

**T.C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI**

**FEMINIST METAFICTION: DECONSTRUCTION OF
CONVENTIONS AND WRITING “NEW REALITY” BASED ON
THE SEVEN SISTERS BY MARGARET DRABBLE**

(YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ)

Narin Merve ZENGİN

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, postmodern “feminist üstkurmaca”nın ne denli güçlü kadın kahramanlar yarattığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Özellikle bu kadınlar geleneklere boyun eğmemekte, onları reddetmektedir. Dahası onlar geçmişlerini sorgulayarak kendilerini kişisel keşiflerine adanmışlardır. Özellikle edebiyat yoluyla ortaya çıkan “kadın benlik bilinci” ile kadınlar kendilerine ve iç dünyalarına odaklanmışlardır. Bu kavram vollendungsroman türüyle beraber yaşlı kadının günlük yazarak “geçmiş kaydetme” ve bu günlüğü okuyarak “geçmiş yeniden değerlendirme” açısından feminist üstkurmaca temasını pekiştirir. Çoğunlukla Gayle Greene’in *Changing the Story Feminist Fiction and the Tradition* kitabındaki teorilerine dayanan ve Margaret Drabble’ın *Yedi Kız Kardeş* adlı eserinin incelendiği bu tezde başlıca eser yorumlanarak anlamlandırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın amacı iki yönlüdür: i) eseri feminizmle ilgili olan kadın günlükleri ve matrofobi; üstkurmaca ile ilgili olan anlatım ve metinlerarasılık gibi teknikleri kullanarak incelemek ii) *Yedi Kız Kardeş*’in feminist üstkurmaca ve vollendungsroman türü olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminist Üstkurmaca, Vollendungsroman, Yeni Bir Şey, Margaret Drabble, *Yedi Kız Kardeş*, Chick Lit.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal how strong female heroines have been created by postmodern “feminist metafiction”. In essence, the strong women do not submit to the traditions, and oppose them. Moreover, they dedicate themselves to their personal discoveries by questioning their past. Drawing upon the “female self consciousness” that appeared in the literature, women focus on their own personality and their inner world. Additionally, the vollendungsroman genre reinforces the theme “feminist metafiction”; to wit, the old woman records “the past” by writing a diary and “re-evaluate the past” by reading the diary. In this thesis, which is mostly based on Gayle Greene’s theories expressed in *Changing the Story Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*, Margaret Drabble’s *The Seven Sisters* is examined and interpreted. Therefore, the aim of this study is two-fold: i) to examine the work using techniques such as women’s diaries, and matrophobia related to feminism; narration, and intertextuality related to metafiction, and ii) to reveal whether *The Seven Sisters* is a feminist metafiction and vollendungsroman genre or not.

Keywords: Feminist Metafiction, Vollendungsroman, Something New, Margaret Drabble, *The Seven Sisters*, Chick Lit.

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INTRODUCTION

Gayle Greene used the phrase “something new” instead of the term “metafiction” to demonstrate that the old writing tradition has changed (Greene, 1991a: 7). “Something new” refers to the woman who does not submit to traditions and devotes herself to discovery. Thus, feminist metafiction which diminishes the influence of traditions on women is a genre that allows women to break free from tradition and pursue new things. In this context, Margaret Drabble’s novel, *The Seven Sisters*, deals with the transformation and the journey of self discovery of an old woman who does not submit to traditions. Also, what makes this novel unique is that it focuses on an old woman by supporting her change and, more importantly, using various narrative techniques like “a story within a story” or “a story about someone reading and writing”.

It took about thirty five years for Drabble to abandon her realistic perspective and transition to the experimental style. For instance, Margaret Drabble, who is generally accepted as a realistic writer, abandoned the realist view and used new narrative techniques after her work *The Waterfall*. Throughout all this process, it has been observed that the author’s narrative style has improved considerably. In this context, the change in narrative should be considered in terms of *The Seven Sisters*. On the one hand, the enrichment in the narrative style adds depth to the work, but on the other hand it makes the work rather complex. In other words, in the work, the narrator constantly shuttles between the past and the present. Moreover, multiple perspectives are adopted on the part of the narrator. The author’s use of these techniques aims at both polyphony and liberation of the character from “the prison of her voice”. In particular, these techniques make the work not only more special but also difficult to understand. As such, the reader must follow the parts carefully in order not to miss the details because the different narrative techniques between the parts lead to the questioning of the reliability of the narrator.

It should be noted that I am not concerned with solving such problems as decoding the sign and symbol system of the language adopted in *The Seven Sisters*. In this thesis study, which is mostly based on Gayle Greene's theories, I attempt to make sense of the text by interpreting it. Therefore, the aim of this study is two-fold: i) to examine the work using techniques such as women's diaries, and matrophobia related to feminism; narration, and intertextuality related to metafiction, and ii) to reveal whether *The Seven Sisters* is a feminist metafiction and vollendungsroman genre or not.

First of all, it is crucial to provide definition of feminism, but a problem that arises here is that there is no consensus on the definition of it. Furthermore, feminist writers are reluctant to define it. Maggie Humm explains this situation by arguing that defining feminism would be wrong; it would close feminism to linguistic alternatives (Thompson, 2001: 5). In fact, defining it is in sharp contrast to what is desired. Hence, it would be better to understand its rationale rather than endeavouring to define it. The main rationale behind it is to liberate women from the rules and contribute to innovation.

Another thing that liberates women from their traditional responsibilities is the second wave. The second wave feminism with the slogan "the break with the fathers" gained some rights such as female birth control and the right for abortion. More importantly, it raised awareness of "writing of women's history". One of the most important things that women realized during women's studies was the importance of history because the rights gained by feminism had to be protected. Denial of history meant cessation or stagnation of the development. The importance of "writing" along with the history has been understood over time. The main reason was the fact that writers' desire for writing aimed to initiate a tradition of their own. In other words, it would not be wrong to conclude that women's movements and women's writing fed each other. To exemplify the significance of women's writing, particularly when the novels written in the beginning of the 20th century are examined, it is seen that the female figures are not completely positive. They are depicted as both negative and positive, thereby causing discomfort. Another example is that female writers reflect their situation in the society in their works. For instance,

in *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939), a character said, “Unhappy as a dog in Turkey or a woman in England.” (Showalter, 1977: 299). This expression portrays the general situation of the women in England at that time. Along with the importance of writing, the necessity of the following situation was also understood.

In some works which advocate patriarchy, there were certain methods applied to protect this system. Women had to learn these applied methods and write their history. For example, Woolf stressed the essence of women’s writing and stated that even it was not sufficient because women were deprived of equal payment in business life (Joannou, 2013: 14). Despite all these outcomes, the position of women did not fully improve, not only in the modern period but also in the postmodern period. Namely, the “postmodern consumer society” formed by capitalism embodied the female body and highlighted “female beauty”. Besides, postmodernism reduced the feminist struggle from the collectivism to the individualism based on the claim that: “We don’t need feminism anymore.” (Pacific University, 2015).

Especially after the 1960s, the concept of “female self awareness” emerged in the literature. It raised the question of why writers had such an intention, that is, was there a disparity between men’s works and women’s works? The response to the question was yes! Therefore, it was vital to know the works or ideas written by women in the past. To Greene, the aim was not to pass on the tradition of the past to the future, but to alleviate the influence of the past on women. “Reviewing” the past, which means “looking back” or “re-evaluating from a different perspective”, refers to survival for women. Thus, postfeminists and feminists are on distinct directions. While the feminists struggle to protect the rights acquired in the past, they also accuse the postfeminists of being the representatives of popular culture that makes women ignore their past achievements. To take a closer look at the female figure advocated by postmodernism, it is vital to analyze *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, an outcome of popular culture. The woman in the work demonstrates how popular culture converted women after the rights acquired from the women’s movements in the 1960s.

A growing of new generation women like Bridget Jones persists in their desire to find a husband. This postmodern cultural work portrays the subgenre “chick lit”. The word “chick” is used as a pejorative expression. In this genre, women are construed as childish, delicate, and in need of protection. Moreover, such works offer women an ending with two options: “Marriage” or “death”, as in the great literary works of the past. In short, it is critical to question whether the place of Woolf’s angel that she killed it in a speech to the National Society in 1931 is filled with the “modern angel” (Joannou, 2013: 10-11). In this case, chick lit appears to be the antithesis of feminist metafiction. Additionally, in the present study, it is claimed that *The Seven Sisters* is a feminist metafiction and it is the antithesis of the chick lit genre. In other words, it can be said regarding *The Seven Sisters* that it is the 20th century version of the “new women” created by women writers in the 19th century to eradicate the “fallen woman” image.

To be more specific about the feminist metafiction, first of all, innovative genres such as feminist metafiction unmask traditions that imprison women in roles, instead of transmitting the tradition. More specifically, metafictional tools work in a similar way to this method. In other words, metafiction is a narrative technique that draws attention to its fictionality. Besides, feminist metafiction was produced to start “something new”, as Greene claimed, because women needed innovations to break free of stereotypes (Greene, 1991a: 7). Greene further used the term “something new” rather than the term “metafiction”, which is an indication that the old writing tradition has changed. Therefore, it is necessary to probe how women are portrayed in the feminist metafiction genre.

The characters in the feminist metafiction genre strive for an unconventional life, do not obey conventions, and try to discover themselves. Moreover, there is always a female writer. The female writer could also be a diary writer as in *The Seven Sisters*. Diaries are critical because they are the works that encapsulate personal experiences from the author’s point of view. Especially, women often use diaries as a source of motivation to deal with difficulties. In addition, matrophobia, which has been a matter of discussion in the works in recent years, is simply known as the fear of becoming mother. This term represents the fear of identifying with

one's mother. While daughters should take their mothers as the first role models, it is delineated as the fear of being like their mothers as a result of the mothers' humiliation by society. Indeed, this fear is predicated on myths drawing upon the idea that women should be perfect. Finally, *The Seven Sisters* is also a vollendungsroman genre. This word means "completion" in German. The middle aged heroine is usually a writer. This author looks back and tells her story once again, as did the heroine Candida in *The Seven Sisters*. The goal is to re-create a "sense of identity" as the old woman reviews or evaluates her memory. In addition, the review of past experiences is of pivotal importance for change in one's life. Especially in the works written by women in the contemporary period, the story of the old woman is handled from a positive point of view. As a result, Candida, a diary writer, is a middle aged woman who refuses to yield traditions. Her diary is based on her personal experiences, past experiences, and especially her troubled relationships with her daughters. The three techniques mentioned above are related to feminism whereas the other two techniques mentioned below are related to metafiction.

As a work of feminist metafiction, *The Seven Sisters* also has polyphony in narration, the narrator directly addresses herself. Besides, the narrator conveys the past events to the reader by using the flashback technique and questioning the past simultaneously. In this case, the concept of "memory" becomes important for the use of personal experiences because, as feminists claim, forgetting the past means being trapped in a vicious circle or stopping change. Furthermore, with intertextuality, the fictionality of the work is underlined, the text loses its monological meaning, and it becomes open to interpretation. Additionally, intertextuality is used in feminist metafiction because it represents a desire to rewrite the past. In this regard, it indicates an important role of the feminist metafiction. So, these techniques have been used to boost the feminist metafiction genre.

Feminist metafiction, which is the focus of the present study, deals with women's "abandonment of traditional roles", "discovering them", and "creating future" or "endings" in this thesis, and each of these themes is claimed to be emphasized in *The Seven Sisters*. During the thesis work, some difficulties were encountered. For example, the term metafiction is a contemporary term, but there is

no consensus among theorists about the definition. In addition, there is a limited number of sources and studies that are specifically addressed as “feminist metafiction”. In the literature, the related subject is dealt with in two ways: a) either to decipher the sub meaning of the texts, the subject is generally analyzed separately as “feminism” and “metafiction”, or b) it is interpreted as a natural extension of the concepts of “feminism and metafiction” in the texts. In fact, “vollendungsroman” and “feminist metafiction” are two genres that extremely support each other, but no source in which these two are used together has been found. Throughout this study, it is seen that the characteristics of the two genres overlap considerably and are used to fortify the theme. Finally, the other challenges such as the difficulty in understanding the text and following the topic were experienced due to the novel’s intense mythological content and experimental style of expression.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize the writers and sources that form the backbone of this thesis. In review of the literature regarding metafiction, there are usually works by authors such as Currie, Scholes, and Waugh. As for feminist metafiction, Gayle Greene and Joan Douglas Peters have studies with regard to feminist metafiction. In addition, there are some works about *The Seven Sisters*, on “aging” by Toplu and Hepworth, and “Writing techniques” by Nagamatsu. Additionally, I would like to point out that the vollendungsroman genre is based on *Adventures of the spirit: The older woman in the works of Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, and other contemporary women writers* edited by P. S. Perrakis. Lastly, within the scope of the present study, I studied *The Seven Sisters* based on Margaret Drabble’s claim that she wrote feminist metafiction and tried to prove that it was feminist metafiction, which I realized was the antithesis of the chick lit genre.

In conclusion, this study seeks to reveal how postmodern “feminist metafiction” empowers heroines, who abandon the traditions that confine them to certain roles and to mitigate the influence of traditions on women by leaving traditional female roles, questioning past, and starting something new. Above all, there has been a special “female self awareness” that emerged in the literature, and the vollendungsroman genre strengthens the theme of feminist metafiction in terms of “recording the past” and “re-evaluating the past” by the old woman. The main

reason behind what makes history so significant is that the denial of the past means the cessation of development. It should be added that memory, which is a tool for establishing a relationship between the past and the present plays an important role and the common element of the subtopics of feminism and metafiction, is examined in this thesis. Succinctly, the purpose of this study is to analyze the work by using some techniques such as women's diaries, matrophobia, narration, intertextuality, in terms of feminism and metafiction. In addition, the aim of this study is two-fold: i) to examine the work using techniques such as women's diaries, and matrophobia related to feminism; narration, and intertextuality related to metafiction, and ii) to reveal whether *The Seven Sisters* is a feminist metafiction and vollendungsroman genre or not.

CHAPTER ONE

1. LITERATURE AND FEMINISM

1.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEMINISM

The role of women has gained importance over the past years. Besides, dramatic transitions have been witnessed during the postmodern period. For instance, while the understanding of postmodernism and postfeminism converges, feminism and postfeminism have moved away from each other.

Before discussing the details of the subject, it will be of value to discuss the meanings of feminism. The movements or names may vary across the countries, so there is no generally a shared understanding of the definition of feminism. First, feminism might be delineated as the defence of women's rights based on gender equality (Lexico.com). The Encyclopedia Britannica defines feminism as at its core a belief in full social, economic, and political equality for women. The belief emerged largely as a reaction to the western traditions' limitation of women's rights, but later on, multiple expressions and variations of feminism emerged around the world (Encyclopedia Britannica). A similar definition is offered by the Canadian Encyclopedia. To the Canadian Encyclopedia; as a word, feminism is a "political, social and intellectual" movement that works for the advantage of each individual, regardless of whether they are men or women, for their equality (The Canadian Encyclopedia). To Marily French, feminism is an important, consistent, worldwide view that offers an alternative to ideas and views concerning patriarchy (French, 1985: 442). As seen, there is no consensus on the definition of feminism. Furthermore, feminist writers are reluctant to define the term. For example, Maggie Humm states that a precise definition of feminism can be misleading. The problem here is that to define it would be to close linguistic alternatives, but the aim is to expand, thus she says and stays away from the definition (Thompson, 2001: 5).

The meaning of feminism underlines problems with culture. The reason is that gender differences or relations between the sexes have come about artificially as a result of social regulation (6). Feminism arises from the efforts to save women from the structures that marginalize them and also contributes to these efforts. This explains the reason why feminism aims not only to be interpreted or discussed but also to change the world (Greene and Kahn, 1985: 2).

Feminism evidently opposes the mechanisms that protect men as human beings and declare men superior. According to feminism, women are deprived of their human status in conditions where men are considered superior, moreover, it highlights that this is the underlying logic of violence against women (Thompson, 2001: 147). Therefore, what is called feminism is a campaign to end women's submission to men. It is a political project that has a deep history in Europe and is still renewing itself (Offen, 2000: 2).

Throughout history, women have struggled to enjoy the equal rights of citizenship. The movements have produced positive outcomes in many areas from education to law. Besides, they provide women with a prestigious position in societies also underline the image of women in literature and, if necessary, question them (Kottiswari, 2008: 1).

Obviously, the movements gradually appeared. Until the modern times, women resisted against social inequality many times. In retrospect, notably for British culture, the first wave lasted between the 1880s and the 1930s-40s, when women gradually obtained the right to vote in democratic elections (Riley, 2018: 4). In the meantime, in the existing literature, in the 18th and 19th centuries, women novelists began to draw attention. The number of works written by female authors proliferated. According to Ian Watt, most of the 18th century novels were recorded by women (Showalter, 1977: 17). Moreover, "new women" began to write mainly about women's suffrage after 1894. Although, in 1918, their request was granted conditionally (women over the age of thirty to vote), they wrote continuously (Laird, 2016: 2).

As for the second wave feminism that gave women the most important advantages in society, it began in the 1960s and continued towards the 90s. It emerged along with the awareness of anti-war, civil rights, and various minority groups. Sexuality and reproductive rights were prominent matters. The focus was mostly on social equality, regardless of gender (Pacific University, 2015).

The second wave feminism was often described as “the break with the fathers” (Jackson and Jones, 1998: 195). Furthermore, body anxiety was the biggest issue of the second wave feminism. This meant woman’s rights over their own body. This issue was very critical because there were various dangers. For example, media manipulations, expensive notions of beauty, and dieting down to anorexia were among the matter of concern. Alternatively, birth control, the right to abortion, and increased interest in breast and uterine cancer were among the other targets (Walters, 2005: 110).

It is also known as the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) or the second wave feminism, which played a major role in the writing of women’s history since the late 1960s (Greene, 1991a: 9). To Greene, it was a fact that “past events control the future” (15). Therefore, several political activists underlined that women were not referred to in the texts, and they once again focused on women’s pasts within the framework of “female self awareness”. Sheila Rowbotham, who is one of the leaders of the Women’s Liberation Movement, created a pioneering work, *Hidden from History*. She examined various aspects of women’s life, including family life, sexuality, and employment (Showalter, 1977: 9). *Hidden from History* mainly depicted the hardships faced by women in England and their quest for equality from the Puritan Revolution of the 17th to the 20th. Such studies are important because, they turn out the past of women.

Furthermore, after the second wave, the impacts of the third wave occurred. The origin of the term third wave belonged to Rebecca Walker in her 1992 article “Becoming the third wave” published in *Ms. Magazine* (Guest, 2016: 13).

The third wave was a reaction to the second wave feminism during the 1990s and early 2000s. The third wave of feminism arose in the mid-90s; moreover, it was

fed by postmodern thoughts. Several concepts such as “universal womanhood”, “body”, “gender”, “sexuality”, and “heteronormativity” have been undermined. Unlike other waves, feminine beauty was defended with this wave. It was marked that beauty was not for patriarchy but for the woman herself. Additionally, there was no collective action in the third wave. It advocated equal rights but excluded feminism with such slogans as “We don’t need feminism anymore.”. That is to say, efforts were more individual anymore (Pacific University, 2015). Moreover, feminists began to call themselves postfeminists (Schrupp, 2017: 77). Thus, feminism split into the second wave and the third wave. Even going a step further, the third wave criticized the idea of natural femininity (79).

Elaine Showalter’s ideas should be scrutinized to figure out the third wave matter in more detail. Elaine Showalter made statements about “the third wave feminism” and “postfeminism” in an interview. To her, the third wave feminism referred to the contemporary era, and emphasized a movement. The wave she means here was temporary rather than revolutionary. She also adds that postfeminism is a term that does not have a clear definition yet like feminism. Very commonly this term is referred to as after feminism or what is left of the end of feminism. After the second wave, hopelessness about the end and failure of feminism is common. So, it is clear that postfeminism means what happens after a women’s movement. And also to Elaine Showalter it is unlikely to be another women’s movement. The author emphasizes that the necessary conditions for the formation of the movement do not exist, and therefore there is no possibility of the formation of another movement (Gillis and Munford, 2007: 292). For example, feminism in the past had certain goals, such as the right to abortion and equal pay. These goals laid the groundwork for any movement to occur (293). However, such targets do not currently exist. Contrary to Showalter’s claim, some critics say that there is a fourth wave. For example, Catherine Riley, who is a feminist historian and writer, accepts and describes the fourth wave feminism as follows. It is the movement of today. Besides, it relies on the use of digital media to reinvigorate feminist activities (Riley, 2018: 4).

In consequence, although there is no consensus on the definition of feminism, of course, feminist movements have great affordances for women. One of them is, thanks to the women's movements, the fact that women's awakening took place. Despite the harsh patriarchal backlash against women writers, the fact that women have been writing and challenging men for centuries makes them valuable. Moreover, the other factor that makes such works created by women valuable for women's rights is the claim that the world is seen as two different places from the perspectives of men and women, which contemporary feminism also advocates. As a result, revealing or preserving the works of women who defended women's rights in the past is essential in protecting women's rights and preventing inequality. Hence, women started questioning why their past was obscure (Spender, 1982: 3).

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S WRITING HISTORY

As examined in the previous section, women have fought for their rights for centuries. They have always been in literature, both in the past and today. Moreover, they questioned their past on writing in detail.

According to women questioning women's past like Susan Gubar and Sandra M. Gilbert, there must have been some women in the past that reacted to male dominance, but they were probably considered "neurotic". For this reason, throughout history, women could not make their voices heard. But actually, it turns out that what was said in the 1970s was also said by many women in previous eras (Spender, 1982: 3). According to Miriam Schneir's *Feminism: the essential historical writings* work, when the history of women is examined, important names in English literature stand out in the table of contents. Writers like Abigail Adams and Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, and Sarah Grimke are just a few names that are most significant to women's history (Schneir, 1972).

To better understand the purpose of women who focus on the past, first of all, it is essential to regard the content of the novels because the female figures in the novels published until the first half of the 20th century were displayed both positively and negatively (Showalter, 1977: 299). For example, there was a type of woman centered narrative written by women authors. In Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the*

Dark (1939) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939), subjects like the female body, adultery, abortion, and sexual repression were boldly explored. For instance, the young gigolo in *Good Morning, Midnight* boldly articulated that England was not a country caring for women, and added, "Unhappy as a dog in Turkey or a woman in England" (Showalter, 1977: 299). Moreover, the novels of the 1960s featured autonomous women, chiefly in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962). Nevertheless, the women figures in the novels were still far from the position they should be. In other words, they were not quite free and strong enough, but they were dependent on men. Another example is A. S. Byatt's *The Game* (1967), the theme "punishment of women" stood out when the choice between art and love resulted in art. Absolutely, there were reactions to such works in which women were portrayed negatively. In response to this issue, Rebecca West in her article "And They All Lived Unhappily Forever." highlighted the collapse of feminist reform to alter the way women view themselves (Showalter, 1977: 301). Additionally, in the early 70s, after the influential works of women authors such as Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, Mary Ellmann, an inquiry was made for a method of rewriting that would make women's voices heard more and unveil women's history (Marcus and Nicholls, 2004: 604). Interest in this type of female centered story generated progress in 1973 with the reprints of Virago Press, a feminist publishing concept in Britain (Joannou, 2013: 2).

