WOMEN IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND
AND
WOMEN IN MODERN TURKEY

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WOMEN IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND AND WOMEN IN MODERN TURKEY adlı çalışma jürimiz tarafından İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalında Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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CHAPTER I

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ÖZET

Bu tezin içeriğini binsekizyüzlü yıllarda İngiltere’de yaşayan kadınlar ile bugün Türkiye’de yaşayan kadınların düşünce yapılarının örneklerle incelenmesi oluşturmaktaadır.


Ondokuzuncu yüzyılda İngiltere’de yaşamış bazı önemli kadın yazarların hayat tarzlarından ve kadın hakları konusunda takımlarını tavırlardan örnekler verilmektedir. 19. yüzyıl İngiliz kadınlarının kadın hakları konusunda atağa geçtikleri bir dönemdir. Özellikle bir çok kadın yazar, eşitlik ve kadın hakları konularının üzerine giderek birbirlerine destek vermişler, kadınların elverişsiz koşullarının düzeltilmesi için çaba sarfetmişlerdir. Fakat öte yandan, bazı kadın yazarlar kadın-erkek eşitliğine açıkça ve
kararlı bir tavırla karşı çıkmış, bu uğurda çaba sarfeden kadınlarla adeta alay edercesine yazılar yazmışlardır. Türkiye'de de toplumsal hayatta kadın haklarını zedeleyen davranışlara sıkça rastlanmaktadır. Bu tür davranışların örnekleri bu tezin içeriğini oluşturmaktadır.
ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on women's state of mind about women's rights both in Victorian England and in Turkey today. The aim of choosing these women from different cultures and different eras is to show the similarities they present in their thoughts and behaviours about women's rights.

For centuries, men have been considered to be responsible for women's inefficient conditions, but women's share in these conditions have not been thought over much. The aim of this thesis is to study women's role in inequality between men and women. Some important women writers who lived during 19th century are presented as examples in order to show their thoughts about general attitudes towards women's liberation. 19th century in England is a period when women had started to strive for women's liberation. Especially many women writers wrote about and worked for women's rights. They struggled for better living standards for women and children. On the other hand, some women writers objected to equality between men and women. They even tried to advice women to accept their inferiority.

Towards 21st century, women's such disappointing manners are still common in Turkey today. While some Turkish women authors are writing about and working for women's rights, some women seem to have already accepted to be inferior. Examples of these manners are presented in this thesis.
I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Mübeccel Taneri, Ph.D. for her invaluable contributions to my research. I would also like to thank Dinçay Köksal, Ph.D. for his guidance during the M.A. programme.
PREFACE

When the conditions of women all over the world are observed, it will prove to be obvious that many women today still live under very inefficient conditions socially and economically. Many women writers from different nationalities have been writing for years about men's unfair treatments to women, about women's being victims in their relationships with men, and about women's unsatisfactory living standards.

It is disappointing to notice that women's liberation is still one of the most important topics most women deal with today. Women's liberation is still a future goal for many women living in different parts of the world.

There certainly have been quite a great deal of improvements in women's conditions since they first expressed their objections for not having the right to vote or to work outside their homes, and to be treated as only wives and mothers but not as free individuals. It is good to say that women now enjoy having the benefits of some rights they struggled for or were somehow endowed with. However, these improvements in women's conditions have always been slower than the improvements in technology, in arm races, in car productions or in job opportunities and working facilities for men.

These slow improvements in women's conditions raise a question in the minds as to whether or not men only are responsible for women's inefficient conditions. The aim of this thesis is to show that women's share in their
inefficient conditions is not to be underestimated. In many ways, women have done and still do a lot to damage their freedom. There are many examples of women who made things harder for women in the past. There are even many women today who can not comprehend the importance of women’s liberation. Some women still insist on blaming just men excluding themselves from taking the whole responsibility for their lives.

Though it was difficult for a woman to live as she wanted to during Victorian Age in England, some women accomplished to have designed their lives as they wished. George Eliot, Harriet Taylor and Harriet Martineau were such women. These women were not like those who just sit and curse their fate blaming men for their conditions or feeling inferior beside men. If these three women mentioned above had achieved what was thought to be impossible in 1800’s England, so could the others.

When women in Turkey in 1990’s are considered, there are apparently two main groups of women as in Victorian England: Women who chose to live as victims accepting that they are inferior and women who chose to live as independent individuals taking the whole responsibility for their own lives.

In the first chapter, George Eliot, Harriet Taylor and Harriet Martineau are presented as examples for independent Victorian women, Elizabeth Sewell and Sarah Ellis for conformist women. Charlotte Bronté is studied apart from these women writers mentioned above because she was neither a conformist nor a non-conformist. Some examples from fictional characters are presented as well
to show women’s thoughts and attitudes about women’s rights.

In the second chapter; women’s state in Turkey today is presented with examples both from literature and from actual life. Duygu Asena, Erendiz Atasü and Nevval Çizgen (Sevindi) are presented as non-conformist women writers in 1990’s Turkey.

In the conclusion, it is presented that women are also responsible for their inefficient conditions today. This conviction has been reached with the examples presented in the preceding chapters.
0. INTRODUCTION

0.0. The aim of the study

The contradiction in the status of men and women continues throughout the world though the twentieth century has almost come to an end. The passing centuries seem not to be completely beneficial for women in the name of changing some clichés about their being subordinate to men.

The aim of this thesis is to show that women are also responsible for their unsatisfactory conditions today. To present this, women from two different cultures belonging to different times have been chosen: Victorian women and Turkish women in the last decade. It will prove to be interesting to notice the similarities these cultures present despite the time and cultural difference. For ages, women have been struggling for women's rights and equality, but these issues have not been fully obtained yet.

