

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



SOCIETY'S CONTROL AND WOMEN'S RESISTANCE IN
CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN'S *THE YELLOW
WALLPAPER* AND MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE
HANDMAID'S TALE*

M.A. Thesis

CHALAK GHAFOOR RAOUF

Istanbul – 2014

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to:

- My Parents.
- All my friends.
- Those who supported me during this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's time and Margret Atwood's early life, women were considered as subjects to men, prevented from knowledge and job, trapped in home, and their social functions were reduced to serving men. Therefore, in sympathy with women's suffering around them, Gilman wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper* and Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale* to expose women's fight against the patriarchal system. Gilman and Atwood dramatized their life experience in their female protagonist in order to expose the cruelty of their society toward women, but unlike women of their society, their protagonists beside the patriarchal controls, move beyond the roles that were determined for them, and resist the patriarchal rules in order to show women's struggle for their rights. Therefore, this paper examines the methods by which women are controlled, and at the same time it examines the elements that aid women's resistance to that control.

Through their work, Gilman and Atwood wanted to criticize their society, and draw readers' attention to unspoken issues by "energizing imaginations and providing fresh perspectives" (Booker, 176). They tried to examine, define and "explore alternative to the social and political quo" in order to get further freedom and rights for women (176). They used their works as a way to demonstrate the major restrictions and control forced upon women of their society while calling for their rights.

1.2 Background of the Study

To understand the causes of women's subordination to men in Gilman and Atwood's work, we have to study the position of women in the two periods.

Therefore, this section exposes the changes that had happened in the condition of women since Victorian era until the modern era.

In the late nineteenth century, the period of Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, women lived in a miserable condition in which they were trapped at home by the patriarchal rules of society, deprived of their rights, and treated as second class citizen. At that time, the society believed that a proper environment for women was home, and the ideal woman was the one who provided a good care for her family. Therefore, being mother and wife was the final stage in the development of female's condition at that time. As Courtney Hoffberger stated, "because of the male-dominated organization of society, women frequently did not have legal rights, thereby, they were expected to obey the male decisions by raising families and perform the duties of diligent wives and mothers" (2).

In this period, women's duty was reduced for maternity in which they had to produce children and bring them up for the patriarchal society, and those women who could find a job outside home due to the labor shortage, were considered as less worthy because women were valued as housewife. The jobs that were allowed for women to take outside home at that time were, "factory girl, nun or convent girl" (Barret 4).

Gilman's parents separated after her birth, and this caused economic problems in a way she described her childhood as "painful and lonely" (Gilman, 1656). Being affected by this, Gilman married to Charles Stetson to compensate her pervious life, but one year from her marriage, she gave birth to her only child, Kathrine, and thereby, she entered the difficulties of life that manifested itself in being mother and wife. As her "marital tension increased", her husband believed that

she had a mental depression, therefore, he consulted a specialist of women's nervous disorder "Dr. Mitchell" that prescribed her a rest cure for several weeks which consisted of bed rest without any intellectual activities (1656).

After Gilman anticipated the disadvantages of the treatments, she refused to be treated in that way, and thereby, came back from a state of madness as a result of her condition during the rest cure in which she was imprisoned in a room without allowing her to touch a pen. Gilman continued her life as a writer, and wrote poems, short stories, and lectures to explain "women's suffering" in her society which Gilman considered it as a social problem. Thus, the idea of female empowerment emerged in her thoughts as she became aware of the injustice around women of her society (1656). Therefore, being affected by her confinement, Gilman dramatized her experience during the rest cure in *The Yellow Wallpaper*. She exposed the limitations in front of women in her society while calling for their rights.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the conditions of women had changed dramatically in which after the industrial revolution and labor shortage, women were called to work in the factories. The male institutions took a huge campaign encouraging women to participate in the development of society. As a result, a lot of women moved outside home and worked in the factories, but with less paid wages, and they could not hold leading positions as their male counterparts. After the stock crash in the 1929, the society moved back again as a lot of workers had lost their jobs including women. The rules at that time insisted; if men available for work, women cannot work, therefore, most of the women lost their jobs and returned home.

During the Second World War, as many men participated in the war and left their jobs, the governments again encouraged women to take men's job and help the country. In this period, women's active participation can be noticed clearly in which they contributed in the country's production, and helped men in the battle fields. Therefore, women again moved a step forward in their conditions, but after the war ended, men came back and asked for their jobs. Due to this, women again lost their jobs and returned home as usual. So, this indicates that although women could go outside home, they were as submissive as they were in home because they went out by men's permission and returned home by men's order. The patriarchal control followed them everywhere, at home and at work places.

Although the condition of women in this period had changed in which women were allowed to work and vote, and the invention of television and radio became an outlet for women toward the world, but the previous belief and attitudes toward women remained the same even until the time of writing *The Handmaid's Tale*. At that time women were only allowed to work in its traditional forms like, nursing, and may be teaching. They could not take leading positions or develop at work in order not to share power with men, therefore, a very limited number of works were available for women to take. Through the period between Gilman's and Atwood's time, one can conclude that women in the crises were called to be active participant at works, while at the normal times they were encouraged to stay at home.

The early life of Margret Atwood also mirrors the condition of women at that time, Atwood faced restrictions at her education as well as her work, she was not allowed to use her university's library, and at the same time, she was not allowed to work in the academic institutions except women's college. Nathalie Cooke in her work, *Margret Atwood: A critical Companion*, explains that Atwood's life and education provided a basis for her trends in writing such as feminism and sex (3). Her father's lifestyle picked up her "ecological awareness", while her mother's family provided possibilities for her to live beyond the roles that were available to women of her generation (6). There were three Killam ancestors in Atwood's family that affected her thinking; her mother, who lived in forests for two summers and kept the fire burning in the camp, her aunt that called Kay Cogswell who got MA at university of Toronto and at the same time brought up six children, and Joyce Carmen Barkhouse, Atwood's aunt who wrote *Anna's Pet* in 1980 with Atwood which was a story for children (7).

During Atwood's early life, women were not allowed to work as employees in every academic institutions except some colleges that were called "women's college" (8). When she attended *Radcliff College* which was called "women's collage" to work, Atwood revealed that the collage is also a "man's world" in which women are not allowed to enter *Lamont Library*, and those who were serving tea during the class were women (8). From this period Atwood's active participation in the collage issues of literary journal can be noticed, in which she wrote literary criticism and poetry under "gender-neutral signature M.E Atwood" to criticize her male-dominated society (7). Beside her defense of women in her society, Atwood was hiding her real name from readers to avoid being discovered as a female writer,

therefore, one can interpret her act as a first indication of Atwood's perception about the discrimination that women writers were facing at that time. Therefore, *The Handmaid's Tale* is one of the famous feminist works of the twentieth century that exposes the major restrictions forced upon modern women in this period. Her book can be considered as a product of twentieth century's exploitation, dehumanization, and repression on women.

From the period of Gilman's *The Yellow wallpaper* till Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the condition of women had changed for better but the patriarchal believes remained the same. Women could come out from home and have paid work, get the right of vote, but they could not get rid of the patriarchal control outside home.

1.3 Theoretical Background:

1.3.1 Foucault's Theory of Control and Resistance

In this thesis, Michel Foucault's theories about control and resistance will provide the basis for analyzing the two works. Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punishment* stated that organizations like prisons and schools employ discipline and punishment in order to have absolute control over the subjects' body and mind, so that the bodies will be the subjects of society. He argued that;

Discipline is an art of rank, a technique for the transformation of arrangements. It individualizes bodies by a location that does not give them a fixed position, but distribute them and circulates them in a network of relations, therefore this could be done by the constitution of tables which transformed confused, useless or dangerous

multitudes into ordered multiplicities and it's the first condition for control. (148)

Here Foucault demonstrates the characteristics as well as the processes of disciplining individuals by stating that discipline is used as a technique for arranging people, it can be achieved through separating individuals, scheduling time in order to create docile bodies.

He argued that discipline through control starts with "separating" subjects from society, and confining them in a place in order to be ready for training (202). Through separation, these organizations take control over the subjects' body in away their body becomes the body of those who are in power. The subjects after separation lose contact with each other, and lack information about those who share the same condition. So by separation, the subjects become an easy prey in front of the authoritative power.

