# REPUBLICAN WOMANHOOD

# IN TURKISH AND AMERICAN

# UTOPIAN/HYPER-REALIST FICTION

**THE CASE OF**

**CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN**

**AND**

**PERIHAN MAĞDEN**

Thesis submitted to the

Institute of Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

English Language and Literature

by

Tuba GÖNEL

Fatih University

June, 2008

FATIH UNIVERSITY

# REPUBLICAN WOMANHOOD

# IN TURKISH AND AMERICAN

# UTOPIAN/HYPER-REALIST FICTION

**THE CASE OF**

**CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN**

**AND**

**PERIHAN MAĞDEN**

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

M.A. THESIS

*BY*

*TUBA GÖNEL*

*ADVISOR*

*ASSIST. PROF. CLYDE R. FORSBERG JR.*

JUNE 2008

©TUBA GÖNEL

All rights reserved, 2008

# APPROVAL PAGE

**Student** : Tuba Gonel

**Institute** : Institute of Social Sciences

**Department** : English Language and Literature

**Thesis Subject** : REPUBLICAN WOMANHOOD IN TURKISH AND AMERICAN UTOPIAN/HYPER-REALIST FICTION THE CASE OF CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND PERIHAN MAĞDEN

**Thesis Date** : June 2008

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof Dr Wisam Mansour
**Head of Department**

This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assist Prof Clyde Forsberg Jr
**Supervisor**

## Examining Committee Members

Assist Prof John Basourakos ...........................

Assist Prof Angela Hamilton ...........................

Assist Prof Clyde R Forsberg Jr ...........................

It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences.

**Director**

## AUTHOR DECLARATION

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

3. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has been comprised of: courses in English Literature, including literary theory, English, American, and World Literature in genres that include narrative literature, documents on history, newspaper and thematic courses such as the history of Utopia and Dystopia.

i) Research Methods. The thesis incorporates research methods taught on both the undergraduate and, on the graduate level (by thesis advisor) during the course of the study. See ii below.

ii) Sources examined in this thesis include articles from scholarly journals, other articles such as reviews, essays, and interviews with the authors in question; books on Utopia and Dystopia in general and Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Perihan Mağden in particular; and secondary sources including postcolonial theory, feminist theory and sources from other disciplines i.e., economy, sociology, geography, anthropology, and history.

Tuba GÖNEL

June, 2008

**University: Fatih University**
**Institute: Institute of Social Sciences**
**Department: English Language and Literature**
**Supervisor: Assist.Prof. Clyde R. Forsberg Jr.**
**Degree Awarded and Date: June 2008**

## ABSTRACT

## REPUBLICAN WOMANHOOD IN TURKISH AND AMERICAN UTOPIAN/HYPER-REALIST FICTION

**TUBA GÖNEL**

This thesis will analyze Republican womanhood and motherhood in America and Turkey in the light of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland and Perihan Mağden's 2 Girls. Using radical, egalitarian and proto-feminist principles, Gilman posited an economic and social alternative to that in which she found herself, a fictive world where women of her class might liberate themselves from the conventional role of mother and wife. She criticized the destructive consequences of industrialization for women and the diminishing importance of women as contributors to the family economy. In her feminist utopia, Herland, Gilman redefined womanhood via the notion of "female capacity." Turkish novelist and postmodern journalist Perihan Mağden makes for an interesting study in temporal, linguistic, and cultural contrasts and her effective use of realism to criticize her native culture and its no less patriarchal understanding of womanhood and motherhood. Like Gilman, issues of class, race, and sexuality intersect and are mirrored in an array of competing and conflicted, female characters. Mağden seems to believe that the social doctrines inherent to Turkish society have imprisoned the "individual" and encourage conformity to socially-constructed roles; above all, women are expected to accept what patriarchy says without question. Despite their differences, Gilman and Mağden have in common an ambivalent attitude toward the effects of modernization

and industrialization on the traditional family and gender relations, late Victorian, American and early, twenty-first century Turkish women finding themselves in a similar position, having to choose between traditional and modern assumptions and expectations vis-à-vis their roles in the family and in society.

**Key words:**

Feminism, Womanhood, Motherhood, Sexual, Racial and Class discrimination, Patriarchal society, Female submission, Utopia, Dystopia, Hyper-realism, Republican Period and Industrialization.

**Üniversite: Fatih Üniversitesi**
**Enstitüsü: Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü**
**Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı**
**Tez Danışmanı: Yrd.Doç.Dr. Clyde R. Forsberg Jr.**
**Tez Tarihi: Haziran 2008**

## KISA ÖZET

## AMERİKAN VE TÜRK ÜTOPYA VE HİPER-REALİST KURGULARDA CUMHURİYET DÖNEMİ KADINLIĞI

**TUBA GÖNEL**

Bu tez Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın Herland'i ile Perihan Mağden'in İki Genç Kızın Romanı ışığında Amerikan ve Türk Cumhuriyet dönemi kadınlık ve annelik olgusuna bir bakışı kapsar. Gilman, radikal, eşitlikçi ve feminizm öncesi (proto-feminist) prensipleri kullanarak, kendisinin de bir parçası olduğu dünyaya alternatifler geliştirir. Böylece kadının geleneksel anne ve eş rolünden kurtulacağı kurgusal bir dünya oluşturur. Kadının ev ekonomisine katkısını azaltan endüstrileşme döneminin yıkıcı sonuçlarını eleştirir. Feminist ütopyasında Gilman "kadın kapasitesi" kavramıyla kadınları yeniden tanımlamıştır.

Türk romancı ve post modern gazeteci Perihan Mağden kendi erkek egemen kültüründeki kadınlık ve annelik anlayışını eleştirir. Etkili realizmine kültürel çatışmaları ve linguistik'i ilave ederek oldukça ilginç bir çalışma ortaya koymuştur. Ele aldığı konular itibariyle özellikle sınıf, ırk ve cinsiyet ayrımcılığı konuları Gilman ile kesişmektedir. Bu konular Mağden'in romanlarında birbiriyle rekabet ve çatışma halinde olan bir dizi kadın karakter ışığında belirgin hale gelir. Mağden'e göre Türk toplumuna miras kalan sosyal öğretiler, bireyleri toplum tarafından oluşturulmuş rollere uymaya zorlar. Dahası kadınların da sorgulamaksızın erkek egemenliğini kabul etmesi beklenir.

İki yazar da, farklılıklarına rağmen, modernleşmenin ve endüstrileşmenin geleneksel aile yapısı ve cinsiyet ilişkileri üzerindeki etkilerine ortak tutum sergilerler. Victoria Amerika'sının son dönemleri ile 21.yüzyıl Türk kadını kendilerini geleneksel ve modern varsayımlar, ailevi ve toplumsal rol beklentileri açısından bir tercih yapma mecburiyeti içinde bulmuşlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler**

Feminizm, Kadınlık, Annelik, Cinsiyet, ırk ve sınıf ayrımcılığı, Ataerkil toplum, Kadının teslimiyeti, Ütopya, Distopya, Hiper-realizm, Cumhuriyet Dönemi ve Endüstrileşme.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my advisor Assist. Prof. Clyde R. Forsberg Jr., whose expertise, understanding, and patience, contributed greatly to my graduate experience. I would like to thank the other members of my committee Assist. Prof. Angela Lynn Hamilton and Assist. Prof. John Basourakos.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Wisam Mansour and Prof. Dr. Mohammed Bakari, without whose motivation and encouragement I would not have considered a graduate career in English Literature.

I would also like to thank my parents, Hayrullah Akmaz and Türkan Akmaz, and my brother Assist. Prof. Hakan Akmaz for the support they provided me through my entire life and for enduring this long process of thesis writing with me.

I must acknowledge my husband, Hüseyin Gönel, my daughter, Sena Gönel and my best friends, Ayşe Mutlu, Başak Güven and Buket Aktaş, without whose love and encouragement, I would not have finished this thesis.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Approval Page**......................................................................................iii

**Author Declaration..**............................................................................iv

**Abstract**..............................................................................................v

**Kısa Özet**...........................................................................................vii

**Acknowledgements**...........................................................................ix

**Table of Contents**...............................................................................x

**Preface**..............................................................................................xiv

### Artwork

**Figure 1: “Hampered with Consciousness”** ……….…………………….....18

**Figure 2: “Helping Mother”** ……………………………………….........20

**Figure 3: “What the Well-Dressed Child Would Wear? (1840’s)”** ……....22

**INTRODUCTION:**

**REPUBLICAN WOMANHOOD and MOTHERHOOD in**

**TURKEY and AMERICA**…….……………….……….……………..…..1

The Turkish Experience …………………………………..……….........1

Turkish Womanhood Betwixt and Between………..…...………...…………..…1

The New Woman in Turkey and Class……………………………..……...5

The American Experience ……………………………………….………..9

Female Seclusion in America……………………………..……….…..10

Female as Contributor to Home and Public Life ………………......................13

The Diversity of Female Experience in America ………...………….…......…19

Notes ………………..……..……………………………………………...26

**CHAPTER 1**

**CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN**…………………….….……...............30

1.1. The Yellow Wall Paper…………...…………………..………………......35

1.2. Women and Economics………………………….……………...…..……...41

1.3. Gilman as Humanitarian and Proto-Socialist: Intellectual

Influences………………………………………………………….....43

Notes………………………………………………………………..…..47

**CHAPTER 2**

**HERLAND: "A STATE OF PERFECT CULTIVATION"**…………….…....51

2.1. The Miracle of the Birth of and in Herland ……………….……...…..…..57

2.2. The Male/Outside World as Counterpoint……...…………….……….......58

2.3. Returning to Where They Began: Gender, Sexuality,

and Community………………………………………………………59

Notes …………………………………………………………………....61

**CHAPTER 3**

**PERİHAN MAĞDEN**…………….…….………………………….….............65

3.1. Educational Background …………...…………………………….…………65

3.2. Individual, Community, and Womanhood for Mağden: Feminist Utopia vs.

Hyper-realist Fiction………………..…………………………….……......67

3.3. Mağden and Motherhood ………………………..……….….………71

Notes …………………………………………………….…………...74

**CHAPTER 4**

**2 GIRLS AS TURKISH, PATRIARCHAL CONVENTION in THE GARB of RADICAL, FEMALE LIBERATION**…………………………………....78

4.1. Behiye's Mood Swings and Varied States of Mind………………..……..78

4.2. Deconstructing Idealized Images of Womanhood and Motherhood……....80

4.3. Behiye, Meet Handan ……..……………………………………………....82

4.4. A New Family Arrangement for Behiye: From Patriarchal to

Matriarchal Dystopia……………………………………………………...84

4.5. Behiye and Çiğdem: Typical Turkish Girlfriend Speak............................88

4.6. Male Intruders in 2 Girls…………..………………………….................89

4.7. Behiye and Her Mother Yıldız: Mutual Self-Destruction as a Means of

Dealing with the Unbearable Pain of Inevitability ..…………………………..90

4.8. Code name "The Sisters Nevin" as Hyper-Realist Harem?........................95

Notes ……………….………..…………………………………………102

**CHAPTER 5**

**FEMALE SPACE in GILMAN and MAĞDEN**………… …...…..……....107

5.1. Herland: Challenging the Traditional Home……..………..…………....108

5.2. Deconstruction of "The Home" in 2 Girls ………..……….…….……….111

5.3. "Home Decoration" and Social Status……...…….……….....................115

5.4. Body Décor: Clothing as Functional or Flirtatious?.....……..…...………116

5.5. Males as Intruders Violating Female Space in Gilman and Mağden…….120

5.6. A Love That Is Free of Sexual Desire: Heterosexual/Homosexual Celibacy

as Utopian/Hyper-Realist Dystopia………………………..……..…....124

Notes …………………………………….…………………………..127

**CHAPTER 6**

**MORAL EDUCATION in GILMAN and MAĞDEN**…………………..…….134

6.1. "There Were No Absolute Answers; Every Child Was a Gamble"……....134

6.2. “Eternal Differences of Persons” ……………………..…………………..137

6.3. Moral Education in 2 Girls………………...……………….....................139

Notes …………………………….…….…………………………………143

**CHAPTER 7**

**HEREDITY in GILMAN and MAĞDEN** ………………………………..146

7.1. “Your Mother Is Your Geography” …………………..………………...146

Notes ……………………………………………………………………149

**CHAPTER 8**

**THE SACRIFICES of MOTHERHOOD in**

**GILMAN and MAĞDEN**……………………………………………………..150

**CHAPTER 9**

**CLASS and RACE in GILMAN and MAĞDEN**………………………....155

9.1. Mağden as Proponent of Racial Stereotyping for Literary Effect..……. 159

9.2. Gilman, Miscegenation, Racial Purity, and Feminist Utopia ………..….160

Notes ……………………………………………………………………162

**CONCLUSION** …………………………………...…………...………164

**WORKS CITED** ..........................................................................................166

# PREFACE

In this thesis, I intend to compare Herland by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and 2 Girls by Perihan Mağden. These works will be analyzed according to certain themes present in the novels, in order: Female Space, Heredity, Education, Motherhood, Class and Race.

Through the effective use of her social principles, Gilman aimed at a reconstruction of society, which would liberate women from their conventional roles and the restrictions synonymous with the duties of being a "slave" to traditional values. In her novel Herland, by changing the repressive and conventional roles assigned to women, Gilman attempts to redefine womanhood, to explicate the true nature and capacity of women and thus combat prevailing, patriarchal prejudice and the Victorian, male chauvinism of her time and locale. Gilman, who wrote at a time when women were regarded as inferior and the possessions of men, believed that social change in society could only be achieved if an egalitarian social order was developed vis-à-vis socio-economic betterment for every member of society. Criticizing the inhuman and inadequate conditions women lived under, Gilman argued that women were imprisoned not because they were socially inadequate or devoid of social capacity but because of the patriarchal prejudices that conspired against them.

Being aware that "the state continued to ignore women's demands," Gilman believed that "it was up to feminist writers like herself to take charge of the neglected sex education of their readers" (Beer, Bennett 193). Realizing the potential for the liberated women of her generation, Gilman placed mothers at the center of utopian theorizing and civilization. With women as the new center, both

physically and socially, Gilman constructed an ideal world and cognitive map for female and male equality and empowerment.

Gilman's theories were more humanist than feminist per se. She believed that progress for society could only be brought about if every member of society progressed. Even though Gilman was regarded as more of an economist and sociologist than literary figure, her effective use of language, metaphor, and descriptions of the female experience via her protagonists introduced her readers to the inner world of women, the social and economic problems of being female, and the many restrictions and trivial roles assigned to women despite their capacity for learning and productivity. Even though Gilman was not truly appreciated in her day, her life and work have come to be recognized by women, and men, worldwide as crucial to the women's movement—past, present, and future.

Perihan Mağden believes in the female capacity and criticizes the traditional roles assigned to women by patriarchy. In her post-modern novel 2 Girls, she introduces the reader to the lives of very real, female characters in Turkish society from a social-historical point of view. Unlike Gilman, Mağden's is a dystopic approach and intended to "present the true, normative picture of her culture" (Beer, Bennett 79). Dealing with such issues as dysfunctional motherhood, classism, sexuality and their concomitant moral and social implications, Mağden underscores the degree of physical and mental imprisonment that being female entails. In this respect, Mağden and Gilman focus on many of the same female concerns: what it means to be a woman, mother, a woman's place in the public sphere, class and womanhood, sexuality, crime and punishment, and the sense of violation that defines both the male-female and female-female experience. Gilman was motivated by a social vision in which economic productivity and independence for women

looms large, whereas Mağden’s aim is one of greater social awareness and various misinterpretations of being a woman. That said, the moral of the story—and of these two stories—is that American and Turkish (republican) women have much in common despite their geographic, historical, linguistic, and cultural differences.

# INTRODUCTION

## REPUBLICAN WOMANHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD IN TURKEY AND AMERICA

### The Turkish Experience

Similar to the experiences of American women in the wake of industrialization, because of the changes caused by the Republican Period and the modernization movement in Turkey following independence, Turkish women were driven from the home and expected to defend modernization--which required female participation and visibility in both the private (social) and public (economic) spheres. Modernization, however, was not altogether acceptable to such a new democratic society like post-World War I Turkey, still accustomed to conventional, patriarchal principles which kept women at home, insulating them from moral contamination and other corrosive effects associated with the male world of business and politics.

### Turkish Womanhood Betwixt and Between

The Republican period and the reforms that followed, "the equality of persons of all religions before the law" (Kadıoğlu 645-661) chief among them, included a number of new roles for women which attempted to strike a balance between "traditional conservatism and extreme Westernism" (Kadıoğlu 645-661). Ironically, prior to this, female roles in Turkish society were surprisingly "modern" and similar to those of America's more conservative women of bygone days. As the influential and leading Turkish intellectual prior to the Republican period, Namık Kemal, has argued, Turkish women assumed "the role of preserving society's traditions in the process of modernizing reforms" (Kadıoğlu 645-661). According to the conventional wisdom, however flawed it might be from our post-modern point of view, the protections

afforded women were considered “essential to [the] protect[ion] of women’s privacy and [to] keep them secluded as well as subordinated” (Kadıoğlu 645-661).

Kemalist reforms would change this, forcing Turkish women into the public sphere in the interest of modernization and to promote the westernization of Turkish society as a whole. This new visibility for women in the young Republic that Atatürk established resulted in a different focus, Kemalist discourse moving away from so-called “public and private role dichotomies” (Kadıoğlu 645-661). Ayşe Kadıoğlu contends that visibility and the collapsing of public and private was potentially problematic for many women and, in hindsight, given to Orientalist and neo-colonial cultural presuppositions:

> Colonial feminist and native Orientalist- Kemalist discourses have placed an unwarranted significance on the modern outlook of women. In so doing, they have shifted the argument away from universal feminist claims regarding public and private role dichotomies. The Kemalist discourse, furthermore, created an image of women who were burdened with the difficult task of maintaining a balance between being too traditional or being . . . --too modern . . . (Cited in Kadıoğlu 645-661)

In the wake of this dual role, political Islamic discourse voiced its concerns, offering an Eastern alternative tailored to the social and cultural needs of Islamic women. The “modern” or “Western” woman was overwhelmed by so much authority, having to perform both traditional female and male duties. It became necessary to defend the veil against attack, too, its alleged connection to Islamic Law and as powerful symbol of female resistance to modernity and the republicanization of Islam.

Similar to the tensions in American society a mere half century before—indeed, the deep changes in politics, economics, and social convention that followed industrialization, Turkish society underwent similar changes, giving impetus to its own brand of feminist literature. In Turkey, its aims were not that different from the American feminist canon, providing women with opportunities for greater representation, self-expression, taking full advantage of the new spirit of free thinking, new educational opportunities for women as representatives of the new humanity and dignity assigned women as sharing some of the responsibility for the new society.

Republican reformism promised to end the subjugation and seclusion of women. However, owing to its decidedly male authorship, it proved less than liberating, Turkish women defined "as the breeders and educators of the new generations, i.e. 'enlightened mothers of the nation'" (Durakbasa 195-203). Reform in Turkey was male not female. As many studies and publications about women of the period have shown, gender reforms were based on "an evaluation of official or other public discourse such as Atatürk's speeches, literary works, male ideologues' polemical writings, newspaper articles, etc." (Durakbasa 195-203). An oral history of women in the Republican period has yet to be undertaken in earnest. What is known is inadequate and ineffective, limited to a small percentage of women. As Durakbasa argues: "The modernist (male) elite has defined the 'required and sufficient degree of modernization' over women's bodies, behavior and social conduct" (Durakbasa 195-203). Such analysis reveals the degree to which modernization was foreign to Turkish women who were being modernized by males. "Women's own self definitions, perceptions, their own theories of self and moral social conduct," Durakbasa writes, "can be best understood by studying their own accounts and analyzing their own construction of their life and history" (195-203).

Durakbasa also contends that fiction can be seen as more telling that history in the exploration and portrayal of the crisis of "true Republican womanhood" in Turkey and the conflicts Turkish women experienced. The case of Adalet Ağaoğlu, the famous novelist who wrote on Mevhibe Inonu (an important figure of the modernization movement) is instructive:

> Why have those women been the ones whose inner worlds have been the least of interest? Why haven't they been written about with a deep interest of seeing and knowing? When they were written about, they were written merely from the angle that showed their social missions. The wife of a statesman, head of an association, volunteer nurse, corporal, teacher, the first lawyer, loyal wife, perfect mother. . . . "Those women" were women who could overcome all those "ill eyes" over them, without losing their balance. They were the ones who had to read in Latin alphabet the next day, although they were writing in Arabic script the day before; they were the ones who had to regulate the degree of intimacy with great caution and meticulous attention as they danced with men who were total strangers to them; those who looked properly dressed although they gave up the yashmak and carshaf. . . . Even if the Great Principles of the Republican Revolution and the leaders of those principles were backing you, still these were not deeds easy to accomplish. . . . Now, it seems easy to tell. (195-203)

Like the American woman, who had to leave her secure sphere, the home, the Turkish woman had to give up her traditional status, even her clothes, to be reborn into a new and unfamiliar social context, defined as the "new woman". The tensions these new women lived under would never let up because the Turkish Republican

discourse invited women to be a little of both--modern and yet traditional. On the one hand, women were expected to be the agents of modernization by obtaining more education and becoming more visible. On the other hand, this often entailed little more than making a good appearance next to their husbands in the tradition of goodly military wives or handmaids of government bureaucrats and diplomats. As the architect of the Turkish Republic put it: "The duty of the Turkish woman is raising generations that are capable of preserving and protecting the Turk with his (or her) mentality, strength and determination. The woman who is the source and social foundation of the nation can fulfill her duty only if she is virtuous" (Stephenson 148).

The quotation from Atatürk underscores the problem, Turkish female liberation a case of the right to mother and nurture Turkish nationalism from the cradle to the grave. Professional life and political leadership were as distant from the new woman as the old woman. Indeed, all that was done in the name of women, female education reforms and female Republican virtue had less to do with female improvement and far more to do with solidifying the gains of Turkish, male-dominated, liberal democracy.

## The New Woman in Turkey and Class

Similar to American society in which classes of women emerged during and after industrialization, the experiences of Turkish women show differences in terms of class. The experiences of aristocratic women and the women of the new middle class in Turkey differed greatly. Durakbasa has shown how the life-styles and levels of independence of two women, Lütfiye Hanım and Nimet Hanım, varied greatly. Lütfiye Hanım was a member of an aristocratic family, harking back to the Ottoman upper classes, whereas Nimet Hanım was one of the "representatives of the new middle class in the making during the early Republican Period" (Durakbasa 195-203).

Nimet Hanım and her husband were both teachers in government service. Lütfiye Hanım was the wife of a diplomat and led an independent and professional life as a famous tailor in Istanbul. The following paragraph illustrates Lütfiye Hanım's independence, self-courage, her place in the high society compared to that of Nimet Hanım and for whom her husband's life and dependency upon him was everything:

> [Lütfiye Hanım] could run a business in her own apartment in which she hired a group of young women who helped her in various stages of the tailoring. She had an authority over the customers and told various stories about how she could be selective in accepting a customer's orders. It is also interesting that Lütfiye Hanım did not tell much about her husband and the intimacies of her life with her husband, keeping this as a reserved part of her life. Nimet Hanım, on the other hand, told about her life as an extension of her husband's sociability and her husband's professional position as superior to hers, as the husband, being a headmaster and later and inspector of the Ministry of Education, could strengthen his position as the head household by his various connections to be the civil bureaucratic staff in various towns where they were on duty. (Durakbasa 195-203)

The so-called "new women" was a product of her class. Some preferred to be teachers, others chose to be engineers, doctors, artists, etc. One striking similarity that "new women" had in common was the degree to which "their modernist outlook and personality" (Durakbasa 195-203) was a product of strong father figures rather than influential or doting mothers. Many such "new women," Durakbasa argues, were educated by their fathers who "were far more educated than mothers and were the representatives of modernity in the household" (Durakbasa 195-203). Fathers took active roles "in the socialization of children" (Durakbasa 195-203) and created a new

type of women closely associated with the male-dominated, social context and the male discourse, giving birth to what might be called "the patriarchal woman."

These women, still present in society today, regard the extra attention from men as their social privilege. They are proud of being women, on the condition that they have the approval of patriarchy and meet the needs and expectations of the patriarchal status quo. Female careerism and professional life for Turkish women, Durakbasa explains, was "directed according to the modernist-nationalist ideology of the young Republic" (Durakbasa 195-203). Hayrunnisa Koni is a case in point. Hayrunnisa Hanım, whose father was an engineer, wanted to follow in his footsteps even though she was discouraged by her teachers and who believed that technical professions were not appropriate for woman. She was expected to be an educated and a well-qualified wife, competent enough to educate the next generation but not to design a bridge or roadway. After her schooling, she was expected to study philosophy and become a teacher--a new woman, schooled in the art of conformity, she became a teacher and not an engineer. She might have been an engineer, but chose instead something better suited to her gender and for the greater Republican good.

As Durakbasa also points out, "women's participation in the public space in a successful way entailed modes other than professional education and training" (Durakbasa 195-203). Being the wife of a bureaucrat entailed a lot of responsibility and requisite qualifications. In this case, female education was largely a case of knowing "what to wear and how to wear clothing plus the presentation of the body within a new feminine outlook with short style hair, smart suits, décolleté night dresses, became important to mark the distinction of the new women and transformations with the women's sphere" (Durakbasa 195-203). Durakbasa's study of the life of new women from the Republican period paints a picture of female

visibility and opportunities for education and freedom as very traditional in some respects:

> These social activities (Republican Balls, tea parties and fashion shows at schools, social activities at people's houses, recreational activities, including card playing and other saloon games, at clubs attached to the military or at other high society clubs) also provided the new social occasions in which husbands and wives shared common social settings and backed the new understanding of a companionate marriage of the couples. Women imitated each other through costume, make-up, hair-style, and they competed with each other in applying the latest fashion in dress as well as home decoration, furniture, party organization, etc. At the same time they learned how to behave in a 'civilized' manner to strange men while remaining sensitive about their husbands' jealousy as well. "A woman should know how to control herself' ('Kadınlar kendini idare etmeyi bilmeli') is the motto in these women's narratives in their self-definitions as 'strongminded women with strong character' 'şahsiyetli kadın'." (195-203)

The new woman still had to conform to the social roles determined by the male powers that be.

The new visibility for Turkish women of the Republican period was often little more than a competition over physical appearances and home decoration, as the following makes clear:

> Usually, women's degree of distance in social conduct was the measure according to which men had to check their own behavior. Although most of our respondents have stressed that they were brought up in quite

> permissive families (‘Çok serbest yetiştirildik biz’) where traditional codes of sexual segregation did not apply, managing new social relationships with men usually necessitated strict sexual repression, and the responsibility of proper social conduct usually fell on young women's shoulders rather than men’s. In these new occasions of social mixing, men and women learned and practiced the new rules of etiquette which mostly depended on management of social distance, where new women preserved basic codes of female virtue and were highly cautious of not being seductive. However, they did not want to look timid, either, and were proud of exercising new forms of sociability with men. (Durakbasa 195-203)

Even in the social context of modernization, the new woman’s chief duty lay in balancing the social relationships of men and women. If the new woman was to control herself and others in public, regulate public relations in the light of male-prescribed female roles, if her real place in the social, educational, and political sphere was merely in the interest of male self-improvement, if her role in the Republic was still to nurture its male leadership, what had changed? To what degree was the new Republican woman no freer than her Ottoman counterpart?

## The American Experience

As Mary Ryan dramatically states, nineteenth-century American women were both physically and socially isolated from the outer world, in other words from the world of men. However, surprisingly, women, despite being secluded and repressed, were still influential even though it was an indirect influence managed through their husbands and children. Nineteenth century middle-class women were indirectly connected to and influential on society through persuasion, kindness, gentleness,

affection and their “sweet temper” and “forgiving spirit” (Ryan 190). Men were directly connected to the world for the sake of profit while women created strong emotional bonds and cooperated to improve the conditions of all female workers and feminity in the patriarchal society in which “a whole theory of being had been constructed around gender differences, a veritable anthology of sex” (Ryan 191). In the family, whose members were gradually separating from each other, men were employed outside the home, while women were associated with domestic roles, which were more privatized but less social and communal (Ryan 191). This reconstruction of roles around gender differences, however, strengthened women in the “private family strategies” (Ryan 191).

**Female Seclusion in America**

Excluded from social life, women were, metaphorically, imprisoned in their homes, which was regarded as the most comfortable and secure space for women. The next level of gender discrimination and female isolation were the daughters who accompanied their mothers in this social imprisonment. Ryan argues that the reason for such strong mother-daughter ties was the similarity of the female experiences. The sex distinction drove daughters to share their mothers’ submission, seclusion and isolation as well as a tendency for kindness, gentleness and affection. Ryan explains:

> Accordingly, females were in no great haste to enter the world outside the household where boys found male companionship, work opportunities, and a glimmer of their adult sexual identity. Quite the contrary, female children encountered the vocational training and workplace and role models appropriate to their sex simply by staying at home. (193)

The expected personality and role of daughters already foreshadowed the fact that their future state would be that of their mothers. The following was considered sage

advice to mothers of the period: "When your daughter is old enough to be your companion and friend allow her to participate in your cares and duties. It is the affectionate daughter and kind sister who will make the self-denying wife, and devoted mother" (Ryan 193).

