

56-A Structuralist approach to women's position in George Moore's *Esther Waters*¹

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Abstract

Structuralism defines the relationship between the part and the whole. This study aims to analyse George Moore's *Esther Waters* (1894) in terms of structuralist approach. The surface structure of the novel focuses on Esther raising her son alone. In terms of syntagmatic relation, Esther has an extramarital sexual intercourse with William, raises her son alone, but finally marries William. In terms of paradigmatic relation, there is homology of relationship between Esther and William who are orphans and start work at early ages. Education and motherhood become explicit signs in the deep structure: While the signifier is education, the signified is profession; and while the signifier is motherhood, the signified is self-sacrifice. As for the deep structure, its harmony operates on binary opposition between 'being as a subject' and 'being as an object'. As a 'being as a subject', Esther makes a choice by having an extramarital sexual intercourse, takes its action by giving birth to her son, and takes its responsibility by struggling for her son. Its melody operates on the fixed cycle of getting married. The novel ends but its melody continues because women will continue to be deprived of education and professions that will provide financial freedom. As for the deep meaning, there is no innate difference between men and women in terms of mental capacity, but there are prejudices imposed by the male-dominated society on women who are left with no choice but to marry and have only the role of a wife and mother in society.

Keywords: Structuralism, existentialism, liberal feminism, George Moore, *Esther Waters*.

George Moore'un *Esther Waters* eserinde kadının konumuna yapısalcı bir yaklaşım

Öz

Yapısalcılık, parça ve bütün arasındaki ilişkiyi tanımlar. Bu çalışma, George Moore'un *Esther Waters* (1894) eserini yapısalcı yaklaşım açısından incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Romanın yüzeysel yapısı, oğlunu tek başına büyüten Esther'e odaklanır. Dizimsel bağıntı açısından Esther, William ile evlilik dışı bir cinsel ilişki yaşar, oğlunu tek başına büyütür, ancak sonunda William ile evlenir. Dizisel bağıntı açısından, yetim olan ve erken yaşta çalışmaya başlayan Esther ve William arasında eşyapılılık bir ilişki vardır. Eğitim ve annelik, derin yapıda açık göstergeler haline gelir: Gösteren eğitimken gösterilen meslektir ve gösteren annelikken, gösterilen fedakarlıktır. Derin yapı açısından, romanın uyumu 'özne olarak varlık' ve 'nesne olarak varlık' arasındaki ikili karşıtlık üzerine kuruludur. 'Özne olarak varlık' olan Esther, bir seçim yapar evlilik dışı bir cinsel ilişki yaşar,

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gerekli adımı atıp oğlunu doğurur ve sorumluluk üstlenip oğlu için mücadele eder. Romanın ezgisi, evlenme hakkında kısır bir döngü üzerine kuruludur. Roman biter ama ezgisi devam eder çünkü kadınlar maddi özgürlük sağlayacak eğitimden ve mesleklerden mahrum bırakılmaya devam edecek. Derin anlama gelince, zihinsel kapasite açısından kadınlar ve erkekler arasında doğuştan gelen bir fark yoktur ancak erkek egemen toplum tarafından kadınlara dayatılan önyargılar vardır ve kadınlara toplumda eş ve anne rolünü sahiplenerek evlenmekten başka bir seçenek sunulmamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yapısalcılık, varoluşçuluk, liberal feminizm, George Moore, *Esther Waters*.

Introduction

Structuralism³ is a critical approach whose aim is to decode the encoded whole composed of a system in order to discover the deep structure of a textual work out of the surface structure (Lane, 1970: 14-15). It appeared at the time of the World War II in 1940 as a result of meeting of the Prague School which turned from a linguistic school into a scientific ecole establishing the background of structuralism. Structuralism's sources are Ferdinand de Saussure, Russian Formalism and Prague School (Yüksel, 1995: 13, 33).⁴ The first source of structuralism is the new linguistic approach that is expressed in the book *Course in General Linguistics* by Ferdinand de Saussure published in 1916. Saussure treats the language as a system that is consistent, understandable, and self-sufficient (1976: 106). In terms of structural linguistic view, three linguistics schools have been formed: the Prague School, the Copenhagen School and the American School.

