

**Focusing on Identity and Language in Timberlake  
Wertenbaker's plays *The Grace of Mary Traverse*  
and *The Love of The Nightingale***

التركيز على الهوية واللغة في مسرحيتي تيمبرلك ويرتباكر

“ذا جريس اوف ماري ترافيرس و ذا لف اوف ذا نايتنكل”

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**June, 2020**

## Authorization

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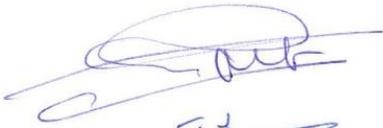
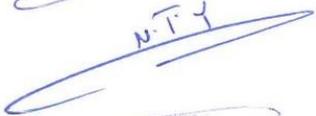
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## Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis entitled “**Focusing on Identity and Language in Timberlake Wertenbaker’s plays *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale***”, was successfully defended and approved on 13 / June / 2020.

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## **Dedication**

To my family, my wife, my son and my daughter, I dedicated this work

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**Focusing on Identity and Language in Timberlake Wertenbaker's plays*****The Grace of Mary Traverse and The Love of The Nightingale.*****Prepared by****Mohammed Majid Jebur Jebur****Supervised by****Dr. Mohammed Mahameed****Abstract**

This study aims at analyzing two selected plays, *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985) and *The Love of The Nightingale* (1988), of the contemporary British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker. It analyzes and discusses Wertenbaker's focus on two crucial issues, language and female identity, in the aforementioned plays. Furthermore, the study investigates the types of violence that Wertenbaker presents in the selective plays. To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher choose two famous plays of Wertenbaker that deal with language and female identity related issues. Results of the study reveal that the playwright has a real deep awareness in both language matters and female identity. Moreover, the results show that Wertenbaker present the female identity as corrupted, suppressed, and oppressed. In addition, the results clarify that there are two obvious types of violence, physical and psychological, and they are vividly presented in the two plays.

**Keywords: Identity, Language, *the Love of the Nightingale, the Grace of Mary Traverse***

# التركيز على الهوية واللغة في مسرحيتي تيمبرلك وبرتتباكر "ذا جريس اوف ماري ترافيرس وذا لف اوف ذا نايتنكل"

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الملخص

هدفت الدراسة الى تحليل مسرحيتين للكاتبة البريطانية المعاصرة تيمبرلك وبرتتباكر ذا لف اوف ذي نايتنكل وذي كريس اوف ماري ترافيرس. حللت وناقشت الدراسة تركيز وبرتتباكر على اللغة وهوية المرأة في المسرحيتين اللتا ذكرتا آنفا. اضافة الى ذلك بحثت الدراسة عن انواع العنف الذي عكسته وبرتتباكر في المسرحيتين. ومن اجل تحقيق اهداف الدراسة، قام الباحث باختيار مسرحيتين من أبرز مسرحيات الكاتبة والتي تضمنت معالجة موضوعي اللغة وهوية المرأة فيهما. انّ نتائج الدراسة اثبتت بان الكاتبة لديها وعي حقيقي في قضايا اللغة وهوية المرأة. وبينت النتائج كذلك بان وبرتتباكر مثلت هوية المرأة كهوية مظتهدة، مفسدة ومسيطر عليها. ووضحت النتائج انّ المسرحيتين احتوت على نوعين بارزين من العنف وهما العنف الجسدي والعنف النفسي واللذان أبرزوا بوضوح في المسرحيتين.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الهوية، اللغة، ذا كريس اوف ماري ترافيرس، ذا لف اوف ذي نايتنكل.

## Chapter One

### 1.0 Introduction

Since the end of the 1980s, which witnessed the great success of Wertebaker's theatre with her plays such as *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985), *The Love of The Nightingale* (1988), *Our Country's Good* (1988), *Three Birds Alighting on a Field* (1991), *The Break of Day* (1995) and *The Line* (2009), Wertebaker shows her powerful energies with a focus on and an investigation of two important issues; language and identity. The focus on language, as one of her most attention, is obviously reflected in her characters' self-consciousness about words. In the case of identity, Wertebaker offers a forceful investigation of the constructed identity and its nature in each of her plays. As a result, she offers a depiction of her main characters destroyed attempt to create their own sexual and racial identity. Therefore, Wertebaker's preoccupation with language and the difficulty in categorizing identity generally calls scholars' attention to these two most evident key aspects of Timberlake Wertebaker.

Nevertheless, it was not by chance that these two key aspects occupied a great deal of Wertebaker's plays. In fact, they are linked to a number of factors. As a child, Wertebaker primarily spoke Basque and French because she spent her childhood years in the Basque country (she was born to American parents and English become her dominant language when she returned to her birthplace of New York as a teenager). This incident helped her witness the French Government policies in replacing and suppressing the Basque language. Such experience with linguistic discrimination of the French helped her recognize the connections between language and power. Her second attention comes as a result of witnessing violence against women and according to her own interest in female corruption.

## **Timberlake Wertenbaker**

Wertenbaker was born in New York in 1940s. She is a daughter of a foreign correspondent for TIME magazine Charles Wertenbaker and to a journalist Lael Tucker. Her parents, shortly after Timberlake's birth, returned to work in France. In the Basque region of France, the family lived in a small fishing village called Ciboure. At the age of four, she began to read in French and spoke little Basque. However, she initially learnt to read and write in English. Timberlake, since she lived in the Basque, was truly affected by the political situation of the Basque people. She witnessed the oppression of the French government over the Basque culture and language: "The threat of the loss of language is one of the greatest threats. I grew up in the Basque country of France where the language was systematically eroded and destroyed so I feel very strongly about language." (*The Theatre of Timberlake*, P.8) Charles, Timberlake's father, died of cancer in 1955. As a result, her family decided to move back to New York. However, Timberlake, at her first experience, found that American life is terrible. She was not interested in her relocation to America. She was not comfortable: "I felt ill at ease in America with its brave, male, woodsman prose." (*The Theatre of Timberlake*, P.9)

As a literary figure, Timberlake is considered as one of the most significant woman dramatists in contemporary British theatre. In the literary canon, Timberlake is always placed next to Caryl Churchill. She covers a period of more than twenty-five years in her dramatic career. Her theatre discusses a variety of subjects. She established a small fringe company in Greece and her earlier writings were for children. Then, as a resident writer, she began to work for the Royal Court Theatre during the season of 1984-1985. At this stage of her career, Timberlake produced most of her notable plays. Thus, her reputation as a dramatist increases as Carlson states that Wertenbaker emerged as "one of several women playwrights, who, after beginning her work on the radical fringe, has found herself courted by more high-profile

theatres” (1993, P.286). As a dramatist, Timberlake received many awards for the plays that she wrote. She received many awards such as The Plays and Players Most Promising Playwright Award (1985) for *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, For *The Love of The Nightingale*, Wertebaker received the Eileen Anderson Central Television Drama Award (1989), and The London Critics’ Circle Award (1991), the Writer’s Guild Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize (1992) for *Best West End Play*.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Wertebaker is interested in female and language related issues. In most of her writing career, Wertebaker is preoccupied with women i.e. she represents corruption, cruelty, and political manipulation against them. She also shows male and female power struggles. So that Wertebaker, in each of her plays, questions the male power and control over women and it is, therefore, considered to be one of her main and most significant concerns of her dramaturgy. Beside female issues, Wertebaker is interested in language matters which come as a result of her cultural diversity which helps her be sensitive to the importance of language in defining a culture. Thus, Wertebaker’s two most famous plays *The Grace of Mary Travers* and *The Love of The Nightingale* are written to challenge and limitations that are imposed whether on female or a whole culture. The two plays have the playwright’s concern about dislocation, exile, the power of language, and the nature of the theater. The first aforementioned play is, in fact, written to react and represent how women are controlled, dominated, violated, and restricted. The second mentioned play has a great focus on language. As a result, this study aims at investigating of how Wertebaker depicts, tackles and reflects the above mentioned female and language related issues in her two plays *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale*.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many of Wertenbaker's plays, especially those which are written between 1980 and 1985, deal vividly with women's suffering and the significance of language. These plays adopt either historical or mythical frames. However, all of them are written to discuss issues of contemporary relevance in the everyday experience. Wertenbaker portrays women as victims of patriarchal society i.e. they are psychologically, sexually, and physically violated. Moreover, she draws attention to the significance of language among human cultures. Therefore, this study aims at exploring how Wertenbaker presents her women characters as restricted, controlled, and violated in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and to what extent she focuses on language in *The Love of The Nightingale*.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyze Wertenbaker's plays *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale*.
2. To explore Wertenbaker's interest in language.
3. To analyze how Wertenbaker focuses on language and female identity in her two selected plays.

## 1.4 Questions of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does Wertenbaker focus on language in *The Love of The Nightingale*?
2. How does Wertenbaker present female identity in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*?
3. What types of violence does Wertenbaker present in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale*?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

Timberlake Wertenbaker is one of the most well-known contemporary British playwrights. However, conducted studies related to her plays are quite few. Most of the studies are academic journalistic papers and they deal with themes and topics that are different from the current study. Thus, the significance of this study is connected with two reasons. First, it investigates two important key aspects in Wertenbaker's plays; language and female identity. Second, it studies how Wertenbaker reflects her interest in ways language and identity shape human being.

## 1.6 Limits of the Study

The study is limited to examine language and identity in Timberlake Wertenbaker's plays *The Grace of Mary Travers* and *The Love of The Nightingale*.

## 1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted in the second semester of 2019-2020

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

**Identity:** refers to the definition of an individual according to his behavioral and personal characteristics. It is also considered as one's self-concept within a certain group of people. Identity is regarded as one of the processes that is used to categorize people and groups of a specific society. The social psychologists Brown, Turner, and Tajfel (1981) argue that people depend on the individual basis in order to define themselves in a particular group. People's psychological functioning, behavioral outcomes, and perceptual are determined by the social determinant. Therefore, it could be said that people often tend to define themselves according to the features of the group that they live in. Thus, identity is used as a process of categorizing groups and people in a specific society.

(Richard, <https://www.questia.com/library/psychology/social-psychology/social-identity>).

Identity is defined as “one’s conception or definition of who one is (One’s identity) is largely composed of self-description in terms of the defining characteristics of social groups to which one belongs” (Abrams & Hogg, P.7).

**Language:** is a means or a medium of communication. It is considered to be one of the most common ways of identifying people and their culture. It is language that plays a crucial role in maintaining and establishing what is so called culture, including norms, traditions, habits, conventions, and practices of communities as well as individuals. Moreover, identities, attitudes, categories, values and belief structures are created and shared by individuals and communities through language. Although there are other ways of identifying people such as food, clothing and religion, language has more than one special role in identifying a person; first it organizes people’s thoughts and second it establishes social relations. (Keating, P.1). Language is used here not to refer to the assortment of words. It is used as an entity that link an individual to his identity, culture, traditions, music, beliefs, wisdom and norms. It is considered to be the carrier of history from one generation to another. No culture can sustain its existence without language. Language is able to deliver the history of an entire culture. (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/kahar-zalmay>)

***The Love of The Nightingale:*** is one of the most famous plays of Wertenbaker. The first performance of the play was in 1988 by the RSC, at the Other Places, Stratford. (Bush, 2013)

***The Grace of Mary Traverse:*** is a very well-known and successful play of Wertenbaker. The first performance of the play was at The Royal Court Theatre on 17 October 1985. (Bush, 2013)

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

Review of related literature of this chapter is constructed to tackle the conducted studies that have dealt with issues related to the selected topic of this thesis. It consists of the Empirical and of the theoretical literature of the conducted studies that are linked with Wertebaker's plays *The Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse*.

