

MOTHERHOOD IN PAT BARKER'S POST-INDUSTRIAL WORKING-
CLASS FICTION: A STUDY OF *UNION STREET* AND *LIZA'S ENGLAND*

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ABSTRACT

MOTHERHOOD IN PAT BARKER'S POST-INDUSTRIAL WORKING-CLASS FICTION: A STUDY OF *UNION STREET* AND *LIZA'S ENGLAND*

Çağlar, Bircan

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This thesis aims to explore issues such as motherhood, poverty, entrapment, procreation, abortion, alienation and violence in Pat Barker's two early post-industrial novels *Union Street* and *Liza's England* by foregrounding the role of socio-economic factors in female characters' oppression. Christine Delphy's *Close to Home* and Stevi Jackson's "Women and the Family" have been used as a theoretical framework in order to explore Barker's portrayal of working-class wives' and mothers' oppression in a patriarchal society. The novels' emphasis on how poverty limits possibilities, affects the experience of motherhood, causes moral ambiguities and violence is underlined through an analysis of the treatment of motherhood in the novels. Barker's critical stance to the experience of motherhood her exploration of the ways in which the practices of motherhood are contingent upon other factors such as poverty, hard work and, constant procreation are studied in the light of Anne Woollet, Anne Phoenix and Eva Llyod's *Motherhood: Meanings, Practices and Ideologies*. This thesis also analyses the ambiguity of relationships between mothers and daughters and the socioeconomic factors shaping the practices of motherhood.

Keywords: Motherhood, Poverty, Working-Class Women, Post-Industrial England, Violence

ÖZ

PAT BARKER'IN SANAYİ-SONRASI TOPLUMU İŞÇİ SINIFI
ROMANLARINDA ANNELİK KAVRAMI: *UNION STREET* VE *LIZA'S*
ENGLAND ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Bu tez, Pat Barker'ın sanayi-sonrası-toplumu romanları olan *Union Street* ve *Liza's England*'daki annelik, fakirlik, hapsolme, doğurma, kürtaj, yabancılaşma ve şiddet gibi konuları, kadınların baskılanmasındaki sosyo-ekonomik faktörlerin rolünü vurgulayarak incelemeyi amaçlar. Barker'ın ataerkil bir toplumda işçi sınıfı eşçilerinin ve annelerinin baskılanmasını nasıl betimlediği Christine Delphy'nin *Close to Home* ve Stevi Jackson'un "Women and the family" adlı kuramsal çalışmaları ışığında incelenmiştir. Barker romanlarının annelik deneyimi karşısındaki sorgulayıcı tutumu ve annelik işleyişinin fakirlik, ağır iş, devamlı doğurma gibi faktörlere bağlı olduğuna olan vurgusu Anne Woollet, Anne Phoenix ve Eva Llyod' un editörlüğünü yaptığı *Motherhood: Meanings, Practices and Ideologies* isimli çalışmadan yararlanarak incelenmiştir. Bu tez ayrıca romanlarda ön plana çıkan anneler ve kızlar arasındaki ilişkilerin belirsizliği meselesini yine sosyoekonomik faktörlerle ilişkilendirerek inceler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Annelik, Fakirlik, İşçi Sınıfı Kadınları, Şiddet, Sanayi Devrimi Sonrası İngiltere

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pat Barker is a prominent novelist who has proven her literary genius as a mainstream writer alongside her well-attested feminism. She comes from a working-class background and her early works such as *Union Street* (1982), *Blow Your House Down* (1984) and *Liza's England* (1986) depict the lives of working-class people, especially women. Barker spent most of her childhood with her grandparents after her mother married and left her. She was raised first on a chicken farm and later in a fish-and-chip shop. This background highly affected her writing and she set most of her novels in a working-class environment, at first, focusing on women but later on including male protagonists, as well. Attending a grammar school, she stepped outside the working-class life, which is reminiscent of Kath's, a character in *Liza's England*, leaving her district to go to a grammar school.

When she first began to write in the 1970s, her writings were mostly about the middle classes and she failed to find a publisher. In one of the interviews conducted by Rob Nixon, she admits that after several rejections she believed she was not going to be published and says "... so I would write the book I wanted to write anyway, which I didn't think could be published, which was *Union Street*" (Nixon 4). She attended a creative writing course in which Angela Carter was teaching in Yorkshire and she showed her some excerpts from *Union Street*, and Carter encouraged her to keep writing. She supported her to "stick to what she knew: the lives of working-class women in the post-industrial northeast of England" (Carson 56). Barker, then, started to produce working-class novels. *Union Street*, which is about seven working-

class women who suffer from similar problems and share similar lifestyles, was published in 1982.

Barker explores issues such as poverty, violence, motherhood, procreation, abortion, long-term unemployment, labor and dereliction in her works of fiction. Her protagonists were mainly women until she wrote *The Man Who Wasn't There* (1989). Later on, in her own expression, she “changed the sex” and started to write about men, as well. Her *Regeneration Trilogy* has a male protagonist and in these prize-winning novels Barker has proved her ability to “write outside her experience” (Ross 131).

Her second novel, *Blow Your House Down*, was published two years after *Union Street*. It explores similar issues like motherhood, violence, poverty, sexual harassment and domestic labor. This time, Barker’s characters are sex workers and the story revolves around the lives of women who are linked by similar concerns. She uses a serial killer character to link the characters to one another. Her third novel is *The Century’s Daughter* (1986), which was published later as *Liza’s England*. In these works Barker explores similar issues; but in this novel, the reader goes between the past and the present, witnessing the historical past of England as well as the lives of derelict, isolated, deprived working-class youth in England in the post-industrial era.

Motherhood, poverty, procreation, violence, backstreet abortion, entrapment, rape and labor are the issues mostly associated with those of Barker’s novels that have female protagonists. She explores these issues over and over again in her novels, especially in the early ones. Although she examines similar lifestyles and her stories take place in limited areas, her works deal with some broader issues and notions. She explores individuals’ lifestyles and these characters are intermingled with one another revealing broader truths about England. In each novel she opens up new political, historical and sociological perspectives for the reader to ponder. In the early

three novels, Barker focuses on the entrapment and mediocrity that working-classes, or more specifically working-class mothers suffer from. This link is a unifying but at the same time a dividing factor for the women; in spite of these disturbing and gloomy themes, her novels also attempt to convey a sense of hope and a chance of regeneration to the reader.

Pat Barker reveals the harsh truths about post-industrial Britain and sets her stories generally in the Northeast of England. Her stories are located in neighborhoods stricken by the impact of de-industrialization. In these settings, the closing down of factories, steelworks, and coal pits, and the declining manufacturing industries have created large-scale unemployment and rendered most of the people impotent. *Union Street* and *Liza's England* present epitomes of post-industrial urban decay. Tim Tomlinson depicts this period as follows:

Older inequalities widened once again at a rate and on a scale not seen since before the second-world war. There was a marked increase in poverty, especially for the old and unskilled among the manual working classes. Women were to suffer more than men in this respect. The growth of what came to be described as sink municipal housing estates was accelerated by the physical departure of the skilled workers and their families who became home owners and moved out to more salubrious surrounding. (382)

In *Union Street* and *Liza's England*, Barker explores the issues that have been mostly neglected in earlier working-class novels, such as motherhood. In these novels, Barker gives priority to women, especially working-class women. In Barker's novels, there is a move away from a working-class sentimentality and unity. Her novels foreground economic conditions as major factors defining the ways in which working-class people live and it is difficult to find fixed gender and class relations as everything is contingent upon other factors. Motherhood, violence and heavy labor are all defined according to the socioeconomic context people live in.

John Brannigan's book *Pat Barker* (2005), which examines Barker's novels from *Union Street* to *Regeneration*, is very significant in that from the very beginning Brannigan distinguishes Pat Barker both from some earlier working-class writers and some of her contemporaries. He talks about the differences between Barker's depiction of working-class lifestyles and that of some earlier working-class writers. According to Brannigan, working class people in Barker's novel are not fixed entities "in which men and women have their apparently timeless places at the hearth and the factory" (16) as in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) by Hoggart, nor do her novels depict the men enacting rituals between factory and work, drinking, having sex, and passing the time left after long work hours, as in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) by Allan Sillitoe. According to Brannigan women were neglected or represented as commodities in these as in most earlier studies of the working-class. In Barker's novels, however, there are men who are decimated and left impotent by the impact of mass unemployment, and women who are working themselves to the detriment of their health in order to have the most basic standards to be alive. Brannigan distinguishes Pat Barker from her contemporaries as well. He holds that:

Many of Barker's contemporaries, such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Salman Rushdie, Caryl Philips and Hanif Kureishi, have explored the historical and contemporary legacies of empire and global migration patterns in Britain. Other contemporaries such as Peter Ackroyd, A.S. Byatt, Graham Swift and Iain Sinclair have been closer to Barker's own concerns, however, with the more local meanings of history and historical geography, and the spectral filtration of the past into the present. (8)

The reader witnesses the human condition under the oppression of poverty and unemployment, and is shown, dissolution with all its bleakness. Her starting point is women but the implications of these novels are broader. As Mark Rawlinson states: "[Barker's fiction] makes us think as it makes us feel, it causes us to stand back and ponder moral and intellectual dilemmas at the same time as we are drawn into identifying with her characters" (14).

Although she is accepted as a feminist writer, her canvas not only presents women who are neglected but also men left idle because of socio-economic factors, world wars and post-industrialism. In one of her interviews, she expresses herself as follows: “I hate to generalize at all about the sexes. You think of your characters as totally unique human beings. That's why fiction is so valuable- because you aren't thinking about categories, while every other genre consigns you to a category” (Perry 10).

Although Barker has now been recognized by the literary milieu for many years, detailed academic studies of her works were not produced until the 2000s. Sharon Monteith wrote and published a full evaluation of her fiction in *Pat Barker*, in 2002; in this she focuses on common topics such as women and sex work, war experience, and dispossessed men in a post-industrial wasteland in the novels, and she claims that Barker's women fail to constitute a sisterhood as there is no class solidarity in Barker's novels. Monteith examines *Liza's England* through Stephen's, a social service worker in the novel, act of story-telling and regards it as similar to a deep x-ray device reflecting the way of living in northeast England since the beginning of the 1900s. She also draws attention to the lack of speech and failure to communicate effectively in this novel, which she claims is significant as it shows alienation between people. John Brannigan also published a detailed study of Barker's novels titled *Pat Barker*(2005), which emphasizes Barker's dialogic tendency and her frequent use of the word “derelict”. He also points out that “ ‘home’ and ‘street’, the stable anchors of existence in Hoggart's working-class community, are derelict or dystopian sites in Barker's post-industrial imagination” (17). According to Brannigan, Barker's use of dialogue is important in that it indicates both the social markers that surround her characters and their background and it is important also in that, by enabling the novels regularly to change perspectives it prevents the elevating of one character over another. Brannigan also holds that Barker's novels do offer hope in that “the ability to represent hope and survival in the darkest corners of a derelict, post-industrial society has become perhaps the most persistent attribute of Barker's work” (34).

Critical Perspectives on Pat Barker (2005) edited by Sharon Monteith, Margaretta Jolly, Nahem Yousaf and Ronald Paul includes various essays with distinctive approaches to the novels from *Union Street* to *The Regeneration*. Sarah Brophy's article "Working-Class Women, Labor, and the Problem of Community in *Union Street* and *Liza's England*" is significant as it provides a detailed comparison of two novels, shedding light on the interconnections between both. Brophy's argument is similar to this thesis' argument, in that Brophy contends that contrary to many critics who claim that the working-class women in Barker's novels, represents sisterhood or a shared-struggle against patriarchy, they are actually ambiguous and interrogative about the existence of any coherent working-class community, solidarity or "collective agency" (25). Brophy also claims that when the two novels are compared, "emphasis on women's entrapment in a cycle of violence and degradation in *Union Street* is modified, to some degree, by the investigation in *Liza's England* of how this cycle may be interrupted..." (26): this thesis argues that this cycle is interrupted to some extent by Liza. Mark Rawlinson, in his book *Pat Barker* (2010) also talks about Barker's way of conveying sense of hope for the people who seem to be condemned to poverty.

There are also numerous articles written about Barker's works: John Kirk's essay "Recovered Perspectives: Gender, Class, and Memory in Pat Barker's Writing," for instance, explores Barker's three early novels and compares her way of representing working-class lives to the ways of her precursors and her contemporaries. He also claims that *Liza's England* is in danger of expressing working-class sentimentality because Liza is so proud of her past and remembers and misses the old days. Sarah Falcus with her essay "A Complex Mixture of Fascination and Distaste: Relationships between Women in Pat Barker's *Blow Your House Down*, *Liza's England* and *Union Street*" examines women in the three novels in relation to a cyclical timescale, in which motherhood is represented as a trap surrounding women and the relationship between people are interpreted as being complex.

Mine Özyurt Kılıç in her article “Where History Meets Ethics: Pat Barker’s *Liza’s England*” studies how Barker’s thematic concerns actually carry an ethical stance to the issues such as “work”, “communication”, “connection”, “poverty” and “motherly affection”. Kılıç claims that most of the themes in *Liza’s England* have been studied as being just “common thematic features of Barker’s fiction” (9), although, Barker’s narrative strategy does actually foster ethical concerns and suggestions. She studies Barker’s “narrative strategies and their thematic implications” (10) and draws attention to the bond between Liza and Stephen: “The strength of the ethical suggestions *Liza’s England* makes mostly lies in its portrayal of care as a reciprocal process. The novel does this by a convincing picture of the interaction between Liza and Stephen” (12).

Barker in an interview with Mark Rawlinson states that: “[a]ll the novelist ever contributes is a sense of complexity of the issues as they are worked out in individual lives. The novelist has a boring role of saying neither the issues nor the feelings are as simple as they appear” (Rawlinson 167). This thesis does not aim to put forward a completely new reading of Pat Barker’s two novels but rather to explore issues Barker conscientiously touches upon while writing her novels and to draw attention to their importance and complexity. The aim of this thesis is to study the relationship between working-class women in *Union Street* and *Liza’s England* in post-industrial England by focussing on the ambiguous relationship between mothers and daughters in the cycle of poverty, violence, abortion and alienation. This thesis also explores the novels from the point of view of notions such as motherhood, poverty, violence and the ways in which these issues are interrelated to each other and subsequently affect one another.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this thesis it will be argued that Barker's novels *Union Street* (1982) and *Liza's England* (1984) foreground the role of socioeconomic factors in the female characters' oppression; to this end, the main emphasis will be put on the novels' focus on the devaluation of women's unpaid domestic labor, which emerges in these novels as a major factor in women's subordination. Therefore, in this chapter some materialist feminist criticism regarding women's double oppression under the sway of capitalism and the devaluation of unpaid domestic labor will be discussed. Christine Dephy's *Close to Home* (1970) and Stevi Jackson's "Women and the Family" (1982) will constitute the theoretical framework. Furthermore, Suzan Lewis's problematization of the term "working mother" in "Motherhood and Employment: The Impact of Social and Organizational Values" and Ann Phoenix and Anne Woollett's questioning of the notion of the "ideal mother" in the article "Motherhood: Social Construction, Politics and Psychology (1991)" will be integrated into the discussion.

Christine Delphy plays an important role in the French women's liberation movement and she is among the first to see housework as production. Since housework is unpaid and mostly undertaken by women, it is central to women's subordination. She thinks domestic work is not different from so-called productive work. Women's domestic work was a highly controversial issue for Marxists during the 1970s. They examined housework in relation to the contribution it made to capitalism, "within what became known as 'the domestic labour debate' which

dominated theoretical discussions on housework in many Western countries, particularly in Britain and Canada, throughout the 1970s” (Jackson 21).

Delphy brings forth a different vantage point to the role of housework in women’s subordination and criticizes the theories that ground the differences between men and women on nature/biology or hegemonic ideas. “Delphy uses the historical, materialist and dialectical principles of Marxism to argue that the relations of production of domestic work are separate from wage relations and constitute a particular exploitative class relation [for women]” (Miles 248). She believes that theories developed to explain class relationships are inadequate in explaining women’s subordination as they ignore the oppressive factors which are specific to women. “She was among the first in the recent wave of feminism to stress the structural importance of the family in understanding women’s situation and she has continued to stress the significance of divisions within family” (Leonard 8). She was also influential in shaping the materialist discourse in Britain during the period in which Barker wrote *Liza’s England* and *Union Street* as her work *Close to Home* consists of theoretical articles written between 1970 and 1981; these articles construct the backbone of what is called “materialist feminism”. They were translated into English and Delphy’s work on domestic labour and on materialist feminism found particular currency in Britain during the mid-1980s, when the infamous ‘domestic labour debate’, and, more importantly, the relationship between Marxism and feminism, marked the heartland of feminist theory” (Adkins, Leonard 10).

Stevi Jackson too is an advocate of materialist feminism and her allegiance to it is shaped by Delphy’s works. She played an important role in introducing “materialist feminism” to Britain during the period in which Marxist feminists had moved away from sociology. While they focused on social structures, seeing women’s oppression as the product of the patriarchal/capital system; as Jackson put it, “[Marxist feminists] had been resistant to French materialist feminism, but were more receptive

to the ideas that might extend Marxism's reach without challenging its central tenets" (Jackson 285).