Secondly, women need to learn the rules to have a place in the society they live in so that they can understand how patriarchy works (Spender, 1982: 10). That's why it was essential to look to the past. Dale Spender explains how patriarchy works as follows. Women have been producing knowledge for centuries, but this knowledge is not part of women's traditions. It is not the women who decide what is crucial or beneficial. Likewise, women are not active in institutions that legitimize and distribute information. In a patriarchal society, if there is different knowledge, it is probably produced by any woman. Men evaluate whether it is useful, and then they own it. Even they can use it against women (11). From all this it is clear that women's past is as rich as men's, but unless this wealth is passed on to future generations, male oppression will always be felt in society (15). Thus, Dale Spender underlines that women writers are critical to the existence of women. Throughout

history, the women who have written have always been disliked, censored, and pushed into obscurity by men. Despite such difficulties, each generation must make sense of female existence again and again (13).

Furthermore, another issue that makes the past significant is that the fact that women's movements and women's writing are fed from each other. First of all, it is necessary to mention the 19th century women writers who were pioneers in women's writing. In the 19th century, there are well known novelists such as Burney, Edgeworth, Radcliffe, and Austen, as well as lesser known novelists such as Inchbald and Holland (Showalter, 1977: 18). On the other hand, the Victorian writer lived through the Golden Age with the following writers: Brontës, Mrs. Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot. Moreover, Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter, Angela Burdett, and so called "female role innovators" were; they were creating innovations one after another (19). The second generation, which took place between 1820 and 1840, consisted of Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton. These women followed the footsteps of the women writers before them. The third generation, from 1840 to 1860, included exciting novelists and children's writers (19-20). "New women" began to write mainly about women's suffrage after 1894. Although in 1918 their request was granted conditionally (women over the age of thirty to vote), they wrote continuously (Laird, 2016: 2). Furthermore, women writers of the 20th century began to take bolder steps. Woolf came first among the women writers who turned their backs on the traditions of the Victorian Period, namely the period from 1920 to 1945 (Joannou, 2013: 1).

Woolf was a woman writer who dealt with women's issues every time (Walters, 2005: 1). According to her, the women of the 19th century were the pioneers of their movements. They were fighting against the authoritarianism of the patriarchal state, but opposing groups called them "feminists" to express their anger. Also, Margaret Walters argues that feminism, basing on the dictionary meaning of it, means "defending women's rights", but since the "right to earn a living" that women want was earned, the word lost its function and had no meaning. That is why, Woolf discussed the idea of the "right to earn a living" extensively, but it was seen that even

it was not enough for women to earn money by just entering the business life because women lacked the right to equal pay (2). Especially, in her book *A Room of One's Own* (1928), she emphasized the importance of women's financial and economic freedom, while highlighting that if a woman was going to write, she should have money and a room (Joannou, 2013: 14). Moreover, in a speech to the National Society in 1931, Woolf announced the death of the "angel in the house" from the Victorian Era (10- 11). All these developments were very valuable steps for women in history.

After the 1960s, there was an interest in the idea of "a special female self-awareness emerges through literature in every period". This meant that a more accurate and orderly history of literature could be established for women. In addition to providing information for the reader to understand the science and literary tradition that emerged as a result of contemporary feminist movements, they began to go back and deal with the less well known in history (Showalter, 1977: 8). Thus, it was no coincidence that the second wave feminism came about, and Kate Chopin's rediscovered novel *Awakening* (1899) became the most popular of the early years. Moreover, Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and Monique Wittig's *Les Guerilleres* (1969) occupied the same positions (Showalter, 1985: 5).

Another important work that supported the turning point of history emerged. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979) grew into a classic masterpiece on women's writing. In this work, the authors concentrated on the 19th century novel content. They explored the roles that characters represented in works written by writers such as Jane Austen and Mary Shelley. It raised the question of why writers had such a purpose or why they need researching past works; to wit, was there a distinction between men's works and women's works? The response to the question was yes! The women writers of Gilbert and Gubar were subject to restrictions. These women were also overwhelmingly dominated by male domination. Therefore, there is no social equality (Labbe, 2010: 4). So, it is necessary to know the works or ideas written by women in the past.

Regarding the importance of women's past, according to Greene, the aim is not to carry the tradition of the past to the future, but to break the influence of the past on women. "Reviewing" the past, that is, "looking back" or "re-evaluating from a different perspective" refers to survival for women (Greene, 1991a: 1). In another work, Greene considers examining traditions as "revisions of tradition". Referring to Adrienne Rich, she emphasized that revision was a kind of survival purpose (Singley and Sweeney, 1993: 316). Moreover, according to her, feminist fiction was produced by feminism and at the same time produced feminism. At this point, feminist metafiction, which focused on women as readers and writers, emphasized the importance of reading and writing in women's movements. Understandably, women finally realized the power of reading and got ready to write fiction (317). Thus, writers like Atwood, Drabble, and Lessing both wrote and paid tribute to 19th century novels. In particular, Lessing praised the novel genre, emphasizing that in the 19th century the novel was at its peak in literature. Since the denial of history means the cessation or stagnation of development, there is the fact that development underlies the authors' respect for the 19th century literary tradition (Greene, 1991a: 5).

To conclude, women writers' fondness for writing aims to create a tradition of their own, and women aimed to take part in the literature and respond to opposing groups that advocated patriarchal views (7). Crucially, thanks to the science and literature produced as a result of contemporary movements, the problems of sexual bias came to the fore and contributed to the understanding of the importance of the literary tradition for women. The most important of these contributions was the unearthing and reinterpretation of the "lost" works of the authors who fought for women (Showalter, 1977: 8). In this context, feminist publishing is remarkable in two ways. The first is the dissemination of women's literature by women as a tool for women's empowerment. The second is to enter into the domain of economic and cultural authority and thereby enact feminist politics (Riley, 2018: 13). According to Elaine Showalter, the female phase maintains that, since the 1960s, a new self awareness has developed in the realm of women's writing, and efforts have been made for this purpose (Morris, 1993: 66). In this way, women narrated their life experiences from their own viewpoints. As a result, women's writings have

progressed throughout history and have been the cause of important advancements in history.

1.3. FROM FEMINIST FICTION TO POSTFEMINIST FICTION

This part summarizes the general state of feminist fictions from 1950s to 1980s by mainly drawing on Greene's *Changing the Story Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*. The most critical aspect of this book is that it draws attention to the change in feminist fiction; moreover, the works of women writers who adhere to the feminist metafiction genre are examined in order to portray this change.

Feminist fiction is revolutionary because it played a significant role in the success of the second wave feminism (Greene, 1991a: 2). This is the reason why feminist writers focus on traditions, as do feminist critics. As Adrienne Rich affirms, "revision" is a struggle for survival (Rich, 1972: 18). So, there is solidarity between feminism and fiction. Feminist fiction is primarily concentrated on women. Moreover, feminist fiction is produced by feminism, which in turn produced feminism (Greene, 1991a: 8).

First of all, it would be reasonable to tease out the following issue: "Feminist fiction" and "female fiction" are not the same thing. Not all women writers are "female writers" or "feminist writers". Writing about women's issues does not mean adopting a feminist perspective. For example, Lessing has a feminist perspective in *The Golden Notebook*, but not in *The Diaries of Jane Somers* (2). Another example is from two different women writers. In Erica Jong's *How to Save Your Own Life*, the sequel to *Fear of Flying*, the female character leaves her husband for her lover, but a different type of woman is described in *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood and *Ella Price's Diary* by Dorothy Bryant. In two novels, the woman protagonists face their own life alone (65).

To discuss the issue from a broader viewpoint of Ellen Cronan Rose, if a "female writer" writes only about women's experience, and then what we call a feminist should write only about women's experience (Rose, 1988: 86). Then, from Rose's opinion, the issue comes to the fore that all women's novels are not feminists

(87). For example, in the first half of the century, there were important women writers associated with modernism: Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes, Rebecca West, Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, Anzia Yezierska, and Willa Cather. Although they were not feminists compared to writers in the 60s and 70s, they did not even have much to do with women's movements, they just attacked the patriarchal ideology (Greene, 1991a: 34). But somehow the modernist writers and feminist writers meet at one point. According to both groups, their current position is unknown and they use fiction as "blueprints for the future". Drabble explain this situation as follows; when writing a novel, not only is a book written but the future is also created. So, feminist fiction supports transformation and seeks a change and new forms, which is why it is self reflexive like modern fiction. It has an interest in transition and questions tradition (36).

After half of the 20th century, the 60s and 70s are the age of renaissance in women's novels. Authors such as Laurence, Atwood, Lessing, and Drabble present complex questions of form in a radically deconstructive feminist method in that period. As for, the relationship between the author and the character in the work, it is as follows. The protagonist suffers alone and thinks that his/her misery is independent of outside events; the author, on the other hand, has not uncovered the literary and critical powers of the heroines, and it is impossible to establish a personal connection with them (26).

The feminist fiction of the period touches on the events so closely that it is probable to make social and political interpretations based on the narratives of women writers like they are historians (33). This is a success, and the successful women writers could be juxtaposed as follows. From 1972 to 1975 *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood, *Small Changes* (1972) by Marge Piercy, *Sula* by Toni Morrison, *Fear of Flying* (1973) by Erica Jong, *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence, *The Odd* by Gail Godwin, *The Dispossessed* (1974) by Ursula K. Le Guin, *Realms of Gold* by Margaret Drabble, *The Female Man* (1975) by Joanna Russ and *The Summer Before the Dark*, *The Children of Violence* and *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing (Greene, 1991a: 32). Additionally, nonfiction works by

Simone de Beauvoir, Germaine Greer, and Shulamith Firestone come to the forefront. It should be especially noted that this explosion in women's fiction took place as a result of women's movements with several women's movements taking place in the United States, Canada, and England (33).

In the 80s, as in the 50s, the concept of family gains importance and begins to be seen as the basis of social order. In this case, the sexuality of the woman should be controlled. Ultimately, discussions begin about birth. As a result, the 50s and 80s arrive at a common point, such as the re-emergence of traditional roles and the separation of men and women (195).

Towards the end of the 80s, female fictions focus on the individual and praises for features such as "sweet romantic nostalgia" appeared in the *Times Book Review* and *The Women's Review of Books*. In other words, from the 70s to 80s, there is a transition from "resistance to individual dignity". This situation can be perceived in two ways, both as evidence of the success of women's movements and the emergence of self-focused, self-righteous female fictions (200). As for woman writers in these years, Drabble and Atwood begin to write novels bearing the marks of postfeminist disappointment. Atwood's *Cat's Eye* (1988) and Drabble's *The Radiant Way* (1986) reflect this disappointment. For example, in both works, "nothing" is reached in the search for the past, and the word "never" in both means fragmentation. Moreover, the belief in "freedom" or "progress" is lost in Drabble's *The Middle Ground* (1982), and it is not clear what kind of change is desired (Greene, 1991a: 202).

After the feminist fictions, it is necessary to dwell on postmodernism before discussing postfeminist fictions in detail. Postmodernism refers to a style that represents a departure from modernism in late 20th century in several areas such as art, architecture, and criticism, rejecting the conscious use of tradition and mixing of artistic styles (Lexico.com). The term postmodern was first used by critics in the 1950s to describe what was perceived as a new literary genre that went beyond cultural modernism. Moreover, postmodernism now corresponds to the new cultural era in which capitalism has invaded everything and left no rivals (Jackson and Jones,

1998: 178). For example, according to Terry Eagleton, postmodernism is a cultural practice that reflects the superficiality of the capitalist consumer society. Linda Hutcheon also construes postmodernism as the only possible means of making the voices of feminists, postcolonial, ethnic, and racial minorities heard (181). It supports the plurality of “different” (Gamble, 1998: 184).

Furthermore, postmodernity is the state or condition of being postmodern which is characterized by small and multiple narratives, inquiry meta-narratives such as patriarchy and capitalism (Kottiswari, 2008: 1). Accordingly, postmodernism and feminism stand in the same direction? For example, while feminism is against the restriction of women by tradition, postmodernism is against asceticism in the 19th century works. Both of them decipher the dominant groups in society. Any narrative or discourse that overthrows the dominant discourse is postmodern. From this point of view, the dominant theme of contemporary women’s fiction is the use of a new history or a special area in order to combat patriarchy (2). Additionally, Jean Francois Lyotard’s assessment of postmodernism in 1979 as a questioning of basic narratives brought feminism and postmodernism closer. Moreover, in *Gynesis*, Alice Jardine has linked the postmodernist narratives of Europe with feminist criticism. This connection is centralizing “eccentric” locations, according to Linda Hutcheon. Based on this opinion, postmodernism makes every cultural value or every expression valuable. As a result, it leads to a reconstruction of expression and a reoperationalization of freedom and self (3).

Postmodern strategies are frequently used by feminist writers. Therefore, postmodernism and feminism arrive at a mutual understanding in certain points and support each other. While postmodernism and feminism embrace each other, postfeminism takes a different view from feminism. First of all, with regard to the meaning of postfeminism, Lacan states that postfeminism has both positive and negative meanings. Positively, postfeminism is in constant flux. This does not mean that it overcomes previous discourses, whether patriarchal or modernist, it just stands in a critical position (Wright, 2000: 5). Negative aspect of the term draws a line between “post” and “feminism” and further stresses that feminism has been taken over by the post. It shows that the feminine subject gives up feminism for its

subjectivity if necessary (8). Therefore, there is a division between feminism and postfeminism. This division manifests itself across the generations. For instance, women in their 20s and 30s see themselves as feminists, while women in their forties focus on so called postfeminists interests such as fashion. Feminism criticizes and even resists patriarchy by prioritizing equality while relying on the power of political actions and movements. It is against media based popular culture and consumerism (Ferriss and Young, 2008: 3).

Feminists may view postfeminists as victims of media and consumer culture as well as shallow, mindless, and unconscious victims. Concerning postfeminism, it rejects the second wave feminist rage because postfeminists see feminists as the enraged and self-proclaimed victims of patriarchy. Furthermore, they substitute “attitude” and “individual” for “the political is personal” and “choice”. It enjoys media and embraces popular culture (4). While feminists continue to protect their past struggles, rights, and values, they accuse postfeminists of being the representatives of popular culture that makes women forget past successes and assume conventional roles. However, postfeminists cannot understand the anger of feminists and postfeminists enjoy the opportunities that popular culture provides for them, as well. As a result, postfeminists and feminists are on the completely separate poles. Additionally, in summary, it might be concluded that being a woman writer and writing about woman do not mean following feminism. Thus, it is not plausible to say that women centered articles have much to do with feminism (Showalter, 1985: 230).

Regarding in detail the idea that “the work of every woman writer is not in the interest of women” discussed in the previous paragraph will make the content of postfeminist works more understandable. First of all, in this thesis, although postfeminism is viewed negatively due to the support of consumer culture, it should be noted that “postfeminist” does not mean “antifeminist”. Moreover, the term does not imply that feminism is outdated, but it does indicate a shift in consciousness of women’s issues. The new system and moral understanding of postmodernism is reflected in works. In addition, it does not offer much hope for change, as it was in the 70s. Just like in the 50s, women are exposed to messages such as participating in

the working life, looking sexy, following fashion, conforming to the consumption culture, and consuming constantly (Greene, 1991a: 198). Also, women's magazines contain messages that will impress women such as reinforcing the message that a woman can "have it all" if she exercises, looks thin, follows fashion and can only blame her if she fails (195). Besides, the protagonists of postfeminist fictions reveal the fact that women are on the web of popular culture (197). This is why young women are confused, and fictions such as *How to save your own life* (1977) and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, which suggest finding a new man, appeared (199). Additionally, as criticism of these arguments, Elinor Langer in her 1984 New York Times article "Whatever happened to feminist fiction" examines contemporary feminist novels and makes a few points. One of them is that she highlights that the characters in the novels have lost their connection with the outside world (Langer, 1984).

Bridget Jones's Diary fully supports Langer's argument. For example, *Bridget Jones's Diary* is a product of popular culture written by a woman and depicts a woman and her adventures, whereby expressing popular culture in the postmodern era. In other words, it is different from the works of other writers, like Jean Rhys, who focus on the woman and her real problems. Moreover, *Bridget Jones's Diary* is the story of a "bachelor" who lives alone in London and is full of shopping, smoking, and chardonnay charms in addition to trying to find her way. The female figure in the novel displays how popular culture converted women after the rights gained from the women's movements and sexual revolutions in the 1960s (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 191). The emerging of new generation women like Bridget Jones are persistent in their desire to find a husband and are confident enough to whine in case of failure (McRobbie, 2009: 21). Therefore, it can be called a work that feeds on feminism and has an attitude against feminism, as well. As a result, when this postfeminist work is examined, it is impossible to talk about the woman being completely free. Therefore, it is not reasonable to say that such a work is in favour of women.

1.4. CHICK LIT AS POPULAR CULTURE PRODUCT

Given the rising of women's literature from the past to the present, the following conclusion might be drawn. The products that put the woman in the center still exist today, but they represent diverse views. One of them is the "feminist novels" which depict robust, and thoroughly autonomous female characters by contemporary women writers. The other is the pop culture product chick lit featuring semi independent females in pursuit of Prince Charming. *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996) portrays the chick lit subgenre (Ferriss and Young, 2008: 3).

First, it is necessary to define this term; "chick" culture is closely tied to postfeminism. Even when defining postfeminism, it is impossible to separate postfeminism from "chick" culture (3). As for the meaning of the word, it is well known as advertising films targeting female audiences. The term "chick" carries a negative connotation, no matter whether it is used in literature, film, or other popular culture. In the 1970s, "The Women's Liberation Movement" was trendy, and the term "chick" was used as a pejorative along with the word "girl". The word hinted that women as childlike and delicate, suggesting that they needed protection (2). The term chick lit was first used in English speaking societies. It was used by Princeton students for Elaine Showalter's "Female literary tradition" course in response to the historical trend that denigrated women's "prose romances and commercial writing". The first published reference for the term was Don Betterton's *Alma Mater: Unusual Stories and little-known facts* (1998), and it was later adopted contemptuously by Cris Mazza and Jeffrey DeShell in their unique anthology *Chick Lit: postfeminist fiction* (1995) (Harzewski, 2011: 44).

It cannot be said that chick lit products are a new phenomenon. For instance, romances published by the Mills and Boon Company were written by women writers but were far from the objects of feminism. These types of novels were mostly sexual, racial, and class based fantasy (Showalter, 1985: 230). It is seen that the same situation applies to the chick lit genre. For example, the image that Bridget Jones designed as a female character is as follows. In the work, Jones is not career oriented. She desires to find a proper husband, get married, and have children. The thing she

fears the most is being a spinster. Especially in the opening scene of the work, Bridget is afraid of being alone in her pyjamas and asks, “What if I don’t get married, if I don’t find the right man?” (Fielding, 2009: 20). It is clear that she is worried. Her fear and anxiety stem from the thought of being without a man and not being able to take part in the world of the happy couples. In other words, the passion to be in a white wedding dress, which is accepted as traditional by feminism, is dominant. Indirectly, there is an emphasis that feminism, which is anti marriage, is wrong (McRobbie, 2009: 20). Hence, feminism has a ghostly presence in *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (8). In this context, postfeminism seems to have produced a different position for women after the second wave. New gains with postfeminism include sexual freedom, smoking, drinking, and economic independence obtained after the second wave feminism. It seems to emphasize the freedom of women, but it actually works against women in such works. That is, the women are settled in the conventional position. Therefore, it may not be reasonable to maintain that feminism is alive (12). Taking this into account, it may be argued that rejecting the products of chick culture means prevent the humiliation of women.

For the second wave feminists, the infantilization of women, the undermining of the word “girl”, and even the convergence of such words with the word “bitch” represent an utter failure (Ferriss and Young, 2008: 3). In a way, it becomes clear why Angela McRobbie declared the death of feminism. In addition to these arguments, some critics interpret this culture in line with its positive aspects. For example, according to Deborah Barker, “chick” culture is an escape, a hobby for women. Lisa Rüll claims that such movies or books approach the lives of women from a funny point of view, which permits them to become stronger and cooperate. Another comment is from Carol Dole; she points to a strong connection with the third wave feminism in terms of portraying the traditional woman, along with themes that include feminist ideas (225). Doris Lessing, on the other hand, approaches the production of such works with regret. She states that “it’s a pity that so many young women are writing like that. I wonder if they are just writing like this because they think they are going to get published”. While she expresses her sadness with these words, she advises the young women that it would be better to produce works

according to what they see in life instead of writing “drunk” or “girls who worry about their weight” (Smith, 2008: 3).

To better understand the chick lit genre, it would be beneficial to know how it arose and spread. Actually, chick lit was a gap-filling product. Before chick lit, marketers were concerned because the changes in American women’s conditions over the past three decades could affect sales. Meanwhile, the reader of traditional romances was getting older (average age 45) (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 192). Additionally, new targets had to be found. So, publishers were intended to reach the next generation of readers (193). Thus, chick culture generally concentrated on the middle-class American and British women in their 20s to 30s. This culture shined through with Helen Fielding’s 1996 work, the *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (Ferriss and Young, 2008: 1). With such works, women were included in popular culture. Besides, the contemporary media was also devoted to the growth of this culture (2).

With regard to how the genre arose, on the market. In other words, why was such a genre needed? There was a hot market for romances no matter whether they support feminist ideas or not. In the 80s, academic feminism underwent a postmodern transformation and began to raise awareness, whereby enabling women to embark on a search for identity. On the one hand, they wanted equality. On the other hand, they argued that the concept of femininity was already developed by patriarchal consciousness and should be destroyed together with patriarchy, which caused a problem. This question has come to your mind: After killing Woolf’s angel, what would be put in her place? (Waugh, 1995: 188-189).

In time, women increasingly entered the public world. By the way, the aims of the feminist works of the 80s were to reconstruct the female identity and to focus on the female body. For example, the increase in hysterical diseases such as the obsession with weight loss and accompanying anorexia nervosa was an indicator of this (188-189). As a result, the place of Woolf’s angel was attempted to be filled by creating a modern angel model. Many publications appeared in support of this angel. Namely, in the 1980s, feminism joined the academy and gained an important position in the literary publishing world.

Already, in the 1970s and 80s, there was an unprecedented expansion in “woman centered” publishing. For example, journals such as *The Women’s Press* (1977), *Sheba* (1980), and *Pandora* (1981) can be counted. Additionally, in the 80s and 90s, there was a marked tendency for postmodern feminists to portray a problem free female identity (Marcus and Nicholls, 2004: 606). Here, the effort to create a problem free female figure is troublesome. As Doris Lessing emphasized a few pages back, this does not reflect the situation of women in real life. In this context, in order to clarify this thought, first of all, the cliché “endings” of the romances should be explained.

At the end of any romantic novel, generally female characters marry. What is meant by “ending” with marriage is that women have no other purpose than to seek men and marry, in a stereotypical way. The main criticism is that the woman is in search of a man and in expectation of marriage, that is, an “end” is appropriate for the woman under the name of a love story theme. A woman’s “end” is, of course, “male” in terms of both “target” and “result” (Greene, 1991a: 12).

Feminist critics interpret marriage as a woman’s only theme, her only success in life, her transition to adulthood, and moreover, her integration with society (12). Women who are transferred from their father’s house to their husband’s house through marriage may be given as an example (Abel, 1983: 228). The transfer of women is problematic, and also Cixous’s statement on this issue is so pessimistic. To her, women move in circles from father to husband and they are almost imprisoned in the “narrow room” they are in (Cixous, et al., 1976: 877). In short, the great works of literature of the past give women two options, either marriage and be happy or death (French, 2011: 189). As a result, in postmodern works, both a problem free female identity and stereotypical endings created for women, as in the great literary works of the past, are seen. Although there were such issues with subtext, this genre had become even more popular with the release of *The Bridget Jones’s Diary*.