#### **2.0 Studies Related to Identity**

Philpott (1992) states that Wertebaker, in most of her plays, emphasizes the crisis of transcendence, subversion and displacement. He confirms that Wertebaker presents characters who struggle to assert their self-determined identity regardless ideological and cultural forces. He, in his study of *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, asserts that Wertebaker shows how the authority and the power of the patriarch are maintained and manifested through the oppression of groups especially the poor ones and women. In his study of *Mary Traverse*, Philpott comments "Wertebaker complicates the problems of gender by compounding and drawing links between problems of class-oppression and political corruption" (P.118).

Susan Carlson (2000) on language and identity in Wertebaker's plays, in *the Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights*, ensures that Timberlake Wertebaker has a consistency, which is found in all of her writings, about identity and its related problems and this consistency is marked by all characters of her plays who struggle through the crisis of identity. , Carlson explains that Timberlake examines the triumph, dilemmas and the problems of living in a world which suffers from shifting identities.

Carlson, on the focus of identity in Timberlake Wertenbaker's plays, asserts that Wertenbaker, in each of her plays, offers powerful and forceful investigations about the nature of identity and as a consequence she depicts how her major characters attempt to create their own sexual and racial identity. Moreover, she states that Wertenbaker's plays often mirror her focus on a woman who is displaced from the culture that she was born in. Therefore, in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, one of her most recognizable plays, Wertenbaker reflects the issues of identity. She also criticizes the class system which is able to freeze what is so called identity.

Nursen Gömceli (2009) indicates that Timberlake Wertenbaker's play tackles different subjects; yet they are considered to be rich with feminist debate such as gender related issues. Besides, these issues are tackled from a feminist point of view. He also asserts that Wertenbaker, through her plays, criticizes the moral order and the values of patriarchy for its double standards and hypocrisy.

Bozer (2011) argues that Wertenbaker, in her play *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, used a historical setting in order to present a current issue i.e. she reflects how women are still getting raped as if they were lived in an ancient age. Therefore, Wertenbaker in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* goes all the way back to the time of the eighteenth century as it is thought that women were objects of men's desire at that time. Bozer continues arguing that Wertenbaker in the mentioned play showed the political and social status of women. She asserts that *The Grace of Mary Traverse* "illustrates the venturesome quest of its daring heroine, Mary, for knowledge and experience, hence a voice of her own, and an identity." (P.70).

According to Gürüzar Öztürk (2012), in Wertenbaker's play *The Grace of May Traverse*, the construction of female identity is vividly shown. He agrees that the historical setting of the play is not chosen to focus solely on the past or the present, but it is chosen to portray

contemporary issues that are embedded in the play. He also asserts that the play offers the inequality of gender in a society of male as its main theme suggests. Öztürk points out that Wertebaker in the entire play tackled gender basis which differentiates between human and categorizes them as being masculine and feminine and as a consequence this categorizing system gives certain characteristics to each one of them. He adds that Wertebaker, through her play *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, appears to deal with the issue of identity.

Bush (2013) states that *The Grace of Mary Traverse* depicts a woman who seeks a definition in a patriarchal society. She adds that in the play, Wertebaker shows her interest in female corruption. She states that Wertebaker's plays, which are written from 1980 to 1985, deal with the problems that women face in the society. Bush says that Wertebaker in *Mary Traverse* presents a woman who seeks to redefine herself in a patriarchal society.

Emine Şentürk (2016) says that *The Grace of Mary Traverse* offers a representation of the role of women which is a multi-dimensional portrayal. This multi-dimensional one is presented by focusing on physical, psychological, political and social aspects. The characters of the play, he points out, challenged the idea of patriarchal society that women are inferior and men are superior. He also agrees that the setting of play which is related to the eighteenth century is a metaphorical one. Şentürk states that the education in the eighteenth century was something crucial for women i.e. it was used for the advantages of dancing, singing, sewing, embroidery, and drawing. Thus, Wertebaker, through her consideration of this perspective of education in the eighteenth century, attempted to depict her main character of the play *The Grace of Mary Traverse* as a woman who tries to acquire knowledge and education in order to be an example of the ideal lady who is respected in a culture dominated by male. In addition to this, education in the eighteenth century was unlimited for men, whereas, for women the field of education was limited and restricted to the private sphere.

## 2.1 Studies Related to Language

Philpott (1992), in the study of *The Love of The Nightingale*, announces that Wertebaker through the language of the two soldiers in the opening scene of the play shows the negative attitudes against women. He also adds that the use of language in the play reflects the way in which Wertebaker shows the role of men and women in the power domain. Wertebaker, Philpott states, clarifies the distinction among and between male and female through the use of the language in *The Love of The Nightingale*. Furthermore, he says that one of Wertebaker's main part in creating a character is language.

Park (1998) explains that Wertebaker's play, *The Love of The Nightingale*, is a play about the power of language, identity and gender: "Wertebaker has reworked the Philomela myth in order to explore the power of language, gender roles, and male and female identities." (P.55).

Mary Farrell (1999) in the study of *The Love of The Nightingale* believes that the play is concerned with voice and language. She asserts that Wertebaker presents the idea that the loss of words means the loss of one's self and the loss of existence. Through Philomele's myth Wertebaker shows how language means to be a human and to lose language is to lose humanity.

Carlson (2000) generally declares that Wertebaker's plays are mostly written with a focus on two crucial issues; attention to language and investigations of identity. Wertebaker's play *The Love of The Nightingale* is considered to be one of her most great examples of the treatment and the use of language. The play explains that the loss of language results in losing the power and control. "Wertebaker offers a relentless examination of the ways in which language controls and is controlled." (P.136). This focus of language comes as a result of Wertebaker's self-conscious which she borrowed from the Greek literary tradition. In addition, Wertebaker

in *The Love of The Nightingale* sets out the ways of how the language controls and is controlled. Many of Wertebaker's characters are portrayed to have a high sensitivity to language issues and these issues are represented powerfully in the play. Carlson also states that the play makes the audience to think carefully about the assumption they have about power, gender and language. She continues saying that the play displays how the loss of language results in the loss of both power and control. She states that "*The Love of The Nightingale* is a linguistically sensuous play in which the women of the Philomele myth search for a voice" (P.136). She expresses that language, in all of Wertebaker's plays, is not about expressing ideas; however, it refers to human oppression and freedom. She considers that "language alertness" is one of the main theme of *The Love of The Nightingale*.

Ponti (2005) believes that Wertebaker's interest in language and its importance can be found in most of her works. She also clarifies that such interest is often linked to her main characters who in fact search for identity and who want to acquire a position in a society. Ponti says that Wertebaker's concern about language is related to the fact that she lives in different countries and learns about different cultures.

Bush (2009) comments that Wertebaker's plays represent her engagement with the themes of both identity and language formation. Moreover, Bush argues that Wertebaker's concern with language and identity is due to their critical role in people's culture.

In the study of Wertebaker's play, Bush explains that *The Love of The Nightingale* cannot be read only from one-dimensional reading because this one-dimensional reading has misled many academic studies since they consider the play is only about the conflict of sexes. In fact, it is a play about the violence which spreads in societies. She continues saying that Wertebaker

asserted, in her play *The Love of The Nightingale*, the fact that the occupation of one's language can be more dangerous to identity than the physical violence itself.

Gömceli (2009), in his study of Wertebaker's play *The Love of The Nightingale*, explains that the play shows how women, who refuse to give up to patriarchal authority, get violated. He also ensures that the playwright commented on such violation from a feminist perspective which is a pessimistic one. Moreover, the playwright considers male hypocrisy and desire are the reasons behind such violence. Although Wertebaker's play *The Love of the Nightingale* discusses the women silencing and oppression by the patriarchy, the play tackles other themes such as adultery, the ill use of power, the desire for revenge, the decay of moral values, displacement, and alienation.

Shih (2010) in his analysis of Wertebaker's play, *The Love of The Nightingale*, believes that through the revision of the Greek myth, Wertebaker does emphasize two important things. First, she emphasizes how language is important and second she emphasizes the power of the theatre and its performance. He asserts that drawing on a Greek myth, Wertebaker gives her two female characters voices; however, they were silenced in the old myth and treated as the other. "Female characters in myth or literary works are usually silent and voiceless, but Wertebaker's Philomele is talkative and sensitive to language. Philomele uses language to express her subjectivity and controls her situation." (Shih, P.205).

In case of language in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, Öztürk (2012) states that Mary's language in the play reflects her symbolic sequestration in both her life and her language since she is over controlled by her father's rules. The play shows how women do not have the ability to express and represent themselves with masculine words. Thus, Öztürk agrees that

Wertenbaker, through her main character Mary, represented how women's language is totally dominated and controlled by men.

Massie (2017) in the investigation of both *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale* ensures that the two plays reflect Worthenbaker's emphasis on language. Massie continues saying that Worthenbaker shows how language means power and the loss of it means the loss of power. *The Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* "display Worthenbaker's characteristic concern with language as a form of power and a tool of oppression." (P.26).

In the study of *The Love of The Nightingale* (2015), Wu Yan states that Worthenbaker offers the problem of language loss and the suffering of women in the society. Yan declares that Worthenbaker reflects the problem of language loss by offering several unspeakable behaviors in the play. He also asserts that "Worthenbaker reshapes the stereotype image of silenced women to be the people who are aware of their language and emotion." (P.1). Moreover, Yan announces that Worthenbaker gives an image of the women who are forbidden to express themselves and silenced to show their emotions. Therefore, Worthenbaker, he asserts, has the focus of identity and language in most of her plays.

Midhin (2016), in his study of Timberlake Worthenbaker's most famous plays, expresses that Worthenbaker, in *The Love of The Nightingale*, uses the power of myth in order to present the issues of silencing and violence against women. He also considers such themes to be pertinent in *The Love of The Nightingale*.

All in all, the current study is distinguished from the previous studies due to a number of factors. Firstly, it focuses on two different plays of the same playwright which are *the Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse*. Secondly, most of the previous studies are

conducted with a different investigation of Wertenbaker's tackled themes. Thirdly, most of the conducted studies are Academic papers which have analyzed the plays generally. Fourthly, some books investigate language and identity in Wertenbaker's plays; yet their focus is general and of different plays. Thus, the study is not like the previous studies since it aims at investigating language in *The Love of The Nightingale* and identity in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and.

## Chapter Three

### 3.0 Methodology of the Study

The study depends on the descriptive analytical methodology. Theories of feminism are used to deploy the selected methodology. The descriptive analytical methodology is written in an attempt to examine the two mentioned plays of the British playwright Wertebaker in three steps. Firstly, it examines Wertebaker's reflection of women identity in contemporary patriarchal society in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*. Secondly, it investigates to what extent Wertebaker focuses on Language in *The Love of The Nightingale*. Thirdly, it explains the types of violence that Wertebaker sheds the light on in her plays.