There are many reasons of this inefficiency in reaching these goals but the concern of this thesis is to present that women (consciously or unconsciously) did and still do to damage the improvements in women's conditions. Both in Victorian England and in Turkey today, there are such examples of women who do not support women's rights.

VIII
0.1. Method

Comparing the place of women in both cultures in the designated times and presenting some women's damaging acts for women's liberation will be the procedures to take. Some illustrative examples have been collected from literature, some other research books and also from some archives of newspaper articles (as done in Joan Perkin's Victorian Women).

Men's reactions against women's movement or men's strivings to make women inferior are not studied in this thesis. It is common to see men objecting equality between men and women, but if there are still some women who reject equality and accept that they are inferior to men, these women are to be put under focus first.

0.2. Brief summary of the chapters

In the first chapter, Victorian people (especially women) are being dealt with. While depicting Victorian women, some of their acts and thoughts which perpetuated women's inferior status are also given. How some women made other women's struggles for a better life harder is presented. In Victorian England, while some were earnestly engaged in seeking better living standards for women and children, some were supporting the system which regarded women as subordinate. Some examples from Victorian literature are given in order to show women's state of mind, the disparity in their social positions and the difficulty they faced in pursuing their ideals.
In the second chapter, Turkish women in 1990's are presented. Struggles for equality between the sexes continue in Turkey as in many other countries. There are still two main groups of women in Turkey as in Victorian England: the ones who struggle for equality and the ones who support men's belief in women's subordination. These two main groups of women will be divided into four subgroups to show various thoughts of women. Some examples have been chosen from Turkish literature showing how some women writers observe women's role in their conditions.

0.3. Literature Review

For women in Victorian England it was not easy to live as independent individuals. The literature of the period reflected the difficulties they had. Women writers started to deal with women's conditions criticizing the social ethics. Joan Bellamy deals with Victorian values in her essay titled Barriers of silence; women in Victorian fiction:

In 1837 when Queen Victoria came to throne, married women had no property rights, not even in the proceeds of their own earnings, they had no rights to the custody of their own children, divorce from a husband was practically impossible, they had no vote, they were utterly excluded from the universities and the professions, except the teaching of the very young and of other girls. (p:131)
Even Queen Victoria could not separate herself from the social and psychological barriers as written in *Bloomsbury Guides to English Literature* that 'needles to say she was a life-long opponent of {women’s rights}'.

As indicated in *Status of Women in Turkey* by Emel Doğramacı, when George Eliot started to live with George Henry Lewis, 'Queen Victoria would not accept her at court.'

Turkish women today show the similar hesitations towards women’s liberation. Yeşim Arat presents Turkish women’s attitudes towards women’s movement in her essay *Women’s Movement of the 1980’s in Turkey*:

Turkish feminists were less successful in creating radical change. Campaigns, festivals, demonstrations organized by women, journals, and magazine articles contributed less to the transformation of the patriarchal society than to the establishment of a liberal, democratic and secular polity. The women’s movement reached its goals, to the extent that a liberal, democratic, and secular polity is a precondition for the transformation of a patriarchal polity. (p:110)

While dealing with problems concerning women in Turkey, Hikmet Saim presents in his book *Türkiye’de Kadın* that overlooking men’s living in polygamy is one of the serious problems to be solved.

*Woman in Turkey.*

XI
Many women writers, both in Victorian England and in England today, criticized women’s inefficiency in laying claim to their rights, in struggling for liberation or in cultivating themselves during Victorian Age as Anne Bronté, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronté, Harriot Taylor did or as Shirly Foster, Joan Perkin, Elaine Showalter, Barbara Caine still do.

In Turkey today, some women writers fulfill the same duty of striving for women’s liberation such as Nevval Sevindi, Duygu Asena, Erendiz Atasü, Füsun Erbulak.

0.3. Conclusion

In the conclusion; it is presented that women are also responsible for their inefficient conditions today. This conviction has been reached with the examples in the preceding chapters.
CHAPTER I

1.0. INTRODUCTION

In England during 1800’s, Victorian women were going through a period in which they started to express their discontent about their inefficient conditions. Some women writers started to write criticizing women’s conditions, their lack of freedom and men’s oppressive influence over women. Charlotte Bronté, George Eliot and Harriet Martineau were among such women who had the courage to take issue with the conditions of their time. These women wanted better life standards for women and children, and expressed their objections to live without realizing their own capacities, womanhood and liberation. These writers were criticized very severly both by men and women at that time but the criticisms did not stop them.

While such conscious women mentioned above were struggling for women’s liberation despite many difficulties they faced, some women were declaring their belief in women’s subordination accepting every role imposed upon them without questioning. Among these women were Sarah S. Ellis and Elizabeth Sewell. These women advised their own sex to be conformists and not to rebel against a world designed for women by men.

In Victorian literature, owing to those women who wanted liberation to change well-rooted but false images of womanhood, there were also many non-conformist fictional characters that inspired many women readers. On the other hand, there were also some conformist fictional
characters as well, causing women readers to feel the need to be conformist in men's world.

In this chapter, some examples are given to show conformist and non-conformist women writers during Victorian Era. There are some examples for conformist and non-conformist fictional characters as well.