Russian formalism emerged as a reaction to social and symbolic point of view in the field of literature in Russia during the second decade of the 20th century. "Form" in Russian formalism is a phenomenon that can be examined by itself not only as the envelope of content but also as its own integrity (Eichenbaum, 1965: 112). The Russian formalists came from Russia and gathered under the roof of the Prague School, setting the basic principles of the structuralist movement. Russian formalist Roman Jakobson is the person who bridges Russian formalism and structuralism. In 1920 Jakobson passed from formalism to structuralism in Prague. Jakobson developed techniques for the analysis of sound systems in languages, inaugurating the discipline of phonology. Jakobson mentioned that there are the following six functions in any act of verbal communication (1971: 95):

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Sender | 4. Contact |
| 2. Message | 5. Code |
| 3. Context | 6. Receiver |

Jakobson's approach is also reflected in the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, who brought a structuralist approach to the human sciences. Levi-Strauss, whose works' essence is to understand the human being, examined them as interrelated items, which will form a general system of unrelated events (1963: 87). Every myth is a "word" and contributes to reveal the structure of "language". The analysis of the narrative text such as the epic, novel, short story, folk tale or myth is one of the study topics of researchers who focus on structuralist literary criticism. Narrative analysis takes up the subject-matter of the text such as the actions, the characters, the story and the themes. The subject-matter is

³ The theory of structuralism is retrieved from the article by Alkan, H. (2016). "A Structuralist Analysis of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Flies*". *Artuklu Human and Social Science Journal*, 1(1), 64-71.

⁴ Quotes from Turkish references were translated into English by the author of this study.

constructed out of language. The text is a meaningful whole which express the state of mind of a writer. It is composed of events to make up a story and to manifest characters in action. The meaning of the text is dependent on the meaning of its parts. The meaning of every part in the text is determined by the events which might have occurred in place of it without making nonsense of the whole. The text produces its meaning within syntagmatic constraints, with regard for paradigmatic contrasts (Pettit, 1975: 42, 43). Vladimir Propp, one of the Russian formalists, made the first analysis of narrative in the field of structuralist literary criticism. Propp has examined the contents of a hundred Russian folk tales, and classified them and found that the task features of the characters in the tales are limited and unchangeable. Thus, the seven spheres of action for all tales are as the following (Alkan, 2016: 65):

1. Villain	5. Dispatcher
2. Donor	6. Hero
3. Helper	7. False Hero
4. Princes	

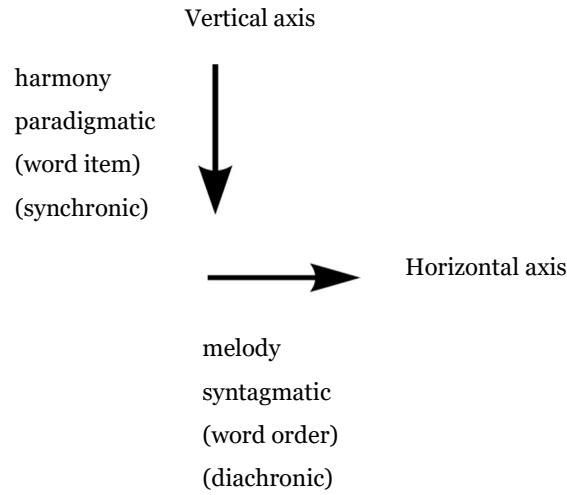
Propp mentioned thirty-one functions that are the actions of the characters in Russian folk tales. The sequence of functions is always identical. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure (Propp, 2005: 22-23). Algirdas Julien Greimas has worked to identify the basic units that make up the plot of the narrative and to determine the possibilities of these units. Greimas proposed the actantial model that is based on Propp's theories. An action is divided into six actants which are also divided into three oppositions on the axis of desire, transmission and power (Greimas, 1983: 207):