### 3.1 Feminist Theories

It is one of the literary theories that are used in analyzing a work of literature. The roots of feminism theory go all the ways back to the ancient times of the Greeks. In fact, the feminist movement can be classified into a variety of theories. However, Feminist theories attempt to break up with the traditional idea that father is the head of the family and to challenge the society which is built on masculine authority. The feminist theories members believe that literature is one of the best tools that could be exploited to reflect the patriarchal society. They assert that literature has a crucial role in changing the social attitudes toward women. Thus, the theories appear to assert that all people (men and women) should be socially, politically, and economically equal. However, the present-day feminist critics ensure that the discrimination between male and female still exist not only in the workplace, home, and in the government but also in society as a whole. (Abrams & Harpham, 2014).

The term feminism is used to refer to a cultural, political, and economic movement which aimed at achieving equality between male and female and at establishing legal protection for female. Feminist movement consists of both sociological and political theories and

philosophies that concerned with the issues of gender difference. In fact, the history of feminism is often classified into three waves. The first one was in the nineteenth and early twentieth. The most famous leaders of this wave are Mary Wollstonecraft, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, and Emmeline Pankhurst. The second wave took place in 1960s. Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer and Bell Hooks (Gloria Jean Watkins) are considered to be the most well-known feminists of the second wave. The third one extends from 1990s up to the present and it has Naomi Wolf, Oprah Winfrey, Madonna, Emma Watson, and Malala Yousafzai as its major leaders.

Generally speaking, all feminist theories seek to call for equality not in a specific field but in all the types of fields that a human can access. However, they are varied and distinctive. They can be classified into more than one theory and each theory has its own aims.

Liberal feminism states that women's oppression is related to the fact that they are unable to access social, legal, economic and political institutions. Therefore, women need to have an access to such institution in order to call for their rights. Its main goal is to achieve gender equality in both public sphere, such as equal pay, better working conditions, and ending job sex segregation, and private sphere.

Radical feminism (1960) calls for a new arrangement of the society in which male supremacy should be eliminated. It seeks to warn the society about raping issues and to stop objectifying women's bodies. It attempts to make the society conscious about the violence that women face.

Marxist and Socialist feminists (1960s) indicate that women are exploited in the field of work i.e. they get paid less than men; however, they both do the same work. They explain that

male supremacy is generated by capitalism, therefore, to end such oppression; capitalism should be ended.

Socialist feminists claim that women can acquire their liberation by working. Women should be accepted by the society as men. It explains that work helps female end the cultural and economic oppression which is practiced against women.

The psychoanalytical feminism uses Freudian theories in order to correct the male bias in psychoanalytical way. It claims that men have an inherent psychological need to subjugate women. It believes that the childhood stage has a great effect on women's own psychos. (Jones & Budig, 2008)

### **3.2 Samples of the Study**

The sample of the study consists of two selected plays, *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985) and *The Love of The Nightingale* (1988), by the contemporary British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker.

### **3.3 Procedures of the Study**

1. Reading the original texts of *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985) and *The Love of The Nightingale* (1988).
2. Reading the previous studies that are related to the main topics of the study.
3. Reviewing the theoretical literature.
4. Discussing and analyzing the topics of the study.
5. Drawing conclusion and recommendations.
6. Writing the study and its references according to the APA style.

## Chapter Four

### Discussion and Analysis

Chapter four is analytically devoted to discuss and analyze Timberlake Wertenbaker's plays *The Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse*. As a matter of fact, there are two reasons behind picking out the two plays. Firstly, Wertenbaker is known with her concern with identity and language. Secondly, the two selected plays are considered to be two of the most famous plays that reflect Wertenbaker's focus on language and female identity related issues. Thus, this chapter discusses and analyzes how Wertenbaker presents female identity in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and how she reflects her interest in language in *The Love of The Nightingale*.

#### **4.0 Focusing on Female Identity in the Grace of Mary Traverse**

*The Grace of Mary Traverse*, which is written by Timberlake Wertenbaker, is set in the eighteenth century. The first production of the play was at The Royal court Theatre on 17 October 1985 with the following characters:

*Mary Traverse, Giles Traverse, Mrs. Temptwell, Lord Gordon, Old Woman, Sophie, Mr. Manners, Boy, Mr. Hardlong, Lord Exrake, Robert, Old Woman, Jack, Guard, Spy, Locksmith, and Man.*

*The Grace of Mary Traverse* is one of the most well-received and successful plays of Timberlake Wertenbaker. It tells the story of a wealthy young girl named Mary who attempts to break the constraints of gender and to obtain experience, power, and freedom in the society of 1780s which is dominated by male. In addition, she tries to create a new world in which individuals are free and equal. The setting of the play is historical which is chosen for a purpose. Wertenbaker intends to portray the themes and characters by not focusing either on the present

or the past. “Although this play is set in the eighteenth century, it is not a historical play” (*The theatre of Timberlake Wertebaker*, P.57). She continues saying that “All my characters are my own invention and whenever I have used historical events such as the Gordon Riots I have taken great freedom with reported fact. I found the eighteenth century a valid metaphor, and I was concerned to free people of the play from contemporary preoccupations.” (*The Theatre of Timberlake Wertebaker*, P.57).

Cousin clarifies that the British playwright Wertebaker partly uses the beauty of the past in order to explore the present.

Mary Traverse is the central character of the play. She is the daughter of a wealthy 18<sup>th</sup> century merchant named Giles Traverse. She was born into a life of privilege in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Mary has no many options i.e. she has to follow her father’s directions and she must get married to a socially prominent man. Although she is not allowed to step into the outside world, she struggles to construct her own identity. The play explores how Mary tries to get power, knowledge, experience, liberation, and identity in a world of male in which she was born in. “ Wertebaker shows how Mary Traverse’s hunger for knowledge and experience forces her to confront restrictive institutional structures of family, class, and gender.” (*The Theatre of Timberlake Wertebaker*, P.142). Mary is a representative figure of women who are oppressed and restricted through sexuality, motherhood, marriage and domesticity in the patriarchal society.

The play opens with a conversation between Mary and her father. He appears to teach her how to follow that type of an ideal conversation. However, she is in a conflict. Her heart tells her to follow her father’s rules. But her mind orders her to go outside. She yearns to explore the world that is completely out of her touch. She decides to follow her eagerness and desires

of being outside. Mary begs Mrs. Temptwell, the family's housekeeper, to take her into London streets to see the life beyond her father's house. Mary realizes that London streets are more attractive than her father's house. However, the outside world is often violent, masculine and decidedly hostile against women. One of her first experiences is that Mary witnesses a peasant young girl, named Sophie, gets raped by Lord Gordon, who is a representative of power, through raising her skirts with his sword and sexually violating her. Mary becomes thirsty for more knowledge, therefore, she makes a contract with Mrs. Temptwell in that she lives with the servant woman and never returns to her father's house. As a result, Mary enters the world which is dangerous and where she frequently encounters violence and sexuality. With the passage of time, Mary becomes more and more familiar with the world and she learns more about the oppressive conditions that women and working class citizen face. She begins to seek ways to get rid of such systems which produce these unfair conditions. However, her attempts to change, dismantle, and subvert the systems result in undesired consequences. Instead of equality and good treatment for women, Mary herself commits violence against women. Moreover, her desire for revolution puts an end to many middle class citizens' life and creates suffering to the rest.

Wertebaker deals with the female identity related issues throughout the play. She categorizes human beings according to gender basis. She gives each category certain characteristics in that male are superior and female are inferior. With such notion of male and female, men hold subject position that controls and determines the lifestyle, position, attitudes and behavior of women who are in fact hold object position. In act one scene one of the play, both Mary and her father, Giles, are sitting in "the drawing room of a house in the City of London" (P.59). Giles Traverse is watching his daughter Mary while she is acquiring the manners of how to talk with a man. She "sits elegantly, facing an empty chair. She talks to the

chair with animation.” (P.59). She imagines a man sitting on the chair and the only subject she is supposed to talk about is nature “Nature, my lord. (*Pause.*) It was here all the time and we’ve only just discovered it.” (P.59). Mary’s words reflect the fact that women are expected to talk about simple and quite unnecessary things such as the widespread of nature. They are not allowed to talk about their wishes, ideas, dreams, likes and dislikes and even their opinions which are considered to be a traditional part of women’s exchange. The scene describes Mary’s confined and domesticated existence. It also portrays her cultural and socio-economic isolation. Her speech and behavior is supervised by her merchant father, Gilles. Phillpott comments on the discourse between Mary and her father by saying that Wertenbaker “shows Mary’s propensity to divert from her cultivated feminine-passive line of behavior in her repeated expressions of curiosity and desire to see and experience the world outside her father’s home.” (P.49).

**MARY:** [to empty chair] You visited the salt mines? Ah, to hover over the depths in a basket and then to plunge deep into the earth, into its very bowels.

**GILES:** No, no, my dear, do not mention bowels. Especially after dinner.

**MARY:** To have no more than a fragile rope between oneself and utter destruction. How thrilling!

**GILES:** No, Mary. It shakes your frame with terror and you begin to faint.

**MARY:** I wouldn’t faint, Papa. I’d love to visit a salt mine. (PP.59-60).

Mary’s manners and words, as it is mentioned earlier, are totally managed by her father. There is no room for her expressions and she cannot say her desires since she is an oppressed woman.

**GILES:** You are here not to express your desires but to make conversation.

**MARY:** Can desire not be part of a conversation?

**GILES:** No. To be agreeable, a young woman must make the other person say interesting things. (P.60).

Carlson states that the language that Mary speaks is supervised and determined by the patriarchy. It is obvious that Mary's father monitors her words, conduct, and gesture. He directs and guides her to be an ideal young woman that he wants her to be. In addition, he wants to shape her identity according to the way he designs.

Another oppressed issue, which is considered to be crucial for women from gender perspective is education. Education was used for the merits of dancing, singing, drawing, cooking, sewing, and embroidery. It was not for occupational or intellectual improvement. The educational perspective in the eighteenth century is depicted in Wertenbaker's main character's case Mary. Mary's education is limited. Giles Traverse does not allow her to study the field that she wants. Instead, he teaches her how to act, speak, and walk as well as how to be a proper listener. "But Papa, you won't let me study politics. And I'd so like to." (P.61). Even though her father is a politician, who is supposed to be educated enough, she has no right to choose the field of the study. She is not given the same opportunities as that of men. Although Mary comes from upper-class family, she is not free to choose her educational field simply because she is a woman. The scene portrays the atmosphere of Giles' house and father-daughter relationship. It reveals the way in which Mary is taught privately instead of being taught in an institution.

Mary has an appropriate life in her father's house. She is a daughter of a merchant and politician. She represents the upper-class who is supposed to have much freedom than the working class. Wallby states that "private model of patriarchy [...] was especially applied to middle-class women to a much greater extent than working class women" (PP.79-80). However, her father believes that his house is the ideal place for her. He is afraid of the idea that people might think Mary spends some time out of the house. Mary is confined into the

domestic sphere by her father. When she tells him that she sees coaches out of her window, Giles endeavors to confirm her that she had better not to be curious about the outer world.

