

A LIBERAL FEMINIST APPROACH TO BOBBIE ANN MASON'S "SHILOH" *

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ABSTRACT

Women's problems are undoubtedly as old as human history. By giving legal rights and political and economic power to men only, the male-dominant society deprives women of the public sphere and makes them dependent on men. Marriage becomes the sole purpose of women because they are convinced that only by this way they can take place in society. Reproduction and the care of the home and family are the main duties of women in the patriarchal structure. Once women begin to demand legal rights and freedom, the basis of feminism emerges. Liberal feminism can be said to be based on equal opportunities in education, women's access to public sphere and economic equality. Liberal feminist approach defines the equality and freedom of women with men in legal, family and social life.

When liberal feminist approach is applied to Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh", it allows researchers to analyse the gender roles in the context of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres. Norma Jean is an obedient housewife who accepts her duty of reproduction and care of the home and family in private sphere whereas her husband Leroy Moffitt is the breadwinner as a truck driver in the public sphere. However, Norma Jean takes a body-building class, enrolls in a composition class at night school, writes a paper about music and becomes the breadwinner. According to liberal feminist approach, Norma Jean's taking place in the public sphere is a manifestation of her claim of independence resulting in the breakdown of her marriage.

Keywords: Liberal Feminism, Women's Position, Separate Spheres, Bobbie Ann Mason, "Shiloh".

Introduction

Women's problems and the roots of women's rights expressed by feminism, which has history of about two centuries, are undoubtedly as old as human history. In this context, while dealing with the phenomenon of feminism, it is necessary to mention women's position in the historical process. In hunting communities, women become dependent on men during pregnancy and child rearing periods (Lerner, 1986: 37). After moving from hunting to farming, motherhood ceases to be just a biological factor, and the concepts of owning a property and being a family gain importance. After adopting a settled life, women are kept at home (Michel, 1993: 17, 18). As part of the concept of private property, women are held responsible for the care of home, left alone at home and isolated from the public sphere (Beauvoir, 1962: 17). In time, men make women their own property and give them only the role of reproduction. The male-dominant society gives power to men only, making women weak (Rich, 1995: 67). 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 are the main duties of women in the traditional structure (Doğramacı, 1992: 106). Marriage becomes the sole purpose of women because they are convinced that only by this way they can take place in society.

In the Middle Ages, women's existence is largely defined in relation to men, and they are not included in the general population classification. Women's legal entity is represented by their husbands, and their economic existence also belongs to their husbands (Cannon, 1999: 157, 159). Women are required to be deprived of all official duties to devote all their time and energy to family affairs (Mohl, 1933: 341). Since women have a busy working life at home and in the field, intellectuality is not expected from them and it is also important that they are either a virgin or honourable (Gies, 1980: 64).

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In the Renaissance period, married women are legally limited, so any legal proceedings performed without the consent of their husbands or judge are considered invalid. In this sense, women deal with family problems, take care of the housework, accept their husbands' authority to make decisions and avoid public problems (Michel, 1993: 44, 45). In the seventeenth century, due to weakness of intellect, women are considered possibly not to understand the complexities of public affairs (Boulding, 1976: 561).

In the Age of Enlightenment, according to Newton, things that are unreasonable are secondary, inadequate, unrealistic, unnamable and the other (Donovan, 1988: 3). Men think that they can rule women because of believing that they lack intelligence. The only role Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the important thinkers of the Age of Enlightenment, gives to women is family life, motherhood and childcare because women cannot be guided by their own minds (1987: 450, 446). According to Kant, women who have the instinct to protect their child are timid and weak by nature and are in need of the protection of men, and are therefore not suitable for academic studies that require reasoning (Schott, 1996: 474). The right to participate in public sphere and rationality are deemed necessary for citizenship, and women are kept at home by being excluded from the position of free and equal individuals since they are deemed to be devoid of reason.

