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**EGO BOUNDARIES AND SELF- ESTEEM IN THE
MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP AS
REFLECTED IN FOUR AMERICAN PLAYS**

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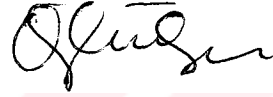
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P R E F A C E

As has been pointed out by some critics such as Freud, Chodorow and Mahler, the preoedipal stage in female development has an influential impact upon the attitudes of mothers towards their daughters. In the first chapter named "The Sense of Mothering" I argue that motherhood has recently entered into literary studies from psychoanalysis through the theory of object-relations. This chapter concentrates on Chodorow's theories upon "reproduction of mothering"; some theories upon "why women mother" are also significant to look at the sense of mothering and altering this sense from a different perspective. That mothers attempt to maintain their sense of mothering in their relations in its earliest form is one of the issues taken into consideration. The term symbiosis (the living together of two kinds of organisms to their mutual advantage) is important to explain the significance of mothering. Furthermore, false empathy of mothers is a way of scrutinising the issue of altering the sense of mothering. The difference between a good mother and a bad mother is drawn: a good mother disowns her desire and sacrifices everything she wants whereas the bad one struggles for authority and possession. Jung's mother archetypes are also examined in order to contribute to discussion of maternal behaviour towards the daughters in the plays. Moreover, the idea of "being mothered" is quite an issue to be discussed in *'Night Mother*.

The second chapter is called "A Feminist Criticism of *Machinal* and *'night Mother*". The reason that two different plays are chosen that are belonging to two different periods in American history is to focus on and compare the twentieth century images of women in America. Furthermore, patriarchal society is criticised to better understand how the oppressed females learn to value themselves as individuals. Passivity, imprisonment, victimization and the male gaze are the subtitles discussing how women are repressed by the patriarchal codes. Under the subtitle, "Patriarchal control of women's mothering", male-dominated social institutions are criticised.

Chapter three, "Ego-boundaries and Self-esteem" is organised with focus on psychoanalytical theories upon mother's possessiveness. Chodorow's theory on ego-boundaries sheds light in the examination of mother-daughter relationship. This chapter also explores the central theme of ambivalence. Furthermore, the

development of self-esteem in mothers and daughters is the core issue of examination in these plays.

In the fourth chapter "A Psychoanalytical Criticism of *In the Summer House* and *If We Are Women*", I find it appropriate to introduce Lacan's theory of "the mirror stage" under the subtitle of "The shadow archetype" in *In the Summer House*. That sexuality is a taboo is another theme that deals with psychoanalytical criticism of female sexuality in the play called *If We Are Women*.

Having read Freudian and Chodorow's theories on object-relations, I argue that the separation of mother and daughter should be seen, considered at the level of unconscious, as fundamental in the development of daughter in a positive way. The final chapter called "Separation of Daughter" discusses the separation process of the daughter, which is also her assertion of independence. The issue of separation in the mother-daughter relationship will be viewed from the perspective of the daughter attempting to grow up and find her identity. The reason she struggles to separate herself from her mother is that she needs to establish her self-esteem. One way to be different is to distance herself from her mother. The struggle for power with the mother is another way for independence of the daughter. Making herself completely opposite to what her mother represents, the daughter rebels against her mother's expectations of marriage in *Machinal*. Attaining a separate and distinct sense of self through transference of emotions is reflected in *In the Summer House* and finally death becomes a separation of self from merging with mother in *Night Mother*. Among the plays discussed, *If We Are Women* has the most optimistic ending because as a result of the daughter's separation from her mother, positive effects on both mother and daughter occur.

Ö Z E T

Kişisel bulgular ve bunların diğer kaynaklarla desteklenmesi sonucunda, bu çalışmada ele alınan oyunların 1928-1993 döneminin en belirgin örnekleri olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Dört oyun psikanalitik ve feminist yaklaşımlarla incelenip değerlendirilmiştir. Psikanalitik feminizm perspektifiyle yazılan ikinci kaynak eserler de ayrıca bu çalışmanın gelişimine ışık tutmuştur.

Birinci bölümde annelerin kız çocuklara yönelik farklı türdeki davranışları incelenmiştir. Sonraki bölüm '*night Mother* ve *Machina*' ı feminist eleştiri merceğiyle ele alır. Üçüncü bölümde, esas konular olan kimlik sınırları ve özgüven tanımlanıp incelenmiştir. *In the Summer House* ve *If We Are Women* psikanalitik yaklaşımla araştırılan oyunlardır. Son bölüm kız evladii annesinden ayrılmayı nasıl çabalayıp başardığını gösterir.

Farklı biçimlerde görünse de dört kız evlat aynı süreçten geçerler: doğum, simbiyoz, kendini anneye bakarak arama, güç mücadelesi ve ayrılma. Özerklik ve kimlik duygusu için karmaşık duygulu bir mücadeleden sonra, kız evlatlar özgüvenlerini kazanıp kimlik sınırlarını oluşturabilirler. Bu da onların annelerinden ayrılmalarının bir göstergesidir.

ABSTRACT

As a result of personal findings and the support of other sources, it has occurred that the plays discussed in this study have been some of the most striking examples of the 1928-1993 period to the mother-daughter relationship. The four plays are examined and evaluated through the psychoanalytic and feminist approaches. The secondary sources written from the perspective of psychoanalytical feminism have also illuminated the development of this study.

In the first chapter, different types of maternal behaviour towards daughters are examined. The next chapter scrutinises '*night mother* and *Machinal* through the lens of feminist criticism. In the third chapter, the core issues of ego boundaries and self-esteem are defined and explored. *In the Summer House* and *If We Are Women* are the plays looked over through the psychoanalytic approach. The last chapter demonstrates how the daughter strives and manages separation from her mother.

Even though it appears in different ways, four daughters go through the same process: birth, symbiosis, searching oneself back through mother, power struggle and separation. After an ambivalent struggle for a sense of autonomy and selfhood, daughters are able to attain their self-esteem and construct ego boundaries. This is the manifestation of their separation from their mothers.

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**EGO BOUNDARIES AND SELF-ESTEEM IN THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER
RELATIONSHIP AS REFLECTED IN: *MACHINAL, IN THE SUMMER HOUSE,*
*'NIGHT MOTHER AND IF WE ARE WOMEN***

YEMİN METNİ	II
TUTANAK	III
Y.Ö.K. DOKÜMANTASYON MERKEZİ TEZ VERİ FORMU	IV
PREFACE	V
ÖZET	VII
ABSTRACT	VIII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IX
İÇİNDEKİLER	X
KISALTMALAR	XIII
INTRODUCTION	XIV

**CHAPTER ONE
THE SENSE OF MOTHERING**

1.1. THE SENSE OF MOTHERING	1
1.2. GUILT AND SELF-BLAME IN MOTHERS	5
1.3. ALTERING THE SENSE OF MOTHERING	7
1. 3. 1. False Empathy Reflected as Possessiveness	8
1. 4. BEING MOTHERED	10
1. 4. 1. Jealousy in Mothers	12
1. 5. AN IDEAL MOTHER VS. JUNG'S DEFINITION OF A BAD MOTHER	13

**CHAPTER TWO
A FEMINIST CRITICISM OF *'NIGHT MOTHER AND MACHINAL***

2.1. THE CHANGES IN WOMEN'S SOCIAL CONDITION	18
2.2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF MOTHERHOOD IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY	20
2. 3. MARRIAGE AS AN INSTITUTION	22

2. 4. THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY	23
2.4. 1. The Position of Women in ' <i>Night Mother</i>	23
2. 4. 2. The Position of Women in <i>Machinal</i>	24
2. 4. 3. Passivity of daughters	25
2. 4. 4. Victimization	26
2. 4. 5. Imprisonment	28
2. 4. 6. The male gaze	30
2. 5. PATRIARCHAL CONTROL OF WOMEN'S MOTHERING	32
2. 6. SEEKING AUTONOMY	34

CHAPTER THREE

EGO BOUNDARIES AND SELF-ESTEEM

3. 1. EGO BOUNDARIES	37
3. 1. 1. A mbivalence	38
3. 1. 2. Boundary Invasion	38
3. 1. 3. Boundary Confusion Caused by Boundary Invasion	39
3. 1. 4. The Concept of Ego Boundaries for Freud	40
3. 2. EGO DEVELOPMENT	41
3. 2. 1. The Sense of Self	42
3. 3. AGGRESSION	43
3. 4. SELF-ESTEEM	45
3. 4. 1. Developmental Roots of Self-esteem	45
3. 4. 2. Mother's Lack of Self-esteem	46
3. 4. 3. Daughter's Lack of Self-esteem	48

CHAPTER FOUR

A PSYCHOANALYTICAL CRITICISM OF *IN THE SUMMER HOUSE* AND *IF WE ARE WOMEN*

4. 1. THE EFFECTS OF THE SUMMER HOUSE	50
4. 2. THE SHADOW ARCHETYPE	51
4. 3. SEXUALITY	57
4. 3. 1. Taboos on Female Body	57

4. 3. 2. Female Sexual Identity	59
4. 4. DESIRES OF WOMEN AS OPPOSED TO MOTHERHOOD	62

CHAPTER FIVE

SEPARATION OF DAUGHTER

5. 1. MAHLER'S CONCEPT OF SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION	64
5. 2. THE POWER STRUGGLE	66
5.3. SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION PROCESS OF THE DAUGHTERS	68
5. 3. 1. Molly's separation: Transference of emotions	68
5. 3. 2. Jessie's Separation: Suicide	69
5. 3. 3. Helen's Separation: Capital Punishment	70
5. 3. 4. Polly's Separation: The First Love-affair	71
5. 3. 5. The Positive Effects of Separation of Polly	73
5. 3. 6. The Positive Effects of Separation upon Jessica	74
5. 4. DE KANTER'S DEFINITION OF MOTHERHOOD	75
CONCLUSION	78
ENDNOTES	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87

KISALTMALAR

ISH	<i>In the Summer House</i>
IWA	<i>If We Are Women</i>
NM	<i>'Night Mother</i>
M	<i>Machinal</i>



INTRODUCTION

As the mother looks into the eyes of her newborn for the first-time and starts cradling her, she thinks "I believe she knows me." At this peaceful moment, the mother feels recognized by her baby although she is aware of the fact that her baby is a unique person with her own destiny. Later, as the baby shows that she *does* know her mother, she strongly feels that her baby is part of herself. This is the beginning of the tremendous inequality of mother-daughter relationship.

Hoping that mothers who are having problems with parenting due to psychological boundary invasions would find insight and identify with the subjects of this work, I believe it will be helpful to better understand the changes in the behaviour and attitudes of the women-in-development. As a starting point for many women, it seems obvious that although daughters or mothers have different lives, different ambitions, different hopes, fears and needs, they are connected in their relationship as mother and daughter as well as in their womanness. I became engaged in feminist thought and theories on women's development when I was studying in the United States. I have always included feminist content and perspectives in my writings. A feminist approach to the study and teaching of American drama is essential because the area has been dominated by the paternalistic, male-dominated modes of consciousness since the first plays of American literature in the seventeenth century. I have chosen the key words "ego boundaries and self-esteem" because I think they have significance in a healthy relationship between mothers and daughters and for the establishment of the sense of autonomy on the daughter's part as well.

The central importance of mother-daughter relationship is based on the fact that males and females experience their social environment differently as they grow up which accounts for the development of basic sex differences in personality. An important thinker and analyst, Chodorow, sheds light into this research. Her work *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978b) deals with the effects of the different types of male and female pre-Oedipal relationship, together with the differential resolution of the Oedipus complex in girls and boys. Therefore, deep and primary relationship between mothers and daughters gain significance. In girls, for Chodorow, the

degree of individuation is lesser than in boys because girls consequently develop more flexible ego boundaries which create the psychological preconditions for the reproduction of women's subordination to men. At this point, the concepts of identity formation and individuation of girls gain significance. This study will also illuminate the phases of identity formation and individuation that daughters go through to be able to establish their autonomy and separation from their mothers:

Birth → Merging/Symbiosis/Close Identification → Searching Oneself Back Through Mother → Ambivalence/Denying the mother → Separation from the Mother

In order to make an analysis of women characters in drama, methods and theories are needed that are directed toward the understanding of how women develop and experience their unconscious fantasies and of how they rebuild their past emotions in the present. Psychoanalysis has interpretive potential on the individual behavior and on relationship such as the difference between mothers and daughters. Most importantly, it will provide tools for and insights into the relationship between mothers and daughters. Psychoanalysts are interested in what gender identity means. Feminists are focusing theories on analysis and critique of male dominance, which define an understanding of sex and gender. Object-relations feminists are concerned with the question of self as this is separate from but related to gender identity and have developed theories that contrast male and female self.

Taking the these approaches into consideration, this study demonstrates the centrality of the mother-daughter relationship related throughout the works of four playwrights: Sophie Treadwell, Jane Bowles, Marsha Norman and Joanna McClelland Glass. In order to understand in what way the conscious and unconscious feelings and emotions influence the interpersonal lives of mothers and daughters, feminist and psychoanalytical criticism of the chosen dramatic works will summarize these specific topics working at the intersection of psychoanalysis and feminism: 1. Selfhood and the identity formation in girls (pre-oedipal period) 2. Self-esteem and ego boundaries 3. Connectedness versus separation from mothers.

While exploring the issue of selfhood and identity formation in girls, the object-relations theory will shed light to the course of transactions between self and other(s) that form our sense of self in terms of connection and separation from

others. From this light, mother daughter relationship can be explained within the perspective of an object relation understanding of mother-daughter bonding in the patriarchal family. This perspective argues that the first experience of a daughter through her connection to her mother is to be examined.

Feminist object-relations theorists strongly argue for theoretical and developmental treatment of the mother as a subject—against psychoanalytic tendencies to treat her as an object whose role is evaluated in terms of the presumed needs and fantasies of the child alone. Melanie Klein developed the basis for what is now known as object-relations theory. Object-relations theory acknowledges the impact of the culture on human development. Within this theory, the life of the child is viewed as a world made up of "objects" rather than of instincts and impulses in desperate need of taming by parents and society. "Objects" are internal representations or internalizations (mental images) of people or things to which the child has assigned meaning. This meaning is developed through the child's experiences. For example, "mother" is a very complex "object" or internalization. We have a mental image of mother (usually our own) but "mother" also has motives, deep meaning, and emotions attached to it (such as caregiver, love, warmth, acceptance).

What is more, Melanie Klein maintains that ambivalence occurs during the phases of child development. For example, the child experiences a need for help from outside during personality development. But she experiences "intense neediness and clinging to the mother" as well. This leads to ambivalence. This is a kind of conflict between the child's need for mother and the child's need for separation.

In the early psychoanalytical development, anxiety, frustration and ambivalence lead to "the development of ego capacities as well as the creation of ego boundaries.. ..ambivalence is an infantile reaction to disruptions and discomforts in its (child's) relation with its mother" (Chodorow, 1978b; 70). The sense of boundary develops in a child both through its relation to mother and its comparison with others. In other words, during this phase of early development, the child realizes the mother as separate. This perception forms the basis of the child's experience of a self. The child develops a sense of separate self, a self which does not depend on

the mother, while at the same time it develops a sense of basic relatedness to its mother. Both ego boundaries and a bounded ego (a sense of the permanence of physical separateness and of the predictable boundedness of the body) emerge through this process. Chodorow relates:

since mother is the primary caregiver, mother is the first attachment we all experience. Our experiences of attachment and identification (whether we are male or female) are therefore first with her. At a young age, a male child must separate from this attachment to form his own identity. The separation is a frightening experience for the male child and prompts the child to develop strong ego boundaries as part of self-protection from this fright. This is not the case for the female child. The female child has experienced unity rather than separation; therefore her ego boundaries tend to be less rigid. (1978b; 68)

However, this study will try to discuss that this separation is also necessary for the female child to develop her identity as well as the formation of her strong ego boundaries.

Even though there are thinkers such as Carol Gilligan, who maintains that for girls and women, issues of femininity or feminine identity do not depend on the achievement of separation from the mother or on the progress of individuation (1982; 8), I assume that as well as masculinity, femininity is defined through separation. Gilligan, later, evaluates upon Chodorow's argument of "girls' weaker ego boundaries" that girls tend to have problems with separation while boys tend to have difficulty with relationships. She asserts in *In A Different Voice*, "women's failure to separate becomes by definition a failure to develop" (1982, 9).

Another issue, "self-esteem" in the mother-daughter relationship is to be examined to better illuminate the development of female identity and ego boundaries. Significance means having meaning or purpose in one's life, being adequate for what one does. Self-esteem is knowing that persons are good at what they do. The problem is that they develop a series of false assumptions of what they think will meet their needs for security and significance. They usually learn these assumptions in childhood. If they don't experience unconditional love and acceptance as a child, they will experience pressure to have those needs met

elsewhere. And if they aren't given a sense of competency and significance in childhood, they will also experience pressure to meet that need elsewhere.

Connectedness (symbiosis) as opposed to separation is the other important issue to be scrutinized. Chodorow states, "as the girl is connected to the world, her experience of self has flexible ego-boundaries. Daughter's self separates itself from that of mother and structures personality boundaries" (1978b; 138). From this angle, selfhood is defined as separateness from others. Separateness is defined relationally in feminism. Chodorow continues, "adequate separation or differentiation involves not merely perceiving the separateness, or otherness of the other. It involves perceiving the person's subjectivity and selfhood as well" (139).

According to Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, connectedness of female child starts in the pre-oedipal period, a time during which core features of the child's identity are taking shape and in which the mother is the center of the child's world. When compared to the boys, girls have a richer ongoing inner world and are connected to the world. People are social beings from the beginning and they need human connection. Thus, the self-reliant, self-assertive individualism that masculine norms prescribe exacts a terrible loss from boys. In contrast, girls are never obliged to break their connection with mother. Feminine identity is expressed in the fulfillment of the needs of others. The girl's acquisition of a feminine identity takes place in close communion with the mother. Her unbroken bond with the mother leaves her with permeable ego boundaries.

As well as the main trends used in this research-- Object-relations psychology, Freudian studies and Jungian studies, the French school of feminism and psychoanalysis will also be considered as having different perspectives from these trends. From this angle, the interpretation of these theories will be devoted to the examination of the plays so as to scrutinize the topic "mother-daughter" relationship.

The object relations school has itself hardly dealt with gender difference or the development of gender, but I argue their approach can be drawn in such a venture: As a result of being parented by a woman, men and women develop differently constructed selves and different experiences of their gender and gender identity. Chodorow in *Reproduction of Mothering* argues that through their early relationship

with their mother, women develop a sense of self continuous with others: "the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world. This psychic structure and self-other process in turn help to reproduce mothering" (1978; 184-5). Because women are mothered by women, they grow up with the relational capacities and needs, and psychoanalytical definition of self-in-relationship, which commits them to mothering. In object-relations perspective, the influence of mother-daughter relationship on the development of self-in-relation is emphasized. To Chodorow, the maternal self is a "self in relationship" (185).

Chodorow also asserts that the interpretation of psychic structure that stresses the mental personality as object rather than subject is fundamental to the development of psychoanalytic ego psychology" (1978b; 45). Moreover, Chodorow reexamined object relations theory and found it failed to acknowledge the importance of the early and longer lasting bond between the girl and her mother. However, Lacanians react to object relations theories: The unconscious is fundament of psychic life and linguistically constructed, structured unconscious is our sexuality.

On the other hand, Freud, maintains that the Electra complex has its roots in the little girl's discovery that she, along with her mother and all other women, lacks the penis which her father and other men posses. Her love for her father then becomes both erotic and envious, as she yearns for a penis of her own. She comes to blame her mother for her perceived castration, and is struck by penis envy, the apparent counterpart to the boy's castration anxiety. Moreover, in Freud's theory of a girl's preoedipal development in *Enigma of Women*, the girl must separate herself from her mother for her development into womanhood: "... the only way she can do is by transforming the initial love into hate, a transformation made possible by the original ambivalence of that love" (1988; 164).

Jung's theories are based on the idea that in the daughter there is a mother-complex which has both positive and negative aspects. In the positive aspects, the daughter is so identified with the mother that her own interests are paralysed through projection mechanism. In other words, she cannot find herself at all. In the negative aspects, the daughter resists towards her mother. All instinctive processes meet with unexpected difficulties; either sexuality does not function

properly, or the children are unwanted or maternal duties seem unbearable or the demands of marital life are responded to with impatience and irritation.

As a French psychoanalyst and feminist, Irigaray accepts the view that women have difficulty in separating from mothers, that they tend to form relationship in which identity is merged and in which the boundaries between the self and other are not clear. She shares the view of Chodorow in the sense that women never separate from their mothers sufficiently and they remain unconsciously in a state of merging. Irigaray asserts that the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects. She is directed towards an analysis and subversion of women's oppression.

As to the American psychoanalysis, it is obviously based on ego psychology. It deals most directly with conflict, and it is the relation of identity to ego-psychology, on which the autonomous, separated and individuated self does not exist in women. I disagree with this claim since this study will try to examine four modern plays which take their subject from the idea: daughters are both victims and recipients of pressures from their mothers in particular and from the culture in general. However, focusing on the female oedipal development theory and the identity formation in girls, the character analysis of mothers and daughters and the criticism of the plays will lead us to the point— a girl learns to search herself back through her mother and tries to find herself as a separated individual. In other words, she can construct an autonomous female identity by a process of separation from her mother.

As a result, the daughter constructs her autonomy by denying and designating her mother. Then, physical separation occurs. When she gets rid of complete merging with mother, an emotional separation occurs. The strong sense of self is about fulfilling the individual needs and self assertion. V.Nice asserts, "separation is the psychological term for the process of growing up and coming to terms with the fact that one's mother is a separate and imperfect individual who is not always available and who cannot and will not satisfy all one's needs and expectations" (1992; 73).

Another trend to be applied in this study is the social base of mother-daughter relationship. It focuses on the idea that the close tie between mother and daughter is

grounded in role expectations in the social world. These constraint and limit the relationship as well as become a medium for its expression in female spheres. Motherhood is often the only basis for women to claim status and privilege. Judith Arcana claims maternal behaviour is the product of mother's entrapment within patriarchy rather than a product of their evil intentions (1979).