**MARY:** I look out of the window and see coaches with your name?

**GILES:** Why gape out of the window when I've given you so much to see in the house? (P.61).

The window represents a barrier between Mary and the outside world. It is one of the barriers that are established by her oppressive father. She is not authorized to go out because the boundaries of her father; however, she is inquisitive to discover the outer world and to do some activities like going to a theatre and see a play.

**MARY:** Wouldn't I do better if I saw a little more of the world?

**GILES:** I'm afraid that's not possible. (P.61).

Giles prevents her again. This dialogue between Mary and her father presents Giles' dominant influence on his daughter. Although it is normal and plain, it gives a vivid image of woman-man role in the eighteenth century. When her father left the room, Mary starts walking alone practicing the manners that she has learnt from her teachers.

It was the dolls who gave me my first lesson. No well-made doll, silk-limbed, Satin-clothed, leaves an imprint. As a child I lay still and believed their weightlessness mine. Awkward later to discover I grew, weighted. Best not to move very much. But nature was implacable. More flesh, more weight. Embarrassment all around. So the teachers came. Air, they said. Air? Air... Invisible. Learn to drop a fan and wait. When that is perfected, you may move, slightly, from the waist only (PP.62-63).

Philpott comments on Mary's monologue by stating that "her self-parodying monologue reveals the total repression of human, let alone sexual, physiology in order to conform to the ideal of feminine grace espoused by patriarchal ideology." (P.50). The education that she receives from the tutors is so restricted to the imitation of perfect women. She is not taught something that helps her improve and develop her mind. She is supervised to follow and learn

only manners. She should be submitted to the roles that she has to play. Examining the manners of ideal women, Mary feels bored with such activities. Yet, she has to perfect her conduct.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Temptwell enters the scene of act one. She comes to the room as Mary commands her. Mrs. Temptwell is Mary's family servant for twenty five years. She is a woman from the working-class. As she enters, a controversial conversation occurs between the owner and the servant. Mary and the servant woman appear to have an argument about the outer world. Mrs. Temptwell's speech motivates Mary to have a desire to know and understand the outside. However, Mary believes there is nothing interesting in the streets when she passes through by her carriage. Mary's mother, as the servant reports, also wanted to go outside and discover the world but unfortunately she could not since she was also under the control of her husband Mr. Giles.

**MRS TEMPTWELL:** Your mother wanted to go out once in her life, but she died before we could manage it. I felt sorry she missed that one little pleasure.

**MARY:** Papa wouldn't have been pleased.

**MRS TEMPTWELL:** The master doesn't see everything.

**MARY:** What's so different out there? When I ride in my carriage I see nothing of interest.

**MRS TEMPTWELL:** That's because the street have to be emptied to make way for your carriage. It's different on foot. Very different. (PP.64-65).

Philpott comments on the relation between Mary and the servant woman by stating that their relation is regarded as a complex one. He justifies his opinion by saying that Mary has both class and economic power over the servant. Yet, the servant has a deceitful controlling power over Mary. Mrs. Temptwell's speech refers to two things. Firstly, it displays the miserable life inside Giles' house. The house which is supposed to be comfortable for women as it belongs to a merchant. Yet, Mrs. Temptwell feels sorry about Mary's mother since she

could not enjoy being outside. Secondly, it shows the discrimination between the classes. The streets should be emptied when the upper-classes pass through. Mary belongs to an upper class, she cannot experience or walk outside. She should be in a carriage behind a windowpane when she passes the streets. The speech of the servant woman drives Mary to take an action. She determines to challenge her curiosity and to start forming her own self-identity. “hunger for knowledge and experience forces her to confront restrictive institutional structures of family, class, and gender” (Carlson, 2000, P.142). Carlson comments on Wertebaker’s idea of Mary’s quest for knowledge by saying that “In *Mary Traverse*, Wertebaker takes the Faustian journey and converts it from an isolating, individual nightmare into a string of bizarre episodes that the main character, Mary, shares with her maid Sophie and her Mephistophelian guide, Mrs. Temptwell.” (Carlson, 1991, P.201).

**MARY:** You’ll take me out there. Yes. Into the streets. I’ll glitter with knowledge.

**MRS.TEMPTWELL:** I didn’t, miss Mary, I never did.

**MARY:** I’ve decided, Mrs. Temptwell, we’re going out.

**MARY:** I’ll pay you. (P.65)

Cousin expresses that Mary is convinced by the servant woman to leave the house, which looks like a prison, and to explore London streets which is out of her touch. Her curiosity, passion for knowledge and the ambition make her take her final decision. She wants to be out even if she pays more money for her woman servant. Such actions indicate how Mary is really in need to be out of her house.

In Act two scene three, Mary is in London streets. She finds herself in an environment which is full of malicious men who seek to exploit and objectify women as much as they could. Lord Gordon is the first man that Mary meets in the streets. He attempts to attract Mary’s

attention. But, Mary disregards him. “How dare someone like you ignore me? You!” (Lord Gordon to Mary, P.67). When he gets ignored, Lord Gordon takes out his sword in order to frighten Mary. “*He takes out his sword*” (P.68). On the top of that, Lord Gordon decides to rape Mary in order to impose his sexual and masculine power. Mrs. Temptwell stays powerless saying that “This is the world.” (P.68). In the meantime, the poor peasant girl Sophie enters and saves Mary from Gordon’s attack. She gets raped instead and in front of Mary’s eyes. These actions portray how men are powerful and how women are really powerless. Mrs. Temptwell’s statement about the world that they live in represents the ugliness, oppression, and submissive of their lives. Besides, it sheds the light on raping. It is just like a man’s weapon toward powerless women. Brownmiller states in *Against Our Will: Men, Women and rape* (1975):

Rape became not only a male prerogative, but man’s basic weapon of force against women, the principle agent of his will and her fear. His forcible entry into her body, despite her physical protestation and struggle, became the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being, the ultimate test of his superior strength, the triumph of his manhood. [...] It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimation by which *all men keep all women* in a state of fear.(P.14)

The first experience that Mary witnesses against women is raping. Mrs. Temptwell explains that raping is something familiar for working-class women. “Call for help, Mrs. Temptwell” (P.69) but the servant Mrs. Temptwell sees no point and she believes that Sophie “won’t mind.” Since “Virtue, like ancestors, is a luxury of the rich.” Lord Gordon, who is a self-described “man of stunning mediocrity” (P.69), rapes Sophie just because he wants to be observed by others. He uses his manhood in order to emphasize that men have superiority, power and dominance over women regardless of the class that she belongs to. In doing so, Lord Gordon breaks Sophie’s sense of identity. She realizes that she is powerless and thus she remains silent. Mary comments:

He stands her against the lamp-post, sword gleaming at her neck, she's quiet. Now the sword lifts up her skirts, no words between them, the sword is his voice and his will. He thrusts himself against her, sword in the air. He goes on and on. She has no expression on her face. He shudders. She's still. He turns away from her, tucks the sword away. I couldn't stop looking. (*Pause.*) It's not like the books. (P.69).

Mary is the narrator and the witness of the raping scene. Though Sophie saves her, Mary steps aside looking at the situation as if she is being taught something new; however, the scene is full of inhumanity, violence and oppression. She states that what she has read in the books is totally different. This ensures the fact that Mary has never been with life related experience before and she just has books related experience. Mary, here, delivers the idea that she gets out from an imprisonment and now she learns what life really is. She narrates the scene in a way of a narrator since she deals only with books. Wertebaker aims to clarify that the sexual oppression of women is found nowadays. In a conducted research of Cambridge University; the results indicate that "1500 women interviewed at Cambridge University had been victims of rape or attempted rape" (Bigrigg, 2004, P.167). Thus, Wertebaker attempts to create a connection between the past and the present.

Mary continues her quest for knowledge but now in a public domain, in a coffee house. Mary is an educated and upper class woman. However, she simply cannot enter a public coffee house. Inside the coffee house the eighteenth century distinguished figures sit, English and French such as Mr. Cyril Fielding, Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Hume, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Garrick, the Doctor, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Hogarth. Wertebaker names the most well-known literary and educated figures of the eighteenth century for a purpose. She, Wertebaker, wants to underline the patriarchal oppression and the universality of patriarchy that oppressed and suppressed the female presence and voice in artistic and intellectual fields throughout Europe in the eighteenth-century.

**BOY:** You can't come in.

**BOY:** Ladies wait outside.

**MRS TEMPTWELL:** Ask him why.

**BOY:** They don't like to be disturbed

**MARY:** I know how to talk.

**BOY:** They don't do ladies' talk.

**MARY:** what sex is wit?

**BOY:** It's a waste of time being kind to women. (PP.70-71).

The boy is the gatekeeper of the coffee house. He explains some characteristics of the men who are inside the coffee house. Mary, in addition to the superiority, starts observing the discrimination between male and female in the public domain. She observes the inequality of the society. Mary feels that she is displaced. She witnesses how much freedom men have in contrast with that of women.

I've seen them walk the streets without fear, stuff food into their mouths with no concern for their waists. I've seen them tear into skin without hesitation and litter the streets with their discarded actions. But I have no map to this world. I walk it as a foreigner and sense only danger. (P.71).

Mary gains her public related experiences. She now understands the social system she lives in. Men are free to do whatever they want even if it is a brutal act like raping. They do not care about the feelings, the needs, the dreams, and the wishes of women. She acquires unpleasant vision of the world that she always wonders about. However, she keeps her curiosity for more knowledge and quest. "What comes next, Mrs. Temptwell, what comes next?" (P.80).

As a result of the discrimination, the oppression, controlling, superiority and violence which she observes, Mary decides to leave her domestic world and joins the man world. She confidently appears to acquire her male-identification in the patriarchal space. "Mary is observed to have acquired male mannerisms which results in her feeling empowered just like men" (Bozer, P.72). She appears to act and behave like men in the social and public domain. The first male action she follows is to attend a cock fight which is regarded to be a manly

challenge as Lord Exrake's points out, "Ladies didn't have cocks in my day." (P.88). Mary, just like other men, considers her cock as a representative of the power that she gains: "Now my bird, fight for me, match my courage and my strength." (P.88). The second male action Mary follows is to acquire sexual knowledge i.e. she wants to be sexually educated. Wyllie clarifies that "Mary's odyssey is an exploration of essentially masculine exploitativeness" (P.43). In order to get herself sexually educated, she pays for Mr. Hardlong. Mary, for the second time pays money for knowledge. Obtaining some sexual manners, Mary feels a kind of great power. The sexual intercourse provides her with power for the first time. She states that sex and power are connected to each other. The same vision of Mrs. Lord Gordon. Such power makes her think about possessing others like Mr. Hardlong and Sophie. This represents the way in which men follow with women: "Mr. Hardlong, it is I who have the money. Will you come to me?" (P.89). She also attempts to seduce Sophie with her money. Money is a symbol of men's power. They use it for their purposes. Mary acts like men. Her actions portray the sexual abuse of men toward women. She herself becomes an exploiter of women. Her exploitation can be connected with Kate Millett's statement: "One of the chief effect of class within patriarchy is to set one women against another" (P.38). The weakness of female identity is the reason behind Mary's transformation that makes her follow male's behavior and actions. By this time, Mary is totally convinced that the society she lives in is built on the account of sex. Once she obtains power and knowledge, she turns to have negative and harsh attitudes against women especially those who are raped, violated, beaten, inferior, and not accepted in the coffee houses. Bozer states that the transformation of Mary is linked to that of Margaret Thatcher who ruled England from 1979 to 1983. Bozer states that "they are both manly in their conducts (Mary consciously refuses "turning female", [...] and Thatcher is widely known as the "Iron Lady" or Iron fist in a Velvet Glove") and unsupportive of her "sisters not caring to realize that the "power" of one woman is not effective in ameliorating the status of women in general"

(P.71). Toynbee also comments on the reference of Wertenbaker to Mrs. Thatcher, “Mrs. Thatcher is only a surrogate man. [...] She was not interested in being a woman—and she certainly had no particular policies for women” (P.34). As a result, Thatcher is not regarded as a representative of women even though she was the first female Prime Minister in the history of Britain. During her time, Mrs. Thatcher was surrounded only by men; which is as Mary Traverse’s. She finds herself encircled by male after tracing her curiosity for both knowledge and power.

