

T.C.
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

**THE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN KATE
ATKINSON'S *NOT THE END OF THE WORLD***

**(KATE ATKINSON'IN *NOT THE END OF THE WORLD* İSİMLİ
ESERİNDEKİ KADIN KARAKTERLERİN İNCELENMESİ)**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Hazırlayan
Müge KESİKTAŞ

Danışman
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nazlı GÜNDÜZ

KONYA-2009



T.C.
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü



BİLİMSEL ETİK SAYFASI

Bu tezin proje safhasından sonuçlanmasına kadarki bütün süreçlerde bilimsel etiğe ve akademik kurallara özenle riayet edildiğini, tez içindeki bütün bilgilerin etik davranış ve akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde edilerek sunulduğunu, ayrıca tez yazım kurallarına uygun olarak hazırlanan bu çalışmada başkalarının eserlerinden yararlanılması durumunda bilimsel kurallara uygun olarak atıf yapıldığını bildiririm.

Öğrencinin Adı Soyadı
(İmza)

MÜGE KESİKTAŞ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Kesiktaş'.



T.C.
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü



YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ KABUL FORMU

MÜGE KESİKTAŞ tarafından hazırlanan “The Analysis of Women Characters of Kate Atkinson’s ‘Not the End of the World’ ” başlıklı bu çalışma 19/10/2009 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği/oyçokluğu ile başarılı bulunarak, jürimiz tarafından yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Ünvanı, Adı Soyadı
Ünvanı, Adı Soyadı
Ünvanı, Adı Soyadı

Başkan *Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nazlı Gündüz*
Üye *Yrd. Doç. Dr. Serbu-omer*
Üye *Yrd. Doç. Dr. Yasir ASLAN*

İmza
İmza
İmza

[Handwritten signatures]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazlı Gündüz, my thesis supervisor, for her patience and suggestions, especially for kindly guiding me through all stages of my study. I owe my personal thanks to Ms. Gündüz for her lectures during my MA studies. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to Ms. Gündüz for accepting to be my advisor and for this wonderful opportunity.

Assist. Prof. Dr. A. Gülbün Onur, my major professor for the past eight years, deserves special thanks for her invaluable kindness, help and devotion. I have drawn greatly from her profound knowledge and experience. Her academic and professional discipline and support have allowed me to grow as a teacher as well as a student. Thus, she has proved a source of inspiration for me. I am also indebted to Mrs. Onur for her estimable lectures which I benefited greatly in English Language and Literature Department at Selcuk University, particularly for introducing me to literary criticism.

Likewise, I am very grateful to Sema Zafer Sümer for her worthy lectures on feminist studies.

I am thankful to Assist. Prof. Dr. Yasin Aslan for his proofreading and valuable comments. I would also like to thank Robert Ledbury, Wayne Carby and John Robertson from Izmir University of Economics for their contribution and kind help to this work.

Outside the academic arena, I also owe a great debt of gratitude to each member of my family for their love, patience, and genuine sacrifice without which this study could not have been completed. My warm thanks goes to my lovely sister for her dynamism and assistance. I heartedly thank them all for their encouragement throughout the preparation of this thesis.

Last but not least, I would especially wish to dedicate this work to my dear mother who watches me from the heaven.

ÖZET

Not the End of the World (Dünyanın Sonu Değil), İngiliz çağdaş yazar Kate Atkinson'ın on iki kısa öyküden oluşan eseridir. Bu çalışma, eserdeki kadın karakterlerin, feminizm ve kadın psikolojisi gibi çeşitli eleştirel bakış açılarından yararlanılarak incelenmesini kapsamaktadır.

Edebiyatta kadın imgesinin incelenmesi özellikle feminist edebiyat eleştirisinde önemli çalışma alanlarından biri olmuştur. Günümüze dek, kadın imgesi bir çok yazar ve eleştirmen tarafından çeşitli yaklaşımlarla ele alınmıştır. Fakat hızla değişen toplumla ve yaşam tarzlarıyla beraber, 21. yüzyıl edebiyat eserlerinde kadının ifade ediliş biçimi de değişmiştir. Bu anlamda, bu çalışmadaki kadın karakterlerin incelenmesi kadın psikolojisini yansıtması açısından yararlı olacaktır. Araştırma, İngiliz çağdaş kısa öykü alanında, kadın karakterlerin incelenmesi ile hem yazar hakkında bilgi edinmek isteyenlere bir kaynak olmakta hem de edebiyatta kadın imgesinin yansıtılışı konusuna eleştirel bir boyutla ışık tutmaktadır.

Bu çalışma anne-çocuk ilişkisindeki olumsuzluklar, evlilik yaşantısında veya boşanma durumlarında meydana gelen problemler, kadınların hayata tutunma çabaları ve bütün bunlara rağmen geleceğe dair var olan ümitleri barındıran bir kadınlar dünyası sunmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, modern zamanda kadınların yenilgisini, başarısını ve özlemlerini kapsamaktadır. Araştırmada, kadınlar bir eş, bir anne, bir arkadaş, bir kızkardeş ve bir kadın olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Kadın bir yazar tarafından, kadın karakterlerin anlatılışı, onların ailesel ve toplumsal idealleri, beklentileri ve edinimlerinin verililişi, karakterlerin analizlerini daha gerçekçi kılmaktadır. Öykülerdeki kadın karakterlerin yaşantılarından örneklemelerle, günümüz koşullarında, kadınların hem aile hem de toplum içindeki hayat mücadeleleri vurgulanmaktadır. Öyküler her ne kadar birbirinden bağımsız dursalar da, aslında karakterlerin öyküler arası bağlantıları farklı bakış açılarıyla onlara tanıklık etmemizi sağlamaktadır.

Bu tezin amacı *Not the End of the World* isimli eserdeki kadın karakterleri incelemek ve hikayeleri feminizm bakış açısı ile ilişkilendirmektir. Çalışmada savunulan temel görüş; mevcut eserde fazlaca vurgulanan kadın karakterlerin feminist eleştirel yaklaşımı kaçınılmaz kılması ve gerçeklik duygusu uyandırmasıdır. Sonuç olarak, *Not the End of the World* isimli eserde, kadın karakterlerin gerçekçi ve ikna edici bir şekilde ön planda olduğu görülmüştür. Analiz sonrası elde edilen bulgular, kadın karakter çeşitliliğinin bir hayli farkedilir olduğunu ve bu karakterlerin ortak yönlerinin feminist çalışmalara da konu olan zevcelik, annelik, arkadaşlık, kardeşlik ve kadınlık gibi kadın merkezli temaları ortaya çıkardığını göstermiştir. Böylelikle edebiyat ile yaşam arasındaki ilişkinin altı çizilmiş ve feminizm ile eser arasındaki bağlantı desteklenmiş ve kanıtlanmıştır. Dolayısıyla çalışma süresince öne sürülen feminist yaklaşımlar eser hakkında faydalı bir perspektif sağlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminizm, kısa öykü, kadın imgesi

ABSTRACT

Not the End of the World is a collection of twelve interlinked short stories written by the British novelist Kate Atkinson. The study covers the analysis of women characters in this collection using various critical points of views like feminism, woman psychology and gender studies.

Interpreting the image of women in literature has been one of the main objectives of feminist literary criticism. Up to now, the image of women has been undertaken as a subject from different aspects by many writers and critics. However, in the works of 21st century literature, with the ever-changing society and life styles, it is obvious that the expression of women has changed, too. In this respect, the analysis of the women characters in this study will be helpful to reflect female psychology. By closely looking at the representation of women within their inside and outside world, the research aims to be useful for showing the image of women both in life and literature.

This study offers a world of women along with the negativities of mother-child relationships, the problems of marriages or divorces, women's struggles to hold on to life and their hopes about the future. In other words, it constitutes women's downfalls, triumphs and longings in modern day. The women are defined as a wife, as a mother, as a friend, as a sister and as a woman in the research. Written from women's perspective, Atkinson's characterization of women in this book and their familial and social ideals, expectations and achievements makes the analysis more convincing. The majority of the stories are women-centred telling the experiences and feelings they have regarding family and society. Though each story seems to stand alone and on its own merit, the stories are loosely linked together so that such an interrelated plot and cast reflect multiple views of characters that are connected to each other in one way or another from different aspects with possible alternative insights and opinions.

The main argument of the thesis is that the emphasis of the female characters offers feminist criticism and thus a sense of realism. As a result, it has shown that the women in the book are convincingly and realistically in the front line. Multiplicity of women characters are quite noticeable and their common points put the women-centred themes forward such as wifehood, motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood which are also main issues of feminist studies. At the same time the connection between literature and life has been underlined and hence the argument that claimed the relationship between feminism and *Not the End of the World* has been supported and proved at the end of the study. Thus, the feminist insight asserted throughout the study has provided a useful perspective about the collection.

Key words: Feminism, short story, image of woman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BİLİMSEL ETİK SAYFASI.....	i
TEZ KABUL FORMU.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE - FEMINISM.....	7
1.1 Feminism in British Contemporary Literature and Kate Atkinson.....	12
1.2 ‘Images of Women’ Criticism.....	19
CHAPTER TWO - THE SUMMARIES OF THE SHORT STORIES IN NOT THE END OF THE	
 WORLD.....	24
2.1 Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping.....	24
2.2 Tunnel of Fish.....	25
2.3 Transparent Fiction.....	26
2.4 Dissonance.....	27
2.5 Sheer Big Waste of Love.....	27
2.6 Unseen Translation.....	28
2.7 Evil Doppelgangers.....	29
2.8 The Cat Lover.....	30
2.9 The Bodies Vest.....	30
2.10 Temporal Anomaly.....	31
2.11 Wedding favours.....	32
2.12 Pleasureland	33
CHAPTER THREE - THE IMAGES OF WOMEN IN NOT THE END OF THE WORLD.....	35
3.1 Women in Marriage: Wifehood.....	37
3.2 Women in Family: Motherhood.....	47

3.3 Women in Friendship: Sisterhood.....	73
3.4 Women as Individuals: Womanhood.....	76
CONCLUSION.....	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	99

INTRODUCTION

Not the End of the World (2002), a collection of twelve short stories, is one of the latest works of the British novelist Kate Atkinson. The aim of this study is to examine the images of women in the stories of *Not the End of the World*. The argument of this thesis is that the book might have a feminist perspective as it has a considerable number of female characters and most of the stories display women issues notably. *Not the End of the World* is a female-authored and a woman-centred book and the stories and characters in it are prominently connected to each other and predominantly female-oriented. In this respect, not only the characters, but also the plot and the viewpoints that each story embraces are other important elements within the study.

In literature, the images of women have been studied, discussed and criticised from different aspects. The importance and place of woman both in family and society has been undertaken in several works of British Literature. As the images of women criticism is one of the aspects of feminist literary criticism, the thesis opens with a preface that describes the history of feminism, its relation to literature with the theories and approaches of feminist literary criticism. After giving the summary of each story, the analysis of the women in these stories through their inner and outer world will take place under the headings of 'wifhood', 'motherhood', 'sisterhood' and 'womanhood'. Additionally, the interconnection between both the plot and the characters will enable the analysis from various viewpoints.

Kate Atkinson is one of the British contemporary female writers who uses female figures in most of her works. She was born in York, England in 1951. She studied English and American literature at Dundee University. While she was writing for women's magazines, she started writing short stories and won the 1986 Woman's Own Short Story Competition. She was runner-up for the Bridport Short Story Prize in 1990 and won the Ian St. James Award in 1993 for her short story *Karmic Mothers*. For her first novel, *Behind the Scenes*

at the Museum (1995), she won the 1995 Whitbread Book of the Year Award, the 1996 Lire Book of the Year (France), and the 1996 Yorkshire Post Book Award (Best First Work). Her second novel, *Human Croquet*, was published in 1997 and won the 1997 E. M. Forster Award (American Academy of Arts and Letters). Atkinson has also written two plays named *Nice* (1996) and *Abandonment* (2000). Her third novel, *Emotionally Weird*, was published in 2000. *Not the End of the World*, her collection of short stories was published in 2002. After *Case Histories* (2004), one of her latest books *One Good Turn* (2006) won the 2007 British Book Awards Crime Thriller of the Year. She lives in Edinburgh now and writes to newspapers and magazines at times.

Since Kate Atkinson is one of the most successful and experienced British contemporary woman writers; thus, *Not the End of the World* is a representative sample of contemporary women writing. Throughout the experience of reading her collection, it is unavoidable not to feel the sense of woman-dominance in the stories. Hence, this study intends to underline the fact that Atkinson's stories have the strong images of women and emphasis on similar women-identified themes that the stories share.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides theoretical information on women studies. Starting with the definition and historical background of feminism as a political issue, the chapter presents its relation to literature in consideration with the theories and approaches of feminist literary criticism. The first subchapter of this part takes a brief look at contemporary short fiction as well as the place of women writers and the portrayal of women in modern literature. The second subchapter provides the information on 'the images of women' criticism. As a part of feminist literary criticism, the images of women issue deals with the presentation of female characters in literature. So that the core of the study will be regarded as the analysis of Atkinson's women reflections which are considerable in number. Therefore, this subchapter underlines the main approach for this study through analyzing the female figures in a literary text. After chapter two, which offers

the summaries of twelve short stories in *Not the End of the World* (2002), chapter three gives a thematic analysis of the women characters in the stories. The chapter observes the images of women in these stories under the four categories of 'wifehood', 'motherhood', 'sisterhood' and 'womanhood'.

Since the focus of the study is the interpretation of female characters in Atkinson's *Not the End of the World*, the theories and strategies on reading a text given in chapter one explore the representation of women from different theoretical viewpoints like gynocriticism, deconstructive feminist criticism, Marxist-feminist criticism and images of women criticism. As the analysis of women has its roots in feminism, the chapter introduces different fields of feminism along with its process as a movement. Through the incorporation of feminism and literature, the chapter provides different approaches of feminist literary criticism to a literary text from political, sociological and formalistic perspectives. Briefly, as a branch of feminist literary criticism, Poststructuralist Theory focuses both on the language and the nature. Realities are reproduced by language according to poststructuralists. They believe that the presentation of patriarchal structures and individual identity in a society also appears in a text. (Morris, 1993, pp.137-8) Marxist ideology has its effect on feminist literary criticism since its subject matter has particularly been power-structured relationships such as hierarchy, capitalism, class, patriarchy and especially gender. In this sense, Mills, Pearce, Spaul and Millard (1989) define this sort of criticism as in the following: "Marxism and feminism are both theories about the power of the 'real' world and its impact on literary imagination" (p.189). On the other hand, another approach is Authentic Realism that is strongly linked to reality. Through examining women's image in a text, it suggests the parallelism between the text and life. Mills et al. (1989) express that "written by a female, it is an attempt and a celebration of that experience" (p.72). Gynocriticism, another feminist literary criticism presented in the first chapter, is identified by Showalter as "the psychodynamics of the individual or collective female tradition" in addition to its focus on femininity of a text

(quoted in Mills, et al., 1989, p.84). This kind of criticism not only studies the different modes of writing between men and women in terms of the author's gender issue and the portrayal of characters but also believes that there is a link between the experience of writer and his/her textual strategy and language. In spite of being varied in perspectives, the theories and approaches presented in chapter one support the analysis in this study as Eagleton (1996) suggests to read a text "through the filters of different feminist criticisms" (p.136).

The brief summaries of Atkinson's twelve short stories in *Not the End of the World* are presented in chapter two. The synopses of these stories will be analyzed in the third chapter in detail.

Chapter three offers a thematic analysis of the women characters that appear in the stories. The interpretation of women in *Not the End of the World* is rendered in terms of their individual characters and personal interactions. Atkinson is at her best when picturing her women's community both in a sense of wholeness and individuality while the stories, events and characters in the book are interrelated to each other. Along with few strong female characters, almost each woman character in the book is damaged, desperate and unhappy in her life. In her interview with Scribner (2006), the writer comments on her portrayal of such characters as in the following; "I never see them as miserable, unhappy characters. They are just complex. Most people have fractured lives and are unhappy. I kind of see them as normal people". The stories also explore family dynamics which have been a subject for Atkinson in her many other works. Readers observe the characters' lives through their family relations. As McDermott (2006) expresses:

The insistence on situating her [Atkinson's] protagonists in relation to her families (in an extended network of family connections and complex genealogies) suggest that for Atkinson, individual identity is formed via the family story. Her protagonists can only know themselves (and we as readers can only know them) if we 'meet the family'. (p.67)

The writer's eccentric style allows her women to meet and share the common grounds and display their failures, regrets, pains, hopes and dreams. As said by Morris (1993), "writing by women can tell the story of the aspects of women's lives that have been erased, ignored, demeaned, mystified and even idealized in the majority of traditional texts" (p.60). Examining her literary style and technique elaborately, chapter three is separated into four subchapters since Atkinson's representation of women is depicted in some certain conditions and situations. These women-centred themes are 'wifehood', 'motherhood', 'sisterhood' and 'womanhood'. Under these headings, the portrayal of women in the stories will be analyzed thematically in terms of individual, sociological and psychological perspectives. Throughout the book, the characters assume variety of roles both within family and society. The relationship between wives and husbands, mothers and children, and women themselves suggest a sense of reality since the common points revealed in the stories play a part in real life.

Morris (1993) thinks that, "women's stories help us live and dream as women" (p.60). Thus, writing of women lets readers read as women. In this perspective, women's writing is not simply a reflection of women's experiences but it also reflects women's feelings. For Showalter, women's writing is "a powerful expression of personal experience in a social framework" (quoted in Moi, 1985, p.4). In this regard, the study offers evidence of the link between fiction and realism, because the image of women has also been a matter of fact all time both in life and literature. In other words, female stereotypes in the literary world are the samples of women from real world. As Morris (1993) puts it:

[Because of the fact that literature reflects life] it has traditionally been believed that creative forms of writing can offer special insight into human experience and sharpen our perception of social reality. Literary texts may, therefore, provide a more powerful understanding of the ways in which society works to the disadvantage of women. (p.7)

Although the book is read neutrally, the image of women is striking evidence that this study covers the analysis of these women characters and the exploration of their women-centred relationships. In this respect, *Not the End of the World* can be accepted as a representative sample of contemporary women's writing. In Atkinson's stories, women are portrayed as mothers, as wives, and as friends that might lead to a feminist reading. In conclusion, there are multiple perspectives of the characters within the stories revealing the specific problems of women's difficulties in developing as whole and harmonious human beings under patriarchy.

CHAPTER ONE

FEMINISM

The starting point of this study is the female characters in Kate Atkinson's *Not the End of the World*. This analysis leads to the interpretation of the book necessarily through gender studies, in the narrow sense, women studies such as feminism.

Feminism is a movement which involves several theories and philosophies on gender issues. Jackson and Jones (1998) expose that "feminist theory seeks to analyse the conditions which shape women's lives and to explore cultural understanding of what it means to be a woman" (p.1). There are several descriptions of feminism as it has different kinds of branches such as socialist, postcolonial, Marxist-feminism and so on. There is also a link between feminist criticism and other critical discourses such as Marxist-feminist criticism, psychoanalytic-feminist criticism or postcolonial-feminist criticism so that these links have led to various interpretations during a feminist study (Eagleton, 1996, p. 135). The main aim of feminist criticism for Moi (1985) is "to expose, not to perpetuate, patriarchal practices" (p.xiv).

Literature has always been in a relation with the politically oriented theories and approaches such as Marxism, colonialism, racism and feminism. As literature reflects life, it can be accepted that there is a link between fiction and reality. This is best explained by Morris (1993) as " 'life', we feel, is just lived, is naturally given and is therefore, in that sense, always prior to literature". She adds "literature constructs a representation of that already existing reality by means of words" (p.7).

In spite of the fact that feminism and its contribution to literature have inarguably a long history, 1960s is the date of re-launch of the modern Women's Movement. In 1969, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* made feminist

literary criticism a theoretical issue which focused on male-authored texts and established the term 'patriarchal'. Such dominance of male writers in literature left female readers no way to position themselves when reading these texts. (Mills, et al., 1989, p.5) Later with Ellen Moers's *Literary Women* (1976), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) and Dale Spender's *Mothers of the Novel* (1986), a new phase started focusing on not only classic women writers such as Emily Dickinson, the Brontes and Jane Austen but also less popular women writers such as Maria Edgeworth and Aphra Behn. (Mills, et al., 1989, p.6) As Moi (1985) affirms, "today it is clear that the works of Moers, Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar have already taken their places among the modern classics of feminist criticism" (p.52). These critics aimed to establish a female tradition by re-reading, analysing and reacting against the works of women writers. Moers saw women's literature as "an international movement" while Showalter stated that this movement is just like "a development of any literary subculture". (Moi, 1985, p.55) Gilbert and Gubar also focused on the 19th century women writers from Austen to Browning and studied women's literary creativity under patriarchy. (Moi, 1985, p.57) Toril Moi, Mary Eagleton, Pam Morris and Simon De Beauvoir are other respectable, well-known contributors to feminist criticism.

Elaine Showalter (1997) has led the way of interest on women's texts from a positive perspective which is named as gynocriticism. It is considered as a reaction to the negative feminist criticism towards male texts. She claims that there are three stages during the process of women's writing. The first stage sees women "as generally imitating the dominant male modes" (p.66). In the second stage, awareness of women emerge which she calls a "protest against prevailing attitudes and conditions" (p.66). The last reaction of female writers is "to patriarchal values and to turn inward, searching for their own independent female identity" has women's self-discovery. (quoted in Morris, 1993, p.66)

Unlike the critics from the UK and the USA, French feminists and theorists such as Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray turned their attention to the difference of language used by male and female writers. They developed a system for analyzing “feminine and masculine modes of writing” in a stylistic way which was later called deconstructive feminist criticism. (Mills, et al., 1989, p.7) Cixous is famous for her patriarchal binary theory which embodies oppositions in it such as male/female, mother/father, active/passive, masculine/feminine and wife/husband. Eagleton (1996) imposes that, “feminists have found this subject relevant because of their belief that binary thinking upholds patriarchy”. Thus, Cixous suggests analyzing a text to see if these oppositions exist. (Eagleton, 1996, p.146) According to Moi (1985), “French feminist critics have preferred to work on problems of textual, linguistic, semiotic or psycho-analytic theory” (p.97).