After separation, these organizations employ time-tables to schedule the subjects' daily life and produce docile body depending on the power's specifications. According to Foucault, achieving a military body which "is a docile body" needs imposing military rules, therefore, the authoritative powers must "draw tables, prescribe movements, impose exercises, and arrange tactics" (138). Thus, time-tables and schedules can be used to break up activities and produce behaviors according to the power's preferences.

Foucault argued that discipline needs surveillance to ensure the subjects' docility, therefore, in organizations like prisons, observation or surveillance becomes a major tool for examining the subjects' docility. He discussed the idea of surveillance in relation to Jeremy's Panopticon that is used for monitoring in prisons;

Panopticon induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary. (Discipline 201-249).

Panopticon creates a state of consciousness or awareness in the subjects in which they realize that they are subjected to a permanent monitoring, so, they behave according to the society's rules that are determined for them. Foucault argued that power employs surveillance at every aspect of the subjects' life to create fear of being watched by the authority. Thus, when the subjects internalize this fear, they do their duties properly even in the absence of the guards, and thereby, the fear becomes their internal monitor that prevent them from any possible resistance against the authoritative power.

Foucault stated that through separation, time-tables, and surveillance the authoritative powers would have the subjects' body controlled, and after that they use language to colonize and control the subjects' mind just like their body. He marked the importance of language for the authoritative powers by stating that;

Language produces power; reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. We must conceive of discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity. (67).

Here, Foucault explains that language is a tool that produces power, and helps those who use it to reinforce their position by imposing their ideology. He stated that there is a strong relationship between power and language. Those who are in power use language to redefine truths, manipulate others, and thereby, impose their ideology upon the subjects.

Alongside control, Foucault also discusses the idea of resistance. In his book *The History of Sexuality*, he examined the concept of resistance by stating that “where there is power there is resistance” (97). He argued that;

The exercise of power requires a degree of freedom on the part of its subjects is to say, first, that the effective exercise of power need not imply the removal of liberty. On the contrary, where this is no possibility of resistance there can be no relations of power. It follows that the exercise of power will normally be at risk from the recalcitrance of its subjects: it will always involve costs and its outcome will often be far from certain. Resistance, evasion and the costs of dealing with them may provoke refinement or modification of the techniques of power – and these, in turn, will provide conditions under which new forms of resistance and evasion may be developed.

(46)

Foucault wants to say that when someone wants to exercise an effective power, must give some kind of freedom otherwise his power faces “recalcitrance from its subjects” (46). He normalizes the idea of resistance by stating that resistance appears when power is practiced, when the power increased, the resistance increases too, therefore, it is normal for a power to face resistance because resistance is a part of

every power. Therefore, resistance can be considered as a “counter-stroke” to the one who exercises power (Nicholls, 47).

Foucault sees resistance as a hidden power that aims at refining the exercise of power. It has various forms such as resistance through imagination, body, and language. It appears in the site of exercising power. For instance, when power exercised upon body to control it, bodily resistance appears.

1.3.2 Feminist Thoughts on Foucault’s Theory of Control and Resistance

Catriona Macleod says, Michel Foucault in one of his lectures argues that “the same style of analysis which he used to study the installation of power in everyday relations and practices could be applied to the techniques and practices of governing populations of subjects” (Macleod 1). Therefore, feminists like Sylvia Walby, Monique Deveaux, and Sandra Bartky used his speech to theorize the patriarchal and social control over female in order to examine how women were and are controlled by the patriarchal believes and ideologies throughout history. Feminists like Catriona Macleod studied “Foucault’s thoughts on governmentality in everyday lives, action, and interaction of people rather than study the intentional aspects of power”, he considered society as a male-dominated institution that exercise its power by preventing women from it. (Macleod 2).

These feminists theorized that the male-dominated societies employed discipline to regulate female body because they considered it as a site of power that may threaten their control over society. Thereby, women were disciplined inside home by their duties as mother and wife, and they were also disciplined outside by the strict rules of the male society. Walby stated that;

Women may participate in an institution in society for work, but they will be separated within it, for instance, they may be separated into less powerful positions. Separation is the social practice in which men and women are segregated from each other, and usually the dominant group which is the male taking the better positions. (12)

The society employs separation over women at work places as a “patriarchal strategy” to prevent them from reaching power (Walby 13). The male-dominated society does not want women’s development in order not to share power with them, therefore, the male-society to produce women’s docile bodies, prescribe functions, duties, and establish “uninterrupted process of bodily activities” (Bartky 27). These functions and duties were and are used as discipline or routine to make women’s body and mind be in a continuous busyness and forget about their trapped condition. Being mother and wife was also among those duties that were used by the patriarchal societies as discipline to confine women in home and drive them away from power. Women after marriage were busy with child bearing and house working; therefore, they did not have time to think about themselves.

Language of society is also an important element that aids the patriarchal control over women. Duygu Ersoy examined the importance of language for the authoritative powers by stating that;

Language is a ground which provides the established system its continuity and closed structure when it is manipulated, it will be taken as the precondition of all other institutions since without language it is not possible for people to agree on the content of other institutions. The manipulation of language changes the perception of other

domains by defining the boundaries of thinking and creating the sense of having no alternatives as well as living under the best system ever, therefore, language identify the subjects' subjection in order to behave automatically in the manner that is imposed on them by the political order. (5-23)

Duygu Ersoy considers language as an effective tool for the tyrant societies because it allows them to avoid resistance from the subjects though changing their thoughts and behaviors, and thereby, guarantees their control over society. The society uses language through prescribing social ideology according to its preferences, redefining truths, and sometimes, through the language of religion to support its position.

When women see the patriarchal and social norms that oppress and deprive them from their rights, they “realized that a conscious reassessment of roles is necessary” (Newell, 16). Foucault states that when the power increased, the resistance increases too. Therefore, women’s resistance, according to feminist like Walby “is inherent to the strategic model of women’s disciplined bodies”, it come as a result of the huge pressure imposed upon them on a daily basis by society (228).

1.4 The Study Area

The Yellow Wallpaper was written in 1892 by Charlotte Parkinson Gilman, it reflects women’s condition in the Victorian era. The story deals with the suffering of unnamed narrator that is confined at home after giving birth. Due to her melancholy, the representatives of patriarchal society, her doctor and husband, prescribe rest cure for her, and thereby, confine and separate her from society and home under the name of rest cure. During her confinement, the narrator suffers from the rigid rules and discipline that the society imposed upon her, and as a result of the pressure, the

narrator resists in order to hide herself from the power. Through resistance, she attempts to create her own reality because the actual reality does not satisfy her. This part will be explained in detail through Foucault's theory on power and raise an argument on the possibility of hiding from power.

The Handmaid's Tale is one of the famous works of the twentieth century that written by Margret Atwood in 1985. This work is considered as a product of the modern society's attitude toward women. It reflects the condition of women in Atwood's early life. The story depicts a futurist United States after a military coup in which due to the coup and misuse of nuclear power, the state suffers from sterility, and since the society is a male-dominated one, therefore, only women are blamed for being sterile. Thus, the society collects women and divides them into groups according to their fertility in order to use them for providing children for the childless families of the commanders. As a result of this control and discipline, women are separated from home, deprived of their rights, and become mechanized subjects through rigid rules of the society. This section will provide examples and explanations on various ways of resistance to show that although the society changed, the methods of disciplining remained the same.

CHAPTER TWO

Society's Control on Women: Controlling the Body and Mind

The tyrant society in *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Handmaid's Tale* to achieve absolute control over women try to interfere in every aspect of their life. For this reason, the society separates women, employs discipline, surveillance, sexual repression to regulate women's body, and uses language to control their mind. Therefore, this chapter examines the elements that aid the male society's control over women's body and mind in the two texts.