According to Jackson patriarchal and gendered structures should be examined in relation to their sociological and historical contexts because "our sense of who we are in relation to others constantly guides our actions and interactions and conversely who we are is in part a consequence of our location within gendered class, racial, and other divisions and of the social and cultural milieux we inhabit" (Jackson 284). The concept and identity of woman is a cultural construct; therefore, this concept has to be problematized in the first place in order to be able to better understand women's positioning in society. According to Jackson "A materialist perspective is necessarily a sociologically informed one [in which the] social encompasses all aspects of social life, from structural inequalities to everyday interaction" (Jackson 284). She is a feminist critic who is against any ideas that reduce women's oppression to a single cause; and she emphasizes that women and men are the products of a social hierarchy. "During the 1980s [in Britain] there was a compelling reason for questioning the category "women," in that it served to conceal differences among women and to privilege definitions of womanhood framed from White Western viewpoints" (Jackson 285). Stevi Jackson emphasizes the differences among women to problematize the treatment of "woman" as a monolithic and universal category; therefore, her materialist point of view makes her theory sensitive to differences such as class, race, ethnicity and sexuality.

Irigaray is also among the ones who problematized the term "woman" and tried to explain how women have come to be oppressed in patriarchal symbolic order. According to her women are defined and commodified in relation to the paradigms of patriarchal order and are associated with the task of nurturing and reproduction. Even women evaluate themselves and their appearances in relation to the terms adopted by male world and contribute to their own suppression. Therefore, women cannot relate to each other as they are not capable of seeing each other without the

norms appropriated to the patriarchal symbolic order and their existence has become unspeakable.

Commodities can only enter into relationships under the watchful eyes of their 'guardians'. It is out of the question for them to go to 'market' on their own, enjoy their own worth among themselves, speak to each other, desire each other, free from the control of the seller-buyer-consumer subjects. And the interests of businessmen require that commodities relate to each other as rivals. (196)

Since there are a number of different factors which play significant roles in women's oppression which is not unilateral in that it changes from one society to another or from one time period to another and even from one family to another, I will narrow down my focus to the studies of the oppressive role of domestic labor (childrearing is included) in the life of working class mothers in Britain in the 1970s and 80s.

Pat Barker mistrusts generalizations. She does not want to see the world through labels. She was not content with the idea of being remembered as a feminist writer writing only about women. Perhaps that is why she has written mainly about men from her fourth novel onward. She does not want to allow her work to be seen as belonging to a single category of writing. A statement she makes in one of her interviews indicates her idea of feminism and reveals that she is against the idea of categorization and stereotyping.

I want to protest the idea that feminist writing and feminism are exclusively about women. I think it's about the way in which gender stereotypes distort the personal development of both sexes and makes people less creative and happy than they otherwise might be... I hate to generalize at all about the sexes. You think of your characters as totally unique human beings. That's why fiction is so valuable because you aren't thinking about categories, while every other genre consigns you to a category (Perry 244).

Barker's idea of feminism corresponds to that of Delphy and Jackson in that all three see generalizations and social constructions as a barrier to understanding and analyzing women's oppression. That is why in this study I will analyze Barker's

exploration of women's oppression in terms of materialistic aspects without ignoring the differences among her female characters

Women's subordination is directly related to their contribution to production and their contribution is devalued for various reasons. Therefore, in order to better understand the factors playing important roles in women's oppression Delphy examines women's productive labor and tries to find the ways in which they differ from men's contribution to production. She holds that there are two modes of production. "Most goods are produced in the industrial mode. Domestic services, childrearing and certain other goods are produced in the family mode. The first mode of production gives rise to economic exploitation. The second gives rise to familial, or more precisely, patriarchal exploitation" (Delphy 69). So, Delphy sees women as forming a class in itself which is close to "serfdom" because production in domestic work is seen as different from the activities which are accepted as productive due to their monetary value. Delphy holds that there are reciprocal relationships between capitalism and patriarchy, which she defines; "as the system of subordination of women to men in contemporary industrial societies . . . this system has an economic base, and this base is the domestic mode of production" (Delphy 18). According to Delphy, men have control over the domestic mode of production and that is why women are exploited. Stevi Jackson, too, sees domestic work as taking place within the boundaries of patriarchal mode of production in which men exploit women's labor. She analyses domestic work in relation to other types of work which "involve the sale of labor power for a set of hours in return for a given wage" (Jackson 186). and holds that domestic labor is different from other types due to the following reasons:

No other occupation is not only exclusively allocated to one gender, but includes almost all adults of that gender among its practitioners. No other job is so intimately bound up with personal ties or so grounded in an ethic of personal service. There is no fixed job description for a domestic laborer, no agreed hours and conditions of work and no trade unions. Housework is work without boundaries or

limits, with no clear beginning and end points, with no guaranteed space or time for leisure (Jackson 185).

According to Delphy domestic services have no value in production. They are unpaid and that is why they are devalued and vice versa. Although much of Delphy's argument is based solely on agricultural families, it provides a starting point to understand and analyze the double burden of labor on working-class women.

The duties that women do at home are "excluded from the realm of exchange and consequently have no value. They are unpaid. Whatever women receive in return is independent of the work which they perform because it is not handed out in exchange for that work" (Delphy 60). Even if domestic work is recognized as a type of production, it is devalued as it does not have any monetary value and cannot find itself a place in social strata. "Operations such as manufacture of bread, clothes and preserved foods, which were once part of household activities, are now performed outside the home. Bakeries, clothing manufacturers and canning and freezing companies today sell goods incorporating paid labor which were, in the past produced with unpaid labor by women" (Delphy 65). Yet, this did not lead to an acknowledgement of women's work at home as real work or liberate women from domestic responsibilities.

Women's entry into industry as paid workers was the direct consequence of its becoming impossible to exploit their labor power completely within the family. However, part of a woman's labour power is still appropriated since she must fulfill her family responsibilities that is, she must do housework and raise children without pay. Not only has going out to work not freed woman from domestic work, it has not been allowed to interfere with it either. Thus what women have been free to do has been to have a double workload in return for a certain amount of economic independence (Delphy 68).

This situation subordinates single mothers more intensely because they have to take care of their children on their own without a partner to help them economically and emotionally.

The notion of the family should be studied in itself as it is also an oppressing factor for women because of their familial “duties”. Socially constructed familial expectations about motherhood and housewifery double the pressure on women’s shoulders. Many theories about the subordination of women have been grounded on the notion of the family, but it is a problematic term. It has long been discussed by feminist critics. As it is impossible to talk about family from a single perspective and as women have experienced different forms of family life throughout history and in different cultures, the meanings and discussion of this concept varies from one society to another.

In order to explore the condition of working-class women and mothers in *Liza’s England* and *Union Street*, the notions of the family and motherhood can be analyzed in the light of Stevi Jackson’s writings. In her article “Women and the Family” she gives a description of the family concept in Britain of the late twentieth century with the help of the information given by the Central Statistical Office, Kiernan and Wicks, 1990 as follows:

The 'cereal packet' image of the supposedly 'normal' family - white and middle -class with a breadwinning husband, domesticated dependent wife and two children - does not, in fact, represent the normal or the typical. Married couples with dependent children account for only 28 per cent of British households and 44 per cent of the total population. Over half of these nuclear families have two breadwinners and only about one in five adult women under retirement age are full-time house workers. Although over 80 per cent of women can still expect to marry, cohabitation and divorce are both on the increase, and 36 per cent of marriages are remarriages. Growing numbers of women are living alone or rearing children independently; 16 per cent of families with children are headed by single parents and 22 per cent of children are not living with both of their natural parents. One quarter of children are now being born to unmarried women, just over half of whom are cohabiting with a man, and 20 per cent of children can expect to experience parental divorce before they reach the age of sixteen (Jackson 178).

These statistics show the diversity of women's family types in Britain so that we cannot study family as a one-dimensional unit. That is why while analyzing Barker's novels, family relations will be related to the other aspects of society; furthermore, diversity, the subjectivity of the relationships in the families will be emphasized.

Delphy, too, is aware of the role of the family and women's socially prescribed duties in women's exploitation. She draws attention to the relationship between the housework in a family and its role in the oppression of women. "The family as itself the site of economic exploitation: that of women. Having shown that domestic work and childrearing are, first, exclusively the responsibility of women, and, second, unpaid, these essays conclude that women have a specific relationship to production which is comparable to serfdom" (Delphy 59). Jackson holds that early in 1990 the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher spoke of "the right of a child to be brought up in a real family" (Jackson 180). According to Jackson by "real family" Thatcher excluded homosexual couples and meant a family formed by a heterosexual married couple and tried to impose this idea on society. Besides, a "normal" family was defined as "a bread-winning husband" and "domesticated wife" in the dominant discourses of twentieth-century Britain, but it seems the majority of the members of the working-class did not fit into this definition. Motherhood is the main subject to be studied in this thesis and working mothers do not fit the universal mother figure. The ways in which they differ from the socially constructed "ideal" mother figure will be studied in the upcoming chapters in relation to Barker's portrayal of the mothers in *Union Street* and *Liza's England*.

Like "family," "motherhood" is a problematic term. It has been romanticized and represented as a fulfilling and complementary stage that every woman should reach in her lifetime. Susan Hays asserts that "By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, mothers were defined as responsible for their children's care and well-being and, more specifically, responsible for ensuring their adoption of the

values, attitudes, and behaviour that would suit them well in the world”(qtd.in B. Fox 236).

Phoenix and Woollett point out the problems with the notion of the motherhood prescribed in twentieth-century Britain. They argue that “the social and the psychological constructions of “normal” mothers run counter with the reality of many mothers” (Phoenix and Woollett 13).Some of the theorist tried to define and explain commonly accepted prescriptions of motherhood of their time. “In the 1970s, feminist theory directed considerable attention to dismantling the ideology of motherhood by understanding its patriarchal roots and by underscoring that it did not represent the experience of mothers themselves” (Bassin, Honey and Kaplan 3). Lots of feminists and consciousness rising groups have tried to highlight the various factors playing important role in women’s oppression some of them have emphasized, and argued that mothering has become the source of women’s devaluation. However; even among the feminists themselves, motherhood caused controversy and difference and some avoided talking about the dichotomy between the stereotype of motherhood and real experiences of motherhood as it was seen something holy and natural. Most of the theories studied the impacts of mothering on children but how motherhood has been perceived by many women, have not been fully studied. Adrienne Rich was among the firsts who drew attention to the distortion between institution of motherhood and experience of motherhood. She also mentions the difference between the unexamined assumptions of motherhood and her own experience as a mother.

A ‘natural mother’ is a person without further identity, one who can find her chief gratification in being all day with small children, living at a pace tuned to theirs; that the isolation of mothers and children together in the home must be taken for granted; that maternal love is, and should be, quite literally selfless. ... I was haunted by the stereotype of the mother whose love is “unconditional”; and by the visual and literary images of motherhood as a single-minded identity (23).

She contends that motherhood doubles the pressure on woman as it is an agent which has been imposed on women by patriarchy. She tries to define “motherhood” with two meanings. “the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the institution, which aims at ensuring that that potential-and all women-shall remain under male control” (Rich 13). And she contends that the latter one is superimposed on the former one. Besides, she draws attentions to the relationship between mothers and daughters. In her book *Of Woman Born* she talks about the bond between mothers and daughters. “[The] cathexis between mother and daughter-essential, distorted, misused- is the great unwritten story. Probably there is nothing in human nature more resonant with charges than the flow of energy between two biologically alike bodies, one of which has lain in amniotic bliss inside the other, one of which has labored to give birth to the other” (Rich 225-226).

Sociologist Sharon Hays also mentioned the hegemonic ideals about motherhood which were dominant in the twentieth century. She tried to explain those ideals by the label what she calls “intensive mothering”. According to Hays ideal mothering is “the assumption that the child absolutely requires consistent nurture by a single primary caretaker and that the mother is the best person for the job” (Hays 8). Furthermore; Donna Basin, Margaret Honey and Meryle Mahrer Kaplan recounted that women’s oppression is the result of “predominant image of the mother in white western society, [which is] ever-bountiful, ever-giving, self sacrificing” (2).

Chodorow is also among the psychoanalytic feminists who assert that socially prescribed motherhood practices create sexual division of labor and this intensified women’s oppression. According to Chodorow:

That women mother is a fundamental organizational feature of the sex the sex gender system: It is basic to the sexual division of labor and generates a psychology and ideology of male dominance as well as an ideology about women’s capacities and nature (208).

Although mothering seems to belong to a private sphere, statutory regulations and the state's political aims are some of the factors constructing the overall ideology of motherhood for a society. "The family is a civil institution which is important for the passing on of state ideologies. It is arguably when the family changes in ways that conflict with a state's political aims that concerns about motherhood and the family are expressed because state practices contain prevalent cultural constructions about women" (Phoenix and Woollett 16). The media is another factor which promotes the social prescription of motherhood. For example an advert for a vitamin building drink in May 1977 (in a women's weekly magazine published in Britain) states: "keeping a family fit and well is what being a mum is all about" (The Social Issues Research Centre, March 2011).

According to research, conducted by The Social Issues Research Centre in 2011, in the UK until the 1940s and the 1950s, advertisements about motherhood stressed the importance of mothers' primary role in maintaining the physiological well-being of their infants. From the 1960s onward, in addition to providing for the child's physical needs, mothers were also expected to be nurturing and caring and responsible for the child's psychological development. (The Changing Face of Motherhood) When the psychological development of a child gained importance, the British psychiatrist John Bowlby's attachment theory was seen as a major factor in children's stable emotional development. According to Bowlby a warm and intimate relationship between the mother and the infant is crucial in the child's normal functioning. If children cannot get such mothering they are subjected to "maternal deprivation" and have difficulties in establishing secure attachments. Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels in their book *The Mommy Myth* tried to give an account of how women have been undermined because of socially prescribed "ideal mother images". They explain those ideal mother images in the framework of what they called "new momism". They talked about the images of motherhood starting from the 1970s because it was the time "when the women's movement burst onto the political scene as one of the biggest news stories of the year, and one of the central tenets of

movement was to critique how existing models of marriage and motherhood trapped millions of women in the lives they found frustrating and in economic arrangements that were deeply unfair” (14). Douglas and Michaels defined the term “new momism” in order to explain how idealization of motherhood has degraded all women. New momism is:

the insistence that no woman is truly complete or fulfilled unless she has kids, that women remain in the best primary caretakers of children, and that to be a remotely decent mother, a woman has to devote her entire physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual being 24/7 to her children.(4)

These socially prescribed mothering roles created oppression on women as these ideals were really demanding and impossible to follow for some, such as single mothers, working class mothers and so on. “The new momism has evolved over the past few decades, becoming more hostile to mothers who work, and more insistent that all mother become ever more closer tethered to their kids” (Douglas and Michaels 23). Barker’s mothers are among the ones who have to work and take care of their children and they cannot fit into these self-sacrificing ideals of motherhood.

Harriette Marshall, also examined some best-selling UK manuals (of the years 1979-1990) about how to be a good mother and other mothering practices surrounding the institution of motherhood. After analyzing the manuals under the headings of “Motherhood as Ultimate Fulfillment” , “Mother Love as Natural” , “The Unnatural Mother “, and “How to be a Modern Mother” she came to a conclusion that:

The childcare manuals construct the nature of motherhood for women as crucial. The responsibility falls on to mothers for the “normal development” of a well-adjusted individual [identified as a good citizen, compatible with the society’s norms and giving importance to her/his nation’s privileges].To mother adequately a women needs to be present with her child 24 hours each day and to be continually and actively engaged, providing stimulating and attentive company. If her child’s development is not normal, the blame falls on the mother... Another implicit consequence is to level the responsibility for the next

generation's moral welfare on individual women's shoulders and to locate any social problems in faulty mothering. Again society and structural influences are omitted from the equation (83).

Mothers are exposed to hegemonic ideals of mothering through various factors. Phoenix and Woollett draw attention to this problem and put an emphasis on diversity in the experience of motherhood.

A major problem with prescriptions for mothering is that they take no account of structural differences between mothers. Working class mothers usually have less disposable income and material resources than their counterparts. The ways in which they mother are, therefore, likely to be different in some respects from those of [welfare] mothers because they are more likely to have to deny their children the goods they want and to have to try to minimize difficulties associated with a lack of material resources and less social power. By failing to recognize such issues, current social constructions of normal motherhood do not reflect the realities of working class mothers' and children's lives, and this results in any differences between them and [welfare] mothers and children being seen as pathological or deviant (Phoenix 18).

There are a number of variables in the experience of motherhood: the type of relationship that mothers have with their children may vary in relation to the number of children they have, their socioeconomic status, the gender of those children and the psychological state of the mother, for instance. Delphy sees "motherhood" as a socially-constructed unit which is created by women's exploitation and in her article "A Materialist Feminism is Possible" she expresses her idea of "motherhood" while criticizing Michele Barret and Mary McIntosh since they see women's reproductive capabilities (such as childbirth and childrearing) as their natural duty and construct a natural handicap for them. Delphy criticizes them for not being able to understand the fact that women's exploitation is not the result of that so-called natural handicap of childbirth or childrearing because neither childbirth nor childrearing is their natural duty. She criticizes them as follows:

We do not know whether they mean by it [motherhood] reproducers or rearers of children. They do not make the distinction because to them the term connotes both at one and the same time, and it does so because to them one is derived from the other: women bring up children because they have given birth to them. They think I rally to their position by conceding that analytically the responsibility for childcare may precede marriage whereas I say exactly the opposite. I do not say that women who have children are mothers and therefore liable to be exploited. I say rather that because their work is appropriated women must raise children for nothing. I do not say that motherhood explains the appropriation of women's labor, but on the contrary that the appropriation of their labor, which is effected through unpaid childcare among other things, constitutes women as mothers. Thus motherhood, far from being a natural fact giving birth to exploitation, is I believe, a social construct created by exploitation (Delphy 170).

