T.C.
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

GENDER TROUBLE, DYSTOPIAN REGIMES, SLAVERY, AND ITS 'OTHERS' IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* AND KATHARINE BURDEKIN'S *SWASTIKA NIGHT*

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	Tezin Adı	Toplumsal Cinsiyet Belası, Margaret Atwood'un *Damızlık Kızın Öyküsü* ve Katharine Burdekin'in *Swastika Geceleri*'nde Distopik Yönetim, Kölelik ve 'Ötekileştirilenler'

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Katharine Burdekin'in *Swastika Night* (1937) ve Margaret Atwood'un *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) eserlerini feminist bir bakış açısıyla incelemektir. Bu çalışma, feminist bir bakış açısıyla kadınların yıllar boyunca hükümetler ve erkekler tarafından nasıl araçlaştırıldığını ve kontrol edildiğini vurgulamaya çalışacaktır. Aynı zamanda, erkeklerin kadınları nasıl birer üreme makinesi olarak gördüklerini ve hükümetlerin bireyleri kontrol etmek için toplumda nasıl "ötekiler" yarattığını ortaya koymaya çalışacaktır.

Bu amaçla, bu çalışma, öncelikle cinsiyet ve cinsiyet kimliği kavramlarını disiplinler arası bir bakış açısıyla tanımlayarak seçilen romanlarda toplumsal cinsiyet belasını ve bunun toplumsal olarak nasıl inşa edildiğini vurgulayacaktır. Ayrıca, kadınların bedenlerinin beden politikaları ile nasıl ötekileştirildiğini inceleyecektir. Atwood ve Burdekin'in romanlarını daha iyi anlayabilmek için distopyaların ve feminist distopyaların tarihini anlamak çok önemli olduğundan, bu çalışma distopyalar ve feminist distopyalar hakkında kapsamlı bilgi vererek, bunların nasıl ortaya çıktıklarından bahsedecektir. Kadınların maruz kaldığı şiddet ve cinsel istismar, seçilmiş feminist distopyalarda metinlerin detaylı incelenmesiyle vurgulanacaktır. Ayrıca,

bu çalışma teokratik devletlerin totaliter ve ataerkil toplumlarının kadınları üreme amacıyla nasıl sömürdüğünü inceleyerek erkek egemen bir toplumda kadınların yüz yüze kaldığı aşağılayıcı durumlara ışık tutacaktır. Sadece üreme amacıyla sömürülen ve aşağı bir ırk olarak görülen kadına yönelik erkek şiddeti de bu çalışmada vurgulanacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: distopya, feminist distopya, toplumsal cinsiyet, feminizm

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	Tezin İngilizce Adı	Gender Trouble, Dystopian Regimes, Slavery and Its 'Others' in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* (1937) and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) in the context of a feminist standpoint. From a feminist perspective, this study will try to highlight how women have been instrumentalized and controlled by governments and men throughout the years. This study will try to reveal how men see women as property and reproductive machines and how governments create "others" in society to control individuals.

For this purpose, this study will first highlight 'gender trouble' and how it is socially constructed in the selected novels by defining gender and gender identity concepts from an interdisciplinary perspective and by revealing the subjugation of women by the notion of patriarchy and misogyny. This study will examine how women's bodies are marginalized by body politics. Since it is crucial to understand some of the backgrounds of dystopian traditions and the history of feminist dystopias to fully understand what Atwood and Burdekin did in their novels, this study will present some background information on dystopias and feminist dystopias and will also mention how they were developed. Then, through a close reading of the texts, this study will highlight the patriarchy, violence, and sexual abuse women face in the selected feminist dystopias. This study will discuss how the totalitarian and patriarchal societies of theocratic states exploit

women for reproductive purposes and highlight the humiliating situations women face in a male-dominated society. The male violence against women who are seen as an inferior species or race to be exploited only for reproductive purposes will also be highlighted in this study.

Keywords: dystopia, feminist dystopia, gender, feminism

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

People have fantasized about perfect societies in history, where every individual is content and affluent. Historically idealized societies were portrayed as being in places like paradise or someplace legendary. Literature has always served as a reflection of human yearnings, and since Thomas Moore's 1516 publication of *Utopia*, where the word utopia literally means no place, this idea has been widely accepted. At the same time, individuals began contemplating the worst imaginable society, which gave rise to the dystopian genre, which is the opposite of utopia.

The most significant historical events of the 20th century, such as the First and Second World Wars, have rendered utopian visions impossible and absurd. It is commonly believed that the deficiencies in the current political and social systems are the primary reasons why utopian and dystopian hopes are fading. As a result of having witnessed the failure of collectivism in the real world, people have become wary of utopias. Both utopia and dystopia promise to work for the collective good. However, the desire for power destroys this concept and transforms the utopian promise into a dystopian hell. In general, utopias promise an impossible-to-realize paradise, whereas dystopias transform these unfulfilled promises into actual hell.

The dreadful impact of Nazi Germany on this transformation must also not be overlooked. The majority of dystopian fiction's themes are derived from the totalitarianism of the twentieth century. Stalin's Soviet Russia and Hitler's Nazi Germany are real dystopias with numerous victims. Both systems relied highly on the concept of collectivism and the failure of collectivism may be attributable to the fact that collectivism as a whole is contrary to human nature, as man is instinctively motivated to assert his individuality in order to stand out against his peers and dominate them. Despite the fact that both systems were portrayed as flawless mechanisms of classes operating in harmony under the authority of totalitarian leaders, basic human nature compelled people to become

one of these leaders rather than their servants. Individuals attempt to demonstrate their superiority through subtle means, such as a different uniform, hairstyle, or even a small piece of jewelry, despite the fact that collectivism requires minimal ego. However, both totalitarian regimes attempted to disregard these human characteristics and create a single, well-functioning body out of them, which could eventually lead to the eradication of independent individuality. Further, the negative developments shattered people's faith in a better society and prompted dire predictions that things would only get worse. Therefore, hope for a better world is severely diminished in the twentieth century.

In this regard, dystopias emerged as a counterforce against utopias. People in utopias were led to believe that their dreams might come true, whereas those in dystopias were led to believe that modern progress would surround them with new kinds of captivities. Dystopias are generally shaped by significant social and political events of the period in which they are written, and it appears that many dystopian novels pay attention to the condition of individuals in a society. However, under the repressive force that exists in any dystopian society, women are subjected to gender-based discrimination as both women and as individuals. In a dystopian society, women are relegated to the status of "objects" used by men. Women have not been able to claim the role of “subject” in any field of life. Moreover, in patriarchal societies, the role of women has been described and imposed on society by male writers. However, through their writings, women have the chance to correct the biased description of them made by male-dominant writing.

In patriarchal societies, women are usually regarded as "the other" which results in women's discrimination and marginalization. Because patriarchy focuses on men, women are always on the outside of society in androcentric and misogynist societies. Before the feminist movement caused a change in society that gave women access to areas, they had never been able to before, this was the case, especially in the 20th century. Like feminism, during the 1970s feminist science fiction tried to change the patriarchal power structure in which women were treated unfairly because of their gender. So, the authors used fiction to talk about the same issues that were most important to feminism in its

second wave. Since feminist science fiction is a fictional genre, the problems with the patriarchal power structure of the 20th century are usually shown in unreal settings. So, with the help of fiction, current problems were reframed and put into a new context. This was a technique that was designed to provide the reader with a fresh viewpoint on certain parts of life that people might get used to and normalize, such as the flaws of patriarchy and women's marginalization in society. Still, there are some authors who think that the real world is like a dystopian world. So, they use real-world issues to set their novels. This is the case with Swastika Night by Katharine Burdekin and The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood. Both texts show the contemporary world in fictional and dystopian alternatives.

Within this context, in this thesis, we will examine two dystopian novels, *Swastika Night* (1937) by Katherine Burdekin and *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) by Margaret Atwood, with respect to dystopian literature and the destructive effects of the manipulation of sexuality and gender depicted in these novels.

The first chapter will try to highlight the 'gender trouble' and how it is socially constructed in the selected dystopian novels. In the first section of the chapter, gender and gender identity definitions will be conveyed from an interdisciplinary perspective. Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* will be mentioned to reveal the violence women face and how power is misused to subjugate women. The argument will also be based on Judith Butler's gender performativity theory which emphasizes how sexuality and gender norms are experienced in these dystopian novels during the close reading of texts. Therefore, the second section of chapter one will discuss Judith Butler's theory of performance and performativity. The third section of chapter one will discuss how women are subjugated by the notion of patriarchy and misogyny in terms of the marginalization of 'the other' with body politics.

In modern societies, each gender experiences oppression and social norms in different ways. These two dystopian writers use the female experience as a warning in

their dystopic novels. In feminist dystopias, women's relationship with power structures and society is analyzed. Feminist dystopias highlight patriarchal subjugation and enslavement of women in male-dominated societies while depicting a bleak and grim future. In both novels, women are marginalized, degraded, and dehumanized; they exist solely to serve the sex needs of men, placing them in a subhuman role. So, these novels are a warning for women. These novels give a voice to women to expose how patriarchy oppresses women about the sexual, reproductive, and subjugation they face in patriarchal societies by highlighting the female experiences in patriarchal societies. In this respect, feminist dystopias are really crucial to undermine male dominance. They encourage women to refuse the subjugation they face in their society and fight against the oppression they experience in society and they are kind of serving as a call to action. They also offer a framework for feminist analysis that enables women to comprehend their place in a patriarchal society. In patriarchal societies, women have no room for creativity, self-realization, or individual autonomy. However, feminist dystopias highlight the potential negative effects of male-dominant ideologies, and feminist authors advocate for all women and offer a solution to gender trouble by highlighting the consequences of oppression in male-dominant societies.

Under the rule of repressive, fascist, theocratic, and patriarchal regimes, women's bodies are the only thing that defines them because of their reproductive abilities. Women's lives have become a nightmare as these governments exploit their reproductive potential with harsh body policies. In this study, these two novels will be used to present and illustrate the restrictive policies that dominate the lives of individuals in dystopian works and how these restrictions result in a catastrophic environment for the society. Through their examination of the worst aspects of oppressive societies, these dystopian works provide readers with a more realistic and terrifying vision of the future. Atwood and Burdekin portray the dangers of oppressive governments that enslave individuals, limit their rights, and create gender-based divisions. Both authors emphasize the need to challenge oppressive regimes in order to protect individual autonomy and freedom in their

novels. By doing so, they warn against complacency in the face of gender inequality and injustice and argue for the importance of fighting for liberty.

Within this context, the second chapter will discuss literary dystopias and feminist dystopias in general. It is crucial to understand some of the backgrounds of dystopian traditions and feminist dystopias to fully understand what Atwood and Burdekin did in their feminist dystopian novels. Hence, the first section of chapter two will define dystopias as a genre. Different dystopia definitions will be conveyed from several points of views, and it will define the historical development of dystopian writing. The second section of the second chapter will define feminist dystopias as a genre and it will give a historical development of feminist dystopias.

Throughout history, it has been believed that women, regardless of their classes or race, are weak, subservient, and submissive creatures. Furthermore, men have seen women as insignificant, causing women to suffer and endure greatly throughout history. Unfortunately, it took centuries for these ideas to be altered. Regardless of all the efforts, many individuals from various cultures still see women as inferior. In addition, women are exposed to emotional, social, psychological, and sexual stereotypes from the moment of their birth. By creating a dark, gloomy, and dystopic atmosphere, Atwood and Burdekin clearly demonstrate this reality of women.

In this regard, chapter three will examine Katherine Burdekin's novel *Swastika Night* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* in the context of a feminist standpoint. During the close readings of the texts, patriarchy, violence, and sexual abuse women face will be highlighted through the selected feminist dystopias.

Swastika Night was written during Hitler's time, so this dystopic novel foresees a terrifying future in which the Nazis rule and warns the reader about the dangers of fascist Nazi power and terror. The women in the novel cannot fight back against male supremacy because they are not treated like human beings. They have been dehumanized by male dominance and power. In the novel, there is a history book that has the realities of a

patriarchal, misogynist, and fascist Hitler empire in it, and this book can create the potential for the end of the sexist, patriarchal Hitlerian regime, and the protagonist of the novel, Alfred, who is an educated man, can be the only person that can help the survival of the book. Alfred's passing this book on to his son is a great hope for the survival of the book. This book can be handed down, and it can end the Hitlerian regime, but still, women cannot fight for and look for their identities because they lose their autonomy and are reduced to animals and dehumanized by fascist male power. Burdekin portrays women as dehumanized to criticize her time's misogynist, fascist, and patriarchal system, and nearly fifty years later, Atwood continued to do the same thing to challenge male dominance and supremacy and the oppression of women by taking the flag over from Burdekin. Atwood portrays a terrifying dark future in which women are utilized as reproductive machines, seen as 'walking wombs' and enslaved by patriarchy like Burdekin. As the protagonist of the novel Offred indicates, Handmaids as fertile women are seen only as vessels to carry the "fruit". "We are two-legged wombs, that's all, sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices" (Atwood, 2017, p.146). The Handmaid's Tale exposes women's marginalization in Western religious discourse as Abigail Rine asserts, *The Handmaid's Tale* is an ''incisive expose of women's marginalization in Western religious discourse, particularly regarding their corporeality, sexuality and autonomy. '' (2013, p.53).

The dystopian societies portrayed in both Burdekin's and Atwood's novels are like prisons. In their novels, they show the reader how patriarchal governments, societies, and power structures can strictly control individuals, how they enslave women, and how they oppress women in terms of sexuality. Furthermore, Atwood's and Burdekin's works portray the consequences of gender inequality, women are not able to own property or pursue their own paths in life; instead, they are reduced to objects for men. In both novels, men stereotype women not only physically but also spiritually. Women have to do what men want and play the roles that society gives them in order to stay alive. Women who don't obey the rules are punished severely by the government in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Similarly, in *Swastika Night*, women have to play their roles in society to be loved and approved by men. In both novels, a woman's worth is determined by her ability to give

birth. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood shows that if a woman loses her fertility, she won't be needed in society, as the old women are left to die slowly in terrible colonies in terrible situations. Likewise, in *Swastika Night*, old women who cannot have children get just enough food to stay alive; they cannot have more than they need if they are infertile. Women are the property and commodity of men in both dystopian novels. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, a commander can use a handmaid to have a child. After the child is born, the handmaid is sent to another commander to give birth to him. Similarly, in *Swastika Night*, a woman cannot refuse a man who wants to have an affair with her. She has no right to say no to a man. Putting an armlet on a woman's jacket makes him the woman's owner. Moreover, a man can easily give her up by just taking the white armlet off.

In conclusion, by examining these two dystopian novels, we will try to emphasize how hard a woman’s life is in patriarchal societies and how oppressed, ignored, ruled, enslaved, and neglected women are in totalitarian regimes, as well as how men rule women's bodies and minds to subdue and control them. How women manage to survive in such totalitarian, oppressive, and male-dominated societies that try to dominate them will also be the focus of this study.

CHAPTER ONE - SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BODIES: GENDER TROUBLE

1.1 Subjugation of Women by the Notion of Patriarchy and Misogyny: Gender, Violence, and Power

Any term that social scientists use to study society and social behavior as an analytical category gives rise to subcategories that help with the scientific study of behavior in society. Gender studies use several ideas about how people act, and gender is one of the most important ones. Gender is a way to make sense of how men and women are different socially and how their relationships are structured. The term was coined by a psychologist who worked with individuals born with ambiguous genitalia, Robert Stoller. He was the first to differentiate between gender and sex. Following Stoller, feminists have shown a great deal of interest in gender, its distinction from sex, and the question of whether men's or women's bodies have natural distinctions that determine their gender. The distinction between sexes and gender provides the basic framework for feminist theories.

Diverse feminist authors have questioned common values and oppressive social norms pertaining to the issues of the patriarchal community and the strict gender roles. During the 1960s and 1970s, the development of feminism accelerated in every aspect of life, including politics, work, family, culture, etc. Three waves that scholars and feminists classify as social movements played a significant role. Beginning in 1792, there were three distinct waves of feminism. Nonetheless, the first wave of feminism emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and it involved fighting for the freedoms and equality of women in political representation, particularly the right to vote. A Vindication of the Rights of Women is the work of Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the most prominent figures of this period. In accordance with the requirements of this work, the first wave's content was affected. About Wollstonecraft, González states,

> been the first woman thinker in posing the issue of women’s subordination in terms of gender, or, so to speak, in using gender as a category of analysis, thus

> suspending patriarchal discourses on the essential and immanent weakness of female subjectivity and rationality. (Gonzales,1997, p.180)

While maintaining the demands of the first wave, the "second wave" of feminism demanded that women's position be at the vanguard not only in political representation, but also in all areas, particularly in public space, such as having equal existence and visibility in education and the workplace. In the 1960s, the second wave of feminism focused more on revealing the distinctions between women's sexuality and fertility to liberate women from the restrictive roles of motherhood at home and lead them more toward the workplace. As a reaction against the practices of second-wave feminism, third-wave feminism raised additional critical questions in the early 1990s, while maintaining the main demands of the previous waves. These practices were connected to a universal conception of femininity. The third-wave movement argued that women's issues are diverse due to racial, religious, socioeconomic, and sexual diversity. During these waves, the women's movement awareness created an echo everywhere. The activities, such as celebrations and marches, gave rise to and had an impact on the studies of women in the intellectual field, as well as encouraged women to write more about women. With a rise in the number of women in intellectual fields, discussions and analyses of gender roles have also increased. There have been discussions regarding whether gender roles are determined by biology or society.

bell hooks, a well-known and respected modern feminist, thinks that the difference between gender and sex is "a movement to end sexist oppression that actively engages participants in revolutionary struggle." (2015, p.30). The movement allows women and men to participate in the struggle on an equal basis. According to Hooks, it is essential to understand sexist oppression before the eighteenth century, when science had not yet replaced religion as the primary world explanation and there was not even the concept of sex as it is understood today.

American sexologist Helen Thomas believes there is only one gender, and it is male. She proposes the theory of the one-sex model. The one-sex model viewed male and female reproductive organs as having essentially the same structure but differing locations due to male and female basic humoral temperaments. (Mccarthy,2016, p.60) According to her, the two sexes are diametrically opposed to one another, so the differences between men and women are oppositional rather than hierarchical. As a result, disagreements over sex and its distinction from gender emerge, rejecting the vertical order that places God at the top, then men, women, and finally animals. Many feminists, including essentialist and egalitarian feminists, appeal to the controversial perspective of the vertical way as a result of arguments.

Egalitarian feminists are opposed to the vertical way. They believe that, despite significant biological differences in reproduction, men and women are otherwise physically and mentally similar. As a result, gender differences in socialization are primarily responsible for the social construction of gender differences in attitudes, behaviors, and social roles rather than biology. Socialization, rather than biology, encourages females to accept traditional gender roles that entrench female disadvantage in the private domestic sphere, the public sphere of employment, the political sphere, and the social sphere.

Social scientists have analyzed and studied the concept of gender from a variety of perspectives, “Gender as a term has been scrutinized, nuanced, inverted, and teased into a field of play wide enough to encompass interest in a variety of masculinities and feminisms, the ‘straight’, the ‘queer’, the bi, trans, and sexual, the ancient, the medieval, the early, late, and post-modern” (Treharne,2002, p.1). However, there is no consensus among theorists and social scientists regarding its ultimate meaning. The only point on which they agree is that gender is an analytical category that has been socially constructed to distinguish the biological differences between men and women. When social scientists refer to the social construction of gender, they are referring to the numerous processes that

shape the expectations of being a boy or a girl. This process is influenced by culture and begins the moment a child is born.

Culture is an umbrella term for shared standards and norms. A culture's set of norms and beliefs determine what is considered acceptable behavior in that society. Culture provides social behavior guidelines. Social scientists distinguish sex from gender to emphasize that gender is a cultural phenomenon and not a biological one. Each culture has its own behavioral expectations for men and women, so the concept of gender varies from one culture to the next. In this regard, it is essential to differentiate between sex and gender.

Sex, according to social scientists, refers to a person's biological identity and indicates whether he or she is male or female. In addition, there are physical and physiological differences between males and females, such as the reproductive system, and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity. Consequently, sex and sexual differences refer to the differences between males and females in their chromosomes, reproductive organs, and relative production of various hormones, which result in a variety of physical differences. Males tend to have more hair, and deeper voices, and they are more likely to go bald as they get older. In addition, they are typically heavier, taller, and physically stronger than women.

Gender is the socially acquired behavior associated with the two sexes. Maleness and femininity are biological facts, whereas becoming a woman or a man is a cultural process. In other words, gender refers to the social and cultural differences associated with being male or female. Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and characteristics that a given society deems appropriate for men and women. Gender emphasizes that masculinity and femininity are acquired socially, culturally, and psychologically in the process of becoming a man or a woman. “Sociologists use the term gender to refer to norms, roles, and behaviors associated in a given society with being male or female” (Chambliss,2014, p.209). In this respect, gender differences refer to differences between

males and females in their social attitudes, behaviors, and social roles within a given society. For instance, men may be typically more aggressive, assertive, and competitive, as well as more likely to occupy positions of political power, whereas women may be typically more passive, sensitive, and emotional, and may shoulder a disproportionate amount of childcare and housework responsibilities. In this sense, social scientists concur that an individual's biologically determined sex is distinct from his or her gender. Sex is a biological concept that is relatively stable, whereas gender is a cultural concept that is not stable. Consequently, the terms sex and gender cannot be interchanged.

Ann Oakley is the first social scientist to say that "sex" is a biological term and "gender" is a cultural one. In her book *Sex, Gender, and Society*, she investigates the term gender. She claims that gender parallels the biological division of sex into male and female but also involves the social evaluation of masculinity and femininity. According to Oakley, the average male possesses a preponderance of masculinity, and the average female possesses a preponderance of femininity (Oakley,1985, p.116). She believes that if the correct terms for sex are "male" and "female," then the corresponding terms for gender are "masculine" and "feminine" (Oakley,1985, p.116). Actually, she uses the term gender to refer to those characteristics of men and women that are determined socially as opposed to those that are determined biologically. Furthermore, she asserts that the fact that a person is born female or male does not mean that he or she will develop stereotypically male or female characteristics. Ann Oakley, who introduced the concept of gender to sociology, introduces the anthropologists' reports on the definition of gender in various cultures in her book *Sex, Gender and Society*,

> Every society uses biological sex as a criterion for the ascription of gender, but, beyond that simple starting point, no two cultures would agree completely on what distinguishes one gender from the other. Needless to say, every society believes that its own definitions of gender correspond to the biological duality of sex. Culturally, therefore, one finds the same biological distinctions

> between male and female co-existing with great variations in gender roles. (Oakley,1985, p.115).

Ann Oakley emphasizes the significance of differentiating the meaning of sex and gender. Gender, according to Oakley, "is not a direct product of biological sex" (Simmonds,2012, p.1). She describes sex as “the anatomical and psychological characteristics that signify maleness and femaleness, and gender as socially constructed masculinity and femininity” (Simmonds,2012, p.1). Masculinity and femininity are characterized “not by biology but by social, cultural, and psychological attributes that are acquired through becoming a man or woman in a particular society at a particular time” (Oakley,1985, p.1). She claims that there is constant slippage between sex and gender; for example, people are generally asked to declare their ‘gender’ instead of ‘sex’ on an application form. This is because, according to Oakley, women play these roles due to their biology. The Western culture also believes that any attempt to alter the traditional roles of men and women in a society can damage that society's social fabric. Oakley concludes that these views uphold the patriarchal order and support it,

> While our society is organized around the differences rather than the similarities between the sexes, these two extremes of masculinity and femininity will recur, so apparently confirming the belief that they come from a biological cause. Whatever biological cause there is in reality, however influential or insubstantial it may be, thus … becomes increasingly a rationalization of what is, in fact, only prejudice. (Oakley,1985, p.210).