2.1 Separation

Elisheva Sadan in his book *Empowerment and Community Planning* argues, "separation is a more complex kind of lack of knowledge. It expresses itself in lack of information about others who share the same fate, with whom it's possible to create an alliance in order to resist power" (47). Usually, most of the totalitarian societies start the process of controlling women by separating them. Through separation, these societies disarm women and confine them in a place in order to reconstruct them according to certain rules. Separation helps the authoritative powers to avoid women's resistance because women through separation lose contact with each other, and thereby, they cannot make alliances with others to resist power.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the male-dominated society employs separation as first step for gaining control over the narrator's body after she gives birth because she is not performing her duty as a mother that will help the society to process better, as appear in her speech, "it is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby, I cannot be with him, it makes me so nervous" (Gilman 1660). Therefore, the society uses the narrator's post-natal depression to justify her confinement, and to produce her docile

body. John through separation wants to recreate the narrator and reshape her according to his preferences. He wants a Victorian ideal wife that her duty is limited to reproduction and house work, but Gilman's narrator does not have maternal feeling, therefore, she does not want to be a part of this conventional construction about wife and motherhood that insist; mothers must stay at home and bring up their children. The narrator considers motherhood as a type of discipline that isolates women from society and confine them in home. Therefore, to control the narrator's thoughts concerning maternity, the society separates her in order to regulate her again.

The narrator's separation can be observed clearly in her description of the house where she was confined in by her husband, "Ancestral halls, at the top of the house, have stood so long untenanted, It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, three miles from the village" (1658). Here, Gilman describes the narrator's condition in the house where she was confined in. The house was uninhabited one with "hedges, walls, and gates that lock", and it was three miles away from the society (1658). In this story, the description of the house presents two metaphorical purposes; on one hand suggests the trapped condition of the narrator and on the other hand intensifies the patriarchal forces because the house is a clear patriarchal symbol that reflected the traditional perspective of motherhood as imprisonment. At Gilman's time, majority of women were trapped at home, prevented from gaining knowledge, and deprived from their rights by the male-dominated society, therefore, Gilman found in house a suitable indication to suggest the patriarchal control on women of her society.

To achieve control over women in the patriarchal societies, usually the authoritative powers isolate individuals through attacking the social institutes such as family in order to treat them individually. In this story, the family is also attacked in order to regulate the narrator as appears in her confinement in a room alone without her husband, as she writes, “The room is not for two beds” (1658). Here, it is clear that the narrator’s society wants to separate her from her husband in order to achieve an absolute control over her body and mind.

Elisheva Sadan quotes from Foucault, “power not only operates in a specific spheres of social life, but occurs at sites of all kinds and seizes, including the most minute and most intimate, such as the human body” (57). According to this view, the authoritative powers regulate society by programming individuals, and regulate individuals by regulating their body and aspects of life. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the patriarchal system to protect the male-dominated society from the narrator’s thoughts concerning motherhood, separates the narrator from society to regulate her body and mind according to the society’s standard value. Since the narrator is not fulfilling her duties as a mother, therefore, the patriarchal society operates its power through isolating her in order to make her follow the rules of society and accept her social function as a mother.

In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the society to save the country from sterility, collects women by separating them from their families, and labels them into groups. The separation depends on the women’s fertility in which those who are fertile are assigned as handmaids in the commanders’ house, while those who are sterile, are assigned as unwomen and are sent to the colonies to work. Therefore, the society

through render separates women from each other and society in order to produce their docile bodies.

Offred as a handmaid is considered as a “national property and recruited by the state for her reproductive ability” to supply the commander’s family by children (Snodgrass 6). She is separated from family as the society kills her husband, takes her daughter, and exiles her mother. The state through this step wants to disarm Offred from her partners, and indoctrinate her according to the state’s principles. As a result, Offred will not remain as a daughter after her mother’s banishment, she will not remain as a wife after her husband’s death, and she will not remain as a mother after her daughter’s kidnapping.

2.2 Discipline

Sara Mills, in her book, *Michel Foucault*, discusses the idea of discipline depending on Michel Foucault’s theory of power;

Discipline is a set of strategies, procedures and ways of behaving which are associated with certain institutional contexts and which then permeate ways of thinking and behaving in general. Discipline consists of a concern with control which is internalized by each individual like time-keeping, self-control over one’s posture and bodily functions, and concentration. (43)

It can be said that discipline regulates body of individuals according to some rules, and thereby, change their thoughts according to these rules through disciplining their daily life. Authoritative powers through discipline isolate individuals in a place that

does not give them “a fixed position” to think about themselves, and through schedules they make individual’s body be in a continuous busyness (Foucault, 148).

Discipline is an effective strategy for controlling large group of people through segregating, training, and manipulating them according to some rules. To establish a disciplinary society, these systems label citizens into groups, train them through language, and monitor them through a military surveillance. Through discipline, “energy of body is controlled, developed, and later is reversed to be a restraint, a power of subjection” (Khouhestani, 610). Through discipline, the systems reverse individual’s energy for their interest.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, as the narrator finds herself in the prisonlike room, she faces another element of control that manifest itself in the discipline of her husband. The patriarchal system prevents the narrator’s imaginations by employing discipline to make her body busy with following the schedules and time-tables that her husband and doctor put for her, therefore, the society does not give the narrator a space to think about herself, as she writes; “John hardly lets me stir without special direction, I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day, He said your exercise depends on your strength your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time, making me lie down for an hour after each meal” (1659-60). Here appears that John is trying to gain control over the narrator’s body through disciplining every aspect of her life, including her behaviors, sleeping, time, and food, and the only thing that John allows her to do all the time is breathing.

John through discipline tries to schedule the narrator’s life in order to regulate her body and recreate an obedient wife according to the Victorian criteria because the narrator is not fulfilling her duty as a mother like a Victorian woman. Therefore, this

discipline suggests John's intelligence, because it gives him an opportunity to make the narrator's body and mind busy with following his schedules and forget about her mental activity, and an hour of sleep after each meal is set to prevent the narrator's mental activities. Jonathan Crewe argues, "the room in which the narrator is confined has been some kind of schoolroom or gymnasium means that she has correctly divined its functions as a scene of disciplinary schooling" (275). The narrator in her new place, like a schoolroom, her movement is limited, her speaking, writing, and sleeping are programmed. The narrator does not allowed to make decision like students at school, but instead, her teacher or her husband decides what to do. Therefore, the narrator, by entering the house, she loses control over her body and mind.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, disciplining women begins with labeling them into groups according to their physiological productivity and obliging them to wear clothes according to their position. The handmaids who are able to give birth, separated from other women by wearing red clothes and their social function is reduced for bearing. The wives who have higher position than other groups of women wear blue clothes and their social function is limited for taking care of garden. The Aunts that are authorized by the government are separated from other groups by their brown clothes; they are responsible for educating the handmaids through implanting Gilead's ideologies in their mind. The last group of women are known as unwomen, they are infertile women, and their social function is limited for cleaning up the nuclear plants in the colonies. These groups of women are disciplined by regimented time-tables in order to regulate their body, and thereby, to "produces docile body" which is ready for indoctrination (Hsieh, 15).

Michel Foucault discusses the idea of time-tables in the disciplinary systems, “time-table establishes rhythm, imposes particular occupations, regulates the cycle of repetition and controls its development” (Discipline, 149). Therefore, through discipline and time-tables, the state of Gilead does not give the handmaids a space in order not think about their condition, as Offred says, “On first days we are permitted front doors, but after that we're supposed to use the back. Things haven't settled down, it's too soon, everyone is unsure about our exact status” (Atwood, 17). So, the state makes the handmaid’s mind be busy with following time tables and forget about themselves, and as a result, it increases the handmaid’s obedience politically, and at the same time it increases their productivity economically (Gerhard, 27).

Foucault in *Discipline and Punishment* argues that through discipline “the individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, articulated on others. Discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine” (87). Through discipline, the authoritative powers create a collective society that individuals work in it like machine to achieve a certain goal. So, in Gilead the power through separation and grouping creates the idea of collectivism in which the society values women as a social body or one body, while as individual it does not value them because they can be replaced by others since all women are disciplined, and then follow one schedule.

Offred at the very beginning of the story describes the disciplinary conditions of their place in which they were confined, as she says; “we slept in army blankets and coats that had been set up in rows, the Aunts standing at the end of the bed, we

weren't allowed out, except for our walk twice daily, As we walk they are watching" (Atwood, 13-19). Her narration reveals that they were confined in a place that suggests discipline and rule in which every private aspect of their lives was disciplined such as sleeping, and the army coats and blankets suggest the military discipline that Offred and her friends were suffering from in the Red center. Her narration declares that the male-dominated society considered their body as a "site of power" that may go against their interests, therefore, the power restricted and confined them, and even in their walk, the women were going out with accompany of another woman to monitor them (Mills, 29). As they go shopping, the handmaids reveal another kind control and military discipline as appears in Offred's narration, "we reached the first barrier, there are men with machine guns on either side of the rode" (26-27). It might be said that the male-dominated society militarized life of women in this country and imposing militarily rules and disciplines upon them to control their movements.