1.1. Brief summary of Victorian Age

During Victorian Age (1832-1901) England reached to its highest point of development as a world power. In the eighteenth century, Paris was the center of Western civilization. By the second half of the nineteenth century London became the center of civilization. The way of life based on the ownership of land was replaced by a modern urban economy based on trade and manufacturing. Victorian Age can be considered as a time of prosperity. The rapid industrialization enabled England to become one of the most powerful and profitable countries. But this development in England brought some problems as well. In the early 1840's a severe depression with widespread unemployment led to rioting. Technological changes caused Victorians to feel pessimistic and a sense of lost. They started to suffer from 'an anxious sense of being displaced persons in a world made alien by technological changes.' With this rapid growth of industrialization and the demand for labour, women started to work in the factories as well but these women were mostly lower-class women. All these changes brought to the fore 'what Victorians called The Woman Question, which concerned issues of sexual inequalities in politics, economic life, education and social intercourse.' Women were still considered as second-class citizens. Bad working
conditions and underemployment drove many women into prostitution. The most common and acceptable occupation for a woman was to be a governess with minimal wages and no security of employment. Victorian society (especially some women authors such as Charlotte Bronté, George Eliot and Harriet Taylor) started to deal with legal and economic limitations on women’s lives and with the nature of woman itself.

1.2. Non-conformist women writers in Victorian England

1.2.1. George Eliot

Victorian Age was certainly not the time when women could easily stand against the well-rooted traditions, customs and rules. However, some women were strong enough to act as non-conformists. One of them was George Eliot. She did not consent to the exact roles of women and always listened to her heart and pursued her own wishes. Gillian Beer describes her as follows:

Mary Ann Evans, the rebel against her father’s religious views; Marian Evans, the free-thinking and free-living literary journalist, the independent woman who had friendships with widely various men; Marian Lewes, Polly, Madonna, the lover of a married man who shared a life with him until his death and married a man almost twenty years her junior,...

George Eliot (1819-1880) was one of the most influential English novelists who outrageously overruled the conventions for women in her time. She lived with the man she loved without marriage for years. This man was
George Henry Lewis who was living in separation from his wife. George Eliot was considered as an outcast by the society. Even Queen Victoria did not accept her at court. But the manner that the society assumed towards her could not make her give in. She lived in the way she believed.

1.2.2. Harriet Taylor

Harriet Taylor was born in 1807. She was a Unitarian. Her parents were Unitarians, a sect which had long been subject to political disabilities. She was very much influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft; 'the martyr-heroine of Unitarian feminist women.' After Mary’s death in 1797, Harriet wanted to further Mary Wollstonecraft’s ideas.

Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill had met in 1830 and their friendship continued till Harriet’s death in 1858. They met through their shared interest in the Monthly Repository which was a journal. She was married and had three children when they met and they started to work together. She had the courage to act with freedom. She wrote for women’s right so that they could gain full political citizenship. She also wrote Enfranchisement of Women which deals with the central issue of the right to vote.

She is described in Women’s Voices as follows:
'Few were more inventive than Mill’s eventual wife, Harriet Taylor, who, for twenty years arranged to live in a virtual ménage atrois* with her husband and Mill, a companion to both, lover to neither.'

She made invaluable contributions to Mill’s writings on politics and economics. Actually she was the one who had a powerful influence over Mill’s thoughts about women’s rights and ‘she was able to bring a more outspoken element of socialism into Mill’s rather cautious views about property.’

1.2.3. Harriet Martineau

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was one of the remarkable Victorian radical women. She had a good education and she was a defender of women’s rights all through her life. She was the first woman sociologist, and a sympathetic observer of women’s social conditions ‘in a society that proclaimed freedom and justice for all but did not grant it to more than half its population.’ She was ambitious and eager to cultivate herself despite her mother’s discouragements. When Harriet Martineau tried to continue her studies at home after she left school, her mother objected to her studying ‘conspicuously’ during the day.

*wicked household relationship
In 1834 she travelled to the United States for two-year visit and wrote essays on American society. In her Society in America she wrote about her observations on Americans, their family values, men's and women's family roles.

While many Victorian women were ready to get married even in very young ages, she never married and showed no regrets on this score. She expresses her contentment about her marital status in her autobiography:

I am in truth very thankful for not having married at all. I have never since been tempted nor have suffered any thing at all in relation to that matter which is held to be all-important to woman,—love and marriage.

1.3. Conformist Women Writers

1.3.1. Elizabeth Sewell

Elizabeth Sewell was born in Newport in 1815. She was a dutiful daughter who devoted herself to Christian principles. As a writer she wrote thirteen novels, three volumes of short stories, religious and educational treatises, history and language textbooks and travel books. She was an influential educationist during 1800's. According to Joan Perkin, she was one of those people who thought that males and females belonged to two different species, their characters operating on different principles. Elizabeth Sewell wrote in 1865:
Boys are to be sent out into the world to buffest with its temptations, to mingle with bad and good, to govern and direct... Girls are to dwell in quiet homes, amongst a few friends; to exercise a noiseless influence to be submissive and retiring.  

While some educated, conscious and practical women writers were trying to make Victorian people realize the harm such discrimination between young boys and girls could cause, Elizabeth Sewell chose to support the system in education which encouraged boys to be extravert and girls to be introvert. For Sewell, the sphere of womanly duty is naturally and primarily the home.

Most of Victorian mothers believed that the first thing they should teach young girls was how to do the cleaning or keep a house tidy or cook and serve the guests beside doing needlework. This belief was very powerful during 1800’s England. The place for women to work was their homes. Therefore, middle-class women who worked would descend to the level of the worst wives, and the things women should do were the housework; for instance sweated needlework was not so frowned upon for women as was factory work.

1.2.2. Sarah Stickney Ellis

Stepping out of the standards always frightens women because they are supposed to live according to the accepted norms and when they refuse to do so, they are accused of being amoral or abnormal and are punished
severely both by the law and the society. Therefore in 1800’s England for a woman to do what she liked needed a great deal of courage and self-confidence. Many women did not even think of what they wanted from life, they just did what other people wanted them to do. Most women’s beliefs and deeds seemed to be contradictory. While some were struggling for the improvement in women’s social positions, some were trying to discourage or even undermine such attempts as in the case of Sarah Stickney Ellis who was a popular writer in 1830’s.