In the eighteenth century, the education given to girls is very narrow and pursues the purpose of marriage (Schreiner, 1911: 50). Adopting the role of a wife and mother, women's education only consists of information on fulfilling her responsibilities regarding home and family. The main purpose of the poor girls' education is to teach domestic service together with the emphasis on domestic crafts, productivity, prudence, care and good governance that are necessary for the roles of a wife, mother and housewife (Barker, 2005: 37).

In the nineteenth century, the essential social institution includes the concepts of family and marriage. Women are a representative of good morality and are obliged to raise their children as moral civilized individuals and should have a positive opinion in all negative situations (Comte, 1853: 78). Men and women have separate spheres in the social hierarchy, and therefore, women are considered the angel at home (Peterson, 1984: 678). Public sphere is identified with rationality and men whereas the private sphere with sensuality, morality and women (İmançer, 2002: 153). Women are imprisoned at home because it is believed that women do not have the intelligence to make important decisions and the physical strength to struggle in public sphere. While men are considered strong, effective and governing, women are seen as weak, passive and obedient. Women's life is concentrated on their home, husband and children, and women at home are expected to develop emotionally and spiritually in order to relieve her husband from the stress in the public sphere. Until the moment of marriage, young girls are raised innocently and ignorant about sexuality while feelings of attachment to family and feelings of motherhood are considered to be inherent in them (Wollstonecraft, 1988: 27). Women are considered the assistant of men, the soul of home, and the mother of the family. As a wife and mother, women's sole passion is to love their home, housework and children (Lerner, 1979: 134). According to traditional conception, young girls grow up with the belief that their life's unquestionable purpose is marriage (Reed, 1975: 105). Mothers teach their daughters that they need male protection, that girls obey men and be tender minded. To find a husband, girls are taught that they do not need anything other than beauty. Thus, the male-dominant structure, in other words patriarchy, considers the superiority of men over women as an innate right. In terms of intelligence, power and effectiveness, men are considered superior by society whereas women are seen as inferior. While men are granted all kinds of rights, only duties such as child care and housework are imposed on women (Millett, 1970: 26). The existence of women depends on whether they are a wife, mother, or daughter of men and is protected by being imprisoned at home. Women are expected to obey and be self-sacrificing. Women who grow up in such an environment raise their own child according to this conception as they get used to and adopt it (Doğramacı, 1984: 135, 136).

Women consider marriage as a means of having a comfortable life and maintaining their social position (James, 1879: 52). Unfortunately, women cannot have the life they want after they get married. Women are considered the property of their father and then of their husbands. Among the

features of a woman is expected to be the spirit of self-sacrifice, the desire for motherhood and obedience to her husband. Seduction and adultery are strictly unacceptable. A seduced girl or a woman who committed adultery is unquestioningly considered as a fallen woman (Palmer, 1837, 1910: 7, 94, 15). Men are excluded from such moral responsibilities. Charlotte Perkins Gilman emphasizes in her "Women and Economics" that women are dependent on men for food, that sexual intercourse is an economic relationship and marriage affects negatively the development of women, thereby preventing their freedom and equality (1966: 5). While women are imprisoned at home, men freely wander around in public sphere; while the society accuses women for some behaviour, it praises men who act the same; while everything is free for men, everything is prohibited for women. The male-dominant society applies double standards to women in marriage (Asena, 2004: 96). Germaine Greer states that features such as obedience, passivity, and sexual passivity are attempted to be imposed on and embraced by women (1970: 15). In order to solve women's problem in the society and ensure social and legal equality between women and men, women must also take a position in public sphere (Davis, 2008: 112). By giving their own struggle, women can benefit equally from the opportunities men have. It is seen that women's position related to education, marriage and profession together with separate spheres is reflected in Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh". Norma Jean is an obedient housewife who accepts her duty of reproduction and care of the home and family in private sphere whereas her husband Leroy Moffitt is the breadwinner as a truck driver in the public sphere. This study attaches importance for its contribution to analyse whether the protagonist Norma Jean can get out of the role as a wife and mother imposed by the male-dominant society. This study applies liberal feminist approach to Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh" to analyse the gender roles in the context of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres.