Michel Foucault in his book, *The History of Sexuality* argues, "sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality; useful for greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (108). Foucault explains that although sexuality does not produce power directly like language, but it can support it for various strategies. Therefore, in most of the patriarchal societies women are sexually controlled or oppressed because sexuality aids women to create relationship with others, and thereby, resist the authoritative power.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the patriarchal society, sexually, controls the narrator through separating her from her husband and confining her alone in a room, as she says, I have a room not “for two beds, and no near room from him if he took another, it is quite alone, I am afraid, John is away all day, he does not know how much I really suffer” (1659). Her speech claims that she suffers from separation because her husband is always far away from her. She does not want to be alone in the room at night, and she tries to tell John about that as John asks her about her conditions, “I do not weigh a bit more, nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away” (1661). Here, the narrator indirectly explains her lack of passion and love that her confinement in the room alone brings upon her.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the majority of women suffer from sterility due to the nuclear radiations and air pollution, therefore, fertile women are considered as a national property of the state that must be used only for saving Gilead from sterility by providing children for the ruling elite. Thus, the state deprives the fertile women or the handmaids from “any sign of sexuality and reduce them for the basic level of the biological function” in order to dedicate their life only for child producing (Hsieh, 8). In this process the handmaids are prohibited from any sexual relations except in the ceremonies, and they are obliged to wear long skirts and cover their heads in order not to appear attractive for the males and involve in illegal sexual relations. Therefore, the society makes use of women's sexuality according to its own interest, which is mainly reproduction.

The Aunts are responsible for indoctrinating the handmaid's mind through presenting pornographic movies that show how women were abused in the past. These movies are shown to brainwash the handmaids through implanting Gilead's ideology about sexuality. As a result of this manipulation, the handmaids are obliged to work as machines, and deprived from their identity, as appears in Offred's speech, "we are for breeding purposes, we are two-legged wombs, that's all: sacred vessels, ambulatory chalice" (Atwood, 176). It suggest that they are not treated as human beings and the regime sees the handmaids as a robot that perform a certain kind of work, therefore, the handmaids become "slaves to their reproductive organ" (King, 31).

The authoritative power in Gilead measures women by their bodies, they value them for their reproductive ability, therefore, the handmaids' social function is connected to their body, if they lose their fertility, their social function changes, as Offred says, "I avoid looking down at my body, not so much because I don't want to see it. I don't want to look at something that determines me so completely" (Atwood, 82). Offred talks about her social function that is connected to her nakedness, she does not want to be valued only for her fertile body, but she wants to be valued for her identity. Whenever Offred looks at her body, she remembers her social function in society that limited for her productivity. Therefore, she does not want to look at something that defines her. Ainin Malak quoted from Foucault, "since man holds power in society, he rules, assigns roles, and decrees after social, religious, and cosmic concepts convenient to his interests and desire" (6). Offred describes her social function in the newly formed Gilead, as she says "I wait, washed, brushed, and fed like a prize pig. Sometimes in the eighties they invented pig balls, for pigs who

were fattened in pens” (Atwood, 69). Offerd’s duty is to fulfill what the society demands from her; she does not control over her body, and since she is a fertile, she must take shower, eat, and be ready for the ceremonies all the time.

Like the handmaids, the other groups of women are also sexually repressed. The Aunts who are sterile women also prevented from sexual relationships and their social function is reduced for educating and manipulating the handmaids’ mind. The Aunts themselves are also manipulated by the state in which they are used as a tool for controlling women by women. They are given a little authority by the male-dominated society, separated from their families, confined in a compound, and their movement and freedom is also limited.

The wives are also sexually repressed, since they are sterile, they don’t have any social function in the society except being commander’s wife. They are separated from the commanders in the house in which each of them lives in a separated room, thereby, the wives’ duty is reduced for taking care of the house as well as the garden. Like the Aunts, they are also have a limited control in the house in which they can only choose or refuse the handmaids, while they cannot prevent their existence. The wives are tortured by the existence of these handmaids because they remind them of their sterility, lack of love, sex, and passion.

In Gilead, the rules about sex are flexible for men while for women are not, although there are strict rules in this regime about sex, but the commanders break these rules according to their desire, and this can be observed when the Commander takes Offred to Jazebel, as she says, “It occurs to me he is showing off. He is showing me off, to them, and they understand that they are decorous enough, they

keep their hands to themselves, but they review my breasts, my legs, as if there's no reason why they shouldn't. But he is also showing off to me” (Atwood, 307). Here, Offred is confused about the Commander’s act, on one hand, she should follow Gilead’s rules and must not go out with the commander alone, but on the other hand, she must follow commander’s order to remain as handmaid. Offred considers herself as a whore because she is in a whorehouse to amuse her commander, and at the same time she is a handmaid that must remain pure according to the state’s ideology. Since she cannot do anything with the commander’s act, she surrenders to him because he can send her to work in the colonies, if she resists.

2.3 Surveillance

Michel Foucault, in his book, *Discipline and Punishment*, discusses the concept of surveillance with reference to Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, as he says; “Panopticon is an instrument of power and observation which provide an efficient mean of control through minimal effort, it could be used to alter behaviors, to train or correct individuals, it is capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible” (200). Foucault demonstrates that Panopticon can be employed to change the individuals’ behaviors, and train them according to some specific rules. When individuals being subjected to it, they internalize the fear of being watched by the authoritative power, thereby, even in the absence of the guards the subjects perform their duties regularly. Therefore, the importance of panopticon lies in its invisibility that regulates the subject’s body and mind with minimum effort. It works as an internal monitor that prevents the subjects from resisting the power.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the patriarchal society to ensure the narrator’s docility, employs continuous surveillance to make her behave according to the

society's preferences. This monitoring is presented through John's monitoring over her that "hardly let her without special direction" (Treichler, 329). In spite of her confinement in a house with a barred window and locked doors, the narrator still cannot do anything because of her society's patriarchy that follows her everywhere. This patriarchal monitoring creates a miserable life for her that prevents her from writing, thinking, and going outside the home. The only thing that John allows her to do is breathing, as appears in his speech "but air you can you can absorb all the time" (1660).

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the authoritative power of Gilead to achieve complete control over women's body and mind uses "the Eyes" to permanently monitor women's behaviors, thinking, and movements (Atwood, 226). The guards, reporters, and the aunts are employed as "Eyes" by the male-dominated society to monitor women wherever they go. The duty of these Eyes is to report on any woman that behave or speak negatively against Gilead's main stream, therefore, these Eyes are everywhere such as the Aunts in the Red Center, the one who accompanies the handmaids in their shopping, and the guards on the street. This constant surveillance of the Eyes is used to make sure that all women in the state follow Gilead's rules that determined for them. The state uses an intelligence strategy for controlling women that manifest itself in controlling women by women, for instance, the Aunts, which are used for controlling the handmaids. The society uses this Aunts as a tool of control, while the aunt themselves are controlled by the state, and what is behind the Aunts' acceptance of their duty is the language manipulation of the state and the little control that the Aunts have over the handmaids.

The regime in Gilead uses the Eyes as Bentham's Panopticon to regulate women's body through making them internalize fear of being watched, as Foucault says "instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible (Discipline 116). Since these Eyes are everywhere, therefore, the women in fear of being watched by the Eyes, automatically perform their work without questioning, and even in the absence of the Eyes women still committed to their work. So, through monitoring "each individual is fixed in her place. And, if she moves, she does so at the risk of his life, contagion or punishment" (106).

The other infertile women according to the rules of Gilead are recognized as unwomen, and they work in the colonies to clean up the nuclear wastes. They are useless for the purposes of the generality. These women due to their inability to bear children are dehumanized and used to do hard works. The condition of the infertile women in the colonies is so terrible that became a nightmare for the other women like the handmaids (Hsieh 4). When the handmaids see the miserable conditions of the unwoman in the colonies, they surrender to the rules and orders of the male-dominated society. The duty of the Aunts beside indoctrination is to portray this nightmare for the handmaids in order to follow the state's rules without questioning, as the Aunt Lydia says, "you are lucky" (76). Here, the Aunt wants to tell them that you are lucky to be here, otherwise you would face the inevitable fate of the infertile women in the colonies. When the handmaids see this virtual picture of the infertile women, they give their body to the state to be used according to its preferences. Therefore, the handmaids unwillingly give up their body just to guarantee their own lives.