Many studies analyze the effects of the childrearing practices of employed mothers on children but neglect how employed mothers' experience of motherhood affect their personal lives and their childrearing capacities. Susan Lewis in her article "Motherhood and Employment: The Impact of Social and organizational Values (1991)" discusses the social construction of motherhood and employment and their impact on mothers. "Cultural directives prescribe that women should become mothers and subsequently reduce their involvement in paid work, or, more recently that women can fulfill all the demands of full-time exclusive mothering and full-time paid work, without modifying the demands of either" (Lewis 195). She points out the relationship between "employment" and "motherhood" drawing on Nancy Felipe Russo's article "The Motherhood Mandate (1976)" in the *Journal of Social Issues*:

The experience of motherhood, and of employment, are affected and constrained by notions of the ideal mother and ideal employee. The dominant social construction of the ideal mother conforms to what has been termed the "motherhood mandate". This is an unwritten, but powerful rule that all women should have children and be good mothers and that this is their primary role in life. ... By definition then, employed mothers, especially those who are employed full-time, deviate from the socially constructed ideal (Lewis 196).

Therefore these mothers are subjected to criticism for the problems in child development and delinquency. “The term “working mother” (with its implications that childcare is not work) has often been used as a pejorative term, to imply neglect of maternal duties. Such ideas have entered popular consciousness to become a part of familial discourse which has a profound impact on mothers” (Lewis 196). Paradoxically, although women are needed in workforce, they are still expected to carry full-time mothering duties while meeting the criteria of the ideal worker. When they take a leave of absence for childrearing, they do not meet the criteria of the ideal worker; yet, when they give all their time and energy to work outside the home, then they are blamed for not fulfilling their motherly duties. So they are doubly trapped.

To conclude, the structural importance and the economics of the family, unequal division of labor within it, the devaluation of domestic labor and pre-constructed ideals about the institutions of the motherhood contribute to women’s subordination. Many studies have been proved inadequate by materialist feminist criticism in that they do not precisely take account of the conditions that women have, and are grounded in slippery terms. According to Delphy, there is no emancipation for women unless the patriarchal system of production and reproduction is destroyed.

In the upcoming chapters, the relationship between mothers and their daughters and their experience of motherhood in Pat Barker’s novels, *Union Street* and *Liza’s England*, will be examined in relation to their socioeconomic environment. The reasons of love-hatred relationship between mothers and daughters in these novels will be examined with an emphasis on mothers’ double burden. This study will emphasize that Barker’s novels challenge the idea that there exist a universal set of mothering practises valid for whole cultures and nations and that the violent attitudes and ill-treatment of mothers to their children bring forth delinquency and reproduce mothers who are unable to mother, instead this vicious cycle can be broken (as the eponymous Liza did) by becoming more aware of social context which they live in,

by gaining consciousness about the division of labour and the hierarchical social structures around them, and by taking control of their actions.

CHAPTER 3

THE REPRESENTATION OF MOTHERHOOD IN *UNION STREET*

Union Street (1982) is Barker's first novel; it provides a realistic social panorama of her time and offers a significant vantage point to class and gender issues by focusing on working-class life with an emphasis on women in such an environment. Barker draws attention to the problems that exist in working-class homes and sees corruption and violence as outcomes of economic inequalities. In women's case this situation is doubled as they may have to work both as housewives and outside the home. Aytül Özüm describes this in her essay "The Representation of the Working-class and Masculinity and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*" draws attention to women's subordination in Britain in the post-war period. "Among the working class family there has always been a tight-knit institution, a place where the gender roles have their fixed place, but in the post-war period when women started to work, the role of the woman as housewife seemed to exist alongside her role as a worker. Yet still the socially expected gender performances were to be fulfilled at home" (Özüm).

The aim of this chapter is, firstly to analyze from a materialist feminist point of view the female characters in *Union Street* and the relationships between them, focusing especially on mothers; secondly to indicate that the on-going violence that both women and men inflict on one another is portrayed in the novel as an outcome of economic depression; and lastly, to draw attention to the ways in which Barker avoids simple solutions and generalizations about the practices of motherhood. The unifying but at the same time dividing cyclical bond between women will be studied by stressing the ambivalent relationship between mothers and daughters. Also the

male characters' impotency and their violent attitudes will be studied in relation to the socioeconomic context in which they live.

Barker, with her bleak representations of working-class homes and relationships, differs from some other earlier writers whose fiction offers idealized depictions of working classes in England. George Orwell, for instance, depicts a sentimental picture of a working-class home and atmosphere in his book *The Road to Wigan Pier*:

I have often been struck by the peculiar easy completeness, the perfect symmetry as it were, of a working-class interior at its best. Especially on winter evenings after tea, when the fire glows in the open range and dances mirrored in the steel fender, when Father, in shirt-sleeves, sits in the rocking chair at one side of the fire reading the racing finals, and Mother sits on the other with her sewing, and the children are happy with a pen north of mint humbugs, and the dog lolls roasting himself on the rag mat—it is a good place to be in (22).

According to John Kirk, in twentieth-century England, writing about the working class became prominent in the 1930s and 1950s. The descriptions of the working classes however were “overwhelmingly masculinized” in the 1930s and the working-class novels of the 1950s focused on the “exploits of the male hero” trying to make his way through struggles while “women are designated the domestic sphere” (Kirk 608). So women mostly occupied a minor space in working-class novels in those periods. Barker, by revealing the complexities of the lives of working-class women, moves away from the reductive and gender-blind novels focusing on working classes. “[She] uses novel form to represent individuals and groups hitherto hidden from history” (Kirk 603).

In *Union Street*, Barker presents a realistic picture of working-class women, whose lives are hardened through procreation, childcare, violence at home and sexual abuse.

Set in a slum neighborhood in an unnamed city in England's postindustrial Northeast, *Union Street* is reminiscent of Teesside. It

survives on the edge of demolition in a town full of rubble from other demolished streets. It is the winter of 1973, during the coal miners' strike, and the lack of fuel further complicates the lives of these women, who already subsist onto a hostile environment, the verge of starvation. Their poverty is further compounded by domestic abuse, dead-end jobs, disease, pregnancy, and childbirth. (Carson 47).

She gives voice to silenced working-class women neglected during the economic upheaval of the 1970s. Their suffocating situation is projected through the consciousness of seven different women, [who are] “trapped in a relentless cycle of poverty, casual underage sex, backstreet abortions, abusive relationships, and early signs of illness” (Brannigan 8). As indicated in the previous chapter, *Union Street* can be read from within realist and feminist perspectives. “To Barker, gender is a cultural construct, and she defines class through sexual difference, identifying working-class women as the working class within the working class” (Carson 75).

By using seven different characters from the very first chapter, titled “Kelly Brown,” to the last one, “Alice Bell,” Barker also tries to represent a female community in which the individuals are linked to each other with invisible links; yet, at the same time, the cyclical form of *Union Street* reflects the endless cycle of poverty, procreation, abortion and violence, which alienates women from one another. In this way, Barker undermines sentimental approaches to the notion of community and she tries to show how difficult it is to form a female solidarity in a world where everybody is stuck in their own problems. She gives the reader insights about the conditions of working-class people by shedding light on seven different women and showing the commonalities in their lives. All the women who live in Union Street suffer from common problems and their lives intersect. They have similar pasts, presents and will probably have similar futures as a result of their social standing. Almost all of them suffer from violence, procreation, sexual abuse and have become, in part, inured to violence and abuses. They have become stoic after the hardships they have been through. They are wearied by economic conditions and these

conditions affect the overall course of their lifestyle and as readers, we witness that lives are getting worse and worse under those difficult conditions.

It can be pointed out that the title of the novel is highly ironical as it gives an impression that the novel will be about unions. Characters are united but they are so on the basis of poverty, violence, death and devastation. With the first story, which is titled “Kelly Brown,” we come across a single-mothered working-class family. It does not have a bread-winning, “head of the house,” working-class father figure. Instead, there is an inattentive mother who, seemingly, does not care about her daughters.

Motherhood is portrayed as a burdensome, exhausting experience for the women in *Union Street* as they have to cope with numerous problems at the same time while trying to make ends meet. Mrs. Brown, Kelly’s mother, sinks into her own miserable life and neglects her children; she never checks on what they are doing, where they are going or what time they are getting back home. Most of the time, she is outside the home herself. She does not show any affection to her children and her relationship with them does not carry any respect or attentiveness. “The social and the psychological constructions of ‘normal’ mothers (with ‘normal’ being synonymous with ‘good’ and with ‘ideal’) run counter to the reality of motherhood for many mothers. As a consequence, many mothers are socially constructed as pathological differences among mothers are not adequately studied or written about” (Phoenix and Wollett 13). Barker points out that every mother experiences motherhood differently as her capability to rear children is shaped by the economic and psychological conditions in which she lives. That is why the common-sense ideals of motherhood go awry with Barker’s mothers; and she shows this by calling attention to their own concerns.

With the very first story the reader is presented with a mother figure that is different from the socially constructed “ideal mother” figure that is attentive, tender, loving

and caring and Barker presents such a mother because she aims to problematize the term “motherhood” as it cannot be fitted into any simplistic set of ideals. “Care support and love are contingent on other factors, such as class, sexual behavior and adherence to feminine norms. In this way the relationships presented in *Union Street* are more adequately described as bonds based on “a complex mixture of fascination and distaste” (Falcus 250). Neither Mrs. Brown nor her daughters show attentiveness to each other. When Kelly talks with her mother, she uses a sarcastic tone. When her mother yells out from her bedroom to silence the girls saying that she is trying to sleep, Kelly’s retort shows no respect: “No bloody wonder. On the hump all night” (Barker 3). Kelly lacks manners and, she is rude to her mother as well as other people in Union Street. Not only mothers but also daughters carry ambivalent feelings towards each other. Kelly’s ambivalent feelings and her dilemma are explicitly indicated by the narrator. “She felt no sympathy: She felt, rather, distaste for this woman whose hard exterior had cracked to reveal an inner corruption. Her mother had been the one solid feature in the landscape of her mind, not much attended to, perhaps, but there, a presence on the skyline that you felt even when your back was turned” (Barker 59).

In the novel, there is a love-hatred relationship between mothers and daughters. Mrs. Brown cannot show any affection to her daughters as life has been hard on her. She reflects this in her behavior towards her children. This situation is no different for the daughters of *Union Street* as they are not exposed to loving and tender relationships. They feel alienated and do not know how to show attentiveness. Although Kelly seems indifferent to her mother, she still prefers to wear her mother’s jumper as its smell is very comforting for her. “There were sweaters of her own and Linda’s there but she liked her mother’s better. They were warmer, somehow and she liked the smell” (Barker 4). In Kelly, we see the need for love, a model figure to whom she can lean on. “She shows such signs of familial affection toward her mother, but the gesture is an indication at least of a desire for sentiment, for connection” (Brannigan 6). She does not know the underlying reason of her like for the smell but the reason

must be her need for motherly love. They do not know how to behave to each other, but some small scenes make it clear for the reader that if situations had been different their relationship would have been different as well.

They looked at each other. Each at that moment expected, and perhaps wanted, an embrace. ... If only she could have reached out and held her daughter the childish bones jutting through the off-white skin might have reassured her that what she felt was merely a sympathy and outraged love, not a more complex mixture of fascination and distaste for this immature, and yet no longer innocent, flesh (45).

Mrs. Brown's ambiguous feeling towards Kelly, and Kelly's rebellious and hostile reactions to her while she finds the smell of her sweater relaxing and comfortable is reminiscent of what Irigaray calls 'dark continent', which refers to ambiguous mother-daughter relationship. As indicated in the previous chapter the relationships between women are distorted as they perceive each other in relation to patriarchal parameters and they have become more like accomplices and rivals.

If we are to be desired and loved by men, we must abandon our mothers, substitute for them, and eliminate them in order to be the same. All of which destroys the possibility of a love between mother and the daughter. The two become at once accomplices and rivals in order to move into the single possible position in the desire of man (Irigaray 102)

Irigaray's argument can explain explain Mrs. Brown's discontent when she realizes that her daughters are growing and attracting males' attentions. She is jealous of Linda, her daughter, when she came downstairs only with a bra and pants. She attracted her mother's fancy boy's, (Arthur's) attention and Mrs. Brown felt disturbed and "looked suddenly older, rat-like, as her eyes darted between Arthur and the girl" (Barker 8). The relationship between them is broken and repressed because they have become rivals under patriarchal gaze. Mrs. Brown started to see her daughters not as her little daughters anymore but as women. Adrienne Rich, also tried to explain complex relationship between mothers and daughters via the term "matrophobia". She defined it as:

a womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mothers' bondage to become individuated and free. The mother stands for the victim in ourselves, the unfree woman the martyr. Our personalities seem dangerously to blur and overlap with our mothers'. (236)

Mrs. Brown relationship with her daughter, Kelly, has become more complex and alienated after her rape. Kelly is raped while she is wandering alone in the streets, something she habitually does because "home" is not the source of safety or comfort for her. She spends most of her time unconsciously searching for anything that she can to fill the void in her life and then she sees "The Man". She associates the man with her absent father and she is drawn to him because "other people-her mother, Linda, the teachers at school-merely glanced at her and then with indifference or haste, passed on. But this man stared at her as if every pore in her skin mattered" (Barker 14-16). She is in need of a kind of familial and emotional attachment and cannot leave The Man. The Man's economic background is not explicitly narrated but as understood from his shiny black shoes and jacket and the tone of his voice he seems to come from a wealthier background. The Man's social class and the fact that rape takes place in an area off a closed, deserted factory which once stood glamorously, symbolizes the abuse and, exploitation of working-classes by higher classes who took what they wanted from the local people and then left, leaving the community deserted vulnerable and desperate.

She spends most of her time in the streets alone since her mother is always out either for drinking or working. As readers, after Kelly's rape, we might blame Mrs. Brown like her neighbors do. Yet the novel emphasizes that it is wrong to put the whole blame on mothers as life has already been hard on them.

Although psychologists generally argue that mothers are the central figures in their children's lives, as carers, socializers and providers of stimulating and sensitive environments, they are rarely considered as having an existence of their own or a perspective on what they do as mothers. Rather they appear as shadowy figures, managing from behind the scenes. This results in definitions of good mothering which

are concerned with children's needs often to the exclusion of mothers' views of themselves, their own needs or the family context in which they bring up children (Woollet, Phoenix 28).

By giving the reader insights about Mrs. Brown's inner life, Barker accomplishes to establish a kind of empathy for her. Although Mrs. Brown is unable to show any affection to her daughter or does not know what to do, she still cares for her little child. Through indirectly reported thought of Mrs. Brown, the narrator shows us Mrs. Brown's mental and emotional responses to her daughter's unhappiness:

The sight of her daughter's misery would bring her own gushing to the surface again, it had taken most of the night for her get it under control...she heard herself start to whimper. The whimpering frightened her ;it sounded so lost, so out of control, so unlike her normal self. For she thought of herself as a hard, though, realistic woman, able to cope with most things. She had to be bringing up two children on her own (Barker 34).

Mrs. Brown has her own reasons for showing a lack of care and attention. "She felt a spasm of hatred for her husband whom she had not thought of for years but who was now, momentarily, identified in her mind with The Man. It had been so easy for him to walk out, and he did not give a bugger, he never even sent them something for Christmas, not even a bloody card" (Barker 35). She is aware that it is difficult to take care of two children properly on her own when she is also the only person who has to work outside the home.

Although Mrs. Brown's behavior might be judged as immoral by some because she lets her children alone, her situation is desperate indeed. She is left alone with two children and she needs to use every opportunity to supply basic needs both for herself and for her children. Conditions make women submit to their fathers or jobless husbands; they accept their fate when they fall pregnant and submit to their boyfriends or husbands. For example, Mrs. Brown does not have a husband to take care of her and children, to aid her in making ends meet, to provide her emotional support. That is why she feels as if she has to be together with Arthur and her

boyfriend, although she sometimes cannot even stand his smell or feels disgusted when she shares the bed with him:

She was crying as she carried the tray upstairs. She'd got up because she couldn't stand the warmth of Arthur's body a second longer. He never wore owt in bed and whenever in the night he 'd turn over she could feel the fuzz of gingery-pink hairs on his back side .The first night that hair had exited her, though it made her shudder now. The hard, hairy, male bum clenching and unclenching...She twitched her thoughts away. As she put the tray down Arthur started to wake up, bringing his lips together with little contented smacking sounds. It was intolerable (Barker 35).

Mrs. Brown sees Arthur or any subsequent male as a kind of roborant medicine on the path of her miserable life. She is alone in raising two children. Underneath her stoic indifferent appearance, she carries concerns, dreams and wishes. That is why she is devastated by Arthur's departure and cries.

Women of Union Street share the present and the future. Each story in *Union Street* shares similar characteristics with the others. Lisa Goddard is another woman who mistreats her children because of the economic hardships. Although she has a husband, she manages everything alone. Having two children and another on its way, she moves as if "tiredness and desperation were written all over her face" (Barker 107). Helplessness, along with the oppression and restrictions of poverty, hard work and lack of assistance leave women open to any physical and psychological abuse, and, it also leads them to use violence on their children. For example, Lisa, although she loves her children, hits them hard when one of them plays with the goods on the supermarket shelves.