The nature of the domestic environment and its many social expectations and traditional perspective were limited to "a table of books, drawings and shells for their amusement" (Ryan 193), inevitably leaving some traces of learning on the female character. As stated in Chodorow's typology, quoted by Ryan,

> [t]he Victorian daughter enjoyed a privileged position in a feminine universe where, with relatively little trauma and at an easy pace, she learned her adult gender role from her mother, the source of her first and most enduring emotional connection. Because she was embedded in this satisfying emotional environment, the female child might not develop the striving, rational edge to her personality that a boy acquired of course on his struggle to identify with a more distant and impersonal role model. It is also likely, to continue Chodorow's analysis that this comfortable female work worked against the formation of unambiguous and exclusive emotional and sexual attachments to males. (194)

The emotional dynamic formed by the ties between the same sex resulted in a premarital crisis and negatively affected marital relations since it was a challenge for women to shift the "emotional forms from one sex to another" (Ryan 194). Still, it is important to indicate that not all the nineteenth century middle-class marriages were influenced by such same-sex, mother-daughter bonds and homo-emotional, homo-social feeling. Nonetheless, the influences are still of great importance to "illustrate the potential for marital tension that was built into the structure of gender at mid-

century" (Ryan 196). Ryan contends that the separate spheres that nineteenth-century men and women occupied hurt the husband-and-wife sexual relationship. "The more separate the spheres, and the more distinct the temperaments of men and women, the smaller the changes of conjugal empathy" (Ryan 196). Many females lost hope "of communicating with (their) husband", and through the "female bonds laced through the everyday life of the middle class, formed a denser social and emotional network than ties between the sexes" (Ryan 196).

Mary Ryan illustrates the limited world and experiences of the female through the diaries of Lavinia Johnson, who like many other women of her time, mentored the "narrowness of women's society" (Ryan 197), "discarded the possibility of communicating with her husband" (Ryan 196). Lavinia devoted herself to her children and her secure space, her home, and she herself explains: "What a wilderness would this world be without my children, I should have none to love, nor anybody to take care of me" (Ryan 197). Ryan continues:

> To women like Mrs. Johnson, women's sphere enclosed the life cycle and provided its own consolation in the loving bonds between mother and daughter. She had no sympathy for those who would break free of these bonds of womanhood. She scorned the female reformers as one who 'aping mannish manners . . . wears absurd and barbarous attire, who talks of her wrongs in harsh tone, who struts and strides, and thinks that she proves herself superior to the rest of her sex.'
>
> Lavinia Johnson could rely on her daughters to take a personal interest in an array of activities that her husband and son would probably find alien and trivial. "I washed my parlor windows, the blinds, cleaned the shades, my kitchen window the large window in the chamber, wiped, dusted, and

> cleaned and was home all day." Two days later Mrs. Johnson reported a mundane retinue of female chores, washing, ironing, and shopping. The last activity provoked some perennial woman's complaints as well, about the cost of living. In exchange for kerosene, meat, apples, milk, and butter, she was charged the exorbitant sum of fifty cents. The rhythms of her work shifted with the seasons. In the fall she tackled the local harvest, pickling and preserving cucumbers, blackberries, peaches, and plums in massive quantities. In the evenings and at odd hours she picked up her sewing basket, and then her diary, recording all the intricacies of style and fabric that went into her latest creation. (Ryan 197-198)

## Female as Contributor to Home and Public Life

The predetermined roles of man as "breadwinner" (Ryan 199) who "brings food into the house" and of woman as "wise and frugal consumer who checks 'that nothing goes wrongly'" (Ryan 199) in the house, resulted in changes in the economic activities of men and women.[i] In the light of this, the middle-class woman, even though she was deprived of a direct influence on social and economic life, was surprisingly influential on industry, economy and the social structure of the time. As Ryan states,

> [t]he female manager of the middle-class home, in other words, was expected to mediate between the family and the marketplace in a parsimonious but active manner, to consume enough to accommodate a growing commodity production and yet to save enough for the continuing accumulation of capital during this early period of industrialization. (200)

Through the industrialization period, it is obvious that women contributed to the family in many ways. While upper-class women were lucky enough to have the

assistance of a servant, others, about 1 in 5 housewives, had to contribute to the family budget "by selling housekeeping skills to boarders" (Ryan 201). To make the female contribution to economy more clear Ryan also adds that

> [b]y this expedient, women converted their domestic services- cleaning, cooking, washing, and mending-into a source of income. From the perspective of the organization of economic and social services, women were managing the equivalent of hotels, restaurants, and laundries; they incorporated into the home many of the lucrative activities that are now assigned to the service sector of the paid labor force. (201)

Besides the (privatized middle-class) female manufacturers of small garment shops, which would be "driven out of business by large factories headed by male capitalists" (Ryan 205), women managed to be employed in one segment of the labor industry: domestic service. This arena included a great number of native-born women, and many others, who unwillingly had to submit to this form of work, which would eventually create classes of women. The following lines sent to the Evening Telegraph reveal the awkward and conflicting experiences of working class women, oppressed by members of the same sex:

> Oh what a weary life we lead,
> Twixt work and scorn!
> We toil in constant slavery
> Night, noon, and morn.
> Be just! And you'll have far less cause
> To call us rude.
> We are in nature like yourself
> One sisterhood. (Ryan 208)

During the industrialization period, upper-class women, liberated from their duties at home, flocked to the churches and outnumbered men. The successfully founded organizations, such as the Female Missionary Society and Maternal Associations[ii] show how "women were poised to make an assault on the male sphere and were determined to take direct control of municipal social services" (Ryan 213). Fed up with the conventional expectations and the moral superiority which didn't carry them to the higher ranks in the socio-economic structure, women decided to invest in female capacity, and transform their indirect contribution to society to a direct and influential form of participation. Ryan explains:

> Women had made their way outside the home and outside their own class into professional tasks, social welfare functions, and the social problems of industrial society. They had taken up an extra-domestic role in social reproduction, acting to help maintain, socialize, and replenish the work force for industrial society. (212)

Surprisingly, despite the successful cooperation of the upper-and middle-class women and their efforts to increase the social awareness and productivity of working-class women, they still did not receive the importance and value they deserved. Nineteenth-century American women of the period were still confined within the limitations of the conventional social structure. Ryan lists the limitations that hampered female organizations and explains how the woman's movement was curtailed by patriarchy:

> First of all, the private female method of dispensing welfare was highly inefficient. Poor relief and social services were entrusted to dispersed, ad hoc associations that were seldom capable of responding systematically to community needs. The different private segments of the women's welfare

system even compete for clients. The orphan asylums and hospitals run by different religious denominations, both Protestant and Catholic, strove to bring the city's poor under the jurisdiction of their own beliefs and culture, rather than to meet the material needs of a diverse population in a simple, straightforward manner. A second limitation inhered in this method of welfare. In the absence of any formal public accountability, female charities could impose their own ethnocentric values on a dependent population. Aggressively benevolent Protestant ladies propagated the work ethic, the King James Bible, and the cult of domesticity, as they distributed alms. The elite Protestant managers of the Utica Orphan Asylum, for example, were the guardians of immigrant children, often of Catholic background. These children were subjected to an annual inspection by some of the wealthiest matrons of Utica, who scrutinized "the situation as to neatness and economy . . . the progress of the orphans in their education…the general conducts of the family.". . . For all its inefficiency and inequity, the city at mid-century was unwilling to part with the economical system of private female charity. When Louis Sheldon attempted to bring some order into this system in 1865, the city fathers expeditiously escorted her back into woman's place. She converted a public meeting for the purpose of founding a citywide charitable organization, only to have Judge Bacon and a male leader of the Sanitary Commission take the podium and advise the assembled women against such an ambitious project. The group compliantly withdrew, back into the fragmented private arenas of their charities. (Ryan 217)

The contradictions and the emotional frustrations that most nineteenth century middle-class women felt are dramatically illustrated in the following poem:

> There is a love far holier than the rest,
>
> The yearning love which fills a mother's breast,
>
> Burns with the babe whose little, wailing moan
>
> Asks aid and pity in a world unknown.
>
> Still clinging closer as advancing years
>
> Enlarge her hopes and multiply her fears,
>
> Chidding the truant with beaming Joy,
>
> That he who grieved her is her darling boy.
>
> In manhood flush, in fevers wasting flame,
>
> But most in grief, in sorrow, and in shame.
>
> In mother love her precious little child attends
>
> To human toil angelic lustre lends,
>
> Cheers the pale wanderer at his parting breath
>
> And pieces even beyond the gate of Death. (Ryan 219)

The grief-laden diction, "moans", "fears", "sorrow" and "death" are all expressions of a woman's "grief at the loss, or anticipated loss, of a beloved child" (Ryan 219), but also work to convey the emotional difficulties that the middle-class women had to bear:

> The symbol of a child's death could evoke, however, a variety of more commonplace and expectable events in the female life cycle. The most immediate of these is the inevitable departure of children when they come of age. Every mother knew, after all, that the infant in whom she was investing so much of her energy and identity would eventually leave home

for school, a job, marriage, perhaps even to pursue goals of which she did not approve. In the case of sons, furthermore, a child became something of stranger to his mother at an early age, for he was destined to inhabit a world quite foreign to women's sphere. The image of a bittersweet death could anticipate these emotional losses (Ryan 221).

During the period the very concept of what constituted a "home" was changing. As Mary Ryan points out:

> By the 1820s, men and women of the urban bourgeoisie were coming to see households as more than just lodgings. The 'home', their own term for the domestic setting, had become for them a pillar of civilization, an incubator of morals and family affections, a critical alternative to the harsh and

**Figure 1: "Hampered With a Conscience"**

(Wishy 124). It is interesting that the boy, despite his obedience and commitment to his mother, is a future member of the patriarchal system which had oppresses and repressed his mother and sister, and which will oppress his wife for many years.

competitive world of trade and politics. The home was based on a particular configuration of family members: woman at home, man at work, children under maternal supervision or at school.[iii] In this psychological form, it embodied the emotional self-sufficiency of the conjugal family and the suitability of women to private life; as material setting, it elaborated the physical elements of the household into an embellished inner space cut off from the public world. Consequently, women were centrally implicated in the limitations of nineteenth-century social organization that these historians have described. (Ryan 217)

Besides the many restrictions imposed on women by patriarchy, it was the "sexual inequality of wages that generated the most forceful and direct criticisms of the gender system" (Ryan 225). As contributors to the home economy and the producers of children as workers in the capitalist system, American women of the period were awake to the importance of race and national pride, indeed the idea that "No race can be strong until it is proud of itself" (Ryan 222). Many female writers, such as Ernestine Rose, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Clemner Ames, Paulina Wright and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, invited women to enjoy the privileges of being women, "unburdened by private responsibilities, free to travel the world and courageous enough to mount public podiums" (Ryan 229), and criticize "why sex should deny half the human race the same autonomy and status" (Ryan 229).

**The Diversity of Female Experience in America**

Following the industrialization period, a huge diversity of female experiences eventuated. While the middle-class women were to stay in their secure place at home and properly control it, working-class women were driven out of their homes for the sake of earning a living. When the old, traditional economy of home-made products

was replaced by large-scale industrialization, women had to contribute to the home economy by working outside of the home, a new women's sphere, which would create "a sex-segregated labor force" (Ryan 204). Christine Stansell explains the emergence of a new class of working women and very different family arrangement from that of the middle-class and upper-class women like Gilman:

**Figure 2: "Helping Mother"**

(Wishy 103). The picture illustrates the children helping their mother by taking care of their younger sibling. It is striking that the one feeding the baby is the boy, not the girl.

> [T]he home was absent from the lives of urban laboring women, who observed no sharp distinctions between public and private. Rather, their domestic lives spread out to the hallways of their tenements, to adjoining apartments and to the streets below. Household work involved them constantly with the milieu outside their own four walls; lodgers' neighbors, peddlers and shopkeepers figured as prominently in their domestic routines and dramas as did husbands and children. It was in the urban neighborhoods, not the home, that the identity of working-class wives and mothers was rooted. . . . With unremitting labor, wives, mothers and female neighbors kept the 'tenement classes' going from day to day-whether stitching shirts for the clothing shops or bargaining down street peddlers. Out of the precarious situations into which immigration, poverty and (for many) the erosion of male support thrust them, women formed particular attachments to each other and to their children that made the neighborhoods important resources in the negotiations and battles of daily urban life. (41-42)

The ethnic origins of working-class women alarmed some intellectuals of the time, including Gilman.[iv] The economic difficulties lowered the quality of social life, which would influence not only the period but also future generations. The fear was that working-class women, and even the wives of prosperous artisans, were more concerned about money than the quality of child-rearing and housekeeping.

The emergence of occupational opportunities for women, however, did not liberate them from their traditional roles at home. In addition to their responsibilities in the outer world, they were still responsible for "keeping house in the tenements in any circumstances" (Stansell 49). As Catherine Sadgwick explains: "Even the better

houses of the poor are discouraging to women. . . . They get wearied out with their necessary work, and have no strength or time left to clean a house that always wants

**Figure 3: "What the Well-Dresses Child Would Wear (1840's)**

(Wishy 15).

cleaning" (Cited in Stansell 49). Stansell describes the physical conditions and the obstacles that the poor women had to overcome:

> Washing and cleaning were difficult, since all water had to be carried up the stairs. People tracked in dirt from the muddy streets; plaster crumbled; chimneys clogged and stoves smoked. The winter wind blew through broken windows and scattered ashes about. Children knocked over slop pails; rains flooded basement rooms. (49)

The difficult nature of domestic life dramatically influenced not only the women but also the children, whose penchant for criminality worried social reformers like Gilman--who regarded their corruption as a corruption of the state.

Industrialization changed the roles of working-class parents and their children, too. The father, who used to be as powerful and influential as a king at home, and who was the only one expected to afford the family, occupied a similar position to that of his children. In his absence, the child had the same economic power that used to be his at the top of the old colonial, family hierarchy. As Stansell explains, industrialization for working-class families led to reforms that were politically conservative but socially radical:

> For all the lack of substantial household effects, domestic labor in these tiny rooms absorbed the energies of women morning to night. The poorer the family, the heavier was woman's work. Women and children spent a great deal of time on work that, in the twentieth century, utilities would perform. . . . The burden of "the almost entire absence of household conveniences: usually fell on young children not otherwise employed . . . they toted water up the stairs and hauled slops back down. . . . Children also ran the many errands required when there was never enough money in hand for the needs of the moment. Mothers sent them out to fetch a stick of wood for the fire, thread for their sewing, potatoes for dinner. (Stansell 49)

Besides the growing economic burdens that overwhelmed working-class families, parents had to worry about the moral development of their children, one and all forced to cope without the advantages of middle-class, Victorian husbands and wives. The children, regardless of their need for parental affection and moral education, were sent "to work in many different combinations of wage earning

domestic labor and paid work" (Stansell 53), and their experiences out of the home led them to the attractions of city life:

> Family loyalties, however, did not always win out over the temptations New York held out to the young: the allure of things to buy, places to go, pleasures of one's own. Families were not simply mutualistic groups, whose members were bound together by reciprocal ties of obligation and devotion. They were also little hierarchies in which men dominated women, and parents commanded the labor and deference of children. When children worked under the direct supervision of their parents on farms or in workshops, they had little chance to evade their parents' discipline. But when they worked on their own, the duties parents exacted from them could begin to chafe. Then spending money on an evening at a dance hall could seem far preferable to handing it over to your mother; leaving home altogether to run about the streets with friends, picking up a living this way and that, could be far more alluring than staying on with a father who whipped you or with a mother who was constantly scolding. The tensions between the meager independence of wage work and the pull of family loyalties defined one dimension of working-class life. (Stansell 53)[v]

Stansell focuses on the huge economic, social and moral gap that divided middle-class and working-class men and women:

> Amiability and anger, reciprocity and resentment lent the working-class neighborhoods the volatile, contentious, emotionally fierce character that so disturbed polite observers. Laboring women's kindnesses were generally invisible to the prosperous, but their pugnacity at moments cropped up in New York's public culture, an element of urban "color". Lydia Maria

> Child, feminist and abolitionist, recorded one such episode, which occurred when a gentleman in a downtown crowd ordered an old Irish woman to move out of his way. "'And indade I won't get out of your way; I'll get right in your way,' said she. . . . She placed her feet apart, set her elbows akimbo, and stood as firmly as a provoked donkey." There was something appealing and cathartic about this incident, a flash of defiance in the urban crowd. These shifting communities of cooperation and contention had none of the counterbalancing elements of the female domestic sphere of calm and affection that bourgeois men and women prized. Poor women created their communities out of something boundless emotional energy, a voracity for involvement in the lives of others. For their social betters, who were beginning to pride themselves on the ability of women to create a private space in a city they perceived as corrupt and alienating, the domestic turbulence of the working-class neighborhood posed a serious threat. (61-62)

The number of working-class families and resistance of working-class women to the ideals of middle-class family life, as well as the fact that most working-class women were immigrants, or African American, tore at the very fabric of American society, threatening to outnumber and outwit elites according to social reformers like Gilman.

The aforementioned very brief outline of key aspects of Turkish and American female life and Republican sensibility point to a number of important contact points. What follows will narrow the field, beginning with our two authors and analyzing their fiction in light of the problems of Republican womanhood and motherhood in nineteenth-century America and twentieth-century Turkey. We begin with Gilman.

## Notes

[i] Realizing the women's potential to consume, both the local industries and those outside the city invested on the "hats, cloaks, skirts, and ladies shoes" (Ryan 200) and many other home implements and supplies that would be consumed by the women. While encouraging the women to consume, "mid nineteenth century America had not . . . seen the dawn of an age of consumer extravagance" (Ryan 200).

[ii] As Ryan states "One social characteristic of these women, . . . , offers an especially important clue to the social-historical origins of their activities" by revealing that these women "were married to men who maintained a business address that was detached from their place of residence" (Ryan 85). In other words, these women "had been physically removed from the corporate family economy well in advance of the mass of the local population" (Ryan 85). Ryan adds the following excerpt to her description of upper-class women of the new nation who managed to found and be the members of the Female Missionary Society.

> These women were relieved from assisting in the farming, artisan production, or sales that once took place within the household workplace. Many of them were wealthy enough to purchase household supplies in the shops on Genesee Street and to employ servants to meet the domestic needs of husbands and children. It would follow the involvement in the benevolent activities filled a vacuum recently opened in the everyday lives of urban upper-class women as the works of women removed to the shops, stores, and the offices of Genesee Street. Or, to put it another way, missionary societies might constitute one mode of exercising that modicum of freedom that fell over women upon the disintegration of the patriarchal home economy. (85)

However, is it vitally important to be aware of the fact that the freedom the missionary women had was limited to the degree that the patriarchy determined. In other words, on condition that they served the new nation, they were allowed to keep their "proper places" and to have power to some degree, especially over children. Despite the fact that they did not have absolute independence, they still had a much better status when compared to the women of other classes of the time. They were also concerned with the women in the isolated parts of the country. The Maternal Associations were the portrayals of the middle-class women who were educating their children as capitalists and greatly contributing to the establishment of capitalism. As Ryan states the elite women were concerned with the members of other social classes while the middle-class women "devised major alterations in the internal family order" (Stansell 103).

[iii] Here, it is important to note that the relationship between a male child and the mother was determined by the rules of femininity. Since the home was female space and the boy at home was in female space with his mother and sister, he had to learn every detail of femininity. The father, who was away from home for the sake of financial benefit, did not have opportunity to spend as much time with the boy as the mother did. So the boy, who would learn how to be a real man when he was mature enough to leave home, was dressed like a girl and feminized.

[iv] Stansell indicates how the economic burdens increased the social and economic pressure on women.

> Women experienced this partly as a change in the nature of housekeeping. We have seen that after the Revolution urban domestic production had become the privileged of a minority of prosperous artisans' wives; after 1820 it virtually disappeared along with its symbols, the peripatetic pigs and cows that trotted about the streets. Even those women, prosperous

> enough to carry on household production, the wives of successful artisan entrepreneurs, largely abandoned it for commercial goods. Poorer women lacked the steady income, the space or the facilities to engage in household crafts. Another pattern took hold in the tenements, the catch-as-catch-can struggle to make ends meet. A ceaseless round of scraping, scrimping, borrowing and scavening came in some measure to dominate the housekeeping of all working-class women. (46)

[v] Despite the changing structure of the family due to the contributions of children to the family economy, there were still some contradictions in the family order resulted from the conventional concept of family hierarchy inherited from the pr-industrial period.

> Working-class poverty increased the importance of cooperation but city life could make it seem onerous and avoidable to the young. Parental control was also patriarchal control, allowing fathers to make crucial decisions about other's futures. On farms, men controlled the disposition of land; in craft shops, they allocated the work and the earnings; in both city and country, they largely determined their children's futures through the disposition of dowries and marriage portions. . . . As the economic basis of patriarchal and familial control diminished, parents lost the ability to limit their children's social adventures- where they went, what they did with their money, how they earned a living and who they courted. Rebellious boys were bad enough, but defiant daughters were worse, raising as they did fears of female passion on the loose and burdensome out-of-wedlock pregnancies. In a culture in which people of all classes viewed with consternation the tremendous changes wrought in New York life, working-

class children by the 1850s were to become a powerful symbol of urban disorder. In particular, unruly daughters would create reverberations within a propertied clad preoccupied with the maintenance of female chastity and within a working class concerned with the declined of masculine authority. (Stansell 54)

# CHAPTER 1

## CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

**"Society is not somebody else domineering over us.**

**Society is us taking care of ourselves" (Hayden 196).**

> Here is a woman in late-Victorian America, denying the social definition of herself as wife and mother, first with a scandalous divorce (scandalous because it was amicable and seemingly without cause), then by "abandoning" her child to its father, and finally by denying the very reality of home. She created a kind of self-imposed exile, reproducing, but this time by choice, the marginality of her early life. (Lane viii)

For Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Society is ourselves" and thus problems can only be dealt with and worked out by the members of society. Gilman thought that

> [i]t is not that women are really smaller-minded, weaker-minded, more timid and vacillating; but that whosoever, man or woman, lives always in a small, dark place, is always guarded, protected, directed and restrained, will become inevitably narrowed and weakened by it. The woman is narrowed by the home and the man is narrowed by the woman. (Hayden 183)

Ann J. Lane is quoted as saying: "to know only Women and Economics (or only one of her works) is to be familiar with only part of her ideas. It is to settle for a view of the ground floor and to neglect the enticing staircase that leads to more elaborate and intriguing rooms above" (Knight, Nelson 160).

Gilman was born in 1860, in Connecticut. Her childhood and youth were fraught with economic hardships and her mother and two siblings were abandoned by her father after the birth of the third child. Witnessing that her mother's misery

resulted from her unsuccessful marriage had a profound effect on Gilman, she said that her mother's life was "one of the most painfully thwarted I have ever known" (Hedges 42). Her mother, at first a representative of the idolized image of eighteenth and nineteenth-century womanhood, was now suffering from the destruction of her marriage. Her life experiences led Gilman to question if "the conflicting patterns imposed on women at that time--'belle of the ball' versus housewife and producer of children-contribute[d] to, or indeed even account[ed] for, the destruction of the marriage" (Hedges 42). It is obvious that Gilman was greatly affected by the dissolution of her family. Suffering from the lack of a secure family and love, she decided "to develop her willpower . . . refusing to be defeated" (Hedges 42). Her aspirations for economic and social independence for women, were on the grounds that "her mother sacrificed both her own and her daughter's need for love" (Hedges 42). Gilman, at the age of sixteen, described herself as having,

> [m]y mother's profound religious tendency and implacable sense of duty; my father's intellectual appetite; a will power, well developed, from both; a passion of my own for scientific knowledge, for real laws of life; an insatiable demand for perfection in everything. (Hedges 43)

These traits lay behind her development into a socially responsible character and served as a foundation for her beliefs and writing.

Gilman, who would eventually achieve international recognition as a female intellectual of the period, decided to observe the life experiences of different people and to share hers with them when she was only seventeen. Gilman was equipped with the qualifications of a typical nineteenth-century young woman who "enjoyed visiting friends, playing cards, going to the theatre, and contributing to the family income by painting cards, tutoring and taking occasional outside jobs" (Farr 134-138). What

made her unique was her intense devotion to the betterment of life for both men and women.

In her autobiography, Gilman explains her integrity and strong sense of social responsibility:

> From sixteen I had not wavered from that desire to help humanity which underlay all my studies. Here was the world, visibly unhappy and as visibly unnecessarily so; surely it called for the best efforts of all who could in the least understand what was the matter and had any rational improvements to propose. (Farr 134-138)

Believing that human progress could only be achieved by improving its social organization, Gilman wrote at a time when women were restricted in their public and private lives, regarded as possessions of men and servants to masculine desire, and with no way out of their imprisoned domestic lives but death. Gilman, a pioneer of the American feminist movement, believed that "society had the potential to evolve institutionally into a healthier, freer, more socially independent state" (Prasch, Sheth 323+), but that such positive changes in society could only be managed if a new social order developed vis-à-vis socio-economic betterment aimed at every member of society. Margaret O'Donnell writes that "Gilman was dismayed that 'half the human race is denied free productive expression, is forced to confine its productive energies to the same channels as its reproductive sex-energies'" (O'Donnell, "A Reply" 337+). She believed that a society, void of female productivity and participation, was not a completely functioning organism.[i] Being aware of the potential for the liberated women of her generation to contribute to the maintenance and betterment of society, "she sought earnestly to foster such improvement" (Lant 294). She also believed that the liberation of women would be achieved through socio-economic betterment and

opportunity. Gilman redefined womanhood and motherhood in relation to a "new social economy, one based on compassion and human sympathy" (Prasch, Sheth 325+). She knew that it would not be easy to change attitudes of women through literature because literature was also masculine.

According to the economic literature from the period, part of the problem for women in Victorian America was the negative effects of modernization and industrialization. Before industrialization, the family economy depended greatly on farming and home-made products sold in local markets, thus family members, including women, were all productive in the sense that they all contributed to the family income. Railroads, machinery, and technological advances, resulted in great changes in the economy, and had immediate influences on the relations of individuals both in the family and the community. The railroads brought commerce, steel, coal and subsidiary industries. Causing great changes in the country's economy, modern technology also resulted in instability in the job market and in the family economy. The transition from shop to factory and advances in industrialization, mechanization and urbanization took many away from the home. Women--whose primary work was keeping house--also contributed to the household income by producing various goods for sale in the market. This secondary role, was now removed and her importance as a contributor to the family economy was consequently diminished.[ii]

Gilman offers the following definition of the devolution of economic power in women's lives as a consequence of the new industrial economy in Women and Economics:

> [C]ells combine, and form organs; organs combine, and form organisms; organisms combine, and form organizations. Society is an organization. . . . The course of social evolution is the gradual establishment of organic

> relation between individuals, and this organic relation rests on purely economic grounds. (51)

Gilman believed that women would be productive and functional only if limitations were removed, freeing them "from the individual constraints of the nineteenth-century family structure" (O'Donnell, "A Reply" 337+). Peaceful relations at home were paramount.[iii] Gilman, motivated by a social vision that underscored economic productivity and independence for women, was "the first to attempt 'to create a general theory of men and women in history from the perspective of gender'" (Fishbein 1116). In doing so, Gilman suggested that both women and children, subservient to men in the home and in the economic sphere, and excluded from the "contribution to society outside the home" (O'Donnell, "A Reply" 337+), should have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the public or male sphere.

Gilman believed that the betterment of life for both men and women could only be achieved through improving society as a whole. Criticizing the inhuman and inadequate conditions that many women of her age were forced to endure,[iv] she advocated three essential changes:

> a) changing the public and private roles of women.
>
> b) redesigning public and private spaces so as to reflect equality for women.
>
> c) making certain traits attributed to females- such as caring and cooperation- more central to community life. (O'Donnell, "A Reply" 337+)

Since women had been ignored throughout history, there were few signs of women in the public sphere other than charity or service work. Changing these repressive and

conventional roles assigned to women would remove the prejudices against women, she believed.

### 1.1. The Yellow Wall Paper

As Hedges points out, Gilman's inherited the "New England Puritan tradition of duty and responsibility: what she described as the development of 'noble character'" (Hedges 43), and this social awareness, while, serving her personal progress and her dream of fulfilling her responsibilities, at the same time harming her married life. Gilman agreed to marry Walter Stetson despite her conflicted views about "the domestic roles of wife and mother and [her] sense of duty to humanity" and the conflicting "need for love and approval and . . . for success" (Farr 134-138). She did not marry for love, but for duty—and with much reservation it would seem. Gilman saw it as a part of her social responsibility to question "the injustices under which women suffered" (Hedges 43), and to fight against these injustices. She carefully followed current developments, such as the increase in female enrollment at colleges and growing numbers of working women, the restrictions on these women, and the publications discussing marriage, sexuality and other female issues at the time.

Impressed with Walter Stetson's talent and tenderness, Gilman married him in 1884. Yet, her expectations of the impending marriage foreshadow her later misery: "I anticipate a future of failure and suffering. Children sickly and unhappy. Husband miserable because of my distress; and I…-" (Farr 134-138). Not surprisingly, the marriage brought little relief from the distress she felt from being torn between marriage and career.

Ideologically Gilman suggested that a woman "should be able to have marriage and motherhood and do her work in the world also" (Hedges 45). However, she knew this appealing vision was quite impracticable. This realization increased her distress,

despite her husband's "tenderness" and "devotion" (Hedges 45). This was not enough to keep her away from periods of depression, ongoing distress, and "fears that marriage and motherhood might incapacitate her for her 'work in the world'" (Hedges 45), the whole experience mentally and physically weakening her.