In 1830’s and 1840’s in literature, many writers were very much concerned about what women should do and should not do. Writers such as Sarah Lewis and Mrs. John Standford wrote about women’s role and duty. Sarah Ellis was best known of all. Ellis expounded at great length on the need for women simultaneously to accept their legal, social and intellectual inferiority to men.\(^{13}\)

According to Sarah Ellis, women had to recognize their inferiority to men. She wrote in one of her works:

> The first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men, inferior in mental power in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength.\(^{14}\)

Ellis advised women not to question their positions in the society and even not to try to improve their faculties because they were inferior intellectually as well, as in many other ways. She also wrote about fashion and criticized the way women dressed in 1830’s:

> The young girl cannot too scrupulously shroud her modest feelings from the unsparing test of fashion. The bloom of modesty is soon rubbed off by vulgar
contact; but what is thus lost in the young female can never be restored. And let her look to the risk she incurs. What is it? On the one hand, to be thought a little less fashionable than her friends and neighbours—on the other, to be thought a little more exposed than a delicate woman ought to be.  

As in the case of Elizabeth Sewell, Sarah Stickney Ellis was one of those Victorian women who chose to be the defender of men’s claims about women’s subordination.

1.3. Charlotte Bronté: A conformist woman but a critical writer

I am tolerably well convinced that I shall never marry at all. Reason tells me so, and I am not so utterly the slave of feeling but that I occasionally hear her voice.  

These words above are from one of Charlotte Bronté’s letters to Elizabeth Gaskell written in 1840. After refusing three offers of marriage, she consented to marry her father’s curate, A.B.Nicholls in 1854. During this marriage her health got worse and she died in 1855. This event shows how much difficulty women had in applying their plans in 1800’s England. As Charlotte Bronté, many Victorian women could not put their thoughts or plans into application.

Though Charlotte Bronté’s heroines are fans of independence, determined, strong-willed and self-sufficient, they usually end up in marriage. Therefore, she ‘was not a sympathiser of the women’s movement.’  

When all her novels are studied, it becomes obvious that Charlotte Bronté herself was not so sure
whether women should stick to their independence no matter what or to give in for the sake of marriage. As Eva Figes puts it, she was herself a victim of the conflicts which beset a woman born into Victorian age.18

But at least Charlotte Bronté was aware of women’s depressing conditions while some Victorian women, especially those who were in no shortage of money, were spending their time going to balls and parties, dressing fashionable clothes, gossiping, gambling and enjoying the same sports as men did such as hunting, racing, horse breeding, cockfighting.19 She joined ‘the debate on women’s nature and women’s right to self-realization and expression through her art.’20

1.4. Conformist fictional characters

1.4.1. Hannah

During Victorian age, beauty, physical appearance and looking attractive to men seemed to be the essentials of life according to some Aristocratic women. They even could risk their health to look beautiful:

‘...they usually wore tight corsets though doctors warned that tight lacing was dangerous for their health and could cause many disease but few women took any notice.’21

Charlotte Bronté always criticized such shallow-minded women who cared about nothing but to look attractive and flirt with men. In Shirley, she describes Hannah in chapter 7 as follows:
Hannah, on the contrary, demanded no respect; only flattery; if her admirers only told her that she was an angel, she would let them treat her like an idiot. So very credulous and frivolous was she: so very silly did she become when besieged with attention, ... 22

Women's dealing with such triviality during Victorian age was actually the result of one-sided education. The aim in educating women was apparently to turn them into good housewives in Victorian England. Ronald Pearsall reflects with this one-sided education in his book The Worm In The Bud and he says that:

Working class girls went into marriage chronically inferior. In 1847 the first evening school for women was opened in Birmingham, and volunteer teachers were shocked at the domestic deficiencies of their pupils. They had been coached in needlework and the making of small largely useless articals of clothing almost since they had been weaned, and the teachers were shattered at the ignorance of the women with whom they were confronted. 23

Hannah, one of Charlotte Bronté’s women characters mentioned above, was one of those Victorian women who had been taught the need for a woman to be good-natured, beautiful and dutiful for all men.

1.4.2. Shirley Kealder

Charlotte Bronté’s novels exhibit a good example for the inferior social positions in Victorian women’s lives.
In Shirley, her most strong and independent character is Shirley Kealder. In chapter 31, while talking with her uncle she asserts:

Did I not say I prefer a master? One in whose presence I shall feel obliged and disposed to be good. One whose control my impatient temper must acknowledge. A man whose approbation can reward—whose displeasure punish me. A man I shall feel it impossible not to love and very possible to fear.²⁴

In the beginning of the novel, Shirley seems to be very self-sufficient, strong and independent who makes no concessions. But in the end she disappoints the reader as she starts to look for a ‘master’ to marry. First she manifests many unfeminine characteristics and chases men’s education and power, then abandons all tokens of manly qualities when she marries for love and assumes her conventional role.²⁵

1.4.3. Maggie

It was not only the educational institutions that kept women ignorant but also the parents perpetuated the inefficient education. As Joan Perkin points out in her book Victorian Women, upper-class parents seem to have no particular philosophy for raising their daughters, but they preferred to keep them innocent about sex and ‘uncontaminated by contact with girls from the lower orders.’²⁶
Another typical example of Victorian families is portrayed in George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*: In the novel we see how thoughtful Maggie’s parents are about their son’s (Tom’s) education while no one in the family thinks that Maggie must have the right to get the same education. The way Maggie is being brought up is so pathetic: In her childhood, she is always scolded, humiliated and restricted by her parents and the other elders of the family, while Tom is being encouraged to realize his superiority, to do what he likes and to patronize his sister because ‘Maggie was a silly little thing; all girls were silly.’