Most feminist writing focus on the conditions in which bad mothering is seen because of the patriarchal system. Tania Modleski states:

feminism has emphasized from the beginning the oppressiveness of the ideology of compulsory heterosexuality and the institution it supports—that of the nuclear family. The family is the structural unit keeping women economically and physically dependent on men; separating women from other women.(1991; 47)

However, some other feminist writers, like Jane Flax, claim that being a mother in a male-dominated society is difficult. Therefore, by looking at the analyses of the mother-daughter relationships in modern plays, this work will offer not only the psychodynamics of this intimate relationship but also perceptive insights into the contradictory needs that emerge from being mothered by a woman. As a result of these conflicts, it is difficult for a mother to be emotionally available for her daughter's needs. With a combination of psychoanalytical perspectives and feminist perspectives on mothering, mother's different experiences of maternal ambivalence will be reflected as well.

In *Feminism and Psychoanalytical Theory*, Chodorow asserts that feminists have been trying to build a theory of mothering without examining the fact that it requires a theory of child development as well (1989). Instead, they developed their theories on psychoanalysis, in which child development is seen as a painful process. (In Chodorow's view, mothering is male dominated and socially constructed. It deals with the cultural and ideological construction of women in their domesticity.) Another view of feminists on mothering is that daughters are the victims of pressures from their mothers and from their culture in general. Since mothers and culture expect the repression of sexuality, feminine passivity and dependence, daughters are to obey these expectations passively.

Contemporary feminist movement demonstrates women are entrapped through their "reproductive anatomy". In addition, the construction of woman's self is involved in boundary negotiations, separation and connection. To get rid of these confusions in her ego boundaries, the woman needs to find a negotiation. Janet Brown: "If the agent is a woman, her purpose is autonomy and the scene an unjust socio-sexual hierarchy, the play is a feminist drama" (1991; 96).

Feminist dramatic criticism, a specific field, is in a state of infancy in comparison to many other areas of scholarly research. Theater Studies have been one of the last scholarly areas to be melded with the field of feminist criticism. One factor limiting the advance of this field of study is that feminist critical theory does not have a clearly defined set of criteria. While feminist dramatic criticism has been characterised by a focus on women's works, feminist works should not be limited to those produced by female authors. I think the feminist psychoanalytical approach allows a great understanding and appreciation of the female characters in any dramatic work. Therefore, my study will be focusing on the analyses of female characters—mothers and daughters— in modern American plays. In analysing four different representations of mothers and daughters, I aim at reaching a resolution between feminist theory and individual experience. Moreover, another effort in this study is to contribute to the feminist criticism, since it is obvious that women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother. These capacities and needs are built into and grow out of the mother-daughter relationship itself.

The plays are chosen deliberately from different periods of time because I wish to explore the fact that these plays relate to different female decisions and behavior but at the same time all the daughters tend to separate from mothers and form new ego boundaries to build or rebuild their self-esteem. Even though the female characters differ from each other, daughters are able to arrive at a resolution in their

the independence of women in their relationship with their mothers. What the playwrights share in common is that they are females who have been quite successful in their career. The plays which will be discussed stimulate our imagination and make us feel them ringing out into a wide significance: the first binding relationship between mother and daughter. They also become the model for much of women's adult relationships--behaviour, attitude, independence and the very selfhood of a woman come from the example set by her mother.

Whether they like it or not, women remain attached to their mothers even when their relationship is difficult. As Nancy Friday remarks in *My Mother My Self*, "Our mutual refusal to show our true selves, good and bad, to each other does not allow either woman to explore her separate life, her own identity" (1977; 67). The wrong basis of such a relationship can often lead to distortions such as dependency, symbiosis, incomprehension and hostility. Most women demand and detest at the same time their feminine condition due to the fact that there is a conflict between symbiosis --the wish to be with the mother-- and separation from her.

Only when the mother realizes the separate identity of her daughter and accepts her as "other", can an understanding be found between the two women. The knowledge of self-worth and desire to make independent choices are evident in the character of the women of the twentieth century. They possess individualistic attitude which is indicative of the independent female with her refusal to obey her parents. This is the image of women drawn in all four plays.

Providing a theoretical account of mother-daughter relationship with all its conflicts and contradictions women have experienced, I will summarize the works of Treadwell, Bowles, Norman and McClelland Glass.

Machinal is the most famous work of Sophie Treadwell. She marched in favor of women's suffrage movement and wrote about society's oppression of women. In 1928, she wrote *Machinal* which takes its meaning from the French term for "mechanical". Treadwell uses expressionist techniques to create a story about an ordinary woman and to attack capitalism for putting intimate relationships on an economic level. Thus, Treadwell's critique not only extends to social institutions but also motherhood which makes it a recognizably feminist critique. *Machinal* is

focused on a woman who rebels against her society as well. She experiences a conflict between marrying a man she does not love and being fired by her boss who proposes her.

In the end, she decides not to submit anymore. She gets rid of the social and psychological restrictions imposed upon her, and the restrictions by her mother. Finding relief from a young man she met, the woman seeks security from imposed restrictions. She becomes a rebel to the moral codes of her society (finding a lover, ignoring her baby, killing her husband). She refuses to project her mother's values. Central to much feminist theory, mother is the enforcer of patriarchal values as well as their victim. The institution of motherhood in a patriarchal culture achieves not only the reproduction of mothering but the perpetuation of patriarchy. Maternal role creates too much ambivalence about mother's and daughter's identity. Mother projects upon her daughter her own ambivalence about being a female in the society. This woman nurtures her daughter without offering her a vision of perfect love and alternate model of identity through community. In this play, we see the image of a passive femininity-- Helen-- who lives in a patriarchal society that threatens her sense of self. This kind of culture also teaches females to hate their original selves. Helen's definition of motherhood becomes a failure since she has been brought up by a mother whose notion of motherhood is grounded in the reality of material conditions. The play deals with the issues like social aspects of marriage, the impact of patriarchal society on women, and the entrapment of them in this oppressive society. When she marries she is deprived of her social role and her few strengths.

Helen's claustrophobia is out of her oppression under the roles asserted upon her by the male-dominated society: be a good girl, wife, mother, may be a woman. The impact of the loss of mother (severing/breaking off the bond) to the daughter is important because the mother is not offering her daughter an adequate role-model and of not encouraging a positive image of womanhood in her daughter. In a sense, there is no ego-supportive relationship between them.

In 1954, Bowles's the only play *In the Summer House* was produced. It was met with acclaim from the less conventional playwrights (including Tennessee Williams). Her work was subjected to much criticism, possibly because of its subtle

nature. She took the criticism good-naturedly, although she drank heavily. Her life was like Virginia Woolf's in ways— an unconventional marriage, battles with moods and self-image, and the lesbian attractions. Like all Bowles's work, *In The Summer House* is autobiographical. It is about the psychological dynamics of mother-daughter bonding, a bond they found strange and confusing. It represents women's worlds in the way that they are marked by jealousy and conflict. Bowles is "alert to the very complex relationships—psychological, sociological and physical— between mothers and daughters" (Barlow, 1994; 403).

Possessiveness in mothers impede the daughter's ego development. The mother, who sees her daughter as an extension of herself, unconsciously envies her daughter's desires and autonomy because she herself cannot fulfill her own desires and autonomy. Molly is a good example of a girl who "alternates between total rejection of a mother who represents infantile dependence and attachment to this mother." There is a push and pull dynamics between them. The most painful moment for Molly is the double ceremony in which both mother and daughter get married. The grooms are absent. Both brides are in bridal gowns; Molly eating a hot dog, her mother in her slippers. With her indifference to the ceremony, Molly reveals her feeling of the threat of separation from her mother, who is leaving for Mexico. Hiding in the womb-like summer-house, Molly has a blow to her self-esteem, when she realizes that her mother is not an all-powerful mother. She feels insecure.

'Night Mother, written by the Tony Award-winning playwright, Marsha Norman, is the story of a daughter reassessing her life's direction. Marsha Norman wrote this Pulitzer winning play in 1983. The protagonist of the play is drawn carefully with psychological details. She struggles for emotional wholeness and control over her life. As a victim of her society, she is forced into a lethal confrontation that kills her. Faced with the perception that her life no longer has significant meaning, this young woman has come to a critical moment of decision. The play tells of the night when she informs her mother, whom she lives with, of her choice of suicide. In another sense, *'night Mother* is about a woman who exercises her own freedom of choice through suicide. In spite of the poor communication, and limited understanding between them, the woman creates a mature connection with her mother in the end. In spite of the poor communication, and limited understanding between them, the woman creates a mature connection with her mother in the end. Jessie redefines

survival, which is related to her death paradoxically. Thus, suicide becomes a positive, cleansing act. Jessie's low self esteem is determined by her family and society whereas her value is determined by how well she provides for the needs of her mom and others (son, husband). In the end, her self esteem is still not healed, but she draws a strict line in her ego-boundaries by refusing to serve people any more and by refusing the oneness in their relation. Inevitably her rebellion has a greater impact on her own psyche than on the society around her.

Joanna McClelland Glass's play *If We Are Women* premiered in the U.S. in 1993. She was born in Canada; and after starting to work, she became a citizen of the U.S.A. *If We Are Women* revolves around the conversation of four women who represent three generations. Polly is the youngest woman who is in a struggle for taking independent acts: her decision to leave home for the sake of her love for a young man is actually her way of expressing self-esteem. In other words, separation from her mother is depicted in the form of her building up strong ego-boundaries. Throughout the course of the play, as the mother and daughter talk, they come to terms with their own struggles; thus their experiences affect the way they view each other.

When compared, all four mothers have much in common. They all project their feminine dissatisfaction into their daughters since they have had unhappy marriages and broken relationships. All are possessive, and over-protective of their daughters as well. Having grown up without establishing adequate ego-boundaries and firm sense of self, all mothers experience boundary confusion with their daughters. (either ambivalence or merging/symbiosis) This destroys the mother-daughter bond since mothers do not provide their daughters with differentiating ego-boundaries. Out of their selfishness they have desire to make their daughters very close to themselves. Finally, all mothers block their daughters' individuality using them for their emotional needs, whereas daughters resist to their mothers. This allows the girls to define boundaries of their selves clearly.

The feminist dramatic criticism of the plays reveals, then, how the woman struggles to define herself as autonomus being who yet maintains a caring connection with her mother. Even though the the way they reveal their self-assertion is not similar, the daughters take their own decisions against their mothers. In this

sense, what they have in common is that they get rid of the boundary confusion with their mothers and prove their own subjectivity, individuality. Separation and differentiation involves perceiving subjectivity and selfhood. Daughters attain their self-esteem and construct ego boundaries after an ambivalent struggle for a sense of separateness and independence from their mothers.



CHAPTER ONE

THE SENSE OF MOTHERING

Feminist literary critics, especially those involved in psychoanalytic theories, have accepted feminist critique of motherhood as an institution and experience for many years. At first, feminist literary critics have seen the position of the feminist critic as daughter who anxiously tries to sort out her relations to her mother, suffering from deeply unresolved feelings about motherhood. Later, for these literary scholars one question, whether the mothers themselves can be feminist critics, is the question to be scrutinized. Thus, feminist approaches to motherhood have been reconsidered and critical analysis of motherhood is made as in Jane Price Knowles' anthology, *Motherhood: A Feminist Perspective*: "The challenge of mothering seems to be not how to be good enough, but dare to believe in our goodness enough to be also bad enough" (1990;10). In the light of this analysis, it is important to understand how the conventional maternal capacities have changed. The nurturant and protective abilities of mothers have also altered because the laws of patriarchy have been subverted by the feminist approach about motherhood. The law a mother assumes is not devalued any more.

I find it essential to examine the maternal behavior towards daughters under the subtitles of: the sense of mothering in earliest form, guilt and self-blame in mothers, altering the sense of mothering, being mothered, ideal mothers as opposed to bad mothers, and patriarchal mothers. The parts of these titles will discuss types of mothers because I believe this issue will help us see how the behaviour of mothers towards the daughters influence the emotional development of daughters. The mothers chosen are suitable examples to all of these subtitles. This chapter will also focus on the difference in the critical approaches towards motherhood as well as illuminate mother-daughter relationship in the plays with feminist and psychoanalytical approaches.

1.1.The Sense of Mothering

My feminist interpretation of psychoanalytic theory lies on the fact that it offers us some insights into the processes of female development. During her development phase, the daughter is emotionally tied to her mother therefore her

mother tries to maintain the sense of mothering in its earliest form even though her daughter is an adult. She desires to bind her daughter to herself. She does this by clinging to her, and being an over-involved and suffocating mother. Since, the mothers' memories hold the images of their daughters as infants, and throughout life, they continue to see the child in their adult daughters.

At some point, most mothers and daughters recognize that they are in a struggle by their mutual efforts to maintain their relationship in its earliest form or to alter it. Like a complicated primitive dance they perpetually come together and move apart. In the preoedipal phase of development, the child is closely attached to her mother. Mother becomes the primary love object. However, the child also has ambivalent desires for her—the feeling of love and hate together. The mother, through primary identification, continues the primary object-relations with her daughter, and starts a difference with her son. She reexperiences her own daughterhood in her relationship with her daughter.

Through their early relationship with their mother, women develop a sense of self which is continuous with others: "the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world. This psychic structure and self-other process in turn help to reproduce mothering" (Chodorow 1978b, 158). Because women are mothered by women, they grow up with the relational capacities and needs, and psychological definition of self-in-relationship, which commits them to mothering.

To give an example to the preoedipal attachment— the earliest involvement with mother— we can examine the relationship between Molly and Gertrude in *In the Summer House*. The most painful moment for Molly is the double ceremony in which both mother and daughter get married. The grooms are absent. Both brides are in bridal gowns; during the scene where mother and daughter are seen in their bridal gowns, Molly is eating her hotdog sandwich and her mother is in her slippers. Molly begs her mother:

Molly: " Please don't go away. ...

Gertrude: Don't be a cry baby. . (Gertrude starts toward the table when she is stopped by Molly who puts the flowers in her hands)

Molly: Stay!

Gertrude: Molly. Put them back. They belong on your wedding dress. Here put them back..
Molly: No.. No... They are for you...I love you. I love you. Don't leave me... (ISH 439-440)

Molly's sense of self is fused with her sense of mother. She lives a boundary confusion—a lack of sense of separation from the world of her mother (to be mentioned again in the third chapter). In the beginning, Molly is like a toddler who cries after her mother going to work. She is apt to change, has strong dependency needs and decided ego weaknesses. In essence, for this kind of woman, it is not easy to reach maturity with major ego weaknesses and with narrowly limited compensatory ego-strengths. She is not ready for separation from symbiosis.

Mahler states: "Symbiosis is a type of object relation in the sense that during the symbiotic period libidinal cathexis is directed toward a dual-unity that includes the object (mother) as well as the self. At the same time, it cannot be an object relation because there is no or very little differentiation between the self and the object" (qtd in Greenberg; 1983, 281). Mother is the symbiotic object for Molly. Mahler uses the symbiosis term with two different referents: Symbiosis denotes an actual relationship between infant and mother, with specific actions and behaviour required from both parents. It also denotes an intrapsychic event, a fantasy. She argues, "...an inferred state... a feature of primitive cognitive-affective life wherein the differentiation between self and mother has not taken place or where regression to that self-object undifferentiated state has occurred" (286).

Another theorist Balint puts:

The mothers ambivalence is apt to manifest itself partly by an exaggerated tenderness, and partly in open hostility. The danger arises that the daughter, instead of finding the path away from the mother towards men, remains tied to the mother. Coldness on the mothers part may, because of the child's unappeased (never stopping) love for her, prevent the requisite loosening of the bond between them. The child will still eternally seek, even when grown up, for a mother-substitute, and bring a childish, immature love to the relationship. Yet on the other hand, excessive tenderness—since it allows for no discharge of hostile feelings—keeps the child in a perpetual emotional slavery to the mother, hemmed in by potential guilt. (qtd in Glenn; 1994, 135)

Like a preoedipal girl, Molly feels painfully incomplete, but the cause of this feeling of incompleteness is to be found in her primary relation with the mother. Her constant staying in the summer house and fixing herself to her mother during their wedding show her incompleteness.

With her indifference to the ceremony, Molly reveals her feeling of the threat of separation from her mother who is leaving for Mexico. Hiding in the womb-like summer house, Molly shows her desire to marry her first love object—her mother. Gayle Austin observes, “the wedding seems to be between the two brides rather than between the women and their fiancés” (1990;405). This is the result of her hopeless dependency. In other words, like the “womb” archetype of Jung’s “Collective Unconscious”, this represents the infant’s desire for symbiosis with her mother. Womb symbolizes the security in literature. It is like a cave that protects the child from dangers. Furthermore, Molly acts like an infant who experiences herself as merged with her mother, as if possessing a common boundary. In the preoedipal period, the infant achieves a sense of power by merging with the mother. Here, Molly experiences her mother as omnipotent and achieves a sense of power as well.

If Molly is like an infant in the symbiotic phase of development, she almost develops a sense of self before entertaining the fantasy of symbiotic fusion with her mother. It seems that the reason why she marries is to make Gertrude happy. However, deep down she suffers so much pain that she will be separated from her mother; and in order to repress that pain she marries. This marriage is, in a sense, another kind of symbiotic fusion with her mother because she imitates her mother’s act of marriage. Thus, this act makes Molly achieve a sense of power just like the infant having a sense of power through merging with mother. Molly’s reactions are the result of the psychic effects of the preoedipal phase of development on the mother-daughter relationship: the process of identity formation in girls takes place through continuous attachment to and identification with the mother.

Another example of mother-daughter fusion is Vivian and Mrs. Constable-pair in *In The Summer House*. Mrs. Constable wishes to keep the earliest symbiotic relationship with Vivian. Thus, Vivian feels the threat of merging with her mother who gives unconditional love to her. She fights against it by attaching herself to Molly’s mother. Chodorow states, “A girl’s preoedipal experience of self leads her to

look for a symbol of her own autonomy and independence, and a relationship and a self-in-relation which will help her to get this" (qtd. in Glenn,1994;127). In order to transfer her emotions to Gertrude, Vivian enters into the womb-like house of Molly. This attachment of Vivian making Gertrude her object of love threatens Molly's less stable sense of self. So as to be relieved Molly must get rid of this threat. Vivian is lost and it is said that she died. But the playwright never makes it clear whether Molly kills Vivian or it is an accident. (She is said to be drowned)

1.2. Guilt and Self-blame in Mothers

Mother and daughter are differentiated by difference in generation. "The daughter discovers the reality of the outside world through the interventions of the womanness in the mother" (De Kanter 29). The mother, however, may have the illusion of being one with her daughter. She is possessive and feels guilt after she harms her daughter with too much of everything. An example to this kind of mother-daughter relationship is in *If We Are Women*. Polly's mother Jessica is a kind of mother who smothers her daughter with her love and too much care. Love is ambiguous to define. It means smothering in this mother-daughter relationship. So many harmful ideas are hidden behind love. Mothers who seem selfless and giving do not give any space to their daughters. For example, Jessica wants to be aware of Polly's sexual and emotional experiences with her boyfriend. She is very anxious about her daughter's being late: "What if she has been raped and mutilated.." (32). Being an over-involved mother, she wants to protect her children from the dangers outside her home. Jessica sees motherhood as something that requires same things everyday. She makes a resemblance between an experiment animal and her own motherhood:

Jessica: Smothering mothering. Running all day, frantically like a gerbil on a wheel. Going to bed each night in defeat.

Rachel: Why defeat?

Jessica: Because during the day, while I was running, I'd glance to the right and the left and all I saw was unmet needs. Soul needs.... moods, sulks, pouts-- a maze of childhood frailties (87).

Jessica assumes herself as a nurturing and giving mother whereas her adolescent daughter who grows rapidly needs is a secure life within family. Polly

says she does not need a suffocating loving bond between Jessica and herself.
Jessica:

I wanted to make the house a fortress and pen them in, protect them from all exposure—oppressive heat, killing frosts, and most importantly, mirrors. Mirrors where they'd make that first, indelible judgment of themselves and wear it like a shackle, to their graves (87).

In Lacan's preoedipal "mirror stage" the infant gazes at her mother for her reflection and identity. She sees the mother as giving an image to the child, which is a misrepresentation. The child's ego is split, and an "Imaginary" image is developed. This mirror image serves as a model of ego functioning, permitting the subject to function as an "I." The mother becomes the mirror for the daughter's self. Something they cannot escape from: mirrors. However, being aware of the fact that her daughter is a grown-up, Jessica is anxious about the possibility that mirrors—everything but herself—could reflect negative effects on Polly's self-image. However, what she projects upon Polly is her own ambivalence about being a woman in society. She cannot escape from the "indelible judgment" of herself. As a matter of fact, she cannot grasp the fact that her daughter is in love with someone socially unacceptable as a future-husband as well. She prefers another man who has a good reputation because of his father's career and is very good-looking as well.

Jessica does not want her daughter's identity to be under pressure. Offering too much care, she actually causes Polly's suffocation. She feels defeated due to the unmet needs of her daughter. It becomes her own self-defeat and self-blame. Moreover, she wants to protect her children from outside dangers in her womb-like house. She cannot satisfy the emotional needs of an adolescent daughter who grows rapidly. When she hears what happened to her daughter, she feels strange: "what a bloody farce it is...wipe the tears of motherhood.." (IWAW 53). She feels broken and frustrated; her self is wounded. She does not approve the man Polly loves. She feels guilty, as a mother, of being unable to stop Polly having a sexual relationship with someone she does not approve.

In *'Night Mother*, Thelma is, at first, critical of Jessie's relationship with her husband rather than being aware of her own unhappy and loveless marriage. She says she wanted her daughter to have a husband she has liked. Later she realizes her mistake and feels guilt: "I didn't tell you things. I married you off the wrong man. I took you in and let your life get away from you or all of it put together..but I did it. This is all my fault" (NM 72).

Mother: I wanted you to have a husband
Jessie: And I couldn't get one on my own
Mother: How were you going to get a husband never
opening your mouth to a living soul? (NM 58)

Mother assumes the task of finding Jessie a husband. She becomes domineering and manipulative because she tries to protect Jessie and denies her own shame and guilt at first. Accordingly, she has never told anyone that Jessie was born epileptic. Thelma's secrecy about Jessie's epilepsy is the focus of conversation. As a mother, she never lets her daughter out of sight because she does not want to be ashamed of her during the seizures. Then the self-blame is inevitable for Thelma.