Mary is fully acting and behaving like men. Harshness and bossiness asserted. Both Mrs. Temptwell and Sophie are having bad treatment by Mary. She starts violating her own account of sex. An old lady, who is hardly able to walk, is forced to race for Mary for the sake of money. But the old hag loses the race, so Mary abuses her; however, she is a member of her sex. Causing a loss of money, the old hag gets nothing for her effort and whipped as a kind of punishment in Mary’s opinion.

**OLD WOMAN:** Give me something.

**MARY:** There is no kindness.

**MARY:** The world is a dry place. (P.92).

Even though the Old Woman begs a mercy and kindness, Mary heartlessly beats her with her whip. “(*She takes the whip and beats her*)” (P.92). In her search for knowledge, experience, and power Mary transforms into a rough woman who violates and abuses members of her own sex. Kate Millett states that the reason behind Mary’s change is related to the distinction that is created by the patriarchy which leads to antagonism among women. Such transformation is connected to Wertenbaker’s central question “a question a lot of women face today: if they’re going to throw themselves into the world, the running of the world, which means knowledge and power, are they going to have to become as horrible as men.” (*The Theatre of Timberlake Wertenbaker*, P.92). Although she acquires knowledge and experience, Mary becomes

completely ignored by men. Mary no longer attracts men. However, with the observation of Sophie's attraction, Mary realizes that men are not interested in her. Sophie's silence and tranquility make men like her more than Mary. "Ah, Sophie, how sweet you are, I understand why they love you. Such peace, Shall we sleep?" (P.89) Wyllie comments on the difference between Sophie and Mary by stating that "by masculinizing herself [Mary] has excised female vulnerability from her persona, and so no longer appeals to the more predatory instincts of men. The more obviously vulnerable Sophie is constantly being preferred by men to Mary" (P.43). Sophie is functioned to be the foil of Mary in the play. She represents the eighteenth-century women. This lower-class peasant girl is doubly oppressed in the play, on account of gender and on account of class. Not only she gets abused by men, but also victimized by one of her own type of sex. Both Mary and other men prostitute Sophie. Wertebaker's emphasis on sexual abuse, which was common in the eighteenth century, is evident in the play. Sexual abuse is regarded as one of the biggest components of male domination over women. It happens due to the idea that men are supposedly higher in rank than women. It is sexuality which causes objectification and submission on the part of women. Lorber confirms:

Sexual exploitation and violence against women are also part of gender inequality in many other ways. [...] women are vulnerable to beatings, rape and murder [...] The bodies of girls are and women are used in sex work-pornography and prostitution. [...] they may be forced to bear children they do not want or to have abortions or be sterilized against their will. (*The Theatre of Timberlake Wertebaker*, P.6).

Beating, raping, violating, and murdering all of these issues result in the exploit of the female body as a commercial commodity. Regardless of their agreement, their bodies are regulated and controlled by abortion, delivery, or sterilization. Act two ends with Mary's behavior as that of men. She refuses the idea of acting like women. When Mr. Manners asks for his money, Mary refuses to beg him. "Burst into tears." (P.91). Mrs. Temptwell tells Mary to act like women and to shed her tears in order to be forgiven. But Mary refuses such tendency

of women and she asserts to continue following men behavior “What? Turn female now?” (P.91). The same behavior is followed when she meets her father after being away for a while. Both Mary and Giles meet in *Vauxhall Gardens*. But Mary pretends to be a whore and she covers her face. She plans to have a conversation with her father questioning him about his daughter. Then, Mary uncovers her face to her father. Giles, her father, does not react that much since he considers her to be dead.

**GILES:** I have no daughter.

**MARY:** My name is Mary Traverse. Your wife had little chance of fathering me elsewhere.

**GILES:** You’re a whore.

**MARY:** Is a daughter not a daughter when she’s a whore? Or can she not be your daughter? Which words are at war here: whore, daughter, my? I am a daughter, but not yours, I am your whore but not your daughter.

**GILES:** Why? I gave you everything.

**MARY:** Except experience.

**GILES:** You could have married a lord.

**MARY:** I said experience, not a pose. The world outside, all of it. This. (PP.97-98).

It is obvious that Mary is an argument with her father; however, she never used to have such argument before. She prioritizes experience more than everything her father allocates for her. Mary is a rebellion against her fear of Giles, her father. She vividly explains Giles’ supervision over her. Speaking with her father in a virile way reflects the power and experience that she earned about the outer world. “And when I try to explain you threaten me with a madhouse? How dare you?”(P.99). Mary is free, after being outside for a while, to have an argument with her father. She gains power and free herself from her father’s restrictions. “I forbid you to speak to me in that manner!” (P.99). “You have no power over me, Papa” (P.99). Their argument ends with Mary asking him for some amount of money. Giles accused her with madness. This reflects that a woman cannot ask for her simple rights. He wants her to get back to the old life. However, she refuses because of the oppression and the submissiveness that are

performed over her character. As the scene ends with Giles leaving, Wertebaker's focus is turned into Sophie, the foil of Mary. Sophie is a lower-class young woman who has been sexually abused. She has a weak personality unlike Mary, who acquires a strong one, and she belongs to the streets. Sophie represents the real image of lower-class women who are exploited, violated and oppressed by the patriarchy. Wertebaker focuses on two different women in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*. One is related to upper-class while the other is from a lower-class. Mary, when the play opens, is oppressed and controlled by her father, then she goes out to discover real experience and to build her own female identity. But as she witnesses the oppression of society, she decides to act manly. The case of Sophie is different. She has been sexually abused throughout her life. Moreover, she represents the miserable life of lower-class women. The image of these two different women, Mary and Sophie, proves the fact that whatever the class a woman belongs to, she is oppressed and controlled.

**SOPHIE:** Questions? Yes. How can I be less tired?

**MARY:** What do you feel for me? Hatred? Contempt? Don't be afraid, Sophie, answer.

**SOPHIE:** I don't have time to think the way you do. Please, Miss Mary, let me get you some wine.

**SOPHIE:** You find me on the streets. I had nothing.

**SOPHIE:** Sometimes I don't feel I'm there. It could be someone else. And I'm walking in the fields. So I don't mind much. My brother used to touch me. He was strong and I learned to make it not me. I was somewhere else. But when I want to, with Jack, I'm there. (P.105).

Sophie's responses reveal her misery and weakness. As a matter of fact, Sophie is not only abused by the society but also by her own brother. But, she gets a turning point in her life when she meets Jack, Sophie's beloved. Jack is the first person who gives Sophie some advice like how to shape her identity and how to use her mind. With his company, Sophie has a sense of identity because he is unlike other men who exploit women. Jack calls for equality between classes. Sophie believes in his nobility and honesty, so she inspires Mary about Jack's vision of the new world.

“Jack dreams of a new world.” (P.106). With Sophie’s words of the new world, Mary’s knowledge, ideas, and vision of the world are increased. Accordingly, Mary is stimulated to be much more familiar about Jack’s ideas and vision.

By the beginning of act two scene five, Wertebaker presents a conversation between Mary and Jack. Sophie introduces them to each other. Jack explains to Mary what is meant by the new world that he looks for. Getting inspired by his speech and ideas, Mary contrives to have power in the male-dominated world. But this time she knows what the real power is. She observed the oppression against women in the society. She understands what real freedom means. Nevertheless, she needs someone to guide her and to teach her what the world really is. She fails to express herself at the beginning since she is able to talk about nature only.

I can talk, Jack, but until now I had nothing to say. I understand what it is to need freedom. I thought it was something only I wanted, but now I know it is a longing in every human heart. I have watched freedom, beautiful freedom, hunted from every street and I know what it is to bang at the doors of tyranny. I could speak for you, Jack, if you taught me what to say. (P.107).

**JACK:** You wouldn’t understand about equality.

**MARY:** I know the humiliation of being denied equality, Jack, and that it is a dignity due to all, men and women, rich and poor.

**MARY:** I used to talk about nature. (P.107).

After these lines, Jack is convinced that Mary seriously realizes what is wrong with the society. Jack informs Mary that the government is responsible of the oppression and the misery life of people. That is why he looks forward to a new world. A world of freedom and equality. Therefore, Mary, Jack and Sophie decide to go to the parliament. “There, where the power sits. Parliament.” (P.108). In the meantime, the peasant young girl is observed to gain a voice. Yet, her voice is totally different from Mary’s voice. Sophie is the one who opens Mary’s eyes to the world. Her voice has a sense of wisdom i.e. she grows to be more articulate and self-confident. Furthermore, she is observed to have the ability to stand up and call for her rights.

With the opening of act two scene six, Mary and Jack are in front of the Parliament. “*In front of the House of Parliament. Jack and Mary try to get by the GUARD.*”(P.108). The guard of the Parliament does not allow Mary to come inside since she is a woman. “no petticoats in the House of Parliament.” (P.108). Mary elucidates her good intentions to the guard. She merely desires to be heard in order to ask for freedom and rights.

“Wouldn’t you like a world where everyone was free to choose their future?” (P.109). The guard replies: “Not much.” (P.109). With these words, it could be said that Mary has another turning point in her quest for experience. She realizes the right things she has to follow. Although some people do not think a change would occur, Mary keeps insisting on getting their rights back. Neither her father restrictions nor her manly behavior is what she dreams about. The equality in rights and freedom that Mary asks are for the sake of all the lower-class and the society as well. Mary’s turning point takes place when she hears the working-class shouting for the high price of the bread. She determines to support Jack, the leader of the working-class who looks for better conditions, with his vision of the new world. But, Mr. Manners, one of political figures who does not want a change to take place, unfortunately manipulates Mary. He easily satisfies Mary that the Catholics are one of the main responsible rulers of the corruption that spreads in the society. Mary is influenced by his words because of the lack of experience that she has about the society. She does not know who the real corruptors are. She, thus, shifts her focus from calling for equality among the classes of the society into targeting the Catholics.