Another kind of feminist criticism is Marxist-feminist criticism that emerged in 1970s. Since Marxism deals with socialist elements such as gender, class, capitalism, society and so on, unsurprisingly feminism has been in a close relation to this ideology embracing the status of men and women in terms of hierarchy, patriarchy, equality, freedom and so forth. For Mills et al. (1989), Marxist-feminism is “a practice or a theory which considers both gender and class to be essential components of an analysis” (p.244). With all these in mind, the issues such as political inequality between men and women, dependence and oppression of women form a basis of this feminist criticism. Moreover, Marxist-feminist criticism has a negative look towards the family which is one of the themes of this thesis in chapter three. However, this study is grounded in Marxist-feminist criticism to a limited extent because of its varied perspectives consisting of other branches of theories. Mills et al. (1989) underline “Marxist-feminism’s lack of a single prescriptive critical model” (p.219) and “ambiguous relationship of feminism to Marxism” (p.220).

In the early 1980s, another type of feminist criticism called poststructuralism was born. Relatedly, according to Morris's (1993) definition, it approaches "literary texts as sites of multiple meanings and intentions" (p.138) relating writer's consciousness and unconsciousness together within the socio-cultural basis. For Morris (1993), these are "conscious authorial intention, unconscious desire, current and past social implications" (p.138).

From another point of view, Mills et al. (1989) offer 'authentic realism' as a reading strategy rather than a literary criticism. During the 1970s, women came together and discussed their experiences and shared problems. This way of reading is connected with this study just like others mentioned above. Mills et al. (1989) explain the historical development of the authentic realist criticism's origin as in the following:

This process was designed to help women to use literature as a means of gaining some insights into their own lives and, into seeing the ways in which patriarchy limits women's possibilities. The texts were discussed in terms of how they related to individual women's lives, and how far woman identified with the female characters. In the UK now, there are still many such reading groups, often consisting of women who have left education to have children, but who want to discuss and meet with other women within a feminist context. (p.52)

As it is an argument in this study, authentic realism suggests that there is a relation between the text and world. (Mills, et al, 1989, p.51)

All these theories, critiques and critics have been in search of the images of women throughout history. They seek to discover whether and how literary texts reflect women. To Morris (1993); "representation is perhaps the most fundamental of all human activities, structuring our consciousness of ourselves and of external reality" (p.7) and adds "as we gain the ability to represent ourselves, our experience and our world by means of language, so we inevitably come to perceive our world through the system of values inherent in the works we use" (p.7).

The stories in *Not the End of the World* are mostly woman-centred. In spite of the fact that these stories are evaluated objectively and just for the sake of pleasure, the female characters are so dominant and striking that this leads us to a feminist reading which is “a reading strategy” in relation to “female experience”. (Eagleton, 1996, p. 120) However, feminist writing and feminist reading are totally different from each other as the former is concerned with the writer and the latter with the reader. Where readers place themselves throughout the reading process is important for the interpretation of a text. (Eagleton, 1996, p.119) This means that the point of view differs from reader to reader. Eagleton (1996) discloses; “the reader plays a crucial and active role in the production of meaning: s/he is not merely a passive recipient of ideas and imaginative projections created by the author” (p.119). On the other hand, it would be wrong to claim that every literary work written by women has a feminist point of view. As Morris (1993) emphasizes, “we cannot assume that all writing by women will be necessarily or essentially ‘feminine’ in its perspectives and values. Even less can we assume that anything and everything written by women will be -somehow- feminist” (p.2). Additionally, Morris (1993) agrees that “not all women-centred texts can be assumed to be consciously feminist texts in the sense of the definition of a political agenda” (p.86). Fortunately, Eagleton (1996) comes up with questions for defining a text whether it is feminist or not. Atkinson’s book is studied here following these questions. One of them is whether readers have had the experience of reading something which they did not expect to be feminist but which stirred a feminist response in them. (Eagleton, 1996, p.33) This is exactly what readers might feel during the reading process of *Not the End of the World* as most of its stories picture different women in different situations. Eagleton (1996) concludes, “the response of the reader determines whether or not a text is feminist” (p.33).

Whether Atkinson is a feminist or not is not the focus and claim of this study. Critics have already made some speculations on this issue. According to

Cox (2002), “Since then, she has continued to write funny, breathless novels that have occasionally been pigeonholed as feminist, but whose only true connection to women’s lib is that they are by a woman and liberating to read”.

It is significant to underline the fact that there are various theories on the analysis of female texts. Mills et al. (1989) expose some of these theories in their book, *Feminist Readings* and they claim that ‘images of women’ criticism is one of the kinds of feminist criticism (p.1).

Because of the fact that Atkinson’s stories embrace women characters from several different perspectives like wifehood and motherhood, this thesis will mainly and preferably focus on women characters’ analysis. The study will argue that the stories which share the women characters’ experiences, feelings, ups and downs in their both inner and outer relations have a sense of reality. As Leonard (2002) declares, “women’s experiences come from their personal relationships” (p.65). As a result of this, the characters and their common sides will be studied in the light of theoretical, political, cultural, sociological and psychological perspectives. In this sense, the theories and approaches mentioned above will offer an insight into this study. Just as Mills et al. (1989) think, “literature has a very close relationship to life in a broad political sense. Literary representations have some effect on what people do in the real world” (p.60) and add “literature and life are seen to be connected in the most intimate of ways” (p.62).

1.1 Feminism in British Contemporary Fiction and Kate Atkinson

Feminism as a branch of literary criticism takes gender issue under discussion so that the figuration of women is considered from different angles both in literary works and in every part of life. Petrut (2003) points out:

The period following the Second World War was characterized, among other important movements, by the controversial movement of feminism; it was interested in ‘freeing’ the woman from the rigid position society kept her tightly closed in. It was

dealing with the emancipation of women in a society that viewed her only in strict roles: the wife, the housekeeper, the mother, the servant, and others as such. The feminist movement fought for the right to make woman's voice heard. (p.131)

Despite feminism dates back to 1960s, femininity issues are still in the foreground of contemporary feminism. For Palmer (1989); “femininity and its construction form the basis of contemporary feminist thought” (p.13). The rapid and radical political, economic, ideological and cultural changes after 1960 influenced British fiction with key themes such as cultural identity, post colonialism and for sure, gender. English (2006) explains this period as follows:

The long twentieth century gained general acceptance and opened a new vantage on the contemporary within literary study. With respect to British fiction, a rough division imposed itself on the curriculum, with postwar now tending to mean the movement, the first generation of feminist novels, and the period of great acclaim for individual authors. (p.2)

Contemporary British fiction has the reflections of social and political movements especially since 1970s. For Bentley (2008), “contemporary fiction tends to be defined as the period from the mid-1970s to the present” (p.2). In British fiction, Virginia Woolf and her work, *A Room of One's Own* is considered today as “the first forceful modern tract on feminism”. (Pandey, 2003, p.4) Equality, patriarchy, women's role in family and society have been some of the issues that interest contemporary feminists and at the same time contemporary women writers. Pandey (2003) asserts; “women's experience became the central concern in feminist literature. Women writers like Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell, Dorothy Richardson, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Margaret Drabble took up certain feminist issues in their works” (p.13). It is obvious that there is an explicit influence of feminist theories on novels and short stories written by women. With the help of these theories, it would be more appropriate to appreciate the contemporary works. (Palmer, 1989, p.2) Kate Atkinson is one of the British contemporary women

writers and *Not the End of the World* is one of contemporary short fiction collection today. However some critics argue either *Not the End of the World* can be named as a novel or a short story book. Wilkinson (2003) comments in her review on the *BBC*'s website that:

Unlike Kate Atkinson's other books, *Not the End of the World* is a series of short stories rather than a novel. However in many ways this book could be classed as a novel, because so many of the characters are interwoven into more than one tale, such that an unfathomable mystery in one setting may be explained later in another narrative.

Upon the interviewer Rochlin's (2006) question on whether any of her stories begin as an idea for a novel, Atkinson replied in an interview with *LA Weekly* as "they were always meant to be stories. I was very clear about that with myself. It had been a long time since I had written any stories and I was very concerned to find again the spontaneity that comes with the form- novels can seem very imprisoning sometimes".

Atkinson is a really adventurous writer in terms of her courage and appetite on giving various kinds of works in different fields. She has written plays, newspaper articles, television scripts, novels and short stories. When reviewers and critics try to name the genre of her works, it does not make any sense to her and she finds such an effort meaningless. In her interview with Lewis (2006), Atkinson says "people like to put you in a box because then it is easier to market you, to read you, to know what they are getting" and adds "in Britain, where I have not been reborn, where I am still me, I feel I still have the same readers, and I do not think my readers are suddenly saying, 'Oh my god, now she is writing crime! They are just buying a Kate Atkinson 'comedy of manners' that has a bit more gore in it than usual". According to Perrick's review on *Times Online* (2006) "It does not really matter in which genre Atkinson chooses to write. Her subject is always the irrecoverable loss of love". The author best answers this genre problem to Scribner (2006) as

“people always want to ask a genre question when I write a book. It is just the book I am writing”.

As it has been mentioned in the introduction part of this study, Atkinson has won several awards for her literary works of different kinds such as thrillers, crime and detective novels and short fictions by which she has made a significant contribution to literature. *Not the End of the World* is, therefore, of tremendous importance for Atkinson as she stepped into the literary world through her short stories. Rabinowitz (2004) declares in her review that, “this collection of twelve stories is a return to her original craft”.

To touch briefly on short story as a genre of literature it should be noted that there has been a great deal of information about contemporary short fiction from its position as a genre of literature to its comparison to novel. For Clark (2005),

So much has been written about the contemporary short story- its decline in quality and popularity, the specter of its demise and the possibility of its regeneration being typical points de depart- that it seems there is almost nothing to say about it. This kind of literary criticism now seems to rely heavily on ready expositions of the genre’s past glories, lofty statements about its potential (often grounded in an almost adversarial relationship with full-length fiction) and a quasi-philosophical meditation on the nature of scale that contrasts miniaturism and maximalism, unwarranted modesty and monstrous ambition. All of which seems completely irrelevant to those engaged in reading the pieces themselves; pieces that might be as remarkably self-contained and, in one sense, unassuming as those by writers such as Kate Atkinson, A. L. Kennedy, John Murray, Ali Smith, or, indeed, Helen Simpson.

As for contemporary short fiction, woman issues have been a subject-matter for many writers. According to Palmer (1989), “another motif related to femininity and its construction which receives analysis in novels and short stories is the identification of woman” (p.24) and she adds “contemporary women writers treat the identification of woman in a variety of different ways” (p.26). It is commonly seen that there is an interaction between contemporary

women's fiction and feminist theories. (Palmer, 1989, p.10) Also Falconer (1998) mentions about the importance of modern short fiction; "shot through with postmodern skepticism about the concept of chronological, historical time, the contemporary short story is particularly well placed to 'net' our culture's apocalyptic sense of impending crisis, of time foreshortened, or already run out, before the end of the millennium" (p.699).

In Atkinson's *Not the End of the World*, the concepts of family, marriage, children and men are obviously connected with the women characters and their lives. Likewise, Petrut (2003) states "in the 70's, feminism came to be perceived as simply anti-family, anti-marriage, anti-children, and perhaps even anti-religion, not to mention anti-men" (p.131). In other words, today, in literary works, it is obvious that handling realities of women is still a very common situation. Palmer (1989) puts a similar view as follows; "femininity and its construction, as well as being a popular theme in novels by women, also features in a number of short stories" (p.23). Just like *Not the End of the World*, many contemporary novels and short stories, nowadays, mostly have the voice of women. Palmer (1989) exposes some dominant aspects that occurred during the presentation of women in the past:

Theorists such as Phyllis Chesler, writing in the early 1970s and seeking to emphasize women's oppressed circumstances, presented, on the whole, negative view of feminine identity and position. They identified femininity with a number of undesirable attributes, including passivity, dependence, indecisiveness and a propensity for excessive self-sacrifice. (p.14)

Although in the 20th century, the authors were mostly male or in other words literature was mostly male-dominated, in the 21st century, women writers have appeared in literature and their writing has gradually been increasing in number over time. As Bentley (2008) emphasizes, "the influence of feminism on British fiction has been profound, to the extent that today, contemporary women novelists are just as likely to gain major literary awards and to be included on contemporary fiction syllabuses as men" (p.12).

Similarly, Eagleton (1996) thinks that “some women authors have gained wide coverage and high level of popularity” (p.56) and she comments on the importance of authors’ gender as “the sex of the author and also the sex of likely readers may have an effect on our understanding of the elements to be studied” (p.32).

Margaret Atwood, Kate Chopin, J.K.Rowlings, Elif Safak are among well-known women writers all over the world. Some other examples of famous women writers are given by Petrut (2003) namely “Angela Carter, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, Fay Weldon and Penelope Lively” (p.132). For Morris (1993), “new anthologies and new editions of women’s writing have made the presence of women’s literary productivity an indisputable fact” (p.59). However, despite living in 21st century, gender still matters in every field of life even in literature. Yorkshire born novelist, Kate Atkinson is one of the most outstanding writers from Edinburgh. Because of the excessive tabloid attention after being the Whitbread winner, she says; “it made me want to kill”. (quoted in Teeman, 2008) Atkinson reacts towards the media and her fellow journalists and doing so, she underlines the difficulties of being a woman writer. She complains about the press’ focus on her gender but not on her writing. It is seen that the media prefers to introduce Atkinson as a ‘woman’ writer instead of a writer:

At the Guardian, which is our most intellectual newspaper, [the reporter] was talking about my hair, my nails, and my clothes. She came up with a great line: ‘Meeting Atkinson is like expecting to eat Yorkshire pudding and instead getting sushi.’ Many of these lines are burned into my brain. In France, I’m just a writer. But in the U.K., I’m treated as a woman rather than a writer. There’s a lot of gender politics here that people don’t notice because it’s so subtle. You don’t take it. You’re given it. You do an interview and everything is about your hair. (quoted in Rochlin, 2006)

Times Online comments on Atkinson’s impression on the press:

She has been described in the press as ‘lippy’, admits that she’s ‘easily offended’, and has recently considered ceasing giving interviews altogether. But her intermittent

pointedness is endearing and witty, rather than frightening. Is this because I'm male, a huge fan, in my twenties and non-threatening? Perhaps. Whatever the case, she seems a pleasant combination of self-assurance and vulnerability. (Cox, 2002)

Atkinson got reaction not only from her fellows but also from male-dominated literary circles on her path to success. *Telegraph* writes the writer's thoughts about the harsh response of the 'literary boys' club' about her success as "I think it was because I'm a woman" (Brown, 2004). In contrast to this common understanding of patriarchal society, it is known that Atkinson is the founder of the *Dundee University Women's Liberation Society*. (Rochlin, 2006) Moreover, Brown (2004) informs that the writer "enjoys delineating differences between the genders". Atkinson tells Brown (2004) about her thoughts on the position and reflection of women in society as follows; "my current bugbear is the news. I saw a report about the floods in Boscastle the other day, and the reporter said that the crew 'tenderly airlifted a woman to safety'. I mean, would you 'tenderly' airlift a man? It's that kind of complete random assertion of emotion into fact". By this explanation, it is understood that Atkinson strongly claims for the equality between men and women.

Kate Atkinson is recognized today as one of the pioneers of British contemporary fiction and she constructs different variations in terms of women in society, family and marriage in her short story collection. Her women characters suffer from their marriage, husband, children and position in family and society. This makes the work of Atkinson more concrete as it unites reality and fiction because the characters represent ourselves somehow. Palmer (1989) stresses that "the idea of the cultural construction of gender, as well as forming the basis for feminist demands for sex equality and women's liberation, has inspired a number of novels and short stories" (p.13). Likewise, in Atkinson's *Not the End of the World*, many readers can find some similarities between their and the characters' life. Therefore, Morris (1993) indicates; "we can know our world only because we can represent it to ourselves" (p.7).

1.2. 'Images of Women' Criticism

Interpreting the image of women in literature has been one of the main objectives for critics and researchers since 1970s. Right along with the increase in the number of women writers, the voices of women in the works are also highly common. From Virginia Woolf to Margaret Atwood, most women writers more or less have had the reflections of women in their works. The portrayals of women in contemporary British literature have been subject to many studies up to now. For Code (2000), "throughout the 1970s feminist academics and activists took the argument about the power of images as an important focus" (p.309).

As said by Robbins (2000), " 'images of women' criticism is named 'feminist critique' by Showalter" (p.73). The earlier 'images of women' criticism was interested in false representation of women in fiction because of the strong, independent female characters which sounded unrealistic and utopic. Register (1975) comments that "a literary work should provide role-models, instill a positive sense of feminine identity by portraying women who are 'self-actualizing, whose identities are not dependent on men' " (quoted in Moi, 1985, p.47). At the same time, such kind of criticism was in search of a link between the author, the reader and the text. (Moi, 1985, p.43) However, Moi (1985) asserts that, today, there is a different tendency of 'images of women' criticism towards "being excessively naive about the relationship between literature and reality" (p.49).

Eagleton (1996) expresses that "what a woman writes or reads about women can create or limit possibilities for women. Thus, questions of representation are at the same time political questions" (p.189). In this sense, feminists divide into two as humanist wing and anti-humanist wing in terms of the argument about the subjectivity of women. Humanists claim that women should be expressed from a much more positive angle while anti-humanists offer an opposite view towards representation of women. (Eagleton, 1996, p.

189) Eagleton (1996) explains humanist wing of feminism thought as follows; “women are misinterpreted under patriarchy and that the images of women which appear in literature, the media and elsewhere are often false and misogynistic” (p.189). On the other hand, she reports anti-humanist wing of feminists’ view as “under patriarchy, women are oppressed and marginalized” (p.190). So that, Eagleton clearly gives the two different sides of feminist thought in the matter of subjectivity of women. In the *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literary Theory* by Wallace (1997), Sielke writes:

Images of women criticism as represented by Susan Koppelman Cornillon’s *Images of Women in Fiction*, for instance, focused on stereotypical and thus supposedly ‘unreal’ characterization of women in texts by male as well as female authors. Instead of these ‘false’ images of women, critics called for faithful reproductions of ‘real life’ female figures. (p.17)

From Morris’s (1997) viewpoint, “in many cultures the literary canon is esteemed as the most prestigious form of representation” (p.8). Within this perspective, because of the fact that feminist critics deal with the image of women, the bond between feminism and literature is unavoidable. Code (2000) underlines; “the debate on literary images of women has become entangled with wider questions of women’s relation to representation” (p.309). Feminists question various points during the process of criticism of a text. For instance, Morris (1993) quotes that they explore “what sort of images of womanhood are constructed for us in their [writers’] work?” (p.8).

As it has been explained previously, in the analysis, the principal focus is the images of women in *Not the End of the World*. For Teeman (2008), “this collection of short stories explores the world we inhabit as well as another world shaped by the beliefs we banish from our conscious minds”. Atkinson reflects on several stories with different characters just like displaying a photo album. For Clark (2002),

The dozen pieces in *Not the End of the World*, which are linked by a character, mood, or the continuation of a strikingly odd set of circumstances-juxtapose the mundane

with the unearthly, as quotidian unhappiness and despair metamorphose into flights of fancy, and classical mythology is leavened by a liberal dose of popular culture.

Throughout this study, from varied aspects on women-identified relationships, the stories of the female characters and the world of women in reality will be connected emphasizing their strength and weaknesses. Thus, it can be possible that Atkinson's readers enjoy identifying experiences with her characters. In line with this idea, one of the aspects of an authentic realist reading is that a "relation between female characters" of a text and "women's experience", while others are about "the author" and "the pleasure of reading" (Mills et al., 1989, p.53). In this thesis, the female characters are of utmost importance. With this in mind, Mills et al. (1989) claim that "female characters are considered important in authentic realist criticism, because they are thought to affect the female readers' self-image" (p.57).

In Teeman's (2008) article, Atkinson expresses her frequent use of women image in her work as follows; "people think I don't like men but I like men as much as I like women. I'd always avoided fully rounded male characters because I didn't know a fully rounded male psyche, but then I decided that didn't matter".

It is important to highlight the fact that the primary objective here is not to claim that the work studied has a completely feminist perspective but to reveal repetitive and common problems shared by the women characters throughout the novel in the view of feminist literary criticisms mentioned before. In *Not the End of the World*, Atkinson shows the characters' struggle with life, how they deal with difficulties. She also reflects their inner thoughts, failures, regrets, and wishes. Such common points each woman character shares lead to making a connection between text and reality of which is a result of having a feminist perspective while approaching the text. Pears (2004) focuses on the comments of Tooley, Professor of education policy at Newcastle University: "They're what I call 'the Bridget Jones generation'. She expresses

the dissatisfaction and unhappiness of many modern women. She may be a fictional character but there is something real behind her” (p.10).

The stories are obviously female-oriented. Atkinson identifies her female characters in these stories highly realistically and picturesquely. In *Not the End of the World*, the interlinked relationship between the stories is remarkable as well as her vivid portrayal of the characters. The cast of Atkinson’s characters includes “single mothers, absconding fathers and pathetic or rebellious kids”. (Duguid, 2002) Characters’ lives intersect at some points. While sometimes one story is the continuation of another, sometimes we come into a protagonist as a sub-character in another.

The experiences of the characters in *Not the End of the World* are so real that it is without doubt readers can easily put themselves in the place of the characters and share similar feelings. Moreover, the depictions of the characters are so alive that readers can easily picture them in their mind because of the vividly described people, scenes and events. It is not to claim that a literary work has to be realistic and when it is realistic then it is closer to readers. As for critics, especially for readers, if a piece of writing stirs a sense of realism and familiarity inside readers, then this means that it tells about us. Morris (1993) claims that “most, if not all, women readers have probably felt the special pleasure of recognition that comes from finding their own feelings and experience given shape in literary form” (p.64). Atkinson is quite successful in rendering her characters’ personal experiences so that readers can make a connection between life and literature. This situation is best explained by Palmer (1989); “writers of fiction make connections between similar areas of life. The linking of the personal and the political, practice and theory, as well as being a tenet of radical feminist thought is also a significant facet of the creative writer’s craft” (p.45). While feminism is generally political in theory and problems that women face are personal, the concept that ‘personal is political’ comes to mind as it is used as a slogan by feminists. (Palmer, 1989, p.43) It is not difficult to associate feminism with literature as one deals with

politics and the other deals with persons. In this regard, the themes under discussion in this study are related to these personal experiences mostly happen to women. Palmer (1989) puts “areas of life previously regarded as purely personal in import, such as sexual relations, marriage, childcare and domestic violence, come increasingly to be examined for the larger meaning in our culture’s treatment of women” (p.45).