Mama: May be I did drop you, you don't know.
Jessie: If you say you didn't you didn't.
Mama(Beginning to break down): May be I fed you the
wrong thing. May be you had fever sometime and I didn't
know it soon enough. May be it is a punishment.
Jessie: For what?
Mama: I don't know. Because of how I felt about your
father. Because I didn't want any more children. Because I
smoked too much or didn't eat right when I was carrying
you. It has to be something I did.....(NM 71)

She blames herself not only for her daughter's epilepsy but also for her decision of suicide. Thelma faces self-blame, shame and embarrassment. Mama: "...I am talking about this killing yourself. It has to be me that's the matter here" (71).

1. 3. Altering the sense of mothering

If We Are Women among the four other plays is the one that gives us the sense of motherhood from different points of view of three different generations. Polly represents the youngest generation. Her mother Jessica and her grandmothers are the two other generations in her life. It is such a tradition that

mothers and daughters experience mutually. Facing their pasts, these women continuously break the hearts of each other.

Jessica: "Rachel, I need to point out that you didn't listen to your mother—(to Ruth) And neither did you—and neither did I. Polly seems to be carrying on the tradition"(55). It is significant that daughters carry what their mothers have taught them towards the next generations. Ruth accuses Jessie of not teaching her to read as well as expecting too much of her daughter: "I thought you'd be my salvation. I thought you'd teach me to read. You hurt me" She regrets having been a "bloody maid" for her family in her childhood. She has sacrificed herself for her family. Even if she wanted to go to school, she couldn't. She had to help her mother look after her sisters and brothers. She also confesses that she broke her mother's heart when she left their farm leaving her mother alone.

Rachel , the mother-in-law, relates, "It is a painful business, thinking back through our mothers.... Because they give us their blood" (89). The dominant feeling for Rachel, was duty while she was mothering. She finds the childhood frailties insufferable. She also broke her mother's heart. She feels regret that she has followed the same tradition of hurting. Her stinging sentences towards her mother reveals that she hated her mother as she carried a five dollar bill in her shoes: "It is your immigrant mentality that makes you do that" (90). These women wish to make a fresh start and erase the painful moments of their pasts. However, they are aware of the fact that they are sentenced to carry this burden all through their lives.

The sense of mothering which becomes a smothering force transforms into a form of mothering that involves false empathy towards the daughters.

1.3.1.False empathy reflected as possessiveness

A difficulty lies in the misrepresentation of empathy as a care-taking orientation. Mothers often feel responsible for children's feelings, and responsible for creating bad feelings in them. When daughters feel psychological pain, mothers may move into taking responsibility or blaming themselves, rather than helping daughters overcome the pain themselves. Such care-taking is not synonymous with empathy.

Empathy involves understanding, joining or moving with the person in their experience.

Mother is accused of not offering her daughter an adequate role-model and of not encouraging a positive image of womanhood in her daughter. In a sense, there is no ego-supportive relationship between them. If the daughter experiences a powerful sense of connection with her mother in the negative sense, this may hinder her formation of ego-boundaries.

Balint maintains, "Women who feel empty of themselves, feel that they are not being accorded a separate reality nor the agency to interpret the world in their own way..." (qtd. in Glenn; 1994,101). The mothers who lack real empathy keep the daughters from forming their own identity, either through identifying and feeling like someone or through contrasting themselves to someone. These kind of mothers attain instinctual gratification through their daughters.

In *Machinal*, Helen's mother reflects these characteristics in her relationship with her daughter. She also tries to control her daughter using the topic of eating:

Young woman (Helen): Ma, I don't want it!
Mother: Want it! Take it!
Nag! Just because I try to look out for you—nag! Just because I try to care for you—nag! Why, you haven't sense enough to eat! What would have become of you I'd like to know—if I didn't nag!
Young woman: I don't want one.
Mother: That's no reason. Here, take one!
Young woman: I am grown up Ma (*Machinal* 188-89)

Demonstrating a kind of possessiveness, Helen's mother successfully acts out the role of a vulnerable mother. She has false empathy and binding attitude. She implies that Helen owes her a lot. A mother song is heard off-stage. She cries. Her reaction is sentimental and manipulative. Mother: My own child! To be spoken like that by my own child... You are all I have got in the world... I have worked and slaved for you. I brought you into the world.... you are flesh of my flesh... you are all I have got in the world and you don't want me—you want to kill me (193-4).

A mother projecting her neediness and feminine dissatisfaction into her daughter provides a kind of glue for her daughter. Helen's mother withholds and holds onto Helen so that she keeps her close. She uses the first person singular "I" very often. The thing she does is actually to impose her own neediness to be looked after. She wants to bind her daughter to herself. This withholding, envious and possessive mother also denies her daughter any hope of selfhood. Extreme possessiveness is sufficient for her to keep her "mother identity" respected in her patriarchal society.

In *'Night Mother*, Thelma is a kind of mother who shows false empathy in the form of possessiveness and selfishness. She evaluates the meaning of being a parent: "Family is just accident... It is nothing personal...they don't mean to get on your nerves. They don't even mean to be your family, they just are" (23). Upon hearing Jessie's decision of suicide, she tries to persuade her through a way of exploitation of feelings:

Thelma: You are acting like some little brat... you are mad and everybody is boring and you don't have anything to do and you don't like me and you are miserable and it is your own sweet fault.

Jessie: I cannot do anything about my life.. to change it, make it better.. (35-6.)

Thelma cries out, as if to prove that Jessie has no right to leave her, "You are my child." This statement carries with it enormous weight in the world of binding relationships. It is like "that is why you cannot do this to me. I gave you your life. You cannot take it."

1. 4. Being mothered

The fact is daughters become their mother's protectors not because they are such good daughters but to protect themselves. In some part of their psyche, they are still children who are afraid to risk losing their mothers' unbroken love even for a short time. The mothers who want to be mothered are both envious and at the same time give their daughters a lot of satisfying physical contact and affection. What this type of mother calls love is her need for someone to mother her. If so, daughter may have problems of self-esteem, but often feel that she can not get enough closeness with others. The mother is able to regress to her former position as little

girl by giving the child the sensitive attention she feels it needs. Therefore, mothers re-experience their own daughterhood in the relationship with their daughters.

Because of her own neediness and in teaching her daughter to look after herself and others, Helen's mother offers herself as the first candidate for her daughter's nurturing skills. Helen's mother wishes to be looked after by her daughter. She envies Helen's position that she is more independent than her. As a working woman, Helen has economic freedom.

However, she cannot say "no" to her mother because her feeling that she has to mother and look after her own mother probably starts in childhood. Caring is generally a complex mix of actual help with physical work and emotional support. Chodorow asserts that "women's mothering capacities and commitments and the general psychological capacities and wants which are the basis of women's emotion work, are built developmentally into feminine personality. Because women are themselves mothered by women, they grow up with the relational capacities and needs" (1978b:203). In other words, they are committed to mothering.

In *'night Mother*, Thelma is also in a selfish need of being mothered: "Jessie, how can I live without you? I need you..... when I wake up you are supposed to be out there making the coffee and watching me get older everyday, you are supposed to help me die when the time comes.." (73).

Jessie's caring for her mother is closely related with caring about her in *'Night Mother*. Caring about is loving the mother. Jessie's act of preparation for her mother's Christmas gifts, for her shopping list, for the milkman and everything she does for the comfort of her mother before she commits suicide. The act of looking after becomes the proof of the daughter's love for Thelma. For instance, Jessie develops a sense of responsibility for her mother. (Helen would not marry her boss, if she did not feel the same responsibility) These women feel they are not able to sufficiently help or empower their mothers. Daughters remain dependent on their mothers, and thereby open to their mothers' needs. However, their mothers can best be described as controlling, enmeshed, unempathic, distant, intrusive. "Relating to her daughter may revive the mother's own feelings of loss of early nurturance from her mother (the mother is a motherless daughter too). She may therefore look to her

daughter to make this up. The mother then becomes the daughter's first child. Daughter hides the part of herself that is needy" (Nice; 1992, 79).

On the other hand, in reality men are not taught to care in the way that women are, they often have trouble understanding when a woman says "You don't show that you care for me". Women are used to get confused over this. They are so used to looking after others, responding to their unspoken needs that the feeling of "one has to mother one's own mother" becomes an added burden for daughters (Nice; 1992, 97).

1.4.1. Jealousy in mothers

Weskott explains how the daughter learns to put others' needs before her own: Mothers expect that the daughters will nurture them and the daughters consent in that expectation as a consequence of the devaluation of the female child in them: "the daughter, devalued and fearing rejection, turns her anger inwards and devalues her own needs..."(qtd. in Nice; 1992, 98).

The envious mother also wishes to be nurtured by her own daughter; however, she cannot not have sufficient nurturing. Thelma is jealous of her daughter, Jessie, because of the fact that Jessie loves her father and that Thelma does not have a good relation with her husband. This arouses competitive feelings in Thelma which inhibit Jessie from having a close relationship with herself. In the mother-daughter relationship, the reversal of roles has an impact on the sense of mothering. Her mother's being flirtatious towards her husband makes Jessie furious.

Mama: I never thought he was good enough for you.
They moved here from Tennessee, you know.
Jessie: What are you talking about? You liked him
better than I did. You flirted him out here to build
your porch or I'd never even met him at all. You
thought maybe he'd help you around the place, come
in and get some coffee and talk to you. God knows
what you thought. All that curly hair. (NM 57)

1.5. An ideal mother vs. Jung's definition of a bad mother

V. Nice, in the fifth chapter (In Search of the Ideal Mother) of her book called *Mothers and Daughters* makes the definition of the myth of the Ideal Mother as that of a mother who understands and fulfills her children's every need. This mother is also benevolent; she answers the human need for support. In this way, her adult children are able to heal themselves in fantasy, as children do in fantasy play. When we forget that she is part of our fantasy, we misunderstand her. She is not a good instrument for analysing reality. Ideal mothers are expected to be unselfish, indeed not to have a self at all but to be there to meet the needs of their children.

Motherhood can involve intense love and satisfaction, as well as feelings of competence and achievement. Motherhood is constantly changing relationships, as both child and mother grow and develop. Mothers and children move from a relationship of profound inequality, with the child literally being dependent on the mother for life itself, to the mother of equality. Throughout the process, the mother moves from meeting physical needs to meeting intellectual ones; yet, emotional demands remain distant. Both the child and mother must confront the limitations of love and care. For example, emotional needs of Molly are not met in *ISH*. She needs Gertrude to say "I love you." Intellectual needs of Polly are met finally. She can express her opinions explicitly and can argue with her mother at the end of the play.

Another myth, the patriarchal myth of the so-called "perfect" mother drives mothers to bow to their daughters' immature demands because they are inhibited by the myth that a good mother does not fight or argue with her daughter. The difference of opinion and perspective between mothers and daughters is an essential part of maturing process. Dissonance between herself and her mother helps the daughter understand her feelings and define herself more clearly. With perfect mothers, daughters would remain immature because their mothers would anticipate their every need, create every comfort which would cause the daughters unable to cope with discomfort and negotiate the hardships of daily life. Therefore, this kind of mother is all-powerful and makes her daughter in her image. She is both blamed and idealized. She is harmful to her daughter's emotional development.

Melanie Klein states, "...in order to protect the image of good mother from the infant's angry and destructive feelings of about the bad mother, the infant treats them in her imagination as two separate mothers" (qtd. in Nice; 1992; 138). The daughter experiences her mother as sometimes fulfilling all needs, and at other times as frustrating and withholding.

Mrs. Constable in *In the Summer House* is a close example for a good mother. The good mother can speak only to renounce possession, to disown her authority; she is someone who sacrifices something she has and wants for the good of another. The good mother understands the limits of her love and power. She also feels regret that she could not satisfy the needs of Vivian. There is envy but no love. She is a strange mother who controls Vivian from a distance:

Mrs. Constable: They belonged to each other, my husband and Vivian. They never belonged to me..ever...But I couldn't admit it.. I hung on hard to the bitter end. When they died... nothing left...no memories...everything vanished...all the panic...and the strain...I hardly remember my life. They never loved me. I didn't really love them...my heart had fake roots...when the strain was over, they dried up...they shriveled and snapped and my heart was left empty. (447)

The definition of an ideal mother for Chodorow is based on the good maternal behaviour that requires both a constant delicate assessment of infantile needs and wants and an extreme selflessness. (1978b; 84) Selfless is not only the opposite of selfish, but also the loss of self. Learning to care for others, as females do from a young age, means putting the needs of others before her own, which leads to women losing touch with what their needs actually are. A selfless mother who gives everything from herself makes mistakes because her identity almost dissolves for the sake of her children.

On the contrary, Nancy Friday's perfect mother is self-sacrificing and giving: "the truly loving mother is one whose interest and happiness is in seeing her daughter as a person, not just a possession" (1977; 82). Women's all powerful mothering shapes the child's psychological, social, political experience.

Before discussing bad mothers in the plays, I want to refer to the myth of the Yiddish Mama with respect to the omnipotent mothers who are different from the ideal mothers. This mythical figure has no limits because if she dislikes her child's behaviour she will always make her change it. This way of thinking results in daughter's blaming of mother. "The Yiddish Mama is the cause of her children's choices" (qtd. in Mens-Verhulst, 1991; 88). Molly's choice and decision of her marriage is the cause of Gertrude's attitudes towards her. Gertrude is a criticizing mother most of the time, even though in the end she cannot manage to make her daughter change her decision.

For instance, Gertrude criticizes Molly negatively about her fear of water, her hobby of reading, and her personality as well. The way Molly cannot express herself becomes a medium for Gertrude to tease her daughter. This is a blow to Molly's self-esteem as well.

...you don't like the ocean... You don't even go into water. You are afraid to swim.. I thought we'd found a paradise at last—the perfect place—but you don't want paradise... You want hell. Well, go into your little house and rot if you like...I don't care. Go on in while you still can. It won't be there much longer...I will marry Mr. Solares and send you to business school...Go and change...quickly...Watch that walk. (416)

Later, Molly will defend herself against her mother who returns home, leaving her second husband. "If you care this much why have you tormented me so about the water... when you know how ashamed I was... Crazy, unnatural fear..."(440).

The bad mother carries the characteristics that are opposite of the good mother: manipulative, assertive, and dominating. Jung's archetypes of mothers can best demonstrate these characteristics. Women get gratification from caring for an infant because they experience either oneness with their infant or because they experience it as an extension of themselves. The basis for 'good-enough' early mothering is 'maternal empathy' with her infant. However, as discussed, when the mother's over-expectations and demands for love are not realized, she shows false empathy towards her child and sometimes becomes a possessive mother. Jung's evaluation between the two different sides of a mother gains significance at this point.

The mother archetype is divided into positive mother and negative mother by Jung. The positive mother is protective, sympathetic, wise, nurturant, and growth enhancing; whereas the negative mother is devouring, seductive, poisoning, terrifying and associated with death. Jung's positive aspects of the mother-complex is about the overdevelopment of maternal instinct. The mother represents the shelter for the daughter who is so identified with her mother that her own instincts are paralyzed and she cannot find herself at all. A daughter who has a mother-complex has some negative aspects coming from her mother in her life. Her mother lives through her. For instance, Thelma's clinging to her daughter annihilates the personal life of Jessie. From Jessie's side, we see a resistance to her mother. This is a supreme example of the negative mother-complex. Jessie knows what she does not want--living with Thelma. All her instincts are concentrated on her mother in a negative resistance and are of no use to her in building her own life. All of her instinctive processes meet with unexpected difficulties. Her life has been a failure. Her maternal duties seem unsuccessful. Her son is a runaway thief. Being epileptic also makes it worse to answer the needs of her delinquent son. Therefore, the real purpose of her resistance to her mother is to break her power by leaving her alone in this world.

Furthermore, the daughter who has negative mother-complex is hostile to all that is unclear and uncertain. She needs to fight against her mother in order to attain great consciousness and self-esteem. In repudiating her mother, she eliminates all that is ambiguous and unconscious in her own nature. For instance, the lack of honesty is also significant in Jessie's negative-complex towards Thelma. It arises out of a desire to protect the daughter from the harsh reality. Thelma's refuses to acknowledge that her daughter is epileptic and lies about it. Jessie is made to believe that she fell down from a horse after her seizures. Furthermore, Thelma believes that Jessie's husband is going to be the man to rescue Jessie. Thelma, as a mother, fails to equip Jessie to deal with epilepsy and doesn't perceive anything realistically. In doing so, she believes she could provide every support for her daughter. She finally explains the truth about Jessie's seizures:

Mama: You never hurt yourself. I never let you out
of my sight. I caught you everytime.
Jessie: But you didn't tell anybody.
Mama: It was none of their business.
Jessie: You were ashamed. (70)

Thelma also fits in definition of the patriarchal mother who is under oppression. She lives in a world of dream. She is unable to cope with the truth until the end of the play. Upon realizing that her daughter is decisive in committing suicide, she is able to distinguish reality from her fantasy world of sweets. Only through sweets and eating, and gossiping she can escape from the painful reality of her life. Her marriage has been a failure. There is nothing meaningful in her life. Being dishonest towards her daughter, she cripples her daughter psychologically and seriously inhibits Jessie's own search for maturity and self-esteem. She can never be an ideal mother.

Molly has a positive mother-complex. She does not fully identify herself with Gertrude but her attachment for her mother has an erotic significance. Her mother lives as a perfect being that seems unattainable for Molly. In her selfless devotion, she clings to her mother. The shadow symbol gains another meaning for Molly: she leads a shadow existence which is often exploited by her mother (to be discussed in the fourth chapter elaborately). The real purpose of Molly's resistance is to break her mother's power by finding her mistakes and stupidities.

The power of mother Gertrude is felt at the very beginning of *In the Summer House*. She is up on a balcony overlooking the vine-covered summer house in which Molly sits. The summer house symbolises a womb in which Gertrude makes her overpowering presence felt deeply. Gertrude also shows her fear based on her unfulfilled wishes. Her savagery is reflected towards her daughter: "If I believed in acts of violence, I would burn down the summer house" (413). She imagines her daughter of breaking the bond between them. The terror of losing her daughter is the reality that Gertrude faces. She fears unconsciously Molly will desert her. Gertrude talks about daughters breaking bonds with mothers. "Sometimes I have the strangest feeling about you. It frightens me... I feel that you are plotting something. Especially when you get inside that summer house. I think your black hair helps me to feel that way" (413).

Gertrude becomes a typical bad mother as well as fitting the image of yiddish Mama. Her domineering and critical attitude is reflected in her talk: "You seem to have developed such a slow and gloomy way of walking lately...not at all becoming to a girl. Don't you think you could correct your walk?" (413).

CHAPTER TWO

A FEMINIST CRITICISM OF *MACHINAL* AND *'NIGHT MOTHER*

Gilbert and Gubar maintain that the plight of the woman in patriarchal culture is the result of her cave-shaped anatomy—her destiny in *The Parables of the Cave*: “The woman may be the cave, but it is the man who knows the cave, who analyzes its meaning, who authors its primary parables, and who even interprets its language...” (1979; 1121).

2. 1. The changes in women's social condition

The ideal female of the nineteenth century was expected to be gentle, refined, sensitive and loving. Her sphere was the hearth and the nursery. The American girl was taught at home, at school, and in the literature of the period, that aggression, independence, self-assertion and curiosity were male traits, inappropriate for the weaker sex and her limited sphere. She was, in essence, to remain a child-woman, never developing the strengths and skills of adult autonomy. There were significant inconsistencies between ideals of female socialization and the real world in which the American woman had to live in the nineteenth century. The first relates to a dichotomy between the ideal woman and the ideal mother. The ideal woman was emotional, dependent and gentle whereas the ideal mother was expected to be strong, self-reliant, protective, an effective caretaker in relation to children and home. She was to manage the family's daily finances, prepare foods, make clothes, serve as a family nurse—and in rural areas, as physician as well.

In the twentieth century, middle-class American girls seemed ill-prepared to assume the responsibilities and trials of marriage, motherhood and maturation. Frequently women, especially married women with children complained of isolation, loneliness and depression. The realities of adult life no longer permitted them to elaborate and exploit the role of fragile, sensitive and dependent child.

During World War I, women left their home to do volunteer and charity work. However, it was not until world War II that women joined the labor force in large numbers out of necessity. After the war, women were induced to give up their jobs

on their own volition. The social value that women were supposed to seek happiness and fulfillment in domesticity was termed by Betty Friedan as the "feminine mystique." The feminine mystique reached its peak during the 1950s, when motherhood and homemaking were emphasized as the primary goals for women. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan describes old patriarchal prejudices and stereotypes that label the women, who try to have a career, as being envious of men. Women were supposed to be passive, dominated by men, and to assume a reproductive maternal role.

The ideology of middle-class family life confirms dependency. The man works and earns the family income, the woman stays at home in order to provide for their physical comfort and is financially dependent on the man. The dominant ideology of husband as breadwinner and wife as housewife ignores married women with children who are economically active. These women have to balance their paid work with the unpaid work of caring for family. The former is seen as secondary to her role as wife and mother.

The status of the women playwrights began to change during the late 1960s when a woman's movement made women's sociopolitical status important and "redefined both the nature and artistic expression of women's experiences." (Kachur, 1991;16). In the 1980s, psychology and moral development were begun to be studied in feminist criticism. The success of these women playwrights on Broadway has been both artistic and commercial, although the plays have been criticized according to the male-dominated forms and modes of American drama.

Treadwell's expressionist tragedy *The Machinal*, written in 1928, has received critical responses by its male counterparts after being staged during the 1980's. Even though the playwrights of this period suffer criticism for their lack of "experimentation in developing new dramaturgical paradigms", their works have thematic and structural diversity that have been a legacy of women dramatists in American history.

Two different dramas belonging to different periods are chosen in order to show the common qualities they contain as regards the portrayal of the oppressed female in society. What is more, *Machinal* and *'night Mother* will be explored as feminist

drama dealing with the situation of women. This chapter will not just demonstrate the way women are oppressed as mothers and wives but also look at the other side of the coin: the way they act to assert their own standards of being women. Janet Brown argues that a drama is feminist if it portrays women seeking autonomy in an unfair patriarchal society. She has made a research on "feminist aesthetic" in Norman's plays. According to her, Norman suggests that "women's speech seems to arise out of a consciousness—at once individual and collective—that alters the cultural context in which the artist can create and the work can be viewed" (1991;183). She comments on *'night Mother* that the political and economic situation of women in patriarchal society is the background of the primary action of the character in psychological and moral ways.