**MR. MANNERS:** Tell Jack about the Catholics. Tell him how they stuff themselves with white bread on Sundays.

**MARY:** Ah, yes. They buy it all up and hoard it in their chapels, that’s why there’s none left for you.

**MR. MANNERS:** Tell Jack about the Pope.

**MARY:** He is the tyrant of tyrants. (P.116).

The rebellion against the Pope and the Catholics is referred to it as the Gordon Riots. But the Gordon Riots rebellion of Mary ends with destruction of thousands of people and hundreds of them die including Jack who is sentenced to death. Due to that, Mary feels disappointed about what happens. She states “I didn’t want it to be like this. Please believe me. I wanted something good. I had dreams.” (P.122). Although Mary has dreams for more power, experience and for leadership in the political world, they are shattered. Wertebaker’s portrayal of Mr. Manners, who has the real power, delivers the idea that in a patriarchal society changes would not take place since power is controlled by men who care for their own business only. Because of what happens to her through the quest for power and experience, Mary decides to kill her daughter, who is named Mary too. She tries to break the vicious cycle which women suffer from. But Sophie prevents her by drawing Mary’s attention from the evils of the male world to the wonders of life. The play ends with some words of the world uttered by Mary.

#### **4.1 The Love of the Nightingale**

*The Love of Nightingale* is one of the most well-known plays of Wertebaker. The first performance of the play was at the Royal Shakespeare Company at The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, on 28 October 1988 with the following characters including male and female chorus:

*First soldier, Second Soldier, Procne, Philomele, King Pandion, The queen, and Tereus.*

*Male Chorus and Female Chorus (Hero, Iris, June, Echo, and Helen).*

Wertebaker’s play *The Love of The Nightingale* is based on Sophocles’ lost play *Tereus*. The play is not only set in ancient Athens, but also it borrows some conventions from the Greek theatre like the chorus. The play, like Wertebaker’s most famous plays, such as *The Grace of*

*Mary Traverse* and *New Anatomies*, is about a woman who is dislocated from her homeland. It is about the Greek myth of Philomele. Philomele is the daughter of the king of Athens, Pandion. *The Love of The Nightingale* opens with a fight between two soldiers referring to the war in Athens. In the meantime, Philomele and Procne feel sad because Procne, Philomele's own sister, is going to get married and, thus, they will miss each other especially their conversations. Procne, according to her father's will, should get married to the king of Thrace, Tereus, who helps Athens in the war. Athens and Thrace are completely two different cultures whether in the use of language or traditions. When Procne leaves Athens, she feels isolated because she is unable to understand the Thracian culture and their use of language. Tereus suggests to bring Procne's sister, Philomele, from Athens to help Procne feel better and to fill the communication gap that she suffers from. On their voyage back to Thrace, Tereus falls in love with his sister-in-law Philomele. He determines to tell Philomele about his love. But, she rejects him. Philomele's rejection drives Tereus to rape her. After raping his sister-in-law, Tereus makes a decision. In order to keep Philomele silent, he cuts her tongue out. Moreover, he keeps her as a prisoner. Five years later, Philomele, to public what Tereus does, decides to use three big dolls because she has no tongue. Philomele exploits the Bacchic festival, one of the Thracian traditions. She acts out what happens to her in front of the attendees of the festival. Procne, as one of the attendance, realizes what happens to her sister. So, they decide to kill Itys, Procne's son by Tereus, as a way of revenge. Therefore, Tereus attempts to kill them both but he could not. At the end of the play, Philomele, Procne, and Tereus are transformed into three different birds. Philomele is into a nightingale, Procne is into a swallow, and Tereus is into a hoopoe.

## 4.2 Language in the Love of the Nightingale

In *The Love of The Nightingale*, like *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, Wertebaker shows a deep rooted concern in language and identity which are considered as two of the main themes of her plays. She depicts both a physical and psychological violence against women. From the very beginning of the play, Wertebaker presents the conflict of sexes which dominates *The Love of The Nightingale*. Wertebaker's emphasis in *The Love of The Nightingale*; however, is centered on the language i.e. she highlights women lost voices in a male-dominated culture and the significance of language among cultures and generations. Wertebaker's interest in language is connected to her experience that she obtained in living in the Basque where she witnessed the suppression of French government over the language and the culture of the Basque. She states: "The threat of the loss of language is one of the greatest threats. I grew up in the Basque country of France where the language was systematically eroded and destroyed so I feel very strongly about language." (*The theatre of Timberlake Wertebaker*, P.8). Thus, Wertebaker's awareness about the importance of language comes as a result of her experience of the significance of language in shaping cultures. She is fully aware about the negative effect of the loss of language. That is why she refuses her play, *The Love of The Nightingale*, to be analyzed as a play about women only: "although it has been interpreted as being about women, I was actually thinking of the violence that erupts in societies when they have been silenced for too long. Without language, brutality will triumph." (*Plays Ones*, P.34).

## 4.3 Focusing on language in The Love of The Nightingale

*The Love of The Nightingale* consists of two different cultures, Athenian and Thracian. Each culture has its own rituals and traditions. The Athenian culture is a civilized one. Although it has philosophers and plays, language is considered to be one of the most distinctive features of it. Dissimilarly, the Thracian culture is not civilized. It has no plays, no philosophers and it

has different usages of language as well. Yet the repressed Thrace has only the bloody festival which is called Bacchae. Procne left Athens after her marriage and lived in Thrace. She, therefore, misses her Athenian conventions especially her language: "Where have the words gone?" (P.6). She wonders. Although Procne speaks with women of Thrace, there is no mutual understanding among them: "The words are the same, but point to different things." (P.7). Procne explains that the way of expressing things are different in Thrace from Athens. Thracian truth, Hero said, is "full of darkness" (P.7) because of the repressive nature of Thracian society which is buried in silence. However, the Athenian belief of truth is totally the opposite. They do believe that happiness is found in truth and truth is both beautiful and good. They, Athenian, revel in truth through happiness. "I am an Athenian: I know the truth is found by logic and happiness lies in truth." (P.7). According to the differences in the nature of the Thrace, Procne starts missing her joy of using the words and her conversation with her sister, Philomele. She feels that such words and conversation give meaning to her life. Furthermore, she cannot accept or appreciate the Thracian festival, the Bacchae. In the same time, Thracian women fail to understand the Athenian words. With her displacement into different culture, Procne is silenced and her search for communication is in vain. As a result, Procne needs her sister in order to fill her communication gap and to find someone who shares with her the same ideas and thoughts. With such impossibility of communication and understanding, Procne gets herself confused. She wonders whether she is physically, emotionally and culturally Athens or Thracian. The power and the joy of language can prove her when the language is shared and understood by others. "How we talked. Our words played, caressed each other, our words were tossed lightly, a challenge to catch. Where is she now? Who shares those games with her? Or is she silent too?" (P.7). Procne cannot communicate even with her husband and her son since they use and follow the Thracian language and traditions. "I cannot talk to my husband. I have nothing to say to my son. I want her here." (P.7).

With the opening of scene five, Tereus is in Athens requesting the King Pandion to let Philomele join him to Thrace. Tereus, while he is in Athens, listens to Philomele's words about the play *Hippolytus*, which was acted in Athens. He admires the words and comments that Philomele utters about the play.

**PHILOMELE:** How beautiful to love like that! The strength of my limbs is melting away. Is that what you feel for Procne, Tereus?

**PHILOMELE:** When you love you want to imprison the one you love in your words, in your tenderness. (P.11).

Although Tereus tells Philomele about the nature of the Thracian culture, she insists on joining him because she knows the real value of words. Tereus: "We have no theatre or even Philosopher in Thrace, Philomele." Philomele: "I have to keep my word." (P.11).

In fact, Philomele's trip to Thrace is full of questions. Cousin states that, "*The Love of The Nightingale* is an interrogative play." (P.115). Philomele's questions clarify the freedom of speech. Michael Billington asserts that "true liberty depends on endless questioning and that speech is a symbol of freedom increasingly subject to sudden, arbitrary extinction." (P.19). The strong bonding of mutual understanding between Philomele and Procne is established by the questions and answers of the two sisters which they miss so much. Scene seven of the play begins with a lot of questions by Philomele to the captain of the ship. Such questions and answers bring Philomele and the captain to fall in love with each other. It is the understanding of language which brings them to fall in love. However, their love is destroyed by Tereus who feels jealous from the captain. He kills the captain of his ship. Tereus, for the second time, deprives Philomele from the enjoyment of speech.

**PHILOMELE:** Where are we now, Captain?

**PHILOMELE:** What is it called, Captain, what is it like? I would like to know about all these lands. You must tell me.

**PHILOMELE:** But surely you believe that beauty is truth and goodness as well. (P.15).

After killing the captain, Tereus begins to seduce Philomele to accept his love, but Philomele rejects him. Thus, Tereus rapes Philomele with no respect to her words which are powerless to him. At the first Philomele starts blaming herself, but then she comprehends that it is Tereus' own fault. She threatens him that she would declare what he did for her. Philomele's words frighten Tereus. He realizes the danger of her words if anyone listens to her. Tereus' fear pushes him to cut out Philomele's tongue in order to keep her silent forever. Although he is a king, he is afraid of the power of language. It is language which helps understand and communicate with others.

**TEREUS:** Philomele, I am telling you. (*Pause.*) I love you.

**PHILOMELE:** It is against the law.

**PHILOMELE:** Tereus.

(*Pause.*)

I do not love you.

I do not want you.

**TEREUS:** Who can resist the gods? Those are your words. Philomele. They convinced me, your words. (P.29).

Tereus' speech indicates how much he admires Philomele's words which drive him to fall in love with her. Tereus does not accept the idea that his love is rejected, so he rapes her physically. Philomele, after the act of raping, is totally powerless. She does not know what to do or what is the reason behind her raping. However, she decides to use the power of language as a means of taking her rights back and to announce the crime. She definitely realizes the power of language which helps her a lot in her case.

**PHILOMELE:** There's nothing inside you. You're only full when you're filled with violence.

**PHILOMELE:** You call this man your king, men and women of Thrace, this scarecrow dribbling embarrassed lust that is what I will say to them.

**TEREUS:** I warn you.

**TEREUS:** I will keep you quiet.

**PHILOMELE:** Never, as long as I have the words to expose you. The truth, men and women of Thrace, the truth - (TEREUS *cuts out PHILOMELE's tongue*) (PP. 35-36).

As soon as she gets her tongue cut out, Philomele is imprisoned by Tereus' orders. Only Philomele's servant women are allowed to join her, especially Niobe. Niobe deals with the physical raping of Philomele as something ordinary and common in their lives. Niobe said: "So it's happened. I've seen it coming for weeks." (P.30). However, Niobe's words and comments about Philomele's tongue raping are unlike. She really feels sorry about Philomele's loss. She considers her tongue raping is greater than her physical raping. Niobe: "Now truly I pity Philomele. She has lost her words, all of them. Now she is silent. For good. Of course, he could have killed her that is the unusual way of keeping people silent." (P.36). It is clear that Niobe is confused with the way that Tereus follows to keep Philomele silent. She mourns Philomele's words. She remembers how Philomele is fond of using the words and her tongue. She realizes that Philomele cannot speak anymore. Such deprivation for Philomele is worse than the physical raping. "But the one alive who cannot speak, that one has truly lost all power." (P.36). Philomele's real loss is the words. Her servant woman shows how language is considered to be a great power. The power that must be available for everyone. After the double raping scene of Philomele, Tereus cages her for five years. She has no one to see except Niobe and another servant woman. Through these years Philomele thinks about another way to expose Tereus' act of raping. She spent the five years sewing three huge dolls, which represent her powerless language, to use them in the Bacchic festival.