I warned you, didn't I? I warned you' She hit the child across his face. He gasped and then howled again, louder, but still he hung back. He was incapable of getting himself out of the situation. 'Come on!' his mother said, trying to drag him back to the pushchair and the squealing baby. He clung to the deep-freeze counter, and she hit him again and again, stinging hard slaps, her face distorted by hatred as she looked at him. (Barker 108).

Here the narrator focuses on Lisa's consciousness, revealing that Lisa would have been a loving, tender mother if she did not have to carry the burden of life on her shoulders. "God forgive me, she thought. She held him close and rocked him. It wasn't that she didn't love him. It was only that she got so desperate. She loved him alright: this rocking gave her as much peace as it gave him" (Barker 110). Then she questions her own bad temper towards her own children: "Why am I so bad-tempered with them? It isn't their fault" (Barker 110). With Lisa's questioning, the reader is encouraged to question the bad temper of women throughout the novel. Instead of looking at superficial reasons, the reader may start to understand how these miserable conditions make people both stoic and bad tempered.

The problem that Barker underlines is less the lack of love mothers have towards their children than the hard conditions these women have and raise their children in. "The types of relationships mothers have with their children, the numbers of children they have, the sex of those children, how they feel about motherhood and the social support available to them as mothers also differ" (Phoenix and Woollet 23). Adrienne Rich in her book *Of Women Born* draws attention to the unrecognized difficulties of mothers and the factors that negatively affect the way women mother.

The mothers: placating weary infants in supermarket carriages, straggling home to make dinner, do laundry, and tend to children after a day at work; getting pregnant yet again because their only one escape into pleasure and abandon is sex; forcing long needles into their delicate interior parts; wakened by child's cry from their eternally unfinished dreams, the mothers if we could look at their fantasies, we would see the embodiment of rage, of tragedy, of the overcharged energy of love, we would see the machinery of institutional violence wrenching at the experience of motherhood. (280)

That is why the way mothers rear their children differs under various circumstances. For Lisa the first child was like a miracle but after her husband's redundancy, the third child has become a burden. Also women's reproductive capabilities and how motherhood creates limitations for a woman who belongs to the working class is

implicated by way of Lisa's thoughts. "She held her daughter in her arms. And the thought that inside that tiny body was a womb like hers with eggs waiting to be released, caused the same fear, the same wonder" (Barker 139). Lisa carries concerns for her daughter as she is aware that she will probably become the part of this vicious cycle which consists of marriage, housework, poverty, violence and continuous procreation. Her situation is very desperate indeed since she has to cope with three children as Brian is not there to help her and she has to save money in order to keep things together.

Iris King, who is another mother figure inflicting violence on her daughter and, who is very cautious about her reputation in Union Street, is happy to be known as the mother of the whole street. In all stories, she is represented as a unifying figure, keeping the community together; but, this sense of solidarity is distorted when she hears about her unmarried daughter's pregnancy. As Brophy points out "Barker's portrait of Iris rules out reading her as heroic, and compels a more complex view of her powerful role in her family and community" (Brophy 33).

Iris is obsessed with decency and order. She keeps everything in her home clean and neat. Her obsession with cleanliness comes from growing up in Wharfe Street, which was even worse than Union Street. In Wharfe Street, murder, rape and suicide were part of a normal life. So Iris's picture of "good life" rested on escaping from Wharfe Street as soon as possible. She has found the salvation in marriage. Getting married seems to be the only way for her to get rid of Wharfe Street: "When she came back [from her Auntie], she got on with Ted, and married him. 'Course she had to, but by that time she'd 've married anybody, just to get out" (Barker 189).

Iris does everything that she can do in order not to return to Wharfe Street. She does not want to remember anything about it. She associates dirt with Wharfe Street and that is why she always keeps her house clean. As a consequence, she becomes a neat, "ideal mother" for the residents of Union Street but her inner fears come to surface

when she hears about her sixteen-year old daughter's pregnancy. Iris is very much concerned about her reputation, which she has strived hard to keep throughout her life.

She valued her reputation in the street. She knew she was respected and her family was respected. Her reputation mattered more to her than anything else. It was the measure of her distance from Wharfe Street, the guarantee that the blackness that came from her past would never finally return. It was this that Brenda threatened to destroy. Well, she wouldn't be allowed to. (Barker 196)

In order to prevent any harm to her decency, she beats up her young, wounded and pregnant daughter and persuades her to have an illegal abortion. Although she appears to be an "ideal" mother, she becomes cold-hearted, when her reputation is threatened. Here the novel challenges Iris's image as an ideal mother. "Iris's fist came up and hit the girl on the mouth. It was such a relief that she did it again...Iris was dragging Brenda around the ward by her hair. The girl was white lipped and moaning with fear. She had both hands pressed together over the wound in her belly" (Barker 184). Like other scenes of violence, bursts of anger bring the subsequent violent actions with it. It is like a moment of anger bringing all the oppressed excessive distress to the surface and characters find relief through hitting again and again. Iris becomes cruel to her daughter and persuades her to have illegal abortion although she is well aware that it is very dangerous. "At the dentist you know it was all right really. Even if you were frightened, you still knew the pain wouldn't be unbearable, you certainly wouldn't die. Here there were no limits" (Barker 212).

The reason behind Iris's violent behavior towards her daughter, Brenda, is clear but Barker, by revealing her inner complexities, indicates that there is another possible motive behind Iris's violent behavior beyond her concern for decency and her obsession with keeping her reputation. Although she becomes cruel towards her, she is well aware that if Brenda gives birth to the baby, her opportunities for the future will be ended. It will change the sixteen-year-old Brenda's life completely by placing

her into the vicious cycle of work, gestation, childcare and poverty. Iris has gone through the same experience before. She was pregnant at a young age just like her daughter is and she refused abortion at that time, condemning herself to the cycle of childrearing and housework till the end of her life. By forcing her daughter into abortion, she may try to break the vicious cycle of young age procreation. Although she forces her daughter into this abortion with the idea that this way she will be better off, she is well aware of the danger that she puts her daughter in. So Iris's concern about her social status is not the only reason behind her violent attitude towards her daughter. Her protective feeling towards her daughter is another reason. She wants her children to have a better life than she has had and Brenda's pregnancy threatens these hopes. She thinks that it is more difficult for women to walk out of the door not only because of the circumstances into which they are born but also the maternal responsibilities that they have. That's why she says "five minute pleasure and a lifetime of misery" (Barker 198). Iris is well aware that women are more vulnerable to harsh conditions or abusive attitudes of their husbands and it is more difficult to give up and leave if they have a child. That is why she thinks that "A man can put his cap on, you can't, you are stuck with it... She love her bairn, she wouldn't have been without them. But she had no illusions left" (Barker 201).

Already wounded, the young Brenda risks her life. Although Iris's motherhood is described in negative terms, Barker's novel invites the reader to question the ambivalence of this love-hatred relationship between mothers and daughters. Women of *Union Street* were once daughters who were abused, exposed to violence and who had to cope with the burden of poverty on their own. Life has forced them to make difficult, painful choices and they, gradually, have started to take life with a kind of stoic coldness; however, the reader is invited to see they actually carry fragile, caring sentiments for their daughters: "Brenda might die. Iris wanted to run back, to stop it happening: the child would grow up as thousands before it had done. But she didn't. Instead she went on clinging to the spikes, pulling on them as if she was in pain" (Barker 211).

The reader is exposed to the dualistic nature of motherhood in *Union Street*. On the one hand, we have an Iris King who wraps the still living baby of her daughter in a newspaper without hesitation; but on the other hand, there is a suffering Iris who is trembling with remorse. “Iris held on to her hand. It is funny –yesterday I could have killed her. Now if I could bear the pain for her I would” (Barker 214). Life is not easy either for Brenda or for Iris. Although Iris buries the newborn fetus immediately without hesitation, the image of her own flesh never leaves her. She feels the pain of her daughter and her own murder but she has to take it with stoic endurance in order to continue her decent life in Union Street.

Interestingly, the seven women aged differently in the novel can be considered representations of the different stages of a single female character’s progress through life. “Barker indicates this in the recurrent scenes in which characters see their younger or older selves reflected in the other characters” (Brannigan 10). Conditions have forced the women in Union Street to make difficult decisions and their lives resemble to one another’s. When Joanne Wilson sees Lisa Goddard, who is the mother of two-soon to be three- children, she imagines her own future and she knows that her future will probably be no different from Lisa Goddard’s. Already stuck between the bakery and home, Joanna Wilson’s life has become mechanical. Conditions have made her expect the least from life. After her unplanned pregnancy, she decides to marry a man without knowing and without questioning whether she really likes him or not. “There’d be a house. Somewhere. Housework and eventually, a baby. Well, that was what she wanted. wasn’t it?” (Barker106). Although this is not what Joanne actually wants, she has no better choice. She chooses to get married just like Iris did for a possibility to have a better life. Joanne submits to what she has and she is aware of the trapped condition that she is in. She says; “I’ m the one who’s got to walk around with me belly swelling, being sick and all that. Then in the end get the poor little bugger out of me. I am trapped worse than he’ll ever be” (Barker 104). Joanne knows that she does not have many opportunities, not many options to choose from. Joanne’s decision to marry Ken is no different than Iris King’s decision to

marry her husband to escape Wharfe Street. Characters are aware of the repetitious life cycle that surrounds them. "Every older woman became an image of the future, a reason for hope and fear" (Barker 94). Joanne is aware that her life will not be much different from the other women whom she knows in Union Street and she carries the anxieties and concerns that this idea creates on her but she goes on with the marriage. "There was Lisa Goddard, whom she often saw in the supermarket, weighed down with kids and shopping, pushing her belly in front of her like another self" (Barker 94). Joanne Wilson will probably have a future similar to Lisa Goddard's life.

Economic and social distresses, either directly or indirectly, creates violence in the lives of Union-Street people. They are wearied by harsh conditions and this situation creates violence, which shows itself in different circumstances. Mothers become cruel to their daughters at times or husbands divert their rage towards their wives; or, children (Kelly is an example) with the epiphany of their alienation and dereliction perform acts of destruction. So throughout the novel there come multileveled images of violence. The conditions of the working class women sometimes create uncontrollable rage in them and they release their rage and suppression by inflicting violence on each other or giving harm to their environment. "Barker explores the extent to which violence, often casual and sometimes socially sanctioned, impacts on individuals... Violence is endemic in society and so cuts through class and gender barriers" (Monteith 7).

After the rape Kelly has been through a kind of transformation. She is forced into adulthood and realizes her socio-economic background's boundaries better when she comes across a middle-class house. Everything she sees there is opposite of her own world and that world is so far from her own perception that she does not know how to "envy" them. When she faces the harsh reality, she adopts violence. After the rape, Kelly vandalizes the headmaster's office and wants to destroy the house that she breaks into. The purity of the bedrooms, cleanliness, everything stands in opposition to her own world and she wants to demolish it. "She wished she had written all over

the house, in bright red lipstick, the worst words that she knew. She wished she had torn and scattered and smashed, because then nobody could have pretended that nothing had happened” (Barker 55).

Kelly is the youngest example of working-class women and she stands as a symbol of the first chain of the cycle. These women are dragged to the fringes of a post-industrial society and they want to obtain visibility. Kelly’s violence is her effort to show that she is there, that she does exist. She does not have great expectations and the lives of the wealthy families are too far for her to imagine. “She might have pitied or despised the girl who lived in this room, but she would not have known how to envy her” (Barker 52). Under such circumstances, Kelly has developed a kind of defense mechanism and she is proud of herself realizing that she can manage alone. Like her mother, she probably will not show any affection to her own children, or she will not have any loving tender family life as this is what she is used to. She can manage alone. She will try to manage alone in the future so the present situation of women in Union Street will show itself in the future of their own daughters like a vicious circle.

Men are also depicted as inflicting violence but Barker, by using other characters’ thoughts or by entering into their consciousness, aims to prevent the reader from lending themselves to easy judgmental assumptions. For instance, via Lisa’s thoughts, the reader sees how men are crushed by life circumstances and how they inflict violence on their wives. Lisa gets so desperate that she cannot control her temper and hits her children. Lisa’s husband’s condition is no different. His unemployment leads him to drink and inflict domestic violence. He beats Lisa as if he does not have any other choice. “He had to silence her somehow. So he stood up and hit her, not very hard, on the side of the head. But the blow liberated something in him, an enormous anger that had been chained up waiting for this moment. He hit her again .An again. It was easier now. She was driven back against the wall” (Barker117). “The redundancy of the novel’s men is strongly determined by socio-

economic factors (industrial decline, structural unemployment) [while] the women's lives are plotted on a cycle of reproduction" (Rawlinson 28). The characters are subjected to harsh economic conditions and it creates a kind of psychological distress, which results in bursts of anger and finds its relief through violence and Barker's novel invites the reader to question the underlying reasons of violent behavior by way of portraying characters' consciousnesses. Brian, after seeking for a job for a long time has already given up and Lisa knows it and understands him. She knows that he is like a child underneath his violent behavior. "She, [Lisa], was sorry for him. She felt how like a child he had become. Underneath the drink and blustering and violence he was like this all the time" (Barker 120). Lisa's response to her husband is significant. She just looks at him and says: "Would you pass me the Flannel please?" (Barker 117). Miserable conditions create a kind of stoic endurance; they gradually get used to these conditions. This desperate situation is fully described with short and abrupt words by the narrator. Lisa understands that their situation will not change at all in the future. "There were morning silences. The evening drinking. Rows. Occasionally, violence. Nothing else" (Barker 121). Life has become stagnant for the people of Union Street. Worn by social conditions, the women of Union Street have nothing to do but submit to their husbands. This submission is not only an example of oppression, but also constitutes a kind of bond between people who are in similar miserable situations.

The reader not only witnesses how women of Union Street have become stoic under the abusive attitudes of social relations, their husbands or mothers; but the reader is also invited to acknowledge that men of Union Street are also trapped by poverty and crushed under the burden of responsibilities that they cannot meet. Therefore, the story of Union Street is not just a story of oppressed women but a story of oppressed people and victims of socio-economic conditions. Men are not written off and they are not demonized. Sharon Monteith calls Pat Barker's men "disempowered patriarchs" and she points out that "it is precisely the absence of paid labour for men in Barker's novels that shifts them to the margins of working class consciousness"

(18). Barker shows the reader what life has become under specific conditions. When people have no choice they can be mechanical or inured to devastation.

The cyclical narration in *Union Street* starts with Kelly Brown and ends with Alice Bell representing the life stages that women of Union Street have been through. The first chain of the life cycle starts with the youngest example, Kelly Brown, and the story completes a full circle by way of the aging Alice Bell. “It is the product of carefully constructed narrative strategies, which enable the reader to perceive not just the monadic isolation of each character, but also inter subjective community which begins to form from each character’s apparently empathic awareness of others” (Brannigan 28). Alice Bell, the oldest of the women represented in Union Street, refuses to leave her home and go to a nursing home which was once a workhouse. She has been neglected by her son and she chooses to die in dignity by sitting on a bench waiting to die. Alice, in the last moments of her life, goes between past and present and these memories link her to the other women in Union Street. “Were [her memories] the debris of her own or other lives? She had been so many women in her time” (Barker 263). Wearing by poverty, Alice carries the scars of heavy labor. Kelly also carries the scars of psychological burden and dereliction. They both come together at the park. This is a kind of symbolic connection between women. Kelly sees her future in Alice Bell just like Alice has been once a child just like Kelly is now.

I used to come here when I was a little lass, aye, younger than you. The old woman looked with dim eyes around the park. Kelly followed her gaze and for the first time in her life found it possible to believe than an old woman had once been a child. At the same moment, and also for the first time, she found it possible to believe in her own death. There was terror in this, but no sadness. She stared at the old woman, as if she held, and might communicate, the secret of life. (Barker 67)

They sit on the bench together and their hands join. “Here, only loosely related women’s stories are tightly ordered along the axis of ascending age, thus offering not

only a view of the street but a picture of a female lifecycle defined through childhood, youth, childbirth, maternity, old age and death” (Jolly 241). Alice Bell and Kelly are alienated. Alice Bell is neglected by her son and condemned to go to a nursing home which is no different than a workhouse for her. Kelly after the rape feels isolated and left alone by her friends and people around her. Even if they do not know each other, as John Kirk argues, “they recognize a mutual pain and a kind of sisterhood which transcends age and is grounded in identifications of gender, class, and community. For both, survival is the main priority” (Kirk 614). Although Kirk states there is a kind of “mutual recognition” and understanding, it is hard to name it as “sisterhood”. It can be called a moment of awareness that those women share. They suffer from similar limitations in their lives. Barker in *Union Street*, instead of implying a better life for those women living in the margins of poverty, explores and interprets boundaries imposed by gender, class, and economics. There are positive moments in the representations of the lives of the women holding possibilities of change but they are quite blurred suggesting that there are some variables beyond the characters’ control such as poverty, dereliction and childbirth.

In conclusion, as readers we witness that although capitalist system leaves many men jobless and miserable, the pressure on women is doubled. They need to cope with several things at the same time. Barker in *Union Street* gives voice to silenced, ignored and abused women by not distinguishing them from others but drawing attention to their hardships and she shows that they are the important part of a whole. *Union Street*, despite taking place in a limited area, symbolizes the problems of masses. Women are trapped in the web of violence, procreation, motherhood, violence, poverty but they share similar problems. Furthermore, women’s reproductive work is represented interchangeably with other forms of labor in *Union Street*, like factory work and domestic service, so that motherhood is “implicated” with other modes of production” (Monteith et. al. xv). Their lives are shaped according to their financial needs: That’s why it is hard to judge mothers or teenage

girls of *Union Street* in terms of such notions as the “ideal mother” or “decent young girl”.