2.2. The construction of motherhood in patriarchal society

Eichenbaum and Orbach relate: "Feminist therapy is about learning to love the little-girl inside that patriarchy has taught us to fear and despise; it is about allowing her to grow up and become part of an autonomous woman..." (qtd. in Nice; 1992, 145). As a matter of fact, the infrastructure of a patriarchal society is based on a sort of oppression that forces the mother into being a medium of balance.

In patriarchal society, the roles of wives and mothers are drawn as endlessly loving, serenely healing and emotionally rewarding. However, the traditional, idealized role of motherhood confines the mother into her house where mothers are likely to be endlessly burdened, and anxious. The conservative definition of mother puts her in a position where her identity depends on the presence of the child whom she gives birth, nurturance, and protection.

Motherhood, like marriage is an institution. Its meaning goes beyond the biological processes of reproduction. It is constructed through men's and women's actions within specific social and historical circumstances. In order to scrutinise the maternal capacities of the mothers in the plays, it is essential to look at some controversial ideologies on motherhood or mothering.

Female subjectivity is constituted through the phase of reproduction of mothering, which is the basis for the reproduction of women's location and

responsibilities in the domestic sphere, according to Chodorow. She relates, "Women's mothering also reproduces the family as it is constituted in male-dominated society" (1978b; 61). Women, as mothers and wives, contribute to the psychology and ideology of male dominance as well as to the ideology about women's maternal capacities and nature. However, if the woman is a powerfully experienced mother, male-dominance in a culture becomes a reaction to it.

Feminist analysis of mothering have some ideologies that depict motherhood as natural experience whereas a patriarchal ideology of mothering "locks women into biological reproduction, and denies them identities and selfhood outside mothering" (Glenn, 1994; 9). According to patriarchy, childbearing becomes the task of womanhood which becomes an obstacle to the woman's intellectual creativity. Kaufman-Blumenfeld claims,

the ancient, continuing envy, awe and dread of the male for the female capacity to create life has repeatedly taken the form of hatred for every other female aspect of creativity. Not only have women been told to stick to motherhood, but we have been told that our intellectual or aesthetic creations were inappropriate, inconsequential, or scandalous..(1998;30)

Patriarchal wisdom carries with it the idea of a mother whose love does not demand possessiveness or egoism, but self-sacrifice. While the patriarchal ideology prevents mothers from achieving their goals in their jobs and denies them interest and activities outside the family, some feminist discussions of mothering are based on the fact that pregnancy, birth and breast-feeding are such bodily experiences that it is difficult for women who have gone through these experiences think that they, in the competitive and hierarchical workplace, are being alienated and could not get the sense of fulfillment in their careers. Some feminist writers also argue that mother's desire for childcare is a powerful experience that put women in touch with their bodies and their children.

"In the United States, middle-class women have made great advances in achieving civil and political rights, including control of their own fertility, thus asserting their right not to be mothers except by choice." (Glenn, 1994; 11). The most important change has been the increase in the number of working mothers of all social classes. By becoming active participants in the workforce, the women have contributed to the change in the concept of motherhood. Since women affirm their

personalities outside home, the ideology that a mother's needs must be subordinated to her children's becomes twisted.

2.3. Marriage as an institution

The meaning of being a married woman is best depicted in Rachel's stanza in *If We Are Women*:

The woman of 1960
Is the same as in 1980
And in two-thousand-sixty
It will be the same again.
She will rise at dawn
And it will fall to her
To wash the semen from the sheets
And bear the child (99)

The role of women in the institution of marriage in the States after the 1930s changed. There was a return to traditional domestic roles for women. *Machinal* deals with the issue of social aspects of marriage. Due to the consequences of mechanised society, women are not seen as individuals. Love in marriage is of no importance. All girls marry some day, but not all find a loving and affectionate husband. As a social institution, marriage determines what a woman expects from life. It also requires woman to be sexually innocent and chaste. However, marriage becomes a stifling experience for the protagonist, Helen, so is motherhood. A woman's whole identity revolves around her role as a mother and she is incomplete without an offspring. Helen's mother has lived a loveless marriage. She disregards emotions in marriage:

Mother: "Love, what does that amount to! Will it clothe you! Will it feed you? Will it pay the bills?" I will tell you what you can count on in life? You can count that you got to eat and sleep and get up and put clothes on your back and take them off again—that you got to get old—and that you got to die. That's what you can count on! All the rest is in your head! (191)

Romantic love stands as the negative form of the economic basis of the traditional marriage. Like motherhood, romance in a male-dominated society gives neither happiness nor freedom, but an illusion of being "purified". In *night mother*, the loveless marriage of Jessie's mother and father is also another illusion. Mama:

"It didn't matter whether I loved him. It didn't matter to me and it didn't matter to him. And it didn't mean we didn't get along. It wasn't important. We didn't talk about it.."(50).

Jessie implies that after her father died, life has changed for her mother in a better way. However, it is obvious that Thelma's marital life was aimless. Besides, she lacks self-esteem in asserting her self. Thelma disagrees, "Into what? The Queen? A clerk in a shoe store? Why should I? Because he said so? Because you said so? Well I wasn't here for his entertainment and I'm not here for yours either, Jessie. I do not know what I am here for, but then I don't think about it." (49).

2. 4. The Position of Women in Society

2. 4. 1. The position of Women in '*night Mother*

Norman's play focuses on patriarchal marginalization of Jessie whose position of imprisonment in a social structure is dominated by patriarchal power and values. The issues are family disconnection, limited understanding, poor communication, and inadequate listening. Norman is not only a feminist playwright but one who speaks to the concerns of all humankind.

Patriarchy defines the sense of meaning of women: Jessie's sense of meaning was defined by her mother's choices. She stocks clothes, cleans closets, prepares a list of Christmas presents. In another words, her value is determined by how well she provides for the needs of others around her. Jessie portrays the condition of the oppressed women. She cannot claim any position of power and influence as a mother in social life.

Jessie's mother, Thelma's sense of meaning is defined by her husband's needs. She couldn't provide care for him. If her relationship with her husband is explored, we see that she is treated as a cipher. In his death-bed, he does not communicate with her. This is depicted by Thelma's position of being a woman who is not wanted to be around by her husband. "Patriarchal power is shown to be based on men's inability to properly see women, coupled with their need to see them in way"(Kaufman-Blumenfeld, 1998; 115). Thelma, even though seems dominant in her conversation with Jessie, cannot claim status and privilege as a wife. "How

could I love him. I didn't have a thing he wanted... he wanted a plain country woman and that's what he married, and then he held it against me the rest of my life like I was supposed to change and surprise him somehow" (NM 46).

Toward the demands of their husbands and children, both women share similar attitudes. Although Jessie loves her husband, she expressed her relief when he left her: "I never was what he wanted to see, so it was better when he wasn't looking at me all the time" (61). She, moreover, does not forgive her son for robbing her: "Those two rings he took were the last valuable things I had" (11). She insists that she would turn him in if she knew where he was. Jessie is aware of the position of her mother and herself as subordinates in society. She grows up to see that her mother not only lacks the power of her father but is also continually degraded and her knowledge and skills devalued.

2. 4.2 The position of women in *Machinal*

With astonishing foresight, playwright Sophie Treadwell's Broadway play, based upon a famous murder trial, anticipates contemporary anxieties about the nature of love, truth, and justice in a virtual world. This expressionist play deals with a young heroine, Helen, who battles to escape the terrifying fixity of the rules governing her roles as woman and as human being in a patriarchal society. This is a modern tragedy of isolation and betrayal in a mechanized age. In tone, look and feeling, it is a symbolist dream world the experience of an individual standing alone in an industrial, urban society disintegrating into chaos. The play portrays "every woman", an ordinary woman, whose romantic idealism is scorned by her mother. In other words, *Machinal* is about a woman who is driven mad by simply trying to survive emotionally amidst the grinding, single-minded efforts of the societal machine to make people conform to itself.

Helen's mother tries to force her daughter to marry the man she does not love, her boss. Mother: "Vice-president! His income must be—Does he know you've got a mother to support?"(90)—a solution that will make her a cipher in her marriage. He will bring her financial peace if she marries him. Helen is also expected to project her mother's values and ideals. The labor of caring is devalued, and unseen by the patriarchy. Mothers are not allowed to take part in in the division of labour. They become socially neglected people. Owning a daughter is not sufficient for Helen's

mother to form her identity in her patriarchal society. Accordingly, Helen's mother falls into a psychological vacuum for not maintaining her standard of living. Helen is a safety valve for her mother, emotionally and economically. Her mother tries to play the role of "real woman" as defined by the male culture; which results in a woman's loss of touch with her real self. If read as the work of the feminist-as-daughter, *Machinal* represents a daughter who is unable to forgive her patriarchal mother in the end. As a result, her motherhood becomes a site of female oppression.

Moreover, Helen's mother does not understand that hands are symbols of love and care for Helen. She is not sensitive enough and frustrates daughter's need for love and protection.

Mother: Those gloves! I have been washing dishes for forty years and I never wore gloves! But my lady's hands! My lady's hands!
Young woman: Sometimes you talk to me like you are jealous, Ma.
Mother: Jealous?
Young woman: It is my hands got me a husband. (194)

The projection of Helen's inner turmoil is her mother on the surface. She represents the source of restrictions and social expectations against which Helen is rebelling. However, it is not only the mother who denies the daughter her value, her rights, and control over her life, but a system which treats women as subordinates, taught to service men, devalued and sexualised for men's needs.

As a result, Helen is not able to manage to value her mother and herself as an individual due to being suppressed by her society: "Daughters may learn to value themselves and fight for their rights by looking back through their mothers, but not in the patriarchal way of denigrating mother and wresting power from her, but by valuing her strengths and understanding her needs—which are also the daughter's" (Nice, 1992; 155).

2. 4. 3. Passivity of daughters

.. daughters are both victims and recipients of pressures from their mothers in particular and from the culture in general. Mothers and the culture expect the repression of sexuality, feminine passivity and dependence, and docile role acceptance; and daughters passively conform to these expectations..(Chodorow, 1989; 95)

The psychological integration of biological reality—submissiveness and passivity— is largely the work of culture. Passivity is one of the attributes expected from women in patriarchal society. It is not an essential characteristic of woman; it is acquired historically, carried from one generation to another generation. In the end, it becomes the defining characteristic of woman. Helen's passivity reaches its peak in her relationship with her husband. At first in office, her boss (her future husband) asks her to come to her office, she acts like a little embarrassed girl. Later, at their first night, she almost tries to hide her body from her husband: "She wears a little white gown that hangs very straight. She is very still but her eyes are wide with a curious, helpless, animal terror" (200). Sexually passive and having insufficient maternal capacities, Helen is a typical woman under the influence of male-domination.

According to Rich, forced passivity and dependence results in women's being alienated from their bodies and their labor. She points out, for example, "that obstetricians replaced the squatting or sitting position for women in labor with the lithotomy position, in which the women lies prone on her back. This position makes the birth more difficult and dangerous...." (qtd. in Glenn, 1994;17).

Helen's passivity during and after her labor is also obvious in her lying without any motion and unwillingness to take responsibility in the care of her new-born baby. The doctors, the patriarchal representatives, set up the procedures in hospital to force women into passive positions so that they could be "worked on" by the doctors.

2. 4. 4 Victimization of women

In any historical period, women's mothering and sexual division of labour are structurally linked to other institutions and other aspects of social organization. Sexual inequality is itself embedded in and perpetuated by the organization of these institutions. Helen is under the oppression of the social institutions. She defies against these institutions that make her a victim in the way she should act. Social and psychological restrictions are imposed upon her in the maternity ward: one room closed in by a corridor. Its window view is blocked. The hospital building represents male power with its tall phallus-like construction. Health institution is

owned by the male power. When Helen refuses to breastfeed out of her reaction towards her unloving husband and the social pressures upon her, the doctor dominates her ordering her to put the child to her breast. This society considers the primary function of women is to give birth and nurture.

Doctor: (with chart) Gagging—you mean nausea.
Nurse: Yes, Doctor, but.
Doctor: No buts, nurse.
Nurse: Yes, doctor.
Doctor: Nausea! Change her diet! What is her diet?
Nurse: Liquids.
Doctor: Give her solids.
Nurse: Yes, Doctor. She says she can't swallow solids.
Doctor: Give her solids.
(204)

Even the nurse is a victim who has to obey the system of treatment and medicine. The males in this institution do not pay attention to her feelings. The doctor not only victimises but also criticises Helen without trying to understand her. “these modern neurotic women.... What are we going to do with them?” (203).

Motherhood was seen as something every woman inevitably did, if she had the opportunity. Helen does not enjoy being a mother. She lives in a society that finds it easier to accept denial, guilt, hostility or child abuse, rather than permit the unhappy or inadequate mother who openly admits her dilemma and has it dealt with. Helen unthinkingly steps into motherhood without realizing she has a choice in the matter. Her denial of breastfeeding might be the result of postpartum depression—feeling loneliness after giving birth. Also as a reaction to maternity, she chokes. Helen not only refuses to breastfeed her baby but also to speak in the maternity ward. When her husband enters in her room with a bouquet, she does not respond to him. She only makes violent gestures of “no” to what her husband says.

Nurse: What's the matter?
Husband: She's got that gagging again—like she had the last time I was here.
(Young woman gestures him out)
Nurse: Better go, sir. (205)

In *night mother*, Jessie's victimization becomes obvious while Jessie's epilepsy seizures are not told her. Everyone in her circle but Jessie knows about them. Jessie feels insecure because there is some time she never remembers. Even

when her brother knows about her underwear, she feels shy. Jessie: "They know things about you, and they learned it before you had a chance to say whether you wanted them to know it or not. They were there when it happened and it don't belong to them, it belongs to you, only they got it. Like my mail-order bra got delivered to their house." (NM 23). Jessie's privacy is under attack when she is not aware of the seizures for many years. "I've never been around people my whole life except when I went to the hospital. I could have a seizure any time. What good would a job do?" (35). The truth is that Jessie will not be able to fill the empty gaps during her seizures. Esther Harriot argues, "Underneath Jessie's feelings of emptiness is her accumulated rage.... She is angry at her mother for being a silly, interfering and manipulative woman and, especially, for being all that Jessie has and that not being enough" (1988;142). She gets angry and uncomfortable when she learns her mother taking her to hospital in an ambulance, subjecting her to the scrutiny of people. At one point, Jessie confesses that the only way she can get rid of this situation is to kill herself. "What if the only way I can get away from you for good is to kill myself" (72).

2. 4. 5 Imprisonment

In *Machinal*, the sound of the riveting machine heard from backstage is the device of Treadwell to demonstrate the metaphor of imprisonment. The machine, the title of the play, is not only a metaphor for imprisonment but for restriction of women by patriarchy and institutions as well. The institution of justice is symbolised by the judge in the courtroom (In prison, she is asked to say openly that she is repentant), the institution of religion by priest, that of business life by her boss—her future husband—and of medicine by doctors in the maternity ward. She is doomed to be alienated and devoured by all of these institutions.

Helen is under the heavy burden of male-dominated society symbolised by the cops and the book—the institutions and the regulations. Young woman: "...let me alone...I have submitted enough...no traffic cop in heaven...all written down—down in a book—no matter—it doesn't matter—I will lie down—it weighs me—it is over me...it is a heavy book." (205).

Helen's reaction to patriarchal imprisonment is apparent in her suffocation at the beginning of the play: Young woman: ...I can't go on like this, Ma—I don't know why—but I can't—it is like I am all tight inside—sometimes I feel like I am stifling....going to work—coming home—I can't—sometimes in the subway I think I am going to die...." (193). The claustrophobia she faces is the result of Helen's suffocating position in her society. During adolescence, she was not allowed to go out. The source of the emotional pressure upon her is her mother. Helen says to her mother, "...somebody young and attractive—that I'd like—that I'd love—but I haven't found anybody like that yet...I have hardly known anybody—you'd never let me go with anybody and—" 192. The feelings of being attracted to someone is forbidden to her.

In *'night mother*, Jessie is hopeless for her future. She has no expectations in her life of imprisonment: "You know I couldn't work. I can't do anything. I have never been around people my whole life except when I went to the hospital. I could have a seizure any time. What good would a job do? The kind of job I could get would make me feel worse" (35). The doctors and nurses are the only people she contacts with.

For Thelma, gardening , shopping for food and eating represent reasons to live. Jessie's domestic preparations for suicide reveal that she has no reasons to live. Thus it is not a pleasure for Jessie to share her mother's desire for living. Before moving to her mother's place, Jessie could not find any other alternative in society, as a divorced and epileptic woman who does not have any education. Jessie has many reasons for getting out of her house.

From another sense, the domestic environment demonstrates the mother-daughter bonding. She feels trapped in the isolated house that she shares with her mother. It is a house to which no one comes, and Jessie never leaves. She is isolated in her relationships. Her father, the only person who loved her or with whom she was comfortable, died. Her days are full of household chores which she has accepted as a servitude to her mother.

Therefore, domestic setting in drama becomes one of the aspects that depicts the psychological and moral sphere of woman in her society. Jessie rarely leaves her mother's middle-class home: "a living-room and connecting kitchen, and a

center hall that leads off to the bedrooms...one of these bedrooms opens directly onto the hall, and its entry should be visible to everyone in the audience... it is a point of both threat and promise. It is an ordinary door that opens onto absolute nothingness" (3).

Epilepsy is both social and psychological imprisonment for her. It has limited the jobs she could get, and most importantly caused her husband to leave her. Jessie is very sensitive about her privacy. Her mother's decision of not telling Jessie about her illness imprisoned her socially. Jessie can not make something out of her life through her relationships. Rather she is not satisfied with her self.

The humiliation of being unconscious, and out of control cause Jessie to be very sensitive about her privacy. Her self-consciousness has made her husband's leaving a relief in a way. "I never was what he wanted to see, so it was better when he wasn't looking at me all the time" (61). Kaufman-Blumenfeld puts, "This is but one telling example, out of many, of women's self-understanding in a society that still defines and determines the feminine subject position negatively" (1998;115).

Through her decision to end her life, Jessie is getting away from this life of isolation and entrapment towards a new alternative (to be discussed in chapter 3, under the subtitle of "Boundary confusion"). In an interview in *USA Today*, the playwright said: "Jessie thinks she cannot have any of the other things she wants from her life, so what she will have is control, and she will have the courage to take that control. (May 5, 1983, p.5)

2. 4. 6. The male gaze

In *Machinal* the male dominance upon women oppresses them and puts them in a separate sphere. A woman—if she mothers—is gazed by the males as someone whose responsibilities are to care and nurture at home. "To say that the gaze is male refers to a way of seeing which takes women as its object" (Devereaux 1990; 337). Helen is aware of being watched because she is bound to be gazed and watched according to the moral codes of her society which involve idealised motherhood and womanhood, Christian values and decent behaviour. Helen's claustrophobia is the consequence of the male gaze upon her. Her sexual pleasure

is repressed until she meets the man she will love in the play. She is the recipient of male desire, passively appearing rather than acting. In the episode called "Honeymoon" Helen is belittled by her husband who treats her as if she is five years old: "Then come here and give us a kiss.(He puts her on his knee.) That's the girlie. (He bends her head down, and kisses her along back of her neck.) Like that? (She tries to get to her feet.) Say—stay there! What you moving for?—You know—you got to learn to relax, little girl"(197).

If read through the lens of a female consciousness, sexual oppression is evident in these lines as well. Through his coarse jokes about the pullman porter and the tart which he tells repeatedly, he treats her almost like a whore: "...you have got something under there—what is it?" (198). The underwear of Helen becomes the subject of obscene talking of her husband. In addition, the reason Helen does not want to undress in front of him lies on the fact that she has been raised through taboos.

The institution of justice is demonstrated by the biased attitudes of the lawyers. The lawyer of defense even carries the male gaze towards a married woman. It is expected from a woman to be submissive and never oppose against her husband. The lawyer for defense says, "...six years of married life without a quarrel.. I ask you to consider it seriously! Very seriously who of us—and this is not intended any reflection on the sacred institution of marriage..." (236). Consequently, Helen becomes the cave of the institutions—health, religion, law. She has been interpreted by those who also shape her destiny. Even deciding the murder, she gets the idea from her lover who tells her a story about killing someone with a bottle full of stones.

In *'night mother*, the male gaze upon Jessie is less overt than that upon Helen. Jessie does not work. She does not go out. She does not have any friends. She is not physically attractive. She is without talent and popularity. She becomes almost invisible in her society. By isolating herself from everyone she knows, she becomes a silenced woman. In her life, there is only her brother and his wife, whom she avoids. Although absent from the stage, Jessie's brother makes his male gaze felt. He has given her the name Jess, putting her into a position of a little girl who needs protection and care. Kaufman-Blumenfeld states, "...he has clearly assumed an extra power over her, fully illustrated by his arrogant and humiliating care of her after

she has wetted herself during one of her fits that have marked her as abject and disgusting" (1998;104).

2. 5. Patriarchal control of women's mothering

By patriarchal control, what is meant is not just towards individual husbands and fathers controlling their wives and daughters, but also male-dominated institutions controlling women as a group. The prison of a patriarchal society incarcerates both protagonists and determine these women's sexual, economic and personal freedom. However, these women struggle to define themselves as autonomous individuals. The initial issue is to look into the sources of their oppression, mostly patriarchal institutions, and into the economic or familial oppression they face.

Treadwell presents one of the most critical portraits of motherhood in modern literature. The episode called "Maternal" carries with it the codes of patriarchal system that force women to bear sons. The nurse says, "...men want boys—women ought to want girls..." (202). Moreover, this episode is important in demonstrating the position of women that is regarded lower than that of men. Helen's God is symbolic of paternal mother of Lacan. The position of Virgin Mary is depicted lower than God in the play. Helen says, "Mary had one—in a manger—the lowly manger—God is on a high throne—far—too far—no matter—it doesn't matter—God Mary—Mary God—Virgin Mary.." (205). Helen's mind reflects that of a woman who is hopeless. Speaking of Mary giving birth, she identifies herself with the religious image of virgin Mary.