If a little boy has such an idea about girls, his parents are to be blamed first. Unfortunately Maggie never gives up adoring Tom and finding faults with everything she herself does. Her parents blind her in a way and their conditioning her thoughts is so strong that she can never distinguish the right from the wrong and always seems to be afraid of trusting her feelings till the end of her life.

On the other hand, Maggie reads whatever she finds at home, then she reads her brother’s school books and even learns more than Tom but still prefers not to use her ability of judging or reasoning. As Elaine Showalter puts it in *A Literature of Their Own*:

Maggie is the progenitor of a heroine who identifies passivity and renunciation with womanhood, who finds it easier, more natural, and in a mystical way more satisfying to destroy herself than to live in a world without opium or fantasy, where she must fight to survive.

That is why Maggie also represents women who prefer the easier way rather than taking the whole responsibility for what they do.
Maggie is not the only one who looks up to male models in the family; her mother acts the same way, so do her aunts. Fathers, uncles, brothers were always looked up to by the other female members in Victorian families. A woman, who was conditioned to regard her father, brother, husband and other males in the family as the most esteemed and righteous while being brought up, most probably teaches her daughter to feel the same way about men if this woman can not see the reality beyond limitations.

In one of her essays Mary Anne Dolan says:

...Like slaves who can’t give up their masters, we cling either to male bosses or to male models. We are responsible for keeping alive He-Tarzan, Me-Jane ethic, rendering ourselves powerless all over again. But somehow comfortable.29

1.4.4. The Bloomfields

Anne Bronté, in Agnes Grey, deals with parents’ wrongs in bringing up their children, the bad influence and hard-to-be-cured damage they make on children’s personality. Miss Bronté writes about her own experiences, when she goes to live with a family as a tutor for the children there. While living with that family, she observes that the parents do not make any effort to teach their children how to behave properly, how to distinguish the right from the wrong or how to express themselves. It was the duty of the tutor to teach such things in Victorian England, especially among Aristocratic families. The parents, in the book, are also
unable to see the bad effects of neighbors and relatives on children. For instance, they let Uncle Robson (Mrs. Bloomfield’s brother) spoil their children, encourage them to be aggressive and hurt animals, instill the feeling of men’s superiority into his nephew:

...Mr. Robson habitually swallowed great quantities of wine, and took with relish an occasional glass of brandy and water. He taught his nephew to imitate him in this to the utmost of his ability, and to believe that the more wine and spirits he could take, and the better he liked them, the more he manifested his bold and manly spirit, and rose superior to his sister. Mr. Bloomfield had not much to say against it.  

Moreover Uncle Robson continually encourages Mary Ann’s (the young daughter of the family) ‘tendency to affectation, talking about her pretty face, and filling her head with all manner of conceited notions concerning her personal appearance.’

The Bloomfields were definately not expections among Victorians. Many Aristocratic parents were experiencing the comfort of staying away from educating their own children leaving this duty to the governesses they hired, and they believed this was all what could be done for children.

1.5. Non-conformist fictional characters

1.5.1. Helen

Anne Bronté, in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, portrays Helen as a conscious woman and a mother who is
aware of how easily children are influenced by their elders:

My little Arthur lives and thrives...He has won his father's heart at last; and now my constant terror is lest he should be ruined by that father's thoughtless indulgence. But I must beware of my own weakness too, for I never knew till now how strong are a parent's temptations to spoil an only child.32

Helen, at least, tries to display a good example for her son while her husband encourages their little son to drink alcohol, to swear, and to be against his mother. It is not surprising to see such men who have practiced their manhood as one and only weapon to suppress women and children in Victorian society as in many cultures. Under the nurturing of these kinds of fathers, it is no wonder that mankind has not yet gone far in eradicating suppression over women. Most Victorian women perhaps did nothing to stop men's bad influence on children because they actually were not aware of men's powerful influence on children. But Anne Brontë's heroine Helen is one of a rare; she thinks that her son should be delivered from his father's corrupting influence and taking him with her, she leaves the house. She knows she will face many difficulties. Nonetheless she tries to start a new life without a husband. She knows the fact that it is better for a child to live fatherless instead of a corrupting father who can create a psychopath out of a little boy.

While giving some advice to Esther, who is a friend of Helen, about matrimony, Helen's words are worth consideration:

...though in single life your joys may not be very many, your sarrows, at least, will
not be more than you can bear. Marriage may change your circumstances for the better, but, in my private opinion, it is far more likely to produce a contrary result.  

1.5.2. Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre is in many ways a new kind of heroine ‘despising hypocrisy and self-deception identifying with nature and above all yearning for freedom and self-realization.’ She is a heroine who objects to inequality between men and women:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or to learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

When Mr. Rochester wants to buy expensive clothes and jewelry for Jane and flatters her constantly saying that she is an angle, she objects to his attitude and asserts:

I am not an angle, and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself. Mr. Rochester, you must neither expect nor exact anything celestial of me—for you will not get it, any more than I shall get it of you: which I do not at all anticipate.
Among many Victorian fictional characters, Jane Eyre seems to be much more natural, straightforward and eager to continue her life without being dependent on any men.