2.4 Language

In most of the tyrant systems, language plays an important role in controlling women, because through language, these systems implant their ideologies in the women's mind in order to make them follow their rules without questioning. Usually, in these societies one individual, holds power and impose his ideology over the others through language, therefore, there is a strong relationship between power and language. In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault reveals his idea on language in constructing statement:

To speak (use language) is to do something-something other than to express what one thinks; to translate what one knows, and something other than to play with the structures of a language. To show that to add a statement to a pre-existing series of statements is to perform a complicated and costly gesture. (230)

Here, Foucault explains the duty of language which is more than expressing one's feeling or communicating with others, but rather language can be used for internalizing the hearers' mind, and thereby, change their thoughts and perceptions according to the speaker's preferences. Therefore, language can be used as a tool that produces power, and helps those who uses it to reinforce their positions by imposing their ideologies in the subject's mind.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, we have an individual that represented by the narrator's husband who takes power, and uses language to make the narrator normalize her conditions, as it is clear in the narrator's speech, "John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad" (Gilman 1658). This speech reveals that the narrator is completely

manipulated by the patriarchal language of John, and her confession shows the effect of language that makes her believe in what John says about her condition. Therefore, language fixes the patriarchal ideologies in the narrator's mind. Paula Treichler argues, "language is male-controlled and remain with the more specific charge that the discourse of medical diagnosis is a prime example of patriarchal discourse" (373). The patriarchal society through patriarchal language of medicine suppresses any attempt that may interfere with the narrator's effort to make herself good.

With the power of language and its influences on his wife, John tries to confuse the narrator's mind by nurturing it with some ideologies that keep her in control, and the influence of John's use of language can be observed clearly in the narrator's speech;

John says that with my imaginative power and habit of story making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, half the time I am awfully lazy, John says it is good for me to sleep all I can, John says I mustn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat, I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you, sometimes I get unreasonably angry, I think it is due to this nervous condition. (1658-64)

The above speech reveals that the narrator is completely surrendered to the patriarchal language of her society because she believes the speeches of John concerning her conditions. The phrase which the narrator uses "John says" is an indication of the effect of John's language use over her in which she cannot decide

on her condition or utter a different interpretation. John tells the narrator to sleep as much as she can, his command can be considered as another usage of language because John realizes that through sleeping he would prevent the narrator's thinking.

In this story, the patriarchal system uses language as a tool that helps them to colonize the narrator's mind, and thereby, to reconstruct her according to its criteria. Language here, plays the role of a silent weapon that its influences can be observed obviously in the narrators speech, as she writes, "He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself of his sake, and keep well" (1663). Here, the narrator appears as if being deceived by the patriarchal language of John, although she is confined by John and suffers from his oppression, but she seeks his pleasure, and her only aim is to recover for the sake of John not for the sake of herself.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the authoritative power of Gilead to ensure the women's docility in the society and control their mind, uses language to make women accept their social functions and perform their duties properly. The ruling system of Gilead uses language to make the handmaids accept the changes that happened in their social conditions by redefining truths according to the state's preferences. The state removed the official language of the society and created its own language, and redefined truths depending on its ideologies, as appears in Aunt Lydia's speech;

Some women believed that there would be no future, they thought the world would explode. That was the excuse they used, say Aunt Lydia. They said there was no sense in breeding. Aunt Lydia's nostrils

narrow: such wickedness. They were lazy women, she says. They were sluts, there are more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In days of anarchy it was freedom to, now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it. (Atwood, 96-21).

In Gilead, language is used as “a vital prerequisite for the achievement of power, and once this power has been achieved, every important characteristic of the human condition-memory, self-expression, self-identity, and freedom faces irreparable damage” (Loigu, 103). Foucault states, “each society has its regime of truth. It's general politics of truth-that is, the types of discourses it accepts and makes function as true” (131). Pierre Bourdieu in his work explains the reason behind people's acceptance of their position while violates their identity by stating that;

What are behind people's acceptance of their position in the totalitarian society are the symbolic power and authoritative language. Symbolic power of language is power which presuppose that is recognized as such and that at the same time those who acknowledge it cannot recognize that the violence that is exercised through that power, and authoritative language is that language that has to heard, believed, and obeyed which claims to be effective. (53)

The authoritative power of Gilead through constructing truths and indoctrination gets absolute control over the handmaid's body and mind in away when the handmaids hear the speeches, they receive them as absolute truths while in reality dehumanize them, and deprive them from their rights. Through language or reconstructing truths,

the regime makes the handmaids execute a doctor with a handmaid for having an abortion. Here, it becomes clear that although this execution violates the handmaid's privacy, but they are unaware of it because they are subjected to a continuous indoctrination.

In the Republic of Gilead there is nothing called man's sterility but instead women are accused for that therefore, the handmaids as a child producing machine must save the state from sterility, "There is no such thing as a sterile man anymore, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law" (Atwood, 79). The cruelty of this society appears when they accuse the handmaids for sterility in the state, while in reality the problem is with men as appear in the Commander's speech "The problem wasn't only with the women, he says. The main problem was with the men" (272). Here, one can observe the importance of language in this state, in which through it, the system makes the handmaids see themselves as subjects and prove their citizenship by performing their social function that is child producing. A social function that dehumanizes them because when they are considering themselves as a part of Gilead's ideology, they cannot think about themselves out of this ideology.

2.5 Nature

In the two selected works nature is corrupted by the male-dominated society, in a way, it aids the society's control over women. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the garden is presented as a false representation of nature that created by the patriarchal gardeners as the patriarchal treatment of John. In the garden, the narrator is confined in a closed garden as she was confined in the house with a locked door. As the

narrator's freedom in the room was limited for breathing and creeping, therefore, in the garden, narrator's freedom is also limited for breathing and creeping since both of the places are dominated by patriarchy. The garden here is controlled by the narrator's society to serve its interests that manifests itself in maintaining power over the narrator. Therefore, the artificial nature can be considered as another element of control that aids society's control on the narrator. Simon Pugh, in his work, *Garden-Nature-Language*, suggests, "The garden is the representation of nature that masquerades as a mimesis of what it repressed but which is really a total reconstruction of what is repressed" (127). Here, Pugh means that the patriarchal system reconstructed nature in order to serve its purpose, therefore, the nature in this society lost its meaning, it's no longer natural, but it is an artificial nature that designed for confining women.

When the narrator talks with Jennie to let her enjoy a walk in the garden, Jennie agrees and takes her to the garden through a series of "borders, lanes, hedges, and locked gates" (Schweninger, 31). When she enters the garden, the narrator soon discovers that the garden is also "a literal prison" that is separated from the natural wilderness by walls, hedges, and locked gates, and the walls are "sunk in ditches" and covered by leaves of trees (Schweninger, 30). Gilman's narrator believes that the garden which represents nature is also controlled by her society, and what she saw from the window is not more than a mere artificial nature. In the garden, the narrator is surrounded by walls and locked gates of patriarchy that limits her freedom. Lee Schweninger says;

In the context of Gilman's story, the garden typifies one particular way of validating power over nature, much as a male doctor's

prescribed rest cure constitutes a way of maintaining power over a patient, wife, or woman. Therefore, the garden becomes the site of limits, of control, of the artificial, of denial, of the male's triumph over the wildness of nature. (27)

Here, I think by controlling the garden or the natural wilderness, Gilman wants to talk about the patriarchal control on women outside home. Although the narrator can go outside the locked doors of the house where she is confined in, but she faces the doors of society or patriarchy that controls her and limits her movement. Although changes occurred in the narrator's condition, but the patriarchal control remains the same.

Unlike *The Yellow wallpaper*, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, nature is presented to symbolize different aspects in the society, such as the corrupted natural role of women, and women's sterility. The process of controlling nature begins by separating Offred from her husband and daughter, thereby, Gilead fails to contain the bio-diversity of a natural society. During this process Offred is excluded from the equation of a natural world and became a means for achieving absolute power by the male-dominated society. Offred criticizes the corrupted nature of her society through comparing it with her previous life, as she says, "Women took medicines, pills, men sprayed trees, cows ate grass, all that souped-up piss flowed into the rivers" (Atwood, 143). Here, Offred compares the two societies that she experienced, and explains that before Gilead, men were sparing trees and taking care of it, women had freedom to take pills or abort, but now, men destroying nature, women cannot take pills, and abortion is considered as crime.