Her domestic and economic hardships were further aggravated by her daughter's birth. Her immediate pregnancy and pre-existing worries drove her to "Absolute incapacity. Absolute misery" (Hedges 45). She became a "mental wreck" (Hedges 45). Gilman felt trapped in the traditional female roles of mother and wife Victorian society had assigned her. She worried about failing in her duty to fulfill her female responsibilities. Evidently, she was overloaded with loneliness, lacked a sense of security (perhaps because of the instabilities of her early life) and fretted about the traditional roles assigned to women of her generation. According to Hedges:

> If marriage meant children and too many children meant incapacity for other work; if she saw her father's abandonment and her mother's coldness as the result of this sexual-marital bind; if she saw herself as victimized by marriage, the women playing the passive role-then she was simply seeing clearly. (Hedges 46)

Gilman was determined not to be defeated in her battle against the institution of marriage and to prove to herself that women could be faithful wives and responsible careerists--not simply in theory but in practice. Gilman failed miserably and was sent to Dr. Weir Mitchell, whose treatment, the Rest Cure, only made things worse, driving her "to the borderline of utter mental ruin" (Farr 134-138). It inspired her to write The Yellow Wall Paper.

Gilman believed that every individual had a different way to contribute to society. Some were created to be doctors, artists or businessman, while others were

meant to be mothers. The latter did not include her. For Gilman, the "changes in the environment of the individual would result in social environmental change" (O'Donnell, "A Reply" 337+). Hence, every individual should take the responsibility to analyze carefully and identify her or his abilities and natural calling in life. Motherhood, for Gilman, was the most important profession a woman could choose and deserved the utmost respect, but in her own defense it was best left to those women who possessed the right sensibility. For Gilman, as O'Donnell explains,

> her personal contribution to society at large should come through her literary endeavors. She had no taste for domestic tasks and felt that others could provide these more adequately than herself. Gilman's quest for individual independence was expressed in her desire to be freed from household duties to pursue her own specialty. (O'Donnell, A Reply" 337+)

Motivated by the fact that depression was commonplace among the women of her class and generation, Gilman wrote The Yellow Wall Paper in order to share her experiences with her contemporaries. In trying to get her story published, Gilman realized that she had to overcome formidable obstacles. She first sent her story to William Dean Howells, who recommended it to Horace Scudder. The terse and dismissive response she received from Scudder is of great importance, giving insight into the patriarchal perception of women's mental health and domestic issues. The note Scudder sent shows that editors in the 1890s were strictly devoted to "moral uplift" in literature (Hedges 40), and Gilman's story went against the grain of Victorian patriarchal pretension. The letter reads:

> Dear Madam,
>
> Mr. Howells had handed me this story.

I could not forgive myself if I made others as miserable as I have made myself!

Sincerely yours,

H.E. Scudder

The Yellow Wall Paper, which "graphically depicts the crippling limitations of a patriarchal society, driving the female protagonist to madness" (Knight, Nelson 160), was published in May 1892, in The New England Magazine. After she published her story, "Gilman was warned that such stories were 'perilous stuff', which should not be printed because of the threat they posed to the relatives of such 'deranged' persons as the heroine" (Hedges 41). Hedges also explains that the "implications of such warnings--that women should 'stay in their place,' that nothing could or should be done except maintain silence or conceal problems--are fairly clear" (41). This warning was no surprise, for aside from the light it throws on patriarchy in America, Gilman's story underscores the problems inherent to the patriarchal, medical establishment of her day. Despite widespread criticism of her story and of its heroine, Gilman was not discouraged and kept writing. As Knight states,

> [p]artly drawn from Gilman's own life experience (as was much of her short fiction and poetry), this story of a wife and mother undergoing a three-month "rest cure" for postpartum depression was written "to reach Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, and convince him of the error of his ways." (Knight, Nelson 160)

After a month of Dr. Mitchell's "care", which almost resulted in a complete mental breakdown, she visited a girlhood friend in California. During her time there, she recovered. Returning home, she discovered that the domestic responsibilities that were

part and parcel of the traditional role assigned to her as wife and mother quickly drove her to distraction. The old depression and fatigue quickly returned. She had no choice but to divorce and thus free herself from the constraints of marital responsibilities. Gilman suffered from nervous depression, regardless, for the rest of her life.

After her divorce, she started lecturing and continued to write on “socialism and freedom of women” (Hedges 48) simply to make a living. However, it was not easy to stand against the widely accepted traditional doctrines of her time. She had to fight “against public opinion, against outright hostility” (Hedges 48). When the struggle to provide for her daughter and mother became too much, she sent daughter Kate--whom she’d had taken to California as well--to live with her father Walter Stetson and his new wife. The economic necessity that forced her hand scandalized Californian society, for Gilman had abandoned her own flesh and blood, breaking the mother-daughter relationship. Gilman also seemed unaffected, failing to live up to the social expectations and sacrifices of being a woman in Victorian America, exchanging motherhood for individual female freedom. She wrote disparagingly but sarcastically in her journal of society’s criticism of her actions: “Call on Gussie Seuter at her mothers. See them both & Mrs. Masters. All cold -Gussie explains their views -I am an unnatural mother! Well!” (Farr 134-138).

Gilman, like many middle-class women of her day, went to great lengths to control her emotions. This may have been a product of being deserted by her father, but it did not destroy her. Gilman’s somewhat cold reaction to her mother’s death as what Farr calls “tightly controlled emotion” is telling, indeed (Farr 134-138). She writes in her journal:

> She passed away at 2:10, very quietly. The nurse and I wash and dress her and clear up the room -all done before 5. Then we try to eat -try to sleep. I

> don't succeed.’ Even as she kept watch by her mother, however, Charlotte was able to continue her work. On 3 March she notes ‘Nothing seems to seriously affect my power to write. This paper [‘The Sex Question Answered’] has been done in short laborious efforts during these wretched days, and finished last night by mother’s deathbed. (Cited in Farr 134-138)

And so, the mental ravages of motherhood, divorce, and the death of her mother all contributed to her writing of The Yellow Wall Paper.

In short, The Yellow Wall Paper tells the story of a woman forced by her husband into solitary confinement because she suffers from a kind of nervous fatigue. Even though John, the name of the husband, is a kind person, he is domineering and unemotional and typical of the nineteenth-century, male attitude toward women. The absence of critical information concerning women in the home and their condescending husbands made the fiction a social and literary representation of domestic realism (and from a decidedly female/feminist point of view). One sees this in the following excerpt:

> John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.
>
> John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures. John is a physician, and perhaps -(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind) -perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see he does not believe I am sick! (Gilman, The Yellow Wall Paper 9-10)

Gilman criticizes the patriarchal attitude of indifference, that of scientists and medical professionals in particular who failed to understand or assist women from a female perspective and a more holistic point of view.

Gilman's use of irony, satire and wit in The Yellow Wall Paper reveal "how a woman is repressed, confined and ultimately driven crazy, specifically by her husband, but more generally by the violence of patriarchy" (Bennett, Royle 113). As Bennet argues, by telling her own story using fiction, she

> emphasizes the ways in which violence against women need not be physical in a literal sense, but can nevertheless be all-pervading. It is what we call the soft face of oppression that is satirically presented, for example, when the narrator notes: "(John) is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction." Or when she says: "It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so." (Bennett, Royle 113)

Her female protagonist's lack of freewill and how husbands are characterized as using guilt to enforce their will—indeed, the scornful attitude of such husbands for their wives—provide much insight into the intellectual and emotional sense of violation that women like Gilman felt. John laughs at his wife, forces her to stay in the country, puts her in a room with barred windows, and loves to remind her that they are far from the freedom of city life "Solely on (her) account" (Hedges 50). Above all, she is not permitted to make her own decisions. The heroine in The Yellow Wall Paper, not unlike Gilman, must fight against "all the social and medical codes of her time, to retain her sanity and her individuality" (Hedges 55).

### 1.2. Women and Economics

In her seminal Women and Economics, published in 1898, Gilman uses domesticated animals such as cows to portray the enslavement and humiliation of women:

> The wild cow is a female. She has healthy calves, and milk enough for them. And this is all the femininity she needs. Otherwise than that she is bovine rather than feminine. She is a light, strong, swift, sinewy creature, able to run, jump and fight, if necessary. We, for economic uses, have artificially developed the cow's capacity for producing milk. She has become a walking milk-machine, bred and tended to that express end, her value measured in quarts. (23)

Gilman also focuses on the fact that women and men share the same world,

> the same human energies and human desires and ambitions within. But all that [a woman] may wish to have, all that she may wish to do, must come through a single channel and a single choice. Wealth, power, social distinction, fame -not only these, but home and happiness, reputation, ease and pleasure, her bread and butter, -all, must come to her through a small gold ring. (Gilman, Women and Economics 36)

Gilman criticized the overemphasis on gender in social and economic relationships. It was humiliating for her to think that the social and economic position of women in society should be decided and developed in proportion to their ability to attract a man to support them. She completely rejected the notion that women should be a lifelong dependent on the male as artificial and against nature. She noted that the female of every species was created and equipped with the qualifications and abilities to survive on her own.[v]

In Women and Economics, Gilman defends a worldview in which "women enjoyed the economic independence of work outside the home for wages and savored the social benefits of life with their families in private kitchenless houses or apartments connected to central kitchens, dining rooms, and day care centers"

(Hayden 183). In the 1880s and 1890s, the prevailing belief was that human evolution and progress would be maintained in "a society where technology lightened all labor and encouraged the socialization of domestic work" (Hayden 184). As Hayden explains, many believed that human relations would be perfected through cooperative housekeeping and looked forward to a society where domestic life would liberate women from the restrictions of conventional as equal participants in the social, economic, and political evolution of humankind. However, Gilman contended that confinement to the household and to motherhood, for women, would hurt the larger social project of evolutionary uplift. To hasten this individual/social evolution, Gilman hoped to find a way to free women from the burden of "domestic work and childcare . . . allowing women to be economically independent of men" (Hayden 184). For Gilman, the development and appreciation of "socialized domestic work and new domestic environments" (Hayden 184) would support human evolution and the evolution of American society according to something more cooperative and communal in nature.[vi]

### 1.3. Gilman as Humanitarian and Proto-Socialist: Intellectual Influences

Gilman's theories were influenced by her uncle, Edward Everett Hale, who believed in nationalism and evolutionary theory, and the sociologist Lester Ward, who "argued that cooperation rather than competition was the key to successful human evolution and stated that social and economic planning could improve the human situation, especially the situation of women: 'A state of society if it be bad for one class is bad for all'" (Hayden 185). Gilman relied on Ward's idea that "Woman is the race, and the race can only be raised up as she is raised up" (Hayden 185). Another important figure in Gilman's intellectual life and of great importance to her views on home economics was Helen Campbell. Because of Campbell, Gilman became part of

the debate on women's economic position and the position of children in society. As Hayden explains:

> Campbell projected intense fervor for domestic reform: "Living, as we get it in our isolated, individual system, is organized waste and destruction, and women who oppose or refuse to even listen to calm and rational discussion as to better possibilities, what are they but organized obstruction?" She wrote persuasively of planning and furnishing houses to show more concern for children's needs. She spoke of the need for family privacy, which could not be met by conventional domestic industries "subservient and reduced to order" as part of a structured community of housing and services, "a whole great building expressed the thought of human living at its best." (186)

Describing herself as a "humanitarian socialist" (Hayden 187), Gilman was greatly influenced by English and French pioneers of socialism like Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. Being all too American in some respects, she was not predisposed to Marxism. In this vein, she writes:

> My socialism was of the early humanitarian kind, based on the first exponents, French and English, with the American enthusiasm of Bellamy. The narrow and rigid "economic determinism" of Marx, with its "class consciousness" and "class struggle" I never accepted, nor the political methods pursued by the Marxians. My main interest then was in the position of women, and the need for more scientific care for young children, as to women, the basic need of economic independence seemed to me of far more importance than the ballot. (Hayden 187)

Moreover, Gilman did not consider herself to be a feminist per se, that label far too narrow for the social vision she hoped to bring about. That said, there was a degree of female chauvinism in her writing.[vii] As Spender notes: "She defiantly asserted that it was the women who protested against tyranny, oppression, and exploitation who were the human norm, against which masculinist values could be measured and found wanting" (Connell 19). Recognizing that it was women who suffered most under oppressive masculine systems of governance, she believed it necessary to educate women and raise and maintain female self-awareness and progress for the sake of all human beings and progress in general. The betterment of women would bring about positive changes in the entire social structure.

Gilman's admiration for Fabian socialism, which "deplored violent confrontation between capital and labor and relied on the effects of skilled civil servants and politicians, enlightened capitalists, and leading, intellectuals" (Hayden 188) also kept "her militant cultural feminism" (Hayden 188) in check. It is one of the reasons she gravitated to fiction as the best means of achieving female liberation and sweeping social reform. Hayden is not alone in celebrating Gilman's work and her importance to feminism, but to social reform in general:

> Gilman was by turns practical and fanciful. She might discourse on economics, illustrating her points with anecdotes based on her days as a boarding housekeeper in Oakland, California, or her struggles as a settlement house worker in Chicago. Or she might picture for her audience an imaginary society, with an ideal set of economic relationships, a place first created in her utopian fiction, such as the California town, Orchardina, where women did no private housework, or the Amazonian country, Herland, where women had governed for centuries, without men, and

> socialized domestic work was the rule. Gilman stood out among all of the feminists and the futurists of her time as the charismatic person who synthesized the thinking of suffragists, home economists, and utopian novelists on the question of the home, and produced a program for collective domesticity which made her a leading figure in feminist circles in the United States and Europe. (Hayden 183)

Gilman and feminist writers of her age underscored the fact that the modern woman was a man-made invention. Gilman worked tirelessly to educate women, to help them to realize their own capacity for improvement and power to will, and for the need to remove the oppressive "he" that had devaluated and dehumanized them for centuries. As a woman, mother, and quasi-socialist, she redefined the female role in the social and economic spheres.

As we will see, her utopian novel Herland can be seen as radical female world devoid of such male vices as war, inequality, political corruption, and sexual immorality. And yet, in her idealized, "feminist" utopia, motherhood is among the most important and powerful expressions of female independence and power.[viii] How this might be possible is the subject of the chapter to follow.

## Notes

[i] The importance and necessity of women cannot be denied or underestimated in the sense that the society is composed of both men and women. So, women must be as functional as men. The factor that prevents women from contributing to the economic and social development of the society in which she lives is the fact that economy is almost totally masculine. The role that women are given in the economic process is limited to the most primitive kind. For Gilman, this distinction is not a result of the disability of female sex, who shares the common humanity with the male, but her present condition in the society. The reality that the economic status of woman depends on man makes woman the absolute consumer while man is the producer and the participant in the social development.

[ii] As Margaret G. O'Donnell states "The economic dependence of women is a natural consequence of a social institution, the family as an economic unit …She called the family as an economic unit a 'relic of the patriarchal age'" (O'Donnell, "Early Analysis" 337). The woman, deprived of her economic productivity by industrialization had nothing but motherhood, which did not help her to be economically independent. According to Gilman, a woman working throughout her life in service of her children, her husband, and other relatives, actually worked harder than a man and yet she still had the ability to work for society, for charity, for education and for many other fields apart from motherhood. Gilman criticized the idea which claimed that motherhood prevents women from working and contributing to her economic status because such an attitude not only underestimated women's' capacity, but also limited her service to the man she married, and on whom she depended.

[iii] As Gilman states, the sex-distinction, which women suffer from, differentiates the industries and virtues of man and woman. On the other hand, social order and development can be achieved by the contribution of both sexes. “All the varied activities of economic production and distribution, all our arts and industries, crafts and trades, all our growth in science, discovery, government, religion, . . . , these are, or should be common to both sexes. To teach, to rule, to make, to decorate, to distribute, - these are not sex-functions: they are race-functions” (Gilman, Women and Economics 27). In this view “women are persons as well as females” (Gilman, Women and Economics 27).

[iv] Woman, being supported by man, placed man between her and her physical environment. As a result, woman, lacked the interaction between her and the environment, and was prevented from development. According to Gilman, while a living organism needs interaction with its external circumstances and to be able to respond to those, woman was confined to her home, which resulted in restriction of her, ideas, information, thought processes and powers of judgment, and gave “a disproportionate prominence and intensity to the few things she knows about”(Gilman, Women and Economics 34).

[v] In this masculine world all human progress was achieved by men, leaving women behind or outside the process of the construction of social order and roles. Even in religious development, women were left outside and below. “Paul commanded her to be silent in the churches. And she has been silent until to-day.” Gilman focuses on her concerns about women in religious terms; “In some nations, religion is held to be a masculine attribute exclusively, it being even questioned whether women have souls” (Gilman, Women and Economics, 35).

[vi] Woman, whose productive skills were reduced to the minimum level and variety of service, was encouraged to take and consume but not to produce. The industrialization and mechanization period, however, required more social services and labor inviting women to take roles as specialized individuals in arts, crafts, trades, sciences, education and in many other fields, which would also give them the opportunities of self-realization and self-expression. According to Gilman, just like the parts of body working for the good of the individual, the individuals must work cooperatively for the good and the unity of the society. In the light of Gilman's argument, it can be said that from the beginning of humanity, woman has always been industrious. Unfortunately, the changing conditions, the destructive attitudes of the male, the excessive masculinity and restrictions of society limited and put her between walls, symbolizing her mental, social and emotional imprisonment.

[vii] Gilman passionately focused on the necessity to end the limitation and pain of women and the conservative attitude towards women. "The common consciousness of humanity, the sense of social need and social duty, is making itself felt in both men and women"(Gilman, Women and Economics 68). She believed that women, who long regarded as the means of reproduction, were also motivated by the desire to produce and would stand together freely to take part in social and economic construction, and for the further goal of self-expression. Gilman advocated following "her lost wheel and loom in their new place, the mill" (Gilman Women and Economics 76) and noted the attempts of young girls in particular who were motivated by the desire to gain independence and a career. Similarly, the women organizations such as, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, established by women, who did not have any other opportunity to feel and act in common and established in order to

appease the pain and struggle in their souls, proved the readiness and capability of women to satisfy other needs of humanity. However, woman, by becoming individual, inevitably suffers from the pressures to conform to the conservative roles of women and family life then prevailing. Suffering from "not being able to do what she wants to do, and from being forced to do what she does not want to do" (Gilman Women and Economics 77), woman, who could not associate herself with the traditional duties, faced the difficulty of being "a newly specialized wife and a mother, a personality" (Gilman Women and Economics 77) in a traditional social context with traditional expectations of women.

[viii] In 1900, Gilman married her first cousin, George Houghton Gilman. She continued to write until committing suicide after being diagnosed with inoperable breast cancer. The following is the note left by Gilman just before her suicide:

> No grief, pain, misfortune or "broken heart" is excuse for cutting off one's life while any power of service remains. But when all usefulness is over, when one is assured of unavoidable and imminent death, it is the simplest of human rights to choose a quick and easy death in place of a slow and horrible one. . . . I have preferred chloroform to cancer. (Lane ix.)

# CHAPTER 2

## HERLAND: "A STATE OF PERFECT CULTIVATION"

Connell provides the following summary of Gilman's utopian masterpiece, Herland, one that is worth quoting at length:

> Imagine a society where there is no poverty, no crime, no pollution, no war, and no disease. In this society technology not only serves human needs, but also works in harmony with nature. Population growth allows a comfortable standard of living for everyone. In order to maintain a large population with a high quality of life, the community forgoes eating meat, and instead, dedicates all of its agricultural land to organically based food production. The result of this dedication to sustainable agriculture is a land "in a state of perfect cultivation. . . . A land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden." Members of this community share common values and unite around common interests. But there are more than just community concerns. This imaginary society also promotes the development of individual capacities to their fullest potential and supports the personal and intellectual growth of individuals throughout their lives. Collective life is primary, and yet, individuals thrive. In this society everyone contributes to community life based upon their individual talents and interests. In the words of one observer of this society, "I never dreamed of such universal peace and good will and mutual affection." (Connell 19)

Gilman wrote that "the popular thought of our day is voiced in fiction" and that "by what is freely written by most authors and freely read by most people is shown our

change in circumstances and change in feeling" (Gilman, Women and Economics 75). Fiction as a vehicle for social uplift goes a long way to understanding the reasons behind her most famous novel, Herland.

Gilman hoped to redefine motherhood and womanhood, challenging the traditional perceptions and portrayals of these concepts at every turn. Indeed, her literary and social agenda are best explained, in some respects, in the following excerpt from Women and Economics:

> In old romances the woman was nothing save beautiful, high-born, virtuous, and perhaps 'accomplished.' She did nothing but love and hate, obey or disobey, and be handed here and there among villain, hero, and outraged parent, screaming, fainting, or bursting into floods of tears as seemed called for by the occasion. In the fiction of to-day women are continually taking larger place in the action of the story. They are given personal characteristics beyond those of physical beauty. . . . They are showing qualities of bravery, endurance, strength, foresight, and power for the swift execution of well-conceived plans. They have ideas and purposes of their own; and even when, as in so many cases described by the more reactionary novelists, the efforts of the heroine are shown to be entirely futile, and she comes back with a rush to the self-effacement of marriage with economic dependence, still the efforts were there. (75)

Karen Lindsey asserts that the exploration of female culture through female works of fiction is of great importance, "shift the prism and help us to look at reality in terms of women's experiences" (Lindsey 273). She also adds that female works are "major steps forward erasing the universal 'he' that has crippled women, and dehumanized men for so long" (Lindsey 274).

Herland, is the story of three adventurous men--Van Jennings, Terry Nicholson and Jeff Margrave--who hear about a strange land, a place for women only, during a scientific expedition in remote South America. Attracted by rumors of a female utopia in an uncharted part of the Amazon, they decide to be the first men to visit this isolated female community in the mountains. Motivated by the possibility of acquiring secret insights into the female psyche and the adventure that surely awaits, they organize a second expedition to seek the hidden realm via air instead of attempting the hazardous journey on foot. During their geographical expeditionary flight, they expected to find a civilized country with cities built in "a strictly Amazonian nature" (Gilman, Herland 5). The female society proves a great surprise to these male intruders,

> a land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden. I confess that we paid small attention to the clean, well-built roads, to the attractive architecture, to the ordered beauty of the little town. We had our glasses out; even Terry, setting his machine for a spiral glide, clapped the binoculars to his eyes. (Gilman, Herland 10)

For the male adventurers, the signs of civilization, the cultivation of the forest, the agricultural skills and impressive architecture are clear evidence of men in their midst.[i] They could not be more wrong and the adventure begins.

In Herland, an exclusively female society is meant to deconstruct a wide range of social ideas and societal assumptions endemic to the male Victorian mindset. Through the characterization of the male intruders in the novel, Gilman attempts to

convey not only the “exploratory nature of the opening of the novel” (Arnold 299+), but also the general picture of nineteenth-century male attitudes about women.

Sharnhorst notes that Van “‘initially articulates orthodox social Darwinian dogma,’ before ‘embracing (the) reform Darwinism and feminism’ to which Gilman subscribed” (Cited in Arnold 299+). Van’s change in attitude “is integral to the novel. He is the voice of social theory with which Gilman contends and is, eventually, a convert to her beliefs. By the end of the novel, Van’s acceptance of Herland is his acceptance of Gilman’s cognitive map of a better world” (Arnold 299+). Van, portrayed as the most balanced of the male characters, will manage to revise some of his thinking and male attitudes that underestimate and humiliate women.

Terry, is “a man’s man” (Gilman, Herland 8), a rich man at that with traditional patriarchal ideas and attitude that have hardened and are beyond repair in some respects. Jeff, on the other hand, is characterized as a “tender soul” (Gilman, Herland 6), “full of chivalry and sentiment” (Gilman Herland 8). Jeff is prone to the reverse problem—the idealization of women as perfectly innocent, fragile and perpetually in need of protection and to which Gilman was not less opposed. Van functions as a bridge between the two poles of patriarchal condescension—Terry’s condescension and Jeff’s idealization. “Terry’s idea seemed to be that pretty women were just so much game and homely ones are not worth considering” (Gilman, Herland 8). Their shock to encounter a highly civilized, all-female society shows how little male civilization values women as capable of the same technological advances without their help. “[W]hy, this is a civilized country! . . . There must be men. Of course there are men,” proclaims Terry” (Gilman, Herland 10).

On their first approach, they do not meet any of the inhabitants of Herland, but eventually they come across three playful girls whom they assume are boys at first

sight. Gilman's choice of female clothing for the three young women is the first glimpse into her imagined world of liberated women. "We saw short hair, hatless, loose and shining," the men are said to remark, "a suit of some light firm stuff, the closest of tunics and kneebreeches, met by trim gaiters" (Gilman, Herland 13). After introducing themselves, the men try to convince the girls to come closer, but to no avail. The men are interesting to the girls, yet they keep their distance. Terry offers the girls a necklace made of pearls but the response comes closer, Gilman writes, to "that of an intent boy playing a fascinating game than of a girl lured by an ornament" (Gilman, Herland 14). After Terry's failed attempt to grab one of the girls, all three flee. The men give chase but are easily outpaced and will eventually be stopped in their tracks by a large group of women at the outskirts of the nearest village.

After observing the silent, clean and extremely well-organized streets and the exquisite houses, Van narrates the first meeting of the Herland women. All of it is simply charming, the men having no sense of being in any danger and only because they are women: "When we reached the edge of the open country," it says,

> They were not young. They were not old. They were not, in the girl sense, beautiful. They were not in the least ferocious. And yet, as I looked from face to face, calm, grave, wise, wholly unafraid, evidently assured and determined. . . . Each was in the full bloom of rosy health, erect, serene, standing sure-footed and light as any pugilist. They had no weapons, and we had, but we had no wish to shoot. (Gilman, Herland 17)

They are invited to follow the women. The men are unwilling to obey the invitation at first for fear they may be taken into custody. Against their better judgment, they allow themselves to be led like sheep into a large building, "a very heavy thick-walled impressive place, big and good-looking; of gray stone, not like the rest of the town"

(Gilman, Herland 18). Once inside, they realize it will be a "peaceful detention" (Gilman, Herland 18). Fears of becoming prisoners of women, the men break out, but are quickly and easily captured, disarmed, and drugged.

When the men awake, they are shocked to find themselves the victims of a warm bath and comfortable, new clothing. The description of their room is meant to celebrate the high level of female civilization in Herland:

> Terry swung his legs out of bed, stood up, stretched himself mightily. He was in a long nightrobe, a sort of seamless garment, undoubtedly comfortable-we all found ourselves so covered. Shoes were beside each bed, also quite comfortable and good-looking though by no means like our own. A door stood somewhat ajar; it opened into a most attractive bathroom, copiously provided with towels, soap, mirrors, and all such convenient comforts, with indeed out toothbrushes and combs, our notebooks, and thank goodness, our watches-but no clothes. (Gilman, Herland 22)

The women treat the men to every courtesy and kindness. They will need to learn the language of their captors--for Herland is home to a women's language as well as a female history that is unique and distinct from anything and everything male. The men are not free to come and go as they please without, that is, their female guards. During their detention, they finally realize that they are the only men in the place. Jeff also notices that the women do not "seem to notice our being men. . . . They treat us—well--just as they do one another. It's as if our being men was a minor incident" (Gilman, Herland 26). Despite the many kindnesses offered him, Terry cannot bear the thought of imprisonment and attempts another escape. After lowering themselves from a window by rope they will get as far as their airplane only to find three women

waiting for them. These men are learning what it means to be women, for they are trapped, their desire for independence thwarted at every turn.

### 2.1. The Miracle of the Birth of and in Herland

Accepting their captivity, the men decide to learn more about the history and the characteristics of Herland. They learn that the country has survived without men for about 2000 years (roughly from the time of Jesus!). Their tutor states that a long time ago in this land there was a country that had ships, commerce, an army, a king and a race comprised of two sexes. These people were polygamous and had slaves, too. Following a series of wars, natural disasters, and internal strife between masters and the slaves, a small number of "infuriated virgins" (Gilman, Herland 46), chose to rebel and "rose in sheer desperation and slew their brutal conquerors" (Gilman, Herland 46). They worked hard to create a new society of female survivors. At the end of five or ten year's of cooperative living they were stronger and wiser.

Then a miracle happened, a young girl became pregnant in an all female society. At first they all thought it was proof of a man somewhere in their midst, but later, it became clear that it was a gift from the Goddess of Motherhood. The young woman and Mary figure in question would give birth to five girls who then establish Herland--a peaceful and well-organized society, totally isolated from feelings such as competition and anger, and shameful behavior such as crime.[ii] A society of mothers without men, the women of Herland could make childbearing and childrearing their first priority, coupled with ideas of economic cooperation in the interest of the common good and where the education and happiness of children rules supreme. What becomes clear from this is how Herland does not challenge Victorian ideas concerning female moral superiority and their natural calling as mothers, but define this and locate it completely outside the realm of patriarchal authority.