1.6. Conclusion

Some Victorian women chose to lead a comfortable life style while others were fighting for their rights. Owing to those who fought for women’s rights despite many difficulties, English women have more freedom today. The ones who realized the importance of education, cultivation and knowledge, tried to awaken others. The ones, who found out that young girls’ and women’s having no need an education of high quality was a mith, tried to train themselves and others, read more and exercised their faculties.
CHAPTER II

2.0. Introduction

After a century, women in Turkey raise the same issue: women’s rights. Still in Turkey today, there is not much difference from those in Victorian England in educating children, marriage institution, men’s obsessions about manhood, some women’s insistence on playing the passive role.

Before sending their children to schools, most of Turkish parents teach the same prejudices to them; they encourage boys to be extrovert, live their lives as they want to whereas they teach girls to be introvert, passive and dependent. In Turkey women’s share on conditioning children’s thoughts is more influential than men. As Nevval Çizgen says in her book *Aşkın Ölümçül Etkileri* that women raise their daughters and sons on different ethics. If such generations are being created constantly, mothers are to question themselves first.

*Love’s Fatal Effects.*
Most of our women have been taught for ages to feel inferior to the opposite sex and have been conditioned to live as wives and mothers but not as independant individuals.

2.1. Women's state in Turkey

According to some research conducted by TESEV about Turkey, one of the findings considered to be noteworthy here in this study is that there is lack of confidence both in men and women in Turkey. Though men earn more than women and live more freely than women, it is surprising at the first glance that inferiority complex and attitude problems are much more common among men. Then one realizes that there seems to be a correlation between being served by the other sex, women, and their insecurity about their personhood. Without realizing this fact, women still try to reshape themselves according to men's wishes, and men consider their women to be beneath them. Mothers bring up their daughters according to men's rules, create more and more women each day who are ready to serve men because women have lack of confidence as well.

*Our real enemies are the things we are being taught—not by men, mostly by our mothers and grandmothers.
In a nation, if lack of confidence has become one of the basic features as mentioned above, the individuals in that nation can hardly make healthy relationships. Women in Turkey, as well as men, are not self-confident; especially in the marriage institution. Most of them regard marriage as a guarantee for comfortable life, as a shield protecting them against the hardships of life. By marriage men make it sure that there is someone who cooks, cleans, and looks after their children. Traditional women are in financial security in return for their service as compared with single women who may have to work for their living. However, it seems that married women suffer more than single women because all kind of violence can be seen in the family.

2.2. Four types of women in Turkey

In Turkey there are four types of women. The first two types are dependent and materialistic women who endure the marriage which is characterised as being deprived of love, respect, sincerity, and honesty. The last two types are working and non-conformist women who do not fit in the traditional type of women.

2.2.1. Dependent women

This first group are usually uneducated and unemployed; they are totally dependent on their husbands. These women are the ones who usually have never been encouraged to work and earn their own living but to get married and last their marriage no matter what. Being wives and then mothers are the only social titles they can reach. It is easy to see that submission has become a part of their lives. These women may not make
up the majority in Turkey in the twentieth century but still their existance can not be disregarded for the actualization of women's rights as Adrienne Rich puts it '...no woman is liberated untill we all are liberated.'

2.2.2. Materialistic women

Women in this group regard money as more important than their freedom and prefer to live dependent on men.

This second group of women usually come from a better background (in the sense of education of the members in the family). These women can be more independent financially than the first group. In this second group, it is noticable that highly qualified life standards do not give much improvement into women's lives; especially in terms of living equally with men. Living in good conditions can not help women to make use of their potentials fully as human beings. Therefore, women who trade comfort for women's subjugation prolongs inequality exercised on women. Putting up with subjugation in many dimension stems from the fact that especially women cling to all sorts of convenience.

On Feb 6, 1996 newspapers wrote about a Turkish deputy and his love scandal. He was married and had four children and his pictures with his mistress were seen in almost all newspapers. He did not deny his secret
meetings with this second woman and said 'Hay Allah, fena tufaya geldim. Çok da dikkat ederdim.'* showing his bewilderment at being caught. A couple of days later an interesting title was seen in the media: 'Çapkın Bakan Balayına Çıktı'** The deputy and his wife went to their second honeymoon with smiles on their faces, posing before the cameras. This wife sent the message to other wives that women should do their best not to get a divorce, that they should go on living with their husbands no matter how rake and hypocrite they are.

Some days later, a journalist made some interviews with some other wives of deputies about this scandal and asked their own opinions in such a situation. One of the wives said: 'Vallahı bilemiyorum o anki durum neyi gösterir...Uzaktan konuşması kolay. Herhalde destek verirdim ama bilemiyorum.'***

*Boy! I used to be very careful.

**The Rake Deputy Go Honeymoon.

***I can not know where this kind of situation would lead...It is easy to talk from outside. Probably I would support my husband but I don't know.
These women mentioned above present a dangerous threat against women's liberation. The anxiety of such women is the possibility of losing the comfort in their lives they enjoy at that time. They think that 'comfort' is to find a husband who earns a lot of money, to spend his money as much as possible, to be able to buy whatever they want, to have their children educated in private schools which cost a fortune. If one's goal in life is to lead a comfortable life, this person is to submit to every kind of humiliation, resentment, or indignation and still this sort of living may not be called as a comfortable life but could be considered as a lost life. Most women in Turkey still live with this false idea of 'easy life'.

2.2.3. Working women

While some women prefer not to work and spend their husbands' money, in the rural areas of Turkey, women have to work twice as much both at homes and in the fields while their husbands generally sit and chat with other men. In the big cities, metropolitans like Istanbul or Izmir, married couples usually work. This may seem to be a sign of equality since both of them work in the marriage institution, but the price women have to pay for this is always higher than financially dependent married women. Women are expected to be perfect wives, perfect mothers and perfect housewives at the same time. If one can not play all these roles well, society is so ready to blame her and accuse her of being a bad mother who neglects her child (children) because of preferring to
work outside instead of staying at home for twenty-four hours; or being a bad wife who does not show enough care to her husband, or being a bad cook, or being a slovenly housewife. 'Working women are considered successful only if they are businesswomen who are at the same time perfect housewives.'