Liberal Feminist Approach

By giving legal rights and political and economic power to men only, the male-dominant society makes women dependent on men (French, 1983: 83). By this way, women are deprived of public sphere. The emphasis on human mind and natural rights expressed in the Age of Enlightenment is also accepted for women. When women begin to demand legal rights and freedom, the basis of feminism emerges.¹ Theory and practice of women's liberation movement is labelled feminism (Kayahan, 1999: 9).² Women's problem deals with women's position in society, having equal rights and the development of women as an individual. Feminist theories and approaches try to find new strategies and policies for women's emancipation by identifying the oppressions women are exposed to and explaining their causes and consequences (Tong, 2006: 9-20). As a concept, feminism is defined as a movement that aims to improve women's position and rights in society. Thanks to liberalism, which opposes patriarchal conception and demands equal educational opportunities for women as men, the Equal Rights Movement begins to emerge. Liberal feminist approach, which is the first type of feminist thought influenced by rationalism and positivist thought, defines the equality and freedom of women with men in legal, family and social life (Çaha, 2003: 563).

Among the features on which liberal feminism is based, the following can be said: Equal opportunities in education, women's access to public sphere and economic equality (Çakır, 2009: 438-446). Equal opportunity in education is that there is no difference in mental capacity among genders. The way to achieve this equality is to provide equal education opportunities for girls and boys without making any distinction (Arat, 1991: 36-79). Women can achieve the duty they undertake with their knowledge by getting education (Doğramacı, 1992: IX). It is ensured that women spend all their energy on the house by preventing their access to the public sphere and imprisoning them at home. The way to get rid of imprisonment in private sphere is to have a good education and work in the public sphere (Walters, 2005: 121-161). Therefore, it is the women's working in the public sphere that provides the equality opening the door of freedoms (Çaha, 1996: 149). In this way, earning a living, having a say about their own future save women from being dependent on men, and women gain power in determining her own life (Dikici, 2016: 525).

¹ 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*". *Academic Studies in Philology-2019/2* (Ed. Zehra Göre), Cetinje-Montenegro: IVPE.

² Quotes from Turkish references are translated into English by the author of this study.

In the context of liberal feminist approach, 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. In her work "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft opposes teaching women to be gentle and obedient from a young age, to need male protection and to influence men with their beauty (1988: 19). Wollstonecraft states that the education provided turns women into trivial objects of desire and stupid people who pursue beauty and marriage. (1988: 10). Wollstonecraft sees women as a rational being and emphasizes the specification and benefit of the education that should be given to women: The most perfect education is the education that strengthens the body and heart and aims to develop conception (1988: 21). Wollstonecraft sees the basic way to end gender discrimination in giving women the same education as men: If boys and girls are taught together in the same fields, gender discrimination that defiles the mind is also eliminated (1988: 165). Patriarchal society, on the one hand, deprives women of good education and limits them to the role of wives and mothers only; on the other hand, it despises women's mental capacity. She states that the current situation of women is due to lack of education and emphasizes that women should be given a good education in order to fulfil their responsibilities properly.

In her work "The Enfranchisement of Women" (1851), Harriet Taylor argues that due to gender inequality, women are deprived of the public sphere and imprisoned in private sphere to fulfil their marital and maternal duties: Most women are excluded from all other career opportunities and do not have any other career chances but as wives and mothers to fulfil their maternal duties (1994: 189). According to Taylor, this dependence of women is not based on physical or biological reasons, but can be explained by patriarchy. Taylor states that the reason why women are left dependent on men can be explained as "it is so because men want so" (1994: 192). Women should not be deprived of the public sphere. According to Taylor, women's economic dependence should be ended and women should be able to benefit from education equally as men and be given the right to participate in the labour force. (Seiz and Pujol, 2000: 479).