## 2.2. The Male/Outside World as Counterpoint

The story of Herland is followed by a male defense of America as a kind of male dystopia and a rather salient example of counterpoint. At the outset, the three men believe that the Great Republic as established by the Founding Fathers is better than anything in Herland. Here, Van and Jeff begin a cognitive mapping of patriarchy that only succeeds in revealing the misogyny endemic to American society. Even the male characters cannot help but acknowledge the inherent superiority of Herland as a more advanced and civilized society. Meanwhile, Herland's female audience is shocked to learn of poverty, disease, violence, the violation of female rights, exploitation, and such wide-spread corruption. Ashamed of the unsavory aspects of their male society, Van and Jeff try to conceal the whole truth, although Herlanders have heard all they need to. Most upsetting to the liberated women of Herland is the practice of abortion implicit to a line of male questioning about how family numbers are kept to a maximum of five in Herland without it:

> But what I do not understand, naturally, is how you prevent it. I gathered that each woman had five. You have no tyrannical husbands to hold in check- and you surely do not destroy the unborn--The look of ghastly horror she gave me I shall never forget. She started from the chair, pale, her eyes blazing. Destroy the unborn-! She said in a hard whisper. Do men do that in your country? (Gilman, Herland 59)

The overall image of the patriarch mainstream in America vis-à-vis Herland and what amounts to a male confession is a competitive, materialistic world where women are exploited. This inferior position requires the active subordination of women, and her absolute obedience to the cruel practices of men. The Herlanders are shown that the

maternal function of women is sacrificed for the sake of the interests of a morally and socially corrupted society.

Arnold argues that Gilman's intentions were social in the main and her audience may well be male, the conversion of males to a female understanding of the world the intention:

> All of the men's assumptions and prejudices are voiced within the first few chapters, and much of the novel is spent on their conversion experience, a conversion to understanding (or refusal to understand, as in Terry's case) the fullness of womanhood. For instance, when they first see Herland, they assume men must be part of the society because of how civilized the country looks, with its cultivated forests and well-kept streets. Men are inherently part of their cognitive maps. Their assumptions soon are proven wrong, however, and their cognitive maps are contrasted with the Herlanders' cognitive maps of gender. (299+)

In other words, the more Van and Jeff learn about Herland, the more they are likely to compare Herland to their own society and the sickness and shortcomings of patriarchy. Terry is the exception. For Terry, the subordination and inferiority of women is a natural and necessity prerequisite to being female in a male-dominated society, causing him to reject the testimony in Herland. [iii]

### 2.3. Returning to Where They Began: Gender, Sexuality, and Community

The experience of being in the company of men for the first time forces the women of Herland to embrace their forgotten and latent heterosexually as sexual beings. To remedy this, three of their women--Celis, Alima and Ellador--form relationships with the men. For the three Herlanders, however, it is not easy to fulfil the expectations of their partners, who possess the patriarchal assumptions of the time

and try to dominate the relationship. The women, on the other hand, believe in equality and cannot understand the men's obsession with being superior. Jeff's romanticism and notion of chivalry cause him to idolize women, "walling them in with his romantic ideas of what they are or should be" (Arnold 299+). His interpretation of Celis as "the ideal of perfect, innocent women to be protected and admired" (Arnold 299+) causes problems in their relationship. Terry, on the other hand, who has an image of "womanhood as conceptualized through Victorian male eyes" (Arnold 299+), expects to have a master-mastered relationship with Alima, and expects her to fulfil her duty in the relationship by functioning as a submissive partner. Van and Ellador strike a better balance of the three.

After the wedding ceremony, the Herlanders get their first real taste of domestic bliss and private life, a concept totally alien to Herland which upholds the superiority of the community. Herland's first brides are surprised by the sexual expectations of their respective husbands. Terry nearly rapes Alima, for example. Jeff, who believes in the absolute superiority of Herland, decides to stay with his pregnant wife, Celis. Terry happy to leave Herland, first threatens to divulge the secret location to outsiders, but relents and promises to keep it a secret. Leaving Jeff behind, Terry and Van depart accompanied by Van's wife Ellador, who wants to experience the outside world. Gilman reveals an important message in the character of Ellador, who wants to leave with Van, that women like her, having achieved self-realization and self-expression to the highest degree are best equipped to survive in a patriarchal society. And so, Herland is but a temporary respite from Victorian society, female empowerment done with integration rather than separation as the ultimate goal.

## Notes

[i] As Peter Turchi states "writing combines two intermingled acts--exploration and presentation" (Arnold 299+). That is exactly what Gilman incorporates in Herland, through the narrator Van Jennings, who, as a result of his experiences in Herland, changes "from skeptic to believer, from explorer to explored, and from would-be conqueror to conquered" (Arnold 299+). Bridgitte Arnold states that Herland can only be fully understood in the light of the theories of scholars such as Fredric Jameson and Peter Turchi. The theory of "cognitive mapping to explain how and why utopias are conceived" (Arnold 299+) by Jameson, and the "notion of writing as analogous to mapping to understand the complexities of Herland" (Arnold 299+) are the two important devices that would give the reader insight into the novel. Cognitive mapping as a theory is described in different ways by different scholars. For example, in the light of Louis Althusser's notion of ideologies, it is "the imaginary representation of the subjects relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence" (Arnold 299+). Jameson describes it as "[T]he mental map of city space . . . [which] can be extrapolated to that mental map of the social and global totality we all carry around in our heads in variously garbled forms" (Arnold 299+). For Jameson, however, no matter how it is described, without the description of one's real position in reality, the imagination of utopia cannot be managed. "Jameson argues that cognitive mapping, in this sense, is essential to utopian thought. He contends that in order to think specifically about a better future, one must know exactly where he or she stands in the present" (Arnold 299+).

> Utopian literature, then, is an exploratory mapping: mapping the present world as one imagines it and mapping the utopia as the site of exploratory

> solutions specific to the problems imagined in the real, present world. Not only must the current world be mapped, the social landscape surveyed, but also the desired land must be explored and presented. It is desire, as Ruth Levitas asserts in The Concept of Utopia, that is the defining element in utopian literature. This act is necessary in order to achieve utopia. (Arnold 299+)

[ii] For the Herlanders, and naturally for Gilman, these feelings and behaviors are man-centered. So it follows that the absence of men prevents the contamination of Herland society with these traits. Gilman, influenced by social scientists such as Lester Ward, Henry Drummond, and Edward Bellamy, believed that "such distasteful and unproductive traits as competition and individualism would play a diminished role in future generations of the human species. Their place would be taken by a specialized, productive, and sympathetic collective industry" (Prasch and Sheth 327+). In Herland, she created a place for women isolated from all these undesirable traits. The Herlanders, in exchanging questions with the explorers, have the opportunity to learn about such distasteful and strange aspect of society as abortion and masculinity which were prevalent in nineteenth century America. The difference of Gilman's world to the real world powerfully represented by Terry's repugnance of Herland children's books which were devoid of adventure, competition and all patriarchal elements of the nineteenth century America.

[iii] As Arnold states, Gilman's choice of the narrator also serves her aim to reach the readers of her age. Gilman, in a way, invites the women confined by the limitations of patriarchy and male dominance to an unknown place people only with women. To make the readers feel comfortable and secure in this unfamiliar place, she employs

characters with which the readers would feel familiar. Hence the narrator and his companions embody the typical masculine views of the day. As Arnold states that:

> A male narrator is necessary not only effectively to voice male stereotypes of women, but also convincingly to convert the potentially skeptical audience. It takes the question-and-answer dialogue and the friction between the sexes-- the male explorers and the female inhabitants--in order for Gilman's arguments for and about femininity to succeed and in order for her indictment of men, of her own culture, to succeed.
>
> Not only, then, do Gilman's multiple narrative mappings determine Herland's utopian concept, but they also determine the mapping of patriarchal and misogynistic assumptions through these male explorers and the male narrator. It is important for the reader to glimpse the land first through the eyes of men because they are the closest to Gilman's contemporary readership in terms of assumptions about womanhood. In other words, as different as Van, Terry, and Jeff may be from the reader (Gilman's contemporaries or modern readers), the reader perhaps finds familiarity with them. Their points of view and assumptions about women are not foreign, even to female readers. The reader can identify with the Not only, then, do Gilman's multiple narrative mappings determine Herland's utopian concept, but they also determine the mapping of patriarchal and misogynistic assumptions through these male explorers and the male narrator. It is important for the reader to glimpse the land first through the eyes of men because they are the closest to Gilman's contemporary readership in terms of assumptions about womanhood. In other words, as different as Van, Terry, and Jeff may be from the reader (Gilman's

contemporaries or modern readers), the reader perhaps finds familiarity with them. Their points of view and assumptions about women are not foreign, even to female readers. The reader can identify with the men, their faulty assumptions, and doubts about the all-female society. (299+)

# CHAPTER 3

## PERİHAN MAĞDEN

> While the possibility of a better country in which people can live their lives without interference with is sailing right under your nose, you remain suffocated by your despair.
>
> You are utterly condemned to stay here forever.
>
> They have confined you in such a way that you will always feel condemned to stay exactly where you are.
>
> You will obey and you will be stifled.
>
> You have no idea how to escape, nor why you are so upset. (Mağden, Korkma Bu Akşam Gelip Çalmam Kapını 15) [i]

Perihan Mağden deals with the social status and progress of women, but in twenty-first century Turkish society. Similar to Gilman, Mağden also criticizes the prescribed roles and social oppression imposed on women. Mağden believes that the social doctrines in Turkish society imprison individuals, forcing women to conform to expected societal roles and rules without question. Through her writings, she claims that obedience to such patriarchal norms is harmful to both the individual and the larger society.

### 3.1. Educational Background

As with Gilman, an appreciation of Mağden's life experiences is a necessary prerequisite to understanding her writing. Mağden, born in 1960 in Istanbul, decided to escape the city and its social expectations after leaving Boğaziçi University. In the hope of avoiding a formal career and the life of a mature working woman, she

traveled to many different countries, especially the Far East. Her experiences as a traveler contributed to her works in the years to follow. In an interview, she states that the "yol teması" (traveling) evident in her works is a result of her travel abroad. Her rebellious personality goes back to early youth. Teachers from her secondary school describe her as "an exceptional, a quarrelsome, and a difficult child"[ii] (Interview with Mağden, 2007). Mağden was not well suited to the formal discipline synonymous with public education. She writes:

> Yes! I was educated in British Girls Middle School. It was a very small school. They tolerated me seeing me as exceptional, discordant, and incompatible with the place. It was like a little family. I had trouble from the time I began at Sonar Robert College. For instance, I was not able to wake up in the mornings although I was a boarder. I always had the problem of not being able to wake up in the morning; I could not attend the courses as I could not wake up, which I, of course regarded as normal. I could not wake up and I expected them to understand. We had notice boards, my name would frequently be written there. It was like "go and see Mr. Webster, or Mr. Whatshisname." Always punishment. I was called for by the discipline committee. I was bewildered as I did not understand what was going on or why they were doing this to me. I graduated by breaking the record of going to discipline committee. (Kabaş 230-231)[iii]

A combination of Mağden's Robert College experience and Boğaziçi University as both decidedly American in nature prepared her very well for a life

bent on challenging Turkish society, especially with respect to women's experiences and her own extraordinary criticism of social codes.

### 3.2. Individual, Community, and Womanhood for Mağden: Feminist Utopia vs. Hyper-Realist Fiction

Mağden focuses on the issues of womanhood, motherhood, a woman's place in the social structure, class and sex distinctions, crime and the violation of individual and civil rights in Turkey. Whereas Gilman uses utopianism and the creation of an ideal female society to criticize patriarchy, Mağden prefers an approach that is more in line with realism and dystopic. The day-to-day difficulties that individuals must face just for the sake of being included and the price one must pay in patriarchal Turkey for a little peace and happiness, this is her aim. Contrary to Gilman's belief in the sanctity of the community over the individual, Mağden celebrates the individual and the idea of living only for the sake of self.

Mağden strongly opposes the stereotypical women of patriarchy in American film and on television. In her book Topladım Dağılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini, she criticizes the American sitcom character, Ally McBeal, as an example of a woman conforming to the way patriarchy wants her to be. She is clumsy, childish and a daydreamer, someone unfit to establish a place for herself in the real world as a lawyer. Mağden writes:

> They win the court case even though the whole time the lawyer was talking; the female client was declaring her love to the man. Mc Beal stands in a corner making strange noises –the type of sounds just like a spastic or autistic person would make-. The male lawyer explains to his

client; "She is a bit of an odd ball." (Mağden, Topladım Kalbimin Dağılan Her Köşesini 2)[iv]

Mağden believes that such female stereotypes in American popular culture can also be seen in Turkish society and, of course, its popular media, too:

> Women keep getting dressed up in these torture rooms called "changing rooms" and then coming out and waiting for the approval of their "men". Will they buy this or that? How on earth could a man decide what is good to buy? Well, of course, you may go with a gay friend. But I have to accept this –in order to be regarded as "flexible columnist"- ; It is a classic scene in Turkish films: you know, when Türkan Şoray and others like her are recreated, I mean; while she begins as a naïve village girl or a "simple secretary" who is miraculously transformed into a woman to be worshipped, she is unfeelingly dragged into some chic and expensive boutique and has to tolerate trying on literally dozens of outfits. For the clothes that meet the mentor's approval, a curt nod of his head, and for the unapproved, a shake. (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 198)[v]

Mağden is critical of the tendency of Turkish men to want to decide how their women should dress themselves as typical of patriarchy. Turkish men want to be involved in every decision that women make. They will not let women decide what to wear on their own. Women should wait for men to approve their choice in clothing. How can a woman, in her view, deprived of her right to choose what to wear be effective and efficient in her individual and social life? For Mağden, this is part and parcel of a cruel male system in which women are merely objects of beauty

and male pleasure. She attacks the beauty myth as humiliating and degrading to women:

> As a mother, one feels sorry for the condition of those girls. What sensible mother wants to watch her daughter standing over there – just as a pair of arms and legs- , grinning desperately and behaving coquettishly? What mother could be proud of her daughter marketing her body before she comes of age, such crassness in order to earn money or gain a Suzuki.
>
> (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 173)[vi]

Mağden challenges the idea that people are always forced to be somebody. She also claims that the limited number of options in one's life negatively affect his or her personal development. For example, Mağden says that for a while she had to work for an advertisement company even though she was not fit for the job. Oppression and social expectations drive people to become what they would not normally aim to be. For this reason, even though she studied psychology, she did not work as a psychologist as was expected of her but started writing.

> For one day, just for one day, get permission from your relations, your power or weakness, even from yourself.
>
> Today, do not be yourself. Be nothing. Do not even be NOTHING-that actually requires too much effort. Use no effort, just be, effortlessly. Be disconnected, isolated.
>
> Some people always force you to be "something": To be a mother, to be a nurse, to have a loving and passionate heart, to be a giraffe, to be a kitten in need of care, to be a person who has power. They push you. They push

> you and shove you. The worst thing is that it is not just them that force you, you also, continuously force yourself. Yet, nothing good comes by force. Good means comfort and peace. It is the state of abandoning yourself to the blowing winds. Not to force. Abandon yourself. What a great word: abandon yourself. (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 9)[vii]

As a columnist for Radikal, a left-leaning Turkish daily newspaper, Mağden has written on a wide range of social and economic issues. In her essays she reiterates her belief that progress in Turkey is not possible as long as women are viewed as second class citizens.

> It is not possible to maintain transparency in economics while there is this much opacity in other areas. All true progress happens as a whole. It should be considered like that. This feverish little society regards such things as human rights, woman rights, the Kurdish issue, and acceptance of F-type prisons, torture, and the bastinado as second class concerns.
> (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 224)[viii]

Mağden has written extensively on motherhood and individualism, underscoring the need to address the hostility in Turkish male society for its women.

For Mağden, women are excluded from intellectual life and instead associated with trivial and unimportant issues or concerns of no real value. As an independent, unmarried woman in Turkey, the prevailing patriarchy expects her to be "Ugly, with a dowager's hump, left on the shelf, blind and mentally ill" (Mağden, Topladım Dağılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini 53). Depending on her experiences, she asserts that men do not accept any criticism from women because they regard

themselves as superior beings sent as a grace to women. She also questions the reasons that Turkish men have for believing that women are inferior, or mere belongings rather than fellow human beings. As the following shows, she is fundamentally opposed to the male oppression of women:

> Regard a woman as a “territory” that you own by marking her on different parts of her body. A human becomes an object of ornament, spoils, booty, plunder, rather than a “living creature”. To not let anyone live there afterwards. And above all, to not give the possessed woman the right to a life after he has gone by maiming her or killing her if necessary. It is not easy to be a woman on this land. Here is more difficult than the other places. Much more. (Mağden, Topladım Dağılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini 58)[ix]

### 3.3. Mağden and Motherhood

In addition to being an adventurer, a writer and social critic, Mağden is a mother. She has a daughter. As a feminist and mother, her take on motherhood is uniquely Turkish in some respects. Unlike Gilman, who celebrates motherhood but not for everyone, Mağden’s discussion of the issue in her books Refakatçi and *Biz Kimden Kaçıyorduk Anne?* rejects such a notion. Married or not, all women ought to experience motherhood. For Mağden, to pass the responsibility of one’s child to someone else is tantamount to abandonment:

> To have a child is entirely essential. It is a kind of social status. For instance, when the child they have grows up and becomes somehow objectionable or does not become what was expected, do people get rid of them?

> To my surprise, they do; they abandon their children to babysitters, grandparents, nursemaids, aunts and so on.
>
> The children are brought up by mysterious groups. Not their own mother and fathers. Moreover, as they have their children not with people whom love, but with others they prefer due to their social status, class and level of income, and as these people are truly horrible, our universe is crowded with a large number of incredibly unlovable children. (Mağden, Topladım Dağılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini 11)[x]

Mağden regards motherhood as a unique interaction between two human beings. This is the good news. The bad news is that she also believes motherhood is a subtle form of self-destruction. Challenging the tendency in Turkish society to idealize motherhood, Mağden proffers a more realistic and emotionally dystopic mother-child relationship which is rather different from that in Gilman's fiction at least.

> Look! Is it possible for a mother to love her child a hundred percent? Let's say, there are such idiots beyond our comprehension, would you choose one of them to be your mother? As far as I am concerned, mothers are a mixture of vampire and cannibal: They want to suck their children's souls out and to feed on their hearts. Mothers, full of love and hatred, are all like this. I am not interested in indifferent mothers; I do not know them. "But my mother belongs to the category of indifferent mothers I think" says her broken voice. "Or she belongs to hesitant mothers; she does not know what to do with me. One part of her wants to be with me, the other part wants to run away. When she sees me, she feels that she has to grow up

> and hates this situation. She feels suffocated because I remind her that she is not a child or a young girl anymore. (Mağden, Refakatçi 47-48)[xi]

Mağden balances this against the necessity of creating a special place for oneself, embracing the concept of isolation in her books and recommending it to her female Turkish readers:

> Me and people like me, people of my tribe, find themselves contaminated after they have spoken to people whom they are not familiar with, in places where they do not belong to. Days spent with very few people have thinned the skin of our souls to the extent that; even everyday meetings-even with those who lighten our souls- injure us as well. Because of this we do not want to take so much as a step outside those places where people of our tribe exist. Sometimes quite often, sometimes never. (Mağden, Refakatçi 16)[xii]

And so modern Turkish women like Mağden constitute an interesting blend of old and new, traditional and radical that resembles some midway between East and West.

**Notes**

[i] İnsanların hayatına daha az müdahale edilen bir ülkenin ihtimali, bir gemi gibi sularınızı kat ederken, çaresizliğinizden boğulacaksınız. Yalnızca buralarda kalmaya mahkûmsunuz. Sizi yalnızca buralarda kalmaya mahkûm hissedeceğiniz şekilde sakatlamışlar. İtaat edecek ve soluksuz kalacaksınız. Karşıdan karşıya nereden geçeceğinizi bilemeyecek kadar. Ve neden bu denli üzgün olduğunuzu. (Mağden, Korkma Bu Akşam Gelip Çalmam Kapını 15)

[ii] İstisnai, uyumsuz, geçimsiz çocuk. (Interview with Mağden, 2007)

[iii] Evet! Ben ortaokulu İngiliz Kız Ortaokulu'nda okudum. Orası çok küçük bir okuldu. Beni de o ortamda istisnai, uyumsuz, geçimsiz çocuk diye hoş görüyorlardı. Orası küçük bir aile gibiydi. Sonra Robert Kolej'e gidince problem yaşadım. Mesela yatılı olduğum halde sabah uyanamıyordum. Benim sabah uyanamama sorunum oldu hep; sabah uyanamayınca derslere gidemiyordum ve bunu normal sayıyordum. Uyanamıyordum ve anlasınlar diye bekliyordum. Board (pano)larımız vardı, oraya zırt pırt ismim yazılıyordu. İşte git Mr. Webster'ı gör, yok git Mr. şunu gör. Sürekli ceza. Sürekli disiplin kuruluna gönderiliyorum. Ben afallıyordum ne oluyoruz, niçin bunu bana yapıyorlar gibi. Disiplin kuruluna gitme rekoru kırarak mezun oldum. (Kabaş 230-231)

[iv] Davayı kazanıyorlar, ama hep avukat konuşarak kazanıyorlar; kadın müvekkil erkeğe aşkını ilan ederken bir köşeye çekilmiş bulunan Mc Beal, acayip sesler (yani bir spastik ya da otistiğin çıkarabileceği sesler) çıkarıyor. Erkek avukat da 'She is a bit of an odd ball' (Tuhaftır yani biraz) tarzı bir açıklamada bulunuyor müvekkiline. (Mağden, Topladım Kalbimin Dağılan Her Köşesini 2)

[v] Kadınlar 'soyunma odaları' tabir edilen işkence odalarında giyinip giyinip ortaya çıkıyor; 'erkeklerinden' onay bekliyorlar: Onu mu alsınlar, bunu mu alsınlar? Ya ne anlar erkekler neyin alınmasının iyi olduğundan? Hani gay bi arkadaşınla gidebilirsin. Ya da şunu da Kabul edebilirim (hani 'esnek köşe yazarı' havası yaratabilmek için) Türk filmlerinde klasik sahnelerden biridir: Türkan Şoray filan yeniden yaratılırken, bir köylü kızı ya da sekreter 'parçasıyken' 'Tapılacak Kadın'a dönüştürülürken, hami erkeği tarafından acımasızca şık ve pahalı bir butiğe götürülüp onlarca kıyafet giymesine müsamaha gösterilir. Ki kıyafetlerden beğenilenler için Mentor (Hami'nin alafrangası) başını öne doğru, tasvip edilmeyenler için iki yana doğru sallar. (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 198)

[vi] Zira bir anne olarak insanın o kızların, o haline içi sızlıyor. Hangi aklıselim sahibi anne kızını orda bir çift bacak, bir çift kol olmak üzre umutsuzca sırıtarak, kırıtırken izlemek ister? Hangi kız anası kızının bu densiz işi yapabilmesi için (Suzukiler, paralar kazanabilmesi için) daha reşit olmadan kendini, etini pazarlamasını iftiharla seyredebilir? (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 173)

[vii] Bir gün için, tek bir gün için; ilişkilerinizden, gücünüzden / güçsüzlüğünüzden, kendinizden İZİN ALIN.

Bugün, kendi kendiniz olmayın. Hiçbir şey olmayın. Bir HİÇ bile olmayın. (Ki zaten o, çok çaba ister.) Öyle çabasız bir hale, bir ruh haline girin. Çabasız. Çabalamasız. Dolayısıyla da hiç kimsesiz.

Birileri, hep sizi bir 'şey' olmaya zorlar: Anne olmaya zorlar, hemşire olmaya zorlar, seven ihtiraslı kalp olmaya zorlar, zürafa olmaya zorlar, bakıma muhtaç kedi yavrusu olmaya zorlar, erk sahibi insan olmaya zorlar- zorlar da zorlar. En fenası sırf birileri olsa iyi, siz de habire kendinizi zorlamaktasınız. Oysa zorla GÜZELLİK olmaz.

Güzellik; rahatlıktır, huzurdur. Kapıp koyverme halidir. Zorlamamaktır. Oluruna bırakmaktır. Ne güzel laf: oluruna bırakmak. (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 9)

[viii] Ekonomide şeffaflık, öbür alanlarda bunca fluluk varken tabii ki sağlanamaz. Tüm bu gelişmeler bir bütündür. Öyle ele alınmalıdır. PARA mevzuuna bunca endekslenen bu küçük hırslar toplumu; insan haklarını, Kürt meselesini[viii], F tiplerini[viii], işkenceyi, falakayı, kadın haklarını "ikinci sınıf" gördüğü sürece, muhakkak birinci sınıf bir toplum olamayacaktır. (Mağden, Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 224)

[ix] Böyle kadını muhtelif yerlerine işaret bırakarak sahiplendiğin bir 'territory' belleme. Bir insan, bir varlıktan ziyade, bir ziynet, ganimet, yağma nesnesi. Sonra orda yaşatmamaca; kimseleri. Ve en mühimi ele geçirilmiş bulunan kadını. Gerekirse sakatlayıp 'geberterek', kendinden 'sonra' ona yaşam hakkını dahi tanımamaca. Bu topraklarda kadınların işi zor. Başka yerlerde olduğundan daha zor. Çok daha. (Mağden, Topladım Dağılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini 58)

[x] Çocuk yapmak pek bir elzem. Bi nevi toplumsal statü ya. Diyelim yaptıkları çocuk büyüyüp sevimsizleşince ya da istedikler gibi 'çıkmadı' diye kapının önüne koyuyor mu insanlar? Ki, bir nevi koyuyorlar: Bakıcıların, büyükanne / babaların, dadıların, teyzelerin eline falan bırakıyorlar çocuklarını. Öyle esrarengiz takımlarca büyütülen çocuklar. Öz anne ve babalarından ziyade. Ayrıca çocuklarını; aşkla seçtikleri kişilerden değil de, gelir grubu, sosyal mevki, sınıf atlamaca, statü mühendisliği tarzı hesaplarla belirledikleri, hakikaten korkunç kadın ve adamlardan yaptıkları için de, çok çok özür dilerim, ama inanılmaz sevimsizlikte birtakım çocuk örnekleriyle beziyorlar evrenimizi. (Mağden, Topladım Dağılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini 11)

[xi] "Baksana çocuğunu yüzde yüz seven bir anne olabilir mi? Diyelim öyle bilinçaltı öncesi etkafalar yaşıyor dünyamızda; kendine anne olarak onlardan birini seçer miydin? Bana kalırsa anneler vampire yamyam karışımı şeylerdir: Çocuklarının ruhlarını içip kalpleriyle beslenmek isterler. Aşk ve nefret dolu annelerin hepsi böyledir. Aldırışsız anneler beni ilgilendirmiyor; onları tanımıyorum da."

"Ama benim annem aldırışsız annelerden sanırım," diyor sesi paramparça. "Ya da kararsız annelerden, benimle ne yapacağını bilemiyor. Bir yanı benimle olmak istiyor, diğer yanı kaçmak. Beni görünce artık büyümesi gerektiğini hissediyor ve bundan nefret ediyor. Ona çocuk ya da genç kız olmadığını hatırlatmamdan . . . bunalıyor." (Mağden, Refakatçi 47-48)

[xii] Ben ve benim kabilemden olanlar, ait olmadıkları mekânlarda alışkın olmadıkları insanlarla konuştuktan sonar kendilerini kirletilmiş bulurlar. Genellikle çok az sayıda insanla geçen günlerimiz, ruhumuzun derisini öylesine inceltmiştir ki; en olağan görüşmeler dahi- özellikle de onlar- bizi derinden sarsar, çoğu kez de yaralar. İşte bu yüzden bizler, kendi kabilemizden olanlarla- kimi zaman oldukça sık, kimi zamansa hiç- görüştüğümüz özel mekânlarımız dışında kalan yerlere, adımımızı atmak bile istemeyiz. (Mağden, Refakatçi 47-48)

# CHAPTER 4

## <u>2 GIRLS</u> AS TURKISH, PATRIARCHAL CONVENTION in THE GARB of RADICAL, FEMALE LIBERATION

In her 2002 novel, <u>İki Genç Kızın Romanı</u> translated as <u>2 Girls</u> in English, Mağden invites the reader to meet her "hyper-realistic" (Interview with Mağden, 2007) Turkish female characters and to become involved in their pessimistic, troubled, dystopic world confined by social and psychological boundaries. Unlike Gilman, who celebrates the superiority of communism and common interest over individualism, Mağden aims to portray the limitations and oppression that are imposed on individuals by external forces, specifically by patriarchy.

### 4.1. Behiye's Mood Swings and Varied States of Mind

The two main characters are Behiye and Handan. These two girls, who become best friends, differ greatly from one another. Mağden paints Behiye as a depressed and socially troubled person. Behiye describes herself to the reader through various states of mind which she labels: (i) the State of Distress, "like a blood-red balloon that's been inflated to the point where it's about to explode. It was a state in which another state existed, but wasn't allowed to fit, couldn't fit, and was strangled, constricted, squeezed by the throat, squeezing the soul itself by the throat, and pressing it down and constricting it" (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 6); (ii) the State of Sorrow, which is "nested within her like an unwanted bird", and which is better than the former because it "is an easier state to resolve, to endure" (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 6); and (iii) the State of Anger, the one that scares her most "because she knows that when she's blinded she's capable of doing any number of things" (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 6) Behiye "loves this state. The power. Strength. This angry, darkened, loose, let-go state: the power of that state: the power of the possessed" (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 7). Unlike Gilman's <u>Herland</u>, totally

isolated from the psychological contamination and patriarchal structures like anger, hatred, and competition, the world of Magden's 2 Girls is full of angst and individualist desires synonymous with patriarchal society.