Most women in Turkey continue their marriages for economic reasons or for being unaware of any other ways. Education plays a curical role in the seperation of married women; when couples both work and have freedom (both financially and mentally), women do not feel a psychological pressure to continue a miserable marriage and prefer a divorce.

When women work and have freedom financially, they become more critical and act more freely. The ones who prefer not to get married at all are usually among working women.

2.2.4. Non-conformist women

These women are mostly working women who earn their own living without any need of support from outside. The reason why this last group of women are classified apart from working women in sub-section 2.2.3. stems from the fact that they have an important difference: They refuse to be conformists. These women might be considered as courageous women. They do not make up the majority in Turkey but they still try to live as they believe.
2.3. Non-conformist women writers in Turkey

2.3.1. Duygu Asena

Duygu Asena was born in Istanbul in 1946. She is considered as an influential writer who is a defender of women's rights. She worked in various newspapers and wrote many articles. She became much more popular after the publication of her first book *Kadinin Adı Yok* in which she deals with women's state in Turkey. She mostly wrote about her own experiences and observations. She still works for several magazines as an administrator at the same time.

She does not just criticize men and consider all women as victims. In her articles and books, she also criticizes women who fail to lay claim to their own rights and women who have hidden hostility against their own sex.

Duygu Asena observes a fact that these women who hold hostility can hardly trust each other. The things divorcees, for instance, have to confront are the signs of this hostility. Actually what makes a divorcee's life hard (except economy) is women themselves. They see divorcees as threats to their marriage. They always think of the possibility that divorcees can seduce their husbands. Therefore, married women regard divorcees unrelayable. It is unfortunate that some women let their feelings like jealousy, seize the power of their reason and do whatever possible to make life difficult for a strong-willed successful women.

*Woman Has No Name.*
Duygu Asena, in her book *Aslında Aşk da Yok*, mentions about such insincere jealous women, their cold manners and fake relationships. In the above mentioned book, the heroine relates that once in her work place she finds her colleagues unbearably unfriendly and disappointing. Describing the situation she goes on:

‘Hele müdür ya da şef düzeyindekiler, neredeyse gözümü oyacaklar...Bana ait güzel bir olay karşısında gözlerinin ateşini sönyor. İlgilendişenler bile, duymazlıktan geliyorlar. İşimle ilgili olumsuz bir yan ortaya çıkamaya görsün bunu dünya aleme yayıyorlar...Şaşılacak şey ki, televizyonda uzun bir konuşmanın yayınlandığı günün sonrasında beni kutlayanlar yalnızca erkeklerdi.’**

*There Is No Love Either.*

**Especially the ones, on manager or chief status, nearly want to destroy me...Whenever something good happens to me, the sparkle in their eyes go out. They never acknowledge my progress. They seem to underestimate my accomplishments. However, if anything unfavorable about my profession occurs, they make the dead hear the whole story. I still remember the instance with a tint of distress that it was only men who congratulated me on being quite successful during a long TV programme.
Consequently women’s lack of compromise among themselves and their hidden antagonistic thoughts against one another constitute serious hindrances in the path of women’s liberation. Some women are very much apt to blame other women to strengthen their places beside men. Because women are conditioned to believe that men are powerful in every way, and in order to survive they have to be dependent on men. The other reason is that convenience in every sense (financially, socially) is more important for them than anything else. So in this battle of survival, women start to use different masks to gain men’s support and try to do their best to disqualify other women in order to open their own way up.

Duygu Asena, in Aslında Aşk da Yok, expresses her bewilderment while observing some women’s behaviours and sees that it is so easy for men to take the control over women:

‘...Onlar bu denli kendilerine güvensez, bu denli kendilerinden habersiz oldukça, Aydın’ın işleri kolay. Çok güzel kadınlarda bile inanılmayacak kadar büyük bir güvensizlik var.’*10

*As long as they (women) lack this much confidence in themselves and unaware of their potentials, Aydın’s job is easy. Even very beautiful women have lack of confidence in an unbelievable way.
Duygu Asena is one of those women who do not feel a pressure to talk about her innermost thoughts. She is constantly being criticized severely both by men and women but she does not change her attitude about women's rights and continues her struggle to encourage women to lay claim to their rights.

2.3.2. Erendiz Atasü

Erendiz Atasü was born in Ankara in 1947. She has been writing stories since 1981. She mostly writes about women's oppressions and their depressing states of mind.

Erendiz Atasü also criticizes women who never question, usually complain, blame other people, curse their fate instead of dealing with problems boldly and being aware of their own shortcomings. These women, whom Atasü criticizes, seem to have lost their beliefs in struggling and accepted defeat from the very beginning. Among such women, young girls inevitably are influenced by this kind of behaviour, so they start acting the same way. Women, who want to get their rights and do not want to believe everything blindly, find themselves alone in this struggle. Erendiz Atasü expresses such feelings of loneliness of conscious women splendidly in her stories:
'Birlikte olduğum insanlardan bıkmıştim. Deniz hayvanları gibi kabuklarının içinde yaşıyip kendilerine bile yabancılaşanlardan...Hep kabullenip hiç karşı koymayan, güçlüyü haklı sananlardan.'

Erendiz Atasü is a writer who can send very influential messages in her short stories. She does not just write about women’s problems in a male dominated society but also their states of psychology in such a society and the things women do (consciously or unconsciously) to perpetuate male dominance.