When Offred sees Serena Joy always busy with the garden through implanting flowers, she realizes that there is an inequality between men and women, as Offred says, “Serena Joy kneeling on a cushion in the garden, he cane beside her on the grass. She was sniping off the seedpods with a pair of shears” (133). Although Serena Joy is the Commander’s wife, but she is deprived from her natural duties, and her busyness with the garden suggests something, as she says;

There is something subversive about this garden of Serena’s, a sense of buried things bursting upwards, wordlessly, into the light, as if to point, to say: Whatever is silenced will clamor to be heard, though silently. Like a body caught in crossfire or pulled apart by force. I have tried to put some of the good things as well. Flowers for instance, because where would we be without them?. (Atwood, 131-238).

Offred through Serena’s garden wants to tell the reader “buried things” about women in her society that results from corrupting nature. She wants to tell us that Serena Joy’s busyness with implanting flowers in the garden reflects her lack of passion, love, respect, and sex as well as her sterility. Her busyness with the garden suggests her loneliness in the home although she is married and has a husband. The garden shows the corrupted nature of Gilead that confined women physical and psychological, while the males do what they desire. The commander satisfies himself sexually with Offred and other women in the nightclubs while Serena watches. The commander goes anywhere he wants while Serena is confined in home and her only

place that she can go is the garden, therefore, Serena considers the garden as her freedom and outlet which she tries to save it or correct it through planting.

Offred and Serena Joy consider women's problem as a problem of nature that causes from the males' misusing of nuclear power, and thereby, causes women's sterility, as Offred says "there is no such a thing as sterile man anymore, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law" (52). Thus, Offred and Serena try to implant the nature of Gileadean by flowers to save it, and thereby, to save themselves and women from this terrible condition. According to Angela Gulick, the images of flowers "point to the lack of freedom, passion, and organic life in Gilead. The Commander's wife is perhaps most strongly associated with dying or artificial plants, reflecting the physical and spiritual barrenness in the woman's life" (85). The image of flowers also for Offred represent her lack of love from Luck, that is why she also helps Serena in taking care of the garden because both of them believe that the key solution of their problem lies in saving the corrupted nature.

CHAPTER THREE

Women's Resistance: Reclaiming the Body and Mind

In *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Handmaid's Tale* women's resistance appears as a result of the patriarchal control in order to reclaim their body and mind. Women use writing, and their memories to reclaim their mind, while they use language and their sexuality to reclaim their body. The two author present resistance to show women's struggle and suffering while calling for their rights, and the various forms of resistance suggest the different positions of women in the two works. Therefore, this chapter examines the various forms of resistance that women use in the two works.

3.1 Writing

Julia Gerhard in her work *Control and Resistance in The Dystopian Novel: A Comparative Analysis*, argues that;

Writing allows individuals to discover their inner slaves and reclaim their individualities, to break through their indoctrinated and social slaves, and gain their bodies and minds. Consequently, this act of self-discovery grants them an invaluable opportunity to look at their lives from a different perspective, detect cracks in the state's system, see and understand their repressed lifestyle, and find the will to rebel against it. For women, writing encourage them to stand up against the patriarchal society, where their voices have been neglected and silenced for so long, and express their individualities through writing in order to gain the freedom to think of things in themselves. (64)

Writing in most of the patriarchal societies serves as a mean of liberation from the authorities' control on mind, because it "develops a sense of empowerment and authorship" to confront the oppression of the authority (17). Through writing, the subjects question errors in their society, and share their thoughts about it with others. It enables the subjects to communicate with others in order to find a solution for certain issues in society, therefore, writing activates mind and eases the pressure on it. Writing can be considered as a breakthrough for the individuals to exchange their thoughts, and to express their feeling in a society that indoctrinated by the authority's ideology. Thus, writing provides an opportunity and an outlet for the individuals to reclaim their mind, and discover themselves as an individual in a collective society.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, since the narrator is confined in a house with a locked door and barred window, therefore, writing becomes her only way of resistance to fight against the patriarchal control on her mind. Through writing, the narrator regulates her mind, in a way, after she reclaims it, she stops writing and starts using other ways of resistance like language use to reclaim her body as well. At the very beginning of the story, Gilman's narrator tries to find a way to escape and end her strife, but the conditions of the place in which she lives, does not give her option, as she writes "ancestral halls, at the top of the house, the windows are barred, three miles from the village, there are hedges and walls and gates that locked" (1658-59). Since the narrator is in a far place and confined in room at the top of a house with hedges, high walls, and locked gates, therefore, she cannot escape physically from her miserable condition. Thus, the narrator through writing finds her outlet that preserves her sanity and eases her pains.

Gerhard argued about the role of writing in the totalitarian systems by stating that “writing functions as an empowering agency that enables the protagonists to reclaim power over their bodies and minds, achieve self-autonomy, and thus redeem their authority in a repressive society” (16). The narrator sees in writing her comfort, freedom of expression and imagination, as she says, “I haven't felt like writing before, there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength, I must not let her find me writing, Jane thinks it is the writing which made me sick! But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows” (Gilman 1659-61). The relationship of the narrator with her papers is like the one of two friends; she complains and expresses her condition to it because she cannot find anyone to communicate.

Through writing, the narrator reclaims control over her mind, decides what is best for her, and criticizes some errors in John and Jennie, as she writes “Jennie thinks it is the writing which made me sick! But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows I know John would think it absurd. But I *must* say what I feel and think in some way -it is such are life!” (1662). This statement reveals the narrator’s awareness of her conditions; she no longer believes in their patriarchal interpretations about her conditions. Barbara Sues says, “the narrator’s dairy not only reveals her awareness that John continuously tries to manipulate her, but it also provides evidence that she has learned to turn the tables on his supposed authority” (87). Through writing, Gilman’s narrator tries to get out what is in her mind concerning imaginations and ideas about her problems, and puts them on papers through writing since she cannot express them verbally. The phrase that narrator uses “I must say” demonstrates her insistence for finding a solution for

her condition, and at the same time it indicates that she reclaims her mind, although she writes secretly. Hiding her writings suggests that although the narrator frees herself mentally and reclaim her mind through writing, but she cannot reclaim her body, therefore, when John appears, the narrator hides her writings.

3.2 Reconstructing the Past

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, since Offred is trapped in the Red Center as well as in the Commander's house, therefore, it is impossible to escape physically from her confinement. Thus, she chooses mental journey instead of physical journey to reclaim her mind, ease her pain, and remain alive. This journey manifests itself in getting her memories back that represents her lack of freedom, passion, love, and the elements that aids her to reconstruct her past are; remembering, senses and mirror.

Hilde Staels in his work *Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale: Resistance through Narrating* argues that:

Offred through her memory moves back through layers of history, opens the wounds and retraces the loss. Pain is still possible because of memory, and memory is what the narrator tries to keep alive. Her memory of the past brings back to life the excluded pole in Gilead, such as the existence of love and humanity, and at the same time, it is an act of survival that saves her from despair and that resurrects the missing part of herself. (230)

Offred starts her resistance by observing in order to understand her surroundings, “the more she observes her surroundings in her own space, the more she remembers the past” (Hsieh, 20). Remembering allows her to activate her mind, and search for

the reasons behind women's condition. Offred's critical thinking and awareness appear as she goes into her room in the Commander's house in which she finds a piece of writing of the former handmaid. In the first reading, Offred cannot understand the writing, but after she tells Serena Joy about it, she reveals that this handmaid committed suicide, therefore, Offred began to think about the reasons behind her suicide, as she says:

I knelt to examine the floor, and there it was, in tiny writing, I didn't know what it meant, but still it was a message, and it was in writing, forbidden by that very fact, quite fresh it seemed, scratched with a pin or maybe just a fingernail, it pleases me to ponder this message. It pleases me to think I'm communing with her, this unknown woman. (Atwood, 45).