1. Subject/Object
2. Sender/Receiver
3. Helper/Opponent

Developing the work of the American structuralist linguistics school, Noam Chomsky provides a deep structure and surface structure for each sentence. While deep structure is the abstract, basic form determined by the meaning of the sentence, surface structure is the form of explanation of the meaning that exists in the deep structure through pouring into words. Surface structure refers to surface meaning, and deep structure refers to deep meaning. Deep structure is obtained from surface structure (Chomsky, 1965: 16). According to Roland Barthes, structuralist action consists of intellectual processes carried out in a systematic way. He aims to find the laws of that object. In order to reveal the data that is not obvious to the object in question, he broke up the object and reconstruct it after making the necessary intellectual findings. That object is now an object of "ideational" (Barthes, 1972: 214-215).

As a result of the theoretical development of structuralism, the basic concepts and terms that have become valid in relation to structuralism have emerged. System is a transformational and self-operating wholeness composed of parts. In this system, each part relates to the other part and to the whole. The system is invisible (Hawkes, 1989: 16). In order to decode the system of a textual work, the following terminology of structuralism has to be known. While synchronic linguistics deals with the status of a language in a specific time, diachronic linguistics analyzes language items and the stages of evolution of linguistic elements at various periods in historical development (Culler, 1973: 8). Signifier

is the element by which we refer to signified. When we call “tree”, the concept of “tree” appears in the mind of listeners, and these two together create the sign. The complete sign is established when the correct signifier meets the correct signified (Saussure, 1976: 61). Binary opposition is the system by which, in language and thought, two theoretical opposites are strictly defined and set off against one another. It means that we are thinking in terms of differences, not similarities such as woman/man, raw/cooked (Leach, 1973: 36-37). Syntagmatic relation means the horizontal relationships between units of a language. Each unit is a part which has to be in proper relationship with the next part and the whole. The words are set from left to right to organize a sentence. Paradigmatic relation means the relations between the units of a language which are identical in function and which can replace each other on the vertical axis. However, these units cannot come together in the same statement (Aksan, 1977: 116). Harmony is the polyphony composed of different musical notes which are simultaneously played by different musical instruments. Harmony is said to refer to the paradigmatic or vertical aspect of music. Melody is a linear succession of musical tones which is perceived as a single entity on the syntagmatic or horizontal axis (Levi-Strauss, 1963: 212):



Homology means that there is binary opposition between two things but all the same together they form a homology. A homology does not deal only with two object or people. It also deals with two relationships (Hawkes, 1989: 53).

Aim of this study

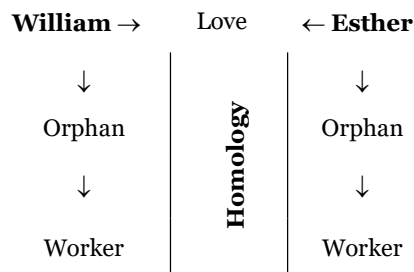
George Moore (1852-1933) was born as the son of a Roman Catholic landed family who lived at Moore Hall in Carra, Ireland. Since he wanted to be a painter, he studied art in Paris during the 1870s. As a naturalistic writer, he is among the first English-language authors to absorb the lessons of the French realist. Although he lives in a patriarchal society, he, as a sensitive man who creates a collective awareness of the injustices women are exposed to, expresses the suffering of women in his novels and demands a change in women's position. This study aims to analyse George Moore's *Esther Waters* (1894) in the context of the structuralist approach. The novel *Esther Waters* focuses on a young female protagonist named Esther Waters who has an extramarital sexual intercourse with a footman William Latch, and who raises her child as a fallen woman.