The Bacchic festival is one of the most famous traditions of Thrace. It is a female forum in which men are forbidden to attend regardless their curiosity. Women behave violently in the festival. They drink and dance with weapons. The rituals of the festival include the cleansing of sin with blood. With the beginning of scene eighteen, Philomele enters the Bacchic festival

of Thrace with her servants, Niobe and the other one, carrying the three dolls. Two of them are given the shape of women and the third one is given the shape of a man who resembles a king. Tereus permits Philomele to attend the festival because he thinks that she is mad after spending five years in a place like a prison. Philomele finds an empty circle in the festival. She decides to enact Tereus' crime exploiting the three big dolls. Niobe dresses the doll that is given the shape of a victim. The other servant dresses the second doll which represents Procne, Philomele's sister. The last is dressed by Philomele. The doll that Philomele dresses resembles and represents a king. In the circle, Philomele violently acts what happens to her in front of the attendance of the festival. She attacks the doll that is dressed by Niobe and cut its tongue out. Procne, Philomele's sister, is one of the attendance of the festival. She sees the entire play that Philomele acts. She comes and hugs her sister Philomele. However, Procne is confused because she thinks that Philomele might lay at her. She knows that Philomele has always a sexual desire. Procne: "How can I know that was the truth? (*Pause*) You were always wild. How do I know you didn't take him to your bed?" (PP. 40-41). Philomele is unable to speak. She already lost her true power which is language. She cannot defend herself. She listens to the tough words of her sister, but she is powerless to response. Yet, Procne, as she is a wise, opens Philomele's mouth and she sees what happens to the tongue. Philomele finds another means of language which is the sign language. The two sisters make a decision. They want to clean Tereus' sin with blood. They kills Itys, Tereus and Procne's own son. When Tereus sees his child body, he finds no words to explain what he did: "I loved her. When I silenced her, it was from love. She didn't want my love. She could only mock, and soon rebel, she was dangerous." (P.47). Tereus is afraid of Philomele's words. He believes that her words would be dangerous for him. He represents Philomele's words as a rebellious words against him. Then, he reveals his ignorance. "How could I know what love was? Who was there to tell me?" (P.47). Tereus' words indicate the impossibility of the mutual understanding between Procne and him. He used

not to communicate with his wife to know what is wrong and right and what love really means. Procne blames him “Did you ask?” (P.47). Procne’s words refer to the importance of language that helps understand things that are common among people. Wertebaker presents Procne as an ideal woman. The woman who not only obeys all the rules but also has a wisdom. At the end of the play, Tereus, Procne, and Philomele, are transformed into birds. Only Philomele is given the ability to speak. Scene twenty-one opens with a conversation between Itys and Philomele who wants Itys to ask her questions.

**PHILEMELE:** You have to ask me questions first.

**ITYS:** You want me to ask questions.

**PHILOMELE:** Yes.

**ITYS:** Do you like being a nightingale more than being Philomele?

**PHILOMELE:** Before or after I was silenced. (P.48).

The questions and answers between Philomele and Itys show the importance of communication between genders. There should be a mutual understanding between male and female. With her transformation into a nightingale, Philomele regains her voice. The voice which helps Itys understand what to do and how to do it. Philomele’s in this scene refers to the significance of communication among generation.

In *The Love of The Nightingale*, Wertebaker reflects her interest in language through the main characters of the play and the choruses. She presents two types of choruses. The male-chorus and the female chorus. However, they are totally different. The male chorus is not involved in the action of the play. Men of male-chorus appear to have no clear identity neither as a group nor as individual. They have no names and their function is to narrate and address the audience. They do not speak to each other or to the king, Tereus. In contrast, the women of female chorus are given names. They are Hero, Iris, June, Echo, and Helen. They play numerous roles in the play. The female chorus collectively act as Procne’s companions.

Further, they comment and address the audience. Their comments visualize Procne's tedium, grief, and homesickness.

The use of the chorus in the days of the Greek drama is totally different from Wertebaker's use. At that time there were a very few characters to occupy the stage. Therefore, the chorus was used to distract the audience while the actors went off the stage to change their costumes. Yet, the chorus had to do more functions rather than that. Firstly. They would provide the audience with commentary on the actions and events that were taking place. Secondly, they helped the playwright to create a kind of literary complexity in order to control the atmosphere. Thirdly. They allowed the playwright to prepare the audience for certain key moments in the play. (<http://krishaamer.com/function-chorus-greek-drama/>). However, Wertebaker uses the chorus in a very different way. She displays her deep interest in language through the delivered speech of the choruses. In scene eight of the play, she offers a semantic discussion with the meaning of the word myth. In fact, some literary works of Wertebaker are written with a reference to the Greek myth. With such tendency, Wertebaker tries to clarify the reason why she uses myth in her writing. The scene directly opens with a philosophical discussion by the male chorus. On one hand, they offer more than one definition of a myth. On the other hand, they engage in a dialect with the audience.

**THE MALE CHORUS:** What is a myth? The oblique image of an unwanted truth, reverberating through time.

**THE MALE CHORUS:** And yet, the first, the Greek meaning of myth, is simply what is delivered by word of mouth, a myth is speech, public speech.

**THE MALE CHORUS:** We might ask, has the content become increasingly unacceptable and therefore the speech more indirect? How has the meaning of myth been transformed from public speech to an unlikely story? It also meant counsel, command. Now it is a remote tale. (P.19).

The male chorus in the first definition express that the value of a myth is lost as time goes by. Then, they define it as both content and public speech. After that, they show how they

sorrow that myth is devaluated by people to be undesired story. Stating different definitions of myth, the male chorus illustrate that they are unable to tell the exact meaning of a myth with words. They suggest that the audience should build their own meaning of myth. Bush asserts that “This kind of semantic discussion is frequently present in Wertebaker’s writing.” (*The Theatre of Timberlake Wertebaker*, P.110). She continues saying that “The repetition of this motif suggests that the meaning of words is something that interest Wertebaker’s herself, rather than merely one of her characters.” (P.110). Philpott considers that the male chorus’ speech is totally pragmatic one. They convey information about the dramatic and physical settings. The language of the male chorus is described as a metaphoric and lyrical one. Philpott states that the male chorus “briefly create a dialectical discourse amongst themselves” (P.108).

The male chorus’ philosophical discussion in scene eight is followed by another discussion of the female chorus in scene nine. The female chorus is Procne’s companions. Although they feel the impending danger, they are concerned about their inability to communicate it. Hero, one of the female chorus, informs the other female chorus:

**HERO:** Sometimes I feel I know things but I cannot prove that I know them or that what I know is true and when I doubt my knowledge it disintegrates into a senseless jumble of possibilities, a puzzle that will not be reassembled, the spider web in which I lie, immobile, and truth paralysed. (P. 20).

Although the female chorus states that they feel a sense of danger, they cannot name it directly. Procne, Philomele’s sister, is sick of the female chorus’ sense of danger. In addition to their sense of danger, they also pave the way for Philomele to be listened by her sister when the visual image takes place. Both Hero and Echo inform Procne that “Images require sympathy,” (P.21) and that is “another way of listening,” (P.21). They refer to the puppet show which is created by Philomele.

The different usage of language of the two choruses refer to the different roles that male and female play in societies of Athens and Thrace. The analysis of the language of both choruses refers to the fact that men and women communicate using distinctive ways. Furthermore, it implies that the Athenian men do not communicate with each other and they cannot influence some changes. Yet, they only appear to observe, philosophize and to be more objective. In contrast with the male chorus, it is the Thracian women, the female chorus, who attempt to influence a change. They try to inform Procne about the coming danger, unlike the male chorus who do not speak to the characters. They warn Procne that her way of thinking, which is scientifically and logically built on her philosophical culture, is limited. They discuss how Procne dismiss their fears of danger.

**HERO:** I say danger, she thinks of earthquakes. Doesn't know the first meaning of danger is the power of a lord or master.

**HELEN:** That one is always in someone's danger.

**ECHO:** In their power, at their mercy.

**JUNE:** All services is danger and all marriage too. (P.20).

Procne is an Athenian citizen the place where women have "a reputation for wisdom" (P.5). However, she can understand the word danger only in the form of earthquakes or "marauding bands." (P.5). She is unable to understand the connotations of the Thracian language. The Thracian females are identified as communicators. Yet, they cannot express themselves in a conventional form. Helen: "Let me put it another way: I have trouble expressing myself. The world I see and the words I have do not match" (P.20). The female chorus, unlike their Athenian counterparts, is not objective thinkers. They understand the world that they live in by exploiting their intuitive feelings and senses.

*The Love of The Nightingale* is known by its richness of Wertebaker's interest in language. Accordingly, discourse is regarded as one of Wertebaker's important aspects in the

play. Wertebaker in her play, which is regarded as a play of language and voice, conveys that a loss of words means a loss of one's own self and identity as a human being and such loss results in being invisible. In their voyage back to Thrace, Tereus rapes Philomele and cuts her tongue out. He commits both physical and sexual oppression over her. Then, Tereus understands Philomele's discourse as a threat to him. Thus, he decides to imprison her in order not to tell anyone how she got violated.

**PHILOMELE:** Why? The cause? I want to understand.

**PHILOMELE:** There's nothing inside you. You're only full when you're filled with violence. And they obey you? Look up to you? Have the men and women of Thrace seen you naked? Shall I tell them?

**PHILOMELE:** Never, as long as I have the words to expose you. The truth, men and women of Thrace, the truth. (PP. 35-36).

Philomele's words make Tereus see the truth about himself. Tereus' announcement of his love for Philomele is another discourse. Tereus, first, tells Philomele about his love in indirect way. He implies his love in his words rather than saying it directly:

**TEREUS:** Do you remember that day in the theatre in Athens? The play?

**PHILOMELE:** Evanescence, evanescence...

**TEREUS:** Philomele, I am telling you.

*(Pause.)*

I love you.

**PHILOMELE:** I love you too, brother Tereus, you are my sister's husband.

**TEREUS:** No, no. The Play. I am Phaedra. I love you. That way. (P.29).

His way of attracting her attention by referring to the play *Hippolytus* is to turn her own philosophical concerns about his love. He uses Phaedra, a character in the play *Hippolytus*, to declare his love for Philomele. His inability to declare his love signifies Tereus' luck of expressing his feelings to others.

**TEREUS:** You should have kept quiet.

*(Pause)*

I did what I had to.

*(Pause)*

You threatened the order of my rule.

*(Pause)*

How could I allow rebellion? I had to keep you quiet. I am not sorry. Except for your pain. But it was you or me.

*(Long pause.)*

You are more beautiful now in your silence ... You are mine. My sweet, my songless, my caged bird.

*(He kisses her. She is still.) (PP. 36-37).*

The numerous pauses that punctuate Tereus' discourse reveal the time that Philomele needs to use her body in order to answer silently. Her movements while Tereus speaks indicate that she still has power to communicate and to express her refusal. As a result, the play has both verbal and silent discourse which at the same time are considered as a major dramatic activity in the play.