By the 90s, *The Bridget Jones’s Diary* was published in 1996 in the UK and in 1998 in the USA. It centered on the romantic adventures of the contemporary young women. Approximately all such works had accomplished notable commercial and

critical success (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 193). The novel appeared on the bestseller lists of the 90s. It sold eight million copies worldwide in its first ten years and was translated into thirty three languages. The novel was at the center of predictions about what the third wave and the postfeminist woman look like. Bridget Jones represented a growing number of young women (Riley, 2018: 121).

The 2001 movie adaptation of the novel grossed just over \$71.5 million at the American box office. These successes have spawned a market for stories about single women grappling with modern life and relationships. This genre became amazingly popular (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 193). Furthermore, “Sex and the city” (1998) which is the best known chick culture television series based on Candace Bushnell’s book is among the product of this culture known as the chick lit genre. It became so popular that it began to affect the spending habits of young women (Ferriss and Young, 2008: 2).

There are also some works written in the postmodern period that differ from works such as *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. They are *Fear of Flying* and *The Odd Woman*. According to Greene, they are exceptions in their adaptation of feminist metafiction to the popular market (Greene, 1991a: 85). For instance, in the work named *Chick Lit and Postfeminism* by Stephanie Harzewski, such works as the *Fear of Flying* (1973) by Erica Jong is declared as a “mother of chick lit”. However, in the *Newsday* interview, the author persistently rejects the chick lit label, emphasizing that this book is nothing short of a contemporary version of the *How to Get Married* by Charlotte Bronte and Jane Austen (Harzewski, 2011: 143-144). Gayle Greene holds the same attitude as the author (Greene, 1991a: 86).

Here is Greene’s explanation: First of all, Gayle Greene accepts that this work is a product of popular culture but puts it in a different place from other popular culture products. To her, In the *Fear of Flying* (1973), Jane Clifford is a character who tries to be “free”, but freedom has no real equivalent (Greene, 1991a: 86). Jane represents a woman who has changed. As such, she goes back to the past and discovers her own paths and endings. Jane’s quest makes the novel feminist metafiction. Moreover, the search for the “impossible” man for the sake of

permanent or literal love turns into a search for her own self. Thus, Greene defends her interest in the *Fear of Flying* by stating that she enjoyed reading it when it first came out. Moreover, to her, this book was taken seriously as a response to the sexual liberation that was an important part of the early women's movements. She expresses another reason for her interest in the book by explaining that it is the only example of feminist metafiction to have sold ten million copies. This is a very serious figure and important for the dissemination of feminist ideas (87). On the cover of the novel, it reads: "A dazzlingly unrestrained novel that reveals a woman's most intimate sexual feelings.". Thus, various initiatives can be mentioned behind Jong's emphasis on sexuality. Also, Suleiman explains the emphasis on sexuality as follows. To her, using or "stealing" of male sexual vocabulary is intended to reverse roles and language. In short, the goal here is not to challenge the conditions but to reverse them (90).

Erica Jong heals the ideology Greene aims to criticize. Jong's metafiction, the *Fear of Flying*, is one of the least complex novels compared to the novels of Margaret Atwood or Drabble. According to Greene, this novel does have the most impact on the majority of the women and is an example of what one reader calls "revolutionary text". The protagonists have greater critical intelligence but resist succumbing to a set of conventions (26). Usually, women who write about desire make use of such strategies. For instance, this is what Drabble did in *The Waterfall*, namely, to articulate new sexual terms that would change the "rules of the old game". The plot in the novel does not challenge the "old story" at the level of language or meaning. When Isadora falls in love with Adrian, clichés from love songs or romantic movies come into play. She starts to identify expressions like "He was my sunshine". Isadora resists clichés (91).

As it turns out, the *Fear of Flying* is an exception, but there are works that are not. For example, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, which began to surface at the end of the 1990s, focuses on women and women's perspectives as well as the products which targeted women in terms of marketing (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 192).

As a result, chick lit is accepted by popular culture although it is contradict to feminism. Ultimately, it is also gradually is deemed worthy of examination by the authors and the academic community. While chick lit products spread rapidly in the market, some contemporary women writers such as Margaret Atwood, Doris Lessing, and Angela Carter have preferred to create fully independent female characters with critical and creative narrative strategies of feminist metafiction which is almost the opposite of chick lit (Waugh, 1989: 168).



CHAPTER TWO

2. FEMINIST METAFICTION

2.1. LIBERATION THROUGH NARRATIVE

According to the contemporary women writers, writing novels has a purpose. And Drabble remarks that novels should be written in order to appeal to a vast majority of readers. Novels written specifically for educated audiences are not preferred by the majority. The author should embrace everyone, and for him/her this is a duty. Lessing agrees with Drabble. To her, the artist defines the novel as the only popular art form in which she/he speaks directly. In this context, it must be accessible (Greene, 1991a: 3). As echoed by both authors, appealing to large audiences and attracting their attention is part of being a writer.

Fiction is a type that includes the bad and even the mediocre, rather than just the good (Currie, 1990: x). The term fiction is sometimes used negatively to describe inaccurate or fabricated content (Friend, 2012: 180). With reference to the feminist fiction, it contains a completely different expression from the definitions mentioned earlier like postfeminist fiction, *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Greene, 1990: 82).

Between 1972 and 1974, *Realms of Gold* by Margaret Drabble, *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood, *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence, *The Odd Woman* by Gail Godwin, and *Fear of Flying* by Erica Jong were published. The publication of these books indicates the emergence of a new genre in the early 70s. This new genre is “women’s ‘quest fiction’”. In this genre, the woman seeks “freedom” within traditional roles, asks questions about the present, and, moreover, by looking/examining the past for answers, goes down to the cultural or literary origins of the present “roles” assigned to her. The woman reflects on the “roles” assigned to her during her past research. The aim is to find answers to the questions about today, as well as to find a different “end” or “end of its own” for herself from cliché “ends”

such as marriage or death brought about by the “roles” carried to the present through traditions (82).

As discussed in the previous chapter, “women’s history”, “women’s writing” is vital for rights protection, cliché-free endings and even for the future. It is also essential to underline that it may be confusing for woman writers to deal with the “past issues”. Margaret Drabble explains it this way: We, as women, do not intend to be like the women of the past (Greene, 1991a: xiv). So, the following conclusion may be drawn. Not being like our foremothers means in a way that history should not be forgotten.

Furthermore, innovative novels like feminist metafiction are far from being the transmitter of tradition like cliché endings; on the contrary, they unmask the tradition and emphasize its artificiality. The method is as follows. The author first cleans the area he/she will change, makes room for new ideas, and grows new ideas in this area. Additionally, metafictional tools are closely related to this method. In metafictional form, fictionality takes place as a theme, but is eventually recontextualized into “reality”. For example, Drabble thematizes the fiction, *The Seven Sisters*, and makes inquiries into “the past”. Moreover, women writers use the tools of “metafiction” not to showcase themselves and their writings, but to combine, in Gerald Graff’s terms, the patterns of individual and social life (19).

A more detailed evaluation of the term “metafiction” was first coined by William Gass in the late 1960s in his essay titled “Philosophy and the future of fiction”. It was emphasized “fictions about fiction” (Gass, 1980: 7). This definition primarily gives the impression to the reader that the frame between fiction and the connection between embeds stories. These connections tend to become slippery, unreliable, volatile, and, moreover, self-refuting as the story progresses (Hite, 1988: 482).

The term metafiction has been used superficially in English as a term that refers to all kinds of practices that directly or indirectly “breaks” the “mimetic illusion” created by the fictional narrative. That is to say, metafiction mostly includes

“anti-realist means, parody, mise-enabyme, everything outside the concept of realistic” (Fludernik, 2003: 11).

The definition of the term “metafiction” is often similar, and William Gass comments on the term as follows: “There are metatheorems in mathematics and logic, ethics has its linguistic oversoul, everywhere lingos to converse about lingos are being contrived, and the case is no different in the novel.” (Gass, 1970: 24-25). Gass uses “metafiction” as a play, emphasizing that the novelist’s aim is to form a world by using language, in relation to fiction’s self conscious use of philosophical views. This explains why metafiction produces new patterns on old patterns (Edwards, 1985: 43).

Within the scope of the study reported in this thesis, metafiction is examined in detail. In 1970, critics such as Robert Scholes have tried to develop the definition. Nevertheless, metafiction introduces a contradiction in any definition. It, leaving everything aside, is primarily concerned with “a reflexive awareness of the conditions of meaning making”, so a definition rooted in objective qualities would contradict the linguistic philosophy that metafiction is trying to convey. It depends on the idea of constructed meanings rather than definable essences in particular. What is needed in these circumstances is a definition that is not based on the common thread among metafiction or is not essentialist but that indicates the problems in the philosophy of language. In other words, there is a need for a postmodern definition of metafiction, which does not clearly state the relationship between metafiction and postmodernism (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 15).

The fictional order is a reflection of the conditions of existence that return humans to their essence. These existential and essential conditions of existence are reflected in human activities and the construction of fiction, especially in the language. And then “being” is divided into “existence” and “essence”, while “fiction” is divided into “form” and “ideas” as depicted in the Figure 1:

<u>FICTION</u>	<u>BEING</u>
forms	existence
ideas	essence

Figure 1: “Fiction” And “Being” Image. (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 23)

Human actions take place in time, in existence. These behaviour patterns change, but if the situation of the person does not change, the person does not change. However, the forms of fiction change. The ideas of fiction are parallel to each other with the essence of man, moreover, when one changes, the other will also change. The ideas of fiction are the basic elements that define human beings and are the characteristics of being human. In this case, as long as fiction responds to human needs in all cultures, it will be governed by these ideas (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 23).

It is desired that the forms of existence and the forms of fiction are in harmony, but these forms cannot survive without changing. The fictional works fall into four fictional categories, as illustrated in the Figure 2:

fiction of forms (romance)	fiction of existence (novel)
fiction of ideas (myth)	fiction of essence (allegory)

Figure 2: The Fictional Works in Four Categories. (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 24)

The most noteworthy works of fiction address all four dimensions. The fictions of ideas are mythical fiction in folk tales that consist of people's needs and desires. In mythology, ideas are clear. The fiction of forms accepts past montages and imitates them. It is aware of this imitation problem. It often appears as "romantic" in English criticism because its concentration on the elaboration of previous fictions is its hallmark. The fiction of existence strives to imitate forms of human behaviour rather than forms of fiction. So, the fiction of existence is mimetic and it also deals with "representational reality". But the present reality of existence is an observable reality (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 25). The fiction of essence deals with the deep structure of being. Deep psychology is used to reach the essence of behaviour (26).

It was also defined by Waugh as classical metafiction. According to Waugh, metafiction is a fictional writing that deliberately and systematically emphasizes the fictionality of the work to draw attention to whether the work is fiction or fact. Such writings not only analyze the main components of narrative fiction but also highlight the possible fictionality of the world outside the fictional text (40). If our relationship with the world is through language, then literary fiction, which is the world completely created through language, will be the source for the creation of "reality" (41).

The language is not a passive structure but an independent and self-sufficient system. The relationship of language with the fantastic world is extremely complex, problematic, and organized by traditions. Therefore, the word "meta" is needed to understand the relationship between the arbitrary linguistic system and the world it refers to. This is critical for our understanding of the relationship between the fictional world within fiction and the world outside fiction (41).

Even if the term metafiction is new, the practice is old (42). For example, works such as *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne and *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen can be given as examples of early metafiction (5).

Studying metafiction actually means examining how novels are formed. The word novel is closed to recognition, so variability can be used to describe it. Metafiction boasts and exaggerates, thus emphasizing its variability. However, there

is a distinguished “language of fiction”. Various genres, such as memoirs, magazines, diaries, and journalism, have their own languages, and these languages compete for the privilege. Moreover, these languages question and relativize each other so much that most of the time the “language of fiction” is self-conscious (43).

The expression “self conscious” is an expression that needs to be examined in detail in order to gain a better insight into metafiction. “Self conscious”, “self aware”, “self informed”, “ironic self distance” mean that metafiction is a narrative technique that underscores the fact that it is fiction. The concept of metafiction poses some problems (1).

Firstly, the idea of “self consciousness” contradicts most postmodern literary theories that attribute self and consciousness and the same situation is true when it comes to fiction. Second, there is a great inconsistency originating from “self consciousness”, per se. If something is defined in terms of its self consciousness, this indicates that that thing is self conscious. But, it is not sufficient for metafiction to be aware of its fiction. Besides, metafiction must be aware that if “self knowledge” is sufficient, then metafiction is metafiction and continues in this way in an endless logic. In this case, can it be said that metafiction is aware of its consciousness? (1).

Another problem is that postmodern fiction is in an intense relationship with its past. The works written based on postmodernism in the postmodern age, in a way, act with the motivation of interpreting their antecedents. In other words, they act as interpretations of the previous works. “Self-consciousness” is a state of “self” consciousness that is neither new nor meaningful because metafiction refers to other fictions in its period, the postmodern period. The relationship between its critical aspect and its literary object is entangled. So, “metafiction” as fictional self-consciousness cannot handle this confusion and contains various problems (1).

The next factor that makes metafiction problematic is the expression “systematic” in Waugh’s definition. The systematic expression here is problematic (Tykhomyrova, 2018: 363). This reference limits the concept of metafiction to some radical postmodernist texts, such as “Lost in the funhouse” by John Barth, which leads to the problem because, as mentioned before, although the concept of

metafiction is new, it does not belong to the postmodern period. Attention to the fictionality of the text is common in the contemporary novels but can be found in earlier times, for example, in 18th and 19th century literature, especially if not necessarily systematically, in the progenitor of metafictional novels such as Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (364).

In general, metafiction has been seen as closely linked to postmodernism, postcolonial writing, and magical realism, but there have also been studies that applied a historical perspective to metafiction and dealt with it in a feminist framework. Metafiction is neither a genre of literature nor a genre of a novel (364). In this case, the term, metafiction, should be clarified by more different critics' definitions.

According to Fludernik, "A narrative strategy or a comment on the part of the narrator is metafictional if it explicitly or implicitly draws attention to the fictionality (fictitiousness or arbitrariness) of the story and the narrative discourse" (Fludernik, 2009: 156). Tykhomyrova, on the other hand, delineates metafiction as a narrative tactic that emphasizes the fictionality of the text by applying reflexive methods in her work "Metafiction in Contemporary English-Language Prose: Narrative and Stylistic Aspects.". In this case, the artificial reality created in the metafictional text must be broken (Tykhomyrova, 2018: 366). Moreover, embedded narratives or a story within a story technique have been prevalent in the literary world for a long time. Metafiction can occur when "mise en abyme" or "mirror text" is applied when tension is created by underlining the fictionality of the text. According to Prince, mise en abyme is the subplot that parallels the plot of the novel. "Mirror text" becomes a clue for both readers and characters, making interpretation easier (385).

Returning again to Waugh and her ideas in metafiction, Waugh points directly to Bakhtin's reference to the "deconstruction" function of metafiction's fictional structure. That is, Bakhtin defines the relativization process as the "dialogic" power of the novel. This unlocks this potential of metafiction (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 43). To elaborate on the concept of "dialogic", "double voiced discourse" serves two speakers at the same time, and furthermore, it simultaneously emphasizes two

different intentions. While revealing the purpose of the character who speaks with two different intentions, the author also defines the fractured purpose. Bakhtin puts forward that these two speakers may be “dialogically interrelated.” (Busch, 2006: 478).

The novel holds diverse discourses. Realism, which is accepted as a classical fictional form, paradoxically tries to suppress this dialogue. In realistic fiction, the clash of languages and voices is resolved through their submission to the dominant “voice” of a godlike author. Novels, which Bakhtin calls “dialogical”, resist this dissolution. Metafiction reveals the main character of the novel by emphasizing the impossibility of such a solution. Metafiction novels tended to be built on these oppositions. As such, as in conventional realism, a fictional illusion is constructed, and then this illusion is revealed. In other words, the fiction is created first, and then it is deconstructed (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 43).

The period we live in is an uncertain, insecure, self questioning, and culturally pluralistic period. Contemporary fiction clearly considers dissatisfaction with traditional values. According to the 19th century realist novels, fiction consisted of a firm belief in a lived and objectively existing history. In the modernist fiction written at the beginning of the 20th century, it was seen that the belief in such a world completely disappeared. For example, Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927) is one of the first examples of the emergence of fiction in the novel. Contemporary metafiction underlines the transience of reality or history. The created world is no longer the world of literary realities but of constructions, artifacts, and temporary structures. In this world, the “materialist”, “positivist”, and “empiricist” world views of realistic fiction no longer exist. As a result, it is not surprising that contemporary fiction is free from realistic novel concerns such as a well-constructed plot, chronological order, omniscient authoritative author and rational connections (44).

Metafiction exhibits the traditions of realism and does not choose to ignore or abandon them (Waugh, 1984: 18). Moreover, in metafiction, traditions are destroyed or revealed to show historical temporality. To make this matter more concrete, to give an example, it would serve the purpose of revealing the ideological views in the

writings of the godlike male writer, who tacitly declared his neutrality and had roots in the late 18th or early 19th century. Metafictional parody serves exactly this purpose (67). The novel has always been intertwined with parody. For example, John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* rewrites the Victorian realist novel and presents other possibilities (69). Indeed, in a way, new developments in fiction find the opportunity to progress through the parody of old or worn out traditions (70). Another example is from Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*. Lessing wrote to resolve her crisis as a writer with a background of free women parodying traditional realism (71). The author has accomplished to a large extent through the critical function of parody and the women's movement (72).

Regarding Jean-François Lyotard's perspective on metafiction and feminism, according to him, postmodern is "as incredulity toward metanarratives, grand narratives or master narratives" (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv). This definition sparked debates about many narrative systems that brought meaning, integrity, and "universality" to the life of human society. Lyotard, in his discussion with Jürgen Habermas, asserted that postmodernity represents small and multiple narratives that do not aim to universalize rather than large, inclusive, and master narratives (Hutcheon, 1989: 39).

The role and function of metanarratives which are self-controversial, in other words, "a self reflexive" is critical (Fludernik, 2003: 13). In addition to the other great master narratives of today, capitalism and liberal humanism, metanarratives are clearly patriarchy. Feminism, along with Marxist and poststructuralist theories, meet at one point in what is called postmodern art that is "self reflectively and historically grounded". Postmodernism desires to object to cultural rulers such as patriarchy, capitalism, and humanism, but it is cognizant of that it cannot get rid of them completely. Nevertheless, since postmodernism uses irony as a strategic tool, it both protects its target and tries to destroy it. This clearly creates a paradox. As a result, postmodernism both collaborates with metanarrative and, due to this paradox, finds a common ground with feminism (Hutcheon, 1989: 40).

Many critics have pointed to the masculinity of the modernist tradition, and even the masculinity of postmodernism, which consciously breaks or criticizes

modernism. This explains why feminism refuses to fall under the umbrella of the postmodern. An important reason for this is that the political agendas of feminists are endangered or covered up by postmodernism. Moreover, “historical particularities” and “relative positionalities” are at risk of colligation. These two concepts are very important for feminists because they try to become aware of cultural traditions through both of them. Both feminist and postmodern artists see the art “as a social sign”. These are the common points between feminism and postmodernism. However, feminism uses art because it aims to destroy systems and to change them (41). The other difference is that, according to Barbara Creed, while feminism tries to explain this crisis from the perspective of the study of patriarchal thought, women, and other minorities, postmodernism relies on the so called universal truth ideas of the west. Feminism, on the other hand, is of the opinion that these so called universal truths serve patriarchy (Creed, 1987: 52).

It is their metanarrative that feminists have a position and “truth” that enables them to recognize aesthetic and social practices in the context of the manufacture and challenge of gender relations. Feminism and postmodernism have been the basis for understanding the dominant forces in society. Feminists have particularly focused on women and sought ways to challenge or change oppressions (Hutcheon, 1989: 42). Moreover, feminists have approached many postmodern questions from different perspectives. Some prominent questions are: By whom is the current historical narrative created? Who decides this? In the face of such questions, personal narratives such as diaries, letters, and biographies began to be re-evaluated (43).

2.2. THEORIES OF GAYLE GREENE

According to Greene, metafiction is fiction within fiction. Even though it is associated with postmodern, i.e. male, writers rather than feminist writers, it is also an effective tool for feminist criticism (Greene, 1991b: 293). Succinctly, the difference between fiction and metafiction is that fiction includes a type of writing invented by the author while metafiction is a type of fiction that constantly underlines that it is fiction as well as being an effective tool for feminism.

Feminist metafiction allows women writers to both take part in the discourse and take a stand against it. It also offers a solution to a problem that is at the center of feminist debate. This solution is to adapt the traditional male writing style to express the oppression of women or to express their desires. While talking about the necessity of a special language for women, it is not a rejection of language or confining women to the feminine space. As Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray state, an alternative discourse derived from the female body, desires, and sensations is meant. When Cixous writes about the female body in her work “l’écriture féminine”, she actually points to the basis of rebellious writing that destroys cultural structures, rejects classes and codes, and intends to change the rules of the old game (Greene, 1991a: 20). Thanks to feminist metafiction, the text is “nontransparent realism” that is it possible to “play”, process, and change for the writer (22).

Feminist metafiction was produced by a few talented writers to keep pace with a new era and to create “something new”. Ambitious and innovative, this genre was widely read, and it was revolutionary in the way it changed people’s lives by creating unusual characters (28). In stories written in postfeminist fiction, for example, in Drabble’s novel, the three female characters are different from each other in terms of their interests and intelligence (214). Marriage is important to them, but their main efforts are diverted to something other than romance (215). Another example, in Drabble’s *The Radiant Way*, Liz focuses on her own past as a way of understanding the present (216). In other words, the method is “turn back to leap forwards, ‘to confront’ the blank, dark backward nothingness of her own unknowing” (217).

Greene used the title “something new” for the term “metafiction”. This term indicates that the old writing tradition has changed. That is, the heroines in the works such as Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook*, Laurence’s *The Diviners*, and Atwood’s *Lady Oracle* are “professional, self sufficient, self conscious writers”, and they make a living from their writing. These women question traditions. It can be seen as proof that the author’s female characters in the novels strive for an unconventional life. In this respect, such writings and the female characters who attempt to write them are similar to Cixous’s “l’écriture féminine”. So, writing is another way of breaking the rules of the game and bringing new rules by not accepting the traditions (7).

For Greene, drawing attention to fictional structures is also to draw attention to the traditionality of the events that affect human life. Greene supports this statement by referring to Waugh. As Waugh said, the world is built on meaning and values, thus it can be changed. Metafiction is in distortion mode, as Wallace Martin argues, for the reason that when an author speaks of narrative within a narrative, it breaks traditional distinctions between reality and fiction. As for, feminist metafiction, like “women writing” as defined by Mary Jacobus, is a process that transcends literary and ideological boundaries (Greene, 1991b: 293). It shares similarities with Julia Kristeva’s “polyphonic novel” which she defines as a linguistic violation, and Helene Cixous’s “l’écriture féminine” and “new insurgent writing”, which destroys classes and social orders and changes the rules of the old game (Greene, 1991a: 20). The novel partially recreates and then destroys traditional narratives of the “individual self” and maintains this dual focus by integrating the metafictional discourse about literature (Bromberg, 1990: 11).