George Moore's *Esther Waters* reflects on the suffering of women which radically alters the landscape of existence. As an existentialist thinker, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) focuses on the conflict between human's needs and hopes, and the meaningless universe into which humans are thrown (Yüksel, 2011: 111). In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre's aspect of existentialism⁵ is that human being is condemned to be free and that there is no limit to human freedom except for the freedom itself (Sartre, 1992: 439). But once man has made a choice, acted upon his choice and taken its responsibility, there is no turning back. According to Sartre in terms of freedom, there are two kinds of beings: 'being as a subject' and 'being as an object'. Human's existence of freedom depends on the on-going relationships between these two aspects. In terms of 'being as a subject', human beings that are conscious beings are free by creating their own value system through choice, action and responsibility. 'Being as an object' means that human beings give up the ability to judge themselves and create their own morals, and simply rely on others' evaluations of them for guidance by letting others impose their morals on them.

In the context of the structuralist approach, in order to explain the reader how the suffering of women which radically alters the landscape of existence in George Moore's *Esther Waters* is discussed or criticized, the novel is analysed in a synchronic manner, only text-based, regardless of the author's biography and the period in which the work was written. The structuralist approach examines the relations of the elements in the structure of a text, which is a closed system, and determines the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships of the closed signs based on binary oppositions in the surface structure of the text and makes them explicit signs to reach the deep structure. Therefore, the deep structure is obtained from the surface structure.

A structuralist analysis of *Esther Waters*

George Moore's *Esther Waters* is analysed synchronically. In the surface structure of the novel, there is a plot focusing on a young female protagonist named Esther Waters who has an extramarital sexual intercourse with a footman William Latch, and who raises her child as a fallen woman. In terms of syntagmatic relation, when Esther was ten years old, her father died. Similarly, when William was a child, his father died. At the age of twenty, Esther goes to work as a kitchen-maid by the Barfield family in a place called Woodview because she must support financially her very poor family. If she does not work, "her [stepfather] would curse her, and perhaps beat her mother and her too" (Moore, 2012: 4). William must also work as a footman by the Barfield family. There, they fall in love with each other. In terms of paradigmatic relation, there is homology of relationship between both children because Esther is a poor orphan child as well as William is a poor orphan child, and they both must work to earn a living for their family:



⁵ The theory of existentialism is retrieved from the article by Alkan, Halit (2016). "A Structuralist Analysis of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Flies*". *Artuklu Human and Social Science Journal*, 1(1), 64-71.

Since Esther has started to work at early ages, she “gave up school, and this was why she had never learnt how to read” (Moore, 2012: 22). In the male-dominated order, a woman is seen as an object that only gives birth to children and she is not given any social rights. Therefore, being deprived of education, Esther cannot get a good profession and her job becomes a maidservant for a very low wage. However, women also have the right to develop and use their intelligence given to them by nature as do men. Esther who is inexperienced falls in love with William and shows interest in her. Mrs. Lacth does not want her son William to bet on horse racing, but William who wants to get rich tells Esther, “that's what women are—they are that short-sighted” (Moore, 2012: 40). Due to the prejudices of the male-dominant society, women are not given the same educational opportunities as men. That's why William thinks his mother is narrow-minded to understand him. One night, as William and Esther walk outside, William throws his arm around her shoulder, whispering that “she was his wife” (Moore, 2012: 62). By opposing the expectations of the male-dominated society, Esther who is seduced by William Latch has an extramarital sexual intercourse with him. In this love affair, there are binary oppositions between the roles of William and Esther as follows:

William	Esther
experienced	inexperienced
seducer	victim

A social structure such as marriage turns into a weapon of persuasion in the hands of men against women who are inexperienced. In terms of ‘being as a subject’, Esther who is a conscious being is free by creating her own value system through choice, action and responsibility. In other words, she is free and ignores how others judge her. Despite the male-dominant society's perceptions, Esther, who believes that William loves her and will marry her, considers this sexuality not as a sign of morality or a fall, but just a natural expression of how she feels towards him. Therefore, Esther can be considered to represent the ‘New Woman’ referring to the libertarian woman who is aware of her rights, different from the traditional perception of the 19th century ideal woman. However, William runs away with Missy Peggy, the little lady of the rich Barfield family. Esther who realizes that William has abandoned her does not know what to do because she is pregnant. Esther tells Mrs. Barfield that she blames William for abandoning her, but apart from that, she explains that she is guilty of having extramarital sexual intercourse with him:

It is always a woman's fault, ma'am. [...] I shouldn't have touched the second glass of ale. Besides, I was in love with him [...]. I thought no harm, and I let him kiss me. [...] He told me he loved me, and would make me his wife. (Moore, 2012: 75)

Mrs. Barfield says to Esther: “My poor girl! my poor girl! you do not know what trial is in store for you. A girl like you, and only twenty! ...Oh, it is a shame!” (Moore, 2012: 74). Esther must leave Barfield family because she is considered a fallen woman. Esther returns to her family and tells her mother that she is pregnant. Her mother cries for her daughter's misfortune and says: “Ah, we poor women have more than our right to bear with!” (Moore, 2012: 81). Her mother is aware of the injustice suffered by women, and so, she does not criticize her daughter's misfortune and shows understanding to her. Since Esther's mother is also pregnant again, both women share their grief over their similar conditions. Esther's mother tells her daughter that “it is the children that breaks us poor women down altogether” (Moore, 2012: 81). When Esther's stepfather learns her misfortune, he does not want her stay at his home: “We wants no bastards 'ere.... And a nice example, too, for the other children! No, I won't 'ave it!” (Moore, 2012: 89). Even Esther's stepfather does not want a fallen woman at his home.

Esther's mother is an ideal Victorian woman in obedience to her husband; however, Esther goes beyond the traditional Victorian woman's limitations and goes against her stepfather. In terms of 'being as a subject', Esther makes a choice by having an extramarital sexual intercourse with William and takes its action by giving birth to her son on the day her mother dies while giving birth. Unable to have a profession due to being illiterate, Esther, who takes the responsibility of her choice and action, struggles for her son in patriarchal society. Therefore, despite the male-dominant's perception of a fallen woman, Esther, as representing the 'New Woman' profile, works as a wet nurse and a maidservant to bring up her extramarital child. However, Esther is dismissed when her secret is revealed. Esther's life depends on her health, employers' money and caprice. When Esther's employer Harold learns that Esther has an illegitimate child, he tells his mother that "we can't have loose women about the place. They all can tell a fine story; the world is full of impostors" (Moore, 2012: 141). Esther points out that although she does her duty well, it is wrong to prevent her from working simply because she has an illegitimate child. Esther is dismissed from her work. Esther is not allowed to remain independent within the male-dominant society. In order to find food, shelter and clothing, Esther has to fight against the patriarchal order. Although Esther is seen as a fallen woman by society, she is not a fallen angel because she has no sexual intercourse with anyone other than William. Esther has not seen William for nine years, and she has worked like a slave during this time.