Simone De Beauvoir, one of the most influential feminist sociologists, believes that society is fundamentally masculine. She points out that, “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (De Beauvoir,2011, p.267). She argues that the characteristics associated with womanhood are imposed on women by culture rather than being inherent to them. In other words, she suggests that women's roles are not biologically predetermined but are rather socially constructed. By virtue of being of the second sex,

women are taught which roles they can and cannot perform. She explains that gender differences in society make the man's role as breadwinner superior. It grants him a position of authority in the family and society. Hierarchical oppositions reflect gender differences, such that men are superior and women are inferior. Women occupy the position of the 'other' and are the outsiders. She further states that, “The discovery of bronze enabled man, tested by hard and productive work, to find himself as creator, dominating nature; no longer afraid of nature, having overcome resistance, he dares to grasp himself as autonomous activity and to accomplish himself in his singularity” (De Beauvoir,2011, p.65). Simone De Beauvoir highlights the marginal position of women in society, how she is defined, and how patriarchy influences their values. De Beauvoir argues that while boys are encouraged to become 'little men' and independent and to 'dominate nature' with their bodies, girls are taught, through playing with dolls, being complimented and criticized on their appearance, and being warned of various dangers in life, to be passive, to view their body as something to be admired, and to fear the world. Within this context, Simone de Beauvoir's formulation distinguishes between sex and gender, which are described as "masculine" and "feminine," and asserts that these distinctions are not biological but rather social constructions of patriarchal society, since men are considered superior to women.

Judith Butler rejects the idea that biology determines gender in her book *Gender Trouble*. She suggests that "periodic practices based on performative theory of gender acts that disrupt the categories of body, sex, gender, and sexuality and cause their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame" (Butler,1990, p.xxxiv). She suggests that "periodic practices based on performative theory of gender acts that disrupt the categories of body, sex, gender, and sexuality and cause their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame" (Butler,1990, p.xxxiv). The rejection is contingent on what she calls performativity theory. Butler defines performativity as "a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler,1990, p.179). Performativity is an effect that is continuously generated and reproduced. She declares that,

> Gender ought to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space …. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (Butler,1990, p.191)

She illustrates that differences in sex, gender, and sexuality are all forms of forced performance, which opens up more options for gender. She argues that gender is the result of the practices and discourses of institutions. This is due to the fact that "Gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of the subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex" (Butler,1990, p.8). Gender is "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 a female one" (Butler,1990, p.9). Instead of considering gender as predetermined, Judith Butler argues that it is something that is continually shaped and reshaped. So, gender is not the cause of institutions, discourses, or practices, but it is the result of them. Institutions, discourses, and practices make you who you are by deciding your sex, sexuality, and gender.

Butler also questions the feminist construction of culture. Gender, according to feminists, is constructed in and by culture. Judith Butler rejects the notion that culture shapes gender norms. Even though Butler extends Simone de Beauvoir's famous insight that "one is not born a woman but rather becomes one", she doesn't agree with the common idea that sex, gender, and sexuality are all connected. She argues that the idea that biological sex, identifying as a certain gender, and being heterosexual are all basically the same is an illusion. Judith Butler questions the idea that some gendered behaviors are natural. These behaviors show what we usually think of as feminine and masculine. In her theory, she stresses that a person's actions and behavior are performances. Normative heterosexuality forces people to perform these acts. Butler continues by stating,

> Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds. (Butler,1988, p.531)

If one who 'becomes' a woman is not necessarily female, as Beauvoir argues, and if the body is already constructed, then one who 'becomes' a woman is not necessarily female; then "there is no recourse to a body that has not always already been interpreted by cultural meanings; hence, sex could not qualify as a discursive anatomical facticity. Indeed, sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along." (Butler,1990, p.11). Butler argues further that there is no such thing as natural objective gender. In contrast, gender is performative, which implies,

> Gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative- that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. (Butler,1990, p.34).

That is to say, the body can be 'female' without necessarily displaying 'feminine' characteristics, as the man/woman binary dictates. She asserts that "if gender is the cultural meaning that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from sex in any one way. This sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders." (Butler,1990, p.9). In this regard, identity exists only to the extent that it is performed.

Judith Butler is not alone in denying the existence of gender. Helen Thomas, a sociologist, is one of the many sociologists who agree with Butler's statement about

gender. She confirms Judith Butler's theory by claiming that gender, “does not follow the construction of “men” will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that “women” will interpret only female bodies” (Thomas,2013, p.9). Additionally, “there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two” (Thomas,2013, p.9).

In conclusion, Butler proposes what she calls a more radical application of constitutional doctrine, which takes gender as an object rather than a subject of "constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames" (Butler,1990, p.45). That is to say, Butler questions the extent to which an individual can define himself or herself, or whether our actions are predetermined. Butler attempts to criticize normative heterosexuality by illustrating the artificial, conventional, and historical nature of gender construction. Additionally, Judith Butler challenges the existing feminist models and their definitions of gender. Butler asserts that historically, feminists have held a binary view of gender. In other words, humans are typically divided into two distinct sexes, namely, men and women. She argues against such dichotomous classifications and argues that gender should be viewed as a variable and mutable human characteristic. She argues that women have been lumped into a group with shared traits and interests, limiting their ability to choose their own distinct and unique identities.

It is essential to understand Judith Butler's theory of gender, performance, and performativity to understand gender issues in both novels. Hence, it is crucial to define gender identity as the primary characteristic of gender and its distinction from gender roles.

Since early childhood, individuals tend to identify themselves with a sense of self-based on external and internal factors. As gender identity is systematically structured by social institutions, some theories assume that this identification is the foundation of gender identity. Gender identity is formed by major social institutions, including schools, religion, the economy, and the state, as well as family and interpersonal relationships. Thus, the notion that gender identity is a social phenomenon and not a natural one implies

that it is acquired. Although rooted in societal institutions, gender identity is transmitted through social learning and enacted through what sociologists refer to as gender roles. Gender identity and gender roles are two distinct concepts.

Gender roles are defined as “an extension of role theories which say that children learn ways of relating to the world around them through observing how people act, and by being rewarded when they themselves display appropriate behavior or punished when they display inappropriate behavior” (Francis,2005, p.21). Through the process of socialization, social expectations about what is likely masculine and feminine are conveyed to individuals. The family, peers, and teachers, as well as the media and religion, serve as agents in the process of socialization. Through the process of socialization, individuals acquire a gender-based identity. Despite the fact that individuals do not necessarily conform to the cultural ideal, their roles in social institutions are governed by the rules of gender relations. The rules consist of a reward for those who comply and a punishment for those who do not comply. Therefore, gender roles define what constitutes masculine and feminine behavior within the cultural context of a society.

Gender identity is in conflict with gender roles. It is an individual's particular definition of "self" based on his or her understanding of what it means to be a man or a woman. An individual's perception of his or her gender significantly influences his or her self-perception and serves as a crucial foundation for his interactions with others. This does not imply that studying patterns of self-position denies individual differences, as each person can have multiple identities, such as ethnic, religious, and national identities. However, a person's gender identity is a fundamental identity.

The father of psychology, Freud was a pioneer in the field of identity development. Freud emphasizes the significance of childhood experiences in identity formation. He demonstrates that identity “consists in the reproduction of repressed fragments [which belong]… to childhood experiences” (Quinodoz,2004, p.188). Erik Erikson, who is credited with coining the term "identity crisis," focuses on the influence of social

relationships on identity development. Beyond childhood, he examines identity formation throughout the entire lifespan. In addition, German sociologist Hans Jurgen Eysenck supports the trait theory because he emphasizes that identity is composed of a number of broad traits. A trait is essentially a relatively stable characteristic that causes a person to behave in a particular way, thereby defining his true identity.

Furthermore, according to British psychologist John Charles Turner, gender identity "is shaped by self-categorization; by people looking at social categories, and deciding whether or not they are in a category. If they consider themselves a member of a category, that category becomes part of their identity" (Woodward,2000, p.47). Individuals can develop two primary identities, a personal self and a collective self, in accordance with Turner's theory. A personal self consists of information that is unique and distinctive to the individual, while a collective self consists of information about the groups to which the individual belongs. Gender identity consists of a person's conception of who they are, the type of person they are, and their relationships with others.

An individual's identity is comprised of mental characteristics and self-awareness that distinguish them from others. A person's identity consists of all the thought and emotion patterns that cause him to act and speak in particular ways; when he abandons these patterns, he acquires a new identity. However, one's values and beliefs are shaped by their gender identity. There are numerous possible factors that can influence a person's gender identity. Environment and heredity are two of them. A person's orientation is substantially influenced by heredity. It shares the spotlight with the natural aspect of childhood development, but it does not define an individual's gender identity. The environment also has a significant impact on the formation of gender identity. Blue blankets for boys and pink blankets for girls are given at birth. Different toys are given to boys and girls, and fathers play with their sons more seriously than with their daughters. Mothers of the middle-class converse with their daughters more frequently than with their sons. While children are growing up, they receive clear messages from society as a whole.

Butler believes that because gender does not exist, gender identity is artificial and performative in nature. She calls into question the notion that some gendered behaviors are natural. She contends that gendered behaviors are conventionally learned and reproduced through behavior patterns and repetition. She asserts that,

> the "coherence" and "continuity" of "the person" are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility. Inasmuch as "identity" is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of "the person" is called into question by the cultural emergence of those "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined.. (Butler,1990, p.23)

Butler believes that gendered behavior is an act of types, a performance that is imposed on us, citing the ambiguity of what constitutes an individual's gender identity. For Butler, identity is an illusion created by our performance, "In opposition to theatrical or phenomenological models which take the gendered self to be prior to its acts, I will understand constituting acts not only as constituting the identity of the actor but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief." (Butler,1988, p.520).

In addition, she argues that "Gender is the linguistic index of the political opposition between the sexes." Because there is only one gender, gender is singularly referred to here. There is only one, the feminine, the "masculine" not being a gender. For the masculine is not the masculine, but the general." (Butler,1990, p.27). Gender identity is an entirely socially constructed fiction. "Because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no

gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction" (Butler,1988, p.522). Harold Bloom asserts, in support of Butler,

> The growing up is not corporeal but performative, so that the body becomes its gender only through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time. In simplified terms, there is no preexisting identity by which an act or attribute might be measured. Thus, according to Judith Butler gender is performed rather than expressed. If such is indeed the case, "there would be no true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of gender and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction." (Bloom, 2007, p.157)

He agrees with Butler that gender identity is a fiction that is continuously shaped and reshaped. He believes that a person acquires his gender identity through a series of repeated actions over time.

It is crucial to note that the struggle to comprehend whether gender identity is fixed or performatively shaped and reshaped is what has sparked the increased interest in identity and gender identity. The next section will provide examples from Judith Butler's theory of performance and performativity to help explain her claim that gender identity is not static. In addition, the following section discusses Butler's approach to the dichotomy between nature and culture in order to examine gender categories and the resistance of women in feminist dystopias. Regarding the novel's characters, they are all expected to conform to the norms of society in Gilead and Hitlerdom and perform in line with the expectations of their societies. We observe that the characters perform their gender roles with the utmost rigidity while simultaneously strengthening their position of resistance. According to this theory, we are assigned a gender category at birth with a corresponding set of expectations. Society forces both men and women to play certain roles as performances. To analyze such a point of performativity, Butler's theory of performativity may help individuals' resistance to these expectations become more understandable.

Before examining Butler's approach, it is crucial to mention Kate Millett and her ideas about women while discussing the causes and consequences of the patriarchal oppression of women. She claims that women are viewed as inferior by men, and she also emphasizes the role of women in the historical improvement of society. Millett's *Sexual Politics* focuses on biological, psychological, historical, social, and mythical perspectives on women. Women have always been oppressed by men in various ways since the dawn of human civilization. Thus, her ideas on womanhood are important in explaining historical and contemporary reasons for women's mistreatment. According to patriarchy, men are the dominant class in the social hierarchy, and as a result, the rest are subject to male oppression. Since oppression originates from male authorities, especially women are subjected to oppression and marginalized in almost every society. Because Millett is a contemporary theorist and Anglo-American feminist, her ideas can be applied to the marginalization of women of color.

Katherine Murray Millett is an American feminist writer, educator, artist, activist, and author of the best-selling book *Sexual Politics*, which mainly focuses on women's marginalization. In her book, Millett highlights the role of dominance and power in sexual activity through famous literary works. According to selected novels, she claims that the male organ gives men power, whereas the female genital makes her inferior in men's eyes. Through his organ, the man obtains his privileged position and power to demonstrate his superiority. In her book, she claims that "The term politics shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons controlled by another." (Millett, 1970, p. 23) Therefore, Millett suggests that the relationship between sexes can be political in terms of power because, just as parties control citizens, men have the power to control women through domination and oppression.

In her book, Millett also quotes Hannah Arendt. Arendt asserts that the "government is upheld by power supported either through consent or imposed through violence" (Millett, 1970, p. 26). Millett connects the domains of power and violence to so-called male superiority through Arendt's assertion. Millett contends in *Sexual Politics* that men

hold privileged positions in every field. Masculine and feminine stereotypes differ in personality; men are associated with aggression, intelligence, force, and efficacy, whereas women are associated with passivity, ignorance, virtue, and ineffectuality. Women are responsible for childrearing and the household, while men are given other accomplishments: ambitions and interests, according to sex roles in the domestic sphere. One of the most important arguments of Millett is the sexual differentiation and the superiority of men as a result. According to Millett, psychology, like religion, defines women as inferior to men due to the child's sexual development, and she criticizes Freud and his concept of penis envy. Freud, considered the father of psychoanalysis, claims that seeing the penis of a brother or male friend causes a young girl to develop penis envy. The boy has an organ that the girl does not because she has already been castrated. When a young girl sees the penis, she develops a weaker ego and a castration complex, which leads to penis envy, which has a negative impact on her entire life, according to Freud. “Much of Freudian theory rests upon this moment of discovery and done is struck how, in the case of female, to recapitulate the peculiar drama of penis envy is to rehearse again the fable of the Fall, a Fall that is Eve’s alone” (Millett, 1970, p. 181)

Because Freud holds the same patriarchal view of women, Millett believes that his assertions about women are a repetition of the biblical account of creation. Although Millett disagrees with his definition of penis envy, she is aware that men do experience it as a result of the organ's presence. This concept is entirely credited to the patriarchy. “The penis, badge of the male’s superior status in both preliterate and civilized patriarchies, is given the most crucial significance, the subject both of endless boasting and endless anxiety” (Millett, 1970, p. 49). As a result, women who are already castrated, as Freud suggests in his riddle, cannot be recognized as the equivalent of men, and patriarchy continues to uphold what Freud claimed at the turn of the century. Men have the right to dominate women because of sexual differences; men must be glorified because women are sexually inferior. “By an irony nearly tragic, the discoveries of a great pioneer, whose theories of the unconscious and of infant sexuality were major contributions to human

understanding, were in time invoked to sponsor a point of view essentially conservative" (Millett, 1970, p. 178).

According to Freud's theory, women envy men and wish they could have a penis one day. Women are portrayed as the other in almost every culture, according to historical documents, myths, ancient philosophy, and the Holy Scriptures. When all customs are made for men, women see men as superior only because they possess an organ that she does not. "Confronted with so much concrete evidence of the male's superior status, sensing on all sides the depreciation in which they are held, girls' envy not the penis, but only what the penis gives one social pretensions to" (Millett, 1970, p. 187). Although Freud's assumptions about women are still relevant today, they cannot provide a realistic explanation for women's perceived inferiority. It is illogical to consider women's physical differences to be negative. Men take advantage of gender differences to maintain their privileged position in society. It makes no sense to believe in a delusion that considers women to be the secondary sex due to the lack of an organ. Furthermore, the absence of the male organ cannot fully explain how it evokes a female's castration complex.

Freud fails to distinguish between biological and social constructions, claiming that men and women have defined roles in society based on gender norms. Every woman who challenges gender roles is labeled as neurotic because a woman must maintain her femininity, which means she must serve her devotion to her master. The main point of Freud's argument is that women are the most negative aspect of being human. Men, he believes, represent positive qualities, whereas women exhibit negative characteristics such as weakness. Women are created for men in the masculine imagination, and they are described as having no identity apart from men. Everything they own has to glorify men, so they are silenced and forced to identify with males' words. According to Millett, under patriarchy, women do not create the symbols that describe them; everything used to describe them is made up of male words, ideas, and designs. This image is created by men, and it is designed to suit their needs. On the differences between men and women, Millett

states that “Whatever the real differences between the sexes may be, we are not likely to know them until the sexes are treated differently, that is alike” (Millett, 1970, p. 33).

With her writing, Kate Millett seeks to expose the rigid patriarchal society's attitudes toward and treatment of women. She focuses on the apparent disparity and the unjust social classification of women and female characters in the works of male writers from a sexual-political perspective. Male writers, according to Millett, tend to portray men as superior and dominant during the formation of the two parties, while women are portrayed as subordinate and obedient. Additionally, it has been asserted in *Sexual Politics* that women are referred to as sex objects who are not worth breaking words. (Millett, 2016, p. 4). In addition, Gilbert and Gubar point out that, in addition to the typical portrayal of women, women in *The Mad Women in the Attic* are designed with two complete, opposite terms; either a monster or an angel (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p. 17). It is obvious that in the works of male writers women’s function is to sexually please and serve men.

There are parallel characters such as prostitutes, “fallen” women, and angelic females with whom men can practice patronizing and sexist behaviors. According to patriarchy, there is a hierarchy between the sexes that separates men from women. According to Millett, men are the only ones who adequately represent the human being, and women are marginalized by patriarchy. “Patriarchy has already been established, and the male has already set himself as the human norm, the subject and referent to which the female is other or alien” (Millett, 1970, p. 46). This idea occupies the linguistic differentiation; the noun man refers to all humans; one must think of humanity when defined as a man. Moreover, Otherness is linked to femininity as Zygmund Bauman suggests:

> Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native, abnormality the other of norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness is the other of health, insanity the other of reason, lay public the other

> of the expert, foreigner the other of state subject, enemy the other of friend. (Bauman, 1991, p. 8)

The social construction of gender in Western societies constructs women as other than men in the context of opposition. Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex* in the 1950s, claims that "Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus, it is that no group ever sets itself as the one without at once setting up the other over against itself." She claims that woman is constructed as the other of man; masculinity, therefore, is socially set up as the essential gender norm, whereas femininity is described as something other than masculine. Being female in such a society leads them to suffer and be abused by men. In conclusion, regarding Millett's arguments about women, it is evident that women have always been discriminated against in society throughout history.

1.2 Judith Butler's Theory of Performance and Performativity

Judith Butler is an influential figure who has altered feminist and queer literary theories' perspectives on sex, sexuality, gender, and gender identity. A significant portion of Butler's body of work examines the formation of identity and subjectivity. Since Butler challenges the concept of gender identity and develops the theory of gender performativity, she is sometimes categorized as a poststructuralist theorist, although she is also equally influenced by psychoanalytic theory, feminist theory, and Marxist theory.

The distinction between performance and performativity is essential to comprehend Butler's perspective on gender. Despite their similar pronunciations, performance and performativity are two extremely distinct concepts. Performance is the enactment of a particular variety of artistic expressions, such as theatrical plays, musical compositions, religious ceremonies, performance art, etc. Whether or not a specific act is performative is unrelated to whether or not it is part of a performance. Schechner defines the meaning of performance as follows, "to treat any object, work or product 'as' performance- a painting, a novel, a shoe, or anything at all- means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects and beings. Performance exists only as actions, interaction, and relationships." (Schechner,2002, p.30). Performativity is the intentional or unintentional production of a series of acts. Performativity is the continuous production and reproduction of an effect. In other terms, "Performance implies a performer behind the act, a conscious and deliberate intent, and performativity implies no such thing, there is no power that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability" (Templeton,2006, p.9). As Butler states, Performance generates "the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core" (Butler,1990, p.186).

Butler's theory of gender performance and performativity appears to be a controversial response to what she perceives as a feminist tendency to equate femininity with the body too closely. To comprehend what Butler means by performance and performativity, J. L. Austin must be referred to. Judith Butler appropriates and retheorizes

J. L. Austin's concept of performativity. Butler uses Austin's theory as a starting point. Kira Hall says that,

> The origin of the term performative can be traced back to Austin's posthumous How to Do Things with Words. Austin, objecting to the logical positivists' focus on the verifiability of statements, introduced the performative as a new category of utterance that has no truth value since it does not describe the world, but acts upon it—a way of "doing things with words". (Hall,2000, p.184)

According to Michael Glass, Austin "believes that the only legitimate role of language is to describe or represent the world by means of verifiable, factual statements" (Glass, 2014, p.69). In accordance with J.L. Austin, performative is a new category of utterance that cannot describe the action, but rather performs the action. Austin contends that performative is a type of speech act in which the production of an utterance is the performance of an action. These actions are therefore terms of performativity. For Austin, performativity means that the sentence "snow is white" is descriptively true or false, but a statement like "I now pronounce you husband and wife" is different because it makes something true that was not true prior to the action. A number of conditions that cannot be evaluated in terms of veracity determine the outcome. A number of conditions that cannot be evaluated in terms of veracity determine the outcome. Through observation, the statement is a law that shapes one's beliefs Therefore, such statements are performative utterances because they are performed.

Influenced by J. L. Austin, Judith Butler claims that everyday communication and speech acts are performative. She extends Austin's theory by arguing that an individual's natural biology (the body of a woman or a man) is also a performative construction because, for instance, a woman's skirt identifies her as feminine. It is known that social ideology regulates and adjusts men's and women's behavior and that gender identity is constrained by society. The female body is a member of a particular social category, which

gives it the authority to assign its prescribed meaning. Butler asserts that “Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate “act”, but, rather, as the reiterative and citation practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler,1993, p. 2).

Judith Butler conceptualizes performativity as the “power of discourse to produce effects through reiteration” (Butler, 1993, p. xxviii). In accordance with this Butlerian formulation, discourse is understood as an embodied practice because,

> speaking is a bodily act. It is a vocalization; it requires the larynx, the lungs, the lips, and the mouth. Whatever is said not only through the body but constitutes a certain presentation of the body. I am not talking about what the mouth looks like, though I can imagine that in some therapeutic sessions that may be relevant, especially if the client faces the therapist. (Butler,2004, p.172).

Butler considers gender identity transformation to be the result of an accidental process over which individuals have limited control. From Butler's perspective, these are things that individuals have little control over. Templeton claims that “discourse, in the broadest sense, refers to the bodily signs, actions, statements, etc.” (Templeton,2006, p. 8). Moreover, he explains that “discourse is not simply a sequence of utterances or as a collection of texts but also “a unit of human actions, interaction, communication, and cognition” (Templeton,2006, p. 208). According to Butler, “acts, gestures, and desires produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggests, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause.” (Butler, 1990, p. 185).

According to Butler, these discursive acts are performative; that is,“ the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (Butler, 1990, p.185). Butler emphasizes that these acts are a collection of socially and culturally learned behaviors.

Thus, “these norms are implicit in that they are unconsciously agreed upon by the community and explicit that they are performed by large group” (Templeton, 2006, p.9). Performativity inverts the notion that identity is the source of secondary actions such as speech and gestures. Instead, it distinguishes the formation of identities as a result of performative actions, behaviors, and gestures.