The issue of the image is particularly significant in this study. For this reason, the images of women approach will provide the interpretation of women in modern day and literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SUMMARIES OF THE SHORT STORIES IN NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

In *Not the End of the World* (2002), there are twelve short stories written by Kate Atkinson. They are respectively *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, *Tunnel of Fish*, *Transparent Fiction*, *Dissonance*, *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, *Unseen Translation*, *Evil Doppelgangers*, *The Cat Lover*, *The Bodies Vest*, *Temporal Anomaly*, *Wedding Favours* and *Pleasureland*.

This chapter provides the brief summaries of the stories so that the study will be much more useful and can be understood more easily. Since the study is based on the women characters of the stories, it is necessary to introduce their world through their story lines. By this way, the characters will be explored impartially by observing not only protagonists but also the subcharacters of each story. In terms of its plot and the writer's unique writing style, the interconnecting web of the stories is remarkably apparent in the entire book. However, the synopses here display each narrative on its own merit.

2.1. Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping

The two Charlene and Trudi stories, in the beginning and at the end, are just like the key figures of the book. Charlene, who is a journalist with a bridal magazine, and Trudi, who is a publicist for a small imprint in a large publishing house, do shopping in London streets as Charlene wants to buy a present for her mother. During their shopping, these two friends talk about men and their ex boyfriends as well as women stuff like hairstyles, dresses, diamonds, cats, and so on. Trudi and her twin Heidi from *The Cat Lover*, lose their parents in a mysterious accident just after they are born. On the other hand, Charlene feels lonely and she thinks that a baby, especially a boy, would probably fill the space inside her [life]. But she knows that she first has to find

a man to father her baby. Charlene also dreams of her wedding in the future. She constantly longs for having a change in her life and imagines that they can make clothes with Trudi and work together or maybe they can keep animals such as goats on a green hillside where there are no machines and noise because it seems that she has done with metropolis. But Trudi thinks of clothes and belts in the world of her own, at that moment. In the end, Charlene buys gloves for her mother.

2.2. Tunnel of Fish

The mother, June has a son, who is a problematic child, named Eddie. He is isolated and unsuccessful at school and June humiliates him all the time. Hawk, symbolizing the lack of father figure, is living with them because he has nowhere to go. They have an unhappy marriage in which there is a lack of communication. June always blames her own family when she is not content with her son and her husband. The only hope she has is the baby girl inside her. Eddie sees the baby as a chance, too. He thinks that he would be a hero when he helps his mother to look after the baby.

The scenery opens with the family on their way to an underwater museum, Deep Sea World. As Eddie is quite interested in sea world, on his birthday he again wishes to visit the museum. June thinks that Eddie, her fish-obsessed son who is a secondary school student, might be autistic in view of his eccentricities. She does not have any hope about him. She is not happy with her life and she blames her own parents for everything, although she knows that it is too late to blame them as she is forty-two. She already knows that if she had listened to them, she would probably have had a better life. She is dissatisfied with her old-fashioned name, her position and her life. What she wants is a better life than she has now. The baby inside her is the last chance to save her family. She has dreams about her baby girl because the abortion she had before Eddie makes her feel guilty enough. Moreover, she stops her education after that abortion although she is top of her class. Crete is the place

where she meets Hawk and functions as a turning point in June's life. As a result, her life changes totally. The scenery closes with the family on their way back to home from Deep Sea World.

2.3. Transparent Fiction

Meredith, graduated from pharmacology, is a wanderer just like her family. She is always like a tourist travelling a lot and now she is on her tour of Europe. She is a member of the Zane family and one of the Zane women. Fletcher, a scenarist of television series, is her English friend who helps her during her visit to London. Meredith doesn't like him because she thinks that they are different. For instance, she wants to share some thoughts about her doctorate thesis with Fletcher but he is not interested in it much. Thus, she thinks that boys do not like such kind of girls. That is why she likes Fletcher as much as she likes a Golden Retriever. She believes that men prefer an 'Air Stewardess Barbie' rather than a girl with a doctoral thesis. Meredith's family has a perfect background. She always takes the women in her family as an example. Her mother is calm but authoritative. Her cousin, who is a performance artist, is very cunning. Her aunt Jenny is an interior decorator. Meredith is also one of the hardworking girls among these Zane women. In her family, except Debbie - who elopes with her lover from high school- everybody is very prospering. Most of her relatives get married during their European trips. All of her sisters -except Nanci from *The Bodies Vest*- have children. For the Zane women, men are unimportant. Additionally, the Zane family is not very religious. Meredith's father, who is a dentist, commits suicide when one of his daughters, Nanci, dies. Meredith and Fletcher live together and spend some time in London. Since Meredith is keen on her freedom, at the end of the story she leaves London and goes on her journey, to the next stop, Paris.

2.4. Dissonance

In this story, Atkinson presents an example of a completely distorted family. The members of the family suffer from a lack of communication and their relationship is quite weak. Simon and Rebecca both hate their mother, Pamela. They do not like her lifestyle, way of dressing, manners and preferences. The children sometimes share their house with the strangers who are the men of their mother. No wonder they do not like these guys. Brian is their mother's boyfriend, who is divorced with no children. They live together most of the time. Hawk, ex boyfriend of Pamela and at the same time the lost father figure in the story *Tunnel of Fish*, is a repairer and he usually helps them with the housework, just like a father figure. The father, Alistair, who is a lawyer, lives with his girlfriend, Jenny and she is pregnant with his baby. In addition to this, the children have their own problems. Simon has problems with the school, Rebecca has problems with her future plans. Atkinson allows readers to hear the inner voices of each character by using interior monologues in this story. Rebecca is in a world of her own. She is looking forward to entering a university and living alone. At the end, Rebecca and Simon leave home and Pamela becomes lonely.

2.5. Sheer Big Waste of Love

The central character, Addison is an orphan and in the very first scene of the story, Atkinson introduces him to readers as a forty-one year old man. She gives the life period of Addison from his childhood to his adulthood using flashbacks every now and then. Addison's wife, Clara, a primary school teacher is carrying a baby but Addison has no idea about what a family means and tries to learn about it by observing Clara's family. The ironic thing is that while he is longing for a father figure, he is soon to be a father. Addison's lost father figure, Bill was a fighter pilot and is now a famous man as known as the Car King in Edinburgh where he lives with his other family. Addison describes the image of his father in his mind. On the other side, his mother, Shirley, who

was a prostitute in her earlier life and now is a cancer patient and an alcoholic, always speaks ill of Addison's father. This is what Addison experiences during his childhood. Then Addison meets Clara and they decide to marry, he experiences the period of wedding preparation and planning for things such as the honeymoon, which his mother, Shirley has never known in her life. Readers share his feelings during this period. He often thinks of his mother and compares his marriage with hers. He does not want to tell his mother's problems to Clara because of the respect he has for his mother. Before Shirley dies, she tries to reach her ex husband, Bill and wants him to take Addison. In the middle of the story, Atkinson takes readers back to Addison's childhood when Shirley throws Addison and Bill together and wants him to look after their son. However Shirley and Bill begin quarreling in front of him and he witnesses all those things when he is only five. Addison's unborn child makes him remember his own childhood. Later on, Addison learns that there are some complications about the baby and also Clara. Moreover, when he is at the hospital waiting for Clara and the baby, he finds out from a newspaper that his father has died. He attends his father's funeral and talks to his stepsisters about him. Bill is an alcoholic, rapist and a villain in his children's eyes. Finally he comes to know that his father is not the kind of man that he has pictured in his mind.

2.6. Unseen Translation

Romney, the mother figure who has lack of maternal instinct, has a baby girl from a very famous multimillionaire Swedish banker, Otto. Now her only aim is to get some money from him and that is why she waits the DNA test results. She poses naked with her new born baby, China, for cameras and gets money from the media. She is good at this job because she is a celebrity on the tabloid press. Arthur, as a young and illegitimate boy, witnesses all her similar kinds of behaviour. But he is very clever and a mature child while Romney is really an ignorant and a distant mother figure. In this story, Arthur's

nanny, Missy functions as a mother figure. Suddenly Romney decides to send Arthur to see his father, Campbell who is a rock singer. She deceives Arthur and Missy telling them that they can find Campbell in Germany as he is on a concert tour. Unfortunately, they realize that there was no father at all. They decide to enjoy their time together and start visiting museums and historical places moving to different cities such as Rome and London. As a result, Arthur stays with Missy, away from his mother while Missy mothers him. At the end of the story, they promise not to leave each other.

2.7. Evil Doppelgangers

Fielding, ex boyfriend of Trudi from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, and Joshua are both television critics. They criticize Fletcher, a television series writer from *Transparent Fiction*. Readers witness these two guys' friendship and their thoughts about women in this story. Flavia, their workmate, is the most disciplined girl at work. He and Joshua wonder what would happen if women ruled the world. According to Fielding, Nina, another workmate, has no sense of humour at all. He thinks that the only thing she knows is French manicure. One day, Nina claims that she has had an affair with Fielding but he does not remember such a thing. In this part of the story, we see some metaphysical elements because of the fact that Fielding has a doppelganger. Also, Emma, another workmate, claims that Fielding for the first time behaved her in a very kind and friendly way which is odd for him. And the jaded protagonist, Fielding again does not remember it. He wants to escape from all these rumours. All these things told and happened in the story are very ambiguous and readers may not be sure whether they are just in a dream or not. It is not very clear in this respect.

2.8. The Cat Lover

The main character of this story is Heidi who is the best friend of Missy from *Unseen Translation* and the twin sister of Trudi from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*. At the very first scene, there is a description of nature, weather of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Berkshire, people in the streets in the bad weather with strong wind and freezing rain. Although, Heidi is not fond of pets, especially cats, ironically she runs into a tomcat on such a bad weather day and starts keeping and looking after it. She names it 'Gordon'. Throughout the story, most of the descriptions of the stray cat seem to be the descriptions of a man.

Gordon is very lazy, sleepy, and as greedy as a pig just like Heidi's ex boyfriend, Fletcher from the story *Transparent Fiction*. She finds some similarities between Gordon and Fletcher. The reason she has broken up with him is his such kind of attitudes. She has thought that if they married, he would be just the same. Since she works at a male geriatric ward, her view through male sex has totally changed. On the other hand, Heidi wants to be a mother. The only thing she wishes is a baby girl. She sometimes behaves as if she was Gordon's mother. They sleep together every night. But one morning, at the last scene of the story, when she wakes up, she realizes that Gordon has left her on a stormy and snowy day as mysteriously as he came. Suddenly she finds herself in a hospital with an ultrasound technician and she learns that she is pregnant. The doctors are surprised as they observe lots of kittens inside her.

2.9. The Bodies Vest

The story starts with Vincent's childhood, the period spent with his father after the mother's death. The writer shows how his father, Billy and the son survive without a mother in the house. Vincent is an orphan boy at the age of six. When he is two, his mother Georgie passes away. She is murdered by people unknown in a mysterious way. Mrs. Anderson helps Vincent and his

father with the houseworks. Vincent does not know Georgie and what having a mother means. Only photographs and some memories his father has told him portray a family picture in his mind. Vincent finds his grandparents in order to discover his family but Mr. And Mrs. Shaw who always blame Billy, do not welcome him warmly. For them, “Vincent is a disappointment rather than a surprise” (p.249). Vincent learns more about Georgie at his grandparents’ house. He learns the family life there. However, Mr. and Mrs. Shaw die after a fire at their house and Vincent realizes that all memories about Georgie are erased, too. Vincent meets Nanci, one of the Zane women from *Transparent Fiction*, on a world tour. After living together for six months in London, they get married. Vincent is a junior lecturer and his doctoral thesis is unsurprisingly on ‘Body and Soul: the Transcendence of Death in Metaphysical Poetry’ (p.257). Nanci has a good relationship with her father, who is an orthodontist. Ironically she has some dental problems and she dies under anesthetic surgery causing her father committing suicide. Vincent feels the loss of his wife deeply. After his mother’s loss, now Vincent loses his wife. After a while, his father passes away, too. Later on, Vincent dies because of a cancer virus at a tender age. The closing scene portrays Vincent and Georgie, hand by hand, in the world of light.

2.10. Temporal Anomaly

It’s a rainy day on M9 highway in Scotland. There is a small discussion between the mother, Marianne and the father, Robert. Marianne is now driving back from visiting her mother with whom she has always a lack of communication. But she has an accident just at the minute she is talking to her mother on the phone. At the very last moment of her death, she thinks of her son, Liam and worries about what he would do without her. Her death is described in a detailed way by Atkinson. After the accident, she rises and comes back to real world but invisible as if she is sent to kiss and say goodbye to her loved ones. She wants to observe what and how well her family is doing

without her and she is shocked at seeing how quickly Liam and Robert get used to live without her. They even do not talk much about her. Only sometimes Liam feels her absence.

Marianne looks for her mother and wonders where she is, why she does not come to the funeral home and look after Liam. Maybe because of the disconnection with her own mother, Marianne always wanted to be a mother. Unluckily, she never knew what being a mother means because of her untimely death. After visiting her mother's house, finally she finds peace in her own house and then she leaves the world forever.

2.11. Wedding Favours

This story is the continuation of *Dissonance*. These two stories are linked to each other. Alistair leaves his wife, Pamela for his girlfriend, Jenny. Pamela, who is now a regretful and unhappy mother, tries to console herself thinking of her children. Rebecca lives in her own flat but luckily, in the same town. At least she is grateful for having Simon at home with her as she is afraid of being lonely. However, when Simon starts university, he decides to stay at dormitory. Sometimes she worries about him and visits Simon's campus. One day, on her way to the campus, she sees a car accident on the road which happened to Marianne from *Temporal Anomaly*. Now Pam is on her own, in her house which looks strange to her as all the rooms are empty. She is in the period of getting used to this new transition of her life. She is now sorry about not having a family. Neither her own parents, nor her children and husband is there with her. Sometimes she wonders if Alistair misses her. She misses her daughter dreaming about her childhood. She starts seeing flashbacks of her life and her family. Maggie, a friend of Pam gives her moral support. Two different sorts of mother examples are represented by Atkinson here. Maggie is enthusiastic about their new period of life, their fresh start with full of freedom, about not having jobs and kids. But Pam wants her old days with her family back. These two friends decide to go into a business and sell wedding favours,

although Pam is not willing to do it since she misses her husband, her children and her old times. The writer shares with readers Pam's own parents, and her youth and also her student life. Pam misses her old free days, too. By the way, the children have some problems surely. On the one hand, Simon is okay with his friends but in trouble with his lessons at university. On the other hand, Rebecca comes home only when she is in need of money. Moreover, Alistair has two kids by Jenny now. Rebecca attends her father's wedding which makes Pam feel sorry. Sometimes Simon and Rebecca prefer staying with Alistair and Jenny rather than staying with their mother. Pam questions what passion, love and a real family are. She questions her place in her children's lives. She questions herself, too, whether she is a nice person, a kind mother or a good wife. Pam is a lonely mother waiting her children to be three years old and walk back in.

2.12. Pleasureland

This story is the continuation of *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and functions as the final one.

Charlene goes to Trudi. But she cannot go back to her own flat, because cholera is rife in the city although nobody talks about the plague much. There is neither electricity nor water in the house. They do not remember when the last time they had a shower was. They imagine clean clothes, bottles of water, drinks, perfumes as Trudi's flat has a very bad smell. While they are in the attic collecting rainwater, Charlene talks about her wishes and Trudi talks about her regrets. They realize that they are trapped in the flat. The door is stuck fast. All flats are nailed with large crosses painted red on the front doors but Charlene and Trudi are sure that they do not have the plague. They start to live with a tomcat which has come from the attic window. They get frostbite in their toes and they sleep together to warm each other. After being in the worst condition, they start to appreciate the value of good things that they ignore in the chaos of

life. Their high wishes turn into simpler things. They dream what they would do if they left the flat.

Charlene keeps telling stories to Trudi in order to kill the time. After a while, they do not have any energy to move anymore. Finally, when Charlene finds no story to tell, Trudi says '*Don't worry, it is not the end of the world*' (p.332).

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMAGES OF WOMEN IN NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

Kate Atkinson frequently brings up the themes of ‘family’, ‘friendship’, ‘motherhood’ and so forth from women’s perspective in *Not the End of the World* to the fore. Because of the fact that her women characters dominate the stories, readers share the world of Atkinson’s women and so it will be seen that women issues are exactly the same both in fiction and reality.

During the analysis of *Not the End of the World*, the text and the author will not be associated to each other. However, Showalter believes that, “a text should reflect the writer’s experience and that the more authentic the experience is felt to be by the readers, the more valuable the text” (quoted in Moi, 1985, p.4). Nevertheless, there are some common grounds between the writer’s life and her text although this study is not aimed at making such a connection. Considering the fact that the women of *Not the End of the World* are the core of this work, the writer, herself, has also a world filled with women. Teeman (2008) affirms; “Atkinson lives in Edinburgh, near her 84-year-old mother, two daughters and grandchildren”. “I like my own company,” she says. “I might have been a more sociable child if I had siblings. My father was very sociable, my mother less so”. Therefore, it is not surprising that she has such a power on inventing clearly pictured scenes full of women characters. Her bewilderingly large cast of women is delineated carefully. Her main protagonists are ‘Charlene’ and ‘Trudi’ from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and *Pleasureland*, ‘June’ from *Tunnel of Fish*, ‘Meredith’ from *Transparent Fiction*, ‘Pamela’ from *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours*, ‘Shirley’ from *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, ‘Georgie’ from *The Bodies Vest*, ‘Heidi’ from *The Cat Lover*, ‘Marianne’ from *Temporal Anomaly*; the other characters function as sub-characters.

It is obvious that the writer puts her women characters first. That is why this study is dedicated to analyse *Not the End of the World* from a feminist

standpoint. Because these female characters are strictly likable, almost all are believably unhappy, regretful and desperate. Unaware of each other, they share the same problems in their own lives. While some of them stand for presenting the relationship between women, others picture being a 'mother', a 'wife', or a 'woman'.

Only one of the stories, *Evil Doppelganger*, has a male protagonist, Fielding. But even in this case, readers witness a man's viewpoint towards women. There are also very negative descriptions of male characters representing an absent father, a womanizer, an unfaithful husband, and so on.

The multitude of characters is identified with a vivid specificity. The collection does embrace the depictions of a shopping addict, a cat lover, an unhappy mother, a divorced mother, a pregnant mother, an alcoholic mother, a dead mother, a hardworking young girl, a rebellious daughter, a devoted nanny, a successful businesswoman, a fallen woman, etc. They are all voiced by Atkinson's creative writing. So it is understood that the text under discussion is 'womanist'.

Throughout the analysis of twelve stories in *Not the End of the World*, the study is divided into four categories as the female characters meet on common grounds. So that, the characters who share the same issues are examined under these categories. The meeting point of the women of Atkinson in this book includes the themes of wifehood, motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood. As women issues have always been a subject matter in feminist literary criticism, the representation of female characters enables readers get inside the stories. For Mills et al. (1989) "these [female] characters are discussed as if they were people, and when they are convincing as people, they are seen as authentic" (p.60).

The research themes are presented in terms of the experiences of the characters in the stories. The question of being a wife, a mother, a sister, a

friend and a woman form a basis for this study in the sense of family and society. Within this perspective, the text and the feminist views introduced in chapter one are on the same line, because Pandey (2003) confirms; “feminism in literature refers to a mode that approaches a text with foremost concern for the nature of female experience in it” (p.1). After all, it does not matter when or why, women issues have been rendered throughout history. From the early 1970s, feminists’ approach through women issues - which also covers the themes of this study - is given by Palmer (1989) in the following words:

They [feminists] drew attention to the oppressive effects of the stereotypical representation of women as sex object, wife and mother. These roles, they demonstrated, had the effect of relegating women to the private sphere of sexual relations and family life, while debarring their entry into the public one of professional work and political struggle. (p.14)

3.1. Women in Marriage: Wifhood

In Atkinson’s thematically-linked stories, family dynamics are one of the prominent features in *Not the End of the World*. As the major subject of this study is the image of women, this section focuses on the place of women characters in marriage, in other words, wifhood in *Not the End of the World*.

Out of twelve stories in the book, the themes of marriage and family run through seven stories. The image of wifhood is dominant in six of these stories namely *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, *Tunnel of Fish*, *Dissonance*, *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, *The Bodies Vest*, *Temporal Anomaly* and *Wedding Favours*.

Throughout the book, the dreams of women about their future weddings, the importance and meaning of marriage, starting and having a family, distorted families, families with lack of father or mother figures, the situation of children without family or of divorced family are on display in terms of interactions between wives and husbands, children and their parents.

As indicated by McDermott (2006), “Kate Atkinson’s fiction can be described as attempting to rewrite and revision the family” (p.67). Inside the stories, there are women characters who dream about a happy marriage and who are in the middle of broken marriages. According to McDermott (2006), “[Atkinson’s] fiction operates as a critique of received ideologies of the family and notions of family values” (p.67).

The absence, significance or place of woman in marriage is one of the common issues in *Not the End of the World*. The meaning of being a family, having a family, or not having a family is unfolded by Atkinson.

While the heroines of the first story, *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, Charlene and Trudi are talking about their dreams and hopes, marriage theme appears as the first subject-matter beside men for these women in the story:

‘When I get married,’ Charlene said, ‘I want white satin wedding shoes, silver horseshoes with white heather, lucky black cats and a bouquet of lilacs dripping with rain. Oh, and a sprung wooden floor to dance on and a father to give me away and a mother to cry and a sister to be bridesmaid - but I have none of these, neither father nor mother nor sister.’ (p.38)

This quotation emphasizes women’s dreams about their future weddings and at the same time the importance of family in weddings for a young woman. As explained before, there is a connection between literature and life. In this sense, the French feminist and theorist Simone De Beauvoir (1989) focuses on the meaning of marriage for women and thinks “marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. It is still true that most women are married [June], or have been [Shirley], or plan to be [Charlene], or suffer from not being [Pam]” (p.425). From the conversation above, Charlene tells her dreams about her future wedding. Meanwhile, it can be seen, she feels sorry of being familyless. We understand her desire to get what she has not got – a family and a marriage -. According to Charlene, marriage or in other words, starting a family is the best thing a person can ever have. She says; “they

[wedding bonbonnières] signify happiness, health, wealth, fertility and long life-” (p.38). The bonbonnières symbolize here marriage so that we can understand what it means to Charlene. Morris (1993) views marriage from a different aspect and exposes: “Freedom for a woman is simply the right man” (p.33). In another story, *Wedding Favours*, as it is evident from its name, marital issues are on the foreground again. The mother figure, Pam dreams about her daughter’s future wedding: “Would Rebecca get married? (Please God, not to Hamish.) Would she want to look at wedding dresses and discuss cakes with her? She wished she would” (p.313). Maybe because of the reason that Rebecca is a rebellious young girl, Pam believes starting a family is the only way for Rebecca to have a straight life and relationship. As if it was the last choice and chance to isolate her daughter from the outside world by the help of the clichés of a routine marriage. But on the other hand, the Pam character says “what was the point of buying a hugely expensive dress that you were only going to wear once in your life? Maybe that was the statement she’d been trying to make when she wore brown at her own wedding” (p.314). For Pam, marriage is an ordinary but exaggerated step for women as she feels no enthusiasm about it, even her own marriage. Atkinson, by all these descriptions, reveals what these women think about marriage and starting a family as well as presenting their hopes, dreams, desires and excitements. Accordingly, Beauvoir (1989) expresses “they [women] banish ennui by the simple fact of their presence, with their dreams, their desires, their pleasures, their emotions, their ingenuities” (p.241).