One day, Esther sees William by chance. William tells Esther that he has divorced his wife Peggy because she has cheated on him, and he has no children from Peggy. When Esther informs William about his son Jackie, William wants to leave his money to his son Jackie: "I've plenty of money to treat you. I should like to make it up to you" (Moore, 2012: 166). It is extremely important for Esther that her son receives a good education and becomes superior to his parents. Esther who is illiterate and does not want her son to experience the same financial hardship as herself eventually chooses marriage as a practical alternative to lifelong work. In this sense, women are taught that a husband is essential for their existence. When Esther forgets that she is a 'being as a subject', she becomes a 'being as an object' and gives up her ability to judge herself and create her own morals. Esther cannot act freely and takes the judgment of others into consideration by simply relying on others' evaluations of her for guidance by letting others impose their morals on her. Marriage becomes a means of salvation for Esther because she is no longer seen as a fallen woman by society after getting married and becoming a part of the family. This requires the woman to give priority to her family, husband and children, not to herself. In terms of 'being as an object', Esther now adopts the typical angelic wife role because she accepts her husband William's business of betting and gambling on horse racing and does not question his authority because she says "it would be wrong of me to set myself against my husband" (Moore, 2012: 232). In this way, from birth, girls are taught to accept every wish of the strong man. Women are taught to please men and never struggle against them. William is a gambler and runs from one horse race to the other horse race and stays wet in the mud all day long, and therefore, he gets cold and has lung inflammation. One day, William is fined a large sum for betting in his bar, and his business license is not renewed. William bets last time with his last money but loses it. Seven years have passed since Esther's marriage with William, and Esther's son Jack is now a fifteen-year-old young boy, successful in his school, tall like his father. Realizing that he can no longer recover because his body is weak and exhausted, William tells his son Jack: "Be good to your mother—she's the best mother a son ever had" (Moore, 2012: 309). William dies at home next by his family. Although Esther chooses the marriage as a means of salvation, she returns to her former state at the age of thirty-eight because she spends her last money on William's burial and falls back into the poor.

Esther learns that Mrs. Barfield's family has lost majority of the farm due to horse racing bets, and they live in a small corner of the farm. When Esther returns to Mrs. Barfield's service, she is back at the very point from which she started at Woodview: "Eighteen years had gone by, eighteen years of labour, suffering, disappointment" (Moore, 2012: 311). Mrs. Barfield's money which is inherited from her father is legally passed on to her husband first, and is managed by her son after her husband's death. Women are dominated by their fathers, then their husbands and sons. When women marry, their legal existence disappears and all their properties are owned by their husbands. Women suffer as a result of their social and economic dependencies on men and the lower position given to them in society. In terms of 'being as a subject', based on her experience Esther feels free because she starts to ignore how others judge her and makes her choice not to remarry because she wants to maintain her autonomous identity without being under the dominance of a husband: "Marry and begin life over again! All the worry and bother over again! Why should I marry?—all I live for now is to see my boy settled in life" (Moore, 2012: 323). Esther wants to stand on her own feet without being dependent on any man. Being a maid is the only profession Esther can do in the patriarchal society she lives in. She is a maid first in other houses, then in her own house and finally in other houses again. In his military uniform, Jack comes to visit his mother Esther. When Jack hugs and kisses his mother, Esther forgets her hard struggle for her son's life in the happiness of the moment: "She was only conscious that she had accomplished her woman's work—she had brought him up to man's estate; and that was her sufficient reward" (Moore, 2012: 326).

Education, motherhood, and horse racing in the surface structure of the novel are closed signs. These signs become explicit signs in the deep structure in the following sense: While the signifier is education, the signified is knowledge and profession; while the signifier is motherhood, the signified is struggle and self-sacrifice; and while the signifier is horse racing, the signified is gambling and poverty. Due to prejudices of patriarchal society about women, Esther who is deprived of education and is illiterate cannot get a good profession and her job becomes a maidservant for a very low wage. Esther gives birth to a son and struggles for him in patriarchal society in order to find food, shelter and clothing. Esther who is not offered any other options than marriage gets married with William, the father of her son, who gambles on horse racing and then leaves his family in poverty.

