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LITERATURE**


**A WAKE-UP CALL: A COMPARATIVE AND
CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF GENDER CONSTRUCTION
IN MAJOR UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN WORKS BY
BURDEKIN, ATWOOD, GILMAN, AND HOSSAIN**

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**PhD Dissertation**


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**UYANIŞ ÇAĞRISI: BURDEKIN, ATWOOD, GILMAN VE HOSSAIN'IN BAŞLICA ÜTOPİK VE DİSTOPİK ESERLERİNDE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET YAPILANDIRMASINA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR YAKLAŞIM**
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*To my sons, Rüzgar KARA and Atlas Umut KARA, who, I believe, will never stop looking for the better.*

*AND*

*To my beloved wife, Tuğba Deniz KARA, with whom my life is even more beautiful and lyrical.*

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# ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL RECORD

This study entitled "**A Wake-up Call: A Comparative and Contrastive Study of Gender Construction in Major Utopian and Dystopian Works by Burdekin, Atwood, Gilman, and Hossain**" prepared by **Mustafa KARA** under the supervision of **Prof. Dr. Hasan BAKTIR** has been accepted by our jury as a **PhD dissertation** in Erciyes University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of **English Language and Literature**.

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Prof. Dr. Atabey KILIÇ

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# A WAKE-UP CALL: A COMPARATIVE AND CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF GENDER CONSTRUCTION IN MAJOR UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN WORKS BY BURDEKIN, ATWOOD, GILMAN, AND HOSSAIN

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## ABSTRACT

Feminist utopian and dystopian works manifest similar issues with different approaches. In feminist utopias, there is a stark difference between the present patriarchal systems and fictional societies. Traditional gender roles such as wifehood and motherhood among many others are generally not employed within feminist utopian novels. Most importantly, males, correspondingly male dominance over females, are totally non-existent or subverted. In this way, most writers emphasize the notion that sex is a biological entity whereas gender is a construction of societal norms. In feminist dystopias, moreover, the same gender roles are taken to excessive limits in such ways that femininity is depicted as a way of insult, especially by totalitarian regimes, or females are objectified and punished due to their gender category. Women's lives are controlled and regulated by certain devices of the societies and states they partake in. Considering the parallel intentions of utopian and dystopian literature, this dissertation aimed to compare and contrast a utopian novel and a utopian short story, *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and *Sultana's Dream* by Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain respectively, as well as two dystopian novels, *Swastika Night* by Katharine Burdekin and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, so as to put forth the notion that submission to the traditional gender roles brings about the disintegration of women, thereby providing the sustainability of the prevalent subordination, whereas subversion of these roles and resistance against normative references strengthen the female identity by opening up new perspectives, thereby bringing forth women's liberation.

**Keywords:** feminist utopia, feminist dystopia, gender construction, gender identity, ideology

# UYANIŞ ÇAĞRISI: BURDEKIN, ATWOOD, GILMAN VE HOSSAIN'IN BAŞLICA ÜTOPİK VE DİSTOPİK ESERLERİNDE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET YAPILANDIRMASINA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR YAKLAŞIM

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## ÖZET

Feminist ütopik ve distopik eserler benzer konuları farklı yaklaşımlarla ortaya koymaktadır. Feminist ütopyalarda, mevcut ataerkil sistemler ile kurgusal toplumlar arasında keskin bir fark vardır. Zevcelik, annelik gibi geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri feminist ütopik romanlarda genellikle kullanılmaz. En önemlisi, erkekler ve buna bağlı olarak kadınlar üzerindeki erkek egemenliği ya hiç yoktur ya da yıkılmıştır. Bu şekilde, çoğu yazar cinsiyetin biyolojik bir varlık olduğu, toplumsal cinsiyetin ise toplumsal normların bir inşası olduğu fikrini vurgular. Feminist distopyalarda ise aynı toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, kadınlığın özellikle totaliter rejimler tarafından bir aşağılama biçimi olarak tasvir edilmesi ya da kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet kategorileri nedeniyle nesneleştirilerek cezalandırılması gibi aşırı sınırlara taşınır. Kadınların yaşamları, içinde yer aldıkları toplumların ve devletlerin bazı aygıtları tarafından kontrol edilmekte ve düzenlenmektedir. Ütopik ve distopik edebiyatın paralel amaçlarını göz önünde bulunduran bu tez, Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın *Herland* adlı ütopik romanı ve Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain'in *Sultana's Dream* adlı ütopik öyküsü ile birlikte Katharine Burdekin'in *Swastika Night* ve Margaret Atwood'un *The Handmaid's Tale* adlı iki distopik romanını karşılaştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Böylece, geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine boyun eğmenin kadınların parçalanmasına yol açtığı ve böylece egemen itaatkarlığın sürdürülebilirliğini sağladığı, oysa bu rollerin yıkılması ve normatif referanslara karşı direnişin yeni perspektifler açarak kadın kimliğini güçlendirdiği ve böylece kadınların özgürleşmesini sağladığı fikrini ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** feminist ütopya, feminist distopya, toplumsal cinsiyet yapılandırması, toplumsal cinsiyet kimliği, ideoloji

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**A WAKE-UP CALL: A COMPARATIVE AND CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF GENDER CONSTRUCTION IN MAJOR UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN WORKS BY BURDEKIN, ATWOOD, GILMAN, AND HOSSAIN**

## CHAPTER ONE
## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

## CHAPTER TWO
## BEGUM ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN AND HER SHORT STORY
## *SULTANA'S DREAM*

## CHAPTER THREE
## CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND HER NOVEL *HERLAND*

# CHAPTER FOUR

## KATHERINE BURDEKIN AND HER NOVEL *SWASTIKA NIGHT*

# CHAPTER FIVE

## MARGARET ATWOOD AND HER NOVEL *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

# INTRODUCTION

As a literary genre, utopia emerged in 1516 when Thomas More wrote and published his fiction, *Utopia*, in which he described an ideal society and protested against the inequalities within the society he lived in and emphasized the pressure on people due to Henry VIII's domination of the Catholic Church, by which he aimed to marry Anne Boleyn. More's work, however, may not be the only example of the utopian tradition, for although the term was first coined in the early periods of the sixteenth century, there are earlier examples inclusive of utopian traces. Plato, for instance, wrote *The Republic* centuries ago, between 370 and 360 BC. Though Plato's work is not under the genre of utopian fiction, it included utopic elements since he describes the ideal state and society in his contemporaneous period. In addition to Plato, Augustine of Hippo wrote *The City of God* between 413 and 426 AD and focused more on spiritual improvement rather than worldly pleasures by referring to various theological principles. Moreover, Abu Nasr Farabi, too, authored a book entitled *The Virtuous City* between 870 and 950 AD and tried to suggest ways of constructing a good society. As such, there are many literary works inclusive of utopian impulses from different parts of the world and from different periods of time though these works are not directly under the genre of utopian literature themselves. In other words, the intuition of dreaming for a better life has always been at the very centre of human life.

Utopianism might be basically described as designing for better alternatives compared to contemporaneous conditions. In other words, it principally focuses on the betterment of prevalent conditions and societies by sketching alternative worlds or communities. Utopia, therefore, turns out to be an urge for a change into a more peaceful condition than the indigenous one. Dystopia, on the other hand, is the sharp antithesis of utopia. Claeys (2010) defines dystopia as follows:

> *'Dystopia' is often used interchangeably with 'anti-utopia' or 'negative utopia', by contrast to utopia or 'eutopia' (good place), to describe a fictional portrayal of a society in which evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand, or as a satire of utopian aspirations which attempts to show up their fallacies, or which demonstrate, in B. F. Skinner's words, 'ways of life we must be sure to avoid' – in the unlikely event that we can agree on particulars. (p.107)*

Considering Claeys' definition, dystopian fiction has been viewed as a sort of warning against distortions or possible apocalyptic ends. Put another way, dystopian fiction functions as a wake-up call for readers so as to make them become aware of the wrongdoings of the existing conditions. Therefore, utopian and dystopian works share similar objectives such as the betterment of societies and reaching an ideal order although the word ideal is considerably subjective and is prone to change for every single individual. Both utopian and dystopian works have been mediums for presenting readers with alternative worlds and perspectives so as to take action and change whatever needs to be changed; their methods and characteristics, however, differ. Kumar (1987) compares and contrasts utopia and dystopia as follows:

> *Like the religious and the secular, utopia and anti-utopia are antithetical yet interdependent. They are 'contrast concepts', getting their meaning and significance from their mutual differences. But the relationship is not symmetrical or equal. The anti-utopia is formed by utopia, and feeds parasitically on it ... Utopia is the original, anti- utopia is the copy – only, as it were, always coloured black ... Anti-utopia draws its material from utopia and reassembles it in a manner that denies the affirmation of utopia. It is the mirror-image of utopia – but a distorted image, seen in a cracked mirror. (p. 100)*

As such, whereas utopias depict the ideal society and order, dystopias are reflections of the undesired and generally fearful communities. While utopian literature presents the wrongs of the existing conditions and proposes solutions for them, the dystopian literature underscores the distortions without demonstrating or implying answers to these distortions. The most significant aim of the latter is to make readers uneasy and trigger them to ask questions about the ongoing events. By doing so, the writer makes readers

open up new perspectives so as to alter their position as individuals and take action to divert from the possible disastrous ends.

*Sultana's Dream*, penned by Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain in 1905, is a utopian novella which subverts gender roles in the most suitable way to serve to the undermining process of the traditional attributions to genders. Hossain's story takes place in Ladyland, where women are responsible for all sorts of things in life and men are put into the purdah, which are private rooms for the seclusion of men. Although the story is considerably short, it incorporates the re-institutionalisation of the government by women, stabilization of the society in a peaceful way, use of technology in all circles of life without the assistance of men, praising intellect over physical power and distorting the stereotypical aspects of traditional gender roles. Despite the fact that this story elevates women over men at some parts, a critical study will be committed as objectively and ethically as required, for neither superiority nor inferiority should be tolerated in terms of gender and society construction.

Similar to Hossain's safe and peaceful Ladyland, *Herland* is a utopian novel which was written in 1915 by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It incorporates an isolated community, which consists of women only and is free from all conflicts and problems of male-dominated societies. Reproduction is significant but it is possible through parthenogenesis and the society is self-sustainable. What Gilman endeavours to do is to define gender roles and underscore the fragility of societal attributions to them. The comradeship of women is also highly significant in Gilman's novel, for this is how the women resist the three male visitors by way of deciding on certain issues altogether. Apart from communal life, Gilman also portrays how important it is to gain individuality even if women live in a communal society. Although it is perceived at some points that Gilman praises women and she elevates them over men, these points will also be treated and criticized objectively, as is proper to the ethics of the study.

*Swastika Night*, by Katherine Burdekin, was first published in 1937 under the pseudonym Murray Constantine. It encompasses a world, divided into two feudal totalitarian regimes as the German Empire and the Empire of Japan approximately seven hundred years after World War II. History is distorted and effaced so as to keep everyone under the tyranny of the new god, Hitler. In the dystopic society of the new world, women

are nearly reduced to the levels of savage animals, giving birth and breeding their babies. They are enclosed within cages and they live in women's quarters where there is no chance of escape.  Not surprisingly, giving birth to a boy is highly significant within this society and even if a woman gives birth to a boy, she has to deliver him to the father at the age of three so that the baby will not be stained with the disgusting nature of women. If the baby is a girl, moreover, the owner of the woman has the right to dismiss her, thereby making her a slave of another man.

*The Handmaid's Tale*, written by Margaret Atwood in 1985, is another dystopian novel which takes place in the Republic of Gilead, a dictatorship established after a coup upon the defeat of the USA in a war. Exerting its power over all people, especially on women, the state is responsible for such issues as the reproduction of women, controlling sexual tendencies and practices, overthrowing all sorts of religious beliefs and practices and imposing its own. Women are not permitted to use their names but they can only be defined with the preposition "of" and the name of their master as in the case of "Offred". Division of sex categories is not enough for the state; therefore, women are categorized under different castes such as legitimate and illegitimate women, which are also classified under certain classes. Legitimate women are sorted from top to bottom as Wives of Commanders, Daughters, Aunts, Marthas, Handmaids, Econowives and Widows, and each class is identified by certain colours, while the illegitimate women are titled as Unwomen and Jezebels, the two most worthless components of the society.

Both dystopian novels are highly inclusive of militarism and this is one of the methods the states in these novels employ to sustain patriarchal and fascist hegemony over people. Re-institutionalisation of religions according to the requirements of the prevailing tyranny, writing history anew and distorting social consciousness through manipulations as well as controlling language in a suitable way to provide the permanence of the authority are among many other methods how the dictatorships are capable of establishing their ideologies, which, in the end, transform individuals into objects. Among the methods presented above, there is also Jeremy Bentham's design, the Panopticon, which provides constant surveillance, thereby making self-control an indispensable part of living.

The reason why there are four women from four different parts of the world and from different periods of time is to point out the notion that misogyny has always been at the core of the female problem; however, each nation, culture, period and ideology approaches woman hatred at different levels and from different perspectives. In other words, although hatred to women is central almost all around the world, each period, culture, and nation has its own concerns and methods. One of the most useful ways to manifest these methods is to pick each work from the East and the West together so that differences and similarities in terms of women's abuse as well as the female response to these practices are clearly demonstrated. One other reason why the writers are women but not men is the fact that the second wave feminist approach bases the female experience and voice at the centre of all female problems. Therefore, the male perspective of female issues would be incomplete and insufficient for the

Freud's ideas on fantasy and fantastic are significant to underline why this dissertation employs utopian and dystopian works as its subject matter. According to Freud (1981), "[t]he German word *'unheimlich'* is obviously the opposite of *'heimlich'* ['homely'], *'heimisch'* ['native'] – the opposite of what is familiar; and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar" (p. 220). In other words, writers' employment of the uncanny in their works help readers reveal their unconscious. By doing so, both the characters and the plots of novels stand as unfamiliar components of male-dominated cultures and societies. Thanks to the estrangement effect of these unfamiliar components, new standpoints emerge for readers to alter their automatised ways of thinking and to approach their experiences in their contemporaneous lives in a more critical way. As a result, readers are enforced to be illuminated about their inherent conditions with the effect of estrangement, thereby interrogating their real-life positions among such cultures and societies.

Furthermore, Todorov (1975) speculates on the idea that programmed and uninquisitive nature of human beings is also prominent, thereby pointing out another reason why utopian and dystopian fiction works are significant to this dissertation:

> *[t]he fantastic occupies the duration of [the] uncertainty. Once we choose*
> *one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighboring genre, the*
> *uncanny or the marvelous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a*

*person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. (p. 25)*

Todorov points out the notion that people think and behave without questioning either in accordance with the so-called natural laws or in parallel with their culture, which is actually formed by way of various ideological and societal impositions. Thus, when they face an unnatural – or uncanny in Freud's term – phenomenon, they are pushed into the zones of uneasiness, thereby denominating their experience as abnormal or improper to the prevalent discourse they live in. People's customary ideas and beliefs, therefore, are subverted in particular societies via the implementation of fantasy into the storylines of fictional works. As is compliant with Todorov's argument, hence, fantasy functions as a warping reflection which makes the unthinkable thinkable, the invisible visible, and the unquestionable questionable.

Rosemary Jackson, too, speculates about fantasy and she believes that fantasy is a literature of subversion by destroying the essence of something through destruction and deconstruction. "Fantasy establishes, or discovers, an absence of separating distinctions, violating a 'normal', or commonsense perspective which represents reality as constituted by discrete but connected units" (Jackson, 2009, p. 28). Therefore, it does not deal with what is not real but it deals with what is not-*yet*-real. Fantasy, thus, suggests replacements and inversions which undermine closed and dogmatic systems such as religion or any institutionalized phenomenon. Fantasy and the uncanny, therefore, are implemented by the authors of the novels studied in this dissertation so as to draw attention to the notion that people have their socially and ideologically codded conventional ways of life, and they are certainly not interested in interrogating their automatised ways of thinking.

Louis Althusser (2014) contributed to Marx, who "often called ideology as false consciousness" (Plamenatz, 1971, p. 23), by describing repressive state apparatuses – government, armed forces, police, law, and so on – and ideological state apparatuses – education, mass media, family, religion, political parties, trade unions, and communication – as well as his coinage of interpellation, which is defined as a free submission to authorities through physical responses. All Althusser endeavours to underscore is the fact that ideology of a state is more important than an individual's own existence. Before individuals, there is always ideology and people are born into certain already-prescribed ideologies. They might believe that they are out of ideology; however,

they can never get out of it. They are always in it since it is everywhere. The only possible way to get rid of a repressive ideology is to become aware of it due to the fact that awakening brings knowledge, which, correspondingly, brings about power, which, in the end, results in resistance.

As for the feminist aspect, Beauvoir (1956) argues that being sexed and being a human co-exist. As humans, we must have a sex category. Gender, on the other hand, is a skill or an attitude which is acquired. Considering this, people should create their own essence, their gender in Beauvoir's sense, through isolation from their society and culture in order to make their own choices and preferences so that they can create their own gender, which is actually their essence. Obviously, what Beauvoir proposes is in parallel with Butler's theory of performativity. She discusses the idea that there are various gender categories and none of these categories is fixed. On the contrary, gender categories are floating on a slippery area and it is possible to perform any of these categories by way of learning and imitating, which is argued by Butler (Dec., 1988) as follows:

> Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gender. (p. 519)

Considering what Butler and Beauvoir suggest, it is possible to put forth that all gender performances are unreal, imitations and copies of the copies. Gender construction, therefore, turns out to be revisable and while reconstructing gender, one may fail it both intentionally or unconsciously, for there are free-floating signifiers of these categories and they are liable to change from culture to culture or from one context to another, thereby putting the second wave feminist ideas at the very core of this dissertation although *Sultana's Dream* and *Swastika Night* were written decades before the second wave movement.

## Purpose

One purpose of this study is to draw attention to the fact that power is not gender specific. Put another way, male domination is successfully established almost everywhere

around the globe and the reason for women's submissive conditions around their own circle is not because men are physically more powerful than women but because the former is allowed to formulate their own systems of power so as to exert on the latter. Although patriarchal societies are primarily responsible for the deterioration of women's positions within societies, patriarchy is merely a consequence of previous actions or inactions. Furthermore, the sustainability of male domination is empowered through inactivity of women and their ignorance or reluctance in raising self-awareness. Though patriarchy has some common referents in every community, it also has certain characteristically different components from period to period, nation to nation, culture to culture, and so on. This is why there is no universal and completely truthful theory about subverting the available gender roles applicable to all societies. Women should be aware of their inherent conditions and take action against what disempowers them within their societies. In some parts of the world, however, ideologies are so well-established that women themselves turn out to be women-haters rather than uniting and taking a collective action to resist the disempowering cogs of the patriarchal wheel. It is, therefore, inevitable to subvert the established norms. Thus, this dissertation takes it seriously to demonstrate that alternative lives are possible and that no matter male or female, whoever holds the power at hand turns out to be constructing the norms and referents in societies, which renders a female utopia seem dystopian and makes a feminist dystopia appear utopian for the male. Therefore, focusing on the battle between sexes – and among genders – merely decelerates the fight for the very natural right of equality within societies. The main focus, hence, should be on power relations and ideologies.

**Significance**

All four works, *Sultana's Dream*, *Herland*, *Swastika Night*, and *The Handmaid's Tale* have been popular for research within the frameworks of some common feminist approaches. However, this dissertation will be the first to compare and contrast all four works, which come from different cultures, countries, and periods. Besides, there are certain seminal studies which compare and contrast feminist utopian or feminist dystopian works. This dissertation, however, undertakes standing out as the first to analyse both feminist utopian and feminist dystopian works at the same time altogether. Additionally, piling up all information and giving an in-depth analysis of both the theories and the related works, this dissertation also pursues to be a reference for future studies on

similar topics. At last, but not least, it is considered as a responsibility for this dissertation to bring up misogynist controversies on the agenda of the upcoming researches as well as calling for attention to other problems stemming from haters of both sexes and all gender categories.

**Research Methods**

This dissertation conducts the following enquiries:

a) What are certain methods for constructing gender identities?

b) To what extent are women responsible for their contemporaneous conditions concerning gender roles?

c) What is the relation of gender with power and authority?

The arguments for these questions are supported by various secondary sources, and interpretation of texts are based upon textual analysis of the primary sources. The study constitutes the required theoretical background for a better understanding of the terms utopia and utopianism referring to various theoreticians such as Lyman Tower Sargent, Tom Moylan, Ruth Levitas, Ernst Bloch, Darko Suvin, Lucy Sargisson, and Krishan Kumar. After establishing connections among various utopian terms and differentiating them from each other, the theoretical chapter incorporates feminist utopian tradition and it is finally concluded with the second wave feminism via attributions to scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir, Candace West & Don H. Zimmerman, and Judith Lorber. Concerning the detailed analysis of the works, Althusser's notions over ideology and state, ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses as well as Jeremy Bentham's panopticon eye and Foucault's ideas over power and knowledge together with his arguments on biopolitics are dwelled on in chapters related to each work for textual analysis.

**Limitations**

This dissertation is mainly concerned with identifying the results of holding power by giving a special regard to the gender of the power holder so as to highlight that irrespective of gender, dominance is mesmerizing for the dominator. Although all works subject to this dissertation are analysed under the umbrella term feminism, it is significant to note that the second wave includes a variety of different feminisms. Therefore, rather

than sticking to one school, it was necessary to apply an eclectic method for the textual analysis of the subject works.

Another limitation is the fact that although the works are analysed with the aforementioned method, it is noteworthy that *Sultana's Dream* and *Swastika Night* were written by their authors decades before the emergence of the second wave. However, it is still possible to find the premature notions of the second wave. It should also be acknowledged that these premature notions are actually the ancestors of the approaching second wave feminism.

One final limitation of this dissertation is actually the pressure I had to feel on my shoulders since certain ideas accusing women of their ignorance or indifference to the ideologies around them might seem and sound like misogynist; however, as I have been endeavouring to do in my personal life, this dissertation has never intended to put the blame on one gender while elevating or justifying the other one. In fact, superiority and inferiority are the two terms that this dissertation attempts to overshadow so as to underline the very right of equality for everyone in all walks of life.

**Literature Review**

Çoban (2021) conducted a research with her M.A thesis entitled *Woman in Eastern and Western Feminist Utopias: Sample of "Sultana's Dream" and "Herland"* so as to analyse the similarities and differences of eastern and western concerns of feminist utopias. Identifying the erasures and exploitation methods of women in each culture, Çoban asserts that while religion is the primary method of women's submission to patriarchy, the so-called civil attempts of women's abuse in western societies cannot be excused just because they are categorised under the first world countries. Moreover, she concludes that in order to emphasize women's contemporaneous conditions in their patriarchal societies, both authors benefit from the exclusion of the male from all circles of life.

Çelen (2021) inquired the relationship of speech acts and gender performativity on her M.A. thesis entitled *Construction of Femininity and Masculinity through Language in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "Herland" and Doris Lessing's "The Cleft"*. She points out that speech acts are definitive of how each gender should be performed. She concludes that the utterances in each novel are implicit so as to sustain and justify

the male hegemony. Normalisation and of masculine values as well as vilifying feminine values, to Çelen, are employed via the speech acts.

With her M.A thesis entitled *She Said, He Said: Écriture Féminine and the Mediation of Masculine and Feminine Discourses in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Fiction*, Hudson (2002) employed the French feminist theory of écriture féminine to analyse how Gilman connects the masculine and feminine discourses with her *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, *Herland*, *With Her in Ourland*, and *Moving the Mountain*. Demonstrating women's helpless existence within dominant masculine discourses, Hudson focuses on phallogocentric properties of each work so as to deconstruct the phallus to reach écriture féminine.

Desforges (2015) studied how Burdekin was in complete control of the period's intellectual politics such as fascism, gender, and body among many others. Moreover, she also manifested Burdekin's great talent in subverting the constructed gender roles by referencing to theoreticians such as Freud, Nietzsche, and Ulrichs. Although Desforges adheres to all four texts, *The Rebel Passion*, *Swastika Night*, *The End of This Day's Business*, and *Proud Men* respectively, as novels of utopian tradition altogether, only the first novel is inclusive of a desired society whereas the other three belong to the tradition of dystopian writing. She concludes that Burdekin created four unique utopian visions with distinctive perspectives encapsulating the conditions of the period she lived in.

Aljuafri (2022) analysed instruments used to institutionalize religions in order to manipulate those under the ruling class by referencing to Marxist theory of ideology. Discussing that religion is one way of justifying the politics of the ruling class, Aljuafri also put forth that the ruling class abuses religion as a manipulative instrument to sustain class stratification as well as authority and power. One conclusion Aljuafri reaches is the idea that manipulation through instrumentalised religion brings about slavery and deprivation of people's rights. Referring to humans as political animals, the writer concluded that religion is not the source of ill-doings of people; however, true evil is right in the heart of all human beings for their cravings for power.

Şenel (2015) proposed in her study entitled *An Ecofeminist Reading of Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" and Starhawk's "The Fifth Sacred Thing"* that exploitation of nature is related to subordination of women by the masculine dominant

ideology. The patriarchy, to Şenel, aspires all its strength from such binary oppositions as human/nature, men/women, and nature/culture which, in parallel, stand out as clashes that the masculine ideology abuses for its self-sustainability. Analysing the relations among gender, nature, masculinity, femininity, science, sexuality, and religion, Şenel also described the roles these concepts have in the formation of societies. Both novels she studied, Şenel concludes, draw attention to the fact that on the condition that patriarchy keeps prevailing over both women and nature, an environmental crisis will be inevitable and the self-sustaining patriarchy will never be smashed again.

With her extensive study, Mercer (2013) interrogated the effect of religious fundamentalism in the formation of theocratic governments which undermine the female identity since the Abrahamic religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are essentially inclusive of misogynist oppressive commandments on the female body. To Mercer, religious fundamentalism contains various dangers for the annihilation and subordination of the female. Due to their inherent oppressive nature, Abrahamic religions contribute a lot in the making of master narratives of Western culture, thereby creating a divine reason for the abuse of the female. The utopian and dystopian feminist writing, Mercer concludes, is suggestive of warnings against religious fundamentalism by way of challenging the justification of Western thought embroidered with the Abrahamic religions.

# CHAPTER ONE

# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

## 1.1. Utopianism

It was not until 1516 that the world acquainted with the word utopia. Thomas More, when he published his work *Utopia*, introduced it to the world and that was the exact moment when the story and debates about utopia began. Endeavouring to find and insert the necessary term into literature, "More resorted to two Greek words – *ouk* (that means not and was reduced to *u*) and *topos* (place), to which he added the suffix *ia*, indicating a place" (Vieira, 2010, p. 4). Considering his neologism, it is possible to claim that in its essence, the word utopia is both a confirmation of the possibility of a better life and a rejection of the existence of the imagined order and society – at least at the time it is imagined. Although the simplest way to define utopia is to assert that it is "an imaginary place in which everything is perfect" ("utopia," 2014, p. 1646), More's intention was definitely beyond that. He aimed to emphasize the idea that an ideal society is actually accessible by way of several negotiations within society, between the society and the governmental institutions as well as among those governmental institutions. As Baker-Smith (2011) asserts, "More initially titled his book *Nusquama*, the Latin for 'nowhere'" (p. 143); however, he did not intend to make people believe that the society in the imaginary island is in fact inaccessible. "[I]f More had published his book with that title, and if he had called his imagined island Nusquama, he would simply be denying the possibility of the existence of such a place" (Vieira, 2010, p. 4). He sketched a considerably admirable society, in which everyone lived happily due to a better social order in More's sense; however, it was negated through More's neologism since the society was imaginary and could only be reached by way of a triggering flame of change within the society and institutions.

In other words, societies, according to More, are obliged to imagine an ideal social order so as to struggle to make it come true, thereby taking it out of the boundaries of utopia, for "utopia works towards an understanding of what is necessary for human fulfilment and towards a broadening, deepening and raising of aspirations in terms different from those dominating the mundane present" (Levitas, 2013, p. 4).

A close observation of Sargent's taxonomy is exceptionally significant in order to understand the progress of utopianism as well as other reflections that have come up progressively:

A. *Myth*

1. *Myths of an earthly paradise*

2. *Fortunate isles*

3. *Noble savages*

4. *Arcadias*

5. *Heaven and hell*

6. *The millennium*

7. *Prester John tales*

B. *Fiction*

1. *Utopias*

a. *The positive utopia or eutopia*

b. *The negative utopia or dystopia*

c. *The satirical utopia*

d. *The anti-utopia*

e. *The critical utopia*

2. *Cockaigne*

3. *Science fiction*

a. *Atlantis legends*

b. *Science fiction*

c. *Fantasy*

d. *Tales of the future*

4. *The utopia of the mind (Daumal, Hesse)*

5. *Imaginary/extraordinary voyages*

6. *Uchronia*

7. *Robinsonaden*

8. *Gulliveriana*

9. *Fairy tales*

10. *Romance*

11. *Oriental tales*

C. *Non-fiction*

1. *Instructions to princes*

2. *Political philosophy (many have been included, few should be)*

3. *Ideal cities*

4. *Urban planning*

5. *Visionary architecture*

6. *Utopian social theory*

7. *Film*

8. *Painting*

9. *Music (Sargent, 1994, pp. 11 - 12)*

The history of art and literature has come across various works which are inclusive of utopian impulses; these works have been concerned with everything that is malfunctional or not functional within contemporaneous societies. According to Sargent (1994), there are two types of utopian traditions which are constituted by "body utopias or utopias of sensual gratification and city utopias or utopias of human contrivance" (p. 4). His first categorization of the utopian tradition is inclusive of utopian works which demonstrate societies, enjoying all sorts of pleasures without any human intervention. Based on myths, Cockaigne and Arcadia, as the first examples of this tradition, these "are utopias (eutopias) that exist by nature rather than human contrivance and that provide a life of ease" (Sargent, Oct. - Dec., 1982, p. 685). In other words, life in such imaginary societies is extraordinarily comfortable and people do nothing special in order to enjoy all that bliss. Sargent's portrayal of one of these forms of the tradition, the Cockaigne, is as follows:

> *[p]eople lie around with food literally flying fully cooked into their mouths and wine rivers running directly past them. (The images of food in all Cockaignes are overwhelming; sexual imagery exists but is muted until the twentieth century.) There is no work, no fear of want or danger, and no death or an easy death. The golden ages, earthly paradises, and Noble Savages are all like this with the addition that women give birth without pain. (Oct. - Dec., 1982, p. 685)*

As the embodiment of heaven in the world, Cockaigne was always refuted by Christianity and its followers, for the representations in those works are strict refusals of the Christian teachings that salvation lies beneath hard-work and that subjects of God ought to do their best to earn His grace. However, the significance of these works is the notion that dreaming has always been on the stage of the history of humanity. Although utopia and utopian writing cannot be limited to a single concept like dreaming, it would not be improper to put forth that to dream is one of the key components of utopian ideals. Put another way, "the propensity to social dreaming existed well before there was any utopian genre" (Sargent, 1994, p. 11).

The second tradition, the city utopia, is not very different from the first one; however, it is believed to be more realizable since physical and mental attributions such as human intervention and decision-making are in the centre. According to Sargent (Oct. - Dec., 1982), the only thematic difference between the two traditions is that pain during childbirth cannot be avoided. Although it was More who coined the term utopia into literature as a genre, it is not possible to put forth that he was the first author who literally created a utopian work or a work which includes utopian elements. In this sense, locating utopia within a certain framework is considerably useful, for the term is not only a genre in literature but also a concept which is inclusive of various functions, forms and traditions. Plato's *Republic*, which was written between 370 and 360 BC, as well as his *Laws*, written in 360 BC, are among the pioneering works which could be categorized as inclusive of utopian elements since they incorporate utopic ideals as well as social dreaming so as to create an ideal state together with the aim of constituting the ideal set of laws which were not available back then. Another example of the early utopian works is *The City of God* which was written between 413 – 426 AD by Augustine of Hippo with a spotlight on the Christian theological teachings such as the abandonment of earthly pleasures with a focus on the preparation for the after-life, pointing out the fact that the versus between The City of God and The City of Men will finally be broken and that the latter will be defeated in the end. That being said, it is also significant to underline the notion that utopian literature is considered as representations of experiences rather than portrayals of ideas. David Lodge (1971) argues this notion as follows:

*For the orthodox realist novelist, the creation of a plausible 'world', densely specified and historically consistent, is usually the frame within which he explores imaginary characters and actions that are the main focus of interest. It only needs a small adjustment to make the frame imaginary and the main focus of interest, and the characters and actions of importance mainly as filling out and authenticating the frame. This is what happens in most modern utopian and science fiction. The conventions of the realistic novel can thus invest the imaginary frame with an astonishing pseudo-historical verisimilitude, so that Orwell's London of 1984, for instance, seems just as 'real' as Dickens's London or Zola's Paris. We experience it from within. The future is enacted before us in the continuous present of the narrative past tense. (p. 230)*

Obviously, although ideas as well as philosophical outcomes are essential in the establishment of the ideal society in utopian literature, experience is more important so as to create a credible account of an alternative society. Socrates was well-aware of this idea:

*[He] feels that he cannot himself provide the account that he desires. He can supply the intellectual scaffolding but not the realized structures of the ideal city. Nor, he says, is he interested in the fanciful fabrications of the poets. [He turns to] … men of substance and worldly experience, men who have travelled and seen the ways of the great cities of the world, men who have been statesmen and administrators. These men possess practical knowledge as well as philosophic wisdom. It is men such as they who out of their concrete experience can animate the ideal society with the colourful details of its building and art, the everyday life of its people, how it conducts family life and the relations between men and women, its politics and its encounters with other states. (Kumar, 1999, p. 23)*

Taking Socrates's approach into account, it is possible to claim that Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* turn out to be a utopian quest for the ideal society, conducted by intense questioning. In other words, Plato's works include utopian elements; however, they are not products of utopian literature in essence. As Kumar (1999) posits it, Plato's *Republic* "is at most a portrayal of the principles of the ideal state, not an exemplification of those principles in action, in concrete institutions and ways of life" (p. 39).

Although Kumar (1999) believes that "[t]here is no tradition of utopia and utopian thought outside the Western world" (p. 33), utopianism or utopian ideals are not exclusive to a closed group of the West. Abu Nasr Farabi, an Iranian philosopher and logician, penned *The Virtuous City* around 870 – 950 AD. Bakhsh (2013) states that the book "consists six sections and nineteen chapters on different subjects such as cosmology, man and his physical and spiritual nature, and the structure of human society" (p. 44). Farabi's book is suggestive of how people and accordingly the society should be shaped. In order to do it, he divides societies into two types as perfect and imperfect. Also, in accordance with the logic of utopianism, cooperation among people is underscored as the sole vehicle of creating a better society. "In *The Virtuous City* he tries to clarify the controversial issue of the Islamic world and the legitimate heirs of the Prophet" (Bakhsh, 2013, p. 51). Because he believed that the Abbasid caliphate created an un-Islamic society, Farabi wrote *The Virtuous City* as the embodiment of "a protest against the illegitimate caliphate: against the caliphs who instead of following the guidelines of the Prophet claimed absolute authority and tried to extend the imperial character of the caliphate" (Bakhsh, 2013, p. 52), thereby fulfilling the notion that "[u]topias are political and economic documents intended as criticisms of their own time by proposing better alternatives" (Sargent, Oct. - Dec., 1982, p. 687).

Not always works are classified as consisting of utopian impulses or themes; there are also utopian characters which embody the preferred individuals of the society. One of the oldest examples of these characters exists in Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata* which was written in 411 BC. Although it is not very clear if Aristophanes really aimed to sketch such a powerful woman within the patriarchal Greek society, it is possible to claim that her representation as a strong woman who can decide on her sexual autonomy as well as urging Greek and Spartan women to avoid having sexual intercourses with their partners stand for a very early embodiment of women's voice on their own bodies, an element belonging to radical feminism, which calls for women's firm participation in the decision-making of their wish for sexual affairs and reproduction, for radical feminists also believe that reproduction is a decision which could only be made by women, not men. Furthermore, Lysistrata and her comrades take part in ending the war between the Greek and the Spartans, thereby taking their positions in the military and political issues.

Therefore, the so-called utopian[1] woman, who has the authority over her own body, was prescribed centuries ago, pointing out how an unrealizable phenomenon has actually come true although it took thousands of years. Although it is clear that a non-existent time or place is essential so as to name something as utopian, it is evident that Lysistrata was not the normative reference for a woman of the contemporaneous time; on the contrary, women in times of war were treated as slaves or booty. Therefore, it would not be improper to categorize the character as utopian though the work is a comedy itself.

As aforementioned, utopian impulses have always been in the agenda of people. In the Medieval Times, another example of city utopia was put forth by Christine de Pizan when she wrote *The Book of the City of Ladies* in 1405. She created an allegorical society which consisted of women only. Each woman is representative of favourable sides of women, which, for sure, was a protest to the misogynist approaches of some certain groups of male writers of the time. Rather than contributing to the follies and vices of women which were presented by the male authors of the time, she created a world of their own, inclusive of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice as three virtues:

> *[T]hree virtues, Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, appear to Christine to help her build a city wherein women can find refuge. In the ensuing dialogue with these virtues, she wrote about women of antiquity along with those of the present day, using biographical accounts to present women as wise and virtuous. (Hindman, Autumn, 1984, p. 459)*

Although there were only glimpses of the feminist thought but not the school itself, Pizan created her own utopia in which women could also be honourable in a non-existent place in contrast to the women depicted by the male authors and poets of the Medieval Ages. The city she created becomes the very embodiment of cooperation and it also presents a better world for women to live in. In her utopian city, people are not valuable because they are of noble birth; on the contrary, they are significant due to their virtuous attitudes.

> *Following the model suggested by Aristotle's Politics, the different residents of the city have different functions that all contribute to the common good and to the good of each person individually, and there is a mixed rule of the*

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[1] This adjective is used intentionally and ironically here with the meaning of unrealizable in order to provide a counter-argument against those scholars who believe that the word "utopian" stands for things that are not realizable.

*city, which includes both a monarch and virtuous citizens. Also, following*
*the early humanist tradition, all the residents of the city are characterized*
*by their nobility, which consists, not in blood or inheritance, but by degree*
*of virtue. (Allen, 1997, p. 617)*

As such is the case, Pizan not only portrays a city where women could feel worthwhile but also points that they could also take part in government, thereby proposing a better society for her comrades. Considering this, it should be emphasized one more time that utopia has always existed although the generic term was first used in 1516 by More. Therefore, Sargent's division of utopian traditions into two is critical in underlining the notion that More was not the first author who created his utopia.

Ernst Bloch, a German philosopher and writer, contributed to utopian studies with his comprehensive work *The Principle of Hope*, which was first published in 1959 and could not be translated into English before 1986. According to Bloch (1986), what lies beneath the wish for a better life and a more optimistic future is the very natural impulse of hope:

*Longing, expectation, hope […] need their hermeneutics, the dawning of the*
*In-Front-of-Us demands its specific concept, the Novum demands its concept*
*of the Front. And all this so that ultimately the royal road through the*
*mediated realm of possibility to the necessarily Intended can be critically*
*laid, and can remain oriented, without being broken off. Docta spes,*
*comprehended hope, thus illuminates the concept of a principle in the world,*
*a concept which will no longer leave it. For the very reason that this*
*principle has always been in the process of the world, but philosophically*
*excluded for so long. Since there is absolutely no conscious production of*
*history along whose path of informed tendency the goal would not likewise*
*be all, the concept of the utopian (in the positive sense of the word) principle,*
*that of hope and its contents worthy of human beings, is an absolutely central*
*one here. (p. 7)*

Considering Bloch's argument of utopia, then, it is possible to draw the notion that utopia is a desire which stems from humans' expectations of the arrival of whatever they lack. In order for people to survive, the impulse of hope, or hunger for it, turns out to be essential. In other words, "Bloch posit[s] the existence of a utopian impulse, an anthropological given that underpins the human propensity to long for and imagine a life

otherwise" (Levitas, 2013, p. 5). The idea of a better and more desirable life, therefore, is made possible by means of projection to the future as alternative lives: the unthinkable is thought while the unquestionable is questioned, which, in the end, underlines the idea that utopia, in fact, calls for movement "from abstract to concrete" (Levitas, 2013, p. 6), thereby bringing about progress, which "is the realization of Utopias" (Wilde, 1915, p. 29) since it is a process rather than a passive but hopeful expectance of what is impulsively desired. Besides, "[u]topia is […] not just a dream to be enjoyed, but a vision to be pursued" (Levitas, 1990, p. 1). In other words, therefore, one of the functions of utopia turns out to be a partial movement "from the purely fantastic to the genuinely possible. It is also a move from the potential fragmentary expression of desire to social holism, a move from speculation to praxis and to the social and political pursuit of a better world" (Levitas, 2013, p. 6).

The projection to future is actually coined as Not-Yet-Conscious by Bloch. *Vor-Schein*, the German correspondent of the term, is also defined as forward dawning as follows:

> *a relatively still Unconscious disposed towards its other side, forwards rather than backwards. Towards the side of something new that is dawning up, that has never been conscious before, not, for example, something forgotten, something rememberable that has been, something that has sunk into the subconscious in repressed or archaic fashion. (Bloch, 1996, p. 11)*

By his Not-Yet-Conscious, which is also synonymous with anticipatory consciousness, Bloch strictly opposes to Freud's psychoanalytic praxis, for he believes that Freud considers conscience as a bag of memories, filled with every single practice, experience and perception in the past, which, in other words, relates to *No-Longer-Conscious*. To Bloch, however, conscious does not necessarily relate to the past; it may also illuminate the approaching future. As is the case with More, Bloch's idea of Not-Yet, too, functions in two folds: (a) as something approaching but has not been realized yet; and (b) as something which does not actually exist at present. Therefore, the Not-Yet idea is inclusive of both possibilities of being and nothing, which is also coined by Bloch as *Not-Yet-Become*. Simply put, the Not-Yet conducts on subjective and objective levels; the subjective level is related to the Not-Yet-Conscious, which is individual at all terms whereas the objective level is connected to the Not-Yet-Become, which is concerned with

the outer world. Hence, there is a reciprocal relationship between the Not-Yet-Conscious and Not-Yet-Become. "[This is why] the examination of anticipatory consciousness must fundamentally serve to make comprehensible the actual reflections which now follow, in fact depictions of the wished-for, the anticipated better life, in psychological and material terms" (Bloch, 1996, p. 13). Forward dawning and More's understanding of utopia, thus, meet on the same ground since they both propose betterment in life standards and social order by speculating about the future before any external attempts. Drawing a portrait about the future, demonstrating alternative lives and opportunities as well as materializing them in real life turn out to be the subject matters of utopia and the utopianist. After all, "[u]topian thought is imaginative, with its roots in literature, and the literary imagination is less concerned with achieving ends than with visualizing possibilities" (Frye, 1965, p. 329).

Sargent, too, posits on the notion that utopia and utopian thought stem from natural human drives for betterment in contemporaneous conditions of people's lives. He considers utopianism as "a universal human phenomenon" (Sargent, 1994, p. 3), thereby taking it out of the boundaries of Western monopoly or Christian thought as well as emphasizing how humanistic and unrestrained from race, religion or any other affiliations it is to desire for progress:

> *If we are hungry, we dream of a full stomach. If we are sexually frustrated, we dream of sexual fulfilment. If we are frustrated by something in our society, we dream of a society in which it is corrected. Often we dream even though we, personally, are well fed and sexually fulfilled. We still dream at least in part because, content, we are capable of recognizing that others are not and feel that others should also be fulfilled. At its root, then, utopianism is the result of the human propensity to dream while both asleep and awake. (Sargent, 1994, pp. 3 - 4)*

It is significant to note that what Sargent underlines actually consists of natural necessities. He situates human desire and human nature at the very centre of utopianism, which is actually what Ernst Bloch does by means of inserting hope in the heart of it. Although utopianism is not desired and welcomed by a lot of intellectuals and political figures for some certain reasons, which are to be discussed in the following parts, being a human and longing for betterment – though not perfection – have always been the core elements of utopianism. Therefore, fantasy, which could be observed in most utopian works, is in charge of transferring all longings and wishes of mankind. Furthermore,

fantasies "never entirely disappear – probably because a degree of fantasy is necessary to human psychic health" (Sargent, 1994, p. 4). This is another parallelism between Sargent and Bloch: while Sargent uses the term fantasy for future projection, Bloch employs his *Vor-Schein* so as to underscore the idea that every fantasy or forward dawning for any kind of amelioration is triggered by way of the assumption that there is actually an undesirable condition at present and it needs to be altered in some certain ways. Brinton (Spring, 1965) argues about this idea of assumption as follows:

> *The utopian starts with the proposition, by no means limited to the utopian thinker, that things (no more exact word is useful here) are bad; next, things must become much better, perhaps perfect, here on earth and soon, or fairly soon; things will not improve to this degree by themselves, by a "natural" growth or development of things-as-they-are; a plan must be developed and put into execution, in a sense, "artificially". (p. 348)*

Put another way, therefore, human nature and natural drives have always incorporated the core points of utopianism. Things which people have always been complaining or dreaming about for centuries have never changed without human intervention – either by individual or communal interference. There has always been human interaction between contemporaneous conditions and the desired future probabilities. However, one paradox of Brinton's understanding of utopianism is that it is problematic to use the word perfect, for there is no place for anything perfect in utopias. If the perfect is achieved, it will be the end of utopia, thereby terminating any type of betterment and progress in the future. As is maintained by Sargent (1994), "perfection has never been a characteristic of utopian fiction" (p. 6); on the contrary, the main function of utopian fiction is to be "a distorting mirror in reverse showing how good we could look. Utopia rightly upsets people because it constantly suggests that the life we lead, the society we have, is inadequate, incomplete, sick" (Sargent, 1994, p. 25). One can easily sympathize with the idea that the perfect is what people endeavour to achieve; however, perversion in people's understanding of their present circumstances is considerably important in triggering action for future betterment. The more the betterment is achieved, the more it will be demanded, which, in the end, will be nothing but a vicious circle, never bringing about the perfection that people imagine. Moreover, Sargisson (2003) also suggests that "[p]erfection […] symbolizes

death: the death of movement, the death of progress and process, development and change; the death, in other words, of politics. To strive for perfection is to strive for death" (p. 37). This is why the simplest definition of utopia, which is generally referred to as an imaginary place in which everything is perfect by *OALD*, needs an urgent and significant modification. The word, perfect, should be replaced with the phrase, *better in comparison with present circumstances*, for progress is unstoppable once people keep employing forward dawning and future projection as well as their fantasies due to the aforementioned reasons. Sargent (2010), too, contributes to the notion as follows:

> *The most common approach of the opponents of utopianism is to equate the utopian with the perfect. In English, perfect suggests finished, completed, unchangeable – and nothing human is finished, complete, or unchangeable, so the equation makes utopias look foolish or at least foolhardy. (p. 103)*

Future, in the end, will become the history of another future. This is exactly why Sargent's distorting mirror analogy is essential in forming future societies besides its usefulness in understanding how the history of societies has changed over time. In other words, utopianism shaped societies, it shapes them at the very moment and it will keep its alterations in the future as long as it co-operates with people's natural drives.