From another perspective, Atkinson gives these women characters’ awareness of reality. Just like two sides of a coin, marriage brings unhappiness as well as happiness in the stories. McDermott (2006) talks about marriages in Atkinson’s narration as “symbolic markers in the life of the family, satirizing the disjuncture between the wedding as ideal and its reality” (p.75). Speaking of the negativity in relationships between men and women in marriage, Charlene brings up the issue of “midnight arguments between husbands and

wives” (p.40). From this point, after this account of Charlene in the very first story of the book, problems of marriages appear in the following stories. The meaning of family reoccurs in *Not the End of the World* just as it does in Atkinson’s other novels suggesting “a monstrous creation, and that its various members might be happier and healthier outside of its grip” (McDermott, 2006, p.76). In *Tunnel of Fish*, there is a married couple, June and Hawk with their son Eddie. June regrets her marriage to Hawk and hates everything she has, including her name; “June blamed her parents. June blamed her parents for everything” (p.50). As for Beauvoir (1989), “reared by women within a feminine world, their normal destiny is marriage, which still means practically subordination to men” (p.xxxvi). Atkinson also reveals the communication gap between the parents; “Hawk only living with them anyway because he didn’t have anywhere else to live” (p.50). Again, Beauvoir (1989) supports this issue by saying; “today the house has lost its patriarchal splendor; for the majority of men it is only a place to live in” (p.449). It is clear here that there is no connection between the wife and the husband and this situation influences Eddie negatively who adores his mother. Being afraid of taking after his father, Eddie asks June whether he looks like him or not. She replies as follows emphasizing their broken family: “I can’t remember what he looked like” (p.61). What defines their marriage is that lack of communication, love and care in this family full of unhappiness and hatred between June and Hawk, because Atkinson portrays here a wife image who wants to get rid of her husband immediately; “she wished he would leave now instead of putting her through the misery of waiting for him to go” (p.66). In the same way, Rampage (2002) comments on such marriages:

Feminists could easily agree that women are disadvantaged by the structure of heterosexual marriage, and that couple therapy has done little to address that disadvantage; but specifying how to redress gender inequities in marriage and other committed relationships has proven to be thornier problem, about which there is still no universal agreement. (p.263)

In *Dissonance*, another failing married couple Pam and Alistair is described along with their children, Rebecca and Simon. Atkinson underlines the fact of marital infidelity in the story. During their marriage, while Alistair is living with another woman named Jenny, Pam has affairs with other men either as a reprisal or as a need of someone to hold on to. All these happen right under their children's very eyes. "Beardy Brian wasn't family. He was a bloody stranger. A bloody stranger who was doing it with their mother" (p.105). In the story, Atkinson frequently uses characters' inner voices in italics so that readers perceive the real intention of their statements. The following sentences clearly display Pam's misery as a wife: "Tell Dad if you want, I haven't even seen him in weeks". "Dad wasn't interested in them any more anyway. He had Jenny now. It'll never last. Jenny who was pregnant, except their mother didn't know it" (p.98). Alistair is shown as the reason for unhappiness and problems in the family. Pam is portrayed in her own world with her own desperation and without anyone to turn to on the other hand. As Beauvoir (1989) expresses, "when a break comes, they [women] feel a despairing sense of emptiness" (p.550).

Temporal Anomaly, revealing the life of Marianne, Robert and their son Liam, in contrast to the former two stories, consists of extraordinary and supernatural elements. In the very beginning of the story, readers meet the problems within the family:

When Marianne saw the stall with the lemons she made Robert stop the car and he cursed her because he said it was too dangerous to stop and she said he was too cautious and he said that she was irresponsible and she said that was unfair and all the time Liam had played Donkey Kong on his Game Boy in the back of their rented Fiat Brava and said nothing. (p.270)

Atkinson again gives the disunity between the family members from the wife's standpoint; "Marianne couldn't remember when she had been so pleased to see Robert, not for years certainly" (p.280). Marianne dies in a traffic

accident weirdly and after a short time of her death, she rises and invisibly watches how her family copes with their grief. The only thing she wants is to see how they survive without her. Atkinson gives Marianne's disappointment and heartbreak when she faces the truth; "and it wasn't just her clothes that had been disposed of, everything had gone - makeup, perfume, every last hair-clip, as if Robert couldn't wait to eliminate her from the house" (p.285). Just in this point, Beauvoir (1989) states, "marriage has always been a very different thing for man and for woman" (p.426). By this story, 'wife' image in a family becomes entirely visible. *Wedding Favours* is the continuation of *Dissonance* as it is expressed in the synopses of the stories in Chapter Two. Alistair, the husband figure, abandons home for another woman, Jenny, leaving his wife, Pam, and children Simon and Rebecca behind. Pam takes solace in her children; "she just wished that he hadn't left her for someone else, someone with whom he didn't have to pretend to be happy. But at least she'd still had the children" (p.295). Atkinson presents Pam's self-questioning in the followings: "Had she really shared a double bed with Alistair? Did he ever miss her?" (pp.301-2). In reference to Pam's such statements, Pateman (1988) highlights the difference of wifehood and motherhood from women's standpoint as "women engaged in sexual relations with men and are wives before they become mothers in families" (p.17). So it is seen that Pam is stuck between being a mother and a wife. As there is nothing left to share with her husband, Pam questions her life in terms of her sexual and emotional needs. "Had she felt passionate about Alistair once? Or Hawk? Or Brian? Forty-eight years old and she'd had sex with only three men. It wasn't a very impressive tally" (p.311). By these sentences, Atkinson describes a marriage without a husband, a life with other men, a family without a father in the eyes of the wife, Pam, picturing in such a marriage, how a woman struggles for life. Similarly, Tripp (2000) mentions about men who are "callous in sex, neither helpful nor affectionate towards 'the wife' - to affirming the end of the absentee husband and a new partnership in marriage" (p.74). After being left on her

own, Pam starts a business with her friend and sells wedding favours which is ironic enough for her. It is quite contrary that a woman who experiences unhappiness in her family causes happiness of others in line of being families. Pam expresses: “What nonsense. How could a sugared almond signify anything, let alone happiness? Especially happiness” (p.306). The writer portrays in this story a woman without a family produces wedding favours for other people who start a family. She does not understand these people’s enthusiasm and at the same time compares her own wedding with theirs:

Pam wondered if she’d actually been at her own wedding. She’d had some kind of flu bug and they’d had no photographer to record the event. It all seemed such a blur now. Register office, close family, no cake, no presents to speak of and lunch in the Doric with both sets of parents. As if there’s been nothing really to celebrate. She was sure she’d worn brown. She must have been making some kind of statement, but what and to whom? Now there were girls (or their mothers probably) spending thousands and thousands pounds on their weddings. (p.310)

Appropriate to Pam’s state, McDermott (2006) imposes that “Atkinson’s fictions can be said to move between a knowing irony and a less cynical desire for recovery and completion” (p.68). Revealing her undeserved situation, Pam at the same time reproves and accuses of Alistair and his girlfriend Jenny because of their expectance of an illegitimate baby: “Did they do church weddings for divorced people these days? For adulterous, divorced people with illegitimate children?” (p.314). Generally speaking, Seidler (1997) informs, “as women feel that they are not being met in their partnerships, they become frustrated and angry” (p.203). On the other hand, seeing that her children support their father and prefer to be on his side, Pam does not accept and excuse what he has and has not done so far. “Including her own children. Shouldn’t they have more loyalty to her? What had their father ever done for them in the way of parenting?” (p.314). In a similar way, Stevenson (1998) underlines the importance of “the significance of the mothers’ feelings about,

and experiences of, relationships between men and women, fathers and mothers, especially in relation to the upbringing of children” (p.50).

As yet, Atkinson depicts unhappy, desperate housewives as well as hopeful and expectant women. The family, in most of the stories, “becomes a malign and oppressive force, binding individuals into a shared legacy of frustration and entrapment” (McDermott, 2006, p.73). Men make women’s life miserable in Atkinson’s stories. One of them gets out of parenting, fathering duties, the other does not even mourn for his wife’s death. The writer reflects a world of adulterous, irresponsible, selfish men from a very negative perspective. At this point, Pears (2004) establishes some ideas on state of feelings of women in the light of Prof. Tooley’s research;

Feminist author Germaine Greer believes that aggressive feminism, and a determination among women to beat men at their own game, actually belittles the contribution women make to society. She describes it as an “injustice” and urges women to celebrate womanhood, not by aping men, but by making the most of their differences. Professor Tooley became interested in the subject when he discovered a recent survey of more than 100,000 British and American men and women. They were asked about their lives, both at home and work, and the statistics showed that, over the last 30 years, women have become increasingly unhappy, while men are just as content. (p.10)

In *Dissonance*, the wife, Pam tries to fulfill the lack of father figure in the family. Here, Seidler (1997) underlines the general belief as “within the patriarchal form of family it was assumed that the ‘father rules the house’ ” (p.65). Pam believes that she cannot cope with life without a man in accord with the patriarchal system. “Hawk, the guy she had hired to do all those little odd jobs that somehow in her mind had been the responsibility of their father, which was a ridiculous flaw in her memory as their father, an advocate in the High Court, had never lifted a screwdriver in his life” (p.109). As it is obvious, Pam compares her husband with her boyfriends, thinking that Alistair is indifferent to Pam’s sexual and emotional needs as well as to his roles of

parenting. As for Beauvoir's (1989) belief, "a woman, enlightened by the failure of her marriage, is attracted this time by just the kind of man to suit her, and in consequence a durable attachment is created between them. She often finds him attractive because he is of a type quite opposite to that of her husband" (pp.550-1). One of Pam's boyfriends, Hawk, -who is at the same time June's husband from *Tunnel of Fish*- makes advances towards not only Pam but also her daughter, Rebecca. Along with the characterization of Atkinson, lack of father figure is the major reason for this situation that the mother and the daughter are in. It is very interesting that the wife figure in this story -Pam- and the wife figure in *Tunnel of Fish* -June- are both discontented with their lives and they are unaware of each other. There is a sense of parallelism in this respect: "He [Hawk]'d even tried it on with Rebecca one time when he was fixing a leaking tap in the bathroom...He hadn't touched her or anything, he'd just said, Do you want to?, just like that. As if" (p.109). In addition, Atkinson pictures the lack of communication in the family along with the irresponsibility of Pam's husband and children. The following dialogue between the mother and her son refers to this issue: "Don't you tell me what to do, you're not my dad." "No and I don't see your father in this room, do you, Simon?" (p.111). In this context, Morgan thinks that "if there is a 'war over the family', then one of its principle battle fronts is whether homes need fathers" (quoted in Tripp, 2000, p.93). In *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, a sad story about Addison and his mother, Atkinson's portrayal of a divorced family reveals the condition of both Addison as a fatherless boy and Shirley as a single woman. Atkinson touches on the problems that arise after divorce through this story. With Shirley's situation in mind, Pateman (1988) highlights that:

Divorce is usually seen as the opposite of marriage, but Christine Delphy argues that divorce today is, rather, the transformation of marriage. She argues that since divorced wives almost always continue to look after the children of the marriage, marriage and divorce can be considered as two ways of obtaining a similar result: the collective attribution to women of the care of children and the collective exemption of men from the same responsibility. (p.184)

In this part, the writer, with the stories of these characters allows readers witness their world by highlighting her women characters in terms of their identity as a wife. The aspects underlined in this section reveal the roles of wives and husbands within family. At this point, McDermott (2006) touches on Atkinson's frequently used "themes of feckless and absent fathers" and "reluctant mothers" (p.68).

The main focus of the section has defined the images of women in terms of wifehood. It has been observed that Atkinson's fictional community of women embraces adulterated, lost, lonely, helpless, downtrodden, trapped, independent or dependent wives. However, Atkinson's women are not totally passive characters as she portrays hopeful, responsible and awake wives. And yet what makes these stories out is the relation between wives and husbands. Presenting a female point of view, the writer illustrates women characters' inner worlds by entering their private zones. The stories show how internal, external and beyond control factors change these women's lives. In consideration with French feminists' criticism of binary oppositions, Atkinson's male characters as husbands lack submissiveness, responsibilities and sense of belonging in the stories. So, Atkinson reveals two different angles, wives and husbands, during the presentation of her women characters within marriage. By this way, the analysis of wifehood becomes much more objective. Such individual fragments given from a negative perspective point the writer's vision of reality. With respect to these results, McDermott (2006) comments on Atkinson's frequent use of family issues as follows; "in Atkinson's fictions, the family is revealed as a disturbing place, the site of violence, resentments and jealousies as much as love and affection; while relations between family members may be characterized by neglect, violence, and cruelty as much as nurturing and love" (p.67).

The stories mentioned in this part are concerned with family dynamics, marriage failures and domestic affairs. Smith (2002) claims that Atkinson

writes anti-family saga novels as her fiction constitutes disconnected families with illegitimacies, infidelities and more. Smith (2002) indicates; “in Atkinson’s fiction the basic elements of family life are jumbled ‘like a box of broken biscuits’. Parents disappear, children turn out to be changelings”. It has been examined that the ‘wifhood’ section of this study tells the significance of ‘marriage’ for women. It can be seen from both positive and negative sides by Atkinson’s outstanding narration style, because while some of her characters are dreamy and hopeful for their future marriage, some others illustrate sad and disappointed women in their present complex marriages. In other words, Atkinson highlights the contrast between the wives of the future and the wives of the present. Moreover, the ‘husband’ figures stand for the reasons of desperate ‘wife’ figures in the book. For instance, Hawk -June’s husband- shares the same house with his wife for not having anywhere else to go. Alistair -Pam’s husband- prefers living with a younger woman than his wife. Robert -Marianne’s husband- quickly and easily starts a new life after his wife’s death. On the other hand, in terms of parenting responsibilities, the ‘husbands’ seem less interested in caring their children than the ‘wives’. As a result, it has been viewed that the wife characters in the stories cope both with the problems of their inner world and with the problems of outer world. So that the figure of speech ‘simile’, “like broken biscuits” which Smith (2002) has used above for Atkinson’s characters clearly suits here, too.

3.2. Women in Family: Motherhood

The majority of the women characters in *Not the End of the World* are mothers. Since motherhood is one of the priority issues of feminist approaches, this part’s principle focus is on the motherhood theme in the study. As it is mentioned before, Atkinson depicts most of the women in the stories as mothers; so that the stories are voiced from a female perspective. As Palmer (1989) states, “the themes which Wilson cites, with the addition of a few others

of a similarly radical and cultural feminist kind such as women's community and motherhood dominate women's fiction today" (p.3).

Out of twelve stories, motherhood issue is on the foreground in eleven of them in *Not the End of the World*. The women characters appear in eight stories as mothers who are 'June' from *Tunnel of Fish*, 'the Zane women' from *Transparent Fiction*, 'Pam' from *Dissonance and Wedding Favours*, 'Shirley' and 'Clare' from *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, 'Romney' and 'Missy' from *Unseen Translation*, 'Georgie' from *The Bodies Vest*, 'Marianne' from *Temporal Anomaly*. Some stories embrace characters who long for a child to hold on to life, while others have unhappy, negligent, distant, regretful, yearned, pregnant, celebrity, cancer, alcoholic, prostitute, divorced and dead mothers. Atkinson's such domestic characters are not totally weak as she expresses strong mothers as well, although they are few in number. During Atkinson's attempt at creating mother figures, she explores the relationships between mothers and children and also mothers and fathers. Within this perspective, Palmer (1989) expresses, "novels which treat the situation of women in paid work are relatively rare while themes relating to specifically female areas of experience such as motherhood, women-identified relationships and women's community are in fashion" (p.42).

In *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, the characters' only ambition is to be a mother. "Charlene worried that she would never have a baby. A baby would love her. A baby would exactly fit the round hollow space inside her" (p.31). In a similar vein, Beauvoir (1989) believes "it is in maternity that woman fulfills her physiological destiny" (p.484). Being a young and successful business woman, she feels a gap in her life and dreams about having a baby. "Charlene would call the baby Smiler. A boy. As fat as a porker, as big as a bomb" (p.31). In *Tunnel of Fish*, June who is disappointed with her son, Eddie, considers her upcoming baby girl as a saver. "June knew that Hawk's baby was her second chance, the only way she could redeem herself for the

mess she had made the first time round” (p.52). As Beauvoir (1989) expresses “through the child she [a married woman] is supposed to find self-realization sexually and socially; through childbearing, then, the institution of marriage gets its meaning and attains its purpose” (p.483). In her unhappy marriage, June thinks her second baby as a second chance in her unhappy marriage in order to make up with her husband, Hawk who is ex-boyfriend of Pam from *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours*. “She hoped the baby would make Hawk stay. Clip his wings. Although she knew it wouldn’t” (p.55). Just like Beauvoir’s (1989) opinion; “sometimes the child is wished for to fortify a liaison or a marriage, and the strength of the mother’s attachment to her baby depends on the success or failure of her plans” (p.494). June also dreams about her baby girl from a mother-daughter perspective:

She could buy pretty clothes for a girl and plait her hair with ribbons. And she could call her a nice, old-fashioned, middle-class name like Sarah or Emma or Hannah. A girl would like dolls and ice-skating and ballet lessons. A girl would read novels and stories, not old encyclopaedias from skips. A girl would want to learn French knitting and the recorder and how to make a cake (that bit might be difficult). In fact, a girl would want the childhood that June had once had, the one she had despised so much when she became a teenager. Would her daughter grow up and treat her the way June treated her own mother? That would be ironic, wouldn’t it, like a punishment fitting the crime. (pp.55-6)

In this sense, McDermott (2006) claims that Atkinson’s narration suggests “longing to recover and mend the family, if only via memory and imagination; and an attempt to restore wholeness by some kind of offer of substitution and restitution” (p.68). In *Transparent Fiction*, most of The Zanes, a crowded family full of women, show the importance of being a mother. “Those Zane sisters were now the Zane aunts, and all of them, apart from the dead Nanci, had produced children” (p.78). The protagonist of *The Cat Lover* is Heidi whose sister is Trudi from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and *Pleasureland*. The story enables readers observe Heidi’s life with her tomcat and it becomes obvious that looking after a cat reminds her the feeling of

motherhood. “She gave him an old woollen shawl to lie on and watched while he slept as if he was as novel as a new baby to a first-time mother” (p.226). Heidi wishes to be a mother, especially a girl’s mother just like June. It seems as if these women made a vow to create a future world filled with women.

Heidi wasn’t really interested in having another relationship with a man, what she really wanted was babies. She wanted several but would have settled for one, for preference a girl and then it wouldn’t grow into a toothless, dribbling old man wandering the world looking for everything it had once known and now forgotten. (p.228)

Tripp (2000) exposes that “woman means mother” (p.32). In this respect, the only thing Heidi wants in her life is to be a mother. “Heidi wished for a baby every night before she went to bed, sitting in front of her mirror and increasing the word ‘baby’ five times because her twin sister Trudi, told her that was what you did if you wanted something very badly” (p.228). Apart from the June character, lonely and downhearted another mother Pam from *Wedding Favours*, comforts herself with her son, Simon since she has nothing but her children in her life. “And she’d still had Simon” (p.295). Such a thought makes Pam feel self-centred. As for Seidler (1997), “women often look towards their infants and children to fulfill emotional needs” (p.73). According to Atkinson’s description; “part of Pam (the bad mother part, she supposed) wished he could just stay in his room for ever and then she’d always have someone to look after and would never be on her own” (p.298). As far as Beauvoir (1989) is concerned; “if as wife she [a married woman] is not a complete individual, she becomes such as mother: the child is her happiness and her justification” (pp.482-3). It is also evident that Trudi from *Pleasureland* repents of the numberless deficiencies in her life when she recognizes her needs. “One of my many regrets,” Trudi said, “apart from the obvious – the dog I never owned, the child I never had, the ballroom dances I never learnt- is that I never studied a musical instrument” (pp.325-6).

Heretofore, the representation of women characters underlines their strong wishes, regrets, gaps and hopes in their inner worlds. The common point that each character shares is that the meaning and importance of being a mother in order not only to taste motherhood but also to save their life. Charlene, Trudi, Trudi's twin Heidi, June and Pam all strike a balance on the subject of motherhood. Furthermore, the relationships between mothers and children are also studied from women's viewpoint. For instance, June pities her deplorable son, Eddie who is obsessed with fish. She knows that there is something wrong with him but still she cannot build a healthy relationship with her son. "Eddie, King of the Fish. 'Thank you, loyal subjects' Eddie said, giving a regal wave to the inhabitants of his watery realm. 'Don't talk to yourself, Eddie,' June said. 'It's the first sign of madness' "(p.66). In fact it would not be true to say June lacks maternal love, but what she lacks is the intimacy, connection and affection towards Eddie. "June wanted to tell Eddie that she loved him but instead she said, 'Don't pick your nose, Eddie'" (pp.60-1). Similarly to this case, Seidler (1997) offers; "if we shared more of ourselves emotionally with our children it would be much easier for them to have their own emotions and feelings" (p.125). Likewise, Pam's continuous complaints and nagging at her son, Simon make their life unbearable. Throughout the story, *Dissonance*, Atkinson places Pam's frequent objections such as: "Shoes don't live in the kitchen, Simon. If you spill something, do you think you could wipe it up, Simon? Do you know what a dishwasher's for, Simon?" (p.97), "I've just cleaned that, Simon" (p.97). At the same time, their quarrels and use of rough language among family members reflect the peaceless atmosphere at home. Their politeness is never seen in their dialogues. "The only conversations we ever have are arguments, have you ever thought about that, Rebecca?" "Well, maybe that's your fault, have you ever thought about that, 'Mother?'" (p.104). In accordance with such a dialogue between the mother and the daughter, McDermott (2006) says "for Freud, the girl is bound to be disappointed with

her mother” (p.71). As it is told before, because of the gap of her husband at home, Pam focuses all her attention, hatred or affection on the children.