Because Butler's theory of gender performance and performativity is based on the idea that there is no single identity and that the naturalization and politicization of heterosexuality are unnecessary fiction. Butler believes that gender and sexual identity are constructed through performance, and they are performative constructions. Performativity is not a single act but rather a process of repetition and ritual that achieves its effects by becoming naturalized within the context of the body. In other words, a relationship between body and gender is not required; the body can be 'female' without displaying 'feminine' characteristics. To some extent, one can choose one's gender, even if it is just how gender presents itself.

As essentialists assert, Judith Butler's theory of performance and performativity rejects the presumption that gender and gender identity are biologically determined. Essentialists believe in dichotomous oppositions. For them, sex, gender, and race refer to a set of defining attributes and characteristics for these categories. Individual preferences and behaviors are predetermined by biology rather than by the choices one makes. Instead, Butler contends that they are constructed performatively and are open to multiple interpretations and expressions. An individual can, to some extent, choose their gender identity due to a series of acts that disrupt his body, sex, gender, and sexuality categories. Gender is not a constant identity, but rather an identity that is gradually constructed over time. New forms of gender emerge as a result of mutations in repetition that expose acts “in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-format, or a periodic repetition that exposes the phantasm tic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction” (Butler, 1990, p.192).

There is no "I" that advances or opposes discourse and culture. Rather, the "I" is a component of discourse and culture that extends beyond a limited set of identity markers. However, because it is “not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition” (Butler, 1990, p. 198), discourse and culture can never fully determine a human subject. Gender is the result of different repetitions. Butler actually expands on this concept when she says,

> Gender is … a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those facts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender. (Butler,1990, p.45)

Butler claims in *Gender Trouble* that “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender… identity is performativity constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results.” (Butler,1990, p.34). Gender and sex are consequences rather than causes of institutions, discourses, or practices. She contends that as norms disrupt the main picture of their bodies, sexes, genders, and gender identities, individuals act progressively. People start to fit into their social roles from childhood. For instance, if a person is born as a boy, he will behave like a boy through education, rules, identification, and recognizing himself as a boy. He makes repeated male-gender gestures, postures, and words. These gestures, words, and postures are imposed on him by societal norms. Consequently, the boy performs the role of a boy unconsciously. In fact, it is the performance that is performing the boy. Individuals can be anatomically male but chromosomally female, or male but hormonally female. In other words, Butler asserts that neither men nor women exist, but that there are male, female, and transgender performances. Even among homosexuals, there are lesbians who play boys and lesbians who play girls. Whether controversial or ambiguous, Butler asserts that sex does not exist.

Butler thinks that: “the radical disjunction posited between heterosexuality and homosexuality is simply not true, that there are structures of psychic homosexuality within heterosexuality relations, and structures of psychic heterosexuality within gay and lesbian sexuality and relationships” (Butler,1990, p.165). Therefore, sex is a matter of personal choice, whereas gender is simply a variable performance. Being an identity is not the key; playing an identity is. Gender is therefore a series of acts. Rather than considering sex and gender as being biologically predetermined, identity is an illusion, as performativity changes over time and one can choose his identity. There is no such thing as a core gender or core self. Butler claims: “The subject is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects” (Butler,1990, p.198). This implies that gender identity is never secured, as the subject's identity-forming repetitions are never finished. The repetition process is not fixed. In other words, the structures that regulate gender norms completely control the subject. Because the norm depends on repetition to fulfill the performative continuing and because the norm is never fully realized, these norms are susceptible to subversion. The subversion of the norms enables the individual to play an identity.

The subversion of norms enables Butler to extend Simone de Beauvoir's famous insight that ‘’one is not born a woman, but becomes one." Butler asserts that Beauvoir's citation is essential to comprehend that the subject is always involved in a process of gender acquisition. Commenting on de Beauvoir's well-known insight, Butler writes,

> If there is something right in Beauvoir’s claim that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman, it follows that woman itself is a term in the process, a becoming, and a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification. Even when gender seems to congeal into the most reified forms, the ‘congealing’ is itself an insistent and insidious practice, sustained and regulated by various social means. It is, for Beauvoir, never possible

> finally to become a woman, as if there were a telos that governs the process of acculturation and construction. (Butler, 1990, p. 45)

Judith Butler emphasizes that one acquires gender through the practice of socially and culturally established gender-based identity codes because;

> the verb 'become' contains a consequential ambiguity. Gender is not only a cultural construction imposed upon identity, but in some sense gender is a process of constructing ourselves. To become a woman is a purposive and appropriate set of acts, the acquisition of a skill…, to assume a certain corporal style and significance. When 'become' is taken to mean 'purposefully assume or embody', it seems that Simon de Beauvoir is appealing to voluntaristic account of gender. (Gray,2017, p.50)

Gender performativity, in other words, denotes the relationship between gender and society. It is critical to recognize that performative actions do not describe an already existing gender identity, but rather what is being done, because performativity requires the acting out of performative patterns, which can only be accomplished through a continuous series of performative acts. As a result, all of the actions that make up the performativity and nature of identity are already embedded within the discourses of masculinity, femininity, heterosexuality, and so on. Because gender proves to be performative, the actions appear natural to a person and occur without their awareness. Within this context, "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed." (Butler,1990, p. 34).

1.3 Marginalization of "The Other" with Body Politics

Throughout history, women's bodies have been utilized by totalitarian and fascist regimes under the sacredness of marriage. In some cases, fascist, patriarchal, and totalitarian regimes use women's bodies to increase the power of the state without hiding behind marriage or family. Utilizing women's bodies solely as an instrument for reproduction brings to mind the Aristotelian concept that women are nothing more than vessels for male progeny. Analyzing the role of women's bodies in the history of Western cultures, one can discover that the concept of seeing female bodies as instruments for reproduction doesn't belong to the ideology of dystopian regimes. It was first used by Aristotle.

Horowitz asserts that 'Aristotle's idea that the male semen produces the form and impetus from which an embryo grows and the female womb contributes only the material nourishment discounted female importance in the one area where the primitive or uneducated mind suspects female superiority' (1976, p.185-186). So, regarding women's bodies as vessels for reproduction and seeing women as inferior to men dates back to ancient times. Aristotle also asserts male superiority in the state and patriarchy for the family. Christianity was greatly influenced by Aristotle's ideas. Women in medieval Europe were seen as inferior to men due to Aristotle's theories. It was advised that women submit to men and utilize their limited capacity by bearing children.

During the early Christian era, women were seen as threats because they might stir up desire for sex. So, they were advised to cover themselves. A woman's body was considered to be an invitation to lust. During the early days of Christianity, it was believed that sexuality was more despicable than murder, and women were advised to marry to protect themselves from adultery. The highest virtue was virginity. So, they were advised to protect themselves from adultery.

Due to Eve's deception by the devil and her role in the expulsion from Eden, women were even in the Bible punished for the first sin by subjecting them to suffering

and making them inferior to men. In this way, women were seen as representatives of sin in Western patriarchal culture, with the Virgin Mary being seen as a virgin and Eve as a whore. Virginity and nunnery were also important for women in Christianity. If a woman was a virgin and a nun, she could have power. While women were expected to be passive, submissive wives, and devoted mothers, nuns rejected all of these womanly stereotypes and were able to hold power and play major roles in society. Even the Bible's rule that women should be the ones to bear children and be ruled by their spouses did not apply to the virgins.

In the 14th century, when the Renaissance spread across Europe, Greek and Roman philosophy changed a lot. While being viewed as a rebirth of Greek and Roman thought, the Renaissance was not a complete change for women. The Renaissance brought some opportunities in terms of social, economic, and political life to men but not to women. The patriarchy continued to affect women. During the Renaissance, equality was not appropriate for women because they were the ones who were weak and should be controlled according to patriarchy. During this era, men wrote the literary works, which taught women to be religious, submissive, pure, and quiet. Men instructed women on how to act. Women were urged to become devout and religious mothers and spouses. Married women did not have any legal rights. Their husbands were accountable for their actions.

Over the course of history, women's bodies have been seen as political and cultural assets that society and power could control and use. In Western misogynistic and patriarchal culture, the female body's capacity for childbearing has traditionally been the primary consideration. The female's body was considered crucial for maintaining racial purity, deciding family succession, and even ensuring the longevity and stability of the nation. Throughout history, men and women have played different roles with regard to their bodies, with men generally viewing the female body as an object that they should be in charge of. Women and men were not required to meet the same standards in terms of beauty and sexuality. In Western culture, some gender roles for males and females were created by using sexuality. Because of the way gender roles have been set up, women are

expected to attract men, offer sexual services, and ensure the continuation of civilization by giving birth. Women's bodies were reduced to their biological characteristics and valued for their fertility and reproduction, and they were viewed as objects, whereas men's bodies were expected to be tough, robust, long-lasting, and strong. The duty of protecting women's bodies was given to men. Further, in terms of health, beauty, and endurance, the expectations for these two were different. While both sexes have been subjected to the interferences of society and political power, the cultural and political discourse has had a greater and more obvious impact on the female body. The female body was conceived as an object that appealed to men, at the same time, it had to be the under control of men. In Western societies, the instrumentalization of sexuality shapes masculine and feminine roles.

Sexuality has become the subject of power that needs to be managed and controlled because it has a direct effect on the number of people and, therefore, on the security and longevity of a country. Even though marriage, sexuality, and having children are personal topics, they are all part of the field of body politics. As the source of population, female body regulation has become an important aspect of contemporary politics. Fascist governments use these population policies to bring female bodies under control and female bodies are reduced and degraded to subhuman positions by the misogynist, totalitarian, patriarchal and fascist governments.

According to French social theorist Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, the body is an object for politics as it is an object for power (1978, p.145). The pursuit of body-based politics is a means for power to exert control over individuals. Even though they do not appear to be based on an individual's sexuality, reproductive policies interfere with a person's body and sexuality when viewed from this perspective. Similarly, the discourse of power regarding sexuality regulates and controls individuals' sexuality within a normative system. Sexuality is experienced through the body and pleasure, and power interferes with it to control the population, conceiving of it as a political and economic issue because the population is one of the fundamental elements of a society's durability

and continuity. Nonetheless, meaning is needed to create body and pleasure as a sexual experience (Foucault,1978, p.154-155). It is the power that constructs the knowledge and normative system that enables individuals to create the meaning they attribute to sexuality. (Foucault,1978, p.155).

Body is subject to intervention and control to conform to the patterns idealized by ideology, and society has transformed it from a biological entity to a social entity for population governance. As a result of constructed gender roles, however, the tasks of appealing to men, providing sexual services, and ensuring the continuation of society by giving birth kept the female body within the confines of biology. The female body was reduced to its biological properties and objectified. Men have been tasked with preventing any interference with the lineage of women who serve as the lineage's perpetrators. In this "protected" and "protecting" relationship, male bodies are expected to be robust, resilient, and strong, while female bodies are objectified and valued for their fertility.

Foucault asserts that as a result of the urbanization of the seventeenth century, the mentality of power changed significantly. A sovereign power had only governed bodies in terms of whether they were killed or kept alive. Now, the fundamental biological characteristics of the human body have become the focus of politics. The state power began to tame and control the bodies of individuals, particularly female bodies, and to standardize their behaviors according to predetermined rules. Foucault argues in his book *The Birth of the Prison* that while this may appear to be an interference to the individuals, it basically targets the majority. (Foucault,1991, p.26).

After the second half of the eighteenth century, a power centered on the biological processes of the body emerged. This new form of power established rules that governed biological developments such as birth, death, and health conditions. Foucault refers to this type of power as "biopower" and the politics they constructed over the individual's body to control the population as "biopolitics," but he uses these terms interchangeably. “The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the

administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (Foucault,1978, p.139). Because the body is the object of power, it is also an object of politics. As a result, power controls an individual's body through body politics.

According to Foucault, the seventeenth century "was the beginning of an age of repression emblematic of what we call bourgeois societies" and he adds that it has become more difficult and problematic to discuss sex (Foucault,1978, p.17).

> As if in order to gain mastery over it in reality, it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present. And even these prohibitions, it seems, were afraid to name it. (Foucault,1978, p.17).

As sexuality became a topic of censorship beginning in the eighteenth century, sexuality discourses increased significantly. Foucault states, "But more important was the multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself" (1978, p.18). He claims further that power encouraged people to discuss sexuality in detail. At this point, he provides the example of confession sessions, "The nakedness of the questions formulated by the confession manuals of the Middle Ages and a good number of those still in use in the seventeenth century, was veiled." (1978, p.18). He adds that confessions, particularly concerning the body, gradually increased as counter-Reformation in Catholic countries attempted to increase "the rhythm of the annual confessions" and

> tried to impose meticulous rules of self-examination; but above all, because it attributed more and more importance in penance -and perhaps at the expense of some other sins-to all the insinuations of the flesh, thoughts, desires, voluptuous imaginings, delectations, combined movements of the body and the soul; henceforth all this had to enter, in detail, into the process of confession and guidance (1978, p.19).

Within this context, the body was the source of all sins. Therefore, desires and sexuality must be closely observed. Therefore, confessions were encouraged and sexuality is discussed during the sessions.

Foucault claims that “Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered. It was in the nature of a public potential; it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytical discourses” (1978, p.24). Sexuality became the object of power that needed to be regulated because it is directly related to population and thus national security and durability. As a result, it became a "police matter" in the eighteenth century. (1978, p.24). Population, which is critical to the survival of a state, is inextricably linked to the body. Power recognized that population was a political and economic concern beginning in the eighteenth century. As a result, the body as a producer of population has become a very important field for politics. Its regulation and control proved to be a significant issue because a state's future and wealth were directly linked to power's use of its citizens' sexual activities. Although marriage, sexual relations, and childbirth are all very personal topics, they all fall under the umbrella of body politics, as "personal is political" and "political is power."

According to Lemke, Foucault proposes three types of power, sovereign power, which has complete authority and control over all sources and bodies; disciplinary power, which is exercised through institutions and by representatives of the authority; and governmentality power, in which people are expected to govern themselves and regulate their own actions for the welfare of the state. (Lemke,2019, p.163). Population is the center of governmentality, which distributes power among the population rather than centralizing it and the most important instrument of governmentality is biopolitics. Power interferes directly with daily life, classifying individuals by associating them with certain levels of identity based on various discourses. (Foucault, 2011, 63). Power doesn't just deal with life as an object; it also decides how the relationship between the subject and life is. As Butler argues the subject can exist as long as it is subjected to power and constructs itself accordingly (1997, p.84). Consequently, biopolitics, as a device of governmentality,

classifies and controls the bodies of subjects and renders them fertile and beneficial for power.

As a means of reproduction, the female body is an economic resource, making it an object for power to tame, regulate, and monitor in order to govern the political and economic performance of the population. Foucault assumes that the population is a "social body" with "its own processes and phenomena, such as birth and death rates, health status, life span, and the production and circulation of wealth" (2011, p.36- 37). The political and economic power of the state is contingent on the well-being of this social body. Although Foucault does not examine this issue from a gender perspective, power requires surveillance of the female body because it is an economic resource.

The selected dystopian novels present extreme versions of Foucault's observations of western societies from the 17th to the 20th centuries. As he states, the shift from sovereignty to biopower in power structures signifies a new way of governing populations. In spite of the fact that states have presented their population policies to the public under the guise of the sanctity of love, marriage, and family for hundreds of years, fascist governments in the novels have no need for these concepts, as they are extreme reflections of Foucault's concept of biopolitics in the patriarchal order. These novels present the neoconservative version of patriarchy at its most extreme. The primary characteristic of the fictional governments in *Swastika Night* and *The Handmaid's Tale* is their use of population policies to control the female body and society.

CHAPTER TWO - A CRITIQUE OF CURRENT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES: FEMINIST DYSTOPIAS

2.1 History and Definitions of Dystopia

It is essential to briefly describe and highlight the main characteristics of utopia in order to gain a better understanding of dystopia and how it has changed over time. The literal meaning of the word utopia is "no place." The word "not" is translated as "ou," and the word "place" means "topos" in Greek. Thomas More who lived from 1478 to 1535, is believed to have started utopia through his classic book, *Utopia*. In his book, *Utopia*, Thomas More addresses many issues of religion, property ownership, equality, concerns about the environment, democracy, and hierarchies. More, who is highly influenced by Plato and his famous book, The Republic, constructs an ideal (utopian) society with a perfect hierarchy. More portrays a perfect society that has achieved harmony between individuals and the state in this book. More's *Utopia* has inspired a lot of different literary works because it makes people want to think about different possible futures and believe that humanity can get better. Every text that has been influenced by Utopia has some signs of the time it was created. These utopias have a great power to change society and, accordingly, history. The literary works that show utopian dreams and fantasies have some things in common. They are generally optimistic and portray an ideal world in which people can live in harmony without war and suffering. However, the fact that it is really hard to build a harmonious, perfect, peaceful world and find a balance between technology and nature made these utopias fail, and they didn’t meet the expectations or what was desired. When these utopian ideas and aspirations, like having a harmonious society and an ideal state, didn’t work out, the dystopian genre became more important. Especially in the 20th century, authors wrote darker and more pessimistic stories, which helped the dystopian genre grow.

John Stuart Mill is believed to have coined the term "dystopia." When he criticized the government's policy, he coined the term. He stated in his political speech;

> It is, perhaps, too complimentary to call them Utopians, they ought rather to be called dys-topians, or caco-topians. What is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable; but what they appear to favor is too bad to be practicable. (Mill,1850, p.88).

The term "dystopia" has had an important and influential presence in a variety of academic fields, including politics, philosophy, and literature. However, it has been the most influential in literature. According to Booker, the literary discourse has been proven to be “one of the most important means by which any culture can investigate new ways of defining itself and of exploring alternatives to the social and political status quo” (1994, p.3). This distinct activity has also served a satirical function and provided a platform for presenting solutions to the unpleasant political and social issues that plague individuals. As it mentioned before, Thomas More's prolific work, *Utopia* (1516), has inspired a literary genre whose name is derived from the concept of a perfect society in which the political and social systems function effectively to meet the diverse needs of its members. The term "Utopia" refers to a "no place" where no one can reside. The subject and purpose of these optimistic studies are to construct a society whose fundamental principle is to provide each citizen with a harmonious environment. However, the harmonious environment provided by the utopian state is achieved through the institution of individual restraint. In *Utopia*, More depicts a society in which human behavior is governed by institutional arrangements. According to Kenyon, More

> maintained that the predicament incurred as a consequence of the Fall of Man was essentially permanent. In directing his social thought to the problems posed by such a situation, More arrived at two conclusions. First, he argued that institutions should be arranged in such a manner as to ease the burdens imposed upon people by the predicament. Secondly, More believed that the organization of the polity, and the regulation of Man's earthly conduct, had a direct effect on the salvation of souls. (1983, p.353)

Lyman Tower Sargent compares the work to a “well-spring that there are many rivers that flow from the source” (1994, p.11). Although there were predecessors in the classical period, More is regarded as the initiator of a community-oriented philosophy that would be extensively referenced and discussed in literary circles. According to Simon, after the publication of Thomas More's “humanist satire on the corrupt European social practices" (1981; 21) in the sixteenth century, utopian fiction as a literary genre gained popularity, and many examples followed.

As political and social practices are the foundation for social harmony, the utopian genre focuses primarily on social and political issues. The utopian texts do not present societies that are purely ideal. The nostalgia in these books can be traced to a specific time period “when the ancient world, namely Greece and Rome, was considered the peak of mankind’s intellectual achievement” (Vieira,2010, p.4). Suvin's definition of utopia suggests that utopian doctrine is fictitious. Suvin defines it as a “verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where socio-political institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community” (Suvin,1979, p.49). When regarded from these perspectives, More's *Utopia* is a satire in terms of nostalgia and the social and political criticism it offers for the time period. Thus, utopian societies are attainable as a result of a lengthy political process employing impersonal, institutional apparatuses. In addition to the belief that human agency is the best means by which society can be improved, the state intervenes in every aspect of life. Also, Elliott P. Simon argues that the prosperity of a utopian institution can only be attained through the combination of divine order and individual satisfaction and that the common ground is to be established by the utopian state by ensuring peace for the individuals who are expected to contribute to its welfare (1951, p.26).

The desired rules of social order are intentionally and effectively correlated with community harmony when they are theologized, just as "man's moral rational behavior is related to his salvation of his soul" (Simon,1951, p.21). Thomas More

considered, among other things, the connection between man's salvation and the "well-deserved" reward he would receive in the afterlife.

More “recognized human sinfulness as the basis of all social evils, and believed that existing social institutions presented continuing worldly temptations which most men were incapable of resisting” (Kenyon,1983, p.355). This sinful human nature is emphasized in the anti-utopian fiction that flourished in the latter half of the 20th century. The abuse of political power by totalitarian and misogynist leaders and governments and the restriction of personality development create a nightmarish environment, and sexuality and gender are manipulated in these environments, which forms the frame for anti-utopian fiction.

The emergence of this anti-utopian tendency is a result of the unattainability of the utopian ideal and the fact that it is an abstract concept that cannot be attained by More's and other leading utopian scholars' and authors' suggestion “that the understanding of human reality could be reduced to a set of universal categories arrived at by abstract reasoning” (Yoran,2010, p.4). Yoran explains that the paradoxical nature of Renaissance humanism at the time rendered utopianism impossible. The influence of Renaissance philosophy has had an effect on plausible theories regarding how social and political conditions could have been improved. More's social and political satire focuses primarily on the belief that the Renaissance man, who was "aware of the infinite powers of reason and understood that the construction of the future was in his hands,"(Vieira,2010, p.9) will construct a utopian society. In accordance with the evolution of society, the human agency can be enhanced and directed through literature, according to the Renaissance humanist doctrine. Thus, utopian literature serves the purpose of Renaissance humanism, which is the recognition of human potential.

Sargent, who defines utopianism as social fantasy, also emphasizes the abstract nature of utopias. He defines this social fantasy as “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" (1994, p.3). The applicability of multiple interpretations of utopian dreams makes utopianism perceived as a multidimensional phenomenon, which was incorrectly explained and treated as a single-dimensional phenomenon until the end of the nineteenth century. Sargent reinforces the multidimensionality of utopianism by equating it with human nature "to dream while both asleep and awake" (1994, p.4). Ultimately, the disposition of social dreaming determines whether the imagination is pleasant or terrifying. As a form of social and political criticism, anti-utopian fiction adopts a nightmare-like perspective. According to Booker,

> by focusing their critiques of society on spatially or temporally distant setting, dystopian fictions provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable. (Booker,1994, p.19).

The utopian discourse develops around multiple domains, such as political, economic, and sociological fields. The societies depicted in utopian fiction serve as commentary on the prevalent ideologies and expose their dysfunctional practices. More did not claim "a quest for what would be ideally right in the world but a good working idea of what was actually wrong with it" (Hexter,1952, p.65). According to Kenyon, the primary purpose of utopian fiction is the criticism of existing institutions. As Kenyon claims,

> Utopia was merely intended to achieve an improvement in human behavior, by stifling the sinfulness, and particularly the fatal trait of pride that had led not only to the Fall, but also to so much subsequent human misery. Morally virtuous behavior promised salvation. But More believed that men were disinclined to act morally. The institutional recommendations of Utopia were designed to affect this end. (1983, p.354).

Therefore, when viewed from a satirical perspective, utopianism – a social theory involving impractical utopian ideals—has turned out to be a device that both reveals the desire for social perfection and attempts to achieve it by manifesting "the practical representation of that redeemed condition" (Simon,1951, p.30).

Utopias, on the other hand, prioritize the prosperity of the society over the liberty of its citizens. Contrary to popular belief, humanism prioritizes the system and the well-being of institutions over the autonomy of individuals. The contradictory nature of humanism is directly observed in utopia, which prohibits its citizens from choosing so much as the color of their clothing. It generally restricts the expression of individuality among its citizens. According to Yoran;

> utopia prevents, for instance, its citizens' even as much as choosing the color of their garment. It generally prevents its citizens from expressing their individuality. This insight is significant as it contradicts the accepted humanist attitude and the rhetoric of Utopia itself. For Utopia is committed to the happiness of its citizens and to enabling them fully to realize their humanitas; to encourage them to "devote themselves to the freedom and culture of the mind." (Yoran,2010, p.168).

Thus, the issue with humanism regarding the conflict between social norms and the individual arises.

These two opposing yet interdependent perspectives define one another. Kumar argues that nightmarish anti-utopias are "formed by utopia and feed parasitically on it." (Kumar,1991, p.100). Anti-utopias are, therefore, pessimistic copies of utopias. He continues his argument by stating that "antiutopia 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" (Kumar,1991, p.100).

The utopian discourse, with both positive and negative characteristics, revolves around fantasies that promise pleasure on an individual and/or societal level, while the dystopian discourse is a pessimistic copy of them. In her article for The Guardian, Margaret Atwood coined the term "Ustopia" to demonstrate the interdependence of utopia and dystopia. She describes Ustopia as “a state of mind, as is every place in the literature of whatever kind . . . which has not been a happy story. High hopes have been dashed time and time again. The best intentions have indeed paved many roads to Hell.” (Atwood, 2011). In a literary text, the coexistence of good and evil signifies the ongoing transition from fantasy to reality.

In addition to the interpretability of the social dreams, these ambiguous illusions could be traced back to the Jeremiads. The satirical tone of utopian literature and the predominance of criticism in dystopian literature is evidence that these two related approaches have their roots in the Jeremiad tradition. A Jeremiad text is described as a moralistic one in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, “either a prolonged lamentation or a prophetic warning against the evil habits of a nation, foretelling disaster. . . The term has been applied to some literary works that denounce the evils of a civilization” (Baldick,1990, p.131). Sargent relates the critical and prophetic aspects of the Jeremiads, particularly the dystopian tendency, to a warning-laden extrapolation from the present, “an extrapolation from the present that involved warning. The utopia says if you behave thus and so, you will be rewarded with this. The dystopia, in the tradition of the Jeremiad, says if you behave thus and so, this is how you will be punished” (Sargent, 1994, p.8).

Utopian and dystopian literature are both political satires. They critique the existing social and political structures in their subject matter. As the governmental systems in these political satires cannot be evaluated independently of the dominant ideology of the time, these works present alternative ideologies to raise reader awareness. Utopias are optimistic representations that aim to restore faith in the attainability of an ideal society. In literary utopias, the present is satirically depicted as inadequate, and human agency is viewed as

the sole means by which society can achieve the anticipated future relief. In contrast, dystopias portray the present as the beginning of the worst-case scenarios that will occur if the necessary precautions are not taken. Gottlieb claims,

> dystopian satire is not satisfied with asking questions, and the questions it asks are not directly about our place in the universe and the limits of our free will in the face of superhuman forces. Dystopian satire focuses on society, not on the cosmos, and it has a primary social-political message, a didactic intent to address the Ideal Reader's moral sense and reason as it applies to the protagonist's – and our own – place in society and in history. (2001, p.14)

In dystopias, the critiques of existing political ideologies and the oppressive regulations that are imposed on individuals by the systems are satirically represented. Dystopian literature often serves as a warning to society about the potential consequences of unchecked power and control. Through exaggerated portrayals of societal issues, dystopias encourage readers to critically examine their own political systems and strive for positive change. In contrast to utopias, dystopias demonstrate the problems that exist within a society and also how far the catastrophe might go.

Dystopian literature has major importance in literature; it gives us new perspectives on social concerns, including patriarchy, repressive social norms, poverty, political views, hegemony, and religious oppression, etc. The genre not only represents a threat to the future as a whole, but it also enforces optimism for the future. The argument is that every battle is worthwhile if it leads to a successful outcome. Dystopian stories combine the ideas of optimism and fear because they want to change the world for the better. The ability to escape from such a terrible environment provides literary characters the will to fight, and if they do something, the scenario changes to one of hope. According to Sargisson, dystopias

> help us to imagine and envisage how the present can change into something very nasty. They tell us what's wrong with the now, and they imagine how

> things could (easily) become much worse. . . Dystopias thus interrogate the now and offer warnings and sometimes prophecies about the future; they are often the jeremiads of utopianism. But sometimes they offer glimmers of hope. (Sargisson,2013, p.40)

In dystopias, the primary motif utilized is the direct influence of a society's political systems. Therefore, the primary purpose of dystopia is the fictional depiction of how much the unpleasant present situation can worsen, particularly in the context of "the age-old issue of despotism, sometimes portrayed as the power of the community over the individual, sometimes as that of oligarchy over the whole" (Claeys,2013, p.172). The other most utilized motifs in dystopian literature are listed by Hardesty as "the surveillance; the total dependence upon, and wide-spread perception of oppression by, the system; worst, the state-begotten war with Earth which nobody seems to want, nobody can stop, and nobody seems to fight in – and which devastates the home planet" (Hardesty,1987, p.167).

Government serves a crucial role in dystopian societies. The repressive policies of the governments or the power holders, the restrictive effects of the policies on individuals' lives, and the imminent threat of punishment that dominates even the thoughts create tension in dystopian stories. The features of the repressive society in dystopias imply despotism. Along with the dread of punishment, the

> control over common resources is often key to maintaining this power; in the degree to which this is the case, we again see the maintenance of communal resources for the common good rather than that of the ruler in utopianism as symmetrically mirroring its opposite in dystopia. To some degree all despotic regimes erode or suppress individualism, but fear often functions chiefly as a means of controlling individuals rather than eliminating their personal identity. (Claeys,2013, p.162)

Dystopian works depict the relationship of the subjects or groups with their country and the social, religious, and political aspects of the community. They convey the stories of these forms of relationships as morality tales, aimed at pointing out flaws in the present and extrapolating them into the future by focusing on a dissenting person or group. An individual feels obliged to integrate into communal life in order to survive, whether s/he is pleased with the social norms that they are born into or not. This obligatory relationship between the citizens and the state is abused by the power-holders. The individuals seem to have no choice but to obey the suppressive regulations of the state. However, through their protagonists, dystopian stories reveal the dissatisfaction of individuals.

To conclude, dystopian works tend to depict imaginary societies that are more terrifying and chaotic than the author's, with excessive control of the government, loss of privacy, and loss of individuality. They are usually generated to serve as warnings against oppressive futures, and some dystopian texts resemble prophecies in order to help raise serious awareness in order to avoid probable terrifying futures prior to the arrival of a hopeless apocalypse.

2.1 Feminist Dystopias

It's significant to examine the feminist movements that influenced the development of feminist dystopias in order to comprehend the nature of female dystopian writing. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, feminism can be broadly categorized into three "waves." Women did not have the right to vote until 1918. The First Wave of the Feminism movement was a period when women fought for political and social equality with men. Their position in political and social environments was not fully acknowledged in the nineteenth century. Sylvia Strauss, a scholar of literature and history, states on the subject, “Scientists, philosophers, essayists, novelists, and politicians” were discussing women’s roles in society in order to “keep women in their traditional domestic sphere, fervently believing that the preservation of civilization depended on it.” (Patai,1988, p.67). Therefore, the first wave is defined as the suffrage movement that emerged in the United Kingdom and the United States at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The Second Wave of the Feminist movement follows the rise of the counterculture immediately following the Beat Generation in the 1950s. This movement was influenced by the worldly and global issues and the writers who support it wrote about them as male authors in dystopian literature starting from the 1960s. In the 1960s, feminist science fiction authors drew serious attention to the development of counterculture. Consequently, the Second Wave of the feminist movement emerged in the 1970s. A term for women in society came forward which was “New Woman” (Grand,1894, p.271). This was a term that was brought up by Sarah Grand in her article in 1894. With the passage of the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1937, which granted women equal rights to men in divorce law, the right to obtain a divorce became particularly prominent for women. The term was used for women who have the economic independence. Those women cut their hair in a short style like men do and “demanded [...] access to higher education, the vote and the right to earn a decent living [...] and challenged [...] views of femininity and female sexuality.” (Heilman & Beetham,2004, p.1) The acceleration of the Religious Right and

the conservative party of the political balance of the time brought about the 1980s backlash against feminist civil rights. The political entrance of the fundamentalist Christianity in the United States made the alterations in society possible in an unfriendly and inhospitable way. Consequently, the Second Wave of feminist activism and the Civil Rights Movement demonstrated a consistent desire to return to the consciousness of the subsidiary norms of the 1950s or earlier. A quote by Rita Felski makes it possible to understand the foregrounds of such incidence as follows,

> The emergence of the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s justifies the analysis of women's literature as a separate category, not because of automatic and unambiguous differences between the writings of women and men, but because of the recent cultural phenomenon of women's explicit selfidentification as an oppressed group, which is in turn articulated in literary texts in the exploration of gender-specific concerns centered around the problem of female identity. (Felski,1987, p.1).

In this context, the political climate had a significant impact on the dystopian writing of female authors, and their works promoted alternative perspectives on politics, society, and culture. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the outcomes of the Second Wave feminist movement inspired female writers to focus on dystopian fiction because it dealt with the destruction of a thought against to the concept of female identity. Feminist dystopian literature boosted the amount of well-spoken power by making awareness of the probable futures, as opposed to merely addressing daily problems but also constructing them. The female perspective in the dystopian literature is controverted. Therefore, it refuted the male-centered dogmas by making use of the female voice in the narration. The male-dominated government demanded the individuals' submission and obedience. When the concept of Second-Wave feminism began to shift from a demand for equal rights to a demand for equal recognition, this type of issue became significant. The female voice in the dystopian writing shows that utopian thought is not stable but a continuing process. Moreover, the major number of male writers made it impossible for the female perspective

to be heard. Therefore, the female writers made it possible to analyze the dystopian narration represented in the eyes of the female characters. It led the reader to read a representation of female characters by female writers. Continuing with the general characteristics of the dystopian fictional writing, feminist writers of the genre wrote actively against the dominant literature by men. For instance, they did not describe the fixed or stable society depicted in non-feminist, male-authored, traditional utopian, and dystopian literature. In binary oppositions, utopia and dystopia are contrasted in late twentieth- and twenty-first-century feminist literature. It is not a coincidence that dystopian novels such as those written by men and women were constructed and written during a crucial period of the events that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century.

In the context of the society of the 1980s, many women encountered the dangers of conservatism and androcentrism. Margaret Atwood wrote her novel *The Handmaid's Tale* right after Ronald Reagan's presidential election in the United States in 1985 and that of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. Therefore, women in Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* harshly experience conservative oppression from the government, just like in real life. Booker makes a point by adding that Atwood's novel is a " direct reaction to the growing political power of the American religious right in the 1980s." (Booker,1994, p.78). In the 1970s, the concept of sex was observed to be public, highlighting people's indulgence in it for pleasure. Additionally, it revealed unintended outcomes. In her book, Fiona Tolan summarizes this issue as follows,

> Against a backdrop of the postmodernist debate, the mid-1980s became a point of evaluation and reinvention for feminism, as the second generation of feminists inherited the second wave. *The Handmaid's Tale* looks back at this transition, examining the changing concerns and evolving vocabulary of an increasingly theorised feminism. Through her dystopian vision, Atwood exposes something of the limiting and prescriptive nature of the utopianism that had underpinned much of the feminism of the early second wave. By juxtaposing flashbacks of 1970s feminist activism with contemporary

> descriptions of Gileadean practices, each informs the other, so that The Handmaid's Tale comes to satirically depict a dystopian society that has unconsciously and paradoxically met certain feminist aims. (2007, 145)

Therefore, in the eyes of powerful political figures, the prevention of sex acts was one of the simplest means to instill fear in women and maintain control over them. In doing so, governments extended their reach from their offices into the bedrooms of their citizens, diminishing their enjoyment. This practice also reinforced patriarchal norms and perpetuated the idea that women's bodies were not their own but rather belonged to the state or to men in positions of power. Similarly, in her book, Margaret Atwood focuses on the oppression of women who can give birth to the population policies of the dominant regime and deprivation of their freedom.

Further, regarding social issues, feminist literature has developed with the influence of the second-wave women's movement, leading towards the third way with the gay liberation movement (and later the LGBTIQ+ movement), ecological problems and struggles, and other social developments since the 1960s. With this development, in feminist dystopias, the concept of androgyny, meaning that bodies are sexually, physically, spiritually, and socially similar, or that both sexes are carried in the same body, has taken on an important place in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, women authors write numerous utopias and dystopias about anarchist, socialist, ecologist, matriarchal, lesbian, androgynous, and queer societies that criticize the patriarchal order. Among the best-known authors in the genre are Ursula K. Le Guin, Marge Piercy, Margaret Atwood, Doris Lessing, Joanna Russ, James Tiptree Jr., Monique Wittig, Sally Miller Gearhart, and Suzy McKee Charnas. In feminist dystopias, there are worlds in which the patriarchal system is sharpened; women are kept away from the social or political sphere, and their bodies are controlled; oppression, discrimination, and violence prevail; thus, inviting the reader to struggle with patriarchal structures in real life. Using new linguistic expressions, original terminology, and subtextual references, feminist dystopian literature aims to raise awareness of gender-based inequalities in society.

Dystopian novels take a significant place in literature; they offer new ways to examine social issues such as oppressive social rules, scarcity, political opinions, power and religious oppression, patriarchy, and similar topics. On the one hand, the genre represents a threat to the future. In addition, it imposes optimism for the future. The reason is that it is always worthwhile to strive for a positive outcome. In dystopias, the concepts of hope and fear are intertwined due to the protagonist's desire for a better world. The possibility of escaping such a terrible world gives literary characters the strength to fight, and whenever characters take action, the situation becomes hopeful.

Kumar depicts dystopia as it shows hopeless worlds and societies ruled by history's and today's worst nightmares, like nuclear and environmental disasters, dictatorships, corruption, racial or gender-based violence, publicity, and overpopulation. (Kumar,1991, p.99). On the other hand, feminist dystopias analyze and highlight the gendered relationship between women and society, authority, and power. Feminist dystopias show patriarchal oppression and how it affects women in a male-dominated world. The earliest examples of feminist dystopias show the reader the male-dominated world and how they degrade women and utilize women just for their reproductive capabilities and women's bodies for the sexual needs of men. *The Last Man* (1826) by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is one of the best and earliest prominent feminist dystopias. *Swastika Night* (1937) by Katherine Burdekin is also one of the best and earliest feminist and anti-fascist dystopias that show how women are degraded for reproductive and breeding purposes. Burdekin was also subjected to patriarchal oppression in her private life, and she had to use a male pseudonym. She stands up for all women, speaks up for them, and shows how male-dominated ideologies do harm to women, but still, in order to be heard, she was required to write under a male pseudonym.

According to its definition, there are several themes that make the novel dystopian. The main ones are the social hierarchy, the regime of repression, and other features revolving around the characters. The notions of power and oppression are also important

factors in considering the novel as dystopian. Accordingly, these factors are highly mentioned and defined in the academic studies. According to Foucault,

> Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiply of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; and as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengths or reverses them. (Foucault,1979, p.89).

As Deacon explains, "One of the most salient characteristics of Foucault's understanding of modern disciplinary networks of power is that they constitute individuals as subjects; but far from denying subjects' capacity to think and act freely and to resist, relations of power make critique, agency and resistance possible." (Deacon,1998). Foucault did not consider power solely as a state-created mechanism.

Further, we can also mention oppression at the point where there are intimidating and restrictive regimes, people continue their lives under difficult conditions, and individual freedoms are constrained. Especially, women deal with the oppression and fear that emerged in Gilead's and Hitlerdom's societies with the takeover of the country's theocratic rules in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Swastika Night*. These totalitarian states have control mechanisms based on dictatorial ideologies, gender inequality, and oppression. The rules point out the effect of the constraints on social life, the inability of society to resist oppression and cruelty, and how the oppressive regimes reproduce themselves with their power. In a regime where oppression is so severe, besides the fact that women do not have the right to speak their own words, the insignificance and the secondary status of women are fixed by law.

Based on this framework, these novels can be evaluated with the themes of oppression, power, and resistance. In these novels, power is exercised first on the female body. There is a decrease in birth rates and an increase in infertility due to environmental problems, and accordingly, the population in the upper structure of the caste system is

endangered. As a result, it appears that the female body is dominated by the regime. The state governs people's lives through the use of power over the female body and uses the female body for its own purposes and interests. It approaches the human body as a machine. This approach encompasses all policies involving the representation of the body, how many children to bear, and population and family planning. As a result, social norms are becoming increasingly important than the legal system, particularly for women.

In contrast to the meaning assigned to women by social norms, the definition of woman is not solely the result of a gender classification. This definition is influenced by numerous social, economic, religious, and political aspects of cultural phenomena in social groups. To analyze a dystopian novel, which also examines the individual's resistance to society or the conflict between individual values and social values, it is necessary to examine society's view of women. In order to improve the situation of women, who are viewed as objects entrapped by social meanings in the novel, society, and social theories should be reconstructed by exposing the prejudices of existing theories one by one. At this point, the dystopian society provides the opportunity to question the understanding of management, the patriarchal social order, and the government-created theories about women. This view of order typically results in the subjugation of women. Particularly in the dystopic novel society, the desire for a subjective and free identity for women, their struggle with the patriarchal system, and their suppression by the dominant culture are all revealed, even if the way society is governed is surrounded by the strictest rules. The rules are based on the violation of private life, interfering with the smallest behavior of every individual in society, their daily choices, and the decisions they make. This is the way women are forever excluded from the real world.

In addition, feminist dystopias combine the dynamics of feminism and dystopia to create a vision of the future that feminists fear, one that is governed by the most oppressive and extreme patriarchal norms and practices. Totalitarian regimes are a common source of inspiration for feminist dystopias, as they cause additional suffering for women. Totalitarian feminist dystopias highlight women's subjugation under male dominance. In

feminist dystopias set in a totalitarian state, silencing voices is the state's primary tool for preventing people from communicating injustices, leaving each individual isolated and helpless. Consequently, totalitarianism is found in almost every social arrangement in which individuals are unable to freely express their opinions on the shackling conditions. Margaret Atwood discusses the dynamics of a totalitarian regime in "An End to Audience."

> In any totalitarian takeover, whether from the left or the right, writers, singers, and journalists are the first to be suppressed. After that come the union leaders and the lawyers and judges. The aim of all such suppression is to silence the voice, abolish the word, so that the only voices and words left are those of the ones in power. Elsewhere, the word itself is thought to have power; that's why so much trouble is taken to silence it. (Atwood,1980, p.427).

Since language is potent, it is considered a threat to any totalitarian social order. Maintaining the government requires the silence of individuals with opposing viewpoints. Therefore, in order to silence the voices, it is necessary to suppress the populace. The process of oppression begins with the suppression of journalists, whose job it is to provide information and shape the country's future. This is the essence of totalitarianism, as depicted in dystopian literature.

To conclude, in totalitarian feminist dystopias, the public and private lives of people are under constant surveillance by an oppressive regime, rendering every individual isolated, lonely, interchangeable, and replaceable. This type of dystopia presents a feminist vision of what would occur if the patriarchy expanded its authority over women to the point where they had no remaining sphere of existence. In the oppressive regimes of dystopias, women are expected to conform to the ideology's expectations by either serving the country with their bodies through their reproductive capacities or by staying at home and performing only domestic labor. The authors of this genre attempt to warn readers to remain vigilant against events to which they are

indifferent. By comparing the dystopian books' reality and their own reality, women should be alert about the things that might happen in the future. Because a change might occur so gradually and be hard to notice in a short time, nobody can predict what will take place the next day. Dystopias "enable readers to draw comparisons between their own lived experiences and the dystopic world and to theorize about the conditions in the society in which they live that might lead to the future represented in the dystopian narrative" (Holladay and Classen, 2019, 5). If individuals are bothered by even a tiny change in society, they should react to these changes. Because if they remain passive against the small changes in society, larger societal shifts will follow. Individuals should take dystopian novels seriously since anything that can happen in the novel can occur in real life at any moment.

CHAPTER THREE - READINGS OF PATRIARCHY, VIOLENCE, AND SEXUAL ABUSE THROUGH FEMINIST DYSTOPIAS: MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* AND KATHARINE BURDEKIN'S *SWASTIKA NIGHT*

3.1 Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*

Margaret Atwood, who was born in 1939, is an influential novelist, poet, and environmentalist. In addition to 18 novels and 18 books of poetry, she has published 11 non-fiction books, 8 children's books, and two graphic novels. She has won many awards, including two Booker Prizes and Lifetime Achievement Awards for her writing. She writes on many themes, like gender and identity, the influence of language, global warming, climate change, religion and myth, and hegemony. She is regarded as a feminist novelist who focuses on gender issues and identity. She frequently discusses the harmful and repressive forces that are at work within society, since they relate to women. She has a great ability to use strong women as protagonists in her novels. She creates strong heroines in her works.

The Handmaid's Tale, which was published in 1985 and written by Margaret Atwood, is a well-portrayed governmental interpretation of society. She effectively depicted how the government views society in her book. Atwood bases her story on sexual freedom, how it was outlawed, and how it influenced the governmental structure that was founded on its conclusion because at that time sexual needs were restrained in society. In order to analyze the contemporary flow of her period, Atwood mostly draws on assessments of religious fundamentalism. As a result, dealing with the perils of a government that enforces its citizens is based on ethical absolutism that derives from a sacred source. As Coral Ann Howells states "Gilead is a totalitarian regime run on patriarchal lines derived from the Old Testament and seventeenth-century American Puritanism plus a strong infusion of American New Right ideology of the 1980s" (1996, p.127)

The novel begins with a religious allusion to the social status of women. Margaret Atwood makes a direct reference to the biblical example in The Handmaid's Tale. The Republic of Gilead is founded on Christian principles, and biblical expressions form the basis of Gileadean society.

> And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, 'Give me children or else I die.'
>
> And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?
>
> And she said, Behold my maid, Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. -Genesis, 30,1-3 (Atwood,2017, p.7)

This biblical passage actually refers to polygamy. Since she is infertile, Rachel, Jacob's wife, urges him to have children with her servant. In order for a woman to fulfill her role as the provider of fertility, nearly all legal means are permissible. Handmaids in Gilead are merely "two-legged wombs," so they are charged with childbearing; rest is unnecessary and even prohibited. This order also creates a rivalry between them.

In her interview, Atwood says, "Hell is often what you get when you try to impose heaven." (Dodson,1997, p.103) This captures the essence of this dystopian masterpiece of a novel perfectly. In the epilogue of the novel, we learn that what we have been reading is a compilation of cassettes discovered and transcribed by professors shortly after the Giledean period. It is about a woman called Offred; of course, her real name was not Offred. However, only the most perceptive reader can discover what her true identity was. The story is told from her perspective. She describes her experiences and life in the Gilead Republic, whose former name was the United States of America after a religious totalitarian party has taken power there. Most women have become infertile because of pollution in this society. Therefore, the government has regulated a new hierarchical

system to assure reproduction. Gilead Society is created in reaction to a drastic decline in birth rates, and women, namely handmaids, are utilized to repopulate the country.

Understanding the novel's historical context is essential to comprehending the root issues that the novel attempts to illustrate. After Margaret Thatcher was elected in the UK and Ronald Reagan was elected in the US, Atwood wrote *The Handmaid's Tale*. At that time, well-educated conservatives supported only religious interests. Furthermore, they criticized the sexual revolution of the 1970s. They consequently made people more afraid of returning to earlier times. In her book, Margaret Atwood demonstrates the terrific hysteria that women experience in Gilead, which is a dystopian society run by conservative religious believers. Gilead society has regressed, making the novel a dystopia of regress. Feminists fought for their rights and women's liberation from traditional gender roles in the 1970s. They were successful in obtaining the right to vote. Moreover, they got the rights to have active roles in politics. Abortion became legal, and women gained control over their bodies. In Gilead society, however, women lack the ability to control their bodies. They do not even have some basic human rights like having a name, reading, or writing. The aim is to regulate reproduction in order to fight the threat of pollution and infertility, and that was the major concern and fear in the 1980s. In the 1980s, sex was associated with male harassment and violence, while sex done for amusement was associated with irresponsibility. As a result, the government found it easy to outlaw sex to control people and reproduction, and Margaret Atwood portrays this idea very well in her novel. *The Handmaid's Tale* demonstrates the unfavorable sides of political interference in sexuality. As Rine claims, *The Handmaid's Tale* is an ‘’incisive expose of women’s marginalization in Western religious discourse, particularly regarding their corporeality, sexuality and autonomy. ‘’ (2013, p.53). In *The Handmaid's Tale*, through the protagonist, Offred, Atwood attempts to warn readers about the evils of current American society. She warns the reader about the sexism, classism, oppression, and racism that exist in society. She presents these evils through feminist imagery and feminist issues like procreation, sexuality, and self-discovery.

There are many characters introduced in *The Handmaid's Tale*. However, the main characters are Offred, the Commander, Serene Joy, Moira, Nick, Luke, the Aunts, and some Handmaids. Offred is the novel's narrator and protagonist, making her the most remarkable character. She tells her story in flashbacks, going back in time. She is trained as a handmaid under the name of Offred, which means she belongs to a commander, namely Fred. Her husband's name is Luke. She also has a daughter who was taken from her. In the novel, while everything is going worse in Gilead, she tries to escape to Canada but can't make it there. She is captured to give birth for Commander's family. Serena Joy tries to manipulate her into becoming Nick's lover. Since Offred and the other Handmaids are prohibited from reading and writing, she records her story on a tape instead of writing it down, thus challenging the patriarchal authority of Gilead. Offred's dangerous tale becomes the source of her independence. According to Freibert,

> Atwood, with a bow to écriture feminine, suggests that even in such a context an imaginative woman willing to improvise and take risks can beat the system and savor a measure of joy in the process ... Atwood demonstrates through Offred that women, able to take risks and to tell stories, may transcend their conditioning, establish their identity, joyfully reclaim their bodies, find their voices, and reconstruct the social order. (1988, p.280).

In addition, Offred, comes from her Commander, Fred. Her name means that she belongs to Fred, which is 'Of Fred'. Offred, despite all the exploitation she is subjected to, is a witty woman who cares about men, relationships, and friendship. She is not as radical as her mother and Moira. However, she refuses to stay silent and "speaks out with the voice of late twentieth-century feminist individualism, resisting the cultural identity imposed on her." (Howells,1996, p.132). She ventures to possess things that are prohibited by the system. At the beginning of the "night" chapter, she says, "the night is mine, my own time" (Atwood,2017, p.47). What is more important is that she keeps her name, synonymous with keeping her identity,

> My name isn't Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden. I tell myself it doesn't matter, your name is like your telephone number, useful only to others; but what I tell myself is wrong, it does matter. I keep the knowledge of this name like something hidden, some treasure I'll come back to dig up, one day. I think of this name as buried. This name has an aura around it, like an amulet, some charm that's survived from an unimaginably distant past. (Atwood,2017, pg.94).

Although women's rights, their identities, and their autonomy over their bodies are taken by the Gilead regime, and even women's most fundamental human rights are being violated and taken from their hands in the Republic of Gilead, Offred still maintains her calmness and chooses to protect her identity.

Offred, as a fertile woman, is expected to bear her Commander's child. There are several different social groups in The Republic of Gilead, which are controlled and ruled by men. Women are categorized into specific gender roles and deprived of their rights and subjected to many injustices and inequalities. They are valued only for their reproductive capabilities, and they are objectified by men. Fertile women were seen as 'walking wombs' and were forced to become reproductive machines. Every woman in Gilead's society is given a specific job that is stereotypically associated with women, including housework, childbearing, and sexuality.

Offred's friend Moira is joyful and rebellious. She was tortured because she tried to escape. Eventually, she was sent to Jezebel's to work as a prostitute, but she seems content to work there. Fred is the Commander of the Eyes, a cynical but fatherly figure who treats Offred as if she were a child. Offred begins to love him when she sees his loneliness. Fred admires Offred's scrabble prowess. Serena Joy, who is the commander Fred's wife, is a defender of Gilead's traditional women's roles, but she hates the ceremonies that are held between Offred and her husband to reproduce. Before Gilead society, she was a gospel singer. Nick and Luke are the non-authoritative male characters in the novel. Nick is

trustworthy and helps Offred escape from Gilead. Nick has an affair with Offred. Luke is Offred's husband, and he tries to flee from Gilead to Canada, but it is unknown whether he managed to escape or was shot and whether he is alive now.

Aunt Lydia is another female character who appears to be a parody. She is submitting to patriarchal control and oppression over her own sex. As Carol Ann Howels calls her, she is "probably the most sadistic character." (Howels,1996, p.131). She might be

> the critique of feminism but it is a double-edged one which rejects binary oppositions, just as Offred's double vision allows her to evaluate both Gilead and her own lost late twentieth-century America, that was not entirely good, but Gilead is undoubtedly worse. (1996, p.131).

Aunt Lydia is supposed to utter intelligent and reassuring words to the handmaids, but what she typically says is the Gileadean order's doctrines and neither intelligent nor reassuring,

> For generations that come after, Aunt Lydia said, it will be so much better…There can be bonds of real affection, she said, blinking at us ingratiatingly, under such conditions. Women united for a common end!.. Why expect one woman to carry out all the functions necessary to the serene running of a household? It isn't reasonable or humane. Your daughters will have greater freedom. (Atwood,2017, p.171-172).

She attempts to persuade the women around her through rhetoric, but she cannot succeed because she is one of the dehumanizing elements in that society. Aunt Lydia sometimes appears to be mocking, but her seriousness is a part of the author's ingenuity and a motif of the dystopian world. "There is more than one freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it" (2017, p.34). Aunt Lydia makes a

comparison between the present order and past anarchy. She suggests that there is freedom in Gilead.

As it was said in the book *The Handmaid's Tale*, the title of it is a reference to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Atwood, 1996, 309). This book is the tale of a woman who has no name and a tale of women who are in pain. " I'm sorry there is so much pain in this story. I'm sorry it's in fragments, like a body caught in crossfire or pulled apart by force. But there is nothing I can do to change it." (Atwood, 2017, 279). It is tale of women who would like to be happier and in better condition. It is a story of women who are seen as walking wombs.

> I wish this story were different. I wish it were more civilized. I wish it showed me in a better light, if not happier, then at least more active, less hesitant, less distracted by trivia. I wish it had more shape. I wish it were about love, or about sudden realizations important to one's life, or even about sunsets, birds, rainstorms, or snow. (Atwood,2017, p.279).

It is a tale that seems like women don't have the power to change the situation. However, at the end of the novel, she sparks the light in our hearts by giving us hope while running from male supremacy.

Within the context of Butler's notion of performativity, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead establishes a totalitarian patriarchal system, and a new moral understanding reduces women and their bodies to commodities. This system disregards their desires, identities, and thoughts. Reconstructed moral rules determine each woman's position in the social hierarchy, including where she resides, what she wears, what she thinks, and even her sexuality. In hierarchical social relations, the production and maintenance of gender norms play a crucial role. According to Butler, continuity and consistency play a significant role in the formation of one's identity. According to her, it is not true to believe that there is an identity before gender identity. Therefore, it is more appropriate for Butler to refer

to gender identity rather than identity. Some socially constructed regulatory practices and norms, according to Butler, constitute identity. Similarly, gender and sex are among the norms in Gilead that establish gender identities.

Gilead criticizes gender essentialism by depicting the consequences of its exaggerated enforcement in a fictional society. Gender as a performance becomes significant as a result of the enforced gender norms, as Gilead's gender essentialism promotes behavior that does not necessarily come naturally to the population but is necessary for survival. In the novel, as society produces norms, categorization causes a loss of identity. Adding the suffix "of" to the names of the commanders they serve gives them a new name. Therefore, they are required to forget their identities and previous lives. If the characters do not comply with the regime's instructions, they are excluded from society. For instance, Offred represents a marginal character due to her rebellion against assigned roles. Through her illicit meetings with the Commander and her sexual and romantic relationship with Nick, she defies the oppressive system, finds solace, and attempts to rediscover her identity through Nick. Offred's efforts to maintain her identity prior to the regime are unrelated to societal norms. She attempts to discover her own significance and to remember who she is. It is clear that she is fighting to hold onto her faith, as she states, “I believe in the resistance as I believe there can be no light without shadow; or rather, no shadow unless there is also light. There must be a resistance, or where do all the criminals come from, on the television?” (Atwood,2017, p.74). Offred challenges societal norms due to the fact that she is a leading figure for female empowerment. Offred wants to be seen and heard, as Butler claims,

> Bound to seek recognition of its own existence in categories, terms, and names that are not of its own making, the subject seeks the sign of its own existence outside itself, in a discourse that is at once dominant and indifferent. Social categories signify subordination and existence at

> once. In other words, within subjection the price of existence is subordination. (Butler,1997, p.20)

In Gilead, identities are created by the duties and roles that women are expected to play; as a result, they are classified according to the duties and roles they play within the system. As the Handmaids are fertile, the commanders imprison them to bear children. The Wives of commanders are infertile, but they are at the top of the female hierarchy. They are only responsible for organizing household responsibilities. The women known as "Marthas" are servants in the commanders' homes. They lack fertility but are deemed suitable for domestic chores. Due to their adherence to Gilead's stringent regulations, they are considered to live a moral existence. Women who do not belong to one of these three social groups or do not wish to participate are required to clean up toxic waste in colonies or sent to brothels called Jezebel. In this regard, men enjoy complete freedom, whereas women are oppressed by social norms and deemed immoral if they do not comply with sexist policies. As Beauvoir states,

> Patriarchal civilization condemned woman to chastity; the right of man to relieve his sexual desires is more or less openly recognized, whereas woman is confined within marriage, for her the act of the flesh, if not sanctified by the code, by a sacrament, is a fault, a fall, a defeat, a weakness; she is obliged to defend her virtue, her honor. (Beavoir,2011, p.444)

Further, some of the novel's categorical terms, such as "containers," "two-legged wombs," and "ambulatory chalices," support the notion that the regime gives women the identity of Handmaids, whose sole purpose in their world is to give birth. Therefore, motherhood is a characteristic that society imposes on women. Women's roles are determined by their ability to bear children. Categorizing them as mothers and non-mothers creates a vicious cycle in the system. When women are evaluated solely based on their productivity, patriarchal authority views them as mere objects rather than subjects. It allows us to suggest that identity is not determined by biology or sex, but by a system

of oppression based on repetitive actions. In Gilead, a "sense of gender reality" is created as a result of abuse and oppressive factors. Indeed, in Butler's terms, repetitive actions play identity-determining roles that do not reflect reality.

The roles of different classes of women in Gilead, such as bearing children, being a mother, being a good wife, and being responsible for housework, are assumed to belong to women in patriarchal societies. In Gilead, other roles, such as participating in political administration, working, receiving an equal education as men, and serving as a chauffeur, belong to men. As it is mentioned in the book, “All those women having jobs, hard to imagine, now, but thousands of them had jobs, millions. It was considered the normal thing.” (Atwood,2017, p.120). Before the totalitarian and patriarchal authority of Gilead, women had jobs, which is now impossible for women in Gilead to imagine. The interpretations of new regulators regarding old and new life are based on arguments regarding the "nature" of men and women. “Those years were just an anomaly, historically speaking, the Commander said. Just a fluke. All we've done is return things to Nature's norm.” (Atwood,2017, p.153). In the new system, attempts are made to normalize and reproduce norms, and women are expected to perform "by nature."

Gender performativity is presented as an act that power identifies and controls, not the subjects themselves. Butler emphasizes that the inequality between men and women is not natural, as if between pre-existing subjects, but rather the result of social power structures. According to Butler, the idea that gender is a cultural interpretation of sex corresponding to nature causes distinctions between gender identities and sexual orientations such as normal, natural, and deviant. (Butler,1990, p.10). These distinctions are the result of a hierarchical relationship between sexual orientation and gender. Thus, forms of exclusion are produced similarly to the exclusion of women, with a focus on the novel's male-female nature. Butler rejects any hierarchical categorization, fixation, or normative imposition for this reason.

Further, within the context of patriarchy and biopower, Gilead is an extreme example of biopower, as the state is founded on reproductive policies developed in response to a sharp decline in birth rates. The policies of the government of Gilead are based on the discipline and control of the female body and sexuality; consequently, they seek the complete subjugation of femininity to patriarchal will. In order to achieve this discipline and control, the state of Gilead employs surveillance and punishment mechanisms that echo Foucault's theories, which historically explain the development of the modern state. Thus, the story of Offred, the protagonist of Atwood's novel, and the structure of the totalitarian theocratic state described in the narrative reveal the repercussions of the power mechanisms that underpin contemporary society for women. As Atwood states in an interview with Maya Oppenheim for The Independent, her novel is "a study of power and how it operates and how it deforms or shapes the people who are living within that kind of regime" (Oppenheim,2017).

It can be readily asserted that Gilead is a republic of men. Since reproduction is the primary concern in Gilead society, women are classified based on their ability to reproduce. Women who are fertile are categorized as Handmaids. Handmaids, who are reproductive in the Republic of Gilead need to be pregnant by their assigned Commander or Angel, are deprived of all rights and freedoms, unable to read, and required to be obedient and submissive. They have to allow their bodies to be used sexually to produce children. They lose their identities as well as all of their family members, personal belongings, and memories. Handmaids are utilized just for their fertility capabilities, so there shouldn't be any feelings or spiritual ties between handmaids and males since they are just there to serve as reproductive tools.

However, the significant men for whom the Handmaids serve are married to women of the same higher social class which are called 'Wives'. Because the Handmaids must have sexual intercourse with their husbands, the Wives frequently look down on them and treat them as if they were nothing but prostitutes. In this hierarchal structure of the Republic of Gilead, other categories of women exist as well, the 'Marthas' are the

maidservants who are recruited by the Wives; Infertile women were assigned to be housekeepers and do household chores, becoming Marthas. They are utilized for chores like cleaning.

The "Aunts" are the women who train the Handmaids. There are also official prostitutes for higher class men called "Jezebels." They are utilized for eroticism. There are also women from lower classes who cannot have servants because of their social status, called "Econowives." They are forced to have the roles of both wife and Martha. If infertile women did not want to be Marthas, they had two options, they could go to the colonies, which are affected by radioactive pollution, or they could go to Jezebel's, a secret brothel where privileged men can go.

Women are regarded as second-class citizens, so they are not permitted to read or write. Only the Aunts can acquire literacy, have property, and have careers as women. The aunts serve as teachers and observers for the Handmaids. Even though Aunts have more power over other women, the Wives of the Commanders maintain a higher position than Aunts. The Wives have limited control over the Aunts and the Guardians but complete control over the home. Although the Wives contributed to the establishment of the current regime, they are not permitted to intervene in governmental affairs. Although the Wives have higher ranks than the Aunts, The Aunts have the power to report them if they notice anything unsavory. The Aunts are able to report even the Commanders. Hence, the Aunts serve as a crucial state control mechanism. Ultimately, “the best and the most cost-effective way to control women for reproductive and other purposes was through women themselves” (Atwood,2017, p.320). The Aunts are also effective in indoctrinating the Handmaids against any possibility of a freedom struggle. As Armbruster states,

> Offred describes how the aunts teach the new culture. First, they teach forgetfulness. Then they teach that women's struggles for equality and autonomy caused all the rape and violence committed against women before Gilead. They also teach that restrictions on mobility and communication are

> protecting the handmaids from the rape and violence brought upon them by feminism. Women's struggles for liberation are likewise blamed for Gilead's continuing problems. (1990, p.147)

In this regard, women's struggles for equality and autonomy are blamed for the rape and violence committed against women before Gilead. The novel addresses the question of why the Aunts volunteer for such a system.

> When power is scarce, a little of it is tempting. There was, too, a negative inducement, childless or infertile or older women who were not married could take service in the Aunts and thereby escape redundancy, and consequent shipment to the infamous Colonies, which were composed of portable populations used mainly as expendable toxic cleanup squads, though if lucky you could be assigned to less hazardous tasks such as cotton picking and fruit harvesting. (Atwood,2017, p.320- 321).

Since they are divided into various classes, women are unable to recognize their greatest foe, masculine power. The interactions between the various female groups foster a potent atmosphere of oppression. Gilead actually encourages acts of a woman against a woman. One can clearly see that even women abuse power because wives and aunts dominate and impose the patriarchal society's rules on other women. Serena Joy, the Commander's Wife, for instance, is the real traitor against women because she strives vainly for traditional womanhood. She fought for this new society, but she is regrettably entrapped in it. She can do nothing but back Offred and the Commander in their ceremony for the future of the family. She has no option but to participate in Offred and the Commander’s ritual for the household’s future. Atwood makes the reader see how women are likewise products of their culture, stuck in their gender, by presenting women who do not exhibit unity with their gender.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, according to Foucault, two forms of power over life emerged. During the second half of the eighteenth century, "biopolitics of the

population" emerged, focusing on biological processes such as births, health, and life expectancy. The other one, "anatomo-politics of the human body" focused on the disciplining of the body and improving its ability to be integrated into the economic system. (Foucault,1978, p.139). In this context, Gilead's interferences with female bodies demonstrate that the state uses them to increase its population and thus its longevity. Gilead strips women of their individuality, identities, and control over their bodies and sexuality. According to Foucault, the new type of power, biopower, regulates, controls, and administers bodies as does Gilead.

> This bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not, have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. But this was not all it required; it also needed the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility; it had to have methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern. (Foucault,1978, p.140-141).

As mentioned before, in Gilead, older, infertile, or convicted women who cannot serve the state with their bodies are categorized as Unwomen and sent to the Colonies to clean up corpses or nuclear waste, which is essentially the same as death. Such practices demonstrate how Gilead uses the female body to govern its population and how it discards them as Unwomen and executes them when they are unfit for such use.

Since the Handmaids' bodies belong to men and the government, just like their names and personalities, they are raped during ‘Ceremonies’ for the sake of the state's population increase. The Ceremonies take place monthly between the Handmaids and the Commanders whose wives are sterile. Since the Handmaids are assigned to breed the Commanders' children, they should consent to be raped monthly. Foucault mentions that

sexuality “was confined” to home, and “the conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction” (1978, p.3). Within this context, the Ceremonies turn what Foucault puts forth on the confinement of sexuality in patriarchal societies into a systematic dystopic tyranny and a dystopian system of oppression. If a woman is infertile, she is sent to the Colonies to perish. Therefore, even though the Handmaids suffer rape, they accept to be part of these ceremonies. Historically, patriarchal ideologies have valued concepts such as marriage, family, and love. As a result, most women volunteer for procreation. However, in Gilead they are just the slaves of the system. The Handmaids are utilized as sex slaves because the totalitarian Gilead regime does not need marriage or the love concept to persuade women to reproduce like in traditional patriarchal societies.

Further, women are also abused in Jezebel's, where they are forced to serve as prostitutes to the Commanders. Jezebel’s institutionalizes sexual violence in Gilead; however, the Commanders keep Jezebel's as a secret because the totalitarian authority of the Gilead regime asserts that they shield women from sexual violence, adultery, and pornography that existed before Gilead. Moreover, Gilead claims that they control all sexual events because sexuality should be utilized for reproduction and not for pleasure. Foucault argues that brothels are places for “illegitimate sexualities and tolerance” and aside from those places “modern puritanism imposed its triple edict of taboo, nonexistence and silence” (1978, p.5). Nonetheless, this tolerance is exclusive to Commanders, who comprise the privileged class, and they are also in charge of controlling "illegitimate sexualities."

Offred and Commander Waterford meet secretly in the Commander's office at some nights. They sometimes chat and sometimes play games. In one of these meetings, the commander wants to take Offred to Jezebel's. The commander takes Offred to Jezebel's and he dresses her with a garment that has “feathers around the thigh holes” and “cups for the breasts covered in purple sequinned tiny stars” (Atwood,2017, p.242). Offred is surprised because these garments have been destroyed in Gilead. The

Commander takes her "out" to Jezebel's and asks her to behave like the women who work there. When they arrive there, he says that this place is just for the elite and privileged class and explains that some of the women were real prostitutes before the Gilead regime and prefer to work there. The Commander also wants Offred to wear a purple tag on her waist. In Swastika Night, in the Women's Quarter, if a woman wears an armlet, it means that she belongs to a man. Similarly, wearing a purple tag on Offred's waist means that she was taken or owned by a man.

In Jezebel's, Offred comes across her old friend Moira. From their conversation, we can understand that women in Jezebel's are controlled strictly. They can only have a fifteen-minute break in an hour. Moira tells Offred about her journey to Jezebel's. She tried to escape from the Red Centre twice. However, she failed to escape. When she was caught, she was given two choices, She would either choose Jezebel's or the Colonies. So, she chose to be in Jezebel's. Just like the Colonies, Jezebel's is also used to punish women in Gilead.

As mentioned previously, class distinction is one of the most striking characteristics of Gilead. The dress code for women indicates their social status. Gilead has a strict dress code for each woman. The way in which handmaids are expected to appear and behave reflects the fact that they are nothing more than examples of their class. As stated in the novel, Handmaids all dressed identically in red, the color of blood. They are wearing a red dress, red gloves, red shoes flat-heeled, and a white hoods with wings. (Atwood, 2017, 18). Handmaids must wear wings to conceal their faces and restrain them from any sexual contact. The color of their dress code is connected with reproduction, menstruation, and blood. The Aunts should wear brown, the Wives should wear blue, and the Marthas are wearing apron-adorned green dresses. Miceli asserts that these colors are “borrowed from the Christian iconography of the late-medieval, early Renaissance period, the Virgin Mary would inevitably wear blue or blue-green, and Mary Magdalene would inevitably wear red” (2018, 100). In the novel, it is indicated that the color red is chosen by Waterford, and “he seems to have borrowed from the uniforms of German prisoners of

war in Canadian ‘P.O.W.’ camps of the Second World War era” (Atwood,2017, p.319). When considering the status of the Handmaids, the inspiration is extremely appropriate.

> Everything except the wings around my face is red, the colour of blood, which defines us. The skirt is ankle-length, full, gathered to a flat yoke that extends over the breasts, the sleeves are full. The white wings too are prescribed issue; they are to keep us from seeing, but also from being seen. (Atwood,2017, p.18).

Their dresses' main purpose is to conceal their bodies. They are supposed to be invisible within their clothes. They are supposed to cover themselves from head to ankle to avoid arousing sexual desires. Although they wear different colors of dresses, they look the same. The intention of wearing the same kind of uniform is to eliminate their physical or personal characteristics and take their individuality from their hands. Likewise, in *Swastika Night*, women are expected to wear dirty brown clothes to avoid arousing sexual desires. However, in *Swastika Night*, not only the women's individuality and femininity but also their humanity are taken away. Women are seen as soulless animals in the Hitler state. They are not treated as individuals or humans. However, in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, women are seen as a national source. Their individuality is taken away, but they are still seen as humans. Handmaids are treated like objects because they are regarded as the commodities of the state and its economic, political, and national sources. What is more, women in the Republic of Gilead are only men's property. As Keith Booker indicates;

> The handmaids in Atwood’s dystopian Gilead have no identity except as potential childbearers; they’re even stripped of their original names; which are replaced with possessive nominations such as "Offglen", "Offwayne", or "Offwarren", indicating their status as mere property of their commanders ("Glen", or "Fred," or "Warren") (Booker,2006, p. 264).

Within this context, since the handmaids are unable to choose their own names, it shows that they are just subjects. It is important to keep in mind that naming have persisted

in western civilizations for years using Mrs. where women are forced to become their husbands through renaming after their husband's family. Today's discussion only concerns women's surnames. However, in the Republic of Gilead, even first names are eliminated. Offred wants to use her own name and sees this renaming as a threat to who she is or how she behaves. Names are the most fundamental ways to describe who we are and the foundation of our personalities. The women of Gilead are required to give the name of someone while introducing themselves, and this is a form of social alienation and the despair of being unheard by others.

They can't go anywhere without permission if it is not assigned to do so. They are very important for the long-term success of Gilead because of their ability to reproduce. Handmaids are not permitted to be alone. Aunts watch them and patrol around if any ceremonies take place for the Handmaids. On the street, there is always security to observe and watch the street. There are also Guardians as a watcher and observer. Guardians of the Faith protect the state. They are regarded as police officers. Some of the Guardians are the drivers of the Commanders. Although Commanders are the highest in the hierarchy, Guardians are the state's troop. They can spy on the Commanders. According to Foucault, this "visibility" of disciplinary power is as follows,

> Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time, it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is this fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection. (Foucault,1991, p.187).

Moreover, Eyes of God, who are undercover police, keep society under control and surveillance. Eyes watch the Handmaids, but other people do not know who the Eyes are and where they are. Not only the Eyes of God watch them, but also each Handmaid can be a spy for their partner; “The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers” (Atwood,2017,

p.29). Because Handmaids are accustomed to being watched constantly in Gilead and due to their belief that anyone can cause them to die, they restrain themselves even when no one is watching them. As aunt Lydia says “The Republic of Gilead …knows no bound. Gilead is within you.” (Atwood,2017, p.33). It is a display of modern societies. In modern societies, especially women have internalized nonstop surveillance and the male gaze so much that they always try to act like someone is watching. Foucault explains it as “a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (1991, p.201). Women cannot think independently of the state's power and the male gaze because the state's influence is so pervasive. In Gilead society, even women represent the male gaze. The Marthas, the Aunts, and the Wives serve as the observers of the Handmaids, and they serve as the eyes of the state. Even though they suffer from the patriarchal male gaze, patriarchal oppression, and patriarchal culture, they also reproduce the male gaze because they feel the power in that way.

One day, when Offred and Ofglen see some Japanese tourists on their way home, they think that the tourists seem undressed. Offred finds the freedom of a female tourist weird. She thinks that tourists' knee-length skirts and high-heeled shoes reveal their sexuality, and she finds it a bit odd. They internalize Gilead's ideology so much that they think that if a woman wants to be valuable, she should be unseen. A woman should not be touched if she wants to remain valuable. Women should protect themselves from men and their sexual appetites and should be chaste. Offred tried to remember what she used to wear, but she couldn't help thinking about how the female tourists seemed undressed. Her thoughts are so dominated by what the government says that she cannot think of anything else.

In the chapter titled "Historical Notes," the decline in births is explained as follows, “the widespread availability of birth control of various kinds, including abortion” (Atwood,2017, p.316). In addition to the decline, ‘'Historical Notes’' discusses the connection between problems affecting newborns, such as stillbirths, genetic deformities, etc. as follows,

> the various nuclear-plant accidents, shutdowns, and incidents of sabotage that characterized the period, as well as to leakages from chemical and biological-warfare stockpiles and toxic- waste disposal sites, of which there were many thousands, both legal and illegal - in some instances these materials were simply dumped into the sewage system – and to the uncontrolled use of chemical insecticides, herbicides, and other sprays. (Atwood,2017, p.317)

Gilead regulates a system of surrogacy based on Old Testament narratives, such as the story of Rachel and Jacob, in order to overcome population decline and degeneration. (Genesis,30, p.1-3). Gilead's misogynistic regulations and practices are supported by biblical allusions and its patriarchal structure is founded on religion. Religion is one of Gilead's most important justifications for its biopolitics, since reproduction is one of its primary concerns. The regime asserts that they carry out God's orders. Before the Ceremony, the Commander reads from the Bible.

> It’s the usual story, the usual stories. God to Adam, God to Noah. Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. Then comes the mouldy old Rachel or Leah stuff we had drummed into us at the Centre. Give me children, or else I die. Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? Behold my maid Bilhah. She shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And so on and so forth. (Atwood,2017, p.99).

As he begins the ritual by reading from the Bible, religion not only justifies the objectification of the female body, but also becomes "a political tool of repression" (Miceli,2018, p.98). In Gilead, women have no right to read or write. Regardless of their classes, reading is sinful for all women. When the Commander and Offred meet secretly in the Commander's room, the Commander reads some texts from the Bible because women are not permitted to read. Commander always locks it in a box. As Foucault asserts “The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power” (1980, p.52). The women are not allowed to read

even the Bible. Although it promotes patriarchy, the government forbids women from reading it. The Commanders are the only ones who can hold it. They only inform their people of what Gilead wishes them to know. Gilead does not want their people to have access to information and, in that way, hold the power.

Although it is forbidden, Offred sometimes reads when the Commander watches. Offred thinks that reading in front of the Commander is a sexual act. " While I read, the Commander sits and watches me doing it, without speaking and but also without taking his eyes off me. This watching is a curiously sexual act, and I feel undressed while he does it." (Atwood, p. 194). Offred feels a bit uneasy about this kind of sexual activity. She inquires about what Nolite te bastardes carborundorum means, which was written inside her cabinet by the Handmaid, who earlier lived there. Because the sentence, which means don't let the bastards grind you down, was written in Latin, she does not know both the pronunciation and meaning of the sentence. However, it becomes her motto after she learns the meaning of the sentence. As Rine asserts,

> Even though Offred does not initially know what the words mean, the fact that they were carved by another woman, a woman in her situation, and left for her to find gives her hope and fortitude ... This message alleviates Offred's isolation by connecting her to the presence of another woman, a woman who sat in this room and slept in her bed, a woman subjected to the same constrained fate. Yet these words are also words of rebellion, signalling the subversive potential of language and women's ability to steal back the Word. (Rine,2013, p.64).

Although Offred is not allowed to write, when she asked the commander for the meaning of the sentence, he gave her a pen and paper. When she picks up the pen, she feels extremely excited and alive. She misses the power of the pen, envies the Commander's pen, and wants to steal it from him. She remembered a center motto about pens. ''Pen is Envy, Aunt Lydia would say, quoting another Centre motto, warning us

away from such objects. And they were right, it is envy. Just holding it is envy. I envy Commander his pen. It's one more thing I would like to steal.' (Atwood, p. 196). The Centre's motto, "Pen is envy' is a metaphor for the dominance of men over language and authority in patriarchal Western society and culture. As Gilbert and Gubar asserts, "In patriarchal Western culture, therefore, the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis" (1979, p.6). Further, the book *The Madwoman in the Attic* asks an important question, Can a pen be a metaphorical penis? and answers, a pen can be an instrument of generative power like a penis. The term 'penis envy' of Freud can be understood as how a girl feels during the course of psychosexual development when she realizes that she lacks a penis. Atwood is apparently trying to criticize the term, saying that what is missing is not a penis but the pen, which means the freedom to write and the power of words.

Since regardless of their classes, all women are not allowed to read and write, when the Handmaids leave the home for shopping, they utilize some illustrative signs to indicate the items they wish to buy. When the Handmaids go shopping, they greet each other with the state's discourse. Even the everyday discourse symbolizes the ideas of Gilead, and the sexual discourse has an impact on everyday language. Their daily language is strictly regulated by the authorities of Gilead. Even some exact words are forbidden between the Handmaids. For example, the term free is considered extremely hazardous and unlawful. Some words are regarded as illegal and cannot be used during daily conversations. When the Handmaids see each other, they greet each other with certain phrases like "Blessed be the fruit" or "May the Lord open". These phrases symbolize women's reproductive capabilities. The word fruit represents the baby. The second phrase implies that God-Lord is watching them. It also implies that the state is always watching them. They also say, Under His Eye, which implies that the state is constantly watching them and also implies that the state constantly observes women, and they have no freedom.

In an effort to establish a normative system, the state regulates and controls the sexuality of its citizens through its discourse on sexuality. Sexuality is experienced

through the body and pleasure; however, the state intervenes in order to control the population, perceiving it as a political and economic issue because the population is one of the fundamental elements of its survival. Nonetheless, meaning is required for the development of the body and pleasure as a sexual experience. It is the power that creates the knowledge and normative system that enables individuals to give sexuality the meaning they do. However, Gilead attributes no significance to sexuality. Before Gilead, the concepts of marriage, family, and motherhood were sublimated, and women did not feel compelled to reproduce; rather, they volunteered. However, Gilead does not need to implement these ideas in order to convince women to have children. It openly enslaves them within its dictatorial system.

Women in Gilead are alienated from their own bodies and sexualities. They are forced to wear long-sleeved nightgowns to protect themselves from temptation, even on summer days. However, being alienated from her body and wearing long sleeved nightgowns are insufficient to prevent Offred and Nick from having a sexual affair in secret. Serena Joy forces Offred to have an affair with Nick for the first time in order to become pregnant. However, the next time, she visits Nick of her own volition. When she is making love with Nick, she feels like she is human again. Like other human beings, she is touched, loved, and hugged again.

In traditional patriarchal societies, women's beauty is significant. However, likewise in the book *Swastika Night* and in the Hitlerdom state, women's physical beauty is not important in Gilead society. In conventional patriarchal societies, women are expected to be beautiful and have a slim figure, smooth skin, and lovely features. However, in Gilead, women are not regarded as individuals, they are not expected to have a beautiful face or be beautiful. They are seen as vessels. Therefore, their bodies are needed for the state, not their beauty. The state degrades women's ability to reproduce for the sake of society. Women are treated as if they exist solely to ensure the survival of society. Offred saves butter or margarine from some dinners to use it for her face, skin, and hands. She rubs the butter over her face and hands. ‘’There is no longer any hand lotion or face cream, not for

us. Such things are considered vanities. We are containers, it is only the insides of our bodies that are important.'' (Atwood,2017, p.107). Offred thinks that the Wives do not let the Handmaids use such products. 'This was a decree of the Wives, this absence of hand lotion. They don't want us to look attractive. For them, things are bad enough as it is.' (107). The Wives mistreat and subjugate the Handmaids, and in that way, they become a part of the patriarchy.

The handmaids are so unfree and so lacking love that by buttering her skin, Offred believes that as long as she butters her skin, she will get out someday and be touched again in love or desire. 'As long as we do this, butter our skin to keep it soft, we can believe that we will some day get out, that we will be touched again, in love or desire. We have ceremonies of our own, private ones.'' (107). Offred wants to be respected, loved, valued, and desired as an individual. However, she is solely valued for her reproduction ability and ovaries, like other handmaids in Gilead. Although she endures a lot because of monthly rapes, she is still alive and far from the colonies just because of her ovaries. She can be considered lucky in misogynistic Gilead society since she is fertile. If she is labeled as barren, she could be sent to the colonies. In a fascist patriarchal misogynistic Gilead society, men cannot be labeled as barren. Like traditional patriarchal societies, women are always blamed for being infertile, not men.

In fact, not only women are oppressed in Gilead; also men face oppression. Men like Nick, who have a lower social status, are not allowed to be in a relationship. " I know this man's name, Nick... He lives here, in the household, over the garage. Low status, he hasn't been issued a woman, not even one." (Atwood,2017, p,27) Offred explains that in Gilead, only commanders are allowed to marry and have sexual affairs with handmaids. Men of lower classes are barred from doing so. Apart from privileging certain classes of men, men's sexual activities are prohibited as well.

Moreover, in *Swastika Night*, homosexuality is not forbidden. Contrary to *Swastika Night*, in the Republic of Gilead, homosexuality is prohibited because of religious

doctrines. It is regarded as against human nature. The fact that homosexual relations do not result in procreation, however, is the real justification for this ban. In order to create submissive and productive bodies, Gilead strictly controls sexuality. Those who don't fit into Gilead's ideas are put to death.

Sexual activities end up in execution. Male bodies are hung on the Wall. It is common to execute homosexuals, Catholic priests, and Quakers in the Republic of Gilead and hang them on the Wall to threaten and scare other people. "Dead bodies of 'criminal' lovers, doctors who performed abortions, priests, nuns, and feminists are publicly displayed as warnings that the only bond that is safe in Gilead is bondage to the state" (Armbruster,1990, p.148). Both living and dead bodies are put to service for the state, both as a constant reminder of the authority and power of the government and as a means for perpetuating that authority. The bodies of those who have been executed by hanging are displayed on the Wall, and a sign is affixed to each one to explain to the viewers what their guilt is. "Beside the main gateway there are six more bodies hanging by the necks, their hands tied in front of them, their heads in white bags tipped sideways onto their shoulders. There must have been a Men's Salvaging early this morning, I didn't hear the bells. Perhaps I've become used to them." (Atwood,2017, p. 42) These hanged bodies are there to serve as a constant reminder that no one in Gilead is truly free and everyone should obey the rules of Gilead. Gender treason is also one of the big crimes, and someone who commits this crime ends up hanging on the Wall.

> There are three new bodies on the Wall. One of is a priest, still wearing the black cassock. That has been put on him, for the trial... The two others have purple placards hung around their necks, Gender Treachery. Their bodies still wear Guardian uniforms. Caught together, they must have been, but where? A barracks, a shower? It's hard to say. (Atwood,2017, p. 53).

Preventing a birth is one of the big crimes and is punished by execution, and doctors who abort are regarded as war criminals. " The men wear white coats, like those worn by

doctors or scientists... Each has a placard hung around his neck to show why he has been executed, a drawing of a human foetus." (Atwood,2017, p. 42). Abortion was legal before Gilead, but it is illegal now. " These men are like war criminals. " It is no excuse that what they did was legal at the time, their crimes are retroactive." (43).

In Gilead, public executions are conducted as a spectacle. If someone is found guilty because of lust, sexual activities, or an attempt to flee, they are executed by hanging publicly as a part of salvaging rituals. Furthermore, Handmaids are forced to take part in these salvaging rituals by pulling the rope in Women's Salvaging. In addition to being required to take part in these executions, handmaids are expected to affirm the entire process with their hearts. If they do not participate, they can be marked by the Aunts and the Wives.

In *Swastika Night*, rape is not regarded as crime because women do not have control over their bodies. However, in *the Handmaid's Tale* rape is one of the biggest crimes as well, and those who commit this crime will be executed. Aunt Lydia informs the Handmaids that the punishment for rape will be death and it is based on a religious text. The justification of the death penalty with a religious text is further evidence that Gilead utilizes religion as an ideological tool. In one of the rituals, in the Particicution, a man who is accused of rape is executed by a group of Handmaids. The Handmaids are free to do whatever they want to the condemned men. The Handmaids desire to be a part of it because it is their only source of power. After Aunt Lydia blows the whistle, the handmaids can do anything they want to the convicted men. In these rituals, some of the handmaids brutally kill the convicted men with their bare hands. The dark, fascist atmosphere of Gilead has such a terrific effect on the Handmaids that they become capable of committing murder with their bare hands. Even Offred takes part in violent rituals like Salvagings or Particicutions although she wants to be against the system. Because Janine was raped when she was 14, she had to go through the demeaning ritual, and Offred joined this ritual eagerly.

In Gilead, the extreme policies of the government are carried out in the name of religion and patriotism. The Handmaids have been forced to offer their bodies in service to Gilead in order to survive and avoid the Colonies. If a woman wants to feel worthy, she is expected to give birth in Gilead. In the Republic of Gilead, getting pregnant is seen as a success, and having children is seen as a national duty. Because giving birth is a kind of victory, handmaids feel envious whenever they come across a pregnant one. When Offred saw Janine pregnant, she envied her and wanted to be saved like her because if you are pregnant, you are the saved one.

> One of them is vastly pregnant; her belly, under her loose garment, swells triumphantly. There is a shifting in the room, a murmur, an escape of breath; despite ourselves we turn our heads, blatantly, to see better; our fingers itch to touch her. She's a magic presence to us, an object of envy and desire, we covet her. She's a flag on a hilltop, showing us what can still be done; we too can be saved. (Atwood,2017, p. 36).

The handmaids must have a guardian when they become pregnant because Gilead considers the handmaids and their offspring to be his property. Menstruation is regarded as a failure, and fertility and having children are crucial to the well-being of handmaids. In addition, because of its significance for the health of the country's future generation, the state makes the decision on the Handmaid's diet. Once a month, The Handmaids and The Marthas visit the doctor to check on their health. They do not have the right to become ill, whereas the Wives have the right to become ill. If a handmaid becomes ill, it can be deadly. Once a month, the handmaids are sent to the doctor to be controlled. Since the Handmaids are essential to Gilead's reproduction, the government maintains strict control over their health. The government organizes and pays for all the regular checkups, but not out of concern for their well-being but rather as a means of enforcing an extreme form of patriarchy.

When the handmaids are taken to the doctor for checkups, doctors can only see and examine the lower part of the handmaids. There is a screen and an eye at their neck level, and the constant presence of surveillance cameras reminds them that they are being watched all the time. Offred describes the procedures that were performed on her at the doctor's examination. "I'm taken to the doctor's once a month, for tests, urine, hormones, cancer smear, blood test; the same as before, except that now it's obligatory" (Atwood, p.69). Doctors are not allowed to talk to the Handmaids if it is not required. In one of the examinations, the doctor offers to help Offred get pregnant. The doctor examines Offred and tries to persuade her to have sex for the sake of saving and serving her,

> "Lots of women do it," he goes on. "You want a baby, don't you?" "Yes," I say. It's true, and I don't ask why, because I know. *Give me children, or else I die.* There's more than one meaning to it. "You're soft," he says. It's time. Today or tomorrow would do it, why waste it? It'd only take a minute, honey." What he called his wife, once; maybe still does, but really it's a generic term. We are all honey. (Atwood,2017, p.71)

However, Offred does not want to accept this offer because the doctor can be one of the Eyes of the state, and this offer can result in being executed. Offred is scared of the choice the doctor gives her because the doctor has all the control. He can send her to death and execution easily, or even to the colonies. The doctor has the keys to her survival. She is nothing more than a vessel for them, and if she does not obey him, she can deserve to die. Offred is aware that the punishment for accepting the doctor's offer is death.

> He could fake the tests, report me for cancer, for infertility, have me shipped off to Colonies, with the Unwomen. None of this has been said, but the knowledge of his power hangs nevertheless in the air as he pats my thigh, withdraws himself behind the hanging sheet. (Atwood,2017, p.71).

She is aware that she lives in a kind of panopticon as a Gilead citizen. Even though the examination room is empty except for her and the doctor, she is terrified of the option

that the doctor suggests. Actually, she is terrified of having options, as she is used to everything being given or assigned to her. Her fate is in the hands of the doctor, the Commander, or the Commander's Wife. She is nothing more than a body for them, and as long as she obeys and serves them, she is safe.

Offred's story is ended with a big question mark. After Offred's visit to Jezebel's with the Commander, Serena finds out and threatens her and Offred waits for her conviction. Nick shows up at her room door and Offred decides to go with them. When she gets into the van, she ends her story by saying “And so I step up, into the darkness within; or else the light” (Atwood,2017, p.307). Atwood projects a dark future for the patriarchal West, with women being turned into mere objects of patriarchal power, stripped of their names, identities, lives, families, and children, and their bodies being disciplined by government institutions. However, there is still hope for women's unity, as the suicide of Waterford's previous Handmaid confirms there is still hope in women's unity. At the end of the novel, we learn that Offred's story is a transcription of nearly thirty tapes discovered two centuries after the fall of Gilead by the academics of Gileadean Studies. The story of Offred is retold by two male academicians, Professor Pieixoto and Professor Wade. Praisler and Gheorghiu claim that Professor Pieixoto's discourse is “the authoritative, omniscient male speaker”, is misogynistic (2019, p.177).

3.2 Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night*

Katharine Burdekin is a British writer who lived between 1896 and 1963. It is possible to classify some of her works as examples of feminist utopian or dystopian literature. In her novel *Swastika Night*, Burdekin focuses on the pervasive male dominance, the powerlessness of women, and the consequences of unequal relationships between men and women in both public and private spaces. However, she does not identify herself as a feminist author. Katharine Burdekin, according to Patai, "would have been tagged as unable to accept her femininity," and by avoiding "the tag 'feminist', her work makes it clear that becoming human, in her view, involves first of all transcending gender." (Patai, 1985, p. x).

She wrote her novels under the pseudonym, Murray Constantine. During the mid-1980s, Daphne Patai was conducting research on utopian and dystopian novels when she discovered the real identity of Murray Constantine. Katharine Burdekin first published under the alias Murray Constantine in 1934. The political themes in her novels and her severe criticism of fascism may have prompted her to write under a pseudonym to protect and save her family from the possibility of negative reactions and attacks. Writing under a male pseudonym appears more prudent and less dangerous under patriarchal oppression. Burdekin may have desired to safeguard herself and her works against the possibility of discrimination based on gender or censorship in a society where men feel more comfortable expressing their opinions. According to Karen Schneider, Burdekin is "a forgotten writer who in the 1930s seemingly took refuge behind a male pseudonym." (1997, p. 39).

The actual identity of Murray Constantine wasn't discovered until a long time after Burdekin had died. In the introduction to Swastika Night, Daphne Patai, who wrote the forewords and afterwords to many of Burdekin's novels, states, "For nearly fifty years, the identity of 'Murray Constantine', pseudonymous author of Swastika Night, has been concealed from public view. Only in the early 1980s, in response to persistent inquiries,

did the novel's original publishers acknowledge that 'Murray Constantine' was in fact Katharine Burdekin" (1985, p. iii).

Burdekin experienced world wars, so it was inevitable for her to write about sociopolitics. She utilized her literature to criticize totalitarian regimes and oppressive male supremacy under the pseudonym Murray Constantine. Because she experienced the two world wars, she wrote about war, fascism, politics, and gender. She uses her writing to present a critique of the rise of totalitarian regimes, the threat of war (Second World War), and the repressive nature of male supremacy. As a result, her fiction deals with war, fascism, and gender politics. She was especially interested in dystopian fiction that could blend reality and fantasy because of Hitler's ascent to power in her time. Burdekin's imagination allowed her to imagine a different life, beyond the limitations of masculine and feminine categories. According to Patai,

> Burdekin's rich imagination allowed her to explore both the past and a variety of possible futures. From her distanced but strongly committed narrative viewpoint, she scrutinized the features not only of her own society but also of the entire Western tradition and then proceeded to imagine a different sort of life, a different way of being, beyond the limitations of the conventional categories of masculine and feminine. (Patai,1993, p. 237)

Swastika Night, Burdekin's most famous book, was first published under the name Murray Constantine in 1937. It was republished in the United States and England in 1985. It portrays a future where the world is divided between two military forces, the Nazis and the Japanese. It reflects Burdekin's analysis of male power in fascist ideology. In this dystopic world, Hitler is worshipped as a deity and seen as a God, Christian people are marginalized and persecuted, and Jews have been exterminated. There is a cult of masculinity and subjugation of women, who are deprived of all human rights and imprisoned in concentration camps; the only worth they have is in their ability to reproduce and breed. *Swastika Night* is one of the first books to criticize fascism. It shows

how fascist ideas could affect Europe and how they could have disastrous consequences for humanity. It is also an anti-fascist dystopia, and Burdekin's narrative is a critique of the misogynistic ideology and biopolitics of Nazism from a feminist perspective. Andy Croft defines the novel as follows,

> *Swastika Night* is a powerful and unique criticism of fascism, an argument that it was misogynist and ultimately self-destructive, and its racial theories had roots in sexual hysteria. *Swastika Night* remains undoubtedly the most sophisticated and original of all the many antifascist dystopias of the late 1930s and 1940s. (Croft, 1984, 209)

Although there are no major female characters, the plot focuses on the oppression of women in the patriarchal society of a fictitious Nazi Germany, describing some males as homosexual misogynists. In his article, Chris Hopkins, a critic, writes,

> Certainly, Burdekin's novel is a powerful and innovative novel, perhaps the first novel to create the plot 'which has become known as the 'Hitler Wins' narrative, and showing an extraordinary power to imagine a wholly different mentalité (or apparently different mentalité which, in fact, radically defamiliarizes the operations of gender and power). (Hopkins,2006, p.138)

The term "Swastika," which appears in the book's title, refers to German Nazi sym bol. The Nazi Party used it on its flag, badge, and armband. Nazism adopted the swastika as a sign of identity, replacing the organic model of the nation-state with a totalitarian scheme. Malcolm Quinn explains the swastika as follows,

> was adopted by Nazism in the twentieth century in its violent erasure of the historical links between people, place and praxis … as a sign of identity in an era when personal and collective identities were being rapidly displaced …Nazism, under the sign of swastika, subsumed the 'organic' and historical model of the nation state within a totalitarian scheme based on the

> expansionist and market-led notions of territory and social geography which has succeeded the organic model. (Quinn,1994, p.xi)

Swastika Night depicts a strict, hierarchical Nazi regime that forces its citizens to have a very limited way of thinking. It shows the reader a vivid picture of the time just before the Second World War and the dangers of fascist Nazism. Di Minico states that " the novel's actual success is its ability to foresee the consequences of a world order where Nazis are all-victorious." (2019, p.38). It reflects the future hazards and risks of the present political and social events. Burdekin warns of the dangers of fascism. As Patai asserts,

> Burdekin's novel is important for us today because her analysis of fascism is formulated in terms that go beyond Hitler and the specifics of his time. Arguing that 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, Burdekin satirises 'masculine' and 'feminine' modes of behaviour. Nazi ideology, from this point of view, is the culmination of what Burdekin calls the 'cult of masculinity' It is this connection, along with the strong argument against the cult of masculinity, that set Burdekin's novel apart from the many other anti-fascist dystopias produced in the 1930s and 40s. (Patai,1984, p. iv)

The novel combines historical context with the fictional structure of a Hitlerian ideology. Burdekin opposes this oppressive, misogynist ideology. She gives a critique by predicting how destructive it will be and what will happen as a result. In Burdekin's vision, the Nazi creed represents the obsessive cult of the leader, the cult of masculinity, and male chauvinism in various social fields. This incisive depiction of the ideology is derived from contextual sources such as Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925), "Nazi speeches," "the Nuremberg laws," "policies about female and male separate spheres," "the increasing adherence to masculine and military values," "the demonization and vilification of Jews," and "the ritualization of oppression as spectacle" (Patai,1993, p.238).

Burdekin signals her critical intention by parodying *Mein Kampf*. The historical context thus becomes a significant source for her text, which Robert Crossley explains as follows,

> *Swastika Night* must have been inspired, at least in part, by Burdekin's friend Margaret Goldsmith, with whom she collaborated on her final book, Venus in Scorpio. In 1935 Goldsmith published Seven Women Against the World--- a study of revolutionary women . . . Goldsmith's dedication reads, "TO THOSE WOMEN OF GERMANY Who Are Fighting Unkown for Human Liberties." It is a hopeful and heroic dedication, and Swastika Night similarly, for all its gruesomeness, is about a light that manages to burn in the long dark dystopian night of the Nazi terror. It is a light that shines . . . in the despised Christian communities that refuse to accept the Hitlerian religion; in the pockets of underground resistance to conformity in rural England; in the legend of a new Alfred who, like Alfred the Great, will start a movement of liberation . . . *Swastika Night* is a vision of great originality and terror. (Crossley,1987, p.97-98)

Burdekin's novel depicts a post-Hitler Europe and Africa ruled by the Nazi Empire for 700 years. The Japanese Empire rules the remaining half of the world. This post-Hitler world is revealed through the eyes of two people in the book. The first character, Alfred, is a German-employed English aerodrome mechanic. He works for the Germans. On his journey, he stays with his friend from Nazi Germany, Hermann. Herman works for a knight. Nazis see Hitler as a god, and Hitlerism is the only religion permitted in the empire. Knight von Hess is a Hitlerism preacher. Nazi power and Hitlerism are shown to the reader through the interaction and relations between these three individuals. Knight Von Hess reveals that Hitler isn't a divine but rather an average man. He discovered this through a history book written by his ancestors. He also saw a photo of Hitler, who was a short guy with brown hair. Contrary to the portrayal of him as a god, Hitler wasn't a god in the picture. Moreover, Hermann and Alfred learned the real facts about women from Knight

von Hess, Before women were degraded by men into a subhuman status and kept in places like cages, they were considered lovely humans. Both of them can't believe the fact that women and men used to share homes and raise children together. Hermann encourages Alfred to share this reality with the world, and so Alfred does. They make up their minds to travel to England and begin enlightening Alfred's son on the truth. The Nazi forces, however, raided them. Alfred's son escaped because Hermann made a heroic sacrifice to allow him to escape. Alfred, who is wounded, encouraged his son to carry on with the task before he died.

The protagonist, Alfred, tries to show how the regime misrepresents social hierarchies and gender politics. He attempts to rebel against the system by being peaceful, and it is a sign of utopian hope in a dystopian government. One can easily understand Burdekin's warning if one knows the history of Nazi Germany, which focuses on women's and men's interactions, race, religion, severe hierarchies, and power. The book vividly depicts the social threats and potential dangers of Hitler in contemporary politics and historical developments. Through the characters' dialogues, the reader can notice the manipulation of citizens by the regime, which controls its citizens. The novel reveals the truth that male supremacy, war, and fascism are all connected to each other. The novel has two significant themes. One of them is Nazism, and the other is gender. The first is to show how limited the truth is in Hitler's ideology. The second is to show how men treat women in general, no matter what their race or religion is, and how women are subjugated and enslaved by men and cult of masculinity. Focusing on the cult of masculinity shows how oppression, dehumanization, the enslavement of women, and gender subjugation make women feel alienated and marginalized. The regime's attempt to manipulate the truth is ultimately intended to oppress those who are viewed as weaker or lesser in status.

The other major theme in the novel is misogyny and the adoration of masculinity in the Hitlerism empire. The foundation of Nazism's fascist ideology is the humiliation of women and the hegemony of men. "Her dystopian novel *Swastika Night*, which imagines the world as it might be if Hitler's regime were to prevail, pinpoints the heteronormative

gender dynamic and its inherent worship of masculinity as the foundation for fascist ideology " (English,2017, p. 45). According to Michel Foucault in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, the world portrayed in *Swastika Night* is the one that art historian Berenson feared, “God knows I fear the destruction of the world by the atomic bomb, but there is at least one thing I fear as much, and that is the invasion of humanity by the state” (2008, p.74).,

Before World War II, Burdekin predicts the outcomes of a Nazi power. In a dystopian setting, she takes the ideas of fascism and patriarchy to an extreme. She highlights Nazi ideologies that promote the superiority of the male gender and the dehumanization of women. As the plot of Swastika Night focuses on the condition of women in Nazi Germany, it may be useful to examine the actual Nazi policies regarding female identity and the family to better comprehend the novel. Ideological considerations largely shape the Nazi perspective on women. The Nazis believed that the differences between men and women were innate. In the highly patriarchal society of Nazi Germany, women were relegated to the domestic sphere, while men participated actively in the broader spheres of politics and war. Women were expected to be submissive wives and mothers, while men were expected to be warriors and politicians. To put it another way, as Burleigh states,

> women should confine themselves to their ‘natural’ occupations, i.e., as wives and mothers, or if they had to work, to occupations which reflected their ‘natural’ talents, such as nursing or social work, which would not endanger their biological capacity to reproduce. Broadly speaking, therefore, Nazi policies towards women were both illiberal and paternalistic. (Burleigh,1991, p. 243)

The Nazis emphasized that a woman's primary responsibility is to become a wife and mother. The Nazis desired more children to be born to German families. Children were not intended to be produced for the simple pleasure of their parents, but rather to “maintain the race and nation. Parents, then, were seen by Nazi ideologists as agents of

the state, and it was their duty to raise children under the supervision of the state to become ‘hard-working national comrades” (Spielvogel,1988, p.181). Moreover, Nazis wanted German women to reproduce in order to achieve their goal of a pure German race. In her article titled "Politics of Gender, Women in Nazi Germany," Charu Gupta writes, " in the context of Nazis, race and gender, racism and sexism are closely connected with each other." (Gupta,1991, p.40). They desired German women to procreate in order to achieve their primary goal, which was a "pure German race." In other words, the Nazi ideology viewed women as significant not only for their familial roles but also as the guardians of racial purity. Gupta further explains as follows,

> Women appeared in Nazi world view primarily as mothers ... encouraged to have more children and to be made fit to do so by new emphasis on physical training which the Nazis introduced schools, workplaces and organisations such as the League of German girls; or as ‘inferior’ mothers as Jewish, gypsy, handicapped or other ‘degenerate’ mothers and potential mothers, to be discouraged or prevented from having children and to be rigidly separated from the favoured majority of the population. (Gupta,1991, p.40)

During Hitler's fascism from 1933 to 1945, women were viewed as state property in accordance with population policies. According to the population policies of the era, women were degraded as the other race and treated as second-class citizens; they were defined solely as "wombs." Their motherhood served as both their punishment and their reward. Macciocchi asserts that in the party's election platform for 1932, Hitler declared that the family is the foundation of society; therefore, the child sacralizes the mother (2000, p. 162). Moreover, women were the most affected by family-centered ideology, sexual oppression, and expansionist politics. While some women were praised for giving birth, others were forcibly sterilized for not belonging to the "master race." “The glorification of motherhood, which received public support, found its necessary counterpart, from the Nazi perspective, in compulsory sterilization for the sake of racial purity” (Gupta,1991, p.41).

Nazism's ideology opposed women's social and economic emancipation. Geoff Layton explains Nazi antifeminism as “a kind of secondary racism” (1992, p.102). The Nazi ideology portrays women differently than it does men. In their view, nature instructed the sexes to perform distinctly different gender roles. A woman is expected to live within the confines of her home. In addition to emphasizing women's motherhood, Nazi Germany confines them to “three Ks –‘Kinder, Küche, Kirche’ (‘children, kitchen and church’)’’ (Layton,1992, p.103). When the Nazis came to power, the birth rate began to decline. As a result, they launched a campaign to honor mothers and housewives. In his book Hitler and Nazi Germany, Jackson J. Spielvogel mentions one of the campaigns,

> Hitler instituted the German Mother’s Cross in 1938. Mothers with four children received a bronze cross, those with six a silver cross, and those with eight or more a gold cross. The Mother’s Cross was portrayed as a distinction of the highest order...These crosses were awarded in annual ceremony on August 12, which was Hitler’s mother’s birthday. The elaborate cross bore the inscription “The child ennobles the mother”. (1988, p.182)

The Nazis' sexist ideologies were not limited to these. The impact of birth control policies and abortion laws on their sexist ideology was significant. Nonetheless, the anti-abortion campaign may be regarded as the most sexist and inhumane. This campaign both denied women the right to control their own bodies and reduced them to nothing more than childbearers. Gupta gives more details about Nazi Germany's campaign to stop abortions, “The Nazis banned contraceptives, closed birth control clinics and increased the penalties for abortion. From 1935 on, doctors and midwives were obliged to notify the regional state health office of every miscarriage” (Gupta,1991, p.41). Furthermore, “women’s names and addresses were then handed over the police who investigated the cases suspected of being in actuality abortions.” (Gupta,1991, p. 41)

These social policies implemented by this racist, fascist, and patriarchal conception of the state reveal the state's gender regime. In the fascist order, women were regarded as

the private property of men in the family and, subsequently, as the private property of the state, regardless of class. Not only were women prohibited from having control over their bodies, but their bodies were also subject to state intervention. Fascism and Nazism's main motto for women is the sublimity of motherhood. As Rupp states, “The government awarded an Honour Cross to prolific mothers and ordered the Hitler Youth to salute women wearing the medal” (1977, p. 371). Obviously, women are praised not because of their femininity, but because they are the race's providers. Hitler Nazism's classification of women as able or unable to bear children is a clear indication of this. While biopower disciplines the individual body and regulates the population, sovereignty kills or keeps alive, according to Foucault. Because the female body reproduces the population, which ensures the continuity and durability of a state, it becomes extremely important as an economic and national source.

Burdekin's *Swastika Night* depicts a world in which fascist Nazi Germany continues to rule far more powerfully. In its extreme, the novel reflects "the integration of sovereignty power into biopower" (Lemke, 2011, p.35) in Nazi power. Women are kept as breeding cattle in *Swastika Night* to ensure the population's survival. Because individual autonomy and privacy are directly related to biopolitics, Nazis keep women in cage-like settings in the novel to surveil them as national sources. They are not recognized as individuals but rather as tools of the state's biopolitics. Under Nazi rule, not only a woman's sexual autonomy but also her existence as a specific identity, as a subject, is denied and prohibited (Rupp,1977, p.162). According to Wesch, by combining biopower and sovereignty power, German fascism's "Regulatory power was implemented through the study and surveillance of the reproductive lives of the German population," and as "a national concern; genitals became property of the regime" (2018, p.13). In her dystopian novel *Swastika Night*, Burdekin pushes the boundaries of Nazi biopolitics and depicts the dehumanization of women for the purpose of reproduction. They are under constant surveillance in Women's Quarter, where they live as a herd, and the Nazis use them as baby-making machines as national resources. Burdekin presents a horrifying projection of Nazi biopolitics. While the Third Reich defined German women by their motherhood,

Burdekin's Hitlerdom dehumanizes them and strips them of their humanity, reducing them to the status of animals.

After seven centuries of Nazi hegemony, *Swastika Night* commences with an act of worship in which the Creed repeats the myth of Hitler's birth,

> In God the Thunderer, who made this physical earth on which men march in their mortal bodies, and in His Heaven where all heroes are, and in His Son our Holy Adolf Hitler, the Only Man. Who was, not begotten, not born of a woman, but Exploded! (A terrific crash from the organ and the drums, and all right hands raised in the Salute acknowledged that tremendous miracle.) (Burdekin,1985, p.5)

Within this context, the fact that Hitler was not born of a woman indicates that Hitler is not tainted by a woman's physical influence, which projects overt misogynism. It ends with his doctrines, “and I believe in pride, in courage, in violence, in brutality, in bloodshed, in ruthlessness, and all other soldierly and heroic virtues. Heil Hitler!” (1985, p.6). The unchanging laws of Hitler's society firmly establish the hierarchy in Burdekin's fictional Nazi Germany, as they do in most dystopian literature. All men in the empire have memorized these laws since childhood and recite them in the Holy Hitler Chapels,

> 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
>
> …
>
> 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 is 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. (1985, p.7)

That is to say, women are considered inferior to men, and only slightly superior to worms. The hierarchical organization highlights the inherent self-perpetuating dynamic of power in Nazi ideology. This Knight's regular sermon in one of the Swastika churches reminds the citizens of Hitlerdom of their social boundaries. In this context, women are ranked in a very low social position, whereas Hitler and God the Thunderer are the all-powerful leaders of the "fundamental immutable laws of Hitler Society" (1985, p.7). Christians, who are at the bottom, are despised and looked down upon with contempt. Thus, their total isolation from mainstream society, particularly Christian women, indicates a fear of racial contamination. As a result of their social stigma, any interaction or contact with Christians is avoided. This social structure relegates Christian women to derogatory terms such as the lowest, most contemptible, and filthiest thing. Christian women are seen as the most repulsive animals by German men. Hitlerism fabricates its own "other" for different groups in order to maintain a rigid and racist hierarchy.

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. (1985, p.7).

As they are expected to conform to their predetermined status, their militaristic order excludes subservient groups from the meaning-making process, thereby causing schisms in society. As the knights occupy a privileged position, military power plays a crucial role in maintaining the political paradigm. Hitler's all-powerful, God-like status makes it possible for an epistemological dogmatism to form and for his ideas to be spread through propaganda. This results in the eventual submission and blind obedience of citizens to the system.

In Hitler's hierarchy, the state attempts to preserve the purity of its race by allowing and compelling only certain races to procreate. In the novel, this policy is so internalized by the Nazis that when Hermann witnesses a young German boy attempting to rape a Christian girl, he becomes so enraged that he kills him. He is enraged for two reasons, first, this precious German boy should have been interested in men, as women are disgusting creatures; and second, she is a Christian who has a lower status in the hierarchy than animals.

The novel reflects the historical Nazis' emphasis on a racist hierarchy. In one of the scenes, Hermann states that ‘’he admires Alfred more than any other man in the world." (Burdekin,1985, p.21) Hermann, who has internalized Hitlerdom's hierarchy, states that Alfred is not his equal because he is "only an Englishman. So, I'm as high above him as a man's above a woman" (Burdekin,1985, p.21). Men's superiority over women is also emphasized in the hierarchical order. However, for a moment, Hermann is able to abandon "his racial superiority consciousness" and acknowledge that, despite his Englishness, Alfred is "a higher type of man." Yet he is aware that attempting to find an excuse is treason to Germany because "the divine doctrine of race and class superiority" makes no exceptions (Burdekin,1985, p.21).

In Burdekin's Hitlerdom, citizens' rights are not even up for discussion. By abusing its authority and power, the state maintains control over every citizen. It is worse for women because they are forced to live in cage-like places such as breeding herds. This novel draws the reader's attention to the supremacy of masculinity, which is founded on the subjugation of women. According to Elizabeth English, this is the foundation of fascist ideology (2017, p.45). Men are expected to adopt the characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity, and they are recited monthly in worship. Aside from the sanctity of Hitler, masculinity is emphasized in the very first pages of the novel, ‘’And I believe in pride, in courage, in violence, in brutality, in bloodshed, in ruthlessness, and all other soldierly and heroic virtues. Heil Hitler.’’ (Burdekin,1985, p.6).

Furthermore, women aren’t allowed to go to churches because they are regarded as dirty creatures. However, every three months, they are herded like cattle and sent to churches for Women’s Worship. In these worships, they aren’t allowed to sit; they have to stand while they are humiliated by the Knight and advised to be obedient blindly and submissive to men. When men and boys depart from the church, women can enter. However, they do not worship like men because their rights in the church are restricted, as is the case in most other aspects of their lives. They are not permitted to sit where men sit in the church, as it is believed that their presence would defile the seats. Their segregation within the church extends beyond this. Women were required to ‘stand while the Knight exhorted them on humility, blind obedience, and submission to men, reminding them 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, p. 8-9). This discourse indoctrinates women in Hitlerism by implanting blind obedience, submission to men, and humility. In this sense, Hitler viewed the birth of sons as a privilege bestowed upon women.

Women are ignored and excluded from society. The regime educates them in such a manipulative manner that they devalue their own sex and ostensibly submit voluntarily to the male supremacist society's ethos. Women are portrayed in a derogatory manner.

They are separated from men by the Women's Quarters. In this oppressive, patriarchal, and fascist future Nazi society, women reside in Women's Quarters, a separate location from where men reside,

> The Women's Quarters was a large cage about a mile square at the north end of the town. The women were not allowed to come out of it without special permission, which was very rarely granted. They had their hospital inside it, and their house of correction, where they were sent if they injured each other or failed in perfect humility. Their rations were brought to them every day, and once a day all women and girls who were not in late pregnancy or ill were made to do some gentle feminine physical exercises under bored male instructors…Once a month they were driven out of their enclosure and up to church, and that was the only time they were allowed to walk in the streets of the town like the men. (Burdekin,1985, p.157)

By means of the Women's Quarters, women's total isolation from their families and society continues. When he visits his wife Ethel, who lives with his sister Margaret, Alfred highlights the functioning of the Women's Quarter. Women cannot leave this cage without permission. There is a hospital and a correctional facility within the cage for those who do not meet male expectations. Some male instructors indoctrinate women and young girls in the male ethos by assigning them the sole responsibility of caring for their children and cooking rations. In Hitlerdom society, keeping women in cages led to homosexual attachment among males. Burdekin's Hitlerdom is tolerant of homosexual relationships in the novel because women are degraded into animals and cannot be objects of desire as in the past. Women are impure beings; therefore, men find it difficult to be sexually attracted to them. As Patai asserts,

> The women are kept in cages in segregated quarters, their Reduction complemented by the exaltation of men. This situation has led to homosexual attachments among males (Burdekin suggesting that male homosexuality may

> involve embracing, not rejecting, the male gender role), though procreation is a civic duty for German men [….] Power over women, not sexual pleasure, is the issue—for only boys are considered beautiful, desirable, lovable. (Patai,1985, p. iv- v).

Despite the fact that homosexuality is a modern patriarchal taboo, it is not excluded or prohibited in the novel. Throughout history, as Oosterhuis asserts,

> homosexuals were among those persecuted in Nazi Germany. Various researchers have explained this in terms of National Socialist racist ideology and eugenics, because the Nazis justified their regulations on the basis of population policies. (1997, p.187)

In the novel, however, the supremacy of masculinity is intertwined with homosexual relationships. Although homosexuality seems contradictory given that procreation is one of the primary concerns of the power, the biopolitics pursued, such as the Reduction of Women and the prosecution of Nazi men who do not have children by the age of thirty, in effect guaranteed procreation. Burdekin's approach towards homosexuality is presented as an embranchment of male dominance “in its worship of masculinity and denigration of women,” (English,2017, p.51) Burdekin's point is to emphasize masculine supremacy and female humiliation through references to homosexuality, such as Hermann's attraction to the young boy he beats to death or Alfred's son's refusal to enter the Women's Quarter.

Furthermore, Hermann's attraction to Alfred from the moment they meet suggests Hermann's homosexuality, even though he is unaware of it. Hermann loves Alfred so much that he even sacrifices himself for him. As a patriotic German who is not particularly intelligent, he cannot accept von Hess' revelations about Hitler not being a god and women being human beings. Nonetheless, he dies to safeguard these truths because Alfred believes in them. Alfred's heterosexuality, according to Horan, makes this relationship impossible. He does, however, state that “the text figuratively alludes to it” (2018, p.97) One of the references is that Alfred and Hermann share Hermann's bedroom, which only

has one bed. “Hermann’s pleasure at finding Alfred in his room, lying on his own bed, had given his face a temporary charming radiance” (Burdekin,1985, p.58). Another allusion to the homosexual relationship between these two men is shown at the novel's end. While they are about to be caught by soldiers in their hideout, Alfred's son Fred offers them to pretend to be lovers, “Make them think you and Hermann are here because you wouldn’t like to be with him where anyone might find you,’ whispered Fred very rapidly, but quite unflustered” (Burdekin,1985, p.190). These examples show that homosexuality is tolerated in Hitlerdom society. Because love between men and women is impossible in the novel, Alfred and Hermann do not have to hide their relationship. Burdekin does not criticize homosexual relationships in the novel; rather, she emphasizes how heteronormativity, in terms of biopolitics, serves fascist ideology by glorifying masculinity while degrading women. Burdekin criticizes homophobia and sexism of Nazis as a “symptom of hypermasculinity” (Horan,2018, p.99). According to Horan,

> In contrast to the genocidal policies of Hitler’s Third Reich, the state’s indifference to non-heterosexual tendencies among both foreigners and Germans who have produced issue reveals the novel’s belief that homophobia, unlike racism and anti-Semitism, would atrophy over time because it poses no threat to the blood purity of the Aryans. (2018, p.100)

Clearly, the Hitlerdom state encourages heterosexual relationships for reproduction; however, this is not due to homophobia but to the race's declining population. Burdekin demonstrates, through the homosexuality of Alfred's son Thomas, that homosexuals can live their sexualities without state interference, even if it is not publicly acknowledged.

> Thomas had gone out somewhere. He never went to the Women’s Quarters. His whole sexual and emotional life was lived among men. No stigma attached to it, and the German government had nothing to say against a whole-time homosexuality for Englishmen. If they had no children to bear it was their own look out. Alfred, who was as normal as it was possible for a man to be in such

> a society, had never blamed or envied Thomas for his way of living. (Burdekin,1985, p.166)

In addition, one of the clues about homosexual relations in the novel is Hermann's jealousy of the choirboy when the boy tries to rape a girl and his conversations with Alfred. Alfred asks Hermann in one of these conversations why he does not have a child, and Hermann responds that he cannot stand women. Alfred reminds Hermann of the penalty for not having a child by age thirty, and Hermann expresses his contempt for women.

> "But you ought to have come around to a normal attitude towards women at twenty-five. Don't leave it too long, Hermann. You may find yourself in difficulties."
>
> "I can't stand them!" said Hermann violently. "Oh, for Hitler's sake don't let's talk about women!" (Burdekin,1985, p.22)

The novel obviously states men's hatred of women. The whole empire in *Swastika Night* is built on patriarchy and misogyny. In the novel's opening scene, the reader is introduced to Hitler's attitude toward women, as it is stated that Hitler " was not begotten, not born of a woman", therefore he was not "defiled at birth" (Burdekin,1985, p.5-6). Since women are associated with being defiled, men are ravished by women even at their birth. Therefore, men should avoid having sexual affairs with women except for the purpose of reproduction. According to the theory of von Wied, a scholar-knight in Hiterdom, the beauty of women was an insult to Manhood.

> the beauty of women was an insult to Manhood, as giving them (some of them) an enormous and disgusting sexual power over men. He said, though, that his 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 dirty-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, through his humble mouthpiece Rupprecht von Wied. (Burdekin,1985, p.81)

In this regard, if a woman is pretty, the men are afraid of her sexual power over them. So, they make women ugly as they make them wear dirty brown dresses and shave their heads to make them ugly and submissive. Moreover, women obey this Reduction of Women process and internalized all the rules men made. Women belong to men; they should be ugly animals and submissive creatures. If a woman rejects a man, it is a big insult for a man. In the novel, as a dystopian reflection of Nazi gender ideology, women are relegated to subhuman roles in an effort to eradicate their autonomy and beauty. Beauty is attributed to German boys, as it is in the case of Hermann's attraction to a young choir boy, and it is not a feature attributed to women. According to traditional gender roles, women are expected to be pretty, have clear skin, and have a perfect bodies . However, in the novel, it is vice versa. Women cannot be pretty because they are soulless animals. Women are believed to have no souls and are frequently described in animalistic terms.

> 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 try to sound like humans. (Burdekin,1985, p.9)

Within this context, they aren't expected to have a soul, sexuality, beauty, or intelligence because they are nothing more than soulless breeding animals with shaved heads. One day, Knight F. von Hess shows an old picture to Hermann and Alfred. They see Hitler and a beautiful young girl in the photo. They are shocked by how beautiful the girl is. They think that women with shaved heads could not have such beauty and could

be just like animals. They even think that the photo isn't real and should be fake. Alfred is shocked about the past reality of women and asks a lot of questions to Knight von Hess. He explains the process of "The Reduction of Women." After his explanation, Alfred says, "I see I shall have to think about women seriously. I never knew they were important before." (Burdekin,1985, p.87). After learning the truths about women's pasts, Alfred's enlightenment gives hope to the reader.

Furthermore, since women are considered soulless human beings, they aren't expected to be sad or show sadness. However, during the women's worship, they need to show deep sorrow. Apart from women's worship, their tears are considered fake. They cannot be sad. Their only duty is to breed, especially boys, and raise them until the children are eighteen months old. Their sole purpose is to reproduce and ensure the empire's survival. Thus, the female body becomes the primary instrument for the state's population policies. Women have no authority over their bodies. If a woman is a mother, she has the so-called blessing and privilege. In fact, men make women think that way. The fact is women are always seen as inferior to men. Also, raping a girl over the age of 16 is not illegal since a woman has no other choice but to say yes to a man. So, men can take advantage of women's bodies as long as they wish. In that way, women become objects for men. As Crossley states,

> imprisoned in cages and fed a bare subsistence diet, the women have no souls according to Nazi ideology and are therefore not human but a biological nuisance required for the propagation of the species. Women are owned by men, but are visited by their men only for the dreary, lustless task of procreation; women do not have the right to refuse any male who wishes to use them, and therefore rape is not a crime. (Crossley,1987, p.97)

Given the position of women in the novel, it is not surprising that rape is not illegal. Since women are not considered to be humans, rape cannot be considered a crime. In the novel, because women are the property of the men of the empire and it is their

responsibility to impregnate them, women who do not wear an armlet can be raped by any man. The armlet indicates that this woman is "owned" by a man, and no man can rape her until he removes it. The practice of rape becomes an indispensable part of the empire's biopolitics. These women are systematically raped since it is a Nazi's duty to ensure the survival of the state. However, if the victim is a child, rape is acknowledged as a crime. Obviously, it is not for the sake of children; rather, it is because young girls under the age of 16 may give birth to weak infants. The priority of the state is reproduction, not the protection of young women. As is the case in Hermann's harsh reaction to the young boy when he catches him attempting to rape a young Christian girl. Hermann beats him to death not because he wants to protect the young girl, but because he is furious that such a handsome young man would be interested in a female, especially a Christian one. Hermann's rage stems from his belief that women are defiled and that any relationship with them other than reproduction is perilous. Women are only required for reproduction, not for sexual desires, because they are not humans but rather soulless animals. Hermann does not care about the young girl who is about to be raped, but he is envious of the boy's sexual attraction to her. During Women's Worship, the Knight informs women and daughters that they have no say in the matter of rape. Since rape means women have the right to "choice" and "rejection," it is not a crime. In Hitlerdom's regime, women have no control over their bodies or sexuality.

> It is not for you to say ‘I shall have this man or that man,’ he told them, or ‘I am not ready’ or ‘It is not convenient’ or to put any womanish whim in opposition to a man’s will. It is for a man to say, if he wishes, ‘This is my woman till I am tired of her.’ If then another man wants her, still she is not to oppose him; he is a man; for a woman to oppose any man (except a Christian) on any point is blasphemous and most supremely wicked. (Burdekin,1985, p.13)

The man decides whether or not to "have" or "own" a woman. Women must be humble and submit to the will of men. Specifically, they are not individuals, but rather

tools of the state for procreation and biopolitical subjects. If they are not in the possession of a man, they cannot escape rape from any man. As mentioned previously, if a woman wears an armlet, she is in the possession of a man in order to avoid being raped by another man. Men have no responsibility for women, as they are merely breeding animals. The armlet is not for the safety of women but out of respect for men. In addition, the armlet is essential for identifying the father. If the woman gives birth to a son, he is raised by the father.

Taking off the white armlet on her jacket, which shows that she belongs to one man, and having a daughter are the reasons women get insulted. In the novel, when a man takes off the armlet, other men can have sexual intercourse with her. What is more, she could also be sent to the big house where the Nazis live, which could mean brutal physical violence, if she doesn't have a baby every year until she stops being physically useful. This highlights the extreme oppression and objectification of women in the society depicted in the novel. It also shows how their worth is tied to their ability to bear children and fulfill men's desires.

The system doesn't make it possible to reject a man; instead, it creates a religious view that says it's blasphemous for a woman to reject a man. In Hitlerdom, women who have sons are regarded as better than women who have daughters. Women's voluntary or involuntary internalization of the constructed discourse leaves no room for criticism or dissidence, to the point where Marta, a dissident female figure, receives disdain from other women. The old woman Marta brings up the Knight's parapraxis about bearing strong daughters instead of sons without fear, which makes other women think of her as a dirty and ugly old woman. Young women insult old women who go against the rules. In this regard, the regime's despotic doctrine helps shape and organize social relationships to keep up the cult of absolute authority and obedience, which is one of the things that all dystopian societies have in common. Almost all the male characters use discriminatory language, which is best shown by the book von Wied, which tells a distorted story of women's history. In his book, women are shown to be more like apes than people.

Furthermore, his teaching also says that a woman cannot reject a man or start a family. In this regard, the standardization of women through the same appearance instructs women to be completely submissive to all men, which they do voluntarily.

Women's presence is not respected or valued at all. The regulations of a patriarchal society do not fully recognize the identity of women. Women are expected to comply with these rules without exception. Irigaray describes the effort of women to find their place within this order as follows, “There is, in an initial phase, perhaps only one ‘path,’ the one historically assigned to the feminine, that of mimicry. One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it” (Irigaray,2004, p.570). Women use mimicry to represent their femininity within male logic. As Irigaray suggested, the women in *Swastika Night* accept the patterns imposed upon them by men and mimic the roles assigned to them by the doctrines of patriarchal society. With the appearance of von Wied's theory against women, the entire pattern of women's lives is altered and made more suitable for the new German Manhood. Von Hess responds to Alfred's question about what women did once they learned the theory that is disadvantageous to them as follows,

> What they always do. Once they were convinced that men really wanted them to be animals and ugly and completely submissive and give up their boy children for ever at the age of one year they threw themselves into the new pattern with a conscious enthusiasm that knew no bounds… they did all that men told them to do cheerfully and willingly, that men would somehow, in the face of all logic, love them still more. (Burdekin,1985, p.82)

That is to say, women embrace the new pattern of submissiveness with conscious enthusiasm and play their roles in society, believing that men will still love them. Women are taught to accept men's will from childhood. As Patai asserts, in the world of futuristic Nazi Germany, “the women, for their part, are indoctrinated from childhood with their own insignificance and their proper role in accepting men’s will” (1985, p. vi). Therefore,

women accept, even subconsciously, their subordinate status. Schenider also asserts that, “The continued privileging of ‘masculine’ values... ensures that women unconsciously retain their feelings of inadequacy and even abnormalcy. Women are thus psychologically and socially manipulated into ‘good behaviour’ and complicity with the very system that denies them equality.” (1997, p. 48).

In the novel, Alfred says that in order to overcome the ideology of patriarchal society imposed on women and go beyond their subordinate status, they have to rediscover their own “soul-power which would come from being themselves, from being women.” (Burdekin,1985, p.108). However, Alfred overlooks something important, in this oppressive regime in *Swastika Night*, it has been stated numerous times, Of course, women have no souls and are therefore not human. Since a woman has no soul, she can have no sorrow (Burdekin,1985, p.9-11). Women of *Swastika Night* have to submit to the system's "Reduction of Women" policy, which is purposefully programmed by males in Germany. Their strategy is as follows,

> 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 do, 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).

With “The Reduction of Women”, it is legitimated the oppression of women within the empire. With the Reduction, women become totally subjected to men’s will and turned

into soulless animals. In *Swastika Night*, women accept male desires and live accordingly, which can happen unconsciously. Because the birth of a girl is considered a disgrace, she is abandoned by her father and placed entirely in the care of her mother, where she is merely used to incubate more males, as Crossley asserts,

> Because the birth of a girl is considered a disgrace, she is ignored by her father, left entirely in the care of women, and is destined to grow up with little food, no freedom of movement, and the sole function of being used to incubate more male babies. (Crossley,1987, p.97).

Women have begun to stop reproducing female babies as a result of the uselessness imposed on them over several centuries. According to Crossley, the women in *Swastika Night*, are "unable to make a physical resistance to their oppression, make a genetic choice not to endure rape, slavery, and dehumanization ... these women know that life without autonomy or pride or a soul is not right but a curse. Instinctively, they choose to bring no more women into the world" (Crossley,1987, p.5). In fact, a decrease in the number of female babies is not a desirable condition because it will lead to a decrease in the sacred race, but male authority cannot explicitly disclose this information to women. Because "if a woman could publicly rejoice in the birth of a girl, Hitlerdom would start to crumble" (Burdekin,1985, p.14).

Women's oppression is so deeply rooted in Hitlerdom's history that Alfred believes women's submission to men is natural. It oppresses women in such a harsh way that they are relegated to a subhuman status within society. Certainly, throughout history, men have oppressed women and held them to be inferior to them, and religion has supported this belief. In his book, *Desire and Empathy in Twentieth-Century Dystopian Fiction*, Horan states that, According to Stec,

> The Nazi hierarchy models itself partly on institutional Christianity. The text indexes St. Paul, whose teachings suggest woman is "nothing", and "nothing

she must become", beliefs indistinguishable from Nazi ideology. (2018, 183-184)

Burdekin's the Reduction of Women reflects the Nazi ideology mentioned by Stec. According to Horan, what Burdekin alludes to in her novel is "that the Church's backward attitude and policies toward women in her own time helped lay the foundation for the systematic degradation of women" (2018, p.111). The implication that Horan mentions becomes clearer when von Hess discusses the Reduction of Women,

> When the Reduction of Women started the Christian men acquiesced in it, probably because there always had been in the heart of the religion 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. And when women were reduced to the condition of speaking animals, they probably found it impossible to go on believing they had souls. (Burdekin,1985, p.73)

The novel's concept of gender is an extreme version of traditional patriarchy. Women, according to the novel, are ranked just above worms. It is unthinkable that they have a soul, intelligence, sexuality, and beauty, let alone an individual identity. They are merely vessels, fortunate to be allowed to carry German boys for the nation and to be subjects of Nazi biopower. Obviously, men cannot bear being rejected by a woman because they have always seen themselves as superior to women. With the process of "The Reduction of Women," the patriarchy depicted in Burdekin's novel eliminates this humiliating possibility by completely depriving women of their humanity. As a result, men ensure that women cannot reject them and that they can copulate with whichever female body they desire, as women are transformed into "female animals" after this process. This is summarized by Patai as follows, "Male egos and female bodies; male persons and female animals, these are the extremes of which an ideology of male supremacy is capable" (1984, p.258).

Even though *Swastika Night* is an anti-fascist dystopia that depicts the terrifying future dangers of Nazism, Burdekin concludes the novel with a message of hope for the future. In a world where women are degraded into animals and kept in cottages resembling cages, Burdekin has no choice but to make a male character the novel's protagonist. Women are so pacified that they are incapable of displaying any sign of solidarity or rebellion. The novel ends with the Knight Von Hess's request that Alfred keeps the history book that reveals the truth about Hitlerism. Alfred undertakes the mission and pledges to reveal the truth to the world. Together with Hermann, he returns to England and begins reading the book to his son, Fred, in order to teach him about the world before Hitler, as Fred will succeed him in the mission. Notably, despite the fact that Hermann is a devout and conservative Nazi and Alfred is inferior to him as an Englishman, Hermann accompanies Alfred to England in order to support and protect him. Hermann's self-sacrifice at the end of the novel to protect Alfred and his son reaffirms the bond between these two men, as emphasized by Burdekin. Three times per week, these three men meet in Stonehenge's bulwarks to read the book in secret. One night, they are caught by Nazi soldiers. While the soldiers capture Alfred and Hermann, Fred is able to escape with the book. Hermann attacks them to defend Alfred, and one of the soldiers shoots him. Alfred leads them to believe that these two men are lovers and are secretly meeting because Fred has offered them the opportunity to do so before he flees. Alfred cannot avoid being beaten by the Nazi soldier when he attempts to prevent the soldier from kicking the deceased Hermann. He awakens in a hospital and learns from Fred that the book is safe at the home of Alfred's Christian friend, Joseph Black. According to Fred, Christians are exempt from searches because Germans do not want to touch the possessions of inferior races. It is intriguing that Burdekin places Christians in such a critical position despite implying in her novel that the Christian Church has a “backward attitude and policies toward women in her own time helped lay the foundation for the systematic degradation of women” (Horan,2018, p.111). Horan explains that,

While, as possessors of von Hess’s book at the end of the novel, the Christians are poised to play a critical role in the decline and fall of fascism, Burdekin, as Payne makes

clear, gives no indication of how they will overcome the sexism that permeates their spiritual beliefs. (Horan,2018, p.111)

To conclude, when everything is taken into consideration, the aspects of the imperial government system that stand out the most are the pervasive misogyny, the emphasis placed on male superiority, and racial discrimination. Burdekin is a prescient writer who warns of the dangers of the misogynistic and fascist biopolitics of the Nazis even before World War II. Burdekin ignites a spark of hope in the gloom of Nazism, but she leaves the future of women unclear. She argues that patriarchy and fascism are inseparable as the supremacy of masculinity is constructed upon the degradation of women. The biopolitics pursued by the Nazis is well reflected in Burdekin's narrative. In her novel, she takes the historical Nazi discourse and policies on population regulation and control one step further. As a writer of dystopian fiction, she implies that the patriarchal, misogynistic understanding of the Nazis, which glorifies masculinity and places women in a subhuman position, would result in the extinction of men due to the decline in female birth rates. However, she gives hope with Alfred's connection to her baby daughter and the survival of the history book at the end of the book.

CONCLUSION

This study has tried to illuminate the gender concept in feminist dystopias by examining two examples of dystopias, *Swastika Night* (1937) and *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). In this study, we have tried to explain how totalitarian, fascist, oppressive, and patriarchal societies and governments exploit women's bodies and how they have enslaved women and utilized female bodies for reproduction. From a feminist perspective, this study tries to show how women have endured humiliating situations in male-dominated, patriarchal societies in the light of dystopian novels. Throughout the years, women have been instrumentalized and controlled by governments and men. The selected novels enlighten how men see women as property and reproductive machines and how governments create "others" in society to control individuals. Especially women are marginalized and othered in society. They aren't regarded as individuals. They are seen as walking wombs.

In *Swastika Night*, with the exception of the once-a-month service held at the church, women have no right to leave the Women's Quarter. Women are indoctrinated to believe that they are inferior animals and should not object to being raped since they have no control over their bodies during church services. They are made to live as if they were breeding animals and are compelled to become pregnant in order to serve as slaves for the nation. Women belong to men if a man puts an armlet on them. Due to this armlet, women can be protected from rape that could have been committed by another man. As women are seen as soulless animals, rape isn't illegal. Since women have no option to say no to any man, rape is not a crime in Hitlerdom. The purpose of this armlet is not, of course, to protect women, but rather to identify the biological father. Further, in the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, women are categorized according to their fertility. Those who have high fertility are selected to serve as handmaids in the houses of Commanders so that they can give birth to their commanders. Women are forced to live without their identities, their sexualities, their families, their names, and their histories by the patriarchal, totalitarian

Gilead Republic. Alike *Swastika Night*, women in *The Handmaid's Tale* are forced to be walking wombs, nothing more. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, women have to wear certain colors to identify their classes. Women's freedom is taken from their hands. They are like prisoners or slaves in society.

As feminist dystopias, *Swastika Night* and *The Handmaid's Tale* have a lot in common in terms of the reduction of women and a feminist perspective. But still, there are some differences. In the novel *Swastika Night*, women are degraded and dehumanized. They are regarded as soulless animals. They have no identities, no powers. They are treated like cattle; they are subhuman creatures. All the women are in their dirty brown clothes. They have no right to have hair. Their entire heads are shaved. They cannot be loved. Women have no class distinction; there is no difference between these women. They are all inferior to men. Just Christian women are at the bottom of the hierarchy; they are the most inferior, lowest beings in the hierarchal list. However, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, women aren't regarded as animals; they aren't dehumanized like they are in *Swastika Night*. In both novels, women are enslaved and seen as reproductive machines. Their first duty is to be a mother. They have no rights; they lost their identities, and all their rights are taken away from them in both novels. But in *The Handmaid's Tale*, some women still have some power over other women, such as the Aunts and Wives of the Commanders. The Aunts have the right to read and write. The others aren't allowed to read and write, such as Handmaids, Marthas, or Econowives. They are all regarded as second-class citizens and have no rights to own property or no jobs. Although Wives have power over the household and the Aunts have the power to command the Guardians and other women, all of these women are still part of the patriarchal hierarchy and serve the patriarchal rules.

Throughout the years, we have been taught about our gender roles as women and men. Women have been regarded as submissive, nurturing, polite, obedient, accommodating, and dependent. They are expected to dress in feminine ways and take care of children, cleaning, the house, and cooking. Women are expected to stay at home, do the domestic chores, and welcome their husbands with prepared meals when their

husbands come home after work. Men are expected to be masculine. They are expected to be strong, qualified, brave, dominant, aggressive, possessive, muscular, and bold. They can't be emotional; there is no need to have sensible thoughts for them because it is a sign of being feminine. These gender stereotypes of being feminine or masculine have been imposed on women and men since they were born. They are strengthened by social norms and patriarchal gender codes that tell men and women how to behave. With the help of literature, men, and women can see the bigger picture and realize that these are just traditional gender roles. Totalitarian, patriarchal, and fascist governments create 'others' in society to control individuals and feed these gender roles. So, as women and men, we don't need to fit into these roles.

Although both Margaret Atwood and Katharine Burdekin portray a dark future in their dystopian novels, they still give hope at the end of their novels. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, even though women suffer a lot from male supremacy, the protagonist, Offred, telling her story to the world gives hope to the reader. It shows the fact that something can still be done to change this slavery. Whether or not Offred's escape from captivity is certain at the end of the novel, her attempt to tell her story still gives hope. In addition, it is mentioned in the epilogue that a female professor serves as the chairman of the 12th Symposium on Gileadean Studies. Within this context, if a woman can be the chairman of a symposium, it means the frightening, troubling, dark, gloomy, and dystopian days of Gilead are no longer with women, and women are no longer considered to be inferior or lower than men. In a similar way, in the novel *Swastika Night*, the fact that the book of Friedrich von Hess, which has the truth about Hitler, is preserved by Fred gives hope to readers. This ensures that the story will continue to be told to future generations. Moreover, it is really encouraging to see that Alfred's, as a man, view of women has evolved in a positive way. The manner in which he treats his wife and daughter provides the reader with a sense of hope.

Consequently, while dystopian novels portray a seemingly impossible dark future, they actually depict contemporary politics or society's problems. We can conclude from

these literary works that patriarchal, misogynist, totalitarian, and fascist governments control individuals, their interests, populations, and collective identities through oppression and suppression. They try to control women, men, gender roles, sexuality, families, religion, and even history with distortions of reality. They try to make individuals submissive, passive, and obedient. Especially women are enslaved, othered, controlled, and marginalized in dystopian regimes, just like in real life. Hierarchical societies don't let women say what they think and don't help them build self-respect and self-worth. We can deduce from these literary works that if a woman starts to internalize male supremacy, it can be the beginning of a dystopic future.

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