Mağden's novel opens with a description of Behiye's depressive mood, while Gilman's opens with an account of the female country and all its beauties--before shifting focus to a delineation of the basic principles of feminist, communitarian living. Mağden's characters lack the cooperative gene.[i] Behiye's state of mind does not mesh at all with Gilman's notion of the nexus of individual happiness and social responsibility, indeed woman's natural and peaceful relationship with her female environment. Behiye's environment is as troubled as herself as the following makes clear:

> That is when she wants to escape that used and constricting, sixteen-year-worn-out, pathetic, narrow body, throw it on to a garbage dump on the edge of the city, and pass into a new body. Behiye hasn't cried since she was seven and a half years old. She was seven and a half-year old- she remembers the day- when she cried her heart out for her mother, because she pitied her mother, because she was ashamed of her mother, because she both pitied and was ashamed of her mother. She hasn't loved her mother since that day. She doesn't love anyone. She can't cry properly. Cry her heart out. She only feels a great deal of shame. She feels shame for her mother, her father, her older brother, her relatives, her neighbours, her teachers, the people she sees on the streets, the people she sees on television, in fact everyone she sees. Everyone makes her feel shame. She can't stop feeling ashamed. She feels ashamed. She is the only one who feels ashamed. No one else feels ashamed. (Mağden, 2 Girls 6-7)

Overwhelmed by feelings of anger, sorrow, distress and shame, Behiye leaves home to collapse under a tree (symbolic of the Mother Goddess). At that moment, she is possessed by a new feeling "The feeling you'll be rescued" and the solution, she hopes, to her interminable depression:

> Things are going to happen. In three times, five times, seven times. Don't be sad. Swear, things are going to happen. You've been depressed since you were seven. Since you were seven and a half. You won't accept consolation. You've been so sad. You've waited so long. Stay in this body now. Don't go anywhere. Something very beautiful is going to come to you. Something very beautiful, good and sweet. A wonderful state will come into you; a state of wellness, a state of flying, of delight of happiness, of going mad with happiness. It's happened already. Your blood was useful. Don't rub on your clothes. Finally, a miracle for you: The Feeling You'll Be Rescued. (Mağden, 2 Girls 9)

Escape is the first step toward liberation in this case.

### 4.2. Deconstructing Idealized Images of Womanhood and Motherhood

After introducing Behiye, the focus shifts on Leman Hanım, the mother of her new best friend Handan and an important character Mağden uses to deconstruct the idealized image of womanhood and motherhood in Turkish society. Leman is a lustful woman who seduces men and partakes in illicit relationships in order to survive. At first sight, she appears to be a typical female servant of and to patriarchal sexual desire. She is dependent on her boyfriends emotionally and economically. In order to find happiness and self-respect she needs to be loved by men. Without male approval, she feels depressed and useless. She has no other job than that of mistress,

characterizing herself as a woman in need of the protection, affection and financial support of men. There are plenty of men who are keen to fill such shoes.

Leman has two contrasting identities: that of a morally corrupt, lustful woman, and that of a loving mother. Outside of the home she has created a patriarchal world to which she must conform in order to survive. Her home, her private space, is also where she purifies herself from the corruption and toil of patriarchal subservience. The scene in which she changes her clothes is a metaphor for her liberation as the object of patriarchal lust. The clothes she wears outside highlight the fact that a woman is only valuable in her appearance and whether this services the male gaze.

Behiye's mother Yıldız Hanım is no less miserable and dysfunctional, but representative of the confinement that awaits the more "respectable" female members of Turkish society. Yıldız works in a tailoring shop. Here, clothing is important, too, but for slightly different reasons. The following describes Yıldız's monotonous and meaningless life as faithful wife and devoted mother:

> Her mother fastens the buttons of her shit-coloured cardigan. She's taken off her nurse's slippers and put on her nurse's shoes. She's put on her scarf. Her mother is ready to go to work. To her shop, to her box. Tailoring alterations. On the third floor of the arcade, she spends all day shortening trousers legs, pressing jackets sleeves, measuring for skirts, taking in waists. They're mostly sent from the shop where her father is chief clerk. Squeezed into her little box, she makes tea for herself on her little burner. She'll make tea. She'll drink tea. Then she'll sew. Yıldız the seamstress. (Mağden, 2 Girls 27)

Behiye and her mother are both trapped by patriarchal familial convention, dysfunctional family relationships, mutual insecurities, and an increasing sense of

placelessness. Tufan, Behiye's brother, and Salim Bey, her father, are no less problematic for Behiye who cannot put enough distance between herself and the entire lot of them.

### 4.3. Behiye, Meet Handan

When Çiğdem, an old friend, introduces Behiye to another friend, Handan, it is the beginning of an unusual and painful friendship that will ripen into love without becoming sexual. Behiye, consumed by feelings of sorrow, anger and distress, and impatiently waiting for her rescue is so charmed by Handan's beauty and warmth that she immediately believes Handan is her long-awaited salvation and female soul mate. Surprisingly Behiye's, whose physical appearance and personality fly in the face of conventional patriarchal images of female beauty, idea of rescue is embodied in Handan and who conforms completely to the Turkish stereotype of adolescent beauty:

> Her hair is gathered into a ponytail on top of her head. She is wearing a tight pink T-shirt and loose, low-waisted blue jeans. On her feet, thick-soled, grey-white sports shoes. She is bouncing. Towards her. Between her T-shirt and her jeans, three or four fingers of flesh are showing. Not much. That's all. And her eyes are so beautiful. They're big eyes, but also slanting. Cat's eyes. They shine. Or at least it seems so to Behiye. They shine, as if they're scattering light. She's wearing a pink cardigan over her pink T-shirt. A furry one. The kind they call mohair. One of those little cardigans they make for babies. The sweater has no collar. In front, two mohair balls hang by pink threads. It closes with a bowknot like a baby's sweater. Two pink balls. Bouncing in front of her. Her name: Handan. Her name: The Feeling You'll Be Rescued. She's come to rescue me. (Mağden, 2 Girls 36-37)

After spending time together with Handan and Çiğdem, Behiye returns to her home, a metaphor of the outer world and full of class distinction and social conflict. This time, however, Behiye has a different sense of it. She feels that from now on she will be happy, thanks to Handan. Handan's mere existence and association promises to liberate her from the unhappiness and distress that Behiye feels:

> As she thinks this, it's as if bells are ringing within her. She feels alive. She feels very well. She feels wonderful well, and happy. She feels very well. She feels as if everything is possible. Possibility Behiye. . . . In a circle of happiness. No one could enter this circle and break it. A halo. Surrounded by a halo of happiness. She'll see Handan tomorrow. Tomorrow and every day. She'll see Handan every God-given day, every God-given day. A day won't pass without Handan. She knows her name. She knows this as she knows her name: Behiye. (Mağden, 2 Girls 48)

Behiye's miserable life is best captured in an ordinary evening at home. Behiye comes home to cook in the peace and quiet of the kitchen, the only place where she is able to find solace in the patriarchal home of her mother and father. Home alone is the ideal and the appearance of her father, brother, and mother constitutes a contamination of the female, private space she has created:

> It's five o'clock now. For an hour, and hour and a half, until the Armed Occupation Forces enter the house, she cooks in the kitchen, her small but clean country, unstained by her mother's accidents, for a brief time her own poor but healthy ground. (Mağden, 2 Girls 48)

Cooking as female ritual provides important insights into Behiye's inner world and feelings and the only means available to her to feel productive.

Behiye resents the intrusion of her family in the home, for they are all too dysfunctional and constitute in her mind a violation of her very limited, adolescent, female space:

> There are six large courgettes in the refrigerator. She makes courgette mousakka with them. She's making red lentil soup. And cracked- wheat pilaff. Her father's favourite dishes. Tufan also likes lentil soup. If she should stick her finger in his plate while passing it to him. Wearing surgical gloves, with a special virus spread on that finger. Ebola. Anthrax: animal disease. AnthraxTufan. Catch it. Behiye starts to smile. It's not that easy to get rid of Tufan, even with the rarest virus. Tufan just won't get the fuck out of this crowded house. He just won't leave this house where everyone's on top of one another, just won't make room. But Behiye doesn't want to think about him. She doesn't want to think about her sleepy, melon-like father either. Her poor father. Salim. (Mağden, 2 Girls 48)[ii]

## 4.4. A New Family Arrangement for Behiye: From Patriarchal to Matriarchal Dystopia

After her second meeting with Handan, it is decided that Behiye should move into Handan's house. From Behiye's point of view this is an answer to her prayers and the end of a life of depression and loneliness, whereas for Leman, Handan's wayward mother, it is an alarming thought to share her daughter. For the first time in her life, Behiye feels safe and completed. Leman worries that this new living arrangement will destroy her holy relationship with her daughter, separate her from her beloved daughter and from the only thing that she has that is real. It is also a female home arrangement that is quite foreign to Behiye, having only known the patriarchal household of her mother and father:

> "What's that smell?"
>
> A cold voice. Barbed. A voice that bites a person as soon as it touches them. Intended to shake Behiye out of her dream: a voice of broken glass. Behiye is startled. Mrs. Leman looks Behiye in the face with her unsettling blue eyes when she utters her first sentence. As if saying, "Who are you, my dear? Are you this smell; where did you come from? You're all we needed." (Mağden, 2 Girls 76)

Leman looks down on Behiye as if to say she is a male intruder, coming from patriarchy—the smell of it still on her despite her gender. Behiye, even though she realizes that she will be regarded and treated as emotionally and socially inferior, is determined to prove herself worthy of this entirely female space:

> No! She's not going to shake Behiye out of her dream. She's not going to wake up to this world. With her nettle voice, she is not going to bring Behiye back to this world which punched her, constricted her, pushed her away. She's not going to be able to freeze her with her icy eyes. Not yet. Behiye is so happy in the cocoon of her dream, so complete; she'll only think of Leman as a crawling snake. A harmless, poisonless, insufficient, pitiful little snake. She tries to frighten her: Leman the inadequate snake. Yet. (Mağden, 2 Girls 76)

Leman's home is no Herland, but it is a female world in which motherhood and sisterhood rule supreme and cooperation is the norm. Mothers and daughters are equals. In some respects and at times, Handan is more grown up than Leman.

Muki, a female friend of Leman who often sleeps over is the fourth member of this alternative, Turkish household. Behiye's first meeting, abruptly in the morning after inadvertently sleeping in her bed, is telling. Muki is another important female

type in Mağden's novel. She is not in any sense beautiful or even kind, but an equal member of their little female community regardless:

> She sees an old woman who's all skin and bones. She has the same cold blue eyes as Leman. She has that frightful look of old women who, out of stubbornness, cover their lined faces with make-up. She looks more like a mummy witch. Or the skeleton of a witch. She wonders what work this witch does. Who would want her in the house? She is like a walking bad omen. Like an evil talisman. No one in their right mind would want to have her around. (Mağden, 2 Girls 81-82)

Behiye must battle her own latent patriarchal prejudices and attachments to conventional Turkish ideas of beauty and comeliness, for there is a place for women who are not the vision of beauty or decorum in the home that Leman has created: "She was disgusted by this house. As disgusted as she was by her own house. But if she didn't come back in the evening, she didn't see Handan again- Behiye would die. This new Behiye would die. She knows this. Handan gives the new Behiye life. That's all" (Mağden, 2 Girls 83). In Leman's house, then, the pitfalls of patriarchy are overcome by women who all battle to escape the orbit of Turkish familial convention and respectability.

Behiye's mind is cluttered with patriarchal folk wisdom. Here, the near impossibility of escaping the orbit of Turkish convention and patriarchal patterns of thinking is the point. Even the freest individual is confined by exposure to and knowledge of the outside male world and the cruelty it engenders. Male convention is so pervasive, in part, because it operates at the level of the unconscious:

> "He who laughs a great deal cries a great deal." One of those folk sayings that comes to you when you don't intend it to, that you remember without

> wanting to, that you didn't even know you remembered, one of those stupid sayings that you don't even want to know, and here it comes falling on to her lap. That's how she feels. As if it fell on to her lap. This time the saying, last stop graveyard has stuck in her head. There's no escape: from song lyrics, film titles, folk nonsense, clichés, no escape from the wisdom of the masses. Even the craziest, loneliest, most alienated people are under this big black umbrella with everyone else. (Mağden, 2 Girls 83-86)

Whereas Gilman thought happiness was achievable in an exclusively female environment, Mağden understands better the psychological and emotional attachments to patriarchy that exist whether men are physically present or not:

> The moment she enters the house, she feels enveloped by distress. Here you are, it says; here's your Old Behiye Distress. You've been longing for it, so take it. The feeling of panic increases when she sees the disarray the house is in. It distresses her. She feels constricted to the point that she fears her heart will stop. Behiye can't get rid of the feeling. The house smothers her. It narrows her, shrivels her, shrinks her. (Mağden, 2 Girls 89)

House and home are metaphors for patriarchal entrapment. This is underscored when Behiye returns home briefly to collect her things and her mother phones. The conversation is unpleasant to say the least, giving impetus to another discussion of the problem of female domestic space and freedom:

> "What are you doing moving in with someone you've just met? Don't you have your own house, Behiye?" –"No, mother. I don't have my own house. It's never been my house. Do you understand?" Behiye is shouting at the top of her voice. (Mağden, 2 Girls 91)

### 4.5. Behiye and Çiğdem: Typical Turkish Girlfriend-Speak

Behiye can do no better than to run to the home of her long-time female friend, Çiğdem's.[iii] The conversation between Behiye and Çiğdem shows how truly vulnerable Behiye is to patriarchal notions of space and female, domestic servitude and happiness. Mağden prepares the reader in the following scene for an outcome that will shock readers—that Behiye is among the weakest of the female characters in the novel.

> "All right, you've always been a little crazy, Behiye. But I swear that lately you've really gone out of your mind. God, look at the jacket you're wearing. I've never seen anything like it. You couldn't have stolen it from Uncle Salim because even he wouldn't wear something like that. All you need now is a beret and a dirty beard. I mean, what were you thinking?" Behiye realizes how much every word out of Çiğdem's mouth twists her heart. Later, she realizes that it's been this way for years. For years Çiğdem's words, figures of speech, her tree-trunk sayings, have been painful for Behiye. They hurt her. They wound her. They scratch at her shell. They always upset her. Always. She begins to feel cool towards the jacket and the lancet that she'd loved so much, that she'd thought so beautiful. With those comments, her relationship with the jacket had been ruined. She takes off the jacket. She folds it carefully and places it on top of her potato sack. (Mağden, 2 Girls 96)

Again, clothing as a metaphor for female association is clearly evident. Behiye hugs Çiğdem. While embracing Çiğdem, she realizes for the first time that Çiğdem has a unique smell. Her sense of smell and all that this entails can be attributed to her growing love for Handan and for the female world this new association entails.

### 4.6. Male Intruders in 2 Girls

In Gilman's Herland, the violation of female space by male intruders is an important trope. Similarly, in 2 Girls, male intrusion plays an important literary role. Behiye's and Handan's budding friendship is threatened by two of Handan's male friends, Burak and Erim, who also expose Handan as a miniature version of her mother, Leman. Handan has her own patriarchal demons, and her attraction to Burak and Erim has much to do with the fact that they are wealthy and can service her financial requirements. If that also means performing sexual favors in exchange for expensive gifts or money like her mother, so be it:

> "Rich people make me sick to my stomach, but they also give me a strange desire to laugh," says Behiye. "That's how it is at first. But if I spend time looking at them, if I really contemplate them, I feel like making them disappear. Cleaning them off one by one. Cleaning is such a nice word, isn't it?" Handan's cheeks become very red. Her eyes shine, her lips get thicker, her teeth longer, and so forth. Or so it seems to Behiye. (Mağden, 2 Girls 106)

Making space for Behiye's clothes in a single closet the two must share, they discover a coat brought by Handan's father, Harun, from Australia. Behiye learns that after her parents' separation, Harun hoped to take Handan with him to live in Australia but Leman forbade it:

> "My mother wouldn't let me go. She threw a fit, fainted, she fought, shouted, insulted, everything she could do. He should have thought about this before he left her, she said. She had nothing to live but me. She said things like that. She never let him see me again. Saying she was afraid he'd

kidnap me. So I stayed here: as Leman's daughter. I remained fatherless. Here with Leman. Just with her." (Mağden, 2 Girls 113)

Here a single piece of patriarchal clothing is how the attraction and dangers of patriarchy are underscored vis-à-vis Handan's longing for her absentee father. The coat has a similar effect on Behiye who thinks that Handan ought to go in search of her father. Handan has made her choice, to be with Leman. Behiye, in her attempt to escape the patriarchal home of her mother and father, ironically, encourages Handan to seek to reconnect with patriarchy by reconnecting with her father and taking Behiye with her:

> "It would, Behiye. It would be awfully nice, we'd be free of this place. But wouldn't it be a shame for Muki and Leman? My mother would be destroyed if I left her."
>
> "She's kept you quite a few years. She's imprisoned in her own world. Isn't sixteen years enough? Sixteen years with you, isn't it enough? (Mağden, 2 Girls 115)

Here, one sees something similar to the idea in Gilman of women returning to live under patriarchy as stronger for their female association, but it is dystopic and doomed to failure regardless of whether they stay or go. There is no escape, no rescue, for Turkish women we are led to believe may not want to be rescued from patriarchy but merely learn from each other how to cope.

### 4.7. Behiye and Her Mother Yıldız: Mutual Self-Destruction as a Means of Dealing with the Unbearable Pain of Inevitability

One morning while preparing breakfast for her female hosts, Behiye burns her hand, causing her to reminisce about her mother's kitchen accidents. These accidents were a constant mystery and annoyance for Behiye until now. Behiye could never

understand why her mother was prone to harm herself, realizing in this moment that self-mutilation is preferable to self-realization and the unbearable pain of confinement and patriarchal dependency. Eventually, both Behiye and Handan will prefer to live under patriarchy per se, Behiye returning home and Handan leaving to find her father.

> "I'm fine, I'm fine. Pain is such a peculiar thing. At first it's so like the other pain, emotional pain, the way it goes into your heart like an arrow. One passes right away. Cold water and ointment break its strength. The other lasts much longer. It grows, it increases. It swallows a person. You don't know when it will stop. Perhaps that's why my mother…" "Your mother?" "Yes, yes. Perhaps that's why Yıldız is constantly doing what she does, in order to be able to bear the other, inner pain. (Mağden, 2 Girls 120)

The nature of Behiye and Handan's relationship has distinct suggestions of patriarchal dependency despite their gender, the nature of their relationship, and the absence of men in their lives. Both are crippled, female souls who find female substitutes for patriarchy in each other to dull the pain. Handan, weak and lonely, believes that she is getting stronger thanks to Behiye. There is little evidence of individual, female strength and independence as the basis for their friendship and deeply loving relationship. "But please don't leave my life. I just can't go on without Behiye. I'm a new person when I'm with you. I can't explain, but I become something when I'm with you. I become stronger. I grow. I become something better, really. I can't explain, but what can I do?" (Mağden, 2 Girls 122)[iv]

In fact, what they do is engage in a series of mutually destructive behaviors, such as a visit to the course director to withdraw from the program in which Handan has enrolled. Money that might have been spent on Handan's education will be used

to find her father. Moreover, this is largely Behiye's idea: "But more important than that- the registration forms. Get them back from him. . . . Tear them up and throw them away" (Mağden, 2 Girls 128). Leman will discover the fraud, causing her to expel Behiye from the home, too. Behiye is incapable of happiness as a consequence of her former life under patriarchy and worries unnecessarily that her relationship with Handan is "fake".[v] "Now 'fake' is stuck in her mind. Is what she has lived with Handan real? Is she real; I myself real? Who is the real Behiye?" (Mağden, 2 Girls 135). In fact, it is fake because of its essential patriarchal qualities and character.

After sending Handan with a well crafted lie that is designed to help her recover her tuition, it bothers her that she is using Handan to rid herself of her troubles. Behiye is justifiably disgusted with herself, playing the patriarchal game, knowing that Handan's physical beauty will help them to acquire money that ought to be used to develop Handan's mind:

> Now, Handan is with the course director. She threw her baby in front of the director. She threw her baby in front of the director without a shyness or embarrassment. The director would plant his eyes on Handan's breasts and lick his lips. His eyes would spin all around. Perhaps he would even grope the cat girl. Take her on his lap and molest her. All because of Behiye! Because of her disgusting selfishness. After all, I'm using Handan too. I'm using my baby cat girl as a means to get something. I've disrupted her life and made her do the dirty work. I'm throwing her in front of men. I'm disgusting. I'm dis-gus-ting. Disgussssting. (Mağden, 2 Girls 130)

Behiye is disgusting because her behavior mirrors that of her mother and father.

The moment boyfriends enter the picture, their relationship changes. Behiye wants to posses Handan in the same unhealthy way that men possess women in

traditional patriarchal families and relationships. It is not healthy for either party. Alcohol transforms her from “milieuless” Behiye to “social” Behiye. She desperately questions her previous life and tries to convince herself that as a normal person she should be more social. However, this proves another form of self-destructive, patriarchal mimicry. The new, social Behiye is a dangerous and self-destructive combination of alcohol and ignorance, fearful that her insecurities will cause her to lose Handan. Alas, she is too much the typical Turkish man, Handan too much the typical Turkish woman:

> How Behiye existed until that day? The suffocation of school, home, family, Çiğdem, books and music. The distress of life. Keeping it all inside, and feeling as if she was going to explode into a thousand pieces. Peopleless. Seldom seeing anyone, or going out, or talking. Without her own milieu. Milieuless Behiye. People are social creatures, Behiye. Now, when she repeats this sentence, she laughs aloud to herself. She truly had been a social creature. She really had been a social nothingness. She erased the Behiye she had known and become accustomed to. When she let herself slide down that slope, she left behind the other Behiye- the true Behiye: if indeed there ever was a true Behiye. At the bottom of the slippery steps. Let her stay there forever, chewing her fingernails. Let her fall apart from distress. In her brand new and constantly attenuating shell, Behiye became social Behiye. Wine let’s say. Later beer: Great beer. Vodka if it was necessary, whisky in an emergency. Whatever presented itself to her. And this medicine, this cape, presented itself to her wherever she went. From the moment Behiye wrapped herself in alcohol, she left behind that defensive, touchy, angry, offended persona. She blooms: she becomes fun girl. She’s

> able to send everyone into fits of laughter; she can make the strangest comments at the least expected moment. She's also ready to go anywhere at any time. The place to be could be anywhere. That is to say, congenial things are happening: New Start Behiye. (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 150)

Behiye is as jealous and possessive as any Turkish man, her precious Handan the object of male lust—hers and that of the boys!

Behiye's criticism of the two boys takes aim at the fact both are from money. She is afraid they only want to use Handan to satisfy their sexual desires, whereas she is using Handan, too. Behiye is threatened by their station in Turkish society because she is not a member of their class. Her protestations suggest that she would like to be if she could. Realizing that she does not and will never belong to that socially and economically enfranchised group of people, all she can do is pretend, hoping alcohol will do the rest. What she calls a "sobering event" at the pool in Kadıköy forces her to confront the reality of her relationship with Handan, when she "leaps out of the car and throws herself into the Bull's water. She dives and emerges. She creates an ocean out of the little pool" (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 153). Handan does not join her, but laughs along with the boys at the entire spectacle of Behiye's boyish prank.

Behiye is conflicted throughout the novel, vacillating between traditional male and female roles. She is the perfect wife to Leman, for example, cooking and cleaning for her and preparing an elegant birthday party celebration complete with balloons and presents. It is enough for her to be appreciated as a first-rate domestic servant in the household and partly why she is made to imitate her mother's clumsy behavior in the kitchen:

> Behiye, feeling embarrassed and biting her lower lip, hands Leman her gift. "I love it, I love it. You're the sweetest, my Behiye." She (Leman) runs to

> her room and puts on the T-shirt. She looks so very beautiful in that short, tight, white T-shirt. She shines. She catches one's eye and one's desire. Birthday Leman. The most desirable mother and daughter in the world. No one has ever called Behiye 'the sweetest' before. Thieves of desire. Pirates of the heart. This mother and daughter are like that. They have Behiye on puppet strings. From happiness. From delight. From flying. Fly Behiye. (Mağden, 2 Girls 184)

And so, Behiye is male and female, patriarchal and feminist in character, traditional and yet modern in temperament--most at home in a patriarchal setting which she manages to recreate among women and the home of Leman, Handan, and Muki.

### 4.8. Code name "The Sisters Nevin" as Hyper-Realist Harem?

Leman is not a prostitute. She is the modern, Turkish woman gone wrong in some respects. However, what is most interesting about her character, and indeed her lifestyle, is how it can be seen as but the secular equivalent of the Ottoman harem. Like Behiye, Leman is also prone to patriarchal behaviors without realizing it and in the guise of something overtly secular. Behiye discovers that "there is a group of women who openly live as mistresses, whose profession is to have affairs. Code name: The Sisters Nevin. They gave each other advice and solidarity and drink a great deal" (Mağden, 2 Girls 157):

> Sister Nevins' lives, which were arranged according to the whims of their men. Those women who went running with their tongues hanging out[1]whenever the men said it was 'convenient'. Women who were ready and willing. A flock of hand-rending women. This is the golden rule of Sister Nevin to be willing to obey any command wholeheartedly, from the

> very depths of their beings, to be one hundred percent dependent. Behiye is burning up. (Mağden, 2 Girls 185)

Indeed, Behiye worries that Handan is certain to become a member of the Sisters Nevin, and so she will lose her to something Republican and yet all too Ottoman. In fact, she's quite horrified at how Leman's demeanor changes the moment a man is present, or in this case, is on the phone:

> Handan! Just at that moment her telephone rings. She answers with the cheerful, flirtatious voice she uses to answer Erim's calls. She runs to her room. She's going to account herself to him. In her baby voice she's going to try to tell him, to explain to him, who she hasn't been able to see him for two days. She's going to bring water from a thousand streams in order to please him. (Mağden, 2 Girls 185)

The truth is, Handan is already a member of this harem, for she understands Leman and her circle of female friends and sympathizes. Behiye is full of Kemalist, monogamist moral indignation. Handan, on the other hand, has no such scruples: "How well Handan knows the mysterious circumstances of Leman world. How naturally she's understood the rules. Behiye listens in amazement. . . . Perhaps Handan is more grown up than she is. . . . Behiye doesn't understand these worlds at all. . . . Zero Behiye" (Mağden, 2 Girls 187). In fact, all of this causes Behiye to feel inferior, to question Handan's moral purity and innocence for simply loving and defending Leman.

Behiye, for all her modernist pretense, is deeply superstitious, too—another indication of how entangled in patriarchy Republican women in Turkey have become. She is angry with herself for spending the day doing nothing, forgetting to pick up photographs she and Handan took of each other at a local photo studio. She believes

that leaving the photos in the studio was a very bad, very dangerous, and unlucky thing because the evil eye of strangers will surely violate their privacy and happiness. She blames this on being too lazy and fat, causing her to lose her grip on everything. The photos, like Behiye and Handan, are symbolic of their female imprisonment in a man's visual world in which women are objects of patriarchal lust and the male gaze. How could she have been so stupid!

Behiye expresses her fear that bad things are going to happen as a consequence, but she is calmed by Handan's unique aroma rather than her arguments Handan imagines that Behiye will be delighted to learn of an invitation to the boy's summer house. Behiye criticizes Handan for wanting to be with boys, Erim in this case. In fact, Handan shouts back angrily at Behiye. It is not the patriarchal image of the perfect woman that Behiye has fallen in love with, and it is a problem for her—for both of them. Behiye's behavior is all to masculine: she punched the wall at the photography studio for arriving late and now kicks the wall to avoid kicking her beloved Handan.[vi]

The next morning, she meets Handan and Leman in the kitchen. She learns that Handan has told Leman about the tuition money and apologized. Leman's sense of their relationship is telling. For the first time in their relationship, Handan feels the need to lie to her mother and, because of this Leman feels the need to ask Behiye to leave their home.[vii] Handan tries to reassure Behiye that Leman is not serious. However, seeing Handan get ready to go to Erim's summer house destroys Behiye, causing her to lose all respect for Handan as essentially a stupid and selfish "whore" like her mother for not wanting to be with her and only her. Behiye is as possessive as any Turkish patriarch!

> Handan went off in that car. She's leaving Behiye behind her for the first time. She feels chased away from everything, she knows. But she's clinging with her fingernails to the receding ground. She's ashamed of herself. But she can't go. She can't leave that place. She can't be without Handan. She can't. Shameless Behiye. Outcast. Outcast mouse. (Mağden, 2 Girls 212)

All she can do is a second failed attempt to retrieve the photos from the evil eye of Turkish superstition. After sending an email to the Australian embassy website to find Handan's father's, her work is done. She has delivered Handan back to patriarchy whether she knows it or not.

Leman's female beauty is not lost on Behiye and being rejected by her is more than she can bear as well. After taking too many sleeping pills and falling asleep in Handan's bed, she is confronted by Leman who tells her to leave. Behiye, numbed by the pills, cannot answer or even rise from the bed. And so Behiye plans her revenge. "But she wants to issue a threat to Leman. To mark Leman. To spray-paint a big red X on her door. You've been found guilty. You've been marked. An X that shouts 'your days are numbered'" (Mağden, 2 Girls 218). [viii] In short, her "female macho" is at stake and Leman is in for a good beating if Behiye has her way.