According to Lacan, God is represented as the paternal "mother" creator of the universe in place of mothers. Grosz relates:

The burial of women under the phallogocentric reduction to maternity is a destruction for both mother and daughter. For mother it implies the constriction of her possibilities of self-definition and autonomy...and her giving up her identity as a woman. ...the mother is thus able to consider herself phallic, if she does, because her only socially valued role as a woman is bound up with maternity and with her role as the object of desire. (1990;181)

Helen not only talks about Mary's position as a mother but that of a pet dog giving birth as well. "Vixen crawled under the bed—way back in the corner under the bed—they were all drowned—puppies don't go to heaven" (204). As Bywaters states,

in a stream-of-consciousness flow, Helen remembers the pregnancy of a pet dog of her childhood....as the dog and the woman fuse in a form of reproductive destiny, the paternal authority reaches its zenith when the earthly patriarch, Helen's husband, merges with the ultimate patriarchal authority, God the Father (1990;105).

In the first episode, we see Helen rejecting the proposal of her boss because of his fat hands. "God is love—even if he is bad, they got to love him—even if he's got fat hands" (205). God represents male-dominated society that limits the sexuality of women, symbolised by fat hands. Even if God puts some oppressive regulations for her, she has to obey them in a passive and submissive role.

In the relationship between her husband and herself, Helen reacts:

Husband: You flinched when I touched you.
Young woman: No.
Husband: You haven't done that for a long time.
Young woman: Haven't I?
Husband: You used to do it everytime I touched you.
.....
Husband: Just purity.
Young woman: No.
Husband: Oh, I liked it. Purity.
Young woman: No.
Husband: You are one of the purest woman that ever lived. (228)

What he values in his wife are the moral codes of the society that protect and separate women. Chastity, being docile and purity in women are the values inherent in the structure of the patriarchal system. The moral codes of society crush her ego-boundaries.

Her husband's use of cliches demonstrate his way of thinking: "A mother is a very precious thing--a good mother .. and a child is a very precious thing." (230). He implies a woman is not valuable unless she performs her maternal duties. In the maternity ward, during his visit he teases her pain of pregnancy "everyday you got to brace up and face things that's what makes the world go round" (202). Helen reacts to his statement with a violent gesture of negotiation.

2. 6. Seeking Autonomy

In marriage and motherhood, Helen has to be obedient towards her duties. She becomes a rebel since she cannot endure the oppression of duties that limit her freedom as a woman, a woman who has the needs of an individual. After marriage Helen meets a young man and believes she has found relief from the unthinking sameness around her. Her attachment to someone else shows her desperate search to find someone to love, someone to understand her emotions.

Helen has little control over her fate. She prefers an extramarital affair as an assertion of her autonomy as well as an escape from the marital restrictions on her. In episode 5, we learn her name for the first time because it is the time she asserts her individuality in society she flirts with a man called Roe and goes off with him to his apartment. She is sexually free now and feels purified. She feels like the cow who jumps over the moon: Hey diddle diddle the cat in the fiddle/The cow jumped over the moon (220). She says now that she can understand the meaning of the nursery rhyme she sings. Her preference of a children's song signifies the fact that she can show her emotions freely, without any oppression. She is almost like a little girl content with what she has, even though her lover does not treat her so.

Helen's unwillingness for sex at her first night, but willingness for sex with another man shows her perception of her self as a separate person. Helen does not fit into the role she has been assigned by her society. This society of machinery values money above anything else and allows women little control over their destinies, punishing them harshly.

The mechanical words and the movements of the players in the episode called "the Law" are significant. In that episode, she confesses she killed her husband to be free. Helen's cry at her last moments is full of rage. While the priest is praying for her in prison, she is in pain but not repentant: "Always to have to submit—to submit! No more—not now—I am going to die—I won't submit! Not now!...when I did what I did I was free! Free and not afraid! How is that, Father? How can that be? A great sin—a mortal sin—for which I must die and go to hell—but it made me free! One moment I was free..." (251-52).

Being a rebel to the moral codes of her society (being with her lover, ignoring her baby, and killing her husband) in the end, Helen refuses to project her mom's values—social expectations from her, such as be a good, docile girl, wife, mother. And she goes to the electric chair - defeated, humiliated, stripped of power and shorn of her hair – nonetheless triumphantly unrepentant. Helen's rebellion is the outcome of her denial of her inner needs. The shirring sound is not like other sounds in the play. It symbolizes her autonomy: "I made me free!"

Confronted with such limited options in her society, how could a woman develop a strong sense of self? She can only have the power to say no, which becomes a painful expression of herself. She thinks she can not have things she wants from her life, so what she will have is autonomy, and she will have the courage to take that autonomy.

Jessie seeks autonomy in connection with satisfying her mother's needs. She feels she is still a part of her mother. The way she makes preparations for Thelma reveals her readiness to extend the borders of her self towards her autonomy. Her existence does not depend on caring for her mother. She does not have any conflict between her sense of existence and her need to serve and care for her mother. Honestly sharing her deepest feelings with her, Jessie has made a mature connection with her mother, not a symbiotic one of childhood.

She breaks free from her mother's influence. Saying no to everyone including herself, she finds a way out to establish her autonomy: "I need something that will work. This will work...This is how I have my say!"(75). Women in patriarchal society are expected to create meaning in their lives by nurturing and by submitting in their relationship with men. Since Jessie cannot make sense of her life—indirect influence of patriarchy—she chooses death. In her domestic culture, as a silenced and overlooked female, Jessie struggles to "define herself as autonomous being who yet maintain a caring connection with her mother" (Brown, 1991;76).

Both mothers in two plays believe that their daughters must marry in order to escape poverty and have a secure and peaceful life. Jessie and Helen must either conform to a role or be destroyed owing to the restriction by the society. Society not only denies autonomy but also imprisons women in a role of passivity, obedience,

non-assertiveness and dependence. In the end, in their different ways they have triumphed over the social order that tried to break them up. They have sacrificed much, but the self is not finally submitted. Jessie chooses a death that makes her reaffirm her own self against the world. Helen moves towards a death that is dignified saying she'll not submit.

Norman's achievement as a playwright or seeming to assert that she must write feminist plays simply because she is a woman playwright should nevertheless be noted that her career has been marked by feminism. The plays are feminist not just in the way that they establish a hierarchy in which men are above women, but also calls for attention to the relationship between patriarchal dominance and the American family, and to the complicity of women in their own oppression through reduction to their reproductive function of child-bearing.

Both female protagonists assert themselves which appears in the form of a reaction or rebellion. Even though they seem losers in a sense, they do not suppress their feelings owing to the social and economic facts imposed upon them. They do recognize their constraints in society and being aware of the limits imposed upon them, they finally reject the traditional roles of women. Their individuality is not socially constructed but under the influence of a domineering gaze of the society. As Devereaux states, "Men do not always do the looking, but they generally control who does. The male-gaze is not always male, but it is always male-dominated" (1990;339).

CHAPTER THREE

EGO BOUNDARIES AND SELF-ESTEEM

Contemporary women's psychology states that women come face to face with a struggle in defining the boundaries of the self, in negotiating between merging and separating. The plays chosen in this work embody the process of negotiating new boundaries for healthy self. The protagonist must trace these borders precisely in spite of the fact that her mother tends to see her as continuous with herself. This chapter will argue that self-esteem is necessary for a good relationship between mothers and daughters. Furthermore, the establishment of ego boundaries is crucial to a satisfying mother daughter interaction. This chapter will also shed light to the fact that the definitions and theories on the terms 'self-esteem' and 'ego boundaries' will be key words in perceiving the process of a daughter's separation from her mother.

3.1. Ego Boundaries

This term is best defined as a sense of personal psychological division from the rest of the world. Having boundaries means to possess the freedom to set one's own limits in a manner that is harmonious with the life one would like to lead. Setting boundaries becomes the primary criterion of psychological health. If to have well-formed boundaries means to have flexible, resilient, and reliable sense of self, it describes a significant achievement in personality development that enables a person to engage in healthy relationships. On the other hand, to be unable to set one's boundaries means to be painfully limited in self-expression, to be hemmed in by fear. We need something to prevent the loss of our individual integrity in the dissolving threat of our ego. A boundariless person needs barriers between herself and others.

Women and men grow up with personalities affected by different boundary experiences and differently constructed and experienced inner object-worlds and are preoccupied with different relational issues. "From the retention of attachments to their mother, growing girls come to define and experience themselves as continuous with others; their experience of self contains flexible or permeable (open

and vulnerable) ego boundaries whereas boys define themselves as separate and distinct, with a greater sense of rigid ego boundaries and differentiation" (Chodorow 1978: 169).

Distinct ego-boundaries are aimed at by western cultures. Mothers tend to identify more strongly with their daughters. In their experience, very disturbed mothers are enmeshed with their daughters and don't seem to have a clear awareness of the physical boundaries between themselves and their girl children. Closeness between mothers and daughters is not usually unhealthy. What is unhealthy is where a daughter's developmental characteristics and individuality are not acknowledged, which creates ambivalence.

3.1.1. Ambivalence

Since the mother is the primary educator and controller, she is seen as dominating, depriving and loving. Ambivalent feelings towards her are always there. Some mothers block their daughter's individuality by using them as vehicles for their adult needs. As a result, they cannot see their daughters as separate persons. Ambivalence is a trap of patriarchal thought for mothers and daughters: a mental disturbance caused by some problems in a relationship, having profound feelings of both love and hate, the need to be close and to be apart and being aware of this complex feeling.

A girl alternates between total rejection of a mother who represents infantile dependence and attachment to her, between identification with anyone other than her mother and feeling herself her mother's double and extension (Chodorow 1978b; 138).

3.1.2. Boundary invasion

On the one hand, in respecting their flexible boundaries, women affirm themselves their rights in all their relationships, and the rights of others. This signifies the strength of their self-esteem. Flexible and weak psychological boundaries have a great impact on mother-daughter relationship. On the other hand, there is an attack on their ego-boundaries—boundary invasion. This is destructive from the side of the daughter because her mother invades her ego-boundaries.

Boundary invasions are attacks—overt or covert—on our self-esteem, our sexuality, our bodies. They are also intrusions on our privacy and our possessions. To give an example from the play *In the Summer House*, Gertrude invades her daughter's life. Gertrude's grip of her daughter is at first an attack on Molly's ego boundaries, then on her self-esteem. (In the fourth chapter under the subtitle of "shadow archetype", Gertrude's attitudes towards Molly will be elaborately analysed.) Her mother tries to include Molly into her ego-boundaries. Not having received enough nurturing, mothers envy their daughters' position of being nurtured or being more independent than they were. For example, at first Gertrude pushes Molly away since she envies her and is threatened by her close bond with herself. Later, when Molly wants to give up her little-girl-position, Gertrude puts a pressure on her daughter in order not to let her go.

Mothers' boundary invasion continues from the time of childhood to the adulthood. Boundaries grow sometimes weak and sometimes strong, or between whole self and whole mother. When does the daughter feel helpless, weak and ambivalent due to the mother's power and her control of satisfaction? For instance, Molly is closely identified with her mother which signifies that her ego boundaries of the self include parts of the mother. At first, the weakness of ego boundaries in a way reveals her symbiotic tie. Part of her is still anxiously tied to her mother. She does not get the sense of basic trust from her mother though she leaves her mother's house and marries. In the end, it is not apparent that she will really feel comfortable on her own, in control of her own life. Emotionally unseparated from her mother, the daughter, nevertheless, chooses a new differentiated life that is against her mother's lifestyle. In other words, Gertrude is not perceived as a nurturant and protective figure any more.

3.1.3 Boundary confusion caused by boundary invasion

According to Chodorow, if a mother grows up without establishing adequate ego boundaries or a firm sense of self, "she tends to experience boundary confusion with her daughter, and does not provide experience of differentiating ego development for her daughter or encourage the breaking of her daughter's dependence" (1978b; 169).

The daughter, for her part, makes a rather unsatisfactory and artificial attempt to establish boundaries: There may be boundary confusions if the daughter is not able to separate and complete her autonomous development. Girls do not have to draw strict boundaries between themselves and their mothers. They do not have to separate as radically from their mothers, nor do they have to express this bond. They develop permeable ego boundaries.

In *'night Mother*, Thelma's hiding the truth, her loveless marriage, her domineering attitude are the effects on Jessie's psychological boundaries. Psychological boundaries are defined as 'the invisible barriers that protect the integrity and rights of the individual. Jessie's psychological boundaries are invaded when the truth about her epilepsy is hidden from her.

A wound is an injury sustained by an organism that was once whole and it can be healed with appropriate treatment. Jessie sees herself as having been born whole but in the last hours of her life, she faces a wound: Until the night she decides to kill herself, she does not know she was wounded—epileptic. She realises that the sole treatment of suicide will heal this wound that renders Jessie an object devoid of personal integrity. Because she is not aware of the moments of seizures, she experiences a boundary confusion. Opening her eyes in bed, she must have felt that parts of her body belong to other people. She is so tired of boundary invasions of her family that she orders her mother to keep her brother Dawson out of her room after her suicide: "I want the police in the room first, not Dawson, O.K.?" (83).

This is a typical person who does not have any reason to live. "Dead is everybody and everything I ever knew, gone. Dead is dead quiet" (84). Her decision to kill herself is a denial of her mother's choices. Her mother's choices are the outcome of the social pressure upon her. She makes a choice that is not her mother's. If she decided to live with her permanently disabled body, she would continue facing boundary confusion and her self-esteem would be under threat.

However, she exercises her own freedom of choice, but in a context of responsive concern for her. Jessie outlines the borders of her self more precisely. She faces a particular struggle in defining the boundaries of the self through suicide which is not a loss for Jessie. The play is about the process of negotiating new

boundaries for a healthier self. These new boundaries embody the ability to take decisions for one's self, not to let others be involved in one's privacy.

In general, the mother-daughter relationship is "... a space in which daughters and mothers both struggle for their subjectivity... it is a process of not only establishing boundaries, but also of orchestrating their opening and closing.." (Mens-Verhulst 1991;161).

3.1.4. The concept of Ego Boundaries for Freud

Classic Freudian theory holds that the healthy integrated person is characterised by firm ego-boundaries, a capacity to experience "himself" (note the male bias in much of this literature) as autonomous and separate from other beings. For Freud, Oedipal dynamics are essential to this necessary process of individuation, as the son, fighting against the father, comes to differentiate himself from the father, even as he internalises aspects of the domineering father in the form of his own super-ego. Individuals are probably born with brain chemistry that in some ways determine their temperament. Nevertheless, I believe that if a child is shown respect, compassion and most importantly is loved; then that child will internalise those attitudes and project them onto the world and others. The problem is that most human beings don't really know how to love (even their children) because they were not treated that way.

3. 2. Ego development

It has been maintained by Chodorow that a person's self has a twofold origin which come from its early relational experiences. One origin of self is derived through "demarcation from the object world." Ego boundaries and bounded ego occur in this process. Winnicott suggests a good relationship between infant and caretaker allows the infant to develop a sense of separate self—"a self whose existence does not depend on the presence of another—at the same time as it develops a sense of basic relatedness" (Chodorow 1978b, 68).

For the daughter's separate selfhood, a "demarcation" from her mother's world is essential. In other words, for the process of ego development of a girl, separation is an inevitable condition. "The process of ego development takes place within a

psychic arena whose parameters are defined by the daughter's struggle to separate from her mother, the first object of love, to attain a separate and distinct sense of self" (Chodorow 1978b, 69).

3.2.1. Sense of self

The definition of strong sense of self includes an awareness of one's own needs, firm ego boundaries and objectivity. Ego strength is about fulfilling individual needs and self-assertion –the qualities that are not expected from women to adopt in patriarchal society. The development of a strong sense of self also includes a concern for connection to and care for others. Independence and assertiveness are masculine characteristics on the basis for ego strength which devalue female characteristics such as nurturance, supportiveness and subjectivity. Self-reliance, independence, assertiveness and strength are characteristics of Western women which are inherent in them. Obviously, we find differences between men's and women's experiences of ego boundaries. While women feel safe and alive in connection with their social environment toward an empathy mode, men are actively socialized toward a power-based experience of selfhood that requires separation.

The question of how women experience and depict boundaries is very important in understanding their sense of self. "The emphasis on boundary functions as protecting and defining, rather than as meeting or communicating and reinforces especially the self as separate entity rather than being as a contextual, interactional process" (Rubinstein, 1987; 139). In Western power-based society, safety seems to demand solid boundaries to protect the separate self. If "self" is considered as separate and alone, others may be perceived as potential competitors, dangerous intruders or objects to be used for the enhancement of the self.

Chodorow suggests that Western cultures allow a much longer pre-Oedipal period for the girl in which the immediate and close attachment and identification with mother is uninterrupted for an extended time. During the development of self, girls emerge with a stronger basis for experiencing another's needs and feelings as their own than boys. But regression to this mode of empathy is not a threat to their ego. Rather, it is a process of differentiation from the other sex and the external

world. However, for a model of women's development, there must be a separate sense of self. Empathy alters the traditional boundaries between the self and the others, and alters the sense of separate self in a profound way. In mutual emphatic understanding, separate self is challenged. For example, Jessica, in *If We Are Women*, understands and shares the momentary psychological state of her daughter. She lets her go. This empathy does not mean that women—mother and daughter-- experience a sense of connected self in their relationships.

Consequently, women's selves are concerned more with relationships and more "open boundary negotiations" whereas men's selves are more involved in distancing to defensively establish firm ego boundaries. Chodorow states that women tend to look to other women to fulfill their relationship needs. Their relational capacities are greater than men, since they do not have to repress their inner self-object world as men do. Their sense of self is continuous with others, which enables them to reproduce the capacity for mothering more effectively. As Chodorow states: "Feminine personality is based on .. fixed and firm splits in the ego...from the retention of the pre-oedipal attachment to their mother growing girls come to define themselves as continuous with others" (1978b; 169).

3.3. Aggression

In object-relations theory, aggression is seen as an effect of mother's frustration. Sometimes she is not sensitive enough and frustrates daughter's need for protection. Aggression is necessary for the establishment of self esteem.

In *Machinal*, Helen is preoccupied with herself. She is not pretty. She has many blows on her self-esteem. She has claustrophobia: "I had to get out. All those bodies pressing. I thought I would faint"(186). She cannot even stand being in a bus full of people. Her mother calls her "crazy" several times because she refuses to marry her boss in the beginning. Helen threatens her mother whose selfishness oppresses Helen many times. Finally she explodes:

...if you tell me that again, I will kill you....maybe I am crazy—I don't know....Go away! You don't know anything about anything! And you haven't got any pity—no pity—you just take it for granted that I go to

work everyday—and come home everynight and bring
my money every week (193)

This is an attempt to reject the merging bond between them, even though it is not enough by itself. As soon as the daughter fights against her mother, she repudiates all that is instinctive and ambiguous in her own nature. She becomes hostile in order to succeed in overcoming the chaos of the maternal symbiosis. Anger is negative but it is a tie. As long as we are angry at our mothers, they are uppermost in our thought and we are still their daughters. It is perhaps the only way for Helen to express her aggression and in this way separate herself from her mother.

Rebellion implies a break. It is a way of saying "The family is great, I love it, but I have to do it on my own, leave me alone." In other words, it is self-differentiation and self-definition. In Freud's *The Enigma of Woman*, Porter maintains that "the girl's aggression towards mother ...constitutes the nucleus of a possible state of paranoia" (1988;158). In Helen's case, her aggression is not a result of paranoia but of a need for self-assertion. Helen is the most aggressive one among the protagonists in the plays. De Kanter relates, "Daughters regulate their mothers by aggression" (1993; 33).

Furthermore, in Molly's case, aggression is the result of loss of the illusion of being ever connected. Molly becomes aggressive towards Vivian. Through fear of losing her mother's love, she becomes angry with Vivian who shows affection towards her mother. Molly's response is due to her frustration of her fantasy of continuous attachment to Gertrude. Her response could be seen as a sort of aggression, an unconscious resistance to the ambivalent female image of her mother. She realizes the powerless woman in Gertrude as opposed to the once domineering powerful mother.

Aggression, moreover, becomes a defense against not being acknowledged as an individual human being. With her own right to enter relationship with someone she has chosen, the daughter resists her mother. Polly's frustration stems out of her parents' divorce. Her mother is not the nurturant and protective figure for her any more. Her aggression towards her mother is out of her desire to form a balance in her emotional life. It is a struggle for the acknowledgement of Polly's own

subjectivity. The sameness and difference between her mother and herself is conflicting for her. Negative feelings are necessary expressions in the development of Polly's subjectivity.

3. 4. Self-esteem

3. 4.1. Developmental Roots of Self Esteem

To understand self esteem, one must go back to infancy. From that time we have experienced needs for attention and approval. Baby associates physical, mental, and moral well-being with mother – the person who insures that all her needs are met. The baby's hunger is satiated by mother. Pleasure is also provided by mother and others who admire and worship her. Warmth, enthusiasm, and the gleam in mother's eye tell her how special she is.

While our experiences eventually tone down as we grow older, all of us desire others to respond to us, affirm our specialness because it confirms to us that we are of value to others and therefore have self-worth. We all want to feel really good about ourselves – we have a sense of grandiosity, omnipotence, perfection, acceptance. Other people become agents for self-confirmation, and self approval. What began in childhood and is based in the body, continues into adulthood.

Self-esteem is built upon the experience of one's self as having an effect on others, of receiving a response from them, and of being important to another. Others are needed so that one can demonstrate his knowledge and personal power. From this angle, the child's need for her mother progresses from the need for her mother to be an extension of her self, to permitting difference as long as another confirms us with enthusiasm and applause.

Cultural devaluation and mother's over involvement make it difficult for girls to develop self-esteem. There are advantages for the boy who must deny his mother and hence all the feminine characteristics that are culturally devalued in favour of the male identity which is culturally valued. "For the daughter, feminine gender identification means identification with a devalued, passive mother, and personal maternal identification is with a mother whose own self-esteem is low" (Phillips 1991; 65). Self-esteem is the evaluative aspect of our self-concept. It is the degree

to which we can accept ourselves and feel competent in the things that matter to us. Self-esteem involves a sense of security, emotional confidence and stability. Because it is central to achieving good mother-daughter relationship, the important question is can self-esteem be changed? Yes, because it is based on our evaluations of how we are behaving in particular situations. When another person is upset it does no good to tell him to forget about it or to be as upset or agitated as he is. To talk as if he is not upset, or to try to talk him out of it is fruitless because one is defensively trying to do something for oneself to make oneself feel better rather than focus our help on the other. It is better to be empathically involved and help decrease slightly what the upset is all about. In this way one is seen as being a friend; a kind of person who is like the other. We do not want to see others who are very different from us when we are upset (suffered a narcissistic blow). We want others like ourselves to enclose, reinforce, and support us. When we have had a blow to our self-esteem, we don't want others to blame us. Praising one's resilience and positive capacities, if sincere, can be of help. If one can find positive feelings and have another share in those good feelings one's self esteem rises.