Barker’s feminist point of view aims to reveal injustices of gender and imbalances of power. Her women are the victims of social corruption and exposed to violence but Barker shows that they are not the only victims. There are men as well. Barker’s novel aims to construct empathy also for male victims. Although Barker takes side with women, she also leads us to question the causes of oppression. She puts the blame on economic conditions that make people desperate and her novel reveals that nobody is isolated. The characters who live in Union Street are bound to each other with invisible links.

CHAPTER IV

LIZA'S ENGLAND: IS THERE A WAY OUT OF THE VICIOUS CYCLE?

Liza's England is another one of Pat Barker's earlier novels about a time period in England stricken by de-industrialization. It can be read as a sequel to *Union Street* as it shares similar characteristics with the former novel. *Union Street* ends with a chapter on Alice Bell, who is resolute in not evacuating her house just like Liza Jarret, the protagonist in *Liza's England*. The reader goes between past and present through the memories of 84 year-old Liza Jarret and witnesses the historical past of England. The reader is also presented with a portrayal of the contemporary lower-class youth in England represented as isolated and deprived, and painful experiences of working-class women. While the novel depicts the past experiences of working classes and history of England through Liza's memories, Stephen, a social worker, who is in charge of persuading Liza to evacuate her house, emerges as a figure through whom the post-industrial present of England can be portrayed.

According to Brannigan "Barker's third novel develops a dialogic relationship between the historical and contemporary ... shifting between Liza's life story of the century, and Stephen's experience of the contemporary dissolution of civic society in the sink estates of urban post-industrial England" (56). In *Liza's England*, which was published first in 1986 as *The Century's Daughter*, Liza symbolizes Britain's history from the turn of the century to the last years of the twentieth century. That is why Liza holds a symbolical place in the novel as she has witnessed the impact of the two world wars on people, recession of the post-industrial period, and struggles of working-classes. Liza's personal experiences reveal larger truths about the disruption of working-class lives and the post-industrial urban decay. Her story is intermingled

with the other people's lives and while she is telling her stories the reader witnesses that the working-class people's lives in general are hardened with poverty.

This chapter aims to study the novel's portrayal of the outcomes of poverty on working-class characters besides the notion of motherhood in a poverty-stricken environment, and investigate the ways in which Barker's novel represents the relationship between the practices of motherhood and the socioeconomic environment. Although this chapter too aims to study the novel's portrayal of mothers in the same cycle of poverty, procreation, and violence as in *Union Street*, *Liza's England* will be shown to be a more hopeful novel since "There are moments in the [text] where a more positive version of cyclical time is offered, and supportive and even spiritual connection between mothers are made" (Falcus 249).

First, it should be pointed out that in *Liza's England* too, motherhood is reflected as "another form of imprisonment" because women in this novel too, both have to carry their domestic duties at home and also work outside the home in order to make ends meet; furthermore, they are continuously pregnant and men are no help. Therefore, their oppression is doubled.

Maternity is implicated in the cycle of alienation; exploitation and division along with other kinds of work. Both the women themselves and Barker's third person narrator in *Liza's England* perceive women's reproductive and domestic labors as a mode of economic production... No different in some ways, from factory labor and domestic service, women's reproductive work places them at odds with themselves and one another; it threatens to sabotage even as it promises to fulfill their desires for security and love. (Brophy 26).

There are some similarities at the same time some differences between the two novels which merit examination. Liza starts to tell her story to the social worker, Stephen, who visits Liza to persuade her to evacuate her home for it is going to be torn down for a housing project and she is resolute in not to leave her home as it symbolizes her past, her memories, her identity; or, in short, everything which is

associated with her and her kin. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is the same for Alice Bell in *Union Street*: when she is forced to leave her house, she feels something which resembles rape because “the dirt and disorder, the signs of malnutrition and neglect which to them were reasons for putting her away were, to her, independence” (Barker 260) and she is determined to keep her independence at all costs just like Liza does. Although the reason behind the social worker’s desire to make Liza leave her home is different than Alice Bell’s evacuation, having to go to a nursing home signifies the same thing, “workhouse,” for both Liza and Alice. Both women try to keep stability in contrast to derelict and disordered conditions and relationships in their district.

With Liza’s story-telling, we go to the 1900s, and the birth of Liza, and the story is transferred to the reader via the consciousness of the young Liza. She tells the story of her birth which she probably heard from her mother. Her birth is important because she was born at the stroke of the midnight and her birth symbolizes the turn of the twentieth century even it appeared in the papers with the title *The Century’s Daughter*. When Liza’s story proceeds, we witness her relationship with her mother, Louise, who is the first mother in this novel to be studied in terms of the cycle of labor, procreation and violence. Louise, who has given birth to 15 children, is not capable of showing any love and attentiveness to her children, especially to Liza. She is a strict mother who has violent tendencies. Louise’s motherhood is shaped by her class, gender and the number of the children she has. She is in continuous procreation and her body and mind carry the traces of hard responsibilities such as hard work, daily chores, and childrearing. She has to work as a domestic help for the Wynyards and bring up many children. Liza is well aware of her mother’s lack of attention. When she gets sick and throws up on her bed, her mother reacts in a bad-tempered way. She says: “You stupid little bugger why couldn’t you be sick on the floor?” (Barker 27). Liza feels weird and unable to understand her mother’s reaction. “Liza felt useless, humiliated by her mother’s anger, by the contempt that was always directed at her, never at any of the others” (Barker 28). Louise carries ambiguous

feelings and a violent attitude towards Liza. As Sarah Brophy expresses, “Liza’s mother mingles maternal care with violence and the hopelessness” (27). Here Barker again problematizes the notion of motherhood by way of Louise as she does not fit into the conventional, patriarchally-imposed category of the loving and tender mother figure.

Louise’s life has been difficult and often traumatic, as, continually pregnant; she struggled to care for her many children. She does not try to rescue her daughter from the same fate rather she is determined to make clear the inescapability of this life defined by service to others locking her daughter into a painful harsh cyclical time. She is a woman who sees no hope for herself and so means to crucify hope in others. (Falcus 251).

Louise stands for the hopeless, yet, stoic victims of the vicious cycle of poverty and procreation in that she is pessimistic about the future and does not believe in any hope and change. She is not a figure who fights against this vicious circle. She is well aware of her economic stance in the society and accepts it as it is. Liza makes this clear in one of her conversations with Ellen, her work-friend in a munitions factory. While talking about authorities and the inequalities structuring their lives, Liza shares her mother’s opinion. “Me mam says there has to be people who give orders and who take them” (Barker 56). So Louise is a representative of the view that for women like her and her daughters it is impossible to escape from the conditions surrounding them and she does not act against it. Even if she had any high hopes and expectations, throughout the years she has chosen to suppress them as she sees no hope in the future and she faces her hardships with stoic endurance. She does not want her children to have high expectations and does not promote any kind of intellectual betterment on the part of her daughters, in contrast to her attitudes towards her menfolk. “Her dad could read Edward could read but as soon as her mum saw a book in her hand it was Liza run round the shop for me will you pet? or Liza if you had nothing to do damn socks need darning” (Barker 25).

Louise's violent tendencies towards her children symbolize the anger, hopelessness and frustrations of poor women of her time. Her body reveals the signals of the burden of 15 children. "You should see the state she is in. It isn't just her legs; it's her womb as well. She has to wear one of them rings, but every now and then it slips out of place and then she has to lie on the floor till the doctor comes and puts it back in" (Barker 137). She does not see any salvation in the future and does not want her children to expect more than they can get. She goes to the Wynyards (a wealthy family) to do the cleaning but as she is continuously pregnant and working, her body loses its strength, her legs have ulcerated and swollen up, but she has to work anyway. This situation leads her to lose her temper quickly and after the last child she completely loses her patience with children. Her reaction is significant when one of the toddlers cries. "She took out her old, sack blue veined breast and pushed the nipple into the child's mouth. He struggled on her lap and she slapped his bare bottom so hard that he started to cry, and fought against the breast" (Barker 42). Liza tries to protect him from her mother's violent behavior trying to explain that there is no point in slapping a crying toddler. But Louise does not stop or listen to Liza; instead:

She pointed her breast at the girl and squeezed. A jet of milk shot out and hit her in the face. This was her mother's unvarying response to anything that resembled disobedience in her daughters, especially this daughter [meaning Liza]. But more even than disobedience, she punished hope, day dreaming any sign of a belief that their lives could be different from hers. Squirt, went the milk, and said, more clearly than words, There is only this. Don't think you can escape (Barker 43).

Her mother's behavior leads Liza to feel alienated and associate her mother with the killer-mother in a tale who murders her twelve children. She remembers in her sick bed the Mary Ann Cotton song:

Mary Ann Cotton had murdered her children, all twelve of them, and her stepchildren, too, nobody really knew how many, and she did it by making them drink arsenic from a teapot. She pretended it was

medicine and made them drink it, but the more they drank the worse they got. They were in awful pain, but she did not care, she just wanted them out of the way, she did not love them. (Barker 26)

Here Barker's novel highlights the willful misunderstanding of desperate mothers' action. If a mother kills her 12 children, that means she does not love them. There is no another explanation according to this kind of thinking. Liza unconsciously associates her mother with Ann Cotton as her mother is uncaring and cruel to her. While lying on her sick bed, tired because of her illness, she hears some footsteps approaching and thinks that they belong to Mary Ann Cotton who is coming upstairs to kill her. Then she realizes that it is her mother. Liza questions her mother's maternal feelings towards her. When she asks Louise if she ever loved her, Louise's answer is significant. "No," she said, in a new, uncertain voice. "I don't suppose I did love you. I tried..." Liza waited. "And..." "Then life caught up with me and I stopped trying" (Barker 181-182).

Barker leads the reader to witness Louise's life story right after this conversation. The novel does this to prevent easy judgmental assumptions about mothering and to help the reader re-consider the complexities of a cruel, unloving mothering. Although Louise does admit that she does not love Liza, she takes care of her when she is sick and she is with her in her first pregnancy. She takes care of her daughter but she shows no signs of love or tenderness. Until the conversation between Louise and Liza about whether Louise ever loved Liza or not, the reader possibly ponders about how difficult it is for a daughter to hear that she has not been loved by her own mother or how difficult it must be to cope with the ill-treatment of a mother. However, via Louise's story, the reader is invited to stand back and establish a kind of empathy for the mother as well since Louise has also suffered from the negative cycle of poverty, procreation and negligence. Louise was rejected by her own mother, cheated by her first husband, and lost some of her "bairns" due to diphtheria. Woollett and Phoenix draw attention to the unexplored sides of motherhood as follows:

Women's experiences as mothers, their insider perspectives, are rarely examined. As a result little is known about how women experience motherhood, how their experiences differ and the factors that account for differences in experience. The experience of motherhood may involve many aspects...A mother, for example, may have to combine her experience of mothering a disabled child with that of caring for two or more children and perhaps, at the same time, with divorce, being a single mother and with employment outside the home. It is difficult to deal meaningfully with all such issues at once in research studies, but understanding of the complexities of motherhood require that researchers appreciate these complexities and recognize that they occur in women of all races, social classes, marital statuses and sexualities. (218)

Barker's novel wants the reader to gain consciousness about the fact that there exist complexities such as those mentioned above; the novel tempts the reader to question the notion of motherhood and it is foregrounded that mothers, especially working-class mothers, could be under various pressures which lower their attentiveness and thereby render the idea of responsibility problematic. As pointed out in the previous chapter, this is also what Barker aims to do when she gives a place to Mrs. Brown's fragile feelings and weaknesses in *Union Street*.

Women are generally seen as the reproducers of society and culture because of the fact that they are the ones who have to carry the major responsibility of their children's upbringing especially in infancy and early years. Chodorow in *The Reproduction of Mothering* states that:

Because of the seemingly natural connection between women's childbearing and lactation capacities and their responsibility for child care, and because of uniquely human need for extended care in childhood, women's mothering has been taken for granted. It has been assumed to be inevitable by social scientists, by many feminists, and certainly by those opposed to feminism. (3)

The responsibility of bringing up children with tenderness and self sacrifice is instilled on them as if it was their natural duty. Yet, poverty, illness, emotional distress or anxiety may create ambivalent feelings in mothers towards their children and their own conflicts affect their attitudes. These mothers are subjected to criticism for the problems in child development and delinquency. Barker's mothers do not fit any generalizations about motherhood because she mistrusts these specific explanations of motherhood and with her working-class women characters she tries to point out that working-class women, especially mothers, are positioned as another and underprivileged working class among the working classes.

Although Barker represents motherhood as a trap for women suggesting that violent traumatic relationships between mothers and children will continue in future generations, her novel also provides a gleam of hope for the future. *Liza's England* includes scenes, displaying loving and tender moments between mothers and children. Liza is represented as a provider of such a hope because she is powerful and resolute in deciding not to replicate her mother's actions. Her mother "often ignored Liza, simply pretended she wasn't there" (Barker 22); but, Liza is different and her difference and strength can be understood easily while she is giving birth to her first child, Tom.

The idea that her body might stretch to let out a full-size baby didn't seem like a bad joke now. She felt it could. She felt its softness, its flexibility and its power. Now, when the pains broke over her, she rose to meet them. Like a strong swimmer in a heavy sea, she was exhilarated by waves that from the land must look like a fury of boiling foam. She raised her eyes to her mother and laughed. (LE 80).

Although she also has to cope with many difficulties, she approaches her son with care and tenderness. She is powerful and conscious. "Liza took [her son] with her everywhere. She would walk for miles with the child in her arms rather than leave him with one of the neighbors" (LE 93-94).

Liza's husband, Frank, suffers from a nervous breakdown as a result of the war. Unemployment and the impact of war have made him idle and he wanders in the streets without doing anything. As Liza says, "he is permanently tired" (Barker 84). That is why Liza is alone in raising her two children. Although she feels alone and needs Frank as it is really difficult to cope with the responsibility of two children while working, she strives hard to keep the family together no matter what happens. When her daughter gets pregnant by a soldier on leave like Iris and Brenda in *Union Street*, Liza, takes her daughter to a backstreet abortionist to get rid of the baby. There Liza makes a vital decision that shows it is possible to change the fate of the women who are linked by the vicious cycle. She is the first among Barker's women in the two novels to fight against the limitations that surround women. "[Liza] only knew that in the end every nerve and muscle and vein in her body had said, No" (Barker 207). She does not let her daughter have an abortion, taking the responsibility of her grandchild. In doing this she knows that she is intensifying her burden, but she chooses not to give up and not to bury her "own flesh and blood" as Iris had done. As Sarah Brophy argues, Liza's rejection of this abortion is "an act of resistance to passing on her mother's poisonous legacy to the next generation, a breaking of cycle of displaced aggression and desperation" (Brophy 35). In addition, while watching her daughter in labour, gives Liza a sense of unity, a link that unifies women through time.

The sky darkened; night closed in around the woman and the labouring girl. As the hours passed, Liza felt herself merge into the girl on the bed. *She* had laboured to give birth like this, in this room, this bed. She became afraid of the vanishing boundaries and turned to the fire, only to feel it strip the flesh from her face and reveal her mother's bones. Eileen was not Eileen, Liza was not Liza, but both were links in a chain of women stretching back through the centuries, into the wombs of women whose names they didn't know. (211)

There are some significant changes in Liza's life implying a sense of hope in the world portrayed in *Liza's England*. Women are emphasized to be linked to each other bringing new generations to this world; but in *Union Street* being a woman and

giving birth to a girl are seen by some characters in a negative way since it is considered as something which limits woman's opportunities. Lisa Goddard's mother's reaction to Lisa's pregnancy is illustrative in that sense. "Don't bring it round here if it's got a crack in it" (US, 135). Liza's mother Louise represents the same understanding. When Liza mentions that maybe the baby will be a "girl", Louise responds quickly and says "God forbid" (LE, 78). With Liza, we see a change in this understanding. Liza loses her son in the Second World War and her husband is left impotent by the impact of the First World War. Liza is not the victim of male power but a victim of male weakness so when her daughter gives birth to a girl she says "Thank God" (Barker 212). Liza understands the potential power of a woman and feels thankful. As the baby is a girl she will not lose another baby for the sake of war.

Liza's relationship with her mother is different from the relationship between Kelly and Mrs. Brown in *Union Street*. Although she has been exposed to the ill-treatment and discrimination of her mother, she shows tender and affectionate reactions to her mother. She takes good care of her mother when she gets old. She takes her to her own house to take good care of her. Even in her mother's moodiest moments, Liza approaches her with attentive feelings. This novel portrays a mother-daughter relationship which is not characterized by a combination of "fascination and distaste" (US 45). Liza carries attentive sentiments and feels sorry for her mother as she is conscious about how women had been forced to go through lots of hardships and in the end became stoic. After years of hard work and gestation, Louise's legs have gone bad and she requires a lot of nursing. Via the third person narrator, the reader witnesses Liza's ambivalent feelings towards her mother along with Louise's pain and her stoic endurance:

[Louise's] legs were so bad now that her bandages had to be changed everyday. When she saw Liza coming with the bowl and the clean bandages she would go white. But she made no sound, just lay there with her black burning eyes and her clenched mouth that had never –

in sickness, in weariness, in childbirth, in pain, in grief- had never let out a single cry. Liza wrapped the bandages and held her own face rigid, because not the least sign of disgust must show, though the smell of rotten flesh churned her guts. She wished more than anything that her mother would cry out. She wanted to tug the bandages off the black skin. She never did, of course, but unpicked the matty[sic] cotton as delicately as if it had been the finest embroidery, feeling every twinge of pain in her own flesh. And yet urge to cause pain, to do something that would break that clenched, stoic, iron will was there. (Barker 180)

Poverty is a major issue dealt with in both *Union Street* and *Liza's England*. It is treated as the cause of many difficulties such as, alienated relationships and especially violence. In every line the reader bears witness to poverty's impact on people and violence is the endemic part of it. Via Liza's memories the reader goes between the 1900s and contemporary England and her memories also indicate that poverty is a permanent factor shaping the lives of these people. Through her consciousness the reader witnesses poverty in her time, women's dangerous and unhealthy labor in munitions factories and so on.