Then, Handan, hungry as usual, returns from her night out with the boys and the gory details of sex with Erim as little more than a bad stomachache. What proves most disturbing to Behiye, however, are Handan's reasons for having sex with Erim in the first place—to get him to buy a house for them in Etiler or Akatlar where she and Behiye will live and attend university. Handan is afraid of becoming like her mother! She has become her mother! Handan's plan to sell her body to men so she and Behiye can be together in a female utopia/dystopia of their own is deeply offensive to Behiye.

All she can do is look down on her "baby car girl," Behiye's nickname for Handan. It is all too pathetic, condescending, and a caricature of Turkish Republican manhood.

For Behiye, their troubles are related to money. When Leman insists that Behiye leave immediately or else she will call the police, Behiye goes to Handan's room and gets the tuition money they took back from the course director—the beginning of their troubles. "Take this money. That's the only language you understand. You only understand money, you worship money, live only for money, don't you? Say it, say it, you money vampire! Take this money and leave us alone!" (Mağden, 2 Girls 232). Such abuse, indeed such criticism is typically male—women seen as too materialistic and vain. Leman cannot do more than leave, frightened of what Behiye may do next.

Behiye plays the role of vengeful patriarch, but she is also still very much a victim of patriarchy, cutting herself on broken glass—which is reminiscent of her mother. Full of shame, Behiye follows Handan around as she sweeps up the broken glass, symbolic of their relationship, and then goes to her room.[ix] Handan is done with Behiye, dressing herself in the same clothes she wore the first day they met. Clothing, so important to their relationship, symbolizes Handan's escape from Behiye's patriarchal-matriarchal reign of terror. It is better if they remain strangers, a sad commentary on Turkish womanhood and manhood lost and found and lost forever.

At the moment of Handan's liberation, the doorbell rings and Behiye's incarceration begins. Her brother Tufan and mother Yıldız are climbing the stairs to take her home. Behiye runs to pick her lancet just before Tufan breaks down the door. She is too late, Tufan administers the beating on Behiye that she hoped to deliver to Handan and Leman. Exhausted and overcome by sleeping pills, Behiye offers no

resistance to Tufan. Her mother Yıldız helps take Behiye to a taxi Leman called to take them all away.

Behiye is then imprisoned in the family house for a month by Tufan. Her mother and father agree to this measure. During her imprisonment, with the assistance of Çiğdem, Behiye tries to call Handan but gets no answer. At the end of the twenty-first day, Behiye decides to see Handan. As she arrives at Handan's house, Leman opens the door and welcomes Behiye with open arms. Behiye does not understand until Leman then informs her that Handan left three days ago. Having located her father (with Behiye's help), he came from Australia to take her back with him. And so, both girls are returned to the care of patriarchy by slightly different roads. All that Behiye can do is leave Leman to her pain, walk the streets aimlessly and curl up in a ball:

> You don't exist in this city. You've gone. You've left me alone in this troublesome, evil city, this city where nobody wants me or accepts me. You left me Handan.
>
> What am I going to do with this much evil? How am I going to clean up this evil city? How am I going to sort out what's bad and what's good?
>
> Whoever has power is bad.
>
> Whoever has power is bad.
>
> In the square, Behiye collapses to the ground. She's so tired, she wants to curl up and sleep right there.
>
> Behiye is so tired, she's finished.
>
> All of the Behiye she knows within her are finished.
>
> 'Handan!' she says, wiping her tears with the sleeve of her jacket.

Handan and Behiye. They’re finished. They’re finished. Finished. (Mağden, 2 Girls 249)

## Notes

[i] This issue will be studied in details in Chapter 5.

[ii] While Behiye is cooking and listening to loud music, she does not hear her mother come home from work. When the dinner is ready and the whole family is at the table Behiye's limited interaction with the other family members takes place as follows:

> "Behiyee! Come to the table."
>
> "What delicious food you've cooked for your family, my daughter."
>
> For your family? This is the kind of nonsense that comes out of her father's ass-licking mouth. Like that. It just falls out.
>
> "Let's not forget that our girl is now a Bosphorus University student, father."
>
> She gives Tufan a "you're nothing but a piece of shit" look. A "back off or I'll know you" look. Those are two of the disgusted looks from the menu she'd developed while living with Tufan.
>
> "What's the matter, carrot-top? Aren't we allowed to pride in our super intelligent sister?"
>
> Here, what Tufan's true intention is to make fun of her and to devalue her skills, but not to really appreciate her.
>
> "Shut your mouth," hisses Behiye.
>
> "Who are you telling to shut up! Who do you think you're talking to? Do you have any idea how many terrorists got rid of when I was a commando? It's only because of us that worthless people like you can live safely in this country! You shut your own evil mouth."
>
> "Tufan! Behiye!" said her mother in her "I'll fall down and faint now and then you'll see" voice.

> "Look how upset your mommie is!" Her father; he's cried, he's going to cry, he's frightened, trembling. (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 51-52)

Trapped in her uncomfortable and insecure world, she struggles to create her own world, in which neither dysfunctional and emotionally insufficient parents, nor a brother having troubled interaction with is surrounding and mentally unhealthy will be allowed to inhabit.

[iii] Çiğdem's house significantly conveys the writer's ideas of social distinction and the issue of mobility between social classes. These issues and the contribution of her house to these issues will be analyzed in the Chapter 3.

[iv] An important issue that Mağden mentions in several parts of the novel is the lack of a place in the world. Behiye's lack of place weakens her.

> She doesn't want to live in this house any more. She doesn't want to be a piece of this house. PIECE. Subdivision. Division. Divided Behiye.
>
> Not "capable", nor success, nor succeeding, seizing opportunity, ascending etc., etc; but what a nothing she'd been, how alone, abandoned, abandoned by life, how neglected, how invisible she'd been…
>
> Behiye doesn't believe it. Had she been alive? Had she belonged here? Where is here anyway? Whose world is it?
>
> It's not Behiye's world. This isn't her world. So whose world is it? Who lives here that the world belongs to? Who does it belong to, this world that spat Behiye out, that wouldn't except her?
>
> But with Handan, Behiye belongs somewhere. (Mağden, <u>2 Girls</u> 50, 71)

Realizing the importance of same issue, Gilman creates a private country for women, in a remote area of the Amazons. Gilman, who had first-hand experience of a woman struggling to share the same world with the male, was affected by the reality that in

this world, women were naturally subordinate to men. They had neither chance nor right to flourish in a patriarchal world. This is why, instead of writing of women in a secondary position in an already existing world, she created a world in which women and women's issues are central.

In Mağden's book, the female characters are expected to overcome the traditional obstacles that women have faced for centuries because they are the inhabitants of secondary importance in a patriarchal world.

Here the choice of setting is important. Herland is set in an uncharted forest while 2 Girls is set in the very real city of Istanbul. Gilman deconstructs the concept of human progress and civilization by creating a highly civilized society in a jungle. Mağden, on the other hand, shifts the light to the reality of human progress and the understanding that civilization imprisons people in a world ruled by violence, a concrete jungle, a patriarchal jungle. Regardless of the technological and cultural developments, people in this world have to overcome the obstacles of the modern world such as poverty, diseases, exploitation, violence and corruption, a world both civilized and uncivilized at once.

> Who could resist her, thinks Behiye. She melts as she looks at Handan. Why don't I take her into my cave. Protect her from wolves, jackals and birds of prey. Like a bear. I have to kidnap her. In order to protect and look after her. In order to feed her. So she won't be eaten by the wolves and birds, so she can get through the winter. Just like a bear. Red bear Behiye: protect your baby girl. Protect her! (Mağden, 2 Girls 127)

In contrast Herlanders live in harmony and peace in their cultivated country surrounded by a jungle, while Behiye is emotionally violated by images of the wild:

> Birds of prey peck at Behiye's heart. They peck at her liver, her heart, her intestines, biting off pieces and flying away with them. They tear Behiye to pieces. She's torn to pieces by worry and anxiety. She doesn't want to be collared by Tufan. She doesn't want herself and Handan to fall into Tufan's hands. She doesn't want to be belittled. Hasn't life belittled her enough already? Hadn't life torn her to small pieces? Hadn't it disregarded her completely? Hadn't it counted her for nothing? Hadn't it examined her? Hadn't it flunked her in all its exams? (Mağden, 2 Girls 127)

[v]Handan and Behiye go to the cinema. Through this cinema scene, Mağden confirms the fact that Behiye is intensely attracted by the inner worlds and the emotions of people while Handan has a more materialistic attitude. For Behiye the quality or value of a film cannot be evaluated by the physical appearances. She celebrates personal differences and opposes Handan's essentialism of women. This issue will be discussed in chapter 9.

[vi]These acts of hurting herself strikingly recall Yıldız Hanım's self-injury in the kitchen and their metaphorical implication that her misery and the weakness of her inner world results in physical destruction. Similarly, as Behiye loses her control over her relationship with Handan, she feels weaker and in desperation harms herself.

[vii]Hearing this and Leman's thoughts about Behiye causes a new wave of destruction in her soul, which manifests itself physically. Behiye burns her hand as she is preparing Handan's breakfast just immediately after hearing Leman's speech.

[viii]This plan gives the reader an important clue about the murders committed throughout the novel. Mağden interleaves three chapters into her tale which seem completely unconnected to the story of two girls. In these chapters, there are the dead bodies of rich boys wearing clothing of expensive and well-known designer labels.

The most important detail is that all the bodies are marked by a red X. Even though the murderer is never openly indicated by Mağden, Behiye's painting of a red X on Leman's clothes for revenge suggests to the readers that Behiye may have committed the murders as a means to reveal her hatred for rich boys, from whom she hopelessly tries to protect Handan.

[ix]These broken pieces of glass can be regarded as a metaphor for Behiye since the mess is caused by Behiye and Handan throws the mess of Behiye away. Metaphorically, she throws Behiye away from her life. She also closes the door of her room, and leaves Behiye outside her room, in other words, out of her life.

# CHAPTER 5

## FEMALE SPACE in GILMAN and MAĞDEN

In her books, Gilman uses the home as a metaphor which backs up her "repeated assertion that the structure of the family has become outdated, that women function within it as 'private servants' and that 'change . . . for the advantage of individual and race' is vital if the 'race' is to progress" (Beer, Bennett 192). In other words, Gilman embraces the concept of home for social reasons, because she believed that the social, economic and moral state of the home, whether it is corrupted or improved, would directly influence society. Home functioned as a prison under the so-called name "the secure sphere" to incarcate and enslave women. As she explains in Women and Economics: "There seems to have come a time when it occurred to the dawning intelligence of this amiable savage that it was cheaper and easier to fight a little female, and have it done with, than to fight a big male every time. So he instituted the custom of enslaving the female" (31).

In Herland, however, Gilman creates a different concept of home, one created in the light of the active and independent life of the Herlanders which naturally and directly influenced their social and physical environment. Gilman, with the ability to enrich the impoverished world of women through her literary works, created not a single home but a country representing the ideal home for women. Instead of a home in which women were doomed to loneliness, misery and endless households chores, women in Herland were graced by a civilized country in which women were freed from the overwhelming burdens of housework and able to concentrate on the education of the children. As she says in Herland:

> This was not the pink-walled town we had so rashly entered the day before.
>
> Our chamber was high up, in a projecting wing of a sort castle, built out on

> a steep spur of rock. Immediately below us were gardens, fruitful and fragrant, but their high walls followed the edge of the cliff which dropped sheer down, we could not see how far. The distant sound of water suggested a river at the foot. We could look out east, west, and south. To the southeastward stretched the open country, lying bright and fair in the morning light, but on either side, and evidently behind, rose great mountains. (Gilman, Herland 26)

As Kathleen Margaret Lant notes, the notion of home in Gilman's Herland carries a social significance as it "transforms the private world of mother-child, isolated in the individual home, into a community of mothers and children in a socialized world" (292). In order to explain its importance to all humanity, Lant also adds that it is "a world in which humane social values have been achieved by women in the interest of us all" (292).

### 5.1. Herland: Challenging the Traditional Home

Gilman, believing that human progress could only be achieved through the perfection of the social organization and the removal of repression and other unwholesome practices of society, put forward the idea that the various domestic tasks should be performed by specialists in order to free women from the restrictions of the home and allow them to contribute to wider social life. In Herland, Gilman introduced readers to a life-style in which every aspect of life is interrelated and where specialization of domestic tasks is a requirement for the betterment of social life overall. This idea of improvement of the society was principally aimed at the betterment of children, regarded by the Herlanders as the very reasons for the existence of their country. So, instead of each individual woman consuming her energies in running a household, Herlanders created a common sense of home in

which every individual collaborated for the common good. In writing Herland, Gilman articulates her idea of domestic specialization vis-à-vis such jobs as cleaning and house maintenance[i] and providing food, which "would be prepared in communal kitchens and served in a dining room or the family's rooms" (O'Donnell, "Early Analysis" 84-95): "People could "go to their food" and would be free to eat at different times, as their individual tastes required. Gilman thought that food prepared in this manner would be prepared as nourishment for the body not as 'affectionate catering to physical appetites'" (O'Donnell, "Early Analysis" 84-95).

To highlight the fact that the Herlanders are totally unfamiliar with the traditional discourse, the conventional perception of the female sphere as synonymous with the so-called "home" are quite foreign to them, as the following illustrates:

> "Oh, everything." Terry said grandly. "The men do everything, with us." He squared his broad shoulders and lifted his chest. "We do not allow our women to work. Women are loved- idolized-honored-kept in the home to care for children." "What is 'the home'?" asked Somel a little wistfully. (Gilman, Herland 52)

The Herlanders to marry are perplexed by the idea of and talk about home life as their natural station and calling:

> But when we began to talk about each couple having "homes" of our own, they could not understand it.
>
> "Our work takes us all around the country," explained Celis. "We cannot live in one place all the time."
>
> "We are together now," urged Alima, looking proudly at Terry's stalwart nearness. (This was one of the times when they were "on," though presently "off" again.)

> "It's not the same thing as all," he insisted. "A man wants a home of his own, with his wife and family in it." (Gilman, Herland 82)

The very concept of the home, as the natural sphere of womanhood, is said to be a creation of patriarchy and intended to rob women of their freewill:

> "Staying in it? All the time?" asked Ellador. "Not imprisoned, surely!"
>
> "Of course not! living there- naturally," he answered.
>
> "What does she do there- all the time? Alima demanded. "What is her work?"
>
> Then Terry patiently explained again that our women did not work-with reservations.
>
> "But what do they do- if they have no work?" she persisted.
>
> "They take care of the home- and the children. (Gilman, Herland 83)

Van's observation that Herlanders do physical exercises without needing to change clothes shows how much men feel the need to influence female behavior and dress in relation to male ideas of decorum and practicality:

> We were free to study as much as we wished, and were not left merely to wander in the garden for recreation but introduced to a great gymnasium, partly on the roof and partly in the story below. Here we learned real respect for our tall guards. No change of costume was needed for this work, save to lay off outer clothing. The first one was as perfect a garment for exercise as need be devised, absolutely free to move in, and I had to admit, much better-looking than our usual one. (Gilman, Herland 28)

Gilman, who foresaw the approaching changes in the home that would result from the "new socio-economic positions of family members" (O'Donnell, "Early Analysis" 84-95), suggested that "women in the home are held 'at a primitive plan of

development, and denied free participation in the swift, wide upward movement of the world" (O'Donnell, "Early analysis" 84-95). She believed that the home should eschew "unorganized industries and servile laborers" (O'Donnell, "Early Analysis" 84-95). O'Donnell explains:

> What was needed, according to Gilman, was more "home" and less house: "we need the complete disentanglement in our thoughts of the varied and often radically opposed interests and industries so long supposed to be component parts of the home and family". With the universal adoption of Gilman's new domestic arrangements, a new type of home would evolve: "The organization of household industries will simplify and centralize its cleaning processes, allowing of many mechanical conveniences and the application of scientific skill and thoroughness. . . . The home would cease to be to us a workshop or a museum, and would become far more the personal expression of its occupants—the place of peace and rest, of love and privacy. . . ." (O'Donnell Early analysis of 84-95)

### 5.2. Deconstruction of "The Home" in 2 Girls

In Mağden's 2 Girls, on the other hand, the perception of the home as a communal place is replaced by a more private and individualist sense of female space. Leman, for example, as mistress, unsuccessful wife, and insufficient mother, needs the shelter of home to be isolated from the contamination of the outer world. The door to her house symbolizes the border between her privacy, in other words, the private and secluded life she has made with her daughter, and the patriarchal world into which she must venture at night to make a living:

> Damn it! Why can't the keys just jump out of the bag when you need them? Collapsing in front of their door, she takes off the shoes Handan calls her

witch's shoes and flings them away. What a relief! With those square high heels it was like walking down a steep hill, and it killed her legs. She has she had a little crimson bag. What are you doing blubbering in front of doors in the wee hours of the morning? You're a grown woman, you should be ashamed of yourself. You're the mother of a young girl. You're big. Leman. Shame on you, really! Repeatedly this to herself, she finds her keys. She puts everything into her bag and rises to her feet. She opens the door, enter. She forgets her square-toed square-heeled witch's shoes in front of the doors. Whatever. She's inside now. The familiar smell of her home, her own home, her tiny house. How good it is to smell that smell. This is mine. With its smell, with the furniture, every centimeter is mine. My daughter's and mine. This is our nest. Our nest.

MY DAUGHTER'S. (Mağden, 2 Girls 14)

Leman's house, besides representing the concept of a secure and safe female refuge from patriarchy, can also be seen as something dystopic. That is to say, Leman, as a single woman living with her daughter Handan and her mother Muki (an old woman relegated to a life of hard labor, having lost her beauty and thus reason for being), and finally with her daughter's friend Behiye, who is no less emotionally and socially excluded from Turkish society, they all find refuge in a homosocial society that is less than ideal. Unlike Gilman's Herland, which welcomes the male intruders in order to prove that the women have simply been misunderstood, Leman's house is not open to males. Even though Leman is a mistress and has many boyfriends, they are never invited to her house—and that is very important. The telephone is their only access to Leman's private world of female companionship and sisterhood. Gilman's all-female world serves the common good, whereas the idea in Mağden's novel is that

men are best excluded altogether if women are to have any chance of true female companionship and association.

One of the things that fascinates Behiye about Leman's house was the strange combination of the "old and new furniture, beautiful and ugly things, expensive and cheap things," which came together and formed a

> complicated house; confused house. . . . Mixed- up house.
> It doesn't look like any house Behiye has ever seen. But Behiye knows with certainty that it's not like any house anyone has ever seen. Messy and orderly, poor and rich, pleasant and unpleasant, an absurd house that was neither one thing nor another. Child house. Handan house (Mağden, 2 Girls 72)

Through the portrayal of Leman's house, Mağden not only deconstructs the conventional expectations about "home" in Turkish culture, but also invites the readers to share the conflicting and complicated emotions of its residents. In Leman's house is a Turkish female utopia and dystopia rolled into one and made up of women on the outskirts of mainstream, Republican society and yet a very modern, feminist affair and female society.[ii]

Mağden wants to shed light on the lives of ordinary Turkish women and their fight with patriarchy (Interview with Mağden, 2007). Behiye, who was not aware that such women even existed prior to meeting Handan and her mother Leman, becomes irritated by these women as she gets to know them, fearful that Handan will become a member of a modernist-post-modernist Turkish harem:

> Those women who went running with their tongues hanging out whenever the men said it was "convenient". Women who were ready and willing. A flock of heart- rending women. This is the golden rule of Sister Nevins to

> be willing to obey any command wholeheartedly, from the very depths of their beings, to be one hundred percent dependent. Behiye is burning up. Handan! Just at that moment her telephone rings. She answers with the cheerful, flirtatious voice she uses to answer Erim's calls. (Mağden, 2 Girls 185-186)

One may compare Behiye's discussion of her home to that of Leman's as a study in contrasts and commonalities, for they could not be more different yet both are dystopic:

> Behiye is looking. At the broken pieces of plate that fell out of the dustpan. At the margarine on the table, at the olives and jam-rose jam-which had been cut for her. The salt shaker in the shape of a female cat, the pepper shaker in the shape of a male cat. At their little kitchen. At the cheap kitchen cupboards. At the cracked tiles, at the plastic thing for drying dishes, the tray underneath it, the cloth bread-bag hanging from the wall, the misshapen carpet on the floor, at the toaster with the burnt handle, the grumbling old refrigerator, at the pitiful, miserable curtains with the ruffled ends and blue heart designs on a white background that was trying hopelessly to cheer up the kitchen. At the kitchen curtains her mother had made. At their impossibility (Mağden, 2 Girls 19)

Behiye objects to having to do all the housework when at home, and so living with Handan and Leman promises to liberate her from that burden. She feels tied to her home and to the idea of home:

> She makes the tiles shine. Later she mops the kitchen floor. She mops the stone. It soothes her to mop the stone. She sanctified the kitchen. It's as if her mother hadn't set foot in the kitchen. . . . Now the kitchen is brand new.

> Now the kitchen is ready. Ready for the ceremony of good cooking. She can go in and cook the evening meal. She's cleaned the kitchen and made it her own. New kitchen. Behiye Kitchen. (2 Girls 22-23)

The description of Behiye's house in the last chapter leaves no doubt that it is also a prison:

> Now she's counting the days she's been imprisoned in her family's house. Tufan had ordered that she be imprisoned in the house for a month. Her mother, and her father-miserable Salim-agreed. From the moment Tufan comes home till the moment he leaves, she doesn't step foot out of her room. A few times she agreed to see her father. Otherwise, Behiye lives locked up in her room, in her family's house. She's forbidden to go outside. She's forbidden to go out for a month. (2 Girls 243-244)

### 5.3. "Home Decoration" and Social Status

Mağden, who employs Behiye to voice her thoughts in many parts of the novel, conveys her ideas of social distinction and the search for the possibility of mobility between the classes through the portrayal of Çiğdem's house. For Mağden, the physical description of the various homes in the novel and the interaction of the individuals with their physical environment give the reader insight into the inner world of the female characters and their wider social and economic aspirations:

> In her boots, Behiye is marching into the living room whose plaster work and wallpaper are so badly matched that a person's eyes get no rest. When Çiğdem's mother is at home she makes everyone wear those undersized, decorated, high-heeled slippers. In any event Behiye would never go into the living room, but would rush to the kitchen or to Çiğdem's room at the back of the house. She throws herself into one of the armchairs, with roses

> carved into the wood and upholstered with claret and white striped cloth, that Aunt Sevil thought were so first class, so noble and chic. A frightening living room this: with three giant chandeliers, coffee tables and end tables, a heavily carved dining table with twelve chairs, crystal ashtrays, vases, white satin pillows embroidered with gold, it was truly a temple to provincial bad taste. But Uncle Yavuz is partners with his older brother in a hardware shop in Persembe Pazar; they make good money, and Aunt Sevil is constantly trying to dress up the house in a "demiclassic style" as if she suffered from a chronic decorating sickness. (Mağden, 2 Girls 93-94)

Similar to the nineteenth-century, American women, who obsessed about home decoration as an indication of the social standing of their husbands, Sevil sees house decoration as a true measure of social status and mobility.

### 5.4. Body Décor: Clothing as Functional or Flirtatious

There is, of course, a close connection between home and body. Female clothing has great importance in the work of Gilman and Mağden. Gilman's recognition of the social function of clothing "both dangerous and demanding to its members" (Rson 160), finds a parallel in the social implications of clothing in Mağden's book. It is not surprising that Herlanders do not need to change their clothes when they perform physical exercises, because Gilman designed their clothes to conform with a female rather than male understanding of what will be practical, beautiful and conducive to good health for women.

In 2 Girls, clothing is often used "to accentuate gender differentiation and to subordinate women via the dictum of 'style'" (Rson 160). The following is instructive:

> Carefully, she brushes her teeth and takes off her make-up. She puts lots of almond milk on her eyes. Bebek, bitter-almond milk. She wipes her eyes with wet cotton. She wets more cotton and wipes again. The cotton becomes earth –coloured, from the foundation. Red, from the lipstick. The little basket by the toilet is filled with soiled balls of cotton. She looks at her face without make-up, her exhausted face: better. It's prettier and calmer than that messy face. Leman face. She takes off her black lace panties and throws them in the laundry bag. She goes to the bedroom and puts on large, clean, white cotton panties. She wears them when she isn't meeting men; what Handan would call "young girl's panties". Then she puts on her baby blue pyjamas. When she wears them Handan calls her "my baby, my blue rabbit, my mother-baby". She wears them so that Handan will say these things to her in the morning. (Mağden, 2 Girls 16)

This has little to do with practicality, or clothing "as a means to free its wearers to reach their full human potential" (Rson 160). Instead, every article of female clothing has a sexual meaning and purpose. The clothes Leman wears when she goes out at night to entertain her male friends serve the needs of male rather than female desire. Women's shoes are a case in point, elevating women (literally) as objects of sexual attraction rather "than as rational objects that aid movement" (Rson 160).

Gilman criticized female shoes for devaluing women, as well as "jeopardize[ing] the health of its wearer" (Rson 160). Indeed, the female foot "is pressured to conform to a 'conventionalized decorative design' that restricts movement rather than a rational but beautiful design that could benefit the wearer by supporting the foot's true function" (Rson 160). Women of the middle and upper classes, "who have been situated to be 'slaves of fashion' and 'conspicuous

consumers'" (Rson 160), and whom Gilman criticizes, can be seen in the character of Leman and thus no less a slave of female fashion and consumption. This addiction to fashion also hampers a woman's ability to be a responsible mother. Leman is a case in point:

> "I'm finished today, Handan," she says. "But I had such a good time. Shopping does a person so much good. How long it's been since I've been able to buy myself a few things. Oh! I feel like myself again. New hair and everything; it's been months since I've felt this good, honestly". . . . She opens two paper bags with the *Beymen* logo on them. From one, she takes a shoebox with the *Jil Sandler* logo on it, and from the other a bag.
>
> "Mother! This bag is Moschino!"
>
> "How could you tell so quickly?"
>
> "Mother, there's a big logo on it. As is *Jil Sandler* weren't enough, you got a *Moschino* bag too. I don't believe it. Where did you find that much money? I thought we didn't have two pennies to rub together?"
>
> "Handan! Am I accountable to you?"
>
> "But mother, you're always doing this. You can barely pay the interest on the credit cards every month. We're four months behind on the apartment payments. Mother, you're always doing this. We have no money at all put aside!"
>
> "Handan, please, be quiet. Your Leman is turning thirty-five, doesn't she deserve a *Moschino*? It's not as if I went and bought *Gucci*. The two together cost one billion eight hundred and fifty million. With the rest I bought some perfume. I didn't pay any extra money. (Mağden, 2 Girls 164, 166-167)

Female fashion is a male invention, the garment industry a clever means of turning women into mere consumers. When clothes as indicators of social class and status is taken into consideration, along with the expansion of the clothing industry in proportion to fashion, the importance of clothing to women's self-understanding cannot be underestimated. Clothing has come to define human beings, and women in particular, is both the consumer cultures of nineteenth-century American and twentieth-century Turkey. Behiye understands this, whereas Leman does not:

> Behiye wants to throw herself over the railing into the middle of the café on the bottom floor. To land with her head in the middle of someone's schnitzel. Breaking her neck. Right on the plate of shnitzel. One of her shoes flying off into some woman's *Gucci* bag. The woman picks her huge boot out of her *Gucci* bag. She picks it out so she can put the bag on her arm and go on about her business. So her bag won't go to waste. (Mağden, 2 Girls 175)

The discussion between Handan and Leman during their shopping trip indicates the increasing danger of consumption and ignorance for Turkish women like them:

> She had a terrible fight with Leman at Akmerkez. She didn't want to buy Handan the things she wanted, tried to get her to buy cheaper things. Handan brought up the *Jil Sander* / *Moschino* subject. They started going at each other about how Leman always got to buy expensive things, and Handan has to buy cheaper things. Later she bought Handan everything she wanted. Considering they didn't make a budget, didn't have a budget. (Mağden, 2 Girls 201)

Indeed, being slaves to fashion they become slaves to the economic costs of buying all the necessary clothing.