3. 4. 2. Mother's lack of self-esteem

Where does the worth of a woman come from? For working mothers, chances are they too find their identities in their jobs. But what happens when we lose our jobs or when we retire? For some stay-at-home mothers, their self-esteem is tied up in their children. If their children behave well and excel in their lives, then they are deemed to be good mothers. Mothers have carried their guilt and self-hatred over into their daughter's experience.

On the base of Gertrude's doubts that Molly plans something against her lies her own lack of self-esteem and self-hatred. (The reasons of her self-hatred will be discussed in chapter 4). She is a demanding mother, unaware of her inadequacy until the very end.

Gertrude: ...you love to call my attention to that wretched vine because it is the only thing that grows well in the garden and you know it was planted by the people who came here before us and not by me at all. You are mocking me for

being such a failure in the garden and not being able to make things grow... (416)

Molly's intention is not really to mock her mother. Gertrude takes Molly's sniffing the blossoms of the vine as a criticism. However, the blossoms of the vine make the summer house nice and shady inside. (This also creates another reason for Molly to stay inside against Gertrude's will) Obviously, this type of mother is selfish and needy. She has low self-esteem. She is over-emotional and unreasonable in her attitudes. Her over-expectations and demands for love and support will become destructive of her daughter.

Mothers carry an unfair burden of responsibility, not only in the domestic work but in the aftermath of having been the primary caretaker. In the early years children cannot see their mothers as independent persons, but as their providers and comforters. Many mothers endure emotional hostility from their children from the pre-adolescence until old age, especially if the children have not constructed a sense of their own autonomy. However, the task of building self-esteem in daughters involves not only praising competence and success but developing a resistance to defining themselves as marginal, deficient or inferior, simply because they are female.

In *If We Are Women*, Jessica is not given praise for achievement. Jessica's low self-esteem is both the result of her own vision of life and the way she has been treated by her parents. The fact that Jessica goes to school and learns to read results in her mother's envy. As she pees her pants, she was beaten by her father, but not protected by her mother who just finds out a solution to satisfy her husband's willingness to punish Jessica. She puts a cushion under the bed cover to make him believe he is hitting Jessica. Jessica cannot forget the fact that her father beat her. She is not loved by him. She peed her pants whenever he beat her and did not want to accept the role her parents want her to take. She was reduced in importance by her father figure. "If you learn to type you don't even need Grade Twelve" (65). He reduced her to cipher not letting her go to college. How does this shape her formation of ego-boundaries and self-esteem? Her mother does not prevent her father from beating Jessica. She says to her mother, "I can never forgive you for that" (66).

Apparently, maternal over-protection is the outcome of Jessica's ambivalence about the maternal and gender roles she has to play. She believes she has tried to be a perfect mother. Comparing her daughter's life with that of herself, she insists, "Eden is your life Did I ever abdicate responsibility? Did I ever deny you hugs and cuddles? Can you recall a single Sunday morning without bacon and eggs?"(64).

However, Polly harshly criticises Jessica's motherhood and blames her for she divorced: "We thought we were secure." There is lack of security in Jessica's motherhood. Safety in family seems to demand solid boundaries. However, the capacity to respond with empathy and over protection does not bring Jessica's daughter the security she needs.

3. 4. 3. Daughter's lack of self-esteem

The daughter's low self-esteem and her failure in psychological development are due to an early lack of nurturance by her mother. The mother transmits both a positive and negative sense of self to her daughter. The mother's ambivalent feelings push the daughter away from the mother who is unable to meet her daughter's needs. If the mother has lack of assertiveness, the daughter will have low self-esteem. She takes her mother's behaviour as a model of female behaviour. Then the daughters develop a resistance to defining themselves as marginal, deficient or inferior, simply because they are female.

The mothers block their daughters' individuality by using them as vehicles for adult needs. They cannot see their daughters as separate persons. Thelma causes Jessie's low self-esteem because she accuses her daughter of making her(self) feel like a fool for being alive after she has died. "They are going to feel sorry for me! They are going to be ashamed of you" (78). She disregards Jessie's low self-esteem and quietness as well.

Jessie's inner confusion is reflected through how she sees her body. For instance, Jessie does not seem to be satisfied with her body. She is shy about her outer appearance. The seizures are big blow to Jessie's self-esteem. Jessie cannot

be a witness to what's happening to herself. She tries to get more information to fill this empty gap in her life:

Jessie: .. My head turns around and I fall down and then what?

Mama: well, your chest squeezes in and out, and you sound like you are gagging, sucking air in and out like you can't breathe.

Jessie: Do it for me. Make the sound for me..... I bite you, too, don't I?

Mama: you got me once real good. I had to get a tetanus!....(65)

In conclusion, the art and practice of loving begins with our capacity to recognize and affirm ourselves. Replacing negative critique with positive recognition makes us feel more empowered. Affirming ourselves is the first step in the direction of cultivating the practice of being inwardly loving. I choose this phrase because the notion of self is bound up with how we are seen by and in relation to others. In this sense, our self value stems from the practice of being inwardly loving.

Their lack of power outside the home makes some mothers more dominant and controlling towards their daughters. If mothers are controlling, manipulative, and dominating, this shows that they withhold love to maintain power over. In order to retain the role of mother and sustain their self-esteem in patriarchal society, mothers interfere with the ego development and separation-individuation process of their daughters.

When the daughter's real emotional needs are denied, she tends to feel fragile, vulnerable, and emotionally unstable. She covers this up by being aggressive, rebelling and resisting against the power over her and, in this way, keeping her ego boundaries and self-esteem stable and strong. In other words, Chodorow's theory on female development gains importance: girls define and experience themselves as continuous with their mothers; their experience of self contains flexible ego boundaries.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PSYCHOANALYTICAL CRITICISM OF *IN THE SUMMER HOUSE* AND *IF WE ARE WOMEN*

"The mother-daughter relation is the dark continent of the dark continent" (Irigaray, 1979; 181).

In her article, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" Chodorow argues that differences in male and female development are a result of women's universal responsibility for early child care and for later female socialisation. Her perspective is psychoanalytic. She argues that the mother-daughter relationship is key to the development of the feminine personality and that the mother-child relationship in childhood consciously and unconsciously effects the development of both sexes. From this angle, this chapter will examine the importance of sexuality, that sexuality becomes a taboo in mother-daughter relationship and that discovering sexuality leads women to their sense of identity.

I will also try to scrutinise the significance of shadow archetype of Jung in *In the Summer House*. Therefore, an analysis of Gertrude in terms of her relationship with her daughter is important at this point because she goes through a change since the beginning of the play.

4.1. The effects of the summer house

One strand of psychoanalytic thought in Klein's work stresses the centrality of the mother's body in the infant's fantasy life and development. Her body is literally the first home of her child and often the first source of food as well. She gives her child a bounded sense of space within which security and continuity becomes possible. The mother is traditionally the central figure in a child's life and perhaps even more significantly so in a female child's life. It is generally through the mother that a daughter denies herself, her sexuality and her place in the world.

In order to establish a healthy connection, a daughter must come to terms with the female power and sexuality that she recognizes in her mother and herself; besides she must negotiate the dangerous territory between mother and daughter.

In the first chapter, we have seen that hiding in the womb-like summer house, Molly shows her desire to marry her first love object—her mother. After the ceremony, Molly realizes that everything will be different for her. Molly is left with perception of a gap between what her mother says, what she does and what Molly detects her mother feels beneath it all. In the second act, she looks at her the summer house and says to her husband, "It looks different..." (443). It is the same building but the feeling Molly experiences has transformed from pain to satisfaction. There has been a great loss in her life and she is overcoming it now. After getting married Molly leaves this womb-like place. There is a big change in Molly after her mother has left the house. The summer house is the place of hiding as well as a place of protection and safety. Molly has healed herself from the destructive effects of the symbiosis. She still needs to feel secure. Even though, she does not live in that house, she dreams she is inside—a position that provides a sort of comfort and security unconsciously.; she relates: "I used to go back and look into the garden.. over the wall... I didn't go there (summer house) any more.. It was all right after a while. I didn't mind so much. It was like being there.. I could sit down in that booth, and if I wanted to I could imagine I was home, in the garden..inside the summer house" (461). In the end, Molly ends the symbiotic relationship in her brain: she does not even wish to enter into the summer house.

4.2. The shadow archetype

In Jung's psychoanalytical thought, the shadow is a step further towards self-realization when one recognizes and integrates it. It is the negative or inferior (undeveloped) side of the personality. It is said to be made up of all the reprehensible characteristics that each of us wish to deny, including animal tendencies that Jung claims we have inherited from our infra-human ancestors. It is said to coincide with the personal unconscious and because all of us has one it appears to be a collective phenomena.

The more unaware of the shadow we are, the blacker and denser it is. The more dissociated it is from conscious life, the more it will display a compensatory demonic dynamism. It is often projected outwards on individual or groups who are then thought to embody all the immature, evil, or

repressed elements of the individual's own psyche.
(Fonda, 1996)

In *In the Summer House*, first, Jung's archetype shadow reflects child's dependence upon her mother. Molly relates the impressions she got from her mother when she was a little girl:

she had a shadow It used to come and pass over her whole life and make it dark. It did not come very often, but when it did she used to go downstairs and drink fizzy water. Once I went down when I was twelve years old. I waited until she was asleep and I sneaked down into the kitchen very quietly. Then I switched the light on ...I drank a little water, but I couldn't drink any more. The water was so icy cold. I was going to drink a whole bottle full like she did, but nothing ... really nothing turned out like I thought it would. (445-6)

For Molly, shadow also becomes a symbol of an obstacle—something that limits the autonomy of her. Molly aims at following her mother's steps but is not able to share Getrude's feeling of having a shadow.

Secondly and more importantly, the shadow, according to Jung, is both part of the personality and an archetype. That Gertrude has a shadow reveals the dark side of her personality and foreshadows Gertrude's inconsistent character. It is reflected in her dreams as well as her talk with Molly's husband. Her dreams about hollow cookies are the product of her unconscious. She tells her dream to Mrs. Solares, one of her guests : "I want something to give my child, and he (her father) handed me this box...a macaroon and I gave it to Molly. When she began to eat it, I saw that it was hollow, just a shell filled with dust.... I kept losing all her presents..." (457).

Jung relates in his *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*,

...shadow appears either in projection on suitable persons, or personified as such in dreams. The shadow coincides with the personal unconscious... the shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly..(1964; 285)

What Gertrude refuses to acknowledge is the fact that she does not have much power to get rid of her dreams since she is under the influence of them. The dream she has had is important: it tells us about the wish to compensate in Gertrude towards her daughter. The things Gertrude thinks valuable for Molly are diminishing. "I kept losing all her presents" The thing feared in a dream is a repressed memory or emotion that eventually must be faced and integrated, if self-realization is to be achieved. The dream is also significant because it is about the relationship between Gertrude and her father. What her father thinks she deserves is just a shell filled with dust which is symbolic of his insufficient love for her. Moreover, the hollowness symbolizes the fact that she embodies the characteristics of a woman who lacks real love in her life. In the play, it is interesting that Gertrude does not mention about her mother. She unconsciously desires to be loved by her father who neglected her during her childhood. She makes a comparison between her father's love for her and that for her sister. The child's ego develops partly as a system of defenses against such early comparisons.

He was my model, my ideal. I admired him more than anyone on earth. And he admired me of course. I was so much like him—ambitious, defiant, a fighting cock always. I worshipped him. But I was never meek, not like my sister Ellen. She was very frail and delicate... He pitied Ellen, but he was proud of me. I was his true love. He never showed it..he was so frightened Ellen would guess. He didn't want her to be jealous, but I knew the truth.. He didn't have to show it. He didn't have to say anything. (415)

After returning home, Gertrude blames Lionel, talking as if she owns her daughter. Gertrude is overtly depicted as a shadow symbol—someone who interrupts between two people. Lionel blurts out the truth into her face:

Lionel: You are like a wall around Molly, some kind of shadow between us...

Gertrude: I am not a shadow any more. I've come back and I am staying here, where I belong with Molly.. Why do you look at me that way?

Lionel: What way?

Gertrude: As if I was some terrible witch...That is it, some terrible witch!

Lionel: You are using her. You need Molly. You don't love her. You are using her.....(451)

Another example to the shadow symbol is the dialogue between Molly and Lionel also foreshadows the shadowy presence of Gertrude between them. Lionel talks about the eclipse of the sun he saw: "There was a shadow over the whole earth... I was afraid then, but it stayed in my memory like something beautiful. It made me afraid but I knew it was beautiful" (445). He continues his talk expressing his feelings about losing something one owns: "...running away from sad things and not being able to find your way back to them ever again.." (445). He implies that he attaches importance to their relationship in spite of the shadowy presence of Gertrude.

Thus, it is essential to look at what Jung relates:

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance....Closer examination of the dark characteristics—that is, the inferiorities constituting the shadow—reveals that they have an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and an accordingly obsessive, better and possessive quality. Emotion, incidentally, is not an activity of the individual but something that happens to him.....with its uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions one behaves more or less like a primitive, who is not only the passive victim of his affects but also singularly incapable of moral judgment. (1964; 669)

Gertrude becomes almost like a primitive who puts herself on a lower level of personality by treating her daughter as if she owns her and grasping her tightly with uncontrolled emotions. In other words, she blocks her daughter's way, in a fiendish manner: "(Gertrude drags Molly brutally out of the corner near the staircase and confronts her with Mrs. Constable) I have something to tell you, Mrs. Constable. It is about Molly. It is about my daughter... she hated Vivian. My daughter hated yours and a terrible thing happened...an ugly thing happened on the cliffs.." (465). She implies that Molly is responsible for Vivian's death.

Why does Gertrude display such a wild action? Lacan's mirror stage is important in understanding the conditions for the child's detachment from its lived experiences of fragmentation: the mirror stage creates the division between the whole person who we see in the mirror and the fractured person we are. This gap between a person "broken up into little pieces" and our united Ego-Ideal is a gap of uncertainty and displeasure where we are both subject and object. So we are constantly in a search to fill this gap to find the delight of being whole. Our perception of the self depends on what images we use to fill in this lack. Gertrude is in search for filling the gap of her father's inadequate love for her: the biggest mistakes of Gertrude in her life are ignoring her only child and seeking happiness outside home without her child. She depends on the existence of "the Other" to fill in the gap of our desires, to create, if only for a moment, "the wholeness before her subjectivity". Gertrude's lived experiences are not based on unity of love and security but self-pity and self-hate.

Since Gertrude cannot control the world at the end of the play in order that nothing bad happens to her little girl, she manipulates the girl into the only security she knows: "the false security of symbiosis" (Friday 1977, 104). Mother's manipulative love doesn't give us the security we need. It drives the real self down deeper into shadows and secrecy. Mother's inability to allow her daughter an authentic, separate life of its own has disrupted the relationship between them right from the start. Molly feels insecure when Gertrude grasps her arm forcing her to stay with herself. At the end of the play, Gertrude tells Mrs. Constable that, "It had to happen...I know her (Molly's) jealousy....I was her whole world, the only one she loved...she wanted me all to herself...I know what it feels like to wish someone dead.." (465). She has had very destructive thoughts towards her sister: her wish to kill her sister is a strongly repressed desire that is forced into her unconsciousness. This mental wound becomes apparent in Gertrude's hysterical attitudes toward her daughter as well as her obsession with the idea that she will be of the first preference of Molly. One of the most dangerous kinds of jealousy is Gertrude's possessive behavior which is so destructive for Molly that she can never be a good mother.

There are two different Gertrudes. Having discussed the first one who is not satisfied with what she has and wants to fill in the gap in her desires, in terms of

her relationship with her daughter, I wish to mention the other one who pretends to have self-confidence in her relationship with her husbands. Gertrude's second marriage is shattered as well as her first one. She also becomes overpowering in her second marriage which ends in a short time. There is no love between Gertrude and her new husband. She says: "When he stood there saying that men should never have given us the vote, I slapped him... He is a barbarian.." (455). Gertrude confesses Molly about her relationship with Molly's father: "I lost interest finally...I lost interest ..in him. I lost interest in our life together. I wanted to give it up.. start out fresh, but I couldn't because I was carrying you. I had no choice. All my hopes were wrapped in you then.." (413). Molly becomes almost the only reason for her to continue her life and hope that she will not be alone.

Gertrude realizes how it is important to stay in the summer house for Molly and the significance of Molly's symbiotic tie to her, because separation denotes a kind of destruction on Gertrude's self. She even talks about compensating her own mistakes and realizing Molly's dreams: "I'll make it up all to you. I'll give you everything you wanted, everything you've dreamed about" (464).

By separating herself from her social environment, she unconsciously tries to establish her ego-boundaries not as a mother of a daughter who is closely tied to her but as a woman free and having no responsibilities for her children. "... there was nothing wrong. I had Molly.. I don't know why I got frightened, why I married again ... I must have been because we had no money... Now my life has lost its meaning..." "I was happy in the summer house" (457). She does not tell the truth since she used to say to her daughter that she had to get away from that boring place. What is ambivalent in Gertrude is that she both wants to live a mutual life with her daughter and see Molly as a child all the time: "...she loves me more than anyone on earth. She needs me. In her heart she is still a child" (459). Gertrude, believing herself as the ideal mother, wants Molly to be perfect like herself and fears that the perfection of their love will be destroyed if Molly leaves her.

Being frustrated from an unhappy childhood and an unsuccessful marriage, the mother in *In the Summer House*, is both the so-called good mother who

fulfills the traditional role of nurturer and the bad mother whose sexuality is a powerful force, capable of creation and destruction.

4. 3. Sexuality

As the daughter experiences sex and becomes aware of her emerging sexual identity and society's confusions about her sex, she becomes embarrassed with any thought of her mother's sexuality. She tries to distance herself. Ambivalence about sex and body, disgust at female biology, dependence on the male for feelings of self-worth and self-esteem and finally distaste for her own femaleness are the basis for the daughter's rejection of her mother. Sexual taboos are used to maintain power under patriarchy. Closeness between mothers and daughters and women in general threatens that power. The taboo includes any erotic content in the descriptions of normal aspects of development in the early mother daughter relationship. As a consequence, during adolescence there are social and personal pressures to give up physical closeness with mothers.

The reality is that women cannot enjoy their own bodies. Under the subtitle "Sexuality" it is examined that the mother-daughter relationship is being based on a deficiency—the idea that women cannot perceive their sexuality as a genuine source of power, creativity and enjoyment, but remain oriented towards male-definition of it—-but as highly valuable in emotional terms.

4. 3. 1. Taboos on female body

The problematic dimension of female ego-personality development is based on the relations of women to their own body, and to their own sexuality. Rachel, from the older generation relates her vision regarded with sex: "I never liked the mess and muck of it. I never liked my premordial smells" (50). She thinks sex is dirty rather than being something natural. The social reality is that female body is a male-defined and occupied territory. Sexuality is a taboo for Ruth in such a sense that she is very much embarrassed in her talk.

Ruth: what I feel, when this sort of talk rolls around, is abject horror. That if I participate, candidly, I will be reduced to some lower

level. Some other species. Something "sub".
Sucked down into some dank pit where no
civilizing influence prevails. A place without
reason, logic and order. A place where
moans and groans replace language.. (49)

Even Jessica, who has been contented in her affair with her boyfriend,
loathes the way female body smells. This demonstrates her self-hate and
lack of self-esteem after she has lost her lover.

Jessica: It is evidence of evolution.. Dodos,
dinosaurs, amsteds came and went. We
lost our tails, our fangs, our horns, our fur.
...but the human female never lost her deep
sea smell. Chemists have tried, for centuries
to conceal it. They have given us potions to
sanitize, deodorize, anesthetize. But it is too
ancient for camouflage...(50-51)

The issues McClelland Glass deals with are ambivalence about sex and
female body, disgust at female biology and dependence on the male for feelings
of self-worth or self-esteem. Polly lives a kind of social ambivalence. In society,
ordinary mothers and daughters often have to battle to maintain respect and
affection for their own bodies and not to view them as unclean and devalued sex
objects. Neither Jessica nor her mother and mother-in-law feel pride in their
female bodies. Thus, they transmit to their daughters that a woman's body is not
a good and healthy place to have. In *If We Are*, three women most of the time
talk about their ignorance about their bodies. Women's ignorance about their
bodies is a learnt behaviour. Little girls are taught to be frightened and insecure
where their bodies are concerned. As the body of the daughter changes in
adolescence, her relationship with her body becomes more evident and this will
be effected by how she has been taught to regard her body and sexuality
generally.

Ruth faces emotions of shame and humiliation buried under women's matter-
of-fact attitudes toward menstruation. Her feelings about menstruation are the
image of what it is to be a woman in her culture. Ruth, as a little girl, is taught to be
frightened and insecure where her body is concerned. She learnt to disown her
body when she was a girl so that she cannot handle her daughter's attitude to her
own body image and sexuality. She mentions her menstruation and what she

used as sanitary napkins. Ruth does not have respect for her own body and view it as clean. As a result, Ruth fails to offer her daughter a positive image of being a woman. This stems from the notion of female sexuality as corruptive of men, and menstruation as evidence of female impurity.

4. 3. 2 Female sexual identity

Sexuality is one of the forces to forge our identity. Old patriarchal myths have a confusing influence on daughters: "good girls don't" to the extent that good girls are not supposed to be sexually active. Communications between mothers and daughters about such beliefs and their consequences is obviously important for self-respecting relationships.

From the mother's and grandmothers' perspective, the sexual development of her daughter confronts her with the upcoming separation and her own aging process. It can remind the mother of her own unsatisfied sexuality, her own unfulfilled desire for autonomy, and her own problems with femininity. "Mothers prevent bodily pleasures; thus daughters are unable to develop a positive attitude toward it. Mothers inhibit their daughter's development of self-image of their genitals. They are silent in describing female sexuality and everything related to it". (Mens Verhuist 1991; 8).