Men and women in *Liza's England* carry the scars of poverty and Barker, with short and abrupt sentences skillfully depicts the effects of poverty on them. "Liza walked on, stiff legged, because her boots pinched. 'Lucky to have boots,' her Dad said. Lene Lowe didn't, she had to stop off school" (Barker 29). Poverty is very much into their lives. "Liza noticed that her mother was wearing Edward's cast-off boots, and that a loose sole flapped and flapped as she walked. Probably she had been wearing them for a long time, but Liza had only just noticed" (Barker 29). Working hard does not change the situation for them. Scars of heavy labor are indigenous part of their lives. "Liza's Dad came up to see her as soon as he came in from work, bringing with him into the room the smell of iron. The backs of his hands were covered with red scars, like tattoos, where the iron dust had got in through cuts or burns on his skin" (Barker 27). Their bodies are adversely affected and collapsed because of heavy work. As Liza states: "women wore out by the time they were thirty" because of the

heavy labor and continuous procreation. Men are no different; their lungs are full of iron or coal dust. Most of them face death earlier because of cancer. They die in furnaces; most of them suffer from nervous breakdowns as a result of wars or long-term unemployment. Poverty makes working-class people feel useless, stagnant and push them to the edges of invisibility.

Characters feel a sense of alienation and discrimination; they feel that they lose their identity. They have become invisible in the monstrous wheel of industrialism, wars and heavy work. Ellen, one of the factory workers, realizes her situation bitterly. “One day, I looked in that mirror and there was nothing there. Nothing. Not a bloody thing. I could see the wall behind me. I ran like hell back in the kitchen and Mrs. Hayes said, ‘Don’t be so soft, you’re imagining things.’ But I knew I wasn’t. That was an awful moment. It was like I didn’t exist at all” (Barker 56). It is ironic that, although these people lost their immediate families in wars, they have to work at munitions factories which serve and contribute to the destruction caused by war. Economic depression forces these people to make difficult decisions. When people’s labor is no longer needed after wars, they are left with few options to choose. In the novel, past and present are connected to each other via the traces of poverty on people.

As Monteith notes, “Barker carefully overlays one century with the next and elucidates the failings of one decade via another...” (32). Years have passed; industrialization has now lost its power and the subsequent decline into mass unemployment causes the closing of factories and poverty again goes on to be a fixture in working-class lives. Streets have become full of abandoned boarded-up houses. Liza gets old and never leaves her district but everywhere there is a sense of dereliction and isolation as a result of de-industrialization. People who live in that area, especially youngsters, wander around, lit their own bonfires, go into evacuated houses. It is a time “when much of the heavy industry characteristic of the northeast had succumbed to the Thatcherite onslaught of shutdowns and redundancies, and

when communities were threatening to disintegrate under the pressure of these developments” (Kirk 617). Poverty, stagnation and sense of dereliction are dominant and transposed to the reader subtly throughout the novel. “High, barbed-wire fences enclosed work yards that would never work again. The wires throbbed and hummed as the wind blew through them. Bits of cloth and polythene clung to the barbs and snapped” (*LE* 216).

Youngsters spend their time in social services of the Clagg Lane estate and wait for a possible job opportunity. They feel useless and are trying to find ways of passing time. They carry the rage of a hopeless generation left impotent by the heavy burden of economic recession and inflict violence on each other. Every time Stephen, whose job is to find suitable jobs for the youngsters, goes there to visit them, a fight breaks out and they give harm either to each other or to their environment. Through the end of the novel these children are linked to Liza by death as it is the same children who are responsible for the death of old Liza at the end of the novel.

The rage of a hopeless generation shows itself mostly in vandalism scenes. They give harm to each other and to their environment. There is a violent and traumatic relationship between people and this is the outcome of poverty. Youngsters do not have high expectations as they are stuck in derelict areas of their hometown and witness the demolition. “Most of them just accepted the situation and tried to find ways of passing the time pleasantly, until things ‘looked up’ – something they never seemed to doubt was going to happen. Not one of them, Stephen thought, had begun to suspect that the absence of work might be permanent” (Barker 13). Brannigan thinks that Stephen’s role as a social worker to help the youngsters to find work, turn out to be an idle work which helps them to find ways of passing time and it is highly ironic. “Work and consequently the meaning of working class life, are in the process of redefinition in the post-industrial community in which Barker’s fiction is set, and the landscape and character of working class communities are altered as a result” (72). There seems to be no solidarity and demolition and poverty pit the working-

class youngsters against one another. Environment is hostile, streets are abandoned. People are living but as a result of long-term unemployment they do not feel that they are alive. They are like the living dead. There are no signs of joy, no worldly excitements, sentiments, or hope for the future.

While Liza is telling her stories to Stephen, he realizes that he is possessed by her stories. Liza symbolizes the historical past of England while Stephen symbolizes the present post-industrial England. This is significant in that for Barker “the present-and the future- are founded on the past” (Monteith 7). Throughout the narration Barker tries to indicate the interconnectedness of the past and the present. When Liza works at a factory scrubbing the floors, her granddaughter, who is abandoned by her mother, goes there after the school which is reminiscent of the young Liza’s going to the Wynyards where her mother used to scrub the floors as a domestic help.

Although lifestyles are similar there are differences in the way people treat each other. This time Liza never scorns her granddaughter like her mother did. She never lets her granddaughter wander in the streets alone unlike Mrs Brown in *Union Street*. Furthermore, the Wynyard house is also important in that it is now occupied by Stephen. Stephen and Liza go there to visit the places where Liza used to spend her childhood and Liza recalls her memories while she is in Stephen’s place which belonged to the Wynyards in the past. Brannigan draws attention to the shift of power as the house, which was once occupied by a prosperous industrialist, now belongs to Stephen. Brannigan sees it as a “shift of power from industry to the management of idleness” and finds it “sardonic” (Brannigan 72). These kinds of resonances show the connection between their lives. So Barker brings them together gradually through the end of the novel symbolizing the inseparability of the present from the past. “ ... the apparently anarchic dissolution of working-class community is intimately connected with, and in the process of repeating earlier forms of working-class history in twentieth-century England” (Brannigan 75).

During their conversations Stephen realizes the hopelessness of his generation: “it startled him to realize that Liza had more faith in the future at eighty-four than he had at twenty-nine. He looked round at the people he worked with here and on the Clagg Lane estate, and it seemed to him that he was witnessing the creation of a people without hope” (219). But conversations with Liza help Stephen to overcome the feeling of stagnation and hopelessness. Kılıç in her article interprets Stephen and Liza as alienated and marginalized characters. Stephen is marginalized and isolated because of her sexual choices and because of his job. Liza is alienated as she is the only one who stands amid demolition. Kılıç contends that “it is this similar isolated condition that brings these initially opposing forces together. Thus, it can be argued that the text suggests the meeting of the two marginalised figures as a model of solidarity which provides a remedy for the emotional coldness that surrounds both Liza and Stephen” (15). Liza conveys her sense of change and hope to Stephen in the end. The image of seeds dispersing over the wasteland at the end of the novel subtly symbolizes the compromising nature of past and present and a chink of hope for the future.

In conclusion, in *Union Street*, it is emphasized that poverty and hard work alienate women, make them drown into their own problems, neglect their own children and show violent actions. Furthermore, mothers and daughters have a kind of love-hatred relationship as a result of the disturbing aspects of their lives. Although alienating factors do exist in *Liza's England* too, the reader has a chance to witness, how these ambiguous relationships between mothers and daughters are modified to some degree. Liza is the epitome of the beginning of this modification. In contrast to most of the women in *Union Street*, Liza does not let her troubles affect the way she mothers her own children. She never inflicts violence on her children and reacts against that vicious cycle and strives hard to keep things right. She has been through too many difficulties. She loses her son in the war; she suffers from psychological illnesses but she does her best. She washes a butcher's aprons; works at the munitions factory even though she lost her son in the Second-World War. Even when

Frank leaves home, she collects coals from slag heap to make do. Unlike Mrs. Brown, she raises her children alone not needing a male figure in her life to submit to. After her daughter's departure, she undertakes her granddaughter's responsibility as well and does everything to afford her uniform or other items necessary at school. In the end, her granddaughter becomes the only one who leaves that neighborhood to study at a university. Her granddaughter's success symbolizes a step out of this working-class environment.

Although this is Liza's story, the incidents she depicts and the incidents that occur later in the century link the people and history together. Barker uses similar settings and similar lifestyles in *Union Street* and *Liza's England* in that even the character's names and locations are similar. Yet, the reiteration of lives and stagnancy are broken by a more conscious and questioning Liza:

Through Ellen, Liza became more deeply involved with politics than she'd ever been before. She needed an explanation for the mess she saw around her. Everywhere you looked, work needed doing. And yet nothing happened, the men and the work weren't brought together. Year after year machinery rusted, men rusted, women wore their lives away making one penny do the work of two. (Barker 150)

So Liza, instead of submitting to her conditions, chooses to question and attempt to change them. In addition, alienated relationships between women depicted in *Union Street* are mended to some degree in *Liza's England*. For example, Mrs. Dobbin, one of Liza's neighbors, never leaves Liza alone and she is always there to help her or just to share her troubles and happiness with her. Also, when Liza is mourning after her son who died in the Second World-War, she finds relief through sharing her sad moments with her primary school friend Lena Lowe, who also has lost her son in the war and husband as a result of cancer. However, it should be noted that "Barker refuses to posit an easy and unproblematic female solidarity, and illustrates her ambivalence about the existence of coherent and sustaining female collectives in the working class neighborhoods she depicts" (Brophy 25). What she does is to convey a

sense of hope that things can change for the better. There is an invisible link which bonds people together as they share common experiences and suffer from common problems.

The random acts of violence in the narrative aims to unsettle the reader and encourage her/him to leave simplistic judgments like “good” and “bad” aside. Furthermore, as in *Union Street* men are represented as idle and weary in this novel as well; yet, Barker does not otherize men. *Liza’s England*, too, reminds the reader of the underlying material reasons of their idleness. Again, in this novel, too, Barker explores mother and child relationship in relation to socioeconomic factors and does not cast off reasons for violence. As Sarah Falcus states, “this texts insists upon practical reasons for maternal and domestic violence. This prevents the othering of those perpetrating the violence but does not excuse the incidents, or undermine their horror” (Falcus 254).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analyzed the how poverty affects working women and ambiguity of relationships between mothers and daughters and the socioeconomic factors shaping the practices of motherhood in Pat Barker's two early novels *Union Street* (1982) and *Liza's England* (1984). Christine Delphy's *Close to Home* has been used as a major theoretical framework in order to explore Barker's portrayal of working-class wives' and mothers' oppression in a patriarchal society. Delphy, in her article "Main Enemy", outlines the framework of her materialist feminism, taking her starting point from where materialist feminism and historical materialism come together. According to Delphy:

Historical materialism is based on the analysis of social antagonisms in terms of classes being themselves defined by their place in the system of production. While these principles have supposedly been used to analyze the situation of women as women, the specific relations of women to production have in fact simply been ignored. That is to say there has been no class analysis of women. (57)

She thinks that the domestic mode of production and women's childrearing activities play a crucial role in women's exploitation as they are not thought to carry any monetary value. Therefore, women's contribution to production is devalued and what they do is not seen as real work. Even if women work outside the house they are still expected to carry household responsibilities and this situation doubles their oppression. This is actually what Barker foregrounds in her novels. Most of the women in the novels have to work long hours in order to earn a living both for themselves and their children and the thesis has emphasized their subsequent

oppression. Most of them left alone by their jobless, idle husbands who have been psychologically and physically affected by long-term unemployment, world wars, demolition...etc. Men are depicted as idle and impotent and they have been mostly kept in the background in order to underscore the women's oppression. So, Barker draws attention to "the voices that had not been listened to" (Nixon 3).

Barker questions the notion of motherhood preventing one-sided ascriptions by her working-class mothers; that is why, while analyzing mothers and practices of motherhood, this thesis has made use of *Motherhood: Meanings, Practices and Ideologies* edited by Phoenix, Woollett and Lloyd. The essays in this book provide different vantage points to the experience of motherhood in that, besides being a fulfilling experience it is discussed as actually being fraud with problems for some. Numerous essays have been compiled in the book to show:

How society's constructions of children and women make motherhood a crucial goal for most women. This construction is manifested in terms of the meanings associated with motherhood, the ways in which motherhood is practised and the ideologies which surround motherhood. Women's experiences and practices vary as a function of their differing personalities and motivations and their structural positions. (229)

This thesis has attempted to study Barker's representation of women in the cycle of poverty, procreation, violence, hard work and this cycle is interpreted as a unifying, yet at the same time, a dividing factor. In the third chapter, "The Representation of Motherhood in *Union Street*," Barker's emphasis on the ways in which this cycle undermines the relationship between women and how the experience of motherhood can be traumatic, ambiguous and violent are studied. While doing so violent, inattentive mother figures of *Union Street* such as Iris, Lisa and Mrs. Brown were analyzed, but they were not interpreted as 'evil' characters showing that the ethical problems are largely determined by the socio-economic factors shaping the lives of the characters. Intersections between women's lives and the commonalities that bind them are emphasized by interpreting the similarities in their lifestyles. The novel's

emphasis on how poverty limits possibilities, affects the experience of motherhood, creates ambiguities and reproduces ills in society has been underlined through an analysis of the treatment of motherhood in the novel.

The subsequent chapter of the thesis is titled as “Is There a Way out of The Vicious Cycle?” because it searches for the moments and relationships that represent hope, renewal, regeneration and chance to break the cycle of poverty, violence, procreation, abortion, abandonment, alienation ...etc. in *Liza’s England*. While motherhood in a working class environment is depicted as a trap limiting mothers’ opportunities, *Liza’s England* has been held to be a more hopeful novel by providing a more positive version of this entrapment by shedding light on the possibility for a change in the relationships between mothers and daughters. Ills, inequalities, ill-treatments are persistent themes in both novels but by focusing on Liza’s life experiences, Chapter Four contends that there is always hope and the things can change for the better in the future. Liza emerges as the first mother figure in Barker’s novels to break this cycle with her determinacy not to repeat her mother’s violent actions. She turns out to be a more conscious and powerful character. She has managed alone, become politically more active, refused her daughter’s abortion and finally her granddaughter has left the neighborhood to study at a grammar school. Her courage and strength have become a gleam of hope for the future generations. Stephen has also overcome his sense of frustration and alienation with the help of Liza’s determinacy.

Union between the characters Kelly and Alice Bell, Liza and Stephen, at the end of each novel emphasizes the interconnectedness between the characters and inseparability of past and present. Although most of the characters are studied in the cycle of dereliction, demolition, degradation in both novels, it will be unfair to say that all the characters in novels are condemned to isolation and alienation permanently because Barker carries the traces of hope in her lines. Barker’s unbiased and hopeful portrayals of the condition of working-classes pave the way for a

reception of her characters untainted simplistic judgments. Like Brannigan states: “her attentiveness to the limitations of any idealistic, universal, notions of gendered community, specifically in relation to social inequalities, and her interrogation of gendered assumptions (about war, society, work and so on) means that Barker has always practiced a critical feminism in her work” (172). Barker’s critical stance is always clear. Although this thesis has limited its scope on women, and men are depicted as backstage characters, a book length-study can be done on Barker’s male characters as they are also victims, sufferers of socio-economic hierarchies of their time. Barker’s feminist ideology goes hand in hand with her realism. Male characters are also as trapped as female characters in the life cycle. Her feminism is “characterized by her refusal to one-sided ascriptions of blame or easy fictional solutions” (Ross 132).

While constructing this thesis, some important points are left untouched in order to avoid digressions but that does not mean that they do not carry any importance in the analysis of the novels. Both *Union Street* and *Liza’s England* carry political importance as they reveal harsher truths of their time. How Industrialism and post-Industrialism affected the way people live and how Britain’s economic policies shaped the quality of people’s life style can be clearly seen in the novels. So, further research can be grounded in Barker’s political stance in two of her novels.

Union Street was adapted into a film titled “Stanley and Iris”. But, there are significant differences between the theme of the movie and *Union Street*. A further research can be carried on the similarities and differences between the actual novel and the movie. “Why are there such differences and are these differences related to the time period when the movie was shot?” are the questions to be asked before the study.