“Where are you going, Simon?”

“Out.”

“We haven’t finished.”

“I have.”

“I thought we agreed you were grounded.”

“You agreed.”

“What are you going to be doing, Simon? Are you meeting Jack and Angus? Simon, can you hear me?”

“Oh, shut the fuck up, will you”. (p.111)

But on the other hand, Pam as well as June are illustrated as distant and discontent mother figures. From this point of view, Seidler (1997) mentions about “women taking out their frustrations on their children” (p.87). It is clear in *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours* that both Simon and Rebecca hate their mother, Pam; “she [Rebecca] slammed her bedroom door. ‘Why don’t you just die,’ she murmured. ‘Drop dead of a brain haemorrhage and leave us to get on with our lives’ ” (p.104) and they want her to die; “Simon wished his mother would die” (p.97). These ungrateful and spotty children are Atkinson’s portrayal of stereotypical teenager models and sibling relationship. Their home is just like a battle field. “I’m at my wits’ end with you, Simon. I worry about what’s going to happen to you, I really do.” “Well, if she was dead she wouldn’t have to worry, would she?” (p.97). In this regard, McDermott (2006) focuses on Atkinson’s family romance plot which suggests that, “mothers are not always nurturing and that children do not always love their mothers” (p.71). Pam tries to be both a mother and a father to her two children as Alistair lacks the role of fathering. “Just because your father doesn’t live with us anymore doesn’t mean he can abdicate his responsibilities” (p.98). Pam wants to take on the role of maternal authority figure in the family although she still misses patriarchal leadership of the family. On the other hand, Rebecca and Simon stand by their father. For this reason the head of the family is only the

father, while the mother is voiceless to them. Similarly to this situation, Stevenson (1998) asserts that; “the impression of maternal responsibility for damage to children which has been justly criticised by those who see in this a disregard of men’s failure to participate adequately in parenting in families with problems” (p.49). Simon and Rebecca want to leave home as soon as possible. “You’re so self-sufficient, Rebecca. If she had a microwave and a kettle she’d never have to bother with the rest of the house, apart from the bathroom” (p.99). However, Pam is not ready to lose her children in addition to a lost husband. “Not that Rebecca was sure about Cambridge. There were plenty of places she could apply to. But Edinburgh has an excellent reputation for medicine - then you could live at home” (p.100). In relation to Pam’s worries about being alone, Beauvoir (1989) points “what she can do hopefully is turn to her children” (p.584). As Atkinson enables readers hear the characters’ inner voices –written in italics in the book- , it becomes easy to understand who thinks what. Rebecca says: “I can’t wait to get away from this fucking house” (p.295). Beauvoir (1989) declares about daughters’ such behaviours as; “most young girls’ dramas concern their family relationships; they seek to break their ties with mother: now they show hostility toward her” (p.297). Both children ridicule and dislike Pam. “When their mother came out with her ‘nostalgia crap’ Rebecca felt the same irritation as her brother” (p.99). They criticize Pam’s physical appearance and her lifestyle. “Her mother was wearing that disgusting worn-out denim smock that looked as if she’d had it since she was pregnant” (p.102). For Coohey (1995), mothers of neglectful families are “less willing or less able to give emotional support to their neglectful daughters and neglectful daughters are less interested in receiving emotional support” (quoted in Stevenson, 1998, p.31). Rebecca thinks “her mother’s underwear was horrible” (p.102) and she adds:

Silly? That was her, with her manners and her rules and conscience. Privileges come with duties attached. What the fuck did they mean? Silly was what Beady Brian made

her. She had new clothes on- some kind of weird ethnic shite, and make-up which she only usually put on for parents' evenings- theirs and hers. (p.105)

With the relation between mother and daughter shown above in mind, McDermott (2006) highlights that, "while Freud conceived of the family romance in terms of father - son relationships, feminist analyses of mother - daughter relations have identified a female-centred version of the family romance" (p.70). Considering the situation that her mother is in, Rebecca does not take Pam as a role model. "Rebecca was going to be just like their mother when she did grow up. Ha ha. That would be funny- the worst thing she could ever think of was going to happen to her" (p.106). As for mother-daughter relationship issue, Palmer (1989) underlines the fact that "writers of fiction, we shall see, regard the bond between mother and daughter and the feminine attributes which it produces in a similarly ambiguous light" (p.114). Although they know that Pam needs their support and care, the children behave her badly. "Rebecca cleared away the dishes from the table. She hated the way her mother looked so pathetically grateful for this act" (p.111). Another mother-daughter depiction is seen in *Tunnel of Fish*. The mother, June, carries a baby girl. Her unexpected son is one of her disappointments in her life and now she is enthusiastic about her upcoming baby. She imagines what kind of a girl her baby would be in the future. By June's assertions, mother-daughter relationship is stressed once more: "Would her daughter grow up and treat her the way June treated her own mother? That would be ironic, wouldn't it, like punishment fitting the crime" (p.56). June wonders and worries if the relationship she has with her mother will be the same with her daughter. What the importance here is that one of the related areas of feminism focuses on the mother-daughter connection which Atkinson illustrates here again. Hence, this supports the main argument of the study. Atkinson's such mother-daughter picture reminds French feminist critic Irigaray's concern with this relationship. Morris (1993) states that for Irigaray, there is a "deformation of the mother-daughter bond within the symbolic order" (p.129). The children think that Pam has no right to

anything. “What if their mother got pregnant? Could Rebecca think of anything worse?” (p.109). As it can be seen, the children are horrified at the prospect of having another sibling. Every family member has a freehand except the mother figure, Pam; Hawk lives and expects a baby with his girlfriend Jenny, Simon and Rebecca look forward to going to a university and leaving their mother alone at home. On the other hand, Pam feels desperate in her own world, left alone. Despite her boyfriends, she never succeeds in her pursuit of happiness and she feels herself trapped. For this reason, Beauvoir (1989) underlines the fact that “so many factors combine against woman’s independence” (p.101). As a result, in the stories, *Tunnel of Fish*, *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours*, the mothers are displayed in terms of their interaction with children and husbands. Lack of authority, maternal and paternal love, roles of mothers and fathers, childrens’ behaviours towards mothers are main issues analyzed in these stories. So what is seen here is that multiplicity of Atkinson’s women seem on the basis of motherhood through the analysis.

In *Tunnel of Fish*, Eddie adores his mother, June, although he does not get the desired response from her: “He [Eddie] was looking forward to helping with the baby. If he helped with her she would love him even more. And he’d be a big brother, a hero to her. He liked the idea of being hero” (pp.56-7). Although June is distant from her son, it is felt that there is a strong mother-son connection which is armed by a maternal attachment and an emotional closeness:

‘What shall we call the baby?’ Eddie asked from the back of the van and June’s heart gave a little flap at the word ‘we’. June and Eddie. June and Eddie and the baby. A family. She wanted to squash Eddie to her breast. Instead she said, ‘Close your mouth, Eddie. If the wind changes you’ll stay like that. (p.64)

In accordance with this kind of interaction between June and Eddie, Booth and Booth (1993) explain some of the reasons of such negligent and wrong parenting way as “a lack of verbal interaction with the child, insufficient

cognitive stimulation, a lack of expressed warmth, love and affection” (quoted in Stevenson, 1998, p.61). Thus it is seen that Eddie desires for a family and a less distant mother. When viewed from this aspect, McDermott (2006) comments on Atkinson’s fiction of family and her use of “family romance” stressing her characters’ “longing for a different family” and “a more loving mother” (p.67). Despite the lack of communication with his mother, Eddie shares her pains and feelings: “Eddie leant forward and put his small, hot, dirty hand into June’s hand and said, ‘everything’s going to be OK, Mum. Trust me’”(p.66).

Eddie has no father-son relationship and feels the lack of father figure at home. As in Freud’s Oedipus complex theory, Eddie puts himself instead of his father’s place. That is why he is very aware of his mother’s miseries; “Now it seemed it was going to be a girl, which Eddie thought would probably be better for his mother” (p.54). These accounts stress on the lack of father and mother figures in family. Although the examples are given from children’s viewpoints, they are important to focus on the ‘mother’ image. The emphasis on ‘fatherhood’ provides an objective view on ‘motherhood’ by constructing such an opposition. The writer imposes the effects of being fatherless on the child; “the whole idea of fatherhood was still so raw and unformed that he [Addison] knew he would start crying if he talked about it” (p.153). Correspondingly, Seidler (1997) defines the loss of a father as “a deep hunger of the soul” (p.158). From Addison’s point of view, readers learn what a father means to him: “Addison developed his own version of a father. A handsome war hero” (p.131). Throughout the story, readers follow the development of Addison’s life, from his childhood to his adulthood. After years, Addison learns from his stepsister everything about his father, Bill in the funeral; “he was a bully and a drinker. And a philanderer. I think he abused my sister, but she won’t talk about it. He had no idea how to love” (p.153). Here, Atkinson draws a bad father image very harshly. In parallel with Atkinson’s description of such father image, Digby Anderson and Graham Dawson (1986) identify “brands of

feminism which are deeply hostile to the family, most especially to the role of fathers” (quoted in Tripp, 2000, p.93). In spite of the facts about his father’s life, Addison keeps his longing for a father. “Addison imagined him high in the clouds, like a god in his chariot, overseeing all his son did” (p.132). Instead of feeling the absence of a live father, maybe he prefers feeling the absence of a dead father. On the other hand, in *The Bodies Vest*, Atkinson underlines the lack of mother image in family this time. Vincent and his father, Billy, live together after the mother, Georgie’s death. “Billy was just twenty-four years old, a reluctant widower who had embraced his role as Vincent’s lone parent with enthusiastic incompetence. Vincent’s mother, Georgie, was already four years dead” (p.245). From this point, readers witness how a father and his son survive without a mother in the house; “for all Billy’s efforts at housekeeping, father and son occupied a dingy sett in which every available surface seemed to be crumbed with cigarette ash desiccated fragments of pan loaf” (p.246). Here, Seidler (1997) claims that “men have to be at home, as women do, within both the domestic and public worlds” (p.101). At the same time there are ‘problem children’ of ‘problem families’ in the book. The stories include these children’s situation and condition within problematic and dysfunctional families, in other words, the effects of lack of family image on children. McDermott’s (2006) comments on Atkinson’s other works are also appropriate for the stories in *Not the End of The World* as they can be considered as an “attempt to critique and debunk received notions of family, and an exploration of familial loss and longing” (p.68). In *Dissonance*, because of the faults or separation of parents, children lose respect for family members. Atkinson (2002) gives the behaviours of Rebecca and Simon as: “God knows how much stuff, your room’s full of it. – CD’s, games, clothes- she thinks Dad’s paying for it, it’s not like he doesn’t give you money, but I mean she must be stupid or really naive- which she is, we know-” (p.112). Rebecca and Simon respect neither their mother nor each other. As shown in the former quote, Rebecca calls her mother ‘stupid’. They humiliate and disregard their gender differences as if they

imitate their parents' relation. In this respect, it can be said that they take their parents as role models here. Rebecca calls Simon as "a fine example of Early Man" (p.112) and Simon calls Rebecca as "whore" (p.100). Another example from *Tunnel of Fish*, Eddie is a problematic child and enjoys living in his own world isolated from outside. "Eddie knew he wasn't important enough in the school hierarchy to be bullied. He was part of the ranks of the invisible, but it was OK" (p.52). In *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, Addison who has no family at all starts his own family and life despite everything. "When he celebrated his fortieth birthday Addison had neither child nor wife. When he celebrated his forty-first he had both" (p.127). In *The Bodies Vest*, after losing his parents, Vincent, without a father and a mother, fulfills his longings with a family photograph left behind. "Scant evidence remained of Billy and Georgie's existence as a couple, only a photograph on the sideboard in a tarnished frame that showed them on their wedding-day looking far too young to make solemn vows about anything" (p.247). In *Wedding Favours*, Pam, as a mother and a wife figure thinks also about her own parents:

She'd grown up thinking her parents were immortal, which didn't look like it was going to be the case. And now she hardly ever saw her brothers (whom she didn't like anyway), and her sister, Susan, was so used to being the baby of the family (she was forty now, for God's sake) that it never crossed her mind that Pam might not be coping. (pp.298-9)

It is clear that Pam is neither satisfied with her family nor with her own parents. She represents truly a sad mother in her broken family with a negligent husband and unmannerly children. So that it is very normal for Pam to envy other happy families. "Driving through Fairmilehead, past stone-built villas, their curtains drawn their lamps lit, how warm and safe other people's houses looked" (p.301).

As stated above, it is seen that 'family' concept is in the forefront here. Up to this part, the relationships between mothers and fathers and the lack of

mother figure in family show the negative influences on the children. Some of them are irresponsible, disrespectful and out of control while others are orphaned, isolated, introverted and hungry for a family. According to McDermott (2006), “all of her [Atkinson’s] novels present us with families that have been altered or reshaped in some way, usually because of the loss of a mother or a child” (p.67). Readers observe how the children in the stories feel, behave and live in undesired situations. It is also possible to accompany some characters such as Vincent and Addison during their growth process. Lack of mother or father figures, or the disunity between mothers and fathers is closely related to children of these families. The growing, longing and struggle of the children of disconnected families are dealt with in addition to the effects of wrong parenting. The statements taken from the stories emphasize the importance of parenting, especially mothering children. If children long for a family, this directly means that there is a problem between family members which leads to the negativity between mothers and fathers. In this respect, ‘motherhood’ is viewed impartially from several angles - not only from mothers’ but also from children’s and fathers’ perspectives-.

In *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, Shirley, is a single mother and brings up her son, Addison without a father. Atkinson emphasizes the lack of father figure in this story, by portraying how Shirley struggles for life as a single woman with her orphaned son. “Bill Addison refused to have anything to do with his unlooked-for son but Addison’s mother, Shirley, was determined to get Addison’s father’s name on his birth certificate, one way or another” (p.127). In this case, Tripp (2000) views women in such condition and exposes; “discontent was unspoken, unshared: every woman felt she carried her burdens, her fears, boredoms, guilt and anxieties, alone” (p.86). Here, Atkinson illustrates a totally different mother figure. Shirley is a single, poor and defenceless mother and she is at the same time alcoholic, dying of a cancer. Her son, Addison knows that Shirley is a fallen woman but still he respects to her: “Shirley had been a prostitute. He didn’t tell Clare this, not because he was

ashamed, Addison knew no woman walked the streets from anything less than dire necessity, but because he thought it was no one's business other than Shirley's" (pp.133-4). From Addison's perspective, it must be difficult to be a son of such a mother. According to Palmer (1989):

Prostitution enables men, Jeffrey's vivid phrase, 'to feel more powerful over all women by abusing one.' The comments voiced by O'Hara are also relevant; All women who work as prostitutes are treated as the legitimate prey of male sexual violence. The institution of prostitution creates a group of women who are social outcasts, whom men can freely abuse and degrade. (p.89)

In contrast to Simon and Rebecca, Addison is grateful for having a mother; "there seemed to be a consensus amongst the nuns in the orphanage that Addison's mother was in hell, an idea so horrifying that Addison tried never to think about it" (p.139). What he has longed for not only in his orphanage years but also during his adulthood is having a mother and a family; "he knew Shirley was neither in hell, nor in heaven - she was nowhere, she was dead. In some ways he preferred the idea that she was in hell because then at least she would exist" (pp.139-140). In the story, Atkinson reveals mother-son relationship in Addison's childhood times. When Shirley takes him to his father, Addison as a little boy, hopes for a family reunion:

Only with hindsight did Addison understand the reason for his one and only visit to his father. His mother must have known she was dying and she had been trying to find another home for her only child. When he thought about this it made him feel unbearably sad, not for himself, but for his mother. (p.134)

Shirley, a lone mother figure is told by the narrator from her son's viewpoint. Shirley challenges the difficulties of life – no matter she is a fallen woman- still deserves to be loved by her son. As a mother, Shirley takes and handles the responsibilities of motherhood regardless of the bad conditions that she is in. Similarly to Addison's situation, Stevenson (1998) informs that "fathers or partners may be physically 'missing' so far as mothers are concerned, but yet may be highly influential in the family" (p.109). *The Bodies Vest* tells a story

of a boy whose mother dies when he is two years old. As it is given before, experiencing lack of mother in his family, Vincent also loses his father and his wife, too. At the end of the story, just after Vincent's death at a tender age, Atkinson brings the mother and the son together, hand in hand, in their after life; "when Vincent entered into the world of light he was in the company of Georgie, exquisitely real and vivid in a way she never had been before. He was holding her hand and they were watching a flock of birds flying overhead" (p.263). So, Atkinson finalizes the story by portraying a mother-son picture and emphasizes the place and importance of mother. Thus, she constructs the motherhood concept as the main theme of this story.

Up to now, the relationships between mothers and sons are analyzed from the sons' angle. All the sons in these stories, Eddie, Vincent, Addison, love their mothers except Simon. While Eddie does his best as a little boy to keep the family picture in his mind, Addison stands by his mother ignoring her life full of mistakes. On the other hand, Vincent misses his dead mother and feels her gap in his life. All these relations embrace love, care, hope and loss of a mother image in these sons' world in terms of maternal hate, love, care, hope, and loss. The mothers; Pam, Shirley, Georgie and June are the leading characters who are under discussion. Dead, lost, bad or distant mothers are in the foreground.

Atkinson's women characters as an image of mother are not completely optimistic as sometimes she sides against them. Her such objective descriptions allow the stories and the characters stand on their own merits. In *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, Shirley reflects a fallen mother image rather than a respectably married woman. And deucedly this is not the worst thing she did in her life. "She died, only a year younger than Addison was now. She was a drinker, of course, and, although the drink didn't kill her, it didn't help to stop the cancer already racing round her body on that summer Sunday morning" (p.137). In *Unseen Translation*, Arthur is an eight-year-old son of a famous model

Romney Wright. However, she is an acquisitive and trophy mother figure. Arthur fills the gap of mother figure in his life by his caretaker, 'Missy' with whom he shares his world; "the words 'like your mother' remained unspoken, but understood, between them" (p.160). McDermott's (2006) comments on Atkinson's other works also fit in this story, because "the motif of the 'real mother' recurs" here with Arthur's "longing for a more nurturing mother to set against [his] own mother's perceived lack of interest in [him]" (p.70). As well as having an ignorant mother, Arthur has never known his father. "Romney had engaged her two weeks before the birth of her second child. Romney-sometime wife of a rock star, glamour model and ironic game-show guest, 'now concentrating on her acting career', but mostly famous for being famous-forgot to mention the first child until Missy was dictating her non-negotiable terms and condition" (p.162-3). Underlining the idea that "Freud's theory of the family romance has some advantages from a feminist perspective", McDermott (2006) declares, "Freud's claim that the child's desires cannot be satisfied may be of use in the context of social critiques of 'bad mothering'. In Freud's version, the child looks for an alternative parent figure because of his/her realisation that s/he is not the sole focus of the parent's desire and attention" (p.70). While Romney is expecting a baby girl from a rich businessman named Otto, she is ready to do everything with her illegitimate baby to acquire his wealth:

Romney had managed to adopt a pose similar to the models in the pornographic magazines- her huge, milk swollen breasts offered to the camera like gifts. The baby itself seemed incidental, almost invisible inside shawl cocoon. Arthur skim-read the text. 'They don't mention me', he said. 'That's a good thing'. 'I know.' Arthur gazed at the photographs of his mother as if she was an interesting stranger. (pp.168-9)

Romney's such poor behaviours bring disgrace on Arthur and affect his little world. Romney deceives her son by offering a meeting of Arthur and his father in Germany. She sends Arthur and Missy away and harbours no regrets regarding her son she left behind; so that Arthur hopes to get a chance to find

his never known father. However, the only person close to him, Missy - functioning as an alternative mother figure in the story- and parentless Arthur start a new life together. In parallel with the portrayal of the difference between Romney and Missy in terms of their intimacy towards Arthur, McDermott (2006) expresses “many of her [Atkinson’s] protagonists are engaged in a half-desperate search to uncover the truth of their family circumstances: to distinguish between ‘real’ and ‘false’, ‘original’ and ‘substitute’ mothers” (p.67). In *Dissonance*, as her husband Alistair leaves home and lives with Jenny, Pam tries to fulfill her sexual and emotional needs with other strangers. In other words, lack of intimacy with her husband drives Pam toward another man. As Seidler (1997) expresses “as far as men are concerned their partners have simply become more demanding and less available to them. They begin to look around for other relationships, not knowing how else to cope” (p.180). On the other hand, Beauvoir (1989) discloses that:

Her [a married woman’s] decision to deceive her husband is often born of resentment. Adler maintains that woman’s infidelity is always a mode of revenge. That is going too far, but unquestionably she often yields less to the seduction of her lover than to a desire to defy her husband: ‘He is not the only man in the world- others can find me attractive’. (p.548)

So that Pam symbolizes a bad mother figure here. June from *Tunnel of Fish* is one of the distant mothers in the book. She feels herself responsible for Eddie’s abnormal attitudes and worries whether she has caused him to be like this: “She hoped his eccentricities were genetic and nothing to do with her haphazard mothering” (p.48). Obviously, she is not a good role model for Eddie. As Seidler (1997) exposes “women will blame themselves for what is happening, as if it reflects a personal inadequacy” (p.180). Moreover, June is aware of her bad mothering and makes a self-criticism during their visit to ‘Deep Sea World’ on Eddie’s birthday:

Someone called Jamie had a birthday today. Eddie knew that because there was a handwritten sign stuck up in the tunnel amongst the seaweed fronds, a sign that said

‘Happy Seventh Birthday, Jamie’. Eddie didn’t suppose anyone had done the same for him but that didn’t stop him hoping. ‘Shite,’ June said when she saw the happy birthday sign. ‘Shite, shite, shite.’ Why didn’t she know you could do that? Because she was a crap mother, obviously. She imagined how Eddie would have been if he’d had a sign. She felt sick again. (p.65)

As it is seen above, Atkinson’s mother figures in the stories are served in wide range; Shirley, June, Romney and Pam are given from critical and objective perspectives so that readers get the chance to observe these characters closely. The mother figures here are rendered in their own worlds. They act without considering their children selfishly and their actions cause undesired results in their family especially in their children’s life. Many of them lack of the notions of respectable and proper motherhood, standing outside the acceptable social norms. Also McDermott (2006) informs that the “negative experiences of motherhood: in particular, the contrast between [women’s] domestic discontents and cultural idealisations of motherhood and domestic life” (p.69) form a centre of concentration in Atkinson’s stories as well as her other novels. Atkinson’s portrayal of these mothers enables them be analyzed individually in their own worlds regardless of other family members and provides a different viewpoint through the ‘motherhood’ concept.