Another reason why such words as perfect and perfection should not be included while defining utopianism is because a large group of scholars considers that *perfection* or *the ideally perfect* could only be reached through violence. Therefore "utopianism is said to lead to totalitarianism and the use of force and violence against people" (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). If one cannot change present mundanity through activism, s/he tries to achieve it by active violence against the political strata and also against the people who do not share the same ideals, which, for sure, is the common premise among those who do not adopt utopianism for some certain reasons. This notion, however, has been put forth as a spear to utopianists by anti-utopianists so as to undermine the credibility of utopianism as well as enfeebling its significance through constructing a public discourse and popular culture. As is ascribed by Levitas (2013), "[p]ublic discourse and political culture are profoundly anti-utopian, portraying utopia as an impossible quest for perfection whose political consequences are almost necessarily totalitarian" (p. 7). It is actually possible to

confirm the anti-utopianists' idea that utopia is an impossible adventure to perfect systems, people, or states, for utopias are for betterment rather than perfection. Discrediting the idea of perfect as the sole and utmost aim of utopianism is what should be at stake of utopian scholarship since "the most complete success of the anti-utopians was to make the label 'utopian' take on the meaning of fanciful, unrealistic, impractical" (Sargent, 1994, p. 22). Sargent consents to the fact that such a discourse of insignificance of utopianism has already been established by way of highly concrete arguments by some important scholars such as Karl Popper, Friedrich von Hayek, and Norman Cohn among many others, whose works are *The Open Society and its Enemies*, *The Road to Serfdom*, and *The Pursuit of the Millennium* respectively; nevertheless, he strongly recommends the omission of the word perfect in describing what utopians actually aim to achieve in order to counterattack to those powerful claims by way of the idea that progress and betterment through human drives lie beneath utopianism. Moreover, Sargent (2010) adds to his discussion about perfection in the utopian thought and puts forth that "[v]ery few actual utopias make any pretence to perfection. Neither Plato or Marx, the utopian sources Popper cites, pretend that they are discussing perfection. Plato spent much of the *Republic* arguing that his ideal state must inevitably collapse" (p. 104). Plato's *Republic*, therefore, embodies an ideal state, which was better than the contemporaneous one that Plato was part of. However, he was well-aware of the fact that as time passed by, it would be impossible to recognize the needs and wishes of humans. Thus, as discussed before, as long as people keep dreaming and projecting their dreams to future, change is inevitable. After all, "utopias put forward projective ideas that are to be adopted by future audiences, which may cause real changes" (Vieira, 2010, p. 8). This is exactly why utopianism does not pay heed to perfectionism.

One other problem of utopia – actually the first and foremost conundrum – is the ambiguity in its functions and themes. As aforementioned, the main emphasis in terms of the functions of utopia is on the betterment of contemporaneous conditions; however, the word contemporaneous turns out to be the key word since every century had its own unique and occasionally shared projections to the future. Sargent (1976) argues this predicament as follows:

> *The utopia […] has been ill served by scholarship. A large number of studies have been produced, but they have often been flawed by a lack of definitional*

*care and a failure to seriously consider bibliographical problems. As a result, poor scholarship has sometimes become canonized by other scholars who have simply, and incorrectly, assumed the accuracy of past work. (p. 275)*

The reason why the lack of definitional care has constituted obstacles for utopia is because scholars have only focused their attention on some great works so far. By doing so, they have considered the themes of those canonical works so as to establish the main characteristics of utopia and utopianism, which, eventually, has made the function of utopia digress from its original route. Moreover, this has led to ignorance of genuine traits of utopia as a genre since other works, which have been left in the margins, have not been taken into consideration while forming the framework of the tradition. Yet, "[i]f one is to describe a genre of literature or a literary tradition, one must move away from the 'greats' and deal with the works that compose the bulk of the corpus under study" (Sargent, 1976, p. 276). In relation with this approach of the scholars to the genre under question, concentration on some specific authors and their works has induced generalizations, which, in the end, has changed the credibility of the functions and themes. Sargent (1976) clarifies this argument as follows:

*"[E]veryone knows" that positive utopias stopped appearing in the twentieth century and were replaced by the dystopia. Not true; there have been one or more positive utopias published in English in every year of this century so far, plus others in other languages. Also, "everyone knows" that utopias were written in greater numbers around depressions. Wildly exaggerated; utopias have been produced in a constant stream and while some relationship to depressions can be shown, it appears to be, at the minimum, a questionable relationship. (p. 275)*

Apparently, utopian fiction has always been on the agenda of authors and scholars without any intervals throughout centuries; nevertheless, the question of utopia has been directed to different paths, inclusive of various deficiencies which are rooted to overgeneralizations. Besides, this is supported by Sargent's cunning use of the expression "everyone knows", for he intends to underline how dangerous it is to stick to exaggerations and generalized ideas. Considering this, it is essential to define utopian function in accordance with the main focus of each century since the emergence of the

genre in the 16th century. Therefore, it is considerably useful to sketch a chronological pattern of the development and transformation of the functions and themes of utopia by referencing to Sargent (1976).

## 1.2. Main Focus of Utopian Fiction between 16th and 19th Centuries

### The 16th Century

Authority and religion are the main focus of utopia in this period. Everyone should be obedient to the hierarchical Christian authority so as to become components of a well-established society. Women, on the other hand, should be subservient to the religion and to their husbands as wives. Punishment for all those who are disobedient is inevitable.

### The 17th Century

The main focus in the 16th century has little changes in this period with a shift from punishment to obviation of it through education. Although first examples of sex-reversal utopian works come up, female inferiority is sustained. Governmental system, which is rooted to Christian hierarchical management, is started to be questioned and first glimpses of democratic statements appear in modes of restricted democratic eutopias.

### The 18th Century

This period is laden with a mixture of the previous religious authority and the process of its questioning by way of reasoning. While reason is one of the main focuses of utopian fiction, it is not fully credited, therefore both advantages and disadvantages are disputed. Furthermore, laws and lawyers are fiercely attacked with the accusation of abusing the people of the period. In addition, denunciations of industrial revolution are also encountered in this period. There are some certain examples of utopian fiction which call for a cooperative ruling system with the public. In other words, first serious charges against institutions, especially with economic reasons, are seen in this period.

### The 19th Century

There are three major focus points in this period. The first main focus is on the necessity of the establishment of a new economic system which will provide equal

standards among people. In consequence with this call, there are also some works which attack on communist/socialist way of life. Apart from that, the female question is still on the agenda: independence of women is interrogated, they are sketched as individuals in some utopias; however, equity between sexes is still virgin, for it is not discussed before the 20th century. Reason, religion, as well as science and technology are also dominant in this period. Additionally, due to the attacks on communism, first examples of anti-utopian works appear.

The reason why Sargent's timetable for utopian fiction ends in the 19th century is the fact that after Wells, utopia as a literary genre has been highly questionable since it is considerably difficult to decide if works are utopian or not. Although there was a big decline in the number of utopian works in the 20th century, there were still some representatives of the genre between the end of 60s and 70s, especially in the United States. Basing their themes on such controversies as feminist, environmental and ecologic issues, utopian works went through a transformation into dystopian fiction after 1970s. Furthermore, World War I and II could be taken as twists in the history of utopian fiction, for they were physically and psychologically among the most destructive occasions in modern history. Their reflections on works were observed in different genres, predominantly in dystopic works of utopian fiction. As Vieira (2010) asserts, "the twentieth century was predominantly characterized by man's disappointment – and even incredulity – at the perception of his own nature, mostly when his terrifying deeds throughout the two World Wars were considered" (p. 18). After experiencing the destructive outcomes of these two historical phenomena, people started to question the notion of the utopian ideal since they lost their hope for the future. Consecutively, their loss of hope brought about the very idea of absurdity in the struggle of betterment of societies and humanity, for they believed "that human beings [were] simply on their own in an absurd world" (Morris & Kross, 2009, p. xxxvi). The reason for this type of turning from utopia to dystopia in the twentieth century is justified by Kumar (Summer 2010) as follows:

> *Certainly it is difficult to think of a utopia in recent decades that has commanded much attention from either literary critics or the general reading public. […] [W]hile it is true that the dystopia uses many of the same literary devices as the utopia, the unwillingness to essay the literary utopia*

*suggests a distinct lack of confidence in its capacity to be effective, as well*

*perhaps as a failure of the utopian imagination. (pp. 549 – 550)*

The industrial revolution as well as the technological developments did not serve for the advancement of people during the related periods. Contrarily, they brought wars which ended up with millions of casualties, genocides, epidemic diseases, poverty, and so forth. The utopian imagination, as Kumar names it, gradually faded away following the advancements in technology, thereby leaving the stage to dystopic thoughts and feelings, inclusive of hopeless and apocalyptic futures.

It is fundamental to propose that the abovementioned transitions in history and the like either triggered utopianism or were triggered by it. As also put forth by Jameson (2005), the "very existence or emergence [of utopia] certainly registers the agitation of the various 'transitional periods' within which most Utopias were composed" (p. 15) since "major social changes are accompanied by a kind of political stasis, where the political will or means are lacking to give shape and direction to the changes" (Kumar, Summer 2010, p. 551). In parallel with Jameson's perspective on the emergence of the works of utopia, it is also viable to admit that different forms of utopia came up as a consequence of those transitional periods. The history of utopia "can be seen as a collection of moments when a clear semantic renewal of the words occurred. The word utopia has itself often been used as the root for the formation of new words" (Vieira, 2010, p. 3). Transpiring as a form of lexical neologism by More, the word utopia maintained as a nest for new coinages such as "eutopia, dystopia, anti-utopia, alotopia, euchronia, heterotopia, ecotopia and hyperutopia" (Vieira, 2010, p. 3) in accordance with those transitional periods besides reactions to utopia by certain scholars. Because defining utopia is still one of the most enigmatic issues of scholarly works, these new coinages have helped narrowing down the meanings into some certain frames. On the other hand, new terms have also contributed to the questioning of the debatable definitions over utopia, too. Therefore, the vicious circle of the ambiguity of meaning of utopia has never been completely broken throughout the history of utopianism, thereby bestowing to the controversies about it.

As is suggested by Sargent (1975), "[u]topia may be used as the general term covering all the various classes of utopian literature" (p. 138). Correspondingly, because there are various literary forms of utopia, underscoring some certain literary terms is

highly critical. As an umbrella term, utopia has generated various descendants such as utopianism, eutopia (or positive utopia), dystopia (or negative utopia), utopian satire, anti-utopia (which is usually mistaken as synonymous to dystopia although they are different from each other), critical utopia, alotopia, euchronia, heterotopia, ecotopia, and hyperutopia. Sargent defines the literary utopia as "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space" (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). It is possible to grasp the notion that his definition embodies a sample of a concrete pillar which is given a shape in accordance with the consequences of utopianism which Sargent calls as "social dreaming – the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live" (Sargent, 1994, p. 3). Put another way, forms of utopia are ascribed meanings through the combination of the non-existent society and the contents of their utopianism. In this case, there is no specific attribution of quality to the difference which the radical society might have, for the quality of the difference specifies the form of utopia – in other words, if the difference is a good and desired one, it is named as eutopia; on the other hand, if it is a devastating and undesired difference, the work is an example to dystopia. This is why eutopia is defined as "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which the reader lived" (Sargent, 1994, p. 9); on the other hand, dystopia is "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived" (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). *Better* and *worse*, therefore, act as contents and outcomes of utopianism – or social dreaming as Sargent calls it – which consequently identify works as either eutopian or dystopian. In short, "[t]he eutopia says if you behave thus and so, you will be rewarded with this. The dystopia, in the tradition of jeremiad, says if you behave thus and so, this is how you will be punished" (Sargent, 1994, p. 8).

The difference in the meaning between utopia and eutopia is worth considering, for the literary tradition has gone through a series of transformations and thus new definitions have emerged. Darko Suvin (1979), a well-respected professor whose scholarship mainly focuses on utopia and science fiction, was not able to foresee the

prospective changes the literary genre would experience in the impending years when he gave his definition of utopia as follows:

> *Utopia is the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis. (p. 49)*

In parallel with Sargent, Suvin, too, elaborates on the idea that utopia is a construction, arising from different hypothesises belonging to people who feel extremely alienated to their contemporaneous societies, thereby opening up new perspectives for a better one. However, because utopia turns out to be an umbrella term in the later periods, Suvin (2010) offers an alteration in his definition, underlining that this modification ought to be essential for differentiating between utopia and eutopia:

> *UTOPIA will be defined as: the construction of a particular community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and relationships between people are organized according to a radically different principle than in the author's community: this construction is based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis; it is created by discontented social classes interested in otherness and change, and its difference is judged from their point of view or within their value system. All utopias involve people who radically suffer of the existing system and desire to radically change it. For 'radically different', EUTOPIA [...] substitutes 'radically more perfect,' and the perfection is judged within that value system. (p. 30)*

Therefore, considering his emphasis on the words different and perfection, it is essential to highlight the fact that while utopia in modern times is a neutral word which does not refer to any positive or negative attributions and is just concerned with presenting the need to change, eutopia is expected to represent betterment in the present conditions of people in the mind of its author, for "the radical difference in perfection is [...] judged from the point of view and within the value-system of a discontented social class or congeries of classes, as refracted through the writer" (Suvin, 2010, p. 384). It is now highly obvious that eutopia, dystopia and all other forms of literary utopia are named in the mind of the author. In other words, the contemporaneous reader might find a work of

the genre either eutopian or dystopian depending on where the reader stands and how s/he evaluates the written material. Put another way, a reader who is conservative and a supporter of totalitarian regimes may evaluate Orwell's *1984* as a eutopian work whereas an opponent might possibly name the same work as an example of dystopia. Levitas (1990) also argues about the categorization of utopian works as follows:

> *Content is for many people the most interesting aspect of utopia, inviting them to consider whether, in fact, this would be a good society, if it existed. The variation in content, however, makes it particularly difficult to use this as part of the definition of utopia. Definitions in terms of content tend to be evaluative and normative, specifying what the good society would be, rather than reflecting on how it may be differently perceived. (p. 4)*

The question, therefore, should be solved by examining the intent of the author. It is one of the most useful ways of categorizing works as eutopian or dystopian. However, "[i]ntent is a minefield and should be entered only when necessary and only for the limited purpose of determining whether the work should be classified as eutopian, dystopian, and so forth" (Sargent, 1994, p. 13). The reason for this warning is to underline the fact that some works, although they include a lot of eutopian or dystopian elements within, do not fit in the standardized definitions of either category. For instance, although a work includes various future projections about the prospective results to the contemporaneous reader, it might not be inclusive of a society. In this case, the author's intention is highly critical so as to define the category of the work.

Pursuing the problematic issue of misconceptions about utopianism, it is also critically important to underline the differences among critical utopia, utopian satire and anti-utopia since these three forms are related to alternative focus points. Sargent (1994) defines critical utopia as follows:

> *[It is] a non-existing society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as better than contemporary society but with difficult problems that the described society may or may not be able to solve and which takes a critical view of the utopian genre. (p. 9)*

In other words, a critical utopia *criticizes* the utopian genre by articulating tension between the original society and the one depicted in the written work. Readers are

expected to be well-aware of the notion that every society, no matter when or where they live, has its own idiosyncratic problems. Besides, solution to those problems could or could not be found. Nevertheless, it is rather obvious that critical utopia does not reject the genre. On the contrary, it aims to demonstrate readers that utopias principally should not be abandoned although they ought to be denominated as nothing but fantasies, thereby refuting all those notions such as future projection, betterment, and so on. Considering this, critical utopia turns out to be the bridge between the present world and future visions. Critical utopia was actually coined to literature by Tom Moylan (2014) who has characterized it as follows:

> *A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream. Furthermore, the novels dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated. Finally, the novels focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives. (p. 10)*

Put another way, contrary to eutopian idealistic portrayals and prizes as well as opposing to the depictions of undesired dystopian punishments, critical utopia functions as a map for alternatives the original society may or may not encounter in the future, thereby providing readers with various perspectives without concrete steps to be taken. The equal chances between the original society and the one in the utopic narrative should not be broken, for the reader is expected to do his/her own criticism so as to evaluate all variants. All in all, as Moylan (2014) suggests, critical utopia creates "the image of the alternative society, […] breaks with previous utopias by presenting in much greater, almost balanced, detail both the utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative" (43). By doing so, despite illusionary presentations, critical utopia encapsulates most probable inconsistencies, failures and problems of the alternative society besides the opportunities for betterment so as to make readers end up with a lot of questions in mind. However, no matter how hard Moylan endeavours to point this category of the genre as a transformation which saves utopia as a literary genre from disappearing, it is not unjust to claim that in addition to the fractional representations of

all possible variations, the piecemeal mixtures of original and alternative society stories create a lot of ambiguities. Levitas (1990) discusses the question as follows:

> *The ambiguity of utopia is not merely exploratory and open, it is also disillusioned and unconfident […]. The presentation of alternative futures, multiple possibilities and fragmented images of time reflects a lack of confidence whether and how a better world can be reached". (p. 196)*

Apparently, the vague nature of critical utopia makes readers feel puzzled about the relationship between the alternative and the existing societies. Additionally, the obscurity contributes to the prevention of decision-making, thereby obstructing mental negotiation among the alternatives. This is one of the reasons why, as Sargent (1994) also puts forth, "critical utopias are no longer as important as they were when Moylan initially characterized them" (p. 8). The flourishing of this category of literary utopia was limited to a period of approximately a decade between 1960s and 1970s when there was a bloom in science fiction.

Utopian satire, which is another tradition of literary utopia, is considerably open to discussions, too, for it is inclusive of criticism again. However, utopian satire does not aim to demonstrate people that there may be a lot of possibilities in the future together with difficulties and problems that may come up; on the contrary, it undertakes the mission of satirizing the contemporaneous society. Sargent (1994) characterizes utopian satire as "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of that contemporary society" (p. 9). Moreover, utopian satire "describes those works where satire overwhelms the other elements and in which there is no simple good/bad distinction" (Sargent, 1994, p. 8). Therefore, it is not possible to identify written works as eutopian or dystopian since the good and bad distinction is impossible to be made. Furthermore, the focus is on satirical elements rather than the portrayal of certain possibilities of the future societies. Through the implementation of satirical elements into utopia, authors ridicule the existing society:

> *[S]ocial rituals are seen from the outside, not to make them more consistent but simply to demonstrate their inconsistency, their hypocrisy, or their unreality. Satire of this kind holds up a mirror to society which distorts it, but distorts it consistently. (Frye, 1965, p. 337)*

Furthermore, utopian satire, too, has ambiguity in itself, for the author is not liable to present readers a choice between the contemporaneous society and the future society. Instead, s/he tries to make readers question their own circumstances:

> *All utopian satire tends to contain a certain aspiration of laughter. The*
> *degree of aspiration, in part, distinguishes utopian satire from the darker*
> *versions of the negative utopia [dystopia] written in our time. In addition,*
> *though the satirist points to his own world through an absurd alternative,*
> *his attention (and the reader's) is more on that actual present world and less*
> *on the alternative as a rehearsal for future worlds. (Aldridge, 1984, p. 6)*

Therewithal, utopian satire is highly close to dystopia since they both target the addressee so as to make them become self-aware. However, the most important difference between the two traditions is that utopian satire is more related to the present society and its own existing distortions whereas dystopia points out the undesired presumptions, thereby admonishing the reader about the prospective disorders in the future.

> *While the utopias of the Renaissance had tried to confer verisimilitude on*
> *the description of the imaginary society by setting it in a distant, unknown*
> *part of the world, the satirical utopia [utopian satire] overtly set the*
> *imaginary society in places which could neither possibly exist nor be*
> *reached due to technological and biological impossibilities. (Vieira, 2010,*
> *pp. 15 - 16)*

As such is the case, "in dystopia our fuller attention is directed to the alternative structure itself as 'possible impossible' (Suvin) future world and our lesser attention to the ongoing present; the opposite is true of utopian satire" (Aldridge, 1984, p. 6). Considering this, *Gulliver's Travels*, which was written in 1726 by Jonathan Swift, could be given as one of the best exemplifications of utopian satire, for the emphasis in the work is not on the ways and types of organizations in the ideal and imaginary society. On the contrary, the traveller's "presumably brilliant – but in reality very narrow-minded – schemes to survive in the rather silly worlds he visits" (Vieira, 2010, p. 16) are underscored. Another striking example of this tradition is *Erewhon*, written in 1872 by Samuel Butler. The work is a distorting satirical mirror to the Victorian England, worshipping machinery. Kumar (1987) summarizes the lesson drawn from the work as follows:

*The Erewhonians understand, in a way the Victorians seem not to, that humans are becoming increasingly dependent on machines and end up being their slaves. [...] It may be very well to talk of this as interdependence, a symbiosis of man and machine; but we should be aware who will increasingly be the dominant partner. Without the machines, men even now would likely perish, physically and mentally. (p. 107)*

Regarding the satirical elements and their consecutive reflections on readers, therefore, it is noteworthy to underline the notion that the attacks are directly on the contemporaneous societies, not on the imaginary ideals in the future. Additionally, the "result is that, in the end, it is the real world which is valued, and thus the positive dynamic which is typical of utopia is lost" (Vieira, 2010, p. 16). In parallel with the progression of utopian traditions, it would be inappropriate not to state that dystopia is a descendant of utopian satire, too, for after changing the focus from satirizing the present society to the reflection of the one in the future, the tradition re-shaped its function as well as shifting the tone of its warning.

Anti-utopia is another controversial tradition of literary utopia. It has been debated upon since the term is suggestive of two different meanings. The first and foremost correspondence is that anti-utopia is a direct attack on the *so called* idealistic and unrealistic attempts of utopian thought. "In fact, […] it was the utopian spirit itself which was ridiculed; their only aim was to denounce the irrelevance and inconsistency of utopian dreaming and the ruin of society it might entail" (Vieira, 2010, p. 16). Furthermore, the second correspondence of anti-utopia is that it was believed to be the equivalent of dystopia between 1950s and 1960s. This, however, is not the correct use of the term in modern times. Although the anti-utopia category is another form of satire within the same tradition, it does not promote the possible apocalyptic ends societies might come across as is done in various dystopic works; on the contrary, it is a counter-attack to utopianism. In other words, "if utopia is about hope, and satirical utopia [utopian satire] is about distrust, anti-utopia is clearly about total disbelief" (Vieira, 2010, p. 16).

Sargent's (1994) definition of the anti-utopian tradition is as follows: "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia" (p. 9). Apparently, the anti-utopian attacks have been

considerably successful because the word utopian, as an adjective, does connote a negative meaning in terms of fulfilment of desires due to their abstractions. As aforementioned, utopianism encountered a lot of harsh attacks from various scholars and authors, for they believed that the tradition encouraged totalitarianism, vandalism, violence, and socialism, among many others; "every attempt ended in the grotesque inversion of its promise – democracy produced despotism, science barbarism, and reason unreason" (Kumar, 1987, p. 110). Karl Mannheim (1935) argues about the abstraction of utopian ideals as follows:

> *The term utopian, as here used, may be applied to any process of thought which receives its impetus not from the direct force of social reality but from concepts, such as symbols, fantasies, dreams, ideas and the like, which in the most comprehensive sense of that term are non-existent. Viewed from the standpoint of sociology, such mental constructs may in general assume two forms: they are "ideological" if they serve the purpose of glossing over or stabilizing the existing social reality; "utopian" if they inspire collective activity which aims to change such reality to conform with their goals, which transcend reality. (p. 201)*

Apparently, to Mannheim, utopia is a way out of social realities. The ideological aspect of utopian thought is also a threat to the prevalent social structure since the former aims to destabilize the latter and then to establish what the collective conscious intends to. Believing so, utopian thought, according to Mannheim, is a danger for the stability of social structures, for it may articulate upheavals among various collective groups. However, in parallel with Blochean notions, it is not very probable to generate a better society without forward dreaming. Therefore, although Mannheim names the very term utopia as unrealistic or impractical, each individual makes the *not-yet-real* ideals come true by way of dreaming about them; in other words, step by step they concretize whatever is abstract to them. Even so, anti-utopians "believe a deliberately constructed society of this sort can only be maintained by the continual use of force [law]" (Sargent, 1994, p. 24). All their ideas challenge utopian thought because they consider that utopia is in search of the perfect society and that reason cannot be part of utopian vision; however, utopia is a quest for establishing the better by mental activities. Also, there are no perfect

societies or perfect people. Karl Popper's (1994) argument against utopian tradition is astounding once it is observed that he eliminates reasoning from utopian thought:

> *Any difference of opinion between Utopian engineers must [...] lead, in the absence of rational methods, to the use of power instead of reason, i.e. to violence. If any progress in any definite direction is made at all, then it is made in spite of the method adopted, not because of it. The success may be due, for instance, to the excellence of the leaders; but we must never forget that excellent leaders cannot be produced by rational methods, but only by luck. (p. 151)*

Admitting Popper's argument about lack of reasoning in any sort of success in utopias would be improper, for decision-making is one of the most prominent qualities of utopian thought. Deciding as well as choosing between the good and the bad without reasoning would be nonsensical. It is considerably understandable that "at present, the sociological knowledge necessary for large-scale engineering is simply non-existent" (Popper, 1994, p. 151); nevertheless, through reasoning, which Popper believes is missing in utopian thought, it is possible to constitute the most acceptable social structure, which, in the end, will be challenged in the future so as to be altered for a better society than the former one. It is also noteworthy that "[a]nti-utopia [...] found its most powerful vocation in shaping the hegemonic reaction against communism and socialism" (Moylan, 2000, p. 131) since "[i]t seemed, for some time, as if socialism might take the place of formal religion, so supplying the emotional current of utopia" (Kumar, 1987, p. 421). After all, Christianity has entitled utopianism as heretical since Christian teachings have underscored the notion that "there can be no salvation for humanity before death" (Sargent, 1994, p. 22), which presumably stems from the original sin. Moreover, this opposition is a contribution to the anti-utopian struggles for alternative possibilities in the future; no matter how impressive and breath-taking they are, the alternatives in the utopian ideals cannot be remedies for humanity's fall from grace because only death is the true salvation. Besides, people will be able to reach perfection through death but nothing else. Understandable enough, anti-utopian tradition based its arguments on the distortion of utopian thought by supporting "Christian objections to perfectibility, conservative opposition to radical reforms, and cynical reflections on human incapacity" (Kumar, 1987, p. 103).

As such is the case with utopianism, it is helpful to restate some basic points about it. Although the meaning and purpose of utopia were less ambiguous when it first came up as an example of neologism in the sixteenth century, the function, meaning, purpose, and forms of utopia have changed as time passed by. Consequently, such forms as eutopia, dystopia, critical utopia, utopian satire, anti-utopia as well as various other types have descended as examples of derivational neologisms from the umbrella term. Since the main scope of this dissertation is within the framework of feminist eutopian and dystopian fiction, functions and purposes of eutopian and dystopian works will be dwelled on in the next chapter.

### 1.3. Feminist Utopian Tradition

It is already put forth that utopia is a process-oriented phenomenon and that progress is inevitable. Therefore, it is impossible to reach the point where everything is perfect. Thus, better and worse are the key words to describe eutopian and dystopian concepts respectively. As such is the case, it is undeniable that female voice has been silenced throughout centuries; although women have started to take action in the betterment process of their roles within all parts in their societies, what has been achieved so far is only a crawl. This is exactly why utopianism has been in the core of feminist writing. As Johns (2010) proposes, "gender equality has never fully existed, so it might be imagined if it is to become a subject of conscious thought and discussion" (p. 175). Hence, women writers as well as male authors who believe in the necessity of the establishment of gender equality within societies have produced a lot of eutopian works which include different perspectives about gender roles in order to show both men and women that there are better alternatives. This, however, has never been so simple, for "utopian landscapes have historically been the property of men. Ironically, the social group which might have benefited the most from a reworking of social structures – women – had virtually no role in their production" (Lewes, Fall 1989, p. 29). Instead, in utopian works "we are given the (usually male) authors' views of the best or significantly better society, and along with all these, their views of what roles and status women should have in a good society" (Sargent, 1973, p. 302). In other words, women and their roles in the better societies within utopian literary works are described and women are expected to behave in full accordance with these descriptions. Because all circles of life such as politics, education, and law have been monopolized by men, women have been withheld

from the very humanely rights. Furthermore, because the way people live in their contemporaneous societies has been the normative referent of becoming male and female, and since that has been the standardized way of life which points out men and women how they should behave and where exactly they should stand within their societies, no other alternative was visible to the audience. Therefore;

> *given the limited political, economic and social clout of feminists, they [feminist writers] have sought out cultural modes, especially artistic and literary representations, as the most eligible means of making a different future comprehensible to the largest possible audience. The utopian literary mode, so open to imaginative construction and unhindered theorizing, has therefore always appeared useful to feminist authors. (Johns, 2010, p. 175)*

Correspondingly, utopianism has been one of the most significant tools for feminist writers in order to raise consciousness especially among women so that they could also start dreaming about a better future. After all, utopian writing takes dreaming as the key element in order to construct the future. They achieve raising consciousness especially by way of the estrangement effect they create in readers' minds. Accordingly, readers go through a process of defamiliarization and when they perceive that what they undergo in their daily lives is actually weird, they tend to start questioning their habits and customs, thereby taking the first step to change their habitual way of thinking. Consequently, they feel they need to change their present conditions by re-establishing and re-constructing their perceptions about the society they belong to.

It is a good way to turn to some examples of utopian tradition in order to illustrate how women and their roles within the projected better societies are depicted by men. It is also significant to underscore why there has been an urgent necessity for raising consciousness as well as establishing a cumulative force against those imbalanced descriptions. Turning back to Plato's *Republic*, one can easily acknowledge his challenge to the mainstream descriptions of gender roles within Ancient Greece. Not surprisingly, women are ascribed to such roles as wives, mothers, and care-givers. Moreover, they are excluded from the very right of education as well as politics. In this sense, Plato's defiance to these referent roles could best be depicted by his intriguing questioning as follows:

> *Do we think that the females of watch-dogs ought to guard the flock along with the males, and hunt with them, and share in all their other duties; or*

> *that the females ought to stay at home, because they are disabled by having*
> *to breed and rear the cubs, while the males are to labour and be charged*
> *with all the care of the flocks? (Plato, 1997, p. 150)*

Although it is still debatable if Plato's work is eutopian, it is absolutely possible to claim that such challenges as above are eutopian elements which are carefully embroidered within the work. He clearly opposes to the notion that there is a natural difference between males and females. Admitting that there are biological and physical differences between the two sexes, he does refute the idea that women should be domesticated and excluded from state works and politics. The reason why women are absent in the works committed by men, to Plato, is because they are not given the equal chances in education with men. "If then we are to employ women in the same duties as men, we must give them the same instructions" (Plato, 1997, p. 150). These instructions, according to Plato, consist of music, gymnastic and military education. As in the example of the watch-dogs, every duty or profession could be committed and shared by everyone only if are they given the proper education. If something is not in nature, it is artificial. As such is the case, women's domestication is not natural but artificial, for "we treat the females as the weaker, and the males as stronger" (Plato, 1997, p. 150).

Thomas More's *Utopia*, compared to Plato's *Republic*, has nothing in common in terms of the status of women as well as gender role descriptions within the prospective better society.

> *The idea that men should be regarded as inherently superior to women was*
> *apparently for More such an obvious and natural one that it never occurred*
> *to him that gender equality should be among the various other social*
> *hierarchies levelled in his ideal society. (Booker, Nov., 1994, p. 338)*

To begin with the patriarchal society, it is clear that it is considerably visible and highly strong. As is presented by More (1965), "[e]ach household […] comes under the authority of the oldest male. Wives are subordinate to their husbands, children to their elders" (p. 80). Apparently, even after approximately two thousand years since Plato's *Republic*, not much changed on behalf of women, for they are still subordinate to males in More's eutopian society. Moreover, the authority addressed to the eldest male suggests that wisdom is not sexless. This subordination is faced more fiercely when such rituals as follows are considered:

*[Before] going to church at an Ending Feast, wives kneel down at home before their husbands, and children before their parents, to confess all their sins of omission and commission, and ask to be forgiven. This gets rid of any little grudges that may have clouded the domestic atmosphere, so that everyone can attend divine service with an absolutely clear mind. (More, 1965, p. 126)*

All these practises contribute to the sustainability of the patriarchal order within the society and promote the weakening process of women. Men are considered as fathers of the church so that women could be forgiven. Otherwise, it is impossible for the female to attend to the feast. Moreover, "[h]usbands are responsible for punishing their wives, and parents for punishing their children, unless the offence is so serious that it has to be dealt with by the authorities, in the interests of public morality" (More, 1965, p. 104). Considering this, the male potency is erected whereas the female individuality is eradicated in More's eutopia.

The domestication of women is another phenomenon in More's eutopian society. Despite women's participation in such works as priesthood, farming, spinning and weaving, they are prominently "given the lighter jobs [whereas] the men do the heavier jobs (More, 1965, p. 75). Furthermore, the belief that "in countries where the women *do* work, the men tend to lounge about" (More, 1965, p. 77) is highly dominant. This, for sure, is also a very contemporary problem of today's world since there are some debates in various countries underlining women's intensity of attendance in professional life as the chief reason of high percentage of unemployment among men. Therefore, it is possible to draw the idea that More actually prefers women in their domestic spheres so that men do not wander idly, which, of course, is another threat to women's individuality. Additionally, women are ascribed other responsibilities. "The actual business of preparing and cooking the food, and planning the menus, is left entirely to the women of the household on duty" (More, 1965, p. 82). Women's assignments are not limited to these household chores; they are also obliged to nurse their babies. Once all these depictions of women's roles in the society and at home are taken into consideration, it is substantially difficult to put forth that there is enough room for equality between genders in More's eutopian society. Even before marriage, there is a really absurd and whimsical arrangement: "The prospective bride, no matter whether she's a spinster or a widow, is

exhibited stark naked to the prospective bridegroom by a respectable married woman, and a suitable male chaperon shows the bridegroom naked to the bride" (More, 1965, p. 103). The fact that this ritual is a reciprocal one does not refute the idea that it is indeed for providing the bridegroom a physically beautiful bride, for "this practice deal[s] with the possible deformity of the woman" (Sargent, 1973, p. 304). In such a male-oriented society, it is not expectable that their prospective husbands are presented to women. Eventually, all these presentations for a better society add to the subordination process of women while contributing to the stabilization of the patriarchy which already prevails as a considerably concrete power within the projected better society. Although it is not possible to entitle all utopian works as belonging to Plato's or More's tradition, Sargent (1973) classifies them as follows:

> *Most of the rest of the utopias [other than Plato's and More's] present societies that are close to either Plato or More, with the family abolished and women fairly equal, as in Campanella's <u>The City of the Sun</u> (1623), or with the family maintained and women definitely inferior, as in Bacon's <u>New Atlantis</u> (1621). Cabet in <u>Voyage en Icarie</u> (1840) tries to have it both ways, with the family the basis of the system and women equal, although his concern for equality is solely political and economic. In the community he established in Nauvoo, women could not vote. (p. 304)*

Therefore, it is significant to underline the notion that although some eutopian works were penned so as to improve the contemporaneous societies, a visible improvement for women could not be achieved, for the authors were predominantly men and they were unable to understand and internalize the sense of equality within the society at all terms. Thus, their intuitive desires always preceded those of women's. What Sargent claims, however, does not necessarily mean that there are two mainstream utopian traditions which cover conditions of women in two different ways. Rather, he makes it explicit that although women are parts of eutopian works, "as far as [they] are concerned, we live in the best possible worlds already, or that women should be more subservient" (Sargent, 1973, p. 314). Correspondingly, this resulted in women's adaptation to the existing conditions.

> *Most of the literary utopias in the next four centuries after More similarly failed to make the imaginative leap required to envision true equality for*

*women, even though utopian thought itself is centrally concerned with the imagination of alternative societies that surmount the prejudices and conventions of the status quo. (Booker, Nov., 1994, p. 338)*

Women, therefore, could not come up with different alternatives for the betterment of their unjust circumstances since they believed that the society at hand as well as the societies in the eutopian works which were written by men were the normative referents of becoming a woman in indigenous societies. In parallel, as is proposed by Lewes (Fall 1989), "even the few utopian texts women did produce conformed to the traditional androcentric world-view in which females exist as secondary beings requiring the guidance and protection of dominant males" (p. 29). Setting free from the margins, thus, could not be considered as an alternating choice by women. In other words, they were doomed to the boiling frog syndrome, making their status within their societies deteriorate gradually.

Alternative projections by women, thus, have been critically significant, for it is considered that changing consciousness is essentially the first step of changing societies. To do so, women writers have started to benefit from the unlimited nature of utopian fiction since it "portray[s] women as the creators of a new consciousness and a new vision" (Pearson, 1981, p. 64). Raising consciousness as well as providing people with new visions constitute one of the core points of providing and sustaining equalitarian societies. By "provoking paradigm shifts in consciousness, utopianism can enable us to repattern and restructure our thought; to dance differently to the same tune, which is language; and to foresee the previously unforeseeable" (Sargisson, 2003, p. 229). The shifts in consciousness are not only presented to women but also to men so as to clear minds by way of challenging to the established and accustomed norms, thereby liberating societies from the manacles of patriarchy. In other words, "[i]n all cases, feminist utopias allow citizens to control their own lives. […] [W]omen are free from the rape of their minds as well as their bodies. No one is owned by anyone else" (Pearson, 1981, p. 64). Since equalitarianism depends on cooperation within the society, alternative projections which have been provided by female authors should be embraced by all components of societies. This is exactly why indoctrination of ideas about and of the female identity is emphasized in all feminist utopian works. The agenda of feminist utopian fiction is

inextricably laden with various techniques in order to trigger the awakening process of people. As Pfaelzer (1990) states, there is a great number of women authors who

> *fragment their texts with multiple protagonists; multiple narrators; interpolated time frames; frequent shifts among past, present and future; and frequent shifts among dreams, awakenings, and drug-induced states of consciousness. Embedded discourses, often drawn from traditions of verisimilitude – recipes, maps, cartoons, autobiographies, histories, slogans, graphics – further stimulate an estranged reading experience and drive the reader to and from the text. [...] Consequently, it forces the reader to confront the relationship between fantasy and empiricism, between utopia and history. (p. 194)*

By way of all these techniques, the reader is uncontrollably estranged to his/her experience. Through this dislocation from their actual state, readers are thrown into an ocean of interrogations, which, in the end, discombobulates such stereotypical attributions to women and men as fragility vs durability, sentimentality vs rationality, domesticity vs potency among many others that are considered as the main sources of generalizations, which in fact disempower not only women but also men. In other words, as Delany (1980, as cited in Pfaelzer, 1990) puts forth, a reciprocal relationship between the text and the reader comes up as follows:

> *[The readers] indulge a much more fluid and speculative kind of survey. With each sentence we have to ask what in the world of the tale would have to be different from our world in order for such a sentence to be uttered – and thus, as the sentence builds up, we build up a world in specific dialogue with our present conception of the real. (p. 198)*

By doing so, the reader is triggered to subvert his/her own reality, thereby forming another one although the newly established world is only a fictitious one for the time being. Feminist utopian fiction, therefore, "challenge[s] and correct[s] biases about innate female 'nature'. They [novels] counter stereotypes by emphasizing women's strength, courage and intelligence" (Pearson, 1981, p. 64). Feminist eutopian works, therefore, remind women that they are as capable as men.

It is eventually possible to give some definitions of what a feminist utopian novel is. Gearhart (1984) defines the genre as follows:

*A feminist utopian novel is one a. contrasts the present with an envisioned idealized society (separated from the present by time or space), b. offers a comprehensive critique of present values/conditions, c. sees men or male institutions as a major cause of present social ills, and d. presents women not only as at least the equals of men but also as the sole arbiters of their reproductive forces. (p. 296)*

Although Gearhart proposes that this is a working definition of the genre, it is still not adequate enough to encompass all dimensions of feminist utopian novel. First of all, as is suggested by Sargisson (2003), "the first [a] concerns utopian content and is fairly straightforward" (p. 40). In other words, the definition does not suggest that such umbrella terms as feminist dystopia, feminist utopian satire or feminist critical utopia are also other products of feminist utopian literature. There is room for the idealized society only, which points out the notion that Gearhart's definition is only concerned with eutopia. "Moreover, there is no room in this definition for the open-ended utopia. In this reading, Gearhart's understanding of utopia is over-restrictive" (Sargisson, 2003, p. 40). According to Gearhart, then, what makes a feminist utopian novel is its success in creating an ideal society which is only ideal in line with a closed circle of feminist world. Other works which are incapable of reaching this idealized femininity are all out of the boundaries of feminist utopian novel, which, for sure, is not literally correct. Furthermore, her definition also hinders readers from negotiating with future projections. Because the definition does not propose a vision to be negotiated for the future, readers only come up with an image which is already unrealizable from the very beginning. Gearhart's limitation "downplays such important aspects of the social action of feminist utopias as the envisioning of a future society that is better in a feminist sense, portraying it in its development, or exploring strategies for social change" (Teslenko, 2005, p. 82). This is why it is not very probable to see readers in contact with the future. It is not possible to build up bridges between the present and future since the presented image is closed to deliberation. Moreover, point (c) in Gearhart's definition embodies a considerably hazardous area since she employs biological entities rather than using such cultural titles as masculine and masculinity. What makes this area a very dangerous one is the fact that biological tags are direct attacks to those who define themselves as men or male biologically whereas masculine and masculinity encompass everyone independent of their sex. Put differently, gender and sex are infused in one single body in Gearhart's

opinion. However, one can be a man and feminine or it is possible for a woman to be masculine and serve to patriarchy at the same time. Sargisson (2003), too, posits on this issue and states that "point (c) itself is unnecessarily exclusive, because it relies on a universalism of the narrative content of utopias. Her [Gearhart's] understanding of what constitutes feminism is clearly free from the subtleties of the French analyses" (p. 31). Therefore, it is explicit that Gearhart's definition of feminist utopian novel is also gender-blind and suggestive of biological polarization. Although it is impossible to claim that patriarchy is not responsible for the inequality within society, it is crystal clear that attacking on one sex brings about detestation among people. Finally, the last point in Gearhart's definition is even more dangerous, for it excludes those feminist utopian novels which do not dwell on women's control over their reproductivity. As another content-based definition, it excludes not only function of utopian literature but also the other feminist utopian sub-genres mentioned formerly. In other words, Gearhart is preoccupied with feminist eutopia one more time. Sargisson (2003) explains what actually happens if one admits Gearhart's definition as correct:

> [F]irst, a novel, according to this definition, cannot be considered feminist unless women are depicted as at least equal to men and in control of their reproduction; second, a feminist text, thus defined, cannot be said to be utopian unless it contains an idealized society in which such a scenario is considered. (p. 31)

As such, it is highly problematic that Gearhart uses reproduction in such an absurd way since it is one of various normative referents which needs to be challenged, for it is another imposition of societies. Moreover, feminist tradition takes criticism as one of the most significant tools for fighting against patriarchy. Nevertheless, Gearhart's definition is considerably away from subverting societal norms; on the contrary, she serves to patriarchy with her definition by "[reducing] the women's activity to their reproductive function, or, at least, [giving] this function a primary defining status" (Teslenko, 2005, p. 82).

As is suggested, a content-based approach to utopianism or feminist utopian novel is inadequate in defining the feminist utopian literary tradition. Thus, the problem which unavoidably arises is to find the best approach – if there is any – to define a feminist utopian novel. As it is proposed before, one of the most suitable methods is to apply an

eclectic approach which will be inclusive of form, content, and function simultaneously. It is undeniable that form, content or function are useful in differentiating utopian novel from other genres since they, too, mark the margins of each work. However, if one employs one or two of these approaches only, literary works will probably be highly exclusive, leaving other works out of utopian tradition although they should be classified under the same title once they are considered with an eclectic approach. Nevertheless, it is also undeniable that the application of such an approach might not always be possible since function of a work is one of the most significant determinants of its identification. The paradox, therefore, makes it harder to define feminist utopian novel. This is why it is essential to refer to the utmost aim of the feminist ideology which is to shatter patriarchy from top to toe so that equality in all circles of life among everyone regardless of their sex and gender could be established in a homogenous way. In order to achieve this goal, feminist utopianism regards function of utopianism as the primary tool against patriarchy. Moylan (2014) prescribes the function of utopia as follows:

> *Utopian writing in its many manifestations is complex and contradictory. It is, at heart, rooted in the unfulfilled needs and wants of specific classes, groups, and individuals in their unique historical contexts. Produced through the fantasizing powers of the imagination, utopia opposes the affirmative culture maintained by dominant ideology. Utopia negates the contradictions in a social system by forging visions of what is not yet realized either in theory or practice. In generating such figures of hope, utopia contributes to the open space of opposition. (p. 1)*

Apparently, Moylan considers opposition to the mainstream ideas, beliefs, political governance as well as societal regulations as the most significant method of smashing the boundaries, which, in fact, renders the most prominent function of utopianism. As such, feminist utopian novels challenge to the mainstream patriarchal utopian tradition besides the very-well established dominant discourses of gender issues. In other words, it is more convenient to define feminist utopian novel by considering Moylan's attribution to utopian function, for the meta-genre actually criticizes the domineering masculine voice within societies and contradicts with it in an effort to realize the necessary social change in order to establish the desired and unrealized necessities. Sargisson (2003), too, focuses on this very nature of feminist utopianism with petty modifications:

*From socialist and feminist approaches I have extracted a view of utopianism as having oppositional and transformative dynamic functions. I have challenged the simplistic dualistic conception of opposition and have replaced it (conceptually) with something multisourced and multidirectional. This creates new paradigms. Utopianism has a speculative function which is located in part in its conventions of critique, estrangement and imaginative writing and [...] utopias are often better read as metaphors than as blueprints. (p. 59)*

In consideration with Sargisson's notion, it is probable to claim that feminist utopian novel does not intend to sketch a portrait of a future society. On the contrary, it establishes a connection between the reader and the texts, thereby presenting different questions, responses, scopes and visions by way of altering consciousness. Put another way, feminist utopian tradition does not suggest one single future probability, for "in the absence of blueprints the future is openended" (Sargisson, 2003, p. 59). Speculation, opposition and transformation, therefore, embody significant components of the genre. Furthermore, Sargisson's reference to feminist utopian tradition as metaphors is worth considering since she states that opposition to the dominant discourse, change in consciousness, and social transformation come true through a metaphorical reading of a utopian novel, for it provides multiple interpretations which direct readers to a variety of conclusions and possibilities. Sargisson (2003) explains her metaphorical reading as follows:

*The metaphor [...] can give shape to the contents of etc.. Like etc., the metaphor invokes 'something' else: a surplus. We must [...] recognize a 'truth' in the metaphor for it to 'work'. By suggesting alternative truths, realities and values through metaphor and myth, feminist utopian theory and fiction [...] both challenge and create, by stimulating questions and perhaps discordance in the mind of the reader. In this way, remetaphorization functions similarly to a disjointed narrative technique, jolting and intercepting the normal (traditional) chain of associative thought. Tradition, for instance, is denaturalized, symbolic order upturned, and new spaces for/of exploration opened. (p. 219)*

Once again, subversion of dominant discourses shows up as the ultimate goal of feminist utopian tradition. In order to realize the desired social change, previously established norms, references, and concepts are to be reformed by way of alternative visions.