Also, it would be of value to note that Greene underlines that many English canons are tradition bearers in her work called *Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*, but Peter rejects this idea. Writers such as Erica Jong, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, and Margaret Atwood began to use heroines. Greene carefully examines the writer’s works. The women in these works are writers, and they have to overcome imposed conventions for their ultimate goal to embed their voices into the text and create their formation. This struggle is also supported through a narrative that directly conveys the inner world and thoughts of the character. While the character becomes a part of the story she tells, on the other hand, she becomes a part of the fiction that tells the story (Peters, 2002: 1).

Joan Douglas Peters, in her *Feminist Metafiction and the Evolution of the British Novel* book, examines six different English genres, from *Moll Flanders* to *The Rainbow* and *The Lady Chatterley’s Lovers*. This review aims to respond to Greene. Especially in her, Gayle Greene’s, work *Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*, she points to the 1970s as the period of the “feminist metafiction” genre. She further marks that the strongest and most

oppressive literary tradition for 20th women writers in English is the tradition of the English novels, the “great books,” or “canons” (1).

To Greene, feminist metafiction is a uniquely postmodernist genre because it has an attitude toward canonical novels of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century. Peters argues that the canons do not deserve such exclusion. That is, canons and feminist metafiction are not as different as Greene says. According to her, Greene’s approach reinforces that feminism has a negative relationship with the canonical past of the novel genre. Greene continues her analysis in binary terms such as “woman versus man, woman writer versus man, contemporary woman writer versus literary order.”. Peters is exactly against this view and tries to refute the view with her work (1).

Peters alleges that, contrary to Greene’s argument, the discourse of “female” metafiction did not emerge as a feminist backlash against the canon in the late 20th century but that “female” metafiction began revising and re-editing the novel from the beginning of the novel as part of the development of the canon. This explains the reason why Peters first analyzes feminist metafiction and then looks directly at the canons of English literature to examine the impact of women’s narrative on the novel’s change. She further examines not only the works of female authors but also the works of male authors because both of them used the female narrative way to create a new genre concept in the novel (2).

In all the novels examined, in Peters’ book, the equivalent of male and female discourses in the text creates a gendered dialogue. It has been seen that a female narrator is included in the English canonical texts. The author posits that any narrator in the text uses the narrative as a tool to convey the psychological state or the story, but as a rhetorical, metafictional argument whose narrative voice dominates the language of the female narrator (4). In other words, the women’s narratives in these works form a dialogue about the narrative by opposing the men’s narratives. Peter defends the idea that writers parody traditional narrative forms and supports this idea by drawing on Bakhtin (Leybovitch, 2003: 166). Bakhtin divides the text into two “poles”. The first pole consists of the system of signs, while the second pole is the

narrative discourse. It acts as a dialogue between non-repeatable individual language systems. That is, Bakhtin treats the text as non-repeatable (Peters, 2002: 4).

Critics of Bakhtin focus on the social contexts that include his polyphonic narratives rather than the structural activities of his discourses (Hohne and Wussow, 1994: xiii). According to Bakhtin, the first metalinguistic strategy used by novelists to develop a new narrative form is a parody. It could further be argued that the most important novel models and genres occurred during the parodic destruction of previous works (Bakhtin, 1981: 309). Moreover, Peters uses Kristeva's concept of "other" as a challenge to the gender neutral male voice to support her thesis (Peters, 2002: 3). Kristeva emphasizes that, unlike the Ecriture feminine theories, a "female" voice in the narrative is not an additional mode of discourse and that the language used by the author, whether male or female, is a language that opposes a traditional phallogocentric narrative style. This voice is different from the language of fixed patriarchal structures, but it is a voice that can be defined by basic female characteristics (Kristeva, 1981: 137-38).

The major novels Peters reviewed are *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe, *Clarissa* by Samuel Richardson, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens, *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, and *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence. During her review of these works, Peters rejects the notion that these women were economically deprived and also literarily incompetent. Peters combines a historical approach with a narratological approach to historically position the narrative, address the qualities of the "female" voice, and define parody (Peters, 2002: 21). Underlining the importance of the language factor in the text, she approaches the historical analysis of the novel and the language issue as follows. The historical analysis of the novel is very important because of the language forms used in the text to represent women and to "disempower" women. However, the history of the novel has a history of language evolving into a new genre. Language has a positive content in terms of feminism (192). In a woman's narrative text, the woman's "self" is formed through language. Fictional narratives are constructed with language. Fiction is concerned with how to persuade the reader and how to manipulate the reader if the goal is political (194).

Leybovitch opposes Peters as Peters did Greene. Primarily, she reviews Peters' work, *Feminist Metafiction and the Evolution of the British Novel*. She emphasizes that the novels Peters analyzes are "underarguments" (Leybovitch, 2003: 166).

According to Leybovitch, Peters examines the language choices in the novels she deals with. The author's main claim is that the female voice has always had an important place in the English canons and that feminist metafiction is part of the history of the English novel. Moreover, she advocates that they are innovative. But, Leybovitch regards some of Peters' claims as problematic. She holds the idea that when Peters opposes the prevailing view of male dominance in the text, her claims are not strong enough to overturn the ideas in the objected work (169). For example, while Peters discusses the ending of *Bleak House*, she glorifies Esther's narrative, then ends the novel in an unconventional way, and accepts Dickens's female narrative as the "other" at the end of the work. Dickens actually tries to consolidate male authority in the novel. Dickens's endorsement of the female privileged narrative hardly stands in the way of the fact that Dickens considers the male voice to be the dominant one (170). It is for these reasons that Leybovitch argues that Peters is problematic.

2.3. THE CONCEPTS RELATED TO FEMINISM AND METAFICTION

2.3.1. Women's Diaries

In general, feminism and metafiction were grounded in the previous sections, and in this section, subtopics such as women's diaries, matrophobia, narratology, and intertextuality, which will strengthen the feminist metafiction genre, are discussed.

Initially, diaries are archived as "Candid" writings of historical significance. Many experts cannot express the definition of a diary clearly. Based on a recently accepted expression, everyday historical and literary writing is a genre that lies between subjectivity and objectivity. Despite these opposing viewpoints, many experts still used the diaries as the sources that witnessed history, and they were autobiographical documents (Paperno, 2004: 561).

With regard to “diary” as a genre, most people focus on the “resilience” and “hybridity” of this genre. Diaries are considered autobiographies or a chronicle of current events within the period. They are what the conscientious writer puts it: “A comprehensive work”. Furthermore, the expression of diary is diverse. It is “diary” or “journal” in English, “tagebuch” in German, “magazine” in French and “dnevnik” in Russian, and as could be seen, it is derived from a root meaning “day” in all the languages mentioned (562).

Diaries often use first person narration and are not meant for the reader or the recipient. These are the articles that deal with the daily activities and personal experiences of the author based on his personal point of view. The author does not necessarily need to address anyone other than himself/herself. Additionally, diaries have been associated with personal and household works as well as annuals (562). To some scholars, the diary appears “symbolic and functional”. In this context, the modern diary also has been important in terms of representing the writer’s psychology and worldview. Moreover, it contains the person’s daily experiences and makes them resistant to extinction (563).

Throughout “A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives”, the authors try to distinguish between “life narrative”, “autobiography”, and “life writing”. First of all, “life narrative” covers many types of self referential writing, including autographs (Smith and Watson, 2010: 3). It refers to the author’s writing about one’s own life from both an external and an internal perspective (4-5). Moreover, “life narrative” and fiction are two genres that are often confused with each other. To put it simply, autobiographical texts are called “novels”, but novels are rarely called “autobiographies”. Both genres share features attributed to fictional writing, such as “plot, dialogue, and event”. In the 19th century, numerous novels were published dealing with autobiographical narratives, namely the life stories of fictional characters. Some of them are *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens, and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (7). The narrators in these works prefer first person narration as protagonists who focus on their personal histories and try to understand their past lives by questioning them (8). The opposite of “life narrative” is

“biography”. In biography, scientists document and interpret another person’s life from an objective point of view (4-5).

When it comes to autobiography, in Greek, *autos* means “self”, *bios* means “life” and *graphe* means “writing”, so autobiography means “writing one’s own life” (1). The term autobiography was coined in the 18th century by English working class writer Ann Yearsley. Studying the extensive history of autobiography, Robert Folkenflik emphasizes that the word originated in the west. The word self biography is also suitable to be used as a synonym for this word. According to Folkenflik, the word “memoirs” was used to mean writing about one’s individual life until the 20th century. “Autobiography” is a commonly used term for this type of writing. This concept highlights that it was produced together with the personal concept of “the self interested individual” in the early modern period in the West. In the 18th century, the concepts of “self interest, self consciousness, and self knowledge” referred to the concept of the “enlightened individual”. Besides, “autobiographies” were known as “life writing” and favored by a growing audience as works that could be affordably purchased. In earlier times, the 18th century was used to break the self reference of the author by referring to several fields such as history, politics, or culture, with terms such as “memoir”, “the life”, and “the book of my life” or “essays of myself” (2).

Finally, “life writing” is a general expression and includes a plethora of writings based on life. Examples of these writings are biographical, novelistic, and historical writings (3).

When historical sources are examined, a conclusion might be drawn about where the act of keeping a diary is derived. According to Beatrice Didier, who described the cobbling together Christianity, individuality, and capitalism in the early modern period, the tradition of bookkeeping was derived from the daily study of one’s religion. As a result, such writings can be considered the economic, spiritual, and emotional explanation of the person (Paperno, 2004: 563).

It is stated that much more diaries were written in England in the Victorian Era than in previous periods (Carter, 1997: 251). To illustrate this; in 1820, the diary

became popular. “The English Catalogue of Books” indicates that, since then, the number of published journals or magazines have doubled compared to the previous decade. It reaches even higher levels in the 1830s. Furthermore, in the 1850s, fictional diaries such as Anne Bronte’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) began to be published. Additionally, the rise stops in the 1860s (252).

Rebecca Steinitz interrogates how the diary was so prominent in 19th century Britain. She stresses that the dominant discourses of the period made the diary a unique tool (Steinitz, 2011: 2). Besides, it is a matter of curiosity the fact that diaries are the form associated with women. In her article “diary as a feminine form”, Hogan directly questions whether the diary is feminine. The answer is “no”, as an explanation, there are also men’s diaries (Hogan, 1991: 95). The abundance of detail is essential in proving the facts of life in 19th century realistic novels. As a result, starting from this idea, the more detailed the narration, the more realism is in question. However, according to Naomi Schor, American literary critic and theorist, the excess of detail causes a loss of perspective, and that causes a loss of hierarchy. Details trigger loss of dominance and begin to immerse as details are entered. A connection can be made here between “detailing” and “femininity” (98).

Suzanne Juhasz claims that the diary writer’s point of view is not to establish distance between events but is to “immersion” (98-99). According to her, the abundance of details does not lead to loss of perspective but to the formation of perspective, because intense immersion in details is a perspective. Moreover, Margo Culley takes a historical perspective on the “feminine” of the diary. For her, due to the emergence of the self through the diary, the diary became the domain of women writers in the late 19th and 20th century. The emergence of the details about private and home life written in the diary contradicted the concept of privacy, especially in the 19th century, but the women continued to write by insisting on diary writing. If the concept of “feminine” is considered a cultural signifier representing the social structure, then it may be possible to say that a diary is a feminine form. In other words, the concept of “feminine” expresses a cultural indicator of the duties assigned to the women in society. When writing a diary, women write about their own experiences, and these experiences will not naturally be independent of the roles that

culture ascribes to women. Theorists such as Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva are promising to build a theory of “l’écriture féminine” diary writing, which neoclassical critics argue, could be a devastating blow to constructs of masculinity (99).

Besides, there are several important reasons behind keeping a diary for women. One of them is that diaries provide essential support and motivation for women to cope with difficulties (Davis, 1987: 5). The diaries, which offer the author many selection advantages, also give freedom to the author in terms of content. In fact, writers sometimes fill their diaries not with writing but with the birds or flowers they see around them (6). Furthermore, women openly expressed their hidden desires in their diaries. They recounted their sexual experiences in their own words through diaries, journals, autobiographies, and popular fictions (Gammel, 1999: 1). For example, one of the most well known diary writers of history, Anne Frank addressed, in her diary, an imaginary mirror in which she watched her development (13).

Another reason for keeping a diary is to improve the way people or writers express themselves through the diary. Moreover, diaries are written regularly, which is seen as a way of developing the author’s sense of discipline (Davis, 1987: 6). Some women refer to their loneliness in their diaries. They have created audiences who can feel some kind of empathy for themselves, especially for their particular feelings or thoughts (9). The most significant reason for keeping a diary might be that the writer tries to maintain her mental balance by writing a diary. Authors draw attention to the advantages of expressing emotions directly in maintaining mental health by writing a diary (10). Ruth Elean Graves, for example, stated that writing a diary enabled her to control her emotions (6). As a result, diaries are mostly preferred by women, both in coping with difficulties and in other subjects. Although not expressed in a clear way, the diaries are mostly identified with women.

2.3.2. Matrophobia

Before discussing the term matrophobia, it would be helpful to clarify what the word “motherhood” means. First of all, the story of the human being started with “female”. Although men are at the forefront of society, women have saved the

human race from destruction thanks to their fertility. The fate of the human race depends on its motherhood and its biology. The social duties of the first women were quite different from those of today. They actively worked throughout the day, collecting food, and keeping their tribes standing. The head of the tribe was the mother, and the mother controlled everything. While the young males left the houses, the females continued their lives with their mothers. Today, the role of women has changed drastically, but the mother and daughter relationship is not much different from the past, so the girls are still with their mothers (Tapaswi, 2004: 1).

In research on “motherhood”, the term motherhood is used to refer to the “patriarchal institution of motherhood”. Contrary to the previous term, “mothering” refers to women’s resistance to the institution of motherhood based on the patriarchal system and to their experiences of motherhood while resisting the pressure created by this system. That is why, the theory of “enhanced motherhood” works as a narrative that stands against “motherhood”, and moreover, it emphasizes a view that empowers women by rendering its main narrative dysfunctional (O’reilly, 2010: viii).

“Empowered motherhood” is concerned with the systems that work like her, opposing patriarchal motherhood, which creates an environment of oppression for women. According to Rich, empowered motherhood makes “mothering against motherhood” possible. After the publication of Rich’s book, motherhood research has turned to the overwhelming and empowering aspects of motherhood and the relationship between them (viii).

Motherhood has evolved into an issue of frequent debate by the contemporary feminist writers. The dismay of the woman after becoming a mother has been discussed by many authors. One of these writers is Cathi Hanauer. The author, on the first page of the introduction part of her work *The bitch in the house: twenty-six women tell the truth about sex, solitude, work, motherhood, and marriage*, states that her book is born from feelings such as “exhaustion”, “guilt”, “resentment” (Hanauer, 2003).

There are leading scientists involved in maternity studies. Authors such as Nancy Chodorow, Adrienne Rich, and Dorothy Dinnerstein have influential work on the science of motherhood (O'reilly, 2010: viii). What's more, maternity studies fall into four different categories. These are "motherhood as an institution, experience and identity or subjectivity, motherhood as an agency.". While studies on motherhood as an institution focus on the policies of patriarchal motherhood, those interested in motherhood as an experience focus on what women do as mothers. Motherhood as identity or subjectivity examines the effects of being a mother on women and the effects of motherhood on the subject's sense of self (vii).

In the early 2000s, a theme called phallic, which is related to motherhood, emerged. "Motherhood", as a science, touches upon the issue of how harmful motherhood is for women due to its patriarchal formation regarding "mothering" as an institution, experience, or identity. For example, researchers interested in experience underline that the gap between the sexes of patriarchal motherhood is both distinctive and tiring in terms of the responsibility "motherhood" imposes on women. On the other hand, researchers who are interested in ideology emphasize the guilt of women who do not prefer motherhood, which is surrounded by popular culture (vii).

Concerning "matrophobia", the term was coined by Lynn Sukenick, and later, it was discussed in detail in *Born Of Woman* by Adrienne Rich. The author describes this term as "the fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of becoming one's mother". The author associates the basis of this term with the daughter, the mother, and the patriarchal system. She further posits that the fear of becoming a mother means that if a person lowers her guard, she thinks that she is in danger of identifying with her mother (Rich, 1995: 235). The term denotes "womanly splitting of the self", which primarily advocates for girls' individuality and freedom. Doris Lessing's character Martha, for example, is aware that she has been taken over by her mother and begins to split herself when she learns that she is going to be a mother, as well (236).

There is a contradictory relationship between mothers and their daughters. They are sometimes considered friends and sometimes enemies. The mystery of this coexistence is related to knowing the social myths about mothers that have an impact on the mother and daughter relationship and understanding the nature of the power that comes from motherhood (269).

The relationship between mothers and daughters is not any more complicated than the relationships between mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, or fathers and sons. The first intervention in this relationship is made by several myths. According to them, good mothers raise excellent children and have endless resources, moreover, they are omniscient and do not get angry. On the other hand, there are six bad myths that no matter whether a mother is good, bad, or neutral, such mothers are always bad. This is a myth that puts a lot of pressure on mothers. While such myths point to mothers in need, weaker than fathers, unable to raise healthy children on their own, they stress the impossibility of a healthy mother and daughter relationship and also indicate that if a mother is at work, she is bad. In fact, what makes the mother and daughter relationship dangerous is the belief that their relationship should be perfect (269). An underlying reason for this is, as discussed in the previous section, that men have made up myths to make sense of their existence by pretending to have self confidence they do not have (Spender, 1982: 15).

Another important problem between mother and daughter is the dilemma that the daughter takes the mother as the first role model, but the mother is humiliated by society. In this case, the mother needs to make her daughter feel less valuable. Therefore, mothers are faced with ambiguity because a girl raised in this way will have a worldview that is socially passive and submissive to male authority. She will always be more devoted to meeting the needs of others than her own. If women raise their daughters away from these views, they will be rejected and risk raising daughters swimming upstream. For such reasons, girls might not want to look like their mothers. Although this may indicate that girls reject their mothers at first glance, the underlying reason is the fact that girls are afraid of being like their mothers (O'reilly, 2010: 270).

It is a commonly held view that when girls reach puberty, the mother and daughter relationship deteriorates. This is a natural process in every relationship, but the effort is reduced because of the special pains and fears that underlie the mother and daughter relationship. Due to the imposition of dependency, kindness, and expressive skill, mother and daughter may see each other as weak and incomplete rather than discovering each other's strengths. There are also certain dangers when mother and daughter come together and develop their relations. For instance, a grown up girl comes to live with her mother for economic reasons, and if the mother does her daughter's laundry she risks being labelled as childish. Conversely, if her daughter responds by cooking, that means she risks being accused of allowing the mother daughter role reversal (270).

Three basic recommendations are given for the repair of the relationship between mother and daughter, which seems to be problematic but is basically based on patriarchal society. The first is the creation of an alliance between mother and daughter. If it is known that the main source of the problematic relationship is the myths and common views in society, the mutual relationship becomes stronger (270). Secondly, it would be more helpful to focus on solving relatively small problems rather than solving the bigger ones, and finally, because of a society that regards the mother as a permanent scapegoat, daughters devalue the mother in their own eyes. To conclude, more sharing is essential for the relationship between mother and daughter (271).

Also, Kristeva approaches the mother daughter relationship from a different point of view. According to Kristeva's abjection theory, to examine the relationship between mother and daughter, abjection is "immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady" (Kristeva, 1982: 4). "Abjection" is the first attempt to relinquish control of the mother's existence through the autonomy of language. The child rejects the mother to address the autonomy of his/her identity. This rejection is the rejection or disgust before the "I". Moreover, "abjection" is the prerequisite for narcissism (13). Later, narcissism turns into a self-conscious and self-sufficient state (14). "Abjection" appears as an impurity in paganism, a society with a matriarchal character. It is the exclusion of a substance that can be considered sacred and which has a connection

with nutrition and sexuality (17). Liquids such as “a wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay”, which are seen as the main “abjection” thing in the eyes of society, are not disgusting for Kristeva. For her, “abjection” is not about cleanliness but about things that break the identity or the system (4).

What is more, there is also a relationship between motherhood, memories and diary writing, and it can be explained as follows. Memories of motherhood and motherhood gained momentum in the late 90s. Mother narratives are narratives of motherhood experiences based on a personal perspective. And it is more personal than autobiography. Motherhood memories are based on the author’s personal experience, and the author mainly focuses on his/her own life experiences (O’reilly, 2010: 819).

While writing their diaries, women usually emphasize the striking events that affected their life. Among the striking events, they are being a mother and raising their child. They use memories to explain their past experiences while addressing their current identities. So, memories are almost an event of confession, and they offer the public the events that have happened, even hidden, open to the public. Thus, the representation of the experience of motherhood in the memoir genre is quite appropriate. More than that, individual narratives, which are now accepted as the precursors of motherhood, emerged in the 1950s. Writers like Erma Bombeck, Shirley Jackson, and Jean Kerr have created works that include their experiences of the middle class, housewives, and mothers to establish a bond with their readers. The purpose of these works is both to express their personal life experiences and to reveal the problems of women who are not satisfied with their own lives (819).

Mothers portrayed themselves in memories or diaries, but how writers portrayed mothers was also important. In the 20th century, technical innovations and new approaches in the field of fiction were introduced in English novels. In the novels of the 20th and 21st centuries, women are in a better position both as mother figures and different subjects compared to the previous centuries. For example, in *The Rainbow*, D.H. Lawrence considers the role of women as mothers, but the author’s most recognizable mother figure is Miss Morel in *Sons and Lovers*. The

author makes use of his own experiences while dealing with the mother and son, and a passionate affection towards the mother is nurtured in the work. What's more, with the character of Mrs. Ramsay in *The Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf symbolizes the mother as an angel who has earned a reputation of family and friends. Compared to this work, *Mrs. Dalloway* was a more imperfectly created woman. She was a wife and mother; especially she seemed to have no connection to her daughter, which resulted in Dalloway questioning her own identity (663).

Woolf's focus on mothers is important in terms of introducing women's literary tradition. Likewise, in her work *In A Room of One's Own*, Woolf not only touches upon the problems women face while writing but also draws attention to the writers in the past. Furthermore, Doris Lessing deals with female identity and socialization in her novels. In the short story "To Room 19", she implies that marriage enslaves women. Finally, Margaret Drabble has created many fictional mother figures in her motherhood experience. Among the subjects, she dealt with, especially in her early novels, were the marriage and motherhood experiences of educated but also young women (663).

As both mother and writer, Drabble states that her children give her the greatest joys in life, and the characters she creates make her feel the same way, as well. According to Drabble, the relationship between the mother and her children is not destructive, and marriage is an institution that contributes to the success of women rather than an institution that causes depression (Rayson, 1978: 43). In *The Waterfall* (1969), the story of the pregnancy, birth, and motherhood of the writer's heroine Jane Gray, who was abandoned by her husband during her second pregnancy, is the subject. Moreover, this story is also about Jane's sexual self discovery during her relationship with her cousin's husband. Jane is portrayed as a character far from a passive stance (O'reilly, 2010: 663).