In his works "Essays on Marriage" (1832), "Principles of Political Economy" (1848), "On Liberty" (1859) and "The Subjection of Women" (1869), John Stuart Mill deals with many issues affecting public life such as marriage, education, profession, and equality. In "Essays on Marriage" (1832), John Stuart Mill criticizes the laws that regulate the relationship between men and women, being written by men who take their own side yet: Marriage laws regulate the marriage contract in a way that prevents women from improving their social status (Mill, 1832). Mill says that women's financial dependence must come to an end: In order for women to gain independence, they must first receive a good education (Mill, 1832). In "Principles of Political Economy" (1848), John Stuart Mill advocates giving women the right to choose the professions they want to do with their free will: "Let women choose their professions" (1965: 765). It is necessary to eliminate women's economic dependence on men, to treat them as adults and independent people, to remove the barriers to women's participation in the labour force and free decision making mechanisms (Pujol, 1992: 24). In "On Liberty" (1859), by saying the individual must have rational decision-making authority over her or his own existence, John Stuart Mill opposes the opinion that women are defined only as mothers or wives, and that men should make decisions on women's behalf (1985: 21). The right to education and profession, which is granted to one half of the society, must be also granted to the other half of the society. In order for individuals to discuss freedom equally, their conditions must be equalized (Mill, 1985: 21). In "The Subjection of Women" (1869), John Stuart Mill who is one of the libertarian thinkers of that time states that his main concern is to change the unjust order between men and women to ensure full equality between them (1869: 1). Mill argues that changing the male-dependent positions of women is necessary for the general well-being of society: The current conditions arranging social relations between women and men make women dependent on men. It can be replaced by unconditional rules of equality without being based on privilege or power (1999: 3). According to Mill, the transformation of the marriage relationship into a slave relationship for women should be prevented, women should be seen as independent economic individuals, they should be given equal opportunities in matters such as the right to education and the choice of profession, and patriarchal prejudices that restrict them in society should be eliminated.

In the context of liberal feminist approach Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill explain that the male-dominant society makes women dependent on men because women are confined to private sphere, deprived of legal rights, convinced to dress nicely for men, and so women is left with no choice but to marry. The basis of this situation of women is due to the prejudices of the male-dominant society because women are not granted the right to education and profession as men. They emphasize that in order for women to improve their current situation, women should be given equal opportunities in education, should be able to stand without being dependent on men and gain economic freedom by being included in the public sphere (Alkan, 2018: 37, 38).

A Liberal Feminist Approach to Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh"

Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh" focuses on the gradual breakdown of Norma Jean and Leroy Moffitt's marriage. Norma Jean's mother Mabel Beasley has been grown up in patriarchal society. Women who grow up in such an environment raise their own child according to this conception as they get used to and adopt it. Therefore, Mabel is a traditional housewife whose husband has died when Norma Jean is at the age of ten. Mabel teaches her daughter to need male protection, obey men and be tender minded. To find a husband, girls are also taught that they do not need anything other than beauty. According to traditional conception, young girls grow up with the belief that their life's unquestionable purpose is marriage and they are also raised innocently and ignorant about sexuality. Norma Jean and Leroy marry at the age of eighteen because Norma Jean gets pregnant. Norma Jean's mother "Mabel has never really forgiven him for disgracing her by getting Norma Jean pregnant" (Mason, 1990: 46). In the patriarchy society, seduction and adultery are strictly unacceptable because a seduced girl or a woman who committed adultery is unquestioningly considered as a fallen woman; however, men are excluded from such moral responsibilities. Therefore, the fact that Norma Jean gets pregnant before marriage is considered a shame for Mabel and her daughter. Norma Jean and Leroy Moffitt have their son Randy a few months after their marriage. Leroy is a truck driver who goes on the road. "When Leroy came home he used to stay in the house with Norma Jean, watching TV in bed and playing cards. She would cook fried chicken, picnic ham, chocolate pie—all his favorites" (Mason, 1990: 47). Norma Jean has never complained about his traveling and she has also never made hurt remarks. The male-dominant society makes women dependent on men for food, so the sexual intercourse becomes an economic relationship and marriage affects negatively the development of women, thereby preventing their freedom and equality. The gender roles of Norma Jean and Leroy can be explained in the context of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres. Norma Jean is an obedient housewife who accepts her duty of reproduction and care of the home and family in private sphere whereas her husband Leroy Moffitt is the breadwinner as a truck driver in the public sphere. Women are imprisoned at home because it is believed that women do not have the intelligence to make important decisions and the physical strength to struggle in public sphere. Men are considered strong, effective and governing whereas women are seen as weak, passive and obedient. Therefore, women's life is concentrated on their home, husband and children, and women at home are expected to develop emotionally and spiritually in order to relieve her husband from the stress in the public sphere.