Concurrently, "[t]he necessary utopian moment in feminism lies precisely in our opening the possible through metaphoric transformation" (Cornell, 1999, p. 169). Correspondingly, the metaphoric transformation will be shaped and reshaped in accordance with the proceeding time and its natural outcomes during its progress. Attributing to Burke's interpretation of metaphors, Teslenko (2005) suggests that "metaphors identify the ethical with the aesthetic, that they can be used to construct a 'corrective literature' which will motivate its audience toward an alternative social orientation" (p. 81). This, for sure, is not a simple objective since people are accustomed to live in accordance with their everyday life which is considerably structured by their habitual way of thinking. Therefore, it is essentially important to break ties with the present way of life. Once people start interrogating and projecting to future with a variety of alternative visions, change will be inevitable since "[u]topian thinking demands the continual exploration and re-exploration of the possible and yet also the unrepresentable" (Cornell, 1999, p. 169). Although Cornell's exposition is based upon utopian thinking as the main focus, it is also relevant to be adapted to feminist utopian thinking because, at its core, feminist ideology strives for deconstructing what has already been constructed before. Therefore, a constant pursuit of new conceptualizations constitutes the core point of feminist utopian tradition, for "[w]ithout utopian thinking, […] feminism is inevitably ensnared in the system of gender identity that devalues the feminine" (Cornell, 1999, p. 169). In other words, "if utopian thought can change the shape and scope of our consciousness, then the unthinkable can be thought and desired" (Sargisson, 2003, p. 59). As a vicious circle, then, it is ineluctable to move back to where all these debates have started – changing scopes and consciousness through visions.

### 1.4. Second Wave Feminism

The first wave of feminism, which was prevalent from the 19th century to the early 20th century, was especially based upon equality in some certain lawful rights for women such as voting, divorcing, and property rights as well as women's possession by their husbands due to their official marriage. After long-lasting and persistent struggles, "[in] 1918, women over the age of 30 were given the vote; and in March 1928, under a conservative government, they finally won it on equal terms with men" (Walters, 2005, p. 85). This instance is only one drop in the ocean especially when women's conditions throughout the previous centuries are taken into consideration since they were excluded

from the very humanely right of possessing their very own properties even if wives were sacked from their husband's home. Furthermore, mothers could acquire the right to lay claim on their children arduously in 1838; however, the bill which provided the right for women had a limitation that kids could only be under the claim of their mothers until they were 7 (Walters, 2005, p. 48). In addition, it was not possible until 1857 that women, too, could get a divorce from their husbands though on specific circumstances only. Before that year, it was only men who could divorce their wives. The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 stated for the first time that it was also possible for women to divorce their husbands – though it was bound to the specific criterion of adultery. However, "[w]hile a wife's adultery was sufficient cause to end a marriage, a woman could divorce her husband only if his adultery had been compounded by another matrimonial offense" (Holmes, 1995, p. 601); in other words, "[a] wife had to prove that the adultery had been aggravated by rape, sodomy, bigamy, incest, bestiality, cruelty or desertion for two years without reasonable cause" (Probert, 1999, p. 33). Following the act in 1857, women's divorce from their husbands which was based on adultery only – without any extra matrimonial offenses – could be practicable with the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1923, which, for sure, was still far from being equal between men and women, for "husbands had been allowed to obtain divorces on the ground of their wives' adultery since the seventeenth century" (Probert, 1999, p. 33). Although the first wave feminist struggles made women acquire equality with men despite on limited grounds, women's condition was still far from being equal because for centuries they were forcibly taught what it is to be a woman and what their expected responsibilities are. Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006) argue about coding women and their responsibilities by the patriarchy as follows:

> *Women were […] required to be modest and to wield only indirect influence, and certainly not engage in public activities. So, when a woman spoke in public, she was, by definition, displaying masculine behaviors. She was even ignoring her biological weaknesses – a smaller brain and a more fragile physique – which she was supposed to protect in order to ensure her reproductive abilities. […] This argument was based on the claim that women and men are, in fact, different and that women have a natural disposition toward maternity and domesticity. (p. 5)*

In other words, if women treated out of the frame the patriarchy addressed for them, they were claimed to be *unwoman*. This is one of the sources where the second wave of feminism sprung; women's place within the society was excessively domesticized and they were responsible for looking after their husbands and children, which was harshly protested against by the second wave activists. Even though women endeavoured for enfranchisement for decades beginning with the first wave, the momentum has decreased due to the First and Second World Wars. However, increasing violence around the globe as well as the rise of the New Left would initiate another attempt, the second wave feminism, from the beginning of the early 1960s.

Student movements in the USA raised consciousness among those who were segregated, thereby triggering various groups of people to stand against certain dominating powers from the beginning of the 1960s until the early 1980s. Women, for sure, were within those groups so as to highlight their very own existence as equal to every individual within the society and their concern was "closely linked to the radical voices of [their] empowerment and differential rights" (Krarløkke & Sørensen, 2006, p. 1). Although the second wave movement was not institutionalized under some certain organizations such as National Organization Women (NOW) and Redstockings among many others, it was already triggered in 1949 in France when Simone de Beauvoir published her outstanding work *The Second Sex*. Following that, it was in 1969 that a young woman, Carol Hanisch (1970), put her stamp on the history of women's liberation movement with her "the personal is political" (p. 76) manifesto. Although she did not choose the title of the article herself, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, the editors of the journal, printed Hanisch's manifesto with this title, which was adopted by millions of people as the motto of their political fight for liberation. The motto has called every woman for action to make their personal problems public so that they could establish an institutionalized gender system, for they believed, as Hanisch (1970) put forth, that "[t]here are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution" (p. 76). Women's response and their activism could be taken as the peak point of activism in the initiation of the second wave feminist movement. As such, people witnessed one of the most major protests by women in the USA in 1968 when radical feminist groups mocked the 1968 Miss America pageant and challenged to the materialisation of women. It "featured a 'freedom trash can' into which bras, girdles, false

eyelashes, and other instruments of female oppression were tossed, and a live sheep was crowned Miss America" (Freeman, 1976, p. 112). The reason why women fiercely attacked to the live broadcast of other women competing with each other on the question of their beauty is that the aesthetic conceptions about women and their outlook disempower the very identity of women, for they were degraded to objects which were excused for their inability of thinking, acting, and decision-making, thereby becoming sex objects or toys for men's pleasure. Put another way, women were angry because they were dehumanised. What women endeavoured to acquire throughout their collective activism was equal pay with men, equal chances of promotion in the workplace with men without any intervention or blocking, equal share in household duties as well as equal responsibility in child-care, equal chances of education, control over their body in terms of sexual fulfilment and reproductive preferences, and the abortion right. Moreover, women's fight in the second wave feminist movement also incorporated a call for action against domestic violence, marital rape, and murder. Female bodies were also politicized, for they were used on advertisements and on TV in the most pornographic way so as to promote products, thereby attracting men to buy them. The second wave feminist movement, therefore, underlines one significant phenomenon, gender inequality, which is described as follows by Lorber (2001):

> *[Gender inequality] is not an individual matter but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies. Gender inequality is built into the organization of marriage and families, work and the economy, politics, religions, the arts and other cultural productions, and the very language we speak. (p. 7)*

This is why the second wave feminists believed that individual experiences should be publicly known; on one hand, harassments which were experienced on personal levels were considered as individual and trivial just because they were not publicly recognized and women experiencing those persecutions thought they were actually alone; on the other hand, making those oppressions recognizable for all was significant in taking a collaborative and collective counter action. Put another way, women's individual attendance in a systematically structured movement was thought to bring solidarity against collective tyranny of patriarchy.

One of the most critical questions of the second wave feminist movement is about the differentiation between sex and gender. While the former is divided into two

categories as male and female, the latter has a variety of categories such as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transsexual, asexual, and so on. Therefore, it has been considerably essential to define gender and sex so as to put forth explicit and strong arguments about the oppressor and the oppressed within the second wave feminist movement. West and Zimmerman (June 1987) define sex as follows:

> *Sex is a determination made through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males. The criteria for classification can be genitalia at birth or chromosomal typing before birth, and they do not necessarily agree with one another. (p. 127)*

As such, sex is classified in accordance with biology since signs of a sex are related to anatomic, hormonal, and physiological properties of a person. It is, in other words, not something acquired; on the contrary, it is given. Gender, the most troublesome part of this differentiation, "is the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category" (West & Zimmerman, June 1987, p. 127). Put another way, gender is socially and culturally constructed, for there are referents which are ascribed to the sex categories as normal and abnormal. On the condition that the sex category and the ascribed normative referents do not meet, someone will probably end up unsexing, in parallel, undoing the gender in question. This could actually be termed as the standardization process of societies, which, in fact, begins with the birth of a baby till the end of his/her life.

> *The members of these two major status categories [men and women] are supposed to be different from each other, and the members of the same category are supposed to have essential similarities. Work and family roles, as well as practically all other aspects of social life are built on these two divisions of people. This gendering produces the gendered social order. (Lorber, 2001, pp. 8 - 9)*

The society enforces people to perform these normative references by ascribing some sort of societal and cultural markers such as clothes, colours, roles, and so on, thereby forcing them to fulfil the ascribed roles of femininity and masculinity. The unwritten and abstract control mechanism, therefore, monitors and disciplines individuals in order for them to be placed in reserved sex categories, which, in the end, will be useful in stabilizing the sustainability of the authority of the dominant group within societies.

Human beings are predestined to be male or female biologically and physiologically. Therefore, they are raised according to the standards of becoming a female or male. However, this does not mean that maleness and femaleness are easily identified through bare observation of people's presence. As West and Zimmerman (June 1987) provide it, "[w]omen can be seen as unfeminine, but that does not make them unfemale" (p. 134). Additionally, it might not be possible to identify a man as masculine; nevertheless, this does not mean that he is not male, either. Walking down the street, it is pretty common to see men wearing earrings, which is an attribution to female gender within some cultures and societies. A man might not have facial hair, or might be physically far from being masculine; how, then, will it be possible to claim that he is not a *he* but a *she*? Hence, gender markers within societies are rather vulnerable and not stabilized for the identification of genders. Lorber (1994) gives an example of her misjudgement about a baby's gender as follows:

> *The child in the stroller was wearing a dark blue T-shirt and dark print pants. As they started to leave the train, the father put a Yankee baseball cap on the child's head. Ah, a boy, I thought. Then I noticed the gleam of tiny earrings in the child's ears, and as they got off, I saw the little flowered sneakers and lace-trimmed socks. Not a boy after all. Gender done. (p. 13)*

This baby instance, thus, depicts it very explicitly that biological sex categories have nothing to do with societal markers, which define gender categories. The dark blue T-shirt, dark print pants and the Yankee baseball cap call for people's attention to a baby boy, whereas the earrings, flowered sneakers and lace-trimmed socks prepare our perceptions for a baby girl. Therefore, combining both dresses and colours in one body becomes more and more difficult for individuals since it hardens the identification of gender according to standardized markers. Barbara J. Risman (February 2009) enquires about these standardized markers and points out how these markers are in fact useless in the identification attempts of sex categories by inquiring "[i]f young women strategically adopt masculine or feminine behaviours …, is this really doing gender, or is it destabilitizing the taken for-granted personae that were in the past assumed essentially to match sex category" (p.82)? This is why transvestites and transsexuals form their gender statuses by *acting like* a woman or a man in accordance with the markers attributed to each gender category. The acting like process here is crucially important, for the attitudes

of men, women, transvestites and transsexuals are all in harmony with the society's impositions. Men are taught to be men, women are taught to be women; thus, transvestites and transsexuals learn to be a man or a woman by imitating their speech, dresses, gestures, mimics, and so on. As Simone de Beauvoir (1956) also puts it clearly as follows, gender is becoming whereas sex is being:

> *One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other. (p. 273)*

Enlarging the scope from the perspective of a woman to a more generalized concept, it is possible to put forward that the same issue is also valid for men due to the fact that one is not born, but rather becomes, a man. As Simone de Beauvoir also suggests it for the female body, men, too, *become* men once they fulfil the institutionalized norms and referents of their society through interaction with other individuals. They learn how to become *normal* according to the norms which are ascribed to their genitalia, thereby conforming to their gendered social order.

Second wave feminist movement brought about various types of feminism which are categorized under three different groups by Lorber (2001) as "*gender reform feminisms*, *gender resistance feminisms*, *and gender rebellion feminisms*" (p. 9). Residing under the umbrella term feminism, each category incorporates different schools of feminism. Gender reform feminisms, which might roughly be classified as Marxist/Socialist, post-colonial, and liberal, "fight to equalize the status of women and men within the existing structure of the gendered social order" (Lorber, 2001, p. 9) whereas gender resistance feminism schools, which are psychoanalytic, lesbian, and radical, strive for the elimination of "oppression and exploitation of women in the gendered social order, particularly in sexuality, violence, and cultural representations" (Lorber, 2001, p. 9). As a matter of fact, although it is highly difficult to praise one category over the other, gender rebellion feminisms, which are postmodern, social construction, multicultural, and queer theory, should be given privilege since they enquire the system itself. As Lorber (2001) posits it, "*gender rebellion feminisms* challenge the

very structure of the gendered social order by questioning its basis – the division of people into two genders" (pp. 9 – 10). Put it differently, even though all schools of feminism are grounded upon clear, rational and significant reasons, gender rebellion stands out among them since they endeavour to go back to the roots of the very problem and fight against the politics of gendering. Their main concern is not to eliminate biological sexes, or feminizing/masculinizing a body; on the contrary, their utmost goal is to highlight the fluidity of genders and gender roles, thereby smashing the borders among all gender categories, and eventually refute a gendered order. "By questioning dualities of male and female, heterosexual and homosexual, masculine and feminine, man and woman, gender rebellion feminisms undermine the legitimacy of favouring one group over its opposite" (Lorber, 2001, p. 11). In order to analyse and propose solutions to gendered orders and overpowering of the female, however, this dissertation employs an eclectic feminist approach constituted by the various second wave feminisms, for each novel studied is inclusive of a variety of problems and obstacles faced by the female under different circumstances with different reasons despite the fact that each novelist has different backgrounds from different countries and periods.

# CHAPTER TWO

# BEGUM ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN AND HER SHORT STORY *SULTANA'S DREAM*

### 2.1. Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and Her Literary Career

A Bengali writer, educationist and a strong social activist, Rokeya Hossain has been a considerably important figure throughout the feminist walk of women in India and in various Muslim countries. Although she is best known for her novels, Hossain was productive for "more than 30 years, in both Bengali and English, and in genres ranging from poetry, polemical essays, fiction, allegorical narratives to social satire, burlesque, letters and journalistic vignettes" (Quayum, 2013, p. 1). An in-depth look at her works, especially her novels and essays, points out how vengeful she is at her family and the society she lived in, for she – and all other women in the same society of course – had to suffer because of the presumably unbeatable patriarchy. As is also suggested by Quayum (2013), Hossain "is perhaps writing back to her parents, responding to their icy treatment with fire and anger – feelings that perhaps ate into her heart for every moment of her life" (p. xxi). Though Hossain came from a Muslim aristocratic family, her life was not very different from the other women of the time who came from poorer families. The effect of Islam on her family was principally responsible for her degradation among family members and within society, for she was forced to obey the purdah practice only when she was five. The purdah practice in India could be described as segregation of the female from the rest of the society no matter if they are little children, young women, single or married. Jahan (1988) describes the practice as follows:

*For Muslims, the relaxation of purdah rules – which were enjoyed by the Quran and sanctioned by hadith (religious traditions based on the sayings of the Prophet) was a very grave issue. The original instructions, proclaimed in Surah 24 of the Quran, concerned modesty of behaviour. A woman was to lower her gaze, to avoid displaying her beauty except to men in permitted categories (husband, father-in-law, brother, sons, stepsons, uncles, children, slaves) to draw a veil or shawl over her head and bosom and avoid attracting attention (for example, by not wearing conspicuous jewellery). Later, interpretations and elaborations were directed more toward restricting women's mobility and sexual self-determination. (p. 45)*

As Hossain (1931, as cited in Quayum, 2013e) puts it in her work *The Zenana Women*, upper class women in India were even more secluded because of the purdah practice as this system does not only "segregate them from the men but also from the women. Unmarried girls are not allowed to walk into the presence of any women except for close relatives and maids" (p. 80). Even when girls in aristocrat families are together with other women, they are thrusted to wear burkas. Because of these cultural and religious impositions on women, it has always been a burdening and painful experience for women to underscore their very existence in their societies. They have not only been secluded from other people but also from the very natural right of education, which, in the end, has gradually prepared their downfall and degradation. Having suffered from the impositions of the purdah practice, Hossain (1927, as cited in Quayum, 2013a) describes the segregation experience during a lecture as follows:

*If it [the purdah system] were painful, the women would cry out in agony using impassioned language. The purdah practice can be compared more accurately with the deadly Carbonic acid gas. Because it kills without any pain, people get no opportunity to take precaution against it. Likewise, women in purdah are dying bit by bit in silence from this seclusion "gas," without experiencing any pain. (p. 130)*

Apparently, this is one of the strongest methods for women's closure into their homes by the inherent patriarchy in India. Excluded from education, women are not even aware of their second-hand lives, burdened with loads of injustice and inequality. Their metaphorical sleeping prevents them from realizing their very own obstacles, handcuffs, objectification, and invisibility; in short, realizing what it is to live as a woman. It is also

highly ironical that women could only wake up from their sleep of ignorance by way of education; however, the purdah culture as well as Islamic suggestions prevent any sort of educative interventions so as to raise their consciousness. In other words, women in India are imprisoned behind the bars of patriarchy, sustained and empowered by religious attributions, which gives them no chance for waking up from their unending, systematically supported hibernation.

Hossain's works might be classified as revengeful and also as inclusive of personal anger due to her family and the society she lived in since it is acknowledged that although she came from an aristocrat family, "the Muslim aristocrats were extremely conservative and tradition-bound […], enforcing the strictest form of purdah on their women" (Quayum, 2013, p. xvi). Her war against traditions, patriarchy, and some certain religious teachings, however, is not only because of the commonly practiced purdah but also due to those mullahs who served for the misinterpretation of Islam so that the sustainability of the overwhelming system is provided. In parallel with that, Hossain was left helpless within the borders of the language spoken in her family. Leaving Bengali aside, her elite family picked Persian, Arabic and Urdu as mediums of communication since Bengali was condemned due to its obnoxiousness for Islam by such families as hers who migrated from Iran. Therefore, women could not benefit from the power of language; they could neither read to be awakened, nor could they scream their sufferings loudly. Hossain (1927, as cited in Quayum, 2013a) courageously attacks on such misinterpretations of Islam and vividly sketches the shortcomings of them as follows:

> *Those who are familiar with the history will know that the Arabs used to bury their daughters alive during the barbaric jahiliyah period. Although Islam has successfully prevented the physical killing of baby girls, yet Muslims have been glibly and frantically wrecking the mind, intellect and judgement of their daughters till the present day. Many consider it as a mark of honour to keep their daughters ignorant and deprive them of knowledge and understanding of the world by cooping them up within the four walls of the house. (p. 128)*

In fact, Hossain's notions here are considerably autobiographical since she, too, was only another woman whose educational rights were deprived by her father and was enslaved in her familial language, Urdu. As is proposed by Quayum (2013), Hossain's father Abu

Ali Saber "was orthodox when it came to the education of his three daughters by his first wife […]; but thankfully, he was more open-minded when it came to his sons' education" (p. xix). Especially these personal experiences were effective in Hossain's fight against the male hegemony. She succeeded in learning English, one of the strongest languages to declare war on gender issues and to be heard globally due to the colonialist and capitalist history of the world, thanks to his brother who held lessons with her privately only after everyone in the house was in their bed, for "being a girl, learning English was forbidden to Hossain, as it would taint her Muslim identity and her faith" (Quayum, 2013, p. xx). Obviously, the hegemony of religion on women is overwhelming since not everything is equally forbidden to all subjects of the God; put another way, if something is forbidden to men, it is already prohibited to women. However, if something is forbidden to women, it might be free for men. In other words, although everyone is considered to be equal in the eye of the God, even religious attributions are constructed in accordance with one's gender. After all, "it was a social norm at the time to look down upon a girl child and see her as a burden, sometimes even as a curse, upon the family" (Quayum, 2013, p. xxi). This is one other thing Hossain fought against; she did her best to raise consciousness among women in order for them to become aware of all the hypocrite constructions of their societies and create collective consciousness so as to defeat the overwhelming ideology together.

Believing that women's collective movement of her dreams is only possible through achieving education, Hossain put all her efforts to establish Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School in Calcutta in 1911. Although she went through various harsh criticisms and threats, she never gave up and worked more and more so as to realize her dream of gender equality in her community. Having no teaching and management experience due to her lack of formal education, Hossain established the school with eight students only (see Jahan and Hossain); however, after around twenty years, the school turned out to be a great success under such difficult circumstances. Jahan (1988) sketches the portrait of this success as follows:

> *By 1930 the school had become a high school [it started as a primary school in 1911], including all ten grades. The curriculum included physical education, handicrafts, sewing, cooking, nursing, home economics, and gardening, in addition to regular courses such as Bangla, English, Urdu,*

*Persian, and Arabic. She laid special emphasis on vocational training for*
*girls which would enable them to become assets rather than liabilities to*
*their families' finances. (p. 42)*

Apart from providing regular curriculum of the state, the school has made it possible for women to survive all alone thanks to its vocational programs. It is, after all, significantly important to have economic independence in order to assert one's individuality and identity. Otherwise, it would not be easy for women to survive on their way of disenfranchisement. The Sakhawat Memorial Girl's School was, for sure, a great step for raising consciousness among women; nevertheless, it was only possible for the upper and middle-class women to reach this opportunity. Therefore, in 1916 Hossain decided to establish Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam, which could be translated as Muslim Women's Association, so that she could also help the underprivileged women of the poorer class in which the prevalence of women's disempowerment and illiteracy rates were higher. This was an unavoidable attempt since Hossain thought that it was considerably important for every single woman to understand what she writes and why she writes. Under this association, Hossain "offered financial assistance to poor widows, rescued and sheltered battered wives, helped poor families to marry their daughters, and above all helped poor women to achieve literacy" (Jahan, 1988, p. 42). Although her assistance to poor families for marrying their daughters may seem contradicting to the nature of women's war against dependence on male hegemony, it was indeed essential so as to decrease the number of children brides at that time, for marrying children to men, most of who were much older than those little children, was regarded as a solution to the familial poverty since the population within the family would decrease. Furthermore, it was highly common for fathers to sell their daughters to richer men in order to make their families survive.

The societal, traditional, cultural and religious impositions, therefore, shape Hossain's artistic methods in her writings. She is as simple and uncomplicated as possible so that every single woman reading her works could understand her points and be awakened. "She uses familiar diction, simple sentences and a deliberately unadorned prose" (Quayum, 2013, p. 4). Her writings, therefore, are not mainly concerned with giving pleasure which is one function of literature. This, however, does not mean that Hossain does not include humour in her works. It is highly possible to laugh at a variety of incidents and representations in her works. Nonetheless, her humour is bitter, "often

satirical, contemptuous and scornful" (Quayum, 2013, p. 4), for "Rokeya's humour is not meant for comic relief or tender amusement but rather for a profound moral purpose" (Quayum, 2013, p. 5). As a matter of fact, Hossain counted on the "ethical function of literature; that literature should arouse sympathy for the oppressed and the exploited in society and heighten the consciousness of readers to the reality of human condition" (Quayum, 2013, p. 2). Thus, she used literature as a mirror to show people themselves so as to trigger the flame of reform within the society she lived in as a result of the expected awakening, reasoning and self-criticism as well as interrogation of various normative references since her objective is "to appeal to the reader's intellect and influence his/her judgement with a compelling train of thought" (Quayum, 2013, p. 4).

## 2.2. Subversion of Central Norms in *Sultana's Dream*

Hossain's *Sultana's Dream*, which was first written in English and then translated into Bengali with the purpose of reaching a larger audience constituted by women who actually could not read and write in English owing to educational reasons, was first published in *The Indian Lady's Magazine* in 1905, a period when the number of women writers was considerably scarce. The effect of the story was a sudden astonishment among people since it was a direct and fierce attack on the indigenous Muslim Indian patriarchy. The publication phase of *Sultana's Dream* is considerably interesting since it was produced during an overwhelming period by a Bengali woman writer who was fed up with the harsh impositions of a Muslim society on women as well as the passivity and reluctance of the latter in challenging against those impositions. While Hossain's husband, Khan Bahadur Sakhawat Hossain, was away for an official tour, she "was totally alone in the house and wrote something to pass [her] time" (Mamun, 2015, p. 236). What makes this feminist utopian fantasy even more interesting is that her husband "read the whole piece [of *Sultana's Dream*] in one go while standing and exclaimed: 'A Terrible Revenge'" (Mamun, 2015, p. 236). For sure, it was especially Muslim Indian women who are avenged in *Sultana's Dream* since fictional men in this utopian fantasy reflect readers the social reality of women in real life. Yasmin Hossain (May 1992) argues about the reason of Hossain's attack as follows:

*In Sultana's Dream, a satirical fantasy of role reversal, Rokeya exposed the depressed condition of women and pictured an ideal world where they were able, after suitable education, to take responsibility for their own lives. In this way she ridiculed the situation in the Muslim community as she saw it, where one half of the population kept the other out of sight in conditions of purdah and powerlessness. (p. 1)*

Therefore, borrowing Sargent's term of distorting mirror, Hossain's work stands to readers as one of those mirrors and breaks the illusion of normative references besides providing alternative perspectives to approach gender roles and women's quest for emancipation. Through the alternative perspectives she presents in her utopian fantasy, Hossain aims to convince readers, especially women, that "the very construction of this world makes it clear that the one we live in is a construction as well, with man-made rules about how men and women should live" (Ray, 2005, pp. 436 - 437). Thus, Hossain constructs another world in *Sultana's Dream*, shifting and subverting nearly all gender roles, attacking to false religious calls, to such cultural practices as purdah and abarodh[2], which, in the end, creates a future possibility of an equal country where women and men live under fairer terms.

The novella begins with a proper attribution to utopian conventions so as to note that although the story is *not-yet-real*, it might be so at one point in time. That the story is actually a dream is a direct reference to the utopian tradition, pointing out readers that alternatives are possible. Sultana, the main character of the novella, finds herself in the middle of a series of events without realizing when and how she came to Ladyland which is actually an imaginary country where women rule over the country and men are secluded from the rest of the society. Readers are acknowledged that Ladyland is but one non-existent society when Sultana says "I am not sure whether I dozed off or not. But, as far as I remember, I was wide awake" (Hossain, 2005, p. 3). Her unclear introduction to the story might be counted as natural for utopian conventions since it is essential to propose a non-existent country, city, or any convenient place in such works. Moreover, Sultana does not remember how she met Sister Sara, whom she mistakes as one of her friends

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[2] The extreme form of purdah is abarodh. Women are strictly prohibited from moving away from their private areas; usually, this means they cannot leave their residence or domestic space. The practice of abarodh is intended to strictly segregate and prohibit women from entering the public sphere (Basu, 2010, p. 49).

(Hossain, 2005, p. 3). Drawing a portrait of a non-existent society for readers is significantly important for utopian writers so as to demonstrate how people in those books live comfortably without the problems of real life. By doing so, Hossain, too, forces her readers to think critically and look for some certain ways to build up the society they have just read. Put another way, she "marshaled her thoughts and arguments in order to question the existing order of things, to raise doubts about seemingly accepted facts, and to motivate people to take the necessary actions to change customs she considered evil and unjust" (Jahan, 1988, p. 3). Apart from avenging a long history, thus, Hossain "had one politics – *nari jagaran* (awakening of women)" (Shamsunnahar, 1996, as cited in Ray, 2005, p. 448). Hence, utopian tradition was the best genre for Hossain to trigger people for dreaming as is done by Sultana.

The most important reason why Hossain's *Sultana's Dream* is taken as one of the most threatening and terrifying works of the time for Bengali nation is that it includes a complete role reversal between women and men. As is explained before, role reversals, which include baby-sitting, cooking, household chores, as well as governing the country, doing scientific research, working outside the house, and so on, are implemented within the story so that people could acknowledge the notion that none of these social roles should actually be ascribed to specific genders just because people are biologically defined as male or female. In other words, although it is not correct to admit that there are only two genders as male or female in the twenty-first century, erasure of these two would probably result in the negation of fixed roles for the two sexes which are in fact different only due to biological reasons. Butler (2007) argues this notion as follows:

> *When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as female one. (p. 9)*

Considering Butler's idea, it is, therefore, possible to claim that Beauvoir's (1956) assertion, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (p. 273), is not only pertinent to women since the pronoun 'one' may refer to both men and women. Moreover, gender is not fixed but performative. Put another way, if gender is considered as a phenomenon which is out of the borders of any of the sexes, gender roles will also be neutral, not bound to one specific gender, for gender roles consist of all cultural and historical accumulations.

Considering this, it is also possible to claim that gender is not bound to sex; however, it is constructed in convenience with culture itself. Hence, Hossain's ambition is to undermine the strict formulations and construction of gender roles especially within the Bengali Muslim world so that the problem of being and becoming a woman will not restrict one's life and freedom because of the historically accumulated attributions to women's biological inheritance. She aims to challenge and attack the Bengali culture actually. She "was aware that in order to establish her case, she would have to refute the counterarguments of the traditionalists and to make women themselves aware of the need for change" (Jahan, 1988, p. 47). She finds the cure in presenting women a better world and reversing patriarchy into matriarchy, thereby catching both men's and women's consciousness by way of counterattacking the inherent customs and traditions.

At the very beginning of the novella, Sultana vacillates between going out or not since she is a victim of the purdah system and that her presence to men is forbidden. She decides to take a walk with Sister Sara only when she assumes that the servants outside are asleep. By doing so, Hossain reminds her female readers of their present circumstances and conditions in the most realistic way because it is more convenient and effective to compare and contrast their social reality and the atmosphere in the novella. Because it is not convenient for Bengali women to be vividly present among men, Sultana "was feeling very shy, thinking [she] was walking in the street in broad daylight" (Hossain, 2005, p. 3). Presenting Sultana's psychological state to readers, Hossain manifests how the zenana life contributes to the deterioration of women within the society. Yasmin Hossain (May 1992) argues about the effects of zenana and puts forward that the "combination of seclusion and ignorance resulted in mental stagnation. Thus, the women of Muslim zenana suffered from mental and spiritual lethargy, lack of confidence, and were without a strong sense of identity or self-worth." (p. 5). Therefore, it is understandable why Sultana feels considerably unsecure when she walks around the streets of Ladyland. She is not educated because of seclusion; thus, she is not self-confident, which, in the end, makes her feel like she is doing something terrible or something divinely forbidden. This is why she feels like she ought not to be visible around especially during daylight. Thus, she confesses with her trembling fingers that "as being a purdahnishin woman [she is] not accustomed to walking about unveiled" (Hossain, 2005, p. 4). She has been culturally taught not to be visible within the society, not to leave

her purdah and not to be negligent about her daily duties. She has been acknowledged that she has no individual identity; in other words, she is made to believe that she is both socially and culturally worthless.

As such is the case, it is possible to put forth Butler's (2007) Foucauldian argument that juridical and political powers are completely functional in constructing societies since people are presented with some certain sets of values and norms on which they are expected to agree. Anyone who is out of the framework of those rules and normative references are excluded in the margins and otherized.

> *Foucault points out that juridical systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent. Juridical notions of power appear to regulate political life in purely negative terms – that is, through limitation, prohibition, regulation, control, and even "protection" of individuals related to that political structure through the contingent and retractable operation of choice. But the subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures. (Butler, 2007, pp. 2 - 3)*

The juridical and political power in *Sultana's Dream* could simply be named as religion, for gender roles and women's position are best suited by way of religious attributions. Women are made to believe that they need to preserve themselves to be protected from and to protect the rest of the society. Therefore, the issue of protection of individuals comes true with the help of the purdah system. Rajan (2006) clearly states how the purdah and hijab practices are rooted to religion and how the prevalent objectification of Muslim women is sustained as follows:

> *The practice of purdah is grounded in the various cultural interpretations of two sections of the Islamic religious text, the Koran, Surahs 24 and 33. Surah 24 requires women to display modesty, and Surah 33 (verse 53) relates a spiritual event in 627 A.D. concerning the "descent" of the hijab, literally a curtain, enacted by the Prophet. The description of this event serves specifically to mark a man's privacy, in this context, regarding his nuptial chambers, and generally to enlighten the Muslim community's view concerning spatial privacy. Historic interpretations of those verses produced symbolic slippages between the private space of the Muslim male,*

*the Muslim woman's body as a site of reproduction for the Muslim community, and the private social space of the Muslim home. (p. 155)*

Accordingly, women are limited, prohibited, controlled and their lives are regulated in accordance with the necessity of the inherent system which requires strict submission to the divine call for protecting the privacy of men by way of the imprisonment of women behind veils, hijabs, and so on. Put another way, suitable women are produced for the sustainability of the productive juridical and political power. Hossain (1903, as cited in Ray, 2005) clarifies her point about the religious assertions on women in her essay *The Degradation of Women* which was first published in 1903 and was highly detested by the mullahs of the time, thereby printed again with a slight modification in the title as well as some exclusions of paragraphs as follows:

> *Whenever a woman has tried to raise her head, she has been brought down to her knees on the grounds of either religious impiety or scriptural taboo. [...] What we could not accept as correct, we had to concede later in the belief that it had the authority of a religious dictum… Men have always propagated such religious texts as edicts of God to keep us women in the dark. [...] Restrictions imposed by religion are responsible for tightening the chains of our slavery. Men are ruling over women under the pretext of laws prescribed by religion. (p. 437)*

As such, women feel like they sin against the word of God when they are not submissive to religious calls by mullahs. This is exactly why Sultana asserts that "it is not safe for us [women] to come out of zenana, as we are naturally weak" (Hossain, 2005, p. 5) on hearing that men in Ladyland are enclosed within mardanas for the good of the society. Because women like Sultana are made to believe that it is good for the rest of the society when women are closed into zenana, which is also the wish of God, which, in the end, would be disgraceful if women were not in complete obedience. All these rules and necessities, however, are systematically structured regulations so that the overwhelming patriarchal system could sustain itself. Hossain (1903, as cited in Ray, 2005) argues about the seemingly unbreakable hegemony of these constructions in the same essay as follows:

> *One can clearly understand that the scriptures are nothing but a set of regulating systems prescribed by men. We hear that prescriptions were laid*

*down by saints. If a woman could have become a saint, perhaps she would*
*have prescribed opposite regulations. (p. 437)*

Considering Hossain's claims, it is evident that Ladyland, the utopian city, is completely inclusive of the opposite regulations which are made by the women saints, for in Ladyland men are kept indoors so as to sustain the peace among people. Moreover, men are responsible for looking after children, cooking, cleaning, as well as all other household chores besides keeping themselves out of the presence of women since "they should not do anything, […] they are fit for nothing" (Hossain, 2005, p. 6), the opposite of which is actually socially real in Hossain's time in India. By subverting these gender roles, Hossain does not only re-interpret roles of women and men but also presents that "these negotiations of the maternal challenge conservative patriarchal ideologies that gauge women's social merit by her fulfilment of the maternal archetype" (Rajan, 2006, p. 176). The plot, therefore, is considerably significant in underlining the notion that roles cannot and should not be adhered in accordance with one's gender. In other words, it cannot be understandable and convincing that women should be domestic just because they have come with a huge load of burden on their shoulders thanks to cultural, religious, and historical conglomerations. Although Jahan (1988) argues that "it is as if the omnipotent author is punishing men in an ideal world, according to the laws of poetic justice, for their criminal oppression of women in the real world" (p. 4), his deduction is surely not the only reason why Hossain presents her readers a world upside down. What Hossain underscores with her witty novella is that social reform is unavoidable, realizable and that it should be realized as quickly as possible. In other words, Hossain "makes men the subject of their own regulations and allows women to exercise the juridical and political power" (Hasanat, 2013, p. 117) with Ladyland so that the Muslim patriarchy could be explicitly represented to readers and redefined by them.

Because the purdah system is one of the biggest problems for women in India, Hossain especially attacks to it in her novella and relates it to every single threat to women. In order to severely criticise the system, Hossain finds it highly useful to reverberate the social reality of women to her readers. When Sultana and Sister Sara keep walking around the streets of Ladyland, Sultana, believing that it is not safe for women to be out of the zenana because of their physical weakness, is eager to know why men are

closed into mardanas and how women could achieve it since they are physically weaker than men. The dialogue between them is full of metaphors with severe criticism:

> *'Yes, it is not safe so long as there are men about the streets, nor is it so when a wild animal enters a marketplace.'*
>
> *[...]*
>
> *'Suppose, some lunatics escape from the asylum and begin to do all sorts of mischief to men, horses and other creatures; in that case what will your countrymen do?'*
>
> *'They will try to capture them and put them back into their asylum.'*
>
> *'Thank you! And you do not think it wise to keep sane people inside an asylum and let loose the insane?'*
>
> *'Of course not!' said I laughingly. (Hossain, 2005, p. 5)*

Probably, this is the first time Sultana has encountered with the notion that women are kept in zenanas for false protection. Now that men are considered as threats for social order, then why are women imprisoned? The question is highly ironic and difficult to answer. However, with Sister Sara's clarification, readers are directed to the issue of construction again, for women have been persuaded that it is not secure outside their homes and they need to be protected against the ills and mischiefs within their societies. The diction Hossain employs, moreover, is considerably harsh and irritating for most readers since men are equal to wild beasts and lunatics escaping from asylum. Nevertheless, this harsh language is essential for demonstrating how men, the creators of the abusive patriarchal system, are also the destroyers of the societal order. As is also underscored by Sister Sara, "[m]en, who do or at least are capable of doing no end of mischief, are let loose and the innocent women shut up in the zenana" (Hossain, 2005, p. 5)!

The significance of language is not limited to Hossain's choice of words. She also criticizes the efficiency of language on people's minds and attitudes. When Sister Sara asks Sultana how they admitted to be closed in zenanas, she bitterly and unavoidably explains as follows: "We have no hand or voice in the management of our social affairs. In India, man is lord and master. He has taken to himself all powers and privileges and shut up the women in zenana" (Hossain, 2005, p. 5). Men's being lord and master as well

as their exertion of power over women is not only owing to their presumably physical strength but also because of the power of language over societies, which is also political again. According to *Samsad Bengali-English Dictionary* (Biswas, 2000), the word *sbāmī* corresponds to "a husband, a master, a lord, an employer, an overlord, a ruler, an owner, a proprietor, a title of saints or great ascetics" (p. 1040). The words *sbāmiji* and *sbāmitba* which are two specific nouns derived from *sbāmī*, on the other hand, are defined in the same dictionary as "ownership, proprietorship, authority, rule" (p. 1040). Therefore, it would not be unjust to claim that Bengali language is also structured in the best way to empower men over women, leaving women powerless against men in their domestic world. The meanings of these words have been so much internalized by everyone that it seems impossible to be aware of the fact that language is another construction and that it can be changed or revised. Hossain (2013d) exemplifies the issue as follows:

> *Some women may object to the use of the word "slave". But let me ask, "What does the word 'husband' mean"? If one who gives charity is called a "giver," the person who receives it must be described as a "receiver"; likewise, if we describe one as "husband, lord, master," what else can we call the other but "slave"? (p. 22)*

The so-called natural meanings of words help men get stronger and stronger against women, thereby sustaining the patriarchal structure and making it more and more concrete. Yasmin Hossain (May 1992) argues about the cultural reflections of language as follows:

> *[M]an's unfettered and uncontested swamitta over the body, mind and intellect of women is the most significant manifestation of his authority, completing the image of male supremacy, for on accepting a swami, women automatically relegate themselves to the status of dasi or slave. (p. 2)*

Objectification of women is provided by one of the most essential tools of a nation; the daily language everyone uses turns out to be one of the most dangerous and invisible weapons for one part of the society whereas the other half of it benefits from all the advantages of it. The notion of being an object or a material to a husband is reinforced through the word *sbāmihīnā* which is simply defined as "ownerless, masterless, [and] (of a woman) who has lost her husband, widowed" (Biswas, 2000, p. 1040).

Language, therefore, stands as another ideological battleground for women since it infuses into minds and brings about a stronger, stricter and more concrete patriarchal society by combining with the indigenous culture. Kristeva posits that the speaking subject goes through four stages: the real stage, the mirror stage, the symbolic order and the semiotic activity. She bases her arguments on Lacan who argues that babies go through the real stage, the mirror stage and the symbolic order respectively. Kristeva (1980) defines the process of articulation and these stages as follows:

> *The semiotic activity, which introduces wandering or fuzziness into language and, a fortiori, into poetic language is, from a synchronic point of view, a mark of the workings of drives (appropriation/rejection, orality/anality, love/hate, life/death) and, from a diachronic point of view, stems from the archaisms of the semiotic body. Before recognizing itself as identical in a mirror and, consequently, as signifying, this body is dependent vis-à-vis the mother. At the same time, instinctual and maternal, semiotic processes prepare the future speaker for entrance into meaning and signification (the symbolic). But the symbolic (i.e., language as nomination, sign, and syntax) constitutes itself only by breaking with this anteriority, which is retrieved as "signifier", "primary processes," displacement and condensation, metaphor and metonymy, rhetorical figures – but which always remains subordinate – subjacent to the principal function of naming-predicating. (p. 137).*

According to Kristeva, therefore, the real stage is when a new-born baby perceives himself/herself as one body with his/her mother whereas in the mirror stage the baby breaks the ties with the mother and destroys the idea of wholeness. After breaking the image of a whole body with the mother, the baby is exposed both to the symbolic order and to what Kristeva terms as the semiotic activity. Moreover, the symbolic order "is inescapable unless one remains in psychotic speechlessness, but it tramples down the free play of each infantile body and of every adult shaped/misshaped through the entry into culture" (Jones, 1984, p. 58). In the latter, the speaking subject is driven by intuitions; however, in the symbolic order, the baby feels the necessity to withdraw from the mother and to move towards the father since he is the picture of the rule-maker, the potent figure, and the infallible patriarchy itself. Kristeva's notions over the symbolic order and its overwhelming ideological power is discussed by Jones (1984) as follows:

*The Symbolic order is a man's world: it dominates the primary pleasures of the body and the senses, suppresses non-reproductive sexuality and any physical and psychic expenditure not aimed at profit and accumulation. Kristeva, that is, identifies the Symbolic with patriarchy, understood as the totality of culture. (p. 58)*

Therefore, according to Kristeva, it is best to move back to the real stage, which is the pre-language period, and forget about all man-made impositions of language, for language and grammar as well as discourses must be abandoned since they shape all the reality besides conveying and communicating these facts as is acknowledged in the meanings of the Bengali words *sbāmī*, *sbāmiji*, *sbāmitba*, *sbāmihīnā*. In other words, "the semiotic aspect is repressed not only by society but also by the patriarchal aspect of language that Kristeva calls the symbolic" (Sadehi, 2012, p. 1491) since "in Kristevan schemes, the social is always oppressive." (Jones, 1984, p. 58). Considering Kristeva's notions over language, thus, it is possible to claim that years and years before Kristeva, Hossain emphasizes how influential language is on a nation's way of life. Underscoring that language is also a construction, Hossain shows her readers that although women are victims of male supremacy, they do not attempt to break the illusions of construction within their society.

As is stated before, Hossain's Ladyland is not only for avenging women's rights but also for mirroring men as they are and presenting women how they could otherwise live. In Ladyland, science is significantly improved and education of women is highly efficient in the development of science. Moreover, all business, no matter political or commercial, is committed by women thanks to the education they get. In other words, as is also stated by Bagchi (2012), "Ladyland embodies the triumph of the virtuous, enquiring, scientific, enlightened, and welfare-oriented spirit in women. And its heroines are women educators" (p. 172). People in Ladyland are "not subject to any kind of epidemic disease, nor [do] they suffer from mosquito bites as [Sultana's people] do. […] In Ladyland no one died in youth except by rare accident" (Hossain, 2005, p. 7). All these improvements in lifestyles are, for sure, based on technological and scientific improvements as well as the adjustment of nature for the good of the people living in Ladyland. Not surprisingly, the advancements and technological inventions in Ladyland

are completely out of the framework of Sultana's own circumstances which are described by Jahan (1988) as follows:

> *The Indian context is very clear. Ladyland has many amenities that Rokeya's [Sultana's] India lacked. We have only to think of the India of horse-drawn carriages, gaslights, smelly, smoke-filled kitchens, dusty streets, natural disasters, famines and epidemics, cockroaches and mosquitos – all the big problems and petty nuisances of Indian everyday life – to appreciate the Utopian element and the trust the author has in the power of science and technology to solve these problems. (p. 4)*

When Sultana steps into Sister Sara's kitchen, sterilized from the gaze of men, she cannot keep her excitement and defines the kitchen and the surroundings as follows:

> *The kitchen was situated in a beautiful vegetable garden. Every creeper, every tomato plant was itself an ornament. I found no smoke, nor any chimney either in the kitchen – it was clean and bright; the windows were decorated with flower gardens. There was no sign of coal or fire. (Hossain, 2005, p. 7)*

It is easy to hear Hossain's voice, emphasizing the importance of women's education as well as its effect on the improvement of a nation. Such a technologically well-equipped kitchen where it is considerably easy to cook thanks to concentrated sunlight and heat, which are the energy sources transferred through a pipe, beside such a beautiful garden breeding lots of fresh and tasty fruits and vegetables thanks to the women in Ladyland who make "nature yield as much as she can" (Hossain, 2005, p. 12) are beyond Sultana's social reality. "Atomic bombs that generate tremendous heat are yet to be invented (in 1945) but the women of Ladyland already use a different method to direct concentrated heat on their enemies" (Roye, 2009, p. 142). The inventions, however, are not limited to these magnificent scientific discoveries. Sister Sara puts forth all the technological advances and discoveries made by women in Ladyland one by one: "Our fields are tilled by means of electricity, which supplies motive power for other hard work as well, and we employ it for our aerial conveyances too. We have no rail road nor any paved streets here" (Hossain, 2005, p. 12). Apparently, education helps people in Ladyland to get the most of science and nature so that they can use their own time and energy on more essential activities. Put another way, human labour has been reduced to the lowliest level so that

Ladylanders could abuse all their teachings and nature in the best way. Roye (2009) factually presents the history of flying people as follows:

> *Not very long ago (in 1903), the Wright brothers had succeeded in remaining air-borne for a considerable length of time to prove that the dream of human flight could materialise with further scientific and technological efforts; in Ladyland, however, the technique has already been perfected in the form of 'air-cars' so much so that the inhabitants no longer need road and railways.*
> *(p. 142)*

As is learned from Sister Sara's presentation of life in Ladyland, it is already impossible to witness any railway or street accidents. Furthermore, whenever Ladylanders need rainwater, they make use of water balloons attached to pipes and use as much water as they need (Hossain, 2005, p. 12). As a matter of fact, "[t]he first artificial satellite to be sent into space … is still decades away and yet, women scientists of this dreamland have sent a 'water-balloon' into the atmosphere to trap rainwater" (Roye, 2009, p. 142). Also, "when the heat becomes unbearable, [they] sprinkle the ground with plentiful showers drawn from the artificial fountains. And in cold weather, [they] keep [their] room warm with sun-heat" (Hossain, 2005, p. 12). The significance of these discoveries and the success in the use of nature are due to the absence of men's participation in these scientific improvements as well as women's high attendance in education. As is also expressed by the Queen of Ladyland, "[they] dive deep into the ocean of knowledge and try to find out the precious gems, which nature has kept in store for [them]. [They] enjoy nature's gifts as much as [they] can" (Hossain, 2005, p. 14). In other words, women could evaluate their circumstances and they could specify their necessities. By doing so, they could tame the nature and use her in the best way with the help of science and education contrary to men who "dawdle away their time in smoking" (Hossain, 2005, pp. 6 - 7) and "talk much about their work, but do little" (Hossain, 2005, p. 7). By comparing and contrasting what men do in real life and what women in Ladyland could do after their release from their zenana, Hossain also refutes the Seventeenth Century logic which suggested women's forceful disintegration from science since scientists then believed that "the 'natural' character of women […] was irrational, emotional, spiritual, and lacking intellectual rigor" (Sheffield, 2004, p. 3); therefore, isolation of women from the new science of the century was essential so that their new science would not be undermined. Hossain, thus, attacks on

such pre-fixed minds locating women nowhere but home, limiting their very own right to participate in all productive areas of life.