Atkinson also focuses on the maternal love from both childrens’ and mothers’ point of view. In *Dissonance*, when Simon is skateboarding, he has an accident. When he is at hospital, he feels that he is in need of his mother. In Leonard’s (2002) own words, “as partners, mothers, daughters or friends, many women feel constantly on call” (p.72). Atkinson describes the moment Pam and Simon share in hospital room: “Cool hand stroking his forehead, hot tears rolling down the sides of his face, pooling in his ears. Everything’s all right. Don’t talk. He held his mother’s hand. Hush” (p.120). No matter how much Simon hates his mother, it is seen that the only person he calls in case of emergency and help is ‘the mother’. In *Unseen Translation*, Atkinson reflects the little but well-behaved child, Arthur’s worries about being lonely and

motherless. Because of his mother, Romney's bad parenting and negligence, Missy takes Arthur under protection. For Stevenson (1998), " 'neglect' is usually seen in terms of the mother's failure to provide care" (p.49). Atkinson shows a touching dialogue between Missy who stands as a mother figure and Arthur as an abandoned boy as follows: "I don't hate you, you know", he said, with a grief-stricken hiccup. "I love you really." "I love you too, she said, kissing the top of his head, and I promise I won't leave you and I never break promises. Ever. You'll leave me one day, though, she added softly when Arthur was asleep" (p.180). In accordance with the fact that Missy fills the gap of Arthur's mother figure, McDermott (2006) informs "the device of offering replacement mothers functions as a critique of the images of happy families and good mothers" and adds "the temporary 'pretend-family' may be far more successful than the 'real' family itself" (p.71). Marianne plays important role in *Temporal Anomaly* despite her physical absence from the stage of the story. The narrator expresses how much Marianne has missed her son, Liam, after her unusual out-of-body experience in the story: "Marianne would have given anything to be at home right now, to walk through her front door just one more time and see the smile on her son's face when she came into the room" (p.274). Equally, Beauvoir (1989) indicates, "the home becomes the centre of the world [for married women]" (p.450). Marianne feels herself lucky when she thinks that at least Liam is still alive although their worlds are separated physically, spiritually and emotionally: "Her heart hurt with relief that Liam hadn't been in the car, wasn't down there in the rain, his fragile body scored and raked by tarmac and grit, surrounded in his last moments on earth by strangers, however kind" (p.274). On the other hand, she cannot imagine her son during the absence of a mother: "What would he do without her? She could imagine only too well how distraught he was going to be when he found out she was gone, not for a week, or a month or a year, but for ever. The thought of Liam's pain and grief produced an odd sensation, a sudden gravitational pull" (pp.274-5). Atkinson here in this story, just like in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, offers

“a sharper sense of loss and sadness: what [Marianne’s] disappearance means to [Liam] she leaves behind”. (McDermott, 2006, p.76) So, through the analysis, motherhood theme is emphasized once more here. One of the most moving scenes is defined by the narrator emphasizing the power of motherliness:

She turned on the lamp by his bed and looked at her son. His eyelids were blue in sleep and his skin had a faint opalescent sheen of perspiration. He was in the last days of his childhood, she could smell it like a sour trace on his breath. She kissed him softly on his cheek and then she turned off the lamp, lay down on the bed and curled herself like an overcoat around her son. It turned out that love was everything, after all. (pp.279-80)

Atkinson describes different mother figures. In this respect, June and Marianne are just the opposite of each other. While June is seen as a distant mother, Marianne suffers from her incomplete motherhood. While June hides her feelings towards her son, Marianne is ready to do anything in order to touch her son again. As she is housebound, Marianne observes how her son but not her husband is in pain:

After the initial grief and despair Marianne had been shocked at how quickly her husband and her son had returned to the rhythm of their lives. Liam still cried himself to sleep sometimes- Marianne had to go and hide in the airing cupboard with her hands over her ears because she couldn’t bear it- but apart from that, they hardly ever talked about her. Sometimes Liam said, ‘Mum would have liked this’ or ‘Mum used to do this’, but then he would fall silent and stare into space and she could see him thinking how strange it was that she had disappeared so completely from his life and it seemed such a dreadful shame that she couldn’t tell him that she was still there, that it was beginning to look as though she was going to be there for ever. (p.282)

Atkinson combines maternal and extraterrestrial love in the following way: “Sometimes Marianne managed to arrange her body so that he unwittingly put his head on her shoulder or lap and those moments almost made her feel alive” (pp.286-7). In *Wedding Favours*, after her children’s leaving, in the deserted house, Pam remembers her naive days full of tender,

love and joy with her children: “Pam went straight up to Simon’s room and lay down on his bed and inhaled the disgusting perfume of his sheets. She burst into the kind of tears she would have been too embarrassed to cry if there’d been anyone to hear her” (p.301), “Rebecca sitting up in bed, a child again, playing with her toys, and the dream had been so real that it woke Pam up and she found that she was crying” (p.302). Beauvoir (1989) voices “she [the woman in love] chooses to desire her enslavement so ardently that it will seem to her the expression of her liberty” (p.643). The narrator enables readers reach Pam’s inner thoughts so closely and openly that her repressed maternal instincts come in view in the followings:

It was the difference between winter and summer, even if you didn’t get on with them, even if they didn’t like you, even if you weren’t very sure that you like them when they were there, everything was in blossom, everything fruitful, and when they were gone, the world was a cold dreich place, a place like the far north country where there were no trees or flowers and the wind howled like ghosts across the frozen tundra. (pp.314-5)

Atkinson’s preoccupation with motherhood theme allows a multidimensional criticism. Such a plurality of interpretations enables to analyse Atkinson’s characters deeply. The stories exploring the inner worlds of mother characters highlight power of motherly love which stems from the women’s maternal status. These women characters’ regrets, secrets and pains are the main motifs of this part of the study.

In *Not the End of the World*, there are also Atkinson’s depiction of unhappy mothers. June from *Tunnel of Fish* is one of dissatisfied and regretful mothers of the book: “June had never really wanted Eddie and in her heart she was sure that had she wanted him he would have turned out a different child- a loud, rude, shouting boy who ran around football pitches and had no fear and no defects” (p.51). Just as Beauvoir (1989) declares “there are a great many mothers who are unhappy, embittered, unsatisfied” (p.521). June tastes being a mother at an early age and blames her parents for the situation that she is in:

“June was just eighteen when she had Eddie (what a big sorrowful ‘Oh, June’ that was) whereas her mother was forty-two when she had June” (p.51). What clips her wings is the roles and responsibilities of being a mother. June conflicts with her identity in the story questioning whether she is independent or not, whether the life she lives is her ideal or not. Palmer (1989) indicates, “a number of novels foreground the oppressive aspects of motherhood. They depict women’s reproductive capacities as making them vulnerable to male control, and describe childbirth and the raising of children as painful, burdensome experiences” (p.95). The narrator describes June’s disappointment when she has her unexpected child, Eddie; “June hated surprises. She had been surprised enough when she found out she was pregnant with Eddie” (p.54). A similar case is expressed by Beauvoir (1989), “pregnancy is above all a drama that is acted out within the woman herself” (p.495). Now, June is pregnant again. However, she is hopeful this time as she is carrying a baby girl as if she is done with the world of men: “She was glad it was a girl because she hadn’t had much success with a boy” (p.55). June feels very sorry about the abortion of her first baby before Eddie. For June, this baby could stop Eddie’s odd behaviours: “It would have been fourteen and it wouldn’t be an it, it would be a boy or a girl, an older brother or sister for Eddie, someone to guide him and be a friend. Maybe that was why she was having this baby. To make up. To atone” (p.55). In relation to June’s regrets, Beauvoir (1989) remarks, because of the fact that “abortion is considered a revolting crime to which it is indecent even to refer” (p.484), “other women may gain from abortion the sense of having destroyed a part of themselves (p.490)”. From a mother’s point of view, the narrator states what pregnancy means: “ June was carrying Hawk’s child. She liked that phrase, ‘carrying a child’. ‘Pregnant’ made her think of animals-cows and sows and dogs, and the hamster...” (p.49). In *Dissonance*, Pam is an example of a lonely mother as the other family members are against her: “You didn’t think to ask if I wanted any hot chocolate then? Her mother said, adding a no one in this house ever thinks about me sigh” (p.104). Kiernan, Land and

Lewis (1998) asserts “the problem of lone mothers was defined as one of women with children and without men” (p.5). Atkinson underlines the fact that just like children, sometimes mothers can be in need of affection. The narrator gives Pam’s inner voice: “Do you remember when you used to kiss and cuddle me and call me ‘Mummy?’” (p.98). Henceforth, Beauvoir (1989) thinks that “the mother’s relation with her children takes form within the totality of her life; it depends upon her relations with her husband, her past, her occupation, herself” (p.521). Pam and June shares some common grounds as they are both discontented with their family life. For McDermott (2006), Atkinson’s works are kinds of a “critique of women’s place in patriarchy, as women are repeatedly trapped within an unsatisfying domestic sphere” (p.73). Atkinson describes a mother’s boredom in a satirical way: “Her mother had a huge lexicon of sighs. A sigh for every occasion. Her Simon sigh was always a particularly heavy one” (p.104). This explanation implies that Pam is not satisfied with her life, with her family, especially with her son. Just as Palmer (1989) points out, “the roles of wife and mother increasingly burdensome and alienating” (p.17). In *Wedding Favours*, the mother’s worries about her children are given as: “What was Simon doing? Hopefully, he was asleep and not drinking in the union bar. Or crying from loneliness and fear in his breezeblock prison. She didn’t even want to think about what Rebecca was doing. Something sexual, no doubt, with Hamish, that awful, upper-class twit of a boy that she lived with” (p.303). The following statement is highly striking in terms of highlighting difficulties of roles and responsibilities of a mother: “Still, role-playing was what everyone did, wasn’t it, even when there was no one else there to see them. What had she been role-playing all her life? Nice person? Kind mother? Good wife? (Alistair and Pamela, 16th October, 1978)” (p.313).

Except her duties Pam has to carry out, and her roles she has to play, and the gaps she has to fulfill, Pam thinks that she means nothing for Simon and Rebecca. As for Beauvoir (1989), “she [a married woman] makes the

discovery that her husband, her environment, her occupations, were unworthy of her; she feels that she has not been appreciated” (p.577). So, in her family, Pam feels isolated and alienated. In this sense, Atkinson reveals the place and position of a mother both in inner and outer life.

Apart from the disconnected family members and the disoriented family life, Pam feels herself trapped and deceived at the edges of her life:

If Pam died would Rebecca look after Simon? She couldn't imagine it. Would they care if she died? Would they grieve for her as much as Buffy grieved for her mother? They probably would, but in their own hopelessly dysfunctional way. They didn't want a relationship with her, they just wanted her to exist somewhere in the background. (I haven't got any clean clothes). If she died would her soul migrate? Into an insect, a tadpole, a bean? (p.315)

By herself, Pam wishes to be in the past, not in the present time: “The thing was, you were always waiting for them to walk back in – not as themselves, not as they were now, no - what you expected (what you dreamt of) was that they were going to walk through the door and be three years old” (p.316). As well as mothers' lack of affection on children, children's lack of affection on mothers is also important within family units. As it is voiced from Pam's standpoint: “Was Rebecca ever going to stop being a stropky adolescent? She was twenty and she still despised Pam (Christ, Mum, listen to yourself.) The thought of Rebecca gave Pam a permanent heartburn. Your children were like a knot of fear that you carried around inside you all the time” (p.301). These expressions reveal how a single mother can be fragile in a divorced family, in need of care and support:

But at least it meant that Simon was in town and was going to spend the rest of the weekend with her. She was looking forward to it the way she used to look forward to high days and holidays when she was a child how long was it since the children had bought been under the same roof with her? What happened when you'd plotted the whole course of your life by your children and then they weren't there anymore. (p.314)

Atkinson presents a mother on her own, without a husband and without children: “Those times in halls were the last time she’d had any fun” (p.299). Similarly Beauvoir (1989) states, “she [the mother] is nothing without the family. And the family is a crushing burden; all its weight rests on her” (p.542).

Up to now, Atkinson exposes June and Pam as unhappy mother figures. They are weak, hopeless, helpless, desperate and in pain as if in the middle of nowhere, they both do not know what to do, where to go and whom to speak. They have really nothing and no one to love, care and share. Atkinson reveals these characters’ regrets about being a mother and difficulties in handling ‘given’ responsibilities on their own. In McDermott’s (2006) words, Atkinson’s women here “experience the same emotions (the feeling of ‘living the wrong life’) and ultimately seem bound to encounter the same fate” (p.73).

During the study, it is clear that Atkinson’s stories show the importance of mothering. For example, June from *Tunnel of Fish* tries to picture Eddie’s life after her death, she worries about her obsessive son’s future when he becomes motherless one day; “it would all be her fault somehow. She imagined him when she was dead - a solitary middle-aged man (‘pleasant enough’) living in a stained and soiled flat, obsessively collecting newspapers and cereal packets” (p.60). *Unseen Translation* has Atkinson’s portrayal of the unusual relation between Arthur and his governess, Missy. In the story, Arthur puts Missy in the place of a mother figure and this little child is afraid of being lonely again after the fact of his mother’s abandonment: “You’ll leave just like she did’, he screamed. ‘You’ll leave me and I hate you! I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!” (p.179). In *The Bodies Vest*, Vincent is the only character who has an obscure mother image in his life and who feels lack of a mother deeply in the book:

Vincent was two years old when Georgie died and had no memory of her at all so that what he felt was her absence rather than her loss. Vincent had an image of what life

would have been like if his mother had lived. It involved living in a warm house and eating fruit and grilled chops, wearing clean, ironed pyjamas and sitting in front of a blazing coal fire while Georgie read out loud to him from the *Dandy*. (p.246-7)

He tries to dream about what having a mother means so that what he learns from his neighbour helps him to picture Georgie in his mind: “Georgie was...flighty,’ Mrs Anderson said, searching for an enigmatic word, so that Vincent imagined his mother as a ball of feathers wafted on a kindly wind” (p.247).

In *Temporal Anomaly*, Marianne’s death reminds her not only her son and husband but also her own mother: “Her mother sounded distracted when she answered, as if she’d already put Marianne out of her thought even though it was less than an hour since they’d kissed goodbye” (p.271). Marianne is both a mother of her son and a daughter of her mother. So it is normal for her to wonder her mother: “Where was her mother? Why hadn’t she been the one who had sorted out her clothes and why did she never come to the house to see Liam? What if something had happened to her as well? What if she had fallen now dead from shock when she heard about Marianne’s death?” (p.286). After her death, Marianne is disappointed not only with her husband’s relief but also with her mother’s absence: “She still didn’t understand where her mother had been while she was dead and her mother was reluctant to discuss it saying it was better to let sleeping dogs lie, which seemed almost wilfully enigmatic to Marianne” (p.288). The following expression from *Sheer Big Waste of Love* is about the effect of Shirley’s death on Addison: “When she died, a year later, Addison could remember his mother’s shoes long after he’d forgotten her face” (p.136). Even in his happiest moment, at his wedding, Addison remembers his mother, her faults and her bad fate hurt him deeply: “His own mother had never had a honeymoon or a wedding, never been a bride or a wife” (p.133).

In sum, except June and Romney, other characters portrayed by Atkinson are the examples of dead mothers -Marianne, Shirley and Georgie-.

The effect of the loss of a mother on children are presented by Atkinson's stories. In this section of the study, women characters are offered from various standpoints in the light of the motherhood theme. Most of the characters are mothers while others hope to be a mother or function as a mother figure in the stories. Displaying mother-children and mother-father relationships, Atkinson reveals ignorant and distant mothers with lack of affection and interaction emphasizing those mothers' bad parenting. But meanwhile she also draws their hidden maternal love. At the same time she uncovers children's perspective in their relation with their mothers. While some of them hate their mothers, some others admire and love them deeply. Moreover, Atkinson describes motherless and fatherless children highlighting the psychological and sociological effects of being parentless on their lives. Apart from the aspects of relationships, Atkinson also unveils the mothers' own world stating their certain roles and responsibilities.

3.3. Women in Friendship: Sisterhood

Another thematic analysis of the study considers the relation between women. What these characters feel for each other is sometimes love sometimes hatred. The women characters analyzed in here are 'Shirley' from *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, 'Pam' from *Wedding Favours* and *Dissonance*, 'Charlene' and 'Trudi' from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and *Pleasureland* and 'Heidi' from *The Cat Lover*. In consideration with the sisterhood concept and the feminist insight of the study, Palmer (1989) expresses; "concepts such as femininity, patriarchy and sisterhood have numerous facets and interpretations" (p.10).

Under this section, the women characters of Atkinson are studied in terms of the relationship between women and themselves. Whether they are a friend or an enemy to each other is the major interest of this part. So that this part has a view of female relationships. As Palmer (1989) states, "today, on

account of the influence of feminism, relations between women are no longer ignored but enjoy a central place in fiction” (p.130).

In *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, when the penniless mother Shirley takes her son Addison to his father in order to reunite them before her death, the narrator describes the scene when Shirley and her ex-husband’s wife see each other; “there was such cruel fury in her eyes that it seemed to Addison that at any moment she might turn his mother into some helpless creature - a cow or a bear, or worse” (p.144). Beauvoir (1989) emphasizes that, “each woman sees in every other an enemy” (p.545). In the story, the reason of Shirley’s misery and desperation is her fellow, a woman. For Shirley, this woman is an opponent who takes her husband from her. In *Wedding Favours*, Pam is deceived and left because of another woman by her husband, Alistair; “she just wished that he hadn’t left her for someone else, someone with whom he didn’t have to pretend to be happy” (p.295). In one of her interviews with Rochlin (2006), Atkinson comments on the rivalry between women as, “there is no sisterhood. Women are their own worst enemies and behave very, very badly in some circles”. In *Dissonance*, Alistair compares his new girlfriend, Jenny and his wife, Pam as follows: “Jenny was five months gone already. Jenny, attractive and smart and fifteen whole years younger than their mother.” (p.110). From this description, it is observed how a man views women in his point of view. Alistair prefers a younger woman to his wife, in other words, to his children’s mother. Again it should be noted that just like the Shirley character in the former example, Pam loses her husband because of another woman, even worse a younger woman.

On the other hand, in *Pleasureland*, -the closing story of the book-boarded up in Trudi’s flat, Charlene and Trudi soon realize that a plague is all around the city. Without electricity, food and water, they tell each other tales in order to stay calm. When Charlene says: “I can’t remember anymore,” Trudi motivates her friend by assuring her not to worry; “it’s not the end of the

world” (p.332). These tales of Charlene and Trudi are not simply a form of entertainment. They serve implying not to lose hopes and dreams in consideration with the role of storytelling in our lives. For Morris (1993), “the resilience of spirit emanates from a sense of community in shared work, pain and dreams” (p.61). These two women characters here symbolize friendship - true sisterhood- between women. They support and try to help each other throughout the trouble they are in. For Beauvoir (1989), “the feminine friendships that she succeeds in keeping or forming are precious to a woman” (p.542). When Charlene dreams about her future wedding, she realizes that she has no family at all to accompany her. Trudi immediately consoles and heartens her friend and reminds Charlene that she is not alone. “I’ll give you away,” Trudi offered, “and I’ll cry and I’ll be your bridesmaid” (p.38). From their dialogue, the ‘sisterhood’ theme is obviously felt. These two women characters share their world with each other. Thus, this example can be another evidence for female-oriented subjects of the book. Charlene and Trudi, in their first story- *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*- are obsessively making shopping lists and talking about men and other materialistic issues. They are so out of control that they even do not care exploding bombs in the streets and the apocalyptic war in the city. And in *Pleasureland*, they are so helpless, hungry and sorry that they understand the meaning and value of love and life outside. Morris (1993) states that, “perhaps the most persistent positive feature of women’s writing is its recognition of the bonds of friendship, loyalty and love existing between women” (p.61). For instance, during the bad condition and situation that she is in, Trudi thinks and worries about her twin sister, Heidi from *The Cat Lover*. Trudi and Heidi seem as friends rather than twinsisters. In the book, it is understood that Trudi is much closer to Charlene as a friend, on the contrary, distant to Heidi as a sister. That is why Trudi regrets the lack of intimacy they have: “Trudi wondered how her sister was. She wished they had been closer. She wished she could see Heidi one more time and tell her that she

loved her” (p.328). This supports the importance of sisterhood theme of the study and proves love between women Morris mentions about.

Heretofore, the relations implies both hostility and unity between women. When women are their own enemies, at the same time they are supporters and protectors of each other. As Palmer (1989) indicates, “sisterhood and women’s community are generally regarded by feminists as providing both a refuge from and a challenge to the oppressive facets of a patriarchal society” (p.126). The analysis of these women suggests that women have either sisterly or hostilely relations. They are seen as rivals or companions. The friendship and the war between the women are served by Atkinson’s characters through the stories of *Not the End of the World*. The relationships between women are highlighted by analyzing the female figures who are Shirley, Pam, Charlene, Trudi and Heidi. By the Charlene, Trudi and Heidi characters, sisterhood and friendship themes are discussed while the Shirley and Pam characters stress malice between women. As a result, through the analysis, in addition to the wifehood and motherhood themes, sisterhood becomes another women-centred subject that dominates Atkinson’s stories.

3.4. Women as Individuals: Womanhood

Out of twelve stories, the womanhood theme appears in eight of them. The characters under discussion are ‘Charlene’ from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, ‘Heidi’ from *The Cat Lover*, ‘June’ from *Tunnel of Fish*, ‘Marianne’ from *Temporal Anomaly*, ‘Pam’ and ‘Maggie’ from *Wedding Favours*, ‘Meredith’ from *Transparent Fiction*, ‘Rebecca’ from *Dissonance* and the only male protagonist of the book, ‘Fielding’ from *Evil Doppelganger*. The women characters of *Not the End of the World* have multiple interpretations not only from women’s but also from men’s point of view under this heading. In the study, these women are analyzed highlighting their images, roles, responsibilities as well as their dissatisfactions and success both in their personal and social lives.