The above speech reveals that the former handmaid has committed suicide as a result of the patriarchal oppression of her society; she was confined in a prison-like room, and prevented from language and pen to express her feelings. Since this handmaid couldn't get access to pen and paper, therefore, she uses her fingernail to deliver her message to the next handmaid. Although Offred cannot decode the message, she understands the woman's intension of resistance since she uses a prohibited method for delivering her message which is writing.

Offred considers the unknown's message as if written for all women, and she considers the woman as liberator that wants to awake women from their sleep to defend themselves, as she says "You don't tell a story only to yourself. There's always someone else. Even when there is no one. A story is like a letter. Dear You,

I'll say. Just *you*, without a name, you can mean more than one. You can mean thousands, I'll pretend you can hear me" (Atwood, 34). The written message reinforces Offred's critical thinking about her present condition, and makes her go on with her thinking to discover her surroundings more, as she says:

I know why the glass in the window is shatterproof, and why they took down the chandelier. I wanted to feel Luke lying beside me, but there wasn't room. I looked up at the blind plaster eye in the ceiling. I wanted to feel Luke lying beside me. What is to be done, what is to be done, I thought. There is nothing to be done. (Atwood, 44)

Through her remembering, Offred reveals the cruelty of Gileadean society toward women. She compares her previous life with her present condition to discover how women are manipulated and controlled. Now, Offred understands that the windows are locked for preventing them from escaping. She does not know what to do to end her sufferings; she needs Luke to be with her and save her. Offred needs them; her husband, and daughter in order to reclaim her previous life. Since Offred does not know what to do, therefore, her only choice is to surrender, lay down and wait for the Commander to impregnate her.

Thinking of her condition demonstrates Offred's intention for reclaiming her body and mind as her former life. She uses thinking as a way to calm herself down, and at the same time to find a solution for her problems, as she says, "I used to think of my body, as an instrument, of pleasure or a means of transportation, or an implement for the accomplishment of my will. I could use it to run, push buttons, of one sort or another, make things happen." (Atwood, 74). It can be said that Offred

uses her thinking and imagination as a way to survive and amuse herself, while she is oppressed and deprived from her rights. She thinks in order to know how she was valued in the pre-Gilead society in which she had a family, and she could take pills.

After Offred reveals the handmaids' manipulation by the regime, she goes to other groups of women to understand how they are also controlled and manipulated. She starts with the Commander's wife in which Offred remembers that she was in a better condition than now, as she says, "she was making speeches. She was good at it. She doesn't make speeches anymore. She has become speechless. She stays in her home, but it doesn't seem to agree with her. How furious she must be, now that she's been taken at her word" (Atwood, 45). Here, Offred criticizes the regime for dehumanizing women through their patriarchal rules, and gives the history of Serena Joy as an example, "Serena was making speeches" but now "she has become speechless," because she is confined in the house without job. Offred is sure that Serena does not agree with her present condition, but since she is a woman, she cannot utter a word. Offred through presenting Serena Joy's conditions before and after Gilead reveals the reality of Gilead's ideology about women; the society says that in the pre-Gilead society women were exploited, while in Gilead they are valued. Thus, through her memories, Offred "makes her thoughts and her body a functioning whole again" (Loigu, 57).

When Offred goes to Nick's room to be impregnated instead of the Commander, she wants to make an alliance with him in order to be saved from the hell of Gilead, but she does not dare to discuss this issue in the first meeting because she does not trust him, as she says "we looked at each other, with the same kind of

hunger that I cannot indulge, they cannot be exchanged, one for the other. They cannot replace each other, Luke for Nick” (Atwood, 171). Her speech proves that although both of them seem to love each other, but Offred does not dare to make an alliance with him, because she does not trust him. This indicates that in Gilead no one can be trusted; most of the people are reporters who report on any one that behaves or speaks negatively about the state. Offred remembers her husband’s trust and love that cannot be replaced, but since she does not have choice, she must not skip this chance in order to end her suffering.

In addition to remembering, Offred also uses her senses to reclaim her mind, and get her memory back, and thereby, reveal and resist the cruelty of Gileadean society against women. For instance, when Offred hears the word Mayday from Ofglen, she immediately remembers her husband Luke who told her about it, as she says, “It was Luke who told me about mayday, though. Mayday, a long time ago, in one of those wars we studies in high school, I kept getting them mixed up, but you could tell them apart by the airplanes if you paid attention.” (Atwood, 36). Offred here remembers her romantic time with Luke when he was telling the story of May Day to her; therefore, her memory shows something that Offred lacks in Gilead. She remembers high school in which she was dealing with pen, book, and paper, but now these things are taken away from her. Offred remembers that this phrase or code was used by French pilots in emergency cases, but now it has become a vital code for women in Gilead to resist the patriarchal control.

When Offred feels the shampoo smell in the bathroom, she remembers the time when she was bathing with her daughter, she remembers her roles and

responsibilities as a mother in pre-Gilead society. Offred shows longing to her previous condition, and therefore, her memory about her daughters urges her to search for her under any condition. Therefore, being haunted by her former life, Offred struggles for reclaiming her body and mind to get her daughter back. Therefore, the shampoo's smell reminds her the glorious life that she had comparing to her life in Gilead.

Smell of the kitchen in the Commander's house also reminds Offred of her mother and former life, as she says "the kitchen smell of yeast, a nostalgic smell. It reminds me of other kitchens, kitchens that were mine, it smells of mothers; although my mother did not make bread. It smells of me, in former times, when I was a mother" (Atwood, 39). Offred through smell of the kitchen remember her former life when she was making bread, and eating the food she preferred, but now she eats according to schedules that are put by the totalitarian regime which prevents her from some kind of food and drinks such as cigarette and alcohol. Here, Offred through her memories demonstrates how the authoritative power in Gilead destroys her life, dismembers her family, kills her husband and kidnaps her daughter.

Due to the suppressive use of language in Gilead, women in this society are forced to depend on other abilities to express their feelings with each other. Touch in this story is used as a type of language by the handmaids to express their solidarity to each other. Touch aids Offred to resist by reminding her past things that they lost, as she says, "I wandered through the house, from room to room. I remember touching things, not even consciously, just placing my fingers on them" (Atwood, 229). Through her sense, Offred remembers that she was wandering from one place to

another because she had freedom of movement, but now she has lost control over her touch sense because she is now confined in a prison-like house, and the male-dominated misuses the handmaids' hand or touch sense by obliging them to participate in executing the decedent handmaids.

Mirror in this story is also aids the handmaids to get their memories back because while they look at themselves in the mirror, they understand how they are manipulated and oppressed by this society, because mirror reflects their reality. Since mirror is prohibited in Gilead, therefore, the handmaids invest any chance to get access to it in order to know what happened to them. When the Commander takes Offred to the night club, she feels stupid about her condition in Gilead, as she says, "I feel stupid; I want to see myself in a mirror" (Atwood, 208). When Offred looks at herself in the mirror, she realizes that she is like the Commander's pet. The mirror reflects her situation to her, how she is manipulated, abused, and controlled.

3.3 Language

Michel Foucault in his book *The History of Sexuality* argues that language "can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (67). Foucault here explains that language is an important element that can be used to strengthen power, and at the same time to resist it. Therefore, language is a multifunctional element that aids those who are in power and those who are subjected to it. In the selected works, women try to take advantage from it to manipulate the tyrant society and reclaim their body and mind. They use language to communicate and counter the patriarchal language in order to gain things and achieve a certain kind of freedom.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, after Gilman's narrator discovers the image of the woman in the yellow wallpaper, she tries to manipulate John and Jennie through communication in order to stay inside the room, and continues her observation, as she writes:

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn't, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately, Jane tried to get me out of the room it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner -I would call when I woke. (1664-68)

When John tells the narrator to give up her thinking, the narrator manipulates him by providing him a positive reply, but when she goes back to the bed, she continues her observation of the yellow wallpaper. Therefore, this can be considered as effective way of resistance by the narrator to achieve a certain kind of freedom to observe the yellow wallpaper. Schweningen states, "Gilman's narrator quickly learns that she must dissemble, must pretend to be happy, healthy, recovering: she hides her writing and creeps only behind locked doors, for example" (31). David Nicholls also argues, "the narrator's language moves against the suppressive power of John's language, and struggles against censorship of her society" (418). Therefore, the narrator through language frees herself from the permanent monitoring of John, thereby, achieves a limited freedom to observe and analyze the pattern in the yellow wallpaper.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, language plays an important role in the handmaids' resistance to the patriarchal language of Gilead. Offred without language use will not be able to make alliance with other handmaids and show her solidarity, will not be able to connect with the Commander, and finally will not be able to make alliance with Nick and escape from Gilead. Therefore, through language, Offred succeeds to manipulating the patriarchal system, and reclaims her body and mind. According to Julia Hsieh, Offred "uses her mouth as a weapon of rebellion that resists the severe control of the totalitarian Gilead regime, and she attempts to use language to mock Gilead society and vents her dissatisfaction of the restricted reality" (22).