As for the deep structure, its harmony operates on binary opposition between 'being as a subject' and 'being as an object'. At the beginning of the novel, in terms of 'being as a subject', Esther is free by creating her own value system through choice, action and responsibility. Esther makes a choice by having an extramarital sexual intercourse with William, takes its action by giving birth to her son, and takes its responsibility by struggling for her son in patriarchal society in order to find food, shelter and clothing as a wet nurse and maidservant. Although Esther struggles to draw 'New Woman' profile, the male-dominant society does not allow her to be free because it has prejudices about women and does not offer any other options than marriage. When Esther decides to marry the father of her son in order to provide her son a surname and a good life, she becomes a 'being as an object' and takes the judgment of others into consideration and adopts the typical angelic wife role by accepting her husband William's authority. After her husband's death, based on her experience Esther feels free in terms of 'being as a subject' because she starts to ignore how others judge her and makes her choice not to marry again because she wants to maintain her autonomous identity without being under the dominance of a husband:

Esther**'Being as a Subject'**Obeying to her husband's
authorityHaving an extramarital
sexual intercourseGetting married to the
father of her sonGiving birth to a son and
raising him on her own**'Being as an Object'**

The surface structure of *Esther Water* reflects George Moore's opinion on the suffering of women which radically alters the landscape of existence and on the patriarchal society's double standard of education and marriage against women in terms of feminism ⁶. Human's existence of freedom depends on the on-going relationships between the 'being as a subject' and 'being as an object'. A woman who becomes a 'being as an object' accepts all moral values imposed by the male-dominant society, and also to be inferior to men. The male-dominant society makes women dependent on men by giving legal rights and political and economic power only to men (French, 1983: 83). In the Middle Ages, women are not included in the general population classification and their existence is largely defined in relation to men. The economic existence of the married woman belongs to her husband and her legal entity is also represented by her husband (Cannon, 1999: 157, 159). In terms of class rules, women are required to be exempted from all official duties and to devote all their time and energy to family affairs (Mohl, 1933: 341). Women who think or comment are punished in the Inquisition for being a witch (Wakefield, 1969: 183). Intellectuality is not expected from the ordinary woman because she has a busy working life at home and in the field, and it is important that she is either a virgin or is honourable if she is married (Gies, 1980: 64). In the Renaissance period, since a married woman is legally limited, any legal proceedings performed without the consent of her husband or judge are considered invalid. The domesticity model defined by the bourgeois morality is adopted. In this sense, the woman deals with family problems, takes care of the housework, accepts the husband's authority to make decisions and avoids public problems (Michel, 1993: 44, 45). In the seventeenth century, men argue that due to weakness of intellect, women could not possibly understand the complexities of public affairs (Boulding, 1976: 561). Marriage becomes a requirement to ensure the continuity of society and to meet the sexual desires of men. Consequently, the main duties of women in the traditional structure are reproduction and the care of the home and family (Doğramacı, 1992: 106). Marriage becomes the sole purpose of a woman because she is convinced that only through this she can gain a position in society. For the woman who adopts the role of a wife and mother in the eighteenth century, education only consists of information on fulfilling her responsibilities regarding home and family. The main purpose of the education given to poor girls is to teach domestic service with emphasis on domestic crafts, productivity, prudence, care and good governance which are necessary for the roles of a wife, mother and housewife as the natural duties of a woman (Barker, 2005: 37).

The emphasis on human mind and natural rights expressed in the Enlightenment period is also accepted for women. When women begin to demand legal rights and freedom, the basis of feminism emerges. Feminism is considered to be the theory and practice of the women's liberation movement

⁶ The theory of feminism is retrieved from the book chapter by Alkan, Halit (2019). "A Structuralist Analysis of Women's Position in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*". In Zehra Göre (Eds.), *Academic Studies in Philology-2019/2*, Cetinje-Montenegro: IVPE (pp.53-74).