The focus of this part is the woman as an individual. The thematic analysis of women characters of Atkinson's *Not the End of the World* studies the relationship between men and women. In *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, two women characters talk about men and emphasize the gender equality. Charlene claims: "Men and women are equal and property held in common" (p.39). The book's two stories which are *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and *The Cat Lover* have the cat imagery in reference to men. Charlene compares men and cats as: "I would like a cat as big as a man" (p.27). On the other hand, *Evil Doppelganger* is an interesting and unusual story of Atkinson. Its two characters, Fielding and Joshua who are the only male protagonists of Atkinson in the book are two close friends and work for a newspaper. Being written for the first time from a male perspective, the story embraces unusual motifs inside. Fielding has a doppelganger and throughout the story, in this encounter between magic and reality, he wants to get rid of his evil twin because of his uncontrolled deeds during Fielding's sleep; "you seemed all right last night," Nina said. "More than all right in fact" she giggled. "Had he had sex with Nina? And he couldn't remember? How unlikely was that? Perhaps he had some kind of brain tumour that was affecting his memory?" (p.199). Throughout the story, Fielding and Joshua talk about women. One of the women they mention is Romney Wright who is the celebrity mother of Arthur from *Unseen Translation*. While Fielding views Romney as a sex object, Joshua stands against of such description: "Romney Wright made a guest appearance." "Did you meet her?" Fielding asked, his intellect suddenly suppressed by testosterone. "Yes," Joshua said. "She was a very nice person." "With huge breasts?" Joshua looked uncomfortable, "That's not how we should define women, Fielding" (p.191). With Fielding and Joshua, there are also many women workmates who are Nina, Gwen, Flavia and Emma. What Atkinson shows here is women dominance at work: "Nina was Flavia's PA, one of those neat, capable sort of girls who were never attracted to Fielding. Nina had French-manicured nails and a precision-cut

sixties bob and no sense of humour” (p.196). With these expressions, how Fielding views women becomes clearer. He also finds aesthetic operations common among women meaningless. He comments:

Nina chewed her lip, rubbing away at the shiny pink lip-gloss she always wore. Fielding found himself strangely transfixed by Nina’s lips. He couldn’t take his eyes off them- they were perfect. In fact, all of Nina’s features, when he looked at them, were just like right, neither too small nor too big, unlike Flavia who had had her lips injected with collagen and now resembled a puffer fish. Flavia also had regular Botox injections, so that more and more she looked as if she was wearing her own death mask. Nina’s features, on the other hand were untouched by artifice. Fielding thought of milkmaids and meadows. (p.198)

As male-dominance is felt in every field of life, especially in business, Fielding worries about the plurality of women at work. He questions: “When exactly was it decided that the world was going to be run by women?” (p.209). As declared by Simone de Beauvoir (1989), “even within the working class, the men endeavored to restrain woman’s liberation, because they began to see the women as dangerous competitors” (p.xxix). So that, Atkinson reveals Fielding’s male egoistic thinking. Again, Atkinson brings ‘binary oppositions’ together stressing the sense of difference between men and women in the story.

Up to this point, women and their world have a sense of male dominance. The difference between men and women at work is underscored through the examples in the story. The story is full of hardworking, successful women in the world of business. Tripp (2000) expresses, “all the women engaged in professional work today” (p.130) and adds, “they [women] fulfill the duties of their profession at least as well as the average man” (p.131). By *The Cat Lover*, women’s outlook towards men’s world comes into the open. The protagonist is Heidi who is the twin sister of Trudi from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and *Pleasureland*, while she is wishing for a baby, she comes across a stray tomcat and starts looking after it in spite of the fact that she hates cats. Throughout the story, the cat imagery refers to men from

Heidi's point of view. She builds a sense of parallelism and a comparison between cats and men and puts the cat in the centre of her life:

'Gordon.' 'Gordon? Gordon Marshall,' the veterinary nurse said tapping the name into the computer. 'We don't have a Gordon. We've got a Trevor and a Roger, a David and a Clive, a Henry, a Vernon, a William, a Desmond, a Bertie, a Charlie and a George. But no Gordon. Until now.' 'Does everyone give their cat a man's name?' 'Only the women,' the veterinary nurse said. 'Make of that what you will'. (p.227)

The fact given here is that women have a tendency to naming their cats with men's name. Here, the writer asks why women always prefer male names for their pets. The name of a cat says as much about its owner as it does about the cat. Here, it shows how Heidi views her cat and her relationship with it. Heidi owns a cat instead of a boyfriend as she has a negative view towards men: "Working with old men...- had influenced the way Heidi looked at the male sex. She had a tendency to think of them as helpless, toothless and child-like, a tendency which had proved fatal for her relationships" (p.227-8). As it can be seen, since she is working at a male geriatric ward, her thoughts about men have totally changed and probably that is why she is not concerned with them. "Fletcher thought that Heidi finished with him because he was untidy and lazy..., but really she left him because she hated the thought that one day he would be a little old man who would have to be tucked into bed all the time" (p.228). Atkinson describes the special and unusual connection between the cat, Gordon, and Heidi pointing out the similarities between her ex-boyfriend, Fletcher, who appears in *Transparent Fiction* and Gordon; "he also displayed a taste (shared by Fletcher before him) for sugary dairy foods and rice pudding, sweetened vanilla yoghurts and cartons of ready-made custard 'for Gordon', like a thoughtful girlfriend" (p.230). Because of the fact that the cat is as expectant as Fletcher, the close resemblance between them is that both get Heidi to cater to them as she cares, feeds and puts all her effort on them: "Heidi had seen the coat in the window of a theatrical costumier she passed every day on her way to work and it had said 'Gordon' to her, in the way that previously

a Stüssy T-shirt might have said ‘Fletcher’ to her” (p.235). What Heidi did for Fletcher once, now she does the same thing for Gordon. In this sense, they are exactly the same. Gordon seems so mannish that he wears men’s clothing. Heidi continues to point out their similarities; “...but was sitting next to her on the sofa. In an upright position. One leg crossed casually over the other. Just like a man. True, he was wiping the inside of the ice-cream tub with his paw, like a mindless bear, but the rest of his body language was ridiculously human” (p.235). Atkinson enriches the story by telling it in a way of fairy tale: “Heidi was struck by a sudden thought- what if Gordon wasn’t a cat at all, but a man under a spell? A man forced to don the disguise of a cat by some wicked enchantress? A man trapped in the body of a cat?” (p.235). And she adds; “...and warily kissed his downy cheek. Gordon’s ear twitched and he stirred but instead of being transformed into a man he simply swiped her away with a sleepy paw. Heidi wasn’t sure whether she was disappointed or not” (p.236). Gordon grew bigger day by day and unbelievably became a real man in her mind’s eye; “It was odd but once he began to lounge around like a man (rather like Fletcher, in fact), he looked embarrassingly naked” (p.236). Towards the end of the story, the cat shares a bed with Heidi and they sleep together:

He slept with Heidi now, not on top of the bed like a normal cat, but beneath the covers, his body rolling against hers in the dead of night, fur against skin, claws entangled in hair. His breath was meaty and warm against her cheek, his whiskers as itchy as a witch’s broom. He was a dead weight, heavier than any man she had ever shared a bed with. (p.236)

After the night spent together, Gordon leaves Heidi alone: “He had gone as suddenly and as mysteriously as he had come” (p.238). So that the cat, Gordon seems as mysterious, independent and at times selfish as men for Heidi. She soon realizes that she gets pregnant from Gordon with kittens inside her; “there were at least four, possibly five of them, nestling inside her, curled kittenwise around each other” (p.239). Atkinson makes ordinary and extraordinary collide here by her compelling writing style. Heidi is a lonely

woman who is in need of something or somebody that really belongs to her. Women's devotion and dependence are stressed in terms of the womanhood subject here. Atkinson puts forward the Heidi character's feelings towards men through the cat image.

The analysis of *Evil Doppelganger* and *The Cat Lover* presents how men and women view each other. Fielding is disturbed with the dominance of women in his world. According to him, women's intellect and success is less important than their physical appearance. The emphasis here is that women's sexuality play important roles in the patriarchal eye. Women remind even his doppelganger of sex. "Emma. I just wanted to say thank you to you actually. Fielding groaned and slapped his forehead with his palm." "Oh God, I didn't have sex with you, did I?" (pp.206-7). By this story, Fielding shows his view towards women. On the contrary, by Heidi's story, how she views men becomes obvious; she wants to fill the gap in her life. While the only thing she wishes is a baby, she fosters a tomcat and puts it in a man's place. The striking resemblance between the cat and her old boyfriend seems to carry a sense of likeness in many ways as it is explained above.

In this section, Atkinson's women characters who are dissatisfied or uncomfortable with their life are examined. In most of the stories, these women appear in disturbing and peaceless situations and conditions that make them feel lost, empty and down. In *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, Charlene wants a change in her life and wishes to revolutionize her world; "...we could lead even simpler life, ...a life where there are no machines and where we would live on a green hillside and sleep under the stars and gather kindling in the woods. And we would keep animals-" (pp.34-5). From *Tunnel of Fish*, June is one of dissatisfied women characters of Atkinson in the book: "That was the one thing that June had been terrified of having- a standart life, an ordinary life, a life like her parents" (p.50). Beauvoir (1989) expresses on the boredom of cliches for women as:

She [a married woman] knows just what her tasks are to be; the same as her mother's. Day after day the same rites will be repeated. As a girl she had nothing, but in dreams she hoped for everything. Now she has her bit of the earth, and she thinks in anguish; 'only this, forever! Forever this husband, this dwelling.' She has nothing to await, nothing important to wish for. (p.458)

Her complaint is on what she wished what she got: "In their flat they didn't even have a bath, just a shower and a toilet. And a wardrobe, fitted or otherwise, would have been a great improvement on the overloaded garment rail on which they all kept their clothes" (p.50). She stops blaming her own parents for her troubles since she realizes that it is too late for everything;

And also June could see that once you were thirty -which she was three weeks ago- it was probably time to stop holding your parents responsible for all the things that had gone wrong in your life, especially as if she had taken their advice she would now have a degree and a job and a decent house and probably even a husband instead of living in a crappy tenement with Eddie and Hawk. (p.50)

In consideration with June's unhappiness in her life, Beauvoir (1989) emphasizes the regrets of married women as "it is not without some regret that she [woman] shuts behind her the doors of her new home; when she was a girl, the whole countryside was her homeland; the forests were hers. Now she is confined to a restricted space" (p.450). June hates everything she has in her life, including her name and she thinks; "June was a name for women in sitcoms and soap operas, the name of women who knit with synthetic wool and follow recipes that use cornflakes, not the name of a thirty-year-old with a ring in her nose ('Oh, June')" (p.51). She regrets her self-sacrifice now as she stops her career after her marriage: "Things had never been the same for June after she terminated that fetus. She'd been top of her class at Watson's before but afterwards she lost interest in academic achievement" (p.56). Similarly, Beauvoir (1989) declares "[the woman] finds herself responsible for an unwanted child that can ruin her professional life" (p.696). Although June tries hard to keep up her education, existing prejudices including especially her

fellows, in society never let her go for it; “all those female teachers looking at her, wondering how old she was when she had Eddie, judging her” (p.58). All that she wants is to be free. Palmer (1989) exposes, “large numbers of women lose their independence, they are driven back into home” (p.78). The dolphin image may refer to a sense of freedom in the following expression: “And if she should actually turn into a dolphin, then she might be happy for ever” (p.63). On the other hand, it should be noted that the book’s front cover image has a picture of woman’s feet with wings which arouses the feeling of women’s freedom. Marianne from *Temporal Anomaly* also pictures herself in her mind as; “she imagined herself walking into the dining room, bearing the pie aloft like a smiling, old-fashioned wife, like her own mother” (p.269). Pam from *Wedding Favours*, after she is left alone by herself, after the abandonment of her husband and children, she is so terribly depressed that she finds herself in business with her friend, Maggie producing wedding favours: “ ‘No more nose to the grindstone,’ Maggie was laughing, ‘No more nine to five, no more revolting kids – think about it, Pam- all those things we’re always saying we wish we had time to do- theatre, cinema, yoga, learn Italian, join a wine-tasting class- culture!’” (p.304). The women characters in the stories namely June, Marianne, Pam and Maggie have the same feelings because all of them share a world which they do not want to be in. These characters are either married or divorced and none of them is a free woman. Their stories show how much they long for a new, fresh start in life. By this way, Atkinson criticizes the state of being dependent or independent. Thus it is seen that ‘freedom’ matters for the ‘womanhood’ theme. Pears (2004) emphasizes that according to Professor Tooley; “women feel pressurized into having a career because they believe that they will not be valued just as a wife or mother. They have to have a career if they are to achieve things, so that’s what a lot of them do” (p.10). Maggie is more full of enthusiasm for being free, being able to breathe again than Pam and she tries to cheer up and encourage her friend: “We’ll have no jobs, no kids- we’ll be free as birds! A bell rang for the next period, thank God. No job,

no kids- what kind of a life was that?” (p.304-5). However, Pam wants her family back. As McDermott (2006) states, “the continued return to family plots in her [Atkinson’s] novels suggests that the family, regardless of its flaws, is not an institution that either she or her protagonists can easily leave behind” (p.67). Also Palmer (1989) mentions about “the tentacular web of male power-structures in which the female characters feel themselves trapped” (p.73). So Pam thinks that her family is the only thing she has in her life and feels no energy inside her:

‘Something creative, something we’ll enjoy. We’ll be starting all over again-new lives!’ Pam didn’t want a new life, she wanted the old one over again so she could do it better, so she could feed her children organic food and give them a Montessori education and do erotic things to her husband-although she couldn’t quite imagine what- after listening patiently while he talked about the finer points of Scottish conveyancing law and insisting he relax and drink....’ (p.305)

And Pam wants her old days back, too; “she supposed she was too old now ever to be called a ‘girlfriend’ again. Ever *to be* a girlfriend” (p.297).

Pam’s statements here become more understandable by Beauvoir’s (1989) explanation which argues “woman is all for giving her ‘interior’ the meaning and the value that the true house and home once had” (p.449). Atkinson’s illustration of powerful women images occur in *Evil Doppelganger* which presents the world of hardworking businesswomen: “Flavia herself sat in the centre of the office, claiming that this made her ‘always available’ ” (p.193). *Transparent Fiction* is the story of the Zane women. The protagonist, Meredith and her maternal relatives are narrated from a very female perspective stressing the image of women positively. The Zane family is filled with women one of whom is Nanci- the wife of Vincent from *The Bodies Vest*. All members in the family are earthly women and they are successful in their own fields on the contrary to the common view which sees women as a weaker sex. “Meredith was a goal-orientated sort of girl who thrived on purpose and objectives” (p.71). Meredith, one of those Zane women is a twenty-five-year-

old girl doing her doctorate degree on pharmacology: “The Zane sisters, as they were known in those American dream-days, were the very best their country could produce. Their dairy-enriched bones were strong, their meatloaf-and-spinach-fed muscles were supple and their vitamin-nourished brains got them all into the top ten percentiles of their school classes” (p.75). She is a career-obsessed young woman; “[she] had never let either sex or mind-altering substances interfere with her progress” (p.71). She thinks that men would prefer more attractive girls rather than a girl with a doctorate degree: “Meredith knew that most men would rather have an ‘Air Stewardess Barbie’ in bed with them than a girl with a doctoral thesis entitled ‘The conservation of telomere length in the human myocardium: the role of telomerase reverse transcriptase’” (p.74). Fletcher is Meredith’s friend who accompanies her during her London visit. However, because of his distrustfulness and cultural differences, she thinks no future with him. For Meredith, Fletcher makes sense as much as a dog does in her life: “Fletcher wasn’t the kind of guy to base any sort of life decision on. For one, he was English, and for two, he had an insecure streak as wide as a six-lane blacktop. Meredith was fond of Fletcher but in much the same way she’d been fond of Chip, a Golden Retriever that had been her childhood’s constant companion” (p.72). She always takes the women in her family as an example; “Meredith’s own family provided a vast assortment of personae from which she could pick and mix. For example, if she had to lead a tricky seminar she adopted the calm, authoritative personality of her own mother” (p.73). And also: “Meredith adopted the serene yet worldly personality of her mother’s sister Jenna. Jenna ran an interior design company in Los Angeles” (p.73). She picks up and adopt those women relatives’ proper sides for herself; “Meredith usually looked to the perky, cheerleading qualities of her cousin Baxter. Baxter, a beauty- pageant veteran by the age of seven” (pp.73-4). Meredith’s story covers the resemblances of women across different generations in terms of their power and positions in the society. According to the Zane women, the narrator gives what men mean: “Men seemed dispensable

to the Zane women” (p.79). Atkinson’s *Transparent Fiction* story constitutes very many women in it. Most of the Zane women members are “lesbians (Wilson, Taylor), virgins (Baxter, Sky) or – a considerably longer list – promiscuous (Tyler, Skyler, Sydney, Storm, Summer, Jeri and Meredith)” (p.79). In this sense, it can be said that the writer implies the gender issue more specifically here. “Fletcher wondered if they were trying to upset the gender balance by breeding nothing but girls” (p.79). By illustrating the Zane women who stand against men, Atkinson stresses the powerful sides of ‘womanhood’. Atkinson presents both women who are in need of men [June and Pam] and women who are indifferent to men [the Zane Women]. From the perspective of powerful women in society, Pears (2004) presents; “obviously, some women are very happy with their careers and lives, but I get the impression that the majority of them are not” (p.10). The only reason Meredith spends time with Fletcher is to show off: “She shot a whole roll of film of Fletcher so that when she went home she’d be able to show people the guy she lived with in London.” “She could imagine herself saying, ‘Yeah, he was a writer’, and her friends saying ‘Cool” (p.82). Meredith’s dilemma is obvious here. She does not want any love affairs but at the same time she wants to prove that she has a boyfriend. Atkinson stresses here that having a boyfriend is more important than having a doctoral degree in society. In *Dissonance*, although Rebecca is a rebellious young girl, she wishes to study medicine at university. For her, the beginning of her career is the end of her relationship with Fraser, her boyfriend: “Rebecca was going to finish with Fraser when she went to university” (pp.102-3). In *Wedding Favours*, finally Rebecca gets what she wants and becomes a medicine student. It is seen that Rebecca prefers her education and career to men. Her mother, Pam does not like selling wedding favours with her friend, Maggie and thinks of her other options appropriate for her: “Pam wondered if she could get a job supply teaching. They always wanted supply teachers. Or a little job in a cafe or a chemist. Or a doctor’s receptionist. Maybe she could clean for other people? She was good at

cleaning. She quite liked cleaning. Anything but this” (p.312). Although Pam is depicted as a weak woman figure in *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favour*, here by these statements, the narrator gives the strong side of Pam’s identity since she tries to stand on her own feet.

Powerful women figures are presented by Atkinson in this book as well as weak ones. The multitude of women reappears in this part with their powerful sides. Atkinson describes her women here as strong-limbed and self-confident with their two feet on firm ground. In terms of womanhood theme, in this section, Atkinson’s women characters in *Not the End of the World* are explored from various viewpoints. The study takes these women as an individual fragments from both male and female perspectives, how different genders view and describe each other is one of the subject-matters in this part of the study. Afterwards, the women of Atkinson are questioned in their inner and outer worlds. It is seen that each woman in the stories analyzed are dissatisfied because of their sort of passive position in both family and society. The last part deals with the powerful sides of Atkinson’s women in terms of their professional and personal lives. In fact, Atkinson’s fictional community of women is divided into two. While such characters like Charlene, Trudi, Meredith and Rebecca represent the independent women, others like June, Pam, Marianne and more stand for dependent women as they are single but with children. The writer’s such colourful women figures make these stories fizz into life easily.

To conclude, chapter three focuses on the status of women thematically. Thus, Atkinson’s stories here can be regarded as an expression of social reality. As shown above, Atkinson’s female characters in *Not the End of the World* are discussed under four categories; wifehood, motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood. Hence, all of the stories in the book are linked to the issues about feminist studies appropriate to the argument of the thesis. Therefore, through the findings, it is seen that the image of women in *Not the End of the World* has

proved the assumption based on the critical view, claiming that fiction and reality are connected to each other.

CONCLUSION

Atkinson is regarded as one of the well-known British contemporary woman writers. Edinburgh born novelist has contributed to contemporary literature by her several award-winning novels.

Atkinson's 2002 short story collection *Not the End of the World* consists of twelve stories in which the characters and events are interrelated to each other. Atkinson's such plot development leads to a more detailed appreciation of the women characters in the book. Accordingly, Falconer (1998) exposes "one cognitive consequence of the short story's brevity is our later remembering much of it at the level of linguistic detail, which is less often the case with longer works" (p.712).

This thesis has presented a thematic analysis of the images of women in Kate Atkinson's *Not the End of the World*. The central point of the study is that despite being read objectively, the book stirs a feminist response as most of its stories put the women characters forward. In this respect, Atkinson's fictional narration in *Not the End of the World* produces a sense of realism.

In parallel with the focus of this study, it should be noted that *Not the End of the World* is both a woman-centred and a woman-authored book. The purpose of this study is not an attempt to claim that *Not the End of the World* is a feminist writing of a feminist writer. Nevertheless, it has a noteworthy amount of women characters at the forefront revealing their situation in both inner and outer worlds from a very female perspective. Therefore, Atkinson's collection contributes to feminist insight even though the writer's aim may not to do so.

The study is divided into three chapters. While the first chapter has a theoretical approach, the second and third chapters function in practical terms. Chapter one takes a brief look on feminism and its relevant branches to this study. Feminism can be defined in many ways. However, for the aims of this

study, it means the representation of women in both private and social sphere of life. Because of the fact that literature and life are in close relationship, there are for sure some social, ideological or political reflections on feminist literary criticism such as Marxist-feminist criticism, post-structuralist feminist criticism, gynocriticism and authentic realism. With these kinds of criticisms, the women in *Not the End of the World* are studied from various standpoints. Many issues related to women and feminism, which a great many feminists such as Showalter and Beauvoir studied in the past, are notably dominant in *Not the End of the World*. Accordingly, Tripp (2000) informs that “woman” turns out to be a protean cultural construct, obsessively created and debated within series of different discourses or ‘fictions’ (p.5).

Chapter two includes the synopses of Atkinson’s twelve short stories which are respectively *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping*, *Tunnel of Fish*, *Transparent Fiction*, *Dissonance*, *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, *Unseen Translation*, *Evil Doppelgangers*, *The Cat Lover*, *The Bodies Vest*, *Temporal Anomaly*, *Wedding Favours* and *Pleasureland*. These summaries provide a closer view of the characters analyzed in the stories. Thus, the study becomes much more understandable as the main subject matter is based on the women characters and their lives throughout the research.