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APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY

Pat Barker, İngiltere’de hem feminist yazarlar arasında hem de ana-akım yazarları arasında rüştünü ispatlamış bir yazardır. İşçi sınıfı kadınlarının ve işçi sınıfı annelerinin çektiği sıkıntıları odak noktasına alarak yazdığı romanları ile birçok feminist yazarın bile dokunmaya çekindiği konuları gün yüzüne çıkarmış, objektif bir bakış açısıyla incelemeye çalışmıştır. Kalıplaşmış annelik kavramları ve toplum tarafından dayatılmış kadın erkek rollerine karşı objektif bir bakış açısı yakalamaya çalışmış genellemelerden, etiketlemelerden uzak durmaya çalışmıştır. Bu tez Barker’ın erken dönem romanları olan *Union Street* ve *Liza’s England*’ı Barker’ın bu özelliklerini göz önünde bulundurarak incelemeye çalışmıştır. Kitapları incelerken Christine Delphy’nin *Close to Home* ve Stevi Jackson’un “Women and the Family” adlı eserlerinden yararlanılmıştır çünkü Barker’ın kadın karakterleri hem çalışmak zorunda hem de onlara yardım edecek bir eşleri olmadan kendilerine ve çocuklarına bakmak zorundadırlar. Bu durum zaten ataerkil bir toplumda baskılanmış kadınların omuzlarındaki yükün iki katına çıkmasına sebep olmaktadır. Christine Delphy kadınların baskılanmasının altında yatan sebepleri *Close to Home* adlı kitabında materyalist feminist bir yaklaşımla incelemeye çalışmıştır.

Delphy kadınların bugüne kadar süregelmiş ve ataerkil toplum tarafından kadınlara ait görevler olarak görülen çocuk bakma, ev temizliği, yemek yapma gibi işleri “evsel üretim” başlığı altında incelemiştir. Kadınların yaptığı bu işlerin ataerkil toplum tarafından normalleştirildiğini ve ekonomide parasal bir değeri olmaması sonucu küçük görülmesine sebep olduğuna diğer bir deyişle gerçek bir iş olarak görülmemesine yol açtığına iddia etmektedir. Bu durum kadınların üzerindeki baskılanmanın artmasına evlilik ve ev hanımlığı gibi işlerin kadınların özgürleşmesine engel teşkil etmesine sebep olmuştur. Diğer bir materyalist feminist yazar olan Stevi Jackson ise kadın ve cinsiyet kavramını problemselleştirmiş ve

kadınların baskılanmasındaki faktörlerden en önemlisinin, onların genellemeler çerçevesinde ve toplumun büyük çoğunluğu tarafından kabul gören kalıplar dahilinde değerlendirilmesi olduğunu, aslında kadın kavramı incelenirken onların hayatlarındaki öznel deneyimlerinin, yaşadıkları sosyo-ekonomik çevrenin göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiğini savunmuştur. Bu bilgilerden yola çıkarak Barker'ın kadın karakterleri buldukları yaşam şartlarına ve öznel deneyimlerine dayanarak incelenmiştir.

Union Street ve *Liza's England*'ta kaleme alınan kadın karakterler kısıtlı bir sosyo ekonomik çevrede bulunan, hem çalışmak hem çocuklarına bakmak zorunda kalan yalnız ya da eşleri tarafından madden ve manen yalnız bırakılmış kadınlardır ve bu esaslar çerçevesinde toplumun çoğunluğu tarafından kabul görmüş olan “ideal anne” kavramının dışına çıktıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Romanlar yirminci yüzyıl sanayi-sonrası-toplumu romanlarıdır ve yirminci yüzyılda egemen olan annelik kavramları birçok teorisyen tarafından incelenmiştir. Adrienne Rich 1974'te yazdığı *Of Woman Born* kitabında kendi annelik deneyiminin o dönemde hakim olan “kendini feda eden, her şeyiyle 7/24 bebeğinin yanında olan ilgili alakalı sevgi dolu anne” kavramıyla örtüşmediğini ve bunun kendinde yarattığı kargaşayı açıklamaya çalışmıştır. Bunun yanında Nancy Chodorow, Susan Hays Susan Douglas gibi bir çok yazar o dönemde hakim olan ideal anne kavramının “çocuğun her anında yanında olan besleyip büyütmenin yanında psikolojik olarak tam anlamıyla çocuğun gelişiminden sorumlu olan ebeynin anne olması” gerektiği algısının aslında bir çok annenin gerçekliğiyle örtüşmediğini anlatmaya çalışmışlardır. Anne Woollet ve Ann Phoenix birçok toplum tarafından dayatılmış annelik kavramlarının kadınların üzerinde yarattığı baskıyı anlatmaya çalışmış. Kadınların ve onların annelik deneyimlerinin belirli kalıplar çerçevesinde incelenemeyeceğine, annelik kavramının dil, din, ırk, psikolojik durum, sosyo-ekonomik durum gibi bir çok faktöre bağlı olarak değişiklik gösterebileceğini vurgulamışlardır dolayısıyla romanlardaki annelik kavramları incelenirken bu yazarların kaleme aldığı ve benzer makaleleri derlediği *Motherhood: Practices and Ideologies* adlı kitaptan yararlanılmıştır.

İlk incelenen roman Barker'ın 1982 de yayınladığı *Union Street*; hayatları bir şekilde kesişen aynı kenar mahallede oturan yedi kadının hikayesinin anlatıldığı bir romandır, dolayısıyla kitapta yedi adet bölüm vardır. İlk bölümün adı Kelly' dir. Kelly' nin annesi eşi olmayan yalnız bir kadındır ve işten arta kalan vakitlerinde barlara gidip boş vaktini erkeklerle harcamaktadır. Çocuklarına ilgi ve alaka ile yaklaşmaz onlarla çok ilgilenmez. Eve erkek arkadaşlarını getirmekle beraber onlarla beraberken formaliteden kızlarına kibar davranmaya çalışmaktadır. Maddi olarak imkânsızlıklar içinde büyüyen Kelly; kendiside farkında olmadan baba özlemi çekmekte hayatındaki boşlukları sokaklarda gezerek doldurmaya çalışmaktadır. Annesi çok ilgilenmediği için okuldan çıkıp sokaklarda dolaşmakta kendi başına vakit geçirmektedir. Bir gün sokakta dolaşırken bir anlamda hiç görmediği babasıyla özdeşleştirdiği bir adam tarafından tecavüze uğrar. Annesi üç hafta sonra fark eder çünkü Kelly hiçbir şey söylemez. Tecavülden sonra Kelly için hiçbir şey aynı olmayacaktır. Saçlarını keser daha vahşi ve daha düşmancıl bir hal alır. Kendisini dışlanmış ve farklı hissetmektedir bu durum öfkesini arttırır daha asosyal daha yalnız bir insan hali almakla beraberer güçlü durmaya çalışmaktadır. Annesi ile olan sevgi-nefret karışımı belirsiz ilişkileri daha da karışık hale gelmiştir. Kelly annesinin gözünde artık saf küçük çocuk değil artık bir kadındır.

Kelly ve annesi arasında sevgi nefret karışımı olan duygular Kelly' nin annesine kaba davranmasına rağmen üşüdüğü zaman annesinin kazağını tercih etmesi gibi minik ayrıntılarda gizlidir. Birbirlerine nasıl sevgi göstereceklerini bilemezler içinde buldukları şartlar birçok insan tarafından normal kabul edilen normların oluşmamasına neden olmuştur. Mrs. Brown kızının acısını hissetmekle beraber ona nasıl davranacağını bilememektedir. Erkek arkadaşı Arthur tarafından terk edilen Mrs. Brown' un yaşadığı zorluklar ve iç dünyasının karışıklığı Pat Barker tarafından kısa, keskin ve basit cümlelerle okuyucuya direk aktarılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Tecavülden sonra Kelly kendini daha çok sokaklara atar ve insanlardan uzaklaşır. Tecavüze uğradığı yerin yakınlarında dolaşır hep sanki ona tecavüz eden adamı arar gibidir. Oranın yakınlarında dolaşırken maddi olarak hali vakti daha yerinde

insanların oturduğu bir mahalleye girer ve oradaki evlerden birine girer. Kelly' nin gördüğü lüks yaşam, rujlar, makyaj malzemeleri, pamuk yataklar, ipek kumaşlar nezihe döşenmiş bir ev, şirin bir çocuk odası, onun kıskanmayı bile bilemeyeceği kadar uzak bir dünyadan gelmektedir sanki. Bu şekilde Kelly kendi hayatı ve dışarıdaki hayatlar arasındaki keskin çizgiyi çok daha net fark eder. Aynada kendi yansımasını görür ve bir hayvana benzediğini düşünür. Eline geçirdiği kültablasını aynaya fırlatarak kendi yansımasını binbir parçaya böler. Bu onun bulunduğu duruma karşı bir başkaldırışı şartların onu çaresiz kılması sonucu içinde biriken öfkeyi yansıması olarak incelenmiştir. O evden çıktıktan sonra tüm sisteme ve hayata isyanını bir gece okuduğu okula giderek duvarlara kendi dışkıyla aklına gelen bütün kötü kelimeleri yazar ve müdürün odasını dağıtır. Bu onun sisteme karşı bir isyanıdır adeta.

Kelly bir gün parka gider ve orada yaşlı bir kadın görür onun yanına oturur ve konuşmaya başlarlar konuşmanın sonlarına doğru el ele tutuşurlar ve yaşlı kadın çok üşüdüğünü ama şimdi daha sıcak hissettiğini söyler. Uykuya dalacağını söylemiştir. Yavaşça gözleri kapanır. Bu kısım ucu açık bırakılmıştır ancak yaşlı kadının orada öldüğü imgesi satır aralarından çıkmaktadır. Daha öncede belirtildiği üzere Union Street' te bütün kadınların hayatları bir şekilde birbiriyle birleşmektedir. Bu yaşlı kadın son bölümde okuyucunun karşısına çıkacak olan Alice Bell' dir.

Pat Barker genellemelerden kaçınır onun için evrensel “iyi” ya da “kötü” kavramlarından bahsedilemez ve aynı şekilde evrensel olan “iyi anne” kavramı Pat Barker' a göre yoktur. Barker okuyucuya Mrs. Brown 'un kendi iç karışıklıklarının olabileceğini, yaşadığı hayatın kolay olmadığını ve onun anneliğinin içinde yaşadığı sosyo ekonomik durumla şekillendiğini anlatmak istemiştir. Union Street kadınlarının çok seçim şansı yoktur ve yaşamları, ağır çalışma temposu, sürekli doğurma, kenar mahalle kürtajları, sağlıksız koşullar, fakirlik kısır döngüsü içerisinde birbirlerine bağlanmaktadır. *Union Street*' te anlatılan kadınların hikayeleri bu döngü içerisinde gidip gelir.

Union Street’ teki annelerin incelenmesinin sebebi buradaki kadınların evrensel olarak kabul görmüş “ideal anne” kavramına uymamalarıdır. Mrs. Brown genellemeler ışığında incelendiğinde çocuklarını ihmal eden ve beklide bu ihmalkarlığı sebebiyle kızının tecavüzüne yol açan bir anne olarak görülmekle beraber Pat Barker’ ın anlatımıyla ve yukarıda bahsi geçen teorisyenler ışığında incelendiğinde kendi iç kargaşaları ve dertleri olan, tek başına iki çocuğu bakmaya çalışan bir işçi sınıfı kadınıdır. Aynı şekilde yine bir Union Street sakini olan Lisa Goddard iki çocuklu ve üçüncüye hamile, kocası işten çıkarılmış bir annedir. Lisa Goddard’ ın hikayesi iki çocuğundan birisi bebek arabasında diğeri kucağında, alışveriş arabasını kocaman göbeğiyle itmeye çalışır gibi görünürken, oğlunun sürekli ağlayıp raflardan bir şey istemesi ve Lisa’ nın alacak gücü olmadığı için çocuğuna bıraktırmaya çalışırken birden kendini tutamayıp çocuğunu şiddetli bir şekilde dövmesiyle açılır. Lisa’nın kocası Brian uzun süredir işsizdir ve uzun süreler iş aradıktan sonra kendini içkiye kaptırmış en son Lisa’ nın yeni doğacak bebek için kenara ayırmayı başardığı bir miktar parayı da içkiye harcamıştır. Lisa birçok zorlukla biriktirdiği paraların Brian tarafından tüketildiğini öğrendiğinde Brian’ ın üzerine gider ve olay neredeyse doğurmak üzere olan Lisa’nın Brian tarafından hırpalanması ve dudağının patlamasıyla sonuçlanır. Barker bu tarz şiddet sahnelerinin ardından karakterlerden birinin iç dünyasını okuyucuya yansıtarak, tek bir suçlu bulunmasını engelleyip, kötü olarak adlandıracağımız olayların altında yatan sebepleri incelemeye çalışmıştır. Barker konuyu ve karakterleri işleyişi açısından toplumdaki kötülüklerin ve çarpıklıkların sorumluluğunu sadece bir kişiye ya da bir cinsiyete yıkmamakta, okuyucularına insanların belirli şartlar altında nasıl tepkiler verebileceğini göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Okuyucu bunu kavga sahnesinin ardından Brian mahzunlaşp hiç konuşmadan diz çökerek başını Lisa’ nın kucağına koyduğunda ve Lisa’ nın Brian’ la ilgili düşüncelerine şahitlik ettiğinde anlar. Lisa’ nın zihninde Brian işsiz kalmadan önce bu kadar ani tepkiler veren ve sinirli biri değil aksine çocuk gibidir.

Union Street ve *Lisa's England*' ta şiddet toplumun endemik bir parçası gibi işlenmiştir ve fakirlikle doğru orantılı olarak artar. Lisa oğlunu o şekilde hırpaladıktan sonra kendi kendini sorgular neden böyle olduğunu bulmaya çalışır ve bazen çok çaresiz hissettiğini söyler. Fakirlik insanlara seçim şansı bırakmamakla beraber annelerin psikolojisini etkilemektedir. Annelik kavramını problematikleştiren Anne Woollet, Ann Phoenix gibi yazarlar annelik gerçekliklerinin ancak kişilerin yaşadığı çevre göz önünde bulundurulduğunda doğru bilgiler verebileceğini, herkes tarafından kabul gören tüm dünyada geçerli “iyi annelik” kavramının mümkün olmadığını savunurlar. *Union Street* ve *Lisa's England* anneleri bunların en güzel örneğidir.

Erkekler iki romanda da geri plana atılmış, sığ kalmış ve işsizlik tarafından kısır bırakılmış karakterlerdir. Geleneksel ataerkil toplumlarda görülen, “evin başı (lideri)”, “eve ekmek getiren kişi” kalıpları Pat Barker'ın bu iki romanında görülmemektedir. Erkekler işsiz, çaresiz, yalnız ve etkisizdirler. Barker bu şekilde kadınları ön plana çıkararak, onların baskılayan faktörlere dikkat çekmeye çalışmıştır.

Iris King, *Union Street*' te anlatılan diğer bir anne figürüdür. Romanda geçen yedi kadın arasında evrenselleşmiş anne kalıplarına uyan, ilgili, ailesinin bütünlüğünü koruyan, temizliğe ve düzene özen gösteren ve dışından tırnağından arttırıp para biriktirmiş bir kadındır. Tüm sokağın annesi olarak bilinir ve yardıma ihtiyacı olan herkesin aklına ilk Iris King gelir, soyadı bu anlamda manidardır. O sokağın kralıdır aslında ancak, Iris kızı Brenda' nın hamile olduğunu ve hamileliğinin kürtaj olamayacak kadar ilerlediğini öğrendiğinde, zaten yumurtalıklarından ameliyat olmuş yaralı kızını saçından sürükleyerek ve döverek hastaneden çıkarır ve beş aylık hamile olan Brenda'yı çocuğu doğurduğunda çekeceği zorlukları anlatarak kürtaja zorlar. Brenda ile beraber Iris' in eskiden yaşadığı ve kaçmak için elinden geleni yaptığı *Wharfe Street*' e giderler, hijyenik olmayan şartlar altında, zaten yumurtalıklardan olduğu ameliyat dolayısıyla acılar içinde kıvranan Brenda beş aylık hamileyken orada erken doğuma zorlanır. Iris yeni doğan ve hareket etmekte olan

bebeği gazete kağıdına sarar ve arka sokaklardan birine atar. İlk bakışta mükemmel bir anne imajı veren Iris King’ in böyle acımasızca bir karar verebilmesi aslında her şeyin görüldüğü gibi olmadığını, insanları belirli standartlar altında incelemenin yanlış olduğunun adeta bir kanıtıdır. Brenda acılar içinde eve döner ve bir daha çocuk sahibi olamayacaktır.

Iris King’ in ilgili özenli, dikkatli bir eş ve anne imajı, Union Street’ te yıllardır kurmaya çalıştığı saygınlığı Brenda’ nın hamileliğiyle tehlikeye girdiği an Iris’ in soğukkanlı bir şekilde kızının hayatını tehlikeye atması çelişki yaratmaktadır. Bu çelişki, kürtaj sahnesinin ardından Barker’ ın okuyucuyu Iris King’ in geçmişi hakkında bilgilendirmesi ile çözüme kavuşur. Iris King Union Street’ ten de daha kötü bir sokakta büyümüş. Babasından ciddi dayaklar yemiş ve oradan kaçmanın tek yolunu evlenmekte bulabilmiştir. Erken yaşta çocuk sahibi olmuş hayal kurmaya bile fırsat bulamamıştır. Iris King’ in hikayesi daha önceki bölümlerden birinde okuyucunun karşısına çıkan Joanne Wilson’ un hikayesine benzemektedir. Joanne kek fabrikasında çalışan genç bir kızdır. Her gün ev ve iş arasında, fabrikanın boğucu gürültüsünde düşüncelerinin bile makineleştiğini hissederek yaşamaktadır. Yoğun çalışma temposundan arta kalan zamanlarda içip Bingo oynar. Bir gün erkek arkadaşı Ken’ den hamile kaldığını öğrenir. Tek kurtuluşunun Ken ile evlenmekten geçtiğini düşünmektedir. Çünkü Union Street kadınları yaşadıkları hayat tarzları ve sosyoekonomik düzeyleri nedeniyle hayattan çok şey beklememekle beraber hayatlarının cinsel ilişki çocuk aldırma, yoğun, ağır çalışma temposu ve fakirlik kısır döngüsü içinde gidip gelmektedir Evlilik onlar için bir kaçış noktası olarak görülmektedir çünkü seçenekleri kısıtlıdır.