The interest in language is also exhibited by Philomele's agility with language. Although Wertebaker's play is based on a Greek myth which is famous by its voiceless female characters, Wertebaker's female character, Philomele, appears to be talkative and sensitive to language. To control her situation and to express her subjectivity, Philomele uses the language. In *The Love of The Nightingale*, there are two methods that prove Philomele's agility with language. The first one is the use of questions. In the play, Philomele asks too many questions either to have some things clarified or to express her ideas. On her voyage to Thrace, Philomele attempts to have endless questions with the captain, the one she loves. The very beginning of scene seven opens with Philomele's questions to the captain.

**PHILOMELE:** Where are we now, Captain?

**PHILOMELE:** Isn't that a fire over there?

**PHILOMELE:** What is it called, Captain, what is it like? I would like to know about all these lands. You must tell me. (PP. 14-15).

The captain tells her about the "Mount Athos" (P.15) in which men believe that all the disasters in the world are because of women. She again begins her endless questions:

**CAPTAIN:** No, but wild men live there, very wild. They kill all women, even female animals are not allowed on that mountain.

**PHILOMELE:** Why do they believe that? (*Pause.*) You don't agree with them, do you, captain?

**CAPTAIN:** I don't know, miss.

**PHILOMELE:** If you don't disagree, you agree with them, Captain, that's logic. (P.15).

In spite of her endless questions, the captain asks none. To drive him to ask her, Philomele takes an advantage of her agility with language. "I'll prove it to you now, I once heard a philosopher do it. I will begin by asking you a lot of questions. You answer yes or no. But you must pay attention. Are you ready?" (P.15). She wants to build a mutual understanding and she tries to fill her eagerness of knowledge and language. Philomele does that by asking questions only. Shih states that Philomele's dialogue is "a Socratic dialogue" (P.206). Furthermore, Shih considers Philomele to be a different princess because she is talkative and asks many questions and such thing is not common among princess; "her curiosity and endless questions make her different from any other conversational quiet princess." (P.206).

In addition to her questions with the captain, Philomele asks Tereus a lot of questions too. After the sexual intercourse, Philomele starts asking herself first if her words are the reason behind the act of raping.

**PHILOMELE:** When will you explain, Tereus?

**PHILOMELE:** Why? The cause? I want to understand.

**PHILOMELE:** I was the cause, wasn't I? Was I? I said something. What did I do? (P.34).

It is clear that Philomele cares to understand the real motivation behind Tereus' action more than the sexual intercourse itself. She wonders if she says something which motivates Tereus to rape her. She indicates the importance of language which is the real power of taking actions. She requests Tereus to explain why he rapes her. She wants to set up her subjectivity by those unlimited questions. She also appears to be eager for speaking, articulating, and for

presenting her identity. By asking questions, Philomele realizes that she is not involved in the action that Tereus does. Thus, she challenges the society which is ruled by Tereus. As a result, she attacks Tereus by her words which help him realize his real character.

**PHILOMELE:** What did you tell your wife, my sister, Procne, what did you tell her? Did you tell her you violated her sister, the sister she gave into your trust? Did you tell her what a coward you are and that you could not, cannot bear to look at me? Did you tell her that despite my fear, your violence, when I saw you in your nakedness I couldn't help laughing because you were so shriveled, so ridiculous and it is not the way it is on the statues? (P.35).

Shih interprets that "Philomele's questions, on the one hand, force the listener to rethink the things that they believed before, and, on the other hand, she expresses her own judgment in an indirect way." (P.206). With her insistence on questions and speaking, Philomele gets her tongue cut out. It seems that Wertebaker wants to elucidate the idea that women, though they are fluent and able to speak, are silenced. However, she presents another powerful way of language which is the sign language.

The second method that shows the Philomele's agility with language is her decision to use the sign language. Philomele keeps insisting on using the language whether by her tongue or by her body. She does not give up using her language. In spite of her inability to speak using her tongue, she uses her body language to expose Tereus and to prove the truth. She prefers not to be silent whatever it takes. Philomele, thus, sews three big dolls in order to use them in the Bacchic festival. She spends all of her time sewing the dolls. In the festival, she comes with her servants, Niobe and another servant woman. She performs how she gets raped by Tereus in front of the attendance women. As Procne is also fond of language, she realizes the real message of her sister. She understands her through the body language. This proves the strength of their mutual understanding.

*The rape is re-enacted in a gross and comic way, partly because of NIOBE's resistance and attempt to catch PHILOMELE. PHILOMELE does most of the work with both dolls. The crowd laughs. PHILOMELE then stages a very brutal illustration of the cutting of the female doll's tongue. Blood cloth on the floor. The crowd is very silent. NIOBE still. Then the SERVANT comes inside the circle, holding the third doll, a queen. At that moment, Procne also appears in the front of the crowd's circle...The Procne doll weeps. (P.40).*

The description of the performance Philomele does proves how she is talent in using the body language. She details the whole scene and sends a complete message to the audience and her sister in order to prove the truth. Despite her inability to speak using her tongue, she tells the truth using her body; however, she never learns how to use her body to communicate with others and this reflects her language intelligence and agility.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

With the ending of the process of analyzing and discussing Wertebaker's plays *The Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* in chapter four, chapter five is dedicated to present certain significant conclusion and recommendations for further studies. The conclusion and recommendations are written in an association with the three questions of the study that are raised in chapter one of the study and to the analysis of the plays.

#### 5.0 Conclusion

The analysis of the study shows that Wertebaker draws a connection between the two plays. She, in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, questions the oppression of female which has been around for centuries. She attempts to give female a voice in a male dominated society. She also states that language is not specific for women and men, for west or east, but it is a communicative way that anyone can use it and he\she can speak the language he\she wants. In other words, there is no language prettier, better or easier than others. Massie finds out that *The Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* "contain numerous scenes of graphic violence, frequently violence against women. Both display Wertebaker's characteristic concern with language as a form of power and a tool of oppression." (P.26).

The results of the study are presented with a respect to the following questions: "To what extent does Wertebaker focus on language in *The Love of The Nightingale*", "How does Wertebaker present female identity in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*?" and "What types of violence does Wertebaker present in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale*?"

Results related to the first question indicate that Wertebaker herself is really interested in language and its valuable significance whether in creating one's own identity or in creating the identity of a whole society. This merit is actually mirrored in most of her works including the famous play *The Love of The Nightingale*. In fact, Wertebaker is very conscious about language. She considers language as one of the essential conditions for existence. Bush states that the concern of language is often addressed in Wertebaker's most plays. Susan Carlson suggests that "Wertebaker's own self-consciousness is clear in her building of extra-textual relations between her plays and other texts, and in her sensitivity to the conceptions of language by those persons or institutions with power." (2000, P.97). Although Wertebaker deals with language related issues in most of her plays, she increasingly focuses on them in two of her well-known plays *The Love of The Nightingale* and *Our Country's Good*. According to the analysis of the play, *The Love of The Nightingale*, language is portrayed as an essential thing. Philomele and her sister represent how language is really significant to build a mutual understanding. Procne in the Thracian culture appears to mourn her language and express her sad feelings about missing her conversation with her sister. After the silencing of the main character, Philomele, the servant woman signifies, "The silence of the dead can turn into a wild chorus. But the one alive who cannot speak, that one has truly lost all power."(P.36). Wertebaker offers her deep interest in language by presenting it as an ideal of communication that human being can shape their identity through.

The second question of the study is "How does Wertebaker present female identity in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*?" In *Mary Traverse*, Wertebaker deals with many themes. One of the most important themes that she tackles is female identity. Wertebaker depicts how women attempt to define their place in a patriarchal society. She offers such depiction in plays like *New Anatomies* (1981), *Inside Out* (1982), *Variations*, and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985).

Bush states that many of Wertebaker's plays "deal explicitly with problems facing women" (P.94). Wertebaker denies the idea that women should be portrayed as passive characters in a work of literature. Her metaphorical setting proves that women whether in the past or in the present still face problems. Mary is seen as a prisoner in her father's house. She is educated to be an ideal woman. She has no clear identity. Mary is obliged to follow her father's rules and manners. Although she goes outside with her servant, she still has no clear identity. With her quest for knowledge and identity, Mary gets manipulated by others and her quest results in a disastrous end. With such depiction of women, Wertebaker presents female identity as corrupted, restricted, violated, and oppressed in a patriarchal society.

The third question is "What types of violence does Wertebaker present in *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale*?" The earliest plays of the contemporary playwright Wertebaker are written with extremely variety of themes. One of the most tackled themes in most of her very well-known plays is violence against female. In *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, the playwright presents her deep interest in the corruption of women in the society. Her main character Mary is seen as a controlled woman with no varied options in her life except to get married to a rich man. Her freedom is limited to some domestic rituals. She cannot walk outside. She is not free to choose the field of the study that she likes. Then, the playwright delivers Mary experience in the outside. She sees how raping is very common in the society. How the working-class has no food. They have to pay a great amount of money to the representative of the authority who rule the society. When Sophie, the foil character of Mary, gets raped by Gordon, the servant woman states "Rape her. But she won't mind. Virtue, like ancestors, is a luxury of the rich. Watch and you'll learn something." (P. 69). Mary in her quest for experience clarifies the idea that women are physically violated, controlled, and oppressed by men. In *The Love of The Nightingale*, Wertebaker goes all the way back to the Greek myth,

*Tereus*. She tackles many different themes through the plot of the play. Yet, violence is again one of the main themes of the play. This time, Wertebaker attempts to show another type of violence. The violence that is not only exclusive against female but against a whole culture. In the play, Philomele, the main character, appears to have a connection with language. Procne and she reflect the creativity of language in creating an understanding among generations. With the passage of time, Philomele gets raped physically because she refuses the love of her brother-in-law, Tereus. By doing so, Tereus rapes her to satisfy his male dignity. He disrespects her freedom, her love for the captain, and his marriage to Philomele's sister, Procne. Tereus, as a representative of the authority, is careless about the feelings of both Procne and Philomele. Furthermore, when Philomele warns him that she will announce his crime, he cuts her tongue out. Thus, Philomele is violated twice in the play; physically and psychologically. In fact, Wertebaker mirrors the raping crimes against women but this time she also mirrors the raping of language. In her comments about the play, she refers to the danger of replacing one language by another. She refers to the Basque language which was about to be replaced by the French government.

Overall *The Grace of Mary Traverse* and *The Love of The Nightingale* offer two types of violence. The first one is the physical violence when both Sophie and Philomele get raped by two powerful men, Tereus and Gordon. The second type of violence is psychological. This type is represented by Philomele in *The Love of The Nightingale* when Tereus cuts her tongue out in order to keep her silent forever. Bush states in *The Love of The Nightingale* there are "recommendations for women to 'fight' the physical, sexual and psychological violence of men" (P.142) However, Wertebaker not only refers to the silence of a specific woman but she also refers to the silence of a whole culture when it gets its language changed.

## 5.1 Recommendations

Due to the fact that the study dealt with Timberlake Wertenbaker's plays *The Love of The Nightingale* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, the researcher recommends the following points:

1. More studies should be conducted about Timberlake Wertenbaker's works.
2. More investigation and analysis of Wertenbaker's literary works are needed to cover the themes and issues that are tackled by the playwright.
3. Much attention should be cared about the tackled issues in the plays.

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