Considering all presentations of technological and scientific contributions to the social life, therefore, Hossain implies that women, enclosed within their zenana, deprived of their very right of education, waiting for their prospective husbands so as to serve them the very domestic responsibilities, have to take part in education so that they could be emancipated and that they could bring up free children, which, in the end, will bring about a free nation. She explicitly shows it in her work that all the advancements in Ladyland stem from the Queen's order of all women's active participation in education as well as her call for abortion of early marriages before the age twenty-one (Hossain, 2005, p. 7). Moreover, there are universities in Ladyland which are closed to men's attendance and there are also various laboratories for sustaining the improvement of technological and scientific research. Sultana, nevertheless, admits that they have nothing to do in the zenana except for knitting and needle work (Hossain, 2005, p. 6). This is why she is incapable of understanding most of what Sister Sara explains and why she sometimes does not answer Sultana's questions, for she feels it is "useless to argue with one who was no better than a frog in a well" (Hossain, 2005, p. 6). Without proper education, supported with equal opportunities to excel in science, therefore, no one is better than a frog to Hossain. Her emphasis on why women should be active participants of equal curriculums with men is because there are different schools and curriculums for women and men, an obstacle which sustained the gap between men and women in the nationalist period of Bengal. The new patriarchy, which was then formed by Bengali Muslim nationalists with the intention of breaking ties with the coloniser Britain, allowed education for women which would "inculcate in women the virtues […] of orderliness, thrift, cleanliness, and a personal sense of responsibility, the practical skills of literacy, accounting and hygiene, and the ability to run the household" (Chatterjee, November, 1989, p. 629). Trying to disenfranchise their country from colonisation, Bengali nationalists aimed to refine their identity by rejecting everything from the West and admitting their very own indigenous norms. However, by rejecting the patriarchy blended by Western and Bengali values, Bengali nationalists could not establish a better social life. Although they believed that allowing women's participation in education is essential for their freedom, they created a new barrier between men and women since they thought

that "of all the subjects that women might learn, housework is the most important … whatever knowledge she may acquire, she cannot claim any reputation unless she is proficient in housework" (Lahiri, 1875, as cited in Chatterjee, November, 1989, p. 629), thereby preparing a curriculum for women inclusive of "such womanly virtues as chastity, self-sacrifice, submission, devotion, kindness, patience, and the labours of love" (Debi, 1870, as cited in Chatterjee, November, 1989, p. 629). This is why Hossain is in favour of a curriculum which encapsulates both handicraft and scientific knowledge so that women could also attend the production chain. After all, "it is true that if one educates a woman, one educates a community, whereas if one educates a man, one educates a man" (Emecheta, 1988, p. 175). Basing her argument on a historical fact, Hossain (2013d) shows Turkish women as an example of solidarity between men and women as well as presenting the significance of the effects of education both for women and men:

> *The other day (dated 19th April) I saw in an Urdu newspaper that the Turkish women have appealed the following in a petition to the Sultan: "We have nothing to do except to remain confined within four walls. Let us be given at least so much education that we could protect our houses and the city with the right weapons during a war." […] It is recorded in history that they have participated in war in the past. (p. 26)*

Most probably, Hossain accounts for Turkish women's cooperation with men and their contribution in the Balkan Wars, the First World War and finally, the Independence War, which, for sure, cannot be underestimated by any nation. Although it is impossible to claim that Turkish women in those wars were successful only thanks to the education they got, it would also be unwise to reject the effect of education. Yasmin Hossain (May 1992) asserts about the periods of those wars that "Turkish women were engaged in new avenues of public employment, worked as nurses on the war fronts and in textile factories, banks, hospitals, and administrative services" (p. 17). If Turkish women had been good at knitting and needle work only, as is the case with Sultana and her people, it would not have been possible for them to play one of the most essential roles in their fight for independence. Similarly, Hossain (2013c) underlines why it is essential to establish equal opportunities between women and men in a very detailed way as follows:

*Imagine yourself standing in front of a giant mirror, in which you can see your entire body. Your right side is male and left side, female. Check yourself out in the mirror: Your right arm is long (thirty inches) and stout; the left arm is twenty-four inches in length and thin. Your right foot is twelve inches long; your left foot relatively tiny. The right shoulder is five feet in height, while the left shoulder is four feet. (That's why the head fails to keep erect and leans to the left, but it also stoops a little to the opposite side because of the weight of the right ear.) The right ear is large like an elephant's; the left ear is long like that of an ass. Watch! Watch carefully, how you look! If this picture is not to the liking of some people, let me explain the state of the two-wheeled carriage. If one wheel of the carriage is big (husband) and the other small (wife), it cannot go very far; it keeps rotating in one place (inside one's home). That's why Indians have not been able to advance in life. (p. 35)*

As is clear from Hossain's self-explanatory analogies, both men and women must be equal at all terms so as to keep moving. The expected movement should first be ignited individually and then it should spread to the whole nation in order to be as developed as the rest of the world. This is why she underlines the notion that women should go hand in hand with men in every aspect of life, learning, teaching, producing, consuming, and improving together on equal grounds. In order to achieve this, of course, the removal of purdah practice is essential and women's participation in the regular curriculum is unavoidable.

In parallel with Hossain's notions over the purdah system and women's deprivation from various opportunities in social life, it is also possible to put forth that Hossain does not put the blame on men only; on the contrary, she equally blames women, too, for their voluntary admission to patriarchal impositions, which have already been discussed as nothing but constructions. When Sister Sara wants to find out why women in Sultana's country allowed men to close them into zenana, she submissively replies that it is because women are weaker than men. The illusion of construction, however, is broken by Sister Sara's subversive comment on Sultana's answer:

*A lion is stronger than a man, but it does not enable him to dominate the human race. You have neglected the duty you owe to yourselves and you have lost your natural rights by shutting your eyes to your own interests. (Hossain, 2005, p. 5)*

Strength, to Hossain, is definitely related to one's perception of it. In other words, it is obvious that it is more preferable to overcome a challenge rather than admitting that it is too difficult to be coped with. Hossain (2013b) keeps reminding women of their negligence in taking control of their lives as follows: "We have reserved all the curses for ourselves, and have vowed not to move forward in keeping with the time. We have taken a pledge not to get out of bed even after hearing the call for prayer" (p. 136). This is exactly why Hossain accuses women of passivity; she clearly states that women are made to believe they are weaker than men both physically and intellectually; therefore, they believe they have no other chance rather than accepting whatever is provided for them. However, as is seen with Ladyland women's great work in closing men into mardana, no one is helpless on the condition that they can break off their biases. When the women in Ladyland acknowledge that they are not trained to fight with swords, guns, and any other weapons, the Queen says "[i]f you cannot save your country for lack of physical strength, […] [t]ry to do so by brain power" (Hossain, 2005, p. 10). This is another attribution to the weakness of men's intelligence, for although it is stated in the novella that men have bigger brains, "an elephant also has got a bigger brain than a man has. Yet man can enchain elephants and employ them, according to their own wishes" (Hossain, 2005, p. 9). By using mental faculties, therefore, it is possible to deal with challenges as in the case of Ladyland women. With the elephant example, Hossain not only intensifies and explains the role of intelligence, but also proves how women in Sultana's country are employed and used by men in accordance with the requirements of the inherent patriarchy. Nevertheless, the success of the women in Ladyland lies beneath their very contribution and addiction to work as well as their dedication to education and science because "while the women were engaged in scientific researches, the men of this country were busy increasing their military power" (Hossain, 2005, p. 8), which also connotes the idea that physical superiority is not enough to overpower women when their intellectual quality is excelled. "Rokeya perhaps suggests here that men have often used science for military purposes, to create destructive tools, but in the hands of women science ceases to remain the proverbial Frankenstein's monster and becomes the means of developing sustainable well-being" (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 50). After all, it is Ladyland women who, after Ladyland men's severe defeat against the enemy army, succeed in overthrowing the

enemy king's army by way of directing all the rays of concentrated sunlight and heat, developed in their universities and laboratories (Hossain, 2005, p. 10). Put another way, Ladyland women exert the strength of their intelligence on men's physical and military power by gaining "a decisive victory without shedding a single drop of blood" (Hossain, 2005, p. 11) because [they] do not covet other people's land, [they] do not fight for a piece of diamond though it may be a thousand-fold brighter than the Koh-i Noor, nor do [they] grudge a ruler his Peacock Throne" (Hossain, 2005, p. 14). By doing so, women of Ladyland evince that intelligence, science, education as well as other walks of life should not be limited to the privilege of men only, for although women were not in state affairs and the number of women scientists was considerably lower than men, the inherent world in the beginning of the Twentieth Century was laden with lots of wars, diseases, and various social confusions. It is, thus, possible to claim that "Hossain offers an ethical choice between the imagining of an aesthetic/aestheticized science-work governed by women and a hegemonic-violent scientific paradigm associated with men" (Bhattacharya & Hiradhar, 2019, p. 623). Hossain (2013b), therefore, gives a wake-up call to all the women of India as follows:

> *Wake up, mothers, sisters, daughters; rise, leave your bed and march forward. There, listen, the Muezzin is calling for prayer. Can't you hear that call, that command from God? Don't sleep anymore; wake up, the night has ended, it is dawn now; the Muezzin is calling for prayer. Whilst women of the rest of the world have awoken and declared war against all kinds of social injustices – rising to the level of education minister, doctor, philosopher, scientist, defence minister, chief of army, writer, poet and so forth – we, the women of Bengal are still sleeping profoundly on the damp floors of our own homes, where we are being held captives, and dying in thousands as victims of consumption. (p. 136)*

Informing women about all other opportunities in different countries rather than becoming slaves to their masters, thus, Hossain explicitly tries to awaken women to become aware of their potentials and to persuade that they are not the lesser breed compared to men and that their fate is not fixed just because they were born as females. Moreover, she reminds them of the notion that they have been poisoned with the patriarchal impositions such as the purdah system and its deprivations as well as the ideological apparatuses depriving women of their very own rights. The end of the novella,

therefore, is laden with a metaphoric awakening since Sultana finds herself in her easy-chair when she wakes up and acknowledges that what she has experienced is but one dream (Hossain, 2005, p. 14). Hossain, however, asks women to leave their presumably comfortable chairs and debilitate the patriarchal impositions by way of making their dreams come true, which is the utmost aim of the eutopian tradition.

# CHAPTER THREE

# CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND HER NOVEL *HERLAND*

## 3.1. Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Her Legacy

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was born into a privileged family, which consisted of politicians, educationists and writers, on July 3, 1860 in the USA. She had a tough childhood in poverty since her father left the family when she and her fourteen months older brother were only babies. Gilman (1990) defines her father as "an occasional visitor, a writer of infrequent but always amusing letters with deliciously funny drawings, a sender of books, catalogues of books, [and] lists of books to read" (p. 5). This is why she did not have the love of a father in its expected sense; on the contrary, her father was as a librarian to her. Furthermore, Gilman (1990) admits that she did not experience affection from her mother, either as follows: "Having suffered so deeply in her own list of early love affairs, and still suffering for lack of a husband's love, she heroically determined that her baby daughter should not so suffer if she could help it" (p. 10). Her mother's blockage on her love for her children, especially for her daughter Gilman, is because she died expecting to see her ex-husband who never showed up. Naturally, childhood traumas shaped Gilman's character and her views on life. Learning to become an individual at a very early age, Gilman "became a passionate rebel, defiantly rejecting the conventional roles deemed appropriate for late-nineteenth-century women" (Knight, 2009, p. ix). Therefore, although she tried various schools for her education, she decided that those schools were in fact the institutions that empowered the ever-lasting androcentric structure. Consequently, "[b]y the time she was twenty, she had decided to devote her life to public service" (Knight, 2009, p. ix).

Although Gilman was highly self-assured that she would not marry, Charles Walter Stetson managed to convince her to get married to him after his insistence on his proposal for a period of almost two years. Her marriage to Stetson could be taken as another twist in Gilman's life since a few weeks after her marriage, she was pregnant to her only child, Katherine, as a result of which she "sank into a deep depression" (Knight, 2009, p. x). In a sense, Gilman could not escape the unhappiness and suffering she inherited from her mother. After she gave birth to Katherine in 1885, she could not help believing that misery was waiting for the rest of her life. Gilman (1990) describes her sorrow she felt after her baby's birth as follows:

> *I, the ceaselessly industrious, could do no work of any kind. I was so weak that the knife and fork sank from my hands – too tired to eat. I could not read, nor write nor paint nor sew nor talk nor listen to talking, nor anything. I lay on the lounge and wept all day. The tears ran down into my ears on either side. I went to bed crying, woke in the night crying, sat on the edge of the bed in the morning and cried – from sheer continuous pain. (p. 91)*

Although Gilman was not diagnosed at that period, she was severely suffering from postpartum psychosis, a psychologic disease which comes up right after giving birth. After all, she was highly dedicated to serve for the society, especially for women; however, all of a sudden, she thought that she was as useless as a broken chair. Having a baby, to Gilman, was one of the worst experiences that could be gained by a woman:

> *Absolute incapacity. Absolute misery. To the spirit it was as if one were armless, legless, eyeless, voiceless cripple. Prominent among the tumbling suggestions of a suffering brain was the thought, "You did it yourself! You did it yourself! You had health and strength and hope and glorious work before you – and you threw it all away. You were called to serve humanity, and you cannot serve yourself. No good as a wife, no good as a mother, no good at anything. And you did it yourself!" (Gilman, 1990, p. 91)*

Motherhood, therefore, was the sheer source of misery and of hopelessness for Gilman. As a woman who stood against all those pre-established roles and norms for genders, Gilman was then within the borders of all those roles she had refuted earlier.

To get rid of her psychological disorder, she left her baby at home and set out for spending the winter in different cities only to find out that she was well while she was

away and sick when she returned home (Gilman, 1990, p. 95). In addition to being one of the victims of motherhood depression, Gilman was given the "rest cure" and was recommended to stop writing, reading, painting, and sewing among many others to pass all her time with Katherine the baby. This cure of Dr. S. W. Mitchell, however, made it even worse for Gilman since it was as if throwing an arachnophobe into a room of giant spiders. After all, according to the doctor it was either hysteria or conceit and Gilman was only another woman who was expecting to be spoiled. Gilman obeyed the doctor's recommendations; nevertheless, her torture deteriorated. Thus, she went back to her utmost aim and restarted her career. "Over the course of her lifetime, Gilman proved to be enormously prolific, publishing some five hundred poems, nearly two hundred short stories, hundreds of essays, eight novels and an autobiography" (Knight, 2009, p. xi). Not limiting herself to academic studies and writing as well as her occasional teaching sessions in different places, Gilman also succeeded in becoming one of the most prominent characters of women's liberation movements not only in her contemporary period but also in the 1960s and 1970s in America. On August 17, 1935, Gilman decided to end her life because she was diagnosed with breast cancer that was not possible to be cured.

Gilman's childhood traumas, her experiences as a mother and a wife as well as her stand against being domesticized should be considered well since her ideas and all her works are shaped by the effects of those experiences. In other words, before 1960s, it is Gilman who makes the private visible to the public. Her real-life experiences, in the end, constitute her fiction with "women who desperately struggle for the autonomy and freedom that is restricted in an androcentric society" (Knight, 2009, p. xix). By putting the blame on the androcentric society, however, Gilman does not excuse women over men for the ills of the society. On the contrary, as is also argued by Hossain, Gilman posits that women, too, feed and accept the always-visible patriarchy. Arbitrariness and construction are Gilman's key points for the durability of the inherent society. She clearly recommends to refute all gender-based constructs and re-establish a society which is more functional. She urges women to be self-aware and act against the imposed values and roles. Therefore, her *Women and Economics*, which was first published in 1898, is significant due to Gilman's teachings which are like sermons to women and men. She writes the book for the reasons follows:

*To show how some of the worst evils under which we suffer, evils long supposed to be inherent and ineradicable in our natures, are but the result of certain arbitrary conditions of our own adoption, and how, by removing those conditions, we may remove the evils resultant. (Gilman, 1900, p. vii)*

The diction Gilman uses above is definitely worth considering since she does not address to one gender only. In other words, the pronoun "we" suggests readers that it is not only men but also women who are responsible for the constructed values and roles. Moreover, now that both genders share the responsibility for all the arbitrariness of their societies, they should also act against those unnatural chains together. No gender, to Gilman, should be superior to the other. Put another way, "[w]hat we do, as well as what is done to us, makes us what we are. But, beyond these forces, we come under the effect of a third set of conditions peculiar to our human status; namely, social conditions"(Gilman, 1900, p. 2). Though Gilman does not put the blame on men only, she considers that women do not have the necessary conscious to claim themselves as equals. Hence, to "reach in especial the thinking of women of to-day, and urge upon them a new sense, not only of their social responsibility as individuals, but of their measureless racial importance as makers of men" (Gilman, 1900, p. vii) turns out to be another reason why she writes *Women and Economics*. Gilman, thus, believes that it is possible to raise consciousness in people, especially in women since she accuses women more of their ignorance in the construction of their roles within their society and of their passivity to stand against those roles, by way of writing novels, poems, articles and so on. In parallel to Plato, she believes that what seems natural to the society is actually in stark contrast to the nature itself. One of the most functional ways to portray this artificial nature to the people of the time was to create Gilman's own society and she did it through sketching a country which is closed to the outer world and which consists of women only. In order to show the society that women are also capable of doing everything men do and that they might even be better than men, Gilman creates her eutopian country Herland which does not include any glimpses of war, crime, and diseases among many other negative phenomena. Presenting readers how they are actually encapsulated within the borders of the arbitrary impositions of the societies, *Herland* stands out as Gilman's ideal not-yet-real society.

**3.2. *Herland* as the Distorting Mirror**

First published in 1915, *Herland* might be considered as Gilman's answer to problems concerning women and parallelly the whole society. Still going through what is termed as the First Wave Feminist Movement at present, it is probable that even Gilman was not aware of her prospective contributions to the Second and Third Waves of Feminist Movements at that period. As Chang (2010) also suggests it, "[Gilman's] contribution to the first wave of the U.S women's movement and social reforms largely relies on both her treaties on the separate economic spheres and her utopian narratives" (p. 319). Therefore, it is possible to put forth that Gilman endeavours to dramatize her notions over gender, gender bias, gender roles, capitalism, Darwinist theory and gender which, in fact, incorporate the essence of her *Women and Economics*, by way of *Herland*. By doing so, Gilman aims to oppose to and dismantle the essentialism of societies. Put another way, she does refute all the so-called natural attributions and claims that it is possible to create a world where there is no war, disease, or any other problems that stem from the badly institutionalized norms and roles within societies. To succeed in dismantling the patriarchy, it is inevitable to "redefine and remodel womanhood and motherhood" (Chang, 2010, p. 319) by way of providing a new definition to women's reproductivity as well as manifesting how labour is unnecessarily divided according to gender roles.

> *Indeed, for Gilman, personal fulfilment and individual economic freedom could be obtained <u>only</u> under the condition of a more closely knit social structure, whereby private or domestic labors are organized and social labors – undertaken for the primary good of society. (Sheth & Parsch, 1996, p. 330)*

In order to achieve her goal, Gilman employs various naturally accepted phenomena in her eutopian novel *Herland* and dwells on such issues as gender roles, especially motherhood and womanhood, science and its misuse as well as women's exclusion from science, sexual division of labour, education, aesthetic norms, individualism, eugenics, language, religion, and the function of sexual intercourse, all of which are actually socially constructed institutions in societies.

The recurring problem in most of the feminist works is actually the case with the institutionalization of various norms, which, in the end, results in people who live their lives within the borders of their habitual ways of thinking. Veblen (2007) sketches how institutions are constituted and how people unconsciously expose themselves to these institutions as follows:

> *The situation of to-day shapes the institutions of tomorrow through a selective, coercive process, by acting upon men's habitual view of things, and so altering or fortifying a point of view or a mental attitude handed down from the past. The institutions – that is to say the habits of thought – under the guidance of which men live are in this way received from an earlier time, more or less remotely earlier, but in any event, they have been elaborated in and received from the past. Institutions are products of the past process, are adapted to past circumstances, and therefore are never in full accord with the requirements of the present. (pp. 126 – 127)*

It is, thus, impossible to look forward with the inherent institutions at hand; furthermore, these institutions, or habits of thought as is called by Veblen, should be re-defined and modified so as to have more applicable and useful ones progressively, for "[i]nstitutions must change with changing circumstances, since they are of the nature of an habitual method of responding to the stimuli which these changing circumstances afford" (Veblen, 2007, p. 126). In other words, orders or thoughts of the past cannot be solutions to any sort of questions at present. As people and life keep changing, so do circumstances and necessities. Furthermore, the problem with stable institutions is not only about their property of being outdated but also about the fact that they are constituted in terms of masculine ways of thought, "[f]or the habits of thought enforced in the affairs of daily life are carried over into men's sense of what is right and good" (Veblen, 1918, p. 162). Therefore, institutions should also change or be altered in order to redefine and modify norms and values. This, for sure, is what Gilman intends to do. Put another way, she clearly urges her readers to create the new woman as well as manifesting that both women and men should change their perceptions about the old woman since "[w]hen a step in the development has been taken, this step itself constitutes a change of situation which requires a new adaptation" (Veblen, 2007, p. 127). The new adaptation here, thus, turns out to be the new woman and when it eventually comes true, "it becomes the point of

departure for a new step in the adjustment, and so on interminably" (Veblen, 2007, p. 127), thereby calling for another step to be taken, another modification or re-definition since progress is inevitable. One of the most significant points in Gilman's ideas is that although she endeavours to create the new woman, her intention is not to revolutionize norms or values but to make those components of institutions evolve so that women and men can constitute a society on equal grounds. To her, as is stated by Lane (1979), "[w]omen are not undeveloped men … but the feminine half of humanity is undeveloped humans" (p. xi). From this point of view, it is possible to assert that Gilman considers gender issues on a highly humanistic perspective and tries to make both sexes meet on the same level. However, this struggle is not to level women up; on the contrary, both sexes should change their habitual ways of thinking, for "[w]hat we call masculine traits are simply human traits, which have been denied to women and are thereby assumed to belong to men" (Lane, 1979, p. xi). Considering the issue of habits of thought, therefore, Gilman's steps for the new woman in *Herland* will be analysed under the subtitles of motherhood and womanhood, women and science, education and women, societal norms of aesthetics, eugenics, and language.

Motherhood in *Herland* is completely different from the perceptions of modern societies nowadays. Although Gilman comes closer to radical feminist approach in terms of reproduction in her novel, she definitely refutes the notion that women should decide on their own bodies in terms of sexual intercourse since she believes that the only purpose of mating should be reproduction, which, for sure, is harshly criticized by radical feminists. This is why Herlanders reproduce through parthenogenesis, a form of reproduction without mating. It is not rather clear whether Gilman points out that women are women even without men; or that one day, there will be parthenogenetic reproduction so that women will not need men even for reproduction, as is applicable to utopian way of writing; or that women should have sexual intercourse with men only if do they plan to breed a baby. Although it is not quite possible to pick one of these reasons or eliminate them, it is crystal clear that Gilman manifests how motherhood is an actual profession within the society. From breeding to growing up, children belong to the whole community. They are not someone's or a family's children. As Gilman (1990) also argues it, she has "a deep sympathy for children of all ages, a reverence for them as the world's best hope; a tenderness for these ever-coming strangers, misunderstood, misjudged,

mistreated, even when warmly 'loved' (p. 153). Gilman is probably still under the effect of her own childhood and motherhood when she writes these ideas; however, it is still understandable how she emphasizes the value of children as they are the future of nations, who, in the end, breed other children progressively. In parallel to Gilman's notions over children, Zava, a Herlander, tries really hard to make the three men, Terry, Jeff, and Vandyck, understand what it is to be a mother in Herland as follows:

> *Here we have Human Motherhood – in full working use. […] Nothing else except the literal sisterhood of our origin, and the far higher and deeper union of our social growth. The children in this country are the one center and focus of all our thoughts. Every step of our advance is always considered in its effect on them – on the race. You see, we are* <u>*Mothers*</u>*. (Gilman, 1998, p. 57)*

As is obvious from Zava, being a Herlander Mother requires women to adopt every little kid in the country and make the best of them in the end so as to make them mothers of the future, for progress is inevitable. These mothers, however, are not mothers because they feel they have to be; on the contrary, they are considerably aware of the fact that becoming a mother is not something natural but it is a professional occupation. This is one of the most essential reasons why Herlanders believe that motherhood cannot be performed just because someone gave birth; in contrast, it should be a profession so that the future of their community could easily be secured. Therefore, "[t]hey developed all this close inter-service in the interests of their children. To do the best work they had to specialize, of course, the children needed spinners and weavers, farmers and gardeners, carpenters and masons, as well as mothers" (Gilman, 1998, p. 58). Still considerably abstract for a modern-time human, motherhood in Gilman's sense is highly different. In her eutopia, mothers are not mothers only because they give birth to their own children. Also, care-givers are not only the mothers who give birth to their children but also every woman who is competent enough to raise children in the healthiest way for the future. Put another way, mothers are not mothers because of the so-called natural instinct of being a mother. It is, as is stated before, a very critically important profession. In a way, becoming a mother is actually becoming a social engineer since they raise children for future generations. Gilman (1900) asserts her notions about the society as a living organism as follows:

*The evolution of organic life goes on in geometrical progression: cells combine, and form organs; organs combine, and form organisms; organisms combine and form organizations. Society is an organization. Society is the fourth power of the cell. It is composed of individual animals of genus homo, living in organic relation. The course of social evolution is the gradual establishment of organic relation between individuals. (pp. 101 – 102)*

The social evolution agents, therefore, turn out to be the mothers in Herland. It is not very probable to talk about a full coordination of fathers and mothers in our world since motherhood in our world is considered as an attribution to women. As is also suggested by Gilman (1911), motherhood is the "original and legitimate base of family life; and its ample sustaining power throughout the long early period of […] the matriarchate; the father being her assistant in the great work" (p. 32). The direct relation of this female attribution to habitual ways of thinking is highly visible and this relation is endeavoured to be dismantled in *Herland* by Gilman. Gubar (1983) posits her notions over the symbolic function of Gilman's implementation of Herlanders' parthenogenetic reproduction as follows:

*[It represents] the creativity and autonomy of women, mother-daughter reciprocity, and the interplay of nature and human nature. At the same time, it releases women from the female Oedipus complex, as defined by Freud: the daughter's rejection of the mother, her resulting sense of self-hatred, the extension of her desire for a phallus to desire for the man who possesses the penis. (p. 144)*

As such, then, Gilman avenges the stolen years of her sex by way of the male-hegemonic world. While parthenogenetic reproduction erases the female embarrassment of castration due to their lack of penis, it also demonstrates the assertion of Herlanders' very autonomy. In other words, it is not women but men, as in the case of the three visitors in Herland, who lacks something. In Herland, the male are definitely useless in reproduction. Hence, they are profitable neither for the system nor for the female. On the other hand, the Herlander female, "far from seeming castrated or mutilated or wounded or envious of the penis, derives her energy and her assurance from the fact that, having no penis, she cannot be castrated" (Gubar, 1983, p. 144). As one of the aims of utopian writing is also obvious,

the writer opens up a new perspective to the reader and makes them think about whatever is unthinkable. Vandyck, for instance, is a man from our world and he certainly feels awakened by comparing and contrasting motherhood in Herland and in our world as follows:

> [T]hey [Herlanders] were Mothers, not in our sense of helpless involuntary fecundity, forced to fill and overfill the land, every land, and then see their children suffer, sin, and die, fighting horribly with one another; but in the sense of Conscious Makers of People. Mother-love with them was not a brute passion, a mere "instinct", a wholly personal feeling; it was – a religion.
>
> [...]
>
> We are used to seeing what we call "a mother" completely wrapped up in her pink bundle of fascinating babyhood, and taking but the faintest theoretic interest in anybody else's bundle, to say nothing of the common needs of all the bundles. But these women [Herlanders] were working all together at the grandest of tasks – they were Making People – and they made them well. (Gilman, 1998, pp. 58 - 59)

Gilman does not reject the notion that we, as humans, belong to nature and have instincts as well. However, she stands against the idea that the instinct of motherhood should not be adhered to one sex only. This is why she criticizes women of her age, thereby calling them for action to elude from the historically accumulated and institutionalized motherhood and embrace all children as their own. Put another way, by deconstructing the so-called nature of motherhood, "Gilman naturalizes the position of women in the workplace and argues that it is only through the systematic production of people that the health of society can be guaranteed" (Fusco, 2009, p. 420).

Correspondingly, everyone in Herland is a labourer and performs whatever is suitable to their profession. Motherhood is sacred in Herland, too; however, its sanctity is in a different sense from our own world. Theirs is a "motherliness which dominated society, which influenced every art and industry, which absolutely protected all childhood, and gave to it the most perfect care and training" (Gilman, 1998, p. 62). As agents of evolution, therefore, this is how mothers build a country where there is "no war, no killing or other evil, no conflict, competition, ownership, disease, poverty, crying, or fear" (Johnson-Bogart, 1992, p. 86). They achieve this through embracing all children as

their own since they know that any bugs in the system may result in the crash of all the system itself. As being opposed to individual way of life, these women have no idea of belonging to a family, for what matters to them is the improvement of the whole society, not people within the community. This notion, for sure, is considerably close to what the radical feminists also suggests. They underline to idea that destabilization of the family institution will bring about the liberation of women. Gilman precedes radical feminists one more time and moves one step further by suggesting that the family institution is also an economic organism and rather than eliminating it, people should reform it since this patriarchal institution has eventuated in "arresting the development of half the world. We have a world wherein men, industrially, live in the twentieth century; and women, industrially, live in the first – and back of it" (Gilman, 1911, pp. 37 - 38). Put another way, the problem with the family is not about partnership of couples or breeding children; on the contrary, the problem is about the *natural* domestication of women and taking them out of the production units, thereby giving them no other options rather than *instinctively* rearing their children. In Herland, however, "[t]he element of personal pride seemed strangely lacking" (Gilman, 1998, p. 64), which connotes the idea that giving birth is natural itself and feeling proud for it is definitely unnatural. Also, readers are one more time reminded of the idea that being a mother does not require women to withdraw into their domestic circles; they can both rear children with their partners and keep working in the economic units of the society.

Herlanders, therefore, underscore the importance of a well-organised society and the significance of cooperation in raising children. By doing so, these women do not only improve their society, but also eliminate the prevention of people from economic circles. Correspondingly, it is possible to claim that motherhood from Herlanders' perspective should be replaced with parenthood in our world, being a parent, as an umbrella term, is out of the boundaries of the biological sex or gender. This, on the whole, will be beneficial in our world for the release of women from their domiciles and it will also provide women with taking part in the labour force so as to have their own sustainable economy; also, women's economic independence will bring about their freedom of choice in social life. In this modern world of ours, however, women have to be satisfied with whatever is presented to them, for "[t]he comfort, the luxury, the necessities of life itself, which the woman receives, are obtained by the husband, and given her by him" (Gilman, 1900, p.

10). In our world, therefore, marriage is considered as an institution in which men are bosses while women are the workers of those bosses, thereby underestimating women's labour at home, which is already unpaid. Women, thus, cannot exist as the equal partner of marriages. In other words, "women who were restricted in their ability to contribute to productivity outside of the closed environment of a single family were bound to servitude not equality in that family unit" (O'Donnell, 1994, p. 89). Men, moreover, are considered as both producers and distributers of wealth within and outside the family institution, disregarding women's labour. Nevertheless, Hill (1980) puts forth that "[n]o men, with practical sense and trained minds would put up for a week with the inchoate mass of wasted efforts in the home" (p. 251). Although Hill's observation is considerably sexist, it is still credible enough since men are made to believe that they do not have the instinctive and natural drives for domestic labour. Put another way, they are taught in their family that their nature belongs to everywhere outside the home. Hill (1980), later on, neutralizes her sexist approach and claims that "when women have the same trained minds and practical sense, they will not put up with it [domestic labour] much longer" (p. 251), thereby underlining the very humane results of education and training, which have no linkage to either biological sex or gender. Believing that all characteristics are but human, not male or female, Gilman, too, underscores that it is not women who should *be like* men, for "[t]he most important fact about the sexes, men and women, is the common humanity we share, not the differences that distinguish us" (Lane, 1979, p. xi). In other words, since women have been stolen their very human rights, Gilman proposes that they do not need to be *like* men, but they should get their own human rights so as to provide equal sexes in communities. Motherhood, therefore, is one of these components that needs to be modified. Because most mothers are burdened with both domestic chores and child-rearing, motherhood turns out to be just another apparatus of the inherent system for stealing the autonomy of women, thereby forcing them to be domesticized. Motherhood, therefore, should be a gender-neutral role to be committed by all genders. For instance:

> *In Herland, […] motherhood is not simply a biological category but a social one. It is a social category for us, too, but Gilman gives it social content without tying it to the wife and homemaker role. Nor does she tie it to specific tasks of child rearing, such as feeding and diapering, or to the social*

*expectations surrounding them. For Gilman, motherhood has a social content because it constitutes a particular relation of love in which an adult stands to a child – a love whose overriding concern is the child's welfare and development. (Martin, 1985, p. 142)*

Furthermore, women cannot help becoming sex toys for their husbands, too. According to Gilman, women have long been paying for their own survival to their husbands by way of sexual intercourse. The woman, asserts Gilman (1911), "as the property of the man, was considered first and foremost as a means of pleasure to him" (p. 32).This, for sure, is related to the assumption that it is actually a woman's natural function to look after kids and sexually feed her husband, thereby framing motherhood and wifehood within the circles of duty, exempting men from such responsibilities as well as domesticizing women and giving them no other chance but service an adult male at all terms and paying for her accommodation. "We are the only animal species in which the female depends on the male for food, the only animal species in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation" (Gilman, 1900, p. 5). The roles of motherhood and fatherhood as well as being a son and a daughter are crucially significant in a society actually. Because parents raise their children, these children are shaped within the ideology of their parents. What is called as normal is in fact normal within these people's families. Gilman's comparison of a common daughter's and son's lives is worth considering so as to find out how these constructions are normalized on the eyes of the beholders:

*The girl-child, peering out, sees this forbidden field [the real world] as belonging to men-kind; and her relation to it is to secure one for herself – not only that she may love, but that she may live. He will feed, clothe and adorn her – she will serve him; from the subjection of the daughter to that of the wife she steps; from one home to the other, and never enters the world at all – man's world.*

*The boy, on the other hand, considers the home as a place of women, an inferior place, and longs to grow up and leave it – for the real world. He is quite right. The error is that this great social instinct, calling for full social exercise, exchange, service, is considered masculine, whereas it is human, and belongs to boy and girl alike. (Gilman, 1911, p. 41)*

As is obvious, both the male and the female children are enforced to believe that this order is a natural one. Moreover, according to Gilman, it is not the new-born generation that should be blamed but the accumulations of older generations, for all these constructed normative references and roles are still considered as natural. It is not only men but also women who should feed their awakening so that these normally and naturally accepted impositions might be deconstructed in order to create better processing societies. Put another way, societies themselves are gendered; however, on the condition that all these gender roles attributed to certain biological sexes are distorted, it will be possible to establish neutral communities where everyone will have equal rights. Nevertheless, although Gilman's notions belong to the early twentieth century, most women are still closed into their domestic spaces in the twenty-first century and they cannot take part in the production chain, thereby losing their individual voices and becoming dependant on their male masters. The reason for this is another habitual way of thinking which suggests that domestic labour does not have an economic value; however, especially in the case of married couples, the reason why a husband spends less money than he actually needs is because there is a woman within her domestic circle and doing all the household labour by herself without an economic income, thereby cooperating with the system on the way to the objectification of the female body. O'Donnell (1994) also speculates about Gilman's understanding of the economic family as follows:

> *The economic family consisted of a male who earns income outside the home*
> *by employing his talents to their highest use in the labour market and a*
> *female who employs her talents as a cook, laundress, house cleaner, teacher,*
> *nurse, servant and seamstress, whether she is for these tasks or not. (p. 89)*

In nature, nevertheless, "male and female alike gaze and browse, hunt and kill, climb, swim, dig, run, and fly for their livings" (Gilman, 1900, p. 18), for there are no such social constructs as division of labour, female domestication, or objectification of the female body in nature, but "in our species the female does not seek her own living in the specific activities of our race, but is fed by the male" (Gilman, 1900, p. 18). The above-mentioned wifehood, motherhood, being a husband, and fatherhood roles in people's world are forcibly imposed on them as *natural* and *instinctive* drives through the proprieties within societies. These societal attributions do not abuse women only; they also undermine men since both sexes are ascribed where to stand and what to do, thereby being limited in

terms of their original productivity and skills. Submission to these proprieties, in other words, begin in families, constituting societies. Gilman (1911) explains the effect of these propriety families as follows:

> *The child is affected first through the retarded development of his mother,*
> *then through the arrested conditions of home industry; and further through*
> *the wrong ideals which have arisen from these conditions. A normal home,*
> *where there was human equality between mother and father, would have a*
> *better influence. (pp. 41 – 42)*

The society, to Herlanders, does not necessarily have to be as it is in our world. Once rearing a child is adopted by both partners, parental gender roles will also be equal within the family. Correspondingly, when each family sincerely adopts the same methods and admits that working and socializing as well as other necessities are not proper to one gender only and that all these are reserved for humanity, the system will work better and societies will come one step closer to equal opportunities between the male and the female. This reform in this way of habitual thinking is not inaccessible since "[h]uman social conditions could be modifiable because human evolution is an ongoing process. […] [T]he social conditions of men and women within androcentric culture are modifiable rather than fixed" (Hudson, 2006, p. 8). As is explained before, no one should demand being *like* a man but everyone has to assert that whatever men do is not manly but *humanly* and that women should have their own portion in these human rights as much as men do.

The three men in Herland, Vandyck, Jeff, and Terry, argue about the perfection of the system in Herland the country among themselves in a long conversation which is significantly worth considering due to their realization of socially constructed notions and the distortion of these normative attributions with Herlanders:

> *Do you really think it's to our credit that we have muddled along with all*
> *our poverty and disease and the like? They [Herlanders] have peace and*
> *plenty, wealth and beauty, goodness and intellect. Pretty good people, I*
> *think!*
>
> *[…]*

*We had expected a dull submissive monotony, and found a daring social inventiveness far beyond our own, and a mechanical and scientific development fully equal to ours.*

*We had expected pettiness, and found a social consciousness beside which our nations looked like quarrelling children – feebleminded ones at that.*

*We had expected jealousy, and found a broad sisterly affection, a fair-minded intelligence, to which we could produce no parallel.*

*We had expected hysteria, and found a standard of health and vigor, a calmness of temper, to which the habit of profanity, for instance, was impossible to explain – we tried it. (Gilman, 1998, pp. 68 - 69)*

The three men's expectations and their non-fulfilment cannot be superficially explained with a well-organized system, of course. Essentially, the way how this system is established as well as the reasons why these three men, coming from the man-made world, consider that the encounter with Herland and the Herlanders will bloom a laughter since women are incapable of founding a civilization must be carefully analysed. As a matter of fact, Herlanders have had a terrible war and they have felt like they have lost everything concerning labour, governance, safety, and power, among many others. When they nearly thought that they were at the end of their civilization, they developed parthenogenesis and started co-operating with each other in order to keep their civilization alive since "the prosperity of their children depended on it" (Gilman, 1998, p. 57). Although parthenogenesis is extremely fantastic, it still constitutes one of the key elements of this eutopian novel since Gilman is not against the idea of reproduction. What she actually stands against is the gender expectations. In other words, she is strictly opposed to the notion that each gender has his/her own duties, which, as is discussed above, are merely normative references and attributions. Gilman, therefore, considers "how much control they [women] exerted in sexual matters, how society organized childcare, how the social world accommodated maternity and its practices" (Hausman, 1998, p. 506) when she implements parthenogenetic reproduction in *Herland*. She does not underestimate women as biological beings; on the contrary, she emphasizes the female reproductivity. Moreover, by highlighting the way Herlanders perform motherhood, she underscores that this role should not be limited to one biological sex only, thereby putting forward women as social bodies. As is suggested by Hausman (1998), "[p]arthenogenesis is a metaphor

for women's control of reproduction. That it is a biological process demonstrates Gilman's desire to make the biological body central to the societal arrangements" (p. 506). This is why it would not be rational to claim that Gilman is against reproduction or motherhood. As Herlanders, she ultimately cares about new generations and their norm-free raising according to their own skills and interests, for their community will be a better place to live in that way. The female body, in other words, is not a medium to organize societal norms for Gilman; however, the reproductive nature of women is an agent for the betterment of societal regulations. This is why Herlanders are excessively careful in their selection of mothers. Somel, another Herlander, explains the process of selections of mothers to Vandyck as follows:

> *If the girl showing the bad qualities had still the power to appreciate social duty, we appealed to her, by that, to renounce motherhood. Some of the few worst types were, fortunately, unable to reproduce. But if the fault was in a disproportionate egotism – then the girl was sure she had the right to have children, even that hers would be better than others. (Gilman, 1998, p. 70)*

Herlanders, thus, owe the perfection and well-progression of their system to their meticulous determining of mothers as well as their insistence on the cooperative motherhood in their community. Somel explicitly states that those mothers who do not have rigorous properties cannot be trusted for raising their own babies since her malfunctioning personal traits might pass on the kids. In order to prevent it, motherhood is entitled as a significant profession in Herland. "[Gilman follows] Plato not only in the communal rearing of children but also in the eugenic program in which the unfit are not allowed to reproduce and the best are allowed to reproduce more frequently" (Christensen, 2017, p. 297). Survival of the fittest is actually what Plato suggests and Gilman adopts. The ideal society is what matters to both Plato and Gilman. Individuals, therefore, are for the community and the community exists for the good of the state. So, by implementing parthenogenesis into *Herland*, Gilman merely modifies Plato's (1997) suggestion of mating festivals for breeding the best people for the state, and she applies the principle that not every woman should be reproductive. According to Plato (1997);

> *the best of both sexes ought to be brought together as often as possible, and the worst as seldom as possible, and that the issue of the former unions ought*

*to be reared, and that of the latter abandoned, if the flock is to attain to first-*
*rate excellence. (p. 160)*

As is claimed by Somel, "[t]hose of us who are the most highly competent fulfil that office; and a majority of our girls eagerly try for it – I assure you we have the very best" (Gilman, 1998, p. 71). As appropriate to the Platonic view of reproduction, Somel clearly exposes that neither reproduction nor motherhood is reserved to everyone; on the contrary, it is on top of all other professions so as to keep progression in its stable pacing. Put another way, by emphasizing the "human imitation of Nature's merciless law of mutation, Gilman deprives the physically, mentally, and morally weak women of motherhood, in hopes of breeding out human spiritual vices and physical weakness" (Wu, 1995, p. 109). Moreover, Gilman is obviously speaking of her inner voice from her own motherhood experiences, for she leaves her daughter to her ex-husband and his new wife when she is a teenager, believing that Gilman cannot both work and look after her daughter. Her own voice echoes when Ellador is highly surprised that women in our world both look after kids at home and do the household chores at the same time (Gilman, 1998, p. 83). Underneath this surprising moment lies the complication of education actually. Because children are considered as the future of a society, their education for the welfare of the community is critically important. However, mothers in our world cannot educate their children as they deserve since they are forced to be highly absorbed with looking after the households. It is, therefore, evident that there is not women's abuse only; further, children are also usurped their very own future. This is why, to Herlanders, maternity should be classified as a different profession to be supported through a well-organised training for everyone, since [t]hese certified mothers are to ensure the welfare of the newly formed nation" (Luczak, 2015, p. 143).

The whole societal order in Herland, therefore, is suited well on motherhood. The motherhood in Herland, however, does not incorporate looking after baby girls and children only. Although it is the mightiest responsibility for them, it is the name of their way of the world actually. In other words, motherhood is the education, religion, language, nature, science, progression, and hard-work among many others.

*All their [Herlanders'] wide mutual love, all the subtle interplay of mutual*
*friendship and service, the urge of progressive thought and invention, the*
*deepest religious emotion, every feeling and every act was related to this*

*great central Power, to the River of Life pouring through them, which made*
*them the bearers of the very Spirit of God. (Gilman, 1998, p. 119)*

This is why all the stereotypical predictions of the three men turn out to be nonsensical and learned attributions when they land on the country. As people from the man-made world, neither Terry, the rich and boastful traveller, nor Jeff, the romantic and chivalrous man, or Vandyck, probably the most scientifically speaking sociologist but who thinks that women have their own physical limitations, expects that they will actually come up with a civilized country and people. Once they encounter "a land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park" (Gilman, 1998, p. 10), they cannot help being stunned and they raise their hopes to find men waiting for them since in the man-made world, it is not even debatable for women to establish such a perfect country. The country, moreover, has its "clean, well-built roads, […] [and] attractive architecture" (Gilman, 1998, p. 10) which are apparently beyond these three men's imagination, for they prepared themselves to find a primitive tribe. As Terry asserts, "[t]hey [Herlanders] would fight among themselves. […] Women always do. We mustn't look to find any sort of order and organization" (Gilman, 1998, p. 7). Gilman successfully ridicules the three men and she actually manifests that the men-made world is more or less constituted by these three mainstream approaches. Johnston (1991) argues about the reason why Gilman implements especially these three men as follows:

*Gilman has created caricatures of recognizable attitudes towards women.*
*The man who believes himself superior master (Terry) and the man who*
*idolizes (Jeff) exhibit, through Gilman's representations, how both attitudes*
*degrade and demoralize, treating women, in fact, as objects rather than*
*people. (p. 56)*

It would still be unjust to claim that all or most societies consist of such men as Terry, Jeff, and Vandyck. Nevertheless, in addition to underscoring that whatever the society considers is merely inclusive of constructions, Gilman endeavours to urge women to break their chains of these attributions, thereby becoming another Herlander in our own world. In other words, by putting women's capability and labour forth, Gilman both refutes historical and cultural accumulations and "launches a two-pronged attack on both industrial capitalism and the infantilization of American women" (Fusco, 2009, p. 420).

Preceding the Second Wave Feminists again, Gilman lets her readers think about aesthetic attributions to women. As another stereotypical entity, aesthetics is marketed so powerfully that it has been traditional to wear considerably chic dresses, bras, make-up and various materials which have no counterbalance for men. Beauty has been so successfully embroidered for centuries that it has been a necessity rather than a choice. Gilman's women in Herland, however, are not those *womanly* women of our world. Although Vandyck describes these women with a lot of masculine observations, they are not *manly* women, either. As is always emphasized, they are merely humans. Vandyck's description of women is as follows:

> *They were not young. They were not old. They were not, in the girl sense, beautiful. They were not in the least ferocious. And yet, as I looked from face to face, calm, grave, wise, wholly unafraid, evidently assured and determined[.] […] Yet they were not old women. Each was in the full bloom of rosy health, erect, serene, standing sure-footed and light as any pugilist. (Gilman, 1998, pp. 16 - 17)*

Apparently, Vandyck is forced to confront with his man-made values when he comes across with Herlanders, for if women are beautiful enough in his world, they show up in the society and gain acceptance as well as recognition; however, on the condition that they get older and less beautiful according to the societal norms, they withdraw into their domestic spheres with the belief that they have lost the approval of their society and wait for the end of their life as much as a wounded animal. Vandyck feels so distorted that he has to admit they "felt like small boys, very small boys, caught doing some mischief in some gracious lady's house" (Gilman, 1998, p. 17). This impression is crucially significant since it represents how women succeed in asserting their authority on men even without doing anything but showing their very own presence. Vandyck's hesitation to do something as well as his dread against these women cannot be merely explained with the fear of the unknown or unfamiliar since he and his friends are actually well aware of the opposite sex in their own ways. What they only begin to find out is the opposite gender, in fact. For this reason, that moment has probably been the first time these three men have figured out what women could actually do or how they might behave. As Vandyck puts it, they "found [themselves] much in the position of the suffragette trying to get to the Parliament buildings through a simple cordon of London police" (Gilman,

1998, p. 19). Therefore, this is the first time in the novel that men feel like they are – in their terms – inferior to the people around them. Masculinity and its values have so strongly been infused to the minds of these three men that when they find out that they will be closed up in their private rooms, Terry becomes boastful and believes that women are scared from the them. However, as Moadine, another Herlander, clearly expresses, "[t]he danger is quite the other way They [Herlanders] might hurt you. If, by any accident, you did harm any one of us, you would have to face a million mothers" (Gilman, 1998, p. 56). As is also discussed by Gubar (1983), gender roles have been so strongly shifted by Herlanders that the three men cannot help feeling inferior before the strength and determination of these women:

> *Secondary creatures, they are herded in like cattle, bedded down like babies, and put on display as anatomical curiosities marketable only for matrimony. Considered inferior for their secondary sexual characteristics, they become petulant, irritable, jealous, vain of their physical appearance, in need of reassurance, rivalrous for approval. (p. 141)*

Representation of Herlanders as strong and healthy beings is not limited to the threat that the three men encounter in the beginnings of the novel only. Believing that women are not created for doing hard-work, Jeff eagerly tries to grab the fruit basket Celis holds. This, for sure, is a stunning moment for her since Celis is incapable of understanding why women cannot carry a small basket full of fruits:

> *She looked out across the fields to where some women were working, building a new bit of wall out of large stones; looked back at the nearest town with its woman-built houses; down at the smooth, hard road we were walking on; and then at the little basket he had taken from her. (Gilman, 1998, p. 79)*

Without even saying a word, then, Celis implies how they could actually live without the help of the male for at least two thousand years and that how Jeff behaves is merely a manifestation of the conventional way of thinking in his own patriarchal world, for in Herland, "[t]here was no accepted standard of what was 'manly' and what was 'womanly'" (Gilman, 1998, p. 79). Correspondingly, Gilman triumphs one more time in her discussion that physical beauty is not compulsory for the female and that physical strength is not reserved to the male only. Moreover, when the three men acknowledge

that all clothes in Herland are designed in accordance with their functionality, they are highly surprised since in our world women wear clothes which are aesthetic and beautiful to the eye. Herlanders, on the other hand, cannot understand why people should wear *decorative* clothes if they have no function at all, for they wear clothes that are proper to their works and seasons without such concepts as fashion or body aesthetics in their minds. Terry inquires "if they [Herlanders] used feathers for their hats. [...] He made a few sketches of our women's hats, with plumes and quills and those various tickling things" (Gilman, 1998, p. 42). Correspondingly, Herlanders come up with the question if the men in their land also use such decorative clothes which connotes the idea that in Gilman's terms, everything for men should also be used for women while all societal impositions for women should also be applied for men. Step by step, Vandyck approaches to the notion that the values in our world are only impositions and not actually crucially essential for the welfare of our people. He asserts that "those 'feminine charms' we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity – developed to please us because they had to please us" (Gilman, 1998, p. 50). By doing so, femininity and attributions to the female as well as the essentialist approaches of the man-made world are interrogated again. Vandyck asserts "[t]o these women we came, filled with the ideas, convictions, traditions, of our culture, and undertook to rouse in them the emotions which – to us – seemed proper" (Gilman, 1998, p. 82). As suitable to the aims of eutopian writing, Vandyck triggers the chain of thoughts in his mind and gradually comes to the conclusion by breaking his habitual way of thinking that different lives are possible. "For the sake of women's autonomy and superiority, Gilman, [thus], evades the myths of femininity and physical attractiveness" (Ying, 2013, p. 673). Underscoring one more time that each sex might have biological differences, Gilman manifests that human is the core of all, not genders. As Somel also claims it, "in a bi-sexual race the distinctive features of each sex must be intensified. But surely there are characteristics enough which belong to People" (Gilman, 1998, p. 76). Gilman, thus, does not refuse the biological differences but she underlines that the human race should embrace whatever is common for the whole race. This is why Vandyck confesses that "the more we [the three men] knew of theirs [Herlanders' country], the less we boasted" (Gilman, 1998, p. 76). As a distorting mirror, then, Gilman presents her readers that the man-made world could actually be twisted and reformed.

Progression through learning and practicing is one of the most essential duties and intuitions of Herlanders. Therefore, the unexpected intrusion of the three men is eagerly embraced by the three Herlanders, Moadine, Zava, and Somel, so as to learn as much as possible from Jeff, Vandyck and Terry. These three women have been ascribed as tutors to these three men, in fact, for they do not know about the language and the societal order in Herland. However, their relationship is actually a mutual one since the men learn what it is to live in Herland while Herlanders find out how the world outside their own country is and whether they should open up their community to a bi-sexual way of life after two thousand years. Their affair could easily be likened to that of a criminal and an inspector's, inclusive of dozens of questions and answers for understanding and solving the case. Therefore, *Herland* stands out as "a place the reader can visit in order to gain a vantage point outside the prevailing culture" (Peyser, 1992, p. 1). All questions bring about other questions and they are excessively helpful in undermining the prevalent patriarchal values in our world, which, for sure, serves to the utmost aim of Gilman, for she takes it very seriously to make the unthinkable thinkable. Vandyck portrays the sessions of lectures and questions as follows:

> *What they were doing with us was like – like – well, say like Napoleon extracting military information from a few illiterate peasants. They knew just what to ask, and just what use to make of it, they had mechanical appliances for disseminating information almost equal to ours at home; and by the time we were led forth to lecture, our audiences had thoroughly mastered a well-arranged digest of all we had previously given to our teachers, and were prepared with such notes and questions as might have intimidated a university professor. (Gilman, 1998, pp. 55 - 56)*

The three men, then, turn out to be as laboratory mice for Herlanders. They are highly developed in science and the art of rhetoric; this is why Herlanders are considerably competent at how and why they will do their research. The unending cycles of research and science, then, become the very roots of the beautiful and well-organised Herland, which is described in a more detailed way as follows:

> *I [Vandyck] could appreciate perfect roads, as dustless as a swept floor; the shades of endless lines of trees; the ribbon of flowers that unrolled beneath*

*them; and the rich comfortable country that stretched off and away, full of varied charm.*

*We [the three men] rolled through many villages and towns, and I soon saw that the parklike beauty of our first-seen city was no exception. (Gilman, 1998, p. 37)*

Not surprisingly, this is another Gilmanian trick to suggest that science and scientific approaches are not under the monopoly of the male-oriented world, either. Herlanders have so greatly achieved to make use of nature according to their own requirements that in the beginning of the novel, the three men cannot help presuming that there are certainly men somewhere in the country. The question-and-answer sessions are also useful in distorting some specific stereotypical gender roles. Virginity, for instance, is not comprehensible enough for Herlanders since it is, to their view, such a trivial matter in their world. When Somel asks what virgin is, Jeff replies her by stating that "[a]mong mating animals, the term *virgin* is applied to the female who has not mated" (Gilman, 1998, p. 39), on which he has to confront with a highly logical question about its correspondence for the male. As the embodiment of another patriarchal value, virginity is put forth by Gilman so that readers could start interrogating about the ridiculous *normality* of the tradition since, as Somel also reasons over the matter, "one cannot mate without the other surely. Is not each then – virgin – before mating" (Gilman, 1998, p. 40)? This is another attribution to human being as thinking animals. The powerful mental faculties of Herlanders, as well as their competence in reasoning and philosophizing dismantle the primitive idea that women are not proper for anything other than their domestic spheres. After all, the saying encapsulates all human beings as thinking animals, not merely the male. The "law of brain-action tends to make it easier for humans to 'personalize' than to 'generalize'" (Egan, 1989, p. 109). This is exactly what the three men experience in the example of the questioning of virginity among many other constructions. Until they encounter with Somel's questions, they have never thought about the attribution of this concept specifically to the female, for they are unaware of these impositions due to personalization, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the male-dominated norms. In other words, they do not realize that virginity is not a gender-specific term. From this point of view, it is possible to assert that Gilman's feminist ideas are directly linked to Humanism as well as Social Darwinism. She certainly believes that

human social progress is "an evolutionary process which follows the same scientifically observable patterns as principles as does animal evolution" (Egan, 1989, p. 105). Therefore, it is scientifically impossible to acknowledge that women are not suitable for works which require mental activities and reasoning. Even after a hundred years after Gilman's publication of these ideas, the present world includes such countries and communities which take women for granted merely for domestic labour and child-rearing. Moreover, Egan (1989) also asserts Gilman's notions over the fact that evolution chain has malfunctioned somewhere in the history of humanity and puts forth that "[t]o her [Gilman's] mind, one half of the human race had for many centuries been held at an inferior stage of evolution by the other half, with the effect that the evolutionary progress of both was jeopardized" (p. 106). It is, therefore, considerably vivid that Gilman creates Herland and Herlanders so as to show the consequences of a natural and equal way of evolution in both sexes, disregarding the societal impositions and regulations. She, in other words, draws a picture of how both men and women suffer because of this malfunctioning chain of evolution. This is why, contrary to some scholars' arguments, Gilman does not consider women as superior to men or vice versa. On the contrary, she believes that women and men are naturally equal as all other animals in the wild. She does not disregard the biological differences; however, she emphasizes that those biological differences do not necessitate societal attributions to specific groups and gender-based roles, for they do not exist in nature. Therefore, rather than a revolutionizing approach, Gilman proposes modifications and reform in societies.

The vision and way of life Herlanders have are surely adopted with a very well-organised and functional education system, applied to everyone in the country in accordance with their interests that they discover themselves. In other words, education is such a naturalized phenomenon for Herlanders that they become competent in whatever is joyous for them. All the country, thus, is an education arena for the babies and children in Herland. Somel explains their education theory as follows:

> *The mind is as natural a thing as the body, a thing that grows, a thing to use*
> *and enjoy. We seek to nourish, to stimulate, to exercise the mind of a child*
> *as we do the body. There are the two main divisions in education: [...] the*

> *things it is necessary to know and the things it is necessary to do. (Gilman,*
> *1998, p. 89)*

As is obvious, Herlanders are born into an education system constituted by a mixture of mental and bodily training. On the condition that both male and female babies in our world start learning in a more functional way in comparison to deductive methods of teaching, everyone may have the chance to develop skills that will be more meaningful and subservient to their ends in life. Put another way, both the body and the mind deserve the same level of interest in terms of education and they should be trained in the most stimulating way so that they can be functional for life and the future of the society. Moreover, Somel demonstrates how babies and children in Herland learn without even realizing that they actually go through an education procedure as follows:

> *With the babies, as you may have noticed, we first provide an environment*
> *which feeds the mind without tiring it; all manner of simple and interesting*
> *things to do, as soon as they are old enough to do them; physical properties,*
> *of course, come first. But as early as possible, going very carefully, not to*
> *tax the mind, we provide choices, simple choices, with very obvious causes*
> *and consequences. (Gilman, 1998, p. 91)*

Learning according to their own interests in the most suitable and joyful way, thus, Herlander daughters turn out to be Herlander mothers and teachers of the future so as to raise and help other Herlander children. Learning is, as (Martin, 1985) puts it, "an unintended, unanticipated by-product of what is called to be natural activity" (p. 147). The system Gilman proposes, therefore, is significant since her design opens to the freedom of women again because in Herland, everyone has her own profession and no one is confined in her home. The domestic labour of our sense of home, therefore, is distributed to the whole country for the professionals. If Gilman's design of education could be applied to both sexes in our world, then, women would probably not have to be acclaimed as responsible for those household services, each of which actually require a different competence and profession.

> *[A]ll the evils of the private home – isolation of women, amateur unhealthy*
> *cooking, the waste of labour and products, improper upbringing of children,*
> *lack of individual privacy – are avoided not by destroying the idea of home*

*but by extending it so the race is viewed as a family and the world as its*
*home. (Gubar, 1983, p. 143)*

Independence of women and unbinding them from their domestic spheres, thus, depend on an education system that can provide a gender-neutral approach to every child since the gender-neutral education will, in turn, bring about the naturalization of all professions. It should be provided in such a way that each child should embrace his/her education with their utmost interest. As Vandyck also asserts it, what modern world needs is "all education but no schooling" (Gilman, 1998, p. 91), which also connotes how Gilman is opposed to another institutionalized control mechanism of the society, for institutionalized schooling teaches what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman as well as what is manly and what is womanly. It would be unfair to claim that education in Herland lacks ideology and that education – or better to call it as schooling – in our world is full of ideologies. However; what matters between these two forms of education and strategy is their masculine and feminine essences. Because education is formed by feminine perspectives in Herland, the country "was all theirs [Herlander children's], waiting for them to learn, to love, to use, to serve" (Gilman, 1998, p. 88). On the other hand, since there is schooling in our world which is shaped by the male-dominant ideals rather than a system of gender-neutral education, "our own little boys plan to be 'a big soldier' or 'a cowboy', or whatever pleases their fancy" (Gilman, 1998, p. 88) which explains why there are deadly wars and various diseases as well as poverty and competition in our societies. In addition, female students are exposed to these male ideals and "our little girls plan for the kind of home they mean to have, or how many children" (Gilman, 1998, p. 88) which, for sure, points out the female to draw their own domestic borders and stay there until they are fed by the male figure in their private families. Herlanders, in contrast, "were born to it [the system], reared in it, […] it was as natural and universal with them as the gentleness of doves or the alleged wisdom of serpents" (Gilman, 1998, p. 67). In other words, while children in our world are filled with gender-based ideals through education, their sense of *natural* way of life adds another burden on their shoulders whereas the children in Herland do not suffer from normative references since the system does not allow it. Therefore, their sense of *natural* way of life provides them with a more liberated environment to live in. Vandyck also suggests that "our children grow up in private homes and families, with every effort made to protect and

seclude them from a dangerous world" (Gilman, 1998, p. 86), thereby underlining the notion that private families add to people's perception of the necessity of competition among children, which, in turn, puts societies in a vicious cycle of deterioration of the world, for the world is not a dangerous place but people make the world an insecure planet; nevertheless, "here [in Herland] they grew up in a wide, friendly world, and knew it for theirs, from the first" (Gilman, 1998, p. 86) not because they have less significance than our children in our world, but because progression as well as community are the essential components of the system. "In Gilman's utopian vision, the interests of women, children, and the state become one, so that an education for citizens is an education for mothers" (Martin, 1985, p. 151); correspondingly, "an education for motherhood, is an education for citizenship" (Martin, 1985, p. 151) in Herland. This is why children do not compete with each other in Herland. Instead, they focus on whatever they find interesting, thereby supporting the sustainability of progression.

As Martin (1985) also puts it, "[t]he women in Herland have great intellectual curiosity, profound powers of observation, a fund of theoretical knowledge, and a highly developed practical intelligence" (p. 140). Shaping their state as well as their education system in accordance with what is essential for their progression and society, Herlanders hold on to required scientific areas only. They have a high level of information about astronomy, mathematics, and physiology. Moreover, they are considerably good at scientific areas at hand and open to practice such as chemistry, botany, and physics. Geography, geology, and anthropology, however, are some certain branches that women in Herland have no idea of. Considering History, other than their ancient traditions, they know nothing; they "ignored their past and built daringly for the future" (Gilman, 1998, p. 95) since they believe that whatever past is past and they are merely concerned with the notion of becoming better than their ancestors. In other words, "[i]dentifying change with progress, Gilman takes experimental science as the proper mode of acquiring knowledge and makes the growth and development of Herland a primary concern of its inhabitants" (Martin, 1985, p. 158). This is exactly the reason why there is no one in Herland who is competent in medicinal areas or military and judicial issues; they have nothing to experiment on these fields since they have already coped with these issues years ago and do not need them anymore. Vandyck asserts how some disciplines faded away in Herland as follows:

> *Physiology, hygiene, sanitation, physical culture – all that line of work had*
> *been perfected long since. Sickness was almost wholly unknown among*
> *them, so much so that a previously high development in what we call*
> *"science of medicine" had become practically a lost art. They were clean-*
> *bread, vigorous lot, having the best of care, the most perfect living*
> *conditions always. (Gilman, 1998, p. 61)*

Obviously, then, science and education have been essentially important in providing the Herlanders with a secure and clean environment, devoid of wars and diseases. The lost art to Vandyck, therefore, "is actually a triumph, medicine having been rendered obsolete thanks to their [Herlanders'] success in ecology, nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, and eugenics" (Christensen, 2017, p. 289). They owe these all to their ancestors who were merely concerned with progression and their aim, therefore, is to be the great progressive ancestors of future Herlanders. Moreover, as Bryson (2002) also puts, "scientific inquiry is not value-free after all, but rather a projection of male assumptions, interests, and biases upon the study of the natural world and human culture" (p. 58). Science and education are still problematic in some certain areas in the modern world where women have to face various difficulties since these areas are also believed to be reserved for the male and have been shaped by the male hegemony. Shiva (2010) also contributes to this problem as follows:

> *[T]he dominant science emerged as a liberating force not for humanity as a*
> *whole (though it legitimised itself in terms of universal betterment of the*
> *species), but as a masculine and patriarchal project which necessarily*
> *entailed the subjugation of both nature and women. (p. 15)*

Gilman, however, breaks this off and urges her readers to believe that an alternative world and alternative lives are certainly possible, which, for sure, is considerably related to the nature of feminist utopian writing since "women's fantasies have frequently been feminist in nature and that, concomitantly, feminism imagines an alternative reality that is truly fantastic" (Gubar, 1983, p. 139). What is essential for both sexes is to change their current vision and habitual way of thinking. Vandyck, for instance, confesses that he has always been proud of his country and has constantly believed that the USA was the best of all; however, "the better Herland looks as a matriarchal culture, the worse patriarchal America seems in contrast" (Gubar, 1983, p. 141). Also, despite Americans' high level

of general intelligence and compulsory public education, Vandyck is forced to admit that "in proportion to their [Herlanders'] opportunities, they were far better educated than our people" (Gilman, 1998, p. 55) and that there are better states compared to the USA, for "[f]rom the first memory, they [Herlanders] knew Peace, Beauty, Order, Safety, Love, Wisdom, Justice, Patience, and Plenty" (Gilman, 1998, p. 85) thanks to their sense of progression and education system whereas Vandyck's world is constituted by "warring nations, […] aristocracy and its ambitions, […] wealth and poverty opposition" (Gilman, 1998, p. 85).

As aforementioned, private family is one other thing Gilman strictly opposes to since she believes that rather than living in private families which promote the urge of competitions and wars, uniting as one body – or one huge family – is much more convenient for the good of all humanity. In this sense, Herland is but one great example of how a nation can be successful without competitions or wars since no woman is on top of another in terms of social and economic conditions in Herland. They find their own ways altogether when they start to run out of resources, which, in the end, makes them sustain peace among all with the same standards. In addition, another reason why Herlanders are so successful is because they ignore individuality and focus on communal requirements. Rather than various private bodies, they are one whole unit. "Therefore, they habitually considered and carried out plans for improvement which might cover centuries" (Gilman, 1998, p. 67). As an enormous family, therefore, Herlanders do not have any ideas about what a private family is. Correspondingly, they do not figure out the concept of marriage is in our land. Standing out as another control mechanism in our world, marriage is one of the biggest enemies of the female since this institution is inclusive of gender-based attributions in itself. To Ehrenreich and English (2005), a wife's "job was to bear the heirs of the businessman, lawyer, or professor she had married, which is what gave her a claim to any share of his income" (p. 116). Situating women in such positions as child-bearers, housemaids, and cooks among many others, marriage turns out to be the legitimised pattern of negating women's identity. This is why Jeff proposes that they can at least give their prospective wives in Herland their names (Gilman, 1998, p. 100). The three men are aware of the fact that in Herland, they can offer nothing promising to these women since their patriarchal shields are in their own world. They do not have their professions, incomes, societal statuses as married men, and so on.

Vandyck's self-realization is strikingly presented when he states "[t]here was so little, after all, that we could do for them. Here we were, penniless guests and strangers, with no chance even to use our strength and courage – nothing to defend them from or protect them against" (Gilman, 1998, p. 100). Without their male-dominated achievements, thus, the three men cannot accept themselves as worthy as they do in their own worlds. Women in Herland do not need their incomes, which clearly underscores how women in our world are given identities in their domestic spheres. A wife, therefore, becomes "a woman who belongs to a man" (Gilman, 1998, p. 100) as is described by Terry, the impotent voice of the patriarchy in Herland. Olive Schreiner (1985) names this economic dependency of women on men as *sex parasitism* which she comprehensively explicates as follows:

> *Among insects [...] while the male remains a complex, highly active, and winged creature, the female, fastening herself by the head into the flesh of some living animal and sucking its blood, has lost wings and all activity, and power of locomotion; having become a mere distended bladder, which when filled with eggs burst and ends a parasitic existence which has hardly been life. (p. 78)*

As such is the case, Gilman points out that marriage is a threatening institution that encapsulates women into their parasitic existence, bound to the men they belong to. However, rejecting to become someone's property, Alima rigidly turns down the idea of taking someone's name after marriage since she believes that a married woman "just loses hers and takes a new one" (Gilman, 1998, p. 101) whereas men keep their names and do not have to change anything at all. By losing their names, thus, women turn out to be sex toys for their husbands in our world since they depend on them to exist. Moreover, there is nothing for free in any market. Therefore, women pay for their survival fee through their bodies via sexual intercourse and they lead a parasitic way of life. As is done to *valuable dogs* in our world, "we put collars on them [dogs], with the owner's name, in case they do stray" (Gilman, 1998, p. 45). This is what marriage is as an institution if partners have a master and slave relationship in their marriage; the husband gives his name to the wife in case he loses his socially strengthened rights on the domestic slave. As is also stated by Terry, "[t]he men do everything. […] We do not allow our women to work. Women are loved – idolized – honored – kept in the home to care for the children" (Gilman, 1998, p. 52) just like dogs, defending their houses outside the home in the

garden. Women, thus, are made to believe that they are the dogs paying heed to their houses but without any permission to get into the house, which, in fact, is the outside world dominated by men. The social evolution of the human race, therefore, has a malfunctioning ring somewhere in the chain. Women have been convinced that they need to be protected against the dangers outside their domestic circles. That malfunctioning ring of the chain is well-presented by (Schreiner, 1985) in a detailed way as follows:

> *The parasitism of the human female becomes a possibility only when a point in civilisation is reached (such as that which was attained in the ancient civilisations of Greece, Rome, Persia, Assyria, India, and such as to-day exists in many of the civilisations of the East, such as those of China and Turkey), when, owing to the extensive employment of the labour of slaves, or of subject races or classes, the dominant race or class has become so liberally supplied with the material goods of life, that mere physical toil on the part of its own female members has become unnecessary. It is when this point has been reached, and never before, that the symptoms of female parasitism have in the past almost invariably tended to manifest themselves, and have become a social danger. (p. 80)*

The convictions that women have been forced to believe, therefore, stand out as other societal constructions by the male-hegemony. "For each man to have one whole woman to cook for and wait upon him is a poor education for democracy" (Gilman, 1911, p. 42). All roles, all responsibilities, thus, are educated by institutions and they are transferred as heritages of normative attributions for future generations. As is also confessed by Vandyck, for instance, "[t]he more external disagreement was in the matter of 'home', and the housekeeping duties and pleasures we, by instinct and long education, supposed to be inherently appropriate to women" (Gilman, 1998, p. 104). Vandyck's idea over the appropriacy of such domestic works for women is what Gilman severely attacks by implying that the social evolution functions in the wrong way. As such is the case, for a wife, "life became […] merely the gratification of her own physical and sexual appetites, and the appetites of the male, through the stimulation of which she could maintain herself" (Schreiner, 1985, p. 82). In other words, the ways wives should behave have been very well-established by the male hegemony and women are considered as mice running on a treadmill merely to grasp nothing out of it. The worse is that people cannot easily recognize the malfunctioning parts of the system when they do not stand on the margins.

Gilman (1900) argues how misguided the society is from the very early ages through various construction mechanisms as follows:

> *To the young girl [...] marriage is the one road to fortune, to life. She is born highly specialized as a female: she is carefully educated and trained to realize in all ways her sex-limitations and her sex-advantages. What she has to gain even as a child is largely gained by feminine tricks and charms. Her reading, both in history and fiction, treats of the same position for women; and romance and poetry give it absolute predominance. Pictorial art, music, the drama, society, everything, tells her that she is <u>she</u>, and that all depends on whom she marries. Where young boys plan for what they will achieve and attain, young girls plan for whom they will achieve and attain. (pp. 86 – 87)*

As such, the inputs provided by the cogs of the patriarchal wheel unconsciously make people subservient to the system. Terry, for sure, is a high-quality product of this system in our world since he believes that Herlanders have "neither the vices of men, nor the virtues of women – they're neuters! [...] They've no modesty, [...] no submissiveness, none of the natural yielding which is woman's greatest charm" (Gilman, 1998, p. 84). This patriarchal perspective, embodied highly vividly in Terry, demonstrates what a man-made society expects women to do. This system, moreover, calls all these expectations as natural by way of adhering them a virtuous meaning and property, thereby producing wives to look after their husbands while the husbands keep making their masculine dreams come true. Herlanders, however, "were women, *plus*, and so much plus that when they did not choose to let the womanness appear, you could not find it anywhere" (Gilman, 1998, p. 109) which emphasizes one more time that women should not be the domestic pets of men and that their femininity cannot be abused for the sake of their livelihood.

Vandyck's idea of womanhood and wifehood, though he is the only critical man within the group, should be questioned and well-established, for his expectations of his wife Ellador do not meet whatever he confronts after their marriage since sexual intercourse is not a matter of instinctive joy or pleasure for Herlanders. The reason for this is because there is a mutual relationship between sex functions of the female and the economic functions of the male. Gilman (1900) discusses about the issue as follows:

*She [a woman] gets her living by getting a husband. He [a man] gets his*
*wife by getting a living. It is to her individual economic advantage to secure*
*a mate. It is to his individual sexual advantage to secure economic gain. The*
*sex-functions to her have become economic functions. Economic functions*
*to him have become sex-functions. (p. 110)*

Therefore, this mutual relationship contributes to the sustainability of the devastating and abusive patriarchal societies. While women become legitimised prostitutes of one man so that she can be fed and clothed as much as the man allows her, the husband experiences his instinctive desires on the female body by way of supporting her economically. According to Gilman, then, "female sexual arts become crucial for attracting and keeping a man: woman therefore identifies herself with the sexual function completely, while man is considered the human prototype" (Gubar, 1983, p. 142). This is why there is no sexual desire in Herland; there are no such relationships among women in the country and "[w]ith no opposite sex to attract, the women have become the epitome of practicality, wearing comfortable tunics and short, carefree hair" (Knight, 2009, p. xiii), thereby underestimating the competition among people in our world who stive for getting a socially recognized status as well as reaching the mutual relationship through marriage. Put another way, in contrast to the culturally coded belief in our world that men are the human prototype, Herlanders emerge as the counterpart of the same archetype. Moreover, mating, to Herlanders, should only happen when the couple aims to have a baby just like animals who mate seasonally. As (Hausman, 1998) also puts forth, "'[d]esire' as we understand it […] is understood by Gilman to be a concept fabricated and perpetuated by men to maintain the 'excessive sex-distinction' that subordinates women to men" (p. 505). Desire – or sexual fulfilment – does not exist in Herland not because they are not bi-sexual but because they are able to reproduce parthenogenetically and they do not need a man's sexual desires to sustain the progression of their population.

*[Moreover] when the men meet the people of Herland, they, not the people,*
*become "sexed". The people, the women, remain unsexed, precisely because*
*the economy of their country, as well as the economy of their personhood,*
*can get along fine without "sex". (Hausman, 1998, p. 505)*

They get married to these three men with the purpose of trying to figure out what marriage is and if they really need to go back to a "bi-sexual race, meaning both sexes working

together for social progress" (Hudson, 2006, p. 9). Therefore, "the submissive sex, the male, is defined by a lack; men cannot produce children, and thus find themselves mere onlookers to the real business of life" (Peyser, 1992, p. 2). Furthermore, because marriage in most countries in our world legitimizes marital rape, sexual drives are also legalized merely because of the institutionalized way of life. Approximately more than a century ago, Gilman postulated this issue as a crime and manifested that violence under such circumstances constitute the right to self-defence. When Terry forcibly tries to have sex with his Herland wife Alima with the idea that "[t]here never was a woman yet that did not enjoy being mastered" (Gilman, 1998, p. 111), "[h]is frustration fiercely erupts when he finally realizes both cultural Phallus and biological penis cannot be transcendental signifiers claiming male mastery" (Chang, 2010, p. 334) and he has to confront a real act of violence by Alima and her comrades. Wienen (2012) exemplifies this issue as follows:

> *As with the founding of the Herland republic some two thousand years*
> *before, the outbreak of masculine violence is met neither with feminine*
> *submission nor with pacifist nonresistance, but by a precisely calibrated*
> *application of force, as Terry is swiftly restrained first by a symbolically*
> *appropriate kick to the groin by Alima, and then by a superior contingent of*
> *matronly home guards. (pp. 199 – 200)*

The so-called natural drives, however, are infused in Terry so much so that it is impossible to make him conscious about what bodily integrity is and that how consent in such issues is critically significant. As a very strongly erected metaphor, the cultural phallus in our world turns out to be Terry's reason for his dismissal from Herland. In other words, Gilman explicitly demonstrates that cultural compositions are not always good for the whole society; while one class of the sexes is free to use them in accordance with their taste, the other class has to wander within the circles drawn for them by the privileged sex. Moreover, just like a slap in the face, Vandyck also suggests that "[i]n a court in our country he [Terry] would have been held quite 'within his rights'" (Gilman, 1998, p. 113). As such, rape cannot be justified just because people are married. Nevertheless, even after a century of the publication of Gilman's *Herland*, there are still many countries where marital rape is not considered as a crime since, as in the case with Terry, the cultural phallus is critically meaningful in our world, which, however, is fully distorted in Herland. He is in an unending quest to find the men he believes are definitely in the

country and fight them, for instance. Thus, he needs all the savage and violent acts that are brought about by the patriarchy itself. This is one other reason why he attempts to rape Alima, for he contends that it is his very own right to mate with her since they are now married. As (Chang, 2010) claims it, "[t]he harder he [Terry] displays patriarchal virility, the more he makes himself an alien in the women-centred world" (p. 334). Considering our world, then, it is highly visible that women rejecting to be subordinate to the male-centred world are alienated to the society they partake and they are also marginalized because of their *unnatural* way of thinking, for habitual way of thinking is what feeds the system.

Language, as is also discussed before, is another product of the male-dominated world and habits of thought. Therefore, the authority imposed on language manifests itself in all walks of life between the male and the female. Because it consists of the male ideology, language, too, asserts the masculine power on feminine bodies. Furthermore, the language system is so powerfully and successfully structured that it is not easy enough to be aware of the limitations it puts on women. Women and the female body are abstracted by the patriarchal language while men are concretized and erected as emblems of authority, giving meanings, adhering attributions and making decisions on behalf of the female body. Each man-made language, therefore, should be scattered so that women can convey the hidden meaning within their own bodies. The concealed meanings are not vivid to the masculine world since those meanings cannot reside in the masculine language. As such, women's utterances are considered as "contradictory words, somewhat mad from the standpoint of reason, inaudible for whoever listens to them with ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 29). In other words, women's own experiences – especially the auto-pleasure they have without the penetration of men – cannot be transposed and figured out within the male-dominated language, thereby paving the way for the erasure of women's sexual identity as well as taking each gender role for granted so that they cannot be destabilized. Women, therefore, do not co-exist with men but they become what the male want them to become. Gilman (1911) explains how the female identity is shaped within language as an addon on the male rather than an identity which is relative to the male:

> *Even in the naming of other animals we have taken the male as the race type,*
> *and put on a special termination to indicate "his female", as in lion, lioness;*

*leopard, leopardess; while all our human scheme of things rests on the same*
*tacit assumption; man being held the human type; woman a sort of*
*accompaniment and subordinate assistant, merely essential to the making of*
*people. (p. 20)*

Because there are no men in Herland, therefore, there are no such clashes or limitations on the meanings Herlanders intend to convey. However, it is not possible to assert that the three visitors in Herland are actually happy with this situation since they cannot exert their authority as they can in their world. This is why Terry protests and bursts out: "Of course they can't understand a Man's World! They aren't human – they're just a pack of Fe-Fe-Females" (Gilman, 1998, p. 68). Correspondingly, Terry's anger against Herlanders shall be considered under the fact that the authority he has had thanks to the language he uses is undermined by these women. None of the societal attributions, roles, and expectations the language has been defining for centuries is fulfilled in Terry's terms. Put another way, his keen insistence on his "conservative views on women disables him from perceiving and recognizing the women-dominated society. […] Terry is psychologically castrated and culturally segregated in his own disillusion of the Woman Country" (Chang, 2010, p. 334). If the case is reversed for our world, it is possible to claim that women are castrated both psychologically and physically as well as sexually since they cannot communicate as they really need within the borders of a hegemonic language. In our world, thus, the male-dominant language survives because it ignores the women experience and the female body. Irigaray (1985), decades after Gilman, exposes what this ignorance costs for women as follows:

*The rejection, the exclusion of a female imaginary certainly puts women in*
*the position of experiencing herself only fragmentarily, in the little-*
*structured margins of a dominant ideology, as waste, or excess, what is left*
*of a mirror invested by the (masculine) "subject" to reflect himself, to copy*
*himself. Moreover, the role of "femininity" is prescribed by this masculine*
*specula(riza)tion and corresponds scarcely at all to woman's desire, which*
*may be recovered only in secret, in hiding, with anxiety and guilt.*

The necessity to hide, the emotions of anxiety and guilt in Herland, however, do not exist on behalf of the Herlanders since their matriarchal language is not inclusive of binary poles to empower or unstrengthen individuals in the community. Instead, they use their

language to communicate and progress together. Because of this reason Terry is disregarded by young Herlanders when in a mastering manner he approaches them.

> *[H]is suave and masterful approach seemed to irritate them; his too-intimate glances were vaguely resented, his compliments puzzled and annoyed. Sometimes a girl would flush, not with drooped eyelids and inviting timidity, but with anger and a quick lift of the head. Girl after girl turned on her heel and left him, till he had but a small ring of questioners, and they, visibly, were the least "girlish" of the lot. (Gilman, 1998, pp. 73 - 74)*

It is, hence, explicit that Terry cannot communicate through a language which shares democratic values of humanity; on the contrary, he tries to assert his authority on the young Herlanders and the reason for this is Terry's necessity that he actually exists not only his patriarchal world but also in Herland. When he is refuted by the youngsters, he goes back to his primitive identity that is imposed on him by the system he was born into. He names the young Herlanders as "[b]oys! Nothing but boys, most of'em. A standoffish, disagreeable lot at that. Critical, impertinent youngsters. Not girls at all" (Gilman, 1998, p. 74). Accordingly, on experiencing that whatever functions proper to the system he has in his world does not actually work in Herland, Terry refers to young Herlanders in accordance with his own understanding which is rooted to his own male-dominated language again. All those attitudes shown by the youngsters are masculine in Terry's world. This is how he and his understanding are shaped. Therefore, he cannot come to terms that these youngsters are actually "keen, logical, inquiring minds, not overly sensitive" (Gilman, 1998, p. 74). The concepts and images in minds do not match with experiences in life because of the difference in ideologies in the process of language construction. "[U]nlike in the man-made world, the Herlanders do not treat [physical sexual difference] as particularly important let alone as the be-all and end-all of one's identity" (Hudson, 2006, p. 11). In our world, nevertheless, every identity is regarded in terms of its physical sexual difference, thereby bringing about gendered identities, some of which are castrated whereas some are elevated due to the dichotomy of the self and the other the man-made language includes. Our world, then, is the reflection of men and this is definitely the result of people using the educated language unconsciously. Through the end of the novel, Vandyck feels illuminated when he contemplates on how language and men actually dominate our world:

*When we say <u>men</u>, <u>man</u>, <u>manly</u>, <u>manhood</u>, and all the other masculine derivatives, we have in the background of our minds a huge vague crowded picture of the world and all its activities. To grow up and "be a man", to "act like a man" – the meaning and connotation is wide indeed. The vast background is full of marching columns of men, of changing lines of men, of long processions of men; of men steering their ships into new seas, exploring unknown mountains, breaking horses, herding cattle, ploughing and sowing and reaping, toiling at the forge and furnace, digging in the mine, building roads and bridges and high cathedrals, managing great businesses, teaching in all the colleges, preaching in all the churches; of men everywhere, doing everything – "the world".*

*And when we say <u>women</u>, we think <u>female</u> – the sex.*

*But to these women, in the unbroken sweep of this two-thousand-year-old feminine civilization, the word <u>woman</u> called up all that big background, so far as they had gone in social development, and the word <u>man</u> meant to them only <u>male</u> – the sex. (Gilman, 1998, pp. 116 - 117)*

Vandyck's consciousness is a highly strong emblem of the distortion of various attributions to women in our land since Herlanders prove to be the direct opposites of what people in our world expect women to be. This is another reason why progression is like a religion to Herlanders and that history is not significant for them. Historical accumulations have formed languages in our world, thereby having contributed to the never-ending subordination of the female. As such, "[w]oman always remains several, but she is kept from dispersion because the other is already within her and is autoerotically familiar to her" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 31). Hence, women are taught to suppress their own identities within their own bodies. In the end, rather than exploring their own identities, they could find feminine females or masculine females within their societies, for they are forced to copy the images of the male in their communities so as to assert their very own existence.

All in all, Gilman's *Herland* is worthy since it incorporates various norms to be questioned so as to manifest that constructions are not dogmatic and should be altered to have a more functional society. Moreover, cultural development should be entailed to natural evolution in order to prevent clashes among people within societies. At the end of

the novel, Vandyck wakes up from his prolonged patriarchal sleep and his consciousness is now raised to embrace the maltreatment of his world to the female and is convinced that the male and the female are the same in essence, for they belong to homo-sapiens and have common humane properties.

> *We talk fine things about women, but in our hearts we know that they are very limited beings – most of them. We honor them for their functional powers, even while we dishonor them by our use of it; we honor them for their carefully enforced virtue, even while we show by our own conduct how little we think of the virtue; we value them, sincerely, for the perverted maternal activities which make our wives the most comfortable of servants, bound to us for life with the wages wholly at our own decision, their whole business, outside of the temporary duties of such motherhood as they may achieve, to meet our needs in every way. Oh, we value them, all right, "in their place," which place is the home, where they perform that mixture of duties so ably described by Mrs. Josephine Dodge Daskam Bacon, in which the services of "a mistress" are carefully specified. […] But – that combination of industries, while convenient, and in a way economical, does not arouse the kind of emotion commanded by the women of Herland. These were women one had to love "up", very high up, instead of down. They were not pets. They were not servants. They were not timid, inexperienced, weak.*
> *(Gilman, 1998, p. 120)*

Gilman's own voice is highly audible in Vandyck's illuminating confession and she more or less summarizes some of her theoretical opinions through him. Presenting the hypocrisy of the society, she also conveys the message that although not all three visitors have changed their minds, Jeff has turned out to be a Herlander while Vandyck has completely changed his opinions about the two sexes. Terry, on the other hand, is expelled from Herland, connoting the notion that no one against the equal opportunities within the society will be able to survive in the end. Furthermore, what is significant for Gilman is the cooperation of the male and the female, for although they have biological differences, they belong to the same species. They are humans.

> *Men and women, masculinity and femininity, and masculine and feminine discourses do not have to be polarized opposites. In a communal spirit,*

*women and men can generate new ideas and new languages and discourses*

*that contribute to their progress as a species. (Hudson, 2006, p. 16)*

This, for sure, requires a comprehensive modification in all the habitual ways of thinking and accustomed ways of life which define gender roles within societies. Therefore, it is highly critical to stop living under the prevalent dysfunctional and sexist as well as discriminative system which creates and re-creates categorizations according to the changing ideologies. Although Gilman underscores the importance of motherhood as a very sacred profession that should be committed only by those who are really competent in doing it, the term does not eliminate – according to the inherent culture in the 21$^{st}$ century – the suggestive gender within it. Therefore, rather than motherhood, parenthood is clearly a better substitute for the term. In this way, it might be easier to passivize and discard pre-conditioned approaches to raising children by all members of societies, thereby naturalizing and normalizing the profession for both sexes. The world which inherits the male as the dominant class while domesticating the female as pets will definitely make people lose half of all their values and opportunities. Therefore, as a eutopian work, *Herland* is critically successful in presenting all readers the idea that another world where there is equality at all terms among people is possible. Hence, what makes the novel a significant one in terms of its efficiency is its aptitude, as Johnson-Bogart (1992) also suggests, "to open up the current reader's most deeply held assumptions, thereby enabling us to perceive the limitations of our own constructions of meaning with the possibility of exploring new identities" (p. 91).

# CHAPTER FOUR

# KATHERINE BURDEKIN AND HER NOVEL *SWASTIKA NIGHT*

## 4.1. Katherine Burdekin and Her Feminist Dystopian Stance

Katherine Burdekin was born in 1896 in Derbyshire, England and she went through both of the murderous and bloody world wars, which, by nature, constituted her scope and main themes for her fiction. Apart from the historical burdens she had to gone through, her personal experiences were also determinant on her ideology and stand in her society. As the youngest of four children, Burdekin had to be educated by a governess until she was nearly 12. Although her brothers were educated in Cheltenham College, Burdekin was not given the chance to attend the same college as a day student for six years until after her education from her governess. Furthermore, although one of her profound desires was "to attend Oxford like her brothers, her parents did not allow it" (Atasoy, 2018, p. 310). Instead, she married to Beaufort Burdekin and had two daughters only to have a divorce and go back to Cornwall from Australia, thereby focusing more on writing. As a woman who experienced one of the fastest evolving centuries, Burdekin was not much successful in breaking out the centuries-long patriarchal curse on women.

With the rising dominance of the fascist politics, women in the 20th century were outmanoeuvred and domesticized more and more, reduced into a group of one gender who owes all their reasons of existence to the welfare of the male by becoming their household keepers, sex toys, and bridges for the sustainability of the males' generation. The previously established masculine domination was already highly unshakable. Thus, Katherine Burdekin used various pseudonyms so that she could be noted among all the other men of the literary period. As is also stated by Williams (1999), many of the texts in the first half of the 20th century were "prophetic cautions

against the rise of totalitarianism, set in imagined near futures [and dealing] specifically with the destructive impact of sexual politics on modern history" (p. 151). Burdekin, not conforming to the various feminist writers of the period, does not believe that the established masculine society exists for the good of the male while it undermines the female identity and deteriorates women's conditions. On the contrary, she underlines the idea that gender dominance in fascist and totalitarian societies is but a tool of the fascists to provide "the co-operation of men who are themselves the victims of domination: no matter what their status, they are granted the assurance of still being superior to women" (Patai, 1985, p. v). The seeming superiority, therefore, provides the sustainability of the totalitarian regime; however, it also keeps the metaphorical murdering of its own children, the men. Put another way, totalitarian regimes, to Burdekin, stem from the tension and unending war between two genders which, in the end, results in one gender ruling over the other.

> *Burdekin's depiction of a totalitarian regime [...] [results] from a gender polarization that can degenerate into the world of Swastika Night with its hypertrophied masculinity on the one hand and its Reduction of Women on the other. Male egos and female bodies; male persons and female animals – these are the extremes of which an ideology of male supremacy is capable. (Patai, 1984, p. 87)*

Burdekin, therefore, underscores the source of totalitarianism as the male supremacy and believes that "Nazism is best understood as an extreme iteration of hypermasculinity, ultimately resulting in a world where women are caged, exploited, and regarded merely as animals for breeding" (Horan, 2018b, p. 93). It would be unjust to claim that Burdekin's notions over the position of women within a totalitarian society were mere irrelevant prejudices. As a woman having witnessed one of the worst dictators of all time, Burdekin acknowledged that Hitlerian ideology was on the rise and that Hitler's ideas on women were just as clear. In his *Mein Kampf* (1941), Adolf Hitler manifests his plans for a totalitarian government which aims to structure its pure race as follows:

> *What we [Germans] have to fight for is the security of existence and the increase of our race and our people, the nourishment of its children and the preservation of the purity of the blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland in order to enable our people to mature for the fulfilment of the*

*mission which the Creator of the universe has allotted also to them. (pp. 289 – 290)*

This is one reason why Burdekin implements women as prisoners of men and the totalitarian regime in cages, deprived of their maternal rights and exempted from any sexual joys with the male, for sexual affair is not to experience joy but to procreate Hitler's pure race.

> *[In other words,] Swastika Night not only captures elements of a cult of masculinity and the repression of women which were frequently evident in the development of the Hitlerian state in the '30s; it also brings out a deep connection, in the larger perspective of the narration, between totalitarianism and male chauvinism, between the establishment of a strong state based on theocratic principles and the inevitable reduction of the female component to a totally subordinate role. (Pagetti et al., 1990, p. 361)*

Women's imprisonment for reproduction without their consent, thus, makes them victims of rape. Their rapists, however, are not restricted to men but could be generalized more to the fascist government and masculine values, too. "In a traditional sexually-polarised society, women challenge male supremacy by their right of rejection" (Patai, 1985, p. v) as in the case with Gilman's *Herland*; nevertheless, Burdekin's women are only flesh and blood, the optimum body for procreation, bereft of everything that makes them feminine. Patai (1985) also suggests that "the institutionalization of rape [stands] as a routine practice, a constant reminder to women of their lack of importance and autonomy" (p. v). As such, Burdekin's feminist dystopian novel incorporates various attributions to threats for undermining women's autonomy as well as the imperceptible but well-founded apparatuses which undermine and disempower both the feminine and the masculine. In other words, Burdekin "does not represent one group as merely white and innocent, but she spotlights the fallacious arguments of both the patriarchal and matriarchal rules and challenges our established notions" (Atasoy, 2018, p. 318). Therefore, she strongly sticks to the idea that gender equality is the utmost "remedy for totalitarian tendencies everywhere and a preventive measure to secure democracy" (Horan, 2018b, p. 93) whereas gender polarization as well as the cult of masculinity are power supplies for the sustainability of totalitarian regimes.

**4.2. *Swastika Night* as an Omen for the Everlasting Future Male Supremacy**

*Swastika Night* was written in 1937, only seven years before the World War II broke out. Although the novel incorporates various anti-fascist notions and manifests how fascism empowers the male dominance over the female body, what differentiates it from many other dystopic novels of the same period is that rather than the male or the female, it actually satirizes and reprimands the masculine and feminine modes of behaviour mingled with the rising fascist ideology. Moreover, 1930s were the years when there were certain charismatic fascists like Mussolini, Dollfuss, Salazar, and Franco among many others, trailing millions of people. Hitler was only a figure on the stage of history and he was emerging as a sinister threat to humanity. In Burdekin's *Swastika Night*, as appropriate to dystopian writing, Burdekin foresees those possible threats. The *not-yet-become*, in other words, was about to become real:

> *[T]he historical present and the imaginary future confront one another in the fiction, superimposing blurred images of women dominated by male supremacy, of totalitarian dreams that are destined to become "reality" (the "reality" which Swastika Night brings into open), and of operations of racial extermination that in actuality had already been announced and were ready to be carried out. (Pagetti et al., 1990, p. 364)*

Burdekin's dystopic novel, thus, turns out to be including a story to become true in 1940s especially in terms of the extermination of certain races, for "in [her] dystopic future, they [Jews] have been exterminated (albeit not in death camps) as an inferior race, and their places taken by Christians" (Pagetti et al., 1990, p. 363). As for women, however, although the speculative walking wombs have not *yet* become real, it does not necessarily mean that it will never come true at one point in history, for as Patai (1985) argues, "fascism is not qualitatively but only quantitatively different from the everyday reality of male dominance, a reality that polarises males and females in terms of gender roles" (p. iv). In other words, Burdekin's approach to the Nazi ideology is significant since she addresses the ideology itself as "the cult of masculinity" (Patai, 1985, p. iv). The ideology, therefore, is not only a political or military stand but also a social one that becomes the very source of polarization since the darker the ideology highlights the gender differences and the roles bound to those differences, the stronger and more sustainable it is. The cult of masculinity, thus, should be created by the dominant discourse and imposed upon

everyone by way of such a strong and irreversible method that it should be perceived as if people were willing to admit it so as to overcome any possible resistance. As such, in Burdekin's *Swastika Night*, approximately seven hundred years after the World War II, the world is now divided into two empires, the German and the Japanese; all former civilisations were conquered, not assimilated but were made to become servants to the supreme German Empire; women were dehumanized and have been kept in cages in order to sustain the number of the future soldiers; language of all other former civilizations were made redundant but not erased for certain reasons that serve to the almighty again; history was changed and mostly erased so that the German Empire could easily manipulate whatever is servient to his needs; science, irrelevant to the sovereignty of the German Empire, has been abolished; laws and regulations are supportive of all the ideological apparatuses of the ruling hegemony; Hitlerism, the empire's religion after World War II, replaced all previously practised religions. Briefly, in Hitler's German Empire "[n]othing is dishonourable, nothing is forbidden, nothing is evil, if it is done for Germany and for Hitler's sake" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 32).

Hitlerism is introduced to the readers at the very beginning of the novel. As expected, the religion is completely masculine, opening up no space for a female soul. As such, even the birth of Hitler is not bound to a female body but a male God. All German men

> *believe […] in God the Thunderer, who made this physical earth on which*
> *men march in their martial bodies, and in His Heaven where all heroes are,*
> *and His Son our Adolf Hitler, the Only Man. Who was, not begotten, not*
> *born of a woman, but Exploed! (Burdekin, 1985, p. 5)*

As an unconsciously internalized pattern, as is the case with most dogmatic thoughts, everyone is expected to consent to the ideology encompassed in the subject religion, for it is one of the most useful methods of organising a society in the way the powerful intends to. The prayer aforementioned might be very familiar for someone from Christianity since the original text is "I BELIEVE in God the father almightie, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ only sonne our lord. Whiche was conceived by the holy ghost, borne of the virgin marie" (Cummings, 2011, p. 247). Nazi ideology, therefore, erased women from religion, too since the dehumanization process should not be rejected, refuted, or challenged at all. As adapted from the Christian liturgy, the prayer is thus orchestrated in

every religious practice conducted by men in Hitler's church. The difference between the Hitlerian and Christian prayers, moreover, is impossible to miss since Hitler's is exclusive of a sacred woman having given birth to a holy son. Even in birth, therefore, Hitler is not smirched by a woman. As such, "[f]rom the Head of His Father, He the perfect, the untainted Man Child, whom [Germans], mortals and defiled in [their] birth and in [their] conception, must ever worship and praise" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 6). Because women are detested by every loyal citizen and member of the holy German Empire, anyone is tainted by birth since they were born of a woman. Hitler, thus, turns out to be a prophet, a sacred heart and soul that is not denigrated by a womb. "*The Book of Common Prayer* was the central text of the English Reformation that defined a new, vernacular religious practice, separate from Rome" (Taunton, 2020, p. 387). Therefore, Hitlerism could also be evaluated as a complete break off from all other religions of the past, bringing about a new world order, adorned by a new and over-masculine religion.

Other prayers in Hitlerism, furthermore, are inclusive of the new values of the new world and all these values are masculine, which clearly prioritise violence, war, barbarous fights, brutality, and ruthlessness among many others while, at the same time, rigidly forbids the socially constructed female values such as tenderness, compassion, kindness and so on. The prayer, "And I believe in pride, in courage, in violence, in brutality, in blood-shed, in ruthlessness, and all other soldierly and heroic virtues. Heil Hitler" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 6), is immensely suggestive of destructive values and these values are imposed upon all Nazis who do not question, for a challenge to these values is but castration. This is what Burdekin attempts to warn the world about with her dystopic future, for these masculine values do not make someone more manly or more humane; on the contrary, they bring about more violence, more wars, more deaths. The deadly consequences of World War II prove her futuristic visions were truthful, in fact. Exclusion of women from all parts of life except for reproduction would definitely have results. Alfred, the Christian pilgrim and technician, draws his conclusions as follows:

> *The human values of this world are masculine. There are no feminine values because there are no women. Nobody could tell what we should admire or what we should do, or how we should behave if there were women instead of half-women. It is an unimaginable state of things. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 108)*

Women, of course, did not decide to exclude themselves from all walks of life. Men, moreover, did not suddenly decide that they should dehumanize women and move them to the margins of the society. It did not happen, for it was made to happen by way of various institutions and apparatuses, one of which is undeniably religion. The long quotation from the prayer conducted in Hitler's church vividly locates all subjects in their proper places within the society:

> *As a woman is above a worm,*
> *So is a man above a woman.*
> *As a woman is above a worm,*
> *So is a worm above a Christian.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *So, my comrades, the lowest thing,*
> *The meanest, filthiest thing*
> *That crawls on the face of the earth*
> *Is a Christian woman.*
> *To touch her is the uttermost defilement*
> *For a German man.*
> *To speak to her only is a shame.*
> *They are all outcast, the man, the woman and the child.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *As a man is above a woman,*
> *So is a Nazi above any foreign Hitlerian.*
> *As a Nazi is above a foreign Hitlerian,*
> *So is a Knight above a Nazi.*
> *As a Knight is above a Nazi,*
> *So is Der Fuehrer (whom may Hitler bless)*
> *Above all Knights,*
> *Even above the Inner Ring of Ten.*
> *And as Der Fuehrer is above all Knights,*
> *So is God, our Lord Hitler, above Der Fuehrer. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 7)*

As such, Hitlerism asks all its male subjects to refrain from equalizing themselves with the female in any way. The hierarchy drawn from the prayer boosts up the motivation of men for fighting, killing, raping and so on while it also reminds women of their one and only responsibility, reproduction for future Men-Children, as well as their status as being above a worm or a Christian woman only. It is not individuals who show willingness or consent to these constitutional so-called necessities. It is the apparatus that calls for immediate and urgent fulfilment of norms so as to be acknowledged as a subject of the same race. Louis Althusser (2014) names it as the Ideological State Apparatus (hereafter ISA) and defines it in a nutshell as follows:

> An Ideological State Apparatus is a system of defined institutions, organizations, and the corresponding practices. Realized in the institutions, organizations, and practices of this system is all or part (generally speaking, a typical combination of certain elements) of the State Ideology. The ideology realized in an ISA ensures its systemic unity on the basis of an 'anchoring' in material functions specific to each ISA; these functions are not reducible to that ideology, but serve it as a support. (p. 77)

Not limited to religion, there are various ideological state apparatuses that reflect the ideology of the state in their essence. These functional apparatuses seem free from the state or the state ideology; nevertheless, they are the symbolic states around every individual however private they are. Although it might seem that everyone is free to believe in a religion or not, the dominant religious atmosphere as well as the social life force people to hide their inner thoughts, beliefs, and reflections in their own private spheres. Althusser (2014) classifies the ISAs as follows:

> the religious ISA (the system of the different churches),
>
> the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'schools'),
>
> the family ISA,
>
> the legal ISA,
>
> the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties),
>
> the trade union ISA,

*the communications ISA[3] (press, radio, and television, etc),*

*the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sport, etc.). (p. 243)*

Considering the ISAs above, it is possible to claim that the ideology of a state – be it socialism, communism, capitalism, liberalism, or despotism among many others – infiltrates all the functional institutions so as to 'discipline' the society in their private spaces. Althusser (2014) also argues that contrary to the Repressive State Apparatus (hereafter RSA) which "functions by 'violence'" (p. 244), ISAs are private and the effects, impositions, enforcements are not visible in a crystal-clear way since they "*function 'by ideology'*" (Althusser, 2014, p. 244).

Hitlerism, therefore, is imposed upon all the subjects in the German Empire with the institutionalized religion, formed by "the fundamental laws of Hitler Society" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 7) which are known to the German since their childhood. Thus, people unquestionably admit that women are the lowest of all, except for the worms; furthermore, Christian women are doubly insulted, devalued and dehumanized since they are basically Christian, one of the older religions which has been loathed by the German throughout centuries. For sure, breaking out of the borders of these institutionalized religious norms is possible only if one acknowledges to be marginalized from the rest of the society, which, in fact, is not an easy step to be taken under such a potent dictatorship and in such a violent community because in the German Empire, as was in Germany in the early 20th century, "the churches are ossified: religiosity becomes part of a 'home and garden culture'" (Glaser, 2020, p. 177). Punishment, either by state or by the society, therefore, becomes inevitable, which makes resistance and challenge to the dominant ideology even harder. As Althusser (2014) also puts forth, "churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks" (p. 244). On an occasion, for instance, knowing that their species is facing the threat of extinction because there are less females and more males in the empire now, the Knight accidentally speaks his inner thoughts to the women in the church and advises them to bear strong daughters, which of course is a shock to the sopping women there. However, even the silent and unresponsive standing of the Knight was enough for the

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[3] Social media platforms as well as the entire internet sources might also be added into this category since they are considerably effective in decision-making, performing cancel culture, promoting fake/real news stories, etc.

women to believe that "[t]hey had actually thought, with appalling and yet quite typical feminine stupidity, that he had told them to bear strong daughters" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 15). This is how the embedded ideology in religion, embroidered with the threat of violence, helps women to hate and devalue themselves, thereby cooperating with the dominant ideology that has been burdening them for centuries. The system, moreover, functions perfectly well when Martha, an old woman, courageously puts forth that the Knight has really told them to bear strong daughters only to be loathed by her own sex, for "[u]gly as they were, they could see she was uglier. A revolting dirty old woman, speaking an awful toothless German" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 15). Althusser's religious ISA, therefore, proves itself as completely useful in sustaining the dominant ideology. The Knight's mistake is now cleared off by women who thought they misheard the Knight due to their naturally inherent stupidity, and the women also helped find a scapegoat, Martha, to show their commitment to the ideology. In parallel with the National Socialist ideology, the women in the presence of the Knight conform to what the dominant doctrine expects them to do, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the petit bourgeois described by Glaser (2020) as follows:

> *The petit bourgeois is asocial: the fellow human to him is human material, usable subject matter which may be manipulated. The <u>Spiesser</u> represses his own humanity; his intimate world reveals a hopeless inner emptiness: his girl as his beloved is sexual animal, as German woman she is a mechanical womb; enthroned as heroic patriarch the man towers over the family. [...] Instincts are not absorbed, nor are they even sublimated; they thrive in the 'forbidden'. (p. 177)*

In the end, the ideology rules itself even more powerful than before since even when the Knight, an agent of the patriarchy, is wrong in certain ways, he is not wrong in the eyes of the subjects at all.

Degradation and dehumanization of women are not only provided by the hierarchical structuring by the empire. Women are also devoid of their very right of free will and control over their bodies. The patriarchal Nazi government succeeded to make this holy plan come true by way of abusing another religious apparatus, the Hitlerian Bible. Laws are regulated in accordance with whatever necessitates for the profit of the Nazi society and "lascivious cruelty is legitimized as an honourable service to the nation"

(Glaser, 2020, p. 177). Women, in other words, are merely silenced incubators who have no right to choose, admit, or decline since these are human properties exclusive to those defined as human under Hitlerian laws. As the Knight gives his sermon to the women, he explicitly manifests the idea that rape is not a crime if it is not committed under age, for "'I shall have this man or that man' […] or 'I am not ready' or 'It is not convenient' or to put any womanish whim in opposition to a man's will" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 13) is definitely not welcomed by either the state or the Hitlerian religion. The reason for this prohibition is that any opposition to "any man (except Christian) on any point is blasphemous and most supremely wicked" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 13). The religious authority, therefore, is established upon women's very own territories, their bodies since religion has always been inclusive of "a hatred of the beauty of women and a horror of the sexual power beautiful women with the right of choice and rejection have over men" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 73). According to the great plan of the holy empire, women have no choice other than obeying whatever is ordered to them. In other words, the religious apparatus creates the convenient grounds for men to show a violent crime as just and reasonable. Women, on the other hand, would be blamed by committing a sin against their Lord Hitler on the condition that they oppose to the male hegemony over their bodies. In compliance with the function of dystopian literature, Burdekin warns her readers against the possible threats of full obedience to the patriarchal impositions. Emancipation from those threats, to Burdekin, "will come only with the liberation of women from the chains men have placed upon them, having first turned the reproductive power of the female body against itself" (Miller, 2019, p. 255) because "a woman's lack of control of reproduction is part of the social relations that define her oppression" (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 79). This is why Reichskomitee of Working Women called for full participation of all women in their move against all fascist and sexist manoeuvres of Hitler and addressed the women of the time as follows: "The Nazis […] want to turn you into compliant birth-machines. You are to be servants and maids for men. Your human dignity is to be trampled underfoot" (Bell & Offen, 1983, p. 383).

The Removal of the Man Child ceremony is another religious apparatus which draws a circle for the women of the Hitlerian Empire and reminds them of their obligation to stay within that circle. They are reminded of "the Lord Hitler's supreme condescension in allowing them still to bear men's sons and have that amount of contact with the Holy

Mystery of Maleness" (Burdekin, 1985, pp. 8 - 9) although they are almost the most detested of all in the empire. Their lack of control over their bodies, thus, is sharply and vividly portrayed by Burdekin since it is Hitler who permits women to bear sons for men but not women who choose to do so. When the Man-Child is eighteen months old, he is taken away from the mother so that she might not poison him with her innate despicable nature. In fact, the Man-Child's "baby limbs [should be] in the hard hands of men, skilled men, trained men, to wash him, and feed him, and tend him, and bring him up to manhood" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 10). Raising a Man-Child is definitely not suitable for a woman who is unworthy although she could succeed in bearing him, the being that the Empire values most. Moreover, if by any chance the woman tries not to give her baby away to the men by word or simply by protesting with her tears, she has to be punished severely, for she "oppose[s] that custom, that law so essential to Hitler Society, the Removal of the Man-Child" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 9). The female brain is naturally paralysed with the Hitlerian indoctrination that they should bear Men-Children but not become their mothers. Therefore, it is never an option for the women to think about their critical importance for the sustainability of the Hitlerian Society. If, all of a sudden, women stop bearing Men-Children, the German Empire will definitely start to be shattered since all the system is established upon the male values and regulations. "Burdekin viewed fascism in the same way that Marx regarded capitalism, as a system that would finally implode as a result of its own contradictions" (Horan, 2018a, p. 94). Therefore, it is very probable for the empire to suffer from its own ills due to its exclusion of women from all walks of life. Actually, the German Empire is now on the verge of the possibility of losing its prospective strength since there are now more Man-Children than baby girls who will be the future bearers of future Men-Children.

> *If they [women] once knew that the Knight, and even der Fuehrer, wanted*
> *girl-children to be born in large quantities; that every fresh statistical paper*
> *with its terrible disproportionate male births caused groanings and anxieties*
> *and endless secret conferences – if the women once raised all this, what*
> *could stop them developing a small thin thread of self-respect? (Burdekin,*
> *1985, p. 14)*

Nevertheless, women are not aware of their pivotal role and they cannot be blamed for their ignorance of their own values, for it is infused in their minds in its most natural way.

After all, they are "blessed above all female animals in being allowed to be the mothers of *men*" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 12). The authority embedded in the Knight's speech is so strongly substantiated with the masculine ideology of the state that it is impossible for the women to interrogate the notion that there are those sacred men around the empire not because they preferred to bear children, but because the Hitlerian men and authorities allowed them to do so. Underneath what women see, however, lies the most threatful truth that "if women cease to exist *themselves* […], the world will be rid of an intolerable ugliness" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 11), the Hitlerian Society, for "unless the Thunderer can throw the whole mass of Germans out of his head, [they] are coming to an inglorious end" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 12). Put another way, the masculine indoctrination of women as well as the religious apparatuses turn out to be the enemies of both men and women in Hitler's Empire. Additionally, "[s]o long as women remain subordinated to men, Burdekin attests, […] the germs of fascism lurk in the very structure of contemporary gender relations" (Miller, 2019, p. 255).

The ideology of the state which Hitler constructs is grounded on his "opposition to the political participation of women and his low estimation of women's abilities on the concept of sexual polarity, the existence of separate spheres for the two sexes" (Rupp, 1977, p. 363), which, as expected from his male contemporaries, is radically supported and disseminated to the German people as is done by Alfred Rosenberg (1942) who puts forth that the state has nowhere been the consequence of a common thought of man and woman, but the result of the male alliance single-mindedly set on some purpose. Goebbels (1934, as cited in Browning, 1934), too, posits on the idea of the polarity of sexes and their places in the state by justifying the Hitlerian exclusionary politics as follows:

> *Woman's proper sphere is the family. There she is a sovereign queen. If we eliminate woman from every realm of public life, we do not do it in order to dishonour her, but in order that her honour may be restored to her. (pp. 7 – 8)*

Although Goebbels' and his comrades' ideas over the position of German women were counterattacked at the time, all attempts to debilitate the mainstream state ideology were refuted via either strict retributions and repudiations by blaming "the enemies of National Socialism for spreading lies about the party's hostility to women" (Rupp, 1977, p. 369) or by romantic and pastoral compliments to women so as to passivize and make them

obedient to the inherent ideology. Baumgart (1935), for instance, advocates the National Socialist movement and its approach to women by claiming that just as the life of a plant is conditioned by natural law through the interaction of the male and female instincts and germinal tendencies until the final development in blossom and fruit, so the organic growth of a state community cannot take place without the cooperation of the inherent forces of both sexes in uninhibited and reciprocal development (p. 31). Therefore, the division of labour between men and women in the fictional German Empire is totally the way how Hitler highlighted in the early 20th century. According to Hitler (1934), if one says that a man's world is the state, a man's world is his struggle, his readiness to serve the community, then one could possibly say that a woman's world is a more delicate one. Therefore, her world is her husband, her family, her children and her house (p. 11). In other words, women should keep themselves busy with reproduction for the good of Germany, looking after all the households and relieve their men of those chores so that they can be happy in their larger world killing, conquering, and destroying, for a man is "a being of pride, courage, violence, brutality, [and] ruthlessness" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 28) whereas a woman is only a walking womb, ranking above a worm in the Hitlerian hierarchy of beings. However, Hitler's holy division of labour turns out to be a threat to himself and his dream hegemony in *Swastika Night*. Though the women in the German Empire are not aware of their hidden strength which could actually tear the empire apart, the Knight is definitely sure that their race is now coming to an end. Having felt the dignity and honour of being a Nazi man in the German Empire since his birth, the Knight now shows vivid hints of his remorse for partaking in this self-murder since he believes that the state ideology has been so successful in creating the new woman that it is now irreversible:

> *They [women] acquiesced in the Reduction of Women, which was a deliberate thing deliberately planned by German men. Women will always be exactly what men want them to be. They have no will, no character, and no souls; they are only a reflection of men. So, nothing that they are or can become is ever their fault or their virtue. If men want them to be beautiful, they will be beautiful. If men want them to appear to have wills and characters, they will develop something that looks like a will and a character though it is really only a sham. If men want them to have an appearance of perfect freedom, even an appearance of masculine power, they will develop*

> *a simulacrum of those things. But what men cannot so, never have been able to do, is to stop this blind submission and cause the women to ignore them and disobey them. It's the tragedy of the human race. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 70)*

Although the Knight complains about the new woman in the German Empire, it would not be improper to claim that the German state ideology of dehumanizing the women has started to punish its own creators together with the women who have long been suffering from the same apparatus. According to the Knight, the dehumanization process of women has been triggered due to men's self-love and self-respect; therefore, any chance of rejection by women is a complete disrespect and ingratitude to the men.

> *And these proud soldiers, the great grandsons of the men who really made the Empire, were beginning to feel very strongly that it was beneath the dignity of a German man to have to risk rejection by a mere woman, to have to allow women to wound him in his most sensitive part, his vanity, without the remedy of a duel. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 81)*

This is exactly where Hitler's ideology of the polarity of sexes functions for the benefit of men while it also works for the degradation and humiliation of women. The larger world, as Hitler calls it, is so closed to women that women are expected to respect men's selfless hard work for establishing it. Also, men's efforts in the larger world are so crucial and dignified that "they wanted *all* women to be at their will like the women of a conquered nation" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 81) believing that it is their very natural right. As such, women have been positioned in their proper places as animals waiting to be fed at certain times, reproducing to increase the number of Men-Children who will become the future soldiers or to sustain the number of Girl-Children who will become the future mothers. Women's sexuality is such a sacred and exotic area that men in the German Empire are scared of this appeal, too. Von Wied, a former Knight, puts forth the "theory that the beauty of women was an insult to Manhood, as giving them (some of them) an enormous and disgusting sexual power over men" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 81). As obvious, it is always the concept of power that the dominant patriarchy struggles to preserve. Any inclinations from men to women due to the latter's sexual appeal might create a twist in the balance of power held by each side. For this reason, the dress codes for women as

well as all the other standards ascribed to their physical appearance are specified as follows:

> *He [Von Wied] said, though, that this beauty was not real (for he would allow women no redeeming qualities whatever) but a sham made by long hair and a mysterious half-revealing half-concealing form of dress. He advocated shaven heads for women and a kind of dress that could conceal nothing and have nothing mysterious or graceful about it. They must dress all in one colour, a dirt-brown (as they do now), and must be, after the age of sixteen, completely submissive, not only to the father of their children, but to any and every man, for such was the will of the Lord Hitler. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 81)*

Power struggle between the state and women, thus, leads to the standardisation and dehumanization of women. They are absolutely not sexually appealing to men, nor have they their own aesthetic tastes since it is forbidden due to fear by the state. When Hermann observes the women leaving the church more carefully, for instance, he actually speaks the mind of the German Empire and clearly sketches women and girl-children along with all other feminine entities as non-human:

> *The mere sight of so many women all in a static herd and close by him [Hermann] - not just walking along the road from the Quarters to the church – with their small shaven ugly heads and ugly soft bulgy bodies dressed in feminine tight trousers and jackets – and oh, the pregnant women and the hideousness of them, and the skinny old crones with necks like moulting hens, and the loathsome little girls with running noses, and how they all cried! They wailed like puppies, like kittens, with thin shrill cries and sobs. Nothing human. Of course women have no souls and therefore are not human, but, Hermann thought afterwards, when his boyish terror had given way to a senseless boyish fury, they might <u>try</u> to sound like humans. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 9)*

Not surprisingly, this is how ideology or an ideological state apparatus is engraved within one's mind, which, in the end, supports the sustainability of the prevalent system. Hermann, who is actually a very young Nazi, has been taught to hate whatever feminine he comes across with. None of his observations above includes any reasons or questionings as to why he thinks women should be detested. Fictional Hitler, however,

made it public centuries ago and addressed Germans as "harden your hearts […] against everything, but above all against women's tears. A woman has no soul and therefore can have no sorrow. Her tears are a sham and a deceit" (Burdekin, 1985, pp. 10 - 11). As such, it turns out to be impossible for the male to be sexually attracted to the female or sympathize with them; on the contrary, men feel they have to have a sexual intercourse with women only to reproduce for the good of the German Empire. As Weininger (2005) puts forth, "*W* [woman] *is a function of M* [man], a function that he can posit or cancel, and women want to be no more or nothing other than just this" (p. 305). Correspondingly, excluding reproduction, "[t]o love a woman, to the German mind, would be equal to loving a worm, or a Christian" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 12). Most Nazis, therefore, have homoerotic appetites since women are to be detested while men are the definition of whatever is adhered to them as good and beautiful. Hermann, for example, speaks the spirit of most of the German men on his own while Alfred, his Christian English friend, is asleep:

> *Oh, if only Alfred had been by some miracle born a German and of knightly*
> *class, how he, Hermann, would have adored to serve him, to be his slave, to*
> *set his body, his strong bones and willing hard muscles, between Knight*
> *Alfred and all harm – to die for him… (Burdekin, 1985, p. 31)*

Sexual appeal, therefore, is now among men rather than between men and women. Moreover, when Hermann beats a boy to death in the forest, for instance, his motivation of beating him is not the fact that the boy was trying to rape an under-age Christian girl but that he was disappointed since the boy had a sexual tendency to a female body. Put another way, Hermann was furious "[b]ecause he's a pretty lad who ought only to be interested in *men*" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 35), which is "a result of the systematic exclusion of women which is founded on the ideological construction of women as inferior, closer to animals than to German males" (Holden, 1999, p. 149). Moreover, as a Nazi, Hermann postpones a sexual affair with a woman in the Women's Quarters as long as he can although he knows that he will be punished if he cannot have a child by the time he is thirty. This is how women are both aesthetically and sexually detested in the German Empire. Therefore, Hermann's phantasy about Alfred is not an individual urge but a

normalized and natural stimulation of most German men[4], which stems from the fact that Burdekin has a "desire to disrupt the heteronormative status quo and to promote alternative, and better, ways of living and loving" (English, 2013, p. 108) in compliance with one of the functions of utopianism. Put another way, the unthinkable is made thinkable by way of Burdekin's creation of alternative reality so as to highlight the fact that systems are only constructs that may be re-constructed through creating alternative collective perceptions.

Women, on the other hand, have shown an incomprehensible willingness to the wishes of men, for they have already been captured and shaped within the circle of the inherent ideology. As a fast-spreading epidemic, the new woman has been welcomed by the vast majority of the German Empire. The Knight claims that women's reaction to new regulations were merely standard womanish responses.

> *Once they were convinced that men really wanted them to be animals and ugly and completely submissive and give up their boy children forever at the age of one year, they threw themselves into the new pattern with a conscious enthusiasm that knew no bounds. They shaved their heads till they bled, they rejoiced in their hideous uniforms as a young Knight might rejoice in his Robe of Ceremony, they pulled out their front teeth until they were forbidden for reasons of health, and they gave up their baby sons with the same heroism with which they had been used to give their grown sons to war. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 82)*

Underneath women's reaction to and their quick admission to the new woman, however, lies a hysterical and dangerous necessity of approval, "a posture, Burdekin keeps insinuating, that women before the Nazi hegemony were already accustoming themselves to by willingly submitting to men's expectations and demands" (Crossley, 1987, p. 97). Because they cannot be part of the larger world ruled by men, they believe that they, too, are serving to the prosperity and welfare of their country by fulfilling whatever is adhered to them by the state with the utmost expectancy that "if they did all that men told them to do cheerfully and willingly, the men would somehow, in the face of all logic, love them still *more*" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 82). Although the reasons behind men's regulations stem

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[4] There is no intention of insult for any sexual inclinations with these statements. The adjectives, normalized and natural, are used within the scope of the related world in Burdekin's novel.

from their irresistible wish for potency and sovereignty over the female body, how women perceive those reasons is considerably political and reactional. Shaw (2000) argues about the hysterical reaction of women in Germany during Hitler's period as follows:

> *Conservative women who considered that the role of the mother had been undermined by the emancipation of the 1920s found not only state support for their grievances but an opportunity to glorify their role in the name of National Socialism. (p. 45)*

The women who were disgraced by the movement in 1920s since it "was encouraging women to assert their economic independence and to neglect their proper task of producing children, […] spreading the feminine doctrines of pacifism, democracy and 'materialism'" (Gupta, 1991, pp. WS-40), therefore, found the very chance to share the same enemy of the state, thereby revering their roles as domestic women, mothering not only children but also all households. Burdekin's novel incorporates the same idea of the common enemy, too. When the new woman concept has been announced by the German Empire, not all women accepted the new norms and conformed them. For instance, a woman who could be described as beautiful before the aesthetic values were destroyed "laughed at a band of the new 'von Wied Women', […] didn't mind Hitler being God but couldn't see why women should be ugly" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 84). The new von Wied women, as the embodiment of the new hysterical strike, are ready to show their submissiveness to whatever authority is imposed upon them for the sake of the prosperous and promising future of their country. Their response as well as the corpse of the woman who rejected to conform with the new norms of the state are described as follows:

> *The eyes were torn out and the nostrils slit up. The hair had all been pulled out, leaving nothing but a ghastly red skull-cap of blood. The body was covered with innumerable stabs and cuts that looked as if they had been made with a pen-knife. The nipples had been cut off. […] That was the temper of Germany in hysteria. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 84)*

As such, it is possible to claim that women are as responsible as men for the establishment of the new rules and gender ideologies. Men's pride which could be easily hurt due to women's freedom of choice and their right of rejection turns out to be the exact role model for women since they cannot tolerate any rejections from their own gender. Thus, their brutal response does not only embody their intolerance to any future objections, but it

also feeds the potency and durability of the state ideology, thereby hauling the whole humanity into an irreversible holocaust. In other words, women are both victims and victimizers, for they come to be more men than men are as is argued by Virginia Woolf (2007) as follows:

> *Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power probably the earth would still be swamp and jungle. The glories of all our wars would be unknown. [...] Whatever may be their use in civilised societies, mirrors are essential to all violent and heroic action. That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge. That serves to explain in part the necessity that women so often are to men. (p. 38)*

Patriarchy, therefore, is not structured by men only. Although it is triggered with the male dominance over the female, the latter also contributes to its structuring by way of glorifying the masculine values and unconditionally subserving to the imposition of these values, thereby creating various opportunities for a man for "giving judgement, civilising natives, making laws, writing books, dressing up and speechifying at banquets" (Woolf, 2007, p. 38). As such, women in *Swastika Night* are divided into different fragments and while one group supports the dominance of the gender ideology of the state, the other challenges to it. In the end, because the supporter group of women suppress the others, patriarchy is sustained and tyranny prevails over equality. In other words, the looking-glass, which is one of the essential bases patriarchy is grounded on, stands out as a very critical role, for "it changes the vitality; it stimulates the nervous system. Take it away and man may die, like the drug fiend deprived of his cocaine" (Woolf, 2007, pp. 38 - 39). Hence, the patriarchal system is established upon unnatural grounds; nevertheless, one should be aware of the natural and the unnatural so as to realize that things are only constructs due to the fact that "[n]ature does not mind [...] a shortage of males. One male can fertilise hundreds of females. A shortage of females is the only *naturally* serious thing" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 105). Therefore, unlike the women in *Swastika Night*, nature does not endeavour to please the male since the female body is more significant for the sustainability of life. Women in *Swastika Night*, nonetheless, have committed a crime

against their very own identity, their nature and whatever makes them women by way of emphasizing the significance of the male while contributing to the degradation strategy of the dominant ideology:

> *They see another form of life, <u>undoubtedly</u> different from their own, nothing half so vague as Blood, but differing in sex, and they say '<u>that</u> form is better than our form'. And for that reason, men have always unconsciously despised them, while consciously urging them to accept their inferiority. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 106)*

This is why when the women massacre the other woman, they actually kill their very own identity. Furthermore, they do not commit this crime with an impelling force but with an autogenic urge since they believe that the roles ascribed to them by the dominant ideology are actually the very essential things that could define them as the female. Put another way, patriarchy abuses women both physically and spiritually so that it can sustain forever. However, "if she [a woman] begins to tell the truth, the figure in the looking-glass shrinks; his fitness for life is diminished" (Woolf, 2007, p. 38). Nonetheless, the murderer women in the novel unconsciously decide that the controverting woman is not fit enough to survive among themselves, thereby playing into the dominant fascist and polarizing gender ideology of the empire which will eventually victimize all women indiscriminately. The infallible purpose of the dominant ideology that women have unwittingly cooperated with has been so successful in the German Empire that

> *[n]one of the women found their lives at all extraordinary, they were no more <u>conscious</u> of boredom or imprisonment or humiliation than cows in a field. They were too stupid to be really conscious of anything distressing except physical pain, loss of children, shame of bearing girls, and the queer mass grief which always overtook them in church. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 158)*

Put another way, the ideological and repressive state apparatuses have worked so impeccably that women cannot be aware of their subordination, dehumanization, humiliation, and degradation since, as mentioned before, it is "an unnatural crime to allow something totally different from yourself to impose a pattern of living on you" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 110). The new woman, thus, does not naturally come up in the German Empire, it is made to be. Therefore, it is now impossible to strike back to the ideology individually

and this is why the patriarchy will prevail as it keeps modifying itself in accordance with what necessitates over the course of history.

As obvious, the National Socialist German Empire in *Swastika Night* bases all its sovereignty on its potency of abusing all the power it has. Apart from women's subservience to the hegemony, the empire also benefits from different *modi operandi* such as new preventive and restrictive laws, changing the language in accordance with what necessitates for the continuation of power, erasing the collective conscience as well as ceasing all the scientific research and art works. The statues and pictures of Hitler the God, for instance, are everywhere around the empire due to many reasons, one of which is making everyone feel the apprehension that they are actually being pursued all the time, thereby entrenching the inherent authority. The statues and pictures depict Hitler as someone with "[c]olossal height, long thick golden hair, a great many golden beard spreading over his chest, deep sea-blue eyes, the noble rugged brow – and all the rest" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 66). However, as is manifested by the Knight through a photograph, Hitler the God does not share any of the physical characteristics of the statues and pictures which are all around the empire, thereby undoing "the two central tenets of Hitlerism: that Hitler was never in the defiling presence of a woman" (Patai, 1984, p. 86), which demystifies all ideological lies about the religion itself, "and that women have always been the loathsome creatures that they are in this seventh century of Hitlerism" (Patai, 1984, p. 86). A detailed description of Hitler the God which is in complete contradiction with all the fairy tales narrated to the German people is as follows:

> *He was dark, his eyes were brown or a deep hazel, his face was hairless as a woman's except for a small black growth on the upper lip. His hair was cropped short except for one lank piece a little longer which fell half over his forehead. He was dressed in uncomely tight trousers like a woman's instead of the full masculine breeches of all the statues and pictures, and his form was unheroic, even almost unmale. Where were the broad shoulders, the mighty chest, the lean stomach and slender waist and hips? This little mas was almost fat. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 67)*

Constructed representations, therefore, are abused by the empire as opium for everyone in the society by dint of the "potential of myths to play a role in cementing cultural imperialism and inequality" (Stock, 2016, p. 440), reminding them of their holy duties to

be fulfilled as well as the prospective punishments to be received on the condition that they fail to be good Nazis and useful subservient women. Manipulation of truth, moreover, has significant importance, for it is one of the strongest tools to create a parallel reality, a reality that will deceive everyone so that the truth will eventually be considered as a lie whereas the parallel reality will be perpetuated as the only everlasting truth. On another occasion, Alfred keeps studying the photograph the Knight has shown him and concludes that the boy next to Hitler in the photograph is "more noble, more German, more manly, despite his youth, than the small dark soft-looking Lord Hitler" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 67). Constructions have been so successfully settled throughout the centuries that even Alfred, a self-educated, sceptical and inquisitive man, conditionally accepts the child in the photo as a boy although it turns out to be a standard German girl "as lovely as a boy, with a boy's hair and a boy's noble carriage, and a boy's direct and fearless gaze" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 68). As such, contrary to the women under the prevailing circumstances in the German Empire, the girl hundreds of years ago seems more German than the God himself.

In order to construct the new society, the history should be erased, for collective memory, which consists of but not limited to positive science, art, music, religion, and psychology among many others, is considerably significant in resolving what is and is not truthful. Memory erasure, thus, is inevitable although it is not a simple step to be taken and may take hundreds of years. As is explained by the Knight,

> [a]ll history, all psychology, all philosophy, all art except music, all medical knowledge except the purely anatomical and physical – every book and picture and statue that could remind Germans of old time must be destroyed. A huge gulf was to be made which no one could ever cross again. Christianity must go, all the enormous mass of Christian theology must be destroyed throughout the Empire, all the Christian Bibles must be routed out and burned, and even Hitler's own book, hollowed throughout Germany, could only continue to exist in part. There was memory there, you see. Memory of what we call the Preliminary Attack. (Burdekin, 1985, p. 79)

Accordingly, if any glimpses or parts of the collective memory from literature, all sorts of art, science, and history among many others could be remembered, people would not be convinced of their inferiority or of all the prevailing religious, military, or

governmental issues. "From the Nazi point of view, the past must be shrouded in darkness to protect the established church from inquiries into the obvious inconsistencies of its doctrine" (Stock, 2016, p. 430). Put another way, history was re-historicized because anything which was not created or constructed by the German Empire is a threat for the political ideology and authority of the empire if it is reminiscent of the good old days and "there was so much beauty *they* [Germans] had not made, so many books they had not written, so many records of wars in which they had not fought" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 78). Nevertheless, having the power for being in full control of the present day beside standing out as the most elegant race and state, the German Empire had no choice other than smashing all history into pieces. Destruction, therefore, had a critical role before construction itself. Anything that could help people to be awakened, therefore, has been destroyed. Sex biology, for instance, has never been promoted and various scientific research concerning the sex of babies to be born have been disrupted with the fear that the "biologists might prove for certain that it is the male who determines the sex of the child, and then no one can ever blame a woman for not having sons" (Burdekin, 1985, p. 104). For sure, knowing the fact that giving birth to a daughter or a son does not stem from the genes of the female would give women a sense of conscience, thereby depriving men of their opportunity of humiliating women and establishing their own autonomy over the female body. Under this status quo, nonetheless, all women like Ethel, Alfred's woman in the women camp, believe that they offend their masters by bearing them girls (Burdekin, 1985, p. 158) and they feel guilty and ashamed for their disability to deliver their masters a Man-Child. Therefore, this is why destruction and re-historicization have critical roles in the holding power at hand. By these methods, "the past is seen through the framework of a mythology that is both unalterable and full of inexplicable 'mysteries.' The regime hopes that historical inquiry will disappear simply through neglect" (Stock, 2016, p. 436), which, thus, explains the reason why reading is not allowed in the German Empire except for some labourers working in different technical jobs as is done by Alfred. Correspondingly, even knowing about the existence of such a book, telling the real history before the German Empire, justifies Alfred's preoccupied thoughts on the conflicts of Hitlerian doctrines. In other words, the book itself is a challenge to the stably ruled empire and the opportunity of reding it renders Alfred being "able now partially to construct and

resituate a subjectivity which was never possible and barely imaginable until he saw the book with his own eyes" (McKay, Nov., 1994, p. 307).

To conclude with Katherine Burdekin's *Swastika Night*, it is obvious that Burdekin aims to ring the bells for all the unaware people of the world against their ignorance to the rising fascism and its prospective destructive results which have the potential of victimizing both genders in their own societies. The following long but effective quotation describes why Burdekin's novel is still on the modern agenda although it was left aside, forgotten by various circles for decades:

> *Swastika Night is a powerful and unique criticism of fascism, an argument that it was originally misogynist and ultimately self-destructive, and that its racial theories had roots in sexual hysteria. Swastika Night remains undoubtedly the most sophisticated and original of all the many anti-fascist dystopias of the late 1930s and 1940s. [...] In a number of specific details – the photograph that is seen by the 'dissident'; the party leader who explains the true history and workings of the party; the book which proves that change is possible, the memory inviolable; the official rewriting of history; the permanent vilification of the enemy ('the four arch-fiends' Lenin, Stalin, Roehm and Karl Barth); the abasement of sex and the outlawing of love; the state of perpetual and unwinnable warfare (we're dying, both the huge Empires side by side, of our own strength') – Swastika Night clearly anticipates Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four by several years. (Croft, 1984, pp. 209 - 210)*

Proper to the ends of utopian tradition, she presents a distorting mirror and speculates about women's degradation, de-humanization, and humiliation as well as men's and women's eagerness to support the overwhelming patriarchal system and all the apparatuses that back up the concretization of its potency. Although sexes do not change in the novel, genders do. Women's and men's roles as constituent cogs of the system are profoundly specified by the system itself and all the fundamental parts are expected to fulfil these expectations so as not to be placed in the margins of the society by the inherent traditionalized power, which is described by Foucault (1980) "as an essentially judicial mechanism, as that which lays down the law, which prohibits, which refuses, and which has a whole range of negative effects: exclusion, rejection, denial, obstruction, occultation" (p. 183). An *admit it or leave it* policy is successfully employed by the

German Empire by way of violence, military and masculine values as well as various apparatuses that are based on different principles of religion, language, art, history, and so on. Put another way, the male hegemony abuses all possible means so as to create a culture of subordination and submissiveness which, in the end, is normalized and imposed upon everyone living under the same roof. By doing so, cultural imperialism renders all pre-planned plots appear to be realizable; however, nature has its own rules and proceeding. Burdekin, thus, focuses on the natural functions rather than conceptualized and constructed roles. For sure, her novel is one of the most prominent works attacking the fascist ideology that calls for misogynist attitudes in societies.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# MARGARET ATWOOD AND HER NOVEL *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

## 5.1. Margaret Atwood and Her Literary Heritage

As a child born into an era of warring nations worldwide in 1939, Margaret Atwood was not severely affected by the deadly results of World War II since she was an inhabitant of the peaceful moors in Toronto where her father conducted forestry research. She was considerably interested in creativity; therefore, she found herself writing when she was a high school student. Beginning her profession at the age of sixteen, Atwood has produced in various genres from poetry to fairy tales, and short stories to novels. Holding a B.A degree from the University of Toronto, Atwood pursued her studies and obtained her M.A from Radcliffe College. However, although she started her doctoral studies at Harvard University, she has never completed it. Atwood also taught English, poetry, creative writing, and English Literature among many other disciplines at various universities in Canada, but she quit teaching in 1971. What makes Atwood an even more significant author for Canadian literature is that she was not principally born into Canadian culture, nor was she raised as a Canadian, for Canada "came into being as a political entity in 1867 as British North America, and only achieved absolute independence from the UK in 1982 by way of the Canada Act" (Macpherson, 2010, p. 11). Until 1982, nevertheless, Atwood was already in her forties, having written many novels, short stories, and poems that constituted what is now known as Canadian Literature. In other words, apart from her globally known reputation, Atwood is also important due to her creation of a national literary canon.

Her success in creating a literature of her own nation is disseminated through Atwood's own description of what it was to be a Canadian and a writer as follows:

> *I was scared to death for a couple of reasons. For one thing, I was Canadian, and the prospects of being a Canadian and a writer, both at the same time, in 1960, were dim. [...] Canadian writers, it was assumed – by my professors, my contemporaries, and myself – were a freak of nature, like duck-billed platypuses. Logically they ought not to exist, and when they did so anyway, they were just pathetic imitations of the real things. (Atwood, 1988, p. xiii)*

In addition to her reasons above, Atwood's womanhood should also be included as another obstacle since she had a tripartite problem before her: being a Canadian, a woman, and a writer, on which she has elaborated and argued that a writer is a writer irrespective of his/her gender with her essay entitled "On Being a 'Woman Writer': Paradoxes and Dilemmas" (1982). By doing so, nevertheless, she does not underestimate the stiffy labour women have to face as writers but she endeavours to highlight that professions should not be monopolized so as to eliminate those obstacles.

It is possible to trace the prints of feminist movements beginning from the 1960s in Atwood's works; however, she has never been a mere practitioner of ideologies who firmly sticks to the principles, for she believes that stiff adherences to ideologies create blinded perspectives, which, in the end, damage the purpose of writing itself. "In numerous interviews, [she] has reiterated her views that novels are not political tracts and that she is under no obligation to toe a party line" (Macpherson, 2010, p. 23). This stance of hers does not mean that she has not collaborated with feminism or nationalism in her own scope; however, what Atwood has preferred to employ is to observe things and reflect them in her writings as they are or as having the potential of becoming real. As is also compliant with Bloch's *Not-Yet-Real*, for instance, Atwood reveals how she composed *The Handmaid's Tale* by her observations as follows:

> *[In] <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> I was very careful to have nothing that we hadn't already done., or for which we don't already have the technology. We could do it all, we have done it all. These are things that human beings do, given half a chance – alas! (Reynolds & Noakes, 2002, p. 20)*

As such, she also manifests the hazardous consequences of radically aligning with ideologies which may have irreversible records in history. In her feminist works, Atwood does not advocate one gender over the other with the most basic argument that one is a victimizer whereas the other is the victimized. On the contrary, she argues and demonstrates how power relations elevate one group – regardless of their gender – while they overwhelm another group in the same society. Put another way, Atwood underscores the notion that "a woman's culture does not necessarily mean that the culture will be better than what went before – separatism of any kind is suspect, and feminism itself requires careful surveillance, too" (Macpherson, 2010, p. 24). Misogyny and misandry, therefore, turn out to be the two radical poles in a society that cause degeneration, corruption, and destruction among many other detrimental results since whatever is malfunctioning for a woman has the same effect on a man in the end and whatever is burdening for a man shows its overwhelming consequences on a woman, too. Atwood clarifies her stance for feminist thought in her 2018 article, "Am I a Bad Feminist?", by manifesting "My fundamental position is that women are human beings, with the full range of saintly and demonic behaviours this entails, including criminal ones. They're not angels, incapable of wrongdoing. If they were, we wouldn't need a legal system". Put another way, as "an awkward feminist icon, skeptical of loose ideological definitions of feminism and resistant to generalizations" (Howells, 2021, p. 4), Atwood clearly attacks on the conventional understandings of feminist ideologies, which, according to her, create inequalities in their search of equality due to overgeneralizations and stereotyping of gender-related areas in societies. Thus, what matters, to Atwood, is not only gender but also power relations. Although she does not like the idea of being entitled as a feminist, she both dwells on gender issues and "humanist and posthumanist concerns as she questions the very survival of humanity in an era of excessive consumerism, unbridled biotechnological experimentation, and unprecedented environmental destruction" (Bouson, 2013, pp. 3 - 4).

## 5.2. *The Handmaid's Tale* as a Dystopian Novel of Remorse

Margaret Atwood wrote *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1985 and the novel has been both a great success and a never-ending source for the literary world, all sorts of media platforms, and the academy which are mostly related to gender studies and sociology since then. It has also been translated into dozens of languages, which, in the end, brought

Atwood innumerable prestigious awards. Apart from the literary success of the novel, various questions on its feminist perspectives have been asked since it was first written, for Atwood challenges the generally accepted feminist issues such as excusing women and putting all the blame on men and the patriarchal system. The novel incorporates a lot of obstacles the women characters have to go through as well as certain roles prescribed by the Republic of Gilead for the women to fulfil. However, contrary to many contemporary feminist works, *The Handmaid's Tale* interrogates the roles of both men and women in the successfully established patriarchal state in the novel. In other words, Atwood erects Sargent's distorting mirror right in front of the readers so that they can feel the creep of prospective threats and do their best as a commune to revert their scheduled fate rather than expecting one gender to automatically protest and wait for a betterment in their conditions. Although accusing or blaming women is definitely not aimed in this dissertation, one of its primary goals is to manifest how gender is constructed in each novel and how both genders assist each system for overpowering the other half of the population.

Gender roles are ascribed to women under different categories in the Republic of Gilead. There are hierarchical categorizations both for men and women. For women, Wives of Commanders are located at the top of the ladder and they are followed by the Daughters, Aunts, Marthas, Handmaids, Econowives, Widows, Unwomen, and Jezebels respectively. Men, moreover, are classified as Commanders and Eyes, followed by Angels, Guards, and Poor Men. The hierarchical structure in the Republic of Gilead ascribes each member a role and women are recognized according to the style and colour of their clothes, which are also called as habits since "habits are hard to break" (Atwood, 2010, p. 34), although men are not expected to fulfil any dress code in the novel. Wives of Commanders, for instance, have to wear in blue and they run their houses while Daughters are expected to wear in white. Although none of the women in Gilead is a free individual, the colour blue symbolizes freedom compared to all the other women in the republic. The colour white, on the other hand, is adhered the internationally acknowledged sense of purity, for the Daughters never have sexual intercourses before marriage and they are raised as virgins to breed children for the future of their nation. The Aunts, who are responsible for raising Handmaids by way of injecting all ideological heritage into their minds so that they can reproduce for the future of their nation, wear in

the colour brown. Because they are the second most privileged class after the Wives of Commanders and they do not hesitate to show even the most brutal way of violence, Aunts are matched with brown, which is a reference to Hitler's Sturmabteilung, who are "mass paramilitary affiliate of the Nazi Party [who] are also called Brown Shirts" (Campbell, 2004, p. 174) and also known as "special assault troops formed in the Imperial German Army during the First World War" (Campbell, 2004, p. 174). Functioning as the metaphorical paramilitary organs of the Republic of Gilead, therefore, Aunts wear brown dresses. Marthas, furthermore, wear in green which stands for the nature since nature exists with all its resourcefulness to serve to humanity and all the wild life. Marthas, thus, go with the colour of nature to be servants to everyone in their Commanders' house. Econowives, wives of poorer men, have "striped dresses, red and blue and green and cheap and skimpy" (Atwood, 2010, p. 34) since they fulfil all roles ascribed to the Wives, Marthas, and Handmaids all alone because of poverty. Widows, moreover, are expected to wear in black. The Handmaids, finally, wear in red which points out reproduction and women's menstrual periods. After all, they exist for reproduction which is directly related to fertility and monthly bleeding. Handmaids are also expected to wear white wings "which are prescribed issue; they are to keep [them] from seeing, but also from being seen" (Atwood, 2010, p. 18) and which also make it "hard to look up, hard to get the full view, of the sky, of anything" (Atwood, 2010, p. 40). Therefore, although white wings imply a sense of freedom in the literary world, they are more like cones that are used for pets to prevent them from hurting themselves, for knowing about the facts or any chance of awakening is a huge threat to the established system. The Handmaids did not wear the white wings when they were not Handmaids before the coup which dates back to times when "women were not protected" (Atwood, 2010, p. 34). Protection of women, thus, brings bout limitations and restrictions on women. All in all, as Bratanović (2020) also argues, "women in the Republic of Gilead wear clothes of a particular colour which designate the job they are expected to do and determine the role they are expected to perform" (p. 350). Specifying the codes for everyone, hence, makes it easier for the patriarch to clarify where everyone should stand so that they cannot cross their borders.

In the establishment of the new rules under the Republic of Gilead, both ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses have had critical roles. Merging both methods, Gileadean government has formed a state where fear has become

the very first weapon directed towards the public. Stillman and Jonson (1994) explicitly manifests how people in Gilead are forced to live in a maze constituted by the ideological and repressive state apparatuses as follows:

> *Gilead's political power grows out of the barrel of a gun, utilizes repressive laws and politics, and is solidified by the isolation of each woman, the fragmentation of her social world, and the reconstruction of each woman's world into Gilead's mold. (p. 75)*

As such, identifying roles that every participant of the society will fulfil is surely not enough to rule a country so successfully. Fear of authority should be imposed on everyone so as to prevent any chances of rejection or resistance. Therefore, there are numerous threatening tools in Gilead. One of these devices is the panopticon which Jeremy Bentham, an architect in the 18th Century, coined in literature when he proposed to build a prison in the shape of a panopticon in order to provide a total and omnipotent surveillance of the prisoners. Božović (2000) describes the panopticon as follows:

> *The panopticon is nothing more than 'a simple idea of architecture', never realized, describing 'a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example' – the possessor of this power is 'the inspector' with his invisible omnipresence, 'an utterly dark spot' in the all-transparent, light-flooded universe of the panopticon. (p. 95)*

Although the panopticon architecture came up as a result of the wish of physically watching and observing the prisoners, it has resulted in various concrete and abstract methods for regulating a society regardless of its size. In other words, since the coinage of the term, it has been possible to construct invisible and abstract prisons for everyone around the world. As a result, holders of power could easily regulate and limit the society by creating an inconspicuous guardian, which, in the end brings about the empowerment of the powerful while disseminating fear to everyone as a preventive measure in case of decamping from the available structure to an alternative world, for "[i]t is precisely the inspector's apparent omnipresence that sustains perfect discipline in the panopticon, that deters prisoners themselves from transgressing" (Božović, 2000, p. 102). As such, Gilead incorporates a considerable number of entities that form the invisible panopticon everywhere. The Handmaids, for instance, are not allowed to go anywhere all alone and they are expected to travel within the permitted boundaries with their comrades only. On

their first encounter, Offred, who is the narrator of the novel, and Ofglen meet outside the Commander's house and start their daily walk. Their meeting "is supposed to be for [their] protection, though the notion is absurd. […] The truth is that she [Ofglen] is my [Offred's] spy, as I am hers" (Atwood, 2010, p. 29). By doing so, the Gileadean regime does not need an official observation for each person since they are the eyes of each other. In any case of violation, one eye will help the state terminate the other. As such, rejection of impositions and resistance against regulations turn out to be endangering one's life and the idea of the panopticon functions perfectly well. On another account, Offred and Ofglen come across tourists from another country and because their outfit is completely different from that of the women in the tourist group, they become the very heart of interest. When the interpreter asks if they are happy as women in the Republic of Gilead, Offred admits that they are happy but she acknowledges that a negative answer would be too dangerous in case the interpreter is an Eye (Atwood, 2010, p. 39). In other words, when the enemy or the spy is not known to anyone, everyone should behave in accordance with what the authority enforces them to. Foucault (1995), too, posits on the idea of the panopticon as follows:

> *Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (p. 201)*

Therefore, Offred tries not to take risks and endeavours to inhabit a spot within her limited frames. When she finds out that her comrade, Ofglen, is no more and that she has been replaced with another Handmaid, the new Ofglen, she panics because she does not know if the new Ofglen is one of the believers. Walking beside the Wall, which is an exhibition of the criminals, the new Ofglen suggests Offred that the people hanged there should be reminders to everyone on which Offred hesitates and cannot decide how to answer her recommendation:

*I say nothing at first, because I am trying to make out what she means. She could mean that this is a reminder to us of the unjustness and brutality of the regime. In that case I ought to say <u>yes</u>. Or she could mean the opposite, that we should remember to do what we are told and not get into trouble, because if we do, we will be rightfully punished. If she means that, I should say <u>praise be</u>. Her voice was bland, toneless, no clues there. (Atwood, 2010, pp. 295 - 296)*

The control mechanism that the panopticon has provided, therefore, works splendidly again and suspends Offred in the air. She demonstrates her fluctuation and says "now that Ofglen is gone I am alert again. […] I should not be rash, I should not take unnecessary risks" (Atwood, 2010, p. 296), thereby positioning herself in the hands of the authority one more time as proper to Foucauldian notion that "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault, 1995, p. 201).

Constant surveillance through the panopticon, however, is not enough to keep the system work, for any misdoing without public punishment may result in an increase in the number of the non-believers, thereby triggering a collective resistance among the society. Blending the panopticon with the repressive state apparatuses, therefore, is essential to sustain an empire of fear. This is why violent public punishment plays a critical role in closing ranks to increase fear and consolidation. In a dystopic world, therefore, creating a public enemy stands out as a prominent issue. As has been the case for centuries, any malpractitioner of societal codes is thus an enemy of the public and the state:

*[E]very evildoer who attacks social rights becomes by his crimes a rebel and a traitor to his country; by violating its laws he ceases to be a member of it, and even makes war upon it. In that case, the preservation of the State is incompatible with his own—one of the two must perish; and when a guilty man is executed, it is less as a citizen than as an enemy. The proceedings and the judgment are the proofs and the declaration that he has broken the social contract, and consequently that he is no longer a member of the State. Now, as he has acknowledged himself to be such, at least by his residence, he ought to be cut off from it by exile as a violator of the compact, or by death as a public enemy; for such an enemy is not a moral person, he is*

*simply a man; and this is a case in which the right of war is to slay the*

*vanquished. (Rousseau, 2002, p. 177)*

Although Rousseau puts forth that the public enemy breaks the social contract with his/her crime, the social contract is only a matter of the discourse established by the power structure. In parallel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, too, incorporates such manifestations of punishments to public as preventive measures in order to both increase the fear in people's heart and to simulate them their prospective ends if by any chance they commit a crime against the society, thereby breaking the social contract prepared by the potent.

The Wall where dead bodies are hanged on hooks is one of these measures that no one can avoid seeing during the day. The bodies are "made into examples, for the rest" (Atwood, 2010, p. 43) and what Gileadean people are expected "to feel towards these bodies is hatred and scorn" (Atwood, 2010, p. 43). Offred explains why the bodies are hanged there as follows:

*We stop, together as if on signal, and stand and look at the bodies. It doesn't*

*matter if we look. We're supposed to look: this is what they are there for,*

*hanging on the Wall. Sometimes they'll be there for days, until there's a new*

*batch, so as many people as possible will have the chance to see them.*

*(Atwood, 2010, p. 42)*

The Wall, hence, stands for the vehicle of punishment itself. In other words, this is one method how the patriarch avenges wrong deeds, by which it reflects the *not-yet-dead* a warning in case they may try to escape, resist, refute, or simply challenge whatever is assigned to them by norms. Each hanging body carries a notice of their treason by which all the audience is informed so that they can avoid doing the same evil. Moreover, Offred's description of the appearance of the dead bodies also points out the notion that anyone could be next:

*It's the bags over the heads that are the worst, worse than the faces*

*themselves would be. It makes the men look like dolls on which faces have*

*not yet been painted; like scarecrows, which in a way is what they are, since*

*they are meant to scare. Or as if their heads are sacks, stuffed with*

*undifferentiated material, like flour or dough. It's the obvious heaviness of*

*the heads, their vacancy, the way gravity pulls them down and there is no*

*life any more to hold them up. The heads are zeros. (Atwood, 2010, p. 42)*

The sacks, for sure, are not there to respect the privacy of the dead; on the contrary, the unfamiliarity of faces gives the audience the opportunity to picture their own faces on the shoulders of the dead bodies hanging on the Wall. Triggering the imagination of the audience, therefore, makes consolidation and the increase of fear within the society come true. At the end of the novel, Offred thinks that they are coming for her to give her punishment. Her fear of authority is so concrete that she uncontrollably resigns and surrenders:

> *Dear God, I think, I will do anything you like. Now that you've left me off, I'll obliterate myself, if that's what you really want; I'll empty myself, truly, become a chalice. I'll give up Nick, I'll forget about the others, I'll stop complaining. I'll accept my lot. I'll sacrifice. I'll repent. I'll abdicate. I'll renounce.*
>
> *I know this can't be right but I think it anyway. Everything they taught at the Red Centre, everything I've resisted, comes flooding in. I don't want pain. I don't want to be a dancer, my feet in the air, my head a faceless oblong of white cloth. I don't want to be a doll hung up on the Wall, I don't want to be a wingless angel. I want to keep on living, in any form. I resign my body freely, to the use of others. They can do what they like with me. I am abject. (Atwood, 2010, p. 298)*

As obvious, although Offred has tried to invoke her individuality and power whenever it was possible throughout the novel, she is forced to accept her lot at the end. From a woman who sticked to hope with a previous Handmaid's "*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*[5]" (Atwood, 2010, p. 62), she has been transformed into a body without a soul to contain next generations in her womb.

ISAs and RSAs, essential tools for founding and maintaining a dominant discourse, are abundant in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Apart from the invisible panopticon, there are also visible tools such as Aunts, the black van, guards, and armed forces to sustain the hegemonic discourse on Gileadeans. The Aunts, for instance, are known for their violence against the Handmaids since the former is a very strict follower and enforcer of the ideology and does not hesitate to apply the most brutal violence to tame

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[5] Don't let the bastards grind you down.

the latter. As such, the Handmaids "learned to whisper almost without sound. [They] learned to lip-read, [their] heads flat on the beds, turned sideways, watching each other's mouths" (Atwood, 2010, p. 14). Because exchange of ideas, thoughts, or anything not related to the service to the patriarch is dangerous and not necessary, the Handmaids are expected to remain silent unless they are asked by a superior. The violence in cases of disobedience is so harsh that it is not possible to break the silence explicitly. On one occasion, for example, when Moira, Offred's friend, cuts her vitamins to fake a disease for the sake of a change in her ordinary and subservient life, her fake disease is acknowledged by the authorities and her punishment for her disobedience is beyond imagination:

> *They took her into a room that used to be the Science Lab. It was a room where none of us [Handmaids] ever went willingly. Afterwards she could not walk for a week, her feet would not fit into her shoes, they were too swollen. It was the feet they'd do, for a first offence. They used steel cables, frayed at the ends. After that the hands. […] Her feet did not look like feet at all. They looked like drowned feet, swollen and boneless, except for the colour. They looked like lungs. (Atwood, 2010, p. 102)*

Aunts, therefore, have been the very embodiment of violence themselves. Moira's body, on the other hand, has served as an example to those plotting similar disobedience, thereby entrenching the hegemonic ideology. In addition to the Aunts, the black van with its winged-eye on each side, carrying armed men all worn in black with their black glasses, is another repressive state apparatus that renders fear as visible as possible since whoever is captured by these vans cannot be seen anywhere any time. They are either murdered or forced to be employed for risky and disrespectful jobs such as prostitution at Jezebel's or destruction of hazardous and poisonous wastes at the Colonies. Given these circumstances, RSAs become the very source of fright to prevent the public from disobedience to hegemony, thereby functioning hand in hand with the ISAs to sustain the sovereignty of the state, as is also put forth by Althusser (2014) as follows:

> *[The Repressive State Apparatus] guarantees the general political conditions for the operation of the Ideological State Apparatuses by means of repression (from the most brutal physical force to simple administrative orders and prohibitions, open or tacit censorship, and so on). (p. 141)*

Therefore, committing suicide is definitely more preferable rather than being detained by the black van, which is exactly what the first Ofglen did when she finds out that the van is coming for her due to her secret service to May-Day, an anarchist group against the hegemony in Gilead (Atwood, 2010, p. 297). Stillman and Johnson (1994), too, posit on the idea of suppression and silencing of women through repressive state apparatuses in Gilead as follows:

> *In Gilead, the modes of personal identity formation and intersubjective relations are so weakened, degraded, and debased that the modes of domination and control – of physical force, political power, conflicting individual interests, and intraphysic control – are internalized by those who are subjected to the regime. (p. 75)*

All in all, the presence of the armed forces, the Aunts, the guards, and the black van contribute to the sustainability of the fear that the Republic of Gilead has been imposing on the society as all these repressive state apparatuses are visible to eyes, committed in public.

The ideology in Gilead prohibits and censors various things to females, forms and reforms certain rules, and abuses all social contracts in accordance with whatever necessitates for the sustainability of the patriarchal hegemony. Language, law, science, reading and writing, religion, and mass media are some certain apparatuses that are employed by the state. In Gilead, language is adapted according to the prevalent ideology. Destroying certain things in language brings about the annihilation of certain concepts. For instance, "*fraternize* means *to behave like a brother*. […] [However,] there was no corresponding word that meant *to behave like a sister*" (Atwood, 2010, p. 21) in Gilead. Feminine correspondents are wiped out just like the female individuality itself, thereby decreasing the feminine values and elevating masculine conceptualizations. Furthermore, certain words are forbidden and no one uses them anymore. *Sterile* is one of those words, for "there is no such thing as a sterile man any more, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law" (Atwood, 2010, pp. 70 - 71). Backed up by law, therefore, men take their pride for granted and women are blamed for any cases of failed reproductions. In other words, although in practice everyone might be infertile irrespective of their biological sex, the law enforces the exclusion of men from any failures in terms of reproduction officially, thereby diminishing the value of the

female and categorizing them under men one more time. Language has one of the biggest portions in forming a culture. If a male-dominated language is prevalent, the triumph of a patriarchal society is inevitable since male values are praised whereas the female values are either annulled or vilified. In parallel, gender properties of a language determine certain roles to be fulfilled by the constituents of a society. Put another way, because power is held by the male in the novel, the language is constructed according to the masculine ideology of the state. Definitions that are ascribed to the Handmaids, for instance, are also laden with the masculine ideals as well as the dominant discourse again. When Aunt Lydia addresses the Handmaids in the Red Centre and points out how valuable they are in fact, she becomes the voice of the patriarch:

> *A thing is valued, she says, only if it is rare and hard to get. We want you to*
> *be valued, girls. [...] Think of yourselves as pearls. [...] We [all Handmaids]*
> *are hers to define, we must suffer her adjectives. (Atwood, 2010, p. 124)*

Even the pronoun, we, Aunt Lydia uses manifests that she belongs to the sovereign party and that she has the very right of defining the females around her. Put another way, she has the right to define since she is a total believer of the patriarch. Holding the power at hand, hence, is critically important to specify the part one can take. Even though Aunt Lydia is a woman, her femininity does not matter as long as she employs the masculine values through the male-dominated language. By speaking through the voice of her owner, Aunt Lydia becomes a tool "through which the biopolitical state enforces and seeks to produce certain forms of behaviour in the Handmaids" (Swatie, Autumn 2019, p. 158). Therefore, masculinity becomes the very centre of the language while femininity is swept away to the margins. Preserving this masculine ideology brings about various restrictions for the females. This is why letters are now forbidden for them. When the Handmaids go shopping, they find out the shop they need to go by looking at the pictures painted on the tables, for all the letters are now erased by the state because "even the names of shops were too much temptation" (Atwood, 2010, p. 35) for the women. "What you don't know won't hurt you" (Atwood, 2010, p. 63) is one of the clearest policies of Gileadean patriarchy and since ignorance is one of the most significant treasures a state might possess, it is imposed on women in Gilead. After all, a sleeping body or a paralyzed and blunt mind does not harm anyone other than himself/herself. Because reading is prohibited to women, they are also forbidden to write as dissemination of information via

written texts is dangerous for the hegemony, for consciousness rises in parallel with the level of education one receives and "women's inferior educational level contributes to consolidate their lower status in society" (Rúa, 2021, p. 42).

In addition to the ideological state apparatuses above, science, which has already always been dominated by the male, is also limited in Gilead so as to control the female body. As is explained by Offred, there used to be a lot of university professors and lawyers in Gilead; however, they do not reside there anymore and universities are closed (Atwood, 2010, p. 33). Also, the non-existence of lawyers clearly demonstrates that there is no need to defend anyone now. In other words, modern and civil laws are now unnecessary since the potent and violent patriarchy at the top of Gilead is always right. Moreover, university professors who were discharged as well as the derelict universities expose how science, too, is eliminated for the benefit of the dominant male culture. It is now only used as a tool of biopolitics, a term which was first used by the Swedish professor of political science Rudolf Kjellén "as early as 1905, in a two-volume work entitled *The Great Powers*" (Gunneflo, 2015, p. 24) and further speculated upon by Michael Foucault in his *The History of Sexuality*. Body, to Foucault, was considered as a machine that could be adapted to the necessities of the evolving life and modern requirements. Foucault names one step of biopolitics as an "*anatomo-politics of the human body*" (1978, p. 139) and he describes the body as a sample which is tested through certain variants such as "its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls" (1978, p. 139). As such, the body turns out to be the very battleground for the dominant ideology to exert its power over. Forming and reforming laws, societal norms, and the historical agenda among many other tools, the sovereign leaders decide on what the body shall be used for. The second step of biopolitics, moreover, is constituted by the limits and potentials of the body:

> *The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions*

*and <u>regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population</u>. (Foucault, 1978, p. 139)*

As such, while the first step of biopolitics is employed to discipline the body, the second step is utilized so as to make the body function in parallel with the ideologies of the sovereign. In the case of *The Handmaid's Tale*, for instance, abortion is outlawed and no technological devices or machines are used to diagnose any diseases either for the women or the foetuses (Atwood, 2010, p. 122), which is a direct intervention to women by the state through abusing both science and laws in accordance with Gilead's reproduction policies. No woman has the right of her own body, which is now used as a carrier of babies, thereby functionalized by the dominant ideology. The second step of biopolitics, therefore, enforce women to give as many births as they can by disregarding their intention or free will while the first step, the disciplining procedure, is employed to differentiate between the 'normal' baby and an Unbaby, who is defined by Offred as something – not someone – "with a pinhead or a snout like a dog's, or two bodies, or a hole in its heart or no arms, or webbed hands and feet" (Atwood, 2010, p. 122). Put another way, the Unbabies, born with certain anomalies, cannot integrate into the system founded by the dominant ideology; however, women cannot be given the freedom of choice in terms of reproduction because the hegemony cannot risk the fact that women might prefer not to give birth to babies who are ideologically accredited as 'normal'. Thus, the babies who are tagged as abnormal are cleared away without hesitation, which, for sure, reminds Hitler's fascist ideology of Übermensch, a pure human race which is equipped with great skills and biological perfection as well as being devoid of all anomalies. The female body's ability to reproduce is praised in Gilead, for if a woman can give birth to a baby who is acknowledged by the state, she is allowed to breastfeed him/her for a few months since the ideology admits that breastfeeding is essential for a baby. The Handmaid who could give birth to a normal baby, then, is never "sent to the Colonies, she'll never be declared Unwoman" (Atwood, 2010, p. 137). Kiss (2020), too, argues about the bodily dominance of the Gileadean patriarchy as follows:

> *By owning the bodies of fertile women, the male power in Gilead also own[s] the entire reproductive capacity of the nation, which instantly confers on them authority over the future of not just their nation but possibly the human race. (p. 65)*

Concurrently, womanhood, too, depends upon the fulfilment of the role the hegemony ascribes to the female body, which, for sure, would be impossible without the two steps of biopolitics. Because womanhood in Gilead is directly related to giving birth, any circumstances that have the potential of hindering it is a threat to the female body. This is why "any real illness, anything lingering, weakening, a loss of flesh or appetite, a fall of hair, a failure of the glands" (Atwood, 2010, pp. 162 - 163) is terminal for the Handmaids since the functionality step of biopolitics may declare them as an Unwoman, which, in the end, will bring about these women's transfer to the Colonies. When Janine, a Handmaid in the Red Centre, went through a delusion about her past, for example, Moira clearly states that the Guards would take her to the Chemistry Lab and shoot her or they would simply burn her as the garbage in the Colonies "like an Unwoman" (Atwood, 2010, p. 228). As such, if a Handmaid has a mental or psychological breakdown, she is not needed by the system as a reproductive body; therefore, she should be overcome in any possible way since she cannot fulfil the functionality requirement of reproduction. Under such a circumstance, if a Handmaid does not have a mental malfunctioning but is merely dangerous for transferring her DNA to the prospective babies, she is declared an Unwoman is transferred to the Colonies where she fulfils other requirements such as doing agriculture, burning toxic wastes, and so on. The people in the Colonies are the ones that the system cannot benefit from in the society; so, they are excluded to the margins by the ideology so that they can become functional in other areas. "It's old women […] and Handmaids who've screwed up their three chances, and incorrigibles like me [Moira]" (Atwood, 2010, pp. 260 - 261). Gileadean biopolitics, thus, forces women to choose one way of death over the other and.

As is proper to fascist and tyrannical governments, religion is also imposed on Gileadean people as one of the essences of state. By doing so, the Republic of Gilead could operate more easily because while the religious apparatus has empowered the inherent system, it has backed up the enslavement of the others, the women. It would be improper to state that women in Gilead are excluded from the right of education. On the contrary, all their life is dedicated to education mingled with religion in the Red Centre. Aunt Lydia, as a committed supporter of the hegemony, instructs all the Handmaids together with the other Aunts. On such an occasion, she highlights Offred how wonderful it is to forget about the material world and to be devoted to spirituality. She proposes that

"you get too attached to this material world and you forget about spiritual values. You must cultivate poverty of spirit. Blessed are the meek" (Atwood, 2010, p. 74). As an already submissive object within the Gileadean society, it is therefore impossible for Offred and the other Handmaids like her to break through the iron cages of everyday teachings of the Red Centre, for the ideology is everywhere, dictating itself on its subjects by way of mesmerizing verses as follows: "Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the silent" (Atwood, 2010, p. 100). They are forced to be thankful to the authority, be it the Gileadean god or the sovereign at the top of the state, for at least they are alive. Even if a rape is committed as in the case with Janine, for instance, it is never the fault of the rapist. Contrariwise, Janine is the one who should be blamed and God allowed her to be raped, for she should be taught her lesson (Atwood, 2010, pp. 81 - 82) due to her wrong deeds such as seducing the rapist or simply going for her daily walk. Religion, hence, is employed by the patriarch as a shield to protect itself from all sorts of convictions while, at the same time, it is used as a weapon directed against the powerless in case s/he might look for ways of justifying himself/herself. Furthermore, all collective prayers beside the sermons given by preachers during Prayvaganzas contribute to the consolidation process of the Handmaids and to their persuasion about the notion that they puritanically work and suffer for the benefit of their state. In other words, they are the new generation Eve who deceived Adam and was saved thanks to her biological reproductive skill (Atwood, 2010, p. 233). In Offred's private contemplation, nevertheless, it is crystal clear that religion is abused by the regime to create its own Heaven, for "Hell we [Gileadeans] can make for ourselves" (Atwood, 2010, p. 205).

Apart from the ideological state apparatuses above, media is used for stabilizing the reproductive propaganda and making sure that the Handmaids are dutiful enough to the established system. In order to manipulate the Handmaids and to convince them that they are in need of the protection of the authority, a lot of videos full of violence against women, pornography and blood are forcibly presented to the them. One of these movies is described by Offred as follows:

> *Sometimes the movie she [Aunt Lydia] showed would be a porno film from*
> *the seventies or eighties. Women kneeling, sucking penises or guns, women*
> *tied up or chained or with dog collars around their necks, women hanging*

*from trees, or upside-down, naked, with their legs held apart, women being raped, beaten up, killed. Once we had to watch a woman being slowly cut into pieces, her fingers and breasts snipped off with garden shears, her stomach slit open and her intestines pulled out.* (Atwood, 2010, p. 128)

Whatever is normalized back in the seventies and eighties before the coup, therefore, is entitled as demeaning and dangerous for the women. That pornography is an attack to the female body and to individuality in modern times is unquestionably admissible; however, relating it to religion and tagging the women playing in those movies and the ones watching them back then as "godless" is definitely possible via the authority the Aunts have thanks to the inherent ideology. Put another way, although "the primary purpose of the system is to protect women, [...] the actual purpose is to control them and reinforce the notion that their biology is their destiny" (Freibert, 1988, pp. 283 - 284). Moreover, although the violent pornographic movies are but fiction, they are demonstrated as the way how women were treated before the coup, thereby justifying the military attack on the previous government and asking for the Handmaids' acknowledgement that they are safe and sound now thanks to the present hegemony. The women in these pornographic movies as well as the other women who acted on TV advertisements to promote working women and increase their numbers in order to boost equality between men and women, furthermore, are classified as Unwomen who are not functional to the state but only enemies and threats to the inherent blissful atmosphere of the available system. Manipulation of truth by way of the power at hand, therefore, is one other apparatus that Gilead abuses to exert its power on the society as well as sustaining its authority.

As such, the Handmaids in Gilead are reduced to bodies that have no souls, no feelings and no logic at all. Because Gilead suffers from a decline in birth rates, it has found the solution in restricting the female identity by domesticating them in their private sphere, which, in fact, is not private since there is a constant surveillance everywhere. Although it has been a long time since women were decapacitated by the state, Offred still has problems in identifying herself as a woman as she was in the past:

*There remains a mirror, on the hall wall. If I turn my head so that the white wings framing my face direct my vision towards it, I can see it as I go down the stairs, round, convex, a pier-glass, like the eye of a fish, and myself in it like a distorted shadow, a parody of something, some fairytale figure in a*

*red cloak, descending towards a moment of carelessness that is the same as*

*danger. A Sister, dipped in blood. (Atwood, 2010, p. 19)*

The image in the distorted mirror, therefore, is not a woman but mere remnants of her. Everything Offred had in the past to define herself as a female individual has been taken away from her and she is only a womb to be filled with babies by as many Commanders as possible. Put another way, she has been exposed to what Foucault (1978) terms as "a socialization of procreative behaviour" (p. 104) and describes as follows:

> *An economic socializaiton via all the incitements and restrictions, the "social" and fiscal measures brought to bear on the fertility of couples; a political socialization achieved through the "responsibilization" of couples with regard to the social body as a whole (which had to be limited or on the contrary reinvigorated), and a medical socialization carried out by attributing a pathogenic value – for the individual and the species – to birth-control practices. (pp. 104 – 105)*

As such, Offred is so defamiliarized to herself that it is impossible for her to establish a bond between the woman she was and the body she is at present. As an anticipated result of the inherent ideology, it is not Offred who defines herself but the reproductive nature of her body, which is manifested when she avoids looking at her naked body while she is preparing for having a bath before her mating ritual with the Commander and states "I don't want to see it. I don't want to look at something that determines me so completely" (Atwood, 2010, pp. 72 - 73). Moreover, Gileadean ideology does not praise motherhood but imposes the idea that the reproductivity of the Handmaids is certainly significant for the future of the nation, thereby objectifying them as mere biological plants used for increasing the number of babies. On the one hand, the Handmaids and the Wives who cannot reproduce are referred in the novel as *empty* and *chalices with no wine*; on the other hand, as is mentioned in the novel, the Handmaids are *natural resources, containers, two-legged wombs, sacred vessels, fruitful bodies, boats with cargos, ambulatory chalices,* and *a blank between two parentheses*. Although they give birth to babies to be looked after by the Wives, Handmaids do not have the right to become mothers. When they complete their missions, they are transferred to another house so as to be impregnated by another Commander. The body, therefore, "is not a 'being', but a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a

cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler, 2007, p. 189). Correspondingly, whether reproductive or not, women can never be acknowledged as women in Gilead. Each constituent of this gender is adhered a function to be fulfilled in accordance with the politics of Gileadean patriarchy and has to bear the responsibilities of each functional role.

Moreover, conducting the allocated roles brings about some certain restrictions and prohibitions such as the anonymity of all the Handmaids as well as their negation through being registered by the name of the Commander they serve to. Butler (2007) speculates on the effect of history on the social body and argues that Forces and impulses with multiple directionalities are precisely that which history both destroys and preserves through the *Entstehung* (historical event) of inscription. […] [T]he body is always under siege, suffering destruction by the very terms of history" (p. 177). This is one reason why the Handmaids cannot possess their real names since their previous names gave them their identities. Also, "attaching a name attaches you to the world of fact" (Atwood, 2010) where there is cumulative information and knowledge for people to create bonds with life, which directly threatens the sovereignty of the patriarch in Gilead. Besides, addressing the Handmaids by using the reproductive referents mentioned above both negates their personality and dissociates them from the previously established system of facts, thereby stabilizing the potency of the available hegemony. Since the Handmaids cannot use their own names, they are always called as *of + the Commander's name*, which, in the end, proves to be a very useful strategy for the sovereign to obliterate all traces of the Handmaid when her date expires. Offred, for instance, is considerably well aware of the fact that her real name, which is forbidden to be pronounced now, is her memories, past, and identity. This is why she asserts "I keep the knowledge of this name like something hidden, some treasure I'll come back to dig up, one day" (Atwood, 2010, p. 94). The fact that she has buried her real name deep down her memories is because history is a big threat to the inherent regime. Another example to the prohibition of real names is once the previous Ofglen is replaced with the new one since Offred confronts the possible end she will face after her replacement: "That is how you can get lost, in a sea of names. It wouldn't be easy to find her, now" (Atwood, 2010, p. 295). The anonymity, thus, makes it possible for the patriarchy to dissociate women from the history

they have had by way of destructing all their ties with the past, thereby metaphorically murdering them.

Furthermore, reproduction for the Handmaids is critically important for their future, for if they cannot succeed in giving birth to a baby in three attempts at most, they are sent to the Colonies. Fulfilling this requirement so as not to be declared as an Unwoman, however, requires a great skill for Offred since she knows that she is merely a walking womb and that there is a role she has to play during her ceremonial duty. Therefore, before going into the room where she will be abused by the Commander, she remarks "I wait. I compose myself. My self is a thing I must now compose, as one composes a speech. What I must present is a made thing, not something born" (Atwood, 2010), thereby referring to the fact that gender is but a construction, for she constructs herself in accordance with what is expected from her. In other words, her presence in that room does not depend on an organic reason but on a made-up procedure, which is also the case with gender construction. As such, it is highly clear that the Gileadean patriarchy enforces the Handmaids to become the walking wombs so that their bodies will not belong to them but to the nation. Moreover, the fact that their bodies belong to the state is registered by way of the tattoos on their ankles, inclusive of four digits and an eye, and prevent them from fleeing to other territories since they are "too important, too scarce, [and] a national resource" (Atwood, 2010, p. 75). This is why when they see a pregnant woman, they assume her as "a flag on a hilltop, showing [them] what can still be done: [they] too can be saved" (Atwood, 2010, p. 36). The Handmaids cannot run away from the enclosed plan and they only dream about their prospective pregnancy since it is the one and only exit from their burdening and objectifying roles in the Gileadean society. Furthermore, the bodies of the Handmaids, who are only equal to a womb, are so important that even when they need to be punished by the Aunts in the Red Centre due to their disobedience, they receive violent physical punishment on every part of their bodies with the exclusion of their womb. As Offred explains it, the Aunts never cared "what they did to your feet and hands, even if it was permanent. Remember, said Aunt Lydia. For our purposes your feet and hands are not essential" (Atwood, 2010, p. 102). The womb, thus, is the only reason why there are Handmaids in Gilead and because they are only incubation machines, their supervision is essential during the ceremonies of pregnancy

attempts, for sexual desire or satisfaction is clearly forbidden. Offred describes her experience with the Commander as follows:

> *My red skirt is hitched up to my waist, though no higher. Below it the Commander is fucking. What he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say making love, because this is not what he's doing. Copulating too would be inaccurate, because it would imply two people and only one is involved. Nor does rape cover it: nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. (Atwood, 2010, pp. 104 - 105)*

Hence, their mating ritual is supervised by the Wife of the Commander, thereby clearing away any chances of orgasm, for it is neither functional nor necessary to transfer DNAs into a woman's womb. In other words, the experience between the Commander and Offred is not a sexual intercourse, but it's a ceremonial duty which should be accomplished by way of an intrusion by the Commander into a uterus. Accordingly, the reason why sexuality between a Commander and a Handmaid is prohibited is not moral but ideological since sexuality is one thing that can stand as a tool to empower women over both Commanders and their Wives. Although a Handmaid is never welcome in a Commander's house by his Wife, she is functionally much more important than the latter, for the former can reproduce but the latter cannot. Therefore, having the orgasmic pleasure of a sexual intercourse would only mean an announcement of the superiority of the Handmaid to the Wife since they have to share their husbands for the sake of the holy plan. Moreover, the notion that the female sexuality empowers women over men is presented perfectly well when Offred moves her hips on seeing the Guards on her way back to the Commander's home:

> *Then I find I'm not ashamed after all. I enjoy the power; power of a dog bone, passive but there. I hope they get hard at the sight of us [Offred and Ofglen] and have to rub themselves against the painted barriers, surreptitiously. They will suffer, later, at night, in their regimented beds. […] There are no more magazines, no more films, no more substitutes; only me and my shadow, walking away from the two men, who stand at attention, stiffly, by a roadblock, watching our retreating shapes. (Atwood, 2010, p. 32)*

Offred's simple hip movement arouses the Guards and she simply avenges all her loss of identity and reduction into a walking womb in a passive aggressive way through men's sexual desires. Put another way, she is empowered and she certainly exerts her authority on the Guards through her sexuality and evinces her victory through the gaze of the two guardians, which is precisely why sexual desire and emotions are strictly prohibited by the Gileadean authority since sustaining the prevalent ideology could be threatened otherwise.

In relation to all the issues mentioned above, Atwood is highly critical of the women who depend too much on their newly gained rights thanks to the movements starting in 1960s. In the novel, there is always a fluctuation between the time at present and the time before the Republic of Gilead. Before the coup, Offred was excessively comfortable with all her rights of working, earning money, and her freedom of choice over her body just as the Commander's wife Serena Joy, who was actually named as Pam and used to show up on TVs to give speeches as well as singing on Sunday mornings. Atwood illustrates Offred as the embodiment of all the women who were ignorant, unaware of their gradual approach to a dead-end where their identities would be reduced into baby-containers, gardeners, cleaners, and cookers among many others. Stillman and Johnson (1994) also argue about Offred's ignorance as follows:

> In her past life, Offred lacked an understanding of the larger political and social structures and forces surrounding her. To her, any problem as well as its solution was a totally personal matter. Not only did she lack a consciousness of the constraints imposed upon her by society, not only did she fail to think in terms of acting with others, she mocked such awareness in both her mother and her best friend, Moira. (p. 78)

As obvious, "it was true, [Offred] took too much for granted; [she] trusted fate, back then" (Atwood, 2010, p. 37). Therefore, while Offred and the other Handmaids have to reproduce as is required by the prevalent ideology, Serena Joy and the other Wives rule their houses and look after their gardens in order to keep themselves busy. Nevertheless, life before the coup was completely different from the current conditions in Gilead. Even the red dresses of the Handmaids are reminiscent of their imprisonment within their bodies, for when Offred encounters tourists and describes them, she draws a stark

difference between herself and the other women who share the same biological sex but different gender roles:

> *The skirts reach just below the knee and the legs come out from beneath them, nearly naked in their thin stockings, blatant, the high-heeled shoes with their straps attached to the feet like delicate instruments of torture. [...] Their heads are uncovered and their hair too is exposed, in all its darkness and sexuality. They wear lipstick, red, outlining the damp cavities of their mouths, like scrawls on a washroom wall, of the time before. (Atwood, 2010, p. 38)*

What Offred sees when she carefully observes the tourist women is not only how they wear but also the freedom of choice that she lost long ago. Also, although the tourist women do not show any resemblance to Offred in terms of their outfits, they belong to the same sex category and Offred is pretty well aware of this fact. This is why she is a remorseful Handmaid, for she cannot become a woman according to her own taste. Although she contemplates on her own that the high-heeled shoes are a way of torture and that the make-up the tourist women wear reminds her of the cavities in the washrooms, she clearly knows that she will not be able to look like them no matter how much she craves to do so. As she also confesses, Offred "used to dress like that. That was freedom" (Atwood, 2010, p. 38). Accordingly, she is only a constituent of a standardized, monotonous, and captivated group whereas the tourist women are diversely and colourfully individual. Another example of her negated individuality is when she finally finds out during the coup that she cannot work, earn, hold, or spend money. All the money on her bank account would be transferred to her husband, Luke. Her awakening is a considerably harsh one since she figures out her vulnerability and says that "we are not each other's, any more. Instead, I am his" (Atwood, 2010, p. 192), thereby facing her objectification and subservience to her husband. Sharing a similar fate with Offred despite the fact that she is hierarchically above all the Handmaids, Serena Joy is also possessed by the present ideology since she lost her very individuality, too. She has turned into a gardener and an impotent queen from a famous and popular woman before the coup. "She doesn't make speeches anymore. She has become speechless. She stays in her home, but it doesn't seem to agree with her" (Atwood, 2010, p. 56).

The present status quo in Gilead is not due to the current ignorance of its people only but also because of their previous choices before the coup. Spreading ignorance is overwhelmingly common in Gilead, too. Thus, Gileadean people both choose to be indifferent because of the violent authority and they are forced to be so owing to the ideological state apparatuses. As for the present gender roles in Gilead, it is possible to put forth that patriarchy is not the only one to be blamed since everyone in the society contributed to the deterioration of all conditions together by way of disregarding everything that did not directly pertain to them. The indifference back before the coup forces the society now to believe that they "were a society dying […] of too much choice" (Atwood, 2010, p. 35). After the coup, therefore, the society is saved from having a variety of alternatives by the patriarch's mandatory politics of obedience. There are merely a few options for everyone now and re-acquiring the rights via resistance does not seem very probable. Offred, almost regretful, manifests how easily they have been accustomed to their new laws and order when she states "[i]t has taken so little time to change our minds" (Atwood, 2010, p. 38). Hence, life in Gilead at present is normalized and the previous history of the state is certainly an enemy to the current system. Specifically for women, Gilead is now a country where freedom and individuality are archaic words which do not connote any meanings. What makes it even worse is that women are deprived of every right due their preference, for they "lived, as usual, by ignoring. Ignoring isn't the same as ignorance, you have to work at it" (Atwood, 2010, p. 66). Ignorance might be related to various economic, socio-economic, ideological, or other social and political reasons; nevertheless, ignoring is only related to people's way of life, how concerned they are, and their stand against the ideologies surrounding them. Therefore, "[w]illed ignorance, Offred learns, is sister to victimization and to passive acceptance of blame for what is done to one" (Neuman, Summer 2006, p. 862). On one occasion, for instance, when a man is captivated by a black van on the street, Offred clearly demonstrates how quick the process is and how normalized it is to ignore this procedure since "[i]t's over, in seconds, and the traffic on the street resumes as if nothing has happened. What I [Offred] feel is relief. It wasn't me" (Atwood, 2010, p. 179). It is exactly this indifference that has brought about the end of the female identity. The reason why there are Wives, Daughters who preserve their virginity, Aunts, Handmaids, Marthas, Widows, Unwomen, and Econowives is certainly the fact that the streets are

considerably normal after such a terrifying occasion as well as people's non-responsive attitude to ideological and repressive apparatuses surrounding them. Put another way, getting used to things beside an unquestioning and submissive attitude are two major sins one can commit against himself/herself and a society since the intersection of these sins is the exact point where all violence and objectification begin. "Ordinary, said Aunt Lydia, is what you are used to. This may not seem ordinary to you now, but after a time it will. It will become ordinary" (Atwood, 2010, p. 43). As is obvious, Aunt Lydia's *after a time* is not actually related to a period of time but the phrase relates to the habitual process people in Gilead embrace the new rules. At the end of the process, women end up making the most of what is presented to them as possible, for a "rat in a maze is free to go anywhere, as long as it stays inside the maze" (Atwood, 2010, p. 174). Although it is the hegemonic ideology who built the maze with all its sovereign powers, it is women who backed up this construction due to their lack of activism. In other words, contrary to the activist women of the 1960s and 1970s, women in Gilead created a culture of failure to "[b]e thankful for small mercies" (Atwood, 2010, p. 137).

Offred, for sure, is not the scapegoat of all the women in Gilead. Serena Joy is another emblem of the indifference of the previous society. Although she has the highest rank among women, she is well aware of her uselessness for the inherent system. Her commitment to the hegemony starts even before the establishment of the new overwhelming Gileadean patriarchy itself because she had an occupation on TV where she promoted the domestication of women and infused this notion into the minds of all her audience regardless of their gender. Offred describes how professional Serena Joy was as follows:

> She was good at it [speaking]. Her speeches were about the sanctity of home,
> about how women should stay home. Serena Joy didn't do this herself, she
> made speeches instead, but she presented this failure of hers as a sacrifice
> she was making for the good of all. (Atwood, 2010, p. 55)

Reasonable enough, Serena Joy is now castrated from her very own voice. She does not need to preach to anyone anymore. Her mission of challenging the period's feminists like Offred's mother is currently complete and she is where she is ascribed to be; in her garden and home only to emphasize the Handmaids that the Commander is her but no one else's husband. Her previous dedication to patriarchy has resulted in her deprivation of her

professional life as well as the domestication of all women including her. Furthermore, it is also possible to claim that although she is an agent of the prevalent ideology, she is also the victim of it since she is always reminded of her insufficiency and futility due to her infertility by way of admitting each Handmaid to her house and witnessing the impregnation attempts of her husband.

Yet, neither Offred nor the Commander's Wife is alone in the sustainability of the established hegemony. Kimmel (2011), too, puts power relations at the very centre of subordination as follows:

> *At the level of gender relations, gender is about the power that men as a group have over women as a group, and it is also about the power that some men have over other men (or that some women have over other women). (p.118)*

As such, Aunt Lydia comes up as another woman who is a radical supporter of the patriarchy in Gilead. Educating all the Handmaids in the Red Centre, she has abused all tools of the ideological state apparatuses to convince the Handmaids to obey. Besides, she has also invoked all her efforts to activate the repressive state apparatuses to punish all the disobedient Handmaids, for what has always echoed in her mind is a politics of perform or perish. As is analysed in the *Historical Notes* part of the novel, women are critically effective in the architecture of the present ideology:

> *[T]he best and most cost-effective way to control women for reproductive and other purposes was through women themselves. For this there were many historical precedents; in fact, no empire imposed by force or otherwise has ever been without this feature: control of the indigenous by members of their own group. In the case of Gilead, there were many women willing to serve as Aunts, either because of genuine belief in what they called "traditional values", or for the benefits they might thereby acquire. When power is scarce, a little of it is tempting. (Atwood, 2010, p. 320)*

This is another reason why believers are also responsible for the sustainability of the inherent ideology. They are certainly dangerous because they are the invisible eyes of the patriarch. Moreover, they do not hesitate to serve to the authority whenever their support is needed. Thus, they create the backbones of the hegemony, thereby becoming both the victims and victimizers. One of the most striking examples of how the male are actually

helpless and how hollow their potency is without the assistance of the female is pointed out by Offred when she sees the Commander naked without his uniform at the Jezebel's and thinks that "[w]ithout his uniform he looks smaller, older, like something being dried" (Atwood, 2010, p. 267). As the symbol of authority, the uniform gives the Commander a more powerful and indestructible look; nonetheless, he is merely flesh and blood when he undresses. The uniform, therefore, signifies the female in Gilead owing to the fact that there will be no more Commanders to impregnate the Handmaids if no support is given to the present ideology.

Not all women have contributed to the patriarchy, though. Atwood includes Moira and Offred's mother in the novel so as to highlight what went wrong before the coup. As the embodiment of the second wave feminists, both characters are greatly in favour of the emancipation of women from their own loads as well as the reductionist and humiliating ideologies. Offred, for instance, remembers that she was taken to *Take Back the Nights*, a collective protest of women's objectification and cultural imposition of aesthetic values on them by way of printed media (Atwood, 2010, p. 48). Counter-attack to impositions is one of the most critical issues that stand for opposition. When there is no one or nothing to oppose, everything is easily infused upon the society. Women who could finally leave their domestic spheres were indebted to these counter-attacks before the coup. One example of this is manifested when Offred, her husband Luke and her mother discuss on the household responsibilities:

> *You young people don't appreciate things. […] You don't know what we had to go through, just to get you where you are. Look at him [Luke], slicing up the carrots. Don't you know how many women' lives, how many women's bodies, the tanks had to roll over just to get that far?*
>
> *Cooking's my hobby, Luke would say. I enjoy it.*
>
> *[…] Once upon a time you wouldn't have been allowed to have such a hobby, they'd have called you queer. (Atwood, 2010, p. 131)*

Apparent enough, Offred's mother is right in her argument that before the coup, women could not protect the rights they acquired thanks to the second wave feminists. In other words, their indifference and consideration of things as *normal* not only brought about their end but also disgraced all the efforts of the second wave feminists. As another protest

woman, Moira cannot be adapted to the normative rules and orders of Gilead, either. She attempts to run away from the Red Centre at any possible time. For sure, she is the soul of the second wave as is Offred's mother since she does not surrender and let cultural impositions be injected into her mind. "She is a powerful woman and a powerful idea because she both possesses and represents an energetic, persistent striving for freedom, a resistance to accept control and definition by others" (Stillman & Johnson, 1994, p. 80). However, because she is not in the good old days when she could find solidarity and support with the sisterhood around, she is severely punished by the Gileadean authority at every attempt. This is why collective activism has a crucial role in opposition, for although Moira does her best to resist all the wrongdoings of the Gileadean patriarchy, she cannot help being marginalized and punished. Yet, receiving the most violent and brutal retributions, she never resigns since she is well aware of the fact that "[y]ou can't stick your hand through a glass window without getting cut" (Atwood, 2010, pp. 189 - 190), a saying which actually constitutes one of the most significant messages of the novel. All in all, the "liberal idea of the autonomous self who works out his or her moral code in isolation and then brings it to bear on his or her society is seriously undermined" (Tolan, 2005, p. 29).

To conclude with *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead is a projected nightmare excessively for the female. In a state where all the ideological state apparatuses are established to negate the female individuality with the help of the repressive state apparatuses beside the other constituents of the society, it turns out to be impossible to resist and reverse everything back to the point where there was a comparatively better society. Apart from the brutality of the indigenous patriarchy, it is also significant to note that in both societies, Gilead before and after the coup, women have different roles to be fulfilled. Therefore, gender roles are certainly constructed in accordance with the requirements of the patriarch and performed by the rest of the society. Although the novel incorporates unimaginable but probable results when a society prefers to be indifferent to the ideology around, the main scope of it is to highlight the idea that results do not matter at all, for it is reasons that should be focused on to prevent such a nightmare from coming true.

# CONCLUSION

This dissertation aimed to find out the methods of gender construction, women's responsibility for their contemporaneous conditions concerning gender roles as well as the relation of gender with power and authority by conducting research in feminist utopian and dystopian works such as *Sultana's Dream, Herland, Swastika Night,* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, all of which belong to different geographies, cultures, and periods. While *Sultana's Dream*, a comparatively short novella, incorporates a wonderfully established society run by women, devoid of violence and blood, developed in science, education, agriculture, and technology, it is also noteworthy that the main concern Hossain shows is to avenge all women for all the wrongdoings of the male hegemony. Even though the novella presents a eutopian vision for a better alternative world, interpretations of questions and dialogues of the characters give readers a clear picture of how religious, educational, juridical, and political ideologies as well as language helped the male establish domestic prisons for the female. By doing so, women have been accepted as domestic animals, lacking required intelligence and skills to be educated in official institutions or to work outside their domestic spheres.

Profoundly employed in many utopias, role reversals and subversion of normative references are abundant in Hossain's novella, too. She skilfully employs subversion of such responsibilities as motherhood, cooking, baby-sitting, all household chores as well as certain roles like governing a country, conducting scientific research, and working outside domestic spheres among many others so as to highlight the fact that none of these roles can be *naturally* adhered to one specific gender. In her highly restrictive and patriarchal Bengali society, utopian fiction is one of the most useful genres for Hossain to trigger people, especially women, for dreaming a more emancipated and peaceful society to live in. As is proper to utopian

tradition, Hossain successfully breaks people's habitual way of thinking, which in turn creates hopes for an advanced society where everyone will live equally.

Hossain's success in creating a peaceful and developed society for women is undeniable. However, one major reason for her achievement in her creation is the perquisite for the exclusion of all men from the rest of the society. Although one other concern Hossain shows is to arise empathetic feelings in the male sovereign, it is still considerably problematic since her work is suggestive of the notion that women are only peaceful and talented on the condition that men are not around them. In other words, women, who have been considered as *naturally* inapt and unqualified by the dominant patriarchal discourse, can only be skilful and qualified when the male and the female do no coexist.

Moreover, Hossain continuously underlines the fact that construction is bound to whoever holds the potency and power at hand and she accuses women of their indifference and ignorance which contribute to the sustainability of the prevalent ideologies used for overpowering them. To her, women are as responsible as men in the establishment and continuity of the overwhelming patriarchy. Sultana, the visitor to Ladyland, is paralyzed by the indigenous ideologies in her own society and thus, she cannot think out of the box, thereby acknowledging herself and her own breed as inferior to the male. As a distorting mirror, therefore, *Sultana's Dream* manifests certain possible ways to deconstruct the presumably fixed roles in a society and it also calls women for collective activism to subvert those attributions not only for the advancement of one gender but also for the improvement of all the nation.

As another eutopian work, *Herland* also interrogates the gender specific attributions to roles in societies and manifests that the ideologically powerful half of each community overwhelms the other half by merely suggesting normative referents to be fulfilled by everyone residing in the subject society. To Gilman, societies are fundamentally constructed through ideological tools and a redefinition or a remodelling for gender roles, especially for motherhood and wifehood, is inevitable so that the female can leave their domestic spheres in order to be equal with the male under all circumstances. In her *Herland*, Gilman presents a society consisting of women only. Herlanders, as are Ladylanders in Hossain's novella, have been living in peace and quiet

for thousands of years because there are no men in their communities. In parallel with Hossain's suggestion, Gilman's message is also inclusive of men's destructive nature shaped by inherent ideologies, thereby highlighting the idea that men should be questioning themselves for the inequalities women have to bear. In short, when there is no man, there is no social, political, economic, agricultural, or environmental crisis.

Presenting a parthenogenetic way of childbearing, Gilman negates the very potency of men over the female body, for motherhood in our world causes women to be castrated from social and professional life because they lack the phallus. In other words, motherhood cannot be a natural role that could be ascribed to women just because they have ovaries. Mating for reproduction is the only responsibility men have in our world and Gilman steals this joyous role from men and empowers women by giving them a very autonomous and self-sufficient identity. Furthermore, she proposes the idea that motherhood should be replaced with parenthood and each baby should be under the responsibility of the *non-gender-specific* professionals in the society for the good of their nation, thereby drawing attention to the fact that motherhood is also a constructed phenomenon itself. By doing so, Gilman praises neither motherhood nor fatherhood as these constructs are inclusive of gender-specific referents which create gender expectations and result in inequalities between the two sex categories.

Gilman, too, proposes the fact that women are unconsciously captive in their domestic cages constructed by the man-made world. She demonstrates the power of language on gender construction through eliminating all gender-specific attributions in Herland. There is no manly or womanly, masculine or feminine values in the language Herlanders speak. Therefore, there are no binary oppositions which are very strong sources that create tension and discrimination within the society. Moreover, aesthetic attributions to the female body as well as women's imprisonment in their domesticated roles are also questioned in the novel so as to bring up new perspectives to readers. A change, Gilman suggests, is only possible when margins are moved into centre and centres are decentred. Put another way, fundamentalist acknowledgement of all societal norms is one reason why women are excluded from the productive units of societies. Such an unconscious attitude, moreover, makes the female depend on the male more and more, thereby contributing to the prevalence of the indigenous patriarchal system.

Although Gilman's accusation of women for inactivity to fight for equality is not clearly visible, it is still possible to grasp her criticism on a closer look at the novel. When the three male visitors arrive at Herland, they are totally products of a man-made world, expecting women to be dependent on other men; however, at the end of the novel, Terry, who is excessively patriarchal, is dismissed from Herland, Jeff has completely been converted to be a Herlander, and Vandyck has come to understand alternative opportunities he could have if there were a collaborative relationship between men and women in his world, thereby giving readers the notion that people like Terry should be excluded from the society for the betterment and improvement of the subject community; that people might be educated for looking at the same page altogether as in the example with Jeff; and that it is not impossible to negotiate with people to destroy the patriarchal hegemony as is conducted with Vandyck. Analysing the storyline, it is obvious that none of these results has naturally come up; on the contrary, Herlanders resisted to preserve their own culture and identity, which points out Gilman's insinuation of women's passivity to resist.

As for Katherine Burdekin's dystopic novel, *Swastika Night*, it should be stated that ideological and repressive state apparatuses are more visible compared to the two eutopian works since punishment and violence as well as self-regulation in order to avoid marginalisation are essential to survive in tyrannical and fascist societies. In parallel to the other works this dissertation studies, gender comes up as a construction again and women are dehumanized and reduced. As proper to the ends of performativity, women are whatever the ideology defines them to be. In other words, they cannot be wives but merely possessions, they do not have control over their bodies, they cannot have free will, they can be mothers to sons for a short period of time, they are hierarchically at the bottom of the society, and so on. Put another way, although women's sex category is fixed, their gender is considerably fluid and changes in accordance with what the authority necessitates.

Defining gender roles is surely possible through the dominant discourse which is very well established by Burdekin. Religion, racism, sexism, language, and history among many others serve to the hegemonic discourse and continuously disempower the female while empowering the male. Foucault's power and knowledge relationship as well as Althusser's notions on ideology are clearly visible when the binaries in the novel are

analysed. The ignorance of women has been so strongly employed into the plot that although the remedy of all German Empire's threat of extinction lies before the women, the female are still intellectually paralysed through manipulations that serve to the inherent ideology. Therefore, it turns out to be impossible for women to raise consciousness and stars resisting.

Burdekin also criticizes women's ill decision-making as well as their inactivity since she implies that women have also served to the establishment of the fascist and restrictive patriarchal hegemony in the German Empire. As aforementioned, results are considerably difficult to be changed after everything is settled. As a warning to her readers, therefore, Burdekin aims to give women a wake-up call to stand against the approaching fascist ideology of the time and draws both men's and women's attention to the fact that they are both going to be the victims of the upcoming threat since women are domesticated whereas men are forced to fight in wars because of Hitler's politics of polarity of sexes. Glorification of masculine values as well as eagerness to serve to those masculine values, to Burdekin, should be closely analysed because if it were not for the female support, male dominance would not be possible in fictional Hitler's empire.

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* stands as one other projected nightmare for the female since they are deprived of their individuality and free will by way of the ideological and repressive state apparatuses again. Women have been categorized according to their performances within the Gileadean society, which repeatedly connotes the theory of performativity. Every woman is expected to fulfil the norms described by the dominant discourse; otherwise, they are categorized as Unwomen, for the hegemony is the one who decides on the identity of its subjects. In parallel to performativity, womanhood is constructed according to the roles the women play in their domestic spheres. By comparing and contrasting the women before and after the coup in Gilead, Atwood gives her readers to what extent a role can be constructed as the prevalent ideology changes.

Moreover, as is also the case with Burdekin's dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* also incorporates women against women, which contributes to the sustainability of the terrorizing patriarchal and totalitarian hegemony. As ideology is everywhere, it is impossible to get away from it. Therefore, what Atwood brings on the agenda is the fact

that raising consciousness and becoming aware of all the ideological apparatuses are certain ways for fighting back to exert one's identity as well as her implication that individual reactions may not always be possible to acquire the desired equality.

As is the case with the other works studied in this dissertation, *The Handmaid's Tale* accuses women of their ignorance and indifference, too. Manifesting the most terrible and brutal consequences of living under the hegemony of a totalitarian regime, Atwood, too, suggests that when the ideology is stabilized, it is nearly impossible to destabilize it, for especially the repressive state apparatuses and the very potency of fear prevent people from taking initiative and fighting back. The perquisite of living under a more peaceful or at least a negotiable society is to acknowledge the ideologies around and react with collective activism.

As such, it is critically noteworthy that women in *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland* have all the ideological strength and opportunities to define and construct gender roles in their indigenous societies. While men in *Sultana's Dream* are decapacitated and enclosed within their private spheres by the inherent ideology, the three men in *Herland* are forced to reach the conclusion that they have to live in parallel with what Herlanders ask them to do. Therefore, it is significant to acknowledge the fact that although these works are products of feminist utopia, they are actually dystopian from the male perspective, which also underlines the relativity feature of utopian and dystopian ideals according to the power holders. Since women in these works are potent in their communities, it turns out to be men who suffer due to inherent ideologies.

Conversely, the male superiority is admitted by almost everyone in the society and the hegemonic discourse elevates manhood over womanhood in *Swastika Night* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, thereby making these two feminist dystopian novels as ideally desirable from the perspective of sexist men. Relativity of utopian and dystopian themes emerge one more time and it evinces the notion that torture and overpowering practices are common points in all works studied in this dissertation. Although each piece of work has its unique reason for its production, it should be noted that the consequences of the analysis of these works point out to a more essentialist war which is not between sexes or genders but among those who desire to hold the power to define, re-define, structure, and re-structure the society. Therefore, one final conclusion this dissertation draws is that

although opportunities to acquire power and authority depend on one's gender in most societies, hunger for seizing them is gender-free.

# EXTENDED SUMMARY

Gender identity has always been controversial since the beginning of humanity, for certain cultures have ascribed specific roles for both the male and the female. Even before humanity was civilised, women in prehistoric times were given responsibilities related to caves or were simply passivized by the cavemen in their private spheres whereas men were more concerned with hunting and gathering, thereby prioritizing their roles over the female's. Nevertheless, it is a vicious cycle to argue that these roles are bound to one's physical strength which *naturally* comes with biological predestination. Going back to the prehistoric period, it would be considerably illuminating to witness the time when the male sovereignty was first established over the female since that is the exact time when humanity has started to accumulate all its hegemonic heritage and has brought it up to modern times. Put another way, although it is still acknowledged by a significant number of people that femininity is inferior to masculinity just because of the physical differences in their nature, each sex category, male or female, has been acquainted with certain constructions throughout history, thereby forming the gender categories and roles we have in today's world. Distribution of labour, therefore, has always been adapted in accordance with either one's sex or gender category. The success in these attributions, moreover, lies beneath the ideologies equipped and infused by those holding power at hand. Thus, the question "what would happen if holders of power were twisted" comes up as a thought-provoking curiosity.

Women writers looked for the answer to this inquiry in eutopian works since it is very difficult to shift the centre of power in the non-fictional world where the male hierarchy is undeniably everywhere. Additionally, by writing in the dystopian

tradition, they also sought for certain projected apocalyptic consequences for the contemporaneous societies they belonged to. Utopian literary tradition, therefore, has been one major genre that women writers have profited so as to highlight that better lives are possible and they have also intended to warn their societies about the probable ends people might face if they do not break their habitual ways of thinking and light the fire of change.

As such, this dissertation's main concern is to study and analyse the tools used by dominant discourses in order to sustain the potency of the hegemonic order as well as the relation of genders to power and authority in two feminist eutopian works, *Sultana's Dream* by Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, and *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in addition to two feminist dystopian novels, *Swastika Night* by Katherine Burdekin, and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. One other concern this dissertation aspires is to find out the role of women in the sustainability of the prevalent hegemonies in their own spaces. Therefore, the first chapter of this dissertation is allocated to provide readers with certain theoretical backgrounds such as utopianism, feminist utopian tradition and the second wave feminism.

The word utopia first emerged in 1516 when Thomas More entitled his work as *Utopia*. As a newly coined term, utopia simply means a perfect place which does not actually exist. As such, More proposes the idea that it is possible to form a perfect society through negotiations and social dreaming for a better alternative. Although utopia calls for an imaginary place, modern interpretations of the genre suggests that these places, irrespective of their positivity or negativity, are *not-yet-real*, thereby highlighting the idea that utopias are actually realizable constructions. In this sense, utopian writing, which incorporates fantastic elements and fantasy, renders people to think about what is taught to be unthinkable, and to question what is *normally* unquestionable.

As such, utopian tradition has transformed into an umbrella term in accordance with its function, meaning, purpose, and form, thereby being inclusive of various types of sub-genres in itself such as eutopia (positive utopia), dystopia (negative utopia), critical utopia, utopian satire, anti-utopia, alotopia, euchronia, heterotopia, ecotopia, and hyperutopia. Put another way, the essentially necessary social dreaming is mingled with the content and intention of the fantasies of authors as well as the form and meaning of

their works which consequently specify the sub-genre each literary work belongs to. Thus, by differentiating the sub-genres from each other, this study draws a clear framework according to the vision a work presents, for although the term utopia and eutopia are still commonly and interchangeably used by various scholars to refer to a more desirable and better society, this dissertation takes the latter to attribute to positive utopia. In accordance with the specified framework, thus, the theoretical background of utopianism is concluded that eutopian writing gives people opportunities to think out of the box and raise hopes by way of pursuing the eutopian vision presented in related works whereas dystopian writing conceptualizes a possible nightmare that societies may go through on the condition that they do not change their habitual ways of thinking.

Even though utopianism has been one of the most significant genres for feminist writers to put forward their feminist concerns, writing under this genre was initially not as easy as they expected, for the genre was already dominated by the male writers of the time. The perspectives presented in the earlier examples of the genre, hence, belonged to the masculine world with male-oriented values, disregarding the female experience and vision. As a result, the masculine perspectives in utopian works presented the female readers incomplete worlds with insufficient experiences, thereby either accustoming them to another future society coded by masculine values, or failing them in terms of raising consciousness for the shortcomings of their contemporaneous societies. Put another way, the female has been the creator/constructor rather than the created/constructed ever since women writers employed the utopian tradition. Thanks to the genre, normative referents have been reacted against, opposed to, questioned and speculated upon which has provided the subversion of dominant discourses in subject works.

As a complement to feminist utopian tradition, second wave feminist schools are also necessary to the analysis and interpretation of the works studied in this dissertation. After presenting the basics of the first wave which was related to women's judicial and civil rights such as voting, divorcing, holding properties, and rejection of being possessed by husbands, the procedure how the second wave movement has been explained through references to historical facts. The movement was first triggered in 1960 as a reaction to objectification of women by way of constructed aesthetic values as well as all societal impositions such as motherhood, wifehood, domestication, reproduction, sexuality and the female body which, in fact, contribute to the erasure of the female identity. The second

wave came up as the first movement to question the stability of social roles that are expected to be fulfilled. Accordingly, gender came up as a fluid and performative concept, not fixed to one's biological sex, thereby suggestive of the destabilization of all previously accredited norms and roles. The movement also called for collective activism to bring about change in societies; so, women are asked to make their individual experiences public in order to raise consciousness. Because the second wave feminist movement was fragmented into various types, an eclectic method has been applied in the interpretation of the works studied in this dissertation.

The second chapter of the dissertation analyses and interprets Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's feminist eutopian novella, *Sultana's Dream*, in terms of the feminist perspective it presents, and fluidity of gender roles as well as the apparatuses employed for gender construction. Because Hossain attempted to take her revenge from the indigenous patriarchy due to the burdens she had to bear together with all the other Bengali women, her novella is highly inclusive of references to contemporaneous life in Bengal in 1900s. Constantly attributing to equality between men and women in all walks of life for a better and improved Bengali nation, Hossain subverts gender roles and imprisons men in their private spheres while liberating women and giving them their freedom to take active roles in life. By doing so, she manifests how restrictive Islam for women is, which is actually one apparatus that Bengali culture and ideology abuse to degrade women and elevate men, for there are various misinterpreted Islamic practices used for domesticating and objectifying women in their enclosed spheres. Nevertheless, in Hossain's Ladyland, men who are employed in certain houses are responsible for domestic labours such as looking after babies, cooking, and cleaning among many others whereas women undertake such commitments as conducting research, governing, farming, improving technology, managing the weather conditions, and so on. Therefore, the author points out to the notion that these quasi-natural roles can actually be performed by everyone regardless of gender and women are as capable as men on the condition that circumstances are equal. Hossain also demonstrates how people's culture is strictly bound to the language they speak since it is the very embodiment of the ideology and culture of a nation, conveying naturalized references to each generation. Presenting readers with the apparatuses that are used to construct each role in their society, Hossain does not only

show men how women's lives actually are but she also demonstrates women how they could otherwise live if they did not surrender to the present ideologies.

Chapter three dwells on the feminist eutopian novel *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Before the analysis and interpretation of the novel, certain glimpses of Gilman's life are presented since her biography is highly determinant of her ideas over the female body. As another novel which was written decades before the second wave feminist movements, *Herland* incorporates a significant number of details such as motherhood, wifehood, marriage as an institution, monopolisation of certain outer spaces in societies by men, domestication of women, and patriarchal language that would be considered as restrictive and incarcerating by the second wave feminists in 1960s. Gilman's eutopian society is free of the ideologies in our world and this is why Herlanders are very well improved in science, technology, education, agriculture, architecture and environment. As a matter of fact, Gilman abuses the profit of eutopian writing so as to manifest her readers that whatever is acknowledged as *normal* and *natural* by societies is actually arbitrary, thereby pointing out to the notion that fighting back to these constructs will bring about a better society. In parallel with Hossain's novella, Gilman's novel subverts all gender roles in our world, too. Men are presented as passive and because there is a parthenogenetic way of reproduction, they are completely useless in Herland. In addition, aesthetic attributions as well as beauty are other constructs Gilman wittily attacks in her novel. She constantly underscores the notion that the female are not a lesser breed to the male, thereby drawing attention to the fact that both men and women are human beings and if there will be attributions to aesthetics, they should be applicable for both of the sex categories. All in all, Gilman's *Herland* stands as a distorting mirror to readers so that they can stop their habitual ways of thinking, for patriarchal constructions sustain patriarchy itself while they also burden women with historical and cultural accumulations, which are essentially gender-suggestive.

Chapter four is allocated to Katherine Burdekin's dystopian novel, *Swastika Night*, and certain ideological state apparatuses such as religion, language, law, science, history, and art are analysed in order to emphasize how manipulation is conducted through these apparatuses so that the dominant discourse is able to construct, define, and regulate gender roles. Katherine Burdekin's awareness for the rising fascism in the early 20th century is considerably significant, for her novel is inclusive of various fascist

practices which might turn our world into a nightmare as is proper to the function of dystopian fiction. In addition to including various subversions and alterations of gender roles, Burdekin's novel encapsulates the possible ends humanity will have to face with the rising fascism as well as the growing indifference. In other words, Burdekin, too, points out the fact that gender is constructable; nevertheless, one of her major concerns is that fascist constructions may smash societies into pieces. Compared to our world which came to an end around seven hundred years ago, the women in the German Empire now are the ones whose roles and responsibilities were changed by the authorities of the hegemony. Therefore, Burdekin one more time manifests that gender is not fixed but fluid as well as being adaptable to the dominant discourse. To Burdekin, women will not be the only victims of the rising fascism since men will also suffer from it; nonetheless, she does not underestimate women's support for the potency of patriarchal norms and she calls for a collective awareness against the ideologies encircling societies.

Chapter five is allotted to the analysis and interpretation of Margaret Atwood's feminist dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, within the framework of the ideological and repressive state apparatuses which contribute to degradation and dehumanization of the female, thereby providing the dominant discourse with sustainability. In parallel with Burdekin's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, too, contains various ideological mechanisms such as education, religion, language, history, law, and science as well as violent methods to reign over the society. Providing readers with comparisons between the past and present, Atwood clearly manifests how gender is constructed and that each gender role might be adapted to the inherent ideology. Her accusation of women's passivity is more visible when compared to the other three works. Women's indifference and ignorance to changing conditions are major criticisms Atwood brings forth; nevertheless, she also argues that power is mesmerizing and because of its magical influence, women also contribute to the ideology of the prevalent system. Put another way, although the patriarchal system is the biggest overwhelming construction of the Republic of Gilead, ascribing roles to genders cannot be attributed to one gender only, for women make their choices by preferring silence and passivity. As a result, Atwood points out the fact that dystopian results may be overcome by way of focusing on present reasons of a possible future nightmare.

As such, the final chapter of this dissertation argues that while eutopian fiction makes it possible to provide people with alternative and better societies, it is also employed by feminist discourse to manifest women that their gender is not their predestination since gender roles are constructed in accordance with hegemonic ideologies. Moreover, the addressee of feminist eutopian fiction is not women only because the didactic feature of such works enables men to find out that they are not treated equally with women in the same society, thereby calling for a collective awareness for all inequalities within societies. Dystopian writing, on the other hand, is considerably beneficial to disturb people and make them uncomfortable so that they can start asking questions about their contemporaneous conditions before coming to a projected or foreshadowed nightmare.

As a matter of fact, all four works underscore the notion that gender is performative and any role might be practiced by any gender. Although men and women have certain distinctive biological differences, allowing these differences to elevate one sex category and degrade the other one should not be tolerated. Women have ovaries to reproduce; however, they are not self-sufficient to reproduce by themselves. Men, on the other hand, have their sperms which have no function at all if they cannot be combined with a female egg. According to this equation, the male and the female are biologically dependant on each other, which, for sure, demonstrates that there is no dominant sex category. However, it is impossible to disregard the imbalance among gender categories, which are mere constructs of ideologies. As such, inequalities among genders can be explained with value judgements but not with biological differences, for even though it is women who can give birth to babies, there are not any physiological or biological obstacles that prevent men from taking care of their babies. The main hindrance for a male baby-sitter, therefore, is cultural and ideological.

Additionally, although eutopian writing connotes a positive utopia while dystopian fiction refers to a negative utopia, it should still be noted that positivity and negativity are relative to the perspective one holds. As for the eutopian works studied in this dissertation, it is possible to put forth that women live under perfect conditions peacefully; however, their eutopian world is a nightmare for the male in each work. Conversely, while the two dystopian novels analysed and interpreted in this study are

inclusive of terrorizing and destructive governments, both novels might also be classified as positive utopias from the fascist and totalitarian gaze.

All in all, there are practices of overpowering, overruling, degradation, dehumanization, objectification, manipulation, and torture among many others thanks to the apparatuses applied by the dominant discourses in all four works of the utopian literary tradition. Nevertheless, on a closer observation, it is highly clear that whoever holds the power to manipulate and define is in charge of all the construction process. Put another way, in feminist eutopian works, men are victimized by the dominant feminine discourse whereas in the feminist dystopian novels, it is generally women who are persecuted by the indigenous patriarchal and totalitarian systems. Therefore, due to its ravishing and alluring nature, power is desirable for all human beings, irrespective of their sex category or gender.

# GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Toplumsal cinsiyet kimliği insanlığın başlangıcından bu yana her zaman tartışmalı olmuştur, çünkü bazı kültürler hem erkek hem de kadın için belirli roller atfetmiştir. İnsanlık uygarlaşmadan önce bile, tarih öncesi çağlarda kadınlara mağaralarla ilgili sorumluluklar verilmiş ya da mağara adamları tarafından kendi özel alanlarında pasif bir halde bırakılmışken, erkekler daha çok avcılık ve toplayıcılıkla ilgilenmiş, böylece kendi rollerini kadınlarınkinden üstün tutmuşlardır. Bununla birlikte, bu rollerin kişinin biyolojik yazgısıyla doğal olarak gelen fiziksel gücüne bağlı olduğunu iddia etmek kısır bir döngüdür. Tarih öncesi döneme geri dönecek olursak, erkek egemenliğinin kadın üzerinde ilk kez ne zaman kurulduğuna tanıklık etmek oldukça aydınlatıcı olacaktır zira insanlığın tüm hegemonik mirasını biriktirmeye başladığı ve modern zamanlara kadar getirdiği zaman tam da bu zamandır. Bir başka deyişle, kadınlığın sırf doğalarındaki fiziksel farklılıklar nedeniyle erkeklikten daha aşağı olduğu hala önemli sayıda insan tarafından kabul edilse de erkek ya da kadın, her biyolojik cinsiyet kategorisi tarih boyunca belirli yapılarla tanışmış ve böylece bugünün dünyasında sahip olduğumuz toplumsal cinsiyet kategorilerini ve rollerini oluşturmuştur. Dolayısıyla iş bölümü her zaman kişinin cinsiyetine ya da toplumsal cinsiyet kategorisine göre uyarlanmıştır. Üstelik bu atıflardaki başarının altında, iktidarı elinde bulunduranlar tarafından donatılan ve aşılanan ideolojiler yatmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, "gücü elinde bulunduranlar yer değiştirseydi ne olurdu" sorusu merak uyandırıcı bir mesele olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Erkek hiyerarşisinin yadsınamaz bir şekilde her yerde hissedildiği kurgusal olmayan dünyamızda gücün merkezini değiştirmek çok zor olduğundan, kadın yazarlar bu sorgunun cevabını ötopik eserlerde aramışlardır. Ayrıca, distopik gelenekte yazarak, ait oldukları çağdaş toplumlar için öngörülebilen bazı kıyametvari sonuçları da aramışlardır. Dolayısıyla ütopik edebiyat geleneği kadın yazarların daha iyi yaşamların mümkün olduğunu vurgulamak için yararlandıkları önemli bir tür olmuş ve aynı zamanda

toplumlarını, alışılmış düşünce biçimlerini yıkıp değişim ateşini yakmadıkları takdirde insanların karşılaşabilecekleri olası sonlar konusunda uyarmayı amaçlamışlardır.

Bu nedenle, bu tezin temel hedefi, Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein'in *Sultana's Dream* ve Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın *Herland* adlı feminist ötopik eserlerinin yanı sıra Katherine Burdekin'in *Swastika Night* ve Margaret Atwood'un *The Handmaid's Tale* adlı feminist distopyalarında hegemonik düzenin gücünü sürdürmek için egemen söylemler tarafından kullanılan araçları ve toplumsal cinsiyetin güç ve otoriteyle ilişkisini incelemek ve analiz etmektir. Bu tezin amaçladığı bir diğer konu da kadınların kendi alanlarında hâkim olan hegemonyaların sürdürülebilirliğindeki rollerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu nedenle, bu tezin ilk bölümü okuyuculara ütopyacılık, feminist ütopya geleneği ve ikinci dalga feminizm gibi belirli teorik temelleri sunmaya ayrılmıştır.

Ütopya kelimesi ilk kez 1516 yılında Thomas More'un eserine *Ütopya* adını vermesiyle ortaya çıkmıştır. Yeni türetilmiş bir terim olan ütopya, aslında var olmayan mükemmel bir yer anlamına gelmektedir. Bu nedenle More, daha iyi bir alternatif için uzlaşmalar ve toplumsal düşleme yoluyla mükemmel bir toplum oluşturmanın mümkün olduğu fikrini öne sürer. Ütopya hayali bir yeri çağrıştırsa da türün modern yorumları bu yerlerin, olumlulukları ya da olumsuzlukları ne olursa olsun, *henüz gerçek olmadıklarını* öne sürmekte, böylece ütopyaların aslında gerçekleştirilebilir yapılar olduğu fikrini vurgulamaktadır. Bu anlamda fantastik öğeleri ve fanteziyi içinde barındıran ütopya yazını, insanları düşünülemez olarak öğretilenler üzerine düşünmeye ve *normalde* sorgulanamaz olanı sorgulamaya sevk eder.

Bu haliyle ütopya geleneği, işlevi, anlamı, amacı ve biçimi doğrultusunda bir şemsiye terime dönüşerek kendi içinde ütopya (pozitif ütopya), distopya (negatif ütopya), eleştirel ütopya, ütopik hiciv, anti-ütopya, alotopya, ökronya, heterotopya, ekotopya ve hiperütopya gibi çeşitli alt türleri kapsar hale gelmiştir. Bir başka deyişle, esasen gerekli olan toplumsal düşleme, yazarların fantezilerinin içeriği ve niyeti ile birlikte eserlerinin biçimi ve anlamı ile karışır ve sonuç olarak her edebi eserin ait olduğu alt türü belirler. Böylece, bu çalışma alt türleri birbirinden ayırarak bir eserin sunduğu vizyona göre net bir çerçeve çizmektedir, çünkü ütopya ve ötopya terimleri hala çeşitli akademisyenler tarafından daha arzu edilir ve daha iyi bir topluma atıfta bulunmak için yaygın olarak birbirinin yerine kullanılsa da bu tez ötopya terimini pozitif ütopyayı betimlemek için

kullanmaktadır. Belirtilen çerçeveye uygun olarak, ütopyacılığın kuramsal zemininde, ötopyacı yazının ilgili eserlerde sunulan vizyonun peşinden giderek insanlara kalıpların dışında düşünme ve umutlarını artırma fırsatı verdiği, distopyacı yazının ise toplumların alışılagelmiş düşünme biçimlerini değiştirmemeleri halinde yaşayabilecekleri olası bir kâbusu kavramsallaştırdığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Ütopyacılık, feminist yazarların feminist kaygılarını ortaya koydukları en önemli türlerden biri olsa da bu tür altında yazmak başlangıçta bekledikleri kadar kolay olmamıştır, çünkü tür zaten dönemin erkek yazarları tarafından domine edilmiştir. Nitekim türün ilk örneklerinde sunulan perspektifler, kadın deneyimini ve vizyonunu göz ardı eden, erkek odaklı değerlere sahip eril dünyaya aitti. Sonuç olarak, ütopik eserlerdeki eril bakış açıları, kadın okurlara eksik deneyimlerle eksik dünyalar sunarak onları ya eril değerlerle kodlanmış başka bir gelecek toplumuna alıştırmış ya da çağdaş toplumlarının eksiklikleri konusunda bilinçlendirmek açısından başarısızlığa uğratmıştır. Başka bir deyişle, kadın yazarlar ütopya geleneğini kullandıklarından beri kadın yaratılan/inşa edilen değil, yaratan/inşa eden olmuştur. Tür sayesinde normatif referanslara tepki gösterilmiş, karşı çıkılmış, sorgulanmış ve üzerinde varsayımlarda bulunulmuş, bu da söz konusu romanlarda egemen söylemlerin altüst edilmesini sağlamıştır.

Feminist ütopyacı geleneğin bir tamamlayıcısı olarak ikinci dalga feminist ekoller de bu tezde incelenen romanların analizi ve yorumlanması için gereklidir. Kadınların oy kullanma, boşanma, mülk edinme ve kocaları tarafından sahiplenilmeyi reddetme gibi hukuki ve medeni haklarıyla ilgili olan birinci dalganın temelleri sunulduktan sonra, ikinci dalga hareketinin nasıl ortaya çıktığı tarihsel gerçeklere atıfta bulunularak açıklanmıştır. Hareket ilk olarak 1960 yılında, inşa edilen estetik değerler aracılığıyla kadının nesneleştirilmesine ve aslında kadın kimliğinin silinmesine katkıda bulunan annelik, eş olma, evcilleştirme, üreme, cinsellik ve kadın bedeni gibi tüm toplumsal dayatmalara bir tepki olarak tetiklenmiştir. İkinci dalga, yerine getirilmesi beklenen toplumsal rollerin istikrarını sorgulayan ilk hareket olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna göre toplumsal cinsiyet, kişinin biyolojik cinsiyetine bağlı olmayan, akışkan ve performatif bir kavram olarak ortaya çıkmış ve böylece daha önce kabul edilmiş tüm norm ve rollerin istikrarsızlaştırılmasına işaret etmiştir. Hareket aynı zamanda toplumlarda değişim yaratmak için kolektif aktivizm çağrısında bulunmuştur; bu nedenle, kadınlardan bilinci artırmak için bireysel deneyimlerini kamuya açmaları istenmiştir. İkinci dalga feminist

hareket çeşitli türlere bölünmüş olduğundan, bu tezde incelenen romanların yorumlanmasında eklektik bir yöntem uygulanmıştır.

Tezin ikinci bölümünde Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain'in feminist ötopik eseri *Sultana's Dream*, sunduğu feminist perspektif, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin akışkanlığı ve toplumsal cinsiyet inşası için kullanılan aygıtlar açısından incelenmekte ve yorumlanmaktadır. Hossain, diğer Bengalli kadınlarla birlikte katlanmak zorunda kaldığı külfetler nedeniyle yerleşik ataerkillikten intikamını almaya çalıştığı için, eseri 1900'lü yılların Bengal'indeki çağdaş yaşama dair referanslar içermektedir. Daha iyi ve gelişmiş bir Bengal ulusu için hayatın her alanında kadın-erkek eşitliğine sürekli atıfta bulunan Hossain, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini altüst ederek erkekleri özel alanlarına hapsederken kadınları özgürleştirerek onlara hayatın içinde aktif rol alma özgürlüğü tanımaktadır. Bunu yaparak, İslam'ın kadınlar için ne kadar kısıtlayıcı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır ki bu aslında Bengal kültürü ve ideolojisinin kadınları aşağılamak ve erkekleri yüceltmek için kötüye kullandığı bir aparattır, çünkü kadınları kapalı alanlarında evcilleştirmek ve nesneleştirmek için kullanılan çeşitli yanlış yorumlanmış İslami uygulamalar barındırmaktadır. Bunula birlikte, Hossain'in Ladyland'inde, belirli evlerde istihdam edilen erkekler bebek bakımı, yemek pişirme ve temizlik gibi ev işlerinden sorumluyken, kadınlar araştırma yapmak, ülkeyi yönetmek, çiftçilik yapmak, teknolojiyi geliştirmek, hava koşullarını yönetmek gibi işleri üstlenmektedir. Dolayısıyla yazar, bu sözde doğal rollerin aslında biyolojik cinsiyet ayrımı gözetmeksizin herkes tarafından yerine getirilebileceğine ve koşulların eşit olması halinde kadınların da erkekler kadar yetenekli olduğuna dikkat çekmektedir. Hossain ayrıca, bir ulusun ideolojisinin ve kültürünün somutlaşmış hali olması ve her nesle doğallaştırılmış referanslar aktarması nedeniyle, insanların kültürünün konuştukları dile nasıl sıkı sıkıya bağlı olduğunu da göstermektedir. Okurlara toplumdaki her bir rolü inşa etmek için kullanılan aparatları sunan Hossain, erkeklere kadınların hayatlarının gerçekte nasıl olduğunu göstermekle kalmayıp, kadınlara mevcut ideolojilere teslim olmadıkları takdirde başka türlü nasıl yaşayabileceklerini de göstermektedir.

Üçüncü bölümde Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın feminist ötopik romanı *Herland* ele alınmaktadır. Romanın analizi ve yorumlanmasından önce, Gilman'ın yaşamından bazı kesitler sunulmuştur, zira Gilman'ın biyografisi kadın bedeni üzerine düşüncelerini büyük ölçüde belirlemektedir. İkinci dalga feminist hareketlerden onlarca yıl önce yazılmış bir

roman olan *Herland*, 1960'larda ikinci dalga feministler tarafından kısıtlayıcı ve hapsedici olarak değerlendirilecek annelik, eş olma, bir kurum olarak evlilik, toplumdaki bazı dış alanların erkekler tarafından tekelleştirilmesi, kadınların evcilleştirilmesi ve ataerkil dil gibi önemli sayıda ayrıntıyı içermektedir. Gilman'ın ötopik toplumu dünyamızdaki ideolojilerden arınmıştır ve bu yüzden Herlandlıler bilim, teknoloji, eğitim, tarım, mimari ve çevre konularında çok gelişmiştir. Nitekim Gilman, toplumlar tarafından *normal* ve *doğal* olarak kabul edilen her şeyin aslında keyfi olduğunu okurlarına göstermek ve böylece bu kurgulara karşı mücadele etmenin daha iyi bir toplum yaratacağı fikrine işaret etmek için ötopik yazının avantajını kullanır. Hossain'in romanına paralel olarak, Gilman'ın romanı da dünyamızdaki tüm toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini altüst etmektedir. Herland'de erkekler pasif olarak gösterilmekte ve partenogenetik bir üreme biçimi olduğu için hiçbir işe yaramamaktadırlar. Ayrıca, güzellik kadar estetik atıflar da Gilman'ın romanında zekice saldırdığı diğer yapılardır. Kadınların erkeklerden daha aşağı bir cins olmadığı fikrinin altını sürekli çizerek hem erkeklerin hem de kadınların insan olduğuna ve estetiğe atıfta bulunulacaksa bunun her iki toplumsal cinsiyet kategorisi için de geçerli olması gerektiğine dikkat çeker. Sonuç olarak, Gilman'ın *Herland*'i, ataerkil yapılandırmaların bir yandan ataerkilliği sürdürürken bir yandan da kadınlara toplumsal cinsiyet telkin eden tarihsel ve kültürel birikimler yüklemesi nedeniyle, okurlara alışagedikleri düşünme biçimlerine son vermeleri için çarpıtıcı bir ayna tutmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölüm Katherine Burdekin'in distopik romanı *Swastika Night*'a ayrılmış ve din, dil, hukuk, bilim, tarih ve sanat gibi belirli ideolojik devlet aygıtları analiz edilerek, egemen söylemin toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini inşa edebilmesi, tanımlayabilmesi ve düzenleyebilmesi için bu aygıtlar aracılığıyla nasıl manipülasyon yapıldığı vurgulanmıştır. Katherine Burdekin'in 20. yüzyılın başlarında yükselen faşizme dair farkındalığı, distopik kurgunun işlevine uygun olarak dünyamızı kâbusa çevirebilecek çeşitli faşist uygulamaları içermesi açısından oldukça önemlidir. Burdekin'in romanı, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin çeşitli altüst oluş ve değişimlerine yer vermesinin yanı sıra, yükselen faşizmle birlikte insanlığın yüzleşmek zorunda kalacağı olası sonları ve artan kayıtsızlığı da kapsamaktadır. Başka bir deyişle Burdekin de toplumsal cinsiyetin inşa edilebilir olduğuna işaret etmektedir; ancak en büyük kaygılarından birisi faşist yapılandırmaların toplumları paramparça edebileceğidir. Yaklaşık yedi yüz yıl önce sona eren dünyamızla karşılaştırıldığında, Alman İmparatorluğu'nda rolleri ve sorumlulukları

hegemonya otoriteleri tarafından değiştirilenler artık yeni kadınlardır. Dolayısıyla Burdekin, toplumsal cinsiyetin sabit değil akışkan ve egemen söyleme uyarlanabilir olduğunu bir kez daha ortaya koymaktadır. Burdekin'e göre yükselen faşizmin tek mağduru kadınlar değildir, erkekler de bundan zarar görmektedir; yine de kadınların ataerkil normların gücüne verdiği desteği görmezden gelmeyerek toplumları kuşatan ideolojilere karşı kolektif bir farkındalık çağrısında bulunmaktadır.

Beşinci bölüm, Margaret Atwood'un feminist distopik romanı *The Handmaid's Tale*'in, kadının aşağılanmasına ve insanlıktan çıkarılmasına katkıda bulunan ve böylece egemen söylemin sürdürülebilirliğini sağlayan ideolojik ve baskıcı devlet aygıtları çerçevesinde analizine ve yorumlanmasına ayrılmıştır. Burdekin'in romanına paralel olarak *The Handmaid's Tale* de eğitim, din, dil, tarih, hukuk ve bilim gibi çeşitli ideolojik mekanizmaların yanı sıra topluma hükmetmek için şiddet içeren yöntemler de içermektedir. Okurlara geçmiş ve günümüz arasında karşılaştırmalar sunan Atwood, toplumsal cinsiyetin nasıl inşa edildiğini ve her bir toplumsal cinsiyet rolünün mevcut ideolojiye uyarlanabileceğini açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Atwood'un kadınları pasiflikle itham etmesi, diğer üç esere kıyasla daha belirgindir. Kadınların duyarsızlığı ve değişen koşullara kayıtsız kalmaları Atwood'un getirdiği başlıca eleştirilerdir; bununla birlikte, iktidarın cezbedici olduğunu ve büyülü etkisi nedeniyle kadınların da egemen sistemin ideolojisine katkıda bulunduğunu savunmaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, ataerkil sistem Gilead Cumhuriyeti'nin en büyük ezici yapısı olsa da toplumsal cinsiyetlere rol atfetmek sadece bir biyolojik cinsiyete yüklenememektedir, çünkü kadınlar sessizliği ve pasifliği tercih ederek seçimlerini yapmışlardır. Sonuç olarak Atwood, gelecekteki olası bir kâbusun bugünkü nedenlerine odaklanarak distopik sonuçların üstesinden gelinebileceğine işaret etmektedir.

Dolayısıyla, bu tezin son bölümü, ötopik kurgunun insanlara alternatif ve daha iyi toplumlar sunmayı mümkün kılarken, aynı zamanda feminist söylem tarafından, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin hegemonik ideolojilere uygun olarak inşa edilmesi nedeniyle kadınlara cinsiyetlerinin kendi yazgıları olmadığını göstermek için kullanıldığını savunmaktadır. Dahası, feminist ötopyacı kurgunun muhatabı sadece kadınlar değildir çünkü bu tür eserlerin didaktik özelliği, erkeklerin aynı toplumda kadınlarla eşit muamele görmediklerini fark etmelerini sağlamakta ve böylece toplumlardaki tüm eşitsizlikler için kolektif bir farkındalık çağrısında bulunmaktadır. Öte yandan distopik yazım, insanları

huzursuz etmek ve onları endişelendirmek için oldukça faydalıdır çünkü bu şekilde insanların öngörülen veya tahmin edilen bir kabusla yüzleşmek zorunda kalmadan önce çağdaş koşulları hakkında sorular sormaya başlamaları sağlanmaktadır.

Bu dört eser de toplumsal cinsiyetin performatif olduğu ve her rolün her toplumsal cinsiyet tarafından üstlenilebileceği fikrinin altını çizmektedir. Erkekler ve kadınlar bazı belirgin biyolojik farklılıklara sahip olsalar da bu farklılıkların bir cinsiyet kategorisini yüceltmesine ve diğerini aşağılamasına izin verilmemelidir. Kadınların üremek için yumurtalıkları vardır; ancak kendi başlarına üremek için yeterli değildirler. Erkeklerin ise spermleri vardır ve dişi yumurtasıyla birleşemedikleri takdirde hiçbir işlevleri yoktur. Bu denkleme göre, erkek ve dişi biyolojik olarak birbirine bağımlıdır ve bu da kesinlikle baskın bir cinsiyet kategorisi olmadığını göstermektedir. Ancak, ideolojilerin birer kurgusu olan toplumsal cinsiyet kategorileri arasındaki dengesizliği göz ardı etmek mümkün değildir. Bu nedenle toplumsal cinsiyetler arasındaki eşitsizlikler biyolojik farklılıklarla değil, değer yargılarıyla açıklanabilir; zira her ne kadar bebekleri doğuranlar kadınlar olsa da, erkeklerin bebeklerine bakmalarını engelleyen herhangi bir fizyolojik ya da biyolojik engel bulunmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, erkek bebek bakıcısının önündeki temel engel kültürel ve ideolojiktir.

Buna ek olarak, her ne kadar ötopik yazım olumlu bir ütopyayı, distopik kurgu ise olumsuz bir ütopyayı çağrıştırsa da yine de olumluluk ve olumsuzluğun kişinin sahip olduğu bakış açısına bağlı olduğunu belirtmek gerekmektedir. Bu teze konu olan ötopik eserler incelendiğinde, kadınların mükemmel koşullar altında huzur içinde yaşadığını, ancak her bir eserdeki erkek için ötopik dünyanın bir kâbus olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Buna karşılık, bu çalışmada incelenen ve yorumlanan iki distopik roman terör estiren ve yıkıcı iktidarları barındırırken, her iki roman da faşist ve totaliter bakış açısından olumlu ütopyalar olarak sınıflandırılabilmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, ütopik edebiyat geleneğine ait dört eserde de egemen söylemler tarafından uygulanan aygıtlar sayesinde, aşırı güç kullanma, hükmetme, aşağılama, insanlıktan çıkarma, nesneleştirme, manipülasyon ve işkence pratikleri mevcuttur. Bununla birlikte, daha yakından bakıldığında, manipüle etme ve tanımlama gücünü elinde bulunduranın tüm inşa sürecinden sorumlu olduğu son derece açıktır. Bir başka deyişle, feminist ötopik eserlerde erkekler baskın dişil söylem tarafından mağdur edilirken,

feminist distopik romanlarda yerleşik ataerkil ve totaliter sistemler tarafından zulme uğrayanlar genellikle kadınlardır. Dolayısıyla iktidar, büyüleyici ve cezbedici doğası nedeniyle, biyolojik cinsiyet kategorisi ya da toplumsal cinsiyetine bakılmaksızın tüm insanlar için arzulanan bir olgudur.

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