In her book Dullara Yas Yakışır, she expresses her resentment while describing a well-educated woman who seems to have accepted submission as a way of living:

*I was fed up with people around me. With the ones who are entrapped even to themselves, living like sea animals in their sea shells...With the ones who always accept and never resist, who think the strong are the right.
2.3.3. Nevval Çizgen (Sevindi)

Nevval Çizgen graduated from the department of anthropology and she has been writing since 1989. Her articles and poems were published in various newspapers and magazines. She mostly writes about the relationship between men and women, women's unsatisfactory conditions and their role in the formation of these conditions. Nevval Çizgen is a defender of women's rights, and in her writings she emphasizes that women should be assertive for their rights. While doing that she criticizes women as well like Duygu Asena. She complains about women's being passive and showing not much reaction when their

*She was so used to living under control that she could not break down the forbearance wall even if she wanted to. She had lost her ability to rebel and to be spontaneous. I used to find this strange. She learnt very well to bear and endure just like a sorrowful peasant woman.
rights are usurped. She believes that finding faults just with men is not a solution and says:

Sadece erkekleri suçlamak işin kolayına kaçmak olur sanırım...Erkeklerden geri ve bağnaz birçok kadın tanıdım. Üstelik sadece diplomasisizler arasında değil.**13

In Turkey even some educated women can be deceived easily by men’s tricks on perpetuating male dominance, and these women start to believe in the system which regards women as inferior. As Emin Çölaşan puts it in one of his articles:

Ama ne acidır, ne tuhaftır ki, pek çok (okunuş) genç kızımız ve kadınımız bile kendilerini bu oyun alet ederler ve erkekler tarafından böylesine kullanılmalarına göz yumarlar!**14

*I think blaming just men would be choosing the easy way out. I met many women who were more backward and bigoted than men. Moreover not just among the uneducated.

**But it is so sad and strange that even our {educated} girls and women make themselves the tools of such a trick and overlook their being used by men in this way.
Nevval Çizgen (Sevindi) criticizes those women as well who can easily get under men’s control, saying ‘biz erkeklerle sığınarakça onlar güç gösterilerine devam edeceklerdir.’

Refering to women’s being insincere in their relationships both with men and women, Nevval Çizgen writes in one of her articles as follows:

Türkiye’de en yaygın davranış biçimi {net} bir ifade kullanımadır...çiftler içtenlik denilen nimetten yararlanmadıkları için ayrılmaktan pek zorlanırlar.

Nevval Çizgen (Sevindi) still writes articles in many newspapers and takes part in TV programmes expressing her thoughts about women’s rights and the things women should do to reach better living standards.

*As long as we take refuge in men, they will go on exercising their power over us.

**The most common behaviour in Turkey is not to use a {clear} statement...it is almost unthinkable to end a marriage for those couples who do not seem to enjoy the use of the blessing called sincerity.
2.4. Conclusion

Non-conformist women in Turkey today are struggling to change some well-rooted but false ideas about women's subordination. Unfortunately these women do not make up the majority and they have to face many difficulties while striving for women's liberation. Some women in Turkey can not lay claim to their rights and even some seem to be satisfied with men's belief in women's subordination. That is why women, like Duygu Asena, Erendiz Atasü and Nevval Çizgen, try to encourage other women to be more conscious about their own rights. These women writers in Turkey are good observers, courageous and sensible. They can observe women's problems objectively and bring up rational solutions. Their mission is, in a way, to think instead of some women who do not make use of their faculty of reasoning. At the same time these writers express the feelings and thoughts of others who are not professional writers but believe in women's rights, they also refer to a group of women who lead considerably better lives making use of the principle of equality in their lives.
CHAPTER III

3.0. Conclusion

Women’s attitudes towards women’s rights both in Victorian England and in Turkey in the last decade have been presented with some examples provided from literature and from actual events.

In the first chapter, some important Victorian women writers are classified as conformists and non-conformists. George Eliot, Harriet Taylor and Harriet Martineau are given as examples for non-conformists because of their attitudes to claiming their own rights and to women’s liberation. Though Charlotte Brontë was a critical writer in 1800’s England, she is not presented as a non-conformist woman because of her hesitations in applying her plans. Through her life she was a conformist but through her art she was inviting women to self-realization and liberation. Sarah Ellis and Elizabeth Sewell are given as examples for conformist women. During Victorian age, they tried to make women accept their inferiority. Some fictional characters from Victorian literature are presented as well to show the contradictions and hesitations in women’s minds.

In the second chapter, women’s state in Turkey in the last decade is presented and four types of women in Turkey are depicted with examples. Duygu Asena, Erendiz
Atasü and Nevval Çizgen (Sevindi) are given as examples for non-conformist women writers in Turkey, and their attitudes about women’s movement and the things they criticize most about women are presented.

It seems to be obvious that education plays a crucial role in women’s conditions. The more educated women are, the more easily they lay claim to their rights. Educated women who earn their own living are more courageous and determined about women’s liberation. On the other hand, some women (educated or uneducated) seem to be content with being subordinate to men, or at least show no reaction to be treated as inferior. These women are usually afraid of taking the whole responsibility for their lives and leave this duty of striving for women’s liberation to other courageous women, or they do this with deliberations as being conservatives.

In the end of this study, it has been indicated that women’s share in their unsatisfactory conditions can not be underestimated. What most women complain today is also the result of their inefficiency of cultivating themselves, of believing everything without using the faculty of reasoning and judging, of being lazy and of being ready for a world designed for them by men.
NOTES

CHAPTER I


NOTES

CHAPTER II


REFERENCES


