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**FOR A BETTER WORLD: EXPLORING THE POLITICAL AND
ETHICAL STRENGTH OF ECOFEMINISM IN CHARLOTTE PERKINS
GILMAN'S *HERLAND* AND BEGUM ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSEIN'S
*SULTANA'S DREAM***

**Daha İyi Bir Dünya İçin: Charlotte Perkins Gilman'in Kadınlar Ülkesi ve
Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein'in Sultana'nın Rüyası Eserlerinde
Ekofeminizmin Politik ve Etik Gücünü Keşfetmek**

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, doğanın tahrip edilmesine bir tepki olarak ortaya çıkan ekofeminist hareketin Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın *Kadınlar Ülkesi* (1915) ve Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain'in *Sultana'nın Rüyası* (1905) adlı etkileyici ütöpik eserlerindeki izlerini açığa çıkarmaktır. 20. yüzyılın son çeyreğinden bu yana en ciddi toplumsal sorunlardan sayabileceğimiz iki temel konu kadın hakları ve çevresel kaygılardır. Bu zorlukların her birine çözüm bulmak için mücadele eden düşünme biçimleri vardır. Feminizm, kadınları etkileyen sorunlara çözüm bulmaya yönelik hem bir hareket hem de bir düşünce iken, ekoloji, kendisini çevreye ilişkin sorunlara çözüm bulmaya adanmış hem bir hareket hem de bir düşünme biçimidir. 20. yüzyıl boyunca çevresel sorunlar kötüleşmeye devam ettikçe, daha fazla sayıda feminist ekoloji hareketine ihtiyaç duyulmuştur. Bu eğilim yüzyılın ikinci yarısı boyunca devam etmiştir. Çevreyle ilgili artan endişelere yanıt olarak kadın çalışmalarının ayrı bir alt

alanı olarak ortaya çıkan ekofeminizm, çeşitli feminist ve çevreye duyarlı bakış açılarını bir araya getirmiştir.

Ekofeminist yazarlar bütün bu sorunları en iyi şekilde ifade ederken bütün bu ekolojik ve sosyal sorunlardan kurtuldukları muhteşem bir dünya olan ütopyalardan yararlanmışlardır. İnsanlık her zaman daha iyi bir geleceğin, daha iyi bir dünyanın hayalini kurmuştur. Ütopya dendiğinde düşündüğümüz muhteşem ve bir o kadar da olması imkansız yerler aslında iki edebi eserde olduğu gibi feminist fikirleri ifade etmede ve ideal bir toplum oluşturmada önemli bir araçtır. İncelediğimiz her iki eserin yazarı da yaratıcı ve tutkulu bir anlatımla kadınların tam ve bağımsız şekilde yetkili olabildiği bir dünyada toplumun nasıl geliştiğini gözler önüne sermişlerdir. Bu amaçla, belirtilen eserlerde doğa ve kadın ilişkisi ekofeminist bir bakış açısıyla ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenecektir. Bu çalışma, kadın ve çevre sorunlarının temel kökeninin erkek egemen düşünce biçimine dayandığını göstermektedir. İlişkilerin hakimiyet üzerine kurulu olduğunu ve özgür, eşit ve yaşanabilir bir hayatın ancak feminist bir yaklaşımla mümkün olduğunu savunan ekofeminizmin de çıkış noktası budur. Ekofeminist ve ütopyik romanlar aracılığıyla, çalışmamız ataerkil toplumun hem kadınlar hem de doğa üzerindeki etkilerini göstermeye çalışacaktır. Bu çalışma, ataerkil ideolojilerde yaygın olan benlik/öteki, erkek/kadın ve kültür/doğa ikili karşıtlıklarına meydan okumayı ve kadınların ve doğanın baskıcı sistemlerden özgürleşmesini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kadın ve doğa sorunlarının temel kaynağının ataerkil toplumlar ve erkek egemenliği olduğunu dile getiren ekofeminizmin bu güçlere karşı nasıl bir çözüm olduğu ve olacağı açıklanacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: ekoeleştiri, ekofeminizm, doğa, ekoloji, ekolojik felaketler, cinsiyet, kadın, feminizm, ataerkil sistem, toplumsal cinsiyet, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, ütopya, feminist ütopya, ideal bir dünya, anaerkillik, kızkardeşlik.



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the traces of the ecofeminist movement, which was appeared as a reaction to the destruction of nature, in the influential utopian works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's *Sultana's Dream* (1905). There have been two topics that might be regarded to be the most serious social challenges of our era since the final quarter of the 20th century. These issues are women's rights and environmental concerns. There are ways of thinking that struggle to find solutions to each of these challenges. Feminism is both a movement and a way of thinking that works toward finding solutions to the issues that affect women. Ecology is both a movement and a mode of thinking that is dedicated to finding solutions to issues related to the environment. As environmental issues continued to worsen throughout the course of the 20th century, a greater number of feminists started to take an interest in the ecology movement. This trend continued

throughout the second half of the century. Ecofeminism, which emerged as a distinct subfield of women's studies in response to growing concerns about the environment, brought together a variety of feminist and environmentally conscious perspectives.

Ecofeminist writers, while signifying all these problems in the most vivid way, benefited from utopias, a wonderful world where they eluded all these ecological and social problems. Humankind has always fantasized about a better future and a better planet. Utopias, that we think about the excellent but impossible places, are one of the most significant means of building an ideal society, as well as an important instrument for expressing feminist ideas as in these two important pieces of art. Both writers present a clear picture of what society may become if women were permitted to fully and independently participate as citizens with their visionary and ambitious way of writing. For this purpose, these works will be examined in terms of nature and women through an ecofeminist perspective. This study suggests that the main origin of women and environmental issues is based on the male-dominated way of thinking. This is also the starting point of ecofeminism, which says that a free, equal, and liveable life in a world where relationships are based on dominance can only be achieved by taking a feminist approach to environmental problems and looking at how it changed over time. Through these ecofeminist and utopian novels, this study intends to demonstrate the effects of patriarchal societies on both women and nature. This research aims to challenge the binary oppositions of self/other, man/woman, and culture/nature that are prevalent in patriarchal ideologies. It seeks to demonstrate the liberation of women and nature from systems of oppression. Expressing that main source of women and nature problems is patriarchal societies and male domination, it will reveal how ecofeminism is and will be a solution against these forces.

Keywords: ecocriticism, ecofeminism, nature, ecology, ecological disasters, sex, woman, feminism, patriarchal system, gender, gender roles, utopia, feminist utopia, ideal world, matriarchy, sisterhood

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INTRODUCTION

From the earliest literary utopias, including Plato's *Republic* (381 BC), to the most recent, like Herbert George Wells' *A Modern Utopia*, there has been a desire to exist in a better world. Utopia is often used to depict an idealized, fictional society in which everyone lives happily ever after. Sir Thomas More, in his work *Utopia* (1516), used the term to refer to a made-up island civilization in the New World. This may also refer to a planned community. Utopias represent such kind of good places that can only be imaginary, on the other hand, they criticize unjust and uncaring regimes while hoping for a better world. This is why, throughout the ages, it has been nourished by many hands and nurtured in accordance with several perspectives. For instance, in More's *Utopia*, the book that introduced the term “utopia” to literature, is notable for its focus on resolving the societal issues that plagued his own country in the author's time. In this light, More's primary goal in his utopia is to ensure that everyone has equal access to protections and opportunities. Or, other writers pay attention to other fields, such as socialism, democracy, anarchy, racism, capitalism, gender, hierarchy, or religion. Although utopias are written in different forms, they serve for the same purposes. Because of the dominance of their societal roles and responsibilities, individuals in these cultures lose their unique qualities, including distinctions, diversity, and individual freedom. When a person loses her/his identity, all of the distinctive qualities that the individual has lost, and the individual becomes an identical component of society.

Even though the majority of utopian novels share many of the same characteristics as early utopian fictions, they are particularly distinct from one another; their central beliefs and ambitions for creating a perfect society are quite different. Utopian literature, in its idealized forms, challenges the fundamental assumptions of patriarchal capitalism, including the meaning of society, democracy, authority, equality, education, parenthood, family, and religion. Utopian literature written by males, a reflection of Western thought and its intellectual traditions, is, nevertheless,

relatively limited in its treatment of gender concerns. Male utopian authors have been reluctant to provide potential remedies to the problem of patriarchal oppression, even while satirizing and critiquing the modern society that they inhabit. In these ideal societies, the conventional gender roles of men as earners and women as caretakers of the house continued till feminist philosophy and feminist utopias tore them apart. The social position of women took a step backward with each tragedy and conflict that occurred throughout the time periods. Women were the most affected in every war, economic crisis, and social destruction. That is why women struggled with not only today's problems but also in the past. In this environment, controlled by men, the concept of sisterhood took on a deeper significance as their slogan. The "current" and "tomorrow" have always been central to feminist movements. Feminists aimed to liberate society from patriarchal tyranny and bring about the gender equality they had envisioned for ages. The women who were members of the liberal movement came to the realization that they needed to speak the same language in order to eliminate the tyranny they faced in the social arena. They came to this realization because they were part of the liberal movement. As a result, women all around the nations have created hundreds of utopian works from a feminist perspective. At this point in time, utopian literature has shown new paths of inquiry that might be taken with regard to the discourse of sisterhood. The question of gender and the associated roles for men and women has often featured prominently in feminist utopias. The victimization and subordination of women, as well as the dishonest attitude that is ingrained in all human interactions, are at the center of the critique of feminist utopias. In this context, feminist authors have demonstrated the inconsistency of classical utopias by pointing out how these utopias scream for liberty, justice, and discipline for the benefit of the whole society, but then conduct exploitation, discrimination, and hatred against their female peers. The exploitation and subordination of women, as well as the hypocritical attitude that is ingrained in all human interactions, are at the center of the critique that is presented in feminist utopias.

Feminist philosophy suggests several potential alternatives to the established order. Regarding this context, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein (1880-1932) have created an ideal world, where only good deeds are done, and all devilish ideas are gone, and society is no longer a force male-power. The feminist ideas and critiques found in *Sultana's Dream* in the East and *Herland* in the West, both of which were chosen from the feminist utopia genre and published in nearly the same years, are very significant in the literature. The writers, Gilman and Hossein created a world filled with consciousness and advances, in which people realize the truth through information, experience, and technology. Their utopian worlds are designed for the actual inhabitants of our world, with the understanding that they promise improvement but not perfection. They also emphasize the importance of nature by referring to ecofeminism. The eco-feminist movement is a critique of patriarchy that finds parallels between the treatment of women and the environment under the male rule. According to ecofeminism, the patriarchal mindset maintains its power and control through the use of authoritarian power structures fed by secondary structures such as human/nature, nature/culture, and man/woman. As a result, ecofeminists advocate for ecologically conscious cultures that encourage gender equality and freedom for all members of society while also fighting to remove the institutionalized dualisms that are now in existence. They underline that water, soil, and air are all essential parts of nature, but also provide a hospitable environment for all forms of life. However, humans have disrupted this balance ever since they appeared. Human selfishness prevails, and humans continue to exploit nature, the environment, and people. Numerous studies have been published in the realm of literature to raise awareness about the environment. Because it has the power to make readers feel compassion for the fate of non-human creatures, to assist readers in mending broken links to the natural world, and to encourage readers to build new connections, literature plays a crucial part in the growth of environmental awareness. Imagination that is sparked by reading literature transports readers to far-flung

locations. Therefore, it is possible to draw people's attention to nature, the environment, and other beings through literature.

This work is an analysis of the new forms in the utopian literary tradition that became powerful during the second wave of feminism and feminist criticism of two notable authors and their outstanding works: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's *Sultana's Dream*. The purpose of this research is to spread the ecofeminist message that until society abandons its patriarchal, hierarchical, and male-centered views of women and nature, environmental catastrophe and gender inequality will persist indefinitely. This thesis reveals the power of ecofeminism in female-dominated societies and how its ethical strength helps to provide equality in every field.

In the first chapter, *An Awakening Against All Hegemonies: Feminist Utopias*, literary utopias will be discussed in general. The term "utopia" will initially be discussed in the context of a literary genre in the first section of chapter one. Various speakers will present their own, unique conceptions of utopia. Then, utopian writing will be classified according to its subjects, including economy, politics, education, and religion. In the second section, the evolution of utopian literature will be explained and the inadequacy of the subjects in male-dominated utopias will be revealed. Finally, feminist utopias will be explained as an opposition to classical utopias. It will provide a historical overview of female utopian ideals. The differences between classical utopias and feminist utopias will be revealed by looking at how they evolved throughout the course of feminist movements.

The second chapter, *Ecofeminism As An Integrative Project*, will explain in full the male-dominated gender norms and the destructive ideology of patriarchy. This means that theoretical frameworks may be used to highlight the differences between women and men. Social and cultural shifts are the root cause of women's subjugation and oppression; thus, it is crucial to establish clear gender roles. By speaking directly

to women from this culture, sexist beliefs and gender norms will be challenged. Lastly, in the final section, an anti-dualist ecological feminism will brake all the limitations of dualist pathriarchy. It is obvious that women are struggling to find meaning in their lives while also battling for their own survival in a society that views women as citizens of a lower social class. This is the case in a social environment that sees women as second-class citizens. Existential ambivalence is quite widespread among women as a result of the losses that are a direct result of living in a patriarchal culture. Thus, in this chapter, the belief of ecofeminists, which is the patriarchy maintains its power via authoritarian institutions based on binary oppositions of human/nature and male/female, will be clarified. Finally, the ultimate goal of the ecofeminist understood that is to disseminate all socially created cultures and foster an environment in which gender equality and freedom may grow.

The last chapter of the thesis, *The Ramification Of Ecofeminist Salvation In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland And Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein's Sultana's Dream*, discusses the writers' respective literary legacies and provides a background on the works under discussion. In the last section of the thesis, ecofeminism is applied to the previously mentioned pieces are analyzed. Both novels, *Herland* and *Sultana's Dream* will be analyzed in terms of utopian and ecofeminist ideas regarding their characters, histories of the countries, the concepts of religion and “holy” motherhood, social relations among the citizens, and the position of nature in their lives. This research will provide a representation of utopian and ecofeminist literature in its historical evolution, which is in the quest of an ideal society in which all creatures are afforded equal rights and opportunities.

CHAPTER ONE - AN AWAKENING AGAINST ALL HEGEMONIES: FEMINIST UTOPIAS

1.1. Heavens in a Non-existing World: Utopias

“More perfect than the real world, yet nonexistent; separate, yet connected”

(Carey, 1999, p. 2).

The phrase “utopia” is difficult to describe because the idea itself contains both uncertainty and conflict. The desire for a better or ideal society is as old as humanity itself. Since the Ancient Ages, individuals of all walks of life have fantasized about future societies in which they would be free to pursue their own pursuits of happiness without fear of persecution from those of other cultures. Throughout time, this need, or dream has been expressed in various ways and for various purposes, but it has never vanished. In this sense, despite the fact that Thomas More coined the term “utopia” in 1516, utopian thought began before with people envisioning an alternative world.

Utopia might refer to either an imaginary civilization very different than the one the author really lives in, or to a certain kind of fiction. Both are very distinct and opposite to each other. In fact, *utopia* is a Greek word (ou: no, topos: place) that means “no place.” Both nowhere and a nice place may be referred to as the utopian ideal. It is living in a world that is impossible, but where one aspires to be. Utopia is a literary subgenre that refers to an imagined civilization that is completely distinct from the reality in which the author really lives. This society is referred to as an ideal society. A utopia that is purposely designed to be perfect and meets all of its residents' needs is known as a paradise. It depicts another reality, free from the problems we face in the existing one. The fact that utopias have a wide variety of depictions suggests that achieving an ideal and happy living is not easy, but that such a society may have been conceivable in some bygone golden period or at some time beyond the past. However, the term “utopia,” which describes this ideal in literature, was not used until 1516, by

Sir Thomas More. Since that time, utopia has been a compelling form for western society's aspirations and concerns to be expressed. As Levitas (1990) mentioned, utopias have always been existed in many forms throughout the history of literature:

Some people see More as a “founder” of a utopian tradition. But More did not invent the practice of imagining the world otherwise. You will find it in medieval poems such as *The Land of Cockayne*, a mythical place devoid of bad weather, lice, illness, and work where ready-cooked larks fly into your mouth; in the biblical Eden; in classical thought such as Plato’s *Republic*, to which More refers; in Native American mythology; in the Irish imrama, accounts of mythical or real voyages, such as the voyage of Saint Brendan (p. 396).

In this regard, the original meaning and context used by More are still significant, but the word has gained additional meanings and contexts over time. As a result, giving a definition of utopia has become challenging as it varies depending on the position of the individual formulating the definition within the arguments on utopianism. Other than that, a person's position can alter depending on the definition he or she employs. In conclusion, there is no established concept of utopia, making its definition a complicated and difficult question. As a comprehensive meaning, it can be possible to say utopia is the manifestation of the longing for an ideal way of life.

The history of utopia includes not only the history that has been documented but also the ancient history that has been passed through orally, which describes alternative joyful worlds. As Sargent states in “Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited,” the earliest utopias are in the form of myths “that look to the past of the human race or beyond that for a time when human life was or will be easier and more satisfying” (p. 10) (As cited in Yılmaz, 2021, p. 18). They are called Golden Ages, Arcadias, earthly paradises, fortunate isles, and isles of the blest; and narrated by Hesiod, Plato, Virgil

and Ovid in the West. They shared many common features as Sargent (1994) summarized:

... simplicity, security, immortality or an easy death, unity among the people, unity between the people and God or the gods, abundance without labour, and no enmity between human beings and the other animals. If women are included (they often are not), they give birth without pain. These utopias are achieved without human effort and are seen as a gift of nature or the gods (p. 10).

As emphasized above, these utopias were not obtained with human success, instead, they were given to humanity as a gift of God. Additionally, these utopias are called “utopias of escape”, “utopias of sensual gratification” and “the body utopia”, because they focused on pleasures, especially bodily pleasures by eliminating misery, pain and death (Yılmaz, 2021, p. 19). Although it was oral or ancient literature, it is very obvious that utopias have always been existed even if they have not been named yet. Because as human beings existed, dreams, desires and needs also existed. As they had a problem or missing in lives, they reflected their fantasies in their imaginary worlds which we call utopias. As Morrison described, “all paradises, all utopias are designed by who is not there, by the people who are not allowed in” (1998, p. 19). As our needs develop, we keep searching on a better place to live. Thus, these paradises become never reachable. As the concept of perfection improves, utopias also shape and expand in different forms. “A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is landing. And when Humanity lands there it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias” (Wilde, 1910, p. 27). It can be concluded that as human beings always search for the nirvana, they will fantasize about a better utopia. In addition to that, utopian thought is a necessary warning to the progress of any society. Progress is the realization of utopia.

As for John Carey as he states in the introduction of *The Faber Book of Utopias*, utopia is about nowhere. But it is not nowhere that can call itself a utopia. Many imaginary places lie outside utopia's boundaries. To count as a utopia, an imaginary place must be an expression of desire. To count as a dystopia, it must be an expression of fear. As well as being about nowhere, then, it is about humanity's desires and fears as recorded over the past two thousand years and more. But as they grow from desire and fear, utopias aim at our sympathy and attention. Sometimes they may appear impractical or unlikely, though. It is the general truth about human beings that from time to time we dream of better places for the ones we love and want them to be free of suffering, injustice and heartbreak. Those who construct utopias built on that universal human longing. But, what they build may carry within it its own potential for crushing or limiting human life. This dilemma is seen in all utopian projects. They aim at a new world but must destroy the old. The core of their imagination is the fact that everything inside our heads, and much outside, are human constructions and can be changed. But how and what to change is endlessly controversial. Because of this, it can be said that the utopia is the most divisive of literary forms. Some of these divisions and the topics that cause them are these: 1. the human race and its composition, 2. how to deal with crime and criminals, 3. the method of producing the ideal citizen, 4. the issue of gender (as cited in Asangöncü, 2011, p. 31).

According to Carey cited above, eliminating humanity is the ultimate goal of every utopian society. As was previously said, every utopia aims to replace the reality we know, which consists of actual people. However, if actual people are unable to live in utopias, what is the point of constructing an ideal commonwealth in which people are able to enjoy better lives? But it is clear that utopian authors have figured out plausible methods to get rid of actual individuals, including dictators, torturers, and terrorists. According to this, utopia is an effort to eliminate the negative aspects of

human existence. Human's tendency towards the perfect, the dream of getting rid of the imperfect leads them to a utopian vision. The struggle to cope with all kinds of negativities, the urge to overcome these negativities, is the source of the birth of utopias. The human being, trying to struggle with the negativities, either dreams the perfect one and postpones her/his desires to the future, when she/he cannot overcome them, or seeks it in the hidden paradise she/he designed in the past, in the centuries of bliss.

The *Politeia (Republic)*, 375 BC) written by Plato is considered by many to be the first utopian work. *Republic* is considered to be a philosophical paradise despite the fact that it is a book that exists outside of the literary framework. As Kurt (2015) mentioned in her study;

Through the works of some philosophers and thinkers like *Republic* by Plato and *Utopia* by Thomas More, it is understood that the idea of creating a perfect world dates back to the beginning of humankind. Plato's *Republic* can be accepted as the first attempt to build up an ordered and ideal society. In his work Plato resembles people to societies and divides them into three categories. He says that people are composed of three components. The first one is the mind that thinks, the second one is the spirit that looks for the person and the third one is the body that likes and hates something and has needs such as food, drink, and sexual intercourse. Plato argues that a good person should not only listen to these three parts but also let the mind control the other two; otherwise, he gets unhappy and is disliked by other people or may do actions that he would later on regret (p. 21).

As it is explained below, Plato also includes society and different types of people in his work. Plato asserts that the exercise of reason is instrumental in establishing a state of harmony and contentment among individuals. He categorizes society into three

distinct groups. The initial group consists of philosophers who engage in thinking for the betterment of society. The next group comprises soldiers who undertake the responsibility of safeguarding the society. Lastly, the third group is comprised of workers who contribute to the production of goods for the benefit of society:

Plato notes that a society needs all these types of people but only the philosophers are labeled as good people as they are thought to be dominated by their mind. The others are assumed to be dominated by their souls or bodies. Therefore, for the welfare of the society, the philosophers ought to be the rulers. So, it can be commented that Plato believes in the sublimity of the reason and necessity of the logocentric way of life (Kurt, 2015, p. 22).

Plato was a pioneer in the concept of the utopian society, which impacted many authors in both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions. The realization of a justice and virtual government that based on rational and moral principles has always been in the focus of the divine prophets and thinkers. That is why Plato depicts a schematic of an ideal and virtuous society in his collection of works. By stipulating the general framework of such a city, he seeks to lead ancient Greek society from the abyss of destruction and corruption to a rational and moral state (Mehrnia, Hasan, 2021, p. 32).

While Thomas More's *Utopia* is one of the most well-known examples of utopian literature, there are some other works of this genre. For instance, in 1623 Tommasso Campanella wrote *The City of the Sun*. The work is about the island of Taprobane where there is a communal property, labour is equally shared and there is no money, science education is stressed above all, slavery is abolished; rulers are men and women, and they are seen as the resource of community. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, published in 1627, is one of the principal examples of

utopian genre in the history of intellectuality. *New Atlantis* is an incomplete utopian novel in which Bacon presents a vision of the future of human discovery and knowledge and expresses his aspirations and ideals for humankind. In his work, Bacon imagines a utopian land where ‘generosity, Enlightenment, dignity, piety, and welfare of the public’ are common characteristics of the citizens of the mythical Bensalem. Another work is Jonathan Swift *Gulliver’s Travels*, which was published in 1726 and the last chapter of which we are going to study in detail together with Thomas More’s *Utopia* in the following parts of this thesis. The book deals with the traveler Gulliver. The society of Houyhnhnms that is represented in the last book of *Gulliver’s Travels* can be considered as a utopian world. There are intelligent and elegant horses in the country of Houyhnhnms and there is an ideal form of government and a perfect social system (Kurt, 2015, p. 23).

She also continues with other outstanding utopian works; Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*, a literary work written in the 19th century, can be classified as another example of utopian literature. In the literary piece, a youthful individual from Boston experiences a state of slumber and subsequently emerges in the year 2000, wherein he discovers a societal landscape characterized by egalitarianism. The population exhibits a state of well-being and good health. The presence of armed forces, lawyers, salesmen, and bankers is absent.

The government gives an equal monthly share. Moreover, in 1933, James Hilton published *Lost Horizon*. In this utopian fiction a British diplomat finds peace in the mountains of Tibet where the monks practice a combination of Christianity and Buddhism. Peace and moderation have to be in everything. Lastly, in late twenties, Marge Piercy writes *Women on the Edge of Time*. The protagonist Connie Ramos visits the idyllic village of Mattapoisett in 2137 in order to see a utopian society out of

pollution, racism, classism, and subordination. She also travels to an alternative place in which drugs are used and the majority of the population subdues. Connie wonders which of these futures realize. The works above are examples of utopian literature. Therefore, it can be maintained that the fantasy of a better world has been an on-going dream since the ancient times (Ibid, 2015, p. 23).

As it is mentioned above; it's obvious that prominent researchers, thinkers, storytellers, etc. have all contributed to the notion of utopia in an effort to craft ideal, joyful, and well-ordered worlds. As the society's intellectuals, they have attempted to demonstrate how the society should function. Therefore, these writers and scientists ruminate on the things that make them uneasy about the world around them and seek answers to those concerns. They evaluate their societies and express their desires by creating ideal, model worlds. It is recognized that utopias serve as models for society's evolution and development. It is concluded that, the history of utopia inevitably begins with Thomas More. However, as Longxi (2002) mentioned utopias shouldn't be limited only with Western literature;

In the same volume, however, Lyman Tower Sargent understands utopia in a much broader sense and traces the theme of utopianism throughout history. "Not every culture appears to have utopias brought about through human effort that predates knowledge of More's *Utopia*" says Sargent, "but such utopias do exist in China, India, and various Buddhist and Islamic cultures" (Sargent, p. 8). Whether utopia is a sixteenth-century European invention or something much larger in scope and can be found much earlier in different cultural traditions (p. 2).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, diversity prevailed in utopia literature. Contrary to the classical utopia tradition, in which the individual is dissolved in society, designs that are open to change and differences have begun to be created. In the classical utopia

tradition, the conditions and how the society was created are not included, but, in modern utopias, there is an emphasis on the necessity of struggle for the creation of a targeted society. Later, feminist utopia literature will benefit from this idea. *A Modern Utopia*, written by H. G. Wells in 1905, showed that utopias can also be written as open to change, and this idea was developed by writers such as Ursula K. Le Guin and Yevgeni Zamyatin. Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948) are also examples of modern utopia literature.

Even though the majority of utopian novels contain many of the same qualities as early utopian fictions, they are notably diverse from one another. Their fundamental ideas and aspirations for establishing a perfect society are highly different from one another. In its most idealistic versions, utopian literature questions some of the most basic assumptions of patriarchal capitalism. These questions include topics such as the meaning of society, democracy, authority, equality, education, parenting, family, and religion. The discussion of gender issues in male-authored utopian fiction, which is a reflection of Western philosophy and the intellectual traditions of that region, is, nevertheless, very restricted.

There are socialist, capitalist, monarchical, democratic, anarchist, ecological, feminist, patriarchal, egalitarian, hierarchical, racist, left-wing, right-wing, reformist, free love, nuclear family, extended family, gay, lesbian and many more utopias [Naturism, Nude Christians, ...] Utopianism, some argue, is essential for the improvement of the human condition. But if used wrongly, it becomes dangerous. Utopia has an inherent contradictory nature here (Sargent, 2010, p. 21).

As Sargent (2010) summarizes utopias, they are very effective to spread the idea of a perfect society, on the other hand, it also gives a way to spread dangerous ideas, too. To conclude, the origins of utopia extend back to ancient times. Utopias are created as a result of the social problems that arise. Prior to the industrial revolution,

utopias that originated before the birth of Christ occupied a significant place in world literature. It reflects the characteristics of the society in which utopias exist in terms of gender relations. However, gender roles are not as decisive as in real life.

1.2. The Hypocrisy of Classical and Male-dominated Utopias

The sexist vocabulary and attitudes of male writers have persisted throughout the history of utopias written by males, notably in classical utopias. Utopian authors' constant ignorance of gender inequality raises questions about the intimacy of male utopian writers, especially when we consider that the fundamental motivation behind their perfect society creation is to critique and parody the current ones. When men are responsible for establishing a utopian system, it is probable that such a system will be associated with a dystopian state of sadness. The attainment of perfect peace by humanity necessitates the complete eradication of all forms of misconduct through absolute control. Bullying cultures exhibit a pattern where individuals who make mistakes are subjected to public humiliation, leading to their marginalization and suppression by the collective. Jami (2016) starts with a very common understanding of male-dominated utopias:

This is a superficial peace made by force and by fear, one in which there is no freedom to breathe; and the reason it is impossible for man to maintain freedom and peace for everyone at the same time. Christ, on the other hand, transforms, instead of controls, by instilling his certain inner peace. This is the place where one realizes that only his holiness is and feels like true freedom, rather than like imprisonment, and, too, why Hell, I imagine, a magnified version of man's never-ending conflict between freedom and peace, would be the flesh's ultimate utopia - yet its ultimate regret (p. 37).

Thomas More's *Utopia* was written during a time when the monarchy was growing in power, injustice, arbitrary sanctions, and inequality were rampant, and the

transition from feudalism to capitalism was accompanied by suffering. Due to elements such as economic equality of individuals and the abolition of private property, *Utopia* has a socialist perspective. In addition, it has religious elements similar to the medieval monastic life in terms of its emphasis on Christianity, common ownership, hierarchy, regulation of all areas of life within the framework of certain rules, introversion, and an isolated society.

More critiques the nobles and nobility, as well as the monarch, in the first chapter. According to More, the reason for the impoverishment of the general population and the rise of social disorders such as theft, prostitution, vagrancy, and begging is that the people are pushed into poverty while kings and nobles increase their wealth and aristocrats exploit the productive segment. People exist in destitution while the upper classes spend money on indulgence and ostentation. The most severe sanctions are administered to criminals. If they are provided with opportunities for healthy living, according to More, no one will pilfer at the expense of their lives. All of More's criticisms are directed at the social injustice, exploitative economic policy, and unjust legal system of his time in England. In the book, the corruption of the church, the clergy's exploitation of Christianity for their own ends, and the clergy's desire for prosperity are criticized. In the first part of *Utopia*, More presents his critiques of political, socio-economic, legal, religious and moral domains.

In the second part, he gave a detailed portray of the island of Utopia. The economic system is predicated on the equitable distribution of the products of collective effort. In *Utopia*, free inhabitants do not fight or do degrading labor; instead, slaves and mercenaries are responsible for carrying out these activities. For instance, animal slaughtering is the responsibility of captives because it dulls the sense of compassion and sympathy. For Utopians, shedding blood and engaging in combat are abhorrent actions. Slavery is the punishment for prisoners of war captured with weapons in *Utopia* and for Utopians who perpetrate severe offenses.

In classical utopias, which set out with the assumption that all individuals are equal, it is seen that there are inequalities between many groups. The rule of the society by an elite minority creates the ruler-ruled relationship. The rulers are seen as virtuous and wise, and they make decisions for the people by themselves. Since the decisions are made once, the people are obliged to maintain it. Sexuality, which is another issue, is carried out by the state in control and order, as well as being the continuation of the society. Interventions in sexual life for the benefit of society are considered legitimate. Classical utopias appear as a society design in which people are limited and controlled with the aim of creating a perfect society, there is no equality despite the discourse of equality, and inequality between men and women is constantly emphasized due to their patriarchal structure. Therefore, each utopian author gives various principles and ideals a higher priority in their societies and molds the social structure of their utopias accordingly. However, in order to maintain their existing ideals, they all relegate individuality and personal autonomy, which are arguably just as vital, to the periphery. Under the influence of their societal tasks and responsibilities, individuals in these cultures lose their uniqueness, diversity, and independence. By losing their identities, all the distinctive qualities of the individuals vanish, and they become identical members of society. Therefore, it is seen that equality in utopias is in a functional and horizontal position. In other words, since everyone in the country has to fulfill the determined functions, special abilities, wishes, or needs are pushed into the background, and freedom is destroyed by ignoring the right to personal choice. Equality is confused with the concept of justice and freedom, which is an outcome of equality, is put into the background because it requires to bear its cost.

Although women in *Utopia* seem to be equal to men in working life and education, there are unequal gender relations in the state system, social life and social institutions. Women, for the most part, deal in wool and flax, which suit best with their weakness, leaving the ruder trades to the men (More, 2020, p. 47). Although factors such as women and men working on equal terms in agriculture, boys and girls serving together at the table, women participating in war training with men at certain

times, trying to develop their thoughts in their spare time, make us think that the position of women in *Utopia* is positive, but, actually only men take part in religious duties, legal system and the state administration. Only widows and elderly women can ascend to the rank of priesthood. The Utopians dress alike, with certain distinctions; The clothes of men and women and singles and married people are different. Their life plans are also different: “Their women, when they grow up, are married out, but all the males, both children and grandchildren, live in the same house” (More, 2020, p. 54).

In this context, the term “woman” refers to a certain biological state. It would seem that she is fragile and easily affected by sadness. More reasons thus based on the fundamental characteristics of being a woman. And the patriarchal legacy of the relationship between father and son continues. Despite the fact that everyone in *Utopia* is responsible for agriculture, the women are expected to remain at home due to their inherent weakness, while “manly” labour is reserved for the actual men. As a consequence of this, “rough works” are the inheritance of males, while the responsibility of taking care of the household falls to the girls.

“But to return to their manner of living in society: the oldest man of every family, as has been already said, is its governor; wives serve their husbands, and children their parents, and always the younger serves the elder (More, 2020, p. 55)”.

As Burçak Tayhan Güzel (2019) stated in her study; in the context of marriage, women assume a possessive status indicated by the use of the possessive adjective “their”. Upon marriage, it is customary for a woman to leave her own residence and relocate to her spouse's residence:

In each family, the head of this nuclear unit is the oldest man, so each time woman is under the control of a man- husband, father, grandfather or father-in-law. As a daughter, she has to serve her parents at home and when she is married, she has to serve her husband. Her role in social life

does not change and also justifies the religious basis that woman was created for man. She is always obliged to fulfill this manly-world's desires. Together with this, the last reference from the book cannot be a coincidence; that is the image of a slave and woman. The housework is under the responsibility of slaves and women. There is a hierarchical order between slaves and women in household matters. It is like a microcosm of power relations outside the dining hall (Güzel, 2019, p. 57).

Classical utopias highlight the elimination of private property and the establishment of universally shared wealth. The importance of education and birth control cannot be overstated. On the other side, women face harsher sanctions, are excluded from governmental administration, and are obligated to submit to males. There is no sexism or discrimination at work, but women are restricted by things like sexual norms.

In classical utopias, social ills of the society are always about education, family, religion, justice, economy, law and social strata independently of gender politics. Woman as a liberated being or a citizen is not pictured in the idealized societies in progress. Traditional portrayal of family, religion and employment makes these dream lands of patriarchy a nightmare for women (Tayhan Güzel, 2019, p. 49).

She summarizes that male-based utopia practice has looked for gender roles that have been confirmed by culture. The concept of family is very important in most of the utopian works. The head of the family always and without any question, is the father. At the same time, gods, rulers and judges are called "father". In Male-dominated utopias, the state, law, religion and family are structured in a patriarchal, heterosexist, hierarchical manner. While the girls of marriageable age move to their husband's house when they get married, the boys continue to stay in the family by

keeping the word of the oldest man until he dies. “But to return to their manner of living in society: the oldest man of every family, as has been already said, is its governor; wives serve their husbands, and children their parents, and always the younger serves the elder” (More, 2020, p. 58).

Joanna Russ, a prominent writer within the feminist utopia genre, classifies classical utopias based on their perspectives on gender roles. The categorizations encompass three distinct themes: the perpetuation of the existing state of affairs without alteration, the portrayal of role reversals as morally reprehensible, and the depiction of fictional scenarios wherein women, albeit in limited numbers, are portrayed as working on par with men. However, these categorizations fail to address the pivotal inquiries regarding other aspects of society, such as personal relationships and the distribution of labor traditionally associated with women. In *Utopia* for instance, women's chores such as cooking, childcare and housework are the responsibility of women:

All the uneasy and sordid services about these halls are performed by their slaves; but the dressing and cooking their meat, and the ordering their tables, belong only to the women, all those of every family taking it by turns. They sit at three or more tables, according to their number; the men sit towards the wall, and the women sit on the other side, that if any of them should be taken suddenly ill, which is no uncommon case amongst women with child, she may, without disturbing the rest, rise and go to the nurses' room (who are there with the sucking children), where there is always clean water at hand and cradles, in which they may lay the young children if there is an occasion for it, and a fire, that they may shift and dress them before it (More, 2020, p. 60).

And Tayhan Güzel (2019) continues that the perception toward the old gender roles continued unresolved until the late 1970s, which, in a manner, demonstrated that

there would be no change for women in future areas. The inability of women to reason and their biological make-up are the basis on which Rousseau builds his argument that women are inferior. This is not the result of patriarchal mindset or customs but rather the result of nature and biology. As cited below, it is very obvious that male-dominated utopias represent the inequalities between men and women, although they are supposed to reflect a more fair and equal life for all human beings:

Patriarchy justifies its superiority over women. So, we cannot read a woman in action as it is in More's *Utopia*. In traditional Christian (social butterfly figure) patriarchal family (doll baby figure), women are left in the houses while their male colleagues are establishing an ideal and new society (p. 43).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, modern utopias differ from the classical understanding. The most basic feature of modern utopias is to emphasize the economic structure and relations rather than the state organization and to try to develop the balanced relationship between the individual and society. Since modern utopias were written with the influence of socialism and anarchism in the years they were formed, they show features such as obeying the will of the majority instead of the imposition of a central group or the domination of a single person, living in small social structures, and making decisions with the participation of the elected representatives of the whole society or region. In traditional utopias, people are kept in check by the use of prohibitions and penalties; however, in contemporary utopias, there is an awareness that people should be encouraged with prizes and given good instructions. However, even though freedoms are included, the society needs to be organized and put into groups. Like all these controls, people's sexual lives are also inspected. In this issue, where two different approaches are followed, either sexuality is left completely free, controlled or mechanized and suppressed.

1.3. Deconstructing of all Patriarchal Institutions and Attitudes: Feminist Utopias

Humanity has long dreamed about a better future and an imagined better world. The first wave of feminism, which emerged in the late nineteenth century, is credited with inspiring the creation of the feminist utopia genre. The women's movement has questioned and transformed the position of women in the private and public spheres. Feminist utopias attempt to create a new system of thought, a new world, and a new language by critiquing the patriarchal order from a variety of perspectives, including the unique perspectives of women writers. Dreams of a fundamental femininity liberated to define its own nature and culture are not what feminist utopias are about; rather, they represent a way out of the male-dominated society and into a culture defined in opposition to the patriarchal heritage. Feminists, especially focusing on the issue of gender, drew attention to the fact that being a woman is an artificial phenomenon that is learned from the very first day. The early feminist movement, which struggled for women's right to vote and be elected, to enter various professions and to receive education, tried to show that all areas of society, especially state administration, were formed on a sexist basis. Sümer (2017), explains the the fundamental structure of feminist utopias throughout the history, so that it really works on struggling with the major problems in a male-dominated world:

Utopias, “the good place, which is no place”, are one of the most influential ways of creating an ideal world and also serve as a crucial tool for expressing feminist ideology. Feminist utopias, for about ages, reflect the hopes, fears and desires of women who have glimpsed the possibilities of a bright new world freed from stifling patriarchal structures. By contrasting the present world with an idealized society, feminist utopias criticize the contemporary values and conditions and see masculine systems as the major cause of social and political problems (p. 1).

With the women's movement that developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, the status of women came to the fore and women began to take an active part in the world of politics, philosophy, and art. Thus, literary works began to be produced in which both the ideal state organization was designed and the position of women in this order was problematized. Although there are gender-based utopias written by men in this period, they cannot be considered as “feminist utopias”. The main problem of these utopias dealing with the women's problem is that they were developed as an extension of men's sexual fantasies. In many works, the utopian world of sexual fantasies, in which men can live without responsibility, is depicted. However, there are many masterpieces showing the real problems of women at that era, such as Louisa May, Annie Danton Cridge, Mary Griffith, Mary Howland, and the Amazon woman image, which was used as a figure representing women's freedom in the late 19th century, is also a theme used in feminist utopias. Especially since the 19th century, the active presence of women in fields such as politics, philosophy and literature has allowed the utopian tradition to change and be shaped by women. Mary Griffith's utopian work *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1836), in which women are free to own and use property, and Louisa May Alcott's utopia *Work* (1870), in which women are economically autonomous, Annie Danton Cridge's counter-utopia *Man's Right, or How Would You Like It?* (1870) and Mary Howland's utopia for an egalitarian society with educated, personally and socially responsible women, *Papa's Own Girl* (1874), are important examples of utopias that existed in the early feminist movement.

Alice Jones and Ella Merchant's *Unveiling a Parallel* (1893) and Mary Bradley Lane's *Mizora: Prophecy* (1880) are some examples of utopias in which the amazon female figure is processed. At the later period; Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Charlotte Perkins Gilman is the most important figure who influenced the feminist utopia tradition after her in the late 19th century. Gilman, who wrote feminist utopias from a socialist perspective, depicts a classless, egalitarian women's community living in peace, wrote *Herland* (1915), and its follow up *With Her in Ourland* (1916) and *Moving the Mountain* (1911) are one of the important

works in the literature of utopia. To some extent, Gilman's work *Herland* contains a well-known example of feminist utopias in response to the male-dominated community. *Herland's* classist and controlling social structure allows slavery, and with this limit, it moves away from ideality. The planned cities of *Herland* are giant structures and vehicles that transcend the human-made devices. Özen (2018) has depicted the major themes in feminist utopias in her study;

It is seen that the number of feminist utopias has increased with the feminist struggle, which gained a new dimension after the 1960s. Issues such as the idea that gender roles are formed through a social construction process, and considering the issues such as sexuality, the female body, motherhood, reproduction in the feminist struggle, the visibility of lesbian feminism, the realization of women's domestic labor, the problematization of the private sphere, the differences in the experiences of women such as ethnicity, race and religion have been the major problems the feminist utopia literature deals with. Unlike the first-wave feminist movement, whose main aim was to have equal rights with men, second-wave feminism also addressed issues such as exploitation, environmental problems, militarism, racism, and religion, and expanded its arena within the framework of these problematic issues. The worlds created in feminist utopias and counter-utopias were handled and formed within the framework of all these issues (Özen, 2018, p. 37).

One of the most important writers of the early women's movement was Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who also influenced later feminist utopian thought. Struggling on issues such as women's right to vote and the reorganization of family duties, Gilman's utopia work *Herland*, in which she describes a classless and peaceful women's society without men, differs from other utopias of the period in two respects. The first feature of this book, written in 1915, is that it draws attention to the gender discrimination against women, which is ignored in many classic male utopias and is included between

the lines; The second feature is that for the first time among the literary essays dealing with women, feminist elements are handled clearly and consciously in a utopia style. In this sense, *Herland* describes women who do not conform to the female patterns, definitions and behaviors of the superior male-dominated society. With this utopia, Gilman reveals the tension of equality and freedom within the nationalism, citizenship and women's movement, which are the main contradictions of the 20th century.

The advocacy of Charlotte Perkins Gilman alongside other feminist voices of the nineteenth century in their feminist utopias was grounded in various principles. The primary intention behind the creation of these literary works was not to depict realistic scenarios, but rather to engage in critical analysis and propose alternative perspectives. As Yunusoğlu (2006) cited, utopias are very rooted in literature:

The first example of such American feminist utopias is probably Mary Griffith's "dream novelette" called *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1836) (Kessler, 1995, p. 250). The work is based upon a male's narration of an altered United States in which women seem to occupy the central role. Kessler's remark about the work is that "though women's rights receive central focus, women characters strangely do not" (Ibid, p. 3). Kessler also underlines the Jeffersonian influence in Griffith's work. Kitch notes the basic themes of this work such as the eradication of war, reforming of industry, etc. (p. 49).

...

Like many of the first feminist utopias, Griffith's work seems to stand close to traditional examples, as it does not "propose to eliminate men or marriage" (Kitch, 2000, p. 65). Yet as one of the first examples of this genre, it should not be overlooked because although utopia as a literary genre is very ancient, so few works until Griffith's time had dealt with women's problems, let alone being written by them. What had been petty

issues in traditional utopias became central and fundamental in women's utopias. Following Griffith's lead, many feminist utopias were written between the years 1840 and 1920. Sally L. Kitch in her *Higher Ground* states that separatist feminist utopias, that is to say, "manless (or man-free)" utopias, were a "staple of feminist utopian fiction" (Ibid, p. 64) during these years although they were not the only examples of feminist utopias. Gilman's *Herland* (1915) is also an example of this approach in feminist utopias, and maybe the most intricate one. Many similar works – more than two hundred – were written during the period between 1836 and 1915 (p. 49).

To give more examples to feminist utopian works; *The Dispossessed* (1974), in which he describes an anarchist community in a system of worlds set on different planets, and *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) books are among the most important works of science fiction and feminist utopia literature. Joanna Russ's *Female Man* (1975), in which she describes a female character who turns into a male, and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), in which we see the male bodies structured in accordance with breastfeeding in a community of physically very similar men and women, are other important examples of utopias. In addition;

Monique Wittig's *Les Guerilleres* (1969), Joanna Russ' *When It Changed* (1972), James Tiptree Jr.'s *Houston, Houston, Do You Read?* (1976), Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Ruins of Isis* (1978), Sally Miller Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1978), Jayge Carr's *Leviathan's Deep* (1979), Doris Lessing's *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five* (1980) and Joyce Cheney's *Lesbian Land* (1985) are examples of feminist utopias consisting of non-exploitation, solidarist, egalitarian, matriarchal or lesbian societies that purge elements from the lives of indigenous tribal societies, question patriarchy and heterosexism (Özen, 2018, p. 38).

Readers have praised More's *Utopia* for its humor and originality, but few would want to really live there because of the oppressive roles that women are expected to take on and are forced to labor constantly and submit down to patriarchs in More's design utopias. The utopias that were imagined by male writers had not been fundamentally different places for women, and throughout history, women have frequently been residents of dystopias, and this is still the case today. In these contexts, the book *Utopia* by Thomas More stands out as a remarkable illustration of conventional gender norms. However, according to Little (2007):

More offers equality as the guiding principle for *Utopia*, although More's view of natural differences generates a selective form of equality. The main political unit of *Utopia* is the patriarchal family for instance. More assumes that the intrinsic superiority of men justifies female subservience to male authority (p. 14) (as cited in Tayhan Güzel, 2019, p. 55).

As a result, the family emerges as an important figure that may shed light on the power dynamics and political dynamics that exist between the sexes. This state is ruled by male powers, and a man serves as the state's chief executive officer. When referring to decision-makers, "he(s)" is almost usually used. "Religion" manifests itself as a monotheistic masculine figure who is the cause of all beginnings when it is an established component of a community that has been there for a long time. The following sentences from *Utopia* portray "an equal, idealized, and just" community for each gender and paradoxically describe women's place and function in society as well as how they are confined within the gender-based barriers of language: Women, for the most part, deal in wool and flax, which suit best with their weakness, leaving the ruder trades to the men. The same trade generally passes down from father to son (More, 2020, p. 49).

According to Bammer (1991), Feminism and utopianism are strongly bound to each other. Both feminism and utopianism set themselves as antitheses to the existing order of things. This order they have insisted, is constructed and maintained as much by what we-and others-think as what we actually do (p. 57) (as cited in Asangöncü, 2011, p. 41). When considered from a feminist point of view, it is clear that feminist analysis reveals the patriarchal nature of the system by highlighting its representation of humans and men. The majority of feminist utopians envision a society that is free of gender discrimination, environmental degradation, or an alternate reality in which men and women are not trapped in conventional roles of inequity and no technology exists (Jabbar Jabbar, 2022, p. 131).

Another concept of a *Herland* comes from an Eastern woman writer, Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, one of the important feminists of South Asia and known as the pioneer of the awakening and emancipation of Muslim women in Bangladesh. Two feminist utopias, *Sultana's Dream* and *Padmarag*, are of great importance as examples of utopias written by a woman in an Eastern country at the beginning of the 20th century. *Sultana's Dream* depicts a country of women where men are confined to their homes and women take part in politics, science, art, that is, “outside”. Men are imprisoned, while women play an active role in the streets, in art, in the administration of the country and in science. While women use their intelligence, men spend their time with domestic practices. Focusing on the slogan that women's liberation can only be achieved through scientific studies, *Sultana's Dream* is the utopia of a world where peace, beauty, truth and love will prevail, while patriarchy and oppression disappear. *Padmarag*, on the other hand, takes place in a women's school called Tarini Bhavan, which is thought to exist in the present and not in the past or the future. In this respect, it differs from Western masculine utopias that describe “no place” and “good place”. Because this school is real and here in every way. Tarini Bhavan, where women of all ages and classes find solutions to their problems and troubles, are healed and educated, is a paradise on earth that opens its doors to all poor and deprived women.

In the novels *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland*, the feminist utopia is characterized by an explicit emphasis on women's stories and their lives within the context of nature. This combination is made possible by nature's assistance to women; it aids their survival and ascent. Most of the works mentioned here were published during the second wave of feminism, which began in the 1970s. There were rising protests against form and formalism at the time, and these works reflect that, as well as the developing rifts within the feminist movement. The utopian civilizations they envision, worlds in which gender does not exist, foster the concept that gender itself is an artificial construct, established by society rather than physiology. They reject the notion that "equality within difference" is possible to achieve.

The radical tone of 1970s feminist utopias is heard in the voices of their protagonists: they are the voices of androgynes or women. Men are excluded from the majority of the utopias of this period, the supposition being that the inclusion of the group "men" admits a gender hierarchy within which women are subordinate. The absence of different sexes, of course, obviates the problems of gender discrimination utopias depicting societies of women only had been written in the nineteenth century, but Gilman's *Herland* was the first to do so with the aim of showing how gender opinion affected women adversely. This theme of utopia being more readily realizable in a single-sex society, a society existing beyond the gender conflict, finds expression in several utopias of the 1970s, three of which, Sally Miller Gearhart's *The Wanderground* (1980), Suzy McKee Charnas's *Motherlines* (1978) and Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) (Marketos, 1993, p. 14).

As Marketos (1993) has compared, feminist utopias are a dynamic genre that represent feminism's ever-changing face, and they provide an image of the essence of feminism, serving as a mirror through which one may see the profile of feminism. The depictions show communities where women live apart from males and advocate for

this separation as a means of liberation or an escape from the patriarchal oppression. Classical utopias are characterized by their depiction of social and value constructions that are in direct contrast to the society in which they were written. They also convey subversive ideas that were prevalent during that time period. Feminist utopias serve as a reflection of the path that feminism has followed, with their increasing prevalence indicating its revival, their critiques mirroring its contemporary ideologies, and their imagined societies embodying its aspirations.



CHAPTER TWO – ECOFEMINISM AS AN INTEGRATIVE PROJECT

2.1. The Masculinity of Culture

A male-dominated ideology that has been around since the beginning of recorded history, patriarchy shapes the social, economic, and religious structures of many cultural communities and serves as the society's central organizing principle. Hegemonic masculinity is described as a practice that legitimizes men's dominating status in society and defends the subjection of the general male population and women, as well as other marginalized forms of being a man.

Hegemonic masculinity is characterized by (arguably) negative attributes such as toughness, aggressiveness, excessive risk-taking and 'emotional illiteracy', alongside 'positive' attributes like strength, protectiveness, decisiveness and courage, and features of more debatable values like individualism, competitiveness, rationality and a practical orientation (Scott-Samuels, Stanistreet & Crawshaw, 2009, p. 3).

In addition the expressions above, because males are physiologically and genetically superior to the classes of the early human colonies, the patriarchal mindset tends to prioritize masculine ideals. However, there is no longer any justification for its worldview in the modern, intelligent, and civilized world.

Hanke (1992) defines hegemonic masculinity as: the social ascendancy of a particular version or model of masculinity that operates on the terrain of common sense and conventional morality that defines "what it means to be a man," thus securing the dominance of some men (and the subordination of women) within the sex/gender system (p. 190) (as cited in Vavrus, 2002, p. 7).

Beliefs considered common sense serve specific power structures; for example, Hanke argues that "common sense" is an umbrella term for a set of assumptions and

beliefs about masculinity that are either taken for granted or voluntarily accepted but are nonetheless assumed to have an imperative character in determining one's level of self-awareness, behavioral norms, emotional state, and sexual orientation.

In this view, masculinity is regarded as a “fragile” and “tenuous cultural formation” (Zita, 1998, p. 39) produced in material and symbolic practices, wherein some practices are reproduced and valued positively while others are challenged and even jettisoned altogether. Conceptualizing masculinity as a contingent construction that results in part from the ideological work of cultural institutions “obliges us” to view it as a “social struggle going on in a complex ideological and political field in which there is a continuing process of mobilization, marginalization, contestation, resistance, and subordination” (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 1987, p. 89) (as cited in Vavrus, 2002, p. 7).

...

Historically specific masculinities are organized hierarchically and from a process whereby certain attributes ascend to ideological dominance while others are rejected or subordinated (those typically associated with femininity) (Connell, 1995, p. 78; Kaufman, 1994, p. 148) (as cited in Vavrus, 2002, p. 7).

By excluding the possibility of conceiving any other forms of masculinity, including female masculinities, as Halberstam (1998) argues, reifies the relationship between men and the cultural image of masculinity. Furthermore, she believes that, by silencing female masculinities, male masculinity is left uncontested as the standard-bearer of both gender normativity and gender deviation. In this way, it perpetuates a gendered binary by establishing clear boundaries between “normal” gender roles for men and women.

It is very necessary to have an understanding of the control techniques that patriarchy employs. It is possible to recognize that patriarchy has a rigid association with the ideas of dominance, repression, and hegemony since the patriarchy's continued existence. In the history of women's liberation, males have consistently interfered via various forms of control and oppression. Dominance, surveillance, and violence associated with patriarchy have branched out into a variety of new forms, including those that are obviously physical as well as those that are more covertly cultural, mental, and emotional. On a mental and spiritual level, violence may take place either directly via physical means or silently through political, economic, educative, ethnic, religious, and social networks. All of these forms of violence have their origins and current power in the history of patriarchy. Hegemony does not imply just superiority acquired via the use of force; rather, it also involves mastery acquired through institutions, culture, and convincing. Power and dominance may both be maintained through the use of force. In this period of history, the dominance of patriarchy has evolved from a home fiction into a global patriarchal cultural regulation. This patriarchal social regulation has spread to the contemporary mindset in such a manner that individuals are not aware of its indirect effects on the way they think about things. Patriarchal traditions associated with gender dynamics are so embedded in everyday culture that they are seldom questioned or challenged. Myths have undoubtedly been an important part of this process. The knowledge that illuminates the world has been placed to the service of civilizations by patriarchal mythologies and religions. At this point, myths and symbols serve crucial functions in maintaining a sense of self-importance and a patriarchal social order. The worship of a father-god authority places an emphasis on deification and brings about gender supremacy. In this sense, patriarchy has given rise to a cultural indoctrination process that has normalized male domination in human existence. This is perhaps the most fundamental effect that patriarchy has had.

The formation of hierarchical thoughts, images, and desires is the primary trait that distinguishes repressive subjectivity from other types of subjectivity. Since the

main moral assumption of the oppressor is that superiority justifies oppression, the logic of dominance, which argues that superiority justifies oppression, requires the oppressor to defend his superiority in order to justify subordination, which requires his subjectivity in order to interpret variety hierarchically. The idea that superiority may rationally justify subordination is central to the oppressive subjectivity theoretical framework. To begin the process of justifying his position as an oppressor, the oppressor must first explain his position as a superior. When two people are in a relationship characterized by dominance, one person tends to dominate the other based on their identities. The identity of the oppressor is what puts him in a position of superiority over the person he oppresses; for example, a man's masculine identity places him in a position of superiority over a woman. As Kesikkulak (2022) explained in his study:

Nevertheless, identity is non-qualitative data, and it does not have any value that can make an identity superior to another. An identity may obtain a value by means of the attribution of an image that expresses a subjective and conditional qualitative value. It is hierarchical image production, attributing images to the oppressor's identity, which is superior to the images attributed to the oppressed's identity, that provides the legitimacy of the oppression by sustaining the superiority of the oppressor's identity (p. 31).

Because of the oppressive subjectivity, variety is transformed into a hierarchy. Values such as ethics, ontology, politics, and aesthetics may be conveyed with a single picture. The oppressor justifies his behavior by asserting his moral, political, ontological, or artistic superiority, which he achieves by placing these traits to his own identity: The basic legitimation of conquest over native peoples is the conviction of our superiority, not merely our mechanical, economic, and military superiority, but our moral superiority (Milss, 1999, p. 25).

The first defining characteristic of oppressive subjectivity is hierarchical thinking, hierarchical image, and desire production. Since the logic of domination, which assumes superiority justifies oppression (Warren, 2000, p. 47), is the primary moral assumption of the oppressor, the oppressor has to justify his superiority to justify subordination which demands his subjectivity to construe diversity hierarchically (Kesikkulak, 2022, p. 44).

As it is stated above, the oppressor's desire is encoded in a manner that makes him appreciate his own identity, which is how hierarchical thinking develops desire. The effective seduction away from the superior identity of the oppressor is provided by hierarchical desire creation. To give an example, the colonist who, having experienced the temptation of supremacy, does not want to return to his own nation. To return home, he may argue, would strip it of its magnificent character, making him a lesser man. While the colonialist may be the center of attention in the colony, back home he would be just another mediocre man.

The second defining characteristic of oppressive subjectivity is asymmetrical thinking, asymmetrical image and desire production (Kesikkulak, 2022, p. 46). As he explains, the oppressive subjectivity shapes identities in a way that is both hierarchical and opposite. To rationalize tyranny hierarchical ideology requires asymmetrical reasoning. By attaching inferior characteristics to the oppressed person's identity, the oppressor reinforces his own sense of superiority: This logic of the oppressor affirming himself in the mediation of the negation of the Other; "You are evil; I am the opposite of what you are; therefore, I am good" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 122) (as cited in Kesikkulak, 2022, p. 46).

Our lives, as well as the lives of most others living in contemporary civilizations, include hierarchical connections. A commander, for instance, has a higher position in the organizational hierarchy than a soldier. It is not his identity that gives him a greater

center of control; rather, it is his individual triumphs. On the other hand, a man may assert his superiority over a woman or have a superior perspective on the relationship between the sexes, but his superiority is dependent on the fact that he was born a male. The oppressive subjectivity is responsible for the creation, maintenance, and justification of dominance, all of which are dependent on the hierarchical interpretation of biological, geographic, and cultural inequalities.

Finally, patriarchy, an oppressive ideology that prioritizes men over women and shapes the social, religious, and economic structures of many civilizations, has been there since the beginning of written history. In patriarchal societies, the idea that women are inherently inferior to males is cultivated. This view of women's inherent inferiority is a kind of biological essentialism, which holds that the inherent distinctions between the sexes are fundamental to who we are. It might be concluded that patriarchal ideology is characterized by an authoritarian system that prioritizes biological certainty in the production of norms. Nevertheless, this discriminating worldview not only results in rules that conceal biological realities. In addition, patriarchy is an all-encompassing and multi-source ideology that is responsible for the suppression of gender stereotypes, holy principles, and legal laws. It has an impact on many governmental and financial models, concepts, and procedures. In history, patriarchy has been the driving force behind the formation of all of the most important societal institutions, including belief systems, finance, politics, and culture. In democratic as well as autocratic political systems, it has also had a significant impact on the models of leadership that we use, the relationships between different races and genders, and the whole of the human social experience. In addition, the term “patriarchy” refers to a “sexual hierarchy of power” in which “the man's role” is seen to be superior in terms of holding power and financial advantages. The hierarchical organization of society based on male dominance is called patriarchy. The fundamental power structures have not changed despite the fact that the patriarchal system's legal and institutional foundation was formerly much more explicitly stated. The point to be made in this examination is that the ideology of patriarchy is gender-oriented,

hierarchical, and inherently acceptable. As Pateman (2004) pointed, in patriarchal systems, as a collective group, women are systemically unrepresented or underrepresented in the economic, political, military, criminal justice, legislative and educational arenas. Men serve in the highest levels in all areas of society (p. 161). When considering women's rights to equality and freedom against violence, this is an especially crucial point to consider. In the end, men have the power to determine whether or not others are granted freedom and to what degree. The only freedoms that women have are those that men have voluntarily granted to them.

2.2. The Construction of Devalued and Sharply Demarcated Sphere of Otherness: Dualism

That the dominance of women is ideologically connected with the dominance of nature is a central principle of feminist environmental study, and of ecological feminist theory in particular. The origin of this perspective can be traced back to the acknowledgment that within Western intellectual traditions, the concept of femininity is constructed in contrast to masculinity, while the concept of nature is constructed in contrast to culture. This dichotomy is hierarchical in nature, as it not only divides the masculine and feminine but also assigns higher status to men over women and culture over nature. Ecofeminist thinkers argue that a dualistic framework is profoundly ingrained, influencing not only understandings of gender and nature, but also the fundamental principles of Western science itself. It might be argued, from an ecofeminist standpoint, that the liberation of both women and the natural world is contingent upon the liberation of thought from the distorting influence of dualistic thinking. Given the enormous impact of dualism as a fundamental framework of cognition, it is worth considering whether its effect can be solely attributable to ideology, as suggested by many ecofeminist analyses. It is of utmost significance to accurately address the inquiry of the roots of dualism, since a comprehensive understanding of these origins is necessary to elucidate the reasons behind the pervasive influence of dualism in Western thinking. Furthermore, without a thorough

comprehension of its origins, it becomes unfeasible to emancipate oneself from the pervasive influence of dualism.

Many people share Le Guin's view that in a patriarchal society that privileges Western civilization over the natural world, both women and the environment suffer. Oppressive subjectivity may initially be identified by its tendency toward hierarchical thought, image, and desire creation. Ursula K. LeGuin (1989), writes in *Women/Wilderness*:

Civilised Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is Other—outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and wilderness, to be used as I see fit (p. 45).

The logic of dominance asserts that one's superiority justifies the subjugation of others. Therefore, the oppressor must defend his power in order to justify his subordination, which requires his subjectivity in order to construct diversity hierarchically. Oppressive subjectivity relies on the idea that dominance justifies subordination as its central tenet. The first step in justifying tyranny is for the oppressor to establish his own superiority. When one person has power over another, it's because of some aspect of their respective identities. The oppressor's identity is what gives him power over the oppressed (a guy's identity as a man gives him power over a woman's identity as a woman).

A brief interpretation of dualism is that it is an example of an alienated kind of differentiation. In this type of differentiation, power construes and produces difference in terms of a subordinate and foreign domain. It is possible for arbitrary tyrannies to choose individuals at random for the purpose of tyranny. But in systematized forms of power, authority is often institutionalized and “naturalized” by grabbing already present forms of difference in order to legitimize the power structure. As Plumwood

(1993) explained, dualisms are not just free-floating systems of ideas; they are closely associated with domination and accumulation and are their major cultural expressions and justifications (p. 53).

Western society is divided down the middle by a collection of dualisms that are both connected to one another and reinforce one another. Although the human/nature duality is relatively new in comparison to the others, it is still best understood only in the context of the whole set. In addition to sharing a similar structure with the other parts of the set, each of these aspects is deeply interconnected with others. They need to be conceived of as constituting a system, a structure with interlocking parts. Plumwood (1993) has listed these dualistic structures, which naturalize the oppressions in gender, class, race and nature:

Key elements in the dualistic structure in western thought are the following sets of contrasting pairs: culture/nature, reason/nature, male/female, mind/body(nature), master/slave, reason/emotion(nature), human/nature, self/other, etc. (p. 54).

As a result of that, culture builds up a stockpile of these conceptual weapons, which may be extracted, improved, and repurposed for a variety of different purposes. Therefore, historical oppressions that are stored as dualisms prepare the way for new forms of oppression while also facilitating their emergence. The exclusions that may be made on the basis of cause are many and cannot be reduced to those of gender. However, gender does play a significant part since gender ideas, in particular, incorporate conceptions of reason, and masculine ideals that make claim to universality for males sometimes regards the superior masculinity of the master. Thus, to read down the first side of the list of dualisms is to read a list of qualities traditionally appropriated to men and to the human, while the second side presents qualities traditionally excluded from male ideals and associated with women, the sex defined

by exclusion, 'made from the dross and refuse of a man' (Morgan, 1989, p. 121) (as cited in Plumwood, 1993, p. 55).

A dualism is more than just a basic hierarchical connection, and it goes beyond a mere connection of dichotomy, variation, or nonidentity. The characteristics (real or imagined), norms, principles and realms of existence connected with the dualized other are consistently and persistently represented as subordinate in the dualistic structure, as they are in the hierarchy. However, it is possible to see hierarchies as fluid and open to change, but after the process of dominance has formed culture and constructed identity, the group that has been marginalized must internalize this marginalization as part of its identity and cooperate in this low valuation in order to honor the values of the center, which constitute the values that are considered to be the dominant societal values. As Albert Memmi puts it, "colonisation creates the colonised just as it...creates the colonizer" (Memmi, 1965, p. 91) (as cited in Plumwood, 1993, p.58). The dualism is an intensive, entrenched, and developed cultural manifestation of such a hierarchical connection. It involves the construction of fundamental cultural conceptions and identities in such a way as to render equality and mutuality physically unimaginable. As Plumwood (1993) concluded, Dualism is a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled, which treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed not merely as different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change (p. 59).

Ecofeminist philosophers have spent much time and energy trying to trace back the origins of dualistic and dominant systems in order to better understand the historical context of women's and the environment's oppression. Dominance shows itself in a certain manner, which may be seen in the subjugation of women and the degradation of the natural world by people. Victoria Davion (2001) attempts to explain the steps by which this process of domination occurs, reporting that:

These are (i) backgrounding, the oppressors' creation of a dependency on the oppressed while simultaneously denying that dependency; (ii) radical exclusion, constructing supposed differences between oppressors and the oppressed in terms of radical differences in order to justify subordination of the oppressed; (iii) incorporation, the construction of the devalued side of a dualized pair as lacking morally relevant features associated with the other side; (iv) instrumentalism, the construction of groups seen as morally inferior, lacking any morally important independent interests; (v) homogenization, the denial of differences between those on the underside of dualized pairs (seeing all women or all slaves as the same) (p. 235) (as cited in Brisson, 2017, p. 10).

Davion's description of this procedure illustrates how crucial dualism is to actions of dominance. (i) Backgrounding (denial) emerges as a complicated characteristic that comes from these conflicts because the relationship of dominance causes unresolvable tensions for the master. The master tries to make use of the subordinate by organizing, depending on, and profiting from the subordinate's services, while at the same time denying the reliance that this establishes between them. Denial can take many forms. Common ways to deny dependency are through making the other inessential, denying the importance of the other's contribution or even his or her reality, and through mechanisms of focus and attention. One strategy for achieving this goal is to insist on a strict hierarchy of activities, which will make it easier to ignore the areas that are off-limits by making them seem less interesting. One similar strategy for resolving this issue is to consider the other person to be the master's foreground while other to be the background. While the foreground reality is wholly dependent on the presence of the backdrop, it cannot exist without the latter's continued existence. The viewpoint of the master is that the other is unimportant. The method of backgrounding ensures that the master is never exposed to the possibility that he is also backgrounded from other points of view. But his perception of the slave's insignificance un comparison to his own essentiality is mistaken.

First, the master more than the slave requires the other in order to define his boundaries and identity, since these are defined against the inferiorised other; it is the slave who makes the master a master, the colonised who make the coloniser, the periphery which makes the centre. Second, the master also requires the other materially, in order to survive, for the relation of complementation has made the master dependent on the slave for the fulfilment of his needs. But this dependency is also hated and feared by the master, for it subtly challenges his dominance, and is denied in a variety of indirect and direct ways, with all the consequences of repression (Plumwood, 1993, p. 60).

As Plumwood (1993) indicated above, to explain the dominance of a particular group over another, (ii) radical exclusion, for instance, depends on the creation of overemphasizing disparities between two groups, such as male and female and natural and cultural. The patriarchal perspective is characterized by this form of dualism because it views the world historically and now through the prism of division and hierarchy. However, when things are built or interpreted in a dualistic way, the master strives to maximize the quantity and significance of distinctions while downplaying or ignoring the similarities between them. 'I am nothing at all like this inferior other' is the motto associated with radical exclusion (Plumwood, 1993, p. 60). In order to distinguish oneself from the other, one must not only be distinctive but radical in exclusion, one must not just separate but hyperseparate, for the other is to be seen as not just different also inferior, component of a lower. Denial or minimization of continuity eliminates affiliation and compassion between the dominant and the dominated and prevents misunderstanding between strong and weak. It also establishes distinct natures to justify unequal advantages and destiny. One of the main goals of binary building is polarization, or making as much space as possible between the two circles so that they do not seem like they remain together. Separation can be made by rejecting or minimizing traits and activities that combine and by putting up hard walls to keep people from coming into touch.

In (iii) incorporation (relational definition), the authority of the master is represented in the way that his attributes are seen as fundamental and as determining societal worth, while the abilities of the slave are identified or restricted in reference to the qualities of the master, often as negations or deficiencies of the qualities of the center. This is because the master is seen as the central figure in the relationship between the master and the slave.

As Plumwood (1993, p. 63) cited, Simone de Beauvoir writes that ‘humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being...she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other’ (de Beauvoir, 1965, p. 8).

The characterization of the other as insufficient or absence is a specific instance of incorporation, characterizing the other exclusively in reference to the self or its wants and goals. The other is defined and recognized in relation to the master, thus his attributes mirror the master's wishes, needs, and deficiencies. Instrumentalism and homogenization are two significant consequences of radical inclusion and exclusion.

Although the relationship is often framed as beneficial to both parties in (iv) instrumentalism, it is clear that those on the submissive side of the dualisms are expected to sacrifice their own needs and desires to serve the master or center. They are incorporated into a system of goals that are either defined in terms of or subordinated to the objectives and requirements of the master. The master self that engages in dualistic thinking fails to see others as morally related or as having their own unique set of demands and desires. In both cases, he can do what he wants regardless of the consequences.

In (v) homogenisation or stereotyping, when a group gets homogenized, the distinctions that exist within the group that is being disadvantaged are ignored. The

master's viewpoint is characterized by homogenization. To the master, residing at what he takes to be the centre, differences among those of lesser status at the periphery are of little interest or importance, and might undermine comfortable stereotypes of superiority (Plumwood, 1993, p. 65). To the master, the rest of the people are simply “the rest” or “the Others”. They provide the context for his accomplishments and the resources he needs to fulfill his wants. He may ignore the existence of diversity and plurality if they are in excess of what he needs. The other isn't regarded as a separate being with inherent connections to the self. Homogenisation in gender stereotyping is well known, involving the appeal to homogeneous and eternal male and female ‘natures’. The sage (for example, Lucretius) and the popular maxim both appeal to the ‘eternal feminine’ and assert that ‘women are all alike’. (p. 65). On the other hand, dualism should not be interpreted as producing difference where none previously existed. Rather, it has a tendency to capitalize on pre-existing patterns of differentiation, portraying them in ways that root hierarchy.

For ecofeminists like Griffin (1989) and King (1989), the distinctively masculinist ego that is prominent in Western patriarchal society is one that is constructed via the severance of links with and rejection of the other. This view was presented in their respective works. It has been suggested that this pronounced distancing from and denying of the other is indicative of a more fundamental drive, namely fear; more specifically, fear of women, nature, and, eventually, dread of one's own mortality. In this regard, as Marincowitz (1998, p. 43) supports; King cites De Beauvoir (1968) who has pointed out that patriarchal culture gives expression to the male fear of mortality of which women and nature, who are associated with the physical, the vulnerable and change, are constant reminders (King, 1989, p.21). This anxiety is shown in the objectification and dominance of the natural world and women, which transforms these two realms into entities that can be taken and controlled by a third party. According to King (1989) the process of objectification is made possible and is based upon a profound forgetting by men. This is a denial of their dependence

on the realm of what is generally considered as necessity, and therefore taken for granted:

They forget that they are born of women, were dependent on women in their early helpless years, and are dependent on nonhuman nature all their lives, which allows first for objectification and then for domination (King, 1989, p. 22).

As cited above, Marincowitz (1998, p. 44) cited and emphasized that the origins of many ecofeminist thoughts may be traced back to socialist feminism, which emphasizes the denial of women's and nature's interdependence. Such a separation occurs by the severance and rejection of the self's relationship with nature. Behind the idea of the ego being superior to nature, lies a terrifying fear, and the dread that lies under this thinking, like all fear, transforms into wrath. As in Marincowitz (1998, p. 44); For Griffin then, the control of nature signifies the ongoing struggle to deny the self's connectedness with the natural which culminates in Western culture's death-denying obsession to ameliorate our technology so as to escape the natural cycles and rhythms of nature, and ultimately death:

The very images that express our power over Nature take us back to our own memory and knowledge of Nature's power both within and outside ourselves. Therefore, our delusion demands that we gain a greater control over nature. We must escalate our efforts. We must improve our technology (1989, p. 12).

Apart from the fear of mortality, the dualist way of thinking that governs the development of dualist images and desires is the distinguishing trait of oppressive subjectivity. The way of thinking known as dualism interprets variety in a manner that is hierarchical, opposing, and exclusive. Both the self and the other are ways of being that are vertical, opposed to one another, exclusive of one another, and homogenized.

The subjectivity that is oppressive will inevitably lead to the negation of distinctions, as well as the transformation and reduction of variety into dualism. It is the fundamental tactic of oppressive subjectivity to clarify and defend dominance, which encompasses numerous techniques to convey the conviction that oppression is justifiable. This is the case since explaining and justifying domination is the goal of oppressive subjectivity.

2.3. An Anti-Dualist Ecological Feminism

The acknowledgment of dualism, specifically the correlation between women and nature, was not a new idea within feminist ideology. Feminists had made observations regarding this matter since the beginning. To a certain extent, the whole of feminist intellectual discourse in Western societies has revolved on grappling with the concept of dualism. In her seminal work, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft saw the connection between women and the concept of nature as early as 1789. The observer noted that women were seen as creatures with animal-like qualities, positioned closer to the animal kingdom compared to males. They were considered to lack the higher cognitive skills that are characteristic of human beings. Consequently, they were deemed incapable of receiving an education. However, Wollstonecraft argued that women were subjected to a state of subordination due to their perceived inferiority, which she attributed to the sexual preferences of males. If provided with the opportunity for education, women would swiftly demonstrate their capability to be on the same level with men.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain reveal how their socialist politics influence utopian economy and place *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland* under ecofeminist and environmentalist guidelines, in light of equating gardens with women and inhibits their agency. These approaches serve to highlight the interrelationships among literary naturalism, determinism, and ecology, and their

impact on Gilman's and Hossain's philosophical perspectives on the dynamics between women, nature, and society.

The integration of the environment and societal cultures via literary works has engendered a novel consciousness towards environmental concerns. The prevailing environmental predicament is a consequence of contemporary human civilization. The use of land as a tradable asset and the lack of consideration for environmental ethics caused the ecological disaster. Within the realm of literary criticism, scholars have established a theoretical framework known as Ecocriticism. This framework aims to establish a connection between the human world and the environment. The use of similes, metaphors, and environmental imagery throughout the narrative provides clear insight into the author's cognitive processes. The book portrays the dynamic between human beings and non-human elements of nature, exploring themes of redemption and betrayal, as well as the use and exploitation of the environment. Ecocriticism is an academic field that examines the relationships between humans and the environment, as well as the portrayal of these connections in literary texts. Literary works are the result of an author's imaginative process, which is shaped by the geographical and cultural context in which they reside. Writers argue that the use of location and its surrounding environment in literary texts extends beyond a basic narrative technique, as it establishes a connection between human history and the natural world. The significance of human interest is not the exclusive focus; rather, there exists a reciprocal connection between humanity and the natural world. The natural environment is a significant entity inside the cosmos, and it is important for people to acknowledge their responsibility for the potential consequences of their activities, including the potential for inducing natural catastrophes. The literature does not portray the environment as a stable entity, but rather as a dynamic process that has a significant impact on human existence. Ecocriticism encompasses a range of disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, literature, and philosophy, that establish connections between the human social world and the scientific field of ecology. Ecocriticism prioritizes the preservation of balance between the natural environment

and human beings. Environmentalists argue that any damage inflicted upon nature would result in catastrophic repercussions. This concept is further connected to environmental ethics, which rejects the anthropocentric perspective that places people at the center of the world and considers all elements of nature as subordinate to human interests.

The emergence of environmental philosophy as a distinct discipline occurred in the 1970s. Environmental philosophers have acknowledged that the emergence of environmental issues during that period was not just a result of bad policies, but rather sprang from a fundamental perspective towards the natural world deeply ingrained within the core principles of Western philosophy. The aforementioned position may be characterized as anthropocentrism, which is an unfounded belief that assigns moral significance only to human beings. From an anthropocentric standpoint, any consideration given to entities other than humans is contingent upon their usefulness or value to mankind. Environmental philosophers have raised objections to this perspective and have advocated for the development of a new ethical framework, namely an environmental ethic, that takes into account the intrinsic value of nature. Val Plumwood, formerly known as Val Routley, together with her spouse Richard Routley, played an essential role in the early development of this academic field. A group of individuals from various English-speaking regions embarked on an investigation to find out why the West had formed such a strong moral bias in favor of people. It was apparent that there was a sort of desire to divide things into two groups. In the form of culture, this put people apart from and above nature. In contrast to the brutal facts of nature, the human stands as the measure of all meaning and worth. For a period of almost two centuries after that, feminists persistently advocated against the symbolic association of women with nature. In adherence to the liberal paradigm that had established the parameters for progressive political thought throughout the historical period known as the “Age of Reason” in the seventeenth century, these individuals mostly aligned themselves with Wollstonecraft's perspective, which supported the liberal conception of human nature as being characterized by the faculty

of reason. Mary Wollstonecraft have argued, against the implicit assumptions of many of their contemporaries, that women are capable of reason (Jaggar, 1984, p. 120). The perception of any inherent cognitive limitation was seen as indicative of an inability to transcend the condition of nature and achieve complete human development. To clarify, liberal feminists implicitly acknowledged the existence of dualisms between reason and nature, and between humans and nature, which formed the foundation of liberal ideology. Their objective, however, was to challenge the gendered connotations associated with these categories. They aimed to separate the concepts of womanhood and nature, and advocated for recognizing women's ability for reason on equal with men. Ruether (1975) makes a very strong emphasis on the liberating effect of ecological feminism:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this [modern industrial] society (p. 204).

To a certain extent, the entirety of feminist ideology throughout Western history has revolved around the challenge of dualism. Mary Wollstonecraft observed the correlation between women and nature in her publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1789. The writer noted that women were perceived as beings with animal-like qualities, placing them in closer proximity to the animal kingdom than men. Furthermore, they were considered to be lacking in the higher cognitive abilities that are characteristic of human beings. As a result, they were deemed incapable of receiving an education. Wollstonecraft asserted that women were subjected to a state of subjugation due to their perceived inferiority, which was reinforced by the prevailing sexual preferences of men. If provided with educational opportunities,

women would demonstrate their capability to be on the same level with men. For almost two hundred years thereafter, feminists tirelessly protested at the metaphoric assimilation of women to nature. They adhered to Wollstonecraft's belief in the liberal perspective of human nature, which emphasized the ability to reason, as they wrote during the Age of Reason in the seventeenth century. The efforts made to establish the equivalence of women with men, in terms of possessing rational abilities and being equally distant from nature and its inherent animality, unintentionally sanctioned the anthropocentric viewpoint that relegated nature and its associated elements to a lower status.

When so-called 'second wave' feminism exploded onto the scene in the 1970s, however, the venerable liberal tradition of feminism was hotly challenged. Did women really want to become like men, or at least as men supposed themselves to be – sober, detached, measured, objective, impartial, the proverbial 'men of reason', the 'masters and possessors of nature', as Descartes put it? No! The new radical, and then 'gynocentric' – or, as they came to be known, 'cultural' – feminists wanted no part of patriarchal identity. The association of woman with embodiment - with fertility, procreation, eros, nurturance, and corporeality – and hence with nature – the terrain of life, purpose, creativity, vulnerability, of intelligence and sentience in a thousand guises, the exuberant and fecund matrix of our existence – was to be ardently embraced (Mathews, 2017, p. 4).

Feminists who adopt a gynocentric (women-centered) perspective, which places women at the center, reject reason as the standard for defining humanity and instead prioritize qualities that are traditionally associated with femininity, such as the ability to nurture, experience emotions, and demonstrate care. Females who were equally devoted to both ecological and feminist political movements expressed their satisfaction in the newfound appreciation for nature and the elevated status that cultural

feminism attributed to them as women in connection to it. The individuals acknowledged the interconnection between the environmental and feminist movements, and thus embraced the ideology of ecofeminism as a means of representing this interdependence. Although gynocentric feminism served as a crucial turning point for female empowerment and healing, it was just a transitional phase towards achieving true liberation for both women and nature. They had altered the valuations assigned to the components of the dualistic framework, yet they had not thoroughly examined the system's exclusive and hierarchical arrangement. The conventional gender roles of masculinity and femininity, along with the binary distinctions that were used to establish these categories, have persisted, representing a system of power dynamics. The ultimate concern is not whether women are subjugated by men or vice versa.

Male-dominated worldviews often depend on creating dualistic frameworks that are fundamentally hierarchical in order to make sense of nature. There is a deliberate emphasis on dominance in many foundational ecofeminist beliefs. One of them is that ecofeminist political activity must always challenge hierarchies because they justify dominance. Within the context of patriarchy, women have been forced to make unsatisfactory decisions with regard to their traditional identity as part of nature. They either agree with it (which would be naturalism) or disagree with it (which would be an endorsement of the prevalent mastery paradigm). A solution to this conundrum may be found by paying attention to the dualistic difficulty that exists. Women need the same respect and recognition as men as complete human beings and cultural participants. But both sexes need to work together to create a new culture that rejects the dualistic view of human nature and instead sees people as inseparable from the natural world. This evolution would also pose a threat to the dualistic view of nature as static, unfeeling, and mechanical. As Plumwood (1993, p. 47) cited, anti-dualist approach proposes a better choice for all;

Thus, the anti-dualist approach reveals a third way which does not force women into the choice of uncritical participation in a masculine biased and dualised construction of culture or into accepting an old and oppressive identity as ‘earth mothers’: outside of culture, opposed to culture, not fully human. In this alternative, women are not seen as purely part of nature any more than men are; both men and women are part of both nature and culture (Warren 1987; Ynestra King 1989, p. 106-121).

In Culture/Nature dualism; Culture is associated with the mind, males, and the transcendent. Nature is associated with body, females, and is inferior to culture. Feminist thinkers seek to deconstruct and level dualistic and hierarchical structures. These concepts of dualism and dominance are central to ecofeminism as an academic discipline. The field of history has traditionally been dominated by men, resulting in the subjugation of both the natural world and women. The primary obstacle to a woman's autonomy is not her biology, legal or political limitations, or her financial circumstances, but rather the historical cultural norms that establish a rigid conception of femininity within society. Some feminists take this stance because they believe that inherent inequalities between people, such as gender, are artificial and cannot be used to justify power structures. Others would argue that although these distinctions are important and essential, they are not sufficient to justify the establishment of hierarchies:

This idea can be traced back to the National Organization for Women towards the beginning of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s. According to Nancy C. M. Hartsock, “Feminists implicitly held the differences between women and men were not a sufficient base on which to construct Difference, that is, that differences of gender were superficial and insufficient ground on which to construct radical alterity, or ‘Otherness’” (Hartsock, 1998, p. 59) (as cited in Brisson, 2017, p. 11).

Both men and women are capable of standing with nature and working toward dismantling the dualistic structure of culture; nevertheless, in doing so from different historical positions and have distinct things to offer to the process of breaking down the dualistic construction of culture. What women have to offer to this process may be particularly important due to their location in the realm of nature and their absence from an oppositional culture. Because of their personal experiences and the context in which they find themselves, they are more likely to feel uneasy in a dualistic society and to question the dualised culture. The endeavor to understand women and reproduction in terms of biological and social processes regardless matter whether of the two possibilities, nature or culture, is selected, dualism will always result in distortion. Due to its status as a natural phenomenon, reproduction is seen as an instinctual process that requires no planning or consideration. As Plumwood (1993) mentioned; It is an unsharable and insupportable 'natural' burden which can be allowed to dominate and distort women's lives and destroy their capacity for choice and participation in a wider sphere of life (p. 49). But if the goal is to get access to culture via the logical dominance of one's body as nature, clearly the outcomes are problematic as well. Plumwood (1993) gives an example from Hegel; If in the rationalistic paradigm (for example, in Hegel), the male body is made rational by being made the instrument of a rationality which transforms nature, the female body is made part of culture by being subject to the control of others taken to represent rationality: medical and other experts, abortion tribunals and the like (p. 49). And she finalizes that; As dualised nature, conceived as inert, passive, non-subjects, women have offered a fertile field for such control and manipulation by a rationality which structures women's experience of reproduction in two Cartesian halves: the suffering body deprived of agency, and the mastering, external rational agent. However, if reproduction is viewed in non-dualistic manners, in which the body and agency are not understood as separate, it becomes understandable as a mission for women. This separation can only be averted if women are considered of independent agents and choosers in regard to their bodies, and when they are conceived of as complete actors

in their reproductive activities. It is only when women have this level of choice that their reproductive lives are not damaged.

Plumwood (1993) explains the ecofeminist point of view on this that; Accordingly, a critical ecological feminism can reject both the distorted choices generated by nature/culture dualism; it can reject the model of women and women's reproductivity as undifferentiated nature, but it is also critical of the attempt to fit them into a model of oppositional and masculinised culture (p. 50). The woman-led movement toward reframing reproduction as something that is strong, creative, and requires skill, care, and understanding with the reproducing woman as subject must also be seen as an attempt toward overcoming the nature/culture duality. The critical ecological feminism that emerges from this strategy would not rely on any assumptions that are problematic from a feminist perspective, and it would represent a more comprehensive advancement of feminist thought by better accounting for the category of nature, which is the key to so much of women's historical and contemporary oppression. As a political ideology, this movement embodies the desire of women to progress to a more advanced stage in their relationship with nature. This entails moving beyond the state of being powerless and merely included in nature, as well as beyond the reactionary response to their previous exclusion from culture. Instead, the movement seeks to actively, intentionally, and thoughtfully position women in alliance with nature, opposing a culture that is destructive and divisive. According to Ecofeminists, not only culture, but also religion is male-dominated:

Spiritual Ecofeminist grabs Christianity as patriarchal religion. Therefore, they harshly criticize patriarchal religions as well as emphasize on the worship of Goddess and the Mother Earth. This view of spiritual ecofeminist illuminates the sacred relationship between women and nature. But social ecofeminists have a different outlook towards the relationship between nature and women. According to them, the relationship between nature and women has been socially constructed

and strengthened by ideology. In this theory binary opposition or two opposite pole in the hierarchy is discussed. As one can find opposition between culture and nature, men and women, rational and emotional, mental and physical, and subject and object. Here one is oppressor and other is oppressed (object). In this way, nature become the victim of oppression and male become the oppressor (subject). Same condition one can find in the case of women, where the male become subject and women and their bodies become the object of domination. Though spiritual ecofeminist suggests a lot, their suggestions and views were highly criticized by Social Ecofeminism (Ottuh, 2020, p. 168).

As stated above, spiritual ecofeminism views God and religion as patriarchal because of their emphasis on male authority. Spiritual ecofeminists believe that it is important to restore the ancient religions as they support the worship of goddesses and see women and environment as sacred components of religious beliefs. They consider that it is vital to resurrect the old faiths. According to social ecofeminists, this is the solution to rising social and ecological issues. As the notion of women's empowerment gained traction in communities, discussions surrounding women's societal contributions became increasingly extensive and powerful. The concept of matriarchy is gaining prominence as women increasingly attain power and contribute to the empowerment of society. In many societies, where the predominant allocation of rights is skewed towards males, women are often seen as companions rather than individuals who exist only to fulfill the desires of others. In some theological settings, women are shown as individuals who need nurturing, indulgence, and attentive treatment. Furthermore, this obligation is dependent on the husband's responsibilities after entering into marriage. However, in contemporary society, there is a shift in societal expectations about women, wherein the traditional role of housewifery is no longer considered the exclusive or primary expectation. Similar to their male counterparts, women are now able to pursue a job of their choosing while effectively managing the responsibilities of motherhood and marriage. Therefore, there has been a total

transformation in family structures when comparing the present day to four or five decades ago. Men have also adapted their societal roles, with some choosing to embrace the duty of a stay-at-home father. Hence, it can be said that the evolution of patriarchy and matriarchy within familial contexts has significantly advanced in order to promote equity. Matriarchal leadership in a family setting is generally less aggressive than patriarchal leadership. As the influence of matriarchy has grown within families, societal conflict has decreased. Feminism, which gained significant recognition in the 1970s, has facilitated the transition from patriarchal to matriarchal leadership within families. It was not until the 1970s that women were finally given the option to continue using their maiden names instead of being required to assume their husbands' last names after marriage. It was at this point that the matriarchal movement got its start. In these two stories, the male characters exhibit contrasting responses towards the matriarchal systems they encounter. In the novel *Herland*, the character Jeff demonstrates an initial appreciation for the society of *Herland*, which gradually evolves into a complete acceptance. Van tries to preserve a state of critical objectivity; but, he also undergoes a transformation upon relocating to a nation characterized by an abundance of aesthetic appeal, meticulous organization, impeccable cleanliness, and an overall delightful atmosphere of homeliness. In this parthenogenetic community, Terry, who exhibits sexist alpha male traits, has a reduced capacity for adaptability and a growing inclination towards confrontational behavior.

He was schooled to be such through every element of his education and was clearly given to understand that these traits were no less than the fulfillment of his very nature as a male. All he has learned has taught him to identify “masculine” with force, cruelty, indifference, egotism, and property (Millet, 1970, p. 26).

He expresses regret about the disappearance of feminine characteristics and asserts that the situation is quite abnormal and an unnatural situation is certain to yield unnatural outcomes. In *Herland*, the presence of males is accepted primarily for the

sake of ‘restoring a bisexual equilibrium’ within their society, and women are advised to ‘capture [men] if possible; domesticate and educate them if necessary.’ The social role of males within the wider matriarchal structure of the hive is notably non-patriarchal and distinctly queer, since it fundamentally challenges the conventional power dynamics associated with masculine gender norms. Whether by choice or not, all individuals ultimately fulfill their duty to the matriarchal hive.

To summarize the antidualist resolution of ecofeminism, Plumwood places an emphasis on the significance of building a pluralist worldview that respects variety, however Warren believes that all ecofeminists and feminists should reject the logic of dominance. The idea of dualism has been questioned by a large number of feminist and decolonial philosophers; nonetheless, this criticism is often presented in an unclear manner. According to Plumwood, a comprehensive analysis of the logical framework of dualism can lead to a more profound comprehension of the essence of oppression and the interrelatedness of diverse forms of oppression. This can be achieved by acknowledging their distinctions and refraining from attempts to simplify or reduce them. She defines dualism as:

A dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable. Dualism is a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalized in culture and characterized by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders construed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, ruler and ruled, center and periphery. It treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed as not merely different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change (Plumwood, 2002, p. 19).

This anti-dualist ecological feminism can be comprehended as an inclusive endeavor that related to other movements for liberation. The dualisms that have typified western civilization and are philosophically associated with rationalism, correspond significantly to its primary modes of subjugation, estrangement, and supremacy. The deconstruction of a dualism founded on differentiation necessitates the reconfiguration of both interpersonal connections and individual self-perception through the lens of a non-hierarchical understanding of differentiation. According to Plumwood (1993), an appropriate relationship of non-hierarchical difference will have the following specific features:

Backgrounding (denial): a non-hierarchical concept of difference requires a move to systems of thought, accounting, perception, decision-making, which recognise the contribution of what has been backgrounded, and which acknowledge dependency.

Radical exclusion: a non-hierarchical concept of difference will affirm continuity, reconceive relata in more integrated ways, and break the false choice hyperseparation presents in reclaiming the denied area of overlap.

Incorporation (relational definition): a non-hierarchical concept of difference must review the identities of both underside and upperside. It can aim to rediscover a language and story for the underside, reclaim positive independent sources of identity and affirm resistance.

Instrumentalism: a non-hierarchical concept of difference implies recognising the other as a centre of needs, value and striving on its own account, a being whose ends and needs are independent of the self and to be respected.

Homogenisation: a non-hierarchical concept of difference involves recognising the complexity and diversity of the 'other nations' which

have been homogenised and marginalised in their constitution as excluded other, as ‘the rest’ (p. 71).

The remedies align with the fundamental conceptual and cultural worries of diverse liberation movements. Thus, having a clear understanding of what constitutes dualism allows one to see the landmarks that signal the way out of it.



CHAPTER THREE – THE RAMIFICATION OF ECOFEMINIST SALVATION IN CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN’S *HERLAND* AND BEGUM ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSEIN’S *SULTANA’S DREAM*

3.1. An Isolated but Visionary Country: *Herland*

“Where I live as a woman is to some men a wilderness. But to me it is home”

(Le Guin, 1989, p. 46).

Throughout history, women have consistently been regarded as subordinate individuals and have endeavored, or been compelled, to persevere in a society ruled by men. Women have been compelled to be dependent on men for their needs in nearly all facets of existence. Likewise, within a patriarchal society, the earth's natural resources are being ruthlessly destroyed for personal gain. In this particular context, it can be observed that men implement an identical approach towards nature as they do towards women. Ecofeminism, on the other hand, endeavors to announce the systemic oppression applied to women and the natural world through literary works. Numerous literary works have been produced related to the subjects of women and nature within this particular framework. One of these works is *Herland* written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

She was a well-known author, speaker, economist, and thinker who advocated for women's domestic rights and women's suffrage in the early 1900s. She is a publisher who is also a pioneer of American First Wave Feminism. Through her publications, famous feminist and theorist Gilman pushed for improvements in culture and women's rights. Gilman is regarded as one of the pioneering utopian writers in the English language who placed significant emphasis on the subject of gender and women's rights, thereby bringing it to the forefront of scholarly discourse.

Kessler argues that “utopias are guides rather than blueprints, Gilman expected her writing to guide readers [...] she advocated through the medium of her fiction

numerous social changes, especially focused upon women and gender arrangements” (Kessler, 1995, p. 2). The majority of Gilman's writings are proactive and explain her desire to influence social change that would improve the status of women. Gilman focused to synthesize feminism and socialism into a cohesive and interrelated ideological framework. Also, the ideals of radical feminism are prominently included in Gilman's utopian book *Herland*. Radical feminists claim that the family institution serves as the underlying source of the conflict between genders, hence advocating for its abolition. One prominent person in the realm of radical feminist, Shulamith Firestone, has the viewpoint that the complete eradication of the institution of the family is essential. For her, “The revolt against the biological family could bring on the first successful revolution” (Firestone, 1972, p. 242). She then proposes “living together” as an alternative solution to the conventional family unit:

“Living together” is the loose social form in which two or more partners, of whatever sex, enter a nonlegal sex/companionate arrangement the duration of which varies with the internal dynamics of the relationship. Their contract is only with each other; society has no interest, since neither reproduction nor production -dependencies of one party on the other- is involved. This flexible non-form could be expanded to become the standard unit in which most people would live for most of their lives (p. 228).

Radical feminists abandon equality debates, which have brought nothing but disillusion so far, and work to establish an alternative world to the male-dominated one. Consequently, they emphasize femininity and reproduction, as well as the control of the female body and fertility. They believe that the patriarchal system that creates mother and spousal roles for women poses the greatest threat to them. Therefore, the only solution to all women's concerns is the destruction of patriarchal society, which must be replaced by a matriarchal alternative. While Gilman's *Herland* aligns with many concepts of radical feminist, it diverges from this ideology in several aspects. The book is particularly noteworthy for its depiction of an all-female civilization,

which serves as a manifestation of radical feminist ideology. This portrayal showcases the concept of establishing an alternative matriarchal social structure in opposition to the prevailing patriarchal order, with the aim of addressing many challenges faced by women. As Elaine Showalter points out “Many forms of American radical feminism also romantically assert that women are closer to nature, to the environment, to a matriarchal principle at once biological and ecological” (1981, p. 201). So as Vandyck states, Herlanders establish and achieve to maintain, “Two thousand years of one continuous culture with no men” (Gilman, 1979, p. 94). However, contrary to the principles of radical feminism, they did not intentionally establish this matriarchal society:

Very few men were left alive, save the slaves; and these now seized their opportunity, rose in revolt, killed their remaining masters even to the youngest boy, killed the old women too, and the mothers, intending to take possession of the country with the remaining young women and girls. [...] There was literally no one left on this beautiful high garden land but a bunch of hysterical girls and some older slave women (Gilman, 1979, p. 54).

Therefore, the establishment of a matriarchal society might be seen as an inevitable consequence of the catastrophic events they undergo. Given that all males are killed by the slaves, the population is reduced to a small number of young females who, by means of parthenogenesis, become the only means of propagating the next generation. Comparing to Kate Millet’s work *Sexual Politics*, Millet explained that masculine role is not an biological identity but an attitude:

Sexual role is not a matter of biological identity but of class or caste in the hierocratic homosexual society projected in Genet's novels. Because of the perfection with which they ape and exaggerate the “masculine” and “feminine” of heterosexual society, his homosexual characters represent the best contemporary insight into its constitution and beliefs. Granted that their

caricature is grotesque, and Genet himself is fully aware of the morbidity of this pastiche, his homosexuals nonetheless have unerringly penetrated to the essence of what heterosexual society imagines to be the character of “masculine” and “feminine,” and which it mistakes for the nature of male and female, thereby preserving the traditional relation of the sexes (Millet, 1970, p. 22).

While the concept of an exclusively female society that reproduces without male involvement aligns with the ideas of radical feminism, it is important to note that the establishment of such a society serves a distinct purpose driven by need. As a result of that, all feminist writers dreamed of an ideal place where everything is equal for all like Bell Hooks described:

Imagine living in a world where there is no domination, where females and males are not alike or even always equal, but where a vision of mutuality is the ethos shaping our interaction. Imagine living in a world where we can all be who we are, a world of peace and possibility. Feminist revolution alone will not create such a world; we need to end racism, class elitism, imperialism. But it will make it possible for us to be fully self-actualized females and males able to create beloved community, to live together, realizing our dreams of freedom and justice, living the truth that we are all “created equal”. Come closer. See how feminism can touch and change your life and all our lives. Come closer and know firsthand what feminist movement is all about. Come closer and you will see: feminism is for everybody (Hooks, 2000, p. x).

Gilman argued that the development of human nature can take shape as desired, and she tried to identify methods for dismantling the societal stereotypes that restricted women. By contrasting the agents of a patriarchal society that relies on dichotomies of culture/nature and man/woman to exert control over both women and the environment, Gilman presents an alternative maternal realm that transcends paternalistic ideologies, ultimately striving for a more egalitarian society. In accordance with patriarchal

ideologies, men's labor is often documented as income-generating, while women mostly engage in unpaid activities such as fetching water, gathering firewood, tending to agricultural tasks such as weeding and hoeing, fulfilling reproductive responsibilities, and preparing meals. These unpaid endeavors predominantly occur inside the private sphere or domestic setting.

The restriction of women's lives not only delayed the advancement of humanity but also prevented it. Thus, the development of the organism necessitated the involvement of women in all aspects of physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social domains of the individual being or society. The author argued that women were marginalized in human affairs in these four domains. According to Gilman (1979), the historical subordination of women can be traced back to the expropriation of the surplus produced by women in agriculture by men (p. 9). As she stated, it constituted the initial manifestation of subjugation and subsequently served as the archetype for further instances of exploitation. The act of subordination prevented the progress of women, resulting in the dehumanization of the entire female gender. The characteristics commonly referred to as masculine are essentially human traits that have historically been taken from women, therefore assumed to associated with men. These traits include but are not limited to courage, strength, imagination, generosity, and integrity.

The generalizations about women and their 'virtues' were rooted in the historical experience of women's subordination, and therefore they would be altered if history's course could be changed in favor of women. Such a change, Gilman and many others claimed, would also free men of the unbearable burden of absolute power, and thus, this new balance of power between the sexes would help the amelioration of humanity's future (Yunusoğlu, 2006, p. 67).

The most important fact about the sexes, men and women, is the common humanity we share, not the differences that distinguish us, Gilman (1979, p. 9) said repeatedly. But since they are denied autonomy, women do not have the right kind of environment in which to grow. Men's personalities are also warped by their tendencies for power and domination. Therefore, women's autonomy is necessary for a healthy social organism that includes both men and women.

That autonomy can be achieved only by women's collective political action. Just as most women have been socialized to accede to their own subordination, implied Gilman, so can they be moved to lead the struggle for a humanized-socialized world. She saw the first step toward resolving the world's predicament in the ideological sphere, and she saw herself engaged in a fierce struggle for the minds of women. (Gilman, 1979, p. 9).

When the social and political structure are compared; Thomas More's *Utopia* is characterized by a societal structure that is mostly patriarchal, with women generally confined to household roles. Women are subject to restrictions that prohibit their participation in public office and many activities outside the confines of their households. *Utopia* is founded upon a republican framework, whereby individuals are chosen to serve as officials for a fixed duration of two years. The Utopians saw monarchy as a problematic form of government primarily owing to the inherent fallibility of its leaders. The legal system represents a harmonious amalgamation of common law and civil law principles. Severe penalties are imposed for acts of treason and other violations against the state, although small transgressions are often addressed via a reprimand. The economic system implemented in *Utopia* may be characterized as socialist. Commodities are allocated via public establishments, ensuring equitable provision of essential goods to all individuals. However, *Herland* is a civilization comprised entirely of women. The society does not exhibit a prevailing hierarchical structure, but instead operates on a consensus on societal functioning and the

resolution of conflicts. The legal framework of *Herland* is primarily founded upon the principle of fairness. In *Herland*, the absence of correctional facilities is notable, since the prevailing system prioritizes the process of rehabilitation above punitive measures. The economic system of *Herland* is predicated around the fundamental idea of collaboration. One notable characteristic of this society is the absence of private property, with all resources being jointly held. The novel *Herland* depicts a world in which gender is rendered inconsequential. In this organizational context, gender does not serve as a determinant for assigning jobs, since tasks are allocated based on individuals' aptitude and suitability, irrespective of their gender. In *Herland*, the process of reproduction is shown as being detached from conventional gender roles. In contrast, it is noteworthy that all members of the community possess the ability to conceive, and the act of pregnancy is esteemed as a commendable and sought-after duty. *Herland* depicts a utopian society that places a greater emphasis on emotional expression and caring conduct, rather than prioritizing labor that is traditionally associated with masculinity. As a consequence, contemporary culture places more emphasis on collective ideals while downplaying individuality. While *Utopia* and *Herland* are both renowned works of feminist literature, *Herland* portrays a more contemporary and equal representation of gender and societal structure compared to *Utopia*.

Gilman's novel, *Herland*, published in 1915, aims to offer a critical re-examination of hegemonic representations by presenting a utopian society consisting solely of women. Gilman has articulated in her literary works the methods of dismantling the societal expectations and preconceived notions that seek to impose gender stereotypes upon women. There has been a claim that women as a collective being can be a driving force in the re-establishment of society, if they wish:

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) advocates an all-female society entwined with masculine adventure tales and centers down upon the idea of mothering, natural cooperation and collectivism which is in contrast to the

individual competitiveness of capitalism. But it also promotes the idea that motherly skills were not natural to women and that women require training in maternal skills and that the future generation was to be reared by professionals. Therefore, despite the capability of parthenogenesis in *Herland* child rearing is entrusted upon the elite. In fact, Gilman rejects the 19th-century-explorer scientist goal of conquering nature. The world created by men has now and then given birth to innumerable problems and ailments, epidemics and pandemics leading to the loss of precious lives, a loss that is incalculable (Hagengruber, 2023, p. 76).

This Amazon-like society of *Herland* surely reflects many of the sensibilities of Gilman's time. Her attempt to unite the socialist trends of her time with a nascent feminism is, like in many works of later feminists, the demonstration of an "essential and necessary interdependence" (Lane, 2001, p. x).

The novel's male characters consist of Terry (O. Nicholson), Jeff (Margrave), and Van (Vandyck Jennings), whose friendships began at school, embark on a journey of discovery to a region of indigenous tribes, are representation of patriarchal point of view and make predictions and evaluations that demean women. The story is told through the character of Van. Van is a sociologist who is knowledgeable and talented in different languages, interested in every field related to human life. Terry is a rich person with boats, cars, planes, successful in mechanical and electrical subjects, interested in geography, meteorology, and experienced in aviation. Jeff, on the other hand, is a doctor and is competent in biology and botanical sciences. Terry is described as a brave, intelligent, generous, self-confident person, but is a flirtatious character who likes to have fun with beautiful women. Jerry is a sensitive and chivalrous, sensitive, idealistic, romantic type. Van is like a character in between, he thinks that gender has physiological limitations. All three characters are sexist men who had prejudices about women before they met the women in *Herland*.

During their voyage of exploration, the three companions hear a legend about a native community composed of only women and girls. The voyage that the men undertake in order to conquer a mysterious land inhabited entirely by women will unexpectedly lead them to doubt their own identity and civilization and teach them to confront the true meaning of all the labels they were once proud of. Gaard and Gruen (1993) suggest that “patriarchal domination is the result of human evolutionary development [...] an evolutionary shift occurred as the result of the emergence of hunting behavior in male hominids” (p. 237) (as cited in Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 3). This is a sexist discourse that reflects the typical male prejudices, fears, and ignorance towards women, and has a strict gender discrimination. This reflects the general situation in today's male-dominated society:

“Hailed as deliverers, I think,” said Terry (Gilman, 1979, p. 50).

Jeff: “They don’t seem to notice our being men,” he went on. “They treat us —well—just as they do one another. It’s as if our being men was a minor incident” (p. 53).

The novel *Herland* depicts a society in which women have established a utopian community devoid of male presence:

“None of them had ever seen it. It was dangerous, deadly, they said, for any man to go there. But there were tales of long ago, when some brave investigator had seen it—a Big Country, Big Houses, Plenty People—All Women.

Had no one else gone? Yes—a good many—but they never came back. It was no place for men—of that they seemed sure” (Gilman, 1979, p. 24).

The representation of the world in this instance is filtered through a male perspective and consciousness, presented not in the conventional form of a dialogue,

but rather through a dramatic encounter between three American men and an exclusively female community. The character Terry's colonialist opinions reveal the general male domination's opinion as well:

“You'll see,” he insisted. “I'll get solid with them all—and play one bunch against another. I'll get myself elected king in no time—whew! Solomon will have to take a back seat!” (Gilman, 1979, p. 30).

As it is cited above, Terry holds patriarchal beliefs that suggest women are incapable of effectively governing their nation, and asserts that male leadership is necessary for the ownership and administration of land. He envisions a greater chance of ascending to the throne and conquering *Herland* in comparison to their peers.

These men arrive by “plane and powered by boat, armed with the instruments of voyeuristic power: camera, binoculars, and guns” (Bartkowski, 1989, p. 29). – and yet, they are captured by unarmed and athletic women (Yunusoğlu, 2006, p.73). The male protagonists in the story come upon a culture like the Amazon, consisting only of women. Interestingly, the society is not shown or explained by its female members, but rather by the male outsiders. This narrative structure, used by Gilman, serves to highlight the difference between the foreign perspective of the men and the indigenous perspective of the women. To the point where, as Frances Bartkowski points out, male tourists “baptize” the territory as a possessive name, calling it *Herland*, while the women themselves never divulge the true name of their homeland. The use of this literary technique serves to maintain a consistent tone of sarcasm and criticism across the whole of the work. In this utopian setting, where both genders coexist in a secluded environment, Gilman effectively challenges several established notions about the roles and characteristics of men and women.

Men long had the power to create their own kind of women—fragile, dependent, passive, timid—by not marrying those who deviated. Now women select from competing males, as is common in most other

species, and are able to breed out the destructive male qualities inherited from a historic past when combat and aggression were necessary for progress. Once evolution had been a long and slow process, but now change can be made rapidly because we understand how to aid nature in the interests of human need (Gilman, 1979, p. 11).

As it is given clearly by Gilman, she explores the concepts of femininity and masculinity, as well as the cultural and biological factors that influence gendered behavior. Her argument regarding the capacity of human beings to shape their societies and manipulate the natural world to their advantage is exemplified in the literary work entitled *Herland*. This narrative features the occurrence of parthenogenesis, which results in the birth of exclusively female offspring, thereby serving as a concrete manifestation of the notion that where there is a determination to achieve a particular outcome, an achievable way of doing so can be found.

The author's conception of the community can be analyzed through the framework of cultural ecofeminism, which states that women possess an inherent inclination to preserve the integrity of the natural world and advocate for harmonious cohabitation rather than the imposition of patriarchal authority. Sisterhood, as conceptualized by Bell Hooks, refers to the collective effort of women collaborating in solidarity to establish a society free from many types of social hierarchy, including but not limited to sexism, racism, and homophobia:

Males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us. But those benefits have come with a price. In return for all the goodies men receive from patriarchy, they are required to dominate women, to exploit and oppress us, using violence if they must to keep patriarchy intact. Most men find it difficult to be patriarchs. Most men are disturbed by hatred and fear of women, by male violence against women, even the men who perpetuate this violence. But they

fear letting go of the benefits. They are not certain what will happen to the world they know most intimately if patriarchy changes. So they find it easier to passively support male domination even when they know in their minds and hearts that it is wrong. Again and again men tell me they have no idea what it is feminists want. I believe them. I believe in their capacity to change and grow. And I believe that if they knew more about feminism they would no longer fear it, for they would find in feminist movement the hope of their own release from the bondage of patriarchy (Hooks, 2000, p. ix).

The book *Herland* exemplifies the idea of sisterhood, since it portrays a utopian community that emphasizes egalitarianism, affection, and mutual esteem among its members, irrespective of gender. This concept aligns with Hooks' understanding of sisterhood. According to the utopian vision built around the sisterhood of all women, men are seen as obstacles to such coexistence and are therefore excluded. In this vision, women reproduce through parthenogenesis and collectively raise their daughters instead of in separate family units. Familial ties are not entirely removed in *Herland* society. Instead, due to the fact that all Herlanders share a common maternal ancestor, they are connected both biologically and culturally.

Davis (2010) has detailed in her book; *Herland* is the name three male scientists give to a secluded and strange “Woman Land” they “discover” in the heart of a dark continent, having learned of its existence on a previous expedition. The explorers expect the women to conform to stereotypes and are surprised by how femininity is construed in a world without men: it resembles the humanity Charlotte believed would define us when the traditional sexual division of labor no longer does:

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

We had expected pettiness and found a social consciousness besides which our nations looked like quarreling children—feeble-minded ones at that.

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

We had expected hysteria, and found a standard of health and vigor, a calmness of temper, to which the habit of profanity, for instance, was impossible to explain—we tried it (p. 526).

Here were evidently people highly skilled, efficient, caring for their country as a florist cares for his costliest orchids. Under the soft brilliant blue of that clear sky, in the pleasant shade of those endless rows of trees, we walked unharmed, the placid silence broken only by the birds (Gilman, 1979, p. 40). “It certainly was different from any towns we had ever seen” (p. 41).

[...] we could not help seeing this much, even on that excited day—a land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden (p. 33).

Terry: “I never saw a forest so petted, even in Germany. Look, there’s not a dead bough —the vines are trained—actually!” (Gilman, 1979, p. 35).

The only individuals they encounter are women and children. They believe that, because this is a civilized country, males must be hiding somewhere. They find the concept of a civilization devoid of males impossible:

“We seemed to think that if there were men we could fight them, and if there were only women—why, they would be no obstacles at all” (Gilman, 1979, p. 43).

Van insists on his idea saying that a “civilized” society is only possible with the contribution of male power:

“But they look—why, this is a *civilized* country!” I protested. “There must be men” (Gilman, 1979, p. 33).

The male narrator, sociologist Vandyke Jennings, in the novel presents the historical chronicle of the Herlanders spanning over 2000 years, which commences with a series of wars leading to the decimation of their male population and the deprivation of their coastal access. This interruption in communication established the first unintentional barrier between *Herland* and the outside world. After a volcanic explosion devastated their only mountain route, their last remaining population consisted of a handful of few males, slaves and women. The secondary natural barrier that was formed between Herlanders and their history was indicated by the volcanic explosion. Slaves saw the natural tragedy as a window of opportunity for an uprising and freedom, and they took advantage of it by eliminating the males and elderly women of the country. The enraged virgins, on the other hand, did not let the slaves to seize authority and instead resorted to violent self-defense, slaughtering the slaves in order to protect themselves. Fear of slave revolts as well as miscegenation were deep seated causes of discomfort in the American consciousness as well as in the consciousness of other slaveholding and colonial powers, which are also reflected in the novel (Özmen, 2021, p. 2). In *Herland*, the primary focus of women's resistance was not directed towards the dominance of men or monarchy, which were the governing systems in place. Rather, their resistance was aimed at male slaves who created a threat to the Aryan women's subordination and racial purity.

The compulsory segregation of races presumably depending on their level of progression that Gilman proposes to eliminate socio-economic burdens on a superior civilization is reminiscent of how Herlanders dealt with their own criminals which was already a rare occurrence among them (Özmen, 2021, p. 2). Despite the absence of an established governmental or judicial framework, the Herlander society exhibits a remarkable level of organization. While they do allow for some degree of diversity in terms of skills and professions, the community places great emphasis on the welfare of its members.

Following the successful resistance and elimination of slaves, the women of *Herland* experienced a sense of despair and were confronted with the apprehension of potential extinction. In contrast to alternative challenges, this particular obstacle proved impervious to resolution through collective solidarity or cooperation within the remaining populace. After five years of exhausting effort and toiling to make their land productive and themselves self-sufficient, they were finally freed from their anxiety when a heavenly intervention came to their aid. One woman, who we will refer to as the over mother, became pregnant and had five daughters as a result. After reaching the age of twenty-five, each of the five of them went on to have five daughters, which resulted in the beginning of an entirely new race of women known as the Herlanders. The primary sanctity around which their lives centered was the interconnectedness of mothering and collective raising of children, all rooted in a shared maternal figure. Gilman's account of pregnancy and childbirth suggests that these processes are brought about through a deliberate and conscious act of will, similar to the creation of creatures by a Biblical deity through focused believe and concentration. However, Gilman does not provide a complete explanation of these processes. In *Herland*, it is observed that women possess the ability to bring about the existence of other women through premeditation. Furthermore, it is achievable for women to avert pregnancy by directing their focus towards physical labor and aiding in the upbringing of children belonging to other women, given that child rearing is a collaborative undertaking in that society. The nurturing and instruction of children, conducted by proficient professionals who

may not necessarily be biological mothers but are always female, is essential in the formation of an entirely new population with a fresh mindset. Gilman's perspective suggests that the wish for motherhood is an intrinsic aspect of the female experience, while the capacity to fulfill the role of a competent mother is not necessarily guaranteed. The daughters of *Herland* are provided with practical abilities as a component of their daily routine, without being fully aware of the structured educational process. Subsequently, they pursue specialization in their respective areas of expertise, such as forestry, landscaping, gathering, pedagogy, or childcare.

There were no spectacular acrobatics, such as only the young can perform, but for all-around development they had a most excellent system. A good deal of music went with it, with posture dancing and, sometimes, gravely beautiful processional performances (Gilman, 1979, p. 55).

Apart from their unfeminine physical characteristics, the Herlanders' construction of their country without males after the conflict and their performance of certain tasks requiring physical strength and considered to be men's occupations in patriarchal societies indicate that they lack feminine qualities. Therefore, when Jeff removes the basket from Celis, stating that women should not transport anything, he is demonstrating sexism:

Celis said, "Why?" with the frankest amazement. [...] He said, rather lamely, that women were not built for heavy work. She looked out across the fields to where some women were working, building a new bit of wall out of large stones; looked back at the nearest town with its woman-built houses; down at the smooth, hard road we were walking on; and then at the little basket he had taken from her (Gilman, 1979, p. 92).

Therefore, in *Herland*, women hold occupations that were traditionally reserved for males during the Victorian era. In this manner, they want to demonstrate that they

are not weak or fragile and do not require men's protection. Consequently, women are portrayed as having the freedom to pursue any specialty, regardless of their gender. Thus, women are seen performing nontraditional occupations. In *Herland*, the engagement of women in specialized occupations leads to a diminished sense of motherhood. Their concern expands beyond that. Mothers' comprehension of education, childcare, and labor sharing aligns with this perspective:

“We soon grew to see that mother-love has more than one channel of expression. I think the reason our children are so- so fully loved, by all of us, is that we never- any of us- have enough of our own. [...] We each go without a certain range of personal joy,” she said, “but remember- we each have a million children to love and serve- our children” (Gilman, 1979, p. 71).

Somel, Vandyck's tutor, highlights the significance of motherhood and fertility, which serves to justify the emphasis placed by radical feminists on these phenomena. The Herlanders lack the concept of individual motherhood. Instead, due to their communal lifestyle, they perceive themselves as mothers to a large number of children, providing them with abundant maternal affection. This also contributes to the development of a well-rounded and healthy generation. Vandyck's description suggests his comprehension of the Herlanders' profound appreciation for motherhood.

As opposed to their American counterparts, *Herland's* women exhibit a greater degree of self-reliance and mastery over their surroundings and offspring. Reproduction becomes a civilized system of beliefs that works for the benefit of civilization: an organized reproductive technology, an efficient industry that eliminates waste (Hudak, 2003, p. 470) (as cited in Özmen, 2021, p. 3). In *Herland*, there exist women who may choose to stay away from motherhood due to the belief that they may not possess the necessary qualities to be effective mothers, as determined by the prevailing societal norms. From an evolutionary standpoint, it is suggested that Herlanders are portrayed as being more developed than the remainder of Western

society. As a result, certain individuals who are classified as “lowest types” are already infertile and are therefore naturally eliminated. Education, to Gilman, should only be entrusted to experts, and maternity is strictly separated from child rearing (Özmen, 2021, p. 3). The responsible architects of *Herland* recognized the potential for resource scarcity resulting from overpopulation. Consequently, they retained authority over parthenogenesis to prevent any adverse impact on the standards of life of the current inhabitants. The holy sisterhood abstained from engaging in competition and instead made personal sacrifices by establishing a sustainable population growth tolerance and refraining from reproduction until the optimal population size was achieved.

In the opening chapters of the novel, upon arriving in *Herland*, Terry, who “was rich enough to do as he pleased” (Gilman, 1979, p. 22), reveals his belief that he possesses the ability to successfully engage in romantic pursuits with the female inhabitants of *Herland*: “Terry, in his secret heart, had visions of a sort of sublimated summer resort—just Girls and Girls and Girls—and that he was going to be—well, Terry was popular among women even when there were other men around, and it’s not to be wondered at that he had pleasant dreams of what might happen” (Gilman, 1979, p. 28). The land of *Herland* is unfamiliar to the three male protagonists. However, one of them, Terry, humorously labels this foreign territory as *Herland*, a term that implies alienation and ownership, traits that are deemed unfavorable by the female inhabitants.

As Abbasi & Moslehi (2016) explains; Gilman pokes fun at Darwin’s assumptions of natural selection and superiority of men by introducing strong and courageous female characters in *Herland*. The three men come from a patriarchal society that ascribes timidity, emotion, and weakness to femininity, and associates reason to masculinity. Despite the fact that the three men are strangers and newcomers for the women of *Herland*, they do not scare the three men (p. 3).

Van says that “with no more terror than a set of frolicsome children in a game of tag, sat as lightly as so many big bright birds on their precarious perches and frankly, curiously, stared at us” (Gilman, 1979, p. 37).

Van describes, “we started up the tree, separated into three swift-moving figures and fled upward” (Gilman, 1979, p. 37). The women climb the tree, and they are watching men, who are on the lower position. Saber remarks that “the women are on the trees, on a higher position that implies an explicit critique of the hierarchy of man/woman” (Saber, 2012, p. 763) (as cited in Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 4).

To be able to attract Alima, Terry holds and shakes the necklace, but “she seized it from him with her left, and dropped on the instant to the bough below” (Gilman, 1979, p. 39). Alima, a woman of courage, takes over the necklace from Terry, who is taken shocked by her nonconformity to conventional feminine attributes as prescribed by patriarchal norms; “... dominating men by her sharp mind and proudly accepting their admiration, she could hardly have felt a prey in their arms.” [...] “The woman who refuses to be the man’s vassal is far from always fleeing him; rather she tries to make him the instrument of her pleasure” (De Beauvoir, 2009, p. 486).

This was Alima, a tall long-limbed lass, well-knit and evidently both strong and agile. Her eyes were splendid, wide, fearless, as free from suspicion as a child’s who has never been rebuked. Her interest was more that of an intent boy playing a fascinating game than of a girl lured by an ornament (Gilman, 1979, p. 38).

Terry comes from a country rooted in patriarchal domination that is the result of human evolutionary development that “women, animals, and nature are considered to the cultural activities of men and can be thought of as separate from them” (Gaard & Gruen 1993, p. 237). Terry, who views women and the natural world as distinct from the man and that man has the ability to rule both of these realms; hence, he is surprised

when Alima's response is not consistent with his presuppositions. The strong female inhabitants of *Herland* reside in a society that is liberated from patriarchal norms that link the female physique with fragility.

Gilman criticizes Darwin's theory of "Natural Selection" or "the Survival of the Fittest" which implies that "those who survive are the 'fit', the 'superior' examples" (Darwin, 2008, p. 19). She marks that "we are the only animal species in which the female depends on the male for food, the only animal species in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation" (Gilman, 1898, p. 5). When Terry says that "the laws of nature require a struggle for existence, and that in the struggle the fittest survive, and the unfit perish," (Gilman, 1979, p. 87) he is elaborating on Darwin's theory of the law of nature. Darwin's theory posits that women are economically and socially reliant on males. However, in *Herland*, Gilman presents a society in which women are the organizing force, independent from men and devoid of the detrimental aspects of competition. In order to challenge the prevailing ideology of dominance and the fallacy of individual autonomy, literary works need tales that emphasize the interconnectedness, communal bonds, and interdependence that exist among human beings, animals, and the natural environment. In Gilman's novel *Herland*, the author endeavors to establish a society characterized by the coexistence of varied human-animal-nature groups and participatory democracy by eradicating conflict and contests, which are seen as symbols of men's ideals. Their response to every issue is a deliberate endeavor to make things better, and they observe the value of "improvement" that is not based on Darwin's notion of improvement, that "improvement" will be the outcome of the process he names "natural selection" (Darwin 2008, p. 19).

According to Gaard and Gruen, "[in] this theory of human social evolution, woman's body, which is smaller, weaker, and reproductive, prevents her from full participation in the hunt and thus relegates her to the realm of non-culture" (Gaard & Gruen 1993, p. 237) (as cited in Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 4). Terry explains to his

teachers and claims that women are inferior to males and maintains that “Mothers [...] would of course work for their children in the home; but the world's work was different—that had to be done by men, and required the competitive element” (Gilman, 1979, p. 85). Terry makes a comment regarding the fact that women are financially depending on males. He also discusses the economic pressures that low-income women face and states that “there was always plenty of opportunity for the fittest to reach the top, which they did, in great numbers, particularly in our country; that where there was severe economic pressure the lowest classes of course felt it the worst, and that among the poorest of all the women were driven into the labor market by necessity” (Gilman, 1979, p. 85). However, women of lower socioeconomic status who put forth the greatest effort are rewarded with the lowest wages; as a result, their contributions to the market economy are mostly ignored. This attitude of Terry is very similar to understanding that De Beauvoir placed in her work *The Second Sex* (2009); The marriage structure, like the existence of prostitutes, proves it: the woman gives herself; the man remunerates her and takes her. Nothing forbids the male to act the master, to take inferior creatures: ancillary loves have always been tolerated, whereas the bourgeois woman who gives herself to a chauffeur or a gardener is socially degraded (p. 444). However, according to Darwin's theory of battle for survival, the lower and weaker a woman is, the greater the likelihood that she will live in poverty.

Darwin mentions that the problem of overpopulation of species is often solved by competition and war for the essential nutrients which people need to survive. Darwin uses the term ‘struggle for existence;’ according to Darwin, “hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the physical conditions of life” (Francis, 2007, p. 142) (as cited in Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 4).

The number of the species continues to rise, but the resources available to care for them are inadequate for keeping up with the growth. As a direct consequence of this, the different species engage in cooperative conflict, the winners of which tend to be those with superior fighting abilities, while the losers are often wiped off. Darwin agrees to the concept that natural catastrophes, hunger, sickness, and death are also means of regulating population in light of the fact that various groups of people struggle with one another for their own survival and strive to sustain themselves during times of a food scarcity. Darwin states that his theory concerning population serves as a crucial indicator for comprehending the functions of natural selection and the struggle for existence. However, Gilman's narrative seemingly creates a fictional reality that unintentionally contradicts Darwin's notion of the 'struggle for existence' as the three female characters explained on their population control methods in *Herland*: "When a population multiplies by five every thirty years it soon reaches the limits of a country, especially a small one like this. They very soon eliminated all the grazing cattle—sheep were the last to go" (Gilman, 1979, p. 92). The researchers developed an optimization system for the farming industry, which involved enhancing their fertilization plan and devising an effective plan for regenerating the soil with its natural nutrients. According to the narrator, "everything which came from the earth went back to it" (Gilman, 1979, p. 105). In her work, Gilman presents a novel agricultural approach aimed at providing sustenance for the whole nation. The narrator observes that the community in question refrains from engaging in predatory activities, such as acquiring more land or procuring food from other sources, in order to sustain their collective well-being. They do not acquire land from other nations in a war to provide more sustenance for their people. This new form of cultivation in *Herland* mocks Darwin's thesis of "the struggle for existence," as Van characterizes it, since in their own nation, the strongest survive and destroy the weak. The narrator argues that the Herlanders did not address their overpopulation issue through a "struggle for existence" approach, which typically favors the survival of the strongest and the elimination of the weak. The population issue is addressed through the implementation

of an unconventional agricultural approach, which effectively mitigates competition and conflict, resulting in the restoration of tranquility and harmony within their nation.

An ecofeminist viewpoint posits that three key factors play a crucial role in population issues: reproductive regulation, socioeconomic factors, and specifically, the societal position of women. According to their assertion, numerous scientific approaches to population management are responsible for the illness and mortality of females. However, in *Herland*, the female population is not subjected to life-threatening situations. The protagonist inquires about this matter to Somel: “you surely do not destroy the unborn” (Gilman, 1979, p. 94), she directs a gaze of terror towards the narrator, her eyes glow with intensity, and utters a phrase in a low and forceful tone: “Destroy the unborn—!”, “Do men do that in your country?” (p. 94). The men try to conceal committing infanticide and other ways of controlling the population which lead to the death and sickness of women, and it seems unimportant to men who consider themselves separated from women (Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 5). But in *Herland*, Gilman introduces the new concept of motherhood and through this new meaning of motherhood, she develops the new way of population control (p. 5).

Gilman's work presents a critical perspective on the dominant cultural power and control exerted by men, offering an alternative vision for the desired trajectory of cultural development. She argues that the root cause of all injustice lies in the subjugation of women by males. According to the author, the removal of this source would contribute to the establishment of a rational society. She presents Herlanders as matriarchal leaders producing children through parthenogenesis, a natural process of asexual reproduction. Interestingly, this independent means of population production and maintenance is one of the most problematic elements in reading *Herland* as a feminist novel. The women of *Herland* conform to the essentialist view that women's identities are defined by their biological differences from men (Bowers, 2018, p. 7). The novel consistently underscores this notion as Van and his associates gradually

recognize that the norms, customs, and anticipations of their own society are not applicable inside this context. As the male characters get a deeper understanding of the historical background of *Herland* and the strategic choices implemented to safeguard the existence of its female inhabitants, Van proceeds to elucidate this information to the reader:

“You see, they were Mothers, not in our sense of helpless involuntary fecundity, forced to fill and overfill the land, every land, and then see their children suffer, sin, and die, fighting horribly with one another; but in the sense of Conscious Makers of People. Mother-love with them was not a brute passion, a mere “instinct,” a wholly personal feeling; it was—a religion” (Gilman, 1979, p. 93).

As it is confirmed above, the admiration he has for these ladies and their resourcefulness in overcoming obstacles that would likely have caused disorder in Van's world is continuously increasing. He expresses his admiration for women, acknowledging that his prior beliefs on women's lack of “initiative” were incorrect: “We have assumed, as a matter of course, that women had none; that only the man, with his natural energy and impatience of restriction, would ever invent anything” (Gilman, 1979, p. 103). Van's findings provide support for Gilman's argument on the agency of women in determining their own fate, highlighting their ability to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives without relying on males. Thus, Gilman confines women to the role of “Makers of People,” (Gilman, 1979, p. 93) rather than individuals capable of pursuing a life beyond motherhood (Bowers, 2018, p. 7). The concept of the “new woman” was commonly portrayed in both societal discourse and literary works as an autonomous, assertive, self-reliant individual who frequently exhibited nonconformity to conventional relationships or matrimony, embodying a progressive outlook. This particular figure exemplified the principles that aligned with the objectives of the women's rights movement. Gilman employs the utilization of parthenogenesis in *Herland* as a means to denounce and eliminate the necessity of

men: “These stalwart virgins had no men to fear and therefore no need of protection. As to wild beasts—there were none in their sheltered land” [...] “these ultra-women, inheriting only from women” (Gilman, 1979, p. 82).

The life cycle of a male is different from that of a woman, as the narrator explains: “We have two life cycles: the man’s and the woman’s. To the man there is growth, struggle, conquest, the establishment of his family, and as much further success in gain or ambition as he can achieve. To the woman, growth, the securing of a husband, the subordinate activities of family life, and afterward such “social” or charitable interests as her position allows” (Gilman, 1979, p. 128). On the other hand, there is just one life cycle in *Herland*: “Here was but one cycle, and that a large one. The child entered upon a broad open field of life, in which motherhood was the one great personal contribution to the national life, and all the rest the individual share in their common activities” (p. 129). They labor without any sense of rivalry since they are caring for their children, as Van points out that “You see, they had had no wars. They had had no kings, and no priests, and no aristocracies. They were sisters, and as they grew, they grew together—not by competition, but by united action” (p. 84). Through socialization of taking care of children, Gilman undermines Darwin’s theory that admits that women are passive creators, and social works are done by men through competition (Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 6).

Gilman demonstrates the distinction between solely maternal and paternal states of mind, and she undermines paternal ideas that are founded on the struggle to possess and rule women as well as nature. She embodies a peaceful, co-parenting environment that is devoid of conflict, rivalry, and competitiveness. The Herlanders have demonstrated the absence of competition and hierarchy, which are fundamental components of both Darwinian theories and patriarchal societies. This has been achieved through the portrayal of a utopian society which is founded on the principle of sisterhood in that “all descended from one mother” (Gilman, 1979, p. 81). In contrasting the representatives of a paternal society that is based on dualisms of

culture/nature and man/woman to possess and dominate both women and nature, Gilman shows a maternal world that is free from the paternal attitudes to leap into egalitarian nation (Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016, p. 6). The prevailing patriarchal assumptions have resulted in the categorization of men's jobs as income-generating, while women's work, including tasks such as bringing water, collecting firewood, harvesting, farm works, bearing a child, and preparing food, is often unpaid and relegated to the private sphere or domestic setting. In Gilman's work, *Herland*, the elimination of war and competitions, which are commonly associated with men's values, is utilized as a means to establish a society that includes a variety of communities consisting of humans, animals, and nature. This society is characterized by participatory democracy. The individual's approach to addressing challenges involves a deliberate endeavor to enhance the situation, and they recognize the significance of progress that does not align with Darwinian concepts of improvement, which posit that progress arises from the natural selection process.

The analysis of the novel is conducted through the lens of ecofeminism theory, which identifies patriarchal religion, Darwin's theory of human evolution, and metaphorical or ideological explanations as the underlying factors responsible for the division between culture and nature, resulting in the establishment of a self/other dualism. The novel endeavors to challenge the dichotomies of self/other, man/woman, and culture/nature that are prevalent in patriarchal ideology, aiming to demonstrate the emancipation of women and nature from oppressive structures. Gilman's research demonstrates that the assertion of self's superiority, isolation, and control relies on the distinction between self and other, wherein all attributes affiliated with self are accorded preference, while those attributed to other are systematically discounted. Gilman used the concept of self/other dualism to elucidate the patriarchal hegemony around the perceived connection between women and nature, since both entities are positioned as "other" and are distinct from the self, which is connected with men and culture. The author elucidates that patriarchal ideology places significant stress on the distinction between the "self" and the "other," and utilizes the association of women

and nature to rationalize the subjugation of both women and the natural world. Gilman argues against attributing the fundamental origins of cultural/natural and male/female dualisms only to the social construction of patriarchal religion and Darwin's theory of human evolution. Instead, she presents a vision of a utopian society centered upon maternal principles. The author challenges the patriarchal ideologies rooted in the desire to control and dominate both women and the natural world. By advocating for the education of children in open spaces, she establishes a link between men, women, and nature. This approach aims to foster a holistic understanding of the interplay between nature and culture, while simultaneously condemning the oppressive nature of these societal constructs. Gilman presents a utopian society established and managed by women, which prioritizes the well-being of its inhabitants via the promotion of peace, comfort, and development. This society actively opposes any kind of exploitation directed towards women, environment, and animals. In addition, efforts are made to instruct and domesticate the three individuals, especially Jeff and Van, who exemplify traits of gentleness and non-domination. However, Terry, who represents a distinct sense of self, is expelled. *Herland* may be seen as a nation that embodies the principles of ecofeminism, a theoretical framework that recognizes the importance of social justice and acknowledges the interconnectedness between varied human beings, other animal species, and the natural environment.

3.2. Realization of A Dream: *Sultana's Dream*

The literary works *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland*, both of which depict feminist utopias, exhibit distinct qualities reflective of the historical contexts in which they were written, as well as the unique viewpoints of their respective writers. Hence, feminist authors, who bear witness to the lived experiences, challenges, and oppressive conditions endured by their female counterparts, and who anticipate encountering these realities firsthand due to their gender, have used many strategies to strengthen their perspectives. The use of utopian literature served as a means for women to

articulate their desires, entitlements, and aspirations. During the global dissemination of feminist ideologies, Rokeya and Charlotte, notable figures who successfully advocated for their perspectives, critically examined the societal status of women and authored two feminist utopian literary works, envisioning an improved and equitable future. *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland* have some commonalities, rendering them enlightening and motivational for individuals of both genders.

The contemporary concern of critics and authors worldwide revolves around the issue of female oppression and enslavement within patriarchal societies that are predominantly governed by men. Numerous books and research studies in the Indian sub-continent have been dedicated to addressing the issue and finding solutions for reducing the challenges faced by women. However, during the 18th to 20th century, there existed an extreme contrast in the prevailing circumstances, wherein women were confined within the domestic sphere and denied access to education and fundamental human rights, all in the guise of rigid societal norms and religious sensitivities in the broader context of India:

In such a state, as a girl of the world, Rokeya's experience in her own house as being deprived of education and secluded inside her house and the plight of women in her society encouraged her to work for the cause of women and to dream for a society where women would enjoy equal rights of men. Consequently, she expressed the dream of female emancipation and the rise of woman conspicuously in *Sultana's Dream* at the beginning of her literary career. Although *Sultana's Dream* pictures Rokeya's long and urges for female emancipation, she is not the only writer who brought the issue in front of the world stage at the beginning of the 20th century. Many other writers like Mary Astell, Daniel Defoe, Hannah More, Catherine Macaulay in the west talked about the issue even before Begum Rokeya and most of them emphasized the necessity of limited education either to be a better mother or to be a

well-mannered wife. Nevertheless, the issue of female freedom was not a central concern for them (Alam & Rima, 2020, p. 186).

Sultana's Dream, which was first published in English in The Indian Ladies Magazine in 1905, is very important in terms of being the first example of a feminist utopia written by a Bangladeshi woman, one of the important feminists of South Asia, in an Eastern country at the beginning of the 20th century. In *Sultana's Dream*, which is dedicated to women who live under oppression throughout her country and in many Muslim societies, who are locked up in a harem, who are married as a child, who are physically restrained by clothes made of heavy fabric and heavy jewelry, and who cannot get an education; It depicts a women's country where men are confined to their homes and women take part in politics, science and art, that is, outside. Men are imprisoned indoors (mardana); women play an active role in the streets, in the administration of the country, in art and science. While women use their intelligence, men are distracted by their domestic practices.

The author, who was accused of being pro-Christian and a fan of Europe because of what she wrote, said and did against the traditional structure of the society; she writes against British colonialism in a nationalist line, and she answers all these accusations by saying that although she has gained some rights such as education, she could not be completely free and still has the effects of a slave mentality. As Friedan mentioned in her *The Feminine Mystique* (2001), women had difficulties in gaining their rights everywhere in the world:

It is more than a strange paradox that as all professions are finally open to women in America, "career woman" has become a dirty word; that as higher education becomes available to any woman with the capacity for it, education for women has become so suspect that more and more drop out of high school and college to marry and have babies; that as so many roles in modern society become theirs for the taking, women so insistently confine themselves to one

role. Why, with the removal of all the legal, political, economic, and educational barriers that once kept woman from being man's equal, a person in her own right, an individual free to develop her own potential, should she accept this new image which insists she is not a person but a "woman," by definition barred from the freedom of human existence and a voice in human destiny? (p. 92)

Sultana's Dream can be interpreted as a portrayal of a feminist utopia, a hypothetical society characterized by ideal perfection and described in great detail. Begum Rokeya attempted to inspire women, who were generally unaware of the concept of female liberation and awakening, with a sense of empowerment. She encouraged them to believe in their own agency and presented a vision of their ultimate liberation as an apparent and achievable reality through a dream.

What if the terror a girl faces at twenty-one, when she must decide who she will be, is simply the terror of growing up—growing up, as women were not permitted to grow before? What if the terror a girl faces at twenty-one is the terror of freedom to decide her own life, with no one to order which path she will take, the freedom and the necessity to take paths women before were not able to take? What if those who choose the path of "feminine adjustment"—evading this terror by marrying at eighteen, losing themselves in having babies and the details of housekeeping—are simply refusing to grow up, to face the question of their own identity? (Friedan, 2001, p. 100)

As a young girl, Begum Rokeya encountered severe discrimination within her own family. This, coupled with the unfortunate circumstances faced by women in her society, deeply affected her compassionate nature and motivated her to strive for the progress and empowerment of women. In doing so, she challenged conventional social, ethnic, and religious norms.

Mine was the first college generation to run head-on into the new mystique of feminine fulfillment. Before then, while most women did indeed end up as housewives and mothers, the point of education was to discover the life of the mind, to pursue truth and to take a place in the world. There was a sense, already dulling when I went to college, that we would be New Women. Our world would be much larger than home. Forty per cent of my college class at Smith had career plans. But I remember how, even then, some of the seniors, suffering the pangs of that bleak fear of the future, envied the few who escaped it by getting married right away (Friedan, 2001, p. 100).

Similar to Friedan, Hossein posits that, in addition to providing quality education, achieving self-reliance or financial freedom is the primary and essential requirement for female salvation. This stance sets her apart from other prominent feminists of her time, as she takes an unwavering approach to this matter. The objective of this literary work is to bring light on the catastrophic outcomes experienced by women who are deprived as well as distressed, and who are submerged in the mire of lack of education, fanaticism, superstition, and prejudices. The author, Begum Rokeya, presents a vision of women who are educated, financially independent, and self-sufficient, ultimately leading to their liberation and the attainment of governmental authority and responsibilities. This vision is conveyed through the narrative of a dream in *Sultana's Dream*. As Alam & Rima (2020) have summarized:

Here, Begum Rokeya sketches a Lady Land where women are independent and free of seclusion and men are confined within the boundary of the house. But the relation between men and women are not equal there; women are dominant and powerful, and men are secluded in *murdana*- places for men inside the house. Men take care of the children, look after the house, and do all house-hold work like women in India. They are not fit for any skilled work outside the house. They don't have any participation in the development of the country as men in India

thought of women at that time. Therefore, many readers and critics consider *Sultana's Dream* as terrible revenge on men for their patriarchal attitude towards women (p. 185-186).

The decision to isolate men in Lady Land can be understood as a response to the present oppression and vulnerability experienced by women in society. Hossain's intention in crafting this piece may have been to instill a sense of self-assurance within the highly vulnerable Bengali female population. It is posited that women have the potential to have faculties and abilities that are equal to or surpass those of men. Furthermore, it is argued that women have the capability to cultivate themselves to a level where they can achieve complete dominion over the natural world without any assistance from men. This, in turn, would enable them to establish a new realm characterized by flawless aesthetics, substantial prosperity, and moral excellence.

Begum Rokeya's literary work, *Sultana's Dream*, is a satirical utopian narrative that portrays a world devoid of sin and evil. The writer follows a classical utopian model, where the protagonist embarks on a dream journey to an alternate world, accompanied by a guide. Through the eyes of the heroine, the reader is introduced to the political, social, and economic characteristics of this utopian world. The narrative concludes with the protagonist suddenly returning to her own time and world, much like how she had arrived.

In this world, there is a reversal of the existing order, whereby women occupy positions traditionally held by men, as opposed to classical utopias. These positions include those of managers, scientists, and artists. During her travels across the land of these women, the protagonist encounters a woman who serves as the Sultana's guide and is referred to as Sister Sara. Through her interactions with Sister Sara, the protagonist provides insight into this unfamiliar world and highlights the significant changes that have occurred, challenging previously held beliefs regarding their permanence:

I was feeling very shy, thinking I was walking in the street in broad daylight, but there was not a single man (Hossain, 2005, p. 3).

....

I became very curious to know where the men were. I met more than a hundred women while walking there, but not a single man (p. 4).

In order to enhance the efficacy of the change and questioning process, the author enables Sultana to consistently ask questions to the guide who accompanies her during her stay in the women-dominated nation:

“Where are the men?” I asked her.

“In their proper places, where they ought to be.”

“Pray let me know what you mean by “their proper places”.”

“O, I see my mistake, you cannot know our customs, as you were never here before. We shut our men indoors.”

“Just as we are kept in the zenana?”

“Exactly so.”

“But dear Sultana, how unfair it is to shut in the harmless women and let loose the men.”

...

“As a matter of fact, in your country this very thing is done! Men, who do or at least are capable of doing no end of mischief, are let loose and the innocent women shut up in the zenana! How can you trust those untrained men out of doors?” (Hossain, 2005, p. 5).

In the quotation above, the author establishes a connection between the harmful actions of men and the exploitation of both the environment and women, resulting in the suppression of their ability to nurture and create, reducing them to simple objects. In *Sultana's Dream*, Rokeya portrays an alternate societal arrangement, women hold positions of authority while men assume domestic roles. Ladyland is a hypothetical society in which women have unrestricted access to public spaces, free from the constraints of social and religious norms. Currently, there is a situation where men are confined to seclusion while women enjoy unrestricted access to various opportunities and resources. As Alam & Rima (2020, p. 189) cited in their work, Bagchi (2005) also depicts the beginning of the dream:

At the beginning of the story of *Sultana's Dream*, Begum Rokeya has depicted the real plight of Indian women and the freedom of woman in a lady- land through a dialogue between Sultana and Sister Sara. When they were walking in the street of the lady- land on a fine morning, Sultana was 'feeling shy' since she walked 'in the street in broad daylight'. She also said, "I feel somewhat awkward. As being a purdah-nishin or veiled woman I am not accustomed to walking about unveiled" (p. 143).

This one extremely straightforward comment made by Sultana is all that is necessary to comprehend the predicament that Indian and Bangladeshi women found themselves in at that era. Even if they did not wear veils, women were not allowed to go down the street in public if males could see their faces. They had only a restricted amount of access to the outside world. In this passage, Hossain is being very critical of the practice of purdah that is widely observed by Indian and Bangladeshi women, especially in Muslim culture. It does not necessary follow that she opposed this purdah because of this fact. Instead, she remained in a state of purdah for her whole life. Also, she was opposed to the rigid and unreasonable purdah that many women in Indian and Bangladesh culture observe. Hossain views purdah in this regard as a barrier to their

efforts to elevate the position of women in society. As Alam & Rima (2020) cited, in her other work, titled *Oborodhbashini* or *Secluded Ones* (Hossain, 1931/1988, p. 2), she has described a few instances of people practising purdah in various locations around India and Bangladesh. An example of such a report might be:

“Once, a house caught fire. The mistress of the house had the presence of mind to collect her jewelry in a handbag and hurry out of the bedroom. But at the door, she found the courtyard full of strangers fighting the fire. She could not come out in front of them. So, she went back to her bedroom with the bag and hid under her bed. She burnt to death but did not come out. Long live purdah!” (p. 189).

These women observed purdah not just toward male members of the community but also toward female members of other households. Even married ladies attempted to hide their identities from a gypsy lady. Girls who were not yet married were not permitted to go in front of other women, with the exception of their maidservants and close relatives. Even a prosperous urban lady chose to follow purdah in contrast to the Christian and Hindu missionary ladies who were not covered. It was nearly as if the lady who was thought to be more aristocratic was the one who might hide more in the tiny corners of the home.

Marriages, then, are generally not based on love. “The husband is, so to speak, never more than a substitute for the loved man, and not that man himself,” said Freud. This dissociation is not accidental. It is implicit in the very nature of the institution. The economic and sexual union of man and woman is a matter of transcending toward the collective interest and not of individual happiness. In patriarchal regimes, a fiancé chosen by parents had often never seen his future wife’s face before the wedding day—and this still happens today with some Muslims. There would be no question of founding a lifelong enterprise,

considered in its social aspect, on sentimental or erotic caprice (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 512).

Hossain was well aware of the tyranny and exploitation that was faced by women who practiced beliefs other than Islam, despite the fact that she had negative views towards the purdah practiced in Muslim culture. A significant number of Hindu women and girls were also forced into following to the purdah norm: During the classical era of Hindu culture, when India's economy was flourishing and many foreign traders and rulers came to visit the country, to protect women from these foreign influences (Alam & Rima, 2020, p. 190). Women of higher castes were confined to the inner chambers of their homes and were to cover their faces whenever they left the house. This habit of covering one's face was also widely practiced by Hindu women in the northern and central regions of India. These women would traditionally cover their faces in public in order to show respect to their husbands' senior male relatives, as well as the residents of the village into which they would have moved as strangers after being married.

Because it is the man who “takes” the woman—and especially when there is a good supply of women—he has rather more possibilities for choosing. But since the sexual act is considered a service imposed on the woman and upon which are founded the advantages conceded to her, it is logical to ignore her own preferences. Marriage is intended to defend her against man's freedom: but as there is neither love nor individuality without freedom, she must renounce the love of a particular individual to ensure the protection of a male for life. I heard a mother of a family teach her daughters that “love is a vulgar sentiment reserved for men and unknown to women of good standing.” (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 513).

As Beauvoir also highlighted above, this tradition educated women on how to conduct themselves within the established social order, including how and with whom

they might engage and converse. They believe that a woman who wears a veil is better able to recognize the contexts in which she should behave in a subordinate and passive manner, as opposed to those in which she can engage in some degree of responsible action and exercise some level of control. Indian women, regardless of their religious affiliation as either Muslim or Hindu, adhered to the practice of purdah in their society.

This points out that for a woman it is not at all a question of establishing individual relations with a chosen husband, but rather of justifying the exercise of her feminine functions in their generality; she should have sexual pleasure only in a generic form and not an individualized one; this results in two essential consequences that touch upon her erotic destiny. First, she has no right to sexual activity outside marriage; for both spouses, sexual congress becoming an institution, desire and pleasure are superseded by the interest of society; but man, as worker and citizen transcending toward the universal, can savor contingent pleasures prior to marriage and outside of married life: in any case, he finds satisfaction in other ways; but in a world where woman is essentially defined as female, she must be justified wholly as a female. Second, it has been seen that the connection between the general and the particular is biologically different for the male and the female: in accomplishing his specific task as husband and reproducer, the male unfailingly finds his sexual pleasure; on the contrary, very often for the woman, there is a dissociation between the reproductive function and sexual pleasure. This is so to the extent that in claiming to give ethical dignity to her erotic life, marriage, in fact, means to suppress it (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 514).

As Beauvoir stated in her work *The Second Sex*, this practice often resulted in their marginalization and subjected them to being perceived as invisible entities and objects of ridicule. The practice of purdah can have severe and devastating consequences for women. The patriarchal society compelled them to stick to this custom in the name of religion. As a result, women were instructed to restrict

themselves within the domestic sphere commonly referred to as the zenana. The portrayal of women in *Sultana's Dream* by Sister Sara serves as another satirical critique of their societal condition. Sara asserts that confining innocent women within the zenana is an unjust practice, while Sultana expresses a sense of security within its walls. Nevertheless, in addition to residing in complete isolation, these women are subjected to various forms of exploitation, as indicated by Sultana's remarks to Sister Sara: "We have no hand or voice in the management of our social affairs. In India man is lord and master. He has taken to himself all powers and privileges and shut up women in the zenana" (Hossain, 2005, p. 5).

Begum Rokeya has effectively portrayed the terrible consequences of the unfortunate circumstances faced by Indian and Bangladeshi women through the words expressed by Sultana. The discrimination against women is readily apparent in all aspects of society. The dynamic between men and women can be compared to that of a dominant and subordinate relationship. This relationship is also seen in Betty Friedan's work *The Feminine Mystique* (2001) presents a compelling thesis that emphasizes the need of recognizing the shared humanity of both women and men as the primary consideration. The women's movement of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s aimed to destroy the legal and social structures that imposed limitations on women's economic, social, and reproductive autonomy. This common objective was central to the movement. The book had a significant influence in raising awareness among the nation about the need of eliminating the concept of *The Feminine Mystique* and unlocking the hidden human potential it wasted:

"Who am I?" my mother must have been asking herself at the table in the kitchen, and with her millions of others who would pore over this painstakingly reported, fiercely opinionated book. My mother had everything a woman after World War II was told she could want, told by the magazines and the movies and the television commercials: a husband with a good job, five healthy children, a lovely home in the suburbs, a patio and a powder room. But in the

drawer of her bureau she kept a small portfolio of the drawings she had done in high school, the pages growing yellower year by year. My bag lunches for school sometimes included a hard-boiled egg, and on its shell she would paint in watercolors, the face of a princess, a seaside scene. I cracked those eggs without thinking twice (Friedan, 2001, p. 3)

Friedan coined a term for the self-blame that women attributed to this particular type of suffering. Women, who were confined to their domestic roles and taught that their purpose in life was to live for and through others, sought assistance from medical professionals and psychologists. These individuals in positions of power regarded their issues as a manifestation of a deficiency in femininity. Furthermore, the mystique lacked a strategy for addressing the needs of older women. Eventually, their limited time prevented them from having another child to validate their existence. Consequently, the physical and mental health issues of women deteriorated as they grew older. Women are devoid of choice, agency, autonomy, and engagement in socio-political endeavors. Men perceive them as mere decorative objects within the confines of a drawing-room, devoid of any physical agency. The individual lacks spiritual essence within her physical and cognitive faculties. The individual's cognitive and emotional faculties have consistently diminished as a result of residing in complete isolation within the walls of the zenana. The phenomenon can be characterized as a genetic background towards reliance on male individuals, ultimately resulting in a state of complete subjugation.

Begum Rokeya, as a girl of the world, was moved by these devastating and tragic conditions of women. She thought of a number of possible ways to turn them into a better life and empower them. She finally came up with *Sultana's Dream* as a remedy for the destitute Indian women challenging the traditional male dominated social conducts and male interpretation of religious scripts by so-called scholars. Rokeya has tried to encourage them to believe in their power through the achievements of

Sister Sara and the women of the Lady Land as a whole. From the yard of a house to the Queen's palace of the country, women have a great contribution to every aspect of life. From the beginning to the end of the story, Sister Sara talks about her work at home, in the laboratory, the Universities for women where all professors are also women, and the contributions of women in science and technology. She also canvasses the encouragement and patronization of the good queen in different social welfare projects and activities that reflect Rokeya's idea of economic independence, one of the most important requirements for women's empowerment towards freedom (Alam & Rima, 2020, p. 191).

The newly designed world is a product of Begum Rokeya's imagination. However, the author skillfully presents her narrative in a manner that allows her to assert the superiority of the new world over the old. The intended communication is unambiguous: The antiquated and collapsed global state, currently trapped in chaos, necessitates an enlightenment. As Mookerjee-Leonard (2017) depicted the country very clearly:

Ladyland is a place of beauty and peace, without crime and epidemic diseases, where educated women participate in developing a technologically sophisticated society. The women study in universities and work in 'factories, laboratories and observatories' (Hossain, 1988a [1905], p. 18). Furthermore, Ladyland is 'free from sin and harm' (ibid., p. 8) because men are kept out of the public domain, and Sultana's 'guide' is dismayed that in Sultana's world, "Men, who do or at least are capable of doing no end of mischief, are let loose and the innocent women shut up in the zenana!" (ibid., p. 9). Among the Ladylanders Sultana meets, besides her companion, is the country's progressive queen who supports women's education and has prohibited the practice of early marriage. To advance the cause of women, the queen has also formulated economic

policies that discourage the practice of purdah, including trade embargoes against countries where women live in seclusion in the zenana (ibid., p. 17) (p. 3).

All women residing in the Lady Land exhibit a strong work ethic and demonstrate a high level of dedication and professionalism within their respective domains of employment. Similarly, individuals exhibit remarkable patience both when working from home and in traditional office settings. In this manner, individuals acquire their sources of a livelihood. Sister Sara possesses a high level of proficiency in the crafts of embroidery, knitting, and needlework, particularly in the context of household decoration. Simultaneously, she is employed in a laboratory setting, which affords her financial autonomy. This concept is clearly articulated in a brief dialogue exchange involving Sultana and Sister Sara:

“Have you done all this work yourself?” I asked her pointing to the various pieces of embroidered teapoy cloths?

“Yes.”

“How can you find time to do all these? You have to do the office work as well? Have you not?”

“Yes. I don’t stick to the laboratory all day long. I finish my work in two hours” (Hossain, 2005, p. 6).

Moreover, Begum Rokeya has placed significant emphasis on the importance of education for women, with the aim of equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in various social institutions and contribute to the overall development of the nation. The fundamental concept behind the spreading of education among women is to empower them to become self-sufficient, achieve financial stability, and earn a livelihood independently, thereby reducing their reliance on others. Hence, the queen of the realm known as Lady Land, who possesses an

intense connection for the fields of science and technology, “circulated an order that all women in her country should be educated. Accordingly, a number of girls schools were founded and supported by the government and education has spread far and wide among women” (Hossain, 2005, p. 7).

When Sultana visits Sister Sara's house and enters the kitchen, she realizes that her curiosity has increased as well as the beauty she sees. When She doesn't see coal and fire, she asks how they cook the food. Sister Sara mentions that they use solar energy by showing the condensed sun rays and the pipe that transmits the heat. When Sultana asks many questions, she begins to tell her about their history, how much they value science and education. She tells that the queen loved science very much, that she ordered all girls to be sent to school, and that she forbade girls from marrying before the age of twenty-one. In the center of Lady Land, there exist two universities controlled by female principals. These women are ridiculed for the scientific research and pursuits by men who term this a “a sentimental nightmare” (Hossain 2005, p.8). Menfolk of the Lady-land are seen engaging themselves in their primary interest of attaining power and desire of ruling the ‘other’, e. g. (Hagengruber, 2023, p. 76). These institutions serve as centers for women who are actively involved in various scientific research projects and innovative pursuits. The female faculty members of these universities consistently engage in a competitive pursuit of innovation. The female researchers at a particular university have developed a remarkable balloon that enables them to extract the desired amount of water from the atmosphere. In a similar vein, another group of researchers at a different university has created an instrument that allows them to efficiently use and accumulate solar heat to their desired extent. After that, these inventions have demonstrated significant utility in fostering social progress and strengthening national security. The story emphasizes the importance of environmental conservation. For example, the society uses solar energy and has a deep respect for nature, which is evident in their gardens and green spaces. In instances where male soldiers were unable to effectively safeguard their nation against an external invasion “Lady Principal along with her two thousand students marched to

the battlefield, and arriving there directed all the rays of the concentrated sun-light and heat towards the enemy” (Hossain, 2005, p. 10) and achieved a resounding victory over them. This is a weapon they did not know how to embark upon and they run away. The heat from the sun is also used to burn large weapons and other munitions that have been abandoned by the enemy. Since that time, no one has been brave enough, according to Sister Sara, to attack the Lady-land. It is significant and noteworthy what Sister Sara says:

We do not covet other people’s land, we do not fight for a piece of diamond though it may be a thousand-fold brighter than the Koh-i-Noor, nor do we grudge a ruler his Peacock Throne. We dive deep into the ocean of knowledge and try to find out the precious gems, which nature has kept in store for us. We enjoy nature’s gifts as much as we can (Hossain 2005, p.13).

The concept of self-sufficiency as well as the preservation of nature via the management of wanton desires is distinct and clear. It is also important to note here that the armaments are representations of destruction, and that the women destroy them rather than assembling them for future use, even if it is for defensive purposes. *Sultana’s Dream* does advocate a useful and profitable science.

Like Callenbach’s *Ecotopia* that embodies several principles of deep ecology, an innovative and visionary dream of a more sustainable society, *Sultana’s Dream* conceptualizes several social, political, technological, and environmental solutions. In this ecotopian world, no land is consumed for a disparaging construction like roads and streets, and aerial conveyances run by electricity invented by women are used for transportation (Hagengruber, 2023, p. 78).

The purpose of this “use and profit” endeavor is to create a state that is both egalitarian and utopian. Sister Sara makes the observation that one does not need to be very strong in order to labor in the fields: “Our fields are tilled by means of electricity,

which supplies motive power for other hard work as well. And we employ it for our aerial conveyance too. We have no railroad nor any paved streets here” (Hossain, 2005, p.11). The individuals engage in the cultivation of agricultural land through the utilization of electrical power for the purpose of tilling. Rainwater is collected for agricultural purposes using a water balloon, ensuring an adequate supply for cultivation. During the summer season, they distribute an abundant amount of water onto the ground through artificial fountains, while in winter, they utilize solar heat to maintain warmth within their rooms. Additionally, they actively engage in the aesthetic pursuits of the nation, as stated by Sister Sara: “We are all very busy making nature yield as much as she can. We do not find time to quarrel with one another as we never sit idle. Our noble queen is exceedingly fond of botany; it is her ambition to convert the whole county into one grand garden” (Hossain, 2005, p. 12). The Ladyland, in a way, promotes a small-scale self-sufficient mini-city that is in tune with the bio-region and which embodies the ideal mix of modern science and sustained environment (Hagengruber, 2023, p. 78).

Nevertheless, the significant accomplishment of women in the Lady Land can be attributed to their access to education and their adoption of a mindset focused on development, as well as the support provided by the Great Queen: “We dive deep into the ocean of knowledge and try to find out the precious gems, which nature has kept in store for us. We enjoy nature’s gifts as much as we can” (Hossain, 2005, p. 14). Throughout the educational journey, women engage in various activities such as learning, teaching, and contributing to scientific endeavors in laboratories, manufacturing facilities, and observatories. These pursuits exemplify their self-sufficiency and financial autonomy.

Based on this observation, it appears that Hossain has depicted the prevailing concept of gender within Indian and Bangladeshi society through the dialogue between Sultana and Sister Sara in the narrative. In this context, Sultana embodies the Indian and Bangladeshi stereotype, while Sara embodies Rokeya's perspective. Begum

Rokeya employs the character of Sultana as a vehicle for satirizing the prevailing male-dominated patriarchal culture in India and Bangladesh. This critique extends to societal customs, the male interpretations of religious texts, which often serve to oppress women by confining them to the zenana, or the domestic sphere. Furthermore, Hossain highlights the deprivation of educational opportunities for women and their consequent dependence on men for their sustenance. Conversely, the author has conveyed the concept of self-assurance, personal fortitude, and self-sufficiency through the portrayal of Sister Sara in *Lady Land* in order to inspire Indian and Bangladeshi women to have faith in their boundless potential for attaining financial autonomy as a significant aspect of female liberation.

It was very necessary for women to have an appropriate education since they played such an important part in determining the personality and thinking patterns of children. On the other hand, it was impossible for society to make any significant progress without first liberating women from the chains of ignorance, superstitions, and limited norms. This was the first step toward emancipation. If their sufferings are to be diminished, women need to have access to an education on equal with their male counterparts.

In this regard, Rokeya's thought is very much distinct and radical even at present times and wonders us. She believes that education is indeed a primary requirement for female freedom that she expressed in her writings like *Women's Downfall* and *Padmarag*. At the same time, she thinks that only education is not enough to attain freedom. According to Rokeya, the first and most important condition of freedom for women is economic freedom or self-reliance besides education that she has shown vividly in *Sultana's Dream*. Because of this reason, she planned this novel to get Indian women to believe in their infinite power as revenge and protest against the unjust and oppression of male-dominated patriarchal society. Her purpose was to make women conscious of their

distressed state, infuse a desire for freedom inspiring them with the courage to stand on their own through economic independence (Alam & Rima, 2020, p. 188).

The concept of achieving economic autonomy, initially portrayed as an aspirational notion in *Sultana's Dream*, gains real base as a suggested solution in her essay *Women's Downfall*. This proposal aims to reduce the desperate situation of women and serve as a pathway to liberation. Hossain asserts that the expression of female autonomy lacks significance within a societal framework wherein women are entirely reliant on their husbands for economic sustenance. Consequently, she advocates for women to take on employment, entrepreneurship, and commercial endeavors as a means of achieving self-sufficiency. Additionally, she provides a clear set of instructions for women to achieve financial independence:

“Firstly, we must have the will and an unwavering resolve to work alongside the men in all affairs of life. We should also have a firm conviction that we were not born as slaves. We will do all we have to in order to attain equality with the men. If earning a livelihood freely brings our freedom, then we will do that. If need be, we will begin by becoming clerks and then magistrates, barristers-at-law, judges; we will work in every profession” (Hossain, 2011, p. 14).

Begum Rokeya included the concept of achieving economic autonomy, a visionary notion depicted in *Sultana's Dream* and advocated in *Women's Downfall*, within her known literary work *Padmarag*. In this literary work, where the story presents a utopian city, devoid of men, where women live independently. The author has gathered impoverished women from various religious backgrounds and disparate regions of the country, convening them at the workshop of Tarini Bhavan. Within this novel, these women collaborate harmoniously, fostering a sense of sisterhood among them:

“In the workshop, all categories of women- spinsters, wives and widows were to be found. They were occupied in various kinds of work- sewing, spinning, weaving cloth on a loom, binding books and preparing different types of sweet meats and selling them. Some were given training that would make them eligible for a teaching job; some learnt typing, while others trained to become nurses. To sum it up, the women belonging to this section earned their own living” (Hossain, 2005, p. 31).

Hosseini presents a different framework for understanding gender dynamics, exactly like Bell Hooks fosters optimism for a more equal society. According to Bell Hooks, sisterhood refers to women collaborating in solidarity to establish a society free from sexism, racism, homophobia, and other types of social hierarchy. Utopian visions of sisterhood based solely on the awareness of the reality that all women were in some way victimized by male domination were disrupted by discussions of class and race (Hooks, 2000, p. 3). Therefore, it is impossible for sisterhood to be effective so long as women continue to wage competitive war against one another:

Feminist sisterhood is rooted in shared commitment to struggle against patriarchal injustice, no matter the form that injustice takes. Political solidarity between women always undermines sexism and sets the stage for the overthrow of patriarchy. Significantly, sisterhood could never have been possible across the boundaries of race and class if individual women had not been willing to divest of their power to dominate and exploit subordinated groups of women. As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized (Hooks, 2000, p. 15).

Begum Rokeya possessed an understanding that the genuine well-being of women necessitated their ability to support themselves financially, a crucial prerequisite for minimizing their misfortunes. However, during her era, the prevailing societal norms placed significance on education solely for males, perceiving it as a

means to secure profitable employment opportunities. Rokeya voiced her opposition and presented arguments in support of women's engagement in employment beyond their domestic responsibilities. She critically examined the conservative society for their antiquated perspective:

“Why should we not have access to gainful employment? What do we lack? Are we not able bodied and endowed with intelligence? In fact, why should we not employ the labour and energy that we expand on domestic chores in our husband’s home to run our own enterprises?” (Hossain, 1993, p. 20).

Hossain posits that the attainment of economic autonomy by women serves as an encouragement for national progress and advancement. Given that women make up approximately 50% of the population, it is impossible to envision the advancement of a society without addressing the economic standing of women. The author seeks to encourage enslaved Indian and Bangladeshi women in *Lady Land* by sharing success stories of women who have achieved financial autonomy through their own determination, acquisition of knowledge, dedication, and livelihood, ultimately leading to freedom. As Alam & Rima, 2020, p. 193) cited; She impels women to walk side by side with men in both the material and spiritual spheres of life and suggests Indian women not to become a terrible burden, rather become a companion, a co-worker and a lover of men in the way to the progress of the society (Alam, 2013, p. 663). As Alam & Rima (2020) has summarized the importance of the economic power of women in the literary works:

Now it seems that Begum Rokeya, for the first time, connected the idea of economic independence of women to the movement of female emancipation whereas most of her contemporary writers, social reformers, and philosophers both in the West and East emphasized restricted education. Although Mary Wollstonecraft raised the issue in

her *Vindication to the Rights of Women*, it was so narrow and dispersed in supplication since she excluded lower and upper-class women from her vindication. John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, realized the necessity of earning money for the dignity of women. But he placed them in the domestic affairs and urged them to be educated for their spiritual development. Virginia Woolf also talked about the financial benefits of women as a writer and demanded equal payment like men. In the end, she too was concerned only about the educated and aristocratic women to earn money through pen disregarding the middle- and lower-class illiterate women in general. Rokeya, in this regard, differs completely from these writers in terms of education and economic independence (p. 194).

Rokeya posits that the objective of women's education extends beyond the cultivation of their spiritual capacities to fulfill societal roles as dutiful daughters, wives, and mothers. It also encompasses the enhancement of their rational faculties, thereby contributing to the socio-economic and cultural progress of the nation. The individual held the belief that within a societal framework where women are economically reliant on men, engaging in discourse and dialogue surrounding liberation becomes an unattainable endeavor. Rokeya was an advocate of recognizing the importance of self-sufficiency and financial autonomy. She advocated for women in India and Bangladesh, regardless of their caste, class, or religion, to liberate themselves from longstanding social limitations and reliance on men. Her aim was to empower women to contribute meaningfully and competently as citizens of the nation. Hence, the current state of freedom experienced by women in the Indian subcontinent, their equitable engagement in education, professional domains, and national politics, in addition to their capacity to fulfill leadership roles within the nation, can be attributed to the effective realization of the vision conceived by Begum Rokeya in her literary work, *Sultana's Dream*, a century ago.

Sultana's Dream is notable for its emphasis on the ecofeminist viewpoint and its significant impact on the feminist movement in the Indian sub-continent. It embraces ecotopian ideology, promoting a comprehensive environmental philosophy that prioritizes nature-focused principles, circularity, and the inherent restoration of ecosystems. Rokeya aspired to motivate women from diverse backgrounds to take action, as action is an inherent characteristic of nature. Her feminist discourse focuses on the experiences of women from diverse cultural, social, and geographical backgrounds. The narrative of *Sultana's Dream* begins with the author's concern for the condition of Indian femininity. The restriction on the movement of women even within the walls of the home is evident when the narrator, Sultana, is invited by Sister Sara to take a look at the garden and believes it is a good moment to go out because the male servant is soundly sleeping outside. The presence of Sister Sara and her insistence that Sultana come out and view the garden is an intelligent use of the concept of "sisterhood", guiding Sultana from the gloom and confinement of the zenanas to the dawn of hope, freedom, and new thought. Sultana is taken to a utopian realm known as Lady-land, characterized by its absence of sin and harm, and the prevalence of virtue. The connection between women's temperament and their ability to connect with nature is evident in Sultana's account of her enjoyment of peaceful walks with Sister Sara in the Botanical Garden. In the Ladyland the green grass carpeted the metal street: "... it was grand. I mistook a patch of green grass for a velvet cushion. Feeling as if I were walking on a soft carpet, I looked down and found the path covered with moss and flowers" (Hossain, 2005, p. 4).

While traveling with her friend, Sultana admires the scenery she sees around her: "The whole place looks like a garden. You have arranged every plant so skillfully" (Hossain, 2005, p. 4) saying that she depicts nature as if walking on a soft carpet. Sister Sara then says that their country could be a better place than here if they wanted to. However, Sultana says: "They would think it useless to give so much attention to horticulture, while they have so many other things to do" (Hossain, 2005, p. 4). Through her statement, she highlights the devaluation of nature and its perceived

insignificance within her country, which is governed by a patriarchal system. Similar to the perceived worth attributed to women, the level of appreciation for nature is relatively diminished. The natural world, characterized by its continuous generation of resources, exhibits a striking parallel with the industrious woman who is similarly productive but often subjected to exploitation. The possibilities and capacities of nature and women have been veiled, ignored, and closed while other things have been termed as important more so because of the unwillingness of men whose profit-maximizing tendency has only led to creating a concrete jungle (Hagengruber, 2023, p. 76).

When they go to Sister Sara's house, Sultana, who enters the kitchen, is again amazed by the beauties: "The kitchen was situated in a beautiful vegetable garden. Every creeper, every tomato plant was itself an ornament. I found no smoke, nor any chimney either in the kitchen – it was clean and bright; the windows were decorated with flower gardens. There was no sign of coal or fire" (Hossain, 2005, p. 7). Sultana finds it fascinating to observe the deficiencies present within her own country. In this nation, which operates under a matriarchal governance structure, women demonstrate an intuitive awareness of the significance they must attribute to the natural world. Consequently, they have fostered an environment characterized by exceptional organization and beauty, despite men primarily occupying roles within kitchen domains. Sister Sarah: "We are all very busy making nature yield as much as she can. We do not find time to quarrel with one another as we never sit idle. Our noble Queen is exceedingly fond of botany; it is her ambition to convert the whole country into one grand garden" (Hossain, 2005, p. 12). She emphasizes that they value nature just as they value themselves. Sultana, who met the Queen, also encounters the emphasis on nature here. Queen said: "We dive deep into the ocean of knowledge and try to find out the precious gems, which nature has kept in store for us. We enjoy nature's gifts as much as we can" (Hossain, 2005, p. 14). She explains that they turned to nature by using their minds with the help of science. Knowing the value of nature, they live in their country with the beauty that comes from, without destroying it.

Following Sultana's meeting with the queen, her accompanying lady proceeds to facilitate a tour of the educational institutions, research facilities, astronomical observatories, and industrial establishments situated within the realm of Ladyland:

Her sightseeing done, Sultana boards the 'air-car' which had first brought her to the queen, but she slips and falls. Startled by her sudden fall, Sultana finds herself back in her bedroom. It was a dream! Hossain's simple story engages in a subversive critical enterprise. On the one hand, it presents the plainest of feminist utopias, but, on the other, Hossain indicates that no simple inversion of patriarchy can be genuinely emancipatory. By suggesting that a woman living in a (dystopic) patriarchal world dreams of matriarchy, Hossain challenges her readers to think beyond what exists, beyond even what seems thinkable. By accepting dichotomous thinking, Hossain, in envisioning utopia, provokes precisely a subtle critique of Utopian thinking that assumes an inversion of patriarchy would be any less dystopian than the status quo (Mookerjea-Leonard, 2017, p. 145).

Following the analysis of Rokeya's *Sultana's Dream*, it is possible to conclude that *Sultana's Dream* highlights the issue of preserving nature and all of its resources as early as 1905. Even though it is a fictional record, it leaves readers attracted about the 'what and how' of the advancements described in the narrative, and it undoubtedly presents an idea and a vision of the utopian world's potential. It also considers the idea that women have the capacity and ability to preserve and make the best use of what is given to them while living in harmony with nature, as opposed to desiring to dominate, command, and exploit it.

Rokeya endeavors to enhance the empowerment of women via the provision of education, cultivation of scientific temperament, facilitation of authority, and facilitation of power, all in accordance with the principles of natural order. The

scientific disposition is distinct from the consumerist ideology, instead aligning more closely with the eco-logue, which refers to a debate centered upon environmental concerns. The act of confining men within an enclosure referred to as the “mardana”, similar to the practice of enclosing women in the “zenana”, should not be regarded as an arbitrary action on the part of Rokeya. Instead, it should be interpreted as a rational measure aimed at safeguarding the world from the solidification of a commercial, hostile disposition and the warlike irrationality inherent in men.

The feminist utopia depicted in *Sultana's Dream* offers a critique of patriarchal societies as a whole. Male-dominated societies are universally criticized and opposed, regardless of geographical location or cultural context. Feminist utopias, as depicted by authors through the lens of an empowered female protagonist embodying feminist ideology, serve to illuminate various sociological, psychological, economic, and cultural challenges prevalent within their respective societies. However, their primary objective is to envision a world where women are liberated from the oppressive mindset maintained by male dominance, and instead, attain a life characterized by equality, freedom, and absence of marginalization.

CONCLUSION

There are individuals who think More as a creator of a utopian literature. However, More did not create the concept of envisioning an alternate reality. The desire for a superior world beyond the present reality has been a longstanding notion spanning several centuries. It is reflected in the myth of the Golden Age, Paradise, the land of Cockaigne and the ideal cities of the Ancient Ages (Yılmaz, 2021, p. 96). All of the examples mentioned above related to individuals' longing to inhabit alternative and improved worlds. However, the ideal cities were set apart from all of them in that they were realized through humanity's efforts in this world, rather than given upon humanity as a divine gift. Therefore, these dreams gradually formed the foundation of utopianism.

The term “utopia” is derived from the Greek words “ou” and “topos,” which together mean “no place.” However, Sir Thomas More cleverly plays on words by combining “eu” and “topos” to create “eutopia,” meaning “good place.” Thus, “utopia” can be interpreted as a non-existent, yet idealized and desirable location. In his work *Utopia* (1516), Sir Thomas More provided a critique of the prevailing social and political structures of his contemporary society. He argued that these structures were responsible for the corruption that plagued the society, and proposed an alternate social and political system as a solution. Namely, he created his ideal society through the rearrangement of social and political institutions in which the problems More depicted in his own society were solved since as Frye indicates, “The utopian writer looks at his own society first and tries to see what, for his purposes, its significant elements are. The utopia itself shows what society would be like if those elements were fully developed” (Yılmaz, 2021, p. 324). Following to More's important work, numerous utopian writings have emerged globally, wherein authors established their own envisioned paradises, often with divergent and potentially conflicting objectives. The authors' respective visions of an ideal place are characterized by distinct values and concerns, which presents a challenge due to the subjective nature of such perspectives.

There exist numerous viewpoints regarding the idealness of a perfect society, and it is impossible for a utopian society to be consistent with all of them. Hence, each utopia concentrates on certain primary ideals which are shaped by the author's vision and concern; and discards some other values in order to achieve the primary ones as Sargent stresses: "It is possible to trace a pattern of the dominant values found in utopias" (Yılmaz, 2021, p. 573). Early utopias exhibit a minimal preoccupation with the concept of liberty, except for occasional expressions of disapproval towards its expansion. Their primary focus lies on maintaining order, following to established hierarchies, and exhibiting obedience.

Feminist utopias in utopian literature are characterized by their emphasis on individuality, acceptance of natural differences, and the subsequent shaping of social life to reflect these values as their most prominent features. These approaches embody a perspective that conceptualizes life in a manner that prevents gender-based distinctions, wherein individuals are regarded as equals who share the world equitably in terms of physical attributes, emotional structure, and social entitlements and obligations.

Feminist utopias try to eliminate not only gender-based prejudice, but also the linguistic discrimination that is a reflection of it. Female writers, who aimed to protect the language from patriarchal stereotypes, eliminated certain gender-specific terms and instead created a novel vocabulary to reflect emerging ideas. As a result, feminist utopias have brought a new understanding that constructs the individual and society, man and woman in a balance, contrary to the traditional utopian thought that prioritizes society over the individual and places women in a secondary position over men. In this sense, feminist utopias aim to create a fully egalitarian society in which everyone, woman, man and child, has the opportunity to realize themselves, instead of a society in which the masculine is oriented towards the masculine in the equality discourse of classical utopias and where the majority can only exist within the boundaries drawn to them.

In summary, it can be asserted that the evolution of classical utopian literature has revealed a notable absence of discourse on gender politics within the male-centric narratives. The representation of women in classical utopias has been restricted by the prevailing ideals of classical femininity and motherhood, which have been deeply rooted in androcentric culture and customs. The analysis of two classical utopias discusses that the representation of women is confined to their reproductive capacities within male-dominated idealistic societies. In this context, female authors specializing in utopian literature have endeavored to propose solutions for the establishment of democratic societies within their envisioned ideal future societies. The utopias crafted by women writers throughout history have demonstrated their ability to respond to the evolving requirements of each century. From the seventeenth century to the twentieth century, female authors of utopian literature have constructed their fictional societies based on principles such as equal access to education, liberation from societal constraints, political enfranchisement, economic parity, linguistic equality, progressive parenting practices, reproductive autonomy, sexual liberation and self-identification, as well as the integration of ecological concerns within the framework of feminism. In the previous sections, the analysis of feminist utopias has revealed that women writers who have explored the genre of utopia have effectively addressed gender politics and related concerns, thereby envisioning societies characterized by equality on equal principles. Female writers who were marginalized by their male counterparts have managed to express their perspectives and envision ideal future societies for the benefit of all humanity through the genre of utopian literature.

The fundamental principles of ecofeminism suggest that there exists an interconnection between all manifestations of oppression, and that it is imperative to confront these systems of oppression in their entirety. The examination of patriarchal power dynamics must include an analysis of the oppression of both the natural world and women, as the two are interrelated and cannot be fully confronted in separate ways. The aforementioned societal oppressions are a result of the power structures inherent in patriarchal systems. Ecofeminist ideology states that patriarchy exerts its oppressive

influence not only on women, but also on the earth and other non-human entities. This fundamental principle is a cornerstone of the ecofeminist movement. The interconnection between classism, sexism, racial discrimination, heterosexism, naturism and speciesism is evident.

Ecofeminism is a complex and diverse ideology that targets systemic structures instead of individual actors. Ecofeminism expands the cultural criticism by challenging patriarchal systems and integrating seemingly unrelated yet fundamentally linked components. The combination of feminist and deep ecological viewpoints, which are inherently diverse approaches to comprehending the world, is a complicated and subversive performing that frequently experiences changes. Ecofeminist perspectives include diverse political orientations that are subject to evolution and contextual variation. To clarify, the political movements and partnerships that arise from ecofeminism undergo changes in response to the justice concerns that are being addressed within diverse cultural and historical contexts. Ecofeminism constitutes a simultaneous challenge to patriarchal structures due to its dynamic and ever-evolving nature. The fluid and diverse positions taken by ecofeminism are indicative of its numerous strengths.

The dominance of women is conceptually connected to the dominance of nature, according to an underlying assumption of feminist environmental studies, and specifically ecological feminist theory. It comes from the realization that in Western traditions of thought, the categories of femininity and masculinity have been established in opposition to one another, and both culture and nature are built in opposition to one another. This conflict is a hierarchical one that not only divides the two into two categories but also places men and women in different social and cultural categories. According to ecofeminist theorists, such a dualizing schema is profoundly established, influencing not just ideas of gender and environment but also the fundamental principles of Western knowledge in general. From an ecofeminist

viewpoint, it follows that thinking cannot be released from the distorted lens of dualism unless both women and the natural world are liberated.

The novel *Herland* portrays sexuality as the boundary of cognitive exploration. Gilman established a community comprising of women who identified as asexual, thereby effectively eradicating sexual desires. The individual asserts that this world does not accommodate lesbianism. Thus, despite its favorable attributes, the novel exhibits minimal deviation from heterosexual ideology. The depiction of the Amazon region, as well as the Amazonian archetype portrayed by Gilman, has been featured in numerous utopian works as a symbol of a strong and liberated female persona during the 19th century.

An additional notion of a “Lady Land” is derived from the literary works of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, an esteemed female writer from the Eastern region. Recognized as a prominent feminist figure in South Asia, Hossain is credited as a trailblazer in advocating for the empowerment and liberation of Muslim women in Bangladesh. The significance of *Sultana's Dream* lies in its portrayal of feminist utopias authored by women in Eastern countries during the early 20th century. *Sultana's Dream* portrays a fictional society in which men are restricted to their households while women actively engage in political, scientific, and artistic pursuits, thereby occupying the “public” sphere. In Mardana, there exists a situation where men are confined to imprisonment, while women actively engage in various societal domains such as public spaces, artistic pursuits, governmental affairs, and scientific endeavors.

While women employ their cognitive abilities, men engage in ridiculing domestic practices. *Sultana's Dream* presents a utopian vision wherein the eradication of patriarchy and tyranny is believed to be achievable through the pursuit of scientific studies, aligning with the notion that women's liberation can be realized. This narrative envisions a world characterized by peace, elegance, honesty, and love.

The feminist ideologies and concepts, which are attempted to be portrayed in various forms within feminist utopias, exhibit a strikingly similar progression in both *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland*. Two female authors, each with distinct family structures, social environments, and cultural values, approach the examination of gender issues from a shared perspective within their respective works. The presence of comparable dialogues in both literary works, wherein robust critiques of male hegemony are articulated, indicates the universal resistance of women against the subjugation and control imposed by men, regardless of geographical location. In a hypothetical scenario where the male gender is absent, the presence of evil, violence, repression, chaos, and domination would be significantly diminished. The absence of men in *Herland* serves as evidence for the argument, while acknowledging that men are present in *Sultana's Dream*, their presence within the harem still leads to a similar conclusion. The concept of patriarchy has become out-of-date and a new social order based on matriarchy has been systematically constructed. The demonstration of women's strength and intelligence becomes evident when they are liberated from the societal expectations imposed by men. Indeed, the male population uses pressure with the intention of imposing upon women the perception of fragility and powerlessness, thereby confining them within prescribed boundaries while concealing their own role in this process. Neither of the feminist utopias permits this action.

One notable distinction between *Sultana's Dream* and *Herland* lies in the presence of men within the harem. Begum Rokeya perceives the aforementioned situation as a state of confinement and responds with such intensity that she avoids from acknowledging the dominance of men in any aspect. Nevertheless, Gilman attempts to envision a society characterized by equality, wherein individuals considered to get essential advantages from the intellectual and practical abilities possessed by men in *Herland*. Her objective is to facilitate individuals' understanding of the fundamental nature of humanity, rather than focusing on the distinctions between genders. Another notable aspect in which the distinction becomes apparent is in relation to femininity and motherhood. The explicit mention of femininity or

motherhood is absent in *Sultana's Dream*. Nevertheless, *Herland* has extensively addressed this matter. The three male individuals consistently emphasize the absence of “feminine” attributes in women. The author conveys the notion of rejecting the conformity of feminine behaviors and attitudes to the preferences and aspirations of men. Over time, individuals who become accustomed to this circumstance come to recognize that perspective holds significance, rather than feminine attraction. Moreover, there is criticism regarding the presumed glorification of motherhood within patriarchal societies, with the contention that men do not sufficiently contribute in terms of their involvement and participation.

Both pieces stress women's natural balance. They direct their lives accurately and regularly analyzing all nature gives them and avoiding situations that hurt nature. Comparing matriarchal cultures to patriarchal ones, the texts sharply criticize their emphasis on nature. Both works explore science and education extensively. *Sultana's Dream*, a brief feminist utopia, condemns females' unjustness by having them go to education instead of marrying and live with science in universities. In the work, ladies who read and loved science won a major battle with their innovations at universities, showing the worth of science and education and the errors committed by a male-dominated society. For a decent society in *Herland*, education is first and foremost. Motherhood and education are linked, and children learn from birth and girls may work as they like in a non-male-dominated society. The message to be conveyed in the works is clearly shown: Science and education have no gender.

The understanding of management is matriarchal in both works, and the well-managed country system proves that women are not shallow creatures. It is frequently mentioned that women can rule, and without males, things run smoothly. Love-and-truth-believing women think that love is the greatest power. Also, both works associate religion with love, kindness, truthfulness, and honesty.

Sultana's Dream and *Herland's* feminist utopias discuss and criticize patriarchal cultures. Whether in the East or the West, male-dominated societies are condemned

around the world. Although these feminist utopias, based on the perspective of equal and free women embodied by feminism, reflect some sociological, psychological, economic, and cultural problems of the society they live in, their main point is women's liberation from male dominance and reach an egalitarian, free, and not marginalized life.



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