Barker okuyucuya “kötü” olarak adlandırılacak karakterlerin geçmişleri ve iç dünyasıyla ilgili bilgiler vererek “kötü” ya da “iyi” kavramlarını sorgularken, daha geniş açıdan bakılmasını sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Iris King’ in ününü korumaya çalışması yanında, aslında onaltı yaşında olan kızının doğurarak kendisi gibi acılar çekmesini, tek başına bir çocuk büyütme zorunda kalmamasını istemiştir şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Fakirlik, daha öncede belirtildiği gibi verilen kararları, yaşam tarzını

ve annelik deneyimini etkilemektedir ve Union Street’ teki kadınlar fakirliğin kısıtladığı imkanlar çerçevesinde benzer hayatlar yaşayan kadınlardır. Bir kadının hikayesi diğer bir kadının hikayesinde yansımalar gösterir. Yedi hikaye genç Kelly ile başlar ve okuyucu bir insan yaşamının bütün evrelerine farklı karakterler aracılığıyla şahitlik eder.

Union Street, Alice Bell’in hikayesi ile sona erer. Alice Bell tek başına yaşayan ve oğlunun ve sosyal servis çalışanlarının onu bir bakım evine yatırma istediğine tek başına direnen fakir bir kadındır. Onun için evini terketmek tecavüze uğramakla aynı şeydir çünkü onun için ev kimliğini, geçmişini bugüne kadar uğruna yaşadığı her şeyi temsil eden bir dayanaktır onun gözünde bakımevine gitmek “working house” a gitmekten farklı değildir. Ancak ekonomik olarak imkanları o kadar sınırlıdır ki, ısınmak için kendini gazete kağıtlarına sarmaktadır. Bugüne kadar seçim şansı olmamıştır ve evini terketmeyerek belki de ilk defa bir şeyi seçebilme şansını elde etmiştir ancak o kadar yaşlıdır ki komşuları gelip onun için dışarıdan topladıkları kömürleri yakarak ısınmasını sağlamaktadırlar. Bir gün komşular gelmez ve Alice tek başına dışarı çıkarak kömür toplamaya çalışırken kayıp düşer ve artık geri dönemeyeceğini farkeder, yaşlıdır. Son gücüyle sendeleyerek yürür ve kendini bir parka atar çünkü kömür toplayıp götüremeyecek kadar güçsüz düşmüştür. Parkta yolları ilk hikayedeki küçük Kelly ile kesişir ve *Union Street* tam bir daire çizerek insanın hayat aşamalarını Alice Bell ile noktalar. Son bölümde Kelly ile Alice Bell’in el ele tutuşması bu biraraya gelişin kadınların ortak sorunlar etrafında birbirine bağlanmasının bir sembolü olarak incelenmiştir.

Liza’s England diğer adıyla *Century’s Daughter* *Union Street*’in devamı olarak okunabilir çünkü karakterler ve yaşam tarzları bir önceki romanla benzerlikler göstermektedir. *Liza’s England*’ ta da kadınlar; ağır iş temposu, fakirlik, sürekli doğum kısır döngüsü arasında gidip gelmektedir. Ancak *Liza’s England* *Union Street*’e göre daha umut verici bir roman olarak incelenmiştir. Romanın hikaye anlatıcısı Liza ondokuzuncu yüzyılın yirminci yüzyıla döndüğü gece yarısı dünyaya gelmiştir. Sanayi sonrası de-industrialization (sanayisizleşme) toplumunda artık

fabrikalar yerini çorak topraklara “boarded up” evler yerini terkedilmişliğe bırakmış, Liza neredeyse bütün hayatını geçirdiği çevreyi terketmemeye kararlı seksendört yaşında bir kadındır. Liza’ nın hikayesi Alice Bell’ in hikayesine benzerlik gösterir. İkiside yaşadıkları evi geçmişlerinden kalan bir anı kimliklerinin bir parçası olarak görmekte ve terketmeye direnç göstermektedir. Terk fark Alice Bell’ in bakım evine gönderilmek istenmesi Liza’ nın ise yeni bir ev projesi için eski evlerin yıkılacağı haberiyle evinden çıkarılmak istenmesidir. Bu görevi üstlenen kişi sosyal servis elemanı Stephen’ dir. Hikaye Liza’ nın onu ikna etmeye gelen Stephen’ le konuşmaya başladığında kendi doğum hikayesini anlatmasıyla başlar. Liza iki dünya savaşını sanayileşmeyi ve sanayisizleşmeyi de görmüş 84 yaşında bir kadındır dolayısıyla hikayede sembolik bir yeri vardır.

Liza çocukluğunu anlatarak hikayesine başlar annesi Louise 15 çocuk doğurmuş çoğunu doğumda kaybetmiş bir kaçını da hastalıkta toprağa vermiştir. Vücudu ve zihni bu 15 çocuğun ve yoğun iş temposunun izlerini taşır. Çocuklarına, özellikle Liza ya karşı sabırsız ve şiddet eğilimleri gösteren bir annedir. Hali vakti yerinde Wynyard ailesine temizliğe gitmektedir. Liza ne zaman ona karşı gelecek bir eylemde bulursa sopasıyla onu hırpalır. Çocuklarındaki umut, hayal etme, okuma gibi bütün entellektüel aktiviteleri, bunların buldukları ortamda hiçbir faydası olmayacağını söyleyerek engellemiştir. Liza’ yı ne zaman kitap okurken görse, temizlik işi verir ya da okumayı bırakmasını ister. Hayat onu çok fazla bir şey beklememeye itmiş ve çocuklarının kaderlerinin çok da farklı olmayacağını düşündüğü için onları da çok bir şey beklememeye yönlendirir hale getirmiştir. Okuyucu yine bir şiddet sahnesinde Louise’ nin geçmişine şahitlik ederek anlar. Louise fakir bir çevrede büyümüş o çevreden kurtulmak için evlenmiş kocası tarafından aldatılmış ve çocuğuyla tek başına kalıp çalışmak zorunda kalmıştır. Kadınların hayata bir adım geriden başladığını düşündüğü için özellikle kız çocuklarının hayattan çok şey beklememesini sosyoekonomik durumları dolayısıyla çok fazla seçenekleri olmadığı için aynı hayatı yaşamaya mecbur olduklarını düşünmektedir.

Liza annesiyle beraber bir gün bir çeşit ayine katılır. Orada birinci dünya savaşında gazi olmuş ve boğazından yaralanmış Frank Wright, ölümlerle iletişime geçtiğini onlarla bir bağı olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Louise Frank' i sever çünkü onun yardımıyla savaşta kaybettiği oğlu Edward' la iletişime geçebileceğini düşünmektedir. Liza' nın Frankle evlenmesini istemektedir ve evlenirler ancak Frank *Union Street*'teki erkekler gibi uzun işsizlik dönemleri sonucunda kendini basit ve işe yaramaz hissetmekte kendi sorunlarında boğulmaktadır. Liza yine *Union Street*' te karşımıza çıkan diğer kadınlar gibi yalnız başına kalmış çocuğunu tek başına büyütme çalışmaktadır.

Liza' nın *Union Street*' te bahsi geçen ve özellikle kendi annesinden farkı, diğerleri gibi pes etmemesi çabalamayı seçmesidir. Diğerlerinin aksine ilgili bir annedir. Oğlu Tom'u bir dakika bile yalnız bırakmaz. Ona özen gösterir yanında olmaya çalışır. Tek başına çabalar. *Union Street*' de Iris Bell ve Brenda, Mrs. Brown ve Kelly arasındaki sevgi- nefret karışımı belirsiz ilişki burada Liza ve Louise örneklerinde kendini gösterir. Ancak Liza daha öncede belirtildiği gibi farklıdır. Oğlunu ikinci dünya savaşında yitiren Liza ironik bir şekilde silah üreten bir fabrikada çalışmaktadır ve savaş, politika, hayat amacı gibi şeyleri sorgulamaktadır. Onun için millet duygusu önemini yitirir çünkü insan yaşamı ön plandadır.

Union Street' te olduğu gibi karakterler yoğun bir fakirliğin pençesinde dirler. Anlatımın her ayrıntısında fakirliğin izleri sürülebilmektedir. Liza hikayesini anlatmaya devam ederken Stephen' da kendi hayatını sorgulamaya başlar ve Liza' ya yaptığı ziyaretler arasında aralarında bir çeşit bağ kurulur. Liza İngiltere'nin geçimini sembolize ederken Stephen ise sanayisizleşmenin insanların üzerinde bıraktığı hiçlik ve karamsarlık duygusuyla yirminci yüzyılın gençliğini sembolize eder. İşçi Clagg Lane denilen yerde sıkışıp kalmış işçi sınıfı çocuklarına iş bulmakken işsizliğin aslında kalıcı olduğunu asıl işinin oradaki gençlerin zaman geçirmelerini sağlamak olduğunu farkeder ve onun için "iş" kavramı anlamını yitirir çünkü hiçbir işe yaramadığını düşünmektedir. Ekonomi kötüdür ve fabrikalar art arda kapanmaktadır.

Liza's England, Liza' nın hikayeleriyle geçmiş ve o an arasında gidip gelir bu sayede okuyucu hem İngilterenin geçmişine hem de o günkü durumuna şahitlik etme imkanı bulabilmektedir. Bu hikayelerde değişmeyen şey “fakirlik” ve fakirliğin insan hayatı üzerinde yarattığı etkilerdir. Dolayısıyla *Union Street* ve *Liza's England*’ taki hayatlar birbirine benzer.

Liza bir gün kızı Eileen’ in hamile kaldığını öğrenir. O an nerede olduğunu bilmediği bir askerden hamile kalmıştır. Bu hikaye’ de Iris King ve Brenda’ nın hikayesinin bir yansımasını görür okuyucu. Liza’ da o şartlar altında bir çocuk doğurmanın Eileen’ in hayatını mahvedeceğini, çocuğa bakmayı başaramayacağını üzerindeki yükü arttıracığını düşünmektedir. Iris ve Brenda’ nın hikayesinde olduğu gibi Eileen ve Liza’ da arka mahallelerdeki bir kürtaacıya giderler ve Liza orada hayati bir karar verir. Eileen’ in çocuğu aldırmasını engeller ve çocuğun bütün sorumluluğunu üzerine alır. Burada Barker aslında her şeyin bir kısır döngüde sonsuza kadar kötüye gitmeyebileceğinin her şeyin verilen kararlar sonucunda değişebileceğinin bir mesajını vermektedir çünkü Eileen doğum yaparken Liza kendi doğumunu hatırlar o da aynı odada doğum yapmıştır. Eileen ve Liza bu doğum sahnesinde sembolik olarak birleşirler ve *Union Street*’ te kadınların arasında görülemeyen birliktelik ortamı burada Barker’ in anlatımıyla kendini hissettirir.

Stephen Liza’ nın hikayeleriyle kendi umutsuzluk hissini yendiğini farketmiştir. Liza onun için bir umut sembolü haline gelmiştir. Stephen o dönemin İngiltere’ sinin umutsuzluğunu sembolize etmektedir çünkü gençler uzun süredir işsizler ve Clagg Lane denilen yerde olası bir iş imkanı için beklemektedirler. Şiddetin ele alımı iki roman arasında da farklılıklar göstermektedir. *Liza's Enland*’ ta da bireysel şiddet vardır ancak Clagg Lane’ de ikamet eden gençlerin arasındaki şiddet daha çok birbirlerine ve etrafa zarar verme şeklinde gelişmiştir. Hatta bu gençler kitabın sonunda zorbalıklarıyla yaşlı ve kırılğan Liza’ nın ölümüne sebep olan, Liza’ ile aynı çevreyi paylaşan gençlerdir. Uzun süre işsiz kaldıkları için bir işe yaramadıklarını düşünen ve fakir şartlar altında, *Union Street*’ te anlatılan hikayelerdeki gibi aile ortamlarında büyüyen gençler öfkelerini etrafa zarar vererek açığa çıkarmaktadır. Bu

durum Kelly' nin tecavüze uğradıktan sonra okula ve girdiği evdeki aynaya zarar vermesiyle benzerlik göstermektedir. Hiçlik hissi karakterlerde etrafa zarar verme isteği doğurmaktadır. Şiddet toplumun endemik bir parçası olarak ele alınmıştır ancak daha öncede belirtildiği üzere roman tek bir suçlu aramaz. Şiddetin ve ilgisizliğin terkedilmişliğin altında yatan sebepleri inceler.

Liza verdiği o hayati kararlar bir kırılma noktasını ve bu kısır döngüden bir ayrılışı, umudur sembolize eder. O iki kitapta ele alınan kadın karakterlere göre daha bilinçlidir ve direnme ve sorgulama gibi özellikler gösterir. Kendi annesi ve *Union Street*' teki annelerin aksine çocuklarına asla şiddet uygulamaz. O da fakirlikten ve ağır çalışma temposundan dolayı psikolojik sorunlar yaşar büyük acılar çeker ancak kendi çocuklarına ve kızı Eileen' in ilgilenmediği torununa karşı sevgi dolu ve fedakardır. Tüm bunlar ışığında torunu Kathleen iki roman arasında o çevreyi terkedip okumaya giden ilk işçi sınıfı kadını olur. Bu durum Pat Barker' ın yaşamıyla benzerlikler göstermektedir. Pat Barker' da fakir bir çevreden gelmiş, kendi babasını hiç tanımamış ve babasının öldüğünü zannederken aslında annesinin o sırada göreve gitmekte olan bir pilottan hamile kaldığını öğrenmiştir. Annesi başka bir adamla evlenmeye karar verince büyükannesi tarafından büyütülmüş ve o çevrede okumaya gitmeyi başarabilen bir işçi sınıfı kadını olmuştur. Bu iki romanda Pat Barker' ın büyüdüğü çevreden izler taşır. Barker karakterleri ele alışı bakımından okuyucuya en objektif bakışı sunacak bir anlatımı seçmiştir ona göre, kalıplaşmış cinsiyet etiketleri ve annelik normları yanlıştır. Barker tüm bu normları sorgular çarpıcı bir gerçeklikle aslında bazı annelerin hayatlarında neler olabileceğini gösterir. Barker için karamsar bir yazar denilemez çünkü her ne kadar karakterler birbirlerine, fakirlik, şiddet gibi unsurlarla bağlansa da bunun sonsuza kadar böyle devam etmeyebileceğinin sinyallerini verir. Olaylar kısıtlı bir çevrede, kısıtlı karakterlerle gelişir ama ima ettikleri gerçeklikler daha geniştir. *Union Street*' te ve *Liza's England*' ta bahsedilen yerlerin birbirlerine yakın olduğu anlaşılmaktadır, hatta karakterlerin ismi, yaşam tarzları ve yaşadıkları olaylar bile benzemektedir ancak hiçbir zaman sığ oldukları izlenimi vermezler.

Liza's England' ta Liza' nın annesi gibi temizlik işini yapması ve yerleri dizlerinin üzerine çökmüş silerken tasvir edilmesi, Eileen' in *Union Street*'te ki gibi hamile kalması, karakterlerin yaşadıkları hayatta evliliği tek çıkış noktası olarak görmesi gibi minik ama önemli detaylar iki romanı da romandaki karakterleri de birbirine bağlamaktadır. Ancak *Liza's England* daha umut verici bir roman olarak incelenmiştir çünkü *Liza's England*' ta değişim vardır, farklılaşma Liza ile göze çarpar. Liza romanın erkek kahramanı genç Stephen' dan bile daha umutlu daha inançlıdır. İki romanın sonunda da geçmiş ve şimdiki zamanın (karakterlere göre) birleşimini görürüz. *Union Street*' te Alice ve Kelly' nin sembolik bir araya gelişi, *Liza's England*' ta Liza ve Stephen' ın arasında kurulan bağ bu bir araya gelişi sembolize eder çünkü Barker' a göre geçmiş şimdiki zamandan ayrılamaz, geçmiş olmazsa şimdiki zaman da olamaz. *Liza's England*' ta çorak topraklarda havaya uçuşan tohumlar yeni yeşerecek olan umutların bir habercisidir.

Sonuç olarak Pat Barker' ın amacı, bu güne kadar taraflarından gözlem yapılmamış ve hakkında çok yazılmamış kadınlar, anneler, özellikle işçi sınıfı kadınları üzerine dikkat çekmeye çalışmaktır ve okuyucu da bazı etik soru işaretleri uyandırmaktadır. Doğru yanlış kavramları yoktur ve değişkenlik gösterir. Barker bu iki erken dönem romanıyla, okuyucuya olayların bir başka boyutunu göstermiş, farklı bakış açıları sağlamış, geri plana itilmiş hayatlara şahitlik edilmesini sağlamıştır.

APPENDIX B: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Çağlar

Adı : Bircan

Bölümü : İngiliz Edebiyatı

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Motherhood in Pat Barker's Post-Industrial Working-Class Fiction: A Study of *Union Street* and *Liza's England*

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınmaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: