

**T.R.
ERCIYES UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**POSTMODERN FEMINIST TREATMENT OF THE
FEMALE BODY: SUBVERSION OF SOMATOPHOBIA
THROUGH EATING DISORDERS IN ATWOOD'S THE
EDIBLE WOMAN, WELDON'S THE FAT WOMAN'S
JOKE, AND GREEN'S JEMIMA J.**

**Prepared by
Ebru UĞUREL ÖZDEMİR**

**Supervisor
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melih KARAKUZU**

Ph. D. Dissertation

**August 2019
KAYSERİ**

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KABUL VE ONAY SAYFASI

Doç. Dr. Melih KARAKUZU danışmanlığında **Ebru UĞUREL ÖZDEMİR** tarafından hazırlanan “**Postmodern Feminist Treatment of the Female Body: Subversion of Somatophobia through Eating Disorders in Atwood’s The Edible Woman, Weldon’s The Fat Woman’s Joke, and Green’s Jemima J**” adlı bu çalışma, jürimiz tarafından Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimleri Enstitüsü **İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı** Anabilim Dalında **Doktora** tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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JÜRİ:

Danışman :Doç. Dr. Melih KARAKUZU

Üye : Prof. Dr. İsmail ÇAKIR

Üye : Doç. Dr. İ. Banu AKÇEŞME

Üye : Doç. Dr. Fatma KALPAKLI

Üye : Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Aysin KALAYCI

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Ebru UĞUREL ÖZDEMİR

**Erciyes University, Institute of Social Sciences,
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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melih KARAKUZU**

ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the subversive aspects of anorexia nervosa and binge eating in the novels *The Edible Woman* (1969), *The Fat Woman's Joke* (1967), and *Jemima J.* (1999), written respectively by Margaret Atwood, Fay Weldon, and Jane Green. For this purpose, this study provides a theoretical background concerning the philosophical, cultural, and psychoanalytical origins of somatophobia. Through an interdisciplinary research and the analyses of the novels, parallelisms and relationships between the cultural ideology and the female embodiment and subjectivity; the images characterizing the ideal femininity; the philosophical background of somatophobia; modern and postmodern understanding of eating disorders; and the deconstruction/reconstruction of the body image are interpreted within the framework of postmodern feminist epistemology. To realize this aim, the argument of this dissertation is based on Butler's existentialist argument that there is no real or biological body, but discourse which constructs and regulates it. This study demonstrates that the understanding of the female body is based on the anatomical fact of being female, and the relevant feminine roles are coded with reference to the interpretation of the female body as embodiment. Thus, so long as woman rejects her gender roles, she achieves to liberate her body from the stereotype definitions.

Key Words: Somatophobia, eating disorders, female body, gender, postmodern feminism

POSTMODERN BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA KADIN BEDENİ: ATWOOD'UN THE EDIBLE WOMAN, WELDON'IN THE FAT WOMAN' JOKE VE GREEN'İN JEMIMA J ADLI ESERLERİNDE SOMATOFOBİNİN YEME BOZUKLUKLARIYLA ALT ÜST EDİLMESİ

Ebru UĞUREL ÖZDEMİR

**Erciyes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü,
Doktora Tezi, Ağustos, 2019
Danışman: Doç. Dr. Melih KARAKUZU**

KISA ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı, sırasıyla Margaret Atwood, Fay Weldon ve Jane Green tarafından kaleme alınan *The Edible Woman* (1969), *The Fat Woman's Joke* (1967) ve *Jemima J* (1999) adlı eserlerde anoreksiya nervosa ve aşırı yeme bozukluklarının tanımları alt üst eden taraflarını incelemektir. Bu amaçla, bu çalışma somatofobinin felsefi, kültürel ve psikanalitik kökenine dair kuramsal altyapı sunmaktadır. Söz konusu romanların disiplinler arası bir yöntemle incelenmesi ve kültürel ideoloji ile kadın bedeni ve öznelik arasındaki ilişki; ideal kadınlığı niteleyen simgeler; somatofobinin felsefi geçmişi; yeme bozukluklarının modern ve postmodern algıları ve mevcut beden imgesinin alt üst edilip yeniden inşa edilmesi postmodern feminist kuram kapsamında yorumlanmaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu tez, Butler'ın gerçek ve biyolojik bir kadın bedeninden ziyade, söylem yoluyla oluşturulan ve düzene sokulan bir beden savına dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, kadın bedeni ve buna dayalı dişil toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin, anatomik bir gerçeklik olan dişiliğin maddeselliğine bağlı olarak yorumlandığını göstermektedir. Kadın dişil toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini reddettiği müddetçe, bedenini kalıplaşmış tanımlardan kurtarmayı başarır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Somatofobi, yeme bozuklukları, kadın bedeni, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, postmodern feminizm

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INTRODUCTION

The “discursive” body, the “materialist” body, the “medicalized” body, the “talking” body, the “individual/social” body, the “physical” body, the “communicative” body, the “consumer” body and the “medical” body, the “sexual” body, the “disciplined” body, the “somatic” body and the “corporeal” body, the “uncertain” body, the “naturalistic” body, and the “socially constructed” body, and the “commodified” body and the “regulated” body
(Howson, 2013, p. 11).

This dissertation critically examines the subversive aspect of anorexia nervosa and binge eating within the context of postmodern feminist understanding of the female body in Margaret Atwood’s *The Edible Woman* (1969), Fay Weldon’s *The Fat Woman’s Joke* (1967), and Jane Green’s *Jemima J.* (1999), respectively. The purpose of this study is to reveal the power of eating disorders both as the cause and the cure of somatophobia, which unfolds in the female characters of the selected novels, through examining the development of the self within the body with references to postmodern philosophy and postmodern feminist approach besides cultural and psychological associations of somatophobia. To realize this aim, through an interdisciplinary research and the analyses of the novels, parallelisms and relationships between the cultural ideology and the female embodiment and subjectivity; the images characterizing the ideal femininity; the philosophical background of somatophobia; modern and postmodern understanding of eating disorders; and the deconstruction/reconstruction of the body image are interpreted within the framework of postmodern feminist epistemology.

The novels to be examined in this dissertation are regarded as popular texts which have been interpreted from different perspectives. Though many papers and dissertations have been written about the selected novels, especially on *The Edible Woman* in terms of feminism and the body politics, this dissertation will be the first to handle somatophobia in the form of eating disorders as a challenge against the traditional and modern definitions of femininity and the female body in the light of cultural, psychoanalytic, and philosophical discourses. In the novels, Atwood, Weldon, and Green do portray various female characters with alternative identities, and they enable

the heroines to overcome their somatophobic habits and perform their own “selves” regardless of the patriarchal boundaries they are covered by because of their anatomy. Each protagonist achieves to liberate her body from the patriarchal open arrest through reconstructing her own perception of the body as a unique and precious base on which solely she has the overall right. Put it differently, the mentioned authoresses negate the notion that women are lack of rationality and are thus designated in a sense to be ruled by their physiological processes. By contrast, each authoress does picture her protagonist as the one who can achieve self-determination and self-acceptance free from the gendered roles assigned to her body by the society.

In this study, the novels are examined with reference to somatophobic tendencies each heroine has in the form of eating disorders. Because somatophobia means a sort of body-hatred or fear of the body, the core of somatophobia is explained within the context of the philosophical and religious understanding of the body. In the novels, the female characters suffer from the assumptions and roles attributed to their bodies, and thus they are coerced to regard their bodies as the guilty of their alienation to their real identities. Having the basis of the contemporary perception of body and woman as interrelated formations, the Western philosophy is noted for its celebration of the mind attributed to man over the body which is identified with woman as a pejorative stock to be eliminated in the cause of reaching the transcendental. Thus, the negative attitudes towards woman and body have taken shape by means of traditional clichés which underestimate woman as unnecessary and unimportant. Such a degrading definition is directly related to the idea that associates woman with the body and with the bodily functions which are indeed perceived as the obstacles that withhold individuals from real knowledge and virtuous life while leading them into a world of materiality. Accordingly, the misogynistic stance of the archaic philosophy is linked with the culmination of a somatophobic – body-hating – doctrine; the body is interpreted as the source of all sicknesses a human being could have and it is women who spend their lives practicing all out of favor traits.

The Western philosophy which goes back to Plato and Aristotle manifests a negative view on women considering the body inessential or trivial while “maleness has been seen as itself an achievement, attained by breaking away from the more natural condition of women” (Lloyd, 2004, p. 39). Based on the traditional judgment on

woman, female characters are portrayed as the ones who are disregarded as the subjects of their lives. The essence of the pejorative conduct towards women exposes the envisagement that women are directly associated with the body because of their nature; and based on this assumption, Plato defines the body as a tempting thing that alienates people from the virtuous and real life by pulling them in the material world with misleading senses (2012, p. 23). In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the female body is constructed under the influence of such archaic assumptions and definitions; women are ignored as subjects, and gender roles which indeed offend their identity are imposed upon them under the pretext of their ostensible biological defect.

In this dissertation, the reductionist view of Descartes, as the representative figure of modern thinking, is discussed as well. Because Descartes does make a distinction between “the physics of matter and the psychology of mind” (Watson, 1987, p. 183), he vindicates the relationship between Cartesian dualism and somatophobia which has enslaved the Western thought in a sense to define and subjugate women within their bodies and the physiological processes they enter into. In this dissertation, the female characters suffer from somatophobia as a consequence of the judgments on the body as flawed, evil, and insignificant, and thus they are forced to punish their bodies either through self-starvation or overeating. Hegel, also corroborating the dualistic thought which segregates woman and man in the point of body/mind, argues that merely man has the reason to lead him to a virtuous life while woman is thought to be associated with the body which is full of hysteric and deceptive senses, and thus she is believed to be deprived of reason to control her actions and behaviors. Predicating the division between man and woman on the anatomical fact, Hegel justifies gender roles as the expected result of the sexual difference between man and woman. In respect to this, since body is considered the indicator of the female sex, particular roles such as procreation and nurturing are considered the obligations every woman must fulfill with regard to her physiology and the materiality of her body. Accordingly, in this dissertation, the Hegelian philosophy is also illustrated and criticized through the habits and performances the female characters are encircled by. Because they are regarded as wicked and lack of reason by nature, they are almost coerced to stay at home to deal with domestic issues instead. In other words, being female determines the necessity for becoming feminine as the only salvation for her bodily existence.

The cultural ideology of the modern world is of great significance to this dissertation. Within the hegemonic paradigm of modern societies, the politics of domination forces woman to accept her sex as the real cause of her victimhood. In other saying, being female is the only reason that makes woman suffer and experience somatophobia. Because biological properties of femaleness determine woman as inferior to the other sex, her anatomy does establish her roles, including the way she feels, thinks, and acts in accordance with the cultural and social expectations. However, the principles which direct woman's life in the patriarchal society is quiet paradoxical: based on her anatomy, while she is considered evil and cursed because of the body she wears on, she is coerced to consummate and idealize it for masculine complacency. The bodily perception of woman puts her in a hole and she is supposed to represent both Mary (chaste and submissive) and Eve (tempting and desirous) simultaneously. The body is considered the thing that makes woman vulnerable and impudent; therefore, she is both exposed to hate it as the sole responsible for her marginalization and embrace it as the mere thing to discipline and correct properly to ensure her acceptance. Put it differently, although the body is defined as the thing which causes woman to be regarded as inferior, it is, nonetheless, assigned to her as the sole descriptive label that she is supposed to perfect in order to be able to maintain her existence. At this juncture, because fictionalized bodies are expected to function in line with the social norms which delimit women via political, religious, and legal institutions, practice, as Foucault indicates, proves to be more influential than belief: the female body is taught, shaped, disciplined, and controlled within the hegemonic regulations of gender and identity, and she is forced to perform her femininity in line with the pre-determined roles cast for her. Put it differently, the constructed femininity requires her to practice and internalize her body-oriented roles as the values which are attributed to her sex. "To identify a person as a female is one thing, to identify her as a woman is another" predicates Spelman (1988, p. 14).

On the assumption that being "female" is the fact of biological sex, being a "woman" is the gendered form of the subject which determines her position in domestic and public spheres. While being female requires her to be sexual and inviting by virtue of the stereotype judgment concerning her corporeal existence, being a woman demands her to be chaste and silent based on the conviction that she is empty of reason and is thus wicked by nature. Metaphorically, she is expected to wear both a garter on one leg and

long johns on the other. For this very reason, “women in sexist society are physically handicapped. Insofar as we learn to live out our existence in accordance with the definition that patriarchal culture assigns to us, we are physically inhibited, confined, positioned, and objectified” (Young, 2005, p. 42). In parallel with the dichotomies that have been fabricated to privilege man over woman, nature/culture dualism is also embodied in this categorization, and thus the marginalization of woman and the body is legitimated. Based on the reason for her reproductive potential, woman is associated with nature whereas rationality and creativity are attributed to man as the indications of culture and thus of development despite the fact that there is no valid ground for it. Therefore, because of her anatomical features, woman is qualified with her body yet again. In this context, Bordo regards culture as the most responsible element which has impact on our lives in terms of its function for bodily practices and habits. The bodies adapt to the requirements of the culture (man) and discern the distinction between the “inner” and the “outer”; in other words, women are coerced to learn the limits of their bodies and their sexualities set by the cultural values.

“There is no private domain of a person’s life that is not political and there is no political issue that is not ultimately personal” remarks Bordo (2003, p. 17). Away from self-determination, the female body is regarded as a politically constructed entity which is formed through “histories and practices of containment and control – from foot-binding and corseting to rape and battering to compulsory heterosexuality, forced sterilization, unwanted pregnancy, and [...] explicit commodification” (2003, p. 21-22). As Foucault indicates, although power is not domineering or adjudicating in its essence, it has the right to produce, to control and to standardize bodies so as to conform to the ideals of the authority. Accordingly, women are constructed so as to be controlled and ruled on the basis of their physiological features, and they are judged in accordance with their roles as procreators and nurturers on the one hand, and as sex objects for male satisfaction on the other. The female sex is, therefore, forced to accept the repressive stance which requires her to internalize the “socially defined ethical values” as the principal issues for their lives. Thus, the self-regulation and self-transformation of the body via the empty rhetoric of autonomy is promoted by the popular culture: “The proper diet, the right amount of exercise and you can have, pretty much, and body you desire” (2003, p. 247).

Since modernism regards the female body as a static and fixed material which does just possess an embodied subjectivity, it is condemned to exist in the margins as a “demonized other”. Because the body is considered anatomically fixed and ahistorical, woman is almost coerced to suffer from somatophobia as a consequence of the prejudgment that labels her body as the marginal other under the pretext of its identification with the material, the nature, the emotional, and the irrational. Within the modern understanding – exactly like in the ancient philosophy – the body is regarded as a biologically constructed entity which counts for nothing remarkable because of its passivity to create subjectivity. Such a stereotypical perception of the body does oblige woman to make her body the center of her existence through perfecting it via various instruments such as plastic surgery, pharmacology, diet, and anti-aging products. As it is understood, by the force of the consumer ideology which targets woman, the body becomes a “battleground” (2003, p. 263) for her due to the presentation of certain body types as thin, young, and fit in the media and in the intentionally dictated cultural discourses. The body, thus, takes the form of a cultural metaphor which implies the discipline and control of what is within our grasp. As Orbach remarks, “the woman’s body is not her own. The woman’s body is not satisfactory as it is. It must be thin, free of “unwanted hair,” deodorized, perfumed and clothed. It must conform to an ideal physical type” (2006, p. 17). Woman does not have a voice even over her own body; she is supposed to yield up to the patriarchal authority as the policy maker of the system and she is obliged to accept her inefficacy to govern her body. In this regard, through transforming the body into a Barbie doll, the capitalist culture and the patriarchal society fulfill the principles of modernity.

The body, which is defined either as the thing to be abhorred or to be admired under the shifting states of consciousness, has always been the subject of discussions since archaic periods. In this study, *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.* are interpreted with reference to the cultural ideology that modern societies impose upon women; woman as a self-disciplining or self-policing subject is examined within the Foucauldian concept of *docile body*. Influenced by the assumptions of the Western philosophy, the popular culture embraces the patriarchal locus of power that designates woman as a mere body which she is supposed to be attentive to and to present it as the object of others’ gazes and manipulations. Confined within an objectified body as a result of the capitalist goals, “she gazes at it in the mirror, worries about how it looks to

others, prunes it, shapes it, molds and decorates it” (Young, 2005, p. 44). The excessive dedication to the body causes her to be alienated from her real self through showing tendency to shape it for the purpose of fulfilling the expectations or the assumed requirements of the patriarchal order with her feminine qualities that she is believed to have by birth. In other saying, under the influence of the definitions concerning her sex and sex-based gender roles, woman is conditioned to perfect her body for approval. Correspondingly, the definition of woman and existing as a woman do not reflect the truth, but a man-made object or figure.

Eating disorders, which are regarded as an inevitable outcome of somatophobia women experience, stem from the normative practices of the dominant ideology, through which the female body morphs either into a docile body via self-control and containment or into a rebellious body by rejecting her femininity. “As well as being a particular kind of language, food endearments are reserved for particular kinds of relationships and used by people in particular situations” (Heywood, 1996, p. 87). Because woman has always been associated with food ever since Eve succumbed to the apple, food makes sense in many different ways for her. Principally, it symbolizes temptation and desire; therefore, woman is to shut off from it to keep herself guarded. Rather, “a woman is meant to police her eating, to feel cautious of what she eats, to be constantly watching it” (Orbach, 2016, p. 190) in regard to the parable in which Eve is said to have committed sin by eating the forbidden fruit and have been punished because of her weakness of will. In other saying, she is believed to have been overwhelmed by her desire for eating and causing Adam to get involved in her sin as a consequence of her corrupting nature. Under the influence of the stories concerning the original sin, woman, in modern societies, is obliged to refrain herself from eating and thus from desires. Because desire connotes sexuality, woman is also forbidden to divulgate her sexual desire. As a knock-on-effect, food, desire, and sexuality are recognized as the issues that women are compelled to repress. In this regard, “a direct equation between food and fat, an equation which can only generate guilt about oral pleasures” (Coward, 1984, p. 105) causes woman to become fat-phobic. In order not to seem hungry for sex or desire, woman is taught to negate her appetite.

In addition to the religious perspective, food also implies a sort of responsibility each woman has for the rest of the family under the name of her gender roles. Preparing food

is her job and she performs her duty for the purpose of expressing her identity and emotions: the feminine qualities require her to prepare and present food at family members' disposal as a sort of gratitude for their well-being. In other words, she perceives food as something that is the only means to express her emotional bond with her husband and children: "Food may become a medium through which you communicate many feelings" (Costin, 1997, p. 30). Through preparing and presenting food for the members of the family, woman is believed to imply her love and affection for them. More precisely, food becomes a metaphor for woman's self-sacrifice; apart from satisfying the sexual and physical appetite of her male partner, she is also responsible for breastfeeding her baby as a mother through making her body the object of the infant's need and desire. In this regard, the female body becomes something possessed by others: the infant lays claim to her mother's breasts as a provider of milk and the husband does for the satisfaction of his sexual desire. On the other hand, in modern societies, apart from religious and gender-based relationship between woman and food, obesophobia, which is interpreted as an unrecognized stance in society – due to the undesired physical appearance –, disturbs woman with the possibility of being excluded from the society by the masculine hegemony. As a manifestation of the social conditioning, woman attempts to control her body with the anxiety of becoming fat; therefore, she consciously rejects food in order to be able to attain to the pre-determined ideal beauty.

In this study, the relevant eating disorders that emerge out of the somatophobic disposition of the characters are examined from different perspectives: subservient and subversive. In contemporary societies, the anorectic either negates her femininity altogether and becomes a masculine woman, or indigenizes feminine qualities determined by the phallogocentric discourse that patriarchy postulates. The overweight, on the other hand, by getting fat, is motivated to desexualize and defeminize her body in order to get rid of the gazes that emphasize her materiality; she attempts to reconstruct her subjectivity without any curves or other feminine functions of her body. However, in the novels studied in this dissertation, both anorexia nervosa and binge eating function on the opposite way round. From the postmodern feminist perspective, eating disorders portray woman as free subjects from the social subordination: the overweight denies or ignores all determinants concerning her existence with the body. Rather, she responds to social demands by negating the norms that emphasize the ostensible

necessity to police her body for the purpose of being involved in the male domain. More importantly, she never rejects her body; on the contrary, she believes that she has the sex appeal and beauty – exactly like a woman with a slender body – as well as her rationality to conduct her mind. Through eating and getting fat, the overweight struggles to gain power to subvert the ideology that labels her as an object existing just with her body. In other words, binge eating works against the traditional and modern Western philosophy which undergirds the binary oppositions that define woman as lack of reason. On the contrary, it functions as an instrument to indicate the ever present mind and rationality in harmony with the body. From the postmodern feminist view point, binge eating is regarded as an intentional act directed against the standardized norms of sex and gender, including the roles such as mothering, nurturing, providing, and giving. Rather than submit to the gendered assumptions and to the body oriented definitions of existence, the overeater puts up a wall as self-defense or self-protection against the normative perceptions that degrade and imprison her. On the other side, when the anorectic rejects food she speaks a language through which she says no to the indoctrinations of society and culture. The anorectic woman is up against the system and the ideology that push her into her bodily functions and maternity. By the time the anorectic achieves to resist the patriarchal definitions of the female body – by rejecting to have a certain size –, she regains her appetite and coalesces with her body once again. In this context, the subversion of the images, associated with body and woman, is achieved through a language woman speaks with her body in an effort to revolt against the manipulative patriarchal discourse. Because sex is regarded as the indicative of the gender roles which man and woman are obliged to perform, the body has the overall influence on the female victimization. However, as Butler claims, once she disregards her gender roles attributed to her under the pretext of her bodily existence, woman achieves to subvert the vicious treatments on the body.

Corresponding to the aim of this dissertation, the first chapter focuses on the theoretical background that formalizes the framework of this dissertation. To this end, the philosophical and historical definitions of woman and the body; the origin of the body fear, body-hatred, and the reasons for the resemblance between body and woman are discussed with references to Plato, Aristotle, Rene Descartes, and G. W. F. Hegel. The cultural aspect of somatophobia is argued within the theory of the “capitalist body” of the media which functions as a disciplining force for the body and also within the scope

of Michel Foucault's concept of docile body as "something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed" (Foucault, 1995, p. 135). Besides, the psychoanalytical perspective of somatophobia is enlightened through the phallogocentric system of thought propounded by Jacques Lacan who attempts to justify the devaluation of woman with regards to her anatomy and thus to her body. The psychological factors which are considered among the reasons for somatophobia and for the relevant obsessions women are predisposed to experience are explained and interpreted. Postmodern philosophy and the body positivity are examined from the perspectives of Friedrich Nietzsche and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and the postmodern feminist reaction against the traditional philosophy and the Lacanian theory is discussed within the arguments of Judith Butler. The modern and postmodern attitudes towards the female body are discussed with reference to eating disorders which ensue from somatophobia. Within the scope of the novels to be analyzed, anorexia nervosa and binge eating, albeit interpreted as the symbols of the female victimhood, are presented as the subversive instruments which woman can use against the authority.

In the second chapter, *The Edible Woman* is examined within the scope of somatophobia which derives from various reasons and causes the heroine to experience anorexia nervosa ultimately. The novel written by Atwood is analyzed in terms of the eating disorder Marian faces as a result of the roles such as pregnancy, maternity, and wifehood that she observes in the lives of her friends. As a consequence of her anxiety for the probable roles she is going to perform once she gets married to Peter, Marian discovers that her body never belongs to herself. Put it differently, Marian realizes that her body determines who she is. Initially, she forces her body to adapt to the standards determined by the masculine order. However, she awakens to the reality that her body belongs merely to her; therefore, once she frees herself from the performances which turns her body into a slave, Marian regains her sense of self. In other words, although her anorexia nervosa experience seems to be the result of her attempt to discipline her body in line with the standards of the culture, Marian does indeed illustrate the postmodern feminist interpretation of anorexia nervosa as a subversive power. Through self-starvation Marian indeed rejects to exist with her pre-determined body and bodily functions; she has a chance to exist and reconcile with her body and mind. Rather than support the status quo which manipulates her body into a certain body shape and size, the anorectic discards feminine qualities that are regarded as appropriate and satisfying

for the male desire. Instead of attaining to the ideal body Peter dreams, Marian unlearns the norms that have always exploited her sense of self through the body. Discovering the significance of her own perception of the body, Marian recovers her appetite and real identity after abandoning the oppressive factors such as the physical obsession with the body through makeup, clothes, and the societal assertiveness to serve and submit to the male cosmos.

The third chapter on *The Fat Woman's Joke* presents the protagonist as the one who is able to overcome her somatophobia and accept her body without fixing it into any regulations. In *The Fat Woman's Joke*, Weldon displays the subversive power of binge eating against somatophobia. As a reaction against the widespread understanding that regards the female body as valuable and functional providing that it recalls sexuality, beauty, fertility, and nurturing, Esther, as the protagonist, represents the rebel against all these characteristics expected from a woman. Esther rejects her obsession with slenderness, nurturing function and maternity, and she gives herself away to overeating. Such an attitude reveals the very fact that Esther does compromise with her body as it is, and she gains power over the determinants of her gender roles and bodily functions. Through her excessive eating Esther takes the opportunity to reconstruct her real identity with self-respect and self-confidence. Esther overturns the clichés that coerce any woman to tame her body in accordance with the male satisfaction. As a subversive character, Esther proves to be a woman who can exist regardless of the definitions of the ideal beauty.

The fourth chapter focuses on the novel, *Jemima J.*, in which somatophobia is examined and overcome both through anorexia nervosa and binge eating. The heroine of the novel, Jemima, is overweight and isolated from social surroundings because of her beauty lack appearance, which thus leads her to console herself just through eating. Jemima's somatophobic disorder gives rise to binge eating through which she believes that she could disguise her identity: she attempts to cover her body with fat so as not to be the focus of criticism. However, the obsession with her body and with the negative judgments concerning her appearance leads her to suffer from the body-hatred. In order to get rid of this phobia, Jemima dyes her hair blond, renews her wardrobe, and goes on a diet along with the regular exercises. Although she loses weight, she is never satisfied and thus she is unable to see the reality that she has turned out to be an anorectic. When

she becomes a bone-thin woman, Jemima realizes that she is not content with her new appearance. The development of a real identity away from her body obsessions manifests itself just after Jemima awakens to her own reality and values. She overcomes her somatophobia by the time she learns that her body belongs just to her, and it is merely her perception that determines the value of her body.

The conclusion part of the dissertation provides concluding comments on the relationship between somatophobia and the relevant eating disorders that manifest within the female characters of the selected novels and the development of the self through the body with references to postmodern feminist approach, cultural and psychological theories, and the body studies. The stereotype judgment that the traditional philosophy and the modern dualistic ideology impose upon the female psyche is challenged, and the subversive power of eating disorders is clarified. Anorexia nervosa and binge eating, which have been regarded as psycho-somatic disorders thus far, are redefined as a form of expression and rebellion that women develop against the phallogocentric discourse. The process how women, as the products and victims of the misogynist societies, overcome the female embodiment, the social essentiality, and the coded roles through rejecting the assumptions that confine woman to her body and to the bodily functions is interpreted from the postmodern feminist perspective.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This dissertation examines the novels *The Edible Woman* (1969), *The Fat Woman's Joke* (1967), and *Jemima J.* (1999) written by women authors to explore the reasons that provoke divisiveness between man and woman; the ideology and the instruments that imprison woman within her body and even make her turn against herself; the body-oriented discourses that oblige woman to perfect her body for the male gaze, and the subversive power of anorexia nervosa and compulsive eating which are indeed experienced both as the cause and the effect of somatophobia. In line with this purpose, this chapter first discusses the philosophy that does create dualism between the sexes and does cause woman to experience somatophobia within the foundational philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and of the Enlightenment thinking of Rene Descartes and G. W. F. Hegel who embrace the essentialist and Cartesian dualism. In the sequel, the relationship between the cultural ideology and somatophobia is explained through the theory Michel Foucault puts forward as docile bodies and "biopower". The influence of the media as a forceful instrument of the capitalist culture and as a disciplining force for the female body is discussed as well. The female psychology and its relationship with somatophobia are examined, and the psychoanalytic aspect of somatophobia is analyzed via phallogentrism introduced by Jacques Lacan. This chapter also presents the two-way effects of somatophobia; anorexia nervosa, initially as an instrument that serves under patriarchy and capitalism with the purpose of attaining an ideal female image, then as a subversive power against the presupposed notions of the female passivity and lack just because of her anatomy. Binge eating, on the other hand, is handled first as an acceptance of the female vulnerability and desire to have masculine power through a swelled body, then as a challenge against the supreme power of patriarchy. Albeit regarded as an imperfection in modern cultures, anorexia nervosa and binge eating, from the perspectives of

Atwood, Weldon, and Green, are treated as the instruments of rebellion of any woman who embraces her body as it is without any rules or measures that could restrict her sense of self. The somatophobia-based eating disorders mentioned in this dissertation are thus examined from the postmodern feminist perception of the female body. The postmodern feminist paradigm which negates the foundational philosophy of the West, which appreciates objectivity, totality, unity, logic, and most especially the dualist approaches towards human beings is discussed and interpreted. In this direction, the subversive philosophy of the body and the mind, the understanding of nature and culture division of Friedrich Nietzsche, and the body perception within the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty are explained and interpreted in parallel with Judith Butler's concept of the body as the challenging power of postmodern feminism.

1.1. Philosophical Logic and the Body

Most men are sometimes obliged to bear with bodily inconveniences, and to endure, occasionally, the inclemency of the elements; but genteel women are, literally speaking, slaves to their bodies, and glory in their subjection (Wollstonecraft, 2008, p. 52).

Since classical ages, the discourse produced by the power relations to vindicate the hierarchy has been called philosophy. In order to legitimate and maintain the order, philosophy does devise metanarratives to manage the social bond through institutions. "The decision makers attempt to manage these clouds of sociality according to input/output matrices, following a logic which implies that their elements are commensurable [...] They allocate our lives for the growth of power" (Lyotard, 1979, p. xxiv). In this context, the archaic philosophical discourse is regarded as the responsible for creating the division between the female body and the male mind. Because woman is considered a mere body as a result of her assumed materiality and lack of reason, a set of gender roles, through which she is coerced to become feminine, are ascribed to woman. In other words, the anatomical facts determine the position individuals hold in the society, and unfortunately, it is woman who is always denigrated due to the sex she is born as. Atwood, Weldon, and Green employ the relationship between sex and gender roles that are attributed to women by the stories of conventional and modern philosophies, and they predicate the reasons for somatophobia – the female characters do experience – on the philosophical disposition towards woman and the body. Although the heroines become subversive at the end of the novels, each authoress does

present multiple female characters that are initially lost within their bodies and gender roles concerning maternity, wifehood, or sexuality. Living without a sense of self, each woman is confined to the patriarchal definition of being a woman. ‘Woman’ no longer means woman but is simply a name for the unrepresented and repressed of patriarchal culture is only one step further along the chain, where woman herself becomes a synecdoche for representation” (Michie, 1987, p. 145). Woman becomes the victim of both her sex and gender roles; first her anatomy marginalizes her, then the norms that are pre-established for her to practice to vindicate her obligations in public and private spheres. Put it differently, being female creates femininity, being the body compels her to become a sexual object for male satisfaction or a self-sacrificing mother for her children; by some means or other, she is forced to represent her embodiment through the roles assigned to her:

The woman concerned was continually portrayed [...] simply as “the Sex,” as “Woman,” with all the misogynist ideology that attaches to “Woman” when she presents herself as a threat to male security and well-being: she is a vindictive liar, a fantasizer, a scorned neurotic, mentally unbalanced, the engineer of man’s fall (Bordo, 2003, p. 235).

Grosz defines philosophy as “a discipline concerned primarily or exclusively with ideas, concepts, reason, judgment – that is, with terms clearly framed by the concept of mind, terms which marginalize or exclude considerations of the body” (1994, p. 4). The misogynistic and somatophobic traditional philosophy which is based on the classical Greece does prove the very idea that the political and public life of ancient Greece played a determinant role in the reinforcement of negative attitudes towards women and their bodies in contemporary societies. To illustrate, Olugbade makes reference to the Greek thought through Pericles’s speech which manifests the dualism between man and woman: “women should be quiet and remain at home, and “we [Athenians] alone think of one who does not participate in public affairs not as a quiet man, but as a useless one” (1989, p. 503). In this sense, women are not the ones who could have a voice in public; their state is the private home and they are subjected to be captained by male masters in the same manner as the latter rules the slaves. Plato manifests his deprecating perspective on women, especially in *Phaedo* and *Symposium*, through the dialogues emphasizing the body’s dependence on sense perceptions which could provide no reality, but illusionary appetites and feelings that constrain women from the pursuit of truth. In the dialogues, women are characterized by their bodies and by the materiality of their bodies. Men, on the other hand, are associated with transcendence which is

thought to be “necessary in order to escape the plurality, temporality, and division associated with the material, the particular forms inherently subordinate to universal Forms or Ideas” (Heywood, 1996, p. 19).

Plato does emphasize the entailment of liberating oneself from the bonds of the material body to reach the ideal status of reason. The physical body, as the prison of the soul that hinders man from his “inner” being, does refer to mortal passions and deceptive senses that are away from being real and perfect, but close to animal-like beings which are prone to appetite. “That which is not-body is the highest, the best, the noblest, the closest to God: that which is body is the albatross, the heavy drag on self-realization” (Bordo, 2003, p. 5). Lacking morality and being exclusively physical, woman is always dismissed as inferior while man is adopted as the principal standard to qualify what is ethical and ideal. Therefore, the principal reason for the existence of woman is determined with the intention to fulfill her husband’s desires. “In Glaucon’s favored city, women appear as courtesans right in the midst of an enumeration of delights including seasoning, perfumes, incenses, and cakes, as needing womanly dress or ornaments, or as wet nurses” (Olugbade, 1989, p. 505). In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the women are presented in the same way as Plato depicts in *Republic*: inferior just because they are considered grouchy and weak. Far from taking active part in public and business environments, the women are portrayed as the possessions of men via marriage and reproduction. The portrayal of the conditions of female characters in the novels thus reveals the very fact that nothing regarding the inferior status of women has changed since ancient times.

Based on the ancient views concerning the association between woman and body, the female characters in the novels are oppressed and subjected to somatophobia as a result of their roles as mothers or as irrational but sexual servants for their husbands or partners. In Plato, being the common properties of the state is reflected as a necessity for women to exist: “all the women shall belong to all the men and that none shall cohabit privately; that the children should also be raised in common [...] [because] the sharing of women and children is indisputably the source of the state’s greatest good” (1989, p. 509). Plato, furthermore, does emphasize the priority of men as the guardians of the state and does as well remark that it is biological attributes which dissociate man from woman. For this very reason, he believes in the innate superiority of man over

woman. If you are a woman, your soul is subject to your appetite; however, man is always the agent who rules his soul by reason. Atwood, Weldon, and Green present the pathetic case of women through the dialogues and the events that they are exposed to experience. Based on the Plato's judgment concerning the female existence as a flawed body, the female characters in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* suffer from eating disorders that supervene somatophobia in the form of body-hatred.

Within the dualist traditional philosophy, Aristotle, just as Plato, does argue for the polarity between man and woman, philosopher and laborer, and master and slave. He does interiorize an inegalitarian stance towards women, and he regards it as the "metaphysical foundation for a politics of domination" (Spelman, 1988, p. 11). Aristotle believes in the natural superiority of men over women based on the judgment that women could only provide the matter and it is men who has the sufficiency to turn into a form. Because of their nature, women are considered inferior and thus lack; therefore, her femaleness is the reason for her enslavement within her body. The containment, control, and "natural" inferiority of women, thus, accord with *the flower pot theory*¹ through which Aristotle identifies women as weak and deficient by nature in that they are just able to provide blood, and it is men who are able to provide semen. Women could only contribute to the matter, and the form is the attribute which belongs just to men. In this context, women and men have different pursuits, different virtues, and they are expected to perform different tasks. To illustrate, woman serves a function as a dutiful and submissive housewife, whereas man along with his rational part of the soul functions as managing, controlling and dominating both home and the state. "Woman is both [...] the repository of the body, the flesh that he desires, owns and masters, tames and controls; and the nurturing source of his life and ego" (Young, 2005, p. 87). From Aristotle's point of view, women's bodies are by nature deficient and weak which is directly related to their physiological lack. While woman is associated with the passive life within the domestic sphere as the nurturer and the nurse of children and husband as a direct consequence of her assumed lack in anatomy, man is characterized by courage and strength; the subject leading an active life not only in domestic sphere but in public arena as well. Therefore, Aristotle considers men the standard, involving intellect and reason, and "female inferiority as inherited"; and this inferiority gives rise to somatophobia in the novels examined in this dissertation.

In *Politics*, Aristotle emphasizes the political importance of the sharp division between male and female, master and slave, and woman and slave, and he states that the relationship between the aforementioned distinctions is nothing short of a mutual need to maintain the life each has. The reason for the inferiority of women and slaves are due to the fact that Aristotle regards them as the sole bodies existing without souls and thus unable to lead a virtuous and ideal life themselves; both women and slaves are the bodily instruments and possessions of men and masters who represent the soul itself. Accordingly, such an argument legitimates the despotic rule of the body by men and masters. “Women and slaves have certain things in common: both do the work that makes the life of the polis possible and both have natures that exclude them from the ranks of those who are fit to rule” (Spelman, 1988, p. 40). Within the novels, the Aristotelian perception of being a woman and being feminine is illustrated through the female characters; they are coerced to regard their bodies as the reason for their weakness, and the male characters legitimate their superiority over them through claiming right over their bodies and lives. Under the influence of the Aristotelian judgment, the women in the novels in question are either subjected to perfect their bodies for male approval or to hate it as the source of their marginalization.

“Woman, next to man, the noblest piece of this creation, is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, a sort of second self” Aristotle declares in his *Masterpiece* (1797, p. 14). As an ancient philosopher, Aristotle demeans women in terms of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the owner and the slave. Because men and women have different features and functions, Aristotle considers women lack of authority and autonomy. Due to the assumption that he does claim, women, because of their nature, are devoid of intelligence and reason; instead, men are created with the capacity for rationality and human excellence. “Some should rule and others be ruled, is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule” (Aristotle, 2008, p. 32). The negative conclusions that Aristotle has against women are derived from the sexist view point he does embrace. In other words, Aristotle regards that women are inferior because of their biological traits, and accordingly, they must remain as the laborers of domestic sphere. As also represented in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, women’s nature, in other words, the physical distinctions between man and woman, ordains the female characters to refrain themselves from the occasions and positions that claim rationality. They are

compelled to repress or forget their potential to reason because as Wollstonecraft remarks “dependence of body naturally produces dependence of mind” (1892, p. 66). The female characters in the novels are forced to internalize their dependence on men through excluding themselves from public affairs and from the business world. The ideal responsibilities and duties of women, which are examined in detail in the selected novels, are reckoned as giving birth and caring for her children, her husband, or for her partner. Consequently, it is physiological features that determine the division of labor between man and woman. Because woman spends most of her life pregnant and nursing, she becomes the symbol of domestic life: “Women’s mothering determines women’s primary location in the domestic sphere and creates a basis for the structural differentiation of domestic and public spheres [...] the public sphere dominates the domestic, and hence men dominate women” (Chodorow, 1978, p.10).

The history of the West is the fictional product of the traditional philosophy that defends dualisms and hierarchy within the society while it imprisons and excludes the other side of the medallion. According to the foundational thought, “gender is a basic, unchangeable characteristic that resides within an individual [and] women are more concerned than men with caregiving because of their own inborn nature” (Matlin, 2012, p. 9). As examined and interpreted in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the intellectual and executive domains are associated merely with men because of the alleged capability of learning and conceptual thought they are assumed to have. Women, on the other hand, do not measure up to men in that the first is coded as the particular, emotional, and passive beings. For this very reason, women are assigned to the domestic realm to fulfill the necessities for the gratification of men. To set an example, in the selected novels, the female characters have been codified with domestic issues due to the ostensible fact that they have no mental capacity to direct their lives. In *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle describes women as female animals who are sensuous and less spirited while men are characterized by courage, savagery, and spirit. Due to the fact that senses and lack of spirit are attributed to the bodily pleasures, then, women are not believed to be capable enough for the cognitive skills, which thus legitimate the oppression and marginalization of them due to their sex. “Now a passionate man is not given to plotting, nor is anger itself – it is open; but the nature of appetite is illustrated by what the poets call Aphrodite” (Aristotle, 1984, p. 1816). As a consequence of the

bodily pursuits that Aristotle associates woman with, she is regarded as an inferior being that just exists to satisfy her appetite through this-worldly means:

The very constitution of the soul has shown us the way; in it one part naturally rules, and the other is subject, and the excellence of the ruler we maintain to be different from that of the subject – the one being the excellence of the rational, and the other of the irrational part (Aristotle, 2016, p. 21).

Descartes, as the representative of the beginning of the modern period in the West, describes the body as “the brute material envelope for the inner and essential self, the thinking thing; it is ontologically distinct from that inner self, is as mechanical in its operations as a machine, is comparable to animal existence” (Bordo, 2003, p. 144). Cartesian dualism, with a belief in the dualistic heritage, designates human existence as bifurcated either into the material/bodily substances or into spiritual/mental realms. In this regard, the division lays stress on the mental realm without physical properties and material substances that lack experiences attributed to the mind. For Descartes, the physical or material substance is identified as the manifoldness of bodies through shape, size, and motion, while the mental or spiritual substance is characterized by thoughts which modify minds, ideas, and understandings. In direct contrast to the Strawsonian thesis², Descartes completely separates the former from the latter by discarding the agency of the body entirely.

Cartesian dualism, as Descartes indicates, originates from the Christian dogma in which God is perceived as the omnipotent power of being: static and free from sensations and change. In this context, God is perceived as the exact opposite of the body because of the fact that the latter is associated with mutation and sentiments. Therefore, in Christianity, there exists disunion between the flesh and the spirit; the flesh, desires, instincts, and passions are coded as obstacles to gain spiritual eligibility. Thereby, such traits are attributed to the body which is already disposed to sin, to make mistakes, and even to push human beings toward destruction. Accordingly, the body is believed to come from animals while the mind is thought to derive from God. Apart from the religious doctrines, the manner of life in the ancient civilizations does establish such dualism as well. To illustrate, on the one hand, the Greeks, who are remembered as hedonists, preferred bodily pleasures over the ones derived from mental experiences; the Epicureans, on the other hand, albeit following the motto “eat, drink, and be merry”, embraced the importance of the mental pleasures over those of the physical ones. Thus,

they did regard women as the ones who need protection and control by male masters. As for the Middle Ages, people were classified according to a dualistic model; the Great Chain of Beings or *scala naturae*³ places God at the top of the hierarchy which is followed by the rulers of the country as the representatives of God on earth, then by males, and then by females as the less of significance among human beings. According to the religious belief of the period, the image of God is found in man yet not in woman; man is considered the beginning and the end of woman due to fact that God is the beginning and the end of every creature. Based on the Genesis the reason for the priority of men over women is thus explained within the religious dogma: the Original Sin of Adam and Eve which caused them to fall from the grace of God. The essence of the matter that manifests Eve as the real wrongdoer, temptress of the flesh, fallen, and morally weak is due to the assumed fact that she is recorded as the one who tempted Adam to commit the sin of eating the forbidden apple besides her own defect to resist her desires.

Through the Cartesian rebirth, a new masculine theory of knowledge is delivered, in which detachment from nature acquires a positive epistemological value. A new world is reconstructed, too, one in which all generativity and creativity fall to God, the spiritual father, rather than to the female flesh of the world. With the same masterful stroke – the mutual opposition of the spiritual and the corporeal – the formerly female earth becomes inert matter and the objectivity of science is insured. “She” becomes “it” and “it” can be understood and controlled (Bordo, 1987, p. 108).

Given that the body represents the unfavorable and woman the one to complete it, being female is believed to sustain this negativity which echoes “distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death” (Bordo, 2003, p. 5). Related to the traditional and modern perception of female sex and feminine gender, the term somatophobia thus stands for the fear of the body which gives rise to self-loathing; “the loathing of women’s flesh by men” (Davis and Weaving, 2010). Originated from the religious dogma that separates the mind from the body, somatophobia is used to characterize women who regard their bodies as faulty, devastating, and tempting while defining the soul as unflawed and male. In this sense, Cartesian dualism does certify the issue obviously; Descartes’s argument “I think therefore I am” extols the mind as a perfect machine that pertains merely to men since the female reason is not recognized as fully developed in comparison to men. Therefore, the images which are used to portray women evoke negative connotations that do humiliate their sex. Based on the assumption that women

resemble children in terms of their intelligence, they are believed to forget things easily because of their weak memories besides they are prone to lying by nature. Therefore, they should be kept under the control of men and should even be punished by men. Such an analogy is evocative of *Malleus Maleficarum*⁴ in which most witches are female because of the weakness of their sex; women are more vulnerable to temptations and evil due to their poor nature of self-control and their ostensible correspondence to animal nature. Regarded as a female pathology, somatophobia is then interpreted as the rejection of the body as a destructive, decaying, and tempting entity, and as the condition in which the subject extols mental pleasures over the ones derived from physical senses.

The term somatophobia is the consequence of the perceptual bias used against woman and the female body. Based on the religious doctrines and the Cartesian myth, somatophobia is defined as “a legacy of the soul/body distinction (which) is often enacted in unequal relationships, such as men to women, masters to slaves, fathers to children, humans to animals” (Spelman, 1988, p. 127). Through establishing a hierarchical structure of nature and culture, since classical ages, the gap between mind/body and man/woman has been indigenized via reductionism. Because it is the body that falls to woman’s share, all negative associations are attributed to body and thus to woman. Accordingly, somatophobia, which is regarded as the hostility towards the body, is interpreted as flesh-loathing that woman is indoctrinated with: “the body is a self-moving machine, a mechanical device, functioning according to causal laws of nature” (Grosz, 1994, p. 6). Based on her bodily existence, gender roles (cooking for others, breastfeeding her baby, and satisfying her partner’s sexual desires) that reinforce her materiality are assigned to woman. As a direct result of her association with the body, she is always rejected, and she is imposed with the idea that the only way to gain feminine spirituality is associated with self-starvation: in order to get rid of her embodiment and to be accepted by male authority woman is forced to experience somatophobia; out of hatred of her own body she punishes it in the form of self-starvation. Because she is persuaded to be affirmed so long as she negates her desires for the sake of others’ desires, she rejects her appetite for the purpose of taming her desires and thus her body. As the main source of her destruction, woman perceives the body as the thing that she is supposed to punish for her purification.

“What is beautiful about her body does not belong to her but to God. But what is ugly is hers alone, proof of her sin, worthy of any abuse” (Wolf, 2002, p. 128). Not only as a result of the tour de force of the dualistic philosophy but also because of the religious imposition women become obsessed with their bodies and with the process of perfecting their bodies. “Genesis says that all men are created perfect, whereas Woman began as an inanimate piece of meat; malleable, unsculpted, unauthorized, raw-imperfect” (2002, p. 93). Cartesian philosophy and Christian theology describe body as a reflection of the carnal order, an instrument serving under the subject – the male, the reason, and as “an object over which struggles between its “inhabitants” and others/exploiters may be possible” (Grosz, 1994, p. 9). The female body and the physical processes it does experience are projected on woman as something that must echo shame and guilt. Menstruation, to illustrate, is considered “bad days” during which she is said to be “unclean, sexually repugnant” (Wolf, 2002, p. 97), and based on her anatomical features, she is excluded from religious and public life on the ground that she is “morally weak, tainted, and sexually unworthy” in this period (2002, p. 97). Among the institutions that qualify and restrain woman as a second-class being, religion functions as one of the most powerful of all. “Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16). Because prescriptive puissance produces or invents the truth for human beings, the Church, as one of these authorities, has the power to discipline and control not only the individual body but the individual soul as well. The church, as the tangible representation of power, has dissidence even among women: a woman is either Eve or Mary in a sense that the sin and disgrace the first uncovers, and the spiritual power, patience, and virtue the latter embraces. The implication behind the aforesaid judgment is that a woman can gain wisdom only through sexual and mental repression, and through depending on and submitting to her male master.

In *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel, in a similar vein, does prop up the division between man and woman in terms of the private realm through which he refers to domestic, natural, and subjective domain, and the public realm that is related to cultural and objective sphere. Accordingly, Hegel associates women with the private realm whereby assigns men to the public one. He claims that women are beings without autonomy; they are unable to control their own lives; therefore, he assumes that they must be absent from

the objective realm and must be guided by men. For Hegel, woman could just become the guardian of the domestic sphere by caring for children, husband and for the family issues. Thus, woman is the “passive embodiment and nurturer of family values, while her male counterpart assumes the challenge of progressively transcending natural immediacy, creating a cultural sphere of free moral action, of politics, art, science, religion and philosophy” (Stafford, 1997, p. 69). Hegel’s negative view on women is based on his argument that regards biological differences between the sexes as the justification of gender codes and dualism. In other words, the reason for her marginalization and restriction both in private and public life originates from her anatomical truth of being female. Under the influence of the archaic philosophy, Hegel maintains the unwarranted judgments concerning the female embodiment and lack of intelligence through incarcerating her within the house:

Man has his actual and substantive life in the state, in learning and so forth, as well as in labour and struggle with the external world and with himself so that it is only out of his diremption that he fights his way to self-subsistent unity with himself [...] Woman, on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family and to be imbued with family piety is her ethical frame of mind (qtd. in Mills, 1996, p. 31).

Like Plato, Hegel also contradicts with himself in that even though he believes that women have the capacity and the right to education and learning, he assumes that women lack mental faculties which are required to have competence in philosophy, science, and state policy. Such perception, accordingly, demeans woman as a disqualified being who needs to be ruled by the supposedly rational human being: man. According to the Hegelian discriminative system, “nature [...] assigns woman to divine law and man to human law. Thus while the political life of the city-state represents the manhood of the community, the family is the sphere of womanhood” (Mills, 1996, p. 61). As illustrated in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the male characters do outclass woman not only in the locus of public, but in private domain as well, because within the Hegelian view, man, as a citizen and husband, has the right to master his wife and her sexuality in accordance with his own desires. Hegel does also interpret men and women in terms of their sex roles and the gender differences he propounds as the determining feature of subjectivity. In this regard, for him, “women are viewed as representing the principles of particularity, immediacy, naturalness, and substantiality, while men stand for universality, mediacy, freedom, and subjectivity” (1996, p. 29).

The man's dominion is scientific universal cognition, and so art is also the object of the man, for although it is presented in individuality, it is a universal idea, the imagination inspired by reason, the Idea of a universal. These are the man's provinces. There can be exceptions for individual women, but the exception is not the rule. Women, when they trespass into these provinces, put the provinces themselves in danger (Hegel, 1991, p. 439).

Setting ground for the contemporary perception of man and woman, the Hegelian dialectic, to set an example, identifies the distinction between the sexes as the distinction in ethical meaning. For Hegel, being a woman is nothing other than being an embodiment, the one without self consciousness to reach her “ethical destiny”. By contrast, woman finds herself degraded “to the status of impotent shadows, to the status of nonbeing” (Heywood, 1996, p. 25). Such an understanding consigns woman to control her body, to hate her body, and even to learn to exist without her body through sacrificing the female flesh and through supporting the status quo. Accordingly, Hegel does embrace the dualistic approach according to which “the male mind is characterized by conceptual thought, self-subsistence, and volition, while the female mind is concrete, rather than abstract, characterized by its connection to emotion” (1996, p. 23). In the Hegelian version, the dichotomy between active male and passive female is exemplified through an analogy:

The difference between men and women is like that between animals and plants. Men correspond to animals, while women correspond to plants because their development is more placid and the principle that underlies it is the rather vague unity of feeling... Women are educated – who knows how? – as it were by breathing in ideas, by living rather than by acquiring knowledge. The status of manhood, on the other hand, is attained only by the stress of thought and much technical exertion (Hegel, 1991, p. 207).

Hegel’s theory of polarity between man and woman is also predicated through his interpretation of Sophocles’s *Antigone* (441 BC); the woman adopting gender differences and adapting herself to the law of family beyond question. Antigone is the perfect example for Hegel to display the “unquestioned alliance to blood ties and the family” (Heywood, 1996, p. 22); her self-sacrifice is the ethical conduct that she must perform in any case. For Hegel, Antigone is the one who naturalizes her role as isolated in domestic sphere. Put it differently, because women are constructed as embodiments, as insensible and undisciplined entities, Hegel argues that they must gain ethical conduct just within their families.

Atwood, Weldon, and Green reflect and criticize the Hegelian tautology concerning active/passive, male/female, and sex/gender which underlies the hierarchical regime,

codes woman as second-class due to her anatomy, and causes her to suffer from somatophobia as a consequence of the negative assumptions attributed to the body. Through the portrayal of the relationships between the heroines and the men, the authors present the division between man and woman successfully. Within the novels the traditional understanding of being a man and a woman is illustrated from the Hegelian perspective: based on the biological fact, being female is considered a part of the male and be produced by the male. Therefore, being female represents being the material, the passive, the simple, and the receptive while being male is associated with being the active, the spiritual, and the united. To vindicate his dualist approach toward the sexes, Hegel claims that “procreation must not be reduced to the ovary and the male semen, as if the new product were merely a composition of the forms or parts of both sides; the truth is that the material element is contained in the female, but the subjectivity is contained in the male” (qtd. in Mills, 2004, p. 413). In other words, Hegel underestimates the function of woman to contribute to the procreation process; he believes that it is man who has the overall privilege to ensure subjectivity. Accordingly, the socialized gender codes rooted in the anatomical sex reveals the very fact that woman is determined within certain roles that echo femininity: mothering, reproductive capacities, nurturing, and etcetera. Furthermore, in the Hegelian dialectic, male and female are necessary for each other in order to be able to fulfill the sexual intercourse and maintain the ethical life of the family. Likewise, nature and spirit are inseparable; yet each has different roles; because man associates himself with spirit under the pretence of being immaterial, nature and female are thus the by-products of the male spirit.

Nature is the immediate – but even so, as the other of spirit, its existence is a relativity; and so, as the negative, is being only posited, derivative. It is the power of free spirit which sublates this negativity; spirit is no less *before* than *after* Nature, it is not merely the metaphysical Idea of it. Spirit, just because it is the goal of Nature, is *prior* to it, Nature has proceeded from spirit. (Hegel, 1970, p. 444).

As reflected in the selected novels, woman is considered childish and empty based on the nature of her anatomy, whereas man, as the representative of culture, is changing and developing in time. “Woman was left behind. Anatomy was her destiny: she might die giving birth to one baby [...] while man controlled his destiny with that part of his anatomy which no other animal had: his mind” (Friedan, 1974, p. 74). The male chauvinism, which determines the situation of women within an asymmetric regulation

of knowledge, assigns men to the metaphysical perception or hyper-reality because “the relation of domination and the existence of gender as a socially constructed system have been concealed in many ways, defining women as a “question” or the “sex” or the “other”, and men as the universal or at least ungendered “species being” (Flax, 1990, p. 23). Within the novels, women are regarded as “sex” and “body”, and therefore, double standard gender roles, which give rise to their marginalization, are assigned to them as duty. As a consequence of their isolation and victimization under the roles they are supposed to perform, they regard their bodies as the mere guilty, and thus they suffer from somatophobia.

Because the Platonic, Aristotelian, Hegelian, and Cartesian philosophies are regarded as the guiding spirit of the Enlightenment and the modern thinking, so is the idea of standardized female beauty is associated with the body. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, each woman is portrayed within the limits of her body; to have a beautiful body is the single pursuit that each female character is forced to achieve through serving for the male hegemony. In the eighteenth century, along with the Enlightenment ideas a set of metanarratives which standardized knowledge according to the presupposed ideals became the norm of the Western science and philosophy. Typifying the foundational notions of fixity, uniformity, and objectivity, the Enlightenment movement, per se, did attempt to eliminate women “from the population of those capable of attaining freedom from traditional forms of authority” (Nicholson, 1990, p. 42) through emphasizing the mastery of the adjectives (constant, reasonable, proper) that re-enforce the patriarchal ideology. “Modernism was predicated on the achievement of some unique personal style that could be parleyed out to the subject of genius, the charismatic subject, or supersubject” (Ross, 1988, p. 21). Defining himself as the charismatic identity and the mastermind of the world, man reduces woman to her body and sexuality. To set an example, Rousseau, as an Enlightenment philosopher, accredits woman with her sexual body through which she is supposed to satisfy man. In other words, because woman is considered lack of logic and reason, she is motivated to perfect and exhibit her body for the male gaze. Paradoxically enough, while from the perspective of traditional philosophy the body is regarded as something to get rid of to gain spirituality, in modern thinking it is considered the mere possession women are expected to embrace as the only thing to exist. In other words, women suffer from somatophobia either through becoming obsessed with their bodies or by alienating

themselves from their bodies. In the novels, all female characters are examined in the consideration of traditional and modern understanding of body and woman.

1.2. Cultural Ideology of the Capitalist Body

The mind-body dualism that supports authoritarianism is more than a verbal, explicitly taught theory. In fact, such doctrines would probably have little effect if they were not supported by a wide variety of body-shaping techniques that train people instinctively to look outside themselves for direction (Johnson, 1992, p. 32).

Atwood, Weldon, and Green reveal the relationship between the cultural ideology of patriarchy and somatophobia, as a consequence of which the female characters have eating disorders. Through the presentation of various instruments that cause the female characters to be trapped in the system, the authors emphasize the influence of the cultural modernization on the female body perfection. Especially in the contemporary age, consumerism, by means of the media, has a strong impact upon women: under the influence of the assumed association with her body, woman feels obliged to perfect it in accordance with the modern fashion bodies presented to her as the standard. Because the culture in which woman lives forces her to become obsessed with her body, she does always try to idealize and perfect it in parallel with the images reflected in the media. Put it differently, before questioning the validity and the truth of the claims concerning the female body, she contrasts herself with the ideal images around her and she desires to be like them by means of various instruments such as beauty parlors, sport halls, dieting, and etcetera. Throughout the centuries, the body has been shaped within various mechanisms of power structures like philosophy and religion; the non-spiritual and the irrational body of the ancient times has transformed into a capitalist body of the private ownership which began to develop in the 1980s as “rough capitalism”.

Due to the power of the capitalist ideology, the popular culture causes women to become the scapegoats of consumerism: “Power came to operate by the creation of a desire to achieve the “perfect body”, through such disciplinary practices as physical fitness activities and the monitoring of body weight” (Pylypa, 1998, p. 25). Due to the fact that women are programmed in a sense to buy and consume on impulse, they become the disempowered and unconscious mediums of power as the representatives of the industrialized bodies. Just the ticket of the system, women, videlicet, are not alive to the distinction between the “need” and the “desire”; through the agency of trifling

pleasures, they are anaesthetized to their real needs. The binding force that cultural representations of power impose upon woman whitewashes the oppression and confinement of her physical and mental capacities.

Like many postmodern feminist theorists, Foucault considers the body constructed and regulated by cultural mechanisms as well. According to Foucault, the body is an object and instrument serving for the power operations, and the dominant system always functions under the name of social control which imposes self-discipline on individuals. Because power itself creates truth and knowledge through the mechanisms of the surveillance of the body, it becomes under the control and discipline of power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault states that the authority has the power to discipline bodies under the name of social control and based on the archaic philosophy, punishment is regarded as necessary for chastening the soul from flaws. In this context, Foucault explains the modern social regime of perfecting the body through discipline and punishment system. Accordingly, coded as the representative of imperfection and embodiment, bodies are forced to be controlled on the purpose of correction, while woman, as the corporeal entity, is taught to lead her body to docility through self-disciplining mechanism. Based on the philosophical bias against the female body, modern woman either attempts to hate her body or correct it in order to be accepted by masculine power. In this dissertation, female bodies are conditioned to be disciplined by the female characters in the novels, *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*; because the authority is patriarchy, the women are coerced to shape their bodies for male satisfaction through self-policing their bodies.

The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances ... Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis of self-recognition or for understanding other men” (Foucault, 1977, p. 153).

If sex is biological and thus the absolute fact of human beings, then, gender is defined as a politically and culturally produced and interpreted identity. Within such a political and cultural system, there is no gender-neutral society, but the subaltern status of woman which has been legitimated via the hegemonic patriarchal structure of domination. Since cultural mechanisms create sex/gender discrimination through directing males and females to specific gender norms determined by the institutions and the laws of power, in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the

cult-producing truth, which functions through institutions and organizations, encapsulates woman and her body within “mechanistic, dualistic and reductionist” terms. In *Body and Society*, Turner states that although woman is associated with nature and man with culture due to the categorization of the roles attributed to each sex, the embodiment of the female body and the domestic function that the feminine gender performs is nothing but the product of the culture: man. The sociological apperception of the body and woman is therefore the consequence of ideological regulations. To regard nature as the biological origin and culture as the intellectual capacity outside the private realm thus manifests the very fact that all justifications concerning sex and gender are the inventions, not discoveries, of the instruments that have the judgment call in the society.

Foucault explains the “internalization” of the operations that regulate bodies in terms of biopower and *anatomo-politics of the human body*⁵ which is based on the regulation of populations and of individual bodies through the mechanisms of the power system. The manipulation and control of the bodies in accordance with this regulation reveal the very fact that power is determined within a particular society and culture. Therefore, it is through political, religious, and legal institutions that women’s bodies are treated towards social normalization, and the conclusion is the “socially trained docile body” in the Foucauldian terms. In fact, woman adopts a kind of “panopticon eye” because she experiences her body in compliance with the patriarchal rule, and therefore, she does not need any one else to control her body but herself. “A woman who wears makeup and watches what she eats has much in common with the inmate of the panopticon: she is a self-policing subject” (Disch and Hawkesworth, 2016, p. 219). Practices and conditions – dieting, plastic surgery, eating disorders – in fact, turn the body into a normative feminine body through which the female body is kept in docility and obedience. In order to explain the relationship between somatophobia which gives rise to eating disorders and the cultural ideology, Bruch predicates her interview with one of her patients as a reference to her argument through emphasizing the significance of the symbolic meaning that the female body bears:

The main thing I've learned is that the worry about dieting, the worry about being skinny or fat, is just a smokescreen. That is not the real illness. The real illness has to do with the way you feel about yourself. There is a peculiar contradiction – everybody thinks you're doing so well and everybody thinks you're great, but your real problem is that you think that you are not good enough. You are afraid of not living up to what you think you are expected to

do. You have one great fear, namely that of being ordinary, or average, or common – just not good enough. This peculiar diet begins with such anxiety. You want to prove that you have control, that you can do it (1979, p. 135).

Consequently, the term biopower, which Foucault coined to describe the practices through which individuals learn to discipline their bodies, proves to be the product of a discourse that leads individuals to normalize the cultural norms that dictate self-discipline and self-regulation. In other words, power operates in such a way that causes individuals to control their bodies voluntarily without feeling any sort of oppression or obligation by the system. In this regard, as Foucault claims, power functions “from below”: individuals are just tools that are programmed to serve for the purposes of the power system. Accordingly, by biopower, Foucault does indeed imply the effect of discourse on individuals’ becoming self-monitoring objects through practicing the knowledge that the power directs on them:

Through the process of normalization, power is both “totalizing”, because it controls all aspects of life by creating pressure to conform to norms, and “individualizing”, because those who fall outside the norm are marked as deviant and targeted with disciplinary strategies designed to neutralize their deviance (Pylypa, 1998, p. 23-24).

In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the female characters are portrayed as the victims of the popular discourse; they attempt to standardize their bodies in parallel with the expectations. Thus, in the novels, power functions in a sense to make individuals get obsessed with their bodies; women are imposed with the idea of having slender and fit bodies. Focusing on the idealized body weight as slim, the discourse, within the novels, functions as the outcome of the capitalist order and the media.

Self-monitoring is fostered through the commercial production of a wide range of technologies of surveillance: bathroom scales, calorie-counting tables, height-weight charts, diet books and products, exercise equipment, and nutritional information charts on packaged foods (1998, p. 26).

In *Unbearable Weight*, Bordo makes reference to Schwartz’s poem *The Heavy Bear*⁶, which implies that the body is “clumsy, gross, disgusting, a lumbering fool who trips me up all my efforts to express myself clearly, to communicate love” (2003, p. 2-3). Bordo, as a postmodern philosopher, regards materialist discourse as the main point for the somatophobic tendency that many women show; as a consequence of the ideology of consumption, female body is directed both to consume and to be consumed by the instruments that serve for capitalism. The penetration of the external stimuli – the

media, cosmetics, diets, and plastic surgery – reveals the power of the capitalist culture on women and on their bodies. The power relations direct women to fiddle with their bodies through “numerous products and services – perfumes, fashion, clothing, dining, all kinds of sensual and pleasurable objects, exercise machines, fitness centers, dietary products, cosmetic surgical procedures and the like” (Joy and Venkatesh, 1994, p. 337). Therefore, the idealized female images which mirror the status quo insinuate women to oblige to the norms of beauty, exercise, diet, and fashion as the principle focus of interest. The pursuit of body-perfection serves for the purpose of the consumer culture which attains its aim through codifying, transforming, and controlling the body with due regard to the principles of the society:

Within a consumer culture the body is proclaimed as a vehicle of pleasure: it is desirable and desiring and the closer to the actual body approximates to the idealised images of youth, health, fitness and beauty, the higher its exchange-value. Consumer culture permits the unashamed display of the human body (Featherstone, 1991 p. 177)

In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the capitalist ideology exploits women through the manipulation of physical appearance and body perfection as the primary concerns in their lives. The beauty ideal in fact detracts woman from her own body and coerces her to accept it as for the others: as an object to be seen. What consumer culture has caused to women's physical and psychological health is the result of the containment policy that the ideology conducts. Women become estranged to their minds and to their intellectual capacity; instead, they are deliberately restrained from the faculties of reason via cosmetics, diet, magazines, television, and surgeries. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, women are influenced by the instruments that serve for the ideology. Alienated to her body, each woman attempts to perfect it on the purpose of reaching the ultimate femininity through artificial means:

In our culture, not one part of a woman's body is left untouched, unaltered. No feature or extremity is spared the art, or pain, of improvement. Hair is dyed, lacquered, straightened, permanented; eyebrows are plucked, penciled, dyed; eyes are lined, mascaraed, shadowed; lashes are curled, or false—from head to toe, every feature of a woman's face, every section of her body, is subject to modification, alteration. This alteration is an ongoing, repetitive process. It is vital to the economy, the major substance of male-female role differentiation, the most immediate physical and psychological reality of being a woman. From the age of 11 or 12 until she dies, a woman will spend a large part of her time, money, and energy on binding, plucking, painting, and deodorizing herself (Dworkin, 2019, p. 57).

Within the consumer culture, the body is subjected to the external transformation through cosmetics, which is one of the control mechanisms that manipulate women's realities and make women feel incomplete and ugly. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the female characters are coerced to perfect their bodies through delusive cosmetics as an indication of their somatophobic disposition; because they regard their bodies as faulty, they attempt to mask it through such instruments. The history of cosmetics dates back to 10.000 BCE when Egyptians first used oils as ointments and for hygienic functions, and perfumes in their religious rituals. Chinese and Grecian people further used powder to make their faces white. Indians used henna as hair dye. In Greek culture, cosmetics were related to and accepted as medicine and therapy while in Christendom cosmetics were regarded as the symbol of temptation and pomp, arousing a feeling of body-worship through adorning it. In Europe, during the Renaissance period, cosmetics did just appeal to the nobility class: blonde hair dye as a symbol of angelic look and powder as an indicator of having light skin. With the reign of Queen Victoria, cosmetics did lose its significance and it was merely preferred by the actors since it was regarded as immoral for ordinary people. On the other hand, in modern societies, cosmetics are the manifestations of the commercialized fashion which has influence over the individual's self-assessment. As Foucault indicates, the relationship between power and knowledge, in this context, represents the discursive rules of the ideology. Through discourses on cosmetics, the media does instill the techniques that are powerful enough to discipline the bodies by women themselves. "Estée Lauder's "science-proven" Night Repair is applied with a medical syringe and rubber balloon, like a blood transfusion or a liquid drug. *Vichy* lets your skin "recuperate." *Clarins* talks of "relapse." (Wolf, 2002, p. 226). In popular culture, thus, cosmetics generally focus on the female body and face without wrinkles or scars by dint of exotic products, mascaras, eyeliners, gels, powders, lipsticks, and anti-aging creams. "Normal" or "real" women attempt to look like these unrealistic images, forgetting that they are humans with imperfections.

These women take the risk, not because they have been passively taken in by media norms of the beautiful breast (almost always silicone-enhanced), but because they have correctly discerned that these norms shape the perceptions and desires of potential lovers and employers (Bordo, 2003, p. 20).

In the novels by Atwood, Weldon, and Green, the role of cosmetics on women's identity development and self-assessment are discussed through interpreting the inner

voice of each woman: especially Marian and Jemima who are trapped in the delusive effect of cosmetics achieve self-realization by the time they reject to mask their faces with artificial products:

High-fashion images may contain touches of exotica: collagen-plump lips or corn rows on white models, Barbra Streisand noses, “butch” styles of dress. Consumer capitalism depends on the continual production of novelty, of fresh images to stimulate desire, and it frequently drops into marginalized neighborhoods in order to find them (2003, p. 25).

Among the forces that canalize the body to corporeality, the media takes the lead; through the media culture the female body is treated as a sexual object serving for the discourses produced by patriarchy. The objectification of the body is managed through advertisements which create the cultural icon of female body as slender, beautiful, and fit through dieting, exercising, and plastic surgery. Accordingly, the representations of the body via the media reveal the ideological images that are supported by the status quo. Especially in *The Edible Woman* and *Jemima J.* the media does play a key role in causing the heroines to suffer from somatophobia. Functioning as a decorative knick-knack, woman is objectified through the materialization of her body in the media. The plasticity of the body, in other words, the power to regulate, to change, and to recast the body does function in a sense to serve for the purpose of the ideology. Within the hegemonic cycle that undergirds hyper-sexuality and objectification of woman, advertisements display gender hierarchies as normal via the practices that woman is obliged to perform.

Through a repertoire of gendered images in advertisements, woman normalizes the position the society attributes to her sex. In some advertisements such as detergents, domestic appliances, and cleaning materials, she represents the home-loving and homebody wife and mother whose primary duty is to deal with domestic issues. Yet, woman in food advertisements has bidirectional role: Food is associated with pleasure, and woman does reflect this pleasure by means of her sexuality. Because sexuality is one of the most lucrative ways which industries use to carry interest, they attempt to sell sex, sell ideas, and sell woman’s self through unethical images set against her. In this sense, the role of food in the media is to portray and reinforce the objectified female image: woman as appetizing, sexual, and decorative thing. Such food advertisements which target women as the headlines have a malicious purpose: on the one hand, the capitalist society depicts woman as an object for male desire, and she is cast in the role

of tantalizing woman for male appetite. Thus, in advertisements, gender stereotypes are blazingly represented through the portrayal of the female body as an edible thing. Using woman and her body as tempting for the male consumer society reveals the very fact that sexist practices are the dominating strategies of capitalism. “Gifts of food may represent offers of sex, and sex may be described through food images” (Johnson, 1992, p. 63).

Encouraging the perception that codes woman as an object, some advertisements such as the *Coke*, *McDonalds*, *Magnum*, *Burger King*, and *KFC* embosom the macho dreams of European and American cultures. To set an example, in the *Coke* ad of 1950s, the female body is the focal point rather than the bottle itself. *McDonald's* 2014 ad in UK into the bargain compares women to French fries as “tall, blonde, and gorgeous”, having the qualities of an attractive woman. The *KFC's* 2014 ad in Turkey shouts the slogan “choose your side: breasts or thighs⁷”, implying female body and sexuality through simulating it with the parts of a chicken. The sexuality of woman is also illustrated through some perfume brands like *Jean Paul Gaultier Le Classique* and *HYTS*; the objectification of the female body is illustrated through the bottles which are in the female body shape. The *Magnum* ad in US presents the female body as a sexual object through the motto “mini size, maximum pleasure” emphasizing the exigency of a slender body to satisfy the sexual pleasure of her male partner. On the other hand, within a consumer culture, woman is supposed to materialize the ideals invented by the patriarchal power relations; she is to have the ideal body size and shape, and therefore, she must discipline and perfect her body through self-starvation; videlicet, self-sacrifice. Woman has been considered weak to curb her desires because of the assumed female hormones. In this regard, she is forbidden to take pleasure from eating and sexuality. Woman wants to believe that she would have a chance to be accepted to the male locus so long as she is careful with her body. Especially in *Jemima J.*, the protagonist keeps herself aloof from eating with the purpose of gaining acceptance to the male world via the idealized body size and shape. In order to police the female body, low-calorie foods like yoghurt, salads, and vegetables are manifested as appealing to the taste buds of women as they are/must be more concerned with their physical appearance. Woman, scilicet, must abstain from eating in real life; however, she is supposed to evoke sexuality and desire through eating – just for the sake of male satisfaction – in advertisements. The patriarchal hegemony does hold societies responsible for

disciplining and controlling the human body under the name of asceticism, panopticon eye, and objectification. Through the panopticon eye, Foucault regards that power introduces self-normalization of gender codes through various institutions and processes: Without any physical privacy, woman's body becomes the subject of social responsibility; the society determines the standard and the acceptable size and shape, and she is forced to give into the system by dominating her own body.

Within the novels, women's magazines also serve as an instrument to divert women's attention from their real identities to the socially masked ideals which constantly underscores the significance of the domestic bondage that women should provide: the images that force women to be taken up with their bodies and the fashion styles that mediate women as the active participants of the consumer culture. The bodily proportions of a woman in the media are perfected through Photoshop and makeup: long legs, fleshy lips, plump breasts, and slim waist. Overall, the media indeed reflects an unrealistic and incredible female image which causes "real" women to feel ineligible, a plain Jane, or even an ugly creature. The media attempts to idealize the female body through subjecting her to the expectations of the consumer society advertisement companies represent. As a result, capitalism, serving as an instrument for women's oppression, produces sexism and hierarchical gender structures:

What is a domesticated woman? A female of the species... A woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute, or a human dictaphone in certain relations. Torn from these relations, she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money...and so on (Rubin, 2011, p. 31).

Magazines function in a sense to influence women via the articles on fashion, diet, self-expression, sexual expression, and etcetera. Thus, women indirectly accept what the magazines tell as the truth. To set an example, the cover page of the magazine *Women's Health* of 2008 does cue women in special weight-loss issue: "18 secret flat-belly foods!" 2011 January issue of *Cosmopolitan* deals with the issues concerning the physical appearance of women: "Look leaner naked through 14 day-workout" and sex tips that indeed make women the victims of male desire. 2015 May *Marieclaire* mentions beauty care through "lip balms, serums, crazy-good mascara & tons of cult faves." The magazine *SELF* provides a detox plan for women to have "longer, leaner legs." In *VOGUE*, self-policing takes the form of "taking control of your look & life." As a consequence, through women's magazines women are desensitized and taught to

be the artificial dolls of male chauvinism. Within the novels, the influence of the media through the instruments such as magazines and advertisements is examined and the relationship between somatophobia and the cultural mechanisms that cause woman to become the victims of the modern plague – capitalism – is discussed.

1.3. Psychoanalysis and the Female Body

In addition to the processes of normalization and discipline, the individual subject is also created through confessional practices. The primary exemplars of these practices are psychoanalysis and psychiatry. These discourses produce sexuality as a dangerous force within us that can be controlled only by the person exercising surveillance upon her
(Flax, 1990, p. 208).

As a discipline, psychoanalysis is based on the principles that explain the process of personality formation or the construction of the self, the influence of gender on the self, the consequences of the pre-oedipal and oedipal experiences, and the power of discourses and other mechanisms that make individuals serve at cross purposes as opposed to their own willpower. Through psychoanalysis individuals learn their gender roles and sexuality: “Psychoanalysis enables us to understand how polymorphous, ambisexual children are transformed through social relations into specific gender identities and heterosexuality” (1990, p. 145). The relationship between the somatophobic tendency that does give rise to eating disorders and the female psychology is discussed within *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.* through the portrayal of the female characters as the ones who reflect the negative perception of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Apart from the manipulative forces of traditional philosophy and cultural ideology, Atwood, Weldon, and Green reveal the very fact that woman’s psychology is under the influence of phallogocentric worldview which is regulated and legitimated by the collaboration between psychoanalysis and patriarchy.

The focus of the Enlightenment on the transcendental self gravitates towards language and the symbol-system with structuralism in the twentieth century. In line with the Enlightenment ideals of universality and stability, structuralism depends upon the objective structures. While the former legitimates the reality within the transcendental self, structuralism posits reality upon language. Underpinning the binary oppositions, structuralism dogmatizes linguistic signs (the signifier and the signified) as the principal components of reality. In the novels studied in this dissertation the function of language

on the construction of the self and the other is illustrated through the analysis of the linguistic signs that male characters do attribute to women and their bodies:

His attempts to impose a fictive or narrative order or structure on experience or events are constantly preconstituted and undermined by desire, language, the unconscious, and the unintended effects of the violence required to impose such an order. Man is forever caught in the web of fictive meaning, in chains of signification, in which the subject is merely another position in language (1990, p. 32).

Based on the structuralist approach, psychoanalysis is in charge of creating dualism between man and woman, masculine and feminine, and of reducing woman to her body and thus to her sexuality. In other words, within the structuralist discourse, phallogentric language fulfills the binary dualism that props up the gap between man and woman. As Aristotle declares in *On Interpretation*, “spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words” (2016, p. 1). Underpinning the Aristotelian discourse, Lacan, with his theory of phallogentrism, contributes to the universal logic of man of reason and woman of body. For him, having the phallus means the standard and the privilege that makes man subsist as the signifier of woman: the signified. In this context, the female characters in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.* reflect the signified position that men, as the representatives of the phallus, assume them to be:

She is the excluded other, outside grammatical language. “Woman” enters signification as the “other” to men. Through this objectification, the masculine subject takes on characteristics of coherence and unity. Woman cannot express her own self, her needs or her pleasures. The real, codified as woman, symbolizes the bodily grounding of the masculine self, a self-grounding which precludes the possibility of truth and certainty (Assiter, 2005, p. 42).

Influenced by the structuralist concept of language, Lacan does formulate the gaining of self through language; for him, language is discourse, and without discourse there is no possibility for a sense of self. In *Ecrits*, he argues that “it is the world of words that creates the world of things [...] Man thus speaks, but it is because the symbol has made him man” (2006, p. 229). Language is the all-pervasive instrument of the power systems; through language the authority regulates, determines, and factionalizes woman and her body. In this regard, the Lacanian theory explains the development of the self in terms of the universal structure of language; in contrast to Freud’s emphasis on

biological determinism, Lacan accentuates the significance of the “linguistic turn” to explain the influence of language on the formation of gender division.

Language has an invariant, universal structure, and always functions to split or castrate all “subjects”; that language (the Other) operates as an independent force, and its effects on the subject have no dependence on or interaction with the child’s relations with actual “others”, especially the mother (Flax, 1990, p. 92).

The psychoanalytical approach presents three notions of being; the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. The Lacanian mirror phase, which corresponds to the Imaginary stage, is associated with the identity development; the relationship between the infant and the mirror corresponds to narcissism. According to Lacan, the mirror is the reflection of the infant, through which s/he can identify her/himself. In other words, before the language and the linguistic determination of the self and identification with the other are restored, the infant regards the mother as the mirror. At this stage, the child is bisexual due to the fact that her/his sexuality is not structured yet. However, when s/he accesses to the oedipal phase, the child develops her/his sexuality and adapts to her/his gender in accordance with the rules and expectations of the culture. Within this coherence, the Symbolic stage is defined in terms of structural linguistics; put it differently, for Lacan, language consists of the signifier and the signified, and the signifier is the universally accepted phallic which determines and produces sexual, social, and the other depictive distinctions between male/female and masculine/feminine. The Symbolic order embraces the preexisting rules of language through which the laws, restrictions, and expectations of a society are dictated on the child. Put it differently, the child does realize the fact that all privileges attributed to the phallus are in fact the characteristics of having the penis. The child, as a consequence, keeps him/herself aloof from the mother due to her/his discovery that the mother is not the one who has the power to give him/her the phallus. The lack is mother herself: imperfect and castrated. The child discovers that the male genital organ structures and determines the subject and object position within the masculine order. Accordingly, the phallus becomes the universal signifier: the subject, the self, and the masculine. The father figure represents the ideal with a privilege: penis, through which he is able to exist in the system that phallus regulates. “The Name-of-the-Father” or “the Law of the Father” forces the child to get out from the internal world of the mother into an external one of symbolic or cultural. In this regard, the mother or woman becomes excluded

from language, from the thing that represents the things. The reason why male-dominant societies divest women of agency and define them as mere marginal objects in political, economic, and social discourses is based on the phallogocentric system of thought which does situate men as the subjects of active life, possessing potency and reason to obviate the existence of women. Within the Lacanian phallogocentric perspective, woman is always lack because the language that represents subjectivity is masculine. Put it differently, the cultural structure is maintained via the “unconscious process of subject formation” of masculine and feminine; the father figure, representing masculinity, is introduced in this stage as the law and the ruler whereas the mother figure is presented as lack and silent. “The feminine is never a mark of the subject: the feminine could not be an “attribute” of a gender. Rather, the feminine is the signification of lack, signified by the Symbolic, a set of differentiating linguistic rules that create sexual difference” (Butler, 1990, p. 38).

The psychology of woman is influenced by and shaped through sexism that culture creates; woman ascertains her female identity via gender codes that surround her. Thus, the psychoanalytical discourse deals with the causes which make women fall within a society not by their own choice, but by a sustained power that confine them into their visible femininity as a result of the traumas they did experience in childhood or during adolescence as well as the influence of the cultural instruments. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, somatophobic tendency of the female characters are interpreted in terms of the phallogocentric perspective that Lacan embraces as the essential precept for personality development. Each heroine regards herself as despised and marginalized due to the negative generalizations directed to her sex; both in private sphere and in business world they are left to their signified positions just because of their anatomical fact. Based on the psychological uneasiness of the female characters as the main cause of their physiological obsession, the universal patriarchal thought imposes strict rules and roles on their bodies which lead them to internalize the assumptions beyond question and adopt their inferior status in comparison to men. The anatomical difference between man and woman concerning having and lacking penis is the actual point of bodily obsession. Because she is coded as the lack, she dedicates herself to her body as the only source of her existence, and she forces herself to idealize it for the purpose of compensating her lack of the male genital. In the novels, the psychology of the female characters is under the influence of phallogocentric perception of

having and lacking. Because they were all grown up with the assumption of female inferiority due to their physiological deficiency, all female characters reflect their signified positions in their lives.

Among the factors that cause woman to become obsessed with her body, female masochism is regarded as one of the most forceful determinants: “Feminine masochism” that woman is believed to have in her nature is based on the psychological effects of the anatomical difference between the sexes. Based on her nature, woman is considered lack as a result of the societal conditioning. Because she feels inferior due to her lack of self-respect, “by having and displaying inferiority feelings, weakness, and suffering is the only means by which (she) can win the affection (she) needs” (Horney, 1967, p. 228). Also, the feminine masochism manifests itself on the condition that the individual has tendencies towards submission, dependency, and self-sacrifice. In other words, the more she feels vulnerable and lack, the more she desires to punish herself, with which she thinks she would content herself. In this regard, self-starvation under the name of diets or child bearing represents an unconscious masochistic satisfaction for woman; she attempts to excuse for her femaleness through suffering physical anguish. Among the conditions that Horney claims as the reasons for masochistic tendency in women, “psychogenic disturbance in pregnancy and childbirth, such as fear of childbirth, fuss about it, pains, or elaborate means to avoid pain” (1967, p. 225). In the novels studied in this dissertation, the female characters and their somatophobic experiences – in the form of eating disorders – are examined with reference to feminine masochism – Marian’s fear of pregnancy and childbirth, Esther’s self-sacrifice after getting marriage and giving birth, and Jemima’s feeling of lack because of her fat body.

The feminine masochist tendency is believed to cause woman to have desires for masculinity. In *God and the Jouissance of the Woman*, Lacan states that “woman” is “not all”; she is the “empty set.” Woman herself “does not exist and ... signifies nothing” (qtd. in Flax, 1990, p. 99). The “penis envy” that women are thought to suffer as a consequence of a feeling of lack causes them to experience “the masculinity complex”: the feeling of inadequacy and incompleteness – lacking penis – directs women to their own bodies; they become body-obsessed via the societal assertiveness and because of the effect of the consumer culture on self-presentation. Becoming anorectic or obese thus represents a sort of desire for becoming masculine: anorectics lose their

feminine body lines and they have some problems such as menstrual disorders and virilization. On the other side, by becoming overweight, she believes that she would get rid of becoming a sex object for the male gaze; the more, she thinks, she gains weight, the more she gains masculine power.

Providing various reasons for the negative female psychology, Horney claims that the instruments of the popular culture along with the Western philosophy lead women to competition under the name of challenging themselves; however, the truth behind the competition is based on their need for acceptance and approval. In modern societies, women are coerced to perfect their body images with the intention of being approved by the male hegemony. However, they do not recognize the tricks which the capitalist ideology plays on them through manipulating their psyches to consume and thereby to circumvent other women. Put it differently, women are dictated to learn to achieve to be selected by featuring themselves for the male gaze. External factors that are infused into her subconscious cause woman's psychology to come under the attack of the public image of femininity: the instruments like magazines, advertisements, and technological progress in domestic appliances motivate woman to boloney pursuits. Regarded as the most important constituent of the consumer society, woman does potter about deodorants, detergents, cosmetics, anti-aging creams, dietary products, clothes, washing machines, irons, food mixers, and etcetera in order to be able to overcome the obsessive neurosis – the penis envy – through more womanish performances. However, woman on the whole fails to notice the reality that she indeed turns into a victim via the “role crisis” she experiences throughout her life.

Bruch emphasizes the role of excessive eating or non-eating as a follow-up of somatophobia; female psychology is negatively influenced by the external mechanisms that cause her to experience somatophobia. “They experience themselves as not being in control of their behavior, needs, and impulses, as not owning their own bodies, as not having a center of gravity within themselves. They act as if their body and behavior were the product of other people's influences” (1973, p. 55). Accordingly, the idea of having a perfect body for existence leads her to experience psychosomatic problems. In this context, there is a close relationship between the female psychology and the somatophobia-based eating disorders like anorexia nervosa. As Bruch claims, anorexia nervosa has contradictory meanings: in contemporary cultures, woman's desire for

becoming a “walking skeleton” is regarded both as an effort to gain male approval through her ideal body composition, and an attempt to gain power and respect through looking masculine. In other saying, the anorectic wishes for being “the little man” without any curves or big butts (1973, p. 59). Because she knows that she is lack, and because she does not want to be excluded from the public or private spheres, she attempts to be like or act like a man, or visa verse to be like a child. Through rejecting food, the anorectic morphs into a child without any indication of sexuality due to the fact that she indeed denies her sexual maturity and her status as a sexual object. Being overweight, on the other hand, represents masculinity complex in that women with binge eating have tendency to prove their existence powerful through becoming fat:

obese girls and women are much more open and articulate in discussing their dissatisfaction with their sex or their concepts of what they would want to be. In psychoanalytic literature there are repeated references to the large body being equated with the phallus [...] they had felt they had been destined to be “more than a woman.” Bigness means to be like father” (1973, p. 97).

Horney, in *Feminine Psychology*, regards psychoanalysis as “the creation of a male genius” (1967, p. 54); therefore, the fiction of masculine and feminine, the dichotomy between mind and body, and the transcendence of man over the immanent woman are the products of the system that attempt to ignore her mental faculty and exploit her body and mind via the empty rhetoric of psychoanalysis and the patriarchal solidarism. Furthermore, influenced by Simmel’s essays⁸ on this issue, Horney claims that culture itself is responsible for the production of man: the state, religion, morality, and science are established and shaped by a male organization. In this regard, as the legislative force of the world, man associates derogative features with woman and imposes the idea of her bodily existence upon her subconscious. Due to the fact that phallogocentric paradigm produces discourses related to the patriarchal myth regarding woman as unnecessary and lack, her psychology reflects this absurdity of social inequality and coerces her to experience somatophobia. “You are assigned to a gender based on what’s between your legs, and for some entirely mysterious reason, in every known culture, the fact of having or not having a penis predicts who gets the economic power, social privilege, and political control” (Kipnis, 2006, p. 22). In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the relationship between female psychology and somatophobia, which gives rise to eating disorders, is illustrated within the context of psychoanalytic theory and the phallogocentric understanding of being a woman. “The body is literally written on,

inscribed, by desire and signification, at the anatomical, physiological, and neurological levels. The body is in no sense naturally or innately physical, sexual, or sexed” (Grosz, 1994, p. 60). Within the novels, because the system recognizes merely the male sex as the authority, the female characters are forced to regard themselves as lack. As a consequence of the negative imposition upon the unconscious, they desperately learn how to become and stay the other through their bodies. As Butler states, the body represents “a kind of materialization governed by regulatory norms in order to ascertain the workings of heterosexual hegemony in the formation of what qualifies as a viable body” (1993, p. 16). Within the novels, the psychology of the female characters is influenced by the standardized rules; their psyches reflect the collective unconscious that causes them to normalize and internalize their lack of phallus as the main source of their inferiority.

From the conceptions that Horney propounds concerning the feminine psychology, it is understood that woman’s tendency to experience somatophobia and the corresponding eating disorders is based on her compulsive behavior towards her self-image: the conflict that she has about her own body image causes her to experience self-hatred. As a consequence of the pressure the mechanisms of the ideology direct on them, women become obsessed with their bodily existence: they become either body-fetishists or somatophobics. Among the somatophobic symptoms that ultimately give rise to eating disorders, the process of pregnancy and the postnatal condition that woman experiences play a critical role in female psychology. The feminization of woman does imply a “threat of invasion of her body space” (Young, 2005, p. 45), since she maintains her existence just within an incarcerated environment through functioning as a wife, as a pregnant woman, and as a mother. In this context, pregnancy conditions woman as passive and inert to have any right to regard herself as the patron of her own body. As Young asserts:

pregnancy does not belong to the woman herself. It is a state of the developing fetus, for which the woman is a container; or it is an objective, observable process coming under scientific scrutiny; or it becomes objectified by the woman herself as a “condition” in which she must “take care of herself” (2005, p. 46).

Pregnancy disregards the subjectivity of woman; per contra, she is split and de-centered as a consequence of the shift and movement within her body which actually belongs to another being although they seem to be united within a single body. Thus, pregnancy is

considered the process during which woman feels alienated to her own body due to the perception that another being is located in her body. For Kristeva, the condition that women experience during pregnancy is defined “as the radical ordeal of the splitting of the subject: redoubling up of the body, separation and coexistence of the self and another, of nature and consciousness, of physiology and speech” (2005, p. 48). The pregnant perceives her body as a massive and outgrowth entity and this leads her to take a dislike to her body. In *The Edible Woman* and *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, as the caretaker of her baby, women get stuck within the borders of their bodies; their flesh becomes the realm of authority, while man, free from the flesh and non-uniform material atmosphere of babyhood, maintains his prestigious stance which is just assigned to him. Based on the phallogocentric theory, Atwood, Weldon, and Green portray the psychology of the female characters through pregnancy and post-pregnancy processes, which cause them to experience somatophobia in the form of body hatred or body avoidance. To illustrate, in *The Edible Woman*, pregnancy is interpreted as a psycho-somatic disorder that imprisons woman within her materiality. Becoming fat like a balloon, the pregnant woman abominates her body and eventually becomes a stranger to it; because pregnancy, as Young claims, transforms woman and her perception of her body; neither her body nor her subjective existence does seem to belong to her:

As my pregnancy begins, I experience it as a change in my body; I become different from what I have been. My nipples become reddened and tender; my belly swells into a pear. I feel this elastic around my waist, itching, this round, hard middle replacing the doughy belly with which I still identify (2005, p. 49).

As a result of the physical change, pregnancy is regarded as the period during which woman is considered away from attractiveness; because the pregnant is believed to keep herself aloof from sexual course, the objectification in the eyes of masculine gaze is also precluded. Woman is taught that she can exist only if she achieves to reach the ideal feminine beauty; she is always supposed to maintain her physical grandeur for her partner’s gaze; otherwise, she would fall out of favor and become useless in an instant. Therefore, woman regards pregnancy as a threat for her existence; she believes that the only thing (her body) that allows her to be accepted by the masculine authority would turn out to be a waste because of the deformation it undergoes. Apart from the psychological pressure of carrying an “other” individual within her body, the idea that she would not lose the weight that she gains during pregnancy causes her to disregard

her body. Because she “experiences her body as herself and not herself” (2005, p. 46), the pregnant is at war with her body by means of internalizing the negative adjectives – massive and outgrowth – that represent her sexual repulsiveness on the one hand, and her weakness and vulnerability on the other. In *The Edible Woman*, Marian’s somatophobia-based anorexia emerges out of her observation of her best friend’s pregnancy: after observing Clara’s self-perception with a pregnant body, Marian begins to reject her body through rejecting food. On the other hand, in *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, Esther experiences somatophobia as a result of the excess weight she gained during her pregnancy. Because she is unable to lose weight, Esther chooses to negate her body as a whole; the more she ignores her body, the more she puts on weight.

Motherhood, on the other hand, causes woman to estrange herself from her body because of her perception of the body within the borders of sexuality. Due to the maternal role that woman is supposed to have after birth, she refrains herself from sexuality. Because sexuality connotes desire, woman, as a mother, is expected to repress her sexual desire. Also, as a nursing mother, woman may not find her body sexual any more as a consequence of the deformation that her breasts undergo; with saggy breasts she believes she is not attractive any longer. “In all cultures, women’s primary responsibilities involve food provisioning and the bearing and rearing of children [...] Women are food to the fetus and infant, and the breasts can be sources of both sexual pleasure and food” (Weiss, 1999, p. 63). Breasts, Young states, are the signifiers of femininity and thus sexuality. In other words, it stands for the phallus: “Breasts are the most visible sign of a woman’s femininity, the signal of her sexuality” (Young, 2005, p. 78).

Based on the traditional philosophy, the modern media-dominated cultures define female breasts as the objects of the male gaze and desire. “The fetishized breasts are valued as objects, things; they must be solid, easy to handle” (2005, p. 78). Under the influence of the phallogocentric discourse, woman considers her breasts the power she has through her body: she believes that she exists with her body, and her breasts are the only representatives of her femininity. “There is one perfect shape and proportion for breasts: round, sitting high on the chest, large but not bulbous, with the look of firmness” (2005, p. 79). However, as a consequence of her lactating experience and responsibility for the baby, she feels her breasts as not sexy, but as saggy and disgusting; she believes that her

breasts become desexualized while breastfeeding. In *The Fat Woman's Joke*, Esther's somatophobic experience in the form of compulsive eating is examined in terms of her maternal position; she disregards her body just after she becomes a mother and feels her body as the possession of others. A mother is expected to feed her baby and repress her sexual desire; yet, she is to satisfy the sexual expectations of her husband as well. "The refusal of female desire to remain circumscribed and repressed; the frustrations of "feeding" others and never feeding the self – the "bite-size" candy genre represents female hunger as [...] contained within the bounds of appropriate feminine behavior" (Bordo, 2003, p. 129). Because food and sex have similar connotations, it is woman who should keep herself aloof from eating. However, the more she forces her body to go on a diet to repress her sexuality but to regain her previous size, the more Esther puts on weight because she comes to realize the fact that she does not have a body that belongs to her. Rather, she discovers that her body serves for the needs and desires of the others: "Woman is a natural territory; her breasts belong to others – her husband, her lover, her baby" (2005, p. 80):

A great many women in this culture that fetishizes breasts are reluctant to breast-feed because they perceive that they will lose their sexuality. They believe that nursing will alter their breasts and make them ugly and undesirable. They fear that their men will find their milky breasts unattractive or will be jealous of the babies who take their bodies (2005, p. 88).

Her role as a mother, along with the process of pregnancy, stimulates somatophobia because of the division between motherhood and sexuality that stiffened through the psychoanalytical approach; "virgin/whore, pure/impure, nurturer/seducer is either asexual mother or sexualized beauty, but one precludes the other" (2005, p. 85). The sense of motherhood, which is interpreted as self-sacrifice and repudiation, is associated with feminine masochism. Because the dualism between maternity and sexuality is derived from the coded gender roles, the first necessitates the abnegation of the latter. In *Jemima J.*, Jemima learns the obligation to become either this or that from her mother; Jemima's mother is the one who internalizes the patriarchal definitions of being a woman; thus, she negates her sexuality and desires by the time she discovers her maternal responsibilities:

The separation between motherhood and sexuality within a woman's own existence seems to ensure her dependence on the man for pleasure. If motherhood is sexual, the mother and child can be a circuit of pleasure for the mother, then the man may lose her allegiance and attachment. So she

must repress her eroticism with her child, and with it her own particular return to her repressed experience of jouissance, and maintain a specific connection with the man (2005, p. 87).

In this dissertation, the relationship between somatophobic tendencies and eating disorders is examined and interpreted within the context of childhood experiences. According to some psychiatrists such as Bruch and Horney, there is a close relationship between somatophobia – that gives rise to eating disorders – and the childhood experiences of a woman. Horney argues that childhood is the most critical period in an individual's life because psychological disorders generally stem from the problems s/he experiences during childhood. To illustrate, there are many reasons for a woman's self/body hatred: She may suffer from sexual abuse at a tender age, or she may be exposed to male privilege in the family because of her parents' different attitudes towards her and her brother, or she may be negatively influenced by the relationship between her parents and the roles they perform under the pretext of their sexes:

A girl may have reasons to acquire a dislike for her own female world very early, perhaps because her mother has intimidated her, or she has experienced a thoroughly disillusioning disappointment from the side of the father or brother; she may have had early sexual experiences that frightened her; or she may have found that her brother was greatly preferred to herself (Horney, 1967, p. 179).

Besides childhood traumas, problems experienced during adolescence may also influence the personality development. With the beginning of menstruation, girls experience difference in their body and personality; they begin to evaluate themselves in a different way, and they are imposed with the idea that they are dirty and even disgusting. However, at puberty, girls also internalize the idea that they should pay extra attention to their bodies as the representatives of their existence. As from their adolescence, girls are taught to perfect their bodies through dieting, exercising, and imitating the idealized bodies they see in magazines and on television. The ideology, provoking women to alienate themselves from their bodies, manipulates their images with an attempt to “make them appear to have longer legs, smaller waists, larger breasts and rounder bums” (Orbach, 2006, p. 77). In order to be acceptable in terms of their size and shape, women are thus forced to be concerned with baloney ambitions such as looking pretty, sexy, and charming:

We are not passive victims. We actively make it our own cause. We embrace the challenge and in doing so we often make decisions which are not only damaging to our well being but inadvertently create and then reinforce an anguished relationship to food and the body (2006, p. 90).

Influenced by psychoanalysis, the feminist writer Chernin does claim that somatophobia is the result of the turbulent relationship between mother and daughter: “To many mothers the offering of food is their way of expressing their affection and devotion and of appeasing their anxiety and guilt about the child” (Bruch, 1973, p. 69). Mothers and daughters are concerned themselves with food rather than sexuality. Mothers bring up their daughters by feeding them first with their milk and then with foods she cooks for them. However, by the time daughters become adolescents, mothers begin to teach how to become feminine by controlling and disciplining their bodies. Because eating connotes desire and sexuality, mothers also teach their daughters how to repress their desires by self-starvation. On the other hand, mothers train their daughters in accordance with the expectations of the popular culture; they force their daughters to have the ideal body image in order to be recognized and accepted by the masculine power. Thus, daughters learn to police their own bodies through non-eating. Mothers transmit the collective unconscious they have inherited from their own ancestors. Moreover, the emotional bond between mothers and girls is a significant determinant for the female psychology and for her perception of the body as something she owns or as something she abominates.

The masculine tendencies are shown by the woman's domineering attitude and her desire to control the children absolutely. Or she may be afraid of this, and therefore be too lax with them. One of the two extremes may show. She may pry into the children's affairs relentlessly or she may be afraid of the sadistic tendencies involved, and remain passive, not daring to interfere (Horney, 1967, p. 180).

Horney remarks that the mother figure plays a critical role in the personality development of her daughter. On the condition that the mother is the domineering figure in her daughter's life, the one who attempts to control and discipline her daughter under any circumstances, or vice versa, the one who is indifferent to her daughter as if she were an invisible or a neutral element in her life, the daughter may probably experience psycho-based somatophobia. Because food is the metaphorical language that the mother and the daughter speak in common, the latter becomes either an anorectic or an overweight as a response to the problematic relationship with her mother. Therefore, as a female associated practice, maternity is regarded as a significant issue that sustains the

phallogocentric view. Without a deliberate intent, women indeed cause their daughters to be like them; according to Chodorow, “female mothering produces women whose deep sense of self is “relational” and men whose deep sense of self is not” (Seidman, 1994, p. 253). Woman, as a mother, indeed teaches her daughter how to become a woman like her and to become a victim of her gender roles. In other words, the social psychology of the mother is the bearer of the daughter’s unconscious. In *Jemima J.*, the eating disorders that Jemima experiences are examined within the context of her relationship with her mother: her psychology, which is influenced by her mother’s excessively interfering attitudes towards Jemima, is under the attack of somatophobia. On the other hand, in *The Edible Woman* and *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, the psychoanalytical analysis of Marian and Esther also reveals the fact that their psychologies are under the influence of the collective unconscious that almost all women in the world are forced to perform in the form of gender roles. Furthermore, the phallogocentric language, which determines the position each sex has within the society according to having or lacking the phallus, is illustrated and criticized in the novels.

1.4. Postmodern Philosophy/Feminism and the Power of the Body

The image of the human body means the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say the way in which the body appears to ourselves (Schilder, 1999, p. 11).

Atwood, Weldon, and Green employ postmodern feminism as a subversive power which negates predetermined definitions and roles of femininity. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the protagonists are able to overcome the patriarchal association between woman and body through vindicating the reality that the body is the fundamental attribute of a woman. The heroines prove that they have the potential to manage both the mind and the body regardless of the ideals and roles that have been coded for them. As a non-hegemonic theory, postmodernism features the abolition of the “metanarratives” inspired and legitimated by the Enlightenment philosophy of the West. Negating the certainty of philosophical notions and meanings attributed to the historical cognition, postmodern approach subsumes deconstruction with regards to its skeptical paradigm of power, knowledge, truth, and language. As a reaction to the ideals that embrace the Western philosophy through conditioning human beings within a determined system via male-centered standards and discourses that attempt to vindicate the categories of man and woman, and thus of the mind and the body, postmodern philosophy rejects all sorts of categorization or dichotomy. In *The*

Edible Woman, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, women are portrayed as the products of the universal system of patriarchy. Each woman is characterized by the features that define her as a female and feminine through pre-established discourses and the instruments that serve for the ideology and the privileged male ego. By contrast, postmodernism centers upon the subversion of the concepts and institutions that echo the mechanic stance of human beings. According to the deconstructive approach, the selected novels by Atwood, Weldon, and Green offer denegation of the discourses of the Enlightenment that deploy the male authority as the reasonable and the coherent dominium over the subjective nature, and they overturn the perception of the body as something to be rejected as the representation of flesh, or something to be adopted as the mere thing to decorate for others' gazes as well. Instead of pivoting on the narrow point of view of the traditional philosophy, postmodern theory promises "a series of "positions" and a heterogeneous polyphony of voices" (Flax, 1990, p. 32). In this regard, *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* target to overrule the traditional and modern philosophies. The portrayal of the female characters in the selected novels demonstrates that Atwood, Weldon, and Green achieve to subvert the fixed definitions of femininity and the female body image via alternative female characters with diverse personalities. Therefore, the authors achieve to subvert the archaic philosophical definition and the Enlightenment treatment of the female body under the name of objectivity, universality, and homogeneity.

Repudiating the foundational and essentialist notions of human nature and existence, postmodernism does argue for the death of man; because man is the fictional or the invented organism of language and society, it is impossible to declare one's unequalled nous. Social practices and language games that determine man as a linguistic artifact in a normative order must be overturned through decentering man. On the other hand, as regards to the death of metaphysics, postmodernism censures the anachronistic philosophical thought which is based on the Platonic and the Aristotelian notions of the truth, the subject, and the self which did adumbrate the foundational understanding of the eighteenth century Enlightenment well in advance. The death of history, furthermore, overlaps the other two concepts: man and metaphysics. History, assumed to be the fact-based stories of beings, is indeed considered the reflection of man's imagination. In other words, history is nothing more than the construction of stories by man for his self-interest. Through fictional stories, man could pave the way for his

power, his transcendence, and his reason. Postmodern theory, by contrast, does interpret the truth as a state of flux and does disregard the events that make reference to unity, homogeneity, and certainty as the compositions of the ideological instruments. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* the authors achieve to negate the stories – history and metaphysics – through liberating the characters from sexual and gender bonds which are invented by the male authority. Underpinned by the metaphysical discourses, the modern philosophy manifests mind and reason as the universal contents. According to postmodernist scholars, by contrast, mind or reason cannot be regarded as the source of absolute truth, or an indication of predominance. “Modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of the “lack of reality” of reality, together with the invention of other realities” (Lyotard, 1979, p. 77). As a prominent postmodern theorist, Lyotard disregards the commonly-held assumptions of modernism such as singular, universal, and transcendental. By contrast, he theorizes “plural, local and immanent” as the prevalent notions of the day. He disdains the totalization of society and culture under a homogeneous framework and claims that society is indeed the reflection of the irregular and multiple discursive practices. In line with these arguments, Atwood, Weldon, and Green do premeditate the principles of postmodernism in the selected novels through portraying female characters as the ones who achieve to discard the norms that attempt to stereotype and benumb them under the name of absolute truth and unity.

In *Sceptical History*, Raddeker does construe postmodernism as an umbrella term that does compromise post-structuralism, deconstruction, and the “linguistic turn”. Questioning the hierarchical structures of the traditional thought and the authenticity of the modern discourses which attempt to legitimate the history and development of human beings through stereotype metanarratives, postmodernism does embrace non-absolute beliefs and de-centered subjects. Ferdinand de Saussure, as a leading structuralist linguist, declares language as the distinctive factor that attributes meaning to the words. In this regard, language, nourished by discourses and knowledge, does limit individuals within certain patterns, because as Foucault states knowledge represents power, and therefore, language is “the ultimate constitutor of knowledge and truth” (Raddeker, 2007, p. 22). However, postmodernists challenge such a dualistic system due to the fact that, for them, there is no indigenous link between the signifier

and the signified; it is nothing short of the constructions by linguistic systems of language.

Within postmodernism, poststructuralists such as Foucault and Derrida do embrace skepticism towards objective knowledge and subjectivity. Through deconstruction and genealogical historiography, they argue that the presuppositions of the transcendental self, universal knowledge and objective structures turn out to be the illusions because neither language nor the idea of transcendental subjectivity could determine the reality. For Foucault and Derrida, the Enlightenment model of thinking and the traditional philosophy of the West, which are based on the ground of reason and the absolute truth, are nothing more than the narrative productions of knowledge and “language game”. Therefore, they do reject the systematic model of language due to the fact that knowledge produces truth through manipulative discourses. In the same vein, Atwood, Weldon, and Green reveal the illusionary nature of truth, through which the patriarchal order attempts to marginalize, limit and even imprison woman within her body – as the linguistic construction of the hegemonic system. Through deconstructing the linguistic nonsense, Atwood, Weldon, and Green flout the taboos concerning the codification between the signifier and the signified. As Flax points out, deconstruction is “disrespectful of authority, attentive to suppressed tensions or conflicts within the text, and suspicious of all “natural” categories, essentialist oppositions, and representational claims” (1990, p. 37). Accordingly, with postmodern-poststructuralist theory, not only structuralism and the Enlightenment ideals turn out to be self-refuting philosophies of the past, but the origin of such fixity: the Cartesian myth also dies out. In the selected novels, the representations of the logocentric discourse which marginalizes women and their bodies, and the subversion of the male-centered language through a new language spoken by the body itself are analyzed and interpreted in line with the poststructuralist and deconstructive paradigms.

1.4.1. Body Philosophy of Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty

Negating the foundational and essentialist notions of traditional philosophies, Nietzsche, per se, had declared the postmodern thinking centuries ago through adopting decentralization of the subject and the uncertainty of truth. As an anti-Enlightenment thinker, rather than consent to the categories constructed by hegemonic structures, Nietzsche acts with suspicion towards the Enlightenment notions of self, reason, and the

fixed truth. For Nietzsche, the relation of knowledge to power is explained in such a way that the former, constructed by human beings in order to exert dominance over nature, is just a means of survival. Yet, the dominance over nature does suppress the faculties related to imagination, feelings, and insight while highlighting the mechanization and robotization of beings through fixed principles. "Self" is constructed by culture, through deploying "corporeal punishment" or socio-physical cruelty upon individuals. As a consequence, people develop "a memory, making possible the idea of God, the "Platonic" fixed idea, and the idea of "eternal" guilt" (Brown, 2006, p. 7). Within the novels, the bodily punishment is examined in terms of anorexia nervosa and compulsive eating which the protagonists experience as a result of feeling fear and shame of their bodies. Therefore, having "self", or becoming "self" is a product influenced by the social formation of meaning on female bodies. In the novels by Atwood, Weldon, and Green women are designated as female embodiments and constituted as passive objects by the society. The female characters are coerced to internalize the rules established by and for patriarchal benefit, and they are threatened to be punished in all conscience of male hegemony on the condition that they go beyond the limits. Nonetheless, each protagonist does prove herself as an individual free from the bounds of the fixed rules, legitimations, and the institutions that serve for the male authority and for the male supremacy through recognizing their bodies as they are; independently of the definitions and of the societal assertiveness.

Atwood, Weldon, and Green present woman as the piggy in the middle who has conflicts within her own body and mind. Split between these two, she strives for existing with an identity. In this concern, the conventional perception which legitimates the oppression and the marginalization of woman is examined from Nietzsche's point of view. According to Nietzsche, both Christianity and Platonic dualism direct human beings to delusive realms through the ill-thoughts they did accredit with mind or intellect. In this sense, universally accepted Christian values are in fact the metaphorical definitions of violence in the history; the dualism between good and bad, virtue and vice are merely the constructions of the power structures. Nietzsche claims that both the state and the church enforce people to silence, conceding, and subjection under the chain of being and present slavery and other forms of oppression and lack as the appreciated features for the spiritual reward in heaven. Especially in *The Edible Woman*, Christianity-based discrimination between man/woman and mind/body is illustrated;

Atwood implies that the values through which the authority attempts to discipline and control woman are nothing short of the misinterpretation of the words of God. For Nietzsche, there is no absolute truth that could be defined as transcendental or divine; what is called truth is just the act of human beings. Therefore, disapproving the Christian doctrine and attacking the Platonic assumptions, Nietzsche confutes the power of mind and intellect through which the system intends to legitimate the maltreatment and exclusion of women from agency:

The intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves – since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey (qtd. in Tongeren, 2000, p. 137).

In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* the women are covered by the illusions and fables invented for them and they are obliged to believe in such fictions as if they were real. However, the heroines are able to overcome the pre-established assumptions that target not only the female marginalization but the bodily isolation as well. Nietzsche does predicate the source of such illusions on the linguistic conventions: language is the primary instrument that conveys the truth. In other words, through language itself, concepts, words, related images, and metaphors are constructed, which thus reflects no factual but simulated abstractions. “Man as a mighty genius of construction” learns to universalize and internalize the concepts and metaphors. However, Nietzsche does harp on about intuition and sensation as the powerful vehicles of “different kinds of truth”. By laying stress on the top priority of instinct and emotion, he is bent on subverting the dissimulation between the body and the mind. “The body interprets, evaluates, and thinks. The intellect tastes, digests, and eliminates” (qtd. in Brown, 2006, p. 108). For this very reason, Nietzsche disapproves the traditional dichotomy between the mind and the body because of the fact that all dualisms are indeed the conscious act of language: discourse. Through the novels examined in this dissertation, Atwood, Weldon, and Green enable their protagonists to give priority to their emotions despite the Enlightenment emphasis on the reason as the directive force of living. Put it differently, the heroines realize the power of their bodies in gaining sense of self through listening to, interpreting, and accepting their bodies.

The difference between the postmodern paradigm and the modern thinking is best explained through the confrontational perspectives that Nietzsche and Hegel adopt

towards the body and the mind. For Hegel, any form of art that features human body as a material is intolerable since it is nothing more than the impure imitation of the Ideal: although “muscles and veins are indicated indeed, [...] they should not appear in the distinctness and completeness which they have in reality. For in all this there is nothing of the spirit, and the expression of the spiritual is the essential thing in the human form” (qtd. in Mills, 1996, p. 125). For Nietzsche, by contrast, the body is interpretive; in other words, it is away from the mechanical and fixed modes of being; the body is the dynamic guide, transforming and developing. Accordingly, he attributes a positive quality to the body because for Nietzsche the body itself is responsible for the production of truth and knowledge. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* the female body turns out to be the principle force that enables woman to be the active agent in her life.

Contrary to the Foucault's theory on the body as a fictionalized and passive machine constituted by the regimes of power, for Nietzsche, the body is the source organism that itself produces the relationship between power-knowledge and the will to power which requires the body to strive, to push, and “to overcome itself on the level of cells, tissues, organs, where the lower-order bodily functions are subordinated to and harnessed by higher-order bodily processes and activities” (Grosz, 1994, p. 122). In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the protagonists achieve to negate the Enlightenment definitions of being a woman through their bodies; they prove that they do not have a fixed or a robotized nature. By contrast, they discover their capacity to live their bodies regardless of the norms. In this dissertation, *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* are examined within the postmodern feminist theory on the purpose of challenging and rejecting the hegemonic male authority. In order to deconstruct, denaturalize, and decenter the understanding of the female body and the gender positioning of woman, each novel is interpreted so as to subvert the power of representation: “the authority of representation constrains us, imposing itself on our thought through a whole dense, enigmatic, and heavily stratified history. It programs us and precedes us” (Derrida, 2007, p. 103). In this sense, Atwood, Weldon, and Green, at the beginning of their novels, do present woman as the one who is torn between the social norms concerning her body and her gender roles: a woman who desires to break the chains that is fasten on her by the male hegemony and the same woman who is unable to create her identity regardless of the qualities that have become integrated with

her. Nonetheless, the protagonists overcome the social norms and the corporeal quality of their existence through making peace with their bodies. “Because consciousness is not a directing agent but an organ of the directing agent [body], we are to turn to the body. It is essential to start from the body and employ it as guide. It is the much richer phenomenon” declares Nietzsche (qtd. in Brown, 2006, p. 114). The capacities of the body are unlimited vice versa the presupposed view of the body as merely a physiological entity; and therefore, Nietzsche considers it the activator of the psychic capacities:

The body is a great reason, a plurality with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd. An instrument of your body is also your little reason, [...], which you call “spirit” – a little instrument and toy of your great reason [...]. Behind your thoughts and feelings, [...], there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage – whose name is self. In your body he dwells: he is your body (2006, p. 127).

According to Nietzsche, bodily motives such as pleasure and pain are the principal factors to reach the Will. Therefore, the body, as the origin and the first step of existence, unlike the categorization of the Cartesian myth, is superior to the mind. “The body is said to be a (non)foundational basis because the body transposes and is itself a transposition of multiple world forces” (2006, p. 96). The forces of the body enable the will to power, and therefore, the roles of the soul, consciousness, and subjectivity depend upon the power of the body. “The belief in the body is more fundamental than belief in the soul: the latter arose from unscientific reflection [on the agonies] of body” (Grosz, 1994, p. 125). Philosophy and knowledge, for Nietzsche, do not belong to mentality or reason, but are the products of the body impulses. Accordingly, in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the protagonists learn to listen to their bodies which they turn against in the beginning. In other words, they overcome their somatophobia after turning to their own bodies and impulses; the body-hatred or the fear of the body is overcome by the eating disorders manifested as a consequence of somatophobia. The problems concerning the body are subverted through the response each heroine gives with her body.

Regarded as one of the most prominent phenomenologists, Merleau-Ponty does also disavow the tradition perpetuated by modernism. For Merleau-Ponty, any sort of bifurcation – mental or physical, noumenal or phenomenal – is unacceptable (Evans and Lawlor, 2000, p. 3). Put it differently, the eximious power of reason, which is ordained

as the sign of truth and the pivot of knowledge that is assumed to be achieved through mental capacity, is confuted by the phenomenological perspective. Activities that human beings perform are the reflections of their perception. Through the agency of the perceptual power, the body can have the potential to coexist with the world. Accordingly, “physiognomic perception” (2000, p. 3); the relationship between the body and the physical surroundings determine the reality. For this very reason, the subject is directly associated with the body, and perception is the essential component of the body which enables the body to overstep the bounds of itself. Therefore, to become a subject requires the individual to coalesce with the body. In accordance with the Merleau-Ponty’s theory of phenomenology, in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, each woman does manage to gain a sense of self through living and feeling her body without the constraints predetermined by the male order. The heroines, in other words, learn the significance of perception. Rather than comply with the assertions of the modern world, they get familiar with their bodies as they are. By the time the protagonists change their sensations of their bodies, they begin to perceive them as positive and dignified as opposed to the masculine perception as flawed and vulnerable.

Rejecting the Lacanian emphasis on the anatomical determinism and the unconscious psychological forces, Merleau-Ponty announces that individuals are independent on the perceptual ground. Consciousness of the individual is the essential element that determines his/her relationship with the world, which Merleau-Ponty does entitle as “chiasm” or “reversibility,” an always “imminent” coincidence between the seeing and the visible, the touching and the touched, self and other selves” (2000, p. 10). The relationship between the visible and the invisible; subject and object; internal and external; inside and outside, and body and soul is not disparate, yet interdependent notions. For him, chiasm is the representation of the body’s relationship with itself and with the world. Contrary to Cartesian dualism and the Christian theology, Merleau-Ponty claims that the body, rather than exist as a robotic construct, emanates as a conscious entity, whereby it “is both an object for others and a subject for myself” (2002, p. 194). Because being a body and having a body correspond to an “experienced body”, Atwood, Weldon, and Green disrupt the body/mind dichotomy that demeans woman as the slave of the body. By contrast, in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, each woman is portrayed as the one who appreciates her body and

the bodily existence, since she realizes that her body does ensure the relationship with herself and with the world. Rather than separate the mind from the body, the protagonists of the novels examined in this dissertation discover the coherence which allows them to establish the relationship between their bodies and the world.

Because the postmodern feminist approach creates possibilities for the plurality of gender identities through deconstructive approaches, the philosopher Merleau-Ponty casts the essentialist thought of sex and gender aside, and focuses on the concept of the “lived body” which provides a chance for subverting the subject/object dualism between man and woman. With this purpose, he argues for the integrated form of mind-body-world. Based on the existentialist phenomenology, “the lived body”, as Moi argues, characterizes “sexual subjectivity without danger of either biological reductionism or gender essentialism” (Young, 2005, p. 55). According to Moi and Beauvoir, “the lived body” might be identified as an alternative to the classification of sex and gender in that it takes form under circumstances. Therefore, it is described as “body-in-situation”. The body is the outpouring of the relationship that a person has with her surroundings. The pre-determined body lives within a certain context and functions pursuant to her age, size, and strength within a given society. This relevance between a woman’s bodily existence and the physical environment constructs her real “being.” In line with this argument, the lived body is against the discrepancy between nature/sex and culture/gender. Rather, “the body as lived is always enculturated” (2005, p. 17). In this context, heterosexual normativity and the binary opposition between masculine and feminine become meaningless since the possibilities of plurality allow for sexual multiplicity – penises, clitorises, breasts – which by extension entitles “each person (as) a distinctive body, with specific features, capacities, and desires that are similar to and different from those of others in determinate respects” (2005, p. 18). Woman with a lived body exists as an agent and as a subject who composes her identity through her own experiences and through the bond with the others around her.

In contrast to Cartesian dualism and the hierarchical structure that upstages body vis a vis mind, there is a reciprocal dependence between mind and body within postmodern understanding. Stated in other words, the body is not an object, but a phenomenon lived and experienced by the subject; the body itself determines the subject’s position with regard to other subjects, objects, and the world: “It is the body as I live it, as I

experience it, and as it shapes my experience” (Grosz, 1994, p. 86). As reflected in the novels in question, the female body and mind get in harmony with each other after the recognition of the body itself as the arbiter of the subject’s position in the world. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the body, as Merleau-Ponty argues, becomes the source of existence and an instrument that enables the subject’s connection with the world. Accordingly, the body as lived experience does correspond to the production of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty, like postmodern feminists, does argue for the entailment of the pre-discursive phase which remains irresponsive by social and cultural fictions. “A “return” to or reconstitution of such prediscursive experience, a “wild being”, an uncultivated or raw sensibility, is necessary to produce a nondualist, nonbinarized ontology” (1994, p. 96). For Merleau-Ponty, perception is a mediator between the body and the mind; neither the first nor the latter overlaps the other. The body, as the pre-discursive and pre-communicative locus, enables the interactions between the subject and the object: “Subject or object, mind and body, the visible and the invisible, are intercarlated” (1994, p. 103). Ultimately, Merleau-Ponty’s body theory subverts not only the archaic understanding of the female body as destructive and evil, but also the phallus-centered perception of the female body as lack by rejecting the Lacanian discourse. Accordingly, in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the significance of perception and the discovery of the body as the subject of woman’s existence are examined and interpreted with reference to Merleau-Ponty’s theory of the lived body.

1.4.2. Postmodern Feminist Body

Feminist movement had repercussions especially in the 1970s in terms of the rights – reproduction, abortion, education, and profession –; yet, it could not accomplish the objective of freedom that women desperately dreamed of. Now women have more rights and legal protection than before; however, they do not have the right over their own bodies and identities. “There is a secret “underlife” poisoning our freedom; infused with notions of beauty, it is a dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of aging, and dread of lost control” (Wolf, 2002, p. 10). Even though feminism via many theories and waves did stand by the objectives of liberty, equality, and opportunity for women in public and private domains, it could not shatter the hopes of patriarchal authority. The real problem which feminist theorists did fail to recognize is the attempt

to unify man and woman under an umbrella along the same line with the conventional and totalizing philosophy. In this dissertation, Atwood, Weldon, and Green reveal the fact that women are constrained both from their own bodies and from the public life even though there seems to be equality and the rights that are assumed to protect them. Rather, they are allocated for the private domain and coded as nurturers, as sexual objects for others' gazes, and as self-denying mothers. Because feminist perspective is supposed to defend difference and undesignated nature of human beings, feminist theorists have embraced postmodern principles as a new model of expression. Holding with postmodernism, postmodern feminists, as an alternative to the blind allegiance to the traditional philosophy, have declared the "death" of the Enlightenment ideals by favor of uncertainty, instability, multiplicity of sex/gender, and power/knowledge relations. Accordingly, postmodern feminism subverts the hierarchical, tandem, and rectilinear forms of existence through reversing the repressed, the oppressed, and the marginalized stance of women.

The proximity between postmodern feminism and poststructuralism is based on the fact that both reject the codification of human body through discourses. In other words, postmodern-poststructuralist feminists such as Butler, Irigaray, and Kristeva claim that language is the agent of everything, and discourse merely fictionalizes the subjects. Therefore, the subjects have no identity or origin beyond discourse. In this sense, gender roles, which are based on the biological differences, are the products of the modern thinking of the Enlightenment. However, postmodern feminism declares that there is no such classification as masculinity or femininity, and furthermore, it dissents from the standpoint that legitimates masculinity as the supreme truth. In order to justify the multiplicity of truth and the nullity of gender codes, postmodern feminism does focus on discourse analysis, through which the theory reveals the very fact that gender is a socially constructed system, and in it women are solely the fictional characters that are constituted as well. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, women awaken to the reality that femaleness and femininity are the fictions and invented by the discourses of the patriarchal ideology. They achieve to deconstruct the ostensible features of the body and woman by the time they discover that there exists no standard or fixed definition of being an ideal woman. Accordingly, they negate the roles and the rules dictated in the form of Enlightenment deception concerning the totalizing metaphysical concepts that brush woman aside as a marginal object.

Through deconstructing the power structures of the modern societies, postmodern feminists regard all the definitions concerning women and their bodies as the constructions of institutions serving for the patriarchy. “Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only the relations of men to women, but the relation of women to themselves” (2002, p. 58). Nonetheless, within the postmodern feminist paradigm, the subject becomes decentered as a result of the “decline of the great imperial powers of modernity, the traumatic loss of hegemony of the West” (Kipnis, 1989, p. 158). Put it differently, each heroine overcomes her somatophobia by disregarding the assumptions and definitions that humiliate her body as an object for the male gaze and desire; by contrast, she learns how to respect her body as it is, without any attempt to stereotype it in accordance with the patriarchal expectations.

Within the postmodern epistemology, there is not just a body which is given and fixed; rather, there are bodies in plural, fragmented and colorful. In this context, Fraser and Greco define the body “as something we have (the body as the object), as something we are (the body as subject), and as something we become (the body as process and performativity)” (2005, p.4). Quite contrary to the universal polarity between the mind and the body, according to postmodern non-hegemonic feminist understanding, the mind and the body are the essential parts of an individual subject: there exists no division between soma and psyche. The subversion of the discriminatory dualistic judgment is achieved through deconstructing the hierarchy that designates the binary oppositions between man/woman and mind/body. Therefore, postmodern feminism insists on the necessity for a dream of “human freedom from bodily determination” (Bordo, 2003, p. 245), which could only be achieved via resistance. In the Foucauldian terms, resistance manifests itself through rejecting to embody any predetermined identity and subjectivity, and keeping herself aloof from containment and control mechanisms. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the assumed sex and gender dualisms are deconstructed through each woman’s negation of the traditional and modern definitions of femaleness and femininity. The authors of the selected novels enable their heroines to resist the norms that attempt to standardize their bodies and thus their personalities. Because both postmodernism and feminism have developed a determined stance against the unwarranted essentialist ideals that legitimate dichotomies and institutions which produce stereotyped images, within the postmodern

feminist theory, Atwood, Weldon, and Green attempt to reveal the distortions and borders that encapsulate women, and they achieve to represent the unrepresentable without any predetermined rules or a determinant verdict. In this respect, women, as Suleiman remarks, indeed learn to “move beyond the valorization of historically suppressed values and toward “endless complication” and a “dizzying accumulation of narratives” (qtd. in Goldstein, 1991, p. 122). In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, through deconstructing the paradigms of patriarchal ideology that manifests itself on the body via gender codes, women achieve subversion. The dualistic presuppositions concerning gender and anatomical determinism are criticized within postmodern feminism with the aim of unveiling the caducity of hierarchical dualism.

The postmodern treatment of the gender issue implies resistance against and deconstruction of the common assumptions of culture. Reconstructing the self without the bounds of the unified and universal understanding, adopting multiplicity, and avoiding generalizations about gender and sex are the issues postmodern feminism addresses. As a response to modernism and to the totalizing assumptions it adopts, postmodern feminism regards the former as a retrogressive approach which “casts active and creative subjects as passive dupes of ideology; it gives too much to dominant ideology” (Bordo, 2003, p. 260). In this sense, the attitude that postmodern feminism assumes is “polysemous, unstable, and open nature of all cultural texts” (2003, p. 260). Within the scope of postmodern feminism, Derrida, as the representative of the theory of deconstruction, declares that oppositions “can never exist in a pure neutral mode” (Falk, 1994, p.19) and propounds a metaphor of “incalculable choreographies”, which signifies “subjectivity without gender, without history, without location” (qtd. in Brooks, 2003, p. 157). In this context, once woman rejects her gender roles, she rescues her body from the bounds of the definitions and generalizations which are based on the sex she represents. Accordingly, the female body transforms into a resistant body that stands against the objectification and sexuality of her own body. Rather than adapt her existence to the assumed stable gender roles and to a predetermined sexual identity, the “female body can be refashioned in the flux of identities that speak in plural styles” (Bordo, 2003, p. 282). Suleiman, on the other hand, examines the postmodern feminist theory in terms of the plurality of identity; “to get beyond, not only the number one – the number that determines unity of body or of self – but also to get beyond the number two, which determines difference, antagonism and exchange” (1986, p. 24). In this

context, the “number one” does symbolize the stability and the unity of identity which is appropriate for the phallogentric understanding of the ideal self within the hierarchal structure of the society. The “number two”, on the contrary, echoes change and difference. There is nothing fixed and limited in the world; by contrast, everything is evaluated in the process of human making and remaking. In contrast to the Cartesian theory of knowledge, for the postmodern feminist epistemology, the body is the dynamic agent of making and remaking of the world through deconstructing the discourse that captivates her identity and body within the limited categories. Through anorexia nervosa and binge eating, which are regarded as modern sicknesses of women with bodily dissatisfaction, the female characters prove the multiple bodily existences: either as slim or fat, the body is under the possession and protection of woman.

The multiplicity of the body or the fragmented postmodern body represents a body which is free from the limitations or definitions constructed by the patriarchal ideology. The postmodern feminist body is a subversive image that deconstructs the predetermined roles. Through *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, which are interpreted within postmodern treatment of woman and the body, Atwood, Weldon, and Green criticize the modern portrayal of femininity within the borders of their bodies. Through deconstructing the reductionist perspective of the traditional and modern philosophies on sex and gender, the heroines discover the power that their bodies represent as a sort of weapon against the Western assumptions. Because postmodern feminism argues for a world going without an origin, without an aftermath, without gender, and without certainty, *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.* illustrate the negation of the categories, identities, and myths of the conventional philosophy and its maintenance in the modern world. As an alternative to the blind allegiance to the traditional, universal, and totalitarian regime of the patriarchal structure, the authors enable their heroines to achieve sex (body)/gender-free basis of existence. In other words, they reject the historical and social construction and recognition of woman through feminine characteristics or categories and discourses that make much of the significance and demands of being female. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the materialized female body and the supposedly necessary maternity are subverted by rejecting the Western epistemological imperatives and deconstructing the phallogentric codes that have dominated woman's mind and body so far. By discarding the norms and etiquettes that cause dualisms

between man and woman, Atwood, Weldon, and Green achieve to portray their protagonists as the ones who negate certainties and fixities that label them as “women” and limit their existence within their bodies.

Butler, as one of the path breaking postmodern feminist theorists, argues that identities are not stable or fixed; yet, through various identity formations, the dualism or classification of sex as male/female, and gender as masculine/feminine might be effaced because the action is the essential determiner in the creation of the subject. In this sense, Butler does negate the relationship between sex and gender that is established within discourse by the system. Influenced by the term biopower Foucault propounded, Butler does embrace an anti-essentialist standing in feminist projects, and she considers the body a discursive construction that is always institutionalized and naturalized through repetitive discourses. The body is, thereby, regarded as a surface on which social, cultural, religious, and sexual values could be practiced in order to introduce certain kinds of subjectivities. On the purpose of subverting the discourse which manipulates the female body in accordance with the patriarchal benefit, Butler argues for the necessity for “a radical rethinking of the ontological constructions of identity” (1990, p. 5), through which the discontinuity between sex and gender can be revealed. In this sense, sex is impossible to be regarded as destiny, but gender which determines the sexed bodies with certain roles via discourses and cultural formulations. Atwood, Weldon, and Green picture women with predetermined gender roles. However, since gender is considered the performative act of the subject, once the protagonists of the selected novels learn not to maintain or repeat their coded genders, they achieve to liberate their bodies from the discursive patterns. Put it differently, by the time they reject to perform their gender, they also get rid of the obligations that are assigned to their bodies:

The body is not understood as a static and accomplished fact, but as an aging process, a mode of becoming that, in becoming otherwise, exceeds the norm, reworks the norm, and makes us see how realities to which we thought we were confined are not written in stone (Butler, 2004, p. 29).

For Butler, as Beauvoir claims, “the body is a situation”; then, the body does not signify a biological essentialness. Instead, it represents meanings attributed to it by the cultural mediums: “gender is a passionate comportment, a way of living the body with and for others; and although sexuality is not reducible to gender in any sense, it is crafted and

mobilized by signifiers that none of us actually choose” (Butler, 2009, p. xii). Gender, in other words, becomes the locus for the cultural configuration of the body; it is produced and shaped by the culture. Nonetheless, Butler claims that it “is open to a continual remaking, and that “anatomy” and “sex” are not without cultural framing” (2004, p. 9-10). Put it differently, gender represents the regime which regulates the norms. Since gender is not natural, but is imposed as a norm and is supposed to be performed by individuals on a regular basis, there is always a possibility to reverse the coded genders: “Performativity is thus not a singular “act,” for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition” (Butler, 1993, p. 12). In other saying, the body is inevitably gendered through repetitive and reinforcing acts. Because the body is always exposed to the cultural construction which is regulated by the ideological principles, Butler does criticize the idea that considers identities static, fixed, and obligatory; rather, she claims that identity is the product of language and discourse. Accordingly, identity is gendered by discourses and practices that are repeated. Because the power system creates and shapes identities in parallel with the aims of the ideology, individuals are coerced to internalize the conditions presented to them as the norm. Individuals are vulnerable to the authority, and as the products of the system they are left no other option but to accept to become the subjects that the authority predefines for them; “choosing one’s own body invariably means navigating among norms that are laid out in advance and prior to one’s choice” (Butler, 2004, p. 7). No matter how pre-ordained the body and systematized the gender roles seem to be, Butler states that gender exists so long as it is performed. Because “the deed” is the determining factor of identity, the negation of the gender codes attributed to the body is possible on the condition that individuals cease to repeat the roles cast in for them:

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “a natural sex” is produced and established as “prediscursive”, prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts (1990, p. 7).

Adopting the phenomenological perception, Butler disapproves the traditional feminist theories that define woman as regards to certain frames and heterosexual perspective

which delimit maleness and femaleness to specific roles. “Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized” (Butler, 2004, p. 42). While being “female” signifies the biological reality without a meaning, becoming “woman” represents codes attributed to the female body by the cultural images. Butler regards that feminine victimization is the outcome of the gender roles coded for the female sex: “It is through the body that gender and sexuality become exposed to others, implicated in social process, inscribed by cultural norms, and apprehended in their social meanings” (2004, p. 20).

Because the postmodern approach focuses on the instability of institutions, plurality of subjectivity, uncertainty, and resistance against authority, the movement provides an opportunity for perceiving the body as distinct from the one directed on women by dominant forces and delivers a solution to the limits of normative indoctrination. Accordingly, among the issues postmodernism does handle, representation is the most essential one because it stands for the combination of power relationships, control mechanisms, and cultural discourses. In other saying, representations of entities are the outcomes of linguistic and historical agencies. Meanings we attribute to entities are constructed and made through various institutions and practices. Therefore, postmodernism handles the human issue as fragmented because of the belief that there exists no real self-unity.

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others but also to touch and to violence. The body can be the agency and instrument of all these as well, or the site where “doing” and “being done to” become equivocal (Butler, 2004, p. 21).

Giving importance to the bodily existence and experience, Butler regards the body as developing and changing rather than as a fixed material. As a response to the instruments that convey the message that woman is her body and exists merely within her body without reason or mind due to the fact that her sex is female, Butler does reject the phallogentric language of the masculine discourse. Accordingly, in this dissertation, the eating disorders, which emerge as a consequence of somatophobia, are interpreted from the postmodern feminist perspective, through which the significance of the body along with the mind is emphasized, and the power of the body to subvert the inferior and even the dirty image of body is examined: “how the change in image reflects the

change from feeling like a helpless victim of circumstances to the experience of being an active participant in life” (Bruch, 1979, p. 158). Even though anorexia nervosa and binge eating are considered the psycho-somatic diseases, in this dissertation, they are interpreted as the subversive powers, through which the heroines achieve to de-construct and re-construct her body/self-perception. The body is the fictional entity regulated through the acts it performs, without “ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality” (Butler, 1990, p. 136). Consequently, the postmodern body is at stake with an undetermined sexual identity and alterable gender roles; the individual is unconfined to (re)make or (re)change her personality without the bounds of the rules and roles dictated on her by the authority. The body, redefined within the postmodern feminist understanding, is thus identified as fragmented, non-essential, non-unitary, non-stereotypical, miscellaneous, and fluid as well.

1.4.3. Postmodern Aspect of Eating Disorders: Anorexia Nervosa and Binge Eating as a Resistance against Somatophobia

Eating constitutes a receptive relationship to the outside world in terms of representations, and so does seeing – though in different ways. The sensory aspect of eating – the sense of taste [...] – is not transformed into a mental representation in the manner visual perception turns into mental “images” [...] but nevertheless, both are still moulded by the cultural representations (Falk, 1994, p. 11).

In this study, Atwood, Weldon, and Green portray the female body as a subversive power which has the potential to protest the patriarchal construction of femaleness within certain body types through anorexia nervosa and binge eating which appear as the symptoms of somatophobia. Because the body has always been studied and represented diversely in different periods of history and influenced by the ideology of the epoch, it mirrors the cultural, technological, economic, and political values of societies. However, by any means, the body has been subjected either to pathology or to the politics through which power relations deactivate the body. As in real life, in *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, women are called biology, sex, nature, and corporeal objects serving just for the sake of male desire. Stating a reason for the oppression and repression of women both in private and public spheres, male hegemony finds women’s weak anatomical structure and vulnerable psycho-biological metabolism as pretexts: “Woman makes man and man makes the world; woman is concrete, need-bound, animal; and man is conceptual, active, human” (Olugbade, 1989, p. 512). Due to the fact that she is regarded as lack, imperfect, irrational, and tempting

one to be trained by the male hegemony woman is intentionally antagonized to herself. Although she has always been considered the body, withheld from the mental activities, and forced to be integrated with her body, woman has at the same time been turned against her body through imposing the idea of self-loathing. Accordingly, the status inconsistency woman does experience vitiates her psychological and physiological health.

In this dissertation, somatophobia is subverted through anorexia nervosa and compulsive eating, which are indeed assumed to be the instruments of the system that serve for the patriarchal purposes. The relationship between eating disorders and somatophobia is based on the symbolic meaning that food has for women almost in all cultures. First of all, human behavior is shaped through the basic needs of physiology and of the social motives. As a physical presence, the individual does strain at satisfying the need for eating, sleeping, and sexuality; and s/he is, at any rate, in quest of pleasure, which is related to desire, and desire is the thing that is independent of social determinants. In other words, desire must be satisfied within the individual. However, throughout the history, the body has always been regarded as unfavorable because of its symbol of desire.

As Turner claims, desire, which undertakes the responsibility for the evils of this-worldly existence, is associated with temptation and flesh (2008, p. 27). Bruch handles eating disorders with an emphasis on the representations of food in different ages. Although eating evokes initially a biological need for the body, Bruch remarks that food as a concept is not that simple: "Food is endowed with complex values and elaborate ideologies, religious beliefs, and prestige systems" (1973, p.3). The tedious relationship between woman and eating is based on the religious parable concerning the original sin. Although she is forbidden to eat the apple, Eve disobeys the rule of God because of her inability to control her desire and hunger. As she is overwhelmed by her emotions rather than her reason, she falls from the grace of God and is punished in consequence. In line with the religious belief, in modern societies, desire is prohibited for women as it connotes appetite. Because appetite evokes sexuality, the latter is also restrained for women and even judged as a sin on the condition that women experience it for pleasure. Sex is allowable only when it serves for the purpose of recreation and for the satisfaction of her partner's desire. In this sense, in the name of woman, there is a

crystal clear similarity between the negative connotations of sex/food/desire and woman. Providing that desire refers to the female appetite, refusal of food to the point of starvation is considered the only way through which woman can discipline and punish her body.

Eating [...] is an activity which has a basic physiological function, but which is heavily mediated by culture. While feeding a child is an act of care and support, creating a bond between parents and child, it is also the imposition of a “mode of living” (a regimen) on a subordinate (2008, p. 152).

Because eating is associated with hunger, hunger with appetite, appetite with desire, and desire with sexuality, this chain link is the explanation of the reason why women are expected to refrain from eating. The inconsistency between woman and food does reveal the delusive judgment concerning femininity: even though woman is defined in terms of and subjected to domestic duties like cooking, the act of eating is barred for her just for the sake of chastity. Therefore, she cooks for others; for the family members; yet, not for herself: “For woman, food and reproduction are particularly emblematic activities, universally associated with femaleness” (Counihan, 1999, p. 63). As a form of expressing her love for her children and husband, food is a vehicle for woman to ensure the family bond and fulfill the maternal duties. Therefore, it is clear that though it is a physiological need, eating is always construed by patriarchal power:

Food may symbolically stand for an insatiable desire for unobtainable love, or as an expression of rage and hatred; it may substitute for sexual gratification or indicate ascetic denial; it may represent the wish to be a man and possess a penis, or the wish to be pregnant, or fear of it. It may provide a sense of spurious power and thus lead to self-aggrandizement, or it may serve as a defense against adulthood and responsibility (Bruch, 1973, p. 44).

In order to clarify the relationship between eating disorders and somatophobia, Bruch elaborates the reasons for the female embodiment and for the changing ideal body images in history through the sound background she provides. During the Paleolithic period, being fat was regarded as the perfect female figure with “steatopygia [...] large abdomens and heavy hips and thighs” (1973, p. 9). Representing sexuality and beauty besides wealth and power, eating was considered an appropriate habit that each woman is supposed to maintain. However, the popularity of obesity lasted by the time starvation was glorified for the sake of God’s grace. Based on the Old Testament, “deliberate refusal of food is a complex, rather “unnatural” phenomenon. Voluntary abstinence from food is a prescribed ritual in many religious traditions, an effort to liberate oneself

from selfish and materialistic concerns, and to purify body and soul” (1973, p. 11). Albeit broadly accepted as a modern-day disorder, the history of anorexia goes back to the thirteenth century. In those times, anorexia was perceived as a form of fasting which women practiced to display their gratitude to God. Through the practice of the Eucharist, *videlicet*, just consuming bread and wine as the symbols of Christ, women served the purpose of Christianity. In this sense, the asceticism that women did experience was just for becoming pure and ideal in the eyes of God as the body was considered inoperative and sinful reminding punishment and hell. Inspired by the story of Eve’s disgrace as a result of her desire for the apple, the Western world did shape the female image in parallel with the Biblical accounts.

Rooted in the religious sense of mortifying the flesh, for woman, fasting functioned for the purpose of disciplining and purifying the body from tempting tendencies. Eating was considered fleshy, voluptuous, and actuator of sexuality for men. “Appetite was a barometer of a woman’s moral state. Control of eating was eminently desirable, if not necessary. Where control was lacking, young women were subject to derision” (Brumberg, 2000, p. 179). Under the influence of the religious doctrines, women regarded being fat or becoming fat as a sin since it did connote rebellion and resistance against the authority. Quite contrary to the modern understanding, in those times the fat woman was generally associated with sexuality and desire because “fat tissues store sex hormones, so low fat reserves are linked with weak estrogens and low levels of all other important sex hormones, as well as with inactive ovaries” (2002, p. 192). In this regard, within the traditional thinking and understanding of woman and the female body, anorexia represents a real somatophobic outcome in a sense that it makes woman hate her own body and strive for perfecting it through depriving herself of food: self-starvation is the single way to purify herself from the evil and to be accepted to the male locus. “Female fat is the subject of public passion, and women feel guilty about female fat [...] women’s bodies are not our own but society’s, and that thinness is not a private aesthetic, but hunger a social concession exacted by the community” (Wolf, 2002, p. 187). Because body is considered disgusting and something to be ashamed of, woman sinks herself into the effort of being estranged to her body. Her body leaves her hanging in the midair: she feels obliged either to take the form of the ideal body image and accept her contained bodily existence, or reject her body as a source of threat.

The anorexic self-image is a black hole, a cavernous nothingness, a disruption of the sense of a linear time, so that the present becomes a synecdoche for past and future and all of lived experience, an experience of the mind and body as radically split, with the mind struggling to control the body, an increasing isolation, a complete suppression of sexuality, as well as loss of secondary sexual characteristic, a marked identification with the masculine and simultaneous rejection of the feminine, along with a paradoxical attempt to accede to beauty standards of thinness (Heywood, 1996, p. 17).

Though considered the most disciplinary female affliction in modern cultures, anorexia nervosa was first introduced as an illness in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most likely due to the mannered and hypocritical stance of the microcosm and the indirect indicator of the macrocosm, the Victorian period witnessed many cultural artifacts and insincerity, through which individuals did pretend to be the one that they ever dreamed. Related to the hypocritical nature of the era, lack of appetite was regarded as a sign of purity and virginity. Because being slender was believed to signify beauty and elegance, the Victorian women did readily accept self-starvation as an indication of having the ideal feminine figure.

When the anorexia develops, they feel the illness is caused by some mysterious force that invades them or directs their behavior. Many experience themselves and their bodies as separate entities, and it is the mind's task to control the unruly and despised body. Others speak of feeling divided, as being a split person or two people (Bruch, 1979, p. 58).

On the other hand, within the consumer ideology of the modern period, anorexia nervosa and obesity are to be interpreted from a different perspective. Bruch defines anorexia as a "voluntary starvation" (1979, p. 4) that any contemporary woman tastes with a desire to gain male approval. In *The Edible Woman* and *Jemima J.* the heroines become anorectics with the purpose of having the ideal female body size and being accepted by the male hegemony. Obesity, on the other hand, is defined as a "grotesque mirror image" (1973, p. 4) that any woman does experience with an uncontrollable desire for eating. In *Jemima J.* and *The Fat Woman's Joke* compulsive eating functions as a masculine power that each heroine desires to have. Since twentieth century, by the force of capitalism, anorexia nervosa has become a matter of contexts. The consumer culture, impressing woman through titivating cosmetics and plastic surgery as normal, has caused her to be obsessed with her body. The patriarchy, as an aside, has taught her to be beautiful and attractive for the male gaze. Accordingly, in modern societies, woman does assume anorexia nervosa as a disciplining or self-policing factor for the

body; the pathetic condition of woman with which she is overwhelmed by and kept under control. In other words, eating disorders have shifted from the perfection for God to the perfection for Man. In *The Fat Woman's Joke* and *Jemima J.*, female characters suffer from anorexia nervosa as an adverse effect of somatophobia they experience through which they regard their bodies as imperfect and as the flesh which needs discipline and control via self-starvation. Jemima and Esther condition their bodies with the purpose of achieving the ideal size for male approval. Therefore, they become the self-policing and self-disciplining subjects of the society which teaches them to adapt their bodies to the standards determined by the patriarchal expectations.

“She is reduced to a cipher of male lust. Her sexuality and her body are denied her as, like her mirror, she becomes a reflection of other people's desires, a blank page on which a series of men can write their narratives of her significance” (Michie, 1987, p. 61). In popular culture, the body becomes the medium of beauty and sexuality, through which woman is expected to appeal to the male eye: “Beauty” is a currency system like the gold standard. Like any economy, it is determined by politics, and in the modern age in the West it is the last, best belief system that keeps male dominance intact” (Wolf, 2002, p. 12). Put it differently, in modern societies the disciplining force of the body is not religion but patriarchy, and taking the body as a mission is not for health or aesthetics but it is just the conscious act of politics. Through her body woman could easily depart from her mind and engage herself with trivial things like beauty, diet, and body shape. In modern societies, obesophobia takes the form of an individual resistance against her own self. As understood from the case studies, the anorectics are not aware of the negative effect that non-eating has caused on their bodies. They gradually lose their interest in food; they do not want to dinner out with their friends or relatives, and they do not want to be involved in enchantments. By contrast, they believe that “[they alone are] gifted with the truth” (Wolf, 2002, p. 122). In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, all female characters turn out to be self-enclosed women as a consequence of their anorectic practices. Under the oppression of the patriarchal norms, the heroines attempt to survive through adapting their bodies to the system; however, the more they attempt to perfect their bodies, the more they get disappointed with their new appearance.

Body hatred or body fear, which is regarded as the symptom of somatophobia, becomes the driving force for woman. Because she finds herself fat, ugly, and unattractive as a consequence of the imposed assumptions, woman does show tendency to self-imposed diets in order to deprive herself of food. Within the capitalist and patriarchal values, anorexia turns out to be a control mechanism oriented to the body in order that woman could measure up the standards determined by the authority; “an exercise of mind over body, of culture over nature” (Turner, 2008, p. 157). In such a case, woman becomes a victim and pawn of the system; she attempts to take control of her body through penalizing it, debarring it from food whereby she believes she would have a voice over her body which has already been conquered by others. In this sense, anorexia nervosa functions as a control mechanism, through which woman achieves self-surveillance. The capitalist ideology targets women and their bodies, and in order to capture their minds the system imposes the idea of consuming their bodies through the care products, plastic surgeries, or self-starvation under the name of diets that aim to re-make women in accordance with the patriarchal norms. In this context, Macleod defines anorexia nervosa as:

a disease in which the concept of the whole person is so confused, so dialectically divided, that ‘I’ can at the same time be choosing to live, as the self, and choosing to die, as the body, however unconscious those choices may be [...] both suicide of the schizoid type and anorexia nervosa involve a denial of reality which depends upon an acceptance of a split between self and body, and is only possible through paradox (qtd. in Turner, 2008, p. 157).

On the other hand, obesity has always been regarded as nauseous; to illustrate, in ancient Greeks, girls were regularly controlled naked in the mirror, and on the condition that they did gain fat, they were forced to exercise to lose weight. In a similar vein, the Athenians and the Romans were against obesity. During the Middle Ages, based on the religious idea, obesity was considered the representation of gluttonousness based on the assumption that those who were sent to hell were fat and heavy while those who were sent to heaven were thin. In the contemporary age, being fat is associated with being psychologically depressed or having some other mental problems; the obese is, thus, believed to have “‘no will power,’ lack of mastery, submission to fate, and readiness to give up in the face of difficulties” (Bruch, 1973, p. 21). In modern cultures, the overweight is isolated from public spheres and even from the professions on the pretext that being presentable – slim – is favored forever. However, some women consume

foods unconsciously. The reason for dedicating themselves to excessive eating is based on some sort of unjust treatment they receive such as rape, violence, or sexual harassment. In order to prevent any further ferocity on her body, woman finds no other way but to punish her body as if it were the guilty of her victimization. Put it differently, under the influence of the discourse which always emphasizes the female marginalization and lack because of her material existence, not voluntarily, but unconsciously, she rejects her body by covering it with fat. Thus, she believes that she would remove the possible threats her body would cause through camouflaging it. In *Jemima J.*, the somatophobic tendency that Jemima shows through binge eating is interpreted with reference to the psychological reasons that turn Jemima into an obese.

“Food refusal, or not permitting themselves to eat as a kind of self-punishment, is a defense against the original fear” (1979, p. 4). From postmodern feminist point of view, anorexia nervosa – “non-fat-phobic anorexia nervosa” – is interpreted as a subversive course of conduct. Quite simply, although the disorder unfolds as a form of women’s submission to the power structure or to the authority whereby she attempts to correct her assumed defective parts of her body through dieting and even through self-starvation, in fact, the anorectic subverts the female body image through challenging certain body lines and female body processes that could define her as a real woman. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman’s Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, anorexia turns out to be an expression for the heroines; a response to the predetermined social values. “The anorexic refuses to let the official cycle master her: By starving, she masters it” (2002, p. 198). Rather than bow to the pressures, the anorectic herself takes the upper hand over her body. In this regard, anorexia does symbolize a sort of communication through the body without any need for verbal forms of expression. In this dissertation, anorexia nervosa represents the metaphorical act of resistance to the capitalist and patriarchal patterns of the body that culture prescribes. As a defense mechanism against the discord invented by the repertoire of discourses that power structures do legitimate, anorexia nervosa is expounded as an insurgence against the patriarchal perception of the female sexuality and body. Rather than have blind allegiance to the assumed ideals of the society, woman rejects her feminine attributes that make her look sexual and charming for the male gaze. In this regard, the anorectic struggles for the power that has been forbidden to her. Herein after, she has a voice in changing the dominant system, and she

is apt enough to take over through controlling her body as a self-directed individual: she exercises sovereignty over her body in order not to let the others put in a claim for it.

Anorexia, as the “compulsive fear of and fixation upon food” (Campos, 2004, p. 149), functions in a sense to cause the anorectic to become both physically and mentally “male identified woman”. In this context, the anorexic philosophy imposes the idea that her excessive slender body is the representation of her masculine triumph: her thin body is the indication of her equality with man as she thinks she is away from the definitions of an ideal body with certain curvaceous body lines. In *The Edible Woman*, Marian’s propensity for anorexia nervosa proves that she attempts to overcome her bodily victimization through turning it into an unfeminine entity. She strives for masculinity and thus equality with Peter through anorexia, and only after she regains her sense of self, she recovers her appetite. As Bruch states, woman struggles for negating her identity as a female and for gaining power and victory through self-starvation: “Hunger is not the only bodily demand that is denied: not giving in to fatigue rates equally high. Swimming one more lap, running one more mile, doing ever more excruciating calisthenics, everything becomes a symbol of victory over the body” (1979, p. 66). The anorectic consciously punishes her body through fasting and vomiting with the intent to depurate her body from the assumed nimity; herewith, her body, in return, shows various physical symptoms such as insomnia, intestinal obstruction, amenorrhea, hypersensitivity, and pilosity. The more she loses the feminine qualities that make her an ideal woman in the eyes of masculine world, the more the anorectic believes that she gains her real sense of self. In other words, she is at peace because her body does not appeal to the male gaze any more. In this context, due to the fact that “discursive formations” are determined or organized by power and knowledge relationship, Foucault argues for the mobility of power relations and the possibility of subversion. Thus, within the subversive postmodern feminist understanding, anorexia nervosa becomes the conscious act of rebellion against coded roles, social rules, and legitimated criteria of being a woman. Woman responds to the expectations of society through rejecting the presuppositions attributed to her body. She declares that she exists without any somatopsychosis⁹. She disentralls from the mental bondage by rejecting the beauty image, body shape, and all other self-consuming factors.

Also, binge eating or compulsive eating is interpreted as a challenging act from the postmodern feminist perspective. Because being overweight is against the expectations of the patriarchal hegemony, fat echoes the uninviting and the unfavorable female body. In other words, binge eating, albeit regarded as “a sister condition of anorexia, a characteristic modern personality construction” (Bordo, 2003, p. 201), functions as a subversive power against the bodily norms determined by the cultural ideology of the male cosmos. In this context, being fat is a reaction against social structures and cultural values. Among the reasons for overeating, gender inequality, which emerges out of the anatomical fact of being female, is the very possible factor for women to become fat: “Fat expresses a rebellion against the powerlessness of the woman, against the pressure to look and act in a certain way and against being evaluated on her ability to create an image of herself” (Orbach, 2006, p. 18). Because being a woman represents weakness and vulnerability in patriarchal societies, obese women are decisive enough to demonstrate their power and self-protection through enriching their bodies with fat. Accordingly, becoming fat is a response, or a challenge against the poor portrayal of woman as powerless; the desire to overeat, thus, metaphorically means power and protection.

The overweight believes that by rejecting the assumptions concerning the ideal femininity she could overcome the perception that defines her existence just as a sex object which is promoted by the media and the capitalist industry with the purpose of forcing woman to satisfy male desire through becoming thin, sexual, and beautiful. The objective that the overweight wants to accomplish is to undermine the visual and discursive dictations which focus on the assumed ideal body that patriarchy creates. Through negating the social roles attributed to her, woman chooses to become fat in order to desexualize but strengthen herself. “My fat says “screw you” all who want me to be the perfect mom, sweetheart, maid and whore. Take me for who I am, not for who I’m supposed to be” (2006, p. 18). In this sense, binge eating becomes a medium for subverting the stereotypical definitions of woman. When woman achieves to resist the expectations of the culture by rejecting the imposed slimness as the ideal, the overweight in fact adopts a real self-image because “it is not the “fat” that possesses power, but the woman herself” (2006, p. 58). Negating the social and cultural norms that impose the assumed sexual and gender ideals on woman, the overweight firmly believes that through escaping the ideal image she could gain power and have a secure

stance in public and private spaces just as the other sex has. In *The Fat Woman's Joke*, Esther's compulsive eating is thus interpreted as her conscious act of gaining power. Discarding the authority of her husband over her identity and body, Esther achieves to subvert the cliché images of femaleness by accepting her body beyond the definitions and measures.

Atwood, Weldon, and Green portray their heroines either as an anorectic or as an obese having problems concerning their perception of their own bodies as faulty and lack. However, after struggling for gaining their own sense of self, each protagonist achieves to appreciate her body as it is. Put it differently, the eating disorders indeed help them discover the truths regarding their existence with their bodies; each heroine realizes the fact that her body is "her" body; it does not belong to others. She learns to get rid of the made-female beauty by changing her own perception. In *Jemima J.*, Green portrays the protagonist as an obese in the beginning; she suffers from the visual image which the society she lives in regards as ugly and unattractive. Nonetheless, by the time she loses weight and becomes an anorectic, she realizes that the thin image she sees in the mirror does not reflect her real identity. Recovering from anorexia nervosa, Jemima works up an appetite. In this regard, in line with the postmodern interpretation of anorexia nervosa, binge eating pertains to rebellion as well. In a similar way, in *The Fat Woman's Joke*, Esther subverts the female image of a slender and well-built body idealized by patriarchy and by the capitalist society. For her, fat makes her safe, strong, and independent. In *the Edible Woman*, Marian's anorexia is a sort of revolt against the patriarchal rules; she resists the regulations of the ideology by rejecting to take food. Therefore, within the postmodern feminist perspective, both binge eating and anorexia nervosa function as languages spoken and understood by women without any need for verbal enunciation. Rather than submit to hegemonic male authority, both the overweight and the anorectic respond to the illusive judgments by seizing control over their own bodies.

The identity is not, reductively, that of the mind with the body, as body; nor of the body with mind, as mind; rather the identity, or the unity, is the totality itself as a functional or organic one, that is as an activity of living, thinking, feeling, willing, whose organic condition is certainly a material or physical body, but only a body of a certain kind, the acting body, whose externality is a relational one, and that therefore cannot be reduced to a composite or aggregate physical thing except in death (qtd. in Turner, 2008, p. 160).

The judgment accrediting woman with inferiority is nothing more than an expired ill-thought of blinkered patriarchy and capitalism. Woman, ere now and today, has reason and mind to sustain her existence along with her body. Therefore, it is high time for woman to question who she is and whom she exists for. Instead of adjusting to the undervalued attributions of femininity, woman must awaken to her own reality and identity as an individual. Woman has both the cognitive skills and the sensuous capabilities that would allow her to get in touch with the internal and external forces; and the body is not the possession of others but one's own belonging through which she fulfills her subjectivity.



CHAPTER II

ATWOOD'S *THE EDIBLE WOMAN*

A cultural categorization in its elementary form is the very naming of the unrepresentable "good" structured in a binary mode and thus defining its opposite, the "bad", or, in other words, what is desired or allowed to enter inside (introjection) and what should be kept outside or must be expelled if it has managed to get inside (projection). In bodily (oral) terms, the binary opposition acquires the form edible versus inedible (Falk, 1994, p. 19).

As a prominent Canadian writer, Atwood has made a hit as a novelist, poet, short story writer and critic in the international cycle through the outstanding gift of her pen and through the translations of her great works into various languages. Beginning her writing career with a book of poetry, *The Circle Game*, Atwood gained the Governor General's Literary Award. She has published sixteen novels so far and has been deemed worthy of the Governor General's Award for her novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, and been honored with Booker Prize with *Alias Grace*. By dint of her creative production of so many rewarding literary works, Atwood is regarded as one of the most frequently studied writers of the contemporary age.

Handling social problems concerning gender politics and ideological conventions, Atwood, in her novels, does explore the process of the search for individual identity. The underlying reason for the success of Atwood's novels is based on the ordinary people she chooses her characters from: market researchers, housemaids, students, writers, and etcetera. Her observation of the public life and the portrayal of realistic characters and situations enable Atwood to project or denounce the negative aspects of the weapons that ideology adopts and presumes as the principle. Atwood generally predicates on the American culture which is based on the capitalist system that dictates inevitable consumerism and artificial femininity as the norms. Through presenting situations that lead her characters to fulfill the expectations of the consumer culture, Atwood indeed attempts to criticize the instruments that serve for the patriarchal ideology. In other saying, the author claims that the generalizations concerning female embodiment and corporeality is nothing more than the malicious intentions of the

patriarchal order. Revealing the fact that women are canalized to trivial pursuits in an effort to prove that they are empty-headed bodily entities, as a great author, Atwood does manage to spoil the patriarchal game on women through enabling her heroines to subvert the stereotypical understanding of femininity. Challenging the patriarchal Western civilization, Atwood does embrace postmodern feminist attitude in her novels. Rather than leave unsettled the victimhood that women have been exposed to, Atwood deconstructs the assumptions of the Enlightenment ideals concerning the fixity of the female nature and the perception of gender as universal values. The author also assures her female protagonists of gaining sense of self through resisting the ideological weapons that restrict their mental and bodily freedom.

Regarded as a feminist icon, Atwood presents situations and characters through which the inequality between man and woman in public arena, gender divisions established by the ideological instruments, and the burden of performing femininity are questioned and examined from different perspectives. Influenced by the feminist movements, Atwood uncovers situations and people as they are instead of imposing what the things should be. Through her heroines, Atwood intends to examine women who are both dominated by the male authority and have the sword to realize their power as well. In her novels, “Atwood does challenge the rules and conventions of writing, and of society” (Cooke, 2004, p. 29). In other words, Atwood creates her protagonists with the power to battle against and subvert the system that does attempt to possess her subjectivity, and reconstruct her true identity without the borders of the society in which they live. Atwood, by transmitting the ideological weapons that captivate women within a society, presents solutions via the power she attributes to the protagonist on the purpose of transforming the course of events.

Written in 1965 and published in 1969, *The Edible Woman* is considered a “proto-feminist” novel despite the fact that Atwood did fictionalize it before the feminist movement took effect. As the first novel of Atwood, *The Edible Woman* presents alternative female characters whose common fate is oppression within a male hegemonic society. Through different female dispositions, Atwood intends to satirize and display the factors that withhold women from their bodies, choices, professions, and the sense of self. *The Edible Woman* is the story of a young and single woman, Marian who works for a market research company. Albeit university educated, Marian finds her

position unsatisfactory due to the fact that it does not promise hope for her future. In a similar way, Marian also discovers that the relationship with her boyfriend, Peter, is clouded. However, by the time Peter proposes her, Marian accepts it without hesitation based on the assumption that marriage would be the mere way to subsist and Peter the ideal husband to save her stance in life through marriage. Yet, she does skip over the reality that Peter considers marriage a mediator for success in his profession.

Having dilemmas between her wishes and necessities within a patriarchal society, Marian touches base with Duncan whom she meets while interviewing for a campaign. Cultivating a friendship with him, Marian finds out that while passing time with him she feels free from any universal complex of femininity. Uncertain about her stance in life, Marian begins to observe the lives of her friends, Clara and Ainsley more closely especially after she receives the proposal from Peter. Realizing the inevitable destiny of a woman who is believed to exist either with her bodily attractiveness as a sexy and charming lady or with her gender roles as a devoted mother and a chaste wife, Marian resolves that she wants to become neither of them. Torn between two representations of femininity – Ainsley as the victim of the consumer culture which dictates her to perfect and present her body as an ideal female image and Clara, as a reproductive machine, forgets her sense of identity – Marian notices that she is being consumed by Peter and thus by the patriarchal norms through the ideological directives. As a woman, Marian strives for finding her true identity; through these models she discovers that neither of them would mirror her real self. In a similar vein, she discovers the fact that Peter would not be an escape but a catastrophe; yet she is unable to escape from her predetermined fate easily. In no time at all, Marian comes to realize that she has problems with her appetite: she is unable to eat certain foods she did eat with pleasure beforehand. Unaware of the reason, Marian recognizes that her non-eating has become a menace for her; the more she forces herself to eat, the more she becomes distanced to her body. Trying to understand the reason behind the problem, she consults her friends desperately; yet, the explanations do not make any sense for her.

Before their wedding, Peter gives a party in order to exhibit Marian to the guests as if she were an object for others' gazes. She begins to be enlightened by the time Peter asks her to be attentive to her appearance for the party. Feeling obliged, Marian makes her hair done, wears make-up, and buys a red dress. Nonetheless, she realizes that this new

Marian is a total stranger to her own self. The next day, when Marian talks to Duncan about her problems with Peter, he claims that the real problem is all in her mind. Upon this recognition, she discovers that her lack of appetite is also related to her intolerance to Peter's attempt to shape, to discipline and to rule over her body. Enlightened about the implied meaning of anorexia that she experiences, she bakes a cake and ornamented it as a woman image. Upon Peter's arrival, Marian presents the cake as a substitute for her body. Unable to understand what Marian implies, Peter leaves immediately without eating. As a reaction to the system that indoctrinates body-obsession and body-hatred to the psyches of the female sex, Marian eats the cake herself, thus rejects to be consumed by the male authority and to exist merely with her body for male service. She declares off the wedding and recovers her appetite as an indication of her approval of her body as it is. Marian overcomes her hatred and fear of the body through subverting the modern perception of the female body.

2.1. Philosophical Background of Somatophobia

Within *The Edible Woman*, Atwood attacks the ancient philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and the Enlightenment understanding of Descartes and Hegel which indigenize the enslavement of mind and body of woman both in public and private spheres. Atwood portrays the archaic identification of woman with the body and with the private domain through the carefully selected situations and events. Because the misogynist philosophy of the modern world does undergird the existence of woman as the marginal outsider in the society, she is left to find her identity within the house through her body. In *The Edible Woman*, in a similar vein, woman is considered the one who does not have the capacity for mental, economic, and public issues because of her innate wickedness. Therefore, she is excluded from the external world despite the right and proficiency she has for education and for the related professions. As a consequence of the unsound assumptions concerning the female materiality, woman is marginalized because of her anatomy: the body.

2.1.1. Body within Nature/Culture and Private/Public Discourse

Atwood does criticize the philosophical lie that attempts to exclude woman from active agency through Clara's husband, Joe. Clara, Marian's friend from the college, is among those who cause Marian to question her identity as a woman in a material body. As an instructor in philosophy, Joe is the one who well knows the philosophical disposition

towards the sexes, and thus he causes Marian to have somatophobic disposal because of the misjudgments he directs to the female body. In a similar vein with the ancient Greeks who regards women as “without courage and political capacity, and as treacherous, duplicitous, and lacking rational control” (Blair, 2012, p. 8), Joe, as the representative of the Western philosophy, identifies women with negative connotations. Just as traditional philosophers, Joe indigenizes a sardonic approach towards women: he believes that women are weak and unprotected just because of their nature. In furtherance of Aristotle, Joe legitimates man’s natural superiority over woman because he believes that woman lacks the rational faculty which he believes necessary for management and domination. Accordingly, Joe attempts to limit Clara’s sense of self within the domestic sphere through imposing the idea of childbearing as the perfect ideal in her life. In other words, Joe believes that woman could exist merely with her body through giving birth and satisfying the sexual desires of her husband via her bodily attraction.

Paradoxically enough, Joe takes care of the children and manages the house which is indeed against the expectations of a patriarchal society. “Joe had been up and down all during the meal, taking off the plates and tending things in the kitchen” (p. 32): he cooks, clears the table, and even deals with the children. The gender roles that are attributed to each sex seem to be subverted at first view; yet, the reality is related to the poor vision of Joe who regards Clara and her sex as lack. Put it differently, the reason for cooking and doing the housework uncovers the weak potential of Clara whom Joe thinks is not competent enough even in domestic business. Joe claims himself as the authority both in and out of the house; he is the decision maker. The things that Joe expects Clara to perform are reproduction and maternity (breastfeeding) which feature her identification with nature. Nonetheless, Joe ignores the fact that Clara has lost her real identity and subjectivity as a consequence of the lack of capability to recover herself. Despite the potential she has for controlling the events in her surroundings, Clara, as a character foil, seems to accept the inevitability of her husband’s claim for superiority in every issue. As an outcome of her husband’s focus on her inefficacy even in domestic deeds besides the hardship with pregnancy and the inability to control her own body, Clara has dispensed with everything in her life:

Clara simply had no practicality, she wasn't able to control the more mundane aspects of life, like money or getting to lectures on time [...] She simply stood helpless while the tide of dirt rose around her, unable to stop it or evade it. The babies were like that too; her own body seemed somehow beyond her, going its own way without reference to any directions of hers (p. 34).

Quite aware of the influence of the Western philosophy which aims to deactivate woman even in domestic sphere, Ainsley does criticize the way Clara acts within the house. "She just lies there and that man does all the work! She lets herself be treated like a thing!" (p. 35). Ainsley regards that Clara allows her husband to authorize her life by doing everything himself rather than make her involve in the matters. According to Ainsley, Clara does not have any sense of decision making mechanism or resolution to take up the challenge. Internalizing the Hegelian perspective, Clara, from Ainsley's point of view, seems to accept her passive existence within the family. "Well, she should do something; if only a token gesture. She never finished her degree, did she? Wouldn't this be a perfect time for her to work on it? Lots of pregnant women finish their degrees" (p. 36) suggests Ainsley. Through the portrayal of Clara, Atwood questions the role of education in women's mental and bodily victimization, and the reasons for the alienation of women to the right to education. Besides various instruments of ideology, education is associated with men only. In other words, education is labeled as manly and restricted to women especially once she gets married and has children. As Plato states in *Republic*, women have the right to be educated as guardians on the condition that they become masculine women. Based on the assumed male superiority over the female nature, Plato regards that women have innate inferiority in comparison to men; therefore, no matter how educated they would become, women, Plato claims, have no sufficient potential to access to male presence. In this regard, despite her educational background, Clara now leads a life either as pregnant or as a selfless mother within the house. Marriage, which takes its power from the patriarchal ideology, legitimates the enslavement of Clara through withholding her from maintaining her education and profession. The ostensible lack of capability for mental faculties causes Clara to be regarded as a passive corporeal entity that could exist merely within the house. "The female is generative, she gives birth and represents the beginning, but not necessarily the completion, of a project" (Olugbade, 1989, p. 516). Such an understanding of woman is the outcome of the archaic philosophy which also penetrates the modern perception of woman as an embodiment. Despite the

substantial potential she has to build a career, Clara is exposed to remise her ideals for the sake of male ego. Highly influenced by the philosophy of Hegel, Joe believes that Clara should not further her education. Because education evokes a sort of freedom and a means for development, Joe thinks that it is too much for Clara to have freedom beyond her family. From Joe's perspective, Clara, as a typical female, is supposed to devote herself to ethics and morality within the private domain. The reason for the isolation of woman from the active stance in life is assumed to be based on her sex; thus, Marian is negatively influenced by Joe's humiliating judgments concerning his wife, and thus all women. Joe's archaic viewpoints regarding the limitations of woman is indicated by the time he speaks of Clara at the party Peter gives before the wedding:

I think it's a lot harder for her than for most other women; I think it's harder for any woman who's been to university. She gets the idea she has a mind, her professors pay attention to what she has to say, they treat her like a thinking human being; when she gets married, her core gets invaded (p. 259).

Joe pretends to be caring for Clara and for her psychology; he seems to be helpful to her in domestic works and childcare. However, through the statements above he indeed declares that Clara is such a woman who is supposed to reject her past, her education, and her awareness. Rather, he states that like any other woman, Clara is to turn into an ordinary female type by adapting her personality to the demands of the masculine benefit. Joe admits that education raises the awareness of woman towards herself and towards life, and she gets the feeling that she is capable of anything that requires reason. However, he claims that because marriage is the ultimate aim of a woman, it is tantalizing to make her feel rational and qualified. In other words, Joe accepts and normalizes the perception of marriage as confinement, husband as the invader of his wife's sense of self, and woman as the invaded and defeated thing. "Her core. The centre of her personality, the thing she's built up; her image of herself, if you like [...] Her feminine role and her core are really in opposition, her feminine role demands passivity from her" Joe resumes (p. 259). More surprisingly, Joe continues to claim that the gender roles which woman is supposed to perform after getting married require her to be submissive; yet, education makes things difficult for woman because dreams and the gospel truth contradict. Despite the fact that she is aware of the traps set for her sex, Clara is unable to prevent her victimization. Unfortunately, Clara lets her personality be captured, ruled, and tyrannized by her husband. Especially after giving birth to their children, Clara, as Joe expresses, has become a "hollow"; she has lost her real identity,

and therefore she has been destroyed. He goes on to claim that it is in vain to warn women about such a future that expects them: “It happens, whether you realize it or not. Maybe women shouldn’t be allowed to go to university at all; then they wouldn’t always be feeling later on that they’ve missed out on the life of the mind” (p. 260). Just as Hegel states in *Philosophy of Right*, Joe believes that “women are capable of education, but they are not made for activities which demand a universal faculty such as [...] philosophy and certain forms of artistic production. Women may have happy ideas, taste and elegance, but they cannot attain to the ideal” (1945, p. 263). Joe’s open avowal reveals the very fact that education makes women conscious about their identities; however, it does not change the result. “But the chains that bind her in her trap are the chains in her own mind and spirit. They are the chains made up of mistaken ideas and misinterpreted facts, of incomplete truths and unreal choices” (Friedan, 1974, p. 26). At that very moment, Marian wants to set him right about the fact that Clara is not the sort he describes. She wants to front for Clara’s unaltered personality, through which Marian indeed tries to defend herself against her own future as she does not want to be involved in such a life. Marian feels unable to express the true nature of being a woman; she wants to outcry the reality that her sex is not a lack as Joe believes; yet, Marian knows that she does not have the power to convince him because the discourse speaks patriarchy. Marian gets disappointed both for Clara’s passivity to defend herself and for her own feeling of weakness to refute Joe’s argument. Because her sex/body is considered the source of her victimization, Marian begins to be alienated to her body. She thinks that woman is assigned to duties in the private domain due to her material embodiment:

“Labor” for women has meant childbirth, so that work, sex, love, pain, and death, over the centuries, intertwined into a living knot at the center of female consciousness: Love hurt, sex could kill, a woman’s painful labor was a labor of love. What would be masochism in a man has meant survival for a woman (Wolf, 2002, p. 219).

Through *The Edible Woman*, Atwood presents conventional philosophical viewpoints concerning marriage. In the novel, marriage, as an institution, corresponds to Hegel’s and Aristotle’s understandings of family ethics and domesticity of women. While it makes women subordinate by fair means or foul, marriage means a sort of privilege for the male sex. Marriage, actually serving for the purposes of patriarchy, has paradoxical interpretations: on the one hand, for a bachelor, marriage is considered an obstacle for

performing his masculine desires since there is a limit to perform his ego just on one woman. To illustrate, Len, Marian's friend from college, states that he had to leave England due to the stress women caused on him: "I had a good job going for me and some other good things too. But you've got to watch these women when they start pursuing you. They're always after you to marry them. You've got to hit and run. Get them before they get you and then get out" (p. 67). As a typical representative of the patriarchal system, Len regards women as mad on marriage as if he forgot his persona as a womanizer. After satisfying his desires with different women at different times, he attempts to escape by the time he finishes with them. Atwood exemplifies the condition and perception of marriage from the opposite perspective: a married man regards marriage as a way to chain woman within the house; or as a sort of necessity for undergirding the outward status and masculine superiority over his wife. "He (Peter) and Trigger had clutched each other like drowning men, each trying to make the other the reassuring reflection of himself that he needed. Now Trigger had sunk and the mirror would be empty" states Marian (p. 23). From this extract it is clearly deduced that Peter wants to marry Marian just due to the fact that he does not have any single friends around him, and now he has lost Trigger the last. The idea of marriage horrifies Peter and he considers women blameworthy for suchlike feeling.

By the time she observes Peter pretending to be depressed upon his best friend's union, Marian decides to keep silent in order not to cause a crisis for their own marriage: "I felt sorry for him, but I knew I would have to be wary. If the other two marriages had been any indication, he'd start seeing me after two or three drinks as a version of the designing siren who had carried off Trigger" Marian states (p. 23). After realizing the disappointment that Peter experiences upon learning his best friend's marriage decision, Marian feels that Peter considers her kind the source of this disappointment. Despite the freedom that men have in general, Peter considers marriage a sort of prison that takes away his sense of self and women the prisoners who intentionally capture their personal liberty. Unaware of anything that awaits her Marian considers marriage the only solution to her marginalization and victimization. Therefore, she thinks that she must be careful in her attitude towards him at this juncture:

Poor Trigger. He looked terrible. How could he let himself be taken in like that? He continued in a disjointed monologue in which Trigger was made to sound like the last of the Mohicans, noble and free, the last of the dinosaurs, destroyed by fate and lesser species, and the last of the dodos, too dumb to get away (p. 65).

When Peter takes pity on Trigger, he blames the bride for the pathetic condition of his best friend. For Peter, it is women who drive men to despair and make them suffer from domesticity. Peter harbors a negative attitude towards marriage; he thinks that marriage is restrictive for men as it highlights the priority of familial issues and duties. “God, Marian [...] I don’t know what I’d do if you didn’t understand. Most women wouldn’t, but you’re so sensible” (p. 66). Peter tries to manipulate Marian in a sense to oblige her to adopt Peter’s mentality as though it were the norm. Peter, indeed, does warn Marian against the “domestic void” (p. 66) that she could force him into. Peter attempts to manipulate Marian and her feelings in line with his conventional thinking. Either as a bachelor or as a married man, Peter wants to maintain his free spirit and the mastery in every respect. Therefore, he warns her against any attempt she would take self-ordained on the purpose of impeding his sense of independence: “he told me later that it was my aura of independence and common sense he had liked: he saw me as the kind of girl who wouldn’t try to take over his life” (p. 61). Peter is so anxious that marriage would cause him to lose his identity; thus, he imposes the idea of his right to freedom. However, he never attempts to develop an empathy with Marian because he believes that woman should establish her identity through her husband under the protection of marriage. Put it differently, Peter never considers that marriage constitute an impediment for Marian since he is sure that there is no other alternative for a woman to maintain her life other than marriage. Behind this anxiety, there lies something problematic for Peter: Marian deduces that in the past Peter did have a relationship with a woman whom he does not want to remember and thus now calls “the other kind” (p. 61). Therefore, Marian is aware of her obligation to “adjust to his moods, but that’s true of any man” (p. 61). Marian tries to normalize the self-centered life of Peter and thus of the whole male sex. She thinks that if you are a woman and idolize a man, then you are to orient yourself in accordance with his identity and rules; otherwise, it is almost impossible for you to survive. In accordance with the philosophical understanding of being a woman, Marian, at the very beginning of the novel, makes a tremendous effort to accept the dualism between man and woman; she tries to normalize the egoist attitude of Peter and the expected subordination of herself.

To underpin the philosophical attitude towards woman, Atwood presents the inner voice of Marian to illustrate the desperate condition that all women are covered by. By the moment she realizes that Peter indeed fetters her sense of self, Marian runs away in the street. However, Peter catches and silences her and by the time Peter puts his hand over her as a reward for her silence or acceptance, Marian does apprehend her future with him: "I was going to bring my other hand up and place it on top of his, but I thought if I did then mine would be on top and he'd have to take his arm out from underneath so he'd have another hand to put on top of the heap, like those games at recess" Marian remarks (p. 66). Even the act of holding hands could turn out to be a struggle for the mastery. Marian is so alive to the fact that Peter wishes to have authority over her; however, she also knows that she cannot challenge him in such a society in which she is an outsider. As a reward from the perspective of Peter, her acceptance of her slavery and inferiority ends up with the marriage proposal at the end of the night. Rather than feel empathy and respect for Marian and for her personality, Peter is sure that he could manipulate and make her adapt to his rules and authority through marriage. As soon as he feels certain that Marian would accept her slavery and inferiority in marriage, Peter makes the proposal. Interpreting Peter's attitude towards her as manipulative and authoritative, Marian believes that Peter claims sovereignty over her based on the traditional argument that woman is lack because of her sex. She realizes that gender roles which are characterized by woman are also related to being female. Marian discovers the fact that her body determines her destiny in a sense to turn her into an object for the other sex. She thinks that Peter conspires to turn Marian into a doll kept for domestic issues, for her reproductive function, and for his sexual satisfaction.

The uncertainty Marian feels regarding her identity is doubled through the office virgins who aimlessly wait for their prospective husbands to rescue them from their prisons. Their excessive dedication to their bodies rather than their mental capacities disturbs Marian: she cannot make sense of their tendency to attract men's attention through making their bodies the center of attention. Under the influence of the philosophical dispositions, the office virgins internalize the archaic idea that regards women as embodiments and marriage as the mere solution for their survival. Because marriage also implies the domestic realm that women are assigned to, through the office virgins, Atwood indeed presents the Aristotelian and Hegelian perception of "woman". On the other hand, Clara illustrates the desperate condition she is in due to her disappointing

marriage. She admits that marriage is not the thing that would break the deadlock, but the thing that causes her to get in deeper day by day. As it is understood, Clara is the personification of non-resistance and submission: she accepts the inevitable fate of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Because she is female, she is to endure and suffer from the gender roles fictionalized by virtue of her sex, and Clara performs her gender by giving birth and imprisoning herself within the domestic sphere. By the time Marian does take stock of Clara and of the office virgins, she concludes that she never wants to be in a similar condition. Marian discovers that women use their bodies on the purpose of ensnaring men for marriage; however, women indeed fall prey to their husbands in marriage. For Marian, both cases are disgraceful and she feels that she is neither the type of woman who presents her body and beauty for a man's approval, nor a woman who loses her true identity just for the sake of the desires of an egocentric husband and children in need of nursing. In this regard, Marian attempts to reject both her gender roles and bodily existence which she believes to emerge out of her assumed anatomical weakness.

In Platonic point of view, "marriage age for the male and female are not the same. While women would start bearing children at about the age of twenty until forty, men would start at about thirty up till fifty five" (Olugbade, 1989, p. 514). Atwood does attack the conservative attitude concerning woman and marriage in *The Edible Woman*. Related to the traditional way of thinking, a woman should get married when she is young enough to be attractive and sexy besides being able to give birth. In this context, regarded as a male-centered institution, marriage demands female self-abandonment and devotion. Because woman is assumed to exist with her body, she has to appeal to the eye of her husband. Either as a sex machine for her husband or as a nursing mother for her baby, a woman is supposed to exist just with her body as if it were the body that makes sense for her subjectivity. Although Marian does consider such an understanding strange, she is pleased with the proposal as it is the day of the days for an ordinary woman and thus she wants to share it with Clara. However, the reaction that Clara gives upon learning Peter's proposal horrifies Marian: "Joe will be delighted. He's been saying lately that it's about time you settled down" Clara states. Marian flashes out due to the unsound judgment: "I wasn't thirty-five and desperate. She was talking as though I was simply taking a prudent step" (p. 91). Uncertain about her feelings concerning the proposal, Marian questions her inner self. She is puzzled upon the response Clara gives;

Marian considers it strange for a woman to put such an unreasonable belief into word that women should accept her exile within a house through marriage as soon as possible (although she is still young and charming). She gets disappointed with Clara's reaction; she seems to have normalized the norms and the regulations of the fusty philosophy which always attempts to justify female victimization. Feeling sorry for Clara's passive and blind acceptance of her bodily and mental enclosure, Marian wonders how a woman changes into a submissive object despite the potential and knowledge she has about such issues. Certainly, Marian is aware of the fact that marriage has turned Clara into a passive embodiment who has internalized her roles as a nursing mother and a domestic doll. Marian finds out that even marriage is tied to a woman's bodily condition; the body once again determines the time a woman should get married and give birth.

Of course you never really know someone till you've been married to them for a while and discover some of their scruffier habits. I remember how upset I was when I realized for the first time that after all Joe wasn't Jesus Christ. I don't know what it was, probably some silly thing like finding out he's crazy about Audrey Hepburn. Or that he's a secret philatelist (p. 141).

Marian finds a sort of nonchalance in Clara's attitude towards life; she seems to be satisfied both with her husband and marriage; yet, she is a whiner about Joe's masculine habits concerning his frailty towards women. Marian thinks that Joe was the same as he is now when he and Clara began to handle a relationship; for Marian, by the time Clara did regard him as her partner, she indeed accepted his authority: "Joe was then a graduate student, almost seven years older than she was, a tall shaggy man with a slight stoop and a protective attitude towards Clara" regards Marian (p. 33). Because Joe considers women weak and vulnerable based on the archaic philosophy, he attempts to protect and rule Clara as a form of expression of his love. Clara, on the other hand, normalizes the repressive attitude of Joe towards her by never resisting his authority. According to Marian, Clara adopts marriage and motherhood as the final destination in a woman's life; she believes that she must accept other negativities as usual. As Hegel argues, marriage and thus the private domain turn out to be Clara's "ethical destiny". Upon Clara's unconscious or even impertinent explanations and advices about the necessity of marriage and motherhood, Marian feels lucky not to be like Clara. However, while observing Clara dealing with her children, Marian finds out that Clara has become a sort of woman who is defined by her roles as a wife and as a mother. The problem, from Marian's perspective, is that she does not know what she is going to

become in the future because she has never imagined her picture as a wife, as a mother, or as a sexual object for the male gaze. Therefore, she does not know which direction she should take:

Confined to the home, a child among her children, passive, no part of her existence under her own control, a woman could only exist by pleasing man. She was wholly dependent on his protection in a world that she had no share in making: man's world. She could never grow up to ask the simple human question, "Who am I? What do I want?" (Friedan, 1974, p. 74).

Soon after the engagement, Peter is disposed to introduce Marian to his friends and takes her to parties and dinners, during which Marian is supposed to keep silent and smiling: "Now that she had been ringed he took pride in displaying her" (p. 191). Marian does fathom that she has become an object on display, and the ring on her finger has turned out to be a sort of leash monitored and involved by the owner. She is disturbed because she begins to associate the ring with the handcuff after accepting the proposal; she feels that there is no escape from the imperatives of Peter. As an aside, while attempting to display Marian to his friends as a visual object, Peter does not pay attention to his outward appearance any longer: "He did look hung-over. He was carelessly dressed, but it's impossible for Peter to dress with genuine carelessness. This was an arranged carelessness; he was meticulously unshaven, and his socks matched the colour of the paint-stains on his sports-shirt" (p. 92). Probably the decision to get married has transformed Peter into an inattentive mood. In other words, Peter seems to achieve the real goal in his life; for a man, the physical appearance makes sense until he does persuade the prospective bride to marry. By contrast, woman, before and during marriage, is expected to be elaborate in order to keep her husband's attention on her ever, or else, she is supposed to accept the infidelity of her husband.

The reason why woman is associated with the body is exemplified through Peter's line of conduct. The surface appearance is never regarded as a key determiner in a man's life; yet, for a woman it is a lifelong duty to maintain the ideal proportion. After the proposal Peter reveals his real thoughts concerning marriage: "A man's got to settle down sometime, and I am twenty-six" (p. 92). Peter does specify the reasons for his decision to get married. The most prominent reason is directly related to his job; he believes that marriage is advantageous for him in terms of his profession as a lawyer: marriage is itself the thing that ensures his position through arousing a feeling of confidence. Therefore, marriage, as one of the most efficient instruments of the

patriarchal ideology, functions on the purpose of privileging man while aggrieving and oppressing woman. In line with the Hegelian philosophy which discriminates in favor of men, Peter wishes to manipulate Marian according to his own benefit: he attempts to position her within the private domain on the pretext of “ethical destiny” of any woman. As a lawyer, Peter regards himself as the competent authority in public; Marian, in his view, should belong to the domestic sphere and perform her roles as an obedient wife:

And now things are settled I feel I'm going to be much happier. A fellow can't keep running around indefinitely. It'll be a lot better in the long run for my practice too, the clients like to know you've got a wife; people get suspicious of a single man after a certain age, they start thinking you're a queer or something [...] And there's one thing about you, Marian, I know I can always depend on you. Most women are pretty scatterbrained but you're such a sensible girl. You may not have known this but I've always thought that's the first thing to look for when it comes to choosing a wife (p. 93).

Based on the Aristotelian doctrine that explains the superiority of man over woman in terms of the relationship between master/slave, Peter claims to be the master of Marian: “Choosing a wife” indeed explains the manipulative treatment of Peter; he regards himself as the absolute authority; the one who is the decision mechanism. Rather than an attachment with love, Peter considers marriage a sort of necessity for which he regards himself responsible for deciding or choosing. Therefore, ironically, by the time Peter asks her about the time to get married, Marian responds in a mordacious manner: “I'd rather have you decide that. I'd rather leave the big decisions up to you.” I was astounded at myself. I'd never said anything remotely like that to him before”(p. 94). Although she knows that marriage would legitimate Peter's sovereignty over her, Marian feels obliged to get married and accept her subaltern status within the house. In other words, Marian is aware of the social sanction that does repress woman's identity; nonetheless, she tries hard to believe desperately that no matter how oppressive does Peter act towards her, marriage would be the unique solution to the problems she has at the company which she believes to be another oppressive factor in her life. However, due to the strict norms regarding her gender, Marian realizes that she has to make a decision, and she chooses to favor the oppression by Peter over that of the company: “I was seeing him in a new light: he was changing form in the kitchen, turning from a reckless young bachelor into a rescuer from chaos, a provider of stability. Somewhere in the vaults of Seymour Surveys an invisible hand was wiping away my signature” Marian states (p. 92-93). As a result of the ideological indoctrinations, Marian tries to

believe in the magic that marriage would provide for her. Because there is no other option aside from waiting for the savior man who would take her under his wings, the proposal which seems to be the mere solution for her victimization within a patriarchal society leads Marian to dream of the perfect life she wishes to have with Peter. On the one hand, she thinks over the unfortunate marriage of Clara and her lack of self-control; on the other hand, marriage, she regards, is the only means of escape from the burden of her life, her job, her status, and etcetera.

By accepting the Enlightenment notion of a common human nature or presenting female “immanence” as merely a private “lack of transcendence” ... by seeing female biological determinant as nothing but an impediment to full human dignity ... women unwittingly acquiesce in the standards of patriarchal thought, and in so doing lose all potential to achieve dignity precisely as women (Stafford, 1997, p. 66).

Atwood criticizes the philosophy that undermines the oppressive and repressive attitude of man over woman through Marian who always appreciates the decisive stance of Peter in almost every condition. Marian, in other words, normalizes her passive stance in life with Peter; she resigns herself to Peter’s claim to have authority over her in every respect. For the sake of example, Marian discovers that it is always Peter who determines even the menu at the restaurant because she believes that Peter always knows what he wants. On the other hand, Marian realizes the fact that she is not even aware of her own wishes; even what she wants to eat. In this regard, it is clear that Marian acts in line with the expectations of the system: submissive, silent, and passive. She does not have a choice or even an opinion because everything has already been determined for her like a menu at a restaurant which is in fact limited and predetermined by others, and as a client you have no option to choose apart from the things listed beforehand. In this regard, Atwood questions the veracity of our decisions or choices. Are they really our choices or do we accept them as they are presented to us? Like the menu at the restaurant, the marriage itself is not up to Marian’s decision; it is the decision of Peter – patriarchy – as the best thing that would legitimate his right to silence Marian while promoting his profession.

Furthermore, as the authority over Marian in every respect, Peter makes decisions, criticizes events and situations, and judges people harshly. To illustrate, upon the conversation they have about childrearing while waiting for their food at the restaurant, Peter’s fixed idea and judgment concerning the necessity for punishment cause Marian

to question her future with him once more. Although Peter speaks his piece in the abstract, Marian grasps the depth of that speech. What Peter tells her indeed implies the climate that prophesies her future with him. Peter argues that the punishment of children is necessary on the condition that the child breaks the rules. Based on archaic views on women as Wollstonecraft expresses in *Vindication*, “men [...] try to secure the good conduct of women by attempting to keep them always in a state of childhood” (2008, p. 30). Disturbed by the attitude and opinion Peter justifies, Marian associates herself with an ordinary child. Peter’s reaction, meantime, is a sort of message for her in that she predicts the future treatment of Peter towards her: she would be punished in the event that she disobeys Peter’s rules. By the time Marian does protest against him as she believes that such a behavioral pattern would mentally damage the child, Peter accuses her of being oblivious to the real life: “Darling, you don’t understand these things [...] you’ve led a sheltered life [...] But I’ve seen the results, the courts are full of them, juvenile delinquents, and a lot of them from good homes too. It’s a complex problem” declares Peter (p. 159).

Because the philosophy assigns woman to the private realm, Peter thinks that Marian can never understand or contemplate on such issues; he believes that it is his domain to deal with matters which require producing solution to the problems in public. Marian does feel uncomfortable with the situation and she attempts to explain her own pedagogic perspective; she believes that each individual is unique and thus cannot be held responsible for others’ wrongdoings. In other respects, Peter generalizes all individuals and gives examples from juvenile delinquents. He represents the characteristics of the Enlightenment ideals: rules and reason are the principal agents that should govern the lives. Presumably due to the fact that he is a lawyer, Peter pays no mind to emotions. Thus, Marian concludes that there is no way to persuade him in this matter; and rather, she does presume that Peter had better buy a “marriage-manuals” (p. 162) to teach her act in accordance with the instructions. Because Peter is a man of rules he does allow neither himself nor Marian to live with sentiment. Just like the magazines and the books on cameras, law books, and detective novels, Marian thinks that a book on marriage can also take part in the shelves. Because women live their lives in accordance with what is taught to them as the principle, Marian claims ironically that she can be also taught how to be an ideal wife and woman in marriage through marriage manuals. Shocked by the egoist attitude of Peter, Marian feels that his judgments indeed

give signals about the future they are going to share. Under the name of marriage, Peter would easily oppress Marian. She comes to realize that modern societies, under the influence of the conventional philosophy, undergird the assumed inferiority of woman through exalting man in every respect. Correspondingly, Marian begins to regard her body as the culprit that designates her fate as inferior. Even though she is not alive to the significance or the metaphorical meaning of it in the beginning, Marian responds to the mentality of Peter through the refusal of certain foods: her rejection of food is indeed the reflection of her rejection of Peter's delusive claims for authority. Because she cannot indicate her opposition to him directly, Marian expresses her uneasiness with the philosophical ideology that legitimates her mental and bodily oppression through her lost appetite. When Marian imagines her future with Peter, she pictures him at forty-five and feels that he still has hobbies and feels comfortable. Further, maintaining her future dream she gets sight of Peter in the garden dealing with the barbecue. However, she realizes that she cannot find herself in that picture. Then, she realizes that there is another door at the hedge of the garden; so she thinks that she must be there. When she looks for herself, Marian experiences the disappointment of not seeing herself, but Peter with a cleaver in his hand. She questions the interpretation of it; if she is not there, where she is: dead? Through such a vision Marian indeed foreshadows the nightmarish life Peter would give her; Peter would legitimate his mastery over her via wedlock.

In Part Two, there is a shift in the narrative voice; while in Part One the events are expressed through Marian's perspective implying Marian's potential to control the goings-on, Part Two signals her submission to the roles that she has already been coded for. Atwood does illustrate the instruments that serve for the ideological purposes through the disciplining forces of family and relatives: because marriage is regarded as the ultimate goal of a woman, everybody around her attempts to get involved in the matter, and she feels that everything is beyond her control. Rather, the control mechanism of the society is felt via the smaller units – such as the family – it includes. The wedding day is approaching and her relatives are making arrangements, and Marian feels as if she were locked into a room, unable to involve in the goings-on or organize the events in accordance with her wishes. By contrast, she feels as if her life were in the hands of others: Peter, her relatives, and her friends force her to adapt to the situations they have determined beforehand without even asking her. Under the influence of the femininity enigma which the traditional philosophy does vindicate through marriage,

Marian's parents coerce her to accept marriage as the chance of a lifetime and her husband as the redeemer; her family does not approve and allow her to lead a life without a man. Although she tries to believe that marriage would be the single solution, Marian feels uneasy about the condition she finds herself in. She feels as if everything worked against her with the intention of making her not reflect upon her decision:

She could feel time eddying and curling almost visibly around her feet, rising around her, lifting her body in the office-chair and bearing her, slowly and circuitously but with the inevitability of water moving downhill, towards the distant, not-so-distant-any-more day they had agreed on – in late March? (p. 122).

The distance Marian means is interpreted as foreignness to her own life and to her true identity. In this sense, this extract does imply the very fact that Marian does no longer has the power to pull the strings. She loses all her energy to control her life by contrast with Part One in which she displays her ability and struggle for herself by escaping from Peter. Torn between the ideals of the society and her own value judgment, Marian cannot concentrate on her work since she thinks that she would be forced to leave her job due to the traditional family perception of Peter after getting married: “he considered it unfair to marry [...] if you couldn't afford to support your wife” (p. 114-115). Despite the fact that she interprets Peter's mentality as preposterous, Marian, oppressed and marginalized in the business world, tries to be convinced about the positive results marriage would provide. Put it differently, she gets confused: on the one hand, she is against the discrimination that women are exposed to in the business life due to the unsound judgments concerning their lack of capability and mentality; on the other hand, she tries hard to believe that he could at least liberate her from the male-stream in her working place notwithstanding confining her to his own jailhouse through marriage. In such a traditional society, man is regarded as the breadwinner and because woman's place is within the house it is man's responsibility to live off. Under the influence of the dualistic perspective, Peter, as the representative of the public realm, feels obliged to earn a living for his family. Daunted after the endeavor she shows in her job Marian feels Peter would break the deadlock. As she has enough of the troubles due to her sex and thus to her materiality, Marian never believes that she can get rid of the social exclusion on her own. Therefore, she considers Peter the unique solution. As Friedan states in *Feminine Mystique* “the only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own. There is no other

way. But a job, any job, is not the answer – in fact, it can be part of the trap” (1974, p. 332). In this regard, the trouble Marian has in her job causes her to wait for her savior to take her to the alternative domain: home. Although woman has the capacity and right to rank among the professions that were once attributed merely to man, she is always stymied through different strategies. In other words, though they have the same professions, man attempts to obstruct woman and her endeavor through mobbing and isolating her under no valid ground because of the sex she is born as.

Atwood criticizes the traditional philosophy which justifies female marginalization in public by predicating on the biological difference. “Nature/culture discourse regularly figures nature as female, in need of subordination by a culture that is invariably figured as male, active, and abstract” (Butler, 1990, p. 48). Also as MacCormack and Strathern state in *Nature, Culture, and Gender*, the female existence is considered barbaric or uncivilized: “nature as pre-society [...] and nature as associated with women” (1980, p. 27). In *The Edible Woman*, among the issues that incapacitate and withhold woman from self-fulfillment is the business world and the monetary matters. Because of the perception that woman represents nature/fertility/home she is excluded from the public/culture/outside practices. At the beginning of the novel, Marian states her discontent with her position at work; since she is a college graduate she expects more in terms of her career. However, the problem is with the society, or the problem itself is the society. Evaluating woman in line with the traditional philosophy, the society in which Marian lives does not provide with an opening in the outer world but disregards her capacity and education. Like any other woman Marian is also believed to represent the body and the bodily pleasures without any sense of reason. Under such an assumption, Marian is codified as the one for whom the only necessity is the domestic works and the bodily attraction. “There are great natural differences between men and women, so different employment should be given to men and women corresponding to these natural differences” (Calvert, 1975, p. 232). The reason why Marian is dissatisfied with her job is that there is a sort of polarization between the sexes: her office is all female and the men are upstairs and the machines below. Such classification indicates the alleged power of patriarchal hierarchy which belittles women especially in the business space:

The company is layered like an ice-cream sandwich, with three floors: the upper crust, the lower crust, and our department, the gooey layer in the

middle. On the floor above are the executives and the psychologists – referred to as the men upstairs, since they are all men – who arrange things with the clients [...] Our department is the link between the two: we are supposed to take care of the human element, the interviewers themselves [...] these are all housewives working in their spare time and paid by the piece. They don't make much, but they like to get out of the house (p. 13-14).

Atwood gives a handle to the protagonist of *The Edible Woman* through making her portray the unequal discrimination within the workplace from her own point of view. Describing the factionalism within the company she works for, Marian indeed reveals the very fact that the system itself legitimates discrimination between men and women in the business world. Regarding her sex and thus her body as the motives for her exclusion and discrimination in the business life, Marian develops somatophobic tendencies. On the traditional excuse that women are incapable of the professions concerning mind and the faculty of reason, the modern philosophy does eliminate women from public domains. Indicated in the quotation above, woman is supposed to be located in the private domain due to the assumed lack she suffers; the only activity Marian could involve in is the interviews concerning the products used in houses; things women are professional at. Although she is university educated, Marian feels an outsider to the business world since she witnesses the discrimination of the same kind: “What, then, could I expect to turn into at Seymour Surveys? I couldn't become one of the men upstairs; I couldn't become a machine person or one of the questionnaire-marking ladies, as that would be a step down” (p. 14). The unfortunate position Marian has in the working area causes her to restrict her potential and quality despite the fact that she believes to deserve better. She is uncertain about her identity in a male dominated society and in the business world; she feels her career unfulfilled due to the categorization that she is subjected to experience in the working space. Marian feels manipulated and trapped within the patriarchal world in which everything is arranged in accordance with the preformed identities created by the male authority.

Based on the essentialist philosophy that positions woman in the private domain because of the lack she suffers as a result of her anatomy, patriarchy, as a means of the system, does not receive women in the business world favorably. Therefore, the financial status of woman is regarded as a significant issue to be kept under the control of the male dominance. In this regard, Atwood reproaches the power system which attempts to discipline women in economic and social terms due to the false charge concerning the inability of woman to manage her financial situation herself. Marian

overreacts when she is asked to join the pension plan; although she does not want to be included in it, she learns that it is obligatory. “It wasn’t only the feeling of being subject to rules I had no interest in and no part in making; you get adjusted to that at school” (p. 15). The institutions that serve for the ideology dictate the containment of woman via various means projected on her. In other words, because woman is considered lack of mental faculties, she is believed to need financial guidance to maintain her life through which the ideology aims to make them neutralize their weakness in such matters. “Somewhere in front of me a self was waiting, pre-formed, a self who had worked during innumerable years for Seymour Surveys and was now receiving her reward. A pension” (p. 15). The discrimination which is regarded as “glass ceiling syndrome”¹⁰ that withholds Marian from personal statement is associated with the decision making mechanisms that underestimate the rationality of woman. She is obliged to accept the assessment the system holds against her; she feels that she has been designated in a certain way to appreciate the status she holds. The conventional philosophy that excludes woman from the active business world is illustrated when she visits houses to conduct a survey. A man invites Marian in with an explanation that his wife is out shopping. After he answers the questions, the already drunk man approaches Marian maliciously and tells her “now what’s a nice little girl like you doing walking around asking men all about their beer? [...] You ought to be at home with some big strong man to take care of you” (p. 47). This extract is the indication of the patriarchal thought that aims to exclude woman from the public life based on the excuse that she is weak, unprotected, and unfavorable for professions since she is thought to exist with her body. In other words, rather than respect her for the endeavor she makes to survive, the man underestimates her by molesting Marian.

Ainsley, maintaining an antagonist stance against Marian, works as a tester of defective electric toothbrushes. Despite the fact that she is a college graduate she also illustrates the victimization of woman in the business world. In the same manner as Marian, Ainsley is unable to be content with her position: “You have no idea how soggy it is [...] having to go through twenty conversations about the insides of peoples’ mouths. [...] And most men look at something besides your teeth, for god’s sake” (p. 3). Having a profession outside her home requires Ainsley to be exposed to the male gaze just because of her female identity. She is aware of the fact that people merely pay attention to her surface appearance rather than her job: “I pretended to be terribly interested. And

naturally I didn't let on what my job was: those Professional men get so huffy if you know anything about their subject. You know, like Peter" (p. 4). Ainsley implies that men always attempt to exclude women from the business world because they do not have any tolerance to witness any woman of more intelligence, qualification, and success than that of the opposing sex. Peter does hold no brief for Ainsley and her mentality; he believes that Ainsley is not among the favorable stereotype women that could be easily manipulated by patriarchal norms and ideals as a result of his "suspecting her of holding what he called "wishy-washy radical" views because she had favoured him with a theoretical speech about liberating the Id" (p. 68). Marian remembers the reason why neither Peter nor Ainsley does fancy each other: Marian states that Ainsley does codify Peter as "conventional" because of the remarks he made during a conversation, and Peter regards Ainsley as "uncivilized" due to her unorthodox statements. Ainsley considers Peter the representative of the philosophy which marginalizes woman and ignores her capacity for reason; thus, Peter feels uneasy about Ainsley since he thinks that she might influence or alert Marian in the matter of him. Unlike Marian, Ainsley intentionally acts like a fool rather than conform to the rules of patriarchy. Despite her consciousness concerning the oppression and repression that her sex is exposed to suffer from, Ainsley knows that she has to pretend as if she were a stereotype woman who is out of mind as men assume. Ainsley is aware of the fact that working outside as a woman is difficult because of the generalizations concerning her sex. Because she is visible just through her body from the perspective of patriarchy, no matter which profession she has her body remains the main focus for men.

Based on the legitimated discrimination and marginalization of woman under the pretext of the necessity for a division between private and public realms, Marian is supposed to be a domestic servant who is good at cooking and cleaning. Within the novel, Peter does criticize Marian for not cooking; although she is still single, Marian acts as if she were married to Peter. As if she were a housewife Marian cooks, cleans Peter's house, and does shopping for him. However, as a result of the labels that describe femininity, Marian never questions her submissive manners. Under the influence of the conventional philosophy that underlies the domestic function of woman as cooking, cleaning, and etcetera, Peter codifies Marian as a machine that is supposed to perform her "duties" concerning cooking and more of the same. No matter how

educated he is, Peter does maintain the traditional thinking in such issues. “I was hurt: I considered this unfair. I like to cook, but I had been deliberately refraining at Peter’s for fear he would feel threatened [...] I was about to make a sharp comment, but repressed it” admits Marian (p. 65). Under the oppressive system, Marian cannot find a way to escape from her slavery. She tries to normalize the condition through repressing her feelings and opinions about the matters Peter directs to her, and thus, being a woman means a burden on her shoulders.

After being subjected to the artificial garnishing on the day of the party that Peter gives, Marian begins to question her bodily victimization and gender roles that make her submissive. She realizes that she cannot have the right over her own body; it is Peter who decides – what to wear and how to look – on behalf of her. She feels that her body and identity have been captured by Peter, and she feels obliged to follow the instructions he gives. After the disturbance she feels at the hairdresser’s, on her way home, Marian walks through the Household Wares section including frying pans and casserole dishes, vacuum-cleaners, and automatic washers. Then she realizes a group of women watching a man who shows the functions of a grater. Upon realizing the other women’s glances on her, Marian interprets their inner thoughts about her. She thinks that consumerism penetrates the female mind not only by cosmetics or clothes, but also by domestic objects in order to contain her within the private sphere. However, the main point is that woman must choose to become either a domestic woman dealing not with her surface beauty but with the household duties, or to become a sexual and beautiful woman who is dedicated to furnish her body for the male gaze. Marian is sure that she wants to become neither a man-made, unnatural woman who just concerns about her bodily attraction, nor a domestic doll that plays the house:

Marian stopped for a minute on the outer fringe of the group. The little man made a radish-rose with yet another attachment. Several of the women turned and glanced at her in an appraising way, summing her up. Anyone with a hair-style like that, they must have been thinking, would be far too trivial to be seriously interested in graters. How long did it take to acquire that patina of lower-middle income domesticity, that weathered surface of slightly mangy fur, cloth worn thin at cuff-edges and around buttons, scuffed leather of handbags; the tight slant of the mouth, the gauging eyes; and above all that invisible colour that was like a smell, the underpainting of musty upholstery and worn linoleum that made them in this bargain basement authentic in a way that she was not? [...] They made her feel like a dilettante (p. 232).

While Marian is not content with her new appearance, Peter seems to be quite charmed by her body. Mesmerized by the beauty of Marian, Peter implies his desire for making love with her at the very moment before the guests arrive for the party. Marian wants to be convinced about Peter's love because she never wishes to make love without love; without love sleeping with someone is just a desire for the material body. Upon Peter's response "I'm going to marry you, aren't I? And I love you especially in that red dress. You should wear red more often" (p. 253), Marian discovers that sexuality and love are too different subjects. What Peter desires is her body and he does not care about her inner self. He just thinks of his own satisfaction and desires; her body serves merely for such purposes. Marian believes that for real love a woman should sacrifice something; nonetheless, for the relationship with Peter there is nothing she can do to prevent the disastrous end because he always attempts to stereotype and shape her in line with his own rules and desires. While questioning her feelings, Marian finds herself examining Peter's clothes in the bedroom: "She realized that she was regarding the clothes with an emotion close to something like resentment. How could they hang there smugly asserting so much invisible silent authority" (p. 252).

The discord between Peter and Marian is illustrated through the order of everything in the house. Everything in the room is in great order, which is indeed an indication of the discipline Peter has within the house. Marian concludes that through marriage she would be just like the clothes in the wardrobe – being the under the discipline and possession of Peter. Upon this recognition, Marian opens the refrigerator in order to take another ice cube for her drink and she realizes the same order of things: "His refrigerator was so white and spotless and arranged; she thought with guilt of her own" (p. 253). Marian and Peter represent the opposite poles, and she deduces that if they got married, Peter would contain her just like the things in the house. Marian discovers the fact that Peter attempts to treat her as if she were an object because of the archaic belief that associates woman with embodiment. Upon this recognition, Marian realizes that she is considered a possession of the masculine world. Because female sex is regarded as the representation of the body, Marian concludes that it is her body which provokes her inferior stance in life. Unable to change or resist the cliché definitions of femininity, Marian feels on the verge of body-hatred.

Atwood gives hints concerning the fear and hatred Marian has for her body based on her isolation and marginalization because of her sex and the relevant gender roles. In order to clarify the issue, the author summarizes the life and the struggle Marian wages within a patriarchal society. When Fish expresses that he is studying Carroll Lewis, Marian resembles the story of Alice with her own. Like Alice, Marian defines her identity as a fictional character constructed by male authors:

Of course everybody knows *Alice* is a sexual-identity-crisis book, that's old stuff, it's been around for a long time, I'd like to go into it a little deeper though. What we have here, if you only look at it closely, this is the little girl descending into the very suggestive rabbit-burrow, becoming as it were pre-natal, trying to find her role [...] her role as a Woman [...] Patterns emerge. One sexual role after another is presented to her but she seems unable to accept any of them, I mean she's really blocked. She rejects Maternity when the baby she's been nursing turns into a pig, nor does she respond positively to the dominating-female role of the Queen and her castration cries of 'Off with his head!' And when the Duchess makes a cleverly concealed lesbian pass at her, sometimes you wonder how *conscious* old Lewis was, anyway she's neither aware nor interested; and right after that you'll recall she goes to talk with the Mock-Turtle, enclosed in his shell and his self-pity, a definitely pre-adolescent character; then there are those most suggestive scenes, most suggestive, the one where her neck becomes elongated and she is accused of being a serpent, hostile to eggs, you'll remember, a rather destructively-phallic identity she indignantly rejects; and her negative reaction to the dictatorial Caterpillar, just six inches high, importantly perched on the all-too-female mushroom which is perfectly round but which has the power to make you either smaller or larger than normal [...] And of course there's the obsession with time, clearly a cyclical rather than a linear obsession. So anyway she makes a lot of attempts but she refuses to commit herself, you can't say that by the end of the book she has reached anything that can be definitely called maturity (p. 212).

The allegorical story of Alice and her adventures reveal the very fact that there is no difference between a fictional female character of a fairy tale and Marian who is also constructed by the ideology of a patriarchal society: both Alice and Marian are forced believe that they live in the wonderland which is in reality full of trouble and suffering caused by the patriarchal mentality. Atwood achieves to make Fish summarize the sexual discrimination and gender bias stereotypes that Marian and the other female characters are subjected to experience. Metaphorically, Marian's life is possible to be regarded as a book which tells about the sexual identity crisis she has had since she was born. She has been forced to adopt her inferior nature and adapt to the gender patterns created and undergirded by the male authority. In other words, she has been manipulated with the purpose of indigenizing the ideal female image for the male gaze and for the ideal feminine domesticity, maternity, and servitude to facilitate masculine

life. The rabbit-burrow that Alice descends into represents the society in which Marian lives without any destination. The rabbit-burrow, metaphorically, means Marian's search for her identity within the patriarchal regulations that limit her sense of self. Furthermore, the rabbit-hole makes Marian remember the rabbit which Peter hunted in high spirits. Accordingly, she resembles herself with the rabbit in that both are the victims of Peter. Through the hunted rabbit, Marian realizes the male tendency to perpetrate oppression of and violence against women. Based on the traditional assumption concerning the resemblance between animals and women, Marian thinks that she will fall prey to Peter just like a rabbit. In other words, through such an analogy, Atwood exemplifies the relationship between the signifier/hunter (Peter) and the signified/hunted (Marian).

Alice rejects maternity when the baby she feeds turns into a pig; in a similar way, when Marian observes the relationship between Clara and her children, she realizes the fact that motherhood is a great responsibility that would consume her energy. Also, she believes that the child you bring up would soon become the product of the system which supports the ideals of phallogentrism and of the patriarchal ideology. While questioning her role as a woman, Marian neither approves Clara and her roles as a devoted mother and a wife, nor does she model herself on Ainsley who might be considered an ideal feminine in terms of her bodily obsession and attraction. The Mock-Turtle refers to the turtle about which Marian gets information in a magazine; the oppression and violence committed on turtles are of a sort. Marian has a second revelation through the similarity she finds between the inevitable fate of turtles and her sex. The reason why Alice is accused of being a serpent is interpreted in terms of her rebellious act against the norms and the rules the system imposed upon her. In this regard, Marian, like Alice, negates the roles and imageries that are attributed to her sex, and now she poses a threat to the opposite sex just like a serpent. Furthermore, the dictatorial Caterpillar that Alice describes as tyrannizer is metaphorically associated with Peter who claims to have the power to direct everything around him. Alice's obsession with time resembles Marian's never changing life. She has hopes about her future with Peter; however, she discovers that a married life with Peter would just feed him while exploiting her sense of self. Since ancient times, the condition of women has never changed. Because Marian is aware of the fact that she cannot resist the outcomes that the time brings, the inevitable

fate of becoming the victim of the system annoys her. In conclusion, Alice's story reflects Marian's struggle for creating her identity; she tries hard to survive within a society in which being female determines the roles and the position she is supposed to internalize.

2.1.2. Sexuality of the Female Body

Atwood presents and reprimands the philosophical understanding of woman as a sexual object created for masculine pleasure. She criticizes the perception that the female body and sexuality are regarded as something possessed by male masters. Because ancient philosophers consider woman an embodiment and the female body a flesh that serves for the male gaze, Atwood indeed presents reasons for the somatophobic tendency Marian shows. Woman and her sexuality remain the outside; the boundary that defines and preserves the inside: "A woman serves (only) as a projective map for the purpose of guaranteeing the totality of the system [...] A woman – paradoxically? – would thus serve in the proposition as the copulative link" declares Irigaray (qtd. in Flax, 1990, p. 172). Atwood demonstrates the patriarchal understanding of femininity through the sexual and domestic illustrations of woman. Paradoxically, patriarchy does establish regulations for women in order to protect them from the male sex. Put it differently, the real danger outside is man; the one who offends or rapes is man. However, within a male-dominated society woman is thought to be both the devil and the bedeviled: She is supposed to be sexually attractive on the one hand, yet unimposing to prevent abuse on the other hand. In accordance with this interpretation, when Marian arrives home late at night without his permission, Peter justifies his reaction and accuses her:

You shouldn't go wandering around the streets at night, you might get raped, if you're going to do these things and god knows it isn't the first time why the hell can't you think of other people once in a while? You could at least have told me where you were, your parents called me long-distance, they're frantic because you weren't on the bus and what was I supposed to tell them? (p. 294).

The imperatives of the patriarchal system present roles and rules for women through which the containment of women is achieved. Rather than find a solution to the oppression and repression of women in the society, men paradoxically attempt to protect women from their own kind through restricting the latter's lives. "The position that there is a natural or biological female who is subsequently transformed into a

socially subordinate “woman,” with the consequence that “sex” is to nature or “the raw” as gender is to culture or “the cooked” (Butler, 1990, p. 37).

Walk down a city street. Pay a lot of attention to your clothing: make sure your pants are zipped, shirt tucked in, buttons done. Look straight ahead. Every time a man walks past you, avert your eyes and make your face expressionless. Most women learn to go through this act each time we leave our houses (Bordo, 2003, p. 19).

While she is supposed to keep her body away from others, Marian is to present it with the purpose of satisfying Peter’s sexual desire because woman’s body does not belong to her, but to others. She is supposed to serve for the sexual expectations of her partner while protecting her body from other men’s gazes outside. By the time Marian thinks of the first time they made love, she remembers that Peter wore an imaginary mask of courtesy, which was the thing that has made her subordinated: “I had allowed myself to be manipulated into the bedroom” (p. 62). Since then, each time after they make love, Peter asks about the pleasure she takes, and Marian responds as “marvelous” although she wishes to say “rotten”.

The reason why she hides her real feeling at that moment is related to the roles she is expected to perform. Because Peter represents dominance, he believes that his performance in sexual relation reveals his power and authority over Marian’s body. Thus, Marian cannot express the rude awakening that she experiences; she feeds his ego by keeping silent and hiding her real feelings. As Butler states, the body represents “a process whereby regulatory norms materialize “sex” and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms” (1993, p. 2). Because man is regarded as the authority even in the sexual course, a negative word Marian would say would enrage Peter. Marian should, as always, repress her real feelings. Therefore, she interprets the bathtub fantasy of Peter as an indication of Peter’s personality: “Asceticism? A modern version of hair shirts or sitting on spikes? it wasn’t his flesh that was being mortified: he had been on top” (p. 62). She thinks that Peter is trying to tyrannize over her even during the sexual intercourse: “did he really think of me as a lavatory fixture. What kind of a girl did he think I was?” (p. 63). She realizes that Peter in fact regards her as a geisha in a kimono; he fantasizes her as the one on which he could perform all the games: “I bet you’d look great in a kimono” (p. 63). Marian discovers that Peter indeed attempts to transform her into a slave upon whom he could exert his sovereignty and satisfaction of his desires. Peter claims right to use Marian’s body for his own

satisfaction because his sovereignty over her body is interpreted as his overall authority in the society.

Before, in the summer, she used to think he didn't often look at her, didn't often really see her; in bed afterwards he would stretch out beside her and press his face against her shoulder, and sometimes he would go to sleep. These days however he would focus his eyes on her face, concentrating on her as though if he looked hard enough he would be able to see through her flesh and her skull and into the workings of her brain (p. 161).

Marian also criticizes the way he looks at her in bed; for Marian, Peter touches her body without passion, and she feels his phlegmatic existence beside her, "it was when she would begin feeling that she was on a doctor's examination table" (p. 162). Peter considers sexual course a sort of necessity in a similar way he thinks about marriage which is away from love or passion. By the time she comes to realize her body as a material for Peter to be consumed as regards to the male desire, Marian becomes exposed to somatophobia. Because she regards her body as the source of inferiority and marginalization, she rejects it.

2.2. Interpretation of Somatophobia in the Popular Culture

Atwood believes that taking the body as a mission is not related to health or aesthetics; rather, it is merely the conscious act of politics. Through their bodies, women are obliged to depart from their minds and engage themselves with trivial things like beauty and body shape. Atwood presents the paradoxical understanding of the cultural ideology as the cause of somatophobia which later gives rise to eating disorders. The society in the novel takes the blame to shape women in accordance with the values the culture assimilates as the norm. In this regard, women are disciplined in a sense to perfect their bodies on the purpose of being attractive to the eyes of male watchers. However, the incompatibility of the ideology lies in the very fact that the society expects women to look chaste and virtuous through an unobtrusive appearance on the one hand, and inviting and attractive through a sexual body on the other. More clearly, the society does categorize women by their surface appearance: paradoxically, the culture both expects her to appeal to the male gaze while demanding her to look meek and colorless in order not to cause evil such as sexual abuse and rape which (male authority believes) result from the tantalizing image (short-skirts, low-necked dresses, perfumes, and makeup) she presents. Atwood allusively questions the real blameworthy: woman or man. The society accuses woman of being tempting and based on her anatomical

features and attempts to shape woman in line with the expectations of the masculine order by disciplining her to look austere and chaste in order to prevent femme fatale image with her outlook. On the other hand, popular culture imposes visual pleasures of patriarchy on woman: due to the assumed fact that woman exists merely as a body; she is supposed to present it to the male gaze through decorating it in accordance with the male desire. In other words, the consumer culture causes woman to be obsessed with her body through various instruments serving for the capitalist ideology.

2.2.1. Society as the Disciplinary Force for the Body

The disciplinary force of the society within *The Edible Woman* is illustrated through the landlady. As a character foil, the unnamed landlady of Marian and Ainsley does represent the patriarchal society; she is the eye in a sense to control and discipline the behavior of the two. Acting and thinking away from sisterhood, the landlady represents the patriarchal ideology. As Foucault indicates, knowledge is the production of the power systems; thus, knowledge determines the truth through which individuals are manipulated for the purpose of normalizing and internalizing knowledge as it is presented: “Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice” (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). Within *The Edible Woman*, the landlady is pictured as the one who has already internalized the norms that encapsulate the truth concerning the patriarchal benefits. Indifferent to the tyranny and pressure applied for her sex, she attempts to regiment Marian and Ainsley in parallel with the expectations of the traditional social values. The landlady generally talks to Marian with the purpose of criticizing and warning Ainsley since she looks out of type in terms of her physical appearance and behavior. Interpreting the landlady’s perception of Ainsley, Marian declares, “I suspect she’s decided Ainsley isn’t respectable, whereas I am. It’s probably the way we dress: Ainsley says I choose clothes as though they’re camouflage or a protective colouration, though I can’t see anything wrong with that. She herself goes in for neon pink” (p. 6). Marian tries to comprehend the landlady’s bias against Ainsley, and the only thing that makes sense for her is related to her surface configuration. While Ainsley prefers ostentatious clothes and colors, Marian is the one who tries to conceal her body through unpretentious ones. In other saying, Marian chooses to represent the virtuous female type, whereas Ainsley stands for the alluring image. In this regard, Marian’s body is transformed into a docile body by the

regulations of the power systems because “our bodies are the unwilling servants of the moral and intellectual order” (O’Neill, 2004, p. 4).

On the other hand, in such a society even clothes play a significant role in determining the position a woman has; the way woman gets dressed always determines the character she represents. Accordingly, Marian thinks that the landlady deduces Ainsley as the one who is vulgar and despicable. Within this extract it is clear that the surface reality of a woman, her physical appearance, the way she gets dressed, and the clothes she chooses determine the statue a woman has in the society. In this regard, Marian thinks that she is the appropriate type of woman due to the fact that she shows ultimate attention to keep a low profile in order not to be regarded as a femme fatale. Although she believes that she represents the unimposing and thus the chaste stance of femininity, Marian, yet still, cannot avoid becoming the product of the society. Despite the fact that she criticizes the system as the responsible for the objectification and marginalization of her sex, Marian, nonetheless, believes that she has to struggle for having the ideal femininity in order to be accepted by the society. Therefore, she attempts to adjust herself to the social expectations; for the workplace, she wears the high-heeled shoes which are indeed the indications of her femininity. Marian needs this job for survival, and in order not to be dismissed she has to meet the expectations of the authority which demands her to feature feminine ideals. Through the high-heeled shoes metaphor, Atwood criticizes the way women are imprisoned within their bodies. Marian too knows that she has to present her body in a lady-like position in order to maintain her struggle for life. Atwood condemns the unreasonable fate of woman; based on the philosophical assumption concerning her anatomical defect, woman is intentionally excluded from the business atmosphere through various difficulties set for her.

As an insubordinate persona, Ainsley does ignore the external forces, such as the disciplining force of the landlady, which forces women to contain themselves within the limits of the patriarchal system. As a typical representative of the society, the landlady attempts to contain the two through factitious acts and beliefs: she is the one who misuses the religious and spiritual values for her own sake. In other words, the trouble for the landlady is indeed herself; she is not candid. She wants to bring up her daughter in a morally virgin medium; however, she believes – just like the advocates of the system which entraps female sex – women must be kept under discipline through

religious or patriarchal regulations. By the time Marian mentions the dialogue with the landlady about the smoke, Ainsley responds negligently and claims that the landlady is indeed a member of W.C.T.U (Woman's Christian Temperance) a committee dealing with the negative effects of alcohol through religious references or I.O.D.E. (Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire) a Canadian women's charity organization which is based on patriarchy and masculine identity. "Probably the W.C.T.U., [...] or the I.O.D.E. I'll bet she wasn't at a meeting at all; she was hiding behind that damn velvet curtain, wanting us to think she was at a meeting so we'd *really* do something. What she wants is an orgy" asserts Ainsley (p. 7). Regarding her as a policing subject, Ainsley believes that the landlady attempts to control and discipline them in accordance with the patriarchal ideals despite her identity as a woman. As Nietzsche claims, both religious doctrines and patriarchal impositions externalize the packaged rules that attempt to discipline and contain woman with the purpose of deactivating her self-judgment. Marian remembers the moment when the landlady warned them against corrupting the sense of decency of her daughter and the statement she utters "that two young ladies were surely more to be depended upon than two young men" (p. 7). Throughout the novel, the landlady is considered the eye of the system, and the reason for renting out her house to Marian and Ainsley is not the matter of sisterhood; rather, the landlady naturalizes the idea that women holders would be less trouble for her in terms of ethics or conduct because she believes that women could be easily contained within the system. Marian remembers day they talked to the landlady to rent the house, and she thinks of Ainsley keeping silent with the purpose of looking tame and innocuous: "Ainsley would sit and look innocent, something she can do very well when she wants to – she has a pink – and – white blunt baby's face, a bump for a nose, and large blue eyes she can make as round as Ping-Pong balls" (p. 7). The only way to rent that house, from the perspective of Marian, is to make Ainsley pretend to be someone else because of the prejudice that the society creates. The real blameworthy is the society itself as it forces woman to seesaw between the identity she really has and the one which society expects her to become. Because Ainsley is aware of the tantalizing female image she presents – which is considered intolerable and disturbing for the supposedly religious section of the society – she acts in a sense to live up to the expectations through disguising her real personality: "Thus we need to discipline our bodies to achieve excellence, to enter heaven, or to endure the passivity of sitting in a lecture hall to

gather the good news of sociology” (O’Neill, 2004, p. 4). Because social and religious doctrines manipulate the sexes in an opposing way, Marian discovers that she is to predispose her body in accordance with the rules pre-established by the authority.

Atwood illustrates the disciplinary force of the female body from Marian’s perspective. She goes to the movie theatre in order to let Ainsley and Len alone at home. Looking at the posters, she chooses a low-budget film about horsemen and dying Indians. “In her present state she did not feel like writhing through intensities and pauses and long artistic close-ups of expressively-twitched skin-pores. She was looking only for warmth, shelter, and something resembling oblivion, so she chose the Western” (p. 132). Because she feels repressed by Peter and thus by the system, Marian wants to be free from the chains that bound her. The only thing she needs in her life is peace and shelter. With this purpose she has already forced herself to believe in the miracle of marriage and the love she feels for Peter as the power that would keep her alive so far. However, she believes that marriage with Peter is not the way to reach happiness because she thinks that she cannot be the one whom Peter tries to shape in his mind. When she takes her seat, “she slouched her body down, resting her head on the back of the seat and her knees against the seat in front and half-closing her eyes. Not a lady-like position, but nobody could see in the dark” (p. 132). Feeling free from the panopticon eye of the society that controls her all the time, there in the theatre Marian acts upon her sudden passion of being herself. Yet, soon after her short-time release from the real life, Marian faces the reality on the screen; even in the movie, the woman with blonde hair attracts the attention of man. Even the movies dictate the ideal femininity through surface perfection: “On the screen a gargantuan cowboy was pressing his lips chastely to those of the blonde woman” (p. 134). The female body is the medium of any woman’s existence; Marian realizes that she is under the influence of such perception. However, she attempts to free her body from the generalizations that limit her sense of self by the time she feels free from the rules and from the eyes that always control her.

You see as long as the population, per square mile especially, was low and the infant mortality rate and the death-rate in general was high, there was a premium on Birth. Man was in harmony with the purposes, the cyclical rhythms of Nature, and the earth said, Produce, Produce. Be fruitful and multiply, if you’ll recall... (p. 216).

The disciplinary force of the cultural ideology is also illustrated through the speech Fish makes; he hides behind the religious commands that dictate individuals the necessity to

multiple. In other words, Fish is the representative of the patriarchal system that attempts to convince women to marry and give birth under religious doctrines. Within a patriarchal system supported by religious dogmas, it is always woman who is forced to adapt her body to the assumed requirements of societies and of patriarchy. In accordance with Foucault's understanding of the concept of biopower, Fish sustains the regulation of populations and thus of the individuals through making their bodies subjugate to the expectations of the society in which they live. In this regard, the society has dominium over the female body as a result of the misinterpretation of religious commands. Through the quotation above, Fish indeed reveals his patriarchal disposition: he believes that the mere purpose of living is to multiply, and based on this assumption, he claims that women do not have any right to decide abortion or not to give birth at all. Accordingly, Marian, already confused about her future, –as a devoted wife to Peter and a self-sacrificing mother to the children – is exposed to internalize the societal assertiveness. She feels as if she would become nothing unless she gets married and gives birth; Marian is coerced to exist through her gender roles which emerged out of her sexed body. On the other hand, Trevor comments “what we have now [...] is a society in which all the values are anti-birth. Birth control, they all say, and, It's the population explosion not the atomic explosion that we must all worry about” (p. 217). From this extract it is understood that the decision making mechanism of giving birth or not is always men. Despite the fact that the matter is indeed directly associated with women, in modern societies, just as in the ancient ones, men declare themselves as the authority to force women to multiply. In such an atmosphere, Marian feels the force of the male hegemony on her body. She wants to have children; however, she is not ready for it yet. But in such a society, she realizes that her opinions fall on a stony ground. Related to the concept of biopower, which is defined as the practice of societies aiming to control the populations and thus to discipline bodies, Atwood satirizes the society in which birth control – a decision on female body – is under the initiative of the patriarchal hegemony.

2.2.2. Reification of the Body through Artificial Femininity

Although she maintains a reasonable stance against patriarchal generalizations concerning the gender roles attributed to the female body because of her sex, Ainsley cannot realize the malice the capitalist ideology harbors against the female body, and

she fulfills the expectations of the modern culture through her body instead. “Methods which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called “disciplines” (Foucault, 1977, p. 137). Representing the consumer culture of the modern age, Ainsley does blindly follow the tricks which the capitalist society presents as a privilege; yet, she is not aware of the reality that she transforms herself into a servant and a victim for the system through being hypnotized to shape her appearance in parallel with cultural icons. Ainsley indeed symbolizes the one who has lost her true identity for the sake of capitalist aims; engaging herself with trivial products for her surface perfection, she forgets the inner reality concerning her sense of self. Accordingly, after observing Ainsley’s obsession with her body and excessive dedication to her physical appearance, Marian becomes alienated to her own body as she cannot tolerate the overexertion that woman labors for the perfection of her body. Because she is obsessed with the idea of being approved and admired, woman, in the popular culture, transmogrifies her body into a factitious thing by depending on the products through which she believes to work a miracle. Since Marian never wants to play with or use her body for the objective of being accepted by men, she develops a reaction formation in the form of somatophobia. In order to reveal the artificiality of Ainsley, Marian describes her as:

a quick-change artist; I could never put myself together in such a short time. She was looking a lot healthier – possibly the effects of makeup, though you can never tell with Ainsley – and she had her red hair piled up on top of her head, as she always does when she goes to work. The rest of the time she wears it down in straggles. She had on her orange and pink sleeveless dress, which I judged was too tight across the hips (p. 6).

Ainsley does correspond to the requirements of the society by decorating her body through the instruments of capitalism. She is prepossessed by the effective mediums of the consumer culture. Because women are dictated to be careful about their bodies due to the nonsensical belief that they exist with their bodies, capitalism does easily influence and deceive women via the things manufactured for them. Women must be attentive to keep their bodies young and beautiful, and thus they must consume the care products produced for them. In fact, capitalism attempts to prove the very traditional understanding of women concerning their lack of reason. In this regard, Ainsley represents the target market by buying the products, adorning her face with make-up,

and overdressing, through which she does yield to the system. Because she is not content with her body as it is, Ainsley also has somatophobia; however, the more she attempts to get rid of her body hatred, the more she becomes estranged to herself. Under the influence of the pressure that the media puts on woman, she regards her body as something that has to be corrected. From the perspective of Marian, Ainsley represents the ideal femininity in a sense that she knows how to use her body to fascinate men. Torn between the representations of the ideal femininity either as a pure and chaste woman or as a sexy and charming lady, Marian realizes that Ainsley chooses to become the latter by believing to turn her body into an advantage for herself:

She had dug out from somewhere a cotton summer creation I'd never seen before, a pink and light-blue gingham check on white with a ruffle around the neck. Her hair was tied behind her head with a pink bow and on one of her wrists she had a tinkly silver charm-bracelet. Her make-up was understated, her eyes carefully but not noticeably shadowed to make them twice as large and round and blue, and she had sacrificed her long oval fingernails, biting them nearly to the quick so that they had a jagged schoolgirlish quality. I could see she was determined (p. 69).

Ainsley is aware of her potential to over-impress men through her physical attributes. In other saying, she knows how to use her body to attract the attention of men. "I studied her latest version of herself, thinking that it was like one of the large plump dolls in the stores at Christmas time, with washable rubber-smooth skin and glassy eyes and gleaming artificial hair. Pink and white" (p. 70). Through her way of choosing clothes, make-up, and accessories, Ainsley serves for the capitalist system which pursues the goal of directing women into the unconscious consumerism and thus into somatophobia. On the other hand, she uses her body for her own benefit; as she wants to have a baby Ainsley tries to deceive her prey (biological father) via her attractive body. Marian is aware of the fact that Ainsley knows how to pretend as the one the society expects to see. Put it differently, Ainsley is an unusual sort of woman who represents both the manipulated and the manipulator: for her own benefit, she knows how to disguise herself as the occasion requires. To illustrate, when she is alone with Marian, Ainsley tells about the night with Len and excuses for her "acting dumb and scared" (p. 87), which she vindicates as necessary for her game. Ainsley is a paradoxical character: she is sly as a fox in that she knows well how to use her feminine codes in line with her project; and on the other hand, it is clear that she challenges her gender roles determined for her by patriarchy. In other words, Ainsley rejects keeping silent, being an obedient

and vulnerable female type; by contrast, she impersonates a tempting Ainsley. She is a character who is conscious of all ill intentions of the male hegemony; yet, she thinks that she has to pretend as if she subordinated to the system.

As an over-feminine individual, Ainsley listens to her hormones which cry out her desire for a baby. To achieve her aim, Ainsley highlights her feminine features and regards her body as armor against external forces. On the other hand, she is too intelligent and rational to be the victim of male desires. Thus, she consciously manipulates male wishes in accordance with her own benefit. "I knew perfectly well why she had come: Len was a potential candidate, and she had chosen to inspect him this way because she had sensed she'd have difficulty forcing me to introduce them otherwise" states Marian (p. 68-69). Marian knows well that Ainsley does also make advances to Len in order to be able to achieve her objective: to get pregnant and have a baby. Ainsley is also aware of the assumption that men in general regard women as free for taking; therefore, they think that they could use women for their momentary gusto. Ainsley thus acts in the same manner as men: this time it is a woman who exploits the other sex:

Ainsley, who seemed as young and inexperienced as a button mushroom, was in reality a scheming superfemale carrying out a foul plot against him, using him in effect as an inexpensive substitute for artificial insemination with a devastating lack of concern for his individuality (p. 130).

Atwood also illustrates the power of the cultural construction of femininity through the portrayals of the office virgins. As artificial blondes, the office girls seem to adopt the patriarchal norms in order to be able to survive within the system. The colleagues of Marian who "aren't really much alike, except that they are all artificial blondes" (p. 16) also aid her indirectly in dissolving her feminine image; she never desires to become "the ideal" like these girls who adopt the public self and adapt their bodies to the system which in fact creates optimum females. Observing each one in detail, Marian describes them as "Emmy, the typist, whisk-tinted and straggly; Lucy, who has a kind of public-relations job, platinum and elegantly coiffured, and Millie, Mrs. Bogue's assistant, brassy from the sun and cropped" (p. 16). Apart from their physical appearances, these office virgins seem to adapt their personalities to the patriarchal authority as well: "Millie from a solid girl-guide practicality, [...] Lucy from social quailing ("What would people *say*?")" (p. 16). Marian recognizes that the office virgins represent the "ideal" women who exist with their feminine attributes and who pretend to have nothing

but their bodies. They act in accordance with the misconception the society adopts as the truth claiming that women do not have the capacity to use their minds. In this regard, they seem to have lost their identities as a consequence of the pressures to forget the potential of their minds. The only expectation of the office virgins is to survive through their bodies, marriage and their savior husbands. In line with the impositions of the consumer culture and the expectations of the patriarchal order, Atwood questions the way how women shape themselves for the purpose of being presentable to the male gaze and how they become somatophobics as a result of being deceived by the capitalist tricks played on their bodies.

Although she does not involve in the system voluntarily, Marian, like the office virgins and Ainsley, typifies the sphere of influence of consumerism. Working for a market research company, Marian also becomes a part of the capitalist system; the market research company in which she works represents the consumer culture itself as it is a community-oriented company which functions as a manipulator of the public brain. The logic of capitalism focuses on the power of ecstasy it creates for individuals: the matter of consumption is the fundamental goal that capitalist societies aspire for. To achieve this aim, the system attempts to hypnotize women to consume without any sense of reason. They are manipulated with the purpose of decorating their surface to be able to address the male gaze. Within the novel, Marian is to organize questionnaires in the form of simple questions so that everybody (every woman) could easily understand and attempt to buy and consume the products right away. Based on the archaic tradition concerning the dualism between the body and the mind, women are not supposed to deal with the issues that require overthinking, and the consumer culture serves for the assumptions that the patriarchal ideology claims.

The bride, the gift, the object of Exchange constitutes “a sign and a value” that opens a channel of Exchange that not only serves the functional purpose of facilitating trade but performs the symbolic or ritualistic purpose of consolidating the internal bonds, the collective identity, of each clan differentiated through the act (Butler, 1990, p. 49).

Peter arranges a final party before the wedding with the purpose of exhibiting Marian for others' consent, and he suggests that Marian have something with her hair and buy a beautiful dress to manifest her feminine charms. Peter does not directly tell her to do something with her appearance; however, Marian is quite sure that the allusive suggestions reveal that he is not satisfied with the image Marian portrays. Even though

she does not want to mask her body with ostentatious clothes and makeover, Marian decides to pretend to be the ideal woman Peter wishes her to become. Therefore, she takes a look at a dress which is “short, red, and sequined” (p. 228), in other words, the dress is designed for those who want to display themselves as charming ladies. Although Marian does not think that the dress reflects her real self, she buys it upon the confirmation of the saleslady: “It’s you, dear” (p. 228). The capitalist ideology targets female minds and in order to capture their decision mechanisms it makes use of the instruments. As an indication of the capitalist tricks played on women, the saleslady’s response persuades Marian to buy the dress: not her but others’ opinions are determinative for her decisions. After leaving the clothes shop, Marian goes to the hairdresser in order to prepare herself for the party. She feels that she does not even have the right over her hair; no matter what she wants the hairdresser to do, the result is always up to the hairdresser’s decision: “They treated your head like a cake: something to be carefully iced and ornamented” she regards (p. 229). Marian feels uncomfortable with her hair since she feels as if she were “a juggler with a fragile golden bubble”, and the hairspray that the hairdresser uses seems to “glue each strand in place” (p. 228). The inconvenience that Marian feels is related to the same issue; her body is patronized by the patriarchal desires. Marian takes the name of the hairdresser from Lucy as she is the type who takes interest in such establishments. However, Marian realizes that it is a mistake because she is totally different from Lucy in nature: Lucy is the sort of woman who is open to artificiality like nail-polish, makeup, and pompous hair styles. Marian believes that without such things Lucy might look pale, or even sick and nude because she is addicted to the products that indeed transform her into a factitious thing. Marian, by contrast, is certain that “on her own body these things looked extra, stuck to her surface like patches or posters” (p. 229).

In spas and beauty parlors, women shed their street clothes and put on identical white or colored robes [...] They give themselves over to the touch of the masseuse or beautician. Pads are put on their eyes, scented liquids cover their faces [...] The liminal moment in a make-over comes after the old makeup is removed, but before the new is applied; in surgery, when the patient, in her hospital gown, is prepared and put under (Wolf, 2002, p. 100-101).

Marian realizes the power of the cultural ideology on her body; she does not want to be involved in the system, but she finds herself to be already drawn in it. Because she cannot resist the cultural sanction that operates on her body, she takes a dislike to her

own body. The details regarding her defeat at the hairdresser's illustrate the cycle of desperation Marian finds her body and mind in: "As soon as she had walked into the large pink room – everything had been pink and mauve [...] she had felt as though she was being admitted to a hospital to have an operation" (p. 229). Unlike the office virgins or Ainsley, Marian suffers from being subject to those who, with great enthusiasm, try to transform her into an artificial doll. While the shampoo girl washes her hair, Marian closes her eyes as if she were lying on the operating-table: "She thought it would be a good idea if they would give anesthetics to the patients, just put them to sleep while all necessary physical details were taken care of; she didn't enjoy feeling like a slab of flesh, an object" (p. 229). Marian is conscious of the fact that she is not the type of woman who can let her body shaped by others with the intent of being acceptable to the male gaze; she knows that such a surface image does not reflect her inner reality. After observing and experiencing such treatments on the female body, Marian grows away from her body gradually and she feels on the edge of rejecting it:

Then they had strapped her into the chair – not really strapped in, but she couldn't get up and go running out into the winter street with wet hair and a surgical cloth around her neck – and the doctor had set to work [...] She had sat motionless, handing him the clamps, fascinated by the draped figure prisoned in the filigreed gold oval of the mirror and by the rack of gleaming instruments and bottled medicines on the counter in front of her. She couldn't see what he was doing behind her back. Her whole body felt curiously paralysed (p. 229-230).

"The body" appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself" (Butler, 1990, p. 12). Atwood reveals the very fact that the system turns women into machines; all women are the same as if they were the products of the same factory. As an outcome of the regulations predetermined by the ideology and supported by the culture, women are coerced to have the ideal female image in order to be able to survive within the system. Marian's experience in the beauty parlor and her observation of the other women manifest the standardization of her sex by means of the instruments that serve for the interests of capitalism. Through the products and establishments women metamorphose into identical beings:

She looked sideways down the assembly-line of women seated in identical mauve chairs under identical whirring mushroom-shaped machines. All that was visible was a row of strange creatures with legs of various shapes and hands that held magazines and heads that were metal domes. Inert; totally

inert. Was this what she was being pushed towards, this compound of the simply vegetable and the simply mechanical? An electric mushroom (p. 230).

The cultural oppression on woman is felt during Marian's preparation for the party. In order to look slim enough to feature her body lines for public approval, she wears a girdle although she does not feel it necessary for her. The "girdle" is indeed a metaphor that might be interpreted as one of the mediums which functions for the purpose of squeezing her in and confining her to a "man"-made body. In other words, girdles designed for women to make them look slimmer in fact mask the real size of the target women. Either this or that way, the girdle is the thing which is metaphorically produced to discipline the female body in accordance with the patriarchal expectations. In such a hegemonic masculine society, Marian does not have a decision making mechanism; by contrast, she is urged to normalize the wish-wash pursuits as the standard. Because the ideological pressure does emphasize the expectation that woman must look beautiful, sexy, and slender, Marian reciprocates the system not for personal satisfaction but for social acceptance:

Now she was all right she could begin to dress. She oozed herself into the new girdle she had got to go with the dress, noting that she hadn't really lost much weight: she had been eating a lot of noodles. She hadn't intended to buy one at all, but the saleslady who was selling her the dress and who was thoroughly corseted herself said that she ought to, and produced an appropriate model with satin paneling and a bow of ribbon at the front. 'Of course you're very *thin* dear, you don't really need one, but still that *is* a close-fitting dress and you wouldn't want it to be obvious that you haven't got one on, would you?' (p. 242).

After helping Marian get dressed, Ainsley suggests that she do Marian's face: "You'll never manage it by yourself. You'd just do it in your usual skimpy way and come out looking like a kid playing dress-up in her mother's clothes" (p. 243). Regarding Marian as too unornamented to show up among people at the party, Ainsley has a bash at ornamenting Marian; she first paints Marian's nails, then deals with her face. "During the rest of the procedure, while strange things were being done to her skin, then to each eyebrow, Marian sat passively, marveling at the professional efficiency with which Ainsley was manipulating her features" (p. 244). Just feeling the same as she did when she was at the hairdresser's, Marian gives in to Ainsley and her persistent mission to embellish her. As a representative of the system that regards women as body, Ainsley sustains the ideology through making a new Marian which does not reflect her true identity: "Marian stared into the Egyptian-lidded and outlined and thickly-fringed eyes

of a person she had never seen before” (p. 244). Ainsley tries to manipulate the posture and the facial expressions of Marian: “Marian was embarrassed: she didn’t know how. She was experimenting, looking in the mirror, trying to find out which particular set of muscles would produce the desired effect” (p. 244). Now Marian seems as if she wore a mask on her face; since she does not reflect her true nature, Marian strives for finding an appropriate facial expression to substitute her real one.

Upon arriving at Peter’s, Marian goes to his bedroom, and when she puts off her coat, Peter is surprised and seems to be charmed by her beauty: “Darling, you look absolutely marvelous” he states (p. 251). Rather than be pleased with his compliment, Marian discovers that Peter indirectly gives a message to see her always like that: as a well-groomed and presentable lady. What Peter likes is not Marian but the things that make her look more artificial. Because Marian is aware of the fact that Peter merely fancies her body, she takes revenge from Peter by rejecting the only link (her body) between Peter and herself:

Now she wondered whether or not she did look absolutely marvelous. She turned the phrase over in her mind: it had no specific shape or flavor [...] She turned her head and examined her profile out of the corner of her eye. The difficulty was that she couldn’t grasp the total effect: her attention caught on the various details, the things she wasn’t used to – the finger-nails, the heavy ear-rings, the hair, the various parts of her face that Ainsley had added or altered [...] What was it that lay beneath the surface these pieces were floating on, holding them all together? She held both of her naked arms out towards the mirror. They were the only portion of her flesh that was without a cloth or nylon or leather or varnish covering, but in the glass even they looked fake, like soft pinkish-white rubber or plastic, boneless, flexible ... (p. 251).

Feeling her posture as a total artificiality because of the vanity effect that covers her face, Marian realizes the fact that she has become a stranger to her real identity. She is unable to see her true reflection in the mirror, and what is worse; everybody except her seems to be content with her new appearance. However, she is sure that she will never appreciate this new Marian because of the illusionary image her body reflects in the mirror.

After the nightmarish party at Peter’s, Marian resolves to make love with Duncan; the copulation, she believes, will finalize her true emotions and thoughts about Peter. Having authority over her own body, she thinks, would solve the problems that she has with Peter. Because making love is a matter of individual desire if she can make her body act freely, she can also achieve the autonomy of her body. However, by the time

Marian touches at him, Duncan immediately sits up on the bed and reflects his somatophobia:

I don't exactly know what's wrong [...] Partly I don't like not being able to see your face; but it would probably be worse if I could. But it's not just that, I feel like some kind of little stunted creature crawling over the surface of a huge mass of flesh. Not that you're fat [...] you aren't. There's just altogether too much flesh around here. It's suffocating (p. 279).

Duncan, as the subversive force for Marian, states that Marian should remove her makeup as it totally covers her face as if it were a mask used to hide her real face of adultery: "I'm not letting you into this bed until you go in there and peel that junk off your face. Fornication may be very well in its way, but if I'm going to come out looking like a piece of flowered wallpaper I reject it" declares Duncan (p. 278). While Peter desires Marian to mask her real identity through make-up and clothes, and thus expects her to become more feminine, Duncan encourages Marian to be her real self. Duncan's statement indicates his challenging attitude towards the assumptions that coerce woman to be someone else through furnishing her body with make-up or any other artificiality.

2.2.3. The Media as an Instrument of Patriarchy

As an influential instrument of the ideology, the media strives mightily for the enslavement of women through consumerism. Atwood reveals the true nature of the media by illustrating the power magazines and advertisements have over women and over their bodies. As a consequence of her observation of Peter and his attitude towards her and towards life, Marian feels uncertain about her decision to get married. Neither does she want to be involved in a life of oppression and repression by Peter, nor does she believe to have the power to direct her life without being under the wings of a man. While questioning her doubts about Peter, Marian scans some magazines to let it all hang out. When she reads the titles of the articles such as "ADOPTION: YES OR NO?," "YOU'RE IN LOVE – IS IT REAL? A TWENTY-QUESTION QUIZ," and "HONEYMOON TENSIONS" (p. 95), she discovers the trap set for her sex, and she thinks that this caption is indeed a sort of warning for her. The power of the magazines to manipulate the thoughts of individuals is clearly reflected in this quotation. Generally, female psyche is forced to regard trivial issues such as partnership or love as the center of their lives; they are expected to read and think over such matters. Marian is already confused about her relationship with Peter and such articles, which are in fact composed to capture the minds of women, enables Marian to question the life that waits

for her. She knows that she is not the type of woman who regards marriage as a contract or a necessity; she wants a marriage which is based on love. Upon reading this section in the magazine, Marian comes to realize her hesitation or doubts concerning her feelings for Peter.

Another case that evidences the manipulative power of magazines and advertisements on women is illustrated when Marian is on the way to Laundromat. Marian does glimpse at the advertisements which she enjoys reading while travelling on the bus. She gets the sight of a girdle advertisement; a quite beautiful and sexy woman wearing a girdle. The manipulation of the female body by the system is illustrated through the advertisement Marian does spy: “no well-dressed woman is ever without her girdle” (p. 98). The epiphany that Marian experiences while looking at the ads from the bus window is that she thinks how such ads manipulate individuals’ psyches in accordance with the expectations of the society. The girdle ad, which is in fact a stuff striking for women’s fancy, is presented via a female image that attracts the attention of men. In other words, although it is produced for women, the girdle in the ad addresses the male gaze. This paradox, she discovers, is concerned with the societal assertiveness the ideology directs on people: the instruments that serve for the ideology function for the purpose of creating individuals without any sense of free-will or self. By contrast, strategically, ads and magazines undertake it as a duty to teach women the ways how to look beautiful and sexy through carrying on a tradition which imprisons her personality. Accordantly, women learn and adopt the standardized expectations presented through the instruments of power:

I concentrated on one of the posters above the windows, a colourful one of a young woman with three pairs of legs skipping about in her girdle. I must admit to being, against my will, slightly scandalized by those advertisements. They are so public [...] The female form, I thought, is supposed to appeal to men, not to women, and men don’t usually buy girdles. Though perhaps the lithe young woman was a self-image; perhaps the purchasers thought they were getting their own youth and slenderness back in the package (p. 97-98).

She thinks about the possibilities and time when she would need a girdle to look slim and fit forever. Marian is well-aware of the ideological power that does force women to adapt her body to a certain form that has already been determined: “they have a way of creeping up on you before you know it” (p. 98). The consumer culture of the modern age pre-determines, pre-establishes the ostensible requirements, and presents the products at the disposal of women before they realize whether they really need them or

not. In other words, capitalism does allure women in a sense that they act as if they lost their minds. Woman already defined and labeled as the irrational is coerced to center upon her body as the single weapon not only against herself and but also against others.

On the edge of her discovery of the fact that her life is standardized by Peter, Marian hears about the “Underwear Man” (p. 123) whom Lucy defines as “one of those dirty men who phone women and say filthy things to them” (p. 123). This psycho man, “probably one of those sex-fiends” (p. 124), introduces himself as though he were from the company and asks many confidential questions to the women on the phone. While the others accuse him of heresy at once, Marian does think on the reasons that would lead him to find satisfaction through such ridiculous acts, and she concludes that he is also a prey of the society. Despite the fact that the media seems to privilege male desire and satisfaction through the objectification of woman and her body, in fact it manipulates the male mentality in a sense to regard woman as a sexual corporeal entity:

Perhaps his otherwise normal mind had been crazed into frenzy by the girdle advertisements on the buses: he was a victim of the society. Society flaunted these slender laughing rubberized women before his eyes, urging, practically forcing upon him their flexible blandishments, and then refused to supply him with any (p. 124).

Marian resembles this Underwear Man with Peter: “Perhaps this was his true self, the core of his personality, the central Peter who had been occupying her mind more and more lately. Perhaps this was what lay hidden under the surface, under the other surfaces, that secret identity” (p. 125). The Enlightenment ideals condition man and woman under definite roles, and they are supposed to perform what is cast in for his or her part; and accordingly, woman should present her body as a gift for male gaze. As a consequence of the modern portrayal of femininity, woman is defined merely as a body, and her body is the target of male desire. In this context, Marian concludes that Peter is also a man in mask: despite the fact that he is an educated man and a promising lawyer, he has the potential to uncover his sexual deviation as an outcome of the directives the system imposes on the male psyche.

Chapter 20 opens with an idiom “walking down the aisle” that represents getting married; however, within the novel, it is understood that the “aisle” that she walks along is in fact a supermarket corridor. While shopping Marian considers the influence of the gentle music she does hear. Gaining experience at Seymour Survey, Marian is well aware of the real purpose of the music: “to lull you into a euphoric trance” (p. 187), it is

conditioned to soothe or to hypnotize the customers with the aim of increasing the sales. Struggling not to be taken in by the music, Marian remembers an article on cows which have been said to give “more milk when sweet music was played to them” (p. 187). She knows the games of capitalism on individuals; nevertheless, Marian regards that she hardly contains herself from “buying” as a consequence of the delusive prices or enchanted packages. Marian believes that all products are the same; yet, they are presented to the customers with deceptive colors, covers, or symbols, revealing the power of consumerism. While criticizing the sphere of influence that the media creates for individuals, Marian indeed emphasizes the trick played on women through the products that appeal to their minds and bodies. Leading towards the vegetable stand, Marian does realize that she has got rid of eating leafy greenery, and she longs for the days when she was a carnivore. As a consequence of her discovery of the tricks and the impositions directed towards the female psyche, Marian reacts to the system through her lost appetite. Because she is not aware of her body’s resistance to the impositions of the media, Marian wonders why she is unable to eat certain foods.

“Kleenex,” she said. She glanced with distaste at the different brands and colours offered – what difference did it make what you blew your nose on? – and at the fancy printed toilet-paper – flowers and scrolls and polka-dots. Pretty soon they would have it in gold, as though they wanted to pretend it was used for something different, like wrapping Christmas presents. There really wasn’t a single human unpleasantness left that they had not managed to turn to their uses. What on earth was wrong with plain white? At least it looked clean (p. 190).

The penetration of advertisements on individual choices is the thing that Marian questions while shopping at the supermarket. She states that surface appearance is always regarded as the medium of percept image. Even though the substance and the content are the same, people always show tendency to buy products with bombastic exterior surface. Just like the fancy printed toilet-papers, the female body is covered with delusive products to make it look more attractive. At the checkout counters, Marian also realizes another publicity: “There was a big poster over the front window, a semi-nude girl in a grass skirt and flowers, and beside it a small sign: PINEAPPLES, Three Cans 65 c” (190). Marian notices the irrelevance within the advertisement; although the aim of the ad is to increase pineapple sales, there is no pineapple image in the picture, but a girl with her body is the focus of the advertisement. Upon discovering the pejorative effect of capitalism on the female body through the advertisements the media instills and through the products that fasten on women as addle-brain creatures,

Maria realizes the whimsicality of the cultural ideology that attempts to antagonize women against their bodies through objectifying them for male pleasure.

Surrendering to the hands of those who try to metamorphose her into a made-woman through the artificial products they use at the hairdresser's, Marian persuades herself to put up with the situation, and to achieve this endurance she decides to glance at a movie star magazine: "A blonde woman with enormous breasts spoke to her from the back cover: "Girls! Be successful! If you want to really Go Places, Develop Your Bust..." (p. 230). The caption is a sort of warning for Marian; the caption implies the menace on the condition that she acts out of feminine ideals. Within the popular culture, woman is supposed to represent the ideal femininity through paying ultimate attention to her body with the purpose of perfecting it. If a woman has eye-catching breasts, this means that she can easily attract the attention of men and be accepted by the society as well. After the operation-like labor has been completed, Marian is ready for the party: "He had built her usually straight hair up into a peculiar shape embellished with many intricate stiff curved wisps, and had manufactured two tusk-like spicurls which projected forward, one on each cheekbone" (230).

For Marian, her appearance is extraordinary, and she feels as though she were a call girl; however, she is certain that Peter will like the style which she disguises herself in. Just as she guesses, by the time the guests arrive at the party at Peter's, they all comment on Marian's appearance with admiration. Duncan's roommates – Trevor and Fish – also express how extraordinary and beautiful Marian looks as well as Peter, the office virgins, Ainsley and Clara. By the time Trevor recognizes Marian, he is nonplused to see her in such magnificence: "my dear you look elegant, you should really wear red more often" he remarks (p. 263). The community pressure is felt here: both Trevor and Fish utter the need for the red dress for Marian to display herself sexier and more beautiful. As the representatives of the ideology that underlines the fated existence of women as sexy and beautiful, they are over-impressed by Marian's feminine image. On the other hand, the office virgins who also internalize the ideal femininity through presenting perfect body to the male gaze remark the necessity for a red dress in a woman's life. Nonetheless, only Duncan, as an unusual type of man, regards her transformation with disfavor: "You didn't tell me it was a masquerade [...] Who the hell are you supposed to be?" (p. 263). As opposed to those who hold in high

regard for her artificial appearance, Duncan reproaches the attitude that forces woman to shape her body not of her own volition, but for the approval and admiration of others. In fact, Duncan symbolizes the inner self of Marian; because just like Duncan, Marian feels as if she were at a masquerade ball with an obligation to turn into someone else. Upon this comment, Marian discovers the fact concerning her identity: she has become a socially constructed feminine type as the outcome of the cultural dictations on the female body. Because she feels to have been sculptured in the hands of a sculptor, Marian gets a total stranger to her own body.

2.3. Psychological Core of Somatophobia

Atwood reflects the close relationship between psychoanalytic theory and the mental and bodily marginalization of woman: as a repressed image in her own life, Marian tries to survive through performing the collective unconscious which dictates her to hate her body as the source of evil or vice versa to become obsessed with the body as the only quality she has. In other words, female psyche is indoctrinated with the purpose of corresponding to the expectations of the society which are undergirded by the ideological discourse. In *The Edible Woman*, Atwood discusses the influence of the psychoanalytic perception of woman in accordance with the male-dominated system which provides the justification of anatomical dualism and thus of the inferiority of the female body.

“Being” the Phallus and “having” the Phallus denote divergent sexual positions, or non-positions within language. To “be” the Phallus is to be the “signifier” of the desire of the Other and to appear as this signifier” (Butler, 1990, p. 56). Marian, Ainsley, Clara, and the office virgins, who are considered the signified within the phallogocentric theory, are driven to survive as the “other”. The interpretations of the names of the characters reveal the function of language and the structuralist discourse for the marginalization of the female body and mind. “Peter”, means “penis” in slang language; therefore, within the novel Peter represents the signifier. Being the male genital organ privileges Peter over Marian. On the other hand, “Joe” means “human”; thus, he regards himself as the signifier of the nonhuman: animal-like woman. The phallogocentric language that reinforces the binary opposition between man and woman reveals the very fact that within the patriarchal discourse spoken language is the determining factor of subjectivity. According to Lacan, language is itself discourse, and woman is absent in it

because language is centered on the phallus. Within the novel, the discourse speaks the language of patriarchy/phallus, and thus the female characters are brushed aside as lack, and the repressive gendered roles are imposed upon them as the norm. As Turner indicates, “language is an impersonal system of communication in which we surrender our individuality. Language represents the authority of society over the unconscious. Thus in the work of Lacan language is the basis of the alienation between the self and the world” (2008, p. 24-25).

Through various situations and events, Atwood achieves to present the lost identity of Marian within a patriarchal society and enables her to awaken to her real sense of self first by letting her entangle with the conditions and then giving her power to overcome the obstacles that discourage her from becoming herself. To set an example, Atwood criticizes the way how women are forced to repress their feelings and thoughts into their subconscious through internalizing the inferior and the marginal stance in life. “Marian”, meaning the virgin Mary, is supposed to be chaste and pure by her signifier Peter, while Clara is expected to accept and internalize her nonhuman stance in life through giving birth and domestic roles: “Patriarchal men have depicted themselves as “more human” than women because they have viewed *human* as signifying everything superior and deserving, everything that supposedly separates humans from “animals” (Adams and Donovan, 1995, p. 22). As a consequence of the normalization of the meanings attributed to her, Marian is convinced to be the submissive one to deserve and make the best of her name. However, the repressed unconscious of Marian comes to surface by the time Peter tells a story of hunting to Len. Marian realizes that he is so fond of the experience which he had depicted differently and innocently to Marian before. The story Peter tells thus causes Marian to identify herself with the rabbit Peter did hunt with pleasure:

So I let her off and Wham. One shot, right through the heart. The rest of them got away. I picked it up and Trigger said, ‘You know how to gut them, you just slit her down the belly and give her a good hard shake and all the guts’ll fall out.’ So I whipped out my knife, good knife, German steel, and slit the belly and took her by the hind legs and gave her one hell of a crack, like a whip you see, and the next thing you know there was blood and guts all over the place (p. 70).

Based on the relationship between the hunter and the hunted, Peter’s hunting story reveals his tendency towards oppression and violence that men commit against women and animals, or more precisely, against the nature. Based on the idea of the chain of

beings, men regard themselves as superior to women and animals; women are considered equal to the status of animals in that both are the manifestations of the lack of reason and mind. As a masculine performance, hunting is pictured as a masculine activity by Peter; even he has never shared his experiences on hunting with Marian since he regards that the issue is beyond female cognizance. Marian interprets Peter's pleasure he takes while telling the story as a sort of disclosure of his inner identity through which he inclines to oppress Marian and does her an ill turn. Put it differently, Marian associates herself with the rabbit in a sense that both are the signified victims of Peter; more precisely of the patriarchal society she is surrounded by. Because within the phallogocentric tradition man claims the right to master everything (woman, nature), woman is left either to submit or to dissolve within this system.

Women stand for and symbolize the body, "difference", the concrete. The qualities are also said to suffuse and define the activities most associated with women: nurturing, mothering, taking care of and being in relation with others, "preserving." Women's minds are also said to reflect the qualities of our stereotypically female activities and bodies [...] Men are said to have superior powers of abstract reason (mind), to be the "masters" of nature (including bodies), and to be more aggressive and militaristic (Flax, 1990, p. 170).

Marian awakens to the close relationship between the rabbit and herself; both are considered prey for Peter and for the system just due to the anatomical facts patriarchy claims as a defense. The phallogocentric order enables and maintains the oppression and repression of woman by the male hegemony; thus, the discourse legitimates the superiority of man over woman and thus her association with animals/nature. In ancient hunter and collector tribes, men define themselves as hunters and women as hunted based on the ancient belief that women are weak and vulnerable to external forces while men are strong and warlike. In this regard, the hunter-victim metaphor has been maintained by patriarchal order since those times. Marian's associating herself with the rabbit is also related to the gender categorization; while mighty animals such as lion, wolf, and tiger refer to man, weak and feeble ones like rabbit, bird, and butterfly are identified with woman. In this context, Marian resembles herself with the rabbit Peter hunted: both are open to attack and oppression. Because Peter and other male chauvinists draw their strength from the patriarchal fictions, they believe that they have the right to make an appearance over woman with pleasure and satisfaction. Although Marian presumes to evaluate Peter's behavior as interlocutory, she realizes the fact that

Peter indeed reflects the personality which he did mask before; he takes pleasure in telling about the violence he did perpetrate.

Atwood critiques the assumption that women and animals are weak and vulnerable creatures due to the anatomical imperfection as against men. In order to clarify the assertion engraved in female subconscious, Atwood refers to animals as the indication of oppression and repression of women under the patriarchal ideology. Apart from the rabbit which Marian associates herself with, she resembles her condition with turtles. By the time Marian glances at a book on shellfish and reads a passage about turtles, she discovers that turtles are kept in a cardboard or in any other form of a cage for a length of time. In this process the owner exhibits love and feeds the turtle meticulously. When the turtle begins to trust its owner, he first puts it into a cauldron of cold water where it could enjoy and swim freely, then immediately into a boiling one. From Marian's point of view, such a process of providing food is a kind of brutality. The tyranny on turtles is the same that is applied on women; man once gains woman's love and trust, then kills her by slow degrees. The information Marian gets about the process a turtle experiences thus enables her to realize her eventual fate supposing that she would get married to Peter:

You were supposed to keep your live turtle in a cardboard box or other cage for about a week, loving it and feeding it hamburger to rid it of its impurities. Then just as it was beginning to trust you and perhaps follow you around the kitchen like a sluggish but devoted hard-shelled spaniel, you put it one day into a cauldron of cold water [...] and then brought it slowly to the boil. The whole procedure was reminiscent of the deaths of early Christian martyrs [...] But the only alternative for that sort of thing seemed to be the cellowrapped and plasticoated and cardboard-cartoned surrogates. Substitutes, or merely disguises? At any rate, whatever killing had gone on had been done efficiently, by somebody else, beforehand (p. 168).

Marian's somatophobic tendency which later gives rise to anorexia in the form of self-punishment is based on the meanings the society attributes to foods and drinks. The company Marian works for is going to carry out a beer study which merely includes men as the interviewers. This proves the very idea that the classification between man and woman is justified even in beverages. Beer is regarded as a masculine drink that "any real man, on a real man's holiday – hunting, fishing, or just plain old-fashioned relaxing – needs a beer with a healthy, hearty taste, a deep down manly flavour" (p. 21). This background music on the phone emphasizes the manly taste and the power of beer reinforces the idea that even beer has different connotations for man and woman: while

it echoes strength for man, it means sin and taboo for woman. The categorization between man and woman is reinforced through masculine and feminine representatives that exalt men while disparaging women.

After Peter tells the hunting story to Len, Marian feels desperate and unveils the condition that was engraved in her subconscious through her tears which are in fact the divulgence of her repressed thoughts she was dictated to internalize as ordinary and normal. As a consequence of an emotional outburst or a kind of semi-self-awakening, Marian reacts to the external mechanisms of oppression and repression by escaping. Marian's self-realization reveals the very fact that she has always accepted things as they are and allowed others to direct her own life. The physical escape at the end of Part One metaphorically demonstrates that Marian is indeed flying away from her own chains and that she is challenging the system that did produce her. The short-time freedom Marian achieves ends by the time Peter catches her, and they decide to go to Len's for chatting. By the time Peter and Len are engrossed in the conversation about cameras, and Ainsley sitting silently, Marian realizes that she wants to be under the bed in order to enjoy the silence and to be far from the eyes although she is sure that nobody would notice her absence:

I was leaning back against the wall, sipping at my cognac, the noise of voices and music slapping against me like waves. I suppose the pressure of my body had pushed the bed out a little; at any rate, without thinking much about anything I turned my head away from the room and looked down (p. 78).

Being under the bed represents a sort of shelter or protection from the external forces, from the mechanisms that make her enemy to her own body as a result of the indoctrinations and assumptions projected to her sex. Therefore, being under the bed is a vehicle to reveal the unconscious mind of Marian. "I myself was underground, I had dug myself a private burrow. I felt smug" (p. 79). Under the bed she has the opportunity to return to her unconscious, and she looks back on her relationship with Peter. She has a flash of inside by the moment she connects the experiences she did have with Peter; through hiding her body under the bed, Marian in fact tries to protect her sense of self. Put it differently she reacts against the regulations through her body.

My resentment at Peter for letting me remain crushed under the bed while he moved up there in the open, in the free air, jabbering away about exposure times, started me thinking about the past four months. All summer we had been moving in a certain direction, though it hadn't felt like movement: we had deluded ourselves into thinking we were static. Ainsley had warned me

that Peter was monopolizing me; she saw no reason why I shouldn't, as she termed it, "branch out" (p. 79).

Marian discovers for the first time that Ainsley is a prescient woman who gave the high sign of Peter's oppression directed to Marian. Marian, for the first time, realizes that she is "in a sort of vacuum" (p. 80) that Peter intentionally created for her. Marian discovers the fact that she has accepted the norms which patriarchy predetermined beforehand. Also the relationship with Peter uncovers the hidden reality that they have never been involved in the future because both internalize the things as they are. Nonetheless, now she has the power to ask herself what she really wants to do. Marian now experiences an epiphany after the nervous breakdown that led her to cry and fly away. She realizes that Peter and she have never had any plans or dreams concerning their future. By the time they find out that Marian is under the bed, they try to persuade her to come out from there: "They were treating me like a sulking child who has locked itself in a cupboard and has to be coaxed" Marian thinks (p. 80). The reason for hiding herself from the others is based on her desire to be invisible, or to test whether she is visible or not to the others. She feels passive and inert as if she were a neutral element in life. Upon the insistence of Peter and the others, Marian decides to get out from there but she cannot. She is stuck, and therefore, she is unable to move. The system gets strength via the discourse that argues for the male superiority, and Marian is unable to get away from the prison that has enslaved her. In this regard, her case of being stuck is a sort of foreshadowing of her future life with Peter: repressed and oppressed. Put it differently, metaphorically, Marian's being stuck represents her confinement or imprisonment within predetermined standards and conditions: "Subconsciously, [...] I probably wanted to marry Peter all along" regards Marian (p. 88). For Marian, marriage could be a sort of consolidation. Though she realizes that she and Peter are all too different in personality and the way of life, marriage is considered the traditional solution for a woman to protect herself from the dangers of the external forces. However, Marian discovers that marriage is in fact an instrument that legitimates the submission of women by hypnotizing the female psyche:

It was my subconscious getting ahead of my conscious self, and the subconscious has its own logic. The way I went about doing things may have been a little inconsistent with my true personality, but are the results that inconsistent? The decision was a little sudden, but now I've had time to think about it I realize it is actually a very good step to take [...] I've never been

silly about marriage the way Ainsley is. She's against it on principle, and life isn't run by principles but by adjustments (p. 108).

As Lacan states, “the Oedipal crisis occurs when a child learns of the sexual rules embedded in the terms for family and relatives. The crisis begins when the child comprehends the system and his or her place and accedes to it” (Rubin, 2011, p. 50). The relationship between maternal instincts and the psychological transformation of a woman is illustrated when Ainsley goes to the Pre-Natal Clinic where she could receive advices on how to bring up her baby. There she obtains information about the importance of breastfeeding and suchlike issues. However, the speech by a psychologist on the great significance of the “Father Image” leaves Ainsley weak at the knees since she has never thought about the necessity of a father figure except until she gets pregnant. Psychologically, she understands that “a strong father image in the home” (p. 197) is of capital importance which, as the psychologist states, “makes them *normal*, especially if they're boys” (p. 197). The emphasis, especially on boys, manifests the power of male chauvinism. The patriarchal ideology reinforces the maintenance of masculine superiority, and the instruments that serve for the ideological purposes argue that a man of power must be the product of a father who has the overall influence on him through the acts and discourse as a model. Accordingly, the young generation even in this day and age adopts the conventional perception concerning the categorization of man as strong and woman as weak and unprotected. Even for Ainsley, who has acted as a subversive character up to her pregnancy, the sense of motherhood turns her previous argument upside-down. Now, she regards that without a father image, her yet unborn son would “turn into a ho-ho-ho-homosexual!” (p. 197).

Marian questions the abrupt change Ainsley experiences and she concludes that the patriarchal ideology has the sanction power on individuals, especially on women. Thought-control mechanism of the ideology coerces women to accept their inferiority, weakness, and helplessness in the male-dominated world; furthermore, women's psyches are imposed with the idea of accepting nonentity without masculine power. Marian feels that she is dissolving gradually within the system; she observes that marriage and childbearing are among the things by means of which she is indeed expected to be the warden of the patriarchal ideals. Through marriage and having children, she would become the defender of the system which she now criticizes harshly. Thus, in order not to become the part of the patriarchal enforcements, Marian

responds to the system via her body both as the source of and solution to her marginalization; her body reacts to the system through rejecting foods.

The masculine linguistic position undergoes individuation and heterosexualization required by the founding prohibitions of the Symbolic law, the law of the Father. The incest taboo that bars the son from the mother and thereby institutes the kinship relation between them is a law enacted “in name of the Father.” Similarly, the law that refuses the girl’s desire for both her mother and father requires that she take up the emblem of maternity and perpetuate the rules of kinship (Butler, 1990, p. 37).

Due to the fact that sex determines gender roles and because gender is itself socially constructed and practiced unconsciously, Marian’s psychology is under the influence of repression. She is forced to accept heterosexuality and the relevant gender norms in parallel with her sex; her psyche is suppressed by the male discourse and she is supposed to live up to the expectations of the phallocratic society. Put it differently, gender as a concept is nothing more than the construction of the power system; it produces knowledge and claims it as truth. In this regard, deactivated female psyche finds all but the normalization of her abject condition within the society.

In order to illustrate the influence of the collective unconscious on the female victimization and the relevant reaction that the female body gives in return, Atwood presents the conversation between the office virgins and Ainsley. When the office virgins and Marian talk about the laxative study in Quebec, Ainsley does join the conversation from the psychological perspective concerning the reason why just in there such a problem is present: “It must be their collective guilt-complex. Or maybe the strain of the language-problem; they must be horribly repressed” she claims (p. 17). Albeit seems to be a physical illness, Ainsley attempts to explain the situation – constipation – in terms of psychological effects of repression. Such a condition is similar to women’s repression in a society just due to the lack the discourse attributes to them. Atwood treats the repression of female psyche within the collective unconscious of the culture in which woman lives. As a matter of fact, numerous physical illnesses unfold as a result of various psychological disorders; therefore, somatophobia and the relevant physical diseases such as anorexia and binge eating are in fact related to the she is predisposed to such eating disorders. Woman’s marginalization and acceptance of the social norms are indeed the consequence of the collective unconscious. The unconscious recalls her inferiority and forces her to repress her appetite as a sin, or vice versa, woman defines herself merely with her body and attempts to optimize it for the male

gaze through self-starvation. On the other hand, she attempts to satisfy her emotional hunger or repress her memory concerning an unfortunate experience like rape or violence through eating much.

While the unconscious locates power in Otherness, the phallic signifier, by contrast, locates power in subjectivity. Unlike the unity of the imaginary imago, which provides a simple referential marker, the symbolic phallic signifier constrains Otherness by buttoning a signification, an identification, and a discourse together into one neat package (Pelt, 2000, p. 153).

Duncan's anomalous behavior symbolizes the repressed psyche of Marian. His utterances and acts cause Marian to discover her own sense of self which she did suppress in her subconscious. The first time when Marian meets Duncan for the questionnaire she feels puzzled with the answers Duncan gives: "I had a twinge of irritation. I had been feeling compassion for him as a sufferer on the verge of mental collapse" (p. 53). Marian criticizes the way Duncan answers the questions because of the unaccustomed and unconventional approach he displays. She finds it bizarre because it is clear that Marian has become a part of the system in which the exception proves the rule. In other words, Marian finds Duncan's expressions odd and out of type, and she is convinced that it is unreasonable to report the questionnaire without revising his answers. However, Atwood portrays Duncan as a subversive man who helps Marian discover her identity and stance within a conventional society. Put it differently, Duncan is the one who represents the psychology of Marian; the subversive and out of type characteristics of Duncan is indeed a message for Marian to motivate her to find her true identity through breaking the chains that restrict her sense of self. Rather than accept and normalize the conditions, Duncan functions as a mirror to show her the other side of the medallion.

Narcissists are unable to tolerate their dependence on an other outside the self, experiencing such dependence as a loss of omnipotence and a threat to the perfect unity of self (annihilation). At the same time narcissists deeply wish for an other who can be a perfect mirror for and completion of the self (Flax, 1990, p. 95).

Although she regards Duncan as strange and unusual, with him Marian feels free from the chains that prevent her from finding her real self. She does not realize how time flows with Duncan; yet, with Peter this is not the point because of his inability to make the most of now. In that very moment, she discovers that their relationship or engagement is a kind of requirement. The day she visits Duncan, Marian examines his

face, his posture, and she needs to tell him something. However, as she does not want to disclose her feelings, Marian goes to the bathroom as an escape. There she discovers that the mirror has been broken, which Duncan explains as: “I got tired of being afraid I’d walk in there some morning and wouldn’t be able to see my own reflection in it” he states (p. 150). In this example, there is a clear connection with the mirror stage of Lacan: Duncan does not like the mirror as he regards it as “a perfectly understandable symbolic narcissistic gesture” (p. 150). He believes that mirrors do not reflect the reality but the thing that we want to see ourselves as.

Within the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the psychological development of an individual is explained through the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic stages. Before the individual has relationship with the society in the Symbolic stage, s/he experiences the Imaginary phase of development in which one gets awareness about the existence of the other: mother. When the child sees his/her reflection in the mirror, s/he develops an ego that is independent from the mother with whom the child has established a mutual relation so far. For this reason, this stage is also known as the mirror stage; now the child has the sense of self and therefore s/he removes the sense of unity with the mother because he could not develop a sense of belonging. In this regard, Duncan as an orphan has never experienced the mirror stage; or more precisely, the unity with the mother image. Therefore, he regards his own reflection in the mirror as an image pictured and constructed by someone else. Duncan is a subversive character because he has never experienced the stages that would help him develop personality. Since mothers unconsciously support the status quo and teach their sons to be the masters over the other sex with their masculine properties, lack of a mother figure prevents Duncan from becoming a typical masculine. In this context, it is clear that Duncan has never internalized sex/gender division between man and woman. In other words, lack of unity with a mother figure or recognition of the law of the father leads Duncan to grow up without the rules of phallogocentric rules.

Trevor, subconsciously [...] thinks he’s my mother; it’s rather hard on him. It doesn’t bother me that much, I’m used to it, I’ve been running away from understudy mothers ever since I can remember, there’s a whole herd of them behind me trying to catch up and rescue me, god knows what from, and give me warmth and comfort and nourishment and make me quit smoking, that’s what you get for being an orphan (p. 150-151).

When Marian wonders about the way he shaves without a mirror, Duncan responds: “I’ve got my own private mirror. One I can trust, I know what’s in it. It’s just public ones that I don’t like [...] About why I broke the mirror and my reflection and so on. Really I broke it because I felt like breaking something” (p. 151). Lacan explains the mirror stage both as the reflection of the self and as an image reflected from outside. Put it differently, the perception of the self is in fact related to an external image; identity stems from an external condition rather than an internal one. Duncan discovers the deceptive nature of the mirror which reflects not his subjectivity but just an image fitted. Therefore, he breaks it with the purpose of finding his true identity. Through breaking the mirror, Duncan criticizes the masks people wear in society, because for him the norms the society has determined as masculinity and femininity are nothing more than the fictions of the system. Duncan rejects the universal norms and the standardization of sex/gender codes that are believed to reflect the identity.

Dreams have a significant role in the interpretation of the subconscious; sometimes regarded as the manifestation of the unconscious desires, sometimes as the consequence of fears and anxieties, and sometimes as the reflections of the images people create in their minds with the help of emotions associated with the image. “The core of the dream is not the manifest content, but the emotional experience [conscious emotions are] transformed into material suitable for unconscious waking thought, the dream-thoughts, and equally suitable for conscious submission to common sense” (Bion, 1992, p. 92). Put it differently, dreams reveal both the psychic reality of the inner world and the external emotional reality of the dreamer. In this context, the disclosure of Marian’s subconscious is illustrated through the dream she has: “The alarm clock startled me out of a dream in which I had looked down and seen my feet beginning to dissolve, like melting jelly, and had put on a pair of rubber boots just in time only to find that the ends of my fingers were turning transparent” (p. 42). Marian’s dream displays her unconscious or her inner reality: her lack of identity or self is associated with the matter. In other words, Marian feels her body is destroyed or evaporated by the external forces such as Peter and the company in which she works; all steal her sense of self. She feels trapped and finds no way to escape. Through this dream, Atwood makes Marian realize the psycho-somatic disorder she is going to experience; not only her mind but her body is melting away due to the impositions of the system that encourages patriarchy.

Among the moments that help Marian reveal her subconscious fears and anxieties is based on the conversation she hears at the office party. The office virgins talk about a girl who did give up washing her hair and her clothes, yet does seem to be normal, and therefore nobody wants to respond to the condition. While the office virgins are talking about the possible reasons for the girl's such an unusual behavior, one of them claims that it would be because she was "immature". Because she is so young and lives away from her family the girl is thought to be unable to adapt herself to the requirements of the society because of her inexperience. For Marian, the word "immature" echoes with "an unripe ear of corn, and other things of a vegetable or fruitlike nature. You were green and then you ripened: became mature. Dresses for the mature figure. In other words, fat" (p. 180). Observing the other women at the party, Marian does realize that all women have chosen clothes which would show them mature. Like vegetables or fruits, Marian regards that these women were ripe in the beginning; they did then become mature after learning to adapt their bodies to the patriarchal expectations. Accordingly, they represent the ideal femininity with their body images; because becoming mature symbolizes becoming sexy bodies:

She examined the women's bodies with interest, critically, as though she had never seen them before. And in a way she hadn't, they had just been there like everything else, desks, telephones, chairs, in the space of the office: objects viewed as outline and surface only (p. 181).

Marian observes that women around her are characterized by "the ham-like bulge of thigh, the creases round the neck, the large porous cheeks; the blotch of varicose veins [...] textures of bumpy permanents and dune-like contours of breast and waist and hip" (p. 181). Marian begins to question such types of different women and the conversations they involve in. When she compares herself with them, Marian thinks that she is indeed the same as the women she criticizes: "she was one of them, her body the same, identical, merged with that other flesh that choked the air in the flowered room with its sweet organic scent; she felt suffocated by this thick Sargasso-sea of femininity" (p. 181). Marian feels as though she were drowning in the ocean due to the feeling that, like other women, she would also become one of the standardized female images that represent the idealized feminine stance. She does not want to be involved in this definition; by contrast, Marian resembles herself with the girl who gave up washing: the girl has given up washing and Marian has given up eating. As opposed to the interpretation that women make at the party, both display a sort of challenge to the

stereotype images and standardized beauty, and the norms attributed to her sex as a rule. Put it differently, Marian is sure that both this girl and she perform a conscious act against the norms that attempt to discipline their bodies and thus their lives.

Pregnancy is one of the most significant reasons for Marian's somatophobic tendency and anorexia: "More and more, Clara's life seemed cut off from her, set apart, something she could only gaze at through a window" (p. 139). She compares Clara's pregnant image with that of the past, and she discovers that pregnancy causes disintegration of the body in a sense that there appears a conflict between the self or the inside and the other or the outside. The location is the inside but it is the place for the other as well; therefore, Marian thinks that Clara's body serves for another being during pregnancy. "Maybe it's got three heads," and "Maybe it isn't a baby at all but a kind of parasitic growth, like galls on tree, or elephantiasis of the navel, or a huge bunion..." Clara defines her baby (p. 121). Thinking of a living thing within the body causes the pregnant to be mentally depressed. Apart from her observations, Marian is also shocked to hear the words that Clara uses to describe her pregnancy and the babies that cause her to experience it; the metaphors she uses to describe for her children such as "barnacles encrusting a ship and limpets clinging to a rock" (p. 33) lead Marian to perceive pregnancy and maternity as the things that conquer and destroy her body.

I sat trying to think of things that would entertain her, but anything I could mention, the office or places I had been or the furnishings of the apartment, would only remind Clara of her own inertia, her lack of room and time, her days made claustrophobic with small necessary details (p. 29).

Realizing that pregnancy has caused Clara to lose her spirit as a consequence of the self-pity she feels due to her huge body, which is now the house of someone else, Marian attempts to divert Clara's attention from her passive existence within her body to something different. However, Marian does not feel she can do anything for Clara because her body seems to be captured by the baby inside her: "The integrity of my body is undermined in pregnancy not only by this externality of the inside, but also by the fact that the boundaries of my body are themselves in flux" (Young, 2005, p. 50). Marian observes Clara's days with a pregnant body, and she concludes that pregnancy has destroyed Clara's sense of self, and has condemned her body and mind to passivity. On the other hand, Marian realizes that Clara feels her body has doubled its size because of the hormones. "The fear of pregnancy was not related to true sexual fears, but was

rather a sexual symbol of a more primitive experience, namely the fear of being invaded by the object” (Bruch, 1973, p. 276). Accordingly, she perceives herself as an enormous creature; this makes her depressed, and she becomes estranged to her body. Thus, she begins to hate her body under the influence of the ideal body image that patriarchal structure has established. “The pregnancy had gone first one week, then two weeks longer than it was supposed to, and Clara had sounded over the phone as though she herself was being dragged slowly down into the gigantic pumpkin-like growth that was enveloping her body” remarks Marian (p. 121).

Within the cultural evaluations, the pregnant is believed to be away from sexuality and beauty because the cultural images of a pregnant body are related to negative connotations like ugly and odd. In this sense, Clara does fall victim to the modern perception of the female body and beauty. She is expected to discipline her body image through self-starvation just after she gives birth. “Woman’s ability to breastfeed and nurture her newborn is clouded by her concerns about her own appearance and appetite [and] the push to return to a prepregnancy figure” (Orbach, 2006, p. 101). Marian realizes the difficulty that women in general have to endure; they are supposed to give birth, feed the baby, satisfy the desires of her husband in the bed, and above all, be careful to keep her body shape and size determined as the standard. In this regard, Marian thinks about the hard period that she believes Clara would experience soon after giving birth because she is to pay extra attention to return to her previous size:

She was thinking that now Clara was deflating toward her normal size again she would be able to talk with more freely: she would no longer feel as though she was addressing a swollen mass of flesh with a tiny pinhead, a shape that had made her think of a queen-ant, bulging with the burden of an entire society, a semi-person – or sometimes, she thought, several people, a cluster of hidden personalities that she didn’t know at all. She decided on impulse to buy her some roses: a welcoming-back gift for the real Clara, once more in uncontended possession of her own frail body (p. 122).

The reason why Marian experiences somatophobia is based on her observation of Clara and her pregnancy; Marian recognizes the fact that pregnancy has transformed Clara into a disguised identity. Clara merely performs the roles she is supposed to act in accordance with the assumed norms; she has lost her identity, her body, and has turned out to be the possession of her husband. As a mother she is engaged with the responsibility to bring up her children in conformity with the social expectations: she is supposed to submit to the male hegemony and consent to a life of second class

citizenship. Upon this observation, Marian visualizes her own condition; after getting married to Peter, she thinks she will also be supposed to give birth and fulfill her maternal roles besides the responsibilities she will have as a wife. However, she realizes that even imagining her future in this frame disturbs her:

Marian wondered how she (Clara) could be so casual about it, as if she was recommending a handy trick for making fluffier piecrust or a new detergent. Of course it was something she had always planned to do, eventually; and Peter had begun to make remarks with paternal undertones. But in this room with these white-sheeted outstretched women the possibility was suddenly much too close (p. 139).

Because psychoanalysis considers maternity as a sort of substitute for sexuality; after giving birth woman is supposed to omit her sexual desires and needs for the sake her role as a mother. Therefore, because sexuality and physical beauty are associated with each other in male minds, Clara believes that her beauty does not have any sense of meaning any longer; therefore, she never thinks she needs to be careful about it anymore. By contrast, Marian thinks that disclaiming the body which indeed belongs to her is inexplicable and unreasonable. She cannot make sense of abjuring her sexuality (which should not be confused with the ideal femininity) in the cause of gender roles that she is supposed to perform after giving birth. As a consequence of her observation of Clara's pregnancy and post-pregnancy experiences and self-perception, Marian questions the relationship between pregnancy, maternity, sexuality and the female body. She begins to regard her body as something she owns; yet, as something captured and deactivated by the others as well. She criticizes the understanding which polarizes sexuality and maternity and questions the reason why woman must choose either maternity or sexuality. Marian thinks over Clara's condition as a wife, as a mother, and as a pregnant woman, and she concludes that it is marriage which assigns her body either to sexual service for her husband, or to her baby as a nurturer. By the time Clara reveals that all her babies are out of plan, Marian understands the power and influence of patriarchy on woman and on the female body. Through marriage her body becomes the possession of her husband on which she has no right; she is even unable to realize her pregnancy because she cannot accept it as something that belongs to her. Clara welcomes the first pregnancy as a sort of special gift for her; the second as a desperation, and the third one as an "inert fatalism" (p. 33). In this regard, Marian interprets Clara's condition as a sort of submission to her inevitable fate in the

patriarchal world. While Clara accepts her bodily existence through giving birth, nursing the babies, and satisfying the sexual desires of Joe, Marian offers resistance through preventing her body from becoming the target of the ideological weapons.

The pregnant believes that she is going to lose her identity just after giving birth because the society makes her believe that she is “becoming a transformed person” (Young, 2005, p. 55). Within the novel, Atwood examines the influence of pregnancy and motherhood on the female psychology. The pregnancy process that Clara defines and the motherhood experiences she tells Marian cause her to become disoriented. She recalls her college days with Clara and now she observes Clara contradicting herself as a matter of the fact that she has turned out to be a machine programmed to give birth without any sense of decision mechanism: “Clara’s body is so thin that her pregnancies are always bulgingly obvious, and now in her seventh month she looked like a boa-constrictor that has swallowed a watermelon” Marian describes Clara’s body (p. 28). Clara has normalized pregnancy and she explains the process as though it were ordinary. Certainly, Marian never underpins the ideal perception of the female body as slim and sexy, but she thinks that Clara has sacrificed her body for the sake of the expectations.

Oh marvelous; really marvelous. I watched the whole thing, it’s messy, all that blood and junk, but I’ve got to admit it’s sort of fascinating. Especially when the little bugger sticks its head out, and you finally know after carrying the damn thing around all that time what it *looks* like; I get so excited waiting to see, it’s like when you were little and you waited to finally got to open your Christmas presents. Sometimes when I was pregnant I wished like hell we could just hatch them out of eggs, like the birds and so on; but there’s really something to be said for this method (p. 138).

Clara mentions her experiences during pregnancy and at the moment when she took the baby in her hands. Against all the odds, Clara appreciates the feeling of being a mother and regards motherhood as a very special gift. In this regard, motherhood turns out to be the representation of “feminine masochism; the true woman is one who gets pleasure from self-sacrifice, the abnegation of pleasure” (Young, 2005, p. 85). After listening to the pregnancy and maternity experiences of Clara, Marian feels under the pressure of pregnancy and motherhood. Upon her observation of Clara’s before and after version, Marian concludes that she is afraid of transforming her body and mind into a similar position. As opposed to Clara’s perception, Marian regards pregnancy as the thing that is obligated by the society; as if it were the only way to become a woman or to be

considered a woman. “Stuck with not just bearing but also raising the children, women promoted the sanctity of motherhood” (Kipnis, 2006b, p. 5). Marian realizes the fact that she is not ready for it now; however, she thinks the ideology and the collective unconscious will force her to give birth by the time she gets married. Because she never wants to become a part of the system through sacrificing her body for others, Marian resists the ideology through her body: rejection of foods implies her attempt to achieve masculine victory.

Although she has never experienced pregnancy yet, Marian is highly influenced by the change that Clara’s body undergoes and the mental breakdown she experiences despite her blindness to the condition she is in. Marian remembers the old days when Clara was a beautiful and an admired girl before she did get married; however, now Marian regards Clara as a sort of machine programmed to give birth as much as she can, and thus her body becomes something that belongs to someone else. Marian, perforce, puts herself into Clara’s shoes, and she cannot accept the possibility that her body would turn into an object for others. Marian is disturbed with the idea that pregnancy dispossesses woman of her own body. What on earth, Marian questions, could explain such a bodily sacrifice. When Marian does reflect back upon old days, she has the mental picture of Clara as:

a tall fragile girl who was always getting exempted from Physical Education [...] In that classroom full of oily potato-chip-fattened adolescents she was everyone’s ideal of translucent perfume-advertisement femininity. At university she had been a little healthier, but had grown her blonde hair long, which made her look more medieval than ever: I had thought of her in connection with the ladies sitting in rose-gardens on tapestries. Of course her mind wasn’t like that, but I’ve always been influenced by appearances (p. 33).

Marian never cares about the significance of the surface appearance; what annoys her is Clara’s overt self-abnegation through her body. The pregnant Clara has nothing to do with her previous image; she has lost her riveting body. When they were at college, Clara was the ideal female type with her perfect body size and long blond hair just like the models in the advertisements. Despite her outward perfection, Clara, as Marian implies, never had intelligence in the same vein; but Marian admits that like most people she is always under the influence of surface appearance. However, Clara does not care about her body anymore because she seems to unlearn it as her own possession. The pregnant image of Clara impinges on Marian the idea of self-sacrifice as though she

were punishing her body as the reason for her current desperation. As Firestone expresses, Marian regards pregnancy as something that dispossesses woman's body: "Pregnancy is barbaric! It is the temporary deformation of the body of the individual for the sake of the species" (qtd. in Assiter, 2005, p. 25), Clara's previous configuration leads Marian to imagine her own pregnancy, and therefore she fears that she would also lose her bodily attraction for masochistic tendencies of femininity.

Ainsley, on the other hand, never wants to reinforce the practices of the system which sustains the Enlightenment ideals from generation to generation. She argues that woman should have the upper hand over her body. In other words, Ainsley believes that she should determine her body's responsibilities rather than let it be captured by man. To illustrate, she points out that a mother must breast-feed her child because it is both necessary and useful for the development of the baby. However, she states that fathers generally do not allow their wives to carry out her basic duty for the child just because they envy the bond the baby establishes with the mother through her breasts, besides thinking breastfeeding unappealing. Ainsley believes that man, egoistically, claims for his own benefit: woman is supposed to fulfill the sexual desires of her husband, and on the condition that they have a baby, man ignores her parental duties for the sake of his drives. He cannot accept the condition that his wife is a mother as well, and he does not approve the idea of her wife's breast-feeding the baby. He believes or he wants to believe that her breasts are his possession: a sort of object that merely belongs to him. In order to explain the condition of the female body as a captured zone by male masters, Ainsley states:

The thing that ruins families these days is the husbands. Have you noticed she isn't even breast-feeding the baby? [...] North American men hate watching the basic mother-child unit functioning naturally, it makes them feel not needed [...] Any woman left to her own devices would automatically breast-feed as long as possible: I'm certainly going to (p. 38).

Although she believes that maternity is one of the roles that cause woman to have bodily and mental oppression, Ainsley considers it a strong bond that she could have with the child as well. "The relationship between mother and unborn child is the loveliest and closest in the world [...] The most mutually balanced..." says Ainsley (p. 172). While Ainsley braces herself for the baby in every respect and embraces the unborn baby as a part of her, Len considers it nauseating and an evil experience. Such a reaction proves him to have "uterus envy" (p. 173) which echoes the opposite of penis

envy. “Where the hell do you think *you* came from, anyway? You’re not from Mars [...] You were all curled up inside somebody’s *womb* for nine months just like everybody else” Ainsley declares (p. 173). Rather than have respect for Ainsley’s decision to give birth, Len accuses her of being “unclean” based on the traditional belief that pregnancy connotes blood, and therefore it considered a disease which defiles femininity. Furthermore, from a man’s perspective, during pregnancy the body of the pregnant undergoes a change and such a transformation withholds woman from being attractive for the male gaze. On the other side, the reason for rejecting the idea of pregnancy and becoming father is related to the repressed anxiety of Len which he associates with a memory:

She made me do it [...] My own mother. We were having eggs for breakfast and I opened mine and there was, I swear there was a little chicken inside it, it wasn’t born yet, I didn’t want to touch it but she didn’t *see*, she didn’t see what was really there, she said don’t be silly, it looks like an ordinary egg to me, but it wasn’t, it wasn’t and she made me eat it (p. 173).

While questioning her own sense of self, Marian thinks over Ainsley’s subversive personality which reflects the exact opposite of her feminine ideals. In this regard, Atwood portrays two dimensional personality of Ainsley: on the one hand, she negates the legitimacy of the male hegemony which does humiliate woman through objectifying her body and regards marriage as one of the institutions which paves the way for the oppression and repression of woman. On the other hand, Ainsley finds it normal to use her femininity as a vehicle to fascinate men. Marian does bring to light the fact that Ainsley does not need a husband but a baby. She does not want to get married; yet because of her interest in anthropology at college, she concludes that a baby is the only thing that fulfills a woman’s femininity. When she learns her pregnancy Ainsley begins to make preparations for the baby; she buys “some blue baby-wool” as a sign of baby boy, which she expects to be better than a baby girl. Because traditionally individuals are labeled according to their sexes, their gender roles, physical appearances, and etcetera, so do the colors have the same significance for them. Within such a society, people are manipulated in a sense to direct themselves to the appropriate behavior patterns in parallel with their masculine or feminine representations. In other words, the discourse based on the signifier/signified is illustrated through Clara’s obsession on blue as the signifier of a baby boy. By birth babies are codified either as pink or blue depending on their sex, and they are categorized according to these colors; to illustrate,

pink is associated with femininity while blue is regarded as the color of masculinity. In this extract, Ainsley intentionally chooses “blue” even though she has not identified the sex of her baby yet. She is aware of the social norms and gender apartheid, and for this very reason, she wishes that she could have a baby boy. Atwood implies the anxiety Ainsley has for her unborn baby: under the influence of the phallogocentric understanding, she wants to protect her baby from the patriarchal oppression and repression that victimize her sex; her baby could save his life just through practicing masculinity. “Under the influence of psychoanalytic teaching the rejection of food was equated with the rejection of and disgust with sex [...] a defense against unconscious fear of impregnation” (Bruch, 1973, p. 276). As a consequence of her observation of Clara’s pregnant body and maternal duties along besides Ainsley’s acts which never reflect her personality, Marian reflects anorexia nervosa as an outcome of somatophobia; because she cannot normalize the idea of thinking her body as the determinant factor of her stance in society; thus, she unintentionally resists the order with self-starvation.

2.4. Postmodern Feminist Perception of Femininity

In *The Edible Woman*, Atwood does employ the deconstructive aspect of postmodern philosophy and feminism; through the portrayal of alternative female characters, Atwood achieves to present heterogeneousness of womanhood: woman without a fixed definition concerning her sex and gender. To illustrate the challenging aspect of postmodernism, Atwood does initially present the issues that explain the relationship between somatophobia and sex/gender codifications. To achieve this aim, she reveals the patriarchal understanding of being a woman in a world ruled by the male authority. The concepts based on the essentialist and foundational perspectives are the main concerns Atwood criticizes within the postmodern philosophy and feminist theory: binary oppositions or the categories between man and woman, masculine and feminine, and body and mind are deconstructed by offering multiple identities rather than the unified and universal subjectivity. In contrast to the assumptions of modernity, for which the body is constructed in double standards, in *The Edible Woman*, Atwood accomplishes to deconstruct the conception of transcendental self through reconstructing the subjectivity of the heroine via the bodily awareness she gains in the end. At the very beginning of the novel, based on her assumed anatomical lack Marian is portrayed as a woman who has been taught to be submissive to the patriarchal

construction of gender divisions and sexual oppression. Stuck within the traditional values of the society, Marian appreciates things as they are without questioning the essence or verity of the matters. She strives for being the ideal woman through accepting and internalizing the principles and social practices the modern world grounds as the norm. The transformation in Marian's interpretation of the events and her response to the demands of patriarchal order takes shape after her discovery of the disturbing atmosphere the male hegemony creates over her body.

Concerning Marian's self-realization and self-confidence to subvert her somatophobia and mentality about tabooed subjects, Ainsley does play a crucial role with her radical personality. Atwood portrays Ainsley as an exact opposite to Marian; the one who represents postmodern feminist understanding as she rejects the generic definitions of being a woman, of gender roles, and of the institutions that serve as the instruments of patriarchal ideology. As Butler states, gender is performative and the individual represents his/her gender so long as s/he repeats it. In this context, Ainsley does not tend to perform the roles expected from her sex. To set an example, when Ainsley mentions her desire to have a baby, Marian thinks that Ainsley is going to get married. However, Ainsley reveals that she does not have any inclination towards marriage due to the fact that she does not believe in the assumed power of marriage. Such a resistance against the regulations which are predetermined by the patriarchal hegemony explains the subversive stance of Ainsley; she acts against her sex and gender roles. Marian cannot make sense of the subversive aspect of Ainsley at that very moment because within a patriarchal society having a baby is acceptable merely through marriage. While Ainsley argues that there is no obligation to give birth within marriage, Marian thinks it immoral for woman. Ainsley decides to have a baby out of wed-lock and without a father figure; she needs a man until she gets pregnant. According to Marian's value judgment, Ainsley's dream is derogatory within a patriarchal society. However, Ainsley challenges the system itself through her dissenting opinion.

What makes Ainsley heroic and subversive is that she neither adopts the norms of the patriarchal system, nor does she forsake her feminine identity. Put it differently, even though pregnancy, giving birth, and maternity are regarded as the positions and roles which oppress and marginalize woman under the pretext of femininity, Ainsley approaches to the issue from a different angle. She rejects marriage as the real

oppressive factor in a woman's life because she believes that man claims right to rule over woman through this institution. In this respect, there is nothing wrong in giving birth or performing maternal roles: "Every woman should have at least one baby [...] It's even more important than sex. It fulfills your deepest femininity" (p. 39). While Marian is captured within the system through the legends told by the male authority, Ainsley declares the death of history by negating the stories invented by patriarchy. Thus, she never allows others to have authority over her body except herself. For Marian, by contrast, acting or even thinking against the fixed rules is intolerable in the society she lives because she seems to have normalized the regulations determined by the ideological instruments. Above all, she cannot make sense of the decision Ainsley takes as Marian knows that Ainsley has career plans, and on the condition that she has a baby, all her dreams would fail. Marian argues that Ainsley should make a choice between career and motherhood because the Enlightenment philosophy of the West does not allow plurality: woman should either exist as a dedicated mother and a domestic wife or as an active agent in public life only if she renounces her femininity. Thus, the reason why Marian cannot understand Ainsley's point of view is related to the traditional perception of womanhood. However, Ainsley protests against the limits that force women to choose either this or that: "What has having a baby got to do with getting a job at an art gallery? You're always thinking in terms of either/or. The thing is *wholeness* [...] Don't you feel you need a sense of purpose?" (p. 39). Ainsley rejects the homogeneous and totalitarian understanding that society imposes upon woman through discursive practices. Since Marian has been brought up by the societal impositions concerning ethical issues, she is not able to make sense of Ainsley's reaction: "So what it boils down to [...] is that you've decided to have an illegitimate child in cold blood and bring it up yourself" (p. 40). For Marian, marriage is imperative in order to give birth; by contrast, by-blows are considered the intolerable products of the immoral intimacy.

The disagreement between Marian and Ainsley is also based on their perspectives towards cultural values. As Nicholson declares, "social identities are complex and heterogeneous. They cannot be mapped onto one another or onto the social totality. There is no social totality and a fortiori no possibility of a totalizing social theory" (1990, p. 24). Ainsley challenges the ideology and the instruments that serve for the patriarchal purposes: "Birth is legitimate, isn't it? You're a prude, Marian, and that's

what's wrong with this whole society" (p. 40). Ainsley is aware of the fiction that patriarchy has created, and she is determined to disregard the generalizations. By contrast, because Marian has never thought of contravening the principles of the society, she is unable to respect Ainsley's decision: "Okay, I'm a prude [...] But since the society is the way it is, aren't you being selfish? Won't the child suffer? How are you going to support it and deal with other people's prejudices and so on?" claims Marian (p. 40). Rather than give in to the regulations and judgments of the society, Ainsley believes that she has the power to overcome such cliché value judgments: "How is the society ever going to change [...] if some individuals in it don't lead the way?" (p. 40). Ainsley is the type of woman who rejects universal truths or claims, and thus she has the potential to subvert the system. Although she finds Ainsley's argument reasonable in her mind, Marian tries to absent herself from such a taboo subject: "I knew Ainsley was wrong, but she sounded so rational. I thought I'd better go to bed before she had convinced me against my better judgment" (p. 41). Ainsley's denial of the stereotype judgments and her decisiveness to do whatever she wants leads Marian to think about the possibility of breaking the taboos and encourages her to accept her body as her possession in the novel's conclusion.

The subversive act of Marian reveals itself first by the time she realizes her existence as a sort of prey for Peter after listening to his hunting story he narrates to Len with pleasure. In other saying, her identification with the rabbit makes her realize the desperate and vulnerable stance her body presents. Rather than keep silent and be submissive to the rules, Marian shows disapproval of her position as a signified thing by running away from Peter: "I could hear the fury in his voice: this was the unforgivable sin, because it was public" (p. 74). In this context, Marian, for the first time, feels her body as her own possession. Based on the argument Nietzsche defends, the body itself creates the relationship between power and knowledge; in this context, Marian needs to turn to her body in order to be able to subvert the hegemonic power relations. Put it differently, in order to overcome the bodily and mental enslavement, Marian should overcome first her body. While she is flying away, Peter shouts after her; he considers such an aberrant behavior intolerable: a woman, in the dark, running... "Run a short distance, keeping your knees together. You'll find you have to take short, high steps if you run this way. Women have been taught it is unfeminine to run like a man with long, free strides. See how far you get running this way for 30 seconds" (Bordo, 2003, p. 19).

The social norms, in accordance with gender roles, canalize individuals to act in a predetermined way in accordance with the feminine codes. Put it differently, a woman is not supposed to have the freedom to cry out against a man or against the order according to the Christian values, Platonic ideas, and Cartesian dualism which function for the purpose of imposing silence and acceptance upon female psyches. Atwood, however, reveals the very fact that coding individuals as good/bad, virtuous/immoral, spiritual/material is nothing short of the stories invented by the instruments that serve for the power mechanisms. While running, Marian realizes the power she has gained through her body and the red flag she is able to hold against Peter and against the system. Therefore, “escape” turns out to be the recovery of consciousness for Marian. She discovers the power to outdistance those who regard her as weak and vulnerable: “I was out of breath already, but I had a good head start on them. I could afford to slow down. Each lamp post I passed it became a distance-marker on my course: it seemed an achievement and accomplishment of some kind to put them one by one behind them” (p. 75). As a poststructuralist postmodernist critic, Foucault claims that power introduces self-normalization of gender codes through various institutions and processes. Nonetheless, he argues for the mobility of power relations as well. In other words, power relations are possible to be subverted through resistance. In this context, Marian achieves to resist her gender roles the hegemonic system has predetermined for her. Her escape might be interpreted as a sort of revolt against the confinements of patriarchy. Marian’s resistance against Peter is illustrated by the time Peter suggests that they go home after all that shit. Marian rejects to go home with him, through which she implies her power:

I wrenched my arm away from Peter’s hand. I said frigidly, “I’m not going back with you. I’ll walk home” and bolted out the door [...] Once I was outside I felt considerably better. I had broken out; from what, or into what, I didn’t know. Though I wasn’t at all certain why I had been acting this way, I had at least acted. Some kind of decision had been made, something had been finished (p. 81).

Peter insists on driving her home and on the way he interprets all the happenings in the evening as nonsense, and he charges her with un-femininity: “The trouble with *you* is [...] you’re just rejecting your femininity” (p. 83). Peter accepts Marian so long as she has feminine attributes; on the condition that she acts against the definitions, Peter accuses her of being out of type. “Sit down in a straight chair. Cross your legs at the

ankles and keep your knees pressed together. Try to do this while you're having a conversation with someone, but pay attention at all times to keeping your knees pressed tightly together" (Bordo, 2003, p. 19). Marian, on the other hand, recently enlightened about the enslavement of her body through her feminine codes, negates all pre-established rules:

"Oh, SCREW my femininity [...] Femininity has nothing to do with it. You were just being plain ordinary *rude!*" she shouts because she is aware of the fact that unintentional bad manners was something Peter couldn't stand to be accused of, and I knew it. It put him in the class of the people in the deodorant ads (p. 83).

On the way home while they are talking about the evening, Peter loses his control and crashes into a hedge. Marian accuses him of going to kill her; yet, Peter does underestimate her reaction, and instead of apologizing to her for his carelessness, he states that the owner of the garden would find the landscape with a new sight because of the damage he has caused. Peter's carefree response irritates Marian: "You seem to find willfully ruining other people's property immensely funny" (p. 84). Marian interprets Peter's act of damage from a different perspective; she is convinced that Peter disregards others' belongings and values impudently. In this context, Marian implies that Peter also attempts to ruin Marian's body as if it were his own property; nonetheless, she comes to realize that her body belongs to no one but her; her body is the subject of herself not of the others. In other words, Marian discovers the fact that the relationship between her body and the world helps her develop a sense of identity. So long as she accepts her body as the subject of her existence, Peter would never damage her.

Duncan, on the other hand, triggers Marian's self-realization. Despite the fact that he is supposed to be the part of the hegemonic masculine world, Duncan remarks that the discourse which emphasizes speech over writing proves to be nonsense. In order to illustrate the rebellious nature of his existence against the phallogentric worldview and against the universal understanding of the Enlightenment, Duncan states that he wants to be an amoeba. The metaphor "amoeba" which Duncan describes as the thing he wants to be is an indication of his resistance to and rejection of the fixities of the Enlightenment ideals. Because postmodernism argues for uncertainty and fluidity, the shapeless and flexible amoeba symbolizes an identity without certain definitions. After interpreting Duncan's utterances as within reason, Marian questions how she has

become the representative of stereotype roles. Awakening to her own reality by the help of Duncan's explanations, Marian learns to free her body from the roles which are assigned to her body under the name of gender.

They're immortal [...] and sort of shapeless and flexible. Being a person is getting too complicated [...] I'd like something to be real. Not everything, that's impossible, but maybe one or two things. I mean Dr. Johnson refuted the theory of the unreality of matter by kicking a stone, but I can't go around kicking my room-mates. Or my professors. Besides, maybe my foot's unreal anyway [...] I thought maybe you would be. I mean if we went to bed, god knows you're unreal enough now, all I can think of is those layers and layers of wooly clothes you wear, coats and sweaters and so on (p. 220).

Duncan reveals the illusion behind the matter and the soul, or between the surface and the depth. For him, nothing is as it seems; people evaluate and accept things in accordance with the rules predetermined by the authorities. As Foucault states, power produces knowledge and knowledge produces truth. Therefore, the relationship between power and knowledge determines the reality. However, Duncan does not possess any essential masculine qualities as a matter of the fact that he rejects the discourse which legitimates masculinity as the absolute truth. Rather than declare himself as a symbol of the masculine hero, Duncan encourages Marian to find her real self independently of sex/gender categories. Disregarding the logocentric discourse that does exclude woman from language, Duncan, by contrast, declares the death of history and metaphysics through unburdening his inability to rule the language which is identified with the male sex. In this context, in order to explain his trouble with the logocentric discourse, Duncan mentions his struggle with his paper, and he regards that "words [...] are beginning to lose their meanings" (p. 101). Metaphorically, Duncan's inability to get along with words might be interpreted as an illustration of deconstruction. The traditional discourse which is based on words or speech is no longer accepted as the norm; the patriarchal language which regards men as the transcendental and women as the immanent is no longer sound. Duncan's incapability with words subverts the phallogocentric language which produces masculine discourse for male benefit; he rejects being a product of the society which privileges men unconditionally. Because he is doubtful about fixities and the universal understanding of the Western world, he warns Marian against the game the power system plays on her sex, and he implies that woman, like man, has desires and drives which are necessary for her existence and which are more vital than nursing her male master:

I can tell you're admiring my febrility. I know it's appealing, I practise at it; every woman loves an invalid. I bring out the Florence Nightingale in them. But be careful [...] You might do something destructive: hunger is more basic than love. Florence Nightingale was a cannibal, you know (p. 105).

As the founder of the modern nursing, Florence Nightingale represents the woman type who dedicates herself to serving and healing others. In this sense, Florence Nightingale must/does symbolize every woman who self-surrenders for something or someone out of herself. Duncan claims that women take a fancy to act like a nurse since they generally love sick/unhealthy men. Woman is taught to dedicate all her life to a man under the pretext of her gender responsibilities. In other words, man takes pleasure in developing a sort of patient-nurse relationship with his partner or wife. However, for Duncan, the sickness of man is based on his tendency to oppression and violence against woman, and Duncan states that woman generally normalizes such neurotics. Yet, he also argues that every woman has an appetite for her basic needs; otherwise, she might turn out to be a man-eater unless her satisfaction is met. Florence Nightingale, to illustrate, resists her family who did attempt to force her to marry and have an ordinary feminine life. She achieves to subvert the roles for the sake of her own wishes. With this example Duncan tries to remind Marian her power to take control of her own life. Upon this briefing by Duncan, on her way home, Marian examines an advertisement on the bus; "a picture of a nurse in a white cap and dress. She had a wholesome, competent face and she was holding a bottle and smiling. The caption said: GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE" (p. 106). This advertisement indeed illustrates what Duncan implied to her; through this advertisement, Marian awakens to her need to liberate herself from the bonds of the rules that are dictated under religious principles or universal truths. Especially after questioning Duncan's attitude towards life and existence, Marian begins to be enlightened about her puzzle: the identity crisis.

She saw herself in the mirror between them (the dolls) for an instant as though she was inside them, inside both of them at once, looking out: herself, a vague damp form in a rumpled dressing-gown, or quite focused, the blonde eyes noting the arrangement of her hair, her bitten fingernails, the dark one looking deeper, at something she could not quite see, the two overlapping images drawing further and further away from each other; the centre, whatever it was in the glass, the thing that held them together, would soon be quite empty. By the strength of their separate visions they were trying to pull her apart (p. 241).

When Marian revises her decision about marriage, she does occupy herself with cleaning-up her room in order to blow off some steam. Marian discovers that the dolls

which she has kept so far do not make any sense for her because of the change in her sense of self. Marian indeed metaphorically ascribes a meaning to the dolls; they symbolize her preformed identity: beautiful and fixed. On the other hand, dolls are generally shaped as perfect babies, through which girls are stimulated with the idea of having such perfect figures. Like dolls, Marian feels having been created by others with a certain shape and size. Dolls represent femininity and they are made for woman to allow (!) her test her sense of motherhood. In other words, little girls learn to care, to feed, and to look after babies when they play with their dolls. They are not aware of the fact that gender roles are imposed upon them in this period. For Marian, the dolls have had sentimental meanings – family, baby, responsibility, and private domain – so far; however, after she discovers her existence as an object – like dolls – constructed and attempted to be decorated by patriarchy for a specific purpose (as exemplified above), she decides to cast away the dolls, through which she could also get clear of her roles that have been pre-established because of her material existence with the body:

There's a cardboard box full of books, textbooks, mostly, and letters from home I know I'll never look at again, and a couple of ancient dolls I've kept for sentimental reasons. The older doll has a cloth body stuffed with sawdust [...] and hands, and feet and head made of a hard woody material. The fingers and toes have been almost chewed off; the hair is black and short, a few frizzy wisps attached to a piece of netting which is coming unglued from the skull. The face is almost eroded but still has its open mouth with the red felt tongue inside and two chine teeth, its chief fascination as I remember. It's dressed in a strip of old sheet. I used to leave food in front of it overnight and was always disappointed when it wasn't gone in the morning. The other doll is newer and has long washable hair and a rubbery skin [...] Neither of them is very attractive any longer; I might as well throw them out with the rest of the junk (p. 109).

Atwood illustrates Merleau-Ponty's theory of phenomenological perception by revealing Marian's self-realization. Marian discovers the fact that Peter has manipulated her body and mind in a sense to fit into his expectations. Marian comes to terms with her body as an object for others and as a subject for herself as well. In other words, she discovers that her body is the source for her enlightenment and reunification with the world: "Marian gazed down at the small silvery image reflected in the bowl of the spoon: herself upside down, with a huge torso narrowing to a pinhead at the handle end. She tilted the spoon and her forehead swelled, then receded. She felt serene" (p. 158). At the beginning of Chapter 17, Marian and Peter have dinner together at a restaurant, and Marian takes one of the spoons and examines the right on end image that her face turns to. The "upside down" image indeed represents the changing life of Marian. She

realizes that what she sees on the spoon does not reflect the reality; what she tries to become with Peter does not correspond to her true self. Upon this realization, she visits her parents and relatives at Christmas time; there she behaves out of her assumed type of character: she is decisive enough to break with the foundational notions of universality, fixity, and homogeneity as a consequence of her endeavor to go beyond herself. Based on the Merleau-Ponty's theory, Marian discovers the power of perception; now, she sees her body from a different perspective. For the first time she believes in the probability of having a better life on her own without any obligation to exist for someone else. She feels that the people in her life do not seem to belong to her any longer; despite the authenticity of the town and the people, she thinks something has changed: herself. The fact is that she has got rid of the "unchanging, monolithic and grey, like the weathered stone ruins of an extinct civilization" (p. 183). Marian rejects the traditions (gifts or paper tags which have no value or use), uniformity, universality, and stability because she feels the necessity for a change.

While preparing her body for the party Peter gives for the purpose of submitting her to his guests' approval, Marian recognizes her figure in the mirror; she feels like an outsider to herself. Marian is deeply regretful to have worn that red dress because she believes that the dress itself manifests her as a target: an eye-pleasing woman who just absorbs her mind with bodily drives and pleasures. To be able to take a breath, Marian goes to Peter's bedroom; yet, she hears the sounds from the living room; Peter is calling her for the group photo. As a symptom of anorexia nervosa, she feels uneasy about it because she does not want to be visible among other people. Running as fast as she can, Marian escapes from Peter in order not to let him catch her this time. While running along the street, Marian starts feeling awkward as if she were chased by Peter. "That dark intent marksman with his aiming eye had been there all the time, hidden by the other layers, waiting for her at the dead centre: a homicidal maniac with a lethal weapon in his hands" (p. 270). Marian makes reference to her imagination regarding the future life with Peter, in which she finds him with a cleaver in his hand. Now, Marian is almost sure that Peter is the one who exploits, dissolves, and destroys her, and in order not to let him kill her, she has to escape without a backward glance. While her previous escape is the reflection of her unconscious reaction, this one represents a conscious act: Marian knows where she is going with her body: the route is her bodily and mental liberation.

2.4.1. Subversive Aspect of Anorexia Nervosa

Atwood reflects the subversive aspect of anorexia nervosa which unfolds as a consequence of the somatophobic tendency that makes Marian alienated to her own body and identity through the end of the novel. As a clinical diagnosis, somatophobia unfolds in the form of Marian's rejection of her body which she conceives first as defective and imperfect as a consequence of the traditional assumptions and Peter's focus on her sexual and feminine attributes rather than her personality, then as an object owned by others after her observation of Ainsley's excessive dedication to her body perfection for male approval and Clara's loss of identity as a result of everlasting pregnancy as a sort of necessity within her marriage. Marian discovers the fact that women do not have any control over their bodies, but others. As a kind of resistance against the obligations, Marian rejects to fit her body into the ideological expectations through anorexia as a protest.

Uncertain about her identity and place within a patriarchal society, Marian tries to raise her consciousness by others' suggestions, expectations, and knowledge. Despite the lack of confidence, she sometimes feels due to the marginalized condition her sex is doomed to suffer, Marian does not have any problems with her body perception or any symptoms of anorexia nervosa. Given the fact that Ainsley and the office virgins represent the model the society creates, Marian compares her body and mind with theirs; yet, she discovers that she misbecomes the body image she is supposed to have despite her predominance over them in terms of the intellectual capacity she has. No matter how fascinating they are Marian does not have any tendency to assimilate to those women. She questions her identity, and in her opinion the identity or the sense of self is independent of the body or the surface beauty. Therefore, everything seems to be right regarding her appetite, and as a routine she has breakfast before going to work: "I had to skip the egg and wash down a glass of milk and a bowl of cold cereal which I chewed through a piece of bread, while Ainsley watched me in nauseated silence" (p. 4-5). Without any anxiety regarding her body perfection, Marian prepares and eats her breakfast while Ainsley regards her as unfeminine just due to the fact that Marian does not pay attention to the feminine issues as much as she does for eating. Paradoxically, on the one hand, Ainsley rejects the gender roles asserted on woman but she accepts the

corporeal existence of woman with her body on the other hand. Thus, she gives in to the cultural ideology which identifies woman with embodiment.

The close relationship between woman and food is illustrated through Marian's reaction. While preparing breakfast, Ainsley presents daring poses against Peter's personality; she regards him as a dictator and warns Marian against his tyranny. Being exposed to Ainsley's criticism of Peter, Marian does not want to comment on the matter even though she holds with Ainsley on this topic. She takes up food as a substitute or as a way to repress her thoughts or emotional hunger: "You'd better eat something before you go to work [...] It's better when you've got something on your stomach" offers Marian (p. 4). Atwood presents Marian's repressed psychology through making her engage in cooking and eating something whenever she feels vulnerable and unguarded. Rather than complain or defend Peter, Marian prefers repressing her voice through her appetite. Therefore, she does routinize especially her breakfasts with the purpose of compensating her emotional hunger or anger: "I boiled my egg and drank my tomato juice and coffee alone [...] I had some toast and a second cup of coffee, and traced out several possible routes for myself" (p. 42).

First, severe disturbances in the body image, the way they see themselves; second, misinterpretations of internal and external stimuli, with inaccuracy in the way hunger is experienced as the most pronounced symptom; and third, a paralyzing underlying sense of ineffectiveness, the conviction of being helpless to change anything about their lives" (Bruch, 1979, p. x).

After observing Clara's pregnant body, her repressed sexuality after becoming a mother and her deformed body after pregnancy, and Ainsley's obsession with her body above anything, Marian realizes that there is something problematic concerning her appetite. While studying on the questionnaire, Marian realizes that she is hungry and cannot concentrate on the work she deals with. At lunch, Millie does order "steak-and-kidney pie", Emmy "a salad with cottage cheese", and Lucy wants an omelet. "Marian was surprised at herself. She had been dying to go for lunch, she had been starving, and now she wasn't even hungry. She had a cheese sandwich" (p. 119). Unaware of the reason Ainsley's use of her body as a vehicle for giving birth to a baby, which she regards as a necessity to fulfill her femininity, causes Marian to become alienated to her own body. Marian cannot make sense of Ainsley's determination to trick a man on the purpose of making him serve for her benefit through abusing her own body. In other words, Marian thinks that Ainsley allows a man, whom she is a total stranger, to make use of her body

which she decorates for attracting attention. Soon after deceiving Len for her project, Ainsley welcomes her pregnancy: She prepares her body and mind for the process and for the transformations that her body would experience. While Ainsley examines her own body with the intention of discovering the reactions that it gives with pregnancy, Marian observes her body, too: “She stood on Marian’s bed to examine the profile of her belly in Marian’s dresser-mirror, which was bigger than her own” (p. 167). Under the influence of the bodily changes that her friend does experience, Marian questions her own reactions on the condition that she would become pregnant. Anorexia nervosa, which generally rises to the surface as a result of sexual harassment or humiliation, is defined as “a defence against the “femaleness” of the body and a punishment of its desires” (Bordo, 2003, p. 8). As a consequence of her observation of Clara’s pregnant and maternal body as something foreign to her and Ainsley’s body as a perfect figure ready for the male gaze, Marian begins to question and fear from her bodily existence.

Marian reflects her fear of the body clearly by the time she goes out dinner with Peter; while waiting for their meals, they talk about child training. Based on his know-it-all manners and self-centered perception of the matters, Peter causes Marian to question her presence in that restaurant with him. Even though she feels too hungry to “devour the steak at one gulp” (p. 161), she loses her appetite by the time she catches the sight of Peter. When she observes the way Peter holds the knife and fork, and the elegance in his treatment of the food, Marian associates the food on the plate with her: she remembers the first time they met; he also treated her with elegance but now his manners are too ordinary and trifling. “How skillfully he did it: no tearing, no ragged edges. And yet it was a violent action, cutting; and violence in connection with Peter seemed incongruous to her” (p. 162). Abruptly, Marian begins to imagine Peter in a different way from her perception of him so far; now, she is able to recognize his hidden defects. Just like the food on the plate, Peter will soon devour her sense of self because he consumes her body and identity as if she were an edible snack:

She wondered why restaurants like this one were kept so dark. Probably to keep people from seeing each other very clearly while they were eating. After all, chewing and swallowing are pleasanter for those doing them than for those watching, she thought, and observing one’s partner too closely might dispel the aura of romance that the restaurant was trying to maintain (p. 160).

Marian observes the way Peter treats the meat; although so gently he cuts it, the act of cutting is violent anyway for Marian. Then, she thinks about the relationship between

violence and Peter; on the surface, certainly there is no reference to him in terms of violence. Yet when she recalls the advertisements which are determined to represent the thing that is totally different from the essence, Marian discovers that Peter does not wear his heart on his sleeve: the surface or appearance does not mirror his true personality. With this, she also remembers a report on the newspaper which tells about a young boy who killed nine people with a rifle. Marian thinks that the boy is not the type who could commit murder. Therefore, she believes that it is not the act of the freewill but “a manipulation of specialized instruments”, and the violence the young boy perpetrated is not tactile, but “a violence of the mind” (p. 163). In this regard, the imposition of the power instruments on individuals via advertisements, magazines, and via many other instruments set a target to capture individual minds so that it would be possible to conquer them mischievously. Through this connection in her mind, Marian develops her anorectic tendency; metaphorically, she challenges the impositions of the system on her body and thus on her mind:

Like the Moose Beer commercials, which had begun to appear everywhere [...] The fisherman wading in the stream, scooping the trout into his net, was too tidy: he looked as though his hair had just been combed, a few strands glued neatly to his forehead to show he was windblown. And the fish also was unreal; it had no slime, no teeth, no smell; it was a clever toy, metal and enamel. The hunter who had killed a deer stood posed and urbane, no twigs in his hair, his hands bloodless. Of course you didn't want anything in an advertisement to be ugly or upsetting; it wouldn't do, for instance, to have a deer with its tongue sticking out (p. 162-163).

While observing him cut the steak into pieces, Marian begins to resemble the visual image of the cow with her body. Marian regards that cows which people eat are beheaded, killed, and packed in order to take its place on the supermarket shelves. Such an image in her eyes makes her realize that like a cow which caters people's need for food, her body is transformed in order to serve for the purpose of others' gazes. As a consequence of the effect that the media creates by ensuring the objectification of the female body, the masculine order normalizes the manipulation of the female body in line with the patriarchal expectations. Considered a this-worldly activity that prevents self-control, food is regarded as a gendered issue in contemporary societies. Due to the fact that eating might become an enemy for her sex, woman is obliged to be careful in food choice. To illustrate, “women who ate meat could be regarded as acting out of place; they were assuming a male prerogative” (Brumberg, 2000, p. 176). “Meat” connotes ferocity and rage; if woman eats meat it comes to mean that she substitutes

men, which is not regarded as a favored act of a woman. Because food is a gendered metaphor for the sexes, “the most feminine food – or meal – of all is tea. Rich, meaty, or very spicy foods [...] are identified as “male.” The unmistakable phallic nature of cigars and pipes serves as an equally unmistakable sign of male dominance and betrayal” (Michie, 1987, p. 16). Under the influence of such nonsensical identifications, Marian thinks that Peter represents his masculinity through eating his steak, which metaphorically substitutes for a woman from the perspective of Marian.

Watching him operating on the steak like that, carving a straight slice and then dividing it into neat cubes, made her think of the diagram of the planned cow at the front of one of her cookbooks: the cow with lines on it and labels to show you from which part of the cow all the different cuts were taken. What they were eating now was from some part of the back, she thought: cut on the dotted line. She could see rows of butchers somewhere in a large room, a butcher school, sitting at tables, clothed in spotless white, each with a pair of kindergarten scissors, cutting out steaks and ribs and roasts from the stacks of brown-paper cow-shapes before them (p. 163).

Marian tries to be convinced on the matter that there is nothing wrong in eating cows; however, when she forces herself to eat the meat, she sets the fork down. Peter, content with his appetite, expresses: “I sure was glad to get that steak inside. A good meal always makes you feel a little more human” (p. 164). On the other hand, Marian, feeling totally different from Peter, is anxious about her condition and wonders how to cope with the situation:

She looked down at her own half-eaten steak and suddenly saw it as a hunk of muscle. Blood red. Part of a real cow that once moved and ate and was killed, knocked on the head as it stood in a queue like someone waiting for a streetcar. Of course everyone knew that. But most of the time you never thought about it. In the supermarket they had it all pre-packaged in cellophane, with name-labels and price-labels stuck on it, and it was just like buying a jar of peanut-butter or a can of beans, and even when you went into a butcher shop they wrapped it up so efficiently and quickly that it was made clean, official. But now it was suddenly there in front of her with no intervening paper, it was flesh and blood, rare, and she had been devouring it. Gorging herself on it (p. 164).

After the dinner with Peter at the restaurant, Marian discovers that she could not eat many other foods. She regards the situation as though eating were a kind of banned activity for her. “This refusal of her mouth to eat was malignant; that it would spread; that slowly the circle now dividing the non-devourable from the devourable would become smaller and smaller, that the objects available to her would be excluded one by one” (p. 166). Marian is aware of the fact that her stomach does refuse foods and it expands day by day. Although she is unaware of the underlying cause of anorexia

nervosa, in fact Marian's body displays a kind of resistance; her body protests the male hegemony which regards her body as an edible and a disposable object:

She had discovered that not only were things too obviously cut from the Planned Cow inedible for her, but that the Planned Pig and the Planned Sheep were similarly forbidden. Whatever it was that had been making decisions, not her mind certainly, rejected anything that had an indication of bone or tendon or fibre. Things had been ground up and re-shaped, hotdogs and hamburgers for instance, or lamb patties or pork sausages, were all right as long as she didn't look at them too closely, and fish was still permitted. She had been afraid to try chicken: she had been fond of it once, but it came with an unpleasantly complete skeletal structure, and the skin, she predicted, would be too much like an arm with goose bumps (p. 165-166).

“Anorexia nervosa is a puzzling disease, full of contradictions and paradoxes” (Bruch, 1979, p. 3): The more she questions her commodification by Peter, the more she loses her appetite. “When women are positively depicted as sensuously voracious about food [...] their hunger for food is employed solely as a metaphor for their sexual appetite” (2003, p. 110). After beginning to be enlightened about Peter's humiliating treatments towards her body and mind, Marian loathes having sexual intercourse with him, and she uses self-starvation as a metaphor for her disgust. In other words, because eating associates sexual desire, non-eating implies Marian's rejection to satisfy Peter's sexual hunger through her body.

By the time she visits her parents and relatives for Christmas, Marian realizes the very fact that she feels distant from everybody and from the habits that she has naturalized so far. While trying to find out the reason for her anorexia in her mind, Marian tries to enjoy the Christmas dinner with her family. However, it turns out to be a fiasco for her in terms of the excessive pressure her mother puts on her eating. The loss of appetite is the thing that she finds no way to explain to her mother. “She had thought of saying she had taken up a new religion that forbade her to eat meat” (p. 189). At the dinner table, Marian discovers that the reactions of her parents seem to be less germane to her; by contrast, they pass the buck to Peter. “They had probably been worried she would turn into a high-school teacher or a maiden aunt or a dope addict or a female executive, or that she would undergo some shocking physical transformation like developing muscles and a deep voice or growing moss” (p. 189). Under the influence of the ideology and of the traditional values, Marian's parents have anxiety about the future of their daughter: because Marian got university education, they thought that she would turn out to be an

out of type or an unacceptable one for the society they live in. However, after they receive the news about her decision to get married to Peter, they feel comforted at last.

After she returns home from the Christmas dinner with her family, Marian resolves on inviting Clara and Joe to dinner at home in order to introduce Peter to her own friends. Although she begins to realize the trouble with Peter, Marian, nonetheless, tries to force herself to accept Peter as he is – with his egocentric posture and sense of ownership over her body. As for the food, she cannot muddle through about the menu: She could not offer fish since Peter does not like it, and because she cannot eat meat she could not serve it, either. “She couldn’t possibly explain; if she didn’t understand it herself, how could she expect them to? In the past month the few forms that had been available to her had excluded themselves from her diet” (p. 192). She is not aware of the fact that her body reacts to the system which attempts to marginalize it through turning her body into an object for others’ pleasure. “She was becoming more and more irritated by her body’s decision to reject certain foods. She had tried to reason with it, and accused it of having frivolous whims, had coaxed it and tempted it, but it was adamant; and if she used force it rebelled” (p. 193). Marian believes that it is time for her body to change its mind. In other words, she perceives her eating disorder as the product of her mental struggle over the matter. Marian’s mind begins to make up many stories about the foods; when she prepares food for the dinner with Clara and Joe, she holds a carrot by its leafy top and observes its skin, and then she fathoms out the developmental stage of the carrot. “She became aware of the carrot. It’s a root, she thought, it grows in the ground and sends up leaves. Then they come along and dig it up, maybe it even makes a sound, a scream too low for us to hear, but it doesn’t die right away, it keeps on living, right now it’s still alive...” (p. 194). She associates the evolution of the carrot with that of a female body. Like a carrot is taken apart from the ground when people think it is time for them to eat it without hearing its screams, women are exposed to be used and consumed by male corrosives. The story that she makes up about the carrot causes Marian to remove it as well from the list of the things she could eat. At the dinner table, Marian tries to hide the meatballs beneath the lettuce leaves as she is afraid of being criticized for her anorexia about which even she does not have a reasonable explanation. The more she struggles for her anorectic reaction, the more she feels under the domination of her body. She feels her body as “a dictator who dominates me,” or “a

ghost who surrounds me,” or “the little man who objects when I eat.” (Bruch, 1979, p. 58).

Obsessed with her body and with the resistance it offers, Marian ponders upon the source of the eating disorder she suffers in the form of anorexia nervosa. Meanwhile, Duncan takes her to a museum to pass the time together. While walking along the corridors of the museum, Duncan shows Marian his “womb-symbol”: “It looked like a heap of rubble. Then she saw that it was a skeleton, still covered in places with skin, lying on its side with its knees drawn up. There were some clay pots and a necklace lying beside it. The body was so small it looked like that of a child” (p. 204). Upon examining the figure in detail, Marian feels sorry for it because of the “jutting ribs and frail legs and starved shoulder-blades” (p. 204) resemble with the people from underprivileged countries. In fact, Marian associates her body with the body she sees at the museum. Because she cannot make sense of and overcome her eating problem, Marian gets anxious about her size that would metamorphose into a bag of bones.

Duncan’s roommates invite Marian for dinner; in order not to be misunderstood Marian tells Duncan that she cannot eat certain foods like meat and some vegetables. Duncan does not seem to be surprised, and he regards that the eating disorder she has now is nothing more than a resistance to the system: “you’re probably representative of modern youth, rebelling against the system; though it isn’t considered orthodox to begin with the digestive system” declares Duncan (p. 208). Unable to comprehend Duncan’s utterance, Marian feels anxiety for the evening because of her anorexia. However, she feels relieved by the time she realizes the soft light that the candles provide: “She was glad they were dining by candlelight: it would be easier to dispose of things if necessary” (p. 214). Marian is decisive to hide her eating problem as it seems impossible to explain the condition that she is in because even she is unable to make sense of her nuisance with her appetite. During the evening, Marian feels unease and tries to avoid eating what is on her plate: “When he dexterously slid whatever was impaled on the skewers onto her plate, she could see that most of it was meat” (p. 217).

Marian surveyed the chunks of meat on her plate with growing desperation. She thought of sliding them under the tablecloth – but they would be discovered. She would have been able to put them into her purse if only she hadn’t left it over by the chair. Perhaps she could slip them down the front of her blouse or up her sleeves (p. 217-218).

The meat on her plate reminds her of the dinner with Peter: his cutting and biting it kindly indeed makes her think of masculine violence towards her body. “Ever since this thing had started she had been trying to pretend there was nothing really wrong with her, it was a superficial ailment, like a rash: it would go away. But now she had to face up to it; she had wondered whether she ought to talk to someone about it” (p. 222-223). Marian feels that something is substantially wrong concerning her appetite because her body does reject everything, even the rice pudding. In the very beginning, she slurred over her condition; but now she is certain that her eating disorder could be the symptom of some serious problems. She decides not to share her problem with Peter since she thinks he would regard her condition as neurotic or freak. When Marian asks Ainsley whether she is normal or not, her response is sarcastic: “Normal isn’t the same as average [...] Nobody is normal” (p. 223). Upon this response, Marian realizes that Ainsley is not the right person to ask for help because she would associate the eating disorder with Marian’s turbulent sex life, or with a traumatic childhood experience like that of Len. However, Marian is certain that her inability to eat is not related to her past memory or her unconscious. Then, Marian thinks about the theory of behaviorism about which Ainsley did say something before: “They say whatever causes the behavior, it’s the behavior itself that becomes the problem” (p. 224). Diseases are cured through showing images concerning the sickness like alcoholism or homosexuality, and then with a drug they stop the patient’s breath. Nonetheless, Marian thinks that her condition cannot be cured through Behaviorism: “How could it work on any condition so negative? If she were a glutton it would be different; but they couldn’t very well show her images of non-eating and then stop her breathing” (p. 224).

“But these are things I used to be able to eat. It isn’t that I don’t like the taste; it’s the whole...” Marian thinks (p. 225). She is unable to explain the condition she is in because even she cannot make sense of it. In order to test her reaction to foods one more time, Marian decides to eat the cake she bought on the way to Peter’s. She knows that she is really hungry because she has not eaten much for dinner. The cake is in the shape of a heart with pink icing, and when she takes a bite of it, she is surprised that the inside of the cake is also pink: “She put a forkful into her mouth and chewed it slowly; it felt spongy and cellular against her tongue, like the bursting of thousands of tiny lungs. She shuddered and spat the cake out into her napkin and scraped her plate into the garbage” (p. 227). Unfortunately, Marian is unable to eat the cake; metaphorically, Marian

perceives the heart-shaped cake as a living organ; she feels that she would make the heart stop if she ate it. Marian cannot help attributing human features to foods. Because her appetite does not let her overcome anorexia, Marian decides to test Peter about the cake: if he cannot eat the cake either, it will prove that she is normal. However, Peter makes short work of the cake, and he does imply that the problem is just related to Marian. The cake metaphorically represents her relationship with Peter. Because there is no recovery in her eating problem, Marian decides to take vitamin-pills as a cold comfort.

She opened the refrigerator to see what was in there that might be edible. The freezing-compartment was so thickly encrusted with ice that its door wouldn't stay shut. It contained two icecube trays and three suspicious-looking cardboard packages. The other shelves were crowded with various objects, in jars, on plates with bowls inverted over them, in waxed-paper packets and brown-paper bags [...] The only thing she could see that interested her at all was a hunk of yellow cheese. She took it off the rack: it had a thin layer of green mould on the underside. She put it back and closed the door. She decided she wasn't hungry anyway (p. 237-238).

As a symptom of her anorexia, Marian abstains from the community because she does not want others to realize her body. Therefore, she does not want to attend the party Peter gives. She does not want to get the flak; she does not want the heads turn towards her; she does not want to reveal her true identity. She is afraid of herself; she knows that she could be riding for a fall. "She could not face the party, all those people [...] didn't really know her, fixing their uncomprehending eyes on her, she was afraid of losing her shape, spreading out, not being able to contain herself any longer, beginning [...] to talk a lot, to tell everybody, to cry" (p. 240). Marian feels the threat of anorexia; she wishes to be invisible. Before the guests do arrive at the party, Peter wants to take her photos; however, Marian rejects. Rather than respect her decision, Peter adjusts his lens and gets her in the focus: "Could you stand a little less stiffly? Relax. And don't hunch your shoulders together like that, come on, stick out your chest, and don't look so worried darling, look natural, come on, *smile* ..." (p. 254). Under any circumstances, Peter is disposed to shape, to discipline, and to control Marian. Even while taking her photo, Peter decides how she should pose for the camera. "Her body had frozen, gone rigid. She couldn't move, she couldn't even move the muscles of her face as she stood and stared into the round glass lens pointing towards her, she wanted to tell him not to touch the shutter-release but she couldn't move ..." (p. 254). Realizing that her life with Peter is a sort of posing for the cameras, Marian reacts to her condition through refusing

foods. She discovers the fact that her identity has taken from her hands. Her body has been forced to adapt to the patriarchal self-centeredness, and because of her anatomical reality she has been confined within her gender roles as a pregnant, nurturer, and sexual commodity of her male master.

The next morning after the party and the night with Duncan, Marian and he go for the breakfast despite the fact that she is still unable to eat anything. Because she could not find a solution to her real life problems the effects are felt on her body. "It had finally happened at last then. Her body had cut itself off. The good circle had dwindled to a point, a black dot, closing everything outside... She looked at the grease-spot on the cover of the menu, almost whimpering with self-pity" (p. 283). While testing her appetite at the table, Duncan states that all her problems are related to the issue of consumption: because she lets Peter consume her, she has lost her appetite. "When he (Duncan) broke the eggs with his fork and their yellow centres ran viscously over the plate she turned her head away. She thought she was going to be sick" (p. 284). Marian adds eggs in her list besides the things she cannot eat. Although she cannot make sense of Duncan's statement at that very moment, Marian interprets what Duncan told her ere long. Marian's anorexia is a sort of psycho-somatic disorder; in other words, she does not have any physical problems concerning her loss of appetite. However, the discovery of her intentionally objectified body image causes her to feel alienation to her body. Considered a conscious act of woman, anorexia nervosa is the end point for a woman to decide whether her self-starvation represents a submission to the system or a sort of revolt against the regulations established for her body. In this context, Marian's anorexia is a challenge against the operations that treat woman as a mere body; she experiences loathing of her body after she feels that it serves not for her own desires but for the male gaze and desire. She discovers the source of her anorexia: she cannot digest the male ferocity on the female body and mind, and as a protest, she starves her body from food. By rejecting eating, Marian refuses to make her body the target for masculine pleasure and satisfaction.

"The anorexic subjugates herself through extreme self-discipline and self-denial, yet rather than experiencing this as repression, she sees it as liberating, an expression of her own will, self-control, and self-mastery" (Pylypa, 1998, p. 29). Marian's self-recovery and self-realization take place by the time she awakens to a new day with a different

mentality after the party and the night with Duncan: now she knows well what to do. In Part 3 there is a shift in the narrative voice which turns to the first point of view. “Now that I was thinking of myself in the first person singular again I found my own situation much more interesting than his” (p. 306). Now she approves what Ainsley has done; she believes that she knows what she wants. “What she needed was something that avoided words, she didn’t want to get tangled up in a discussion” (p. 295). Not with the words but with the acts she is going to explain the whole story. She goes to the supermarket and buys what she needs for the cake she plans to make: She wants to buy everything new although she has some of the ingredients in her kitchen; leaving everything behind, she desires for a total subversion. For the first time in her life, she constructs an image: Marian makes a cake in the shape of a female body:

Now she had a blank white body. It looked slightly obscene, lying there soft and sugary and featureless on the platter. She set about clothing it, filling the cake-decorator with bright pink icing. First she gave it a bikini, but that was too sparse. She filled in the midriff. Now it had an ordinary bathing-suit, but that still wasn’t exactly what she wanted. She kept extending, adding top and bottom, until she had a dress of sorts. In a burst of exuberance she added a row of ruffles around the neckline, and more ruffles at the hem of the dress. She made a smiling lush-lipped pink mouth and pink shoes to match. Finally she put five pink fingernails on each of the amorphous hands (p. 297).

For the first time in her life she creates an image for consumption; metaphorically, the cake she makes symbolizes the ideal feminine figure the patriarchal ideology has defined for centuries. Just like her condition at the beauty salon, she approaches the cake as if she were performing a surgery on it. Dividing the cake into parts, Marian adds legs and arms, and sticks them with icing. She adds a nose, draws its eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows. Then she decorates it with a pink dress through which “the woman looked like an elegant china figurine” (p. 298). Just like a real woman who is shaped and even transformed into a made-body, Marian manages to create and complete her image. “Her creation gazed up at her, its face doll-like and vacant except for the small silver glitter of intelligence in each green eye” (p. 298). Despite the justified proud she has for the image she has created, Marian feels pity for the creature since “her fate had been decided” (p. 298). Making reference to Freud’s argument of “anatomy is destiny”, Marian emphasizes the fate that women have been doomed to so far. Yet, now Marian ridicules the absurdity of the inferiority of woman based on the ostensible lack of being female. “You look delicious [...] Very appetizing. And that’s what will happen to you; that’s what you get for being food” (p. 298). Marian does forecast the absolute

judgment Peter would direct to her by the time he comes across with the cake. He would possibly regard her as silly and irrational as though a child playing a game. No matter what Peter thinks of her after seeing the cake-woman, Marian decides to ignore it because she does not pay attention to his judgment any longer. Marian is ready for presenting her surprise to Peter: “You’ve been trying to destroy me, haven’t you [...] You’ve been trying to assimilate me. But I’ve made you a substitute, something you’ll like much better. This is what you really wanted all along, isn’t it? I’ll get you a fork” (p. 299-300). At that very moment, she realizes that she is really hungry. This is because she has unburdened herself.

The problem has been solved: Marian achieves to subvert the norms that dictate her body and mind to be submissive to the male authority. Rather than hate or punish her body, Marian realizes the power that her body has over the masculine nonsense. She overcomes anorexia nervosa and recovers her appetite which also signals her rejection of the patriarchal definitions of the ideal body. Atwood, through *The Edible Woman*, subverts the Western philosophy of the female body through intersecting feminist theory and postmodernism. Through enabling Marian to discover her unity with her body and mind, Atwood questions the validity of social realities which are in fact the offspring of patriarchy and capitalism. By portraying Marian as a subversive character in the end, the author also declares the fact that woman is not a doll without an identity or a plantlike object in need of aegis by male holders of power; by contrast, she has the capacity to lay claim on her body and mind regardless of the false judgments concerning her inferiority and marginalization.

CHAPTER III

WELDON'S *THE FAT WOMAN'S JOKE*

Women's humor is about our reclamation of certain forms of control over our own lives. Humor allows us to gain perspective by ridiculing the implicit insanities of a patriarchal culture (Barreca, 1994, p. 12).

As a British author, Fay Weldon is well recognized with her novels, short stories, screenplays, and several books written for children. Regarded as a social critic, Weldon does reproach modernity and its ideals such as objectivity, universality, and uniformity which she claims to standardize individuals as monotypes. Maintaining a stance against the ideological institutions and instruments which serve for the purpose of the patriarchal orthodoxy, Weldon rejects the status quo and its social sanction, but she embraces the postmodern principles such as plurality, individuality, subjectivity, and uncertainty through which she offers alternative personalities for her characters and metamorphosis in fixed rules. Rather than accept and fulfill the rules predetermined by the authority unquestioningly, Weldon emboldens individuals to realize their potential to reverse the oppressive order.

Influenced by the Second Wave Feminism, Weldon does criticize the disparity between man and woman and the marginalized stance of woman both in private and public domains. Related to the arguments the radical feminists hold against the female body oppression and marginalization by male chauvinists, the author does protest against maternity and fecundity qualifications attributed to women. Presenting motherhood and marriage as the basic instruments of confinement, Weldon does disapprove the ideology which labels woman with domesticity and maternity as the mere ways of her survival. Nonetheless, Weldon never accuses men individually; by contrast, she claims the society as the actual blameworthy. Because the phallogocentric discourse and the patriarchal ideology withhold women from expressing and living their true identities, men are programmed to take active part in public issues and to disregard woman and her body as inferior as a consequence of the sanction power of masculinity. Weldon

believes that man is also the product and even the victim of modern societies because he is coerced to represent masculine features without getting his opinion. Accordingly, she expresses her discord with feminist aims because she thinks that they also cause discrimination. Rather, Weldon embraces postmodern feminism which embraces human beings as individuals without any categorization such as man or woman. As Marie Hebert states:

Weldon refuses containment within patriarchal law, but she also steadfastly refuses an easy or artificial feminist solution. That no one is innocent, man or woman, complicates her searing critique of the current construction of heterosexual gender relations and makes her novels unsettling to conservatives and feminists alike (qtd. in Atayurt, 2014, 40).

In her fiction, Weldon portrays alternative types of women and men having different personalities on the purpose of revealing her impartiality concerning the sexes. Consequently, she convicts the ideology of creating binary dualisms between man and woman because she claims that the power system, which is based on the patriarchal fundamentalism, causes man and woman to define each other as the opposite pole. Weldon states that in conservative societies, woman is coded as feminine so long as she has perfect body lines besides acting out her gender roles such as cooking, caring for the family members, and doing the housework, whereas man is considered masculine through the qualities of invulnerability, stability, strength, and dominance. During an interview with Gholson, Weldon states: “it was always the pressure on women to describe rather than to invent. Until recently, women have been pressured to describe what they know and never to make up what they don't know” (1990, p. 45). Weldon indicates that woman is intentionally restrained from imagination and production because creativity is associated with men. Weldon blames the system that encourages gender inequality and feminine oppression; society itself is responsible for making woman discipline her own body and control her mentality in parallel with the expectations of the power relations. In other words, Weldon, through her novels, achieves to overthrow the traditional beliefs which are presented as the basic values for women. Having studied psychology, Weldon does intellectualize woman’s marginal stance in public and private spheres. As a consequence of the assumptions the masculine ideology imposes upon the female psyche, the mentally depressed woman has no other option but to repress her true identity in the cause of male satisfaction. In

this regard, Weldon objects to the phallogocentric view which attempts to define woman as lack.

I'm a sociobiologist. I think if you were to believe in simple Darwin, in natural selection, we are all obviously being selected to be meaner and nastier and stronger and more horrid, each generation more so than the last generation. I don't think that's true. If you are a sociobiologist, you see that survival amplifies to genetic groups and survival depends upon your capacity to cooperate with others. Then we are actually getting nicer, you see, because those who survive are those who are best able to cooperate. The society that's best able to cooperate, is best able to survive. And probably in the long run, that is true, so all is not lost. (1990, p. 47)

Combining the objectives of the second wave feminism with those of postmodern feminism which focuses on the subjectivity of man and woman and difference rather than equality between the sexes, Weldon rejects the essentialist philosophy through the portrayal of multiple female identities. The author undergirds the postmodern feminist ideals through transforming the heroine from self-sacrificing and body-obsessed female mentality into a woman who discovers the power of her body and mind under her own control. In other words, Weldon attacks the ancient philosophy which regards woman as out of mental capacity and thus out of reason. She disavows such null and void perceptions of woman that cause her to be confined into the house through domestic duties as the single pursuit she is believed to be involved in. For Weldon, the philosophy which traps woman within the private domain as a slave is nothing more than the constructed paradigms of the male benefit. Subverting the ancient philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and the modern Enlightenment thinking of Descartes and Hegel, Weldon does ensure compromise between female mind and body through demonstrating the reality that woman – as opposed to the assumptions – has the potential and power to rule her mind and body together.

Weldon's fiction exemplifies the ways in which cooking is an integral part of defining cultural ideals and personal and political relationships, and in her work, food constitutes a practical and symbolic discourse through which gender and class are revealed and negotiated (Magid, 2008, p. 3)

The Fat Woman's Joke, as the first novel of Weldon, was published in 1967 as the adaptation of a television play *The Fat Woman's Tale*. The novel reflects the subversive aspect of the outrageous female corporeality the society does taboo for women. Titled as *And the Wife Ran Away in America*, *The Fat Woman's Joke* tells the story of a woman who becomes aware of her life as a repressed wife and as a self-denying mother.

Regarding her marriage as the real cause of her somatophobic tendency initially, and of the evolution she experiences later, Esther denounces the conjugal union after suffering and then losing her identity as an individual. By the time Esther, as the protagonist of the novel, takes the advantage of binge eating as a form of declaration of her reaction to the stereotype gender roles and to the female embodiment regulated by patriarchy as a slim and sexy image. “Weldon had challenged and trivialised the “thin/sexy/demure” feminine image by making the fat woman smart, powerful and intelligent” (Atayurt, 2014, p. 39); through portraying Esther as a fleshy and middle-aged woman, Weldon, indeed, achieves to present the possible alternatives to exist as a woman; in other words, Weldon reconstructs her heroine as a self-sufficient woman with her body and mind. Esther’s eating is a revolt against the system which defines her existence within the feminine ideals patriarchy has coded for her. Experiencing a conscious metamorphosis in her body, Esther rejects the idealized feminine image through which she is expected to serve for the male gaze. Embracing postmodern characteristics, Weldon attacks fixed rules which are presented as the norm. In other saying, the author does enable the heroine to deconstruct the universal and unchanging understanding of femininity through Esther’s struggle for and triumph over the generalizations concerning her body and gender roles. Therefore, Esther defines her experience as “a story of patterns but no endings, meanings but no answers, and jokes where it would be nice if no jokes were” (p. 16).

The story is narrated through the flashbacks the heroine provides; therefore, at the beginning of the novel, Esther represents a victorious woman who has overcome her somatophobia through binge eating which manifests itself as a sort of resistance to generalizations concerning the ideal feminine figure. In other words, readers are not informed much about the process she did suffer because of her body-fear or hatred. By contrast, her somatophobia is narrated from the perspective of the awakened Esther and through the conversations with the other female characters in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, Esther is alone in a flat and she enjoys her freedom through eating and doing nothing concerning domesticity or the correction of her body flaws. Upon Phyllis’s insistence on learning the reason behind her leave-taking, Esther begins to relate her story. Stating the diet – which later gives rise to anorexia – as the real motive for her awakening, Esther explains why she decided to go on a diet. As a

consequence of Alan's insistence on and wish for seeing her with a sexy and inviting body under the pretext of a health, Esther resolves to lose weight in order to win recognition by Alan. While struggling for adapting herself to the diet through self-starvation, Esther realizes the fact that Alan indeed dreams of his secretary, Susan, who is about her twenties, sexy, and attractive. Because she accuses her fat body as the source of her husband's infidelity, Esther begins to experience somatophobia; she finds it disgusting and ugly since it is the main reason for her inferiority. However, by the time she gets out of the shock of her husband's infidelity, Esther abandons the house and her son. Getting rid of the diet and thus of anorexia nervosa, Esther begins to eat whatever she wants without having any anxiety about her size because her perception of her body changes in a positive way.

3.1. Philosophical Background of Somatophobia

Weldon does attack the traditional philosophy of the West which confines woman to her body and thus to her gender roles based on the ostensible dualism between man and woman. Within the novel, the author criticizes the institutions and the mechanism which imprison woman within the house for the sake of the satisfaction of the male ego. Based on the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Hegelian doctrines concerning the lack of autonomy of women, in the modern societies men are considered the authority and even the guardians both in the private and public arena. Accordingly, in the novel through the portrayal of the alternative female characters Weldon achieves to display the influence of the philosophical assumptions on the value judgments about being a woman and being a mere body in and outside marriage.

By virtue of the traditional philosophical attitude towards women and the body, the modern epistemology, along with the division between the sexes, legitimates gender codes, based on which women feel obliged to behave in a certain way. Through the portrayal of Esther, Phyllis, and Susan, the author criticizes the way how women become obsessed with their bodies either in the form of perfecting it for the male approval, or in the form of flesh-loathing because of the assumptions assigned to the female sex. However, influenced by the postmodern feminist theorists, Weldon claims that gender identities are imagined, constructed, and standardized in line with the dominant power. Ultimately, the polarity between masculine and feminine is normalized within the figurative determinants. Thus, Weldon illustrates the

predetermined gendered roles through which women are coerced to normalize the social and legal inequality, and are impelled to exist in domestic and public spheres as second-class citizens, functioning as mothers, cooks, and nursemaids which Bordo defines as a sort of “vampirism”: the thing that steals the essence of individuals (2003, p. 74).

Esther, as the protagonist of the novel, is confined within the house as being in charge of doing the housework and providing food for the other members of the family: “cultural containment of female appetite: the notion that women are most gratified by feeding and nourishing others, not themselves” (2003, p. 118). Weldon never gives details about her educational background although the reader is informed about the capabilities she did have before marriage. However, now Esther seems to forget her abilities and pursuits for the sake of domestic responsibilities she is thought to have for her family. No matter how decent education she received, Esther is in fact taught to forget and negate her past after getting married. Accordingly, she has been imprisoned within the house through her roles as a housewife and as a mother since she got married to Alan. The reason for her imprisonment within the house is based on the cliché judgments concerning the female vulnerability and her lack of mental faculties. The double standard that bestows privilege on men while pushing women out is indicated by Kant: “acting out of duty (is) essential to acting rightly, but that women were incapable of acting out of duty” (Spelman, 1988, p. 7). In other words, women are always dictated the roles they must perform in and out of the house by men of reason, and because they are cast in the role of the ethical conduct, punishment is inevitable for them in the event that they act against the norms. “Women serve, nurture, and maintain so that the bodies and souls of men and children gain confidence and expansive subjectivity to make their mark on the world. This homey role deprives women of support for their own identity and projects” (Young, 2005, p. 123). In this context, Esther indigenizes her purpose as doing whatever she can do to ensure the happiness of her husband and son. Esther knows that she has no place in the house aside from being the provider of domestic security for the family.

Because gender is the orbit of the cultural interactions and of the psychological effects created by the power mechanism, cultures and societies invent their own realities upon the commonly held values and beliefs. Accordingly, Esther within such a society recognizes her identity via the gender roles already constructed for her sex. Esther, in

this respect, is undervalued due to the essentialist gender stereotypes which are assigned to her body because of her sex. Throughout the centuries, woman has been overleaped in history based on the assumption that the real makers of history are just men who actively take part in the politics and public issues with their facile innate rationality. Napoleon Bonaparte, to illustrate, declares that “nature intended women to be our slaves ... They are our property: we are not theirs. They belong to us, just as a tree bears fruit belongs to a gardener [...] Women are nothing but machines for producing children” (qtd. in Lopez-Corvo, 2018, p. 7). As is also understood from the official documents and from the manner of life in societies, women’s marginalization is legitimated through the unequal treatment of them in history, religion, philosophy, and mythology. As Bem states, “First, God created man “in His own image.” Later, God made Eve, constructing her from Adam’s rib. In other words, women are made from men, and women are therefore secondary in the great scheme of things” (qtd. in Matlin, 2003, p. 39). Accordingly, Esther’s confinement within the house as a housewife is based on the ancient philosophy that claims woman as the source of evil. Alan regards Esther as a sort of his possession, under which she is supposed to fulfill her duties within the domestic sphere through her body: giving birth, nurturing, and satisfying her husband’s sexual desires.

3.1.1. Body within Nature/Culture and Private/Public Discourse

In accordance with the ancient Western philosophy which obliges both woman and man to accept marriage as a necessity, Esther is supposed to internalize her inferiority and dependence on her husband while Alan declares himself as the head and the authority of the family. Because she is conditioned to accept her lack of potential to direct her life, like other women, Esther is perceived as the one who is in need of her savior: Alan. Accordingly, the void philosophy privileges Alan by empowering him for his unwarranted authority over Esther through marriage, as one of the well-established instruments serving for the female submission. Following Aristotle’s and Hegel’s arguments that women should be domineered by men under the name of marriage and that they should kept in the private domain because of their wicked nature and inability to govern their lives, Alan victimizes Esther and her body by legitimating his expectations as the norm. “Alan was different. He was a creative person. Anyway, they’re all quite good at pretending to be men. They know all the rules. Their bodies,

even, work as if they were men, but on the whole they're deceiving themselves and everyone else" (p. 37). On the other hand, Marian indigenizes her repressive gender roles such as giving birth, maternity, and the satisfaction of her husband's sexual desires through marriage. In other words, Alan legitimates his sovereignty over her body under the name of marriage. Despite the privilege their marriage offers to him, Alan always criticizes Esther, and thus he does not seem to be content with his marriage. Meanwhile, Esther is unaware of the fact that marriage is a barrier in front of her life which prevents her from having the active agency in life; by contrast, marriage is the institution that transforms Esther into a submissive, passive, and ineffective individual. To illustrate, before their marriage, both Alan and Esther did have interest in painting; however, after getting married, Esther had to give up painting because of the responsibilities she has within the house as well as due to the assumption that she is considered incompetent to engage with scientific and artistic activities.

Paradoxically, Alan feels limited and states that he could not allocate time for painting in point of the fact that there is no limit for him to waive his activities: "Once you embark on family life, it is too late to do anything else. Thoughts of self-expression fly out the window" remarks Alan (p. 67). While he explains the reason why he cannot concentrate on painting any more, Alan gives marriage as an excuse for his lack of opportunity, and he inwardly accuses Esther. He accepts that marriage requires responsibility; but he believes that Esther should ease his burden by taking in charge of the familial issues. In other words, Alan thinks that he is overwhelmed by the responsibilities of marriage. Even though the real blameworthy is not Esther but the system, which defines men as the authority and the breadwinner of the family, Alan yet accuses Esther of potentiating his burden. Despite the fact that it exalts man in almost every respect, the system in fact puts man under the influence of the ideology as well. Because patriarchy requires man to be the disciplining force in every condition, he feels fixed and limited within the private domain. Put it differently, patriarchy victimizes man while striving to discard woman at bottom based on the constructed gender roles: masculine and feminine features are assigned to the sexes and they are supposed to reflect the codes loaded on their personalities.

Under the influence of the Enlightenment norms concerning the universal values and reason, Alan decides to marry not with his heart but with his mind because he regards

marriage as a necessity and as a sort of accepted institution that he must eventually get involved in. He considers marriage the final point for him due to the fact that society expects him to marry and start a family which exalts his career and masculinity:

I am merely trying to publicly affirm my faith in you, marriage and the established order, and to explain that I am content with my lot. I am a married man and I married of my own free will. I am a city man, and live in the city of my own free will. A company man, also of my own volition. So I should not be surprised to find myself, in middle-age, a middle-aged, married, company, city man (p. 31).

Apart from evaluating marriage as a necessity for his career, Alan also thinks that marriage is the instrument which enables him to practice his masculinity and satisfy his ego through configuring Esther into a husband-dependent domestic wife. As a middle-aged man, he has to be married and to be looked after by his wife. Based on the Hegelian definition of the mutual need, Alan considers marriage and thus Esther a sort of necessity for the fulfillment of his sovereignty over his wife. He needs Esther for advancing in his career and for the satisfaction of his sexual appetite. From Alan's perspective, Esther needs him for protection and survival based on the Aristotelian and the Hegelian evaluation of woman as lack of rationality to sustain her life on her own. Representing the archaic philosophy of Hegel and of the Enlightenment model of masculinity, Alan claims that because men are superior over women and that the latter must depend on their husbands; otherwise, they are doomed to be excluded from the social conventions. "Wives need husbands more than husbands need wives [...] Such is the structure of our society that women without husbands are scorned, and men without women admired" states Alan (p. 97). As in the Hegelian dialectic, Alan believes that women are dependent upon their husbands; by nature, women are considered inferior, weak, and vulnerable. Therefore, they are supposed to be kept in the private domain under the authority of their master husbands. Reinforced by the ancient and modern understanding of being a woman, Alan claims/is claimed to have the right to betray Esther under the authority of the patriarchal system. In other words, Alan, exactly like men in general, is encouraged to act despotically against Esther through cheating on her under the pretext of the male doctrines.

The established order takes its principles from the ideals of the Enlightenment which stipulates order, objective values, fixity, and etcetera as the norm. Even though he remarks marriage as his own will or decision, Alan is in fact coerced to get married in

order to be a part of the system. Accordingly, based on the traditional clichés and the Enlightenment ideals, marriage does privilege men over women. By the time Esther and Alan have argument concerning the unhappy marriage they have, Alan as a defense regards women as responsible for their adultery. Alan accepts his betrayal of Esther; yet, he finds nothing wrong in doing it. Rather than regret for his immoral act, Alan tries to rationalize his affair: “Marriage isn’t a prison [...] Unfaithful husbands are made by jealous wives” he declares (p. 96). The double standard, which benefits man but aggrieves woman, is based on the assurance and the reinforcement the patriarchal ideology secures for the male advantage. Put it differently, the system or law does not treat the sexes equally: on the condition that a married woman betrays her husband, she is eternally punished for her immorality. As a response to Alan’s impertinent allegation which is based on the justification of the dualism between culture and nature, Esther expresses: “Just that there’s one law for husbands and another for wives” (p. 97). Esther’s remark indeed illustrates her consciousness about the tricks patriarchy plays on her sex; nonetheless, she is unable to reject the etiquettes ruling her life. It is Esther who is supposed to endure in silence and repress her feelings – because of her nature – despite the fact that Alan accepts his indecency swaggeringly.

Because the system expects individuals to normalize the double standards practiced on man and woman, Juliet, the charlady, indigenizes and summarizes the philosophical disposition patriarchy embraces as the standard. She expresses that the basic roles Esther undertakes in her marriage includes cooking, feeding, nurturing, caring for, cleaning, and etcetera which she fulfills for the sake of her husband’s and son’s happiness. Nonetheless, the neglected aspect is that she forgets herself, her identity, and her own cares. In Juliet’s statement, there is a sort of acceptance of the condition predetermined for woman:

Not satisfied with what he’s got? Is that it? That’s husbands all over. Ungrateful pigs. You do everything for them, you bring up their kids, you cook their food, you wash their clothes, you warm their beds, you fuss over your face day after day so they’ll fancy you, you wear yourself out to keep them happy and at the end of it all, what happens? They find someone else they fancy more. Someone young some man hasn’t had the chance to wear out yet (p. 76-77).

On the other hand, Phyllis, as a family friend of Esther and Alan, is pictured as the exact opposite to Esther in terms of her surface appearance and personality. She internalizes her marginal stance in her own marriage, and accepts to exist through presenting her

body as an object to her husband. Under the influence of the social construct, Phyllis prioritizes her body image and tries to associate her physical beauty with her survival. Therefore, she internalizes the social norms and the cultural values by appropriating her body for the expectations. Phyllis chooses to pretend to be happy and satisfied with her marriage; despite the evidence concerning Gerry's insincere nature of being and of his relationships with other women, Phyllis seems to have normalized the condition through the excessive sympathy for her husband and through the redundant care for her appearance on the purpose of monopolizing Gerry with her body as the only weapon. In this context, it is clear that Phyllis internalizes the patriarchal order which imposes the idea of having the ideal female image as a sort of obligation for her survival.

Phyllis, as a character foil, is the victim of the philosophical definitions which label her sex as wicked and lack on account of her biological fact. Internalizing her marginalization, Phyllis strives for being appreciated by the male authority through correcting and perfecting her surface appearance. Rather than question the accuracy of the assumptions directed to her sex, Phyllis dedicates all her energy to discipline her body. Because she normalizes the dualism Descartes puts forward, Phyllis almost celebrates the superiority of the soul which is associated with man, and she dedicates herself to discipline her body based on the assumption that dabbling with the body rather than the soul is the expected act of woman while man is considered the active agent of the mental faculties.

Phyllis seems so concerned about Esther's split marriage; therefore, she tries to make sense of the separation. She attempts to reconcile them as a result of her fear that Esther would be ruined without her husband. By the time Esther talks about Alan's indecency, Phyllis advises her to have a surgery of cutting her frontal lobes to reach happiness: "Things have gone too far with you. You can have your frontal lobes cut, do you know, and then you never worry about a thing. You're just happy all the time. All the time" (p. 170). Because she normalizes the claim that women do not have any mental faculties, Phyllis attempts to find happiness through accepting and internalizing her lack. Sarcastically enough, Esther responds her poor advice as: "Poor Phyllis. Is that next for you? If cutting your breasts open and stuffing them doesn't work, try cutting open the brain?" (p. 170). Esther criticizes Phyllis's blind allegiance to the philosophical definitions of "woman"; rather than declare herself reasonable enough to take her own

decisions, Esther submits to the philosophical judgments concerning her lack of mind and mental faculties. When Phyllis states her fear concerning the possibility of the desperation Esther would face without Alan, Esther warns her against the danger that her own marriage poses for her, and she explains the reason for her paranoiac thoughts: she states that she is sure about Alan's affair with his secretary. Upon this information, Phyllis declares that although she already certainly knows that Gerry has many affairs, she does not regard them as threats for her marriage just because she considers them trivial. Upon this pathetic confession, Esther claims that Phyllis accepts everything as it is because she lacks courage to divorce him:

What other choice have you but to agree? Divorce? You are not brave enough to be a single woman. You are a coward. You have played at being helpless for so long that now you are. And Gerry knows it. He doesn't have to bother. Your friends, not yours at all. Your home is Gerry's home, bought with Gerry's money. You just don't exist without him. And again, a single woman over thirty is an object of pity, or so you think. So you agree with Gerry that such masculine affairs are trivial; you tell yourself it is not in a man's nature to be monogamous; but neither of these things are any more true of men than they are of women, and your misery is no one's fault but your own because you are craven and a betrayer of your sex. You suck up to the enemy. I despise you (p. 91).

Phyllis does not have any sense of self-respect in that she even consents to her husband's infidelity so long as he does not divorce her. Rather than accept Gerry's indecency and make her own way through holding firm against the patriarchal nonsense, Phyllis considers her marriage a shelter for her. She believes that marriage is the mere thing that would save her life; therefore, she never thinks on the possibility of divorcing and leaving Gerry behind her: "It can't be Gerry, because I know he'll never leave me. He'll just go on having sordid affairs with sordid women, but they mean nothing to him. He tells me so, so it's understandable. It's just something a woman like me has to learn to put up with" remarks Phyllis (p. 13). Based on the assumptions of the traditional philosophy of the West, the female psyche is imposed with the idea of becoming the possession of her husband. In this regard, Phyllis normalizes her husband's infidelity as faddish. For her, being married under the sovereignty of Gerry is the gift of her life. Even worse, rather than see Gerry as responsible for his immorality, Phyllis humiliates other women with whom her husband does betray her. Because the society itself discriminates against women, even indecency is regarded as legitimate for men. Regrettably, Phyllis does also internalize the inferiority which her sex is subjected to suffer from, and she interprets her husband's immorality as a sort of amusement.

Upon Phyllis's claims over her marriage, Esther remembers her own past with Alan: like Phyllis, Esther did normalize her husband's infidelity by accusing her body of his immoral acts: because she was fat and thus away from sexuality, Alan did regard it right to have affairs with other women. In order to win back her husband Esther did attempt to lose weight. However, after awakening to the reality, Esther gives up condemning herself for Alan's indecent affairs. Therefore, Esther claims that Phyllis would soon come to terms with her by the time she reaches maturity. Put it differently, Esther remarks that Phyllis is now young enough to curtain the realities with imaginations or with substitutions. Yet, Esther believes that Phyllis will be soon enlightened with her own truth:

Because you are growing old. Because you have a vision of loneliness, and it is a terrible moment when you realize that your future is not green pastures, but the glue factory. We are all separate people, and we are all alone. It is a ridiculous thing to say that no man is an island. We are all islands (p. 13-14).

Making reference to John Donne's *Meditations*, Esther claims that individuals and their perceptions have changed based on the dualistic view of the world. Donne regards that every individual is a part of the whole; in other words, there is a strong relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. However, individuals today first learn the dichotomy between man and woman, mind and body, spirit and matter, and etcetera. Within the modern understanding of the world, each individual is to learn to live for oneself. In this regard, Esther implies that Phyllis is pissing in the wind; however, as soon as she grows mature, Esther believes, Phyllis will discover that all her attempts to please someone else – even if it is her husband – would turn out to be in vain. Under the influence of the conventional belief, Phyllis is indoctrinated to present her body as an object for the male pleasure. “Normalcy is regarded as being able-bodied, having light skin, having sex and gender congruity, and being thin or “average-sized,” heterosexual, and middle-class” (Gailey, 2014, p. 9). In this regard, Phyllis decorates her body for the purpose of indulging and satisfying her husband's libido. “Do you intend to go on like this forever [...] spending your entire life attempting to placate that fat selfish bully of a husband?” states Esther (p. 138). Rather than consent to the roles and the rules established by the male hegemony, Esther disregards the definitions that force her sex to serve for the male desire through the sexuality of her body. Challenging the philosophical assumptions, Esther attempts to awaken Phyllis to her own reality by warning her against the illusions that she was once deceived by within her marriage:

Soon, little Phyllis, you will stop painting your toenails. Already I suspect you no longer wear your best panties to parties. It will all be over for you as it is for me, and love and motherhood and romance will be no more than dreams remembered, and rather bad dreams at that. Your real life will begin as mine has now (p. 14).

Despite Esther's warning, Phyllis internalizes the discursive rules established by patriarchy, and she dedicates her life to the service of her husband in spite of the fact that Gerry never notices her efforts. Phyllis normalizes the dichotomy between man and woman and considers marriage an institution which requires her to fulfill the needs and expectations of her husband. Rather than discover the realities concerning her husband's unjust behavior towards her, Phyllis legitimates the dualism between body and mind and attributes the mental capacity to her husband through which she also normalizes his lack of understanding of her feelings. For Phyllis, Gerry represents rationality; therefore, he dominates her in private and public spheres. Phyllis embraces her domestic roles as if they were the gifts in return for her husband's marriage with her:

Gerry's not a bully. He is very strong-willed and not very good at controlling his emotions, and he speaks his mind, and he is very highly sexed, but he's not a bully. And he needs me. And I like having the house nice when he comes home, and the smell of food cooking to welcome him and everything looking neat and tidy (p. 74).

Esther remembers the oppression and repression that she was exposed to during her own marriage: she remembers that Alan did play with her emotions and her mind; nothing was sincere concerning his feelings towards her. Esther remembers the past times when she did dedicate herself to domestic roles as her duty. Because she has been forced to accept biology as the determinant factor of dualism between man and woman, Esther is excluded from the public life. As Hegel argues, Esther is taught to keep family values as her reason for being. However, she is not meant to govern the private domain; she is supposed to perform her feminine duties attributed to her under the authority of her husband. As a consequence of the traditional philosophy of the West which regards woman as an irrational and a corporeal entity, Alan denigrates and humiliates Esther jauntily, even about her attitude in bringing up their son. Under the influence of the philosophical remarks, Alan thinks that Esther is unqualified for childrearing, and he regards Peter's lightheaded and indifferent stance in life as her guilt. Put it differently, Alan attempts to exercise his sovereignty over Esther under the pretext of the mental privilege men believe to have. When Phyllis visits Alan with the purpose of convincing him to reconcile with Esther, Alan complains about the life he leads. He is not pleased

with Esther because of her inability to train Peter as required; according to Alan, there is nothing wrong with himself as though it were the mere responsibility of Esther to bring up their son. Oddly enough, Alan states that he is not sure whether Peter is his son because he thinks that he was not like Peter when he was at his age. Stunned by Alan's expression, Phyllis does not want to accept his insult. However, Alan explains that at one time Esther did go mad, cut her hair, and eat nothing except apples. Moreover, he claims that a great number of men did visit her flat; he implies that Esther had sexual course with many different men. He also states that he did accept her after all such scandals. Accordingly, he tries to vindicate his dirty affair with Susan through unveiling Esther's unreasonable acts in the past. He could not realize the fact that she did everything when she was mentally unstable: "I would have thought she could have afforded me the same courtesy and not left me here to die of influenza. I'll tell you another thing. Susan admired me. Esther never, in all her life, admired me. Esther is incapable of admiring a man" Alan states (p. 123). Alan's unappeased ego is empowered by the doctrines which ancient and modern philosophers have dictated so far. For Alan, being admired and being flattered are the things that reinforce his ego.

While Esther dedicates her life to the welfare of her family, Alan always humiliates her based on the ostensible inferior nature she has. "Women are what their husbands expect them to be; no more and no less. The more you flatter them, the more they thrive" (p. 28) claims Alan while talking to Gerry about women and marriage. It is understood from his attitude towards Esther that Alan yanks her chain; he underestimates her reason and feelings. In accordance with the Platonic and Cartesian views of woman, Alan considers woman as matter and man as soul; thus he believes that man, as the representation of the ideal/form, has the right and power to govern woman. In other words, from Alan's point of view, woman is just like a puppet in the hands of man: he decides and he knows what she is. As a gender-conforming woman, Esther's role in the house is determined as a cook and nothing more. Especially after she gives birth to Peter, Alan begins to feel strange from her; he does not have any sexual intimacy for her. Accusing herself of becoming fat and formless, Esther tries hard to lose weight through diets in order to be approved and accepted by Peter once again. However, after discovering the absurdity of her attempt to shape her body in parallel with Alan's expectation, Esther recovers her appetite. Thus, while telling her story to Phyllis, Esther

picks out a tin of curry to eat, and criticizes the system and women who fall victim to domesticity. Esther indeed remembers the old days when she did dedicate herself to cooking and preparing foods for the family members; rather than feed herself, she did develop a sense of expression through cooking. Esther now realizes the fact that all she did was to serve for the masculine ideals expected from women:

It's not real curry, this, of course. Real curry is very tricky to make. You use spices, added at precise intervals, and coconut milk. It's not just a matter of making a stew and adding curry powder and raisins and bananas. You have to devote a whole day to making a true curry. It is all a waste of time and energy, but it keeps women occupied, and that's important. If they had a spare hour or two they might look at their husbands and laugh, mightn't they? (p. 72).

Esther tells in flashback the dinner at Phyllis and Gerry's house: the food that Phyllis cooks is a disaster; however, Alan and Gerry expressed their pleasure with the meal. Then, Esther deduces that femininity is not determined merely by cooking; Phyllis's slender body does atone for her inability to cook. As a result of her awakening to the reality that her existence just serves for domestic duties, Esther thinks that Alan does not take interest in her body any longer:

I am wounded [...] Marriage is such a falling away. It hurts. When you go to the pictures you remember a time you used to hold hands. You go to bed in your curlers and remember a time you used to sleep in each other's arms. Nothing is ever as it was, in marriage (p. 59).

Before she achieves self-realization, Esther maintains her marriage by imprisoning herself within the house just dealing with cooking and presenting food for her husband's service. "Women prepare the food, cook it and serve it – all seen by a sexist society as an inevitable aspect of "femininity" (Coward, 1984, p. 89). Esther considers food a form of expression of her love and affection for her husband and son: "all day at home I would plan food, and buy food, and cook food, and serve food, and nibble and taste and stir and experiment and make sweeties and goodies and tasties for Alan to try out when he came home" (p. 21). In the course of her marriage, it is understood that Esther dedicates herself to cooking for Alan's pleasure. On the other hand, so long as she cooks she feels that she is powerful and has authority over the others. Thus, Esther ascribes an emotional meaning to foods.

Heterosexual gratification for men clearly evokes oral pleasures and this is reinforced by the fact that men's social power has appropriated women's labour to care and provide for them. "The way to a man's heart is through his

stomach” is one of those sayings which unknowingly reveals the connections which a given society makes between different things. And, for men, there’s not such a rigid division between food and sex as there appears to be for women (Coward, 1984, p. 89).

Alan, on the other hand, works in an advertising agency and he has been just assigned to a position of respect as an executive creative controller. The patriarchal society in which Esther lives privileges men over women in professional careers as well. The status men have in their professions makes them feel strong and masculine. As a representative British man, Alan regards himself as “a cerebral creature” (p. 25) who acts with his reason rather than feelings. Regarding himself as a man of reason, Alan does undergird the philosophy which legitimates the dichotomy between the rational man and the irrational woman and thus the double standard that excludes woman from the business world. Worse still, woman does indigenize her passive condition in the public life, and she aims to monopolize a man of career and thus of power instead. When Susan, Alan’s secretary, tells Brenda that she is in love with Alan, she indicates that the determining factor of her love for Alan is related to his career and profession as the boss of the company she works in. Through this example, Weldon attacks the woman type whose principal target is to monopolize a man of power and wealth. Rather than maintain her own stance through her mental capacity, Susan chooses the line of least resistance: through becoming the mistress of a rich man, she thinks she could climb the social ladder.

The same man, not my boss, would probably have made no impression on me at all, I am honest enough to admit it. Status is a great aphrodisiac. His name was in black type on the telephone list and if you work for an organization like Zo’s, even temporarily, these things have the power to affect you (p. 68).

Based on the Aristotelian and the Hegelian doctrines on the nature and culture division, Alan takes pride in his position in the business world. He believes that it is men who have the ability and right to be preferential in public just due to the vain assumptions concerning their superior mental faculties in comparison with those of women. By the time he is up on about Susan’s interest in him, Alan directs insults against her existence: he regards her as an embodiment, a sexual object for his gaze and satisfaction. Rather than confess his weakness of will in his womanizing attitudes, Alan puts the blame on Susan: she is guilty for tantalizing Alan via her sexuality and femme fatale stance. Due to the fact that woman is a corporeal entity Susan is conditioned to make man imagine and fancy her with her bodily attractiveness.

It is too unsettled a relationship that you describe [...] for my peace of mind. Secretaries, however temporary, should maintain the illusion of being either virgins or well-married. Otherwise, the mind begins to envisage possibilities. The girl takes on flesh and blood. You are a bad secretary (p. 42).

Alan reduces Susan and her profession as a secretary to her corporeal existence because he perceives Susan as a mere body. In other saying, Alan ridicules and even ignores Susan and her struggle for existence via her position in the office. For Alan, a woman's place, especially if she is a sexy and a beautiful woman, is home. Rather than show resistance to his advances, Susan allows herself to be used for Alan's self-interest. She even encourages him to consume her and do her whatever he wants: "True courage lies in doing what you want to do, and not caring whom you hurt" remarks Susan (p. 67). Realizing what Susan means, Alan responds in a cynic way: "True courage [...] lies in employing temporary secretaries with beautiful legs and wayward thoughts" (p. 67). He admits honestly that he is interested not in her personality or in other characteristics, but in her body. He confesses that he recognizes Susan seriously by the time she features her sexuality. Despite the humiliating remarks Peter addresses to her, Susan still allows him to underestimate her personality and job as a secretary. In other words, Susan prefers to exist with her body rather than with her profession:

I take you very seriously. When you sit and wave your legs at me, they are the most beautiful legs I have ever seen. You make me young again. There is a gap between stocking top and panties which excites me beyond belief. I want to eat it. I shall visit you this evening (p. 85).

Alan reveals the normalized position of woman and of the female body within a patriarchal society. Seeing that Susan is working as a secretary rather than stay silent and perform domestic duties at home, Alan believes that she should accept his judgments concerning her. Put it differently, she is supposed to accept the insults he directs against her. Alan also confesses that the only aim for him is to massage his ego; therefore, he warns Susan against any expectations she could cherish. The young and the fresh body of Susan is nothing more than a game for Alan through which he finds satisfaction and relief. "All I can tell you is that my intentions toward you are entirely dishonorable. If you are likely to take me seriously, stop now. Stop showing your legs at me" remarks Alan (p. 86). He warns Susan against her tempting behavior which causes him to be aroused:

And when you first waved your stocking tops at me, you did so more crudely than any other secretary I have ever had, and that is saying something. You

had your way with me. But I must remind you that I am an old man. You are a child and you are playing with dangerous things. When children take their games seriously, it ends in tears. With grown-ups, it ends in suicides, divorce, and delinquent children. Be careful what you do (p. 85).

Accepting that he is a sort of womanizer, Alan implies his desire to have a passing fancy with her body. Away from the realization of Alan's insolent words against her identity and body, Susan tries to rationalize her act of having an immoral relationship with Alan. Rather than empathize with Esther under the name of sisterhood, Susan thinks that "it is the wife's fault for being my inferior" (p. 79). In a similar manner with Phyllis who accuses other women for her husband's immoral affairs, Susan puts the blame on Esther: she considers Esther the guilty because of her lack of femininity.

Despite the fact that Susan breaks up Esther's marriage through making use of her body for sexual gratification of Alan, she criticizes the way Brenda has a sexual relationship with a man that she does not know yet: "I am not your mother and you are not a little girl. I do think, however, that this kind of behavior is not in your nature. It doesn't become you. You should go back home and marry a nice bank clerk, and only fornicate, if absolutely necessary..." states Susan (p. 78-79). Under the assumptions that the conventional philosophy directs woman to, Susan interprets Brenda's behavior as immoral and out of type. Paradoxically, she remarks that she must be chaste and she is not to waste her body for the male satisfaction. Susan attacks Brenda for making love with a stranger she did meet in a pub about whom she knows nothing. Susan regards such an act as a sort of prostitution, and she emphasizes that the required act of any woman is to be chaste but sexual within the house under the marriage and merely for her husband. However, Brenda states that she is in love, and she never cares about the details like his name or income. "I feel liberated. I thought I would have to marry a bank clerk or a doctor or a lawyer and have children and be a housewife, but now I see I needn't do any of these things. I shall never get married" (p. 105). Brenda tells Susan that she will not marry him no matter how much she loves based on the reason that she has some speculations concerning his being Muslim and thus his unacceptable attitude towards women. Believing mistakenly that Muslim men are barbarians and they ill-treat women, Brenda is unaware of the fact that Western men lead the charge in the victimization and oppression of women although they regard themselves as civilized and sophisticated because they internalize the principles of the Enlightenment. Upon Brenda's decision not to marry ever, Susan claims that she has to marry in order to have

children: the patriarchal ideology, which is based on the traditional philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and the modern thinking of Descartes and Hegel, dictates the obligation of marriage for women under the pretext of their vulnerability.

3.1.2. Sexuality of the Female Body

Weldon portrays the opposite pole which causes the female characters to be identified either as domestic or sexual within the novel. Esther, as the one who achieves self-liberation after giving up her gender roles and bodily marginalization within the marriage, makes reference to the old days when she was blind to Alan's faults and his contempt. Esther states that she did lead a life of whole devotion to her family by exerting herself on domestic issues especially after the birth of her son, Peter. Under the influence of the legends concerning the divinity of motherhood, Esther believes that maternity requires her to negate her womanhood. Therefore, she unlearns her sexual desires and needs, and rather she dedicates herself to domestic issues and maternity. After giving birth to her son, Esther feels her body split: the sexual body of Esther has turned out to be a maternal body, and she believes that she has to choose either this or that. After she chooses motherhood as her role within the house, Esther loses her sexuality.

It is precisely "historical and moral element" which determines that a "wife" is among the necessities of a worker, that women rather than men do housework, and that capitalism is heir to a long tradition in which women do not inherit, in which women do not lead, and in which women do not talk to god (Rubin, 2011, p. 164).

Within the novel, the awareness of the body becomes the medium of power which dictates gendered roles on Esther by intentionally excluding her from freedom and agency and by obliging her to remain immanent. Since archaic times, the body, characterized as the marginal other and the anatomically constructed entity, has not corresponded to an outstanding ideal self. Accordingly, the generalizations based on her anatomy cause Esther to face somatophobia; her expression of her fear of the body in the form of binge eating is associated with her supposedly bodily existence that dooms her to isolation and exclusion. By the time she becomes a mother, Esther is forced to repress her sexuality with her son; thus, she attempts to efface it by covering her body with fat by binge eating. Therefore, "being a "true woman" is indispensable from being the Other" (Spelman, 1988, p. 61). Based on the philosophical judgments concerning

the female embodiment, women are associated with their bodies and with the bodily functions; and therefore, they are considered marginal and lack while men, as the active producers of knowledge, are capable of creating, solving, and managing through the reason they are coded with. At this juncture, the difference between sex and gender is defined as bidirectional: being biologically female on the one hand and being a woman through the dictates of culture and society on the other. “What she has to do to become a “true woman” is to be seen and to see herself as Other in contrast to the Self of the male, as inessential in contrast to the essential, as object in contrast to the subject” (p. 67). Esther, in this context, is taught to internalize her existence as marginal and inferior based on the discourse which teaches her to stay passive and even excluded because of her anatomical coding.

All these years of marriage, I could see, he had been laughing at me, playing with me, using me and my money, and caring nothing for me at all. When he smiled at me it was to hide the sneer of derision on his lips; when he touched me and embraced me it was the worst insult of all, because he had to steel himself to do it. I knew he did. Because he touched me to keep me quiet. He lusted after someone half my age, and half my size (p. 75).

At night after the ninth day of their diet, Esther and Alan lay on the either edge of the bed, and they talk about their dreams concerning foods. For the first time in years, they use long sentences. While imagining themselves eating their favorite foods, immediately, Alan’s mother becomes the point of discussion. He remembers her mother’s foods and her excellent domesticity. However, Esther criticizes the way Alan admires his mother’s perfection in terms of her private gender roles: “Men are very good at making faces over domestic details. They say nothing, but with the merest look they can drain all joy from any minimal sense of domestic achievement one may have painfully acquired” declares Esther (p. 94). Esther regards that men claim – without any knowledge – that they know everything even the issues concerning the domestic ones: they always have something to say. Although Alan claims that he does not compare Esther with her mother, his statements insult her because she knows that he expects Esther to be a perfect housewife like his mother. Because Esther has lost her sexuality or her drive for sexuality because of her role as a mother, Alan gives up hope of having sexual course with her any more. Accordingly, he begins to focus on her domestic roles concerning cooking and cleaning the house. Stating that he has an exhausting work in the office, he implies that cooking is the duty of his wife. Based on the Aristotelian and

Hegelian argument, Alan regards that Esther is supposed to accept her ethical destiny within the house by fulfilling her roles. Because he is the active producer in the public, it is his wife's duty to handle the domestic issues:

But in general terms, husbands get interested in other women, wives are supposed to be tactful and silent and not make scenes, and put on new corsets and get their hair done, and win their straying spouses back by patient loving endeavor. Now if I had a lover, would you try and win me back by behaving with restraint? Would you buy me roses and wash your feet and have your toenails manicured to please me better? Like hell you would! (p. 97).

Esther feels that her body is not inviting to Alan anymore; as a consequence of the metamorphosis in her body, Esther thinks that her sexuality does not appeal to Alan: "the more he fancied her the nastier he was to me. That's the way guilt takes him. He loads it onto me. He goads me into behaving badly so then he can consider himself justified" declares Esther (p. 60). It has always been women who are considered responsible for their husband's infidelity. Under the regulatory frame, woman is supposed to be careful with her size to monopolize man. In other saying, she is to preoccupy herself with the expectations of the society. In order to explain the immoral affair of Alan, Esther states that Alan "was hungry. A hungry man grabs what he can get" (p. 90). "But you were hungry, too" Phyllis reacts to Esther's statement; however, Esther is aware of the trap the patriarchal philosophy sets for her sex; in the case of a woman, being hungry for something does not mean that she could have anything she desires. By nature, she is supposed to keep herself aloof and her desires repressed.

In due course of the dinner with Esther, Alan, and Gerry, Phyllis mentions Gerry's new secretary. She intentionally wants to speak of her, through which she believes she could test Gerry and his reaction. Phyllis describes the new secretary that her husband has in his office as: "A luscious child, at least eighteen, and nubile for the last five years. Plump, biteable and ripe" (p. 28-29): Phyllis outlines the characteristics of the new secretary from a male perspective: she is highly attractive, young, and sexy. She defines her physical appearance as if she depicted an aftertaste of a fruit. Although she tries to put up a brave front, Phyllis knows that the secretary is a sort of threat for her marriage and thus for her existence. Then, Esther makes reference to Alan's new secretary whom he describes as "slim like a willow. But she has curves here and there" (p. 29). Such a detail that she hears from her husband about his secretary disturbs Esther. The metaphors used to describe the female body like a "willow" might be interpreted as a

direct reference to nature as the source of the female body. Upon commenting on the secretaries and the details that define them, Gerry claims that it is Phyllis who directs his attention to other women; because of her nonsensical remarks, he says, he thinks about the possibility of taking interest in other women: “Those are Phil’s lines, to be spoken in plaintive female whine and guaranteed to drive a man straight into a mistress’s arms” states Gerry (p. 30).

By the time Phyllis visits Alan to make sense of their problem, she makes a pass at Alan through complimenting him on being clever, handsome, and having control over everything she declares that she admires in a man. As a response, Alan also makes advances to Phyllis, which is the indication of his manhood: “You’re a proper feminine woman. I think the only one left in the entire world. You must excuse me. I feel weak [...] First it was lack of food, then it was lust, then it was literature, then it was Esther’s hysteria, then Susan’s neurotics” (p. 124). Because Phyllis is a type of woman who represents the ideal femininity in terms of her bodily stance, she is able to attract the attention of Alan so readily. Although she is quite awkward in domestic affairs such as cooking and cleaning the house, Phyllis is so practical in presenting her body and sexuality to Alan’s visual pleasure. Taking advantage of her problems with Gerry, Alan easily gets her into bed. While having sexual course, Phyllis questions the intention of Alan about her. Knowing how to manipulate her, Alan states:

You are gentle and docile and slim and pretty and neat, like a doll. You endure things. You don’t try to be anything, ever, except what you are. You have pretty little eyes that never see more than they should. You are not in the least clever and you never say anything devastating. I should have married you (p. 125).

Representing the ideal female image of the modern world, Susan, as well, presents her body for Alan’s pleasure. Although she knows that he is already married, Susan finds nothing wrong in this immoral relationship. While Esther dedicates herself to domesticity, Susan represents sexuality. Because she blindly believes and internalizes the patriarchal doctrines, and because she normalizes the condition in which the female body is just an object to be consumed by men, Susan insensitively blames Esther for Alan’s immoral affair with her:

I wanted to ask about his novel, but he seemed to want to keep it secret. He was so clever. Not just with words, but he loved painting, too. He used to be a painter before his wife got hold of him and destroyed him with boredom and responsibilities. Domesticity had him trapped (p. 40).

Susan tells about Alan to her roommate, Brenda; the reasons why she is advantageous than his wife. Through her expression it is interpreted that Susan uses her body as an instrument to attract the attention of Alan. While his wife deals with the household issues like cooking and presenting delicious foods for him, Susan makes use of her bodily power to tempt him into bed. She intentionally lets her body be the focus of attention; she voluntarily makes her body be the possession of Alan. When Brenda wonders how Esther feels, Susan replies sarcastically: “I don’t think she feels very much at all. Like fish feel no pain when you catch them. From what Alan says, her emotional extremities are primitive” (p. 18). Unfortunately, Susan defines herself as a sexual gift for Alan. Rather than feel an empathy with Esther as a woman, Susan does despise her sex through boasting for her sexual attractiveness and bodily drives over that of a married woman for whom the essential thing is her family. In other words, she allows Alan to conquer her body without any sense of emotion; she lets herself be consumed:

You lack substance. Men do tend to lack substance in women’s eyes. They are figments of lust, vague sources of despair. I think the least a man can do, in the circumstances, is to endeavor to exist well and truly in the flesh. I believe in you on account of you are so solid. It is the other way round with women. A woman has all too much substance in a man’s eyes at the best of times. That is why men like women to be slim. Her lack notice he need take of her. The more like a male she appears to be, the safer he feels (p. 66).

Manipulating the sexual drives of Alan, Susan uses her body as an instrument to tempt him. However, she is not aware of the fact that she indeed objectifies her body for the male consumption: “Susan came in with a tray of coffee and biscuits. She wore a very short white skirt and a skimpy gray jersey [...] Her eyesight was normal, but the glasses combined frailty of flesh with aggression of spirit, and he enjoyed them” (p. 41). Alan takes pleasures of the material which is presented to him by Susan herself. Because he is hungry as a result of the diet, he aims to satisfy his desires and needs through Susan’s flesh:

She was wearing a white ribbed jersey, which seemed too small for her, an abbreviated skirt, and a leather belt which hung around her hips. He thought it scarcely seemed suitable attire for a secretary in an advertising agency. It would never have been allowed in a permanent girl (p. 62-63).

Alan explains the reason why he is attracted to Susan; because she represents the female embodiment and corporeality he finds her appealing. In other words, Alan claims that woman lacks reality; she exists with her sense perceptions. This makes her weak and vulnerable as well as inviting and charming for the male gazer – because woman’s weakness satisfies masculine ego. Alan’s interest in Susan is based on her sexuality and her bodily attractiveness. Alan finds what he thinks Esther lacks in real life in Susan’s corporeality. Susan, on the other hand, internalizes the philosophy that obliges her to accept her embodiment and sexuality as the labels of her existence. Because she is imposed with the idea which privileges man as the active producer in public and business life while excluding woman as the emotional poor, Susan accepts her inferior and passive stance in the workplace. Therefore, she attempts to attract her boss’s attention through presenting her body to his disposal:

Anyway, there I was, working in this great throbbing organization, beginning to fancy my boss, and his wife would ring up every day and ask what he wanted for dinner [...]and why didn’t Alan’s wife ring up and ask him what did he want to do in bed that night, or something? [...] Here was I, young, clever and creative, with depths to plumb, able to take a constructive interest in what really interested him, sitting docile and waiting at his elbow, typing, and all he’d do was let his eyes stray to my legs and back again (p. 39-40).

Alan substitutes Susan’s body for his hunger for food. Because he is on a diet he dreams for delicious foods and fruits in his mind. Accordingly, he perceives Susan’s body as something that is free to be consumed. “You are a comforting delicious child, all peaches and cream. Your breasts are like melons, your breath is like honey, your hair is like – no, spun silk is inedible [...] I would rather make love to you than eat a dozen cream cakes” Alan tells Susan (p. 87). Because he is on a diet Alan initially tries to repress his hunger; yet, then he attempts to satisfy his hunger for food through the sexual body of Susan. Accordingly, the metaphor “eating” connotes the consumption of her body as a substitute for food. Unaware of the insult Alan directs against her personality, Susan receives what Alan tells her as a compliment. However, after letting her body be consumed several times by Alan, Susan discovers the fact that he never considers her a human being; she comes to realize that Alan perceives her merely as a body without any emotions or reason. Upon this discovery, Susan attacks Alan with her words: “You are crude. You are only interested in my body” (p. 85). However, Alan does not take her accusations seriously due to the fact that he takes his power from the society. By the time Susan realizes the fact that she has become an object for Alan’s

gaze and desires, she rejects the male hegemony on her body. Although she takes pleasure in her ability to tempt Alan initially, she faces the fact that her body rather than her personality is the driving force for Alan. “You see me not as a person, just as a woman. I want to be a person” Susan states (p. 86). The dichotomy between body and mind, woman and man is negated by Susan by the moment she challenges the normalization of the idea of being consumed by men. Soon after discovering the aim of Alan – to consume her body just like a birthday cake – Susan, once a seductive woman, accepts now that she has been trapped in the definitions of the ideal female beauty. Therefore, by the moment Alan states his wish for the sexual course with her, Susan attacks him verbally:

You credit me with no feelings at all. You see me as some kind of sexual vulture preying upon your flesh. You are very old-fashioned. You think that if a woman takes any kind of initiative she is cheap and worthless. In fact I have given up a great deal on your account, because I have faith in my own feelings and I am prepared to suffer for them – even your rejection of everything about me that isn't my body (p. 86).

Alan does express his misogynistic attitude at every turn; after consuming Susan's body as a substitute for his hunger, he never abstains from humiliating femaleness and femininity: “I think that women are determined to suffer at the hands of men. They will manipulate every situation in the world to ensure that they are in the right and the man is in the wrong” he remarks (p. 151). Just related to the philosophical definitions of “woman”, Alan disregards woman as a human and as an individual. Ignoring the reality, he regards that women always try to justify that they are right; however, he claims that men want nothing more than eating, sleeping, making love, and procreation. He states that he likes Susan just because he believes that Susan does not have the capacity to question and understand her victimization, and thus he thinks she does not suffer: “You pretend to for the sake of appearances, but you are more like a man at heart. You take your pleasures simply and your relationships lightly” regards Alan (p. 151). Such an expression reveals the expectations of the male world from women: they are supposed to be deaf and blind to the facts, and they are to live on the surface. “Why women always want things to be fair, I wonder. Nothing's fair. And I wasn't reproaching you, either. You have to be brave, mind you, to be a childless, husbandless woman. Women are only considered to exist through merit of their relationships” claims Alan (p. 153).

As Hegel claims, Alan regards that women are nothing without men and male protection. Within a patriarchal society, being a woman is a social phenomenon: woman's status, rights, freedom are all in the hands of the male authority. Just after realizing her own inferior status in the eyes of Alan, Susan attacks Alan verbally: "You see me not as a person, just as a woman. I want to be a person" (p. 86). Susan discovers the fact that Alan consumes her sense of self through possessing her body just for his sexual pleasure; he never respects for her personality. As a reaction, Alan reveals that "girls given to adulterous affairs must learn not to expect too much" (p. 86). Accordingly, he humiliates Susan based on the Platonic and Aristotelian perception of being a woman. He implies that she allows her body to be used as an object. As a consequence of his claim, Susan does realize the desperate condition of woman in general. "I keep having to batter away at their impregnability. It's a kind of compulsion. It never works. They still think I'm just a piece of decoration on a birthday cake, and get very angry if I so much as open my mouth to say anything except how marvelous they are" Susan states (p. 130). Under the influence of the archaic philosophy, Alan thinks that being a woman means being a body; woman has no opportunity to survive within patriarchal structures: "My painting makes me sick, too. It just makes matters worse. There is no point in it. It's just more of me, spreading into another dimension. If you're a woman you never win. Look at it. It's so bloody fucking personal! I don't know why I bother" Susan declares (p. 89). Deploring for her victimization and entrapment within the patriarchal definition of being a woman, Susan awakens to the reality that Alan, as a representative of the ancient philosophy, reduces her existence to her body because he considers her a lack. As a reaction to Susan, Alan tries to justify his act of consuming her body as a substitute for food: "I want food [...] I want pie and chips and ketchup, the kind of food we had when I was a little boy. I can't raise my sights above my stomach. I'm sorry. I know I should, but really I can't take anything seriously but food" Alan says (p. 154-155). Through revealing the story of Susan, Esther indeed explains the causes that lead her and many women to face somatophobia; their bodies turn out to be the enemies through which they are forced to accept defeat.

Laying her on the bed he turned her unclothed body this way and that, and pumped her limbs here and there, penetrating every likely orifice that offered itself to his view. He slapped and bit her, pulled her breasts and tore her hair. It afforded no pleasure at all, and she suffered a mounting sense of shock and outrage. This was not what she had meant when she embarked upon her career of cheerful sexual freedom (p. 155).

The sexual assault that Alan did commit on Susan exacerbates her. So far from apologizing to Susan for his misconduct, Alan states that her body is marvelous. When Susan asks about her identity rather than her body, Alan tells her that it is time she got married he went back to Esther. Upon the disappointment she experiences, Susan talks to Brenda about the issue: “It’s terrible to be used like a pound of butter [...] because that’s what he did. I won’t go into details [...] but he went all the way through the book of rules, bending me and him in every possible direction. What has love got to do with rules? Or position?” remarks Susan (p. 156). She feels insulted and consumed with regards to her body. She realizes that what Alan did her does not accord with real love; it is merely an invasion of her body by an outraged man who did externalize his hatred through exploiting her body: “It wasn’t anything to do with pleasure or with sex. It was just all his miserable rage and hatred coming out; he was humiliating me on purpose” (p. 156). She feels to be treated just like a whore; because she thinks that Alan voluntarily hurt her feelings through benefiting from her body and regarding it as an object to be used jauntily, Susan considers Alan a misogynist.

“Why should I have this feeling about a man I can’t even speak to? It is not the union of two minds. Could it be the union of two bodies? Susan, why did he give me two pound notes and not his telephone number” (p. 144-145). On the other hand, Brenda has a sexual course with the man she does not even know his name. She defends herself against Susan’s accusations of her vulnerable stance in terms of masculine language. She attempts to act as though she were a man and she wants to try to test the pleasure and satisfy her desires through the man. Without any emotional bond or any other knowledge concerning his personality, she gets into bed with him; however, Brenda soon learns that this world is masculine, the rules and personal benefits are on the side of man: when she wakes up, she finds him giving her two pounds in return for the night with her. In other words, he pays the price for her body and for the pleasure that he did get. Brenda feels as if she were a call-girl; her body has transformed into a material, and object that is programmed to fulfill the desires of a man: “he took two pound notes from his pocket, handed them to her, bowed politely, and left. Brenda went and had a bath. She felt too humiliated to so much as cry” (p. 115). Weldon achieves to display the morbid treatment that categorizes woman either as the one to marry or to string away; as a consequence of the roles attributed to woman with different qualifications, she is

coerced to hate her body, her identity, and the other women who represent the other side of the medallion:

Men have committed the greatest crime against women. Insidiously, violently, they have led them to hate women, to be their own enemies, to mobilize their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of their virile needs. They have made for women an antinarcissism! (Cixous; Cohen; Cohen, 1976, p. 878).

In a similar manner, Susan also accuses Esther of her husband's betrayal; she thinks that Esther is too domestic to satisfy Alan's desires. Unaware of her own betrayal, Susan tries to get rid of the feeling of guilt. However, by the time realizes the true nature of Alan and her indecency through making her body the focus of attention, Susan decides to visit Esther to apologize for her seductive plans on her husband. However, Esther, as an intelligent woman, outfaces Susan through her speech. When Susan cries out that Alan indeed wants Esther, not her, Esther declares:

He didn't have to want either of us, did he? He might have wanted the moon, or the Pope, or the Queen. I am afraid the intensity of your rivalry with me prevented you from noticing anything of the kind [...] It is not that I have vanquished you. It is that we have both been wounded in a battle which we should never have embarked upon (p. 174).

Esther summarizes the condition Susan and many other women put them into. Esther indicates that Alan's indecency is not related to Susan at all; she implies that Alan has a weak point: woman. Susan is just one of them for Alan. As an aware woman, Esther never allows Susan to overestimate her beauty and sexuality to attract Alan's attention. As a product of the society in which the female body is thought to bear an inviting meaning for the male satisfaction, Alan would have most probably been aroused by any woman if she had not turned him on:

My leaving Alan is nothing to do with you. You are welcome to him, I promise you. Anyone is. And probably are. When Alan embarked on his manic association with you, he was in a sad psychic state. You were a symptom, not a cause. A chicken-pox spot, if you like, but not the virus. You itched him, so he scratched. Now the spots have subsided, but the virus, I am afraid, remains (p. 173).

3.2. Interpretation of Somatophobia in the Popular Culture

Weldon reveals the somatophobic predisposition as the symptom of the eating disorders Esther does experience until she gains self-respect by returning to her own body. Weldon enables the heroine to tell her own story by reminiscing about the bodily

obsessions that Phyllis and Susan are subjected to in their own stories. Although Esther is portrayed as a subversive woman at the beginning of the novel, through the flashbacks she narrates, the reasons for her negative body image are understood. Besides the frivolous arguments Plato claims concerning the corporeality of the female body and the Cartesian dualism through which Descartes disregards the female body as flesh, Esther is almost forced to experience somatophobia as the direct effect of the pressure Alan applies on her body under the influence of the modernist definition of the female body as a hyper ideal through a slim image. Esther faces both anorexia nervosa and binge eating as the triggers of her body fear and also as the means of her liberation from her body hatred. In the first case, after giving birth and becoming a mother figure in the society, Esther loses her sexuality and becomes a fat woman as a consequence of her excessive eating habit. By the time she realizes that Alan might take interest in other women, Esther decides to lose weight and have the ideal image. In other words, Esther decides to discipline her body for the purpose of being accepted by the authority:

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constrains. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself (Bordo, 2003, p. 27).

Esther accepts her body to become a “colonized space” (Nelson, 2002, p. 37), which is organized and practiced for a certain shape and size. Accordingly, she learns how to adapt her body to the cultural norms through self-surveillance Foucault does use to define the power of feminine body practices in shaping and controlling their bodies.

3.2.1. Diet as a Disciplinary Force for the Body

“The diet” is itself a precarious, unstable, self-defeating state for a body to be in – a reality that the “disordered cognitions” of bulimics and anorectics are confronting all too clearly and painfully” (Bordo, 2003, p. 59). Based on the judgment that she does not appeal to Alan anymore because of her grand size, Esther decides to punish her body in the form of self-starvation under the name of a diet because she finds her body the guilty for Alan’s fancy for his secretary. In order to explain the process that causes her to experience first binge eating and subsequently to anorexia nervosa, Esther emphasizes the significance of eating and non-eating for the perception of the female body: “how food set the pattern of our days” (p. 21). Under the pretext of a healthy life; yet in reality under the influence of the disciplinary forces of the popular culture on the

female body perfection by reaching the ultimate thinness, Alan encourages her to go on a diet together in order to be healthy and fit. It is Alan who suggests the idea of going on a diet with Esther: “we are going on a diet, you and I. We are going to fight back middle-age. Hand in hand, with a stiff upper lip and an aching midriff, we are going to push back the enemy” he states (p. 32).

The real intention of Alan to go on a diet is based on his middle-age complex: he wants to look young and powerful for young women. Alan is aware of the fact that the surface appearance is the determinant feature for the relations. Thus, he decides to pay attention to his body with the purpose of attracting the attention of young women. In line with this aim, Alan becomes a part of the consumer system which attempts to involve individuals in the system via the manipulative devices. On the other hand, Susan regards that Alan is an ad-man whose soul she believes to be easily destroyed because the materialist understanding of the world even pushes men into despair as well. Despite the fact that capitalism undergirds the patriarchal expectations, even men who have a hand in advertising as a business are trapped within the system. Phyllis thinks that being an ad-man is not equal to being a poet: while the latter feeds the soul, the other exploits it.

Esther, on the other hand, with the object of being admirable by Alan, accepts to punish her body: “If you say so, darling [...] I’m all yours to command” she declares (p. 33). In a similar way with the Aristotelian dualism between master and slave, Esther acts as though she were a slave of her husband, and in order to save her marriage, she decides to go on a diet for the purpose of being approved and admired by Alan. Internalizing the ideology which forces her to discipline and contain her body for the purpose of correcting her faulty flesh, Esther claims her body as the guilty of her marginalization; therefore, she goes on a diet. “Body size is similar to other nondiscursive appearances (race or ethnicity, sex, and gender) in that it is noticeable prior to any word utterances” (Gailey, 2014, p. 8). Esther tries to fix her body in line with the expectations predetermined by the conventional philosophy. Forcing herself to the diet, Esther has difficulty because she is reluctant to lose weight or shape her body just for the sake of her husband’s desires. However, she commits to the diet to the best of her ability. Esther’s dieting as a necessity represents the norms that the modern world embraces and standardizes for women. “Male physical weight [is] in parallel with social weight, such as power, authority, and prestige, while woman’s form is described in terms of physical

attractiveness and docility” (Atayurt, 2011, p. 137). The ideology does not treat man and woman equally; while woman is supposed to be careful about her body size and shape, man is free from the regulations because fat represents power and authority for them: “the most proper penalty for a soldier who surrenders to save his body when he should be willing to die out of the courage of his soul, is for the soldier to be turned into a woman” (Tuana, 1994, p. 98). In this context, by the time Esther warns her son against eating too much, Peter rejects to force his body to be in a certain size and shape. “I’m sure I hope my children will be better than I. Because I am morally frail and weak-willed, this is no reason for you to be content to be the same” (p. 53). During her diet, Esther indeed criticizes herself and reflects her regret for neglecting her body. Peter does attack her parents in that he believes that they have lost their sense of existence. He reminds them of their past and of the togetherness of them in every respect, and he claims that marriage has turned them into passive individuals who have been lost within the private domain with the feeling of domestic comfort. Although Esther rejects her son’s such a harsh judgment on their lives, Peter is pushy in his argument. Upon Peter’s harsh criticism, Esther discovers the fact that she is not content with her condition. She remembers that eating did have a special meaning in their marriage: they used foods as a substitute for something they are hungry for:

Alan and I were accustomed to eating a great deal, of course. We all have cushions against reality: we all have to have our little treats to look forward to. With Gerry it’s looking forward to laying girls, and with you it’s looking forward to enduring it, and with Alan and me it’s eating food. So you can imagine how vulnerable a diet made us (p. 21).

Peter criticizes Esther for punishing herself through self-starvation; for him, Esther should not expect much from life: she already has a husband and a son, and the mere happiness should be within the house. Traditionally, the concept of a maternal woman is that of a plump and cheerful one. In our culture there is an overemphasis on the sexually attractive woman, who is conceived of as very slim, and a condemnation of the maternal type as being dowdy and even unfeminine. For some women this culturally induced dilemma between the two roles – motherhood and sexual attractiveness – may represent an insoluble problem (Bruch, 1973, p. 131). He insults her mother through his arguments that Esther as a middle-aged woman is not recognized whether she is slim or fat. Peter is the image of his father; therefore, he represents the patriarchal ideology through internalizing the roles that patriarchy attributes to men. His speech proves that

Peter indeed ignores her mother's emotions; just evaluating her as a mother, not as an individual who has desires and self-respect for her own body, both Peter and Alan disregard Esther's strive for the ideal physical measures:

Why don't you eat? No one cares whether you are fat or thin. Let's face it, you are out of the age group where it matters. You just be a nice cozy comfy mum and leave it at that! What more do you want? You've got a nice home and a good husband [...] and an easy life (p. 92).

Although she has lost weight and become slender in comparison to her previous size, Esther is not happy. In one sense, she could not appeal to her husband with her new appearance, and on the other hand, she is subjected to her son's criticism concerning the useless effort she exerts for losing weight despite her age. "I was getting thinner. I had lost eight pounds in just over a week. I was pleased with myself, but no one would allow me comfort. I was tormented" states Esther (p. 92). As a consequence of the pressure the popular culture imposes on her psyche, Esther feels obliged to attain to the ideal femininity through having a slender body; she believes that the diet would discipline her body in parallel with the expected female image.

Juliet, the cleaner, also criticizes Esther for punishing her body through the diet. Because her psychology seems to be negatively influenced and she has depressive indications, Juliet suggests that she give up her diet program; she states that Esther goes on a diet in order to become slim and thus to be admired by her husband; however, Alan perhaps would not like the new Esther. In this sense, Juliet believes that no matter what she does to attract the attention of her husband, it seems impossible to erase her image as a mother. Such an explanation proves that Esther has forgotten her femininity in terms of her desires for sexuality or self-care. For Juliet, it seems in vain to subvert her mother image with a sexy one via a slim body. Juliet's statement thus reveals that either fat or thin – despite her endeavor – there is a strong possibility that Alan would not be content with the outcome because of her maternal image. As though she were a toy at the hands of her husband, Esther struggles for her perfection; yet she never achieves acceptance:

I'll see you through a bit longer, because obviously you are not yourself. I think it is very foolish of you to ruin your health and your temper in this way, if you don't mind my saying so. Some of us are made fat and some of us are made thin, and that's all there is to it. You'll lose your husband if you carry on like this. He can't much fancy this glimpse of the Real You (p. 76).

3.2.2. Reification of the Body through Artificial Femininity

“The 1960s protests against the commodification of the female body were replaced by a constant fixation with ways to look desirable and attractive in the commercial culture of the 1980s, which “enslaved women by ludicrous beauty standards” (Atayurt, 2014, p. 42). In other words, the patriarchal ideology does intentionally mystify woman’s head for the purpose of diverting her attention from the ideals of the feminist movement which aims to achieve the liberty of the female body from the patriarchal aspirations to the body-obsession through the baloney pursuits invented by the consumer culture. “Body anxiety” which Esther is deliberately imposed upon targets her passivity through the instruments of the media which attempt to regulate her life. Weldon does picture the influence of the capitalist ideology and of the private ownership of the body in response through Phyllis. Giving in to her husband’s flirtatiousness, Phyllis still strives mightily for monopolizing Gerry through her body. With this design, she is absorbed in consumerism through buying care products, having cosmetic surgery, and paying extra attention to her face and clothes. Nonetheless, she is unable to realize the vexed issue which makes her existence troublesome; while trying to get hold of Gerry, her body and her soul are captured and consumed.

Michelson states that “we must try to achieve the impossible, for without physical beauty, finding love and acceptance is hopeless; without physical perfection, we are worthless” (O’Brien, 1984, p. 81). Capitalism teaches women to consume external and artificial products for the sake of their beauty and attractiveness while it teaches man to consume the body of woman which has become something they desire. “Susan was tall, and slim to the point of gauntness. She had straight very thick hair, enigmatic slanty green eyes, high cheekbones, a bold nose and an intelligent expression” (p. 17). Weldon portrays the bodily stance of Susan from the protagonist’s point of view: the visibility of a woman from the perspective of another woman. As far as Esther observes, Susan is appreciated with her figure in the mirror, which means that she is also pleased and normalized her bodily existence without any sense of genius which could help her take a firm stand in life. Transforming into a robot and standardizing “sylph-like figures of models as the ideal body image” (Abraham, 2008, p. 13), Susan seems to be ready for operating absolutely anything the cultural regulations require for her kind. “Brenda had long legs and they were, in truth, fairly massive around the thighs. But seen sideways on

she was almost as slim as Susan herself” (p. 18). Susan’s friend, Brenda, also represents the cultural values the capitalist ideology forces on woman. Internalizing the docile body of the modern societies, Susan lives to perfect her body in line with the expectations, and she attempts to control Brenda’s body as well; she criticizes Brenda’s heavy legs and advises her not wear trousers in order not to look unattractive. For Susan, being a woman requires her to be careful about her outward appearance; this is one of the differences between man and woman: if you are a woman, you should overexert to look feminine; otherwise, there would be no difference with a man.

Weldon criticizes the cultural ideology on the body construction through the body sociology which aims to stereotype the female body under the social meanings and judgments attributed to woman as a consequence of her assumed gender essentialism. Within the novel, the ideological ideals of the feminine beauty and body portion are portrayed through Esther’s friend. Phyllis shows ultimate attention to her outward appearance through disciplining her body via the instruments which make her a docile body. From her speech, it is understood that Phyllis does normalize the idea of the embodiment of the female body by the cultural mechanisms which cause her to experience either body-obsession or body-hatred. By the time she learns that Esther has abandoned her house, Phyllis comes to visit to console her. However, observing Esther’s enlarging body-size and insatiable appetite, Phyllis gets anxious and warns her against her non-ideal act of eating. Phyllis, as Esther describes, is “thirty-one and finely boned, beautifully dressed in a red tiny-flowered trouser suit with hat to match-neat, sexy and rich; invincibly lively and invincibly stupid” (p. 8). As an ideal figure of the popular culture, Phyllis features her bodily existence to the foreground; capitulating to the capitalist ideology, Phyllis does unconsciously accept to be consumed by consuming the body market. In other saying, Phyllis indigenizes the inferior stance of woman in the eyes of man, and in order to be able to comply with the standards she is at war with her body. Unaware of the everlasting war and struggle for the body, Phyllis attacks Esther because of her excessive eating habit regardless of the effect it would have on her body. Phyllis thinks that Esther needs help for her unsociable and reserved personality which is indeed the outcome of her fat body. Put it differently, for Phyllis, Esther’s locking herself in the house and non-stop eating signal her as an antisocial and even a sick individual. Under the influence of the cultural mechanisms, Phyllis manifests the

reductionist norms of the ideology which anesthetizes woman's mind while canalizing all her energy and power to her body. "I wish you'd stop eating, Esther, you'll be like a balloon" (p. 9) Phyllis states.

As the exact opposite to Esther in terms of surface appearance and personality, Phyllis represents the patriarchal order Esther does argue against. Under the influence of the social construct, Phyllis prioritizes her female body image and tries to associate her physical beauty with her survival. Phyllis represents the docile body which is ready to be manipulated, re-shaped and contained. Therefore, she internalizes the social norms and the cultural values by appropriating her body to the expectations. Bodies give implication about the position one has within a society. In this regard, woman is taught to be visible to the public eye only after perfecting it. Accordingly, Phyllis struggles for being visible through becoming the victim of the capitalist ideology which in fact serves for the patriarchal purposes. Embracing the definitions which indeed mischaracterize "womanliness" as being sexy and beautiful, Phyllis compels Esther to be careful with her outward appearance too. Because she thinks that Esther is inefficacious to step into action and seize power through her corporeal existence, Phyllis attempts to persuade Esther to see the doctor that helped her once:

I think you should see a doctor. It's not right to think like that. It's perfectly natural for women to be wives, and to look after husbands who are not really fit to look after themselves, and it was very unfair of you to try and stop him writing [...] No wonder he looked elsewhere (p. 101).

Because she realizes that she has considerable appetite after she "made herself a breakfast of porridge, from a tin, and evaporated milk, kipper from a plastic bag, already buttered, three Heinz tins called "Junior Bacon and Egg Breakfast," toast, butter, marmalade, and coffee, to strengthen her after her illness" (p. 115-116), Esther decides to see the doctor to learn her sense of sickness. The doctor states her fat body as the reason for her sickness, and when he asks whether she is pleased with her appetite, Esther responds in a defensive mode: "I prefer it to other things, like being hungry" (p. 116). The doctor increases the tension through his reaction; he recommends her to lose weight immediately, and he states that otherwise he could not help her. However, Esther is so insistent to stay fat and she defends her fat as a weapon against the doctor. When the doctor learns that Phyllis did recommend the doctor to Esther, he tries to understand why she is there then since he did perform surgery on Phyllis's breasts: "You came

because I am a cosmetic doctor and you are fat and you don't want to be fat, otherwise you would have chosen another doctor. You don't have to be fat" (p. 117). The doctor functions as an instrument of the ideology that dictate woman to have the ideal body portions through self-starvation and cosmetic surgery to correct the faulty parts of the body. "He was also a rude and impertinent young man. She understood why Phyllis had recommended him. He would play the domineering father to Phyllis's little girl" (p. 117). The doctor serves for the purpose of the capitalist ideology through attempting to manipulate Esther to shape and correct her body on the purpose of transforming it into a made-body: "Medicine has also objectified our bodies, bringing them under the surveillance of the medical system as objects to be manipulated and controlled" (Pylypa, 1998, p. 30). Esther, rejecting the panopticon eye of the doctor, reveals her true identity by disregarding the doctor's advice. However, the doctor is insistent on his argument that he tries to convince Esther to have plastic surgery to efface her defects: "If you are worrying about wrinkles, I can remove those, you know. I can tighten the eyelids. That makes a lot of difference. There is nothing to be ashamed of in a woman wanting to go on looking young and attractive" (p. 118). According to the doctor, a woman's happiness is based on her physical beauty, and by rejecting his help, the doctor claims, Esther would become a "self-destructive" woman (p. 118). Before leaving the doctor, Esther wanders around the pictures of women whose noses minified, faces lifted, and breasts enlarged. Then, she is curious about the reason why women do it to themselves; the doctor's response proves the very traditional perception of women: "To please men [...] All men, if they're in show-biz. One man, if they're not, like your friend Mrs. Frazer" (p. 119).

While Phyllis tries to make Esther acknowledge the condition she is in and convince her to return to her domestic sphere and be appropriate with the standard female image, Esther attacks her in an ironical way to criticize her vain attempt to use her femininity to hold Gerry in her hands: "I bet you put on lipstick for the great homecoming, too. And a fresh dress and comb your hair, and put on a welcome-home-darling smile, just like in the women's magazines" says Esther (p. 74). Now it is Esther's turn to criticize and make fun of Phyllis's way of making herself accepted by her husband. Esther is conscious of the fact that Phyllis accepts her husband despite his everlasting rascality;

therefore, she advises her to look more feminine in order to be able to keep him on a tight leash through wearing skirts rather than pants.

3.3. Psychological Core of Somatophobia

The appearance anxiety which causes women to experience eating disorders as an outcome of somatophobia is based on the biased perception of the female body within the cultural milieu. Because women are supposed to reflect the value of the culture they were born into, they are conditioned by the physical measures pre-determined by the masculine authority and imposed on their psyche with the very idea that they must conform to the established regulations in order to be approved and accepted by society. Slender body image is the expected outcome of the female masochism which coerces Esther to discipline and even to punish her body against fatness. Because society imposes the very idea that fatness connotes weakness of will and self-discipline, Esther's psyche is preoccupied with the probability of getting fat and thus losing control of her body. Having a fat body is interpreted as having an unattractive body which is not appropriate for the female existence. Weldon illustrates the relationship between the repressed female psychology and the somatophobic tendency the protagonist experiences. The author implies that women are brought up with the idea that they must struggle for achieving and keeping the ideal female form in order to exist within the system.

Women, fat or not, are taught from a young age about the importance of appearance [...] Thinness is equated with beauty and health, and for most it requires substantial effort, not to mention the unrelenting supervision and commentary from others when one is not thin (Gailey, 2014, p. 63-64).

The relationship between Esther and her mother during her childhood plays a significant role in her body perception; as a consequence of the troublesome attitude of her mother, Esther becomes obsessed with her body image and then faces somatophobia due to her huge body image. Beginning from childhood, girls are taught to be obsessed with the significance of having the ideal body image. In this regard, the relationship between mother and daughter has a drastic effect on the female psychology. Within the novel, Esther links her feeling of inadequacy due to her excessive weight with her childhood relationship with her mother; she states that when she was a child, her psyche was imposed with the idea of having a slender body. Because of her mother's insistence and pressure, Esther finds her body as the source of her problematic relationship with her mother: she believes that her mother does not love her just due to the fact that she is fat.

Unable to subvert the condition, Esther responds to her mother's imposition on her weight and indifference towards her feelings through eating; through hating her body; through taking revenge from her own body through becoming an enlarged body.

You're lying. People have been ashamed to be seen out with me as long as I can remember. I was a very dirty little girl. My mother used to tell me so. She's a very smart neat woman, as you know, and I, by comparison, overflowed. I seemed to have more surfaces than she, and every single one of them picked up dirt. While I was married to Alan I tried very hard to be clean. I dusted and swept and polished. I bathed every day, changed my clothes twice a day, bought new ones perpetually, had everything dry-cleaned. It is a very expensive business, being clean. I sewed on buttons, too. None of it was my true nature. In trying to be clean I contorted myself. This is what I am really like: I shall pretend no longer" (p. 71-72).

"Things better should come after things good – this is the whole of my discontent. Since the moment I first found myself in this nasty chilly world, things have gone from bad to worse" claims Esther (p. 118). As she states, during childhood girls associate or compare themselves with their mothers; and in this instance, Esther develops a sense of guilt and humiliation as a consequence of her mother's perfect image in her eyes. Her mother's solicitousness concerning her surface appearance does influence Esther's self-perception in a negative way: her mother's obsession with her body and her harsh criticism concerning her daughter's bodily stance lead Esther to react in a different way. Her struggle for looking smart and clean has a backlash since she transforms into a fat girl through consoling herself with eating. Irigaray states that "the substratum is the woman who reproduces the social order, who is made this order's infrastructure: the whole of our western culture is based upon the murder of the mother. The man-god-father killed the mother in order to take power" (qtd. in Bianchi, 1999, p. 141). Rather than resist the system which marginalizes the female body, Esther's mother attempts to produce a female body out of her daughter which she also expects to represent the ideal femininity. In other words, from the feminist perspective, as a woman, Esther's mother is supposed to obviate the patriarchal understanding of "woman" and "body"; however, she imposes the empty rhetoric of patriarchy she once suffered into her daughter's psyche:

I should never have been born. I should have lived forever in my mother's womb, where everything was dark and beautiful and timeless, and I had no dimensions, and no one could see me, or judge me, and all there was was existence. My mother put an end to it. She forced me out into the world, and I find it as hard to forgive her for this as she does me for fighting back on the way (p. 117-118).

From childhood, a girl observes the behavior and performances of her mother, and she does internalize the oppression and repression her mother is exposed to by the father figure. As a little girl she is instilled with the penis envy which causes her to accept the power of the male authority as the rule. In order not to experience the assumed lack, she is taught to submit to the father law, and thus to display her feminine codes. In other words, girls develop their gender identities through observing and imitating their mothers, and they become their mothers in the future inevitably. Brenda's mother criticizes the way Susan tries to capture men: she knows that Susan wants to get married; yet she thinks that it is not right to secure herself through sex and emancipation: "Women want to get married and have babies just as they always did. But your generation hasn't got the self-discipline ours had. My life with your father wasn't all roses, but I didn't complain. I stuck it out, and I was very sorry when he died" (p. 133). Brenda's mother represents the system which dictates the containment policy and the necessity for the discipline of women. She believes that women should be silent and chaste without any expectation from men. When Brenda opposes to her mother's idea, she calls her a rude girl whom no man would appreciate. "But, Mother, I don't much care what men think of me. No, don't look like that. I'm not a Lesbian, it's all right. I just think it's as important what I think of men as what they think of me" declares Brenda (p. 133).

What Brenda attempts to argue for is indeed the equality between man and woman; however, her mother does not have any sense of awareness of the oppression and victimization of her sex. By contrast, she normalizes the patriarchal worldview and wishes her daughter to internalize the idea that she must be under the protection of a savior man. By the time Brenda states that she is not a lesbian, her mother feels relieved: "I've told my mother I wasn't a Lesbian. That's the worst fate she could imagine for me. Why do old people feel so strongly about these things? (p. 147). Susan interprets that their mothers are afraid of their daughters' becoming lesbians because this possibility would make them think about their own possible lives. What would happen if they were lesbians? Mothers do not want their daughters to be lesbians; rather, they want them to have children and have a family unity just like they did. "I wonder why my mother thinks there's a dumpy little housefrau inside you trying to get out? I think it's more like a footballer" remarks Brenda to Susan (p. 147). For Brenda, Susan

sometimes reminds Brenda of a man because of her behavior and acts, and Susan in return, justifies Brenda's comment by accepting that she sometimes feels like a man.

Women have always tried to make themselves attractive to men, and you're not going to change a thing like that in a hurry. Look around you. All the women nicely groomed and attractive and good looking, and the men no better than fat slugs, for the most part, or skinny runts. Unshaved and smelly, as often as not. They get away with everything, men. They can do every disgusting thing they like and no one ever says a thing (p. 133).

The relationship between mother/daughter and son/mother reveals the reasons for the troubles they experience when they become adults. To illustrate, on the condition that the boy has strong ties with her mother during her childhood will probably withdraw from his wife since he regards his wife as a mother figure once she gives birth. In such conditions, woman concentrates all her hunger and wishes on her son as a female masochism. "All my life nobody has ever really appreciated me. All my life I have been used. My mother used me; she would dress me up in the same spirit as she dressed her poodle, in a little fur coat and red booties, and take me out for walks" Alan remarks (p. 148). Alan explains the source of his reductionist attitude towards Esther by revealing her subconscious: his troublesome relationship with his mother caused him to identify Esther with his mother especially after she gives birth.

None of my side of the family had brains. You got them from your father. And your body became overgrown in its attempt to keep up with your brain. Your father would stimulate you, that was the trouble. He encouraged you to think, when what you needed was the exact opposite (p. 159).

By the time Susan pays a visit to Peter with the aim of convincing him about her innocence in the affair with his father, she attempts to attract the attention of him through her surface appearance. On the other hand, trying to understand the reason behind her visit, Peter realizes her beauty: "Her long legs were crossed and she smoked a cigarette from a holder. Her nails were long and beautifully manicured" (p. 129). As a masculine heritage, Peter, despite his inexperience in life, pays ultimate attention to Susan's body. As a consequence of the phallogocentric worldview, Peter considers himself and his sex the signifier; because of his genital organ, Peter believes that his sex has the right to act in accordance with his desires, and he regards the female sex as the real blameworthy due to her signified stance in life as wicked, tempting, and femme fatale. Therefore, Peter thinks that his father is innocent since the one who seduced Alan is a woman. Accordingly, by the time he speaks to Esther to convince her to return home,

Peter almost charges Esther with caprice or waywardness: “I wish you would come home. [...] Just because I leave home, doesn’t mean you have to, too. It is very embarrassing explaining to people [...] how can you bear to live like this? It makes me think you must be depressed” (p. 167). For Peter, Esther cannot lead a happy life without the family unity that she can achieve with Alan; Peter indeed regards her mother’s condition as miserable unless she returns her domestic sphere. Brought up within the phallogocentric understanding of being a woman, Peter does ignore her mother’s suffering; as the symbol of the phallus, Peter claims that her mother, as the signified, as the lack, and the vulnerable, cannot lead a life without a male savior: Alan.

As a reaction to Peter’s unconcerned attitude and utterance based on phallogocentrism, Esther criticizes the discourse while revealing its real intendment: “I am a woman and so I am an animal. All women are animals. They have no control over themselves. They must have children – there is no merit in it, there is no cause for self-congratulation, it is blind instinct” (p. 184-185). In modern societies, the relationship between mother and son reveals the real nature of the psychoanalytic approach and its association with the patriarchal ideology. Although it is mother who brings up the child, she is unable to resist the discourse teaching boys to reflect the characteristics which are attributed to them as the norm. In this context, Esther realizes the fact that, like many other women, she is herself in charge of Peter’s pejorative arguments against her sex today, because she did bring up her son with the adjectives –strong, reasonable, and universal – she indeed made him the signifier of the woman within the patriarchal society.

Pregnancy, as a significant factor for the emergence of the somatophobic tendencies in Esther, is illustrated as the thing which influences her body perception and thus her psychology in a negative way. She realizes that her own pregnancy is one of the causes of her somatophobia: the weight she gained during her pregnancy and the feeling of being invaded leads her to get estranged to her body. In fact, Esther never cares for her body size; but, Alan who does not like her body during and after pregnancy. “There is no reason for a woman to have children if she doesn’t want to. But if your reason for not is the preservation of your figure for Gerry’s benefit then I shall, indeed, think the less of you for it” (p. 137). Esther questions the reason why Phyllis and Gerry do not have children; Esther’s intention is to understand the real cause of their not having children. Representing the perfect femininity through her body, Phyllis never thinks about having

a baby just because of the process her body would undergo during pregnancy and post-pregnancy. Because she regards pregnancy as frightening and the fetus as something which would possess her body, Phyllis believes that she does not have the desire and courage to sacrifice her body for a baby. Therefore, by the time Esther asks about her opinion, Phyllis responds: "I am not as young as all that. I am thirty. That's a terrible age to be [...] And as for breast-feeding, it fills me with horror, the very thought of it. I don't want to be like a cow, with a baby draining away my strength" (p. 164). Phyllis explains the reasons why she does not have a baby or has never thought of having a baby. She believes that during pregnancy her body would become the locus of another being, and after she gives birth, she thinks that she would have to breastfeed the baby which she considers a sucking thing for her own existence. By the time Esther offers bottles as an alternative feeding, Phyllis, under the influence of the traditional perception of maternity, never regards any other option as possible: "But that's not right. That's failure. Babies should be breast-fed. They force you to, in hospitals" Phyllis claims (p. 165).

The influence of the institutions that serve for and reinforce the status quo and thus the patriarchal demands even determine the way how women should feed their babies. Women do not have any right over their bodies. Through Phyllis, Esther gives background information concerning her own experience of somatophobia; she remembers her body during pregnancy and post-pregnancy: she cannot lose the weight she gained in pregnancy, and as a consequence of her maternal roles, she negates her sexuality, and never thinks about her bodily attractiveness. Therefore, she does face somatophobia in the form of flesh-loathing; accusing her body of her exclusion and otherness. Nonetheless, Esther is able to subvert the preconceived norms; for her, there are various alternatives and solutions that would prevent woman from perceiving her baby as a parasite and her body as a battleground. Rather, Esther negates the established truths the patriarchal ideology imposes upon the female psyche: "Any hospital is a place of myths and legends, and maternity one is worst of all" Esther speaks to Phyllis (p. 165). As a consequence of the rumors concerning maternity that she has heard especially in hospitals, Phyllis suffers from somatophobia due to the fact that she thinks that her body would never be the same again once she gets pregnant; pregnancy and

breastfeeding, she remarks, would give rise to bodily deterioration. Once she loses her control over her body, she believes, she would become nothing.

Ensnared by nature, the pregnant woman is plant and animal, a stock-pile of colloids, an incubator, an egg; she scares children proud of their young, straight bodies and makes young people titter contemptuously because she is a human being, a conscious and free individual, who has become life's passive instrument (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 495).

Susan as well has the somatophobic tendency as a result of her fear of pregnancy; at night she wakes up in distress thinking the possibility of someone in the room. After being certain that there is no one, she feels swollen and it becomes difficult for her to breathe. By the time she thinks about the possibility of her pregnancy, Susan begins to worry about “the moving mountain” image that William – her ex-boyfriend – once described his wife’s pregnant body as. Regarding pregnancy as a sort of disease that she believes to catch from someone else, Susan tries to calm herself down. “She wondered if perhaps women had a primitive group soul that linked them together. The pregnancy had been real enough; it had just turned out to be someone else’s, that was all. Sympathy with her sex [...] could go too far. She must struggle against it” Susan thinks (p. 115). The following extract represents Alan’s point of view that he utters for Susan; however, it also represents his general view of woman. In this direction, during their marriage, Esther accepts her inferior status and her mere function as giving birth and being a sexual object for her husband:

You coward. You prissy miss, with your curls and your sexy little suits. You’re an animal. You said to me once you were chained to your bed. Well, so you are. Because you’re a female animal, and your brain and your mind and all your fine feelings are no help to you at all. You’re just a female animal body, fit to bear children and then be thrown away. And if you don’t have children, you’ll be on the rubbish heap all the sooner (p. 185).

“The fear of pregnancy was not related to true sexual fears, but was rather a sexual symbol of a more primitive experience, namely the fear of being invaded by the object” (Bruch, 1973, p. 276). Susan believes that her body will change and she will lose her ideal feminine size if she is really pregnant. Especially after she discovers the fact that her body she adores is misused by Alan, she stakes a claims on her body as the thing that she owns. Susan entitles her pregnancy as “the unwanted gift” (p. 132):

She began to think she was immensely pregnant, and even when she moved her hands over her belly and found it flat as ever, she was not assured. The

feeling that there was a mountain beneath her breasts remained. The mountain, moreover, stirred and moved and heaved (p. 114).

Esther, during her marriage, represses the neurotic symptoms she has tendency to show. Based on the assumed roles she is supposed to perform within the family, Esther feels as though her body were a possession of her husband: she is to satisfy the sexual needs of him as well as her domestic responsibilities. Because Alan regards marriage as a sort of power through which he believes he has the right to claim her as his possession, Esther learns the ways to repress her emotions and power through eating: the only consolation she can act freely is eating. In other words, unable to subvert the system which privileges Alan, Esther accepts her status as an object to be owned by her husband. The pregnancy and the breastfeeding periods cause Esther to become estranged to her own body and sexuality. She finds no other way except normalizing her passive condition to adapt her body to the male desire and regard it as natural. The neurotic anxiety she has for her son and husband causes her to experience the inferiority complex. She thinks that her otherness is based on the fate that her body because her reproductive organ determines her as the lack. She is unable to balance between maternity and sexuality, and she abnegates her sexual needs and desires for the sake of her divine maternity, and thus she dedicates herself to eating as a symptom of her somatophobia.

The sign system, which is based on structuralism, excludes woman from the language. Within the phallogocentric discourse, man is the transcendental and woman is the immanence; thus, man has, woman lacks. Esther is aware of the fact that speech or words determine the truth. Therefore, she warns Phyllis against the threat of logocentrism against the female sex: "One has to be careful with words. Words turn probabilities into facts, and by sheer force of definition translate tendencies into habits" (p. 32). Esther implies that the patriarchal discourse establishes and determines knowledge in parallel with the ideology it argues for; on the condition that women maintain and internalize the assumed truths as facts, they also become the instruments of the system through living in line with the norms. By the time Phyllis disregards Esther's warning concerning the tricks the logocentric discourse plays on women through acts and words, Esther concludes that Phyllis has already normalized the ideology of masculinity, and she accepts her passive stance as "lack" in such a male hegemonic society: "You are incurable. You comfort yourself with words" Esther

claims (p. 92). Phyllis is the one who internalizes the logocentric discourse beyond question, and she never questions the authenticity of the assumed truth. Accordingly, by the time Phyllis attempts to convince Esther to return home despite the inexcusable affair of Alan, Esther, aware of Phyllis's blind acceptance of the male immorality suggests that she go home to serve for her husband instead: "Why aren't you at home warming Gerry's slippers, or sulking, or putting on a flimsy nightie to tempt him, or whatever you are accustomed to doing at this time of night?" (p. 89). The normalization of her inferiority and her masochistic tendency is based on many other factors such as economic and emotional dependence on man: under the strict rules of man, woman is conditioned to correct and perfect herself in parallel with the male regulations: "emotional dependence on men, and generally speaking, a development that is not autonomous but fashioned and molded by existing male ideologies" (Horney, 1967, p. 230). In this regard, gender and the relevant codes have significant influence on her: "We are creatures swaddled in culture from the moment we are designated one sex or the other, one race or another" (Bordo, 2003, p. 36).

The gender roles, the inferiority of women, and the repression and oppression of women are all the utterances of the patriarchal discourse: the rational mind of man speaks the irrationality of the female body. "I find there is something very erotic about literary men, don't you? [...] I might become a poet's wife. But poets, I find, are often rather dull. They are in the habit of expressing themselves through the written word, and not through their bodies" states Susan (p. 38). Susan is a type of woman who accepts the logocentric view of patriarchy; she accepts the power of speech. She states that Alan is writing a novel; however, he never shares the details about the work, and she seems to be influenced by the power of his speech and his other artistic skills. She believes that it is his wife that bothers him; due to the monotony their marriage causes, he feels, from Susan's perspective, obliged to be faithful to his family: "She drove him into advertising, and he ended up a kind of coordinator of words and pictures" Susan claims for Esther (p. 40). On the other hand, by the time she mentions his literary stance, Susan reveals the very fact that she is influenced not because it demonstrates his emotional capacity, but because it makes him sexier and erotic. Weldon criticizes the logocentric discourse which adopts speech as the language and undergirds the dichotomy between man and woman in terms of the signifier and the signified. Because woman is regarded

as lack of mental faculties, she is coerced to keep herself aloof from writing besides many other skills. Esther declares that she regards Alan's writing a novel with disfavor. "That's another of the rules of marriage. Husbands can snub wives, but wives aren't allowed to indulge themselves in artistic endeavors: wives can only do so in secret, when husbands are out of the house. Wives are a miserable lot. I shall never be a wife again" (p. 101). As Cixous states in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, women perform writing hidden as if it were the guilt that must be abstained from:

because it was in secret, and because you punished yourself for writing, because you didn't go all the way; or because you wrote, irresistibly, as when we would masturbate in secret, not to go further [...] we go and make ourselves feel guilty – so as to be forgiven; or to forget, to bury it until the next time (1976, p. 877).

In line with the structural-logocentric viewpoint, the phallogocentric understanding of being a man and becoming a woman is criticized by Weldon. By the time Esther questions Alan about her new secretary, Alan speaks in a sense to reveal the real nature of men. Alan tries to defend himself against the accusations, he believes, Esther directs to him. Based on the phallogocentric understanding, Alan disregards the women in his life and their existence; because he represents the phallus, both Esther and Susan are lack. He states that he does not even remember the name of the secretary; however, he knows well about the body lines she has. For Alan, the name of a woman is a trifle detail; because she does not exist in the discourse, the private name of a woman does not have any meaning either as she is signified by a male authority. Worse still, he regards that she is not appropriate for a position as a secretary; he implies that the secretary with an ideal feminine features should have a different position. While describing Susan, Alan states that she never pays attention to small details that he is concerned with. In this regard, he implies that Susan is beautiful and sexy; yet, she is not good at performing her gender roles like serving his boss. Alan tries to give the message of his priorities in marriage; as a gender conforming wife, Esther knows her duties and roles, and the things which make her husband pleased:

To tell you the truth, I can't even remember her name. It is entirely forgettable. I think it is Susan. She can't type to save herself. She is thin [...] I think she thinks she is not a typist by nature, but something far more mysterious and significant, but this is a normal delusion [...] She is in, I imagine, her early twenties. She keeps forgetting that I like plain chocolate biscuits, and dislike milk chocolate biscuits. Now you, Esther, never make mistakes like that. You have a clear notion of what is important in life. Namely money, comfort, food, order and stability (p. 30).

3.4. Postmodern Feminist Perception of Femininity

“Fat presents an apparent paradox because it is visible and dissected publicly; in this respect, it is hypervisible. Fat is also marginalized and erased; in this respect, it is hyperinvisible” (Gailey, 2014, p. 7). Awakening to the anesthesia that has been metaphorically applied to her through the values like marriage, family, and home, Esther rejects her enslavement within her body; she negates the values that make her enemy to her own body. “Esther’s increasing size is another challenge to Alan’s power and represents a challenge to socially prescribed gender roles” (Reisman, 2018, p. 14). In other saying, her recovery from her somatophobia is recognized concurrently with her denial of her roles and the rules imposed upon her: “I live by myself. Just me. Self-sufficient, wanting no one, no other mind, no other body. I live with the truth. I need no protection from it!” (p. 34). After learning the infidelity of her husband, Esther decides to liberate her body from the constraints of the ideological assumptions. In other words, Esther accepts her body with its size “regardless of what others might think of her, she has renegotiated her relationship with herself (body image and identity) and with others” (Gailey, 2014, p. 36). Ignoring the medical standards which would probably define her overweight or obese, Esther interprets her act of eating as a psychological rebel. Rather than consent to her husband’s infidelity, Esther does abandon the house as a reaction to the system which attempts to imprison her within the private realm as a passive entity. Esther’s act of leaving the house and giving up the diet is an indication of her power against the patriarchal order; she rejects being under the sovereignty of a man who never cares about her feelings and thoughts but her physical appearance.

This is the only proper holiday, she thought, that I have had for years, and then she thought, but this is not a holiday, this is my life until I die: and then she would eat a biscuit, or make a piece of toast, and melt some ready sliced cheese on top of it, remembering vaguely that the act of cooking had been almost as absorbing as the act of eating (p. 8).

Esther regards her loneliness in a new flat as a sort of holiday she has felt the absence for years. She believes that she would turn this “holiday” into a life style through negating the norms which dictate the gender roles she is supposed to fulfill. Regardless of the responsibilities, being alone symbolizes a new beginning and a new experience for her. The “house” she leaves is thus interpreted as the private prison which allows no freedom for Esther; the responsibilities for the family members – cooking, cleaning, and ironing – shades into torture for Esther. Cooking for the other members of the family

and dealing with the household issues make her alienated to her real self/body. Now, she discovers that domesticity is the thing that dominated her life. Rather than depend on anybody as a companion, Esther does enjoy her loneliness and freedom through eating and drinking: “she would wake, and get up, and make herself a cup of cocoa and eat a piece of chocolate cake, eating in the silence and privacy of the night” (p. 7). In this regard, “her rampant food consumption” (Reisman, 2018, p. 15) is indeed a sort of proof for her power over Alan because the “gluttonous Esther” (2018, p. 14) represents the counterpart of Eve. She subverts the roles cast in for her as gender based on her sex; through eating Esther declares her sexual and mental power. There is nobody to disturb or henpeck her eating habit; she is the only one to have domination over her own body/self. Through leaving the house Esther rejects all the values that define her as a woman. During her marriage, Esther forces her super ego to dominate herself because of the anxiety she did have about what others would say; however, after casting her responsibilities aside, Esther turns to her ego as the main drive for her subjectivity and selfhood. Discharging herself from the responsibilities which are assigned to her under the pretext of gender, Esther indulges in reading science fiction novels, watching television, and eating, drinking, and eating whole day:

She ate frozen chips and peas and hamburgers, and sliced bread with bought jam and fish paste, and baked beans and instant puddings, and tinned porridge and tinned suet pudding, and cakes and biscuits from packets. She drank sweet coffee, sweet tea, sweet cocoa and sweet sherry (p. 8).

As a reaction to the traditional view concerning women, some feminists deny the indispensability of home and family as values because home and house echo the imprisonment of women with the purpose of nourishing and serving for the male masters. Freidan in *Feminine Mystique* criticizes such oppression and isolation that women are subjected to experience because of their gender roles within the domestic sphere, and she suggests that women should get out of the house in order to be able to reconstruct their personalities. In this context, Esther leaves her domestic security behind in order to liberate her body and soul from the prison. As Beauvoir predicates, “leaving the world of immanence and joining the men in the realm of transcendence” is the mere remedy for women to be regarded as humans (Spelman, 1988, p. 121). The core meaning Beauvoir suggests here is not to become women men desire us to be, rather, to exist as women men desire themselves to exist. The basement flat in which Esther lives after leaving her husband and son represents her own most space; there she

could make the most of her freedom. She does not have to give an account of herself or to care out the deeds that have been attributed to her by the self-proclaimed patriarchy. Esther overcomes her somatophobia by embracing her body as it is. In other saying, Esther learns to reunite with her body which was antagonized to her through adopting it as the thing that belongs merely to herself: “woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display – the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions” (Cixous; Cohen; Cohen, 1976, p. 350).

Weldon criticizes the modern societies which attempt to control and discipline women under the supposedly homogeneous and uniform framework. Rather than be a victim of the modernist understanding of woman, Esther achieves to deconstruct her own self-perception through realizing the power of her body. Marriage, as a strong instrument of the ideology, plays a significant role in enslaving the female body within domesticity. Esther, like many women, has respect for marriage which she considers the representation of unification and faithfulness. However, marriage, for Esther, turns out to be a sort of renunciation of existence, through which she is supposed to offer her body to the desires of her husband and to the demands of her baby like breast-feeding. After realizing her body fear as a result of her maternal duty and of the burden of being a woman under the name of marriage, Esther gives up her roles as a wife and a mother: “Marriage is too strong an institution for me [...] It is altogether too heavy and powerful” (p. 10). Marriage represents the values of modern thinking because as an institution marriage commodifies Esther within four walls and legitimates her enslavement as a mother and a wife. By the time Esther discharges her commitment to her husband and son, she indeed breaks the chains which have bounded her freedom. Thus, Esther acts against the limitations and against the dualistic approach that modernism idealizes:

she felt her marriage to be a single steady crushing weight, on top of which bore down the entire human edifice of city and state, learning and religion, commerce and law, pomp, passion and reproduction. Beneath this mighty structure the little needles of this feeling which flickered between Alan and her were dreadful in their implication. When she challenged her husband, she challenged the universe (p. 10).

When she negates her responsibilities for her son and husband, Esther in fact rejects the universal perception of being a woman as domestic and silent who accepts self-sacrifice as the necessity. For Esther, marriage turns out to be a burden on her shoulder, under which she thinks that she has been crushed. “Was I to die still polishing and dusting, washing and ironing, seeking to find in this way my fulfillment? Imprisoning Alan as well as myself in this structure of bricks and mortar we called our home?” Esther regards (p. 74). Among the domestic roles Esther is expected to practice, cooking is of great significance in that she believes that it is a matter of expressing her affection and love for the family members. In marriages, woman is considered the provider of food; rather than feed herself she is supposed to serve for the other members within the family. However, Esther learns the importance of returning to herself; she learns to feed her hunger, feed her soul, and feed her body through feeling and accepting it as it is. Accordingly, after leaving the house, Esther recovers her appetite; eating is now just for her own:

I know what to expect from one day to the next. I can control everything, and I can eat. I like eating. Were I attracted to men, or indeed attractive to them, I would perhaps find a similar pleasure in some form of sexual activity. But as it is, I just eat. When you eat, you get fat, and that’s all. There are no complications. But husbands, children – no. Phyllis, I am sorry. I am not strong enough for them (p. 10-11).

Esther has grown in maturity because she is aware of the reality that the physical appearance is merely a fiction conformed by patriarchy. The universally accepted truths are nothing more than the regulations legitimated by the ideology. Representing a stance against the hegemonic theory of the Enlightenment which privileges man over woman, and mind over body, Weldon presents her heroine as a woman who realizes the fact that the absolute truth which has been imposed upon her so far is nothing more than the stories made up by the power relations. According to Weldon, it is impossible to totalize the society under certain and pre-determined norms; by contrast, she argues that all the instruments which attempt to deactivate woman from mental faculties and from the public issues are indeed afraid of the subversive power woman would draw on man when required. In other words, Weldon claims that woman has the power to involve her mind and her body in her existence; she does not have to make a choice between becoming a masculine woman or a feminine woman: as opposed to the assumptions which regard woman as sexual, beautiful, and passive (true feminine), Weldon’s heroine

negates the norms attributed to her sex by acting against the rules. Through the novel, Weldon reveals the fact that Esther has the potential to exist both with her mind and body through discarding her body hatred or body obsession and through having peace with both of them.

There is a “suspended animation,” an impermanence of living the fat body. The act of living fat is itself an act of defiance, an eschewal of discursive modes of bodily being. Seemingly, the fat body exists as a deviant, perverse form of embodiment and, in order to be accorded personhood, is expected to engage in a continual process of transformation, of becoming and, indeed, unbecoming (Murray, 2005, p. 155).

As a family friend, Phyllis attempts to convince Esther to return home regardless of the oppression which her body and mind suffer. Phyllis exemplifies the typical female who acts and thinks within the borders of her body. Put it differently, she reflects the philosophical and cultural disposition she has been subjected to adopt; she unveils the ideal femininity through disregarding her identity for the male pleasure. Paying extra attention to keep her body size the ideal, Phyllis criticizes Esther’s appetite; rather than try to show empathy for Esther, Phyllis almost vindicates the existence of women as female bodies. When Esther suggests Phyllis eat with her while telling her the story, Phyllis rejects because she thinks that she has to be careful with her figure. However, Esther, as the opposed to the stereotype female understanding, reacts to Phyllis: “If I don’t care, why should you? I didn’t bring anything with me when I left. I don’t need clothes. I don’t want anyone to look at me; it’s their misfortune if they do. Are you ashamed to be seen out with me?” (p. 71). Rather than predicate on the anatomical facts for women’s oppression and victimization, Weldon believes that social factors are far more effective in women’s lives. Because the body signifies one’s social standing, being fat and being slim connote different meanings: Esther bears the negative associations of her “supersized” body, and thus she is forced to believe that she has physical deformity and thus an anomalous body. However, “sizeism” (Gailey, 2014, p. 42) is a paradoxical subject to deal with: on the one hand, fatness is thought to make women nonsexual and unfeminine, and hypersexual and feminine on the other hand. Esther, beyond the cultural ethos of the feminine beauty, discovers that body size and the relevant definitions of the female beauty is nothing short of reinforcing “hegemonic masculinity” and “emphasized femininity” (Ristanovik, 2002, p. 64).

I suppose you really do believe that your happiness is consequent upon your size? That an inch or two one way or the other would make you truly loved? Equating prettiness with sexuality, and sexuality with happiness? It is a very debased view of femininity you take, Phyllis (p. 11).

Esther never rejects her bodily existence; rather, she rejects the ultimatum which dictates woman and man to perceive her as a mere body. For this reason, while Phyllis forcing Esther to accept her desperation because of her fatness and of the relevant infidelity by Alan, Esther criticizes the stance of Phyllis as a woman. For Esther, Phyllis has normalized and even internalized the roles attributed to her; she has accepted her womanizer husband as he is under the excuse that he is a man:

What do you imagine Gerry is doing at this very minute? Let a vision come into your mind. I know what you see. You don't know what she looks like, all you know is she isn't you. perhaps she looks like me? Vaguely? He's just a vague shape too, isn't he? Your husband. You don't really believe he exists separately from you. At least I just eat food. You'd eat him, if you could. To incorporate him. That's a terrible way to be (p. 109).

Esther disapproves the way Phyllis attempts to transform herself: in order to be accepted and admired by her husband, Phyllis tries to discipline, shape, and control her body through unnatural ways. In other words, she accepts to be the artificial product of patriarchy that never appreciates her. "Breast augmentation has as its purpose only looks: to enhance a woman's presentation on stage or in magazine photos, to make her look more normal or sexy, to better fill out the look of her clothes" (Young, 2005, p. 91). Apart from criticizing Phyllis for her blind acceptance of her objectification, Esther does reprimand her for the doctor – who is indeed a cosmetic surgeon – she did advice to help her lose weight. Esther accuses Phyllis for letting her body be treated like an object and as something that can easily be metamorphosed for male approval:

You ought to be ashamed. It was a degrading thing to do. To allow your body to be tampered with by a man, for the gratification of a man, conforming to a wholly masculine notion of what a woman's body ought to be. That you, a decent woman, should offer yourself up as a martyr to the great bosom-and-ass mystique; should pander to the male attempt to relate not to the woman as a whole, but to portions of the female anatomy; should be so seduced by masculine values that you allow your breasts to be split open and stuffed with plastic! (p. 136-137).

Esther negates the idea which coerces woman to shape her body just for the male pleasure. For Esther, woman's body is not a common property which could be easily interpreted, changed, and controlled by someone else. She attacks Phyllis's act of having her breasts made larger to appeal to the male gaze: "They are, let me remind

you, mammary glands, milk producers, not male exciters” (p. 137). For Esther, to have such plastic surgeries make woman less of a woman. Blind to realities, Phyllis perseveringly vindicates her struggle for body perfection: “I don’t understand your attitude at all. I like to look nice. My clothes look better for a bit of bosom. And anyway you’re always saying how awful it is to be a woman” (p. 137). Phyllis cannot comprehend what Esther tries to tell her: For Phyllis, being a woman means being a body; the essential purpose of living for her is to use her body. She is not aware of the fact that she allows her body to be used and even consumed by men. Striving to explain the facts, Esther states:

Never! It is a fearful thing to be a woman in a man’s world accepting masculine values and aping masculinity. It would be perfectly acceptable being a woman if only men didn’t control the world. If only it were possible to gracefully and gratefully accept their seed to create their children, yet feel obliged neither to accept their standards nor their opinion of womankind, which is, let’s face it, conditioned by fear, resentment and natural feelings of inferiority (p. 137).

Esther presents a subversive stance by giving up the diet and recovering her appetite. She discovers the fact that it was her futile attempt to be accepted to Alan’s world through struggling for the ideal size; now she feels liberated because she recognizes her body as a subject, as an agent and not as an object to be presented for the male pleasure. “The trouble is, if I stop eating I feel even sicker than I do if I don’t stop eating” (p. 135). Gaining self-actualization, Esther now lives in parallel with her own desires and chooses eating rather than self-starvation: “I don’t feel hungry any more. I think your horrible doctor was right. I was sickening myself. Now I’m purged, and I’m better. Eat up, Phyllis, it will do you good” (p. 184). As Irigaray expresses, Esther “negates the negation” through worming her way out of the patriarchal definitions and philosophical perception of woman and the female body. She rejects the ideal feminine image and the gender roles attributed to her as necessity. Instead, Esther invents a language to express herself; binge eating becomes a new language through which Esther disregards the phallogocentric language of the modern discourse:

I am not mad. I know you want to think I am, but I’m not. I had a nervous breakdown fifteen years ago, from which I am quite recovered. At least I suppose it was a nervous breakdown. That’s what people said. It seems, in retrospect, more like a fit of sanity, from which happy state you and your doctors wrenched me, forcibly. By the time you’d drugged me and shocked me, I was in no state to do anything but go back to Alan. Why should one necessarily be mad, just because one prefers not to live with one’s husband? I am not mad now (p. 160).

Representing the marginal, the excluded, and the abnormal, madness is interpreted as the condition the ideology associates with woman. However, madness metaphorically stands for a challenge against the norms and dictations. By the time Esther explains her leave-taking of Alan, she makes it clear that this is not the first time she did it. “It was a willful sin against all those human organizations that stand between us and chaos, marriage being one of them” (p. 158). She states that her act of leaving Alan is regarded as a conscious misdeed against the system; however, she considers it a sort of threat or intimidation. She expresses that she left him at first just because she did have courage, resolution, and expectation from herself and from the world. She did know that through her act of leaving, she could teach Alan. She did have the power to recreate herself. However, this time she does it not with a shadow of hope for a future with Alan. Rather, she is awakened to the reality the system empowers through the institutions. She reacts against the ideology which embraces the oppression and repression of women through silencing and isolating their existence:

I left Alan once before [...] I did it because the state I was in seemed intolerable, not because I hoped for anything better. And yes, it is true that this time I have been conscious of a sin, not against Alan, but against the whole structure of society. It is a sin against Parent Teachers Associations and the Stock Exchange and the Town Hall and the Mental Welfare Association and the Law Courts – (p. 157-158).

Esther realizes that women act in vain to impress men with their bodily attraction; in other words, no matter how decisively women struggle for perfecting their bodies to monopolize men, men always ask more. Alan, to illustrate, attempts to find solace in Susan whom he perceives as sexy and beautiful, and he ignores Esther just because of her fat body. Esther implies that Alan, like many other men, is temperamental and he does not know his own mind; therefore, today he consumes Susan, tomorrow he would probably desire for someone else to satisfy his libido better. Thanks to her courage to challenge the universal ideals of the Enlightenment, Esther explains the essence of the commodification of the female body.

By the time Alan begs for Esther’s return home, Esther is decisive enough to resist his oppressive and degrading attitudes towards her. Challenging the patronizing manner of Alan, Esther expresses her thoughts that were once repressed. During her marriage, Esther is a woman who is torn between the social norms concerning her body and her gender roles. Nonetheless, she is able to break the chains which are fastened on her by

her husband as a representative of the male hegemony. Esther indeed protests against Cartesian dualism which celebrates man's reason and condemns woman's corporeal body. Realizing the fact that she has the same mental faculties with those of Alan, Esther does reproach Alan and the Enlightenment ideals he embraces beyond doubt:

I wish I had been born a man [...] Now you are being unpleasant. Men are always accusing women of being unfeminine, and at the same time making sure that the feminine state is as unendurable as possible. You leave your dirty socks around for me to pick up. And your dirty pants. It's my place to pick them up, because I'm a woman. And if I don't, you accuse me of being unfeminine. It's my place to clean up the coffee cup when you've ground out your cigarette. I am only fit to serve and to be used and to make your life pleasanter for you, in spite of such lip service as you may pay to equal rights for women. You may *know* that I am equal, with your reason, but you certainly don't feel that I am (p. 97-98).

As opposed to the popular belief that regards woman as a property of the male domain, Esther maintains a firm stance against the limited sphere of woman. She appeals to all women with the intention of inventing a new world which belongs to their sex and which is free from the bounds of the patriarchal definitions. The novel thus exemplifies the subversive stance of Esther through revealing her idea of being a woman:

Women should aspire to be as different as possible from them. You should wear a skirt as a matter of principle. There must be apartheid between the sexes. Men and women should unite for the purpose of rearing children. Any woman who struggles to be accepted in a man's world makes herself ridiculous. It is a world of folly, fantasy and self-indulgence, and it is not worth aspiring to. We must create our own world (p. 110).

Because modern societies internalize the male-centered standards, the female beauty is considered a commodity possessed by those who invented the patriarchal discourse: phallogentrism. Weldon gives Esther an opportunity to deconstruct the universal ideas which marginalize and entrap her identity. Esther rejects the authority, and in order to be able to achieve the subversion, she learns how to denaturalize and decenter her body: "You take everything [...] You take everything and you give me nothing. You take my life and you throw it away [...] I have nothing else to do but eat. What else have I got? You give me nothing. No love, no affection, no sex, nothing" declares Esther (p. 180). Having no notion of understanding Esther, Alan still attacks her rebellious attitude: "Take a look at yourself. You are disgusting. What do you expect? [...] What is it you want, Esther? Why can't you be satisfied? You've got a home, and a child, and security, and a husband who comes home every night. I support you" (p. 180-181).

You make me sick. You want to keep me in prison. I can't even go to bed when I want any more, because I hear your prissy little voice calling down the stairs like some teenager [...] "Oh Alan, Alan, beddy-byes." What sort of life do you think I have, sitting in a bloody office day after day, getting nowhere, doing nothing [...] This is the only life I'm going to have. I'll be dead soon. And you make me live like this. I was born a *man*, and now look at me. I am scarcely human any more. I tell you, the day I married you was the end of my life [...] It's not me, and it's your fault. I hate you. You've cheated me of my freedom, and my life. You've stolen it (p. 182).

Based on the postmodern feminist theory, Weldon offers compromise between the mind and the body of Esther. "A grotesque body can represent a refusal of orderliness and social control" (Pitts, 2003, p. 41). In order to discover her potential, Esther needs to turn to her body but in a very different way from the popular culture has established for her sex. "There is more dignity, if one is neither young nor beautiful, in simply giving up. Which is what, being middle-aged, I am finally allowed to do" (p. 58). As Atayurt states, through portraying Esther as a compulsive eater, "Weldon had challenged and trivialised the 'thin/sexy/demure' feminine image by making the fat woman smart, powerful and intelligent, thereby parodying cultural notions about woman should or should not be like" (2014, p. 39). Her body becomes a guide for her, and it enables Esther to understand the reality of the world. The important aspect that Weldon portrays in her novel is that she does not make Esther abdicate her body; by contrast, she accepts her body as it is regardless of the definitions and limitations set for it. Although Esther she still has the same huge body which seems to be away from the ideal female image, Alan begs for forgiven and for Esther's return home. It is Alan, not Esther, who recognizes that Esther's body is the subject of her own. Rather than be submissive to the rules and the norms of patriarchy, Esther achieves to get rid of her body hatred.

3.4.1. Subversive Aspect of Binge Eating

Based on the strong alliance between patriarchy and the popular culture, the author, through *The Fat Woman's Joke*, dramatizes a society which attempts to enslave women via the superficiality the consumer culture and the male hegemony direct them to internalize. Criticizing the Western assumption which associates woman with her body, Weldon presents an alternative response to the pejorative definition of womanhood. The society in which Esther lives privileges the surface appearance of woman over the mental capacity that she has and expects her to perfect her image through striving for a slender and a sexy body. In other saying, she is supposed to forget her mental capacity and the sufficiency for self-perception without artificial sources. However, within the

novel, the body becomes a medium of power through which Esther achieves to subvert the ideal image of femininity and resist the order which associates woman with the body. Not only does Esther break with the social imperatives which coerce her identity to adapt to the gender roles such as domestic duties and maternity, but she also challenges the bodily enslavement the popular culture obliges her to comply with. As a matter of fact, Esther achieves liberation from the maternal and domestic burdens through realizing the power of her body. “The abject (fat) body is subversive because it resists discipline. Such a body defies normativity in its appearance, practice, and stylization and fails to situate itself easily in dominant categories and roles” (Gailey, 2014, p. 79). Esther, as a sized woman, achieves self-fulfillment and self-realization through rejecting the roles which are already defined and measured for her sex.

Esther’s self-actualization eventuates after she discovers the burden her husband places on her shoulders under the name of duties and responsibilities such as domesticity, motherhood, and femininity (having a slim and a sexy body). However, the process which ends with self-realization is painful and traumatic for Esther. Before her rebellious act of excessive eating as a guard – because “the overeating serves as a defense against deeper depression” (Bruch, 1973, p. 127) –, Esther feels obliged to submit to her husband’s desires. Thinking Alan would take interest in other women because of her huge body, Esther does show somatophobic tendencies; in other words, fat-phobic assumptions cause her to have body-hatred. As the direct result of the cultural mandate, Esther perceives her body as disgusting and as the basic reason for her exclusion from the society: “Fat bodies, at least in contemporary Western culture, confer a low status in the social hierarchy because of the tremendous stigma associated with fatness” (Gailey, 2014, p. 19). The body fear that Esther suffers from crystallizes by the time she learns her husband’s sympathy with his secretary and his perception of Esther’s body as “just a little too fat” (p. 29). She feels disturbed with the possibility that Susan would substitute her; accordingly; she compares herself with Susan and finds herself unattractive because of her middle age and fat body. Wishing Alan to prove the contrary, Esther sounds him out about the young lady: “This Susan seems to be quite your confidante” (p. 50); yet, she does not receive the response which would eradicate her prejudices. Motherhood, the burdens of domesticity, and her fat body make her estranged to her identity, and with the growing age, Esther considers it impossible to

turn back the time. Because she dedicates her whole life to her son and husband, she forgets self-care; she neglects her real self. Her husband has an affair with a young woman, and Esther believes that nothing but beauty and youth are satisfactory for her husband to pursue an indiscreet affair: “There is only one virtue these days, and that is to be young. Everything is forgiven to the young – even fatness, and that is saying something. And I am no longer young. Nothing will be forgiven me. All I can hope is not to be noticed any more” (p. 57).

One of the terrible things about marriage is the dread of change that goes with it [...] Any change, and you begin to worry. Either Alan wanted me to be thin because he was fancying his secretary, or he wanted me to be thin because he was ashamed of me the way I was. Either way, he wanted me to be different from what I was, and this to me seemed the most devastating insult (p. 58).

Esther becomes obsessed with her body size and finds her body responsible for her husband’s indecency as though she were the guilty: “You don’t find me attractive any more. You’re ashamed to be seen out with me because I’m fat and horrible, and you think people will be sorry for you because you’re married to me” (p. 52). The psychological oppression Esther feels leads her to regard herself inferior and ugly in terms of her physical appearance. “The concern with visible appearance has hegemonized any real understanding of health and the integration of mental and physical well-being” (Coward, 1984, p. 23). Considering Susan a threat, Esther begins to hate her sized body, and in order to be able to gain Alan back, she resolves to go on a diet as a form of self-punishment. In fact, it is Alan who suggests the idea of going on a diet together with the excuse of a healthy life. However, Esther realizes the real intention of her husband later: he wants to look young and fit for younger women, and he also wants to shape Esther as if she were an object possessed by him. He attempts to make her look slim and sexy because he is aware of the fact that he has lost all his attention to her due to her fat body she has transformed into after pregnancy.

Within the novel, Esther does experience binge eating in different forms: first as the cause of her somatophobia and later as the solution to her body perception. Before her conscious act of excessive eating, Esther suffers from somatophobia in the form of rejecting her body through eating much. Esther is shocked to witness how her stomach contains so much; even while telling her story she is obsessed with eating too much. Trying to overcome her stomach, Esther immediately realizes her image in the mirror;

she examines her naked body and stares “at the rolls of fat which swathed her body like a sari” (p. 113). In modern cultures, binge eating unfolds as the uncontrollable excessive eating and evokes the feeling of guilt and hatred of the self soon after the consumption of food. Like anorexia nervosa, binge eating is based mostly on the psychological problems such as depression and neurotic anxiety. In modern cultures, binge eating or compulsive eating is the condition that pushes woman into a desperate and isolated existence. Because fat represents “expendable female filth, virtually cancerous matter, an inert or treacherous infiltration into the body of nauseating bulk waste” (Wolf, 2002, p. 191), Esther’s psyche is imposed upon with the assumed ideal female image. In other saying, the more the media and the cultural stimuli and the social pressures on slender body image are reinforced, the more she attempts to cope with her body-hatred through compulsive eating. Her inability to control her body weight stimulates her desire for eating. Because the notion of the female beauty is standardized in the form of slender and muscled, both the fat-phobic and the glutton have sense of insufficiency and anxiety concerning their bodies and they attempt to control their bodies to the full extent of their power.

Stupidly, unconsciously, dominated by appetite, he continually misrepresents my “spirit’s motive,” my finer, clearer self; like an image-maker from the darkness of Plato’s cave, he casts a false image of me before the world, a swollen, stupid caricature of my “inner” being (Bordo, 2003, p. 3).

As a consequence of the persistent emphasis on the ideal female body image as slim, Esther responds to the system oddly enough: she develops coping mechanisms against her environment that attacks her body as overweight and thus ugly and asexual: her psychic repression is reversed through the excessive eating habit of Esther. After she realizes the game played on her by her husband, Esther begins to live alone; she goes out only for buying food and science fiction books; psychologically, science fiction books burden her memory and moves her away from real problems; through books she could think about the possible worlds. Food, on the other hand, substitutes for something that is absent in her life; either material or spiritual, she suffers from hunger which she attempts to replace with eating: “When the cupboards were full of food she felt pleased. When her stocks ran low she became uneasy” (p. 8).

The compulsive eater regards her body as something she cannot prevent from excessive eating. As a consequence of the growing anxiety concerning her body size, Esther

decides to go on a diet with her husband in order to be accepted and desired by Alan as she knows that her appetite is based on her “neurotic need for food” (Bruch, 1973, p. 127). Among the eating disorders, anorexia nervosa is characterized by the sickness of societies in which female slenderness is regarded as the ideal and standard a woman should achieve. The perceptual disorder behind anorexia is that women who suffer from this sickness become wholly absorbed in the idea that they have heavy and big bodies which pose an obstacle for them to meet the functional requirements of their bodies. Therefore, they believe that the sole remedy to gain self-control and qualification is through losing weight and getting feminine body lines. According to Bordo, anorexia nervosa “is an effort to make the body speak; it is a profoundly embodied understanding of what the culture demands of women” (qtd. in Disch and Hawkesworth, 2016, p. 220). That is, the anorectic does maintain the metaphysical Western definition of being a woman and the body which coerces her to dispense with her own appetite for the sake of meeting the needs of others, meanwhile preserving self-control to be able to be accepted to the male domain. “The female body has constructed a whole regime of representations which can only result in women having a punishing and self-hating relationship with their bodies” (Coward 43). Therefore, Esther defends her intention of losing weight by the time Juliet, the cleaner, warns her against anorexia nervosa that would cause her to lose first her appetite and her life in the end: “This is a very well-tried diet, and very sensible. One should be able to control one’s size, if one is going to control one’s life” (p. 48).

Metaphorically, the diet represents a sort of solution for her in the beginning; through the diet she believes she could lose weight and she could reawaken Alan’s interest. Put it differently, Esther is not troubled with her size on her behalf; rather, she is forced to deal with her bodily image for the sake of her husband’s satisfaction. However, going on a diet with the body she hates is painful for Esther: “Day One of the Diet was a horrible day for me; although no doubt it was a delight to my husband” (p. 46-47). Perceiving Susan as a sort of delicious food and her scent as nourishing, Alan, on the other hand, appeases his hunger through a female body, and as an excuse for his unfaithfulness, Alan attempts to find Esther’s fat body as a pretext for his infidelity. Put it differently, Alan, under the pressure of self-starvation, finds solace in another woman whom he perceives as something to be consumed. Because the traditional and modern

philosophies impose the idea that woman exists just with her body, she is to present it in accordance with the standards: slim, fit, and sexy. Thus, Esther's fat body is a sort of imperfection for Alan, and therefore, he makes up an excuse for his infidelity. Just because he wants to reach his ambition of looking young and attractive for younger women, he claims the diet as the responsible factor for his sliding hands over Susan's breasts: "Do you know what I had for breakfast? Two boiled eggs and some black coffee. Do you know what I shall have for lunch? Two boiled eggs and a grapefruit [...]. I am only explaining that I am light-headed and cannot be held responsible for my actions" (p. 44). Having difficulty in adapting her mind and body to the diet, Esther begins to see the realities behind the diet and her body-hatred. With the idea that she would regain her husband's attention to her through losing weight, she tries to forget the crotchety thoughts in her mind; yet, she feels that losing weight or looking slender through punishing her body for her husband does not make the matters better: "'anorexia' is a misnomer. Afflicted persons don't suffer from a loss of appetite. Instead, they have a bizarre preoccupation with eating – coupled with an obsessive desire to attain pencil-like thinness through restricted food intake and rigorous exercise" (Bordo, 2003, p. 55). Esther comes to recognize that her bodily transformation would not be the solution but a sort of destruction of her identity: "Better in my mind but sicker in my body" (p. 136). Despite the fact that she begins to lose weight, the diet does not meet the expectations of Esther in that she realizes that the image she is expected to turn into is not something she wants to be like; the slender body is merely a concept invented by cultural mechanisms:

One of the strange things about not eating is how clearly you begin to see things. By the end of the week I could see myself very clearly indeed, and it was not comfortable. My home was not comfortable, either. It seemed a cold and chilly place, and I could see no point in the objects that filled it, that had to be eternally dusted and polished and cared for. Why? They were not human. They had no importance other than their appearance. They were bargains, true [...]. Running a house is not a sensible occupation for a grown woman. Dusting and sweeping, cooking and washing up – it is work for the sake of work, an eternal circle which lasts from the day you get married until the day you die, or are put into an old folk's home because you are too feeble to pick up some man's socks and put them away any more. For whose sake did I do it? Not my own, certainly (p. 73).

Day by day Esther approaches the truth that did withdraw her from her own body. Despite the fact that she begins to go on a diet on the purpose of disciplining her body in parallel with patriarchal desires, Esther discovers that her body belongs to herself,

and it is her to choose how to look. Upon this enlightenment, Esther feels more secure and self-sufficient:

Big women can be extremely imposing. A large woman who is not apologizing for her size is certainly not a figure to invite the dominant meanings which our culture attaches to femininity. She is impressive in ways that our culture's notion of the feminine cannot tolerate (Coward, 1984, p. 41).

The incessant eating habit of Esther and the excessive fat body image she consciously transforms her body into symbolize her acquired power over the system; her fat body does not have anything to do with the patriarchal pretensions of the ideal female image. Rather than be submissive to the male authority through self-starvation, Esther resolves to be her true self. She rejects the norms which pre-defined her role in her very own life. As Nietzsche claims, for Esther, her body becomes an active agent which sustains her personality. During her marriage, Esther lacks the sense of will to power; however, after leaving her husband and her son behind her, she recovers her body from the bounds of patriarchal definitions, and she reestablishes the truth through deconstructing the relationship between the assumed power and knowledge. Esther's compulsory eating should not be confused or compared with the clinical binge eating problem that many women experience in modern cultures. In the popular culture, binge eating is regarded as an unconscious consumption of food without any sense of power to control her appetite; however, for Esther, compulsive eating takes the form of an intentional reaction against the rules and regulations predetermined for her. Esther purposefully denies self-control and proves her purposeful act of resistance to the authority which attempts to exploit her identity through disciplining and containing her body. "I feel hungry. I am all stirred up inside. I feel the way I did when I was eighteen. I don't know what I want, but it's not this. I don't want to be this person, I don't want to be trapped in this body, in this house, in this marriage" (p. 99). Esther does not let the others take control over her body; therefore, she maintains her excessive eating. She seems to be out of control because of her appetite; however, she consciously and purposefully controls her body through eating much. Her act might be interpreted as a sort of gaining power: "My world is so small. My body is shriveling. Perhaps that's why I need to be fat" (p. 139).

CHAPTER IV

GREEN'S *JEMIMA J.*

Body is always responded to in a particularized fashion, that is, as a woman's body, a Latina's body, a mother's body, a daughter's body, a friend's body, an attractive body, an aging body
(Weiss, p. 1).

The British author, Jane Green, is known by her reputation as a writer of women's fiction. As a modern writer, she has already put pen to paper many novels which have been translated into various languages. Green has acquired fame as an international bestseller and as a chick lit author of the contemporary period, and she has been still writing for some magazines and newspapers in England. Choosing her characters from the real life, Green is able to present real-like situations and events. She expresses her aim to write novels: "I think what I'm trying to portray in all of my characters is the human condition, that we're all flawed, that we all make mistakes and we all screw up [...] What I aspire is to show people a slice of the human nature in a way that will make them understand" (Stephens, 2014). In order to portray real human nature, in her novels Green deals with her heroines' search for identity, women's condition in marriage, family life, and the social values that determine stance of women in public and private realms.

Jemima J., as the first novel of Green, tells the story of a young woman, Jemima, who works as a newspaper reporter at a company. The author portrays Jemima as an overweight who substitutes eating for her emotional hunger. Because of her huge body, Jemima isolates herself from social surroundings and believes that people do not want to be seen with her due to the heavy body image she presents. Although she is in love with Ben, who is portrayed as a handsome career man working in the same company with her, Jemima is unable to express her emotions since she thinks that he would never consider her a match because of her surface appearance. Furthermore, Jemima feels marginalized in the company just because of her bodily stance. When she compares her condition with that of Geraldine, who is her coworker at the company, Jemima feels

inferior and thus suffers from somatophobia. Because she is not a presentable woman, Jemima cannot get the promotion and the salary she deserves. Her body fear and hatred worsen after Jemima observes her roommates and their bodily existence. She considers her body the guilty and the source of her victimization; the more she accuses her body of her loneliness and the inferiority complex she suffers from, the more she eats as a consolation. As a sort of innovation, the company offers internet courses to the personnel, and after becoming familiar with the internet, Jemima begins to have online relationship with Brad. As the representation of the media world, the internet makes her feel the freedom of portraying herself as the one she has ever dreamed of. By the time Brad invites her to Los Angeles, out of her anxiety for the lies she has told about her body size, Jemima decides to lose weight and become the ideal woman to meet the standards. However, in the process of achieving the ideal body size, Jemima becomes an anorectic, and despite the considerable amount of weight she loses, she does not notice the change in her body. By the time she is convinced to realize the metamorphosis that her body has undergone, Jemima travels to Los Angeles; during her stay in there, Jemima comes to realize that something is wrong. The novel reaches the climax by the time Jemima finds some magazines belonging to Brad. The development of a real identity takes shape soon after she learns that Brad shows interest to fat women and he is in fact in love with his heavy assistant, Jenny. This confession awakens Jemima to her own realities and values. Either as a fat or as a thin woman, Jemima gets rid of her somatophobic disorders and learns how to be content with her own body.

4.1. Philosophical Background of Somatophobia

By virtue of the traditional attitude towards women, modern epistemology, along with the division between the sexes, does maintain the biased behavior against the gender issue, which forces individuals to behave in a certain way, and thus, reveals that masculine and feminine do correspond to male and female bodies that are biologically determined. Put it differently, gendered codes are determined as a direct result of the anatomical differences between the sexes. In this regard, gender identities are imagined, constructed, and standardized on the purpose of reducing the agency of woman in private and public fronts. Ultimately, the polarity between masculine and feminine is normalized within figurative determinants. Because she is supposed to fulfill her femininity through making her body the object of her responsibilities, woman is always

disadvantaged as a commodified entity; both in public and private realms, she is expected to represent different versions of body, through which her real body turns out to be locus of the discursive regulations. In this context, Green attacks the philosophical ideology that embraces and maintains the female embodiment and inferiority both in private and public spheres even in the contemporary world. Inspired by the doctrines put forward by the ancient philosophers, the society in which Jemima lives does normalize the passive condition of woman due to her anatomical fact, and also the society codifies her as a mere body which constitutes the source of somatophobia that she experiences as a consequence of the widespread bias against being a woman and becoming feminine through her body.

4.1.1. Body within Nature/Culture and Private/Public Discourse

Based on the “caveman tradition” of the ancient philosophers who regard man as reason and mind, the heroine of the novel in question suffers from the discrimination her sex is exposed to endure in the public realm. Green does not give information about Jemima’s educational background; however, she works as a journalist, and this indicates that she must be highly educated because she deals with language and writing in her profession. “The division of labor by sex can be seen as a “taboo”: a taboo against the sameness of men and women, a taboo dividing the sexes into two mutually exclusive categories, a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between the sexes and thereby creates gender (Rubin, 2011, p. 178). Despite the assumed rights that she is thought to have regarding the equality in job opportunities, Jemima is victimized and marginalized in the company she works merely because of her sex. While men are the ones who get privilege in terms of financial gain and respectability, women are always exploited in terms of monetary issues. In other words, despite the fact that they do the same labor, men believe that they are always more qualified, more intelligent, and more gifted. Jemima is well aware of the fact that she is judged with her huge body, which does not present an ideal female figure, and thus she is excluded from specific working fields besides her segregation because of her female existence: “women are frequently physically and emotionally terrorized and financially trapped in violent relationships and degrading jobs” (Bordo, 2003, p. 27). Put it differently, based on the archaic philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the society in which Jemima lives does attempt to exclude her from the public domain under the pretext of the female weakness and the

lack of rationality. Despite the fact that she has the qualification to have a profession outside the house, Jemima is restricted in terms of the work she does.

From the very beginning of the novel, Green reveals that Jemima is not content with her position at the company she works for. She likes her profession as a journalist; however, she does not believe that she deserves the position she works for: “I love the English language, playing with words, watching sentences fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, but sadly my talents are wasted here at the *Kilburn Herald*” claims Jemima (p. 4). She is sure that the discourse which directs lives is the speech; in other words, she knows that the reason for her isolation is because she does not exist within the language that patriarchy speaks: the phallus is the determinant factor of her place in public domain. Because she writes for the column Top Tips which interests merely housewives, Jemima feels that she does potter about rather than be involved in tasks that would make her use her mind. Like any other workplaces, the company in which she works privileges men over women; men are promoted to significant departments with high salaries without any qualification. Despite her skills and intelligence concerning language and writing, Jemima, on the other hand, is exposed to patriarchal bias in the office she works; she is considered inadequate due to her anatomy. However, aware of her potential and eligibility, Jemima cannot stand being under the rules of the patriarchal hierarchy; she does not find it right to work under the authority of a male boss. She thinks that she deserves a better position, and above all she hates being under the authority of the sexist male and thus the question “who do you work for?” (p. 4). In other saying, Jemima is against the traditional philosophy of the West which disregards her identity and mental capability while enhancing male reason without question. Although she cannot find a way to cope with the situation her sex is doomed to suffer, Jemima is sure that she has all the qualities a journalist must have.

On the basis of the archaic philosophy, in the modern world, education fails to guarantee equality between the sexes. Put it differently, despite the right to education, woman is always unjustly treated in the outside world. She cannot make sense of the conventional way of thinking and perceiving the world just for the sake of male pleasure. Yet, she does not have the power to change the state of affairs that leads her sex to suffer from the unjust treatments in the business life. Man is deemed worthy of the status of control mechanism both in domestic and public life: in the business world,

man regards himself as the controller and as the one who disciplines the other: woman. Even though she criticizes, Jemima finds herself a part of the system through transforming herself into a slave under the dominion of her master. Based on the Hegelian philosophy, Jemima is marginalized in the public domain, and she is supposed to be kept under the control of the male authority within the house through marriage. Accordingly, unable to raise an objection to the system which reduces her sex to a lay figure, Jemima is subjected to witness and accept the male privilege. Despite her proficiency for the job, she plays the second fiddle and is treated as second class man and cannot get the promotion she deserves, and she is exposed to suffer from the male control and authority. In accordance with the Aristotelian and the Hegelian dualism between the public man and the private woman, the authority coerces her to be passive and silent on the basis of her assumed lack of rationality. Thus, Jemima is supposed to perform her gender and thus her femininity through remaining at home and dealing with household issues.

As against the dispersed, contingent, and multiple existences of actual women, mythical thought opposes the Eternal Feminine, unique and changeless. If the definition provided for this concept is contradicted by the behavior of flesh-and-blood women, it is the latter who are wrong; we are told not that Femininity is a false entity, but that the women concerned are not feminine (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 253).

Based on the traditional judgments, Jemima is regarded as a disqualified woman for the business world not only because of her sex but also because of her fat body. In other words, she is excluded from the society twice as much: as a woman and as a fat woman. Yet within the novel Green presents situations and characters through which she reveals the corrupted nature of the patriarchal ideology: while Jemima is unable to perform the profession she wants and get the promotion she deserves because of her unappreciated outward appearance, those having the ideal femininity promote to higher positions. Geraldine, who is not as qualified as Jemima, gets the promotion and the salary she is satisfied by: “when it comes to words I am infinitely more talented than Geraldine, however slim and beautiful she may be” states Jemima (p. 20). The mere thing that makes Geraldine advantageous over Jemima is that of her slim and sexy body; otherwise, Jemima is quite sure about her mental superiority: “I am, if I say so myself, an expert with words” Jemima remarks (p. 4). Paradoxically, this statement reveals two facts: first, Jemima, as a journalist, is gifted with her intelligence to use the language –

and such a feature is extraordinary for a woman within the philosophy – second, because the patriarchal discourse is based on the speech, she implies that she has normalized and accepted the patriarchal norms as they are. In other words, being an expert with words implies that she knows the power of the discourse that manipulates her sex in accordance with the directives of patriarchy.

The double standard that aggrieves Jemima merely for her fat body while aggrandizing Geraldine for her ideal size causes the first to face somatophobia. Because she thinks “Geraldine of the perfect figure” (p. 18) and herself in flesh, Jemima believes that she is exposed to face such discrimination and marginalization. Despite the fact that she does not have any aptitude for writing, Geraldine works at the writing department which is the indication of her privilege over Jemima. Nonetheless, most of the time she asks Jemima for writing on behalf of her. Geraldine’s position requires her to write tips concerning female related subjects; she illustrates the type of woman who has obtained the position, which Jemima wishes to attain, through her feminine qualities, not through the professional competence. “If they’re lucky, if they have the requisite long blond hair, flirtatious nature, and penchant for being wild, the girls may just make it on to the screen as presenters of some wacky new show” states Jemima (p. 35). Jemima summarizes the condition which determines woman’s position in the public life: if you are remarkable enough with your surface, then you could have the chance to get the position you want. Accordingly, it is Jemima who saves Geraldine’s position by writing on behalf of her: “I’m writing this piece about dating again after you get divorced for the woman’s page” Jemima says (p. 67). Jemima finds it quite easy to write on such topics, and she begins without giving writing some thought because she knows the problems that all women have the same: they experience the same difficulties in life. Therefore, for Jemima, writing on the woman’s page does not require extra effort, but communion. Discovering the power of the pre-defined ideal femininity on woman’s fate, Jemima begins to question her existence with such a huge body and blames it for her victimization. The reason for Geraldine’s ideal position is based on her physical attractiveness; although she does not have any capability of writing she uses her body as a weapon. On the other hand, Jemima is good at writing but does not have the potential – sexuality of the body – to promote. Ben, as the man who Jemima loves blindly, advises her to find a job in a woman’s magazine as he believes it would catalyze her

rising. Jemima, however, keeps silent because she knows that she is not fit for it in terms of her bodily presentation:

The type of women who work on glossy magazines are pencil-slim. They have highlighted hair, and hard faces covered in too much makeup. They always wear designer black, and always, like Geraldine, have sunglasses pushing their hair off their faces (p. 96).

The preposterous definitions that determine the position women have in private and public life are based on the criterion of beauty and sexuality. No matter how qualified she is – concerning her intelligence and proficiency for the work –, Jemima is aware of the fact that she could have the position she wants only through achieving the ideal femininity via a slender body. The dualism between man/woman and mind/body does change the dimension in a sense that woman without a certain body shape is twofold marginalized within the society. Jemima thus regards her body as the guilty of her second class status at work, and she begins to hate her body as the source of her suffering.

STANDING at the aisle, reading your wedding vows, you hoped and prayed your marriage would last forever [...] But years later your vows of loving and honoring your husband are as distant a memory as the happiness you once shared [...] And women all over the country are discovering that no matter how wise, how experienced, how old they may be, no matter how much the rules may have changed, when it comes to excitement, disappointment, pain, nothing has really changed at all (p. 67).

In this extract, Jemima makes reference to the feminist movements which aimed to achieve equality between the sexes in public and private domains: in the business world and at home. However, the feminist movement, especially that of the second wave feminism, is recognized as a failure. Although she never declares herself as a feminist writer, Green, in this novel, attacks the philosophical disposition that does trivialize woman's position in marriage. By means of Jemima's statement above, Green does criticize marriage as an institution that enslaves woman within the private domain. Jemima states that many women believe that marriage would heal the wounds they receive – such as the isolation in business life and the marginalization due to the assumed lack of rationality –; however, the realities come to the surface by the time they get married; marriage, for women, turns out to be a means of oppression and authority over them. Many women to whom Jemima writes – as the agony aunt – through the agency of the journal are the victims of marriage which they did believe to rescue them. Based on the Aristotelian and Hegelian views on the nature of marriage, women are

supposed to perform silent and submissive roles towards their male authorities. Despite her power to create awareness in women's minds by expressing the truth regarding the desperate condition of married women, Jemima cannot escape from falling prey to the patriarchal order. In other words, she waits for a male savior who she thinks would pull her through the hardship she is to face. She considers marriage the sole remedy for her inferior status and victimization although she is aware of the fact that marriage, as an institution that serves for the patriarchal ideology, cannot better her bodily and mental oppression. Jemima, thus in despair, wants to get married; yet, she is aware of the fact that even marriage is a matter of appearance. Accordingly, based on her huge body image, Jemima is pathetic about the possibility of getting married.

Although she is aware of the fact that she is intentionally coerced to face somatophobia as a consequence of the indoctrinations of traditional philosophy on the negative image of body, Jemima is unable to get rid of the labels that define her bodily existence. She tries hard to survive with her female identity; yet she knows well that she is doomed to exist either as a constructed maternal body or as a sexual body always under the control and discipline of her male master. In other saying, despite the fact that she condemns the tradition and the ideology which push her to embodiment as the mere means of survival, Jemima considers her body the reason for her marginalization both in the business world and in the private domain. The somatophobic tendency and the relevant anorexia and binge eating problems of Jemima emerge as a result of the unfair judgments of the ancient and modern philosophers who define women in terms of femininity they are supposed to perform through using their bodies as the subject of their roles.

On the other hand, Diana Macpherson, as the executive producer at London Daytime Television, is a character foil: she represents a masculine woman in that she attempts to exist by imitating the masculine ideals. "Diana Macpherson has reached her position of power by being clever, by making good moves, and securing an exclusive interview with Alexia Aldridge, albeit a very expensive one, is a good move" (p. 300-301). Under the influence of the philosophical assumptions concerning her sex, Diana feels obliged to break the chains by becoming masculine. In other words, she is coerced to become either a silent and oppressed woman without reason or a powerful and dominant woman

without femininity. Put it differently, she has to disclaim either her mental faculties or the characters that make her feminine:

(She) is a tough woman [...] She is also single, and happens to have a particular penchant for pretty young boys like Ben. Diana Macpherson is a rough diamond – brought up on the wrong side of the tracks, she was the only girl from her seedy neighborhood to win a scholarship to a good girls' school, and then to go on to university (p. 118).

Green portrays Diana as an unusual character who rejects the roles and the definitions coded for her sex. By contrast, she plays the same tricks that men do on women; she forces Ben to submit to her “overt flirtations” (p. 243). “Diana and her boy toys, that her nickname was the Piranha, and he could tell from the way she looked at him that the last thing on her mind was the program” (p. 244). Rejecting to become a victim of the society, Diana attempts to enslave men just like the same manner as the latter do to suppress women. As the dominant boss of Ben, Diana monopolizes him easily because she knows how to manipulate him through her money and power:

Diana, as far as she's concerned, made Ben, and that means one thing in Diana's book. He owes her. Big time. And she's simply waiting for that day when she can call in her debt, because Diana Macpherson always wants what she can't have. And she wants Ben Williams, not only because he's gorgeous, but because he's shown no interest in her whatsoever (p. 243).

Despite her struggle for suppressing the gender roles cast in for her, Diana begins to dream a future – a family life under the name of marriage – because her hormones force her to change the direction of her life; out of her biological features, Diana desires to have babies and a family. In this context, Diana is forced to accept the inescapable fate of any woman. Because the society in which lives is governed by the rules of the ancient philosophy and of the Enlightenment ideals, marriage, regarded as the universal truth of human beings, is the mere destination for women. Put it differently, no matter how subversive her personality has been so far, Diana feels obliged to fulfill the feminine roles such as maternity and wifehood as a result of her observations and experiences. Though she fights against the traditional norms, she cannot resist to the generalizations: “Not sex. That's always available when you're as powerful as her, but Diana wants more than just sex now” (p. 300). So far, Diana has regarded the opposite sex as the one with whom she could satisfy her sexual desires; but now, she regards sexual course not as the manifestation of her libido, but as a strong feeling that she

wants to experience under marriage. In fact, like many women, Diana is conditioned to practice her gender roles under the pretext of her nature:

And Diana Macpherson, who should be over the moon at this brilliant coup, is actually not very happy. Not happy at all. Usually she would be buying champagne for the whole crew, but just recently she has started to think more about her personal life. She's started watching mothers in the park, and once or twice she's even stopped to coo at particularly attractive babies. Diana Macpherson has never thought of herself as a woman, more of a working machine, but for some strange reason she's started fantasizing of late about relationships, marriage, babies (p. 299-300).

Green's portrayal of the alternative female characters reveals the fact that women in sexist societies try to survive either through representing their femininities with their bodies and the relevant gender roles or through attempting to gain power and authority through becoming masculine women. Under the influence of the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, and Descartes, the patriarchal societies claim to have the right to isolate women from becoming the active agencies of their lives and exploit their sense of self by regarding their bodies as the real perpetrator.

As a stereotype woman, Jemima considers marriage the only way to stand in life. Regarding wifhood and maternity as the final destination, Jemima internalizes the philosophical disposition which attempts to deactivate woman. However, she is also aware of the fact that in order to get married she is to have the ideal body size: slim and sexy. Because her huge body does not allow her to find her future husband, she feels desperate. Nonetheless, Sophie, her roommate, states that people from all over the world date on the Internet: "You go to these dating places and there are pictures of single people, and you can write to each other, e-mail over the computer [...] There have even been marriages because of it" (p. 29). Jemima gets her hopes up with the possibility that she would find her future husband in the cyberspace. Upon this, Geraldine finds a site called LA Café which is a sort of site that enables single people meet other ones. Then they decide to join that cyber world with the nickname "HONEY". By the time Jemima begins to chat, Geraldine suggests that Jemima lie about her real identity: "Don't say twenty-seven [...] You don't have to tell the truth on this. Tell him you're nineteen" (p. 46). Under the influence of the Hegelian argument that women must get married when they are young enough to give birth and to be attractive enough to satisfy the sexual desires of her husband, Geraldine coerces Jemima to lie about her age. She thinks that the man on the other side would not accept her if

she reveals her real age. Soon after their nonsensical writing to each other, the unknown man turns out to be a womanizer who just dreams for the female body as a means of sexual satisfaction. Even though Jemima hopes that she would find her prospective husband through chatting on the internet, the man on the end has the mere pursuit of taking advantage of her through his unwholesome fantasies on the female body. This part illustrates the male perception of “woman”: like the man on the screen, men in general make a pitch for sleeping together with the promise of marriage because they do know that women desire for having a family under the name of marriage. The verbal harassment that Jemima is subjected to experience reveals the threat that men pose for women. Because men consider women just bodies without souls, they regard themselves as the authority to claim any right on their bodies:

After dinner I'd lead you into my bedroom and I would give you a message. I'd unbutton your shirt, and dribble some baby oil on to my palm. I'd warm the oil between my hands and then I'd make you lie on the bed while I slowly rub the baby oil into the smooth, tanned skin of your back (p. 47).

Obsessed with her body size, Jemima gets closer to the internet through which she feels free from her complexes. Her fat body is the reason for her self-enclosed existence; because she is unable to evaluate the criticisms on her body, Jemima wants to be invisible. In this context, the internet fulfills her desire. By the time she joins the LA Café, a man named Brad introduces himself as a gym owner; they ask questions to each other, and Jemima lies to him. By the time he wants to learn her dressing style and the thing she is wearing at that moment, Jemima lies after examining her sloppy looking: “An Armani shirt [...] Fitted jacket, short skirt, and cream shoes. I have to look smart for when I'm on screen” she states (p. 82). Jemima's description is indeed her dream. When he asks about her appearance Jemima lies again: “I'm pretty fit but I work too hard to exercise as much as I'd like” (p. 70). Although she is troubled with the lie she tells to him; nonetheless, she knows that on the Internet, he would never know the truth. Then, the second lie comes: she states that she is a television presenter which she thinks would prove her as a presentable and attractive figure for screens because it requires her to be beautiful and charming enough to appear on TV. By lying Jemima confesses inwardly that she tries to “borrow Geraldine's life for a little while” (p. 71). Despite the pleasure she takes by pretending to be someone else for a little, Jemima accuses Geraldine of convincing her to lie because when Jemima questions the reason for lying, in a defensive mode, Geraldine says “you, my dear Jemima, are an innocent, and that's

why you need fairy godmothers like myself to keep your best interests at heart” (p. 116).

Green portrays Geraldine as a character foil who normalizes the female embodiment and thus attempts to impose the significance of the ideal femininity on Jemima’s psyche. Therefore, Jemima tells the story of Geraldine as if it were her own, stating that she ended the relationship with her boyfriend because of his endless wish for marriage. Under the influence of the traditional view of woman, Jemima tries to attract the attention of the man through her made-up femininity while attempting to hide her desire to marry in order not to seem a marriage freak. The lie that Jemima makes up indeed reveals the background reality about her: she describes the woman she wants to be and the life she wants to live. As a result of her descriptions concerning her appearance, profession, and life-style, Brad regards Jemima as his “type of woman” (p. 124). Traditionally, it is man who chooses and decides whereas woman stands still to be recognized and picked. The dialogue between Jemima and Brad thus reinforces such a perception of being a woman. Jemima presents herself to Brad’s disposition for the mere purpose of being approved and accepted. Therefore, by the time Brad appreciates her beauty, Jemima responds as: “I aim to please” and “I’m picky” (p. 124). Being picky is related to her sexual attractiveness, and no matter how much she desires to be the ideal woman, the condition she is exposed to experience in fact causes her to suffer from somatophobia; she believes that her body is the single guilty for her objectification and exclusion.

The influence of the traditional and modern perception of being female and becoming feminine is illustrated from the perspective of Brad who compares the condition of women in Santa Monica with those in New York and stoutly states that he takes pleasure from women’s passive stance in life: “It’s not like New York, where the women are successful in their own right. Here the women want to marry success, and for the men, the ultimate status symbol is having a beautiful, hard bodied woman on their arm” Brad states (p. 198). Still thinking about the possibility that she would misinterpret his statements, Jemima asks about the qualities he wants his partner to have; yet, the response that Brad gives to that question makes Jemima feel more troubled: “I’m looking for someone who’s honest, sensitive, feminine. Someone who isn’t necessarily into having a career, who’d be a great wife and mother” he replies (p.

210). Brad is one of the representatives of the Aristotelian and Hegelian philosophy that define women within the borders of the private realm through giving birth and dealing with the household issues. Before marriage man expects woman to be attractive enough to deserve spousal; however, once she gets married, woman is supposed to devote all her sense of self and energy to familial issues rather than her bodily attraction. From his utterance it is interpreted that Brad has the mentality to coerce her wife to resign to her fate that limits her by maternity, domesticity, and femininity. By the time she hearkens to his words, Jemima begins to discover the fact that Brad is, indeed, in search of a woman to marry who is quite passive as if deaf and dumb as well as slender and sexy: “who’s self-aware, who is open to loving and being loved. And I need someone who looks great; who looks after herself, who doesn’t drink or do drugs, who is slim, and fit, and healthy” claims Brad (p. 210). Under the influence of the Hegelian dialectic, Brad regards marriage as a sort of mutual necessity – woman needs her husband in order to exist while man needs his wife in order to satisfy his desires and to be cared for the whole life.

4.1.2. Sexuality of the Female Body

“It was thought normal for women to be ruled in all of their states by activities of their reproductive organs, it was thought abnormal for them to have pleasurable sexual sensations” (Gallagher and Laqueur, 1987, p. viii). Jemima has taboos concerning her sexuality; due to the fact that she regards her body as a threat or an enemy for her existence, she tries to keep herself aloof from it. Therefore, she represses her sexuality behind her fat body. Her pressed sexuality comes to the surface by the time she is exposed to face it: In order to get used to the Internet, Jemima tries to learn the details that would help her improve the skills. While she is working on the internet, Ben comes near her and suggests her explore the sex sites together. Searching for the pornographic pictures on the screen, Ben indeed reveals his true nature. Just like other men, he also regards the female body as a sexual object to be gazed and satisfied through. By the time Ben writes “sex” on the screen, Jemima is embarrassed since she has never examined her body before and never experienced a sexual course based on her fear of the body: “I am not going to show Ben that I am anything other than a woman of the world” (p. 40). As a result of her fat body, Jemima does not consider herself a real woman; and rather than blame Ben for his perversity, Jemima puts blame on her body

as the thing that constrains herself from sexuality. Put it differently, she internalizes the philosophical and cultural definitions of being a woman; she normalizes the perception of woman as a commodity to be looked at.

Although Jemima is ashamed of being there witnessing the dirty models on the screen – the portrayal of the female body as a sort of materialized object for male gaze disturbs her – she believes that the woman on the screen represents the ideal femininity because Ben is delighted in looking at her body, and thus, she examines the photos in detail with the hope of learning something from the images. By the time she sees the picture of a naked woman on the screen, she examines the woman as a sex object who consciously presents her body to the male pleasure: “I study her platinum blond hair and perfect eyebrows, and then make a mental note to add her to my collection when I get home” (p. 42). Jemima believes that the woman on the internet is quite attractive and sexy with her blond hair and naked body. Because she hates her own fat body, she internalizes the image she sees on the site as the norm that she is to transform her body into as well. However, she also questions how a woman on earth could accept to present her body as a tantalizing image for male satisfaction. “Jemima has never seen porn before, not proper hard-core porn, and, sitting next to Ben, she blushes furiously, a hot red rising up and covering her face. Don’t look round, she thinks, don’t look at me, Ben, don’t see what I look like” (p. 42). The pornographic photograph of the woman on the screen is highly sexy while Jemima’s fat body arouses disgust for her. Therefore, she does not want to be noticed by Ben at that very moment; she wants to hide her body from his view in order not to make him compare her body with that of the sex object. In other saying, Jemima does not find herself appropriate either for the modern definitions of femininity as the representation of the ideal female image of a slender body for male gaze, or for the traditional definitions of femininity as the symbol of flesh that is to be suppressed through divine duties such as maternity and wifehood. Becoming neither of them Jemima thus experiences somatophobia.

The girl learns actively to hamper her movements. She is told that she must be careful not to get hurt, not to get dirty, not to tear her clothes, that the things she desires to do are dangerous for her. Thus she develops a bodily timidity that increases with age. In assuming herself to be a girl, she takes herself to be fragile (Young, 2005, p. 43).

As a consequence of her obsession with her fat body, Jemima goes on a diet and gets rid of her weight, and thus regards her new appearance as “the office “baby” (p. 181): she recognizes that her body is the determining factor for her career. Because she has achieved to have a slender body, she has the opportunities similar to those of Geraldine’s: “For the first time last week I was sent on an interview, and not just a crappy, boring interview, I was sent to interview the new star of a London soap” (p. 181). Green criticizes the very idea that woman exists just with her body, and the bias that she exists so long as she keeps her body up to the feminine standards. Even the profession that she performs is up to her body’s sexuality and beauty. Jemima is aware of the fact that she is involved in such a different task due to her bodily change in terms of its size; she knows that so long as she covers the expectations of patriarchal hegemony she can lead a promising life. “The interview went fantastically. A little too fantastically perhaps, as I ended up trying to maneuver myself out of the way of this admittedly cute man who seemed to have sprouted a thousand hands, all of which were trying to paw me” remarks Jemima (p. 182). Jemima shines out with her remarkable posture, and this leads her to appeal to the male gaze; the man with whom she interviews makes a stab at touching her up with the intention of exploiting her bodily attractiveness. Put it differently, Jemima achieves conspicuousness and acceptance after the bodily metamorphose; she learns how to use her body for her advantage – to get the position and the promotion she deserves – though she is unaware of the reality that she in fact destroys her own identity. Because the ancient Western philosophy dictates that woman is restricted to exist either with her sexuality or chastity within the boundaries of the domestic sphere, Jemima feels obliged to endure by accepting to be the object of the male desire via her corporeality. As a consequence of her struggle for the bodily recognition, Jemima becomes a sexy woman. By the time the editor talks to Jemima for promotion, she is quite certain that it is not because of her tenacity and endeavor for the position, but because of the visible modification in her appearance. Jemima concludes his response as a sort of insolence for her personality:

now that I’m slim, and blond, he suddenly wants to promote me. I know I should be grateful, he probably expects me to gush my thanks, but all I can think of as I sit here looking at his expectant face, his chubby cheeks and his little piggy eyes that keep straying down to my legs is, you bastard. You big bloody bastard. You would never have given me this chance if I didn’t look like this. If I hadn’t lost weight I would have carried on doing the Top Tips page for the rest of my bloody life (p. 183).

Gaining self-confidence as a result of losing weight and wearing sexuality on her body, Jemima is decisive enough to benefit from her body and from the sexual power it gives to her: her body reassures her decisive stance in life. After she achieves the ultimate thinness, Jemima is sure that she could manipulate those who once ignored her. Although the position the editor has proposed to her is one of her dreams, Jemima states that she would accept the job on the condition that she has a holiday to rest before she begins to work besides an increase in her salary. Upon witnessing the courage and the resolution in her face, the editor is shocked: “The editor is almost speechless, probably amazed at the confidence losing weight can bring, for the Jemima Jones of old would never have dared to say anything like that” (p. 184). Losing weight and achieving the ideal female image is the turning point in her life because Jemima feels challenging for the first time in her life. In order to be able to survive, Jemima feels obliged to become a woman of femme fatale through presenting her body for the male gaze.

Thinking about the possibility of Brad as her future husband, Jemima decides to travel to see him and the course of their relationship which would take shape upon this visit. Based on her somatophobia, Jemima is quite nervous about her appearance despite the fact that she has lost considerable weight: “I know I don’t look like I used to, but it still seems ridiculous that I might not like someone who likes me. What if I’m not what he expected? What if he sees through the illusion and sees the fat unhappy girl lurking beneath?” (p. 191). Jemima becomes obsessed with her body as a consequence of the societal assertiveness on the ideal female body. She thinks that she could only persuade Brad with her body, and therefore, she is to perfect it to the best of her ability. By the time Jemima visits him in Santa Monica with her new appearance, Brad reveals his true nature: “Meeting someone like you on the Internet, then actually meeting, and most of all seeing that you absolutely fulfill my expectations. More than fulfill” he regards (p. 197).

Though woman is no less capable of real “existence” than man, it is in her corporeality rather than his own that man sees palpable and undeniable reminders of his own animal nature, of his own deeply regrettable and undignified contingency. Desirous of seeing no part of himself in her, he regards her thoroughly Other, or as thoroughly Other as he can, given that he nevertheless needs her as a companion who is neither merely an animal nor merely a thing (Spelman, 1988, p. 59-60).

Because patriarchy legitimates male perception of woman as a mere body, Brad, as an exemplar of masculinity, makes no bones about his deviant thought. As Jemima realizes, the only thing that determines and finalizes Brad's feelings and opinion about Jemima is her outlook; he believes that the surface appearance of Jemima is like an instrument that she will serve for the purpose of Brad's satisfaction and expectations: he considers Jemima merely a sexual body.

4.2. Interpretation of Somatophobia in the Popular Culture

“Cultural representations of the body are historical, but there is also an experience of embodiment that can only be understood by grasping the body as a lived experience” (Turner, 2008, p. 12). Within the novel, cultural factors set ground for the rise and development of somatophobia which give cause for eating disorders. The standardized form of the representation of femininity especially in the media obliges woman to disregard her autonomous subjectivity in the form of anorexia nervosa and binge eating. Because the cultural dictum argues for the ideal femininity, Jemima feels obliged to discipline her body by self-policing, as a consequence of which she becomes an anorectic. Through the obsessive pursuit of slenderness, the anorectic indeed performs extreme bodily discipline and thus configures the norms that men control outwardly into the female self-control that she can regulate from within herself via dealing just with her body: “She must observe and evaluate herself, scrutinising every detail of herself as though she were an outside judge” (Orbach, 2006, p. 16). Because the body is regarded as an anomalous stock that stirs up the somatophobic tendency in woman, it is to be staked in perpetually through self-starvation. Provided that anorexia nervosa is the product of the contemporary societies, it functions with the purpose of canalizing woman to hate her body, or to feminize, sexualize, and objectify it through the impact of diet programs, newspapers, magazines, cosmetics, and advanced technology.

4.2.1. Diet and Gym as the Disciplinary Forces for the Body

“The body is a site where regimes of discourse and power inscribe themselves, a nodal point or nexus for relations of juridical and productive power” (Butler, 1989, p. 601). As an instrument of the capitalist culture, diets function for the purpose of coercing woman to punish her body through self-starvation. Under the name of different tantalizing promises, diet programs aim to manipulate woman's psyche to struggle for

becoming more and more feminine. Besides her victimization in the business world, Jemima also suffers from the affairs of her heart; she loves Ben Williams; yet, he does not even capture a glance because of her disgusting bodily stance Jemima thinks. In order to be able to attract his attention and to gain self-respect she decides to go on a diet as a last resort: "I climb out, trying to be dainty, delicate, feminine" Jemima states (p. 22). With a strong desire for becoming feminine, Jemima dedicates her life to diets: "The Scarsdale, the High Fiber, the Atkins Diet, the six eggs a day diet, Slimfast, Weight Watchers, Herbalife, slimming pills, slimming drinks, slimming patches" (p. 3). The game that capitalism plays on the female body is illustrated through various diet names; every day woman wakes up to a new and different diet program which guarantees weight lose as pie in the sky. As in Jemima's condition, diets generally yield no expected results for her. Despite the effort she exerts on her body, Jemima cannot achieve her target size. She regards that woman is forced to perform many practices due to the tricks of the capitalist order, and diet programs which function as an expensive project indeed reveal the malice of the consumer society against the female body: "And diets don't work, how can they? It's a multi-million-dollar industry, and if any of the diets actually worked the whole caboodle would go down the toilet" claims Jemima (p. 3). Even though she is conscious about the condition that the system puts women into, Jemima is unable to resist the dictations directed towards her body. Because capitalism claims for consumerism, Jemima, as a project of the system, is forced to follow every new diet despite the fact that it gives no result. Although she is intelligent enough to comprehend the threat of the ideology, Jemima cannot absent her sense from the tricks capitalism plays on her body. Because diets function as the instruments of the popular culture, Jemima, as much as the next woman, learns how to self-police and self-discipline her body through another disciplinary force: diet.

Jemima struggles for maintaining a diet that would help her lose her weight and thus would make her an ideal woman; nonetheless, she is unable to control her desires for hunger because the force to lose weight comes from the outside as an ultimatum. It is not Jemima's own decision; she feels obliged to suppress her desire to eat as a result of the pressure the culture puts on her body. Accordingly, on her way to work, she is affected by the smell of the bacon frying and every day until the dinner time comes, she dreams "the picture of a bacon sandwich" (p. 16). Jemima seems to repress something

other than her hunger for food. She is hungry for something else: loneliness, isolation, and marginalized existence direct her attention to eating as the only solace. “Every morning you battle with yourself, Jemima” she mutters (p. 16). Despite the endeavor she makes for attaining a slender body, she cannot withstand eating; even the salad she chooses at lunch is “as fattening as an éclair” (p. 17). The more she struggles for a thin body, the more she suffers from her appetite.

I had forgotten how good this feeling was. For the time being, the cravings have subsided, and for the past couple of weeks I’ve only had a small bowl of cereal for breakfast, and I’ve bypassed my daily bacon sandwiches completely. The smell still gets me every day, but somehow I’ve managed to learn to live with it, not to give in to the temptation (p. 119-120).

By the time she begins to chat with Brad on the internet, Jemima thinks that this man would be a chance for her. Brad becomes a motivation for her and she feels obliged to lose weight in order to be able face him. Therefore, she attends the gym as another force that would discipline her body with the purpose of catching the fancy of Brad. After attending the gym and beginning a new diet under the control of the fitness instructor, Jemima realizes that she begins to lose weight. “But today is the day I’m going to change my life. And pushing through the double doors I approach the pert blond receptionist with as much determination as I can muster” she states (p. 126). At the gym she examines the magazines and sees a photo of a woman who presents her body as slim and sexy; she likes the image on the photo and wants to be really like it. Rather than reveal her true identity, Jemima hides her appearance through forcing her body to change in accordance with the patriarchal expectations. In this regard, the instructor becomes the panopticon who controls Jemima’s appetite and the practice she is supposed to do. He plans what she eats, how she eats, and how much she eats, and he forces her to check her progress regularly:

Paul has been trying to monitor Jemima’s routine, for although she does look amazing, he is worried about how quickly the weight has come off, and he is convinced that under the golden skin – she has been using Clarins fake tan regularly on Geraldine’s recommendation – Jemima Jones may not be as healthy as she looks (p. 182).

Because she gives in to the instructor as the mere solution to her huge body, Jemima observes the fact that she is changing day by day; she is losing her appetite and thus her weight. The idea of getting rid of her fat and being loved by Brad lead her to refrain from food. However, the instructor realizes that Jemima is not healthy enough to

maintain her diet and the gym together: with an excessive ambition to lose weight, Jemima indeed neglects her health. Despite the warning the instructor directs against her, Jemima never listens to his cautions. Because she internalizes the idea that her body is the mere responsible for her marginalization, she is determined to discipline it via the instruments that serve for the patriarchal ideology. On the purpose of being accepted, Jemima disregards her condition and dedicates her sense of self first to punish, then to correct her body both through starving it under the name of the diet.

4.2.2. Reification of the Body through Artificial Femininity

On the basis of her self-loathing Jemima considers Geraldine the perfect symbol of femininity in terms of her body size and shape: “Geraldine is the woman I wish I was” confesses Jemima (p. 7). Together with the models she imagines herself to become, her friend, Geraldine, is also among those who cause Jemima to internalize body-hatred. Observing Geraldine’s dignified stance, Jemima concludes that it is her body that makes her so powerful. The inferiority complex Jemima has intensifies by the time she realizes the fact that she is not the type that Geraldine represents: “I feel like an ungainly oaf next to Geraldine” (p. 19). Contrasting her body with that of Geraldine’s, Jemima considers herself inferior due to her diffident posture. Thus, Geraldine also becomes a threat for Jemima – besides her fat body – as she stands in vivid contrast to her existence. From Jemima’s perspective, Geraldine represents the ideal femininity in terms of her outward appearance, her body lines, her clothes, her way of sitting and laughing which help her keep men under her spell. Therefore, Jemima thinks that she is bulky while Geraldine is of the perfect image.

Hatred is not only color-coded but inscribed on such body parts as noses, hair, vaginas, eyes. I argue that physicality – our physical bodies – is key to constructing and seeing hatreds. Bodies are always in part psychic constructions of meaning symbolized through coloring hatred on sexualized sites (Eisenstein, 1996, p. 21-22).

Jemima observes that Geraldine is always attentive to her surface appearance, and the more she examines Geraldine’s body the more she nurses a grudge against hers. Because of the judgments concerning her physical appearance, not only Jemima keeps herself away from people, but she also believes that even her friends do not want to be seen with her outside. Under the influence of her somatophobic pressure, Jemima disregards her own body. Rather, she envies Geraldine’s plastic, made body: “I silently

wish I looked like her” thus Jemima remarks (p. 7). Comparing herself with Geraldine, Jemima realizes the fact that Geraldine represents the popular culture ideally: her body determines her stance both in the private life and in the business world; she is beautiful, sexy, and soigné, and thus, these features are enough to make her accepted by the system:

It's not that I'm completely cynical, but with her gleaming blond hair in a chic bob, her tiny size 8 figure squeezed into the latest fashions, Geraldine may not have an ounce of talent, but the men love her, and the editor thinks she's the biggest asset to the paper since, well, since himself (p. 7).

Jemima scrutinizes the life of Geraldine and finds out that Geraldine is a sort of woman who makes herself admirable and favorite through her physical appearance and through the attitude she displays to men. To illustrate, Geraldine's going out with rich men proves the very idea that she knows how to manipulate and consume men through her body. While Jemima admires the beauty of Geraldine, the latter regards her appearance as a hangover, and upon the astonishment of Jemima for whom Geraldine is always perfect, she says: “Believe me, I look a mess,” but she's pleased because, like all girls who are perfectly groomed, below the perfection is a writhing mass of insecurity, and she likes to hear that she's beautiful” (p. 20). While Jemima consoles herself with eating all the time, Geraldine knows how to correct her faults through the artificial products that are aimed to appeal to the female psyche. Thus, the difference between Jemima and Geraldine is that it is Jemima who internalizes her body fear and hatred whereas Geraldine attempts to hide her flaws via the instruments produced for that means. In this regard, Jemima feels body-hatred more intensely after she examines Geraldine's appearance with “french manicured nails [...] and her MAC mascara” (p. 43). Besides correcting and transforming her body into a made one, Geraldine indeed becomes an artificial product: behind her excessive dedication to her body lies her ambition to be accepted by the masculine domain. The body which she owns turns out to be the possession of others; through making her body the target of the male gaze, Geraldine indeed lets it become an object or a possession. “Geraldine always considered herself a man's woman, a woman with no time for female friends” Jemima states (p. 189).

The body as object is thematized only as the body of the *other* – even when it appears as the other's *own* body – thus excluding the possibility of dealing with both the interactive and self-reflective dimensions of subject constitution. In other words, the subject is reduced to a mere product

surrounding the indefinable body, lacking the autonomy that would allow a “producing” relationship with the outside and with itself (Falk, 1994, p. 6).

Geraldine represents the target market in that she allows to be consumed by consuming the products through which she is convinced to have perfect body. Decorating herself via cosmetics and quality brand clothes, Geraldine knows how to appeal to men. She internalizes the idea of existing with her body, and thus her main pursuit is to correct it. For Geraldine, this is a bilateral agreement: she consumes products for her body to monopolize men, and men consume their money for her body in return. “The female body was of a socially shaped and historically “colonized” territory, not a site of individual self-determination” (Bordo, 2003, p. 21). In other words, Geraldine is aware of the fact that she is in disposition of men, and in return, she makes use of their money. Jemima is also well aware of the fact that Geraldine does not have any sense of mental capacity to give prominence; therefore, she uses her body as the single weapon she has. To illustrate, when Geraldine gets bored with her boyfriend, Dimitri, she mentions her alternative plans to Jemima. On the basis of her self-confidence and bodily attractiveness, Geraldine feels free to start dating other men. Jemima interprets Geraldine’s calmness as a sort of “confidence of those with unnatural beauty” (p. 65) whereas Geraldine reckons on her bodily attractiveness and believes that so long as she is young and sexy enough to keep her femininity up to the standards, she could get hold of any rich man she wants. Green does criticize not only men who enslave women to their bodies intentionally but also women who allow the ideology to manipulate their bodies into somatophobia or body obsession. Accordingly, the author attacks those who allow their bodies to become commodities or decoration objects for exhibition. Thinking about Geraldine and her bodily decisiveness, Jemima discovers that Geraldine and her car resemble each other in that both are the man-made objects of gazes: through artificial surfaces, Geraldine and her car have the power to attract the attentions.

Geraldine and her car go together like apples and honey. They’re both sleek, chic, with glossy exteriors and purring engines. Geraldine, as usual, has done herself proud. She’s wearing a beautifully cut navy suit, the jacket just skimming her thighs, the lapels showing off a white silk T-shirt. On her head is a pair of large black sunglasses, keeping her highlights off her face, and she’s holding a cigarette languorously, sexily, out of the window (p. 19).

Under the influence of Geraldine’s advantageous stance in life through her bodily attraction, Jemima wishes to become one of those man-made objects. Put it differently, Jemima becomes the victim of modernity which imposes the significance of having a

perfect body image. Rather than appreciate her mental capacity or the inner beauty, Jemima feels obliged to make her body suitable to the standards. After she observes the endeavor Geraldine makes for perfecting her body through the artificial products which cover her body, Jemima begins to examine her own body with disgust. Because she has never had an emotional relationship with a man and because she does not find her body fascinating enough to satisfy the male desire, Jemima accuses her fat body of her inferiority:

it's me, for God's sake, the woman who never has any boyfriends, and although I know what a nice person I am, I'm not the most sociable of creatures. I wish I were, I wish I could be more like my roommates at times, but unfortunately my size dictates my social life, and my size is the one thing I can't control (p. 49).

Among the factors that trigger Jemima's experience of somatophobia are her roommates who, like Geraldine, exist with their bodies rather than their minds. "Sophie is blond, a chic, snappy blonde with an inviting smile and come-to-bed-eyes. Lisa is brunette, long, tousled locks and a full, pouting mouth" (p. 8). Under the influence of the capitalist society, Lisa and Sophie are in hot pursuit of fashion and magazines with the purpose of adapting their bodies to the principles of modernity:

Meeting them for the first time you'd probably think they were perhaps fashion buyers, or something similarly glamorous, because both have perfect figures, ready smiles, and wardrobes of designer clothes, but, and this is the only thing that makes me smile, the truth is far less interesting (p. 8-9).

Sophie and Lisa are receptionists at an advertising agency, and this truth justifies the effect of the consumer culture on their perception of their bodies. They are the front faces of the company; therefore, they are supposed to be inviting and the representative images of the agency. In other words, their bodies serve for the company; they are the made objects. Nothing is natural concerning their smiles, their faces, and their clothes; they imitate models' make up, latest fashion, and present themselves as toy dolls. "Every night they're out the front door, dressed to the nines, by 9 P.M. Teetering on the highest heels, they totter out, giggling together, instructing me, and I'm usually either in my room or watching television, to behave myself" (p. 9). The principal aim of Sophie and Lisa is to decorate their bodies with the purpose of attracting the attentions of men that they would meet out somewhere. Put it differently, they normalize the idea of becoming body-consumed animals. Sophie and Lisa, thus, internalize the ideology that teaches them to keep their bodies under discipline, and they become the docile bodies.

Based on the Foucauldian argument, they learn the ways to normalize the knowledge the power system dictates as truth. Giving priority to the surface appearance, Sophie and Lisa do not suggest Jemima join them; because she is fat, they never consider Jemima appropriate for public gatherings:

They are thin and beautiful, and I am not. I would never dare suggest going along, and they would never dare ask me. Not that they are nasty, you understand, underneath the glitz and glamour they're nice girls, but a girl has to keep up appearances, and fat friends, I'm afraid, do not come into the equation (p. 9).

The instruments that serve for the ideology of the popular culture offer woman the products that would make her body sexy and her contours more marked. In order to be catchy for male gaze, Jemima, under the influence of the examples around her, desires to become like them. She dreams for an “athletic new body” (p. 12), she wants to decorate her body and to wear the clothes that would highlight her body lines. However, soon after imagining the new Jemima, she turns to the reality that she would never wear such things due to her fat figure. “She likes her full pouting lips. But they tend to disappear in the round moon-ness of her face, so she paints them pale pink. She likes her glossy hair, and she brushes and brushes until it gleams back at her in the glass” (p. 15). Due to the fact that her body prevents her from becoming an objective for the male eyes, Jemima attempts to feature her lips and hair which she believes the only positive parts of her body. In this regard, she makes use of the cosmetics as a means to transform herself into a made object.

I don't know quite where to go, so I wander down the hill, looking in every window I pass, all the main street chains that line the main street, and even though the windows are filled with garish, high-fashion clothes, size 6 bits of cloth that would normally serve only to emphasize my inadequacies, tonight I don't care, and anyway, a girl can dream, can't she? (p. 55).

Especially after chatting with Brad and dissembling via the lies she tells concerning her appearance, Jemima recovers her potential to become one of those fashion-models and thus to become a docile body. Along with the diet and the gym, Jemima is aware of the fact that she has to change her wardrobe as well. Thus, she begins with doing some shopping; she feels hypnotized by the “glamorous window displays” (p. 52), and under the influence of the capitalist ideology, Jemima directs her attention to trivial things based on the idea that women are always believed to consume through buying new clothes, changing their hair styles, buying cosmetics, and etcetera when they are in

depression. In other saying, before a new beginning, women are almost forced to consume. In this regard, Jemima also victimizes herself for the aims of capitalism. She is mesmerized by the products which are displayed on the windows: “the clothes that Jemima Jones can only dream of wearing. Hip-hugging trousers with tiny bootleg flares at the bottom. Soft leather boots with square toes and center stitching, tiny little tank tops squeezed over perfect, pert breasts” (p. 57).

He (Ben) too is looking into shop windows, admiring the shirts, the suits, wishing he had a bit more money so he could afford them, but not wishing with quite the same zeal as Jemima, because after all he is a man, and men do not share women’s excitement about clothes. Have we ever heard of a male shopaholic? (p. 55).

Green does criticize the double standard capitalism applies on man and woman besides the ostensible difference created between femininity and masculinity because of the anatomical fact: while woman is supposed to perform her feminine ideals through perfecting her body, man is free from such trivial values. Within the novel, Jemima states that Ben is also interested in shopping; however, he does not lose control of himself as opposed to a woman who seems to be anesthetized while doing window shopping. The reason for this difference goes back to the ancient philosophy: because woman is considered a material entity, she is believed to have no reason or mentality to understand the tricks played on her. On the other hand, in modern philosophy with the spread of the capitalist ideology which is undergirded by patriarchy, woman is left nothing except her body to deal with. In other words, Green illustrates the condition that women are condemned to exist under the pretext of their lack of reason to question the system.

To illustrate the influence of the surface appearance on perception, Green associates the female body with books: while shopping, Jemima decides to buy some books; in the book store, she examines the covers of the books rather than get information about the contents: “Covers, so many covers, so many different, it is the thing I hate most, when it comes to literature I always judge books by their covers. First the cover will catch my eye, then I read the back of the book, and then finally the first page” states Jemima (p. 53). Even though she suffers from the critical eyes of people who condemn her for her surface appearance, Jemima internalizes the same approach even for books. Instead of giving priority to the inner self and to the natural beauty of woman, the society directs

criticism against the female body. In the same manner, Jemima makes a misjudgment about the books via their covers. Green attacks the popular culture through which individuals internalize the ideas they are in fact against: Jemima feels inferior due to the harsh criticisms directed to her body; yet, she acts in the same manner unconsciously. Despite the fact that she criticizes the society for disregarding the inner beauty she has and for giving priority to the surface appearance as the determining point of her place in life, Jemima normalizes the judgments through performing with the same purpose. “Then I pick up another book. No picture, just a bright yellow cover with large purple letters, the author’s name and the title” (p. 53). The cover of the book metaphorically means the body of a woman: her surface appearance. While a book is interpreted as good or bad through its cover, the female body is appreciated in terms of the image it represents outwardly.

Her excessive disposition to artificiality does crystallize by the time Ben invites Jemima out for a drink. She gets anxious due to her somatophobic tendency: she avoids harsh criticism people would probably direct to her because of the unfavorable body she displays. However, she is excited even with the idea of being with Ben. While getting prepared for the night “Jemima Jones flings open the doors of her wardrobe and desperately looks for something new. Something exciting, something inviting, something that might make her look slim, or at least slim enough to attract the advances of a certain Mr. Williams” (p. 85). She wants to attract Ben’s attention on her through the clothes that would camouflage her fat body. In a similar vein with Geraldine, Jemima wants to cover her faulty parts through ostentatious clothes which would shadow her reality. After a short time of feeling pretty, Jemima sees Sophie and Lisa are also at the bar. To her disappointment, Jemima feels disadvantaged after observing the attractiveness that Sophie and Lisa have achieved through their clothes and through the high quality accessories they wear as well:

Sophie and Lisa have got dressed – the pair of them in almost identical black lycra dresses, knee-high boots [...] with little black Chanel bags over one shoulder. Sophie is wearing a soft black leather jacket with a fur collar, and Lisa is in a cape. These are their pickup outfits – the clothes they wear when they venture to an unknown club to attract potential millionaire husbands (p. 98-99).

Sophie and Lisa are determined to monopolize men whom they hope would become their future husbands. They naturalize the idea of marriage as the single solution for

their desperate existence. On the purpose of achieving their aims, Sophie and Lisa adopt the necessity to metamorphose their bodies into artificial or made entities for the sake of male approval and protection. Jemima states that Sophie and Lisa always follow picture windows and magazines and copy the style of fashionable women, so they know how to pretend to look as though they were someone else. “They, after all, are not only fashionable, they are also wearing designer labels, and both make sure the gold intertwined C’s on their Chanel bags are facing outward just so that everyone can be sure of this fact” (p. 100). Within the capitalist pursuits, they internalize the show of brands as if they did determine their real value. Put it differently, they believe that they would capture a glance and have men under their spell through the artificial products and the brands that are famous with celebrities and the rich. Observing her roommates’ dedication to the capitalist pursuits of buying and consuming as the single ways to mask their defects, Jemima decides to join a gym upon Brad’s wish for seeing her. The capitalist ideology functions on the purpose of disciplining Jemima’s body through the products she is supposed to have even for the gym. Therefore, she does some shopping from the sports shop:

Half an hour later my arms are being dragged down to the floor with shopping bags. I’ve bought a tracksuit, two pairs of lycra leggings, three pairs of socks, and a gleaming pair of Reeboks. I have spent so much money today that there’s no way now I can change my mind. That was the idea (p. 129).

After getting a new job, Ben gives a party for his friends, and Geraldine is also ready for the party with her red dress: “a short, flippy soft dress that hugs her curves and shows off her legs, snugly encased in shimmery, sheer natural stockings, with flat red suede pumps on her feet” (p. 153). While examining Geraldine, Jemima remembers Brad’s dream of seeing her in a black dress just like Geraldine’s: “Wear something beautiful tonight, I’d like to picture you in a black dress, cut so it swings around your legs as you walk, and if you have any high-heeled strappy sandals, wear them tonight and think of me” he states (p. 148). From this extract, it is interpreted that Brad is a psycho man who dreams for a female body in terms of his fantasies; he imagines Jemima not as a person, but as a body. Upon receiving the message that Brad sent, Jemima does not find his attitude bizarre. Physical appearance is everything for those who are imposed with the idea of presenting their bodies for the male gaze. While man considers woman an object decorated with clothes and makeup – through a dress described as above – woman believes that she could get hold of a man with such subsidiaries. However, the truth is

bitter: man regards woman as a private possession; through changing and shaping her body in line with his fantasies, he believes he can establish sovereignty over her: “In patriarchal society woman is the supreme object, the possession that complements his subjectivity” (Young, 2005, p. 68). Green illustrates the objectification of the female body through the products the capitalist culture presents as gifts. Man regards himself as the authority, as the one to claim any right over her body, and it is therefore man who chooses and decides what her possession – woman – should wear.

Jemima is now the half the size she was, and she gets prepared for the party with the help of Geraldine: “with the help of her fairy godmother Geraldine, she seems to have perfected the art of looking impossibly cool, not to mention beautiful” (p. 188). Stilted as a consequence of the unnatural products Geraldine applies on her face, Jemima transforms into a different woman, and this new Jemima is quite beautiful and sexy. Jemima is pretentious enough to attract the attentions, and thus she regards the change as a sort of success.:

What she is looking at is Jemima’s face. She is looking at the creamy skin, given a hint of gold with the help of Geraldine’s supremely expensive foundation. She is looking at Jemima’s green eyes, large and sparkling with the help of Geraldine’s expert knowledge of eye shadows, eyeliners, and eye drops to turn the whites of her eyes brighter than snow. She is looking at her full pouting lips, made to look even more full with the help of Geraldine’s lip liner, lipstick, and lip gloss. Any finally she is looking at Jemima’s hair, which Geraldine has gathered up in a French twist, soft tendrils falling about her face (p. 155).

Sophie and Lisa also join the party. By the time Jemima notices them, she realizes how beautiful they feel: “Lisa has obviously been to the hairdresser, who has set her away with hair so big she almost has to watch her head walking through doorways. She is wearing a tiny piece of black fabric masquerading as a dress, and high, high, strappy sandals” (p. 159). Both Lisa and Sophie know how to use their bodies with the purpose of monopolizing men. “Sophie has caught her hair in a French twist, much like mine, and has squeezed herself into a sparkly black cocktail dress, which shimmers and shines every time she moves” (p. 159). Jemima observes that neither Sophie nor Lisa feels awkward; from their stance, it is clear that they consciously come to the party for Ben. Regarding him as a potential husband, Lisa and Sophie decorate their bodies for Ben’s approval. By the time they notice Jemima, Sophie and Lisa are shocked by the beauty and sexuality of Jemima; they become jealous of her after observing the transformation in her appearance. Realizing their gazes at her, Jemima remembers the moment when

Lisa suggest her give up the gym out of jealousy: “Because Lisa, as addicted as she is to the superficialities of life, can see that as the weight is dropping off, a real beauty is emerging, and Lisa doesn’t like this. Not one tiny bit” (p. 146). Woman, as the biggest enemy conditioned by patriarchy against her sex, always struggles for defeating other women. In this context, Jemima’s roommates, away from sisterhood, attempt to stimulate Jemima’s somatophobia and the relevant eating disorders:

The pair of them are speechless with envy dysfunctional with disbelief. They had, up until now, vaguely registered that Jemima was losing weight, but so what? Being slim doesn’t automatically make you beautiful, and Jemima was never a threat to them, but standing in the doorway of the living room, in her new tailored trousers and understated chocolate brown shoes, Jemima Jones looks exactly like the sort of woman Sophie and Lisa have always tried to be (p. 175).

“Ben is far too busy thinking about his career to think about women. Sure, if someone uncomplicated came along who would be willing to fit in with Ben’s life, and just see him occasionally, i.e., on the occasions when he’s not working [...], then great” remarks Jemima (p. 62-63). Accepting Ben’s indifference towards her, Jemima decides to go to California to see Brad instead. She thinks that Ben is unable to see the new Jemima; but Brad would be the one to appreciate her beauty. However, Green reveals later that Ben, after sent to Los Angeles for an interview with a celebrity, is captivated by the beauty of the women he realizes in the streets: “Why don’t they make women like that in England, he thinks, taking in the curve of her well-toned buttocks and tanned, muscular thighs, the golden skin set off by faded denim shorts and a white crop top” he says (p. 324). In other words, Ben is also a part of the system, and thus, he likes the capitalist games played on the female body. He is sure that he wants to see such kind of women in his hometown because they appeal to his gaze.

As a consequence of losing considerable weight, Jemima begins to get prepared for the journey. Geraldine does convince her to do some shopping besides skin and hair care as a necessity before she goes to California to see Brad. They first go to the hairdresser: “I start to feel ever so slightly nervous, because my long, glossy hair, after all, has always been one of my favorite features” states Jemima (p. 169). At the hairdresser, she looks at the designer magazines to decide on the haircut. “Take a closer look. See how the bangs stop just above her green eyes, how the green is accentuated by the gold above it, how the bangs show off her heart-shaped face perfectly” (p. 172). Regarding it as a chance, Jemima wishes to get rid of her somatophobia through transforming her body

into a made one. She believes that she has the opportunity for becoming the ideal female type she dreams of. Through the products applied on her hair and face, Jemima turns out to be the woman in the picture. After the physical metamorphosis she undergoes, Jemima's and Geraldine's next stop is the clothing store:

The trousers fit. The beautifully tailored jacket fits. The short, flippy skirts fit. The little silk T-shirts fit, more importantly, the little black dress fits. The camel suede shoes fit. The soft leather boots fit. And more to the point, *I* fit. And I cannot believe that the smart, sophisticated woman, grinning like a Cheshire cat in the mirror, is me. Me! Jemima Jones! Once again, I am completely speechless (p. 174).

Unaware of the reality yet, Jemima admires her beauty after losing weight and achieving the ideal size the patriarchal society has already determined for her sex as the ideal. Especially after she remembers the past when she felt repressed and inferior due to her undisciplined body size, Jemima feels liberated; now she is slender, with blond hair and a sexy body. "Jemima Jones is beautiful. She is slim, she is blond, she is beautiful, and, because of Geraldine's help, she is also chic, stylish, and sophisticated, although admittedly she hasn't quite yet realized it" (p. 175). Under the influence of the magic that she believes she gets as a result of the radical change she has undergone, Jemima is pleased with her body's position as the determinant of her life: "Life, I now realize, is certainly different when you're thin" claims Jemima (p. 182). Accordingly, by the time Jemima is ready for meeting Brad with her new appearance, Jemima is in fact away from naturalness: "she does indeed look like a made-it" (p. 188).

In order to keep her face unfading, Geraldine provides a vanity case for Jemima, which she mentions as a necessity while traveling. "She pulls out two bottles of Evian water and a can of what looks like hair spray, followed by a selection of exotic-looking jars" (p. 186). Consumerism imposes women with the idea that they should always be careful with their appearance; the products are the basic assistance they would need. Therefore, Geraldine convinces Jemima to use such products as an obligation by stating that "it's what all the models do, as it stops your skin drying out" (p. 187). She tries to manipulate Jemima through imposing the idea of the indispensability of the products which are indeed produced to victimize women: "They're super-duper moisturizing products" Geraldine states (p. 187). Geraldine, as the representative of the consumer culture, teaches Jemima how to become feminine through the instruments of consumerism. Hypnotized by the capitalist instruments, Jemima adapts her body to aims

of the artificial products because she believes that she can only overcome somatophobia through disciplining and punishing her body via artificial ways.

4.2.3. The Media as an Instrument of Patriarchy

The negative effect the media creates for woman is illustrated through Jemima's self-questioning after reading some magazines: "Thousands of words about how to keep your man, how to spice up your sex life, how to spot if he's being unfaithful are, quite here, irrelevant to me" remarks Jemima (p. 1). Serving for the purposes of the ideology, magazines impose the significance of the ideal femininity on Jemima's psyche through suggesting ways to exist merely for a man. As a result of the impositions the popular culture constructs, Jemima develops a sense of inferiority complex because of her fat body image. Due to her antipathetic outward appearance, she has never had a boyfriend and thus a sex life. Within the capitalist society, she is imbedded with the idea that woman is supposed to perfect her body in order to be realized by and accepted to the male cosmos. In this context, Jemima represents those who are ready to be manipulated to perfect their bodies with the purpose of monopolizing men. In other words, body is the single weapon that woman could use against man so long as she keeps it sexy and slim. In the opposing case, she is forced to believe that the inevitable end for as be betrayed under the supposedly reasonable reasons.

Experiencing her somatophobic disposition as a result of the images and the directives that the magazines she reads impose on her body, Jemima thinks that she is away from the ideal femininity due to her huge body size which prevents her from being sexy and attractive for the male gaze. She buys magazines on purpose and examines the photographs of the models in detail because the photographs which she carefully studies are indeed the examples of what she wants to become. She feels as if she were one of those models who have self-confidence to display their bodies. In the magazines she reads, Jemima is influenced by the beauty and the sexual attractiveness of the models. Thus, she wishes she would become one of them: "pictures of my top supermodels, preferred poses. Laetitia's there for her sex appeal, Christy's there for her lips and nose, and Cindy's there for the body" (p. 2). The female images in the magazines emphasize the ideal femininity in terms of bodily perfection and sexual appeal. Away from considering herself sexy or bodily attractive, Jemima does envy the models' body lines: "If I had one wish in all the world I wouldn't wish to win the lottery. Nor would I wish

for true love [...] I would wish to have a model's figure, probably Cindy Crawford's, and I would extend the wish into having *and keeping* a model's figure, *no matter what I eat*" claims Jemima (p. 2). Under the influence of the ideology that condemns woman to perceive her body as a flesh, Jemima does queer for having a slender, beautiful, and thus a sexy body more than anything. As a natural outcome of the portrayal of the female body in the media, Jemima disapproves what she has: her body represents nothing more than the filthy flesh that causes her isolation from the social sphere:

I buy them, all of them, for the pictures. I sit and I study each glossy photograph for minutes at a time, drinking in the models' long, lithe limbs, their tiny waists, their glowing golden skin. I have a routine: I start with their faces, eyeing each sculpted cheekbone, heart-shaped chin, and I move slowly down their bodies, careful not to miss a muscle (p. 1).

Observing the presentable stance of Geraldine and her roommates, Jemima wishes she were like them. However, she awakens to the reality that she is not the one who is admired. At that very moment, she begins to examine the photographs in the magazine: "I think about this for a while, and then I remember my magazine. I draw it out of my bag and once again study the pictures, reaching into my bedside drawer to pull out the scissors and add the latest models to my collection" states Jemima (p. 12). Through the magazines, through examining and learning every detail about the models in it, Jemima hopes to become one of them. In other words, while reading the articles and looking at the images, Jemima imagines herself as the one whom she wants to become:

I would wear tight cream trousers, lycra crop tops, and the bits of flesh exposed would be taut and tanned. I would, I decide, even look fantastic in a bathrobe. I look at my old white bathrobe hanging on the back of the door, huge, voluminous. I love wrapping it around myself for comfort, trying desperately to ignore the fact that I resemble a balloon with legs (p. 12).

As a consequence of the technological developments, the Kilburn Herald in which Jemima works begins to get online access; because most of the employees are not familiar with the internet, a man teaches them all about it. The capitalist system presents the Internet under the name of technology and development. Jemima, unaware of the effect it would create for her, feels that the internet would become a new world for her. "Drug addiction; food addiction; alcohol addiction; cigarette addiction. The funny thing is no one ever talks about Internet addiction" Jemima says (p. 27). Because of her social phobia, Jemima finds the Internet as a chance to pretend as if she were the one whom she in fact wants to become without the inferiority complex she has for her fat body.

“The Internet is another world, where people can be anyone they want, and, even as you read these words, marriages are disintegrating through the lack of communication, thanks to a little colored screen tucked away in a corner of the house” (p. 27). Influenced by the magic of the Internet, Jemima even forgets to buy some chocolate on her way home. The real problem behind her somatophobia and thus behind her binge eating is that she has emotional hunger based on her isolation from the social atmosphere due to her fat figure. Now, the Internet substitutes for her hunger, and therefore, she forgets her obsessed binge eating.

By the time Brad sends her an e-mail with an attached photo of himself, Jemima examines the photo and admits that Brad is quite handsome with strong muscles and blue eyes: “He looks like an advertisement for the perfect male product of California” Jemima thinks (p. 107). When Brad asks for her photo, Jemima gets disappointed because of the impossibility of a relationship between such a well-favored man and she of a filthy flesh upon discovering that the man she communicates with is beyond her expectations. Geraldine, considering appearance the main point, suggests Jemima send the man a fake photo by cutting a picture out of a magazine. Despite Jemima’s objection, Geraldine appeals to Paul for help who also works at the paper and knows well about the Photoshop. Just like a cook decorates a cake, Paul works on Jemima’s real picture: “narrows her face, and then chooses the exact same shade of Jemima’s skin. With incredible precision, he shades her cheeks in carefully until she has cheekbones. Perfect, beautiful, protruding cheekbones” (p. 109). Then, he works on her hair through highlighting it, and Jemima’s process of reinvention is completed through the help of the technological instruments. Ultimately, she transforms into a made being. “Geraldine runs back to her desk and quickly spreads out the pile of glossy magazines threatening to topple over on one side. *Vogue*? No, too posed. *Elle*? No, too fashion victim. *Cosmopolitan*? Perfect” (p. 110). Geraldine suggests taking the photo of a girl on a bicycle in the magazine. “Slim, stunning Jemima Jones, standing astride a bicycle, with one foot on the pedal, on a hot summer’s day” (p. 110-111). After looking at the picture, Jemima is amazed. “I never realized I could ever look like this. I can’t take my eyes off the picture. I want to enlarge the picture and stick it on my face, show people I am beautiful, show them what’s underneath the fat” she avows (p. 111). Green criticizes the cultural dictum that does exercise influence over the female body through the

external stimuli: the media manipulates Jemima's self-perception in a negative way. In other words, it is the magazines and advertisements which cause her to suffer from somatophobia. Jemima, especially after examining the pictures, experiences body-fear and thus wishes to have a totally different body.

4.3. Psychological Core of Somatophobia

“Body image is the ever-changing total of conscious and unconscious information, perceptions and feelings about one's body as different and apart from all others” (Norris, 1978). The psychological disorder that pushes Jemima initially to somatophobia and thereafter to binge eating and anorexia nervosa goes back to her childhood experiences because she states that her background has stocked in her mind in a negative way; “my childhood wasn't happy, that I never felt loved [...] the only time I feel really comforted is when I seek solace in food” Jemima states (p. 2). The relationship between her somatophobic tendency and overeating is based on her unhappy childhood: the feeling of insignificance as a result of the apathetic behavior of her parents causes her to face displacement as a psychological defense mechanism: her hearty appetite is the indication of her repressed feelings: she tries to satisfy her emotional hunger with food. Put it differently, Jemima's psychological disposition towards somatophobia is based on the turbulent relationship with her parents. Green provides information concerning her lack of a father image in her life. Jemima implies that one of the reasons for her being overweight since her childhood is due to her father's leave-taking. Lack of a father figure causes Jemima to console herself via foods and become a huge body. Now she tries to lose the weight she has gained as a consequence of her father's absence: “Slim. And beautiful. As I once was, I suppose, when I was a child, before my father left, before I discovered that the only thing to ease the pain of being abandoned by an uncaring father was food” she remembers (p. 129).

Although Green does not provide any further information about the details of her father's absence, it is highly probable that he died when she was so little. Therefore, Jemima compensates the emotional and the psychic trauma through eating; through foods Jemima tries to silence the outcries her father's lack caused her to be exposed to. As a natural outcome of the lack of her father, Jemima knows her mother as the authority, and it is her mother who always causes Jemima to sink into depression and embrace food as her best friend. As the panopticon eye in her life, Jemima regards her

mother as the dominating figure since her childhood: as a product of the society, her mother wants her daughter to have the ideal femininity through a slender body image; therefore, she always forces her to lose fat. When Jemima recalls her childhood, her mother image corresponds to the ideal femininity with an excessive beauty and attractiveness. “I was trying to be what other people thought I was. I am an unknown quantity – it all began with mother’s obsession with social success” (Bruch, 1973, p. 101). Internalizing the psychoanalytic judgment of woman as marginal and the modern understanding of the female body as something to be presented for the male gaze, Jemima’s mother lets her identity be captured by the patriarchal ideals, and despite the discrimination she experiences based on her bodily change, she obliges her daughter to conform to the principles pre-determined for her sex:

My mother was slim and beautiful when she was young. She was the belle of the ball [...] Before she was married, she looked like Audrey Hepburn, with a beauty and elegance that betrayed her background. She started putting on weight when my dad left sixteen years ago, and now, since hitting middle age and the boredom that comes with it, she’s ballooned, but of course Mum being Mum she doesn’t accept it, she turns it into a bloody event (p. 113).

For Jemima, her mother has always been a threat for her self-confidence; “my life is a constant diet” she states (p. 3), her mother has always demanded Jemima to look slim since she believes that a slender body makes her more feminine and beautiful and thus she would deserve to be accepted by the male authority. “Her mother never seems to ask about Jemima’s work, her friends, her social life. She always asks about her weight, and Jemima immediately jumps to the defensive, suppressing it carefully with a weary sigh” (p. 113). Since her childhood, Jemima’s mother has been pushy and obnoxious on her daughter’s weight. “Women serve, nurture, and maintain so that their bodies and souls of men and children gain confidence and expansive subjectivity to make their mark on the world. This homey role deprives women of support for their own identity and projects” (Young, 2005, p. 123). Though the underlying cause of her negative attitude towards Jemima is not stated within the novel, Jemima’s mother seems to be conditioned in accordance with the patriarchal expectations. Based on the psychoanalytic premise, woman is considered a lack and in order to be able to survive she has to exist with her body. In this regard, Jemima’s mother attempts to make a copy of herself in Jemima: “Her mother, you see, thinks she wants what’s best for Jemima. In fact, her mother wants what’s best for her mother. Her mother wants a slim, beautiful

daughter who will be the envy of all her neighbors” (p. 113). Her mother’s insistence on a slim body is indeed the indication of the societal assertiveness: in order to survive, a woman must be careful with her mere toy: the body:

What she doesn’t want is what she’s got. A daughter she loves, but of whom she’s ashamed. Because at this moment in time Jemima’s mother tries her damndest not to take her daughter shopping. She tries to avoid the pitying stares of shopkeepers, the humiliation of having to shop in plus-size stores, of people staring at them walking down the street (p. 114).

Since her childhood, Jemima is marginalized because of her fat body, and this has led her to face somatophobia. The reason for hating her body is directly related to the structural labels and the discursive language which exclude her from the active life she could enjoy to the full extent. When her roommates Sophie and Lisa call her “mimey”, Jemima remembers the “back memories of being the fat girl in the class, the one who was bullied, the one who was always left out” (p. 8). The obese evaluates her whole life as “the idealized image her parents had planned for her, particularly her mother, whose own childhood had been deprived and who had wanted her daughter to have all the things she had missed” (Bruch, 1973, p. 102). Most probably because of her mother’s own complexes concerning femininity, she almost forces Jemima to control her weight. Her mother plays the role of the panopticon eye in her daughter’s life on the purpose of maintaining the phallogentric perception of being a woman. Thus, under the influence of her mother’s directives, Jemima feels obliged to discipline her body in line with her mother’s wishes. Therefore, she calls her mother as soon as she begins to lose weight. Jemima is delighted since she believes that she has achieved the ideal body shape through the great effort she exerts so that her mother would love her: “I’ve become the daughter she always wanted” thinks Jemima (p. 177). Through her new body Jemima believes she could prove her love for her mother, and she thinks that her mother would love her on the condition that she loses weight.

Jemima didn’t have an adolescence like most teenage girls. While her classmates were at parties, experimenting with makeup, clothes, and fumbling in darkened bedrooms on beds piled high with coats, Jemima was at home with her mother, eating, watching television, and daydreaming (p. 158).

Due to the lack of a father figure and her mother’s directives on her personality and body Jemima tries to find solace in foods, and in the end she becomes an overweight. The more her mother forces her to discipline and contain her body, the more Jemima

attempts to appease her emotional hunger through eating. Accordingly, with a huge body she refrains from being visible and isolates herself from the public. All day at home, through eating, dreaming a different Jemima, eating, and eating again, Jemima uses eating as a response to her mother's commands. She is aware of the fact that her mother always dictates the roles cast in for her and the image that she wants her daughter to impersonate. By the time Jemima and Brad talk about their families, Jemima states that she does not have any brothers or sisters, and Brad wonders whether she did feel lonely when she was a child. Besides her turbulent relationship with her mother, Jemima's loneliness causes her to suffer from binge eating as a sort of solace:

I wasn't just lonely as a child, I was achingly, heartbreakingly lonely. I used to go to bed at night and clasp my hands together, praying to God to deliver a baby brother or sister, not fully understanding that without a father, there was little, if any, chance of that happening (p. 124-125).

Influenced by psychoanalysis, the feminist writer Chernin does claim that somatophobia-based eating disorders are the results of the turbulent relationship between mother and daughter. Mothers and daughters are concerned themselves with food rather than sexuality. "The "hunger-knot" experienced by so many modern daughters represents issues of failed female development, fear, and the daughter's guilt over her desire to surpass her mother", and those diagnosed as anorectic attempt to imply their "desire to reunite or bond with the mother" (Brumberg, 2000, p. 31).

From infancy through old age we are taught to conform our bodies to external shapes. We learn to perform physical activities in specifically prescribed ways. We are rewarded for keeping quiet and controlling our bodily impulses. The implied meaning of these recurrent nonverbal messages in consistent with the explicit teachings: our bodies, with their feelings, impulses, and perceptions, are not to be trusted, and must be subjected to external controls to keep them from leading us astray. They must be trained to support the status quo (Johnson, 1992, p.33).

Apart from the troublesome relationship with her mother, Jemima also suffers from the memories that influence her healthy personality development in a negative way. "Jemima isn't a virgin, but her virginity was lost during a quick tumble in the dark with a boy who was so inconsequential he may as well stay anonymous" (p. 18). As stated in the novel, Jemima was raped when she was a child; her body was captured and misused by an unknown man, and this makes Jemima depressed. Since the violation, Jemima has become obsessed with her body, and she begins to hate it. In the form of revenge, she always eats and she never has a proper boyfriend: "And since then she has had the odd

fling with men who have a penchant for the larger lady. But she has never really enjoyed sex, has never tasted the pleasures of making love, but that doesn't stop a girl from dreaming does it?" (p. 18). After this event, she becomes distant to her own body because of the feeling of guilt and sick for her misused body. She regards her body as the source of the sin; because of her corporeal existence she believes she was raped. Although she hates her body and treats it as if it were her enemy, Jemima, under the influence of the cultural impositions, dreams about having a slim and sexy body which she regards as "daydreaming about romance, which is something you have little experience of" (p. 17).

And up until recently Jemima had shown very little interest in the opposite sex. Yes, she had lost her virginity, but she had never felt what it was like to pine for someone, to lie awake all night praying they will notice you, to wince with pain when you realize they will never reciprocate your feelings (p. 159).

No matter how traumatic the emotional burnout she experiences, Jemima never thinks better of eating and daydreaming; thus, she states that "the only fun thing in my life has been fantasizing first about being thin" (p. 50). Despite the condition she is in because of her psychological breakdown, she tries to hold on to the life through her daydreams. Based on her inability to declare off the things she has experienced and recover her physical and psychological health, Jemima finds happiness and relief in her dreams: "Even first thing in the morning I will look gorgeous. With no makeup and tousled hair, I imagine meeting Mr. Perfect [...] exposing just my long, glowing legs, my bony knees, and naturally he will be head over heels in love with me" claims Jemima (p. 12). She is aware of the fact that she is away from the ideal female image with her huge bodily stance; yet, she tries to fantasize herself as the one she always wants to be: "in all her fantasies Jemima is thin" (p. 102). Accordingly, Jemima's discovery of the Internet represents a new world for her to maintain her dreams and become anyone she desires to be; "this could open up a whole new life for me, a new life that doesn't care about looks, about weight, about expanses of flesh" Jemima remarks (p. 49). "The state of starvation itself is associated with marked psychological changes which are often denied or camouflaged by rationalized explanations" (Bruch, 1973, p. 215). In order to get rid of her large body, Jemima decides to lose weight, and unaware of the fact that she turns out to be an anorectic, Jemima struggles for achieving the ultimate slender body. "I lie there and spin out an elaborate fantasy about what I would wear if I were thin. I would

have my hair cut into a super-trendy shaggy style, and perhaps, if I dared, would have a few blond highlights, just at the front” (p. 12). Under the influence of the phallogocentric worldview, Jemima feels marginalized and in order to survive within the system she is decisive enough to adapt her body to the standards.

Internalizing her inferiority which is based on her fat body, Jemima is unable to make sense of Geraldine’s cordiality with her. In other saying, because of her inferiority complex Jemima never considers her existence worthwhile: “why would Geraldine want to befriend someone like me? It’s not that I dislike her – she, after all, is one of the few to have always treated me like a human being – it’s just that I can’t help but be intimidated by her perfection” claims Jemima (p. 18). On the basis of the discursive language, Jemima is signified as an overweight and thus as an undeserving woman: “I know I’m overweight, she thought, but I’m not a bad person. I love animals, and children, and I’m kind to people and why does no one ever fall in love with me, why can’t Ben see through the weight and fall in love with me as a person” questions Jemima (p. 60). She tries to make sense of the judgments which make individuals worthy or not, and she deduces that the whole point is the surface, not the soul, not the spirituality that determines one’s status or value. Regarding her body as the cause of her victimhood, Jemima strives for having an ideal figure and thus having a prospective husband. She knows that woman can exist within such a patriarchal society so long as she maintains her femininity through her body. Therefore, she internalizes the discourse which regards woman as absent and she is convinced to perfect her body in order to be accepted by the male authority. She loves Ben; however, she knows that he is unattainable. Because of her fat body, Jemima thinks that it is impossible to be recognized: “There would be absolutely no point in me fancying Ben Williams, which, incidentally, I don’t, because he would never, ever, be interested in someone like me” (p. 104). Paradoxically enough, Jemima’s body becomes both the destroyer of her sense of self and the basic means for her survival.

4.4. Postmodern Feminist Perception of Femininity

As a reaction to the universal understanding of sex and gender, postmodernism characterizes values such as “the unstable, fluid, fragmented, indeterminate, ironic, and heterogeneous, for that which resists definition, closure, and fixity” (Bordo, 2003, p. 38). At the beginning of the novel, Jemima reflects her somatophobic disposal through

her fat body; because she is overweight, she develops a negative perception concerning her body. By the time she decides to get rid of her somatophobia, she decides to lose weight; however, she becomes an anorectic this time. Unaware of the fact that her new image would not offer any satisfaction for her identity, Jemima acts as if she did achieve her aim. As a consequence of her endeavor for a slim body image, Jemima achieves to lose weight and becomes a fashion model figure: “Jemima Jones looks exactly like the girl in the picture” (p. 167). She realizes that she no longer believes that food would console her: “Food. Jemima is eating just about enough to give her the energy to exercise, to watch her skin regain its taut elasticity, to rediscover bones and muscles she didn’t think she had” (p. 167). Nonetheless, Jemima discovers the fact that no matter how ideal her size has become, she is not content with her new appearance: “I still can’t believe that this is me, that the woman staring back at me in the mirror is Jemima Jones” (p. 177). Conditioned to lose weight in order to have the ideal slender body, Jemima supposes that she would be content with her image after constructing a new Jemima. However, she discovers the fact that it is not a matter of her body image that would make her happy and satisfied. Jemima’s self-realization does occur by the time she finds her silhouette not reflecting her own self. Although she thinks that “binges are now a thing of the past” (p. 167), Jemima, indeed, realizes that it is not her excess weight that makes her become alienated to her real self but her body-hatred based on the experiences she has had as a consequence of her interaction with her family, friends, and the body.

Jemima begins to see the truths starkly after she goes to California in order to know Brad better. As a pass time activity, Jemima decides to go the bookstores, and she asks about the bookstores around there to look and buy some books for herself. When she asks about his interests in a sense to understand the personality of Brad, he confesses that he does not read much. Then, he tries to remember the name of the book and the author, which he says, have influenced him the most. With the help of Jemima, the reader learns that the author is Hemingway. Jemima is shocked to discover such an ugly fact that he does not even know the name of a famous author. “I was completely, utterly speechless, and it suddenly became blindingly obvious what was wrong with Brad” (p. 228-229). This extract does reveal the fact that no matter how smart and intelligent a man pretends to be, the true personality is beyond the surface. On the basis of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the modern man considers woman incapable of

further education and development in artistic and scientific fields. However, Jemima proves that it is not a matter of dualism between mind/body and man/woman. Understanding the manipulative force of the archaic philosophy on the marginalization of women, Jemima discovers the fact that regarding woman as the lack of mental faculty and reason is nothing short of the discursive fiction.

After achieving the ideal body size, Jemima does no longer attempt to compare her body with those of the models in the magazines or daydream in order to console herself: “no longer does she tear out the pictures of models. She doesn’t need to, she’s fulfilled that dream, and, while she’s still interested, that degree of desperation has disappeared” (p. 252). She remembers the past when she was obsessed with her huge body and the inferiority complex her body caused her to live with; however, Jemima realizes the transformation both in her appearance and in her mind as a consequence of the endeavor she shows for attaining a slim body. The old Jemima tries to hide her body with the purpose of bias-suppression; however, Jemima now thinks that she is ready enough to present and make her body visible for others’ gazes: “thinking about how invisible I felt before I lost weight, and how much that had changed” (p. 263). However, Jemima finds out that body perfection or having the ideal body size is a matter of perception by the time she discovers the magazines at Brad’s: “The only thing I’m aware of at this very moment in time is the pile of photographs and magazines in front of me” states Jemima (p. 312). She discovers the fact that the cultural ideology, philosophical perception, and the psychoanalytic disposition, which have captured her body and mind through the instruments serving for the purpose of consumption, now uncovers the other side of the medallion: Jemima finds out that Brad is taken with “enormous women” (p. 312), and thus he takes magazines which appeal to men who have the same interest with Brad. “I turn the first page and read the note from the editor, addressed to those men who like larger ladies” states Jemima (p. 312). By the moment she finds out that there is no ideal body size and shape as a consequence of her discovery of the magazines at Brad’s, Jemima regrets making her body a battleground or a sort of enemy to be discarded. In other saying, Jemima realizes that achieving the ideal femininity through a slender body is not a norm.

I reach across and pull over one of the many magazines from the pile. “Big and Bouncy!” it proclaims on the cover, a lurid headline over a picture of a woman who’s not so much a woman, more a mountain of flesh. She’s completely naked, grinning into the camera and spreading her legs,

presumably to help the viewer see what they would otherwise miss due to the rolls of skin, the acres of fat that would otherwise completely obliterate her genitalia (p. 312).

Jemima examines the magazine, and she is appalled with the pictures she sees; she has never imagined a man could take interest in huge women. She begins to question the system that forces woman to shape, to correct, and to discipline her body in order to obtain the ideal body image for the sake of male approval. After seeing the pictures, Jemima realizes that all generalizations and all assumed obligations that cause woman to get obsessed with her body image is upside down now. By the moment she discovers the fact about Brad's interest in large women, Jemima wants to escape because she does not want to face the reality: the models in these pictures are in fact what she was a few months ago:

The horrified part of me doesn't want to look, wants to run crying into her mother's skirt and hope the big, bad, nasty world will go away, but that other part of me, the fascinated part, can't stop turning the pages because these women are me. They're what I used to be, except I never knew what I looked like then because I never dared look in the mirror properly. I used to pretend that if I couldn't see the fat then no one else could either (p. 313).

The awakening related to her body image is felt by the time Jemima realizes that these huge bodies serve just like the same purpose with slender models. These images in the pictures are constructed for the male gaze; there are always women – fat and slim – and men who are taken either by the overweight or by the slender body type.

Except looking closely I can see that these women aren't really me. They have pouting, glossy smiles, they lick their lips seductively as they look into the camera, they seem proud of their size, their bulk, their excessive weight, but they shouldn't be proud. Or should they? (p. 313).

While reading the magazines and examining the pictures of huge women, Jemima realizes a photograph which is indeed Jenny's naked body: "Jenny, lying on Brad's bed, smiling seductively into the camera" (p. 314). While Jemima is searching for the reason for such pictures, Jenny arrives at Brad's and explains everything: "Brad and I were at high school together [...] I looked pretty much the same as I do now. I was the overweight kid that everyone laughed at. Sure, I had my friends, the social misfits, the geeks, the nerds that no one else wanted to know" states Jenny (p. 316). Jenny states that Brad, as the hero of the school, did not notice her; however, he never let the others heap ridicule upon her. This made Jenny fall in love with him. After getting a secretarial job, just like Jemima loves Ben and daydreams for the day she would get slim and gain

his love, Jenny fantasizes that Brad one day would reciprocate her love. “I know I should hate her, she’s ruined my life, but I can’t hate her because sitting here listening to her voice I’m hearing the story of my life” Jemima claims for Jenny (p. 317). It is understood from her story, Jenny, like Jemima, suffered from somatophobia because of her overweight body as she thought that she was the one who is abstained from because of her fat body: “I never really had boyfriends, I never felt that anyone would be interested in me, but I never let go of the dream that Brad and I would somehow, someday, be together” Jenny avows (p. 317).

Despite the loathing she feels for her body, Jenny later learns that Brad in fact likes fat women. After listening to Jenny’s story, Jemima understands that it is always men who push women into desperate struggles. Jemima tries to understand the reason for her being there, and Jenny responds touchingly: “You think it’s easy to look the way I do in a town like this? [...] You think I don’t know what people think of me, what people would think of Brad if they knew he and I were together?” (p. 317). It is understood from Jenny’s explanation that Brad in fact takes interest in fat women, but as a consequence of social imperatives he pretends to be caught up in slim bodies. Put it differently, in the public realm, Brad is in need of a woman who represents the ideal female image, and worse still, Jenny is the one who normalizes this condition through adjusting her body and mind in accordance with Brad’s wishes. Upon this story, Jemima does notice the complicacy of her own condition: her own struggle for a feminine body image flashes before her eyes. As the representatives of the ideology, both Jenny and Jemima have forced their bodies to take shape in accordance with the expectations of the male masters: after learning the fact that Brad takes fancy in larger women, Jenny gives up the diet and remains fat, while Jemima punishes her body through self-starvation with the purpose of being admired. However, Jemima now becomes aware of the fact that the new Jemima is not the image that she has dreamed of all her life.

Despite the fact that she is now slim and has the potential to attract the attention of men, Jemima realizes that she is not happy with her new image: “The weird thing is that people judge me by my looks as much as they did before, only now they just come up with a completely different conclusion, and yes, I have a boyfriend, but my life certainly isn’t the fairy tale I thought it would be” Jemima states (p. 313). For Jemima, these magazines and the pictures wreck her life in that she has suffered and struggled all her

life for a pre-determined ideal body image. Even though she achieves the ostensible feminine image, Jemima is neither satisfied with her new appearance and its reflection on her soul, nor is she able to satisfy the man whom she thinks she would appeal to.

I realize that I really haven't felt myself since arriving in Los Angeles. I feel almost as if I'm playing a role [...] I've forgotten who I really am [...] I haven't felt myself since I lost weight and I never understood before how much I used the excess weight to protect myself (p. 313).

Awakening to her reality, Jemima decides to return to Santa Monica; she realizes that “this is about thinking that being blond and slim and perfect will automatically bring you happiness, and then discovering that life is full of as many disappointments as there were before” (p. 321). Jemima discovers that her lifelong struggle for attaining a slender body size – in order to exist in a patriarchal society – is nothing short of the fiction invented by the male hegemony. She understands her role as a puppet in the hands of the masculine order: she has always tried to be the one she is always taught as the best example: sexy and beautiful. Now she is sure that beauty cannot be measured through a pre-defined size and sexuality, and it is only the woman herself who has the right over her body. She discovers that fat is the thing that she used as a guard and as a resistance against the system that attempts to shape her sense of self through transforming her body. After gaining self-realization, Jemima decides to return to her reality; “the only thing that will make me feel better right now is food. Lots of it. As much as I can eat” (p. 322). In the beginning, Jemima seems to console herself in eating; however, this time her intention is disparate. Now she eats because she rejects what she has done for others; she tries to recollect her real self. She learns that her real identity is free from the definitions, and thus she achieves the coherence between her body and mind:

Cravings. I'd forgotten about cravings, but now I'm getting the strongest craving of my life, and for your information I'm not sitting here thinking about lettuce, or rice cakes, or even, gasp, a loaf of bread. I'm sitting here thinking about spare ribs. About Singapore noodles. About pasta. About cookies. About cakes dripping with sugar and cream (p. 323).

Upon the shock, Jemima instructs the taxi driver to take her to a mall where she plans to eat everything: she eats a sandwich, a hamburger, some Singapore noodles, sweet things, and then she buys a cinnamon roll. By the time she arrives at Lauren, Jemima tells of everything she has witnessed that day. Lauren, as a response, suggests Jemima write a piece for the magazine concerning “good-looking bastards”: “For this piece you can write a bit of first-person stuff, but expand on the theme, how we're taken in by

looks, how we're blinded by lust, how easy it is to fall for what someone looks like, not who they are" (p. 327). After taking a shower at Lauren's, Jemima goes to the kitchen and opens the refrigerator. "Without thinking, I pull out a tray of sushi, a carton of yogurt, a cellophane package of precooked chicken" says Jemima (p. 329). Jemima's excessive eating is the indication of her negation of the roles and the pre-determined female image as slim and sexy. By contrast, Jemima is now well aware of the necessity for turning to her body and accepting it as it is. Therefore, this time her eating is not a disorder that she suffered unconsciously formerly in the form of binge eating; rather, this time, Jemima eats consciously as a token of self acceptance and self-realization:

But I don't stop there, even though I know I should. I pull out packets of ready-made salads, cheese, fat-free cookies. I spy the bread box and dig down to where half a loaf of whole grain bread is temporarily residing [...] I sit at the kitchen table and I eat. And eat. And eat. And eat (p. 329).

At the beginning of the novel, Jemima is the one who suffers from somatophobia because of her perception of the body as something to be abhorred. On the purpose of achieving the ideal body image, Jemima disciplines her body through self-starvation under the name of a diet. She loses weight; yet, she becomes an anorectic. Not content with her slim body, Jemima discovers that her body belongs merely to herself, and thus, she does not have the necessity to turn it into a doll in the hands of men. "I look at my taut, muscular figure, so lean now that I look more like a boy than a woman. I run my hand over my flat breasts and remember how pendulous they used to be, how like the women I saw in the pictures today. How like Jenny" Jemima claims (p. 331). At the end of the novel, Jemima overcomes her somatophobia through binge eating – this time in a different way. "I remember how people judged me, how they misjudged me" Jemima declares (p.188). She remembers how she was exposed to suffer from harsh criticism because of her fat body and how she was obliged to adopt the norms as truth. However, Jemima now feels free from the masculine principles: "I lie in bed and I know I should feel guilty at the amount I've eaten today, but I don't" she claims (p. 330).

Rather than feel guilty due to the great amount of eating, Jemima feels safe and happy: "that this bulge is just the temporary result of tonight's binge, but the more I stroke it the more I like it. It feels rounded, feminine, womanly" she says (p. 331). By the time she changes her perception of the body, Jemima regards her body as more feminine, and above everything, as something that she appreciates more than anything else. "I get up

in a while, curious to see what it looks like in the mirror, and I go into Lauren's bedroom and pull the full-length mirror around to face me. I lift my T-shirt up over my head and stand there, naked, just looking at myself" she states (p. 331). Jemima does not feel any discontent with her body although she can see the fat around her belly. "I remember how I used my size and my flesh to hide away from the world, to hide my sexuality, to hide who I was, and I know that, despite in a strange way feeling comforted by my size" (p. 330). When she remembers the old days, Jemima cannot make sense of her endeavor to look sexy and beautiful through making her body slender. Now, she likes and accepts her body as it is:

That I'm a survivor too; that the experiences I've had over the last few months would surely have broken someone weaker than me. It's not that I feel terribly strong on the surface, but I know, as an absolute certainty, that deep down I have an amazing reserve of strength, which all in all is pretty comforting really (p. 370).

By the time she returns to her own body and negates to conform to the rules that dictate her to submit to the masculine authority, Jemima feels strong enough to break the chains that did oblige her to associate her existence merely with her body. This new Jemima has the power to subvert the roles that have been attributed to her sex; she believes that she has the potential to direct her own life without letting others pry into her affairs. Jemima comes to realize that her body belongs to herself, and merely she has the right over it: either fat or thin, she learns to appreciate it. In order to make a new start, Jemima decides to lead her life. She is aware of the fact that she is not a lack and she thus she decides to carry out her dreams. By the time she learns how to change her perception of her body, Jemima indeed discovers her beauty and potential to alter the direction of the events:

This is a whole new start, Jemima Jones. A whole new chapter: mine to write however I choose. And the first step is not going back to the Kilburn Herald. If Ben can do it, so can I. I'm going to fulfill that dream, work on a glossy magazine, and that's just the beginning. Once upon a time this would have terrified me, but now I can't wait to get started, to set off on a new journey, this time surrounded by people I love, who love me in return (p. 371).

Questioning her sense of self, Jemima awakens to the reality that all her life she has struggled for being accepted. "And Jemima Jones is no longer lonely. Jemima Jones no longer dreams of the perfect romance with a man she can't have. She no longer believes that true love only exists outside herself" (p. 373). She discovers that no matter how it is

forced to adapt to the assumed norms, the female body is beyond the definitions. By the time she returns to her body, she realizes that happiness comes from the inside, and thus she learns to listen to the inner Jemima. From now on, she is decisive enough to live a life of her own regardless of the rules and definitions associated with her body.

Jemima Jones is no longer skinny, no longer hard bodied, no longer obsessed with what she eats. Jemima Jones is now a voluptuous, feminine, curvy size 10 who is completely happy with how she looks. Jemima Jones now eats what she wants, when she wants, as often as she wants, as long as it's reasonably healthy (p. 373)

Gaining self-realization, Jemima disregards the norms/gender roles that captured her identity through enslaving her body within the system. This new Jemima appreciates her body as it is, and irrespective of her size and shape. She eats in accordance with her wishes and the only criterion for her to be careful with her weight is her health. Jemima's appetite is related to her freedom; she is now at her liberty to do whatever she wants. After Jemima achieves to appreciate her body regardless of the definitions and norms attributed to it, she feels liberated. Despite the fact that she did struggle all her life for being noticed and admired, Ben recognizes her beauty by the time she really accepts her own self: Ben falls in love with her and they get married in the end. All in all, Jemima finds happiness after she disregards the definitions based on her sex that determine her position in life and the gender roles that she is exposed to perform because of her assumed nature. The happy ending of the novel is related to the perception that she ascribes to her body. By the time she perceives her body as something that belongs to her and herself as the mere authority over her body, Jemima does overcome the problems that caused her to antagonize her body.

4.4.1. Subversive Aspect of Anorexia Nervosa and Binge Eating

At the beginning of the novel, Jemima is portrayed as an obese, and the obesophobic disposal of Jemima causes her to become more obsessed with her body. Despite the fact that she is aware of the necessity for losing weight to be approved by the sexist masculine order, Jemima is unable to restrain her appetite and cannot withhold herself from replacing her emotional hunger with eating:

I, Jemima Jones, eat a lot. I catch the glares of disapproval on the occasions I eat out in public, and I try my damndest to ignore them. Should someone, some "friend" trying to be caring and sharing, question me gently, I'll tell them I have a thyroid problem, or a gland problem, and occasionally I'll tack

on the fact that I have a super-slow metabolism as well [...] so people don't think the only reason I am the size I am is because of the amount I eat (p. 2).

Especially in public atmosphere, Jemima feels marginal; because she does not want to be the focus of people's bitter criticism, she wishes to be invisible. Since she cannot lose weight, Jemima makes up an excuse for her fatness: she wants to make people believe that she is fat because she has a chronic illness, through which she thinks it proves her right to be overweight. As a consequence of the social force, Jemima suffers from somatophobia; because of her huge embodiment she fears her body and she never wants her body to be noticed in community and to be subjected to verbal attacks. As an outcome of her somatophobia, she unavoidably reads people's minds: she thinks that people find her unattractive and childish just because of her appearance. She is twenty-seven years old, and she describes herself as funny, kind, and caring. "But of course people don't see that when they look at Jemima Jones. They simply see fat" remarks Jemima (p. 2). She is aware of the societal assertiveness on the ideal femininity; she knows that people deal with her outward appearance, and therefore, they are unable to realize her other features except her surplus weight: "they don't see what I see when I look in the mirror. Selective visualization [...] They don't see my glossy light brown hair. They don't see my green eyes, they don't see my full lips" Jemima avows (p. 2-3). Despite the fact that she finds her body parts appealing enough to make her content with herself, she is aware of the fact that people deal not with the parts but with the big picture she presents. Accordingly, Jemima wants to be invisible in order to keep herself aloof from the harsh judgments directed on her body. The isolation from the society turns out to be one of the factors that lead her to become depressed and obsessed with her body:

for all my faults I'm not sad. Miserable a lot of time, yes, but those who bother to get under the layers of fat know that not only does there beat a heart of gold, I'm also bloody good fun to be around, providing I'm in the right mood. But nobody really bothers to look for that, nobody really bothers to look beneath the surface appearance (p. 10).

"God, I wish I were thin. I wish I were thin, gorgeous, and could get any man I want" (p. 1) Jemima claims at the very beginning of the novel. This statement reveals the relationship between somatophobia Jemima experiences under the influence of the philosophical assumptions, the cultural definitions, the media, and the psychological experiences on the female body image and the relevant eating disorders she suffers. The

eating disorders which Jemima faces emerge initially in the form of binge eating and subsequently of anorexia nervosa as a consequence of her body hatred. Green portrays Jemima as a woman with inferiority complex due to the bitter criticism that the modern world directs to her sex. Except for the fact that she is female, her inability to have the ideal body size makes her disgust with her body. Because of her physical appearance Jemima has always drawn heavy criticism: she is fat and this reality excludes her from the life that she could enjoy fully.

As a symptom of her somatophobia which is based on her undesirable body image, Jemima refrains herself from public spheres, therefore, she disdains herself by the time Geraldine talks about a restaurant which Jemima believes that she should never go: “a restaurant for the rich and the beautiful” (p. 21). This is the place where rich men take beautiful women with the mere purpose of seducing them through gaudiness and money. Green reveals the disgraceful picture of modern societies and the perception of femininity: man represents power and he exercises his strength over woman monetarily. Woman, as things stand, allows her body and soul to be consumed for the sake of passing fancies of dolce vita. In order to be able to get a taste of such ecstasies, Jemima believes that her essential aim is to have the ideal body size through which she thinks she could make her existence purposeful in a world full of empty patriarchal values. Because the society forces woman to find her stance in life through a male savior, Jemima, as a representative of the popular culture, yearns for achieving body perfection as the sole pursuit in her life; she believes that she could attract the attention of any man just through a feminine body, and thus she would secure her future. As a consequence of the pressure the cultural instruments create for woman and the generalizations made concerning the female sex as a corporeal entity, Jemima experiences body hatred and even the rejection of it. Her body, as Green describes, is rather interpreted as an object that she is supposed to put at the disposal of the male desire.

Jemima feels the same guilt of being visible; she wants to hide her body as a whole when Ben invites her to a café to pass time together; she is quite excited and at the same time anxious because of her wish for invisibility: “Jemima instantly wishes they had gone somewhere else, somewhere less trendy, somewhere she didn’t feel out of place” (p. 93). She is happy as Ben is with her at that very moment; however, her fat body soon disturbs her: “But as I stand up I suddenly have a horrifying thought. From the front, I

am passable. I can just about hide my size, and hope that people look at my eyes or my hair, but from the back even I admit that I'm huge" she states (p. 100). While trying to cool down, Jemima notices how the female body is used as an inviting image for the male desire: "large picture windows look out on to the street, and a huge bust of a woman, the sort of bust that used to be on the front of ships in pirate movies, stares fondly down from the top of the door frame" (p. 93). Green attacks the traditional and modern portrayal of woman through her protagonist: Jemima reveals the fact that people evaluate woman in terms of her outward appearance; unfortunately, she regards that people pay no attention to the inner realities or beauties of her. Because the determinative feature of a woman's position within the society is her body, under the influence of the consumer culture, she thinks that if she were thin she would wear stretch pants that would highlight her slim legs and sexy body. However, she considers her body quite faulty with its size, and thus, she negates her right to wear whatever she wants because of her fat body:

If I were slim, you would say I look fantastic in my bold striped trousers and long tunic top in a perfectly matching shade of orange. But no, because of the size I am people look at me and think, "God, she shouldn't wear such bright colors, she shouldn't draw attention to herself (p. 3).

The isolation and lack of confidence cause Jemima to suffer from body hatred: "call me pathetic, call me loser, but I can't help it" she remarks (p. 59). The reason for her growing flesh-loathing is based on the inferiority complex she has for her body. She loves Ben; however, she believes that she does not deserve him because of her body size. Feeling of guilt causes her to become more obsessed with her somatophobia. Unable to overcome her emotional hunger, Jemima finds consolation in eating more:

because lying on your bed feeling fat and miserable is inevitably the beginning of a binge, and last night, when Jemima had composed herself, she phoned the local pizza delivery company. They brought round a large pizza [...] Jemima opened the front door and pretended she was having a load of friends round. Just to make sure they believed her she also ordered four cans of Diet Coke (p. 64).

Within the modern thinking, anorexia nervosa and Cartesian dualism have much in common in a sense that both reject and marginalize the body as corporeal while celebrating the mind as the dominium over the body. Through self-imposed infliction, the anorectic Jemima attempts, in vain, to be included in the male locus. Because from the feminist perspective, anorexia is interpreted as a "dieting disease", this bodily

disorder is regarded as the defeat of Jemima under the patriarchal system due to the fact that the male authority does indoctrinate the ideal female appearance as slender. Because woman has always been portrayed as corporeal, the body is instilled as the single pursuit of her life. Within a socially constructed world, Jemima is supposed to dedicate herself to perfect her body through dieting and self-starvation. In this case, she does fall victim to the game projected by misogynists: “Women with eating fixations see temptation everywhere. Since women’s appetites are satanic, the cult member is in a trap from which there is no escape” (Wolf, 2002, p. 127). In order to overcome her body hatred, Jemima wishes to lose weight and achieve the ideal feminine body size. In other words, she dreams for a thin and fit size without any flaws that would otherwise make any man disgust her. However, by the time she wakes up, she faces the fact of her body: she is overweight, and the more her somatophobic tendency deepens the more she becomes obsessed with her figure. When she wakes up in the morning, Jemima controls her body lines and consoles herself about the flatness of her stomach while lying on the bed: “Jemima lies there and rubs her stomach, half affectionately, half repellently, for there is something innately comforting in the bulk that is her body. But then she rolls over to her side, and tries to forget her stomach weighing down, sinking into the mattress” (p. 14). Trying to find a consolation for her body, Jemima is well aware of the fact that she deceives herself; just while lying on the bed, her stomach seems just as she wants: flat.

Because of her body obsession, Jemima even hates the mirrors which reflect her reality. Therefore, as an indication and even as the final point of her somatophobia, she avoids seeing her body as blindingly obvious. Once she gets dressed, she feels comfortable in the mirror as she is covered and does not have to be exposed to face her filthy body: “Avoids the mirror in the bathroom, for it is full length and she really does not want to see herself in all her glory. Starts running a bath, and pours at least five capfuls of bubble bath in to hide her flesh” (p. 15). Jemima hates her body especially when she is exposed to see it naked, and she tries to forget or ignore her reality through turning a blind eye: “when she’s covered in the comfort of her clothes, does she look in the mirror and quite like what she sees. She likes her intelligent green eyes, and she applies the tiniest eyeliner and mascara, just to accentuate them” (p. 15). She does recuperate her

lack of self-confidence through the clothes she wears as a sort of camouflage. Despite her fat body, she is aware of the beauty and the ingeniousness her eyes radiate.

Jemima's complex of inferiority is based on her huge body image; she believes that she would overcome her binge eating problem through disciplining her body via diets and exercise. However, she is oblivious to her body's reactions: unaware of the fact that she punishes her body through excessive pounds she loses, Jemima turns out to be an anorectic. "I have been slimmer, but not slim" she thinks by the time she becomes obsessed with her body (p. 3). Jemima's perception of her body causes her to deepen her body-fear. As Heywood defines, anorexia represents Jemima's relationship with different types of the body, and she attempts to find the appropriate one for her identity: The ghost body represents the body image as we perceive it to be, the real body which is biological, and the ideal body which our bodies become. Representative of the contemporary societies, Jemima denies her existing body in search of an ideal one, and in order to achieve the level of the ideal body, she decides to construct her body in accordance with others' wishes; thus, she turns her body into a ghost. In this context, the ideal body which is beyond the raw material – biological – is carved out through working on it.

Jemima worries excessively about her huge stance, and she decides to attend to a gym along with the dietary follow-up. "I know I've only lost ten pounds, but I can see the difference already. My clothes are slightly baggier, my trousers no longer cut into the place where my waist should be, nor are they straining at the seams when I sit down" she states (p. 119). By the time Jemima arrives at the gym club, the fitness instructor, Paul asks several questions in order to apply the appropriate program for her. When he asks her weight, Jemima gets anxious: "This is my biggest nightmare. No one's ever measured my fat before, Jesus, no one even knows how much I weigh, and my eyes suddenly fall upon the scales in the corner of the room. Shit, shit, shit" (p. 136). As an indication of her somatophobia and anorectic disposal, Jemima does not want her body to be examined and known; she wants to keep her weigh as a secret since she believes it would be horrific to be discovered by someone else. Soon after she dedicates herself to her diet and gym, she achieves to lose weight considerably: "the transformation, in just a month, is completely remarkable. Paul, the trainer, is quite frankly amazed, but he is also slightly worried because the weight has dropped off at an alarming rate, and he

suspects that Jemima is eating far less than he told her to” (p. 140). Her instructor is anxious since he suspects that Jemima has become an anorectic. “He has tried to broach the subject with Jemima, but she is instantly dismissive. “Of course I’m eating enough, Paul!” [...] Anorectic? Me? Don’t make me laugh. For the record Jemima isn’t anorectic, merely obsessed, which is definitely equally unhealthy, and possibly nearly as dangerous” Jemima declares (p. 182). Bruch claims that woman with eating disorders “makes her body a stand-in for the life that she cannot control. She experiences a disturbance of “delusional proportions” with respect to her body image, and she eats in a peculiar and disorganized fashion” (Brumberg, 2000, p. 30). Although she begins to lose weight considerably, Jemima is never satisfied and she does not realize the change that her body has undergone.

As Barry and Colebrook indicate, “the anorectic is the victim of representation, trapped in embodiment through stereotypical and alienating images” (1998, p. 37). Rejecting being an anorectic, Jemima cannot control her loss of appetite which was once for her binge eating: “She sits at her desk and swigs mineral water all morning, and then for lunch she has a side plate of plain lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumber, while Geraldine shakes her head in amazement, still unable to comprehend Jemima’s willpower after all this time” (p. 141). Under the influence of her body hatred and as a consequence of the brainwashing ideologies of the traditional philosophy and the popular culture, Jemima is unable to realize the transformation, and as an indication of anorexia nervosa, she still observes her body as a huge embodiment:

She still thinks she is huge, although she is infinitely less huge than she was a few months ago, and refuses to watch herself in the mirrors at the gym, except to think that one day all this excess weight will be gone. One day she will have a hard body. One day she will be a hardbody (p. 141).

Away from appreciating her present image, Jemima becomes body-obsessed; she does not buy any clothes that would fit her current size because she aims to achieve ultimate thinness more than anything: “She likes the feeling of her clothes being large and, although she hasn’t as yet bought anything new, she knows that if she carries on being as good as she has been, it won’t be long before she will be able to wear whatever she wishes” (p. 142). As an indication of her anorexia, Jemima’s obsessive attempt to look slim does reveal the fact that she has become the product of modern culture: “They actually practice looking at themselves in the mirror, over and over, taking pride in

every pound they lose and every bone that shows. The more pride they take in it, the stronger the assertion that they look just fine” (Bruch, 1979, p. 81-82). Under the influence of the ideal body image projected through the media, Jemima still finds her body unsatisfactory for the pre-determined measure: “Jemima stands in the bathroom, takes off all her clothes and looks at herself in the full-length mirror. She still feels revulsion at the cellulite on her thighs, the bulges on her hips, but even she has to concede that the change is miraculous” (p. 142). The eating disorders that Jemima experiences as binge eating and anorexia nervosa reveal the effect of somatophobia on her perception of the body. Despite the fact that everybody around her remarks her metamorphosis, she never takes her at their words. To illustrate, Geraldine is shocked by the appearance of new Jemima, and although she emphasizes how skinny she looks, Jemima never accepts it.

Jemima expresses that “she looks different, she knows she feels different, she’s just not entirely sure how she should be feeling about it” (p. 168). Upon discovering that she has changed dramatically in terms of her body size, Jemima finds herself discontented: “although I can see that I’ve changed, that I look like a completely different person, underneath I still feel the same, I still feel fat” she states (p. 180). All her life Jemima has desired to have an ideal body, and now she has achieved to arouse others’ attention; however, she does not like the new Jemima. No matter how admiringly people utter her beauty, Jemima is not content with her body: “I’m getting a bit sick of people telling me how beautiful I am, I just can’t take it all that seriously, and I don’t feel beautiful” states Jemima (p. 180). In other words, Jemima is not happy though she achieves the ultimate thinness: “Yes, I feel better, more confident, but I’m still the same person inside, and if I’m being really honest with myself I wouldn’t say I’m that much happier now, and all the insecurities I had when I was fat are still there, they haven’t gone away, even though that sounds ridiculous” she regards (p. 313). As a consequence of the impact of anorexia nervosa, Jemima grows apprehensive for her body. She has the ideal body now; nonetheless, she thinks that she would have the same huge body again. The discontent related to her body perception is based on the societal assertiveness that causes Jemima to fear to experience the same nightmare of being fat:

And although I look in the mirror and I don’t recognize myself, in a weird sort of way this feels like a game too. It feels like it can’t be real, that I’m

playing at being thin, and that at some point I will be fat again. I know I'm thin because I'm buying size 8 clothes [...] but I still feel the same (p. 192).

By the moment she meets Brad's personal assistant, Jenny, Jemima observes that she is also overweight, and thus Jemima resembles herself with Jenny; realizing that Jenny is aggressive, Jemima concludes that Jenny has the same anxieties and fears that Jemima did have when she was fat. As a consequence of her fat-phobia, Jenny may feel a sort of envy when she sees the slender and thus beautiful women: "I remember how I felt when someone skinny and beautiful was introduced to me, how inadequate I felt, how I couldn't look them in the eye, and I try desperately to think of a way to make Jenny feel at ease" states Jemima (p. 223). With a purpose to feel empathy for the assistant, Jemima remembers the hard times she did have with her body. "You can't even begin to imagine what it was like being [...] fat. It colors your whole life. Nobody wants to be seen with you, nobody notices you, or if they do it's because they think you're worthless" remarks Jemima (p. 263). As a result of her own experiences, Jemima could understand the inferiority complex of Jenny and the societal assertiveness concerning her femininity: "I know how superficial Los Angeles is, how people will only accept you if you're beautiful. And slim" remarks Jemima (p. 318). However, rather than cover the expectation of Jemima, Jenny lets Jemima down by her explanations; she states that Jemima is there "because Brad needed a trophy girlfriend. He needed someone who's blond and skinny [...] He needed someone like you to prove that he's made it" (p. 318). Jenny explains the real reason for her fleshiness; Jenny is fat because Brad desires for fat women. She states that she does not feel any guilt for her huge body; yet, it does not change the fact that she is one of the products of the society as well. Brad, on the other hand, wants to be seen with a woman who has the ideal female image; under the influence of the patriarchal ideology that defines woman as slender and sexy, Brad feels obliged to pretend to take interest in women with a slim body; because the woman he is with also determines her stance and his position within the society. The sexist masculine order regards it as a matter of "having" or "possessing" woman and her body under the dominion of man; thus, the more the ideal feminine features a woman has, the more the man gains favor in public.

Jemima subverts the modern understanding of the eating disorders and thus her body perception by the time she awakens to the reality that having the ideal femininity is nothing short of the myths the patriarchal ideology does regulate via the instruments

which serve for the purpose of the male satisfaction. After discovering the fact that it is not merely the body which determines her stance in life, Jemima accepts her body as it is, and as an indication of her recovery from her somatophobia she begins to eat and eat again; however, this time she performs a conscious act of eating with the purpose of rejecting the values that make her woman and feminine. Therefore, by the time Lauren questions the reason for her previous pretext of being fat, Jemima responds: "I supposed in a way I wanted to hide from everyone. Even though I hated it, it was my protection, it kept people away and a part of me was very frightened of people, especially of men, and my size made me feel safe" (p. 263). Because female body represents sexuality, Jemima attempts to hide her sexuality by covering her body with fat. As a consequence of the trauma that she goes through after the rape and her mother's accusatory attitude towards her, Jemima gains fat as a means of protection from the outside world. However, after having the slim and sexy body, Jemima indeed realizes that no matter what she does to satisfy the male desire, it must be her own wishes that must be fulfilled.

Quite contrary to the modern definitions of eating disorders, Green undergirds the poststructuralist and postmodern feminist epistemology which suggest alternative solutions to the dualistic stance degrading and objectifying woman and her body. Within the novel, postmodern feminist epistemology upholds that "body fascism and the tyranny of thin and the sense that we should all be one size is not only unrealistic, it is unhealthy and unattainable" (Orbach, 2006, p. 19). Jemima reacts to the system through negating her gender roles that are believed to make her woman and thus feminine. Put it differently, she disregards the norms which attempt to enslave her body and force her to perform the roles identified with her by the system. In this regard, anorexia nervosa and binge eating are the rebellious acts against the system and the ideology which push Jemima into her bodily functions. Jemima deconstructs the definition of the ideal femininity via the ideal body size, and she reconstructs her own body in accordance with her own wishes and desires. Accordingly, the subversion of the images which are associated with her body is achieved through a language that Jemima speaks with her body with the purpose of subverting the manipulative patriarchal discourse. By the time she rejects the stereotypical image of the female existence and embraces her body independent from the instrumental and objectified function

associated with it, Jemima in fact gains self-confidence and “creates a chink in the armour of a patriarchal order” (Orbach, 2006, p. 252).



CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman*, Fay Weldon's *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and Jane Green's *Jemima J.* have been studied in terms of eating disorders which both stimulate and remove somatophobia. By examining the novels with reference to somatophobia and the relevant disorders – anorexia nervosa and binge eating –, the female body has been handled as a subversive power. Because postmodern feminism draws on and critiques the essentialist norms and negates the Western values which are regarded as universal truths, in this dissertation the selected novels are examined by making reference to the invalidity of the dualistic approaches such as the traditional philosophy of mind over body and the modernist understanding of objectivity over subjectivity, singular over plural, and rational over irrational. Adopting difference rather than equality, Atwood, Weldon, and Green make use of postmodern feminism as a deconstructionist method of sex and gender issues. In other words, through their novels, Atwood, Weldon, and Green offer the subversive aspect of the female body via the challenge the heroines pose against the sexist masculine order.

This dissertation has dealt with the reasons for the emergence and development of the somatophobic tendencies in the female characters and the eating disorders as the nodal point they suffer in the cause of negating their bodies. Connoting body fear and body hatred in the simplest form, somatophobia targets merely women; therefore, in this study the philosophical background has provided a basis for the explanation of the relationship between somatophobia and woman. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the symptoms of somatophobia which eventually give rise to eating disorders – anorexia nervosa or binge eating – have been discussed with reference to the judgments Plato and Aristotle made concerning the corporeality of woman. Marian, Esther, and Jemima are all discriminated and coerced to experience body fear and hatred as a consequence of the impositions the conventional philosophy directed on their bodies. Furthermore, the Hegelian philosophy has been discussed in

terms of the division it makes between the private and public realms: Marian, Esther, and Jemima are exposed to face marginalization especially in the business world; based on the idea that they are corporeal, the protagonists, as well as the antagonist women in the novels, experience unjust treatment in the public life. Esther in *The Fat Woman's Joke* is coerced to exist within the domestic sphere through performing duties to satisfy her husband's wishes and the maternal responsibilities for her son, while Marian and Jemima feel the oppressive and repressive force of patriarchy in their stance in the business life.

Descartes's argument that paves the way for somatophobia has also been discussed in this study: Cartesian dualism, which is based on the dichotomy between mind and body, gives precedence to the male existence which is thought to represent spirit and reason, and thus the Cartesian myth provokes the idea that woman is intrinsically a lack. When declaring "I will consider myself as having no hands, no eyes, no flesh, no blood, nor any senses," (qtd. in Dicker, 1980, p. 115), Descartes does emphasize the mastery of the mind over the body in that just through the former one is able to think properly. In *The Edible Woman*, *The Fat Woman's Joke*, and *Jemima J.*, the female characters have been portrayed as the productions of the patriarchal system; they all internalize Descartes's dualism which marginalizes women because of their ostensible existence as embodiments. All the male characters believe that the material body cannot constitute an accomplished self to the core while the infrangibly designed mind is the essential part of the self, through which they think they can achieve control and dominance. Therefore, the male characters in the novels studied in this dissertation have been handled as the ones who regard themselves as the authority over women. Representing a direct contrast with the postmodern feminist ideals, Cartesian dualism, which bears the traces of the archaic philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and symbolizes the beginning of the modernism, has been examined on the purpose of revealing the reasons which both enslave woman within her body and cause her to turn against her body.

"By virtue of her sex, she represents the temptations of the flesh and the source of man's moral downfall. By virtue of her race, she is instinctual animal, undeserving of privacy and undemanding of respect" Bordo remarks in order to explain the relationship between somatophobia and the eating disorders (2003, p. 11). In line with the philosophical foundation, the eating disorders experienced in the modern world have

been interpreted as the manifestation of body fear, through which each heroine attempts to get rid of her body. As Heywood does state, the logic of the anorectic and the obese is related to the “logic of assimilation that values mind over body, thin over fat, white over black, masculine over feminine, individual over community” (1996, p. xii). Thus, in the novels studied in this dissertation, the anorectic/obese has been interpreted as a woman who is at war with her body: either by starving and punishing it she attempts to ensure self-discipline under the name of training her body, or by overeating and thus rejecting her overall control over it. “You love your agony and pain because they are designated as the price of admission to the upper reaches of white male high culture, the realm of individual achievement, power and precedence” (1996, p. 5-6). In this context, the eating disorders has been interpreted first – within the popular understanding – as the representation of self-sacrifice and of the desperate acceptance of woman’s passivity over her body (1996, p. 6). In line with the arguments directed against women, Marian, Esther, and Jemima feel obliged to discipline their bodies on the purpose of being accepted and approved by the patriarchal domain.

In this dissertation, the relationship between the Foucauldian concept of docile bodies and somatophobia and the relevant eating disorders have been discussed with reference to the pre-determined norms which are indented with the female characters in the novels. In this regard, the antagonist women – Ainsley, Clara, Susan, Phyllis, and Geraldine – have been criticized as the representations of the docile bodies of the popular culture as they normalize and dedicate themselves to perfect their bodies for male service: “the body is a tabula rasa, awaiting inscription by culture” (Bordo, 2003, p. 35). In other words, the protagonists – Marian, Esther, and Jemima – are influenced by the modern epistemology which imposes the cultural norms on the female body with the purpose of victimizing them under the capitalist aims. Because women are taught to believe in the myth that they exist with their faulty bodies, the female characters within the selected novels strive for correcting, masking, and perfecting their bodies to achieve acceptance. As an instrument of the ideology, capitalism serves for the patriarchal aims projected on women: since woman is pictured as the one without rationality, her psyche is intentionally manipulated to consume the products which are said to better their appearance. Marian in *The Edible Woman* feels obliged to become wholly absorbed in consumerism as a consequence of her observation of the other women around her; on the other hand, Ainsley and the office virgins seem to be content with their existence

which they achieve through artificial means such as cosmetics, brands, and makeup. Having difficulty in transforming her body into something made, Marian becomes an anorectic. In a similar vein, Esther in *The Fat Woman's Joke* attempts to get rid of somatophobia, which emerged as a consequence of her fat body, for the sake of being appreciated by her husband; she attempts to discipline and contain her body through diets. Her second somatophobic tendency crystallizes by the time she realizes the artificial stance of Susan and Phyllis who dedicate themselves to shape their bodies in accordance with the expectations of the popular culture through making use of cosmetic surgery and excessive expense on clothes and makeup. "The anorexic is the victim of representation, trapped in embodiment through stereotypical and alienating images" (Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 37). On the other hand, Jemima, in *Jemima J.*, becomes a victim of the culture and of the societal impositions which isolate her merely for her large body. In order to get rid of the condition, she attempts to discipline her body through diets and exercise, as a result of which she becomes an anorectic.

In this dissertation, the heroines are portrayed as the ones who are compelled to internalize the phallogocentric view of woman and the female body. Marian's, Esther's, and Jemima's psyches are imposed with the idea of the female inferiority which is based on the Lacanian theory of having and lacking phallus. In this study, the influence of the phallogocentric judgment of being female has been criticized with reference to each heroine's psychology: since their childhood, Marian, Esther, and Jemima have been exposed to accept the privilege the phallus gives to men, and they have been forced to internalize their signified stance in life. On the basis of the transformations the body has undergone as a consequence of pregnancy and breastfeeding, and because of the sexual assaults directed to their bodies, the female characters, through observing the lives of the others' around them, face somatophobia as an expected result of a trauma.

In this dissertation, somatophobia, which is regarded as a female pathology, has been interpreted as a psychological pressure on the female characters, functioning to discipline their bodies for the purpose of satisfying the male desire. Accordingly, anorexia nervosa and binge eating have been considered the outcomes of somatophobia the heroines face. In this study, anorexia nervosa – from the perspective of the modern understanding of the female body – has been regarded as an attempt either to achieve the ideal body size through self-starvation, or to reject the body through starving it for

the purpose of losing all the features – curves, thighs, breast, and etcetera – which make a woman feminine. Binge eating, on the other hand, has been interpreted as the negation of femininity through making the body more of a masculine attribute; in other saying, just in anorexia, compulsive eater attempts to reject the body that is believed to make her more feminine and thus sexier and tempting. However, Atwood, Weldon, and Green subvert the stereotypical definitions of anorexia and binge eating; Marian, Esther, and Jemima have been identified as the subversive characters who are able to get rid of their somatophobia through the eating disorders. Put it differently and paradoxically enough, the protagonists overcome their fear and hatred of body by ascribing a different meaning both to anorexia and binge eating.

All in all, Atwood, Weldon, and Green adopt the postmodern feminist perspective to prove the subversive power each heroine has against the philosophical, cultural, and psychoanalytic definitions of being a woman and having a female body. Each writer reveals the very fact that her heroine has the potential to challenge the order through returning to her body and accepting it both as a subject and an object that belongs merely to her. Through the eating disorders the protagonists have been given the power to discover that they do not have to discipline their bodies to conform to the ideals or fear their bodies as the source of their subjugation and marginalization. Therefore, in this dissertation, Marian, Esther, and Jemima have been portrayed as the heroines who are able to change their self-perception of their bodies and learn how to appreciate their bodies as given not as made entities. Butler argues that “sex and gender are ‘phantasmatic’ cultural constructions which contour and define the body” (Salih, 2003, p. 49). In this context, in this dissertation, the heroines come to realize that there is no “natural body” but discursively constructed bodies they wear on; they realize that their bodies are not the static ultimate facts of their lives, but the process which ensures change and becoming. The postmodern body, in this study, thus represents not a specific body with a certain size and shape which is determined and regulated beforehand; but an unrestricted entity which enables each protagonist to establish a bond between the world and herself through proving it to be the living experience of the subject who is free from the ideological traps set for her sex. Lastly, the limitations of this dissertation include the limited availability to the sources about the concept of somatophobia, which thus obstructs to provide further examples for the theoretical background. On the other hand, because *Jemima J* is a so recently published novel, the disadvantage of limited

sources about the novel has caused some problems in terms of providing referentiality. However, examining such a new and modern novel makes the findings original and riveting. Since this dissertation is the product of an interdisciplinary methodology, it has some difficulties in term of finding associations between each theory and the concept of somatophobia. Nonetheless, the application of different theories to each novel makes the study original and productive. In this dissertation, only three novels have been examined in terms of the postmodern treatment of somatophobia and eating disorders; therefore, more novels written by authors of both sexes and from different periods of time need to be examined in order to provide comprehensive and valid generalizations about the subversive relationship between eating disorders and somatophobia.

END NOTES

1. The theory conceptualized by Aristotle to describe the condition of women during pregnancy. Aristotle claims that the female body is just a container; the provider of the seed is always a man.
2. Put forward by P.F. Strawson to indicate the significance of the fraternity between mind and body. He embraces both the necessity of collaboration between the mind and the body. Rather than undergird the supremacy of the mind over the body, he emphasizes the equality of both.
3. Also considered the “ladder of being”, it is based on the religious hierarchy according to which God is placed at the top of the scale, men come the second, and then women, animals, and plants. The dualistic and discriminative understanding of the Western world is based on the idea of the chain of beings.
4. Translated into English as “Hammer of Witches”, *Malleus Maleficarum*, which is a book written by Heinrich Kramer, describes women as witches and devil.
5. It indicates the regulation and containment of the individual bodies. While biopower refers to the regulation of the populations under the name of birth rates, health, and etcetera, anatomo-politics attempts to discipline individual bodies both as the subject and the object of the instruments that regulate the practice.
6. A poem by Delmore Schwartz to which Bordo makes reference in *Unbearable Weight*. Bordo mentions the poem in order to reveal the dualistic Western interpretation of the body as a bear and an evil thing to be abhorred.
7. My translation. A 2014 advertisement published in Turkey by KFC.
8. As a German sociologist Georg Simmel has many essays on modern culture and individuals. He argues that there is a dialectical relationship between individuals and society, which he believes to contribute to each other.
9. Somatopsychosis means mental disease which stems from a physical disorder.
10. Also regarded as an “invisible barrier”, the glass ceiling is used metaphorically to explain the difficulties or the obstacles that prevent women from promoting.

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APPENDIX II



Figure 1. The cover page of the magazine *Cosmopolitan*, January 2011



Figure 2. The cover page of the magazine *Marie Claire*, May 2015

APPENDIX III



Figure 1. The cover page of the magazine *Self*

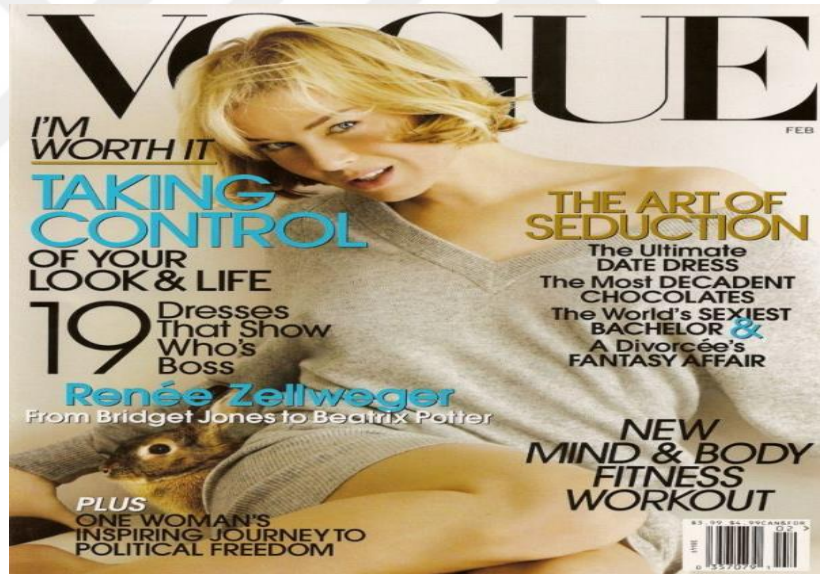


Figure 2. The cover page of the magazine *Vogue*

APPENDIX IV



Figure 1. An advertisement by *McDonalds*, 2014, UK



Figure 2. An advertisement by *KFC*, 2015, Turkey

APPENDIX V

Figure 1. An Advertisement by *Arby's*, 2009Figure 2. An advertisement by *Burger King*

APPENDIX VI



Figure 1 and 2. Advertisements by Coca Cola



Figure 3. Coca Cola advertisement, 1952, Australia

APPENDIX VII



Figure 1. *Alcoa Aluminum* advertisement, 1953



Figure 2. Advertisement by *Magnum*

APPENDIX VIII



Figure1. Advertisement by *Pepsi*, 1956



Figure 2. *Jean Paul Gaultier* perfume bottle

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER

Adı, Soyadı: Ebru UĞUREL ÖZDEMİR

Uyruğu: Türkiye (TC)

Doğum Tarihi ve Yeri: 10 Kasım 1983, Kütahya

Medeni Durumu: Evli

Tel: +905305404437

email: ebruugurel@gmail.com

Yazışma Adresi: Aksaray Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, 68100, Merkez/AKSARAY

EĞİTİM

Derece	Kurum	Mezuniyet Tarihi
Yüksek Lisans	S.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	2008
Lisans	S.Ü. İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	2005
Lise	Atatürk Lisesi, Kütahya	2001

İŞ DENEYİMLERİ

Yıl	Kurum	Görev
2009- Halen	Aksaray Üniversitesi	Öğretim Görevlisi

YABANCI DİL

İngilizce

YAYINLAR

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