Unlike mothers writing their own memoirs and being the subject of novels, there are many modern novels and memories based on the daughter's point of view regarding the mother and daughter relationship. Firstly, while writing allows adult girls to be interested in art, it can also provide support for girls to uncover their own

identities (Juhasz, 2000: 157). When girls write about their mothers, they try to resolve their own and their mothers' complex issues of subjectivity. According to Jessica Benjamin, for girls to see mom as a "like subject", the girl needs to write about mom. This refers to the process of "mutual recognition". Seeing each other as mutual subjects is an important part of this process (156-157). Since the subject of writing is shaped in daily life, writing has the function of transforming the mother-daughter relationship for the child girl. For example, Virginia Woolf stated that her anger towards her mother had subsided when she finished *To The Lighthouse* (1927), which is considered by many to be a mother-daughter novel (Woolf, 1976: 81). As a result, the act of writing satisfies the needs of the relationship (Juhasz, 2000: 161).

2.3.3. Vollendungsroman

The origin of the word is German and the word "das Vollenden" means "completion" in English (Cambridge Dictionary). Literary critic Constance Rooke argued that a vollendungsroman is a novel meaning "completion" or "winding up". Rooke underlined that she coined the term vollendungsroman by comparing it with the "bildungsroman", a novel of the development of youth while coining it as a novel of old age (Rooke, 1992: 245).

According to the author, "growing up" novels in youth and "completion or winding up" novels in old age complement each other. Additionally, in describing the cyclical progression of life, the author compares two expressions: "construction of the ego", which corresponds to the first task in youth, and "deconstruction", which symbolizes the last task in old age. According to Rooke, these expressions are related to each other (245). "Deconstruction" especially in old age depends on the ability of the old person's body to pass from his/her home to the "natural world" (255).

Rooke also touches on the issue of writing the old character's own life story and draws attention to the resemblance between living and writing a life story. The old heroines usually play the role of a writer and a person who looks back or reads her work. The main character recreates a "sense of identity" while reviewing or evaluating her memory (Rooke, 1993: 209).

Constance Rooke draws attention to the use of the water image in the *vollendungsroman*. Water often signifies the routine and “open form” of nature. Also, it is associated with the fear of death as well as the anticipation of spiritual renewal. It is often against the home because the home is the symbol of society against nature and the guardian of a singular identity. In the *vollendungsroman*, generally, the old woman leaves the house and begins to make her way toward the universal water. The water mentioned here simply symbolizes the universal place that was once passed through and now needs to be returned (222). The image of water symbolizes that in such a way that as the character ages, she faces the unknown universal. The water solution involves transforming and accepting (Rooke, 1992: 255). The feeling that the character is approaching the end begins with the images associated with water and ends with these images (Rooke, 1993: 3).

The revising life for this genre is a significant detail to note. Firstly, according to American physician Robert N. Butler, the process of revising life in various periods of literary history is common. Especially in the case of elderly individuals, this reminiscence is associated with a psychological disorder. The reason for this is that the elderly with mental disorders show the same symptom (Butler, 1963: 65). Reminiscing or reviewing life in the face of death has an important place in the psychology of the elderly (66). The link between life review and death is found not only in the elderly but also in the terminally ill youth. The basic function of reviewing life includes the process of looking back due to future death, and this contributes to the reorganization of the personality (67).

At the same time, this process may not be completed before death. During the examination of life, it manifests itself as mild regret and severely as guilt and hopelessness. At first glance, it may seem insignificant to think about the past and talk about it, but it can also manifest itself in short time intervals and even become continuous over time and create awareness in the person (68). As a result, past experiences are reorganized through the review process, and in this way, the person can gain new and important meanings in her life (69).

As for the term “buildingsroman”, which is more common in literature, it is synonymous with the genre of novel, also known as “educational novel”, in which the development of the protagonist is traced from childhood or adolescence to adulthood. The word “bildung” can be used to mean self cultivation or self creation. Goethe’s novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-6) was translated into English by Thomas Carlyle as *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* in 1824, and it is cited as the first example of the bildungsroman (Kucich, et al., 2012: 90). *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1847), *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot (1860), and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1861) are important works for this genre. So, when it put the two species, vollendungsroman and buildingsroman side by side, they may be seen as the opposite of each other (Meyer, 1999: 193). In fact, there is a slight parallel, although not directly, between them.

Kunstlerroman is a subgenre of bildungsroman. It shows the growth of the novelist or artist from childhood to maturity stage, which shows his/her development in art. Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-27) and James Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-15) are important works of this genre (Meyer, 1999: 193). Concerning this, art occupies an important place in the vollendungsroman. In the vollendungsroman, there is an intense relationship between art and life, the old character and the novelist (Chen, 2004: 40).

According to Barbara Frey Waxman, the situation of vollendungsroman is quite different. To her, bildungsroman is a maturing process. To track this kind of emotional and philosophical development, it focuses on the freest woman in the work (Waxman, 1985: 320). The author coined the German word “reifungsroman” to distinguish the expression “growing up”, which is frequently used in bildungsroman, from “growing down”. The word “reifung” embodies both “ripening” and “maturing” emotionally and philosophically, which is exactly what the hero of the few achieves. The author clearly states that she is interested in Doris Lessing’s warning on behalf of the woman. Lessing states that old age is not a “dark” period in a woman’s life; on the contrary, it is a period that is as bright as “sunlight” and offers an opportunity for spiritual development and self-evaluation (321).

The term Reifungsroman, which is defined as the construction of the aging process in women, was coined by Barbara Frey Waxman. This term refers to works in which the middle or old woman is the main character in the works published from the 70s to today. In this type of novel, older women are not depicted as destitute. On the contrary, although some physical changes occur due to the aging process, older women reject cultural stereotypes against themselves. Moreover, they try to change the society that supports these stereotypes. In conventional works, such women are put on the back burner and silenced; on the contrary, old women and many issues related to this process are discussed in such novels. Authors such as Margaret Moganroth Gullette (1988) and Constance Rooke (1992) confirm that the old woman is not treated negatively in such works (Oró-Piqueras, 2014: 143). Especially Doris Lessing's *The Summer Before the Dark* (1973) and *Love, Again* (1996) are examples of this genre. The women in these works, in their "maturation" adventures, realize that their thoughts do not match their images in the mirror. There has been a change in their bodies due to time. They are aware that they will soon be seen as old and inefficient by society. This awareness leaves its place to regret because they realize that they do not know the value of the power within them for a lifetime. Their maturation processes continue with such confrontations (145).

Vollendungsroman is a genre about old women. However, there is also a distance between feminism and "ageism". Feminism has always taken a position against ageism. In 1972, gerontologists Lewis and Butler asked in the *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, "Why does feminism ignore older women?" Early feminist developmental psychologist Nancy Datan devoted her career to researching older women, noting that older women are marginalized because people who see themselves as younger have difficulty changing their perspectives and empathizing with others (Mitchell and Bruns, 2010: 119). Furthermore, the predecessors of the second wave of feminism have reached their sixties, and as they have incorporated the themes of aging into their works, there has been an increasing trend in society to study older women (Brennan, 2005: 4). Both authors present a vision to transform women's lives and make positive contributions to them (Mitchell and Bruns, 2010: 118). Examples of these works are Germaine Greer's study *Of Attitudes Toward Menopause*, and Betty Friedan's *The Fountain of*

Age (Brennan, 2005: 4). So, in recent years, works based on older characters have remarkably increased (Oró-Piqueras, 2014: 143).

Writers such as Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, and Margaret Drabble describe the adventure of a new genre, the middle aged and old woman. The adventures of these women are an adventure that makes possible ways of being or existing again. The importance of remembering for change was underlined in the previous section. The old woman's questioning by looking at the past triggers the change. Moreover, in this adventure, the old woman takes a journey to the past, to her period of youth. Such soul journeys do not leave the body behind. With the deterioration that occurs as the body ages, the heroes are forced to face the realities that hurt them with their dreams. Thinking about a physical or mental loss activates regressive actions. This movement is retrospective and is an attempt to analyze the place where the old woman came from and the events in the paths she passed through her life (Virginia, 2007: 1).

This inner journey is therapeutic and contributes to the maturation of the old woman and increases the level of self awareness. Thanks to the narration, the difficulties of the old woman's life today are also witnessed, and at the same time, it allows the reader to gain a new perspective on her. The elderly characters of contemporary writers are characters with traditional identities who especially adhere to families or social environment rules (2). For example, a character sacrifices herself for her family. As women age, they are busy questioning these scenarios (3). During this questioning, the self is not under the control of the ego. Moreover, the character analyzes both her present thoughts and her past actions and behaviours (7).

As for women's identities and the third age, literature has greatly contributed to shaping the views on aging. It presented the accepted traditions of aging and the assumptions that fed these traditions. Literature has explored these views and constructed values for a meaningful life in old age (Deats and Lenker, 1999: 89).

Fictions before the 21st century are silent about aging because according to the belief in Western society, as a woman ages, she loses her fertility, and as a result, her attractiveness decreases. That is why, the expectations of society and the woman who

shows signs of aging physically contradict. And this may result in the woman falling into the “other” position (Oró-Piqueras, 2014: 143). In the contemporary period, especially in the works written by women, the story of old women is handled from a positive point of view. In these novels, the old women are satisfied characters, free of regret, and continue to develop their identities and realize themselves in the following years (Deats and Lenker, 1999: 90). For example, in her fiction called *The Seven Sisters*, Drabble reversed the tradition of the 19th bildungsroman with an individualistic perspective and used the vollendungsroman genre in which the old woman’s story was handled. Throughout the work, she tried to change the reader’s perception of the old woman by bringing the changing story of the old woman together with the reader (91).

There are significant differences in the position of older men and women in the literature. The most well known elder figures are male characters whose lives are destroyed. For example, Gustav Aschenbach in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear* are the first examples that come to mind. These characters are faced with failure in the last stages of their lives and create an unnecessary impression on the reader. On the other hand, there are few older but satisfied male characters in fiction. For example, in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*, Cuban fisherman Santiago is one of these exceptions (91).

In society, women are more socially and economically disadvantaged in old age than men. Culturally, women are expected not to lose their sexual appeal. Considering such expectations reverberating in society, the number of works written by women writers focusing on the aging woman, such as Gail Sheehy’s “successful aging” instead of “passive aging”, is remarkable. Most of the women in these works are in search of new identities. They are after “self discovery, self affirmation, and new commitments”. These women share certain points in common. Many leave their homes and most importantly realize the value of their life at the final stage of their lives (92). However, some features of older women in literature can be disturbing. These women are not understood by the people around them or their family members. Especially the old people are approached with prejudice by the young people (93). However, such prejudices against older women show how badly they

can affect a woman's life and that such individuals will be deprived of many opportunities in the last stages of their lives (99).

The term "third age" refers to the positive form of aging, which is used to describe the lives of those who are not considered middle-aged but have not yet suffered from mental or physical deterioration (Radtke, et al., 2016: 87). In this context, "third age" and its synonyms, namely "productive aging" or "successful aging", tend toward the positive side of old age (Kastenbaum, et al., 1992: xviii). It is possible to define the third age as a career that reaches its peak in personal life (Laslett, 1991: 4). As Moen and Spencer argue, men and women reach the third age stage in different ways, and therefore it will not be helpful to consider the third age independent of gender. Today, a great deal of progress has been made in terms of gender equality in western societies, but gender is still felt in social life (Radtke, et al., 2016: 89).

In the third age which is of natural menopause, according to Ellen B. Gold, some trends seem to be peculiar only to men, but of course, such an approach is wrong and reduces women's possibilities for social change (87). Furthermore, feminist therapists require revealing how women perceive themselves and their environment at this stage. So, Hvas and Gannik noted that seven different discourses were identified on menopause. These are "the biomedical discourse", "the eternal youth discourse", "the health promotion discourse", "the consumer discourse", "the alternative discourse", "the feminist/critical discourse", and "the existential discourse". They noted that the most dominant among these was the "the biomedical discourse". In this case, they asserted that during menopause, the woman could be a passive patient who could make decisions about her health (Hvas and Gannik, 2008: 157).

In menopause, which is the period of cessation of menstruation, the ovaries stop producing estrogen which is the female sex hormone. This change has effects on the body, and these effects manifest themselves as symptoms. These symptoms include mainly hot flushes, excessive sweating, depression, and decreased libido. Menopause occurs as a deficiency syndrome due to a decrease in hormones. Even

during the later ages, the conditions experienced by women are directly related to menopause. As a result, in menopause due to aging that is seen as a state of debilitation due to biodegradation and increasing disease states. Moreover, according to the Medline medical database, “aging” is defined as an irreversible change in organism structure and function over time (163). So, ageism refers to discrimination and prejudice, just like misogyny, racism, and homophobia (Gullette, 2018: 253). Additionally, this discrimination may worsen in discourse with the increase in age. Finally, an interesting thing about the issue of aging is that, in the case of men, there is “maturation”, but in the case of women, there is “aging” (254). Even though aging is specific to both genders, the situation is portrayed as positive for men and negative for women.

Nowadays, staying young is ideal. Youth is admired; aging is humiliated (Hvas and Gannik, 2008: 165). This claim may be more understandable when the dictionary meaning of the word is examined. According to the Collins dictionary, negative connotations such as “growing old, decline, decay, deterioration” are used as synonyms for the word “aging” (Collins dictionary). According to the Journal of Aging Research, aging has been gerontology’s way of politely stating what age class it refers to, without using the alienating adjective “old” (Gullette, 2018: 256). Therefore, it is inevitable to give a sick role to individuals in this period (Hvas and Gannik, 2008: 164). So, the menopause period is also viewed negatively as the onset of old age. This turns out to be a complete threat for women. Against this threat, aging is tried to be neutralized with modern products such as hair dyeing, cosmetic surgery, and moisturizers (165). This danger is frequently emphasized in literary works. One of the authors who mention this kind of danger is Simone de Beauvoir. Simone de Beauvoir, the author of *The Second Sex*, featured older women in volume two and the ninth part titled “From Maturity to Old Age”. She emphasizes that women’s lives are stable and monotonous and that the transition from one stage to another is dangerous and full of crises. Moreover, in the menopause phase, the woman loses her chance of being sexually attractive and giving birth, which is the reason for her existence in society (De Beauvoir, 2010: 702). Such a situation may be an opportunity for women. In other words, it may create more freedom for women in any oppressive society.

The elaboration of the story of the old woman in menopause is critical to creating a strong figure. Menopause is perhaps one of the biggest signs that women are aging. It is a universal and normal condition for women. Despite insufficient scientific data about the nature of this period, it is possible to say that it plays a transitional role in the “development of women” (Voda and Eliasson, 1983: 137). In today’s medical literature, menopausal women are described as either “castrated” or “estrogen deprived”. As can be understood, the woman loses her fertility. Therefore, considering that a woman in the menopausal phase does not have ovaries, it can be said that this gender does not correspond to a “female” or “male” gender. So, what exactly is the gender of the woman during the menopause period? In this case, the individual appears to be genderless. However, medical professionals answer this question by defining this period as “woman with estrogen deficiency.” (138).

2.3.4. Narratology

The word narrative is closely related to the verb “narrate”. Both novels and historical writings contain narration. Some people use it to refer to any subject, such as a radio announcer, or a teacher at school, so there is a possibility of encountering it in all areas of life (Fludernik, 2009: 1). Overall, the narrative is a process of secrecy. Feminism narratives are produced through what is said or not (Guest, 2016: 37).

In narratives, a cause and effect relationship is attributed to successive events (Fludernik, 2009: 2). Therefore, the narrative is closely related to the narrator. It would not be wrong to consider everything that the narrator expresses as a narrative. In this case, it is inevitable to ask the following question: What does the narrator tell? (2).

Gérard Genette examines three different meanings of the French word *récit*, meaning “narrative”. He marks that “narration” is the narrator’s narrative action, “discours or récit” is text or verbal narration, and finally “histoire or story” is the story that the narrator expresses. While the first two of these represent the narrative discourse, the third represents what the narrative discourse conveys or gives meaning (2). This distinction illuminates the fact that a story can be told in many different

ways. For example, “The snow white” story in Grimm’s version and the modern version or parodies of the story is completely different from the original. Moreover, the Grimm version of “The snow white”, where the cruel world is present, while the modern version uses parody to deal with current issues. Therefore, the story is rewritten from a feminist perspective (2-3).

Narratives create a fictional space in which people reflect on the world and the realities in which they live. As a theory, it also deals with topics such as narrative of bildungsromans, gothic novels, and fables (9).

As for the author issue, the focus has been on the author lately. Roland Barthes, for example, claims that the author is dead. With this approach, it is seen that the author is cut off from the text and assumed the role of a discourse transmitter. Narratologists also deal with situations that subvert this idea. It is noteworthy that the author and the narrator are not different people. For example, in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*, the first person narrator declares himself to be the author. The first person narrator is from Surinam. Behn declared herself a Surinamese while in London (13).

Another controversial issue about the authorship is the gender of the author. Authorship usually refers to the male. For example, it was a 19th century strategy for female authors to use male pseudonyms to publicize their work. To give an example, the pseudonymous female writer in the 19th century is Mary Ann Evans, known as George Eliot. Moreover, text oriented literary studies have also addressed the gender of the author. In particular, attention is drawn to the differences between the language in the text and the feminine and masculine discourse, but there are some languages in which “masculine” or “feminine” elements are dominant. Japanese can be given as an example of such a language. As a result, “femininity” or “masculinity” may be applied in the narrative. After all, this is what Victorian women are trying to implement, namely using performative femininity (14).

There are two layers to each narrative. The first is the level of the expressed world, and the second is the level at which this expression takes place. The second level in a novel is the level of narrative discourse. This refers to the narrator’s

discourse in the first person and author narratives. The narrator can take part in the plot and convey his own experiences, or it can look at the world it has constructed from afar and relate the events from its perspective (21).

In the English speaking world, the terms “overt” and “covert” are used by the narrator. As an “overt” narrator, it can see that it is telling the story, although it is not a first person narrative and reflects its point of view. Moreover, it makes its presence felt both stylistically and at the metanarrative level. A “covert” narrator, on the other hand, is a person who is linguistically inconspicuous and vaguely speaks for the story (22).

Segmentation in the text has a certain function. First, the scene or focus changes as you move from one chapter to the next. Moreover, the titles of each chapter allow the narrator to cheat at the metafiction level as metanarrative elements. These tricks can turn into surprises that will surprise the reader at the end of the chapter (24).

In a narrative, the narrator has the function. First, the narrator transfers his fictional world to the reader and can remain “covert”, that is, it does not have to bring itself to the fore. Second, the narrator makes comments about the events or explains the reason why the events occurred. The narrator here should be the “overt” narrator. Third, the narrator acts as a moralist or philosopher who conveys universal moral messages. Finally, the narrator addresses himself/herself directly and makes metanarrative comments. Naturally, in this case, the text becomes blurred and ambiguous, and more significantly, the narrator loses his/her credibility (27).

Regarding techniques, some stories progress chronologically, while others break the chronology with flashbacks. Flashbacks are called “analepsis”. Sometimes these tools are used to clarify an unforeseen event. For example, Michael Ondaatje’s novel *The English Patient* (1992) uses the technique of analepsy. What caused Almásy’s burn injuries is revealed through flashbacks (34). The opposite of the flashback technique is reporting or “prolepsy”. In such texts, it is very difficult or even impossible to understand whether the events follow each other chronologically (34-35).

As for the narrator's point of view, a narrative is conveyed to the reader by the narrator's point of view, the character's point of view, or the neutral, impersonal, in other words, "camera-eye" point of view. Succinctly, it is possible to talk about four different perspectives in a work. It is worth emphasizing the differences between "embodied" and "impersonal" perspectives and between "external" and "internal" ones as presented in the Figure 3 (36):

Vantage point	Embodied	Describes psychological states of others	Impersonal
External (extradiegetic level)	So-called omniscient narrator	Yes	Impersonal, 'omniscient' (covert narrative)
	First-person narrator	No	Neutral perspective
Internal (diegetic level)	Reflector figure	No	0

Figure 3: Forms of Focalization. (Fludernik, 2009: 37)

There is an "anthropomorphic" figure, the first of whom interprets what it sees from the "embodied" point of view as well as making statements about it (Fludernik, 2009: 36). The "impersonal" perspective is the opposite of the first. It does not make any statements about itself. This type of perspective is the incarnation of the first person narrator. It sees the world with its own eyes and makes sense of it through reasoning. "Internal", on the other hand, is the unlimited expression of the fictional world from the outside, while in the "internal" perspective, there is an insider perspective that is limited to the information within the knowledge of the narrator (37).

"You" narrative (singular and plural), "we", and "they" subjects are used to express "person". Using the pronoun, many authors in experimental postmodern literature has changed the pronouns in the text in order to break down the traditional patterns. Nouns referring to both masculine and feminine pronouns were used, such as "teacher". As can be understood, this word does not correspond to a certain gender. The teacher can be a woman or a man. The authors have tried various ways

to reject the use of grammatical structures that emphasize gender. For example, the second person narration is to hide the gender of the main protagonist. They also tried to use first person narration to disguise the gender of the first person narrator and confuse the readers (49). Unlike these, the omniscient narrator has obstacles to subjective reality and understanding of others, which makes the narrator unreliable (Heckard, 1976: 212). For example, in traditional novels, the narrator has a single focus or is individualized as an entity that draws the path of the story with a fixed point of view. This narrator eliminates the forms that confirm the reality in his opinion and declares his independence (Davis, 1989: 56). This undermines the confidence in the narrative.

As for metanarration and metafiction, there is a relationship between these two terms, according to some critics, and according to others, they are different. First of all, it is necessary to define the term metanarration which is frequently used in postmodern texts like metafiction. Moreover, metanarration and metafiction are almost the same in terms of their meanings. But, metanarrative often underlines the fact that a realistic narrative is an illusion. By emphasizing the mediating role of the narrator, this statement destroys the impression that the fictional world is conveyed without mediation. Exhibiting such attitudes in the works was used by the modern period writers who opposed the traditions of the Victorian Era. Metanarrative comments build trust in the narrator. The narrator is no longer omniscient but has answers that will satisfy the reader to some degree (Fludernik, 2009: 61).

Drawing attention to the fictionality of the narration in the work strengthens the effect of metafiction (62). It is not only metanarrative narratorial comments that emphasize the metafictionality side of the work but also different strategies, such as a story within a story or metalepsis (63). Metalepsis emphasizes the destruction of the story within the story and the frame narrative else (Oxford Reference). In other words, metalepsis is a transition between levels of narrators, such as characters who want to destroy the narrator or the author, or third person narrators who enter the character's world (Fludernik, 2009: 63). Nevertheless, Nünning states that there is a distinction between metanarrative and metafiction. He argues that metafiction is the revealing of the fictional, but for him, a metanarrative is "the act of narration". As a

result, while the metanarrative is related to the narrative, its function is to inform the reader of the fictionality of the work, which is the reason for its discrimination (Fludernik, 2003: 18). Moreover, the Figure 4 states that

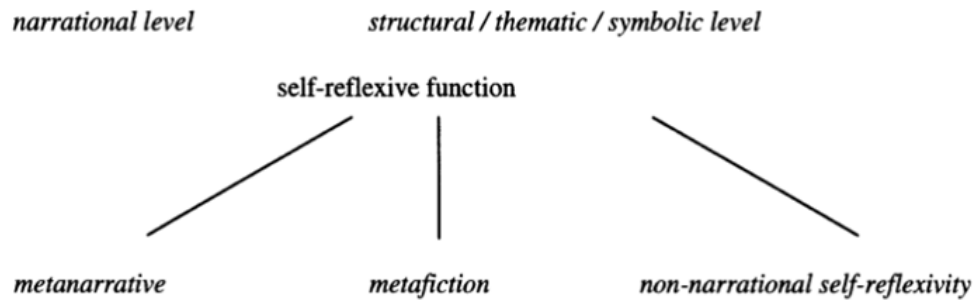


Figure 4: A New Model. (Fludernik, 2003: 28)

In this scheme, self-reflexive narrative strategies are subdivided into metanarrative, metafiction, and non-narrational self reflexivity. As seen in the diagram in the Figure 4, it would be useful to consider all self reflective terms that will donate to the formation of discourse as metafiction narratives. In other words, it would not be wrong, then, to refer to all the self reflective statements that refer to discourse and its construction as metanarratives. Moreover, the term metafiction is here limited to self-reflexive statements about the making up of the story. Therefore, it is worth noting that the term metafiction is self disclosure about the artificiality of the story (Fludernik, 2003: 28).

Finally, regarding setting, most of the realistic narrative texts take place in real, that is, non-imaginary places, at least that is reflected by the reader, but the author generally places his/her imaginary figures in the environments he/she creates in his/her mind and tries to form an idea that they exist there. In the novels, places such as London and Paris are often described differently. For example, the London mentioned in Dickens' novels is not the real London. The reason for referring to real places is to cover up that what is told is fiction (Fludernik, 2009: 42). The main purpose of realistic novels is not to depict the world in a real way but to present the world mentioned in the novel as a part of the real world. Such novels do not imitate

reality. As such, the author refers to the world familiar to the reader by creating conceptual frameworks (55).

The Seven Sisters, which is the focus of the present study reported in this thesis, includes the experimental narrative strategy. Therefore, this issue should also be addressed. First of all, Emily Zola, who is the founder of naturalism, defines the terms “experiment” and “experimental novel” in a comprehensive way. Naturalism has two principles. Determinism argues that the fate of a character is determined by heredity, period, and environment, and the experimental method involves the objective recording of clear and unambiguous information (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021).

The experiment is not against the naturalness of living individuals (Zola, 1893: 3). Moreover, experimental science concentrates on explaining the “how” of issues rather than the “why”. In this case, it can be observed that the novelists are both observing and experimenting. The observers observe the situations and convey them as they observed and make suggestions. Then, the experimentalists, who carry out experiments, take place in the foreground and put their characters inside the story (8). In this case, it is obvious that there is both an observation and an experiment. For example, Balzac is not satisfied with the “photographic facts” he collects while creating his works; moreover, he intervenes directly while placing his characters in certain places and becomes a “master” (9).

As for contemporary experimental fiction, metafiction helps us understand how the reality in which we live every day is constructed in the same way by showing how fantasy worlds in literary fiction are created (Currie, 1995: 53). Moreover, metafiction tends to appear experimental and, as such, resembles the “anti-novels” of the past. Any anti-fiction is “‘about’ fiction-making”. Any work of experimental fiction asserts attitudes about the art of fiction, such as breaking down or ignoring certain conventions and promoting others instead (182).

Furthermore, narration in the experimental genre which dominates *The Seven Sisters*, which is the subject of this thesis, should be mentioned. The time is traditionally chosen as the past tense in the narrative. Of course, there are

simultaneous narrations, and they are available in “conversational storytelling”. Stories that tell the past underline the fictionality of the text, that is, the story is in the mind of the character and is conveyed to the reader through him/her (Fludernik, 2009: 51).

In an interview with Drabble, Arnold Bennett asked her if she gravitated towards the experimental genre in her work. Drabble refused by saying that was not her intention and further emphasizing that she was simply clear and far from confusing. In her work titled *The Waterfall*, the author emphasized that the narrators sometimes used the first person and sometimes the third person and that she followed this path due to the flow of the novel. She added that the first person narration in the first part would not progress in the novel, so she chose the third person narration (Rose and Drabble, 1980: 88).

Drabble went into the 19th century as a realist in the early 1960s by adapting fictional form and technique to contemporary situations. She studied the novel tradition one after another. The author developed and multiplied the heroes and their perspectives. She created polyphony and self reflexivity in her stories with intertwined narrative voices and intertwined events (Bromberg, 1990: 7).

Drabble’s multiple hero and narrative experiments were a serious critique of the romantic individualism of 19th century bildungsroman works. Moreover, the author aimed to destroy the narrative structure of such works (8). She utilized the 19th century first person narrative technique in her novels such as *A Summer Bird Cage* (1962), *The Garrick Year* (1964), and *The Millstone* (1965). However, with *The Waterfall* (1969) and *The Needle’s Eye* (1972), she embarked on a skeptical and humorous vision and adopted a more informed narrative. As her career progressed, the author moved further and further away from the central perspective of the first person bildungsroman (Bromberg, 1986: 179). Particularly in her novels after 1975, it is possible to detect a tendency towards multiple perspectives, narrative self reflexivity, and formal experiences. The narrative in her novels has moved from the psychological life of a single character to the social, political, and economic relations of individuals (180).

Moreover, memory plays an important role in the narrative. Black, Turner, and Bower's article "Point of view in narrative comprehension, memory, and production" emphasizes that narratives are the representatives of memory, and the memory describes the "state" and "state-transition" information of the narrator in the text (Black, Turner and Bower, 1979: 189).

Memory is a tool for establishing a relationship between the past and the present as well as constructing the self and experience (Greene, 1991b: 293). Writers are closely related to memory because writings are always fed from the past, in other words, they are memories of the past. Furthermore, if a writer is aiming for a change, she/he should be especially interested in memory. The truth behind this thought is that forgetting is doomed to repetition. So, memory plays a vital role in this situation, especially for feminists. For prominent feminists such as Margaret Drabble and Margaret Atwood, memory is a vehicle for liberation. The narrative aims at change. There is a call for liberation in the narrative. Therefore, "repetition" from such a narrative occurs as an undesirable situation, in which case the narrative "recollects, remembers" for advancement or change (291).

Unlike memory, nostalgia is a powerful "impulse" that cannot be attributed to any gender (295). As mentioned in the "diary" section, women are more prone to living in the past than men, which is why they are the keepers of diaries, family memories, and photo albums. This passion for nostalgia includes the longing to return home. However, as it is known, the issue of returning home turns out to be advantageous for those in power, while it is disadvantageous for the weak (296).

"Nostalgia" is "to remember", "to keep in mind", "to think again", "to pay attention", as well as the wish to return home. Besides, according to Woolf, "memory is the seamstress" (Woolf, 1928: 46). Also, Greene especially emphasizes that women need to remember because, for them, forgetting is a major obstacle to change. Collective amnesia destroys all the labors and struggles of the past. It amazes every researcher to see that it is forgotten that the rights of women in the contemporary era, such as the right to vote or own property, were gained through the struggles of women in the past (Greene, 1991b: 298).

Textual feminists seek to eradicate “nostalgic rhetoric” by exploring the past. They see the past not as fixed and finished but as important enough to respond to current questions and produce new meanings. The purpose of bringing up the nostalgia in the work is not to make it a part of the work, but to destroy it (305). A quote from Laurence’s character, Morag, sums it up perfectly. According to him, the opinion that we cannot alter the past is a popular misconception (Laurence, 1993: 59). Besides, Maxine Hong Kingston tells that understanding the past will enable transformation in the present (Rabinowitz, 1987: 60).

As a result, the belief that the past develops by confronting the present finds its place in the narrative strategies of feminist fiction, and the chronology is distorted. For example, in Drabble’s *The Waterfall* (1969) and Erica Jong’s *Fear of Flying* (1973), the past and the present alternate (Greene, 1991b: 306). Moreover, to Greene, women’s fictions are always cyclical. Therefore, breaking this cycle is for the benefit of women. For example, the happy ending in novels during the Victorian Period is usually marriage. Marriage causes patriarchy rather than giving women an identity, but the situation is different in contemporary women’s novels. In the fiction of writers such as Drabble, Atwood, and Laurence, the circular structure exhibits a “turn” that specifically allows repetition as an escape from repetition (307-308).

2.3.5. Intertextuality

Intertextuality is a term associated with postmodernism (Haberer, 2007: 54). According to Riffaterre, “the term refers to an operation of the reader’s mind” (Riffaterre, 1984: 142). Although a text may appear to be composed of the author’s ideas, it must necessarily incorporate elements of other texts (Snyman, 1996: 446).

For Kristeva, the “reader” or “receiver” is included in the discourse of the text. That’s why, according to her, every text is a junction of texts where at least one other text can be read. The term intertextual was first used in this sense (435). So, what is the motivation that drives the author to produce a certain text? In this case, an author’s reaction to the texts he/she is supposed to have read can be investigated, which can creatively approximate a depiction of the author. The textual impact represents a biographical investigation to identify the reasons that compel the author

to use certain sources. Intertextuality does not deal with the biography of the author but focuses on the author as the reader and tries to understand how meaning is constructed (436).

When a text is read, the reader listens to the voice of the author in that text. However, the author himself/herself is not the owner of that text, so different voices have been mixed into the text. Different voices are included in the text designed by the author, knowingly or unknowingly. It is likely to say that the text consists of different voice layers. Readers both encounter these different voices and read the text with different voices (427).

Two important names, Bakhtin and Kristeva, played a vital role in the development of the concept of intertextuality. The term was first used in Julia Kristeva's "Word, Dialogue, And Novel" (1966) and then in "The Bounded Text" (1966-67). With the use of the concept as it is, it suggests that the text is a dynamic space that is central to processes and practices rather than being static (Alfaro, 1996: 268).

Bakhtin coined the concepts of "dialogue" and "carnival". These two concepts are closely related to each other in terms of supporting each other. First, renaissance literature in the late 15th century promoted human humility as a means of restraining dogmatism, displaying open mindedness and sceptical tolerance. One of the most important tools emphasizing that man is a limited human being is a carnival. At the carnival, people disguise themselves, use friendly language, and at the same time, they are sarcastic and open hearted. Carnival destroys fear, piety, serious and powerful hierarchical life (Snyman, 1996: 429). It offers an alternative to laughter and acts freely on certain days. Additionally, thanks to it, everything gets mixed up in hierarchical life. Carnival creates an open space for a dialogist. In this area, the rich and powerful get embarrassed, while the poor and miserable get stronger. Every action, symbol, and dress makes one another question its validity. As a result, thanks to the carnival, it was parodied by its powerful subordinates, and the mythologies of the ruling elites were defeated (430).

What Bakhtin attributes to texts and words is the dual nature of carnival. He underlines the distinction between the two words, namely the object orientated word and the strange word (430). It is worth emphasizing that no word is irresponsible from the other, that is, they are all related to each other in some way. After all, the dictionary was born from another context, but now it takes on strange meanings. The word is a constantly changing dialogic medium, and the word comes to life only when it is transferred from person to person, from context to context. Every word crosses its borders, which is why no text can be analyzed in its terms alone. Additionally, every thought involves associating a text with other texts and transforming the reader into an as different context. In this case, a text exists only as long as it relates to other texts. Thus, according to Lachmann, the concept of intertextuality provides a dual service to literature. These two services are the reinterpretation of known non-textual texts and the first interpretation of contemporary texts. The effect of one text on another increases the intertextual dialogue, and this destroys the concept of monologic as language and understanding. This is a never ending dialogue and always takes place in a social setting (431).

When it comes to textual influence, every word interacts with other words between texts, and this interaction continues with an endless circularity. It is possible to see an influence from other texts in every text. This is why, the text loses its monological meaning and opens to interpretation; moreover, it moves away from certainty. So, Friedman argues that the discourses concerning “influence and intertextuality” are quite close and cannot even be considered separately (432). Moreover, Kristeva’s use of Bakhtin’s ideas to lay the groundwork for her theory of intertextuality embodies this claim. Intertextuality focuses on issues addressed by influence such as “background, context, overtones and tradition”. In this context, intertextuality as an effect comprises how the unconsciously actuated text is formed, the style, and the constraints and advantages pre-existing for the author (432-433).

Concerns about influence are raised in connection with originality and genius. Originality shows the imagination of the author, but if it is possible to see the effect of a text on other texts, the genius of the author decreases. In this context, the effect

leads to the formation of hierarchy by creating the concepts of upper and lower text among the texts (433).

Furthermore, it would be appropriate to compare the two postmodern terms metafiction and intertextuality. They are also closely related. Metafiction is linked to intertextuality to create a narrative for its self-consciousness that specifies its artificiality by reference to tradition and borrows its principles of theme or structure from other narratives. Intertextual reference to written works expresses the artificiality of the fictional world. The border of “art and life” in fiction destroys its own “referential illusion”. And in doing so, it places “referential illusion” on the border between fiction and criticism (Currie, 1995: 4-5). These situations are metafictional because of their implicit connections to criticism or the text’s artificiality (5).

It can be said that postmodern intertextuality has two functions. It has both the desire to close the gap between the past and the present the reader and the desire to rewrite the past. Fixing the present by looking at the past is not just a modernist desire, nor is it a rejection of that history. On the contrary, postmodern intertextuality confronts the past of literature and historiography because it is not an original text but derived from previous texts. Moreover, postmodern intertextuality abuses intertextual resonances, undermining their strong implications and then using irony to subvert them (86).

Intertextuality is a very useful term for the postmodern period because of its functions. So, it is frequently uses by many authors in their works in the postmodern period. For example, Drabble has preferred to use intertextuality in many of her works. In *The Radiant Way*, there are “intertextual motifs” arising from her indebtedness and admiration for Woolf. The novel begins with the New Year’s Eve party. Liz Headleand, one of the three main characters, is about to throw a party at her home in central London. Like Woolf’s characters Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, she thinks about the gathering of guests and their wishes and hopes. She is happy with his success at the beginning of the party, which is very similar to Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (Rubenstein and Drabble, 1989: 96). The three female

characters of Drabble, the reader learns through flashbacks, meet in Cambridge in the 50s (97). As the friendship between women develops through marriages, careers, divorces, etc., the bonds of friendship between them are strengthened. As a result, some intertextuality can be seen in the novel written by Drabble, whose narrative can be associated with Woolf's work (98). At the same time, the work incorporates not only Woolf but also some mythological characters such as Medusa and Minotaur. Thus, the author widens this "intertextual webbing" (99).



CHAPTER THREE

3. ANALYSIS OF *THE SEVEN SISTERS*

The author, Dame Margaret Drabble, was born in 1939 in Yorkshire, England. Life experiences such as love, marriage, and motherhood inspired her to write many works (Britannica *Margaret Drabble*). Drabble is a friendly, sincere, and prolific writer. It is likely to notice her sincerity in her works. Besides being a writer, Drabble is an article and novel writer, critical biographer, editor, and mother. After graduating from Cambridge, she becomes interested in theater, but this desire is not fulfilled due to her pregnancy. She directs her passion for the theater stage to writing (Hardin and Drabble, 1973: 273). Moreover, the author has a famous sister writer. Her elder sister is the famous writer A.S. Byatt, in full Dame Antonia Susan Byatt, who became Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2008 (Britannica *Margaret Drabble*).

Drabble is the author of seventeen novels and two literary biographies. Drabble first came to prominence in the 1960s, with writers such as “Nell Dunn, Lynne Reid Banks, and Penelope Mortimer” portraying women. The author dealt with the traditional female role and the career conflicts of contemporary women in her first novels. The women in her works depicted women who both continued the 19th century traditions and paralleled the women’s movements that had just begun. Besides, Drabble’s fiction in the 1970s, particularly her work *The Ice Age* (1977), was a reflection of England in the modern period. The author continued this theme in her trilogy works *The Radiant Way* (1987), *A Natural Curiosity* (1989), and *The Gates of Ivory* (1991). These works concentrated on the lives of three women shaped by the present and the past. The analysis of the British society’s situation continued in Drabble’s novels such as *The Witch of Exmoor* (1996) in the 1990s and later. In her works such as *The Red Queen* (2004) in the 2000s, she combined the voice of an eastern woman from the past with the voice of a contemporary academic. Many of

her novels were not considered “feminist fiction” despite the effects of the environment, marriage, and society on women (Turner and Drabble, 2014: 1).

Drabble, who becomes more and more ambitious and open minded in her works, includes the stories of women who are maturing in her work. She both breaks down the traditions she inherits and stuck to them (Showalter, 1977: 307). The fact that she gives importance to reasoning rather than emotions in her works leads to a relationship between her works and the works of the 19th century, but it should be emphasized that the author is also very interested in her period (Hardin and Drabble, 1973: 273).

Drabble is interested in the individual’s journey of self knowledge, maturation, and, social changes. In her writing career, she continues the writing traditions of writers like “George Eliot, Henry James, and Arnold Bennett” (Britannica *Margaret Drabble*). The author especially aims to break the stereotypes and defend the independence of women. The women in her works draw attention to their resilience and are also characters who question what they are looking for and who they are. They mostly try to get to know themselves through their close environment or the outside world (Hardin and Drabble, 1973: 274).

In addition, the nature of Drabble’s women has both resemblances and contrasts to their characters, thus making them even more human. The author especially emphasizes that she cannot tolerate the implication of “fixity” and “finality” in her works. According to her, there is no such thing as an end, especially when it comes to learning. In this type of quest, the characters struggle to find the most suitable lifestyles for themselves. The author thus infiltrates the nature of complex and fluid relationships (275).

Drabble employs various techniques of feminist metafiction, such as intertextuality. The heroines who are selected by the author are primarily middle aged women. The stories of these women do not contain themes such as traditional quests or courtship fiction. Especially in her recent works, the author has focused on the power of social class over people’s lives and stories (Bromberg, 1996: 174). As a result, Drabble writes a new genre, “metafictional feminist realism”, which

undermines her narrative style and the traditions of the European novel she inherited from her predecessors (Bromberg, 1990: 7).

Finally, the expected development takes place and political and social thought of the 20th century meets feminine reality. Besides, more promising things happen. Of all the English novelists, Margaret Drabble stands out as the most ardent and enthusiastic writer. It is closely tied to women's tradition. Drabble recounted her childhood at the 1974 meeting of the Bronte Society. She said that while she was writing a novel with her sister AS Byatt, who is also a famous novelist, she was inspired by the novels of the Bronte (Showalter, 1977: 304). Moreover, the author is passionate about women's writing. She clearly states that she would prefer to be in the back by writing experimental novels instead of being in the front by writing in the genre she admires. It is an interesting detail that the author gives the women in the novel names such as Rosamund, Clara, Emma, Lucy, and Jane, which were common in the Victorian Era. The personal characteristics of the characters, such as their names, are also taken from the Victorian Era. Thus, it is also natural for Drabble's characters to gossip as they did in the Victorian Era (305). Additionally, love is an instructive and very human relationship between characters. The heroine's room exists to have a baby and is the area where the character is put to the test on issues such as endurance and benevolence. Thus, Drabble brings a feminine solution to the biological and artistic conflict in her way (306).

Drabble's novel *The Seven Sisters* is derived from Goethe's Italian journey. Furthermore, it refers both to the "Pleiades' constellation of seven stars", which Candida can see through her window, and to a legend. According to the legend, after the Seven Sisters died, they were placed in the heavens by their father, Atlas, to form a constellation. The rise of these stars in May marks the bountiful spring rains. Their sinking in November marks the time of seeding (Virginia, 2007: 28).

Moreover, the novel consists of four parts entitled "Her diary", "Italian journey", "Ellen's version" and "A Dying fall". What makes each of the four parts different from each other is the narration from the perspective of different characters, that is, the perspective changes from one part to the next. The protagonist of the

novel is the story of the middle aged widow Candida who goes from being estranged to getting engaged (28). She is both a wife abandoned by her husband Andrew and a mother rejected by her daughters Ellen, Isobel, and Martha. After separating from her husband, she moves to a small flat in London, and her ex-husband marries a young woman named Anthea Richards (Stovel, 2022).

Candida's point of view dominates the opening part of the novel, "Her diary", and it is the longest of all. Despite Candida's first person narration in the part, the title of the part was created from a third person perspective (Stovel, 2022). The character, who is in her fifties, in menopause, or in the third age, tries to discover herself and establish a new life after the divorce (Toplu, 2009: 173). "We cannot pretend that we are young anymore." (Drabble, 2002: 206). Candida writes in her diary on the laptop about both the present days in London and her past days in Suffolk. In this way, information about Candida's past and present is obtained.

In the second part, Candida travels to North Africa and Italy with her six friends. This section is dominated by a third person perspective. Therefore, it is a more objective part. The information about the life stories of other women in the group is also gathered. There is a situation should be underlined that this chapter is written from a third person point of view, however, did Candida really go on such a vacation, there is no clear answer. In the part called "Ellen's version", her daughter Ellen questions the reality of the holiday as follows. "Why should she invent a trip to Cumae?" (271). More importantly, there are clues in the chapter called "Ellen's version" written by Candida herself. Candida admits this in the fourth part: "But it was in its way a useful exercise, my effort to impersonate Ellen. It was only when I started to try to see things from Ellen's point of view [...]" (276).

The third part is narrated by Candida's daughter, Ellen. The point of view here is third and first person. In this part, the reader sees the mother and daughter relationship from a different perspective. Oddly, in this part, Candida has committed suicide, and Ellen looks through her diary to find answers to some questions. When the reader learns that the fourth and final part is written by Candida, her suicide claim in the third part is a big surprise for the reader. Drabble, who likes to interrupt

the narrative and is a “master of metafictionality, and past mistress of plot reversals”, surprises the reader in this part (Stovel, 2022). So, Candida returns in the fourth part. According to Natasha Walter, author of *The Guardian*, in a rich fictional world, such a situation should become the most exciting part of the novel, but there is no emotional feedback in this work. So, this surprise by no means turns into an emotional memory. Even Candida sees herself as “insignificant” and “unfinished” in her own eyes and emphasizes the feeling of insignificance (Walter, 2018).

According to Greene, “feminist metafiction” includes relations with traditions in the “self conscious fiction” works of women writers (Greene, 1991a: 1). Such works mainly include women’s liberation efforts and traditions that affect people. It is very critical to examine traditions, especially in the context of researching how traditions arise. Therefore, “metafiction” is used to rebel against inherited culture and tradition (2). Moreover, feminism arises from the effort to save women from traditional structures that isolate and marginalize them (Greene and Kahn, 1985: 2). So, discussing the past in a work contributes to this issue, but the aim here is never to carry the past to the future but to break its influence. Most importantly, going back or past, examining, and re-evaluating it from different perspectives give rise to the hope of creating a future free from the stereotypical traditions imposed on women (Greene, 1991a: 1).

3.1. HER DIARY: RECORDING THE PAST

Considering the novel to examine the traditions in this context, from the beginning of the novel, Candida Wilton is alone in her home in a dark evening (Drabble, 2002: 3). While writing her diary, Candida talks about the “health club”, where she spends most of her time, and abruptly it comes to marriage. As Candida writes her thoughts on marriage life in her diary, the reader gets the opportunity to learn about her thoughts about both her ex-husband Andrew and herself. Although she hates Andrew now, she admires him in her younger years and considers herself lucky to have married him. “People probably thought I was lucky to catch him, though I too was pretty enough when I was a girl. I thought I was lucky, [...] Also, in those days I loved him [...]” (15).

First of all, it is useful to underline that feminism is to create a promising world for women. In other words, it means breaking down old patterns and building new ones (Green, 1991a: 9-10). Also, Rich draws attention to the same point. To him, “To change what is, we need to give a speech to what has been to imagine together what might be.” (Rich, 1979: 260).

Today, if a change is aimed and a brighter future is wanted to be created, the current situation should be discussed and considered in detail. Candida talks about her memories that created the present conditions. As it is known and discussed in the previous sections, the universal truths that constitute today’s conditions already serve patriarchy (Creed, 1987: 52). The aim is to break the influence of traditions on women and, as a result, change (Greene, 1991a: 1). Destroying history, which means the cessation of development, is left (5). Just as feminist theorists and writers do. Writers such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar emphasize the importance of women’s history when they realize the lack of a solid women’s history while questioning the current position of women.

The emergence of publishing books like *The Seven Sisters* spawned a new genre, “women’s ‘quest fiction’”. In such works, women play traditional roles, but women do not submit to these roles, and they seek freedom. In this quest, memories are recalled, explored, and examined, and questions about the present are asked. During the examination of the past, traditional roles imposed by society are discussed. Such questions and answers are of great importance because, unlike the traditional novels, a different ending is sought from “ cliché endings” such as marriage or death. “This ending” is a character specific ending. During personal interrogations, character imagines his/her “end”. In her inquiries, Candida often turns to her youth and speaks of her youthful aspirations:

Sex was rare, when we were young. Julia was our pioneer. She went out, into all those dangerous places, and came back and told us about them. [...] She would entertain us with them, at night, after Lights Out. Julia seemed to lack some kind of moral sense. She simply didn’t think that what she was doing was wrong. Kissing, petting, heavy petting, letting the hands rove over her body, letting the fingers enter her body. We were all so timid and priggish and frightened [...] There wasn’t much scope for sex at school, as we were closely supervised during term time. Our parents paid good money for that supervision. (Drabble, 2002: 25-26)

Candida was restrained during her teenage years. It is Julia who breaks the traditions of Candida's past. Candida expresses it exactly like this. "I do not know where she got her confidence or her ideas. The environment was hardly very supportive of her kind of interest or experimentation." (Drabble, 2002: 28).

Candida is also aware that Julia is quite different from her, even from most of the others. Julia is an exception. She both opposes the traditions of the time and enjoys the day. Others like Candida try to enjoy simply by listening to Julia's stories. Julia is not only a disruptor of tradition but also a writer. She even gave her voice to one of her characters in her work (Virginia, 2007: 15).

Candida is in her fifties at the time of writing her diary. Therefore, the events that Candida refers to in the past might presumably have taken place during the 1960s and 65s. At that time, the second wave feminism was just emerging. The slogan of the wave, "the break with the fathers", also reflects the meaning of breaking with the rules of a patriarchal society (Jackson and Jones, 1998: 195).

Julia seems to the reader to embody this rupture. When the quotation above from the novel is analyzed, although it resembles the content of the chick lit style novels that became prominent in the 90s, when it is considered in terms of "feminist metafiction", it represents a character that defies tradition and has her own rules in her world. The character, Julia, is completely different from Candida and her friends. What is more, Julia's tradition breaking at the time could be considered another version of Candida's future tradition breaking.

Another detail emphasized by this quotation is that Erica Young's work, called "mother of chick lit", is trying to convey the same message as *Fear of flying*. As it will be remembered, Jane is on a quest in the work. Because of this pursuit, Greene, like the author, separates the work from the chick lit genre (Greene, 1991a: 86).

In the work, *Fear of flying*, the theme of sexuality seems to be in the foreground in the work, but the purpose of this theme is to draw the attention of the reader. In this way, the sexual liberation message that is intended to be given to the reader and which arises from the feminist movements is given. According to Greene,

Young achieved this goal by selling more than ten million copies (87). Of course, it is out of the question to talk about sexual freedom because of the strict control of students at school in the novel, *The Seven Sisters*. Moreover, it can be understood that the parents made great efforts to ensure the strict supervision of the children. While Candida appreciates Julia's courage to act, she states that students like her, passive and obeying the rules, find such pleasures in novels. "Our knowledge of the sexual act was restricted to descriptions in the pages of the novels of Mazo de la Roche, Nicholas Monsarrat, and D. H. Lawrence." (Drabble, 2002: 26). To Candida, the expression of her situation is as follows. "I was a virgin when I married." (32). As for Julia, "She is so interested in sex." (34). Moreover, she continues to question:

My body has been used for its proper purpose. It gave birth, three times over. No wonder it isn't as tight and firm as it used to be. It has seen some action. And then I think to myself, what an absurd, teleological way of thinking about the body. Julia used hers for sex, and bodies are made for sex too, aren't they? (Drabble, 2002: 35)

Candida, who had emphasized Julia's difference in the past, is now in the menopause period and gives her credit after her marriage experience. Like Julia, she slowly begins to break traditions. First of all, the destruction of tradition begins with the dissolution of the marriage. Even if she was deceived, it opens the door to new beginnings for her. To everyone's surprise, Candida moves to London. This is an action that cannot be expected from Candida and a woman of her age, but she tries to open the door to innovations in this way. It is also very important that the woman's "vicious cycle" between her father's house and her husband's house is broken:

I did think, at one point, in those early days of shock, of moving back to the Midlands, [...] Once the notion of moving to London occurred to me, I became increasingly fascinated by it. It started to glow at me in the darkness, with the dangerous nocturnal brightness of a new love. There was something erotic in my imaginings of London. I had never lived in the heart of a big city, and London is one of the biggest cities in the world. I was warned about the expense, but I was not deterred. (Drabble, 2002: 43)

Candida, who could not realize that she had been cheated on and was suddenly faced with the divorce process, was shocked. Instead of imprisoning herself in the past and darkness, she gave herself a second chance and moved to London. As Candida from time to time laments her marriage and expresses her hatred for Andrew, this may be the regret of a woman who gave up on herself in the past and simply followed

tradition. As a result, the father of her three children left her and preferred a young woman to her.

Julia rejoices that Candida's marriage has ended. Like Julia, she is free now. Candida admiringly speaks about Julia: "She is as free as a bird [...] She too was delighted by my divorce [...] She never liked Andrew." (25). It seems that Candida now openly questions the rules she was taught and expected to obey. This change in the character's point of view is also reflected in her life, and she moves to London. "I was frightened when I first moved into this flat, alone. It is my own [...] Why did I choose this dark, dirty, menacing area, [...] Was I setting myself a survival test? Was I punishing myself?" (41). This is the first time Candida makes such a big decision about her own life. She is confused at first. She experiences the uneasiness of leaving the comfort she was used to in her old life and coming to a dark and threatening region.

Moreover, she talks about the place where she lives as if she were talking about the cave. At the same time, the place described in Candida's point of view is reminiscent of the "cave of the power" by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Gilbert and Gubar, 1984: 95). This "cave" is a place for women to unleash their creativity without social pressure (Jehlen and DuPlessis, 1981: 545). This is the cave where Candida questions her past, where she developed herself. Candida is satisfied with her living conditions, and more importantly, she is aware that the struggle she deals with in life is her pride (Drabble, 2002: 40).

She writes that the past is now wreckage for Candida, and she considers herself lucky, however, she saves herself from the wreckage, along with a few books and a radio. That's why she considers herself lucky (52).

Furthermore, her bed was moved from the school dormitory to the marriage room. It symbolizes Candida's cycle. Candida, who breaks free from her marital bondage and starts her new life, is an example that proves that a woman can exist alone at any cost. Although she describes the place where she lives as "this dingy ill carpeted", she is thirsty for freedom enough to feel excitement and pleasure from it.

Besides, she is fascinated by the idea that she will sleep in the bed she bought for himself for the first time and perhaps no one else will sleep in it (50).

Candida comes from a culture that instils that it is a crime to eat on the street, and she emphasizes how lively single life is against the passiveness of married life. The protagonist, who is now a middle aged woman, breaks the rules and traditions one by one, starting with her marriage. She declares that she is freed from both the marriage that limited her and the conventions: “And I broke the rules.” (77). Additionally, the moment that reflects Candida’s view of marriage and perhaps most liberates her is when she deliberately drops her ring into the pool. She lets it sink to the bottom when she could catch it if she wanted. She does not regret it. Now she does not care if she sees the ring again. At that moment, she separates herself from Andrew and announces her marriage with blue water (162).

Part one states that she has received good news and that something has changed as a result. Candida is too busy to look at her diary for a long time, and she has a lot to tell. The situation here is that Candida’s life flow is in the opposite direction of her previous monotonous life. She has received a letter, and she learns that she has some money. This is something she did not expect but desired because she sometimes plays the lottery in hopes of getting a certain amount of money. Candida gets the money she hoped for, but it is not from the lottery but from the pension fund, thanks to her father (141). Andrew comes to mind first, and according to Candida, this event will disturb Andrew. Her second thought is to travel to Italy. She plans to visit the “Cave of sibyl” with Julia on the first trip to Italy (144).

It is critical to plan the “Sibyl cave” and the cave visit, especially with Julia. According to Merriam Webster, Sibyl is the spokesperson of the god and the old woman who foretells the future. Among the many Sibyls, the most famous is Cumae Sibyl in Italy (Merriam Webster). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Candida’s apartment was likened to a “cave” which represents the place away from social society and especially from its restrictive rules. Her intention to visit another cave in Italy is not so surprising. In both “caves”, there is power. The oracle woman in the cave in Italy is given the word of God. She foretells the future in the name of

god. Thus, she has a position and power. However, this situation is seen as objectionable by patriarchy. The patriarchy cannot accept that such power should be given to women, and in order to break this power, Sibyl has been accused of witchcraft or insanity. According to the patriarchal system, women should play a passive role and should not express destructive discourses (Bök, 1992: 82). It should also be noted that what brings modernist and feminist writers together is that their current situation is ambiguous and they are making plans for the future. Drabble emphasizes that she not only writes novels but also creates a future. As a result, Sibyl might represent Drabble. Candida, who has become a symbol of change, questions the past and plans to go with Sibyl while trying to find answers about the future.

Marriage is a burden for Candida. The burdens of the past have put her in a negative mood. She reads her diary again before the vacation and realizes that it is too negative. "I have just reread the whole of this diary. I am not proud of it. What a mean, self righteous, self pitying voice is mine." (Drabble, 2002: 160). But now there is no past, there is a future. She wishes to get rid of all the burdens and innovation with travel. Vacation is wealth, happiness, and peace for her. That is all the things a person deserves. Contrary to her previous negative situation, she has a very positive attitude towards life now, and more importantly, she is aware of what she wants. "I am happy now. I am full of happy anticipation." (161). Moreover, the holiday represents renewal and purification, and more importantly, a "new beginning". Candida takes it upon herself to destroy the past because the past must be destroyed so that innovations can emerge. Nothing is ever the same for Candida. She is on vacation and is full of peace. The third person narration describes the current state of Candida as follows. "She has escaped both from that dullness, and from that dark destiny. She breathes deeply, and feels herself dying into life." (188). Candida now has a "bright and hopeful" life against her past "boring and dark" fate.

Candida sets off to visit Sibyl alone. While she is waiting for the train, her daughter Ellen comes to mind, and she begins to think about their relationship. It is noteworthy that she thought about this issue on the way of Sibyl. She emphasizes that after her divorce, her daughters were deceived by the father and that she was

declared the enemy, but now she started to question impartially. It is precisely indicated that a great innovation will take place.

3.2. MATROPHOBIA AND DYSFUNCTIONAL KINSHIP

While the term “motherhood” expresses the patriarchal institution of motherhood, the term “mothering” expresses the resistance against the institution of motherhood based on the patriarchal system and the pressure created by this institution (O’reilly, 2010: viii). The term “matrophobia”, coined by Lynn Sukenick and later discussed in detail in Adrienne Rich’s book *Born of Woman*, refers to one’s fear of becoming a mother. In this context, the basic fear of the daughter is the fear of identification with her mother (Rich, 1995: 235).

Generally, the relationship between mother and daughter is seen as contradictory. The main reason behind this view is easier to understand when the myths are examined. For example, according to myths, mothers are portrayed as extraordinary creatures. They have endless resources, they know everything, and what is more, the relationship between child and mother is seamless. Such mothers are good. Mothers who exhibit the opposite of this situation are bad. Such myths put pressure on women. The myths focus on the mothers who have to work and unable to raise children on their own. Moreover, such beliefs may damage the mother and daughter relationship. The main danger here is the belief that the mother and daughter relationship must be perfect (O’reilly, 2010: 269).

Another problem is that the first role model for the girl is the mother, but the girl has a dilemma here. The main reason for this dilemma is that the mother is humiliated by society. If the girl takes the mother as a role model, she knows that they will have to have a more passive and submissive view socially than the boys. If the mother does not raise her daughter according to the social norms and rules, the mother will face the danger of being rejected by society. Such reasons deeply affect mother and daughter relationships. As a result, the most striking reason is that girls reject their mothers and are afraid of being like them (270). As seen here, there is a negative detail, but Kristeva takes this situation from a different perspective and states that it is necessary for the construction of the child’s identity. Kristeva

considers the relationship between mother and daughter as “abjection”. Thanks to “abjection”, the mother and child get away, and the child has the opportunity to build his own individual personality. The child rejects the mother to address the autonomy of his/her identity. The struggle of the child is the effort to be “I” (Kristeva, 1982: 13).

The mother and daughter relationship in the novel can be handled in two dimensions. First, it is the mother and daughter relationship between both Candida and her mother and Candida and Ellen. To begin with, Candida and her mother appear to have a contradictory and fearful relationship between them. In the novel, the relationship between Candida and her mother is handled only from Candida’s perspective. Candida gives the reader almost no details about her mother. Considering that she does not spend much time in her father’s house, it is understandable that she does not give details. In this case, the result is as follows. Candida has been transferred from the tightly regulated school where she spent her youth to her husband’s house. As a result, the reader does not know the relationship between these two. After Candida’s divorce, her father dies, and she does not want to stay in the same place with her mother. Candida likens her mother to darkness, and she is afraid of being drawn into it. “And after father’s death, I did not want to be too near my mother, for fear she would suck me in. A failing mother and a daughter shamed.” (Drabble, 2002: 43).

Candida moves to London to escape from her mother and her darkness. The relationship between Candida and her mother is described by Candida in the first part of the novel. Candida stayed in a boarding school where she was forced to follow strict rules (31). It is clear that there is no close mother and daughter relationship between Candida and her mother, so this indicates that there will not be a close relationship between Candida and her daughters. In her story, which she tells from her own point of view, she often refers to her distant relationship with her daughters:

I’m at the upper age limit now. When I go there, young shameless naked female bodies assault my eyes. I can’t remember when I last saw young naked female bodies. I haven’t seen the bodies of my daughters for years, not since they reached the modest age of puberty, [...] And I wasn’t very good at being motherly. (Drabble, 2002: 9)

Occasionally, Candida questions her motherhood between the lines. She is not satisfied with the rules and the lifestyle of that period when she talks about her boarding school time spent with oppressions and rules. She always envies Julia, who has the same conditions as her but ignores the rules. What she could not do in those days is still a dream for her. "Julia never had any children. [...] She has always said that she did not want children. Did I want children? I don't know [...]" (Drabble, 2002: 34-35).

Candida questions relationship with her daughters especially with Ellen rather than other daughters. "Ellen is, in fact, the most reasonable of the girls, [...] Ellen, I feel, doesn't dislike me [...] Nor is she in love with her father [...] She has wisely decided to remove herself" (46). Generally, Candida presents her relationship with her daughters from a negative point of view, which she admits in the next part of the novel. To her, there is an invisible hand that disturbs the relations between mother and daughter. Neither the girls nor the mother takes action to repair this relationship. Everything seems to be proceeding in its natural course as it should. Candida is a lonely woman aged in her own eyes and living in her small London flat, and her daughters are ashamed of her. "My daughters were treating me, at this stage, as a guilty fugitive. They were ashamed of me." (51).

In part two, in Italian journey, the third person narrator has a reasonable interpretation of the ambiguous mother and daughter relationship. "Why was Candida afraid of her own daughter? Was she afraid of rejection? Surely, she had already been rejected, and therefore she had nothing more to fear. What was this terror? What did it mean" (245). In the third part, the relationship between Ellen and Candida is told from Ellen's point of view. It turns out that many situations are not as Candida describes. Candida has not been able to establish the mother and daughter bond with her daughters, which she could not establish with her own mother. The reader witnesses different aspects of the mother and daughter relationship from Ellen's perspective. This happens thanks to the diary that Candida left behind and was found by Ellen. Before that, thanks to this diary, the fragmented and lost identity of the diary writer stands out. Candida repeatedly emphasizes that she is a lonely old woman (42).

Diaries are “Candid” writings, and although they are quite subjective, they are important in that they bear witness to history (Paperno, 2004: 561). In the diary where Candida records her personal memories, the reader witnesses the writer’s feelings and inner reflections on the world. Moreover, another importance of the diary is that it guides the author in his/her search for self. Davis also supports this view by claiming that diaries provide very important support and motivation for women to cope with difficulties (Davis, 1987: 5). In addition, as Elean Graves points out, journaling helps women control their emotions (6).

The reader is informed about Candida’s identity crises, the divisions in her life before and after marriage and after divorce until the part “Italian journey”. The diary is taken over by Ellen, and after this, the diary acts as a bridge between mother and daughter. Thanks to Candida’s diary of unrealized desires, Ellen has the opportunity to enter her mother’s secret and private world:

It was a great shock to me, as you can well imagine. [...] she She ‘d sounded perfectly reasonable on the phone when she rang me in Amsterdam. She’s never been exactly warm-hearted or cozy in her manner [...] I was surprised to hear from her at all, that’s for sure, and I may have made that a bit too obvious to her, but I didn’t give her the cold shoulder. I was pleased to hear from her. In my own fashion. Which is not unlike her fashion, when all is said. For, when all is said, I am, alas, her daughter. I never got any flowers from her. (Drabble, 2002: 252-253)

As it can be seen in the quote, the reader has interpreted the events with the narrations of Candida and the third person until this section, but now it is interpreted from Ellen’s point of view. Ellen is seen as unaware of many things. This is an indication of the unhealthy and broken relationship between mother and daughter. Moreover, Candida stressed that her daughters were cold and unfriendly towards her, but now Ellen is complaining about the same thing. After the “Italian journey” part, Candida mysteriously returns and further emphasizes that she is alive. It leaves the reader wondering whether the previous part was made up by Candida or contains Ellen’s thoughts. It is again Candida’s comments that make the reader doubt this. “I don’t think that interpretation would have occurred to me on my own, without the help of an imagined Ellen.” (Drabble, 2002: 276). The expression “imagined Ellen” in the quote, in particular, is contradictory. Apart from that, this is a great development for Candida because Candida now leaves her pessimistic point of view

and interprets the events she has experienced in her way, showing that she has started to repair and rebuild herself.

The mother and daughter relationship is not considered healthy by the mother, nor does it seem healthy in the part supposedly written by Ellen. However, Drabble does not finish the work by leaving the mother and daughter relationship ambiguous. One reason is that Drabble is very fond of her children in her personal life. Besides, according to her, the relationship between mother and children is not destructive. In addition, Drabble does not see the institution of marriage as an institution that destroys and harms women (Rayson, 1978: 43).

As a result, the work results in the restoration of mutual relations, at least the mother and daughter relationship between Ellen and Candida. Candida attends Ellen's wedding in part four, "A dying fall" (Drabble, 2002: 286). This part is written by the third narrator and seems more convincing. Candida attends Ellen's wedding. Later, in the fourth year of her journey of self discovery, Candida receives a card from Ellen and learns that she is pregnant. Candida is happy for her daughter. This part is the last part of the book, and thus the book closes (300).

3.3. VOLLENDUNGSROMAN: RETROSPECT AND MATURATION

According to Constance Rooke, vollendungsroman is a novel meaning "completion" or "winding up" (Cambridge Dictionary). Rooke underlines that the term vollendungsroman is an old age novel. According to her, "growth" novels or buildingsroman in youth and "completion or winding up" novels in old age are complementary to each other. That is, the "construction of the ego" in youth and "deconstruction", which symbolizes the last task in old age, are related to each other (Rooke, 1992: 245). To her, "deconstruction", especially in old age, depends on the old person's ability to move from the habitual place to the "natural world" (255). Drabble's protagonists are usually middle aged women, and their stories are quite different from traditional fiction (Bromberg, 1996: 174). As a result, Drabble's protagonists are usually middle aged women challenge standard and traditional categories and seek novelty. Candida, the old woman character of the novel, also begins to discover herself by rejecting the traditional lifestyle:

It started to glow at me in the darkness, with the dangerous nocturnal brightness of a new love. There was something erotic in my imaginings of London. I had never lived in the heart of a big city, and London is one of the biggest cities in the world. I was warned about the expense, but I was not deterred. I pursued my fancy with more energy than I had felt in years. I signed on with estate agents, I read the property columns. My means would be restricted but I was not destitute. (Drabble, 2002: 43)

Many people do not consider that she will move from her permanent residence to London, and they even try to discourage her. Despite this, Candida is determined and does what she is determined to do. The fact that Candida leaves her hometown and selects a difficult life in London is a sign that a change has begun. She prefers such a change after the end of her marriage, rather than continuing her ordinary life because the past is like debris for Candida. She is aware that she will either survive the wreckage or die by staying under that wreckage (Drabble, 2002: 52).

Moreover, there is a similarity between living and writing a life story. The old heroines are usually a writer. This person plays the function of a person who looks back or reads his work. The aim here is to re-create a “sense of identity” while reviewing the character’s memory (Rooke, 1993: 209). The statement mentioned in the quotation is written in the diary of the middle aged woman, protagonist Candida. The author covers a wide range of subjects, step by step, from her youth to the present. The task of the diary is to look at the past of the author, convey her experiences to the reader, and reconstruct her identity.

Moreover, water is of great importance in *vollendungsroman*. Margaret Drabble also repeatedly uses the water theme in her works. When Drabble was asked about the frequent use of water related symbols in an interview, the author stated that water was symbolic. The reason why she includes copious amounts of water and drowning in her works is the author witnessed at least two drowning people in the Stratford on Avon River (Hardin and Drabble, 1973: 291).

Two kinds of functions of water draw attention in such works as *vollendungsroman* and *The Seven Sisters*. The first is fear of death, and the second is spiritual renewal (Rooke, 1993: 222). Besides, according to Ellmann, “solid ground is masculine, the sea is feminine.” (Ellmann, 1968: 74). As a result, water is the

representation of femininity; moreover, it both exists and destroys. These two effects of water also appear in *The Seven Sisters*.

First, Jane Richards throwing herself into the water like Virginia Woolf results in her death, which causes Andrew and Anthea to unite, while Candida and Andrew separate. “What would have happened to me and my marriage, if Jane Richards had not drowned herself in the Lady Pond? From that death, Andrew and Anthea took life, and now they are man and wife and one flesh.” (Drabble, 2002: 74). Jane is a student of Candida’s ex-husband Andrew. Jane committed suicide by throwing herself into the water. Andrew’s consolation for Anthea brings them closer together. The main cause of Jane’s suicide is never known, but her suicide results in Candida being cheated on. Candida cannot accept this betrayal. She questions repeatedly. The fact that Jane’s suicide coincides with Candida’s birthday also plays a major role in this interrogation. Partly for betrayal and partly for this reason, Candida constantly questions this event (76). This birthday can also have a metaphorical meaning. She is born for the second time, Jane’s death will enable Candida to break free of her marriage and dedicate herself to innovation.

Secondly, Candida throws her wedding ring into the water and divorces Andrew and marries the water. “I have divorced myself from Andrew and married the blue water.” (162). The water mentioned here symbolizes the universal place. It is a common position in *vollendungsroman* that the old woman leaving the house begins to make her way toward the universal water (Rooke, 1993: 222). Candida simply watches the ring sink to shallow depths. She is also spiritually divorced from the man who betrayed her. She revisits a memory. More importantly, Candida puts aside the perception that she is old and inefficient and gradually begins to discover the power within. With the return to the past, her maturation process has now begun. Since the most important part of the maturation process is flashbacks, it is necessary to remember the past for change. So, Candida’s questioning by looking into the past triggers her change (Virginia, 2007: 1).

As a result, Candida, who is in her third age stage, prefers “successful aging” over “passive aging”. In other words, she abandons the old pessimistic perspective

and replaces it with the search for new identities, self discovery, and self affirmation. It is clear that this novel is not a romance novel unlike traditional novels; it is a novel transformation of an old woman trying to find her own identity or struggling by giving herself a second chance.

3.4. METAFICTION: CREATION AND THEN DECONSTRUCTION

As for metafiction, there is no common definition of the term, so it is defined differently by experts. While some emphasize its fictionality, others emphasize its narrative technique. To Waugh, what constitutes a novel is metafiction (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 42-43). Such novels are aware of their fictionality (1). In other words, they are works of self consciousness.

To Greene, metafiction is fiction within fiction (Greene, 1991b: 293). It has embedded narratives or a story within a story technique (Tykhomyrova, 2018: 385). For example, in *The Seven Sisters*, Candida writes a diary. Diary forms a large part of the novel. However, it is Drabble who also writes Candida's diary. Thus, Drabble disguises herself as Candida. Sometimes in metafictional works, the narrator underlines the fictionality. For example, in the introduction to the work, Candida clearly states that she will turn on the computer and write a diary:

I have just got back from my Health Club. I have switched on this modern laptop machine. And I have told myself that I must resist the temptation to start playing solitaire upon it. Instead, I am going to write some kind of diary. (Drabble, 2002: 3)

The reader is aware that what he/she is reading is Candida's diary. Sometimes in metafictional works, the narrator directly addresses himself/herself and makes metanarrative comments. In the novel, Candida directly addresses the reader using the pronoun "you", "You do overhear some odd conversations there, though. I heard an alarming one this very evening." (Drabble, 2002: 4). The work does not try to drag the reader into the fictional world from the very beginning. Instead, it underlines its fictionality and clearly stresses that this work consists of the diary of a character, that is, it was created by someone while the diary author has direct contact with the reader. In this matter, a problem arises, and the text becomes ambiguous, and, the narrator loses its credibility (Fludernik, 2009: 27).

An important point that makes the narrator unreliable is that the narration technique changes during the transition between the parts. The reader, who gets used to the author's first person narration in the first two parts of the work, is shocked when Ellen intervenes in the third part. Moreover, Ellen surprises the reader even more by making important claims. Ellen says that her mother is dead. She takes her mother's computer and she continues to write. "I am writing this on the same laptop machine. On my mother's machine." (Drabble, 2002: 251).

When the reader moves to part four, it realizes that Candida is not dead; she is just disguised as Ellen. With various narrative techniques in the work, the reader is perplexed. The ambiguity of some points causes the reader to ask some questions such as "Is the third part written by Ellen? Is Candida dead? If not, why did Ellen intervene and tell the reader that Candida was dead?" Thus, the problems stem from the nature of metafiction. It as a self consciousness fiction cannot handle this confusion and contains such kind of problems (Scholes and Waugh, 1995: 1).

Another metafiction feature, in metafiction works, is that fiction is first created and then deconstructed (43). As it is known, the narrative self consciousness emphasizes to the reader that what she/he is reading is fiction (2). As a result, artificiality emerges. In this case, the artificial reality created in the metafictional text must be broken (Tykhomyrova, 2018: 366). For example, it can break the fourth wall by addressing the reader directly, just like in epic theatre. On the other hand, another purpose behind "creation and destruction" is to break down the clichés, instead to construct a direct message that the work wants to convey. The character's diary writing in the work mainly serves this purpose. As such, first of all, any woman writer stands out in feminist metafiction works. The fact that the heroines are writers means that she has control over the traditions (Greene, 1991a: 17).

Regarding writing, Drabble claims that "Writing isn't about writing; it's about the other thing, which is called life" (Drabble, 1987: 130). In the related work, Candida, who wrote the diary, and her school friend Julia are writers. Candida describes Julia's authorship by writing in her diary: "Julia said she was going to be a writer. Most of us weren't very ambitious, but Julia was." (Drabble, 2002: 28). It is

very common for heroines to be a writer in feminist metafiction works. Cixous states the importance of the issue of authorship. To her, such writings are similar to the “l’écriture féminine”. It is the basis of “new insurgent writing” that violates social codes (Greene, 1991a: 20). When writing a diary, Candida often recalls her memories of school and marriage in the past. Of course, the purpose of this is not to keep the past alive. The aim is primarily to question the transition and create a better future. Another reason is that the writer develops ways of expressing themselves by writing a diary and discovering themselves (Davis, 1987: 6).

3.5. NARRATION: ESCAPING THE PRISON OF VOICE

In narratives, there is a cause and effect relationship between successive events (Fludernik, 2009: 2). In a novel, the plot takes place in the first person, with the narrator sharing her own experience, or looking at the fictional world from afar in the third person (21). While some stories progress chronologically, some stories break the chronology with flashbacks. Such flashbacks are called “analepsy”. Sometimes such tools are used to clarify an unexpected event (34). Or it is sometimes used to bring about a transformation by breaking the traditions as the old aged woman Candida in the current novel does. Moreover, memory is needed to go back and forth. It is a tool for establishing a relationship between the past and the present and at the same time constructing the self and experience (Greene, 1991b: 293).

Writers are closely related to memory because writings always feed on the past, so they are memories of the past. Candida sometimes uses her memory to talk about her school memories and sometimes about her marriage. Candida compares its past to its present form. She brings up her memories at school about Julia. She admires her, no matter how unconventional what she does, and still admires her in her middle aged state. “I was a virgin when I married.” (Drabble, 2002: 32). Moreover, she continues: “My body has been used for its proper purpose. It gave birth, [...] And then I think to myself, what an absurd, [...] Julia used hers for sex, and bodies are made for sex too, aren’t they” (35). Additionally, she often goes back to talk about her marriage. “I have a microwave. Microwaves are sinful. Andrew didn’t

approve of them and [...] That's why I got one. But I don't mind if I poison myself, do I? What does it matter, at my age?" (58-59).

As discussed in previous sections, visiting the past is critical for women's novels. Moreover, if a writer is aiming for change, she is particularly interested in memory. The truth behind this thought is that forgetting is doomed to repetition. Memory plays a vital role in this situation, especially for feminists. For Margaret Drabble, memory is a means of salvation. It aims at narrative change. There is a call to salvation in the narrative (Greene, 1991b: 291). Greene also emphasizes that women should remember, because for them, forgetting is the biggest obstacle to change because, as women learned from the past, a collective memory loss destroys all the efforts and struggles of the past (298). They see the past as not fixed and finished but as important enough to answer existing questions and create new meanings.

First of all, Candida desires to be alone, so she surprises everyone by leaving the Suffolk countryside and settling in London (Virginia, 2007: 36). Tom Wilhelmus discusses Drabble and *The Seven Sisters* in his article *Many Voices*. Candida's diary evolves what she rediscovers herself. Middle aged widow Candida settles in London with "foreign land barbarians" from sheltered Suffolk. She is isolated and alone. She begins to keep a diary and that results in self discovery (Wilhelmus, 2003: 691).

Candida writes in her notebook diary which corresponds to the first part of the novel that London was her rebirth (Virginia, 2007:19). In this part, Drabble uses a tool which is a summary or comment of the part in italics written by the point of view of third person narration (36). For example, a few pages after the beginning of the first part, an italicized title like "She encourages herself to continue, despite misgivings" (Drabble, 2002: 8). This title works as follows, it appears, and then the subject changes. This tool also functions as the subtitle of the part and informs the reader in advance of what is explained in the relevant part. This tool can be compared to the "the 'v' effect" technique used in epic theatre. When it is adapted to any work to give a political or social message, it allows the reader or viewer to focus on the message to be conveyed. This might be a reason why Drabble used this

technique. It is to get the reader to focus on the message containing Candida's struggle rather than the subject. Besides, in the parts the first person narrator is used, the narrator is a diary writer who gives every detail about herself. While saying "I want to die" at the shrine in Cumae, Candida examines her bodily existence (Virginia, 2007: 38). "My skin is weathered and wrinkles and crow's feet don't look as good on a woman as on a man." (Drabble, 2002: 15).

The second part is "Italian journey". This part is dominated by the third person omniscient narrator. The title of this part is taken from Goethe's Italian journey (Virginia, 2007: 39).

The part three of *The Seven Sisters* is "Ellen's version". The highlight of this part is Candida's thought about where the name of *The Seven Sisters* came from (Drabble, 2002: 267). It is dominated by Ellen's point of view. In the part, the reader is shocked, for example, when Ellen Candida drowned herself in the channel. Ellen finds her mother's story on her laptop. The narrator collaborates with Ellen and addresses the reader as "you" in the opening (Virginia, 2007: 41).

In this part, the reader is disappointed because Candida has made up a lot from her point of view. Ellen explains by reading both parts, namely "Her diary" and "Italian journey". Ellen is given a voice for the multiple perspectives characteristic of postmodern novels. Mainly in "Ellen's Version" part, Ellen justifies herself, especially in the parts about herself. In different parts, she explains that her mother is not honest (42).

Furthermore, as readers, we learn more from Ellen in this part. According to Ellen, her mother is "an emasculating woman" (Drabble, 2002: 266). Besides, her father's cheating on Candida is due to her "mother's frigidity" (258). Ellen portrays her mother as devoid of maternity interest. Moreover, Ellen accuses her mother of being "unreliable" and a "faux-naive tone" (264). "Why would one lie in one's diary?" (265). There is a point at the end of this part that implies that the previous parts are purely fictitious. "According to Mrs. Jerrold, my mother never went to Cumae. She never walked alone up the Via Sacra and heard the immemorial bees [...]"

None of them ever reached the Sibyl. Why should she invent a trip to Cumae?" (271).

In the part four, "A dying fall", the readers find Candida in front of them again. Candida has returned to London and is still alive. At the beginning of this part, it is understood that Candida is disguised as Ellen in the previous part. The person called Ellen is Candida's inner voice, even Candida's inner voice that she cannot even admit to herself. "I don't think I've made a very good job of trying to impersonate my daughter or of trying to take my own life" (275). The narrator here changes sometimes as first and third person narrators. Moreover, third person singular in italics summaries appear at the beginning of the journal entries (Virginia, 2007: 42).

In the text with the plural narrator, Candida "tries to escape from the prison of her voice" (Drabble, 2002: 264). According to Virginia Tiger, strategies such as "formal practices of partial concealment, delayed disclosure, embedded riddle, oblique clue, signifying gap, baffling crux, oscillating point of view, and intertextual engagement" are narrative strategies in *The Seven Sisters*. The purpose of these strategies is to involve the reader as an active participant, following the implications. When Candida criticizes herself harshly or looks at herself through her daughter's eyes, it is purely to know herself (Virginia, 2007: 43). As a result, while Candida has a self directed perspective in the first and second parts, she maintains a similar perspective in the fourth part (Wilhelmus, 2003: 691).

Candida is aware of her weaknesses. She will not be able to escape from the prison of her voice as she gets older, she is especially aware of this situation. Her attempt to emulate her daughter's voice in the third part to imitate "polyphony" seems heroic and life affirming (692). Just as feminist metafiction subverts master narratives, polyphony is dominant instead of monophonic in this work.

In traditional novels, the narrator has a single focus or dominates the story from a fixed point of view. According to this narrator's worldview, the truth may change from the narrator's point of view (Davis, 1989: 56). With *The Waterfall*, Drabble slowly leaves her traditional narrative norms. This situation also shows that the author does not support the patriarchal view. Furthermore, the author's invention of

alternative narrative strategies reflects her intention to express the feminine. The author contributes to the feminist revolution and wages war on patriarchal thought in the field of discourse (Rose, 1988: 88).

According to patriarchal thought, “femininity” is associated with nature, and “masculinity” is associated with civilizations that are superior to nature. Drabble has launched a war against this pernicious hierarchy. She has made patriarchal structures subject to criticism by feminist morality by playing both thematically and narratively (87). Moreover, by using innovative narrative techniques, Drabble deconstructs tradition in her mature work and creates a new feminist metafiction to realistically articulate contemporary women’s life (Bromberg, 1990: 5). Thus, Drabble’s novels contain multiple heroes and narratives (8). That is why Arnold Bennett asked Drabble if she gravitated towards the experimental genre in her work. Drabble refused by saying that this was not her intention. She boldly stressed that her intention was far from confusing to the reader. The author gives an example from her work, *The Waterfall*, to better explain this subject. She sometimes used the first person singular and sometimes the third person in the work, and she emphasized that she followed this path due to the flow of the novel. She added that the first person narration in the first part would not progress in the novel, so she preferred third person narration (Rose and Drabble, 1980: 88).

Having published her first novel, *A Summer Bird-Cage*, in 1963, Drabble prided herself on her traditionalism and preferred the traditional style of writing. However, as the writer progressed in her career, her writing style also changed. She abandoned her conservative stance and began to write in an experimental style (Nagamatsu, 2014: 387). She published her 5th novel, *The Waterfall*, in 1969. She made changes in her narration techniques in this work. She used the “stream of consciousness” technique in the first singular narration, and in addition to this, she used an experimental writing technique, which is “first person and third person narrative shifting”, for the first time (388). With this change, she used different narrative techniques. About thirty five years later, *The Seven Sisters* was published. In thirty five years, she made great progress in her career and developed her writing

skills (387). What makes this novel special is the use of different narrative techniques in each part of the novel, which consists of four parts (388).

In addition to the ideas above, Assoc. Prof. Miho Nagamatsu has very valuable opinion about Drabble's narration. According to Miho Nagamatsu, first person narration reflects a person's view of the world, and hence the point of view is narrow, whereas third person narration has a broader point of view (390). In terms of plot, the self discovery process of a widow who was cheated on by her husband may not be very remarkable, but what makes this novel privileged is its narrative style. To wit, in the novel, which consists of four parts, the first part is narrated by Candida with first person narration. Candida shuttles between the present and past (391).

The second part is narrated by Candida again, but it is narrated in the third person singular describing her trip to Italy. It is seen in these parts that Drabble has carefully chosen the narrative style of each part and adapted it effectively. Moreover, while most of the three hundred pages novel consists of the first and second parts, the third part titled "Ellen's version" which is the most influential part of the novel, consists of only fifty pages (391).

The third part is narrated by Ellen, who is Candida's second daughter. According to what is told in the part, Candida committed suicide after returning from her trip to Italy (391). Ellen found Candida's diary on the computer and took over the third part narration. Ellen pointed out the deception of what was written in the diary. Meanwhile, the readers still firmly trust all that they read, including this part (Drabble, 2002: 275).

In the fourth part, it is understood that Candida is not dead and has assumed the identity of Ellen. "I'll have to admit that here I am, still alive. [...] Of course, I won't end up in the canal. [...] Did you believe [...] even for a moment, that I might? [...] I suppose that we all have fantasies of our death" (275). In this part, Candida impersonated Ellen (276). Here, the credibility of the narrator is questioned. In this case, the reader begins to question. Was it Candida speaking at the previous two parties? In an interview, such narrator tricks are asked to the author and she answers as follows. Drabble emphasizes that the "unreliable" narrator in the work is not that

exaggerated. According to the author, this is just a postmodern technique, and any writer can apply it at will (Turner, 2014: 8).

Drabble's complex narrative technique creates the expectation that the reader will carefully follow the novel. Moreover, the work, which requires a mythological background, is also quite challenging for the reader. Again, according to Miho Nagamatsu, if Drabble finished this work in the second part, the work would not have been privileged. And as a result, Drabble has successfully used the "experimental writing technique" to add depth to the work (Nagamatsu, 2014: 393).

3.6. INTERTEXTUALITY: REWRITING THE PAST

Main techniques such as "intrusive narrators" and "breaking down the traditions" that imprison women in certain roles are "feminist metafiction" techniques. Unlike these techniques, the techniques such as "intertextuality unresolved endings" are metafiction techniques that Drabble frequently uses in her works (Bromberg, 1996: 174).

Contemporary or innovative novels have abandoned the function of transferring traditions to new generations, and they underline the traps created for women in the background of traditions. Especially, women writers' use "intertextuality" to expose these traps (Greene, 1991a: 19).

Intertextuality appears to have been created by the author of a text, but any text necessarily includes elements of another text or text (Snyman, 1996: 446). Also, it seeks to understand how meaning is constructed (436). In addition, there is a feature that brings metafiction and intertextuality closer together is that: While metafiction draws attention to the artificiality of the work, intertextual reference in written works also underlines the artificiality of the fictional world (Currie, 1995: 4). Drabble's work contains references to various intertextual discourses, notably Virgil and T. S. Eliot. For example, Candida enrolls in a class in the Aeneid to make friends. As London becomes her Avernus, she becomes like Eliot's caged Sybil of Friday (Wilhelmus, 2003: 691).

Different from unresolved endings which are essential themes for feminist metafiction, secondly, for Joan Douglas Peters, feminist metafiction is defined as “a woman’s writer writing about a woman” (Peters, 2002: 1). Women have discovered the power of reading and writing in recent years. So, women writers have begun to write fiction, especially about women (Singley and Sweeney, 1993: 317). Additionally, in these books, women imprisoned in roles seek freedom and at the same time question their past. Moreover, they question cliché “ends” such as “death” and “marriage” attributed to women in traditional works, and they seek a new “end” (Greene, 1990: 82). In short, examining the past and creating new “ends” for women is necessary for change or transformation. This is why, writers like Drabble delve into the past in their works and seek to find different “ends” for women (Greene, 1991a: xiv).

In traditional narratives, the end of a woman is a man. Feminist critics examined traditional works and explored that the only success and integration of women with society was marriage, while death was their failure. In short, two roles were assigned to women in literary works in the past. These roles were related to either marriage or death. Any woman character has two options; to wit, marry and be happy or die (12). In this context, women’s pursuits are cyclical. In other words, women pass from the father’s house to the husband’s house through marriage (14). Also, Cixous describes this cycle in her article “The Laugh of the Medusa”: “They have wandered around in circles, confined to the narrow room in which they’ve been given a deadly brainwashing.” (Cixous, et al., 1976: 877).

As for *The Seven Sisters*, it has open ended. In a way, the novel does not have a clear ending. The novel ends the way it started in the first part. Candida writes her experiences as a first person narrator in her diary. Although the ending of the book is open-ended, the “end” is not a “marriage” or “death”. It is also worth emphasizing that in this work, an “end” independent of a marriage or death indicates that this work is not chick lit. It includes a woman’s struggle rather than her commitment to a man. In this respect, this novel differs from traditional works as feminist metafiction. Drabble defends the idea of “write it the way it is” by opposing the writing rules because, according to her, finishing the work with a married woman is wrong and

also finishing the work with an alone woman is victory. In this case, the best practice is to write the work the way it is (Greene, 1991a: 2). To her, what is called truth is more valuable than ideology (3). The author insists on expressing the real situation of women in society in her works. According to her, the other kind will turn out to be normative (5).

Candida has traditionally moved from her father's house to her husband's through marriage. After her divorce, she chose not to be in "safe" Suffolk but "unknown" London. So, she breaks her circles. "I used to know in Suffolk when I was married to Andrew. I couldn't face them. I ran away. I still can't decide whether courage or cowardice prevailed in me when I made that choice." (Drabble, 2002: 12). Candida breaks the cycle in which she was imprisoned by tradition, and later she embarks on a journey of self discovery. Finally, Greene deals with the "end" issue as follows. Especially she uses the title "something new" for the term "metafiction" (Greene, 1991a: 7). Feminist metafiction is produced by a few talented writers to keep pace with a new era and to create "something new" (28). As a result, in feminist metafiction, authors and the female characters strive for an unusual life.

CONCLUSION

Feminist metafiction, portrayed as “something new”, is a work about women who cannot submit to traditions. Although the women in these works are brought up with rules and traditions and even spend most of their lives in this way, they find the strength to reject the traditions. Works in the genre of feminist metafiction are about extraordinary women. For example, even if they are middle aged or divorced, they cross boundaries and step away from traditional roles by saying that there is still something to explore. Just like Candida did in *The Seven Sisters*. In short, feminist metafiction aims to display how heroines, who confine themselves to certain roles, abandon traditions, reject traditional women’s roles, question the past, and create something new, thereby empowering them to break the influence of traditions on women.

There has been a special “female self consciousness” that emerges primarily through literature, and it strengthens the theme of feminist metafiction in terms of the vollendungsroman genre, in which the old woman “records the past” by writing a diary and “re-evaluating the past” by reading the diary. By the way, diary writing is essential because the data is recorded by writing the diary. The main reason for this is the denial of the past; it means the cessation of maturation.

In this respect, *The Seven Sisters* is a type of feminist metafiction. Moreover, it is not a genre supported by the chick lit style and postmodern consumer culture. In addition to these, the focus on the old woman’s personal experience and inner world also confirm that this work is vollendungsroman. The work is very invaluable in that it possesses diverse genres and various narrative strategies. Drabble demonstrated the writing experience she gained after thirty five years by masterfully applying the “experimental expression” technique she used in the work.

The genre of feminist metafiction is promising because it can be said that it is the 21st version of the “new woman” that they formed to eliminate the image of the “fallen woman of the 19th century”. To break this perception, women started to write their works, and, as a result, the essence of writing was understood. In this way,

women will both write their history from a positive perspective and record the history about them. Recording the history because of remembering the past is invaluable, and the same is true of feminist metafiction works. In such works, female protagonists write. This writing is sometimes done professionally, and sometimes just a diary is kept, as Candida does. Keeping a diary allows the character to maintain their sanity and share their loneliness in some way. Moreover, journal writing allows one to review the past to evaluate it from a different perspective.

While talking about her school, marriage and family life in the work, Candida expresses her regrets and makes self criticism. She even looks at things through her eyes, disguising herself as her daughter. As a result, it is understood that this work is a feminist metafiction in terms of its liberating narrative style and its handling of the woman who does not submit to tradition. Therefore, this work is not a chick lit genre, because, in such works, the goal of the woman is usually to marry, that is, there is no woman autonomous. Secondly, since this work concentrates on the life of the old woman, it is also a *vollendungsroman* genre.

In addition, memory, which is a means of establishing a connection between the past and the present, has an important place in the work. Moreover, a detailed analysis of topics such as diary writing, matrophobia, narration, and intertextuality was carried out and it was concluded that these topics developed the theme of feminist metafiction. In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to analyze the work by using some techniques such as women's diaries, matrophobia, narration, intertextuality in terms of feminism and metafiction. So, this study has revealed that *The Seven Sisters*, which is far from being a chick lit, is a feminist metafiction and *vollendungsroman* genre.

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