Through language, the handmaids establish alliances with each other and set the "Mayday" code to be their sign in the emergency cases (Atwood, 134). It can be said that the handmaids not only use language that is prohibited in Gilead, but instead they establish their own code to be their own language in time of need. Therefore, the handmaids by this act commit an act of resistance that contradict with the rules of Gilead that prevent them from speaking or using language. Offred who did not understand anything about Gilead, gets a lot of information from Ofglen through verbal communication, and this encourages her to search for more, as she says, "I can feel speech backing up inside me, it's so long since I have really talked with anyone. The terse, whispered exchange with Ofglen, on our walk today, hardly counts; but it was a tease, I want more" (Atwood, 239). Offred here demonstrates that she begins to communicate in order to understand what is going on in this society. Beside her whisper with Ofglen, Offred needs more to understand the truth about this new formed state.

In the Commander's room, Offred sees things that were available for her in pre-Gilead society, such as, books, magazines, radio, television, pen, paper, drinks, and foods, as she says, "Books and books and books, right out in plain view, no locks, no boxes. No wonder we can't come in here. It's an oasis of the forbidden" (Atwood, 177). Offred realizes that in this forbidden room everything is allowed, Gileadean society prevents women from these things while the Commanders have them in their rooms. Offred understands that "what is happening in this room is a normal life", that is why, she is allowed to act, behave, read, write, and drink freely as her previous life (Atwood, 121). These things bewilders Offred, and thereby, encourages her to communicate and ask the Commander some forbidden questions, as she says, "why do you have this? Why show it to me? How about your wife?" (Atwood, 166). It shows that how Offred's language takes a new turn, she does not only use language in front of the Commander, but she uses it for asking him private questions that can be considered as a crime according the rules of Gilead. Offred through language asks the commander for an interpretation about these contradictions she sees in his room.

Offred continues her language manipulation in the Commander's office in away, she makes him confess some information about Gilead's reality, as it appears in the Commander's speech, "we thought we would do better, everyone's human after all" (Atwood, 222-248). This speech reveals that the handmaids are not the only group that does not agree with the present situation of Gilead, even those who established this system also do not agree with it. Offred through her communication skill, makes the commander take responsibility of women's hell in Gilead, and the commander's confession shows her triumphant over the Commander. Therefore,

language becomes an effective tool for Offred to confront and defeat the patriarchal language of her society.

When Offred makes the Commander confess, the balance of power changes, Offred no longer listens to him, but instead, she uses language to direct him and order him to bring her things such as hand lotion, and when the Commander tries to touch Offred's breast in one of the ceremonies, Offred comes to his Office and tells him, "don't that again" (Atwood, 171). Here, Offred demonstrates her complete control over language in the story because when something is put into language it becomes real. Offred put her control over the commander into her language, therefore, her language demonstrates her superiority over the Commander that makes him express his apology, as he says, "I am sorry, I didn't mean to. But I find it .What? I said, when he didn't go" (Atwood, 171). Here it appears that the commander is completely surrendered to the language ability of Offred. According to Lembi Loigu, Offred's language "shows that she has not given up fight and the circumstances have not broken her will-power" (70). From this point Offred no longer believes in the Commander's speech, and this clearly can be observed in the Commander's use of "trust me" (Atwood, 261). This indicates that Offred reached into a new level of awareness, she is no longer following the patriarchal rules of Gilead, as she says, "we play two games. I hold the glossy counters with their smooth edges, finger the letters. The feeling is voluptuous. This is freedom, an eye blink of it" (Atwood, 149). This indicates that Offred now has completely controlled the circumstance in the Commander's office, she is not afraid of anything that is why she feels free about it. According to Fredrik Patterson, Offred "uses the word

freedom, as if to say that for an instance she is uncontrolled. In other words, for the moment, she controls language, language does not control her” (7).

Offred also uses language to create relations with other characters in the story such as Nick to get knowledge and discusses her plan to escape from Gilead. Therefore, Offred uses language as a tool for getting knowledge about this newly formed state in order to help herself escape from Gilead. After she become aware of the weaknesses of this society through getting knowledge from Nick and the Commander, language takes a new turn in which Offred uses it as her only way to escape for Gilead. For this reason, Offred manipulates the Commander as well as his wife, and makes a relation with Nick that at the end of the story that helps her to escape from Gilead.

At the end of the story, after she escapes from Gilead, Offred uses language or narration to compose herself, as she says, “My self is a thing I must now compose, as one composes a speech” (Atwood, 86). Through narration, Offred gets her body back and compose it as she composes her language, and at the same time, communicates with readers of next generations, as she says, “If it's a story, even in my head, I must be telling it to someone” (Atwood, 52). Offred does not only resist the system through speaking which is prohibited, but she speaks to share her ideas and thinking concerning the newly formed state with others that may lead to alliances against the male-dominated society. According to Hsieh, through her narration, Offred “turns her mouth to a tool of resistance because narration can be taken as an act of reconstruction and imagination, which indeed occurs once in a while when she tells the story” (22).

3.4 Creeping and Madness

Sara Mills in her work *Michel Foucault* discusses madness among women in the nineteenth century by stating that:

Madness is constructed by society and its institutions. Mental illness should rather be seen as the result of social contradictions in which humans are historically alienated, Foucault describes the way that the institutionalization of those considered to be insane developed from the practice in the twelfth century of confining those who were suffering from the highly infectious disease leprosy. (89-100).

In the nineteenth century those who went beyond the social norms and traditions were considered as insane, therefore, they specified a prisonlike house that were called “leper house” to confine these insane people in it. Since at that time women were the only gender who moved beyond the socially accepted norms because of their miserable conditions, therefore, most of the inmates of these houses were women (101). So, Gilman’s narrator for her thoughts concerning motherhood is confined in a country house or a metaphorical leper house. In this house, the narrator tries her best to avoid her madness through writing, creeping, thinking, and language manipulation, but at the end she loses hope, and enters into her inevitable fate which is madness.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, creeping is another way for the narrator to express herself, and construct her own language that exclude male dominance in order to achieve a limited freedom. The narrator through creeping defies John’s monitoring and prevents him to enter the room, as she says, “Rarely women creep by daytime”, but now I am creeping at daytime, and I locked the door while I am doing it (1668).

Greg Johnson argued that the narrator's creeping "suggest growth into a new stage of being" because while she creeps, she creates an alternative reality that she is happy in (529).

The narrator warns John about entering the room as she says, "I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard! It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!" (1668). Her speech shows that the narrator has freed herself inside the room after she has removed all the yellow wallpaper, therefore she does not want to return to world outside her room. The narrator does not want to enter the patriarchal world again and be a slave in it, she choose madness over sanity under the pressure of her male-dominated society. Schweninger stated that:

The narrator's madness comes as a result of the anxieties of the domestic world of the wife, patient, and mother. The garden does become the site of exploitation and domination of laborers and gardeners, just as the Victorian household is the site of patriarchal control of wives and mothers, and narrator's madness can be seen to mark the end of hope. (35)

The narrator's suffering under the cruelty of her society makes her try everything in order to end her strife, but John's fainting at the last scene represents his inability to hear the narrator's language or his inability to believe what the narrator says. Kasmer gives another interpretation about John's inability as he says, "John's inability to understand her, typify earlier readers' inability to understand the story" (2). Kasmer here compares John's inability of understanding the narrator to the inability of Gilman's male-dominated society to understand what is behind the lines of this story.

The narrator's madness can be considered as resistance for her because she "creates her own order" as it appears in her creeping around the room and over fainted John. It can be considered as sanity for her because she is no longer obliged to follow the patriarchal rules of John, and although she cannot free herself physically