Chapter three constitutes the focal point of this thesis. As the aim of the study is to analyse the image of women in *Not the End of the World*, the chapter begins with theoretical information of the image of women approach as a branch of feminist literary criticism. As indicated by Moi (1985) “the ‘images of women’ approach to literature has proved to be an extremely fertile branch of feminist criticism” (p.42). ‘Images of women’ criticism “concerns itself with analyzing the representation of women in visual and verbal texts, often as part of a sexual-political critique” (Mills et al., 1989, p.243). The chapter investigates the women images provided by the stories within the light of the approaches given before. The writer portrays women in these stories as wives,

as mothers, as daughters, as widows, as workers, as friends and as sisters. Consequently, descriptions of Atkinson's women in this study are based on the concepts of wifehood, motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood which are also the subchapters of chapter three.

The first subchapter provides an approach towards Atkinson's women under the wifehood concept. The wives are 'Pam' from *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours*, 'June' from *Tunnel of Fish*, 'Shirley' and 'Clare' from *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, 'Georgie' from *The Bodies Vest* and 'Marianne' from *Temporal Anomaly*. Most of Atkinson's heroines are presented in wide range. The wives depicted in these stories are adulterated, lost, lonely, helpless, trapped but at the same time hopeful and aware of their responsibilities. On the other hand, the husband figures are presented as irresponsible, selfish or adulterous. The study focuses on the female characters' dilemmas along with their internal desires and external obligations. Throughout the stories, Atkinson reveals these women's struggles, pressures, expectations, disappointments and hopes. Conflicting between their ideal and given life, Atkinson's women seem to question their identity. Nearly none of these women is happy in their marriages and nearly all of them are in a dysfunctional family. The women are disappointed when they find themselves in the middle of an unhappy marriage in contrast to their dreams. Most of the stories portray nuclear family units like June, Hawk, Eddie and Pam, Alistair, Rebecca, Simon. However, these family members are separated and scattered although Atkinson's women such as June and Pam who are one of the lone mother figures of the book wish to reconstruct, reunite and regain their families. McDermott (2006) expresses that "for Atkinson, it seems, such a revisioning of the family -as provisional, contingent, but never truly expendable- is the only way to construct 'a world that makes sense' " (p.77). In parallel with the wifehood concept, the relationships between wives and husbands as well as their parenting roles and responsibilities, the meaning and importance of being or having a family, absence of authority or parents and its effects on children are examined within

the family-dynamics framework in this part of the study. The children of unhappy marriages and disunited families are either disrespectful and irresponsible or orphaned and isolated. The writer underlines the unfulfillment of these women's private needs along with their selflessness and self-sacrificing. The stories are presented by Atkinson via "series of losses, deaths and disappearances that suggest the precarious nature of families as well as a combination of fate, chance and sheer bad luck" (p.68) that is also effective in writer's other novels for McDermott (2006). At the end of the analysis, it is seen that the stories embraced the importance of being, having or not having a family and its negative influences on both wives and children as in *Dissonance*, *Tunnel of Fish* and the rest.

The second subchapter approaches Atkinson's women namely 'June' from *Tunnel of Fish*, 'the Zane women' from *Transparent Fiction*, 'Pam' from *Dissonance* and *Wedding Favours*, 'Shirley' and 'Clare' from *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, 'Romney' and 'Missy' from *Unseen Translation*, 'Heidi' from *The Cat Lover*, 'Georgie' from *The Bodies Vest*, 'Marianne' from *Temporal Anomaly* through the motherhood concept. Contradictions and conflicting viewpoints about the themes of motherhood and mothering are dominant not only in theoretical works but also in novels and short stories (Palmer, 1989, p.95). Equally, Atkinson pictures different kinds of mothers such as good or bad mothers, single or married mothers, absent or dead mothers. The relationships between mothers and sons, mothers and daughters, mothers and fathers are analyzed in this subchapter. The meaning and importance of being or having a mother, motherless or fatherless children, roles and responsibilities of mothering or fathering is dealt with from mothers' standpoint. Some of them feel obliged to embody the traditional standarts of motherhood as the June character while some others stand outside of social norms as the Shirley character. Morris (1993) refers to French feminist critics Cixous and Irigaray and expresses; "within the restricted meaning allotted to the term 'mother' this entails a total loss, since no other identity is allowed but of nurturing" (p.129).

Her women are usually unhappy “with the mundane realities of domestic life” because of the realisation of “living the wrong life”. Atkinson’s “motifs of good and bad, real and false mothers” permeates most of the stories in the book. (McDermott, 2006, p.72) There is also a sense of maternal deprivation in the relationship with the children. Mothers’ dissatisfaction with their family in terms of their relations and struggles with their husbands and children appears in most of the stories. The writer presents the family relations stressing the negative impact of inadequate, bad or absent mothering and fathering on children. The motherhood concept is examined here from both children’s and mothers’ aspect. At this point, Atkinson lets her readers judge and appraise the situation of the characters on their own. Atkinson’s domestic characters are mostly discontent and regretful because of the circumstances in which they find themselves in contrast to their desired life. On the other hand, the ‘motherhood’ theme is seen as “a source of pleasure and ambiguous power” (Palmer, 1989, p.96). In parallel with the mothers in *Not the End of the World*, Eagleton (1996) puts the followings:

Being born as a woman does not automatically equip one for motherhood or imply that one ought to become a mother. Some women may wish to mother [Charlene, Trudi, Heidi and June]; some may wish to but be unable [Marianne, Shirley, Georgie]; some may not wish to mother but find themselves mothers [June, Romney] despite some may have children only through medical intervention; some may mother, but not their own biological children [Missy] and on and on. (p.158, paranthesis added)

The third subchapter offers the sisterhood concept to examine ‘Shirley’ from *Sheer Big Waste of Love*, ‘Pam’ from *Wedding Favours* and *Dissonance*, ‘Charlene’ and ‘Trudi’ from *Pleasureland* and ‘Heidi from *The Cat Lover*. The aim here is to stress the relationship between women and reveal either a strong unity or a strong hostility among them. The women have shared problems, dreams, ideals and hopes. For Tripp (2000), “what binds women together is a sociological notion of the ‘sameness’ of their oppression” (p.56). Within the

interrelated plot of the book, Atkinson's women sometimes meet on the common grounds.

The final subchapter studies Atkinson's women from womanhood perspective. The women studied in this part are 'Charlene' and 'Trudi' from *Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping* and *Pleasureland*, 'Heidi' from *The Cat Lover*, 'June' from *Tunnel of Fish*, 'Marianne' from *Temporal Anomaly*, 'Pam' and 'Maggie' from *Wedding Favours*, 'Meredith' and 'the Zane Women' from *Transparent Fiction*, 'Rebecca' from *Dissonance*, 'Shirley' from *Sheer Big Waste of Love* with the only male protagonist of the book, 'Fielding' from *Evil Doppelganger*. The analysis of these characters shows whether they are dependent or independent, happy or unhappy, successful or unsuccessful in their both private and professional lives and relations with men emphasizing their strengths and weaknesses in terms of internal and external factors. Atkinson focuses on daily life and musings of her women characters. The stories embrace the specific problems and difficulties of these women from multiple perspectives. There are also Atkinson's depictions of strong women images throughout the stories. In this sense, Atkinson's text has a dark and gloomy atmosphere as well as its sense of liveliness. While this part studies these women, it also demonstrates how men and women view each other. As a result of the analysis, it can be seen that Atkinson offered variety of women situating their inner and outer worlds. As Palmer (1989) stresses:

The fictional representation by writers of the social and psychological aspects of the construction and deconstruction of gender; the treatment in novels and short stories of the identification of woman with nature and the body; and the theme of the dominance of the male gaze and the circulation of images of woman which it promotes. (p.16)

It is seen that Atkinson's *Not the End of the World* is filled with woman-identified relationships which are among the important feminist themes. For Palmer (1989), "two or more of these themes frequently come together within the frame of a single text" (p.3). The cast of men in the stories gives readers a sense of passivity in terms of their roles and responsibilities

within the family unit. No matter they are weak or strong, it is certainly obvious in the stories that these male characters of Atkinson are no help to the women. In fact, they are the ones who make these women feel lack, desperate, guilty, angry and more. In this sense, the absence of men influences the lives of both women and children. However, Atkinson does not let any misdirection throughout reading, instead she lets readers consider and judge the characters in their own merits. Similarly, Falconer (1998) emphasizes such characteristics of contemporary short fiction by saying, “the collection unravels in its telling, then leaves it up to the reader to think” (p.720). Moreover, the author presents inner voices of the characters to amplify their feelings. Women’s thoughts and emotions are narrated by an insider view on the family and domestic relations with their negative experiences of wifehood and motherhood. Women’s failures, disappointments, lacks are displayed as well as their maternal, familial, social identity in the stories. Additionally, the experiences of Atkinson’s women are all remarkably similar, even repetitious. The stories are studied in terms of their own limitations. Atkinson’s narration does not go beyond description. Besides she does not offer solutions through her characters but instead she reveals their situation on stage with an objective tone, and in doing so, she makes readers observe, question and understand the women in her stories. In this sense, Falconer (1998) explains the advantage of short stories; “as a kind of explosion; like a photograph, the story presents itself as a statement of its own incompleteness, its partially relative to the whole picture, and thereby ‘acts like an explosion which fully opens a much more ample reality’ ” (p.720). On the grounds of the feminist approaches such as Poststructuralism and so forth presented in chapter one, it is clear from the analysis that Atkinson uses binary oppositions in the stories such as mother and father, wife and husband, daughter and son. In this respect, French feminist critic Irigaray’s thought claims “the binary gender oppositions are the keystone of the whole conceptual order” (Morris, 1993, p.139). At the same time, since most of Atkinson’s women have negative representations within their

relationships and their lives, another French feminist critic Cixous thinks, “the ‘feminine’ side is always seen as the negative, powerless instance [in hierarchy]” (Moi, 1985, p.104).

This study has proved that *Not the End of the World* presents a world of women. Thus the thesis grounds the book on the feminist approaches as the stories show some feminist tendencies in terms of the concepts such as wifehood, motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood discussed previously. The reflections of feminism in British contemporary literature are “some of the most important representatives of this current” (Petru, 2003, p.140). The most striking feature of the book is its presentation of multiple viewpoints both structurally and contextually. Such multiplicity of perspectives leads to impersonalization of the characters through their lively descriptions. Thus, *Not the End of the World* can be seen as a critique of women’s condition in general. Also Marxist-feminist criticism offers such an approach to literary texts. As it was explained in the very first chapter, Marxism combines “sexual ideology” with “narrative form” (Mills et al., 1989, p.189). And also Authentic Realism claims that women writers reflect women’s experiences (Mills et al., 1989, p.51). In this sense, the study attempts to associate fiction with reality to some extent considering the book as a sample of contemporary culture. As Moi (1985) informs that, the image of women criticism is “raising the individual consciousness by linking literature to life” (p.43). Supporting the events in the stories both theoretically and thematically, the study provides that Atkinson’s women in *Not the End of the World* exist beyond their fictional world. In Falconer’s (1998) opinion, “many short story theorists have explored the genre’s flexible allegiance to the traditions of fantasy and romance, on the one hand, and to those of realism, on the other” (p.718). In other words, representation of women in contemporary literary texts has a relation to reality in terms of the aspects covered in this study.

All in all, the images of women in the stories are studied and the multiplicity of female characters is appreciated. As a result, the similarities and common points that these characters shared are highlighted. Atkinson's frequent emphasis of women and women issues shows that she might have an intention towards a feminist approach. In this sense, this thesis can be an example for the studies on the image of women in contemporary short stories.

As the center of the thesis is feminism, theoretical ideas support this conclusion and thematic results provide evidence for sense of realism. Supported by the critics, the current research finds out how much women in literature reflect women in life, because the problems of women in the stories comply with the issues of feminist studies. So, through a feminist perspective, this study intends to connect fiction and reality together and underlines the relationship between them.

The themes which dominate *Not the End of the World* are given in the table below with the titles and characters of the stories. The chart illustrates the findings of this thesis;

Title of the story	The character(s)	The theme(s)
"Charlene and Trudi Go Shopping"	Charlene Trudi	Wifehood Motherhood Sisterhood Womanhood
"Tunnel of Fish"	June	Wifehood Motherhood Womanhood
"Transparent Fiction"	Meredith The Zane Women	Motherhood Womanhood
"Dissonance"	Pam Rebecca Jenny	Wifehood Motherhood Sisterhood Womanhood
"Sheer Big Waste of Love"	Shirley	Wifehood

	Clare	Motherhood Sisterhood
“Unseen Translation”	Romney Missy	Motherhood
“Evil Doppelgangers”	Nina Gwen Flavia Emma	Womanhood
“The Cat Lover”	Heidi	Motherhood Womanhood
“The Bodies Vest”	Georgie Nanci	Wifehood Motherhood
“Temporal Anomaly”	Marianne	Wifehood Motherhood Womanhood
“Wedding Favours”	Pam Rebecca Jenny Maggie	Wifehood Motherhood Sisterhood Womanhood
“Pleasureland”	Charlene Trudi	Motherhood Sisterhood

As it can be seen from the table above, the stories include numerous female characters offering several women-centred themes. Through their detailed interpretation, it should be underlined that, *Not the End of the World* describes most of feminist issues regarding its explicit characterization and narration and serves a sense of realism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Atkinson, K. (1996). *Behind the scenes at the museum*. London: Black Swan.
- Atkinson, K. (1998). *Human croquet*. London: Black Swan.
- Atkinson, K. (2000). *Emotionally weird: A comic novel*. London: Black Swan.
- Atkinson, K. (2002). *Not the End of the World*. London: Black Swan.
- Bagguley, P. (2002). Contemporary British feminism: a social movement in abeyance? *Social Movement Studies*, 1 (2), 169-185.
- Beauvoir, S. D. (1989). *The second sex*. (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Bentley, N. (2008). *Contemporary British fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Birch, C. Not the End of the World by Kate Atkinson. (2002, Nov. 2). *The Independent*.
- Brown, H. (2004). A writer's life: Kate Atkinson. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3622950/A-writers-life-Kate-Atkinson.html>. [July 25, 2009].
- Carey, J. 'Case Histories' : Women in trouble. (2004, Dec. 5). *New York Times*.
- Chapman, R. (1984). *Linguistics and literature: An introduction to literary stylistics*. London: Edward Arnold.

- Clapp, J. (1997). Lasch, Christopher. Women and the common life: Love, marriage, and feminism. *Library Journal*, 122 (1).127.
- Clark, A. (2004). Fiction: Case Histories by Kate Atkinson. [On-line]. Available: http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/article476733.ece. [July 10, 2009].
- Clark, A. (2005). Helen Simpson's stories of the rituals of modern life. [On-line]. Available:<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/incomingFeeds/article774967.ece>. [July 9, 2009].
- Clark, A. Glimpses of gods. (2002, Nov. 8). *Times Online*.
- Clarke, D., & Clarke, E. (Eds.). (2000). *This double voice: Gendered writing in early modern England*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Code, T. (2000). *Encyclopedia of feminist theories*. London: Routledge.
- Cooks, R. Nanny takes Arthur to a parallel universe. (2002, Nov. 10). *The Observer*.
- Cosslett, T. (1996). Feminism, matrilinealism and the 'House of Women' in contemporary women's fiction. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 5 (1), 7-17.
- Cox, T. (2002). Like Buffy, but more huffy. [On-line]. Available: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/article819854.ece. [June 6, 2009].
- Croft, S., Cross, H. (1997). *Literature, criticism, and style: A practical guide to*

advanced level English literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Daunt, W. When Will There Be Good News? by Kate Atkinson. (2009, Feb. 1).
The Observer.

Duguid, L. (2002). Not the End of the World by Kate Atkinson. [On-line]. Available:
http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/article818983.ece. [June 6, 2009].

Eagleton, M. (1996). *Working with feminist criticism*. UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Eagleton, M. (Ed.). (1986). *Feminist literary theory: A reader*. Oxford: Basil
Blackwell,.

English, J. F. (2006). *A concise companion to contemporary British fiction*. UK:
Blackwell Publishing.

Falconer, H. Homer comes to Scotland. (2002, Nov. 9). *The Guardian*.

Falconer, R. (1998). Bakhtin's chronotope and the contemporary short story. *The
South Atlantic Quarterly*, 97, 3-4.

Farrell, J. Road-rage wrongs. (2006, Aug. 11). *Times Online*.

Fay, E. A. (1998). *A feminist introduction to romanticism*. UK: Blackwell
Publishers.

Gilbert, M. S., & Gubar, S. (1989). *No man's land: The place of the woman writer in
the twentieth century: volume 2*. Sexchanges. New Haven and London: Yale
University Press.

- Griffiths, R. T., & Jones, M. L. (Eds.). (1993). *British and Irish women dramatists since 1958: A critical handbook*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Hill, C. B. Accidental adults. (2006, Mar. 26). *Times Online*.
- Jackson, S., & Jones, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Contemporary feminist theories*. UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Kiernan, K., Land, H., Lewis, J. (1998). *Lone motherhood in Twentieth-century Britain*. New York: Clarendon Press.
- Kingham, M. (1997). *Jane Austen, feminism and fiction*. London: Athlone.
- Lane, R. J., Mengham, R. & Tew, P. (2003). *Contemporary British fiction*. UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Leonard, P. (2002). Organizing gender? Looking at metaphors as frames of meaning in gender/organizational texts. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 9 (1), 60-80.
- Lewis, G. (2006). Kate Atkinson's rescue operation. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.powells.com/interviews/atkinson.html>. [June 6, 2009].
- Love, B. (2003). Not the End of the World. *Library Journal*, 212.
- Lovenduski, J., Randall, V. (1993). *Contemporary feminist politics: Women and power in Britain*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press.
- Macintyre, B. Yorkshire terrors. (1996, Mar. 31). *New York Times*.
- Maslin, J. At sea in an Edinburgh of daydreams and traffic. (2006, Sep. 28). *New*

York Times.

Maslin, J. Watch out, inspector: Parallel plots collide. (2008, Sep. 21). *New York Times.*

McDermott, S. (2006). Kate Atkinson's family romance: Missing mothers and hidden histories in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. *Critical Survey*, 18 (2), 67-78.

McRobbie, A. (2000). *Feminism and youth culture*. (2nd ed.). GB: Macmillan.

Mills, S., Pearce, L., Spaul, S., Millard, E. (1989). *Feminist readings*. London: Hervester Wheatsheaf.

Moi, T. (1985). *Sexual textual politics: Feminist literary theory*. London: Routledge.

Montgomery, I. and Jays, D. Fame, fish, floods et al. (2003, Jun. 7). *The Guardian.*

Mooney, J. (2000). *Gender, violence and the social order*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Morris, P. (1993). *Literature and feminism: An introduction*. UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Mount, E. (1979). *The feminine factor*. Richmond, Va: John Knox Press.

Not the End of the World. (2003, Nov 10). *Publishers Weekly*, p. 43.

O'Donoghue, H. Brodie note. (2004, Sep. 10). *Times Online.*

Owen, K. A daily sense of danger. (2004, Aug. 29). *Telegraph.*

- Palmer, P. (1989). *Contemporary women's fiction*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Pandey, M. (2003). *Feminism in contemporary British & Indian English fiction*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- Pateman, C. (1988). *The sexual contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Pears, C. Where is a woman's place? (2002, Apr. 24). *Northern Echo*.
- Perrick, P. (2006). Crimes of dispassion. [On-line]. Available:
http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/fiction/article696689.ece. [August 6, 2009].
- Petrut, B. O. (2003). Feminist lens of some British contemporary women writers. *CEEOL*, 2, 131-141.
- Pugh, M. (2000). *Women and the women's movement in Britain, 1914-1999*. (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Rabinowitz, R. (2004). Not the End of the World. [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.laurahird.com/newreview/nottheendoftheworld.html>.
 [July 18, 2009].
- Rampage, C. (2002). Marriage in the 20th century: A feminist perspective. *Family Process*, 41 (2), 261-269.
- Ratner, R. Not the End of the World. (2005, Jun. 1). *Library Journal*. p.186.
- Robbins, R. (2000). *Literary feminisms*. NY: Palgrave.

Rochlin, M. (2006). Genre and Gender. [On-line]. Available:

<http://www.laweekly.com/2006-11-02/art-books/genre-and-gender/1>.

[July 20, 2009].

Roe, S. (1990). *Writing and gender: Virginia Woolf's writing practise*. New York:

St. Martin's Press.

Sage, L. (1992). *Women in the house of fiction: post-war women novelists*. London:

Macmillan Press.

Sceats, S., & Cunningham, G. (Eds). (1996). *Image and power: Women in fiction in*

the twentieth century. London: Longman.

Schappell, E. A series of unfortunate events. (2008, Oct. 10). *New York Times*.

Schillinger, L. Sunday book review: Unusual suspects. (2006, Oct. 29). *New York*

Times.

Scribner, A. (2006). Scandal in Scotland: Kate Atkinson keeps her latest mystery

close to home. [On-line]. Available:

http://www.bookpage.com/0610bp/kate_atkinson.html. [July 10, 2009].

Seidler, V. J. (1997). *Man enough: Embodying masculinities*. London: Sage

Publications.

Shattock, J. (1993). *The Oxford guide to British women writers*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press.

Showalter, E. (1984). *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Bronte*

to *Lessing*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Shumaker, J. R. (1995). Sacrificial women in short stories by Mary Lavin and Edna O'Brien *Studies in short fiction*, 32 (2), 185.

Smith, J. (2002). Critical Perspective. [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth4#criticalperspective>
 [July 18, 2009].

Stevenson, O. (1998). *Neglected children: Issues and dilemmas*. Oxford: Blackwell Science.

Taylor, I. Not the End of the World. (2005, Jan. 16). *The New York Times*.

Teeman, T. (2008). An interview with Kate Atkinson. [On-line].
http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/fiction/article4484424.ece. [June 6, 2009].

Thornley, G. C. (1990). *British and American short stories*. Harlow: Longman.

Tripp, A. (Ed.). (2000). *Readers in cultural criticism: Gender*. New York: Palgrave.

Walker, V. Paperback fiction shorts. (2003, Jun. 28). *The Times*.

Wallace, E. K. (1997). *Encyclopedia of feminist literary theory*. NY: Routledge.

Walter, N. (1998). *The new feminism*. London: Virago Press.

Weber, K. The best of all paralel worlds? (1997, Jul. 6). *New York Times*.

Wheeler, K. (1997). *A critical guide to twentieth-century women novelists*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Widdowson, H. G. (1975). *Stylistics and the teaching of literature*. London: Longman.

Wilkinson, G. (2003). Review: Not the End of the World. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/culture/bookclub/reviews/2003/07/endworld.shtml> [July 18, 2009].

Wolfe, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Modern North American criticism and theory: A critical guide*. UK: Edinburgh University Press.