Not only are they silent in its description, but conservative as well. For instance, the grandmothers of Polly judge their grandchild without trying to understand her sexual needs. The way they have been brought up leads them to possess narrow-minded conventions towards sex. The first thing Ruth could think of upon hearing that Polly is in love is the possibility of her pregnancy: "I will get on my knees tonight and pray that wee lass isn't pregnant" (51). They judge Polly according to their own moral codes of sexuality. They see Polly's first night with her boyfriend problematic even if it is very romantic for Polly. They question Polly if she has used any condoms rather than asking about her feelings.

The attitudes of Polly's grandmothers towards Polly's relationship show that they have not fully learnt pride and pleasure in female sexuality. In a patriarchal society, a woman battles to maintain respect for her body which is "a good and healthy place to live" (Rich, 1976; 74). However, Polly's grandmothers are unable

to pass on their own limitation to their granddaughter. It is Polly's business to emancipate herself from this problematic influence on her ego development. For Polly sex is the first experience of discovering one's body and sexuality.

Furthermore, being a woman is the manifestation of her autonomy. By having sex with someone her mother objects, she implies to her mother, and grandmothers that "this is my life and my body. I will do what I want with both because this is what I want." As Friday puts, "Autonomy is the declaration and affirmation of the self; sex is one of its expressions" (1977; 331).

In object-relations theory, boys and girls relate to and differentiate from their mothers. They grow up to play different roles. Girls need oppositions to perpetuate a false sense of differentiation. As a result, they choose a whole between oppositions. Polly lives in a family of sharp-tongued women, who are known to raise their voices, to argue and to use these capacities as a weapon to shame someone. Polly: "you think you're wise and experienced and you're really just old and cynical and you've all filled with the truth to make your decisions acceptable. Your visions are warped..." (72). She does not let them pass their insecurities and fears onto herself. She both loves to be in her mother's and her grandmothers' sphere and hates to be close to them. Her final words signify that nobody can control her since this is her life.

Accordingly, Polly's relationship with her mother is significant in the formation of her ego-boundaries as well as her sexual identity. The daughter may not be able to be the person her mother wanted her to be. Both mother and daughter have trouble in accepting the subjectivity of each other. Polly chooses to be unlike her mother because she has a need to differentiate herself from Jessica whose mothering is smothering for Polly. Too much possessive care, over-protective attitude of her mother harms Polly's sense of self whereas Jessica feels personally violated upon hearing the fact that Polly has had her first sexual experience. She faces a conflict--someone she does not expect and trust violates her own daughter, who stands as a mirror, an extension to Jessica.

As for Polly's mother's reaction, Jessica shows disrespect accusing Polly of being with a man she does not approve. She also judges the man without knowing

him: "A manly man? He is barely out of knickers. You will have to give him shaving lessons, for God's sake" (47). Polly's reply to her mother's question "where have you been?" is telling the truth that she is in love and having an affair. If the mother knows her daughter has sex with someone, that means she is inside the girl's head, the way she was when the girl was a baby, this is a kind of symbiotic thinking. However, Jessica is not able to control her daughter's sexual experience. Instead, she tries to hinder Polly's sexual activity, which is ironic in the sense that Polly chooses whoever she likes as a mate.

Being critical of Polly's new boyfriend, Jessica actually behaves in a way whose lines are laid down by events in her childhood. The reason she does not approve Polly is based on the powerful unconscious motives of her past: she finds out there is no attraction between her mother and father. In her monologue, Jessica gives an account of the relationship between her mother and father: "When I was little, she washed her face with milk every morning. Went about rather slack in the belly all week, but on Friday night, when Dad came in off the road, she put on a girdle. And cologne from a cobalt blue bottle.." (24) She was full of desires in spite of living with an alcoholic husband. Later Ruth stopped doing these things. Obviously, there were repressed sexual desires in Ruth towards a man: "I remember once, seeing only the back of a man. A thin, muscular man. When he turned around, he was homely as a mud fence. But what drew my attention, really was, the way his jacket sleeves fell on the cuffs of his shirt. I mean it had nothing to do with tailoring. If all had to do with his wrists. There was a beauty about his hands, and I wanted that man" (48).

Jessica understands that a mother's role is one of being sensitive to her daughter's own self-image based on her sexual identity. This is a form of mirroring that society establishes its rules. If the mother fails to adequately mirror, she distorts her daughter's experiences. As I pointed out before, Jessica forms a mirror for Polly. The conditions under which Jessica is able to appreciate her own body can be depicted with an example from the play. Having lost her lover with whom she lived for years, Jessica feels lonely. Moreover, she suspects that he has deceived her, after finding two theater tickets in his pockets. She talks as if she will never be with anyone. "I have become neuter.. female impersonator.." (93).

The fact that Polly is with someone who has bad reputation, at first, disturbs her own sense of motherhood. It is hard for Jessica to swallow the truth that her daughter is a grown up woman. In order to overcome this situation she needs someone to share her frustration—her lover Martin: "If Martin were here, I'd be more...Polly looked so formidable" she implies that she needs a man to complete herself to be strong to deal with her daughter's problems. However, she later learns that it was her daughter who went to theater with Martin. Now that she can develop a positive attitude towards sexuality and Polly's sexual choices as well. In other words, she understands the needs and desires of Polly to continue her relationship with her boyfriend. She decides that she will not prevent her daughter's bodily pleasures and sexual activities. Therefore, Polly's development of a positive self image of her sexuality is not inhibited any more.

4. 4. Desires of women as opposed to motherhood

In *In the Summer House*, Gertrude becomes a selfish, domineering and envious mother who chooses to satisfy her desires. She marries not out of love but to assert her femininity, rather than be a mother providing her daughter with what she needs. At first she has the goal of sexual liberation that can no longer be equated with motherhood. In women's fantasies and dreams, sexuality and eroticism are often opposed to motherhood and reproduction. The experience of motherhood often necessitates a withdrawal of a woman's interest from other primary commitments to her own body and developing child. However, in Gertrude, being a mother does not weigh heavier than her second marriage. Molly's attachment to Gertrude—sense of motherhood in its earliest form—is the reason that disturbs her. Thus, her marriage is a way of escaping from Molly since Molly's symbiotic bond with herself threatens her selfhood. Moreover, she cannot receive nurturing from Molly.

Because the mother's sexuality is daughter's point of reference to her own sexuality, the daughter longs for a relation in which she can see herself as independent. The mother's behaviour is influenced by her unconscious aspirations. Gertrude unconsciously envies her daughter's sexual desire and autonomy because she herself cannot fulfil her own desires and autonomy. Upon coming back home, she expects to be nurtured by Molly: "You are my child." This is a manifestation of possessiveness based on envy. Benjamin maintains, according to Freud, "... desire in women appears as envy ...many women enter into love relationship with men in

order to acquire vicariously something they have not got with themselves.." (1988; 89). Gertrude marries her second husband to acquire the love and care she lacks since her childhood. Another Freudian theory relevant with Gertrude's situation is that women tend to love narcissistically in order to be loved or to be largely self-sufficient and to love someone as an extension of their selves rather than loving a differentiated object. However, by resisting passionate involvement with her husband, she tries to protect her autonomy. In other words, she protects her sense of separate self being undermined by leaving her husband and returning home.

Consequently, female sexuality and identity are the issues related to the development of daughter's self through her bind with her mother and the other females around her.



CHAPTER FIVE

SEPARATION OF DAUGHTERS

Until this chapter we have seen how being a powerless child in the face of a domineering mother affects the child's view of her mother, and how the daughter while experiencing the mother's power over her also sees the mother's powerlessness in her society. Motherhood carries with it massive cultural expectations to which both the mother and daughter relate. Mothers are not comfortable with all sides of themselves, neither demanding space for themselves, nor giving space to their daughters. No wonder the daughter feels ambivalent—should she be supportive of her mother or reject her mother? Since her mother has a different life, different ambitions, different hopes, fears and needs, the daughter moves into a world her mother has no understanding of. This is where the psychological process of separation begins.

Mothers are supposed to meet all the needs of their children, to care for and stimulate their physical and emotional development. In the past when these conditions were not met, daughters and mothers were thought to be physically separated. Today, if a daughter rejects her mother and prefers psychological separation, this signifies her rejection of the conforming female role in her society.

When mothers learn to become highly responsive to the feelings of their daughters, this becomes a fundamental component of woman's self-worth upon experiencing psychological separation. From this angle, the concept of separation-individuation is important. Because this concept does not involve great degrees of autonomy and the breaking of emotional ties, but is about maintaining connection while fostering. It is a kind of growth of the other and of oneself. The mother-daughter relationship is then interactional and allows for the growth of each, leading to mutual self-esteem and mutual empowerment.

5.1. Mahler's concept of separation-individuation

The phase of separation-individuation, is viewed by Mahler as having two processes. Individuation is the process of acquiring intrapsychic autonomy, separation the process of differentiating the self from the mother, distancing and structuring personality boundaries. During this time, the child acquires motor skills

and ventures forth to explore the world. The mother needs to allow for this separation, but still has to be available as an anchor to cue the child to reality and to comfort when required.

In Mahler's features of development, of the five phases, "the rapprochement subphase" is the one that tells us how the child experiences a need for help from outside, but simultaneously needs to deny that it actually comes from another person. In this phase the child is able to function at a distance from mother, realize the loss of the previously enjoyed ideal sense of self and the reappearance of a kind of separation anxiety. She faces the painful time that her mother is a separate person. These realizations lead to ambivalence—intense neediness and clinging to the mother and intense negativity and battling with her. The child fears that she will lose her mother which is followed by her need for separation. There is a conflict between the need for mother and need for separation. In other words, a stable concept of the self and a stable concept of the other must be formed to discard this conflict.

Mahler points out that "the developmental movement from embeddedness within a symbiotic matrix of child-mother to the achievement of a stable individual identity within a world of predictable and realistically perceived others. She terms this process separation-individuation or in her most recent formulations, psychological birth" (qtd. in Greenberg, 1983; 272). To put it simply, the process of separation means establishing a firm sense of differentiation from the mother, of possessing one's own physical and psychological boundaries. "Individuation means the development of a range of characteristics, skills and personality traits which are uniquely one's own" (qtd. in Nice, 1992; 51).

Chodorow also uses Mahler's theory of child developmental timetable that includes the separation-individuation phase. The struggle between separation and symbiosis with mother occurs during this phase and continues throughout the rest of life. During separation-individuation process, the self of the daughter distances itself from the mother and structures personality boundaries. She needs to explore the world while her mother is available for her to provide comfort when required. The girl's ego becomes structuralized, as it internalises the mother's rules, ideals

and demands. If separation but not individuation is accomplished, the daughter's self-esteem and confidence need to be sustained.

5.2. The power struggle

Freud states, "In order for the change in object to take place-- this is normal fate for femininity-- space must be made, the girl must separate herself from mother: the only way she can do so is by transforming the initial love into hate, a transformation made possible by the original ambivalence of that love" (qtd. in Chodorow, 1989; 169). From this sense, separation-individuation process may manifest itself in the form of power-struggle or that of control. Accordingly, Benjamin states, "To the child, it now appears that her freedom consists in absolute control over her mother" (1988; 34). Furthermore, Mahler's phase of rapprochement is a phase of conflict in which the toddler insists that mother participate in all his deeds. To assert her will, she can move away from her mother. This is a psychological effect of the separation from the violent love and hate relationship with the mother--a necessary condition for separation and individuation process.

This effect is also related to the ambivalence of what the object "mother" represents--love and protection as well as power and control. Let us look at the love-power relationship between Thelma and Jessie. Jessie shows a different kind of response to her mother's control in her life. It is a sort of response to and a defense against their mothers' care and discipline. Jessie's strive for control over her mother is apparent in their conversation upon food. Jessie and Mama (Thelma) discuss a topic on which they concur: both of them dislike milk and agree that hot cocoa would be good if it were not for the milk it contains. In spite of this agreement, milk provides Jessie and Mama with a topic for disagreement. Milk seems to be a stand-in topic which provides a means for Jessie and Mama to express feelings that they cannot or do not wish to address directly. Significantly, milk is not what Jessie and Mama are actually arguing about. Rather, their quarrel over milk is a result of their struggle for power in the conversation. Secondly, to give indirect answers or to get rid of direct questions of her mother, Jessie uses the food topic. And finally, Jessie uses it to gain or assert control.

Jessie struggles for the acknowledgment of her subjectivity—a sense of selfhood. She wants to have the power to have a say in her relationship with Thelma. When Jessie tells Mama that she "should drink milk" and that she has instructed the milkmen to continue delivering it no matter what Mama tells him, she uses milk as a part of her larger scheme to assure Mama's welfare and relieve herself of guilt about committing suicide. And when Mama refuses to drink milk, she is telling Jessie that she does not condone her plan to commit suicide and will not go along willingly with Jessie's plan to prepare her for life after the suicide. "I told them (milkmen) to keep delivering" she reaffirms her commitment to follow her plan. Through her repetitions on the subject of food, Jessie asserts her will—that no one can stop her suicide. Jessie also says "I told them you'd run out of Cokes and you'd have to drink milk.." (54). Notably, these same instances reveal much about Jessie's character. She imposes her thoughts upon her mother before leaving her alone in this world because there is a struggle for power between them.

Interestingly enough, Jessie uses a diversionary technique when she and Mama are discussing Jessie's seizures. After reprimanding her mother for needlessly sending her to the hospital, she turns the subject to food:

You know there never was any reason to call the ambulance for me. All they ever did for me in the emergency room was let me wake up. I could've done that here. Now, I'll just call them out and you say yes or no. I know you like pickles. Ketchup?
(55)

The previous example also reveals obviously the way food operates in the dialogue: Jessie uses food to gain or assert control. In the above instance, Jessie takes charge by turning the discussion to food and the activity of cleaning out the refrigerator, which is a part of this evening as she has planned it. Jessie wishes to set things in order before she commits suicide, and her statement makes a transition into this preparatory activity.

Another example to power struggle is the one between Jessica and her mother in *If We Are Women*. Jessica, as a daughter opposes what her mother thinks and does for her. For instance, when Ruth tells her why she wanted Jessie to get a high school diploma: "Our neighbourhood, Mayfair, was very good. Ferguson, the lawyer, lived next door. The bank manager of the Bank of Montreal lived up the street. I

wanted that for you" (66). Jessie ridicules her mother's "ludicrous, social symmetry" but she has similar expectations for her daughter's future life. Jessica does the same thing her mother does to her, since she does not approve of Polly's early discovery of sexuality. Jessica compares the social status of Polly's boyfriend with the boy named Ethan Kendall whose father has an important status in their neighbourhood. "I know where he lives. I see his dad at the bank... And Ethan Kendall's the handsomest boy in Guilford.." (48).

5.3. Separation-individuation process of the daughters

"Separation whether really loving or simply asserting one's own will is often viewed as a hostile act, by both sides. Both must endure not only separation but also the aggression coming with it" (Benjamin 1988; 213). Separation process occurs in four plays in four different situations.

5.3.1. Molly's separation: Transference of emotions

Psychoanalytical theorists of the object-relations school suggest that during the critical phases of a child's psychological separation from the mother in early childhood, the inner image of this ambivalent being who both rewards and punishes may be split into a "good" or "bad" mother. In separating from this "bad" mother, the daughter transfers her emotions to someone else.

In *In the Summer House*, the author dramatizes the emotional split by making the mother (from the daughter's perspective) monstrous and overpowering. The way Gertrude asserts power has a negative influence on Molly. Her talk with Miss Solares. Molly: "I used to waste a lot of time day-dreaming. I guess I still do. She didn't want me to dream....because she wanted me to grow up to be wonderful and strong like she is.." (447). Since Molly, unlike her mother, is a dreamer, she is not rewarded by her. Accordingly, in fleeing the negative mother, the daughter tries to merge herself with anyone other than her mother. At the end of the play, Molly's act of refusal of mother's assumption of oneness in their relation shows the process of maturation in her life: a change from the lack of autonomy towards making one's own decision—from the initial attachment to the mother towards the process of separation:

Molly: "You told me not to dream. You're all changed..You are not like you used to be.....I am going...Let me go.."

Gertrude: You can't go. I won't let you. I can stop you. I can and I will.

Molly: (Straining to get through the door and calling in a voice that seems to come up from the bottom of her heart) Lionel! (464)

Being dependent on her husband for approval, Molly becomes almost like someone who needs protection near her husband. She merely transfers her symbiotic needs to him. Lionel becomes a shelter for Molly from the physical and psychological grip of her mother.

5.3.2. Jessie's Separation: Suicide

Suicide, like so many other illnesses and behaviors related to the realm of psychological breakdown, tends to be seen as the gesture of a "weak" person. In Jessie's case, it should not be seen as a character flaw because it is not difficult for Jessie to confess her suicidal feelings. She feels her own life has somehow ended. If she had a group of friends, folks, or acquaintances who may be grappling with grief in their lives, and start a support group focusing on loss, this setting would potentially be a place for healing.

Unreconciled grief, sadness, feeling that life has lost meaning are all states of being that lead Jessie into life-threatening depression. If she expresses grief, she leads a more life-affirming condition. She only tries to enter into a power struggle which is not sufficient to create a space for her life. For Jessie, dying is a precondition for living: for an unknown new life of meaning. Where are the spaces in our lives where we are able to acknowledge our pain and express grief? Jessie cannot identify this space so she seeks separation in a context of controlling her mother.

Suicide is her act of rebellion like Helen's act of murder. Jessie will be in charge of her death. She controls the time, the place, and the method. Her mother's future without her is an issue she deals with. Suicide is not an act of violence but a solution to a life which has no hope.. After she has told her mother of her plan, she assumes the role of her mother who controls her saying "wash

your hands" at every five seconds. Jessie can only control her life in separation from her mother.

Jessie breaks free from her mother's influence. Saying no to everyone including herself, she finds a way out of this trap. "It is somebody I lost.. it is my own self.. who I tried to be and never get there. There is no reason to stay, except to keep you company...that is not reason enough because I am not... very good company" she sees her position in society as someone useless. Jessie: "I am not just having a very good time...I am tired, I am hurt. I am sad, I feel used" (28).

Suicide does not only mean physical separation from mother but a mental one as well. Therefore, suicide arms Jessie with a power, a sense of control over her life, an act she couldn't perform till now. She defines the boundaries of her existence through choosing suicide. From this light, in order to tackle her deepest fears, she needs to get on with things she harbors about her self-worth. Her self-assertion is the business of her becoming. Getting off a crowded bus becomes a symbol for Jessie's self-assertion.

Riding the bus and it's hot and bumpy and crowded and too noisy and more than anything in the world you want to get off and the only reason in the world you don't get off is it is still fifty blocks from where you're going.... It is the same place when I step down to it. Whenever I feel like it, I can get off. As soon as I've had enough, it is my stop. I've had enough, it is my stop. (33)

5.3.3. Helen's Separation: Capital Punishment

As is stated in the second chapter, Helen's murder of her husband is a rebellion towards the moral codes of her society. From this light, the act of murder becomes a separation from the social imprisonment and oppression. Furthermore, Helen is a safety valve for her mother in society, emotionally and economically. Her mother tries to play the role of "real woman" as defined by the male culture; which results in a woman's loss of touch with her real self. As a daughter of such a mother, Helen resists against staying connected to her mother; however in the end she yields. Helen is not said to be mentally separated from her mother because at the moment of her death she desperately needs her mother to take care of her little daughter. At this point, Helen is almost like a little girl who needs to be nurtured and protected by her powerful mother.

Young woman: She (her mother) is a stranger—take her away—she's a stranger.
.....she has never known me—never known me—ever—
(To the mother) Go away! You are a stranger! Stranger!
(Mother turns and starts away. Reaching out her hands to her) Oh Mother! Mother!....my child; my little strange child! I never know her! She'll never know me! Let her live, Mother. Let her live! Live! Tell her—(253)

Seeing her mother's hands, she is full of emotion again. The hands are representatives of hope for her little girl. However, she is stopped by the jailer and the priest. Helen strives for the last time but cannot finish her sentence: "Wait! Wait! Tell her! Wait! Just a minute more! There is so much I want to tell her—Wait—" (253). "Helen's plea to communicate to her daughter the realities that Helen has discovered, to 'tell her—' holds the hope of change, of solidarity among generations of women.." (Bywaters 1990; 108). Helen is not able to pass the message to her daughter owing to the capital punishment, but stays connected to her mother in her last attempt. What is frustrating for Helen is that she cannot control the way her daughter will be brought up at the end of the play. She has no choice but giving her daughter to the hands of her mother whose values are shaped by the patriarchal society.

5.3.4. Polly's Separation : The First Love-Affair

When the mother stops functioning as someone who sets boundary to the daughter's will, the daughter experiences this as separation. In other words, because ego boundaries between mothers and daughters are often merged as a result of both psychological and social processes, the daughter must struggle to separate herself from a figure she regards as destructive before she can understand her mother's own cultural dilemma and see the "good mother" as the hidden aspect of her own parent. In four plays, Polly is the one who can manage this understanding.

Polly has fallen in love with a drug-peddler, and is giving up her admission to Yale to join him on a farm in Colorado. The moment she feels free is when she has her first affair with a man. That moment she is mentally separate from her mother as well. Moreover, a loving relationship with someone from extrafamilial world is the way she expresses herself. Unlike her grandmothers, Polly needs to explore the world, even though her mother is available for her to

provide comfort when required. Her grandparents are also central figures through whom Polly comes to understand the difference of generation gap and reconcile the rift between the generation and her self. Polly gives an ultimatum: "If you must discuss the future, please don't talk like guidance counsellors.. and please accept that the farm is final" (91).

Polly's sense of identity, as well as her view of place in society, is likely to be shaped in response to the relationship with the women who have served as her earliest model, be it her mother, or grandmothers. Thus, the binding relationships between these women and Polly become the model for Polly's independent behaviour and her selfhood. Through her connection with these women and their past experiences, Polly learns to choose what is right for herself. In another sense, Polly's sense of self becomes organized through her connection between the relation to her mother and other interpersonal relations in her life. ---"A farm?!" her incredulous prairie grandmother cries. "A farm is something you get away from!" But while the three older women join forces to convince Polly of the folly of her heart, it is unlikely her hopes and dreams will benefit from their experience and advice. She is independent from her mother and grandmothers. Polly cries: "everything I heard is about failure and breakdown" (72). Disregarding the expectations of her society and female circle, she keeps the continuity of her self-esteem and sense of identity. Her decision to live on a farm shows her will of separation from her mother. Separation will be a medium for her to heal her wounded self-esteem.