### 5.5. Males as Intruders Violating Female Space in Gilman and Mağden

Despite Gilman's vision of a progressive, supportive and mentally and physically developed femininity, the need to invite males into the community can be seen as a violation of everything that Herland represents. As Lant explains:

> Gubar assures us that one of the primary metaphors of masculine power over the feminine-rape-is subverted in Herland. Characterizing the three masculine visitors to Herland, Gubar writes, "Part of what they must discover is that there is no central, secret interior place to penetrate, for there are no mines or caves in Herland"; in this way, Gilman re-imagines and reshapes women metaphorically. Women do not exist to be entered, conquered, or taken; they exist as agents of their own experience. But in fact while Gilman does attempt such a re-imagining of our metaphors for female experience, she violates the message she conveys. By shaping her novel as she does-that is, by centering the narrative on the issue of Terry and Alima's uncertain sexual union and by generating suspense through exploiting the potential violence of that union-Gilman compromises the integrity of her own text. Through Gilman, the masculinist values of the patriarchy impose themselves on the feminist values of the novel. To paraphrase Susan Brownmiller's characterization of rape, Gilman allows patriarchal values "forcible entry" into the feminist body of her text. By means of this forcible entry-or rape-the masculinist values that Gilman abhors enjoy "victorious conquest" over the feminist "body or ideology of her novel." (Lant 292)

However, Arnold contends that the existence of the male, especially a male narrator, in Herland is obligatory:

> A male narrator is necessary not only effectively to voice male stereotypes of women, but also convincingly to convert the potentially skeptical audience. It takes the question-and-answer dialogue and the friction between the sexes—the male explorers and the female inhabitants--in order for Gilman's arguments for and about femininity to succeed and in order for her indictment of men, of her own culture, to succeed. (299+)

Male intruders serve an important literary function then, increasing an awareness of the plight of the female in a male-dominated society. Through the men's eyes and in the light of their perceptions or misperceptions of female society, Gilman is better able to convey her developed vision of society. Arnold continues:

> Not only, then, do Gilman's multiple narrative mappings determine Herland's utopian concept, but they also determine the mapping of patriarchal and misogynistic assumptions through these male explorers and the male narrator. It is important for the reader to glimpse the land first through the eyes of men because they are the closest to Gilman's contemporary readership in terms of assumptions about womanhood. In other words, as different as Van, Terry, and Jeff may be from the reader (Gilman's contemporaries or modern readers), the reader perhaps finds familiarity with them. Their points of view and assumptions about women are not foreign, even to female readers. The reader can identify with the men, their faulty assumptions, and doubts about the all-female society. (Arnold 299+)

Related to this is the issue of sex and female space. All the members of Herland are quite ignorant concerning their own latent heterosexuality. Put more simply, they have no concept of sexual reproduction and, especially, the social and

economic dependencies it implies. Only men can help them to understand this by naively expecting Herlanders to behave in accordance to the social norms imposed on "white women in the Western world" (Hausman 501). As Hausman explains, part of the problem for the men is they lack any sense that heterosexual relations may not serve women very well at all. Instead, a pattern of subservience to men ought to follow naturally from the moment of sexual contact:

> Van, Jeff and Terry think of it as an absolute standard of behavior, but Gilman's narrative proves it to be a proscriptive behavior forcing women to accommodate themselves to men's needs in order to obtain food and housing. In their hearts, the men want to believe that the Herland 'girls' are marrying them for the form of "sex-love" that the men are used to, but to the women of Herland, love means something different: it is comradely, warm, motherly in fact. Van writes that his wife refused to give in and have sex 'in season and out of season' as he would like. She responds, "If I thought it was really right and necessary, I could perhaps bring myself to it, for your sake, dear; but I do not want it not at all. You would not have a mere submission, would you? That is not the high romantic love you spoke of, surely? It is a pity, of course, that you should have to adjust your highly specialized faculties to our unspecialized ones." The women of Herland, indeed, are unspecialized for sex-they have no training in the "sex-tradition." (502)

Thus, males are incorporated into the female narrative, and utopia, to bridge the gap dividing Herland from the larger patriarchal world. Again, as Lant explains:

> her narrator cannot escape the masculinist bias of his own culture, for he tells us at the beginning of his story that he has written from memory- that

> is, his story is his version only and the facts may differ greatly from his shaping of them: "This is written from memory, unfortunately. If I could have brought with me the material I so carefully prepared, this would be a very different story." (Lant 300)

The reader is thus better able to comprehend Gilman's female sense of the male world in which she finds herself and the idealized world of her female, utopian heroines:

> While the women of Herland desire to learn from their visitors, in asking the Americans questions they reveal much about their world. They are shocked to learn of the existence of abortion, of "fathering" and "mothering" (that is, procreating) without adequate birth control; they are appalled by a society that worships a patriarchal, harsh God; they even express dismay at depriving a calf of its mother's milk. But these comparisons, which the visitors find "odious" and embarrassing, are always educational; they change our minds and our consciousness just as they seem to reshape the narrator's consciousness about the inevitability or "naturalness" of sex-roles and sexuality as constructed by turn-of-the-century America. (Lant 294)

With the help of males, Gilman sheds light on the contradictory political issues of her time vis-à-vis the marriage of Herlanders to the above male intruders.

Whether or not marriage is tantamount to slavery and rape are twin issues for Gilman. Terry's tendency to violence and the violation of his wife is the tip of the iceberg. "Will he rape Alima?" is less a question than inevitable (Lant 302). Lant contends that the issue is a complex one:

> Thus, early in the novel, the story of the men's courtship of the "Gorgeous Girls" of Herland, as Terry calls them, is well on its way to becoming a

> story of terror. Gilman hints that the rapist lurks in Terry's heart, and the narrator admits that pushing further into Herland "was unwise of us". Gilman continues to play upon the anxiety she arouses in her readers concerning this courtship by stressing the increasing sexual frustration the men feel. Because they are rendered helpless by these women, they begin to feel "like a lot of neuters". When they finally win their lovers and marry them, Terry tries to put into practice his pet conviction that a woman loves to be mastered. At this point the ideological conflict between America's society and Herland's, the political conflict between colonizer and potential colony, and the sexual conflict between male and resistant female come together. The central questions of the novel coalesce. The ideological question (how does American patriarchal culture stand up to Herland's matriarchal culture?), the political question and the personal question (will the three men be able to convince their wives to have sexual relationships with them?) all become one question: will Terry-the most vehement and insistent of the men-force himself upon Alima? Will he, in fact, do what both Gilman and he have been hinting since the beginning of the novel? Will he rape Alima? (302)

The aforementioned becomes an indictment of all heterosexual relations between men and women, husbands and wives.

### 5.6. A Love That Is Free of Sexual Desire: Heterosexual/Homosexual Celibacy as Utopian/Hyper-Realist Dystopia

The feminist, utopian alternative for Gilman and Herlanders is love purified of all sexual desire. For Herlanders sexual attraction and lust are considered to be purely

male qualities. Freed from satisfying male lust, the women and mothers of Herland can concentrate on their children as objects of female love.

In contrast, heterosexual love in 2 Girls, represented by Leman, is tantamount to prostitution and done for economic reasons. Whereas Leman has an abundance of sex that is void of love, Handan and Behiye are deeply in love, having a strong homoemotional, homosocial, and possibly even homosexual relationship were it allowed to run its course. It does not, and that is important in itself. The novel is chock full of homoemotional and homosexual intensity, important distinctions drawn between the female kissing that goes on—whether real kisses or child kisses—and indeed Behiye has slightly too much to say about Handan's smell not to be seen as a corollary of something sexual. Indeed, Behiye and Handan even sleep together, but their relationship never becomes sexual, and that is very important:

> As they walk down the hill, Behiye puts her arm around Handan's shoulder. Even though Handan is a bit taller, Behiye puts her arm around her. Surprising herself, but in a natural way. She catches the smell from the nape of Handan's neck. Handan smell. The most beautiful smell in the world. Like an animal, she knows she couldn't exist without the Handan smell. She feels in her bones that there's no turning back now. They've become Handan and Behiye. Until Judgement Day. Judgement? Whatever that means (Gilman, Herland 60)

Mağden invites the readers to consider the emotional and social depths of Turkish female association that stops short of sex per se.

> They've got into a taxi and are on their way to Handan's. As if they're doing something very natural. Without even discussing it first. . . . We're Handan and Behiye, don't you understand, forever. Everything became so

> incredibly fluid. . . . She belongs to Handan. And Handan to her. (Mağden, 2 Girls 70-71)[iii]

The expression "as if they're doing something very natural" leaves little doubt about what it is that Behiye feels for Handan. Indeed, Behiye is a jealous Turkish husband in this respect, too:

> "My alien!" says Handan. She puts her arm around Behiye's waist and pulls her close. She plants a big kiss on her cheek. A resounding kiss, a real kiss. . . . "You may kiss me. You may kiss me whenever you like, Handan." They kiss each other lovingly. She holds Behiye's hand again. "I don't really know you but I'm so happy I found you. I don't know how to say it, but it's as if I've found something that was missing and now I'm complete." (Mağden, 2 Girls 74, 80)

Not unlike Gilman, Mağden suggests that true female love is not sexual. Handan and Behiye, by not having a sexual relationship, manage to create a tender and beautiful love relationship worthy of Herland. They are a Turkish, dystopic Herland of two.

## Notes

[i]Gilman, realizing the growing potential of the women as consumers, indicated that the house, which should be isolated from "consumption for its own sake, would be simply furnished and decorated" on the grounds that "with less clutter, housekeeping would be easier; houses would be more sanitary" (O'Donnell, "Early analysis" 84-95).

[ii] While the idea of a female family shows similarity to Gilman's Herland, the functions of the members, their morality and productivity levels, and the reason that they are brought together differ. In Herland, all spheres of the society are regulated by competent and specialized mothers according to the needs of the children. In 2 Girls, however, the mothers are dysfunctional and incompetent. The most striking example is Leman's not being able to feed Handan.

> It would be difficult to find a child who'd been left hungry as much as Handan. Leman had never so much as fried an egg in her life. Sometimes she buys unnecessarily expensive cold-cuts, or rather she orders them by phone. They don't eat most of it, and it goes bad, and is thrown out.
>
> She doesn't think about food until it's time to eat; then, ordering by telephone from restaurants and delis and kebab shops becomes an urgent problem. The problem is solved by ordering out; and she doesn't think about it or do anything until the next time someone's hungry. (Mağden, 2 Girls 26-27)

Behiye's description of the relationship between Leman and Handan requires the analysis of a new topic; the reversal of roles. Leman, who is supposed to be the one to concern about the home and their financial problems, she goes shopping and leaves Handan to take her own responsibilities.

It hurts to watch them. Two little girls who'd been left alone in sand pool. The mother is child, has remained a child, they look like they're just children. They both seem to be completely worldly and don't seem to be of this world. It's strange. She's never seen a mother and daughter like this. Not even in books or films.

"You don't have any extra money to give! Be reasonable, Mother. You're like a child. Don't you ever think of anything but yourself?"

"Mother, you're always talking nonsense! Do we have money in the house for even our most basic needs? Every time I say anything I get the same nonsense. We have no order in our lives, do you understand? Am I supposed to be grateful you didn't buy Gucci?"

"Let's have a real child's birthday for Leman. She's growing up after all: she's turning thirty-five. Tonight, sensible Leman comes into being, and emotional Leman will be left behind." (Mağden, 2 Girls 165, 167, 175)

Leman, who cannot meet the basic needs of her daughter and her home, Yıldız also functions as a dysfunctional mother. Instead, Behiye, who dislikes her mother as a miserable and clumsy woman, does the housework and cooks.

This woman, this wretched bird, can't set the table without dropping something and breaking it. She's certain to break something, drop something, burn something, and will undoubtedly, hurt herself. She'll burn her hand, or her hair, or her eyelashes, or cut her fingers, or bang her elbow, or spill something boiling on herself, or hit head against something: Kitchen accidents.

> Her mother is a constant victim of kitchen accidents. A perverse victim. A serial victim. A victim who never tires of being a victim. A victim who's her own murderer. A perfect state of completing herself.
>
> In an instant Behiye is at the kitchen door. She has that piercing look in the eyes, that look, reserved for her mother, that combines sarcasm and disgust. Her lips have disappeared. Her upper lip and her lower lip are pressed into her mouth. Her mouth is also slightly turned down, as if she's grinning. A grin that seems to say, "How disgusted I am with you. You've made me lose my temper; at the same time you're such a pitiful little thing, you are not worth a thing." A grin. A grind. Weigh. A weigh that's called your mother. (Mağden, 2 Girls 17-18)

It is important that Gilman, in her utopia, creates a motherhood which is appreciated not only by the citizens of Herland but also by the male intruders. In Herland, the women are portrayed as social organizers and physically strong characters. Their social and technical ability and competence surprise the intruders, who are familiar with suppressed figures of women.

> Mothers, he supposed, would of course work for their children in the home; but the world's work was different- that had to be done by men, and required the competitive element.
>
> "The men do everything, with us." He squared his broad shoulders and lifted his chest. 'We do not allow our women to work. Women are loved- idolized- honored- kept in the home to care for the children.'
>
> This traditional perception of womanhood is transformed into a new form of womanhood, specialized and educated to be self- confident and self- competent.

> I talked later with little mountain girls from the fir- dark valleys away up at their highest part, and with sunburned plainswomen and agile foresters, all over the country, as well as those in the towns, and everywhere there was the same high level of intelligence. Some knew far more than others about one thing- they were specialized, of course; but all of them knew more about everything- that is, about everything the country was acquainted with- than is the case with us.
>
> We boasted a good deal of our "high level of general intelligence" and our "compulsory public education," but in proportion to their opportunities they were far better educated than our people. (Gilman, Herland 55)

Even though Terry claims that "Women cannot cooperate-it's against nature" (Gilman, Herland 57), their well organized and highly civilized country surprises the intruders and leads them to accept that women are cooperators. In Herland, not the intruders but the Herlanders are surprisingly more organized, self-confident and powerful. When the fact that the female body has been significantly colonized by the male by various practices such as rape, pregnancy and physical violence against women, is taken into consideration, this physical and mental development of the Herlanders, achieved not to serve the male desires but for the female betterment, is worth celebrating.

> Their attitude was not the rigid discipline of soldiers; there was no sense of compulsion about them. Terry's term of a 'vigilance committee' was highly descriptive. They had just the aspect of sturdy burghers, gathered hastily to meet some common need or peril, all moved by precisely the same feelings, to the same end.

> Never, anywhere before, had I seen women of precisely this quality. Fishwives and market women might show similar strength, but it was coarse and heavy. These were merely athletic-light and powerful. College professors, teachers, writers-many women showed similar intelligence but often wore a strained nervous look, while these were as calm as cows, for all their evident intellect. (Gilman, Herland 19)

The intruders' imprisonment by the Herlanders symbolizes the social and physical imprisonment of women. Gilman dramatically changes the conventional roles by having the intruders captured by the women in Herland.

> The solidity of those women was something amazing. Terry soon found that it was useless, tore himself loose for a moment, pulled his revolver, and fired upward. As they caught at it, he fired again- we heard a cry-.
>
> Instantly each of us was seized by five women, each holding arm or leg or head; we were lifted like children, straddling heloless children, and borne onward, wriggling indeed, but most ineffectually.
>
> We were borne inside, struggling manfully, but held secure most womanfully, in spite of our best endeavors.
>
> So carried and so held, we came into a high inner hall, gray and bare, and were brought before a majestic gray-haired woman who seemed to hold a judical position.
>
> There was some talk, not much, among them, and then suddenly there fell upon each of us at once a firm hand holding a wetted cloth before mouth and nose- an odor of swimmimg sweetness- anesthesia. (Gilman, Herland 20)

This physical imprisonment of the intruders and their awakening from the deep slumber symbolize their increasing awareness of female existence as humans. Through this awakening, Van starts his "conversion experience a conversion to understanding (or refusal to understand, as in Terry's case) the fullness of womanhood" (Arnold 299+).

> From a slumber as deep as death, as refreshing as that of a healthy child, I slowly awakened.
>
> It was like rising up, up, up through a deep warm ocean, nearer and nearer to full light and stirring air. Or like the return to consciousness after concussion of the brain.
>
> I felt as light and clean as a white feather. It took me some time to consciously locate my arms and legs, to feel the vivid sense of life radiate from the wakening center to the extremities. (Gilman, Herland 21)

[iii] An unpleasant episode with a leering taxi driver indicates Behiye's increasing emotional dependency on Handan and misanthropy.

> Later she would remember how, squeezed into the taxi, breathless with happiness, so happy she felt she would explode, as they climbed the hill, the taxi driver looked at Handan's breasts through the rear-view mirror like a hungry and impudent wolf- how he looked at her breasts like a disgusting animal that would never exist. Those little breasts rising and falling under her baby- blue T-shirt. (Mağden, 2 Girls 70-71)

The second taxi event does not end so peacefully. Behiye's increasing anger and jealousy indicates her increasing emotional dependency on Handan.

> The driver is a real bastard. He pays a lot of attention to the rear-view mirror, presumably in order to look at Handan's breasts.

He is like that the whole way. Whenever a traffic light turns green, there is always honking from behind. He can't take his eyes of Handan's breasts.

Behiye can feel the arteries in her forehead throbbing. "Keep your eyes on the road," she tells the driver once or twice.

The guy turns and gives Behiye a dirty look. Then he continues to dissect Handan in the mirror. This is how Behiye feels: as if he's cutting Handan to pieces; as if he's cut her into pieces consisting of her breasts, her behind, her stomach. He's cut Handan to pieces with his eyes. She feels as if Handan has been cut up and killed with the filthiness of his glances.

She wants to protect Handan. To rescue her from this disgusting creature's aggression. She wants Handan to remain in one piece. She wants her to remain Handan.

Handan! Handan!

The two arteries in her forehead are throbbing so wildly that she feels they might jump out of place.

When the taxi stops outside the building, Behiye is so irritated she's ready to fall into a heap on the ground. She feels as tense as a bow. Very tense. Ready to let loose.

The bastard jumps out and opens the door on Handan's side. While pretending to help her take packages out, he manages to rub himself against Handan's breasts.

Behiye sees this.

"Don't you dare touch my friend, you faggot."

"Your father is a faggot! How dare you call me a faggot. I'll make you eat your words!" (Mağden, 2 Girls 176)

# CHAPTER 6

## MORAL EDUCATION in GILMAN and MAĞDEN

Gilman, realizing that her ideas of "national improvements" (Farr 134-138) could only be managed through specific methods, highlighted the importance of education to fulfill her aims of the "turn-of-the-century's movement for women's civil and social equality" (Farr 134-138). The conflict between the American education system and the national improvements that Gilman aimed at drove her to analyze and create a new system of education.

### 6.1. "There Were No Absolute Answers; Every Child Was a Gamble"

Parents and teachers had a very difficult job forming a child's character and teaching them how to be good American citizens. The model of American moral and civic education can be seen below:

> We appoint more and more monitors instead of training the inward monitor in each child, make truthtelling difficult instead of easy, punish trivial and grave offenses in the same way, practice open bribery by promising children a few cents a day to behave themselves and weaken their sense of right by giving them picture cards for telling the truth and credits for doing the most obvious duty. . . . There comes a time in the child's development when he begins to realize his own individuality, and longs to see it recognized by others. The views of life, the sentiments of the people about him, are clearly noted, and he desires to so shape his conduct as to be in harmony with them. (Wishy 142)

The American education system enabled each child "to see within daily work all there is in it of large and human significance" (Wishy 144). In opposition to a pedagogical system that emphasized the "highly specialized, over-intellectualized, and narrow; . . .

made for listening, not making, doing, creating, producing" (Wishy 144), Gilman and other social reformers of her radical, feminist temperament believed that

> [t]he child weaving wool in class, . . . could be easily led to learn about where wool came from, how it was gathered, what the customs of shepherds and sheep-raising countries were, the geography and botany of pasture lands, how wool was weighed and marketed (and thus how important numbers, measurements, and arithmetic were to civilized life), the care with which sheep must be watched and thus the necessity of loyalty, kindness, and diligence in one's job and in life in general. The occupation supplies the child with a genuine motive; it gives him experiences at first hand; it brings him into contact with realities. It does all this but in addition, it is liberalized throughout by translation into its historic and social values and scientific equivalences. With the growth of the child's mind in power and knowledge, it ceases to be a pleasant occupation merely, and becomes more and more a medium, and instrument, an organ of understanding-and is thereby transformed. (Wishy 144)

Wishy goes on to explain that American child education underwent a number of radical changes and, in the process, "the humane beliefs in the individual possibilities of the child, and at the same time, in the limitless powers of the right kind of education to move him 'in direction of social capacity and service,' the emphasis on the need for expert advice, intelligence, patience, and love handling the impressionable creature" (Wishy 145) inspired a number of writers, including Gilman.

In the light of scientific knowledge "about the child's inherit and activism and natural spontaneity" (Wishy 115), the importance of parenthood was fortified and became more commonly accepted. The aim was "to preserve or purify the race and

speed the progress of evolution" (Wishy 115). This could only be achieved through the cooperative and dedicated work of mothers and fathers. Motivated by this idea and realizing the vital significance of children and child nurturing not only for the family order but also for the healthy existence and stability of the state, many movements and organizations were founded, such as The Society for the Study of Child Nature, whose members focused on the principles and theories introduced by authorities such as Rousseau, Stanley Hall, Preyer, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, Felix Adler, Ueffelmann, Locke. Such societies "soon became conscious of the importance of their work and prided themselves on breaking new ground" (Wishy 116). The following paragraphs reveal their moral conservatism and understanding of child psychology:

> Even now the child is, as a rule, an object of scientific observation only; while we study it as a human being, giving attention to those manifestations of traits of character that are open to the observations of the mother, and of those about the child, whether, these persons have had the advantage of scientific training or not. Such traits, and dispositions, and tendencies are observed and discussed with a view to gaining a better understanding of the child's nature; and though scientific analysis is not the avowed attribute of the study, the work becomes scientific when conclusions and results are carefully noted and continued, consecutive work is pursued . . . . We do not aim to antagonize or overthrow the old in receiving the new, but merely to search for what is right and good. Whether those who have found enlightenment are too blind or too weak to profit by it--*that* is not our province to examine into. To define our own briefly would be to adopt the motto which once was proposed for our Society: Altiora peto (I seek the higher). (Wishy 116-117)[i]

Gilman believed that the cause for such “wearing unrest in life” (Wishy 121) was the application of “the old truths” (Wishy 121) and traditional methods to domestic life a social order that had outlived their usefulness. For Gilman, it was necessary to “get rid of unimaginative homes full of drudgery” (Wishy 121) in order to ensure the healthy development of both the child and the mother whose job it was to educate and nurture the child. Gilman challenged the conventional, patriarchal roles, indeed the sheer work expected of mothers and the equally unrealistic expectations of children. Indeed, living up to the image of “mamma’s little lady’ [meant] to be a caricature of the real child and bound with cords which will prevent the development of that wholesome and strong nature which the growing girl should have” (Wishy 122).

### 6.2. “Eternal Differences of Persons”

In Herland, notions of individuality and uniqueness vis-à-vis child education do not conform to the Victorian standard. Indeed, readers are invited to meet children as a group and consider an alternative model of education as more collective and truly social in nature. Gilman’s understanding of the “child” is essentialist as a consequence. Children constitute a unity rather than plurality, referred to nominally as babies and children, never by name, and with the preposition “they” and never “she”.

> From the first memory, they knew Peace, Beauty, Order, Safety, Love, Wisdom, Justice, Patience, and Plenty. By “plenty” I mean that the babies grew up in an environment which met their needs. . . . They found themselves in a big bright lovely world, full of the most interesting and enchanting things to learn about and to do. The people everywhere were friendly and polite. No Herland child ever met the overbearing rudeness we so commonly show to children. They were People, too, from the first; the

> most precious part of the nation. In each step of the rich experience of living, they found the instance they were studying widen out into contact with an endless range of common interests. The things they learned were related, from the first; related to one another, and to the national prosperity. (Gilman, Herland 85, 86)

This was in stark contrast to the fear in more conventional educational circles and individualism meant that not all children might be saved, that is, civilized. As Wishy explains, "there were no absolute answers; every child was a gamble" (123). Quoting a writer in the *Delineator*, he continues:

> Those who think, or who thought in the eighteenth century, that education might write its lessons equally upon the equally blank tablets of each young mind were hardly observers of the first days, the first weeks of life. Those weeks are all sufficient to show the implicit signs of the eternal differences of persons. (Wishy 123)

In Herland, thanks to the freedom women have to devote themselves entirely to the education of their children, theirs is less of a gamble.

Gilman was most certainly influenced by the child nurture literature of her time, which suggested that the job of the parents was to "provide the right conditions of mental growth and then let the child do the growing" (Wishy 125). Mrs. Frank Malleson's child-rearing manual was typical:

> What we have to do with it in early training is to direct it to desire what it ought to desire, to strengthen, and to develop it. Make the daily routine of the child's life pleasant to him, its duties inevitable, and you will find obedience will follow your just demand of it . . . if you do not apportion his

> trial to his powers active or passive, you deserve defeat and run the risk of injuring the growing goodness of the little one. (Wishy 125)

In Herland, children are certain to encounter only that considered appropriate by their mothers. They get only what they need. It is the perfect environment for children, controlled by their mothers, and where such an environment guarantees that children will grow into moral beings and thus mentally competent to create a perfect society of like minds and souls. Indeed, motherhood itself is the state religion of Herland:

> The religion they had to begin with was much like that of old Greece-a number of gods and goddesses; but they lost all interest in deities of war and plunder, and gradually centered on their Mother Goddess altogether. Then, as they grew more intelligent, this had turned into a sort of Maternal Pantheism. (Gilman, Herland 51)

### 6.3. Moral Education in 2 Girls

Similar to the nineteenth-century American understanding of child education, rooted in Romanticism and ideas of individuality and uncertainty, Turkish educational reforms following the Revolution intended to create a generation equipped with such features as self-confidence, self-competence, notions of equality, morality, and a strong sense of nationalism. As Carroll explains, the essence of child education in Turkish society lies in the fact that it should not only teach science and technology but instill in students the best of the so-called human capacity:

> Justice itself, then depends on people throughout the various professions and roles in society who have been educated since childhood on the percepts of beauty and goodness. Moreover, the society that depends on such people to govern it must itself be structured to generate those selfsame types of people for its furtherance; thus, the central role education plays in

> society. Education is the mechanism through which is developed the highest and best human capacity, and the best forms of education are those that, no matter what their immediate subject matter, have as their chief objective the cultivation of the human soul attuned to justice, beauty, and goodness. Without such individuals at all its levels, society is lost. (70)

Not unlike Gilman, Mağden rejects such conventions and considers education in Turkey to be fundamentally flawed. Not enough real options exist for graduates regardless of their superior intellectual talents or accomplishments. She is quoted as saying:

> You want to earn money but the work opportunities are so limited. In America, some work as dog trainers, and some become specialists in botany. There are so many options in America, but not in Turkey. If you are educated and if you have to earn money to make a living, there is a very limited number of works available. (Kabaş 233)[ii]

Formal education comes under fire in 2 Girls, Behiye passes the Turkish national university entrance exam (the ÖSS) with no trouble and then decides against attending Bosphorus University, the best university in Turkey. She does not believe in education, least of all in higher education. Handan and Behiye are typical of children born into working-class Turkish families and deprived of parental interest and education. Behiye has unpleasant memories of her high school teacher, who symbolizes the contradiction between the lofty intentions of education to improve each generation and the low quality of the educators who fell short of fulfilling those ambitions.

> She remembers Rezzan Hanım, her literature teacher in her last class. Annoying bitch. All year she gave her fours, or threes. "My child, you

> write such negative things. Your view of life is negative. Scattered and irrelevant: where's the beginning, the end, the clarity? You have no sense of order, my child. All right, you're talented. But it doesn't work. In life you have to be positive. You have to be affirmative, positive, full of love. Do you understand, Behiye, my child?" (Mağden, 2 Girls 129)

This teacher's negative attitude regarding Behiye's individuality surely contradicts the ideal of an education system that is supposed to be loving, tender and conducive to true child development. In 2 Girls, the picture of Turkish education is gloomy and deeply depressing. Behiye is convinced that educators are all sexual predators, in fact, which is why she worries that the course director whom Handan must go begging for her tuition will lead to some form of sexual harassment:

> Rezzan Hanım, with an ass as big as a teacher's desk, elephant legs, and her pitiful hair, dyed blond and showing pitch black at the roots. With blue lenses in her eyes: she gave herself dead eyes. She'd look at you like a corpse with those blue-lensed eyes. With her fish-net stockings, décolleté blouses, her sweat smelling. Her collars always decorated with fur or lace or bows or whatnot. With her plump, mottled flesh showing. Nightmare literature teacher. She had it in for Behiye. She doesn't say anything to anyone else when she hands out the papers. Until that day Behiye had always got top marks for her compositions. Only Rezzan Hanım sees her as being worthy of these marks. She talks away at her. Puts her down. She polluted Behiye's space. Her ships dump their garbage in Behiye's waters and then flee. (Mağden, 2 Girls 130)

The image of being polluted by a teacher stands in contrast not only to the utopic description of the teachers and education in Gilman's Herland, but also to the high ideals alleged by Turkey educational authorities.

## Notes

[i] As Bernard Wishy states in his book, among the questions discussed between the years of 1890 and 1900 in the lectures with the topics such as "The Spiritual Discipline of Children" were the following:

> Should implicit obedience be enforced upon children?
>
> How could the true idea of property be conveyed to the child?
>
> Should the child see death in any form?
>
> Does the time devoted to young children limit the mental growth of the mother? Does it detract from responsibilities to other members of the family, especially the father?
>
> How much authority should older children have?
>
> Is a child's imagination stunted if it is made to adhere strictly to the truth?
>
> Should a desire for the right of franchise be inculcated in daughters?
>
> Can music, *per se*, be demoralizing, especially when it is sensuous?
>
> Is the feeling of self-esteem, which we experience when our children realize our expectations, a moral one?
>
> Obviously, the range of questions was very broad and it would be difficult to generalize about their conclusions. At least the general direction of argument can be inferred from the minutes of a few of their discussions. . . . In conclusion Mrs. Hastings advised that in as far as our city life will permit, children should earn their own spending money, thus teaching them the rewards of labor and the benefits of accumulation. To give no stated allowance as a right, to teach the child at an early age the value of money by doing acts of service in the household, not acts of love, however, which we do not wish to and cannot pay. (118-119)

As Wishy adds:

> Whatever the differences of tone and context between our present notions and these and other discussions, that parents themselves were actually raising such questions in great detail shows that the child was no longer merely a beloved offspring of the nation's future in microcosm but a home-laboratory experiment as well. Close supervision of the child's development was not a new ideal but so high degree of deference to scientific knowledge was. Already, the ideal was approaching our own: parents were to act as chiefs of staff of an organization, patiently and devotedly watching and plotting the changes in the child's growth, ever quick to notice and analyze to the best possible advantage any opportunity that the child offered them. (119)

In order to achieve this important mission, which required the cooperative contribution of the two sexes, most intellectuals of the time believed that parents, especially mothers, must be educated to properly perform their roles and mission. For Gilman, who believed that much more qualifications than mere maternal instinct were needed suggested that the '"mother, by virtue of being a mother, is supposed to know just what is right for her children.' When the right kind of children are created '. . . then we shall have some reason to honor motherhood, and it will be brain work and soul work we honor . . . not the uncertain rudiments of a brute instinct'" (Wishy 120).