While Norma Jean and Leroy are at a drive-in watching a film, their child Randy who is sleeping in the back seat dies of sudden infant death syndrome "at the age of four months and three days old" (Mason, 1990: 46). Leroy takes Randy to a hospital and hands him to a nurse at the emergency room. Although the doctor says that it just happens sometimes, scientists say that crib death is caused by a virus. Leroy thinks that nobody knows anything because the answers are always changing. According to the male-dominant society, feelings of attachment to family and feelings of motherhood are considered to be inherent in women. As a wife and mother, women's sole passion is to love their home, housework and children. Married women have to ensure the continuity of society through reproduction. In this sense, Norma Jean is held responsible for her child's death as a mother who could not care for her baby.

Sixteen years have passed, but Norma Jean and Leroy never speak about their memories of Randy. They can hardly remember their child anymore. Norma Jean and Leroy are now thirty-four years old. Leroy has injured his leg in a highway accident. His physical therapy which involves weights and a pulley prompts his wife Norma Jean to try building herself up: "I'd give anything if I could just get

these muscles to where they're real hard" (Mason, 1990: 44). Norma Jean wants to have a rock-hard body and wants to assume a more masculine gender role. Leroy has a steel pin in his hip and will probably not be able to drive his truck again. Leroy has been home for three months. Norma Jean is often startled to find her husband at home. However, Leroy is home now all the time and wonders if one of them should mention the child. He has the feeling that they must create a new marriage, start afresh. Ever since they were married, Leroy has promised Norma Jean he will build her a new home one day: "They have always rented, and the house they live in is small and nondescript. It does not even feel like a home, Leroy realizes now" (Mason, 1990: 44). The dissatisfaction does not do with the condition of the house they share, but with the quality of their marriage. It is a bit strange that it has taken Leroy sixteen years to realize this situation. Norma Jean dismisses his idea because she thinks that he will not be allowed to build a log cabin in any of the new subdivisions. At Christmas, Leroy buys an electric organ for Norma Jean who used to play the piano when she was in high school. The new instrument has so many keys and buttons that she is bewildered by it at first. Norma Jean masters the organ and plays Christmas songs. Then she buys "The Sixties Songbook" and learns every tune in it, adding variations to each with the rows of brightly coloured buttons. Leroy likes to lie on the couch and smoke a joint and listen to Norma Jean.

Norma Jean's mother Mabel Beasley brings her an off-white dust ruffle she has made for the bed. By pointing to a tangle of yarn on a piece of canvas, Mabel asks Leroy in a loud voice what that thing is. Leroy holds it up for Mabel to see, and says "it's my needlepoint [...] a *Star Trek* pillow cover" (Mason, 1990: 47). Mabel criticizes him by saying "that's what a woman would do" (Mason, 1990: 47). Leroy's mother-in-law Mabel Beasley does not seem to be pleased and makes fun of his needlepoint pillow cover. In the patriarchal society, Leroy has to be the breadwinner as a truck driver in public sphere, but now he is sitting at home sewing like women in private sphere.