(Kayahan, 1999: 9). Woman problem can be said to deal with women's position in society, having equal rights and the development of a woman as an individual. Liberal feminism is based on equal opportunities in education and social life, and economic equality (Çaha, 2003: 563). The term 'New Woman', introduced in 1894, questions many institutions, assumptions and beliefs about sexuality, marriage and family life (Caine, 1997: 134). Opposing the Victorian ideal of women and marriage, the 'New Woman' offers a more educated view of women. In this context, liberal feminist authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Harriet Taylor (1807-1858) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) defend women's rights and discuss women's problems. These authors come to conclusion in their works that women cannot think correctly and are excluded from social events because they are not granted the right to education. They state how the male-dominant society makes women dependent on men by considering women as two separate poles. They express that a woman is confined to the house and deprived of political and legal rights and she is convinced to have the sole purpose to dress nicely in order to sell herself to a man, and eventually she is left with no choice but to marry (Alkan, 2018: 37). A seduced girl or a woman who committed adultery is unquestioningly considered as a fallen woman because seduction and adultery are strictly unacceptable (Palmer, 1837, 1910: 7, 94, 15). In order to ensure the continuity of society and to meet the sexual desires of men, marriage becomes a requirement. Consequently, reproduction and the care of the home and family become the main duties of women in traditional structure (Doğramacı, 1992: 106).

Conclusion

As for syntagmatic relation, Esther was ten years old when her father died, and similarly, William was a child when his father died. Since Esther must support financially her very poor family, she goes to work as a kitchen-maid at the age of twenty by the Barfield family in a place called Woodview. She falls in love with William who also works there as a footman. Since both Esther and William are poor orphan children and must work to earn a living for their family, there is homology of relationship between them in terms of paradigmatic relation. As for the surface structure of the novel, after having an extramarital sexual intercourse and giving birth to a boy, Esther who is considered as a fallen woman struggles for her son by working as a maidservant. Although Esther struggles to draw 'New Woman' profile, the patriarchal society does not allow her to emancipate by excluding her from the society. In order to provide her son a surname and a good life, Esther marries William and adopts the typical angelic wife role by accepting her husband's authority. The surface meaning obtained from the surface structure is as follows: In the male-dominant society, it is believed that women who stay outside the institution of marriage, which is considered as the place where they are under the protection or responsibility of the man, are fluttering in destructive waters.

Education, motherhood, and horse racing become explicit signs in the deep structure in the following sense: While the signifier is education, the signified is knowledge and profession; while the signifier is motherhood, the signified is struggle and self-sacrifice; and while the signifier is horse racing, the signified is gambling and poverty. Since Esther is deprived of education by prejudices of patriarchal society, she cannot get a good profession and becomes a maidservant for a very low wage. In patriarchal society, as a mother, Esther struggles for her son in order to find food, shelter and clothing. Esther gets married with the father of her son because she is not offered any other options than marriage, but her husband leaves his family in poverty by gambling on horse racing. In terms of the deep structure of the novel, its harmony operates on binary opposition between 'being as a subject' and 'being as an object'. Esther is a 'being as a subject' at the beginning of the novel because she is free by creating her own value system through choice, action and responsibility. Esther makes a choice by

having an extramarital sexual intercourse with William, takes its action by giving birth to her son, and takes its responsibility by struggling for her son in patriarchal society in order to find food, shelter and clothing. Although Esther struggles to be free, the male-dominant society does not allow her to be free because it has prejudices about women. Esther becomes a 'being as an object' when she decides to marry the father of her son in order to provide him a surname and a good life because she adopts the typical angelic wife role by accepting her husband's authority. After her husband's death, Esther becomes a 'being as a subject' because she makes her choice not to marry again in order to maintain her autonomous identity without being under the dominance of a husband. The melody of the novel operates on the fixed cycle of getting married in patriarchal society. Although the novel ends, its melody continues because women will continue to be deprived of educational backgrounds and professions that will provide financial freedom. As for the deep meaning of the novel, there is no innate difference between men and women in terms of mental capacity, but there are prejudices imposed by the male-dominated society on women. This is because the patriarchal society does not allow women to have the same educational opportunities as men. Women who are not allowed an adequate education are left with no choice but to marry and have only the role of a wife and mother in society.

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