Gilman also claimed that people in her time were not happy as they were confused by complicated duties, which caused an ongoing conflict between conventional restrictions and the expectations of the developing society.

[ii] Geçiminizi temin etmek istiyorsunuz, yapabileceğiniz o kadar az iş var ki. Amerika'da kimisi köpek terbiyecisi oluyor, kimisi botanik bahçesinde uzman oluyor.

O kadar çok çeşit var ki. Ama burada yok. Eliniz kalem tutuyorsa ve para kazanmak zorundaysanız yapacağınız çok az iş var. (Kabaş 233)

# CHAPTER 7

## HEREDITY in GILMAN and MAĞDEN

### 7.1. "Your Mother Is Your Geography"

Becoming like one's mother, or in Mağden's hyper-realistic dystopia the fears that both Behiye and Handan have of becoming too much like their mothers, is a theme that clearly separates 2 Girls from Herland:

> Behiye hasn't cried since she was seven and a half years old. She was seven and a half years old-she remembers the day-when she cried her heart out for her mother, because she pitied her mother, because she was ashamed of her mother. She hasn't loved her mother since that day. She doesn't love anyone. She can't cry properly. Cry her heart out.
>
> You know your mother. . . . Your mother is your geography. You're as much as your mother. Just that much. Be bored, cramped, depressed from here to Jakarta if you want. Suffocate from distress. Unable to breathe. You're your mother's daughter. An extension of your mother. Your mother's kitchen is your life. Your life is that kind of place: a place that endangers accidents. (Mağden, 2 Girls 7, 18)

Behiye believes that it might be genetic and thus the bond between mother and a daughter impossible to break. Her education, indeed her native intelligence cannot save her from this fate:

> Behiye loves to drink tea. But now tea is something associated with her mother. It belongs to her mother. Behiye is disgusted by anything associated with her mother. Anything that reminds her of her mother. Anything connected to her mother. Motherthings. Mothertouched. (Mağden, 2 Girls 22)

Likewise, Handan as the daughter of a freelance prostitute who sells herself for money, too, eventually and as her destiny. "Don't ask," she says to Behiye,

> "That's the big thing. Erim and I slept together last night. When I woke up I didn't want to stay there anymore." This boy's parents are rich, right. I thought if I slept with him, if we started sleeping together we'd get married, then they'd buy us a house, and furnish it, a really nice place around here, in Etiler or Akatlar, furnished to our taste, and later a nice puppy. "Don't make fun of me, Behiye. I thought you could come live with us. We'd have the latest model car. We could study together, and I could get into Bosphorus University[i]. . . . That was my plan. To cage Erim."
>
> "Handan, did you think all of this- did you really think all these things?"
>
> "What's wrong with that, Behiye? Millions of girls in the world think the same thing. What do you think they write about in those magazines?"
>
> "So what happened that made you flee the battlefield after the first attack? You couldn't stomach it, could you? Couldn't you take the stomach ache?"
>
> "One has to try it out. After we slept together I turned to Erim and said 'Shall we get married?''. Handan is laughing. . . . "So what did the matrimonial candidate say?"
>
> "What would he say Behiye?" "Girl are you crazy. We only slept together once." That's exactly what he said. If I was in love with Erim or anything I'd have been terribly hurt. I don't know, it was all so funny, and" . . . . "I have a Leman fear, Behiye. I'm afraid of growing up to be like Leman. I'm afraid of becoming like the Sisters Nevin; but I'm even more afraid of becoming like Leman. I'm afraid of living my whole life thinking about men day and night. How frightened I am' I'm frightened, Behiye, I can't

help it. But I'm so frightened, constantly, constantly." (Mağden, 2 Girls 222)

A fear of becoming their mothers is something that binds them to each other in the beginning and divides them in the end.

## Notes

[i] It is important to note that being a student at Bosphorus University is required for Handan to get prestige and prove her quality as a member of society but not as a woman. Her methods to fulfill her dreams, however, are overly feminine because she was brought up in a female house, without a father as a male model to balance her perception of the social environment. On the other hand, Behiye, who has a troubled relationship with her mother, trained herself to fight back against patriarchy in a patriarchal way. In the light of her relations with her mother and brother, it is not surprising that her attitudes are totally masculine.

# CHAPTER 8

## THE SACRIFICES of MOTHERHOOD in GILMAN and MAĞDEN

The quality of motherhood in Herland is not strained, whereas in 2 Girls it could not be more so. Leman's sense of motherhood depends largely on satisfying her own selfish needs to have her daughter as a surrogate parent. She also seems not to care that Behiye's friendship is important to Handan, callously inviting Behiye to leave the moment her presence proves the list bit problematic. Leman is not wrong to be disturbed by Handan's need to lie, and Behiye's obvious role in this, undermining Leman's maternal authority, but in truth Leman is just being selfish and even a little childish:

> "And you're a child who doesn't even know what a lie is. Or rather you were. This is all Behiye's influence. I am telling both of you openly to your faces. I'm not in favour of the two of you seeing so much each other" (Mağden, 2 Girls 210). . . . "Girl, didn't I tell you to get hell out of our house? What are you doing here in Handan's bed? Didn't I throw you out of this house this morning? Do I have to call the police or something? What is this? Get the hell out of my house. Get out!". . . . "And she still says Leman. Who am I to you for you to be calling me Leman! Get out of my house. You've stuck to Handan. Getting that course money back, and so forth. What's your problem, girl? It's almost if you were in love with my daughter. Leave my child alone." (Mağden, 2 Girls 215)

This reaction of Leman reminds the reader of Behiye's previous analysis of Leman as a mother. Regardless of her ignorance and incompetence, Leman is a great improvement compared to Yıldız, for Leman and Handan have a strong mother-daughter bond:

> Whatever kind of mother Leman is, at least she's a loving mother. She may not always have managed to fulfil her responsibilities to Handan. At times when she was preoccupied with her own problems, she may have completely neglected her daughter. She may have let her grow up alone in front of the television, to be fed, bathed, put to bed and have her fingernails clipped by aunt-like neighbours. But Behiye feels that having Handan as her daughter is the most important thing in her life. She feels from the way Leman looks at Handan how crazy she is for her, how she loves her with all her heart. (Mağden, 2 Girls 165)

Leman's motherhood, liberated from social restrictions and expectations stands in stark contrast to that of Yıldız—the model of traditional motherhood but a working mother all the same. Yıldız dresses herself all too conservatively, in part to hide her inadequacies: "Behiye wants to fall down and die. To fall down and die right there. And her mother has put on a headscarf. So she'll look like a good, suffering, family mother: overcoat and headscarf. Behiye is ashamed of her mother. She's ashamed to be ashamed of her mother in the middle of this tragedy" (Mağden, 2 Girls 240).

In fact, Yıldız is just as selfish as Leman, but in her own way, relegating Behiye to the kitchen and expecting her to fulfill her domestic responsibilities while away at work.

Unlike Leman and Yıldız, who fail to live up to the most basic responsibilities of motherhood, the mothers of Herland, motivated by pure maternal instincts are said to create a utopian society for the sake of their children and only for them. "They developed all this close inter-service in the interest of their children. To do the best work they had to specialize of course; the children needed spinners and weavers, farmers and gardeners, carpenters and masons, as well as mothers" (Gilman, Herland

58). This is what proves most surprising to the men of Herland, that these women are capable of such self-sacrifice where their children are concerned. Their men, of course, prove a different matter:

> Then came the filling up of the place. When a population multiples by five or thirty years it soon reaches the limits of a country, especially a small one like this. They very soon eliminated all the grazing cattle- sheep were the last to go, I believe. Also, they worked out a system of intensive agriculture surpassing anything I ever heard of, with the very forests all reset with fruit- or nut-bearing trees. Do what they would, however, there soon came a time when they were confronted with the problem of 'the pressure of population' in an acute form. There was really crowding, and with it, unavoidably, a decline in standards. And how did those women meet it? Not by a "struggle for existence" which would result in an everlasting writhing mass of underbred people trying to get ahead of one another- some few on top, temporarily, many constantly crushed out underneath, a hopeless substratum of paupers and degenerates, and no serenity or peace anyone, no possibility for really noble qualities among the people at large. . . . They sat down in council together and thought it out. Very clear, strong thinkers they were. They said: "With our best endeavors this country will support about so many people, with the standard of peace, comfort, health, beauty, and progress we demand. Very well. That is all the people we will make." (Gilman, Herland 58)

As Arnold explains, the "discovery of this notion of mothering and education is a pivotal moment in Van's conversion" (299+), "from skeptic to believer, from explorer to explored, and from would-be conqueror to conquered" (Arnold 299+). Gilman's

criticism of maternal sacrifice is of female imprisonment and maintenance of "the private home for husband and children" (Golden 137). Female sacrifice on a grand scale in which the health and welfare of the human race is concerned, that was another matter and best achieved through collective means. As the Herlanders explain it to their male visitors-intruders:

> There followed a period of "negative eugenics" which must have been an appalling sacrifice. We are commonly willing to "lay down our lives" for our country, but they had to forego motherhood for their country--and it was precisely the hardest thing for them to do. She explained to me, with sweet seriousness, that as I had supposed, at first each woman bore five children; and that, in their eager desire to build up a nation, they had gone on in that way for a few centuries, till they were confronted with the absolute need of a limit. This fact was equally plain to all--all were equally interested. They were now as anxious to check their wonderful power as they had been to develop it; and for some generations gave the matter their most earnest thought and study. "We were living on rations before we worked it out," she said. "But we did work it out. You see, before a child comes to one of us there is a period of utter exaltation-the whole being is uplifted and filled with a concentrated desire for that child. We learned to look forward to that period with the greatest caution. Often our young women, those to whom motherhood had not yet come, would voluntarily defer it. When that deep inner demand for a child began to be felt she would deliberately engage in the most active work, physical and mental; and even more important, would solace her longing by the direct care and service of the babies we already had." (Gilman, Herland 59-60)

How different from Mağden's dystopic novel, set in Republican Turkey and where violence, ignorance, conflict, rape, misery and all manner of hateful associations destroy the soul.

# CHAPTER 9

## CLASS and RACE in GILMAN and MAĞDEN

In Gilman's feminist utopia, women are liberated from "their restricted roles as sexual beings that the 'inevitable evil consequences' of 'excessive indulgence' in sex is eradicated" (Lant 293). The eradication of sex is essential to ideas of female equality. As Lant explains:

> Because sex for pleasure's sake alone has been eliminated from Herland, because the women of Herland are not economically dependent upon men and need not please men, these women have been able to build an egalitarian, sharing community. The effects of their liberation are felt in every area of social interaction, as Ann Lane reveals in her enumeration of the revolutionary ideas of Herland: class equality; some kind of communal child-rearing; absence of privilege by sex; freedom from fear of male violence; elimination of sex-linked work; the mother-child relationship and the idealized home as models for social institutions; and the use of persuasion and consensus to maintain social order. (293-294)

The removal of sex is the key to rooting out other patriarchal negatives such as war and the competition and corruption that ends in warfare. Herlanders do not compete but cooperate for the betterment of the whole of humankind. In Herland, there are no class distinctions, for the female society they create is egalitarian in practice not just in principle. "You see, they had had no wars," it says. "They had had no kings, and no priests, and no aristocracies. They were sisters, and as they grew, they grew together- not by competition, but by united action" (Gilman, Herland 51). Again, this is achievable by making motherhood the greatest good. Van, who proves so receptive to such feminist utopian ideas, explains it as follows:

> "I understand that you make Motherhood the highest social service- a sacrament, really; that it is only undertaken once, by the majority of the population; that those held unfit are not allowed even that; and to that be encouraged to bear more than one child is the very highest reward and honor in the power of the state." (She interpolated here that the nearest approach to an aristocracy they had was to come of a line of "Over Mothers" – those who had been so honored). (Gilman, Herland 59)

What becomes clear is how Motherhood in Gilman as the highest female calling and achievement makes some women more equal than other.

In fact, Herland was written with middle and upper-class readers in mind and in no sense did Gilman imagine that working-class women, or men, would read it. Very little of it spoke to them. The characters are upper class. The male intruders, it is worth noting, are well educated and rich enough to live how they please. The men are welcome to visit Herland, in part, because of their class. It is true that Herland is without class divisions, but that is because everyone is essentially upper class as the following passages make clear: "We had known each other years and years, and in spite of our differences we had a good deal in common. All of us were interested in science" (Gilman, Herland 1). Van, the sympathetic male, is a typical New England gentleman of impeccable pedigree. His colleagues, moreover, hardly qualify as working class, as the following makes clear:

> Terry was rich enough to do as he pleased. His great aim was exploration. He used to make all kinds of row because there was nothing left to explore now, only patchwork and filling in, he said. He filled in well enough-he had a lot of talents- great on mechanics and electricity. Had all kinds of boats and motorcars, and was one of the best of our airmen.

> We never could have done the thing at all without Terry.
>
> Jeff Margrave was born to be a poet, a botanist-or both-but his folks persuaded him to be a doctor instead. He was a good one, for his age, but his real interest was in what he loved to call "the wonders of science." As for me, sociology's my major. You have to back that up with a lot of other sciences, of course. I'm interested in them all. (Gilman, Herland 2)

Mağden has a very different agenda vis-à-vis race, her characters coming from the lower strata of Turkish society and "class-stricken" rather than persons of class. In the following interview, she explains:

> We generally witness the lower-class members struggling to liberate themselves from this "lower-class" membership. They aim at being an upper-class member. They play tennis, learn a few words in English, and live in big houses. This is a blind class addiction. In the novel[i], the mother was born into a respectful family but she disgusts her class. In this aspect, the woman willingly rejects her social status. One's refusal of her class means rejecting the life standards and expectations of that class. (Interview with Mağden, 2007)[ii]

Mağden's novel takes place very much in the real world, a world moreover that is divided along class lines and deeply committed to the notion of class as indicative of human worth. Behiye comments time and again on how working-class people are obsessed with class, or "class-stricken," because they do not occupy the upper reaches of society. Behiye is full of self-hatred for her class because she is herself a victim of the same obsession with class and hates what she calls "Akmerkez creature":

> They're in that frightful Akmerkez now. . . There are people who pass their whole lives here, who spend all their time here. A veritable flock of people

whose souls are filled with sand . . . . It grinds her soul to watch this miserable flock, these kids whose parents are servants in the Etiler area and who want nothing more than to be children of Akmerkez . . . At the table in front of them are two servants' daughters who've clearly been sitting there for hours. One of them has a smile on her, a smile that's been practised but is still a miserable failure. She's constantly looking up and smiling. She doesn't stop smiling. A smile that says- I'm open to all suggestions, come find me. What could possibly find you, you miserable creature? I don't even want to think about what kind of disgrace is going to find you. I don't want to feel sorry for you, shred my soul, to have it go through a meat grinder and come out looking like worms in order to go to war for you. I don't want to. I want you to get out of this disgusting place. I want you to flee screaming Help! Save me! I want you to run screaming out of this frightful, pitiful place and be free of it forever. But that's not going to happen, is it? You'll remain here, on this floor, waiting for, inviting, whatever dreadful and disgusting thing might happen. You're not going to run down the stairs four or five at a time to throw yourself into the servants' quarters in the basement. You're not going to pull yourself together and say you're free of the place. I didn't belong there, and I managed to escape that frightful scene. Whatever I become, I'll be here. Whatever I turn into, it will happen here. This is my own place. Servants' daughter.You're not going to say it. You're not going to say it. Pitiful Akmerkez creature. You're not going to leave behind these dirty, airless, mossy waters that you've been wandering around in. Isn't that so? (Mağden, 2 Girls 105)

For Behiye, the Turkish addiction to class and social status is part and parcel of patriarchal society. It pains her to see Handan as a child of Akmerkez, too:

> Handan is a true child of Akmerkez. Behiye sees this the moment they pass through the door. She starts breathing and swimming happily, flipping her tail, like a goldfish in her bowl. She knows all its shores and corners by heart. All its possibilities. As well its impossibilities. Handan doesn't have any money. She knows the price and the quality of everything, each and every label, that Akmerkez will never present to her. What a frightful thing to have memorized! What a heavy load! (Mağden, 2 Girls 105)

### 9.1. Mağden as Proponent of Racial Stereotyping for Literary Effect

Mağden herself can hardly be construed as racist. Having traveled extensively, she is very accepting of ethnic and racial variety. Her peaceful attitude toward people of other races and nationalities is clearly evident in her books. As she has stated repeatedly when interviewed, Turkish chauvinism and a tendency to look down on the East, and the Japanese in particular, is abhorrent. For Mağden, the way that the Japanese are perceived in Turkey is superficial and bigoted. In 2 Girls, she takes the occasion to address this in an innocent discussion between Behiye and Handan about going to see an Oriental movie:

> "Look, shall we go to this Chinese film? Or rather Hong Kong film. The director is very good. It's called *In The Mood For Love*." Handan doesn't want to go that film. "The Chinese aren't very good-looking, Behiye."
>
> "What does it have to do with the film if the people in it aren't good-looking? And the Chinese are very good-looking."

"No, they're not. They all look alike. And if the people in a film are good-looking a person is more emotional, and wants to live what they're living, Behiye."

"Then I shouldn't be in your film, Handan. No one gets emotional when they see me." (Mağden, 2 Girls 136)

In what follows, Behiye tries to cure Handan of her racism by criticizing the whole of Western popular culture and the patriarchal obsession with European ideas of beauty:

> They got to the film. It's a love story that takes place in Hong Kong in the sixties. But it's a story about pure, unadulterated love. Behiye loves it. Handan starts to make sounds of complaint after the first half. She keeps looking at her watch. She tries to make out the numbers in the dark. "How long this Hong Kong film is," she says during the intermission. "Nothing at all has happened yet in the film."
>
> "Does it have to be like those idiotic American films where there are five thousand events every five minutes? That's the way the film is. That's why it's good. Real life is like that. Years go by without anything happening in anyone's life. Life is a heavy, crippled thing that moves slowly." (Mağden, 2 Girls 136)[iii]

### 9.2. Gilman, Miscegenation, Racial Purity, and Feminist Utopia

Gilman is a different story, the child of a culture and belief in the racial superiority of whites and supremacy of the United States. Peyser contends that "Gilman's utopian depiction of white women cut off from the rest of the world, surrounded by the darker-skinned natives of South America" (78), is of importance and essentially racist. Typical of the feminists of her generation, she worried unnecessarily that white women would be outnumbered by increasing immigrations. Herland is not, it is

important to say, a multicultural society in any sense. As Peyser points out, her ideas for a female classless society took the white supremacist and Anglo-Saxon beliefs of her times as normative:

> In Herland Gilman pursues what we might call a radically segregationalist aesthetic according to which beauty is ensured by "purity," by a refusal to mix the races and a reluctance even to mix the sexes. This refusal of assimilation points to Gilman's habit of imagining the highest possibility of human development under the sign of racial isolationism. Interpreters of Herland have tended to view Gilman's racism and her eugenic application of "insidious standards to determine who will reproduce" as "disappointing lapses in her democratic vision," as is her attitudes on race were separable from the truly "radical" thought, as if her idealism and her racism were not cut from the same cloth. (90)

As they say, no one is perfect and Herland, like all utopias, proves less than perfect, too.

## Notes

[i] At this point, Mağden mentions her novel Biz Kimden Kaçıyorduk Anne?, which tells the story of a daughter and a mother rejecting her social background and social identity. The mother was born into a respectful family from upper-class, but she disgusts her class. In this aspect, the woman consciously rejects her social status.

[ii] Normalde hep alt sınıftan gelen kişilerin bu sınıfı unutturma çabalarına tanık oluruz. İşte 'tenis oynayarak, iki üç kelime İngilizce öğrenerek, köşkte oturarak' üst sınıfa atlanmaya çalışılır. Oysa burada farkında olmadan bir sınıf-stricken'lık (yani sınıf-muzdaripliği, sınıfa mecburluk) söz konusudur. Romandaki anne ise üst sınıfa doğmuş, ama üst sınıftan, kendi içine doğduğu sınıftan tiksinen bir kadın. Bu noktada sınıfını anarşist bir şekilde kendisi iptal ediyor. Böyle bir farkındalık sonucu sınıfını iptal etmek, sınıfının getirdiği gibi yaşamamayı tercih etmek, 'sınıfsızlık'ı bilinçli bir şekilde tercih etmek söz konusu. (Interview with Mağden, 2007)

[iii] At this point, it is important to point the intellectual difference between Handan and Behiye. Behiye is a book addict, and this addiction and the book prices lead her to steal books. The books that she enjoys reading are of importance to give us an idea about her intellectual level. It is also significant to remember that Behiye's reason to read these books is not to make a difference in her social identity but for her own betterment. Mağden criticizes those who are in search for a better social identity.

> Books are very expensive, though. Since she was twelve, Behiye hasn't been able to get her fill of reading. She couldn't, or she'd die. She'd have killed herself. She wouldn't have been able to bear that balloon of distress called home. She reads constantly, she has not other resource. Books are her medicine. There's no other way. Otherwise she would have died.

> At this bookstore, there's a place on the top floor where you can read the books. When Behiye climbs up there and pretends to look through the books, she takes out her little pocket-knife and prices off those plastic things stuck on to the covers. Only from the books she's going to steal. Not in big numbers. After she takes the plastic things off, she throws the books in her bag.
>
> Later, she goes downstairs and puts some of the books back. The 'I looked at all of them. I'm only going to buy this one' game. At this point several of them, freed from their plastic things, lie like babies in her bag. She goes to the cashier and buys the cheapest books. …
>
> She bought Alberto Moravia's Jealousy; that was the cheapest one. She stole Kafka's America and Sartre's Nausea. She couldn't do without these. She'd rescued from their plastic things. She's had to. (Mağden, Herland 34)

Behiye's comments on the magazines that symbolize "modernization" express her concerns about cultural colonialism. Even though she reads Western writers, she objects the spreading popular culture and its influences on female, who is aimed to be repressed and stereotyped in almost every society.

# CONCLUSION

Many female writers, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Perihan Mağden, reflect cultural and social realities through the mirror of fiction. Peyser explains that “[f]or women already educated enough to grasp the facts and their relations, and able to make a conviction work, it should require no more than a book or two, to start swifter social evolution” (194). Gilman and Mağden, both mirror their time through their works, are similar to each other “in their determination to impart a feminist sex education” (Peyser 194), and their struggle to remove the prejudices against the female. In order to motivate women for self-consciousness and social awareness, both writers aim at female education and realization of female capacity. Even though the two novels can be claimed to be of different natures when their endings are considered, through these endings, both Gilman and Mağden criticize the ill-perceived and misinterpreted image of womanhood.

Gilman, who sends Ellador to the patriarchal world with her husband Van, celebrates the female competence and capacity. Through Ellador, Gilman conveys her message that those women, who are well-educated, self-courageous and who achieved self-realization are competent enough to survive even in a patriarchal society.

Mağden, whose novel ends with Behiye’s and Leman’s misery and desperation, leaves Behiye to death and Leman to loneliness. Following Handan’s departure, Behiye loses her strength and reason to live. Through Behiye’s metaphorical death, Mağden criticizes those who claim themselves to be rebellious and contributors to society but do not make any difference in either social or economic spheres of life.

The Turkish Republic underwent similar changes in social, economic and political life, giving impetus to a decidedly Turkish form of feminist, reformist

literature. Not unlike their American, Republican predecessors, the object of such Turkish feminist writing was to open the way for women in Turkey to have the same opportunities and freedoms as men and help in the creation of a modern, Islamic Republic like no other in world history.

Gilman and Mağden criticized their respective patriarchal cultures, focusing on issues vital to women as individuals, as wives, and as mothers, as well as other issues common to all regardless of gender—social, economic, and political reform, education, and the need to eradicate class and racial distinctions. They are a study in the lives and experiences of women under Republican governance and the perils of patriarchy. Both challenged widely accepted social conventions and ideas in their respective patriarchal democracies, one using utopia or fantasy and the other hyper-realism or dystopia to similar ends.

## WORKS CITED

Arnold, Bridgitte. "It Began This Way": the Synonymy of Cartography and Writing as Utopian Cognitive Mapping in 'Herland.'" Utopian Studies 17 (2006): 299+.

Beer, Janet, and Bridget Bennett, eds. Special Relationships: Anglo-American Affinities and Antagonisms, 1854-1936. Manchester, England: Manchester UP, 2002.

Bennet, Andrew, and Nicholas, Royle. An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall / Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995.

Carol, Jill B. A Dialogue of Civilizations. New Jersey: The Light, Inc, 2007.

Connell, M. Jeanne. "Revisiting the Concept of Community: an Examination of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Utopian Vision." PJE. Peabody Journal of Education 70.4 (1995): 19.

Durakbasa, Ayse, and Aynur Ilyasoglu. "Formation of Gender Identities in Republican." Journal of Social History 35 (Fall 2001): 195-203. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/search>.

Farr, Marie T. "The Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman by Denise D. Knight; Charlotte Perkins Gilman." Rev. of The Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, by Denise D. Knight. The New England Quarterly 1997: 134-138.

Fishbein, Leslie. "To Herland and Beyond: the Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman. by Ann J. Lane." Rev. of To Herland and Beyond: the Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, by Ann J. Lane. The Journal of American History 1993: 1116.

Gilman, Charlotte P. Herland Ed. Paul Negri. New York: Dover Publications, 1998.

- - -. The Yellow Wall Paper London: Virago P, 2004.

- - -. Women and Economics: a Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution Boston: Small, Maynard & Co. 1898.

Golden, Catherine. "'Light of the Home,' Light of the World: the Presentation of Motherhood in Gilman's Short Fiction.'." Modern Language Studies 26 (1996): 137-147. <http://www.jstor.org>.

Hausman, Bernice L. "Sex Before Gender: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Evolutionary Paradigm of Utopia." Feminist Studies 24 (1998): 488-510. <http://www.jstor.org>.

Hayden, Dolores. The Grand Domestic Revolution: a History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities. Cambridge, MA.: MIT P, 1981.

Hedges, Elaine R. Afterword. The Yellow Wall Paper. By Charlotte Perkins Gilman. London: Virago P, 2004. 37-59.

Kabaş, Sedef. Ipek Dokulu Basarılar, 41 Kadın 41 Öykü. Istanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2007.

Kadıoglu, Ayse. "Women's Subordination in Turkey: is Islam Really the Vallian." The Middle East Journal (1994): 645-661. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/search>.

Knight, Denise D., and Emmanuel S. Nelson, eds. Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: a Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook. Westport, CT.: Greenwood P, 1997. 160.

Lane, Ann. Introduction. Herland. By Charlotte Perkins Gilman. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979. v-xxiii.

Lant, Kathleen M. "The Rape of the Text: Charlotte Gilman's Violation of Herland." Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 9 (1990): 291-308. <http://www.jstor.org>.

Lindsey, Karen. “Women's Terms:the 60's Without Apology.” Social Text 9 (1984): 273-274. <http://www.jstor.org>.

- - -. Biz Kimden Kaçıyorduk Anne?. 1st ed. Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2007.

- - -. Interview with Fulya Ozlem. Zaman 23 July 2007.

- - -. Two Girls Trans. Brendan Freely. London: Serpent's Tail, 2005.

- - -. Korkma Bu Aksam Gelip Çalmam Kapını 1st ed. Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2004.

- - -. Topladım Dagılan Kalbimin Her Köşesini 4th ed. Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003.

- - -. Refakatçi 3rd ed. Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003.

- - -. Herkes Seni Söylüyor Sahi Mutsuz Musun? 3rd ed. Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001.

O'Donnell, Margaret. “A Reply to “Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Reassessing Her Significance for Feminism and Social Economics.” Review of Social Economy 54 (1996): 337+.

- - -. “Early Analysis of the Economics of Family Structure: Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s Women and Economics.” Review of Social Economy LII. 2 (1994): 86-95.

Peyser, Thomas. Utopia & Cosmopolis: Globalization in the Era of American Literary Realism. Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1998.

Prasch, E. Robert and Falguni Sheth, “Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Reassessing Her Significance for Feminism and Social Economics.” Review of Social Economy, 54, 3 (1996): 323+.

Rson, M. Amy. “The Dress of Women: A Critical Introduction to the Symbolism and Sociology of Clothing.” Rev. of The Dress of Women: A Critical Introduction to the Symbolism and Sociology of Clothing, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Eds. Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Ryan, Mary. P. Cradle of the Middle Class: the Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.

Stansell, Christine. City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789-1860. New York: University of Illinois P, 1987.

Stephenson, Anna J. “Leaving Footprints in Houston: Some Women in the Gülen Movement.” Muslim Citizens of the Globalized World. Eds. Robert A. Hunt, Yüksel A. Aslandoğan. Izmir: The Light, Inc, 2007. 145-161.

Wishy, Bernard. The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nurture. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania P, 1982.