After the accident, Leroy does not want to work anymore. Therefore, Norma Jean takes place in the public sphere and works at the Rexall drugstore and has acquired an amazing amount of information about cosmetics. Norma Jean takes courage by her own masculine behaviour because she is now the sole breadwinner. She reads to Leroy a list of jobs, but he rejects a job that requires standing. So, Norma Jean reminds Leroy that she has the strength to stand behind a cosmetics counter all day long. In patriarchal society, men are considered strong, effective and governing while women are seen as weak, passive and obedient. However, Norma Jean has strengthened her body and can work in public sphere.

One day, Norma Jean is crying because her mother Mabel has caught her smoking. Mabel tells her daughter Norma Jean about the news that a dog has killed a baby when its mother is in the next room all the time, and the mother is thought to be as neglect. Norma Jean knows that her mother Mabel tells the news about the baby because she has caught Norma Jean smoking. Mabel holds her responsible for Randy's death and is trying to pay her back. As a traditional mother Mabel wants her daughter Norma Jean to have a baby in order to ensure the continuity of society through reproduction and to adopt her role as wife and mother in private sphere in terms of patriarchal society. Leroy hands a glass of beer to Norma Jean in order to comfort her. This shows that he is unable to cope with unpleasant situation although men are considered strong, effective and governing. Something is happening:

Norma Jean is going to night school. She has graduated from her six-week bodybuilding course and now she is taking an adult-education course in composition at Paducah Community College. She spends her evenings outlining paragraphs.

(Mason, 1990: 50)

In the patriarchal society, the education given to girls is very narrow and pursues the purpose of marriage. The main purpose of the poor girls' education is to teach domestic service together with the emphasis on domestic crafts, productivity, prudence, care and good governance that are necessary for the roles of a wife, mother and housewife. The male-dominant society, on the one hand, deprives women of good education and limits them to the role of wives and mothers only; on the other hand, it

despises women's mental capacity. Developing her body and mind, Norma Jean breaks out of her former position and takes on a more masculine role. Norma Jean just drags all day if she loses ten minutes' sleep, but "now she stays up late, writing compositions" (Mason, 1990: 50). In the case of Norma Jean, it is seen that there is no difference in mental capacity among genders. Although her second paper is called "Why Music Is Important to Me", Norma Jean does not play the organ anymore. While Norma Jean sits at the kitchen table to concentrate on her outlines, Leroy plays with his log house plans, practicing with a set of Lincoln Logs.

Leroy knows that Norma Jean is miles away and he is going to lose her. One day, Leroy tells Mabel the matter and asks her for a solution. Mabel makes comment about her daughter Norma Jean as follows: "I don't know what's got into that girl... She used to go to bed with the chickens. Now you say she's up all hours. Plus her a-smoking. I liked to died" (Mason, 1990: 50). As a traditional mother Mabel does not approve her daughter Norma Jean's strange behaviour. For their honeymoon, Mabel and her husband Jet Beasley "visited the battleground, and then Norma Jean was born" (Mason, 1990: 50). Since Mabel and Jet has been there on their honeymoon and Norma Jean has been conceived there, Mabel offers Leroy to take a trip together with Norma Jean to Shiloh, the Civil War battlefield, for second honeymoon. Mabel thinks that Norma Jean needs a little change because "her brain's all balled up over them books" (Mason, 1990: 50). The idea of the patriarchal family is posited behind the action proper of "Shiloh", and it originates at Shiloh. Through her offer, Mabel hopes that the trip to Shiloh will rekindle Norma Jean and Leroy's marriage. In this sense, Mabel thinks that Norma Jean will adopt her role as a wife and mother in private sphere by becoming pregnant again. That evening Norma Jean is reading a book about another century. When she learns that her husband's name Leroy means 'the king' in French, she becomes aware of the irony in the definition because her husband is not strong, effective and governing anymore. Norma Jean's education both empowers and drives her away from Leroy. Similarly, he knows that Norma Jean's books take her beyond his reach, and he feels that she may have ceased to see him the head of the household. By flexing her biceps, Norma Jean confirms Leroy's suspicions, meaning that she is the one in charge of things now. When Leroy asks Norma Jean about the meaning of her own name, she says that "Norma comes from the Normans, they were invaders" (Mason, 1990: 51). The meaning of her name shows that Norma Jean is superior intelligence, it identifies with a masculine warrior role, and that the Norman invaders conquer the king. Although Norma Jean does not feel much satisfied to see Shiloh, she feels an obligation to her mother. Therefore, she decides to visit Shiloh to satisfy her mother Mabel, not herself.