In order to sustain her self-esteem, Polly needs to assert her wishes and expectations for the future.. Polly's separation from home and her mother is a way of differentiating her self and attaining her gender role. She is quite modest about her future in Colorado. She just relates that she will accept everything he likes. Domesticity seems her vision of life. . Polly is proud of her boyfriend when she admires the way he uses his hands to tan leather, to plant gardens and to make paddles. She, in a way, wishes to give herself in this relation—be a yielding wife. "What he needs is a tranquil home where he can go to mend the day's damages. I won't do anything nouveau or trendy in furnishings. I'll do cheap and cheerful" (94).

From this angle, it is apparent that Polly's self distances itself from her mother and structures personality boundaries. She asserts herself : "I am not worn-out. I am

not heart-broken...I am eighteen and I am filled with hope and anticipation...I cannot listen to one more moment of your carefully nurtured sorrows" (76). At this moment it is essential to ask the question: Does Polly transfer her emotions? She is ready to attain her gender role-- be a good wife who keeps the loving bond between her husband and herself. In order to realize this, she does not have to transfer her emotions and split the good and bad aspects of objects in her life: her home and mother represent bad, the extrafamilial world good. She chooses to go with a boy to a farm in Colorado, which means she is ready for physical separation, and plainly loves Charles. Having experienced her first sexual relationship, Polly replies in quite a mature way to her mother who speaks offensively with her: "When your sanity returns you'll want to talk privately. You owe me an apology." (47) (She calls her boyfriend "twerp"(46) Polly achieves the process of separation from the mother thanks to her ability to develop a sense of her own body, her sexuality.

5. 3. 5. The positive effects of separation on Polly

There is mental separation as opposed to physical separation. During mental separation—the internal conviction that someone is outside the self, the loss of the control of body boundaries happen when the daughter perceives the separation from the loved-object. Separation from mother is not loss for Polly. It has a positive effect. Separation, in this case, is giving freedom to the other person to be herself before she becomes resentful and suffocated by being tied too close in symbiotic living. Separation is not the end of love for her mother. It creates love. In *If We Are Women*, Polly's separation has this effect on both the mother and daughter. Furthermore, Polly's entering into womanhood does not mean that her selfhood is violated or destroyed; yet it is a way of demonstrating her separate self. Jessica Benjamin relates: "Selfhood is defined as separateness from others" (1980; 6).

Polly does not lack self-esteem since she has observed her mother's happy relationship with her boyfriend for eight years. Separation, from this sense, is a psychological term for the process of growing up and coming to terms with the fact that one's mother is a separate and imperfect individual. Therefore, Polly refuses to believe that "misery is inevitable" After her shattered childhood memories, she thinks she only needs love with security. "we thought you (her parents) loved each other"(64). During her childhood, she faced lack of security. In another sense, her emotional confidence and stability are wounded. While her mother has been a victim

of mistreatment, she has been a victim of divorce. Polly: "You are the one who wanted the divorce/ Jessica: you have never forgiven me for that, have you? You have always implied that, because I refused to live a life of emotional paralysis, I was the spoiler" (76). She accuses her mother for separating from her father. The reason she feels insecure is that she feels there is no loving bond between them any more.

Polly may not be able to become what Jessica wants her to be. She chooses to be herself, carrying the feeling of incompetence and lack of emotional stability in herself because her parents broke off their bond. The fact that Jessica offers an affectionate sphere to Polly where she never deprives her daughter of her maternal love is not sufficient for Polly to feel secure. Jessica loves, nurtures, stifles her daughter, trying to teach her that love means everything. What Jessica unintentionally does is to block her daughter's way of differentiating from herself. The maternal roles she plays creates an ambivalence in Polly. In this way, her ego boundaries are separated from those of her mother. The way she differentiates herself from her mother manifests itself in Polly's desire to live far away from her mother.

5. 3. 6. The positive effect of separation upon Jessica

As discussed throughout this work, the possessiveness of the mothers impedes their daughters' development. They cannot succeed in giving their daughters a positive image of being a woman. Furthermore, the reaction of mothers facing separation of their daughters is related with symbiosis. "The daughter is for the mother at once her double and another person, the mother is at once overweeningly affectionate and hostile towards her daughter; she saddles her child with her own destiny": a way of proudly laying claim to her own femininity and also a way of revenging herself for it (Benjamin, 1988; 11). Self-recognition, mixed feelings of guilt and of solidarity battle within a mother's heart with regard to her daughter. The complete symbiosis between mother and little daughter is therefore dense and dramatic; as the daughter grows older and needs more independence from her mother, the process of separation may become more or less difficult according to the character and the self-realization of the mother herself. However, the more a mother is well-balanced and has a

good relationship with her daughter, her husband, her past and society at large, the easier it will be to give daughters the best possible start in life.

How does Jessica feel as her daughter grow and assert her individuality? She is exceptional among the mothers in four plays regarding the fact that she lets Polly get what she wants as “the best possible start” in her life. At first, the devotion and great effort Jessica has spent to raise her daughter harms herself. Hearing her daughter’s first sexual experience, Jessica feels emotionally violated. She faces a conflicting situation: someone she does not know and trust violates her daughter; as a result she is frustrated. “what a bloody farce it is...” –she means motherhood. What is more, she is deeply influenced by her daughter’s phrase “smothering mothering.” Facing Polly’s reaction regarding her unmet needs, Jessica feels defeated. She, later, breaks her daughter’s heart when she calls her new boyfriend a “twerp”. Polly’s choice of boyfriend is in contrast with Jessica’s image of her as nice little young girl. The fact that Polly is proud of her boyfriend and that she has had her first sexual experience makes Jessica frustrated.

Jessica will realize how and when to let her daughter go so that in the end she will give Polly a space she needs. Therefore, she assumes a rational solution: “I may be a gelatinous mess, but she is intractable. I know my daughter... I will let her live on the farm for a year. If it doesn’t work, she will come home and go to Yale” (IWWAW 82). Jessica, in a sense, encourages Polly in the process of conveying a double message of “do not be like me” but also “be like me.” She sends her daughter away to a farm where she will live a traditional marital life, unlike her mother. She also believes that Polly will be back one day and lead her previous life, like her mother. Jessica attempts to love Polly for what she does and needs, not because she does not coincide with her fantasy image of the perfect daughter. In women there is always more or less the mother who makes everything all right, who nourishes, and who stands up against separation; a force that will not be cut off (Cixous, 1989; 1095).

5.4. De Kanter’s Definition of Motherhood

The daughters have to accept the fact that the mother’s mirror image is a woman; they have to separate from the perfect fantasized relationship with their mother to become “women.” In *Daughtering and Daughtering* (1993), Ruth De

Kanter argues that when a daughter is able to separate from the three levels of mother, she can accept that her mother is a situated woman with her own sense of subjectivity and gender identity different from hers (31). There are three levels of object "mother" that separate the child from the mother:

A) Real living person—the physical presence

B) Position of mother—economic, ethnic, sexual, emotional, etc.

C) Symbol of mother—of power and love.

The conflicts between the sense of being nurtured by mother and the sense of relative autonomy are the conflicts where a woman-in-development faces. The daughters in the plays go through the experience of these conflicts and are confronted with power or powerlessness. Some daughters never separate sufficiently from their mother's positions; their social identities never become distinct.

Polly is able to become a woman since she separated from the perfect fantasized relationship with her mother. In the play, that her mother has a heterosexual relationship becomes a factor for Polly to accept the subjectivity of Jessica. Through separating from the sexual and economical (her future husband will supply her needs) situation of her mother, she gains her own feminine individuality.

Helen becomes both powerful and powerless. She has power: the economic position of Helen's mother is dependent upon Helen and her husband because she does not have a place in the paid labour market. Therefore, by means of her rebellion and murder—freedom—Helen can separate from this economic structure. However, even though she strives to reject the symbol of mother as powerful, she has to accept the physical presence of her mother for the future of her little baby. Even a daughter making every effort to be different from her mother is said to be still caught up in mother-daughter symbiosis because she uses her mother as a model—albeit a negative one. It is obvious that Helen's mother won't be the best model for her grandchild.

Thelma, as a mother, feels dependent on, autonomous of, or connected to other people around her. Jessie's suicide becomes a separation from the emotional as well as the physical position of her mother.

Molly is disappointed because she finds out that her mother is different from her previous mother. She realizes that her mother is not powerful at all. Choosing to run away from her mother and going with her husband, Molly achieves separation and fulfills her own individual needs. She separates from the symbol of mother as well as the physical position of her. Consequently, none of the daughters in four plays are able to be "situated women" as in De Kanter's definition because it is unlikely for them to separate from "the symbol of mother".



CONCLUSION

There has been extensive research on the relationship between fathers and sons and mothers and sons, but until recently, very little on the relationship between mothers and daughters. The analyses in this work reveal how myths, fantasies and desires are projected onto mothers, thus putting an impossible burden upon them. They also offer insights into the social indispensability of the values mothers are made responsible for. As already pointed out in the introduction, these issues bear pertinence not only to dramatic criticism but also to contemporary American drama.

The spectrum of all possible definitions of feminism and all possible approaches to feminist dramatic criticism are far beyond the scope of this particular work. In this study, I hope to have provided a glimpse into the critical lens of feminist dramatic theory and the many shapes which it may assume. My personal hope and belief is that a middle ground exists in which dramatic works may be examined with a critical and discerning eye, with full awareness of feminist sensibilities and the history of women's oppression and lack of representation. But in this middle ground, I also try to make this distinction, noting that while feminist dramatic criticism has been characterised by a focus on women's works, feminist works should not be limited to those produced by female authors. The feminist psychoanalytic approach which is employed in this study allows a greater understanding and appreciation of the female characters in any dramatic work, whether or not the playwrights are writing with feminist sensitivities.

Drama has also been used as a source of material by the field of women's studies. Thus, this study sheds light to the Women's studies that seeks to change women's sense of themselves, their self-image, their sense of worth and rights, their presence in the world to change women's aspirations based on an increased sense of self-confidence and self-love.

We are, obviously, products of a particular society which has conditioned us to have certain expectations of mothers and daughters and how they are supposed to relate to each other. These expectations can be hidden, but are the outcomes for mother-daughter relationship. Psychological factors and individual responses and

behaviors are the results of mother daughter relationship. The attitudes of society and family toward females are important to realize our view of ourselves as mothers and daughters. Mothers and daughters embody and transcend the boundaries of their culture. Women need to work on their self-esteem and autonomy, because patriarchy will not do it for them. The complexity of mother-daughter relationship is an important factor of the influential biases of a male-dominated society. For instance, there is always a conflict between the sense of being nurtured by mother and the sense of being autonomous. This comes into being on every occasion where the daughter confronts.

It is also important to point at the patriarchal mothers in the system that devalues motherhood and oppresses women to arrive at the same point as feminist criticism where maternal identity is seen as something rewarding, healing and loving. Patriarchal mother remains a myth. Mother's position or identity depends on the presence of the child to whom the maternal figure gives birth, nurturance, protection and so on. In patriarchy, motherhood is a site of female oppression whereas feminist critique of motherhood depends on the idea that daughters, as feminists, are unable to forgive their own patriarchal mothers—either for abandoning them or failing to let them go.

Therefore, feminist criticism must make its ideology explicit and seek to transform the structures of authority and expose them. In this study, feminist criticism of the plays demonstrates both the oppressiveness of society and the silenced and passive position of women. In the second chapter, the constraints of patriarchy on the daughter's sense of self is explored. Sexuality is a taboo in patriarchy. Patriarchy both victimizes mothers and causes them to let their daughters down. Patriarchal mothers such as Helen's mother in *Machinal* and Thelma in *'night Mother* are not comfortable with all sides of themselves. They are not assertive and self-confident. They neither demand space for themselves nor give their daughters space. In this way, daughters grow up to see that mothers not only lack the power of their fathers but are also degraded and their knowledge and skills devalued. Accordingly, it is not the mother who denies the daughter her value, her rights and control over her life, but a system which treats women as subordinates, teaches to serve men, and devalue them for men's needs.

Parent-child relationship in a culture of domination is based on the assumption that the parents have the right to rule the child. Mothers have difficulty in letting their children grow. They act as catalysts in this process of growth. They continue to treat their children as dependents. In *Machinal* and *'night Mother*, the daughters—Helen and Jessie— are brought up through the model of their mothers' parenting. Mothers exercise control over daughters making certain that they are obedient. This is an expression of the distorted view of family relations. Living in a sexist society, where mothers are often blamed for any problem that arises with children, it makes sense that mothers have often felt the need to assert control over their children in ways that are oppressive and dominating.

Another concept discussed in this work is the "sense of self". The myth that the women somehow lack a sense of self because of a lack of separation from their mothers is questioned by Vivien Nice who maintains that the children are born with a sense of self that mothers are positive influences in their daughters' ego development. Jane Baker Miller also claims in her book, *Toward A New Psychology of Women* that women's sense of self becomes very much organised due to the connection between the relation to mother and all interpersonal relations in a woman's life. Development of a strong sense of self can also include a concern for connection to and care for others in society. Women are not encouraged towards individualism but towards developing interpersonal and nurturing skill, the skills that are devalued. In Jessie-Thelma relationship, Jessie has been mothering her mother all her life. That Jessie enters into a power struggle with her mother demonstrates that she wants to construct her own sense of self and ego boundaries as well. (Jessie's boundary confusion due to her epilepsy also leads her to exercise her own freedom of choice.)

The concepts of ambivalence, boundary invasion and boundary confusion examined in the third chapter contribute to the idea that the process of separation from mothers is essential for female development. We have seen that when Molly faces boundary invasion, her individuality is blocked by her mother. Molly realizes that living with Gertrude will be burden for her in the end. In spite of Gertrude's insisting on her need to be connected with her daughter, Molly expresses her feminine identity through separation from her mother in the end.

The four plays deal with various issues. The issues that this study mainly focuses on are ego-boundaries and self esteem in the mother and daughter relationship. Ego boundaries become a map in terms of the empathy and emotional relationship of daughters with their mothers. In their final acts, the daughters prove that they are separate (persons) from their mothers. Their mothers' failure to meet their emotional needs brings these daughters together. In other words, women's sense of selves are closely related with understanding the others through empathy since the beginning of their lives. In the end, the daughter must reject the mother's choices in order to give birth to herself; that she must save herself from connectedness is the idea behind their behaviour. Even though it appears in different experiences, the daughters in the selected plays have ambivalent feelings towards their mothers. However, they manage to form their ego boundaries that are distinct from their mothers.

The daughter may not be able to be the person her mother wanted her to be. Both mother and daughter have trouble in accepting the subjectivity of each other. In *If We Are Women*, Polly chooses to be unlike her mother because she has a need to differentiate herself from her mother Jessica, even though deep inside she has hunger for connection. Polly longs for a relation with her mother in which she can see herself as independent. She ends her ambivalent attachment to her mother by transferring her emotions to someone she loves and by dividing the good and bad aspects of objects: her home represents bad, out of home (extrafamilial world) good. She also sees motherhood as a defeat which requires the same chores everyday. Being attached to someone from outside her home, Polly, in her own way defines her self ego-boundaries. In order to sustain her self-esteem, Polly needs a loving relationship with someone. Polly behaves mature enough not to get angry with what her mother and grandmothers are saying in reference to her first love-affair. Disregarding the expectations of her society and female circle, she keeps the continuity of her self-esteem and sense of identity.

Self-esteem is an important issue for the daughter to attain her autonomy since it is central to achieving a good mother-daughter relationship. It involves a sense of security, emotional confidence and stability. When mothers lack self-esteem, they demonstrate different attitudes towards their daughters. Thelma's over-protection upon Jessie in *'night Mother* is the result of her low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is

transmitted from mother to daughter in *In the Summer House*. We have examined how Gertrude, as a mother, becomes manipulative and dominating because she wants to cover her low self-esteem and how Molly escapes from her mother to retain her emotional confidence.

At this point, the issue of aggression discussed in the chapter called "Ego boundaries and Self-esteem," gains significance since it becomes a manifestation of the disturbances and tension between mothers and daughters. Aggression also allows daughters to define their own boundaries more clearly. Through fighting, daughters learn about themselves and how to cast off their childhood, to define their differences with their childish selves. To give an example, my favourite mother-daughter couple from the plays is Polly and Jessica. Polly is not simply an empty vessel into which self-esteem is poured by her mother. She works on it herself. She struggles to develop her autonomy and draw her own ego boundaries. As she becomes more confident and sure of herself, she can accept her mother's fallibilities, whereas Jessica gives her daughter enough space to define her boundaries. She shows this not just letting her go away but opening the doors of her house to Polly's boyfriend whom she does not willingly approve.

For understanding and adjusting disturbances caused by the structures that define mothers and daughters, psychoanalytical approach has been an appropriate analytical tool in this study. To observe how early life of the daughter actively influences later life, all stages of development starting from infancy have been examined. As for the daughter's phase of identity formation and individuation, the daughter learns to use her own skills and personality traits and structure personality boundaries that are separate from her mother.

Given the different perspectives among the trends of psychoanalysts mentioned throughout this study, it is essential to arrive at a conclusion: The achievement of daughters in having autonomous and individuated selves is based on their separation from mothers. What is more, the positive effects of separation of a daughter from her mother is examined in *If We Are Women*. Jessica is aware of the fact that a loving mother strengthens the capacity of her daughter's making decisions. Even though she doesn't always agree with her choices, she respects her and offers solace. In none of the three other plays can we see such mothers.

Jessica lets her daughter go not because she respects Polly's choice but because she does not have any other alternative, otherwise she knows Polly will reject herself forever. In the end, she creates a space for her daughter. The mother, consequently, must grow herself to give the daughter room and space to gratify its desires even if they are in conflict with or disappoints hers.

Social interaction and personal relationships (related with the issues of empathy and connectedness) are not the only characteristics of women's lives. In terms of their need for dependency, women not only define themselves in a context of human relationship but also judge themselves as regards their ability to care and create distinct boundaries. The capacity to respond with empathy does not involve the loss of boundaries or boundary confusion. Safety in family and society seems to demand solid boundaries. If the daughter experiences a powerful sense of connection with her mother in the negative sense, this may hinder her formation of ego-boundaries.

To sum up, boundaries constitute a person's sense of self as distinct from other people. Ego boundaries are in close relation to the emotional fields of other people. As in Mahler's "psychological birth" the child discovers and creates the boundaries that both separate it from and identify it with the mother. The daughter's separation from her mother is characterized by ambivalence and confusion over ego boundaries. Thus, the process of separation is an issue of female development, although it is not seen as the crucial moment in the development of the self. It is clear that the separation myth could be perpetuated, not to keep mothers and daughters separated, but to contribute to the psychological development of the daughter. Helen, Jessie, Molly and Polly need to grow in empowerment in their relationship with mothers. By developing empathy for mothers—understanding, forgiveness, flexibility, openness to change— daughters are able to achieve separation from mothers.

We need to think more about the complexity of mother-daughter relationship. For this, the more we analyse and learn of female behaviour in written texts, the less we can generalise about the failure of mothers to cherish their daughters providing them with high self-esteem. When mothers and daughters broaden their lenses, that is learn more about each others' lives, they will be able to share interpretation of

their experiences by asking rather than interpreting. It is also important for the mothers and daughters to separate wishful thinking from facts rather than holding onto fantasies of perfect mothers and daughters in their relationship.

This study has highlighted the extent to which the ego boundaries and self-esteem are essential conceptions to reflect mother-daughter relationship. Mother and daughter characters in the plays discussed have shown that daughters' will of separation from mothers is achieved. Studies of any aspect of women's lives and experiences are approached with a broader frame of mind than the popular conception of the victimization of women found in most literature about women.



ENDNOTES

- Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, p.70.
- Sigmund Freud, *Enigman of Women*, p.164.
- Vivien Nice, *Mothers and Daughters Distortion of a Relationship*, p.73.
- Janet Brown, *Feminist Drama: Definition and Critical Analysis*, p. 96.
- Judith Barlow, *Plays by American Women*, p. 403.
- Jane Price Knowles, *Motherhood: A Feminist Perspective*, p. 10.
- Jane Bowles, *In the Summer House*, p. 439.
- Jay Greenberg, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytical Theories*, 281.
- Evelyn Glenn, *Mothering, Ideology, Experince, Agency*, p. 135.
- Gayle Austin, *Feminist Theories for Dramatic Criticism*, p.405.
- Ruth De Kanter, *Daughtering and Mothering*, p. 29.
- Joanna Mc Clelland Glass, *If We Are Women*, p. 32.
- Marsha Norman, *Night Mother*, p. 72.
- Sophie Treadwell, *Machinal*, p.188.
- Nancy Friday. *My Mother/My Self*, p. 82.
- Janeke Mens-Verhulst. *Daughtering and Mothering*, p.88.
- Eichenbaum L. and Orbach, *What Do Women Want?* p. 115.
- S. Gilbert and Gubar (eds), *The Parables of the Cave*, p.1121.
- Betty Friedean, *The Feminine Mystique*, p. 64.
- Barbara Kachur, *Contemporary American Theater*, p. 16.
- Odette Kaufman-Blumenfeld, *Studies in Feminist Drama*, p. 30.
- Nancy Chodorow, *Feminist and Psychoanalytic Theory*, p. 95.
- Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*, p. 76.
- Esther Harriot, *American Voices Five Contemporary Playwrights in Essays and Interviews*, p. 142.
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- Barbara Bywaters, *Marriage Madness and Murder in Sophie Treadwell's Machinal*, p. 105.
- Janet Brown, *Taking Center Stage: Feminism in Contemporary U.S. Drama*, p.76.

Roberta Rubinstein, *Boundaries of the Self, Gender, Culture, Fiction* p. 139.

Shelley Phillips, *Beyond the Myths Mother-daughter Relationship in Psychology, History, Literature and Everyday Life*, p.65.

Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Women*, p. 181.

Marc Fonda, "Fonda's Jung Notes: Summary of Jung's Psychology", p. 2.

Carl Jung, *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, p.669.

Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination*, p.89.

Jay Greenberg, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytical Theory*, p. 272.

Helen Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa*, p. 1095.



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