On Sunday, after Norma Jean packs a picnic, she drives to Shiloh together with Leroy, sitting beside her. The male-dominant society considers women as weak and passive because of not having the physical strength to struggle in public sphere. Since Norma Jean has developed her body and mind, she drives while Leroy is sitting beside her. At Shiloh, Norma Jean passes the log cabin which is surrounded by tourists looking for bullet holes. Norma Jean and Leroy find a picnic spot near the cemetery. When they sit in silence, Norma Jean says to Leroy without looking at him that she wants to leave him and explains her reason:

I want to leave you... You can't stop me... Everything was fine till Mama caught me smoking... That set something off... She won't leave me alone—you won't leave me alone... I feel eighteen again. I can't face that all over again.

(Mason, 1990: 52)

When Norma Jean got married at the age of eighteen, she had no control over her life and did things to please her mother Mabel and her husband Leroy, but not herself. Therefore, Leroy's being home again reminds Norma Jean of those painful days because she had to get married due to being pregnant, but then lost her baby to sudden infant death syndrome. Norma Jean is dissatisfied with her mother Mabel and her husband Leroy because she does not want to fulfil their expectations anymore. If she tries to make her mother and husband happy, she will not have a chance to find out what will make her happy. Since women are not granted the right to education and profession as men, the male-dominant society considers women as weak, passive and obedient, deprives them of the public sphere and imprisons in

private sphere to make them dependant economically on men, fulfilling their main duties of reproduction and the care of the home and family. Women are also convinced that only through marriage they can gain a position in society. However, Norma Jean develops her body and mind by taking a body-building class, and enrolling in a composition class at night school. Norma Jean's becoming a breadwinner in the public sphere is a manifestation of her claim of independence. Now she chooses to grow up and take her destiny into her own hands because she is strong enough to say clearly that she wants to end her marriage. Norma Jean has moved away to walk through the cemetery. Norma Jean looks out over the Tennessee River toward Leroy and waves her arms. She seems to be doing an exercise for her chest muscles. Norma Jean takes the trip to get away from Leroy and Mabel, and the idea of conceiving another child. Therefore, the trip to Shiloh effects just the opposite what Mabel has hoped because the expected traditional family disintegrates completely. The real inner workings of a marriage have also escaped Leroy. Now he understands that building a log house is a meaningless idea. Leroy realizes that he is unable to play the role of the powerful husband. He begins to think of Norma Jean to be strong and smart.

Conclusion

Women's problems and the roots of women's rights expressed by feminism, which has history of about two centuries, are undoubtedly as old as human history. The male-dominant society considers women as weak, passive and obedient because it does not grant women the right to education and profession as men. Marriage becomes the sole purpose of women because they are convinced that only through this they can gain a position in society. Due to gender inequality, women are deprived of the public sphere and imprisoned in private sphere to fulfil their marital and maternal duties. The main duties of women in the patriarchal structure are reproduction and the care of the home and family. Once women begin to demand legal rights and freedom, the basis of feminism emerges. Liberal feminism can be said to be based on equal opportunities in education, women's access to public sphere and economic equality. Liberal feminist approach defines the equality and freedom of women with men in legal, family and social life. When liberal feminist approach is applied to Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh", it allows researchers to understand the gender roles in the context of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres.

Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh" focuses on the gradual breakdown of Norma Jean and Leroy Moffitt's marriage. Norma Jean's mother Mabel Beasley has been grown up in patriarchal society. Therefore, Mabel is a traditional housewife whose husband has died when Norma Jean is at the age of ten. Mabel teaches her daughter to need male protection, obey men and be tender minded. Norma Jean and Leroy marry at the age of eighteen because Norma Jean gets pregnant. According to traditional conception, young girls grow up with the belief that their life's unquestionable purpose is marriage and they are also raised innocently and ignorant about sexuality. Therefore, the fact that Norma Jean gets pregnant before marriage is considered a shame for Mabel and her daughter. Norma Jean and Leroy Moffitt have their son Randy a few months after their marriage. The gender roles of Norma Jean and Leroy can be explained in the context of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres. Norma Jean is an obedient housewife who accepts her duty of reproduction and care of the home and family in private sphere whereas her husband Leroy Moffitt is the breadwinner as a truck driver in the public sphere. While Norma Jean and Leroy are at a drive-in watching a film, their child Randy who is sleeping in the back seat dies of sudden infant death syndrome at the age of four months and three days old. Norma Jean is held responsible for her child's death as a traditional mother who could not care for her baby.

Sixteen years have passed. Leroy has injured his leg in a highway accident. His physical therapy which involves weights and a pulley prompts his wife Norma Jean to try building herself up. Norma Jean wants to have a rock-hard body and wants to assume a more masculine gender role. In the patriarchal society, Leroy has to be the breadwinner as a truck driver in public sphere, but now he does not want to work anymore and is sitting at home sewing like women in private sphere. There is also a change in Norma Jean because she has graduated from her six-week bodybuilding course, she is taking an adult-education course in composition at Paducah Community College, and she spends her evenings outlining paragraphs. Developing her body and mind, Norma Jean breaks out of her former

position and takes on a more masculine role. In the case of Norma Jean, it is seen that there is no difference in mental capacity among genders. Norma Jean's education both empowers and drives her away from Leroy. Therefore, Norma Jean takes place in the public sphere and works at the Rexall drugstore and has acquired an amazing amount of information about cosmetics. Norma Jean tells Leroy that she has the physical strength to stand behind a cosmetics counter all day long. As a traditional mother Mabel does not approve her daughter Norma Jean's strange behaviours. Mabel wants her daughter Norma Jean to have a baby in order to ensure the continuity of society through reproduction and to adopt her role as wife and mother in private sphere in terms of patriarchal society. Since Mabel and Jet has been to Shiloh on their honeymoon and Norma Jean has been conceived there, Mabel offers Leroy to take a trip together with Norma Jean to Shiloh, the Civil War battlefield, for second honeymoon. The idea of the patriarchal family is posited behind the action proper of "Shiloh", and it originates at Shiloh. Through her offer, Mabel hopes that the trip to Shiloh will rekindle Norma Jean and Leroy's marriage. In this sense, Mabel thinks that Norma Jean will adopt her role as a wife and mother in private sphere by becoming pregnant again. Norma Jean decides to visit Shiloh to satisfy her mother Mabel, not herself. Since Norma Jean has developed her body and mind, she drives while Leroy is sitting beside her.

At Shiloh, Norma Jean and Leroy find a picnic spot near the cemetery. When they sit in silence, Norma Jean says to Leroy without looking at him that she wants to leave him and explains her reason. Norma Jean is dissatisfied with her mother Mabel and her husband Leroy because she does not want to fulfil their expectations anymore. If she tries to make her mother and husband happy, she will not have a chance to find out what will make her happy. However, Norma Jean develops her body and mind by taking a body-building class, and enrolling in a composition class at night school. Norma Jean's becoming a breadwinner in the public sphere is a manifestation of her claim of independence. Now she chooses to grow up and take her destiny into her own hands because she is strong enough to say clearly that she wants to end her marriage. Norma Jean takes the trip to get away from Leroy and Mabel, and the idea of conceiving another child. Therefore, the trip to Shiloh effects just the opposite what Mabel has hoped because the expected traditional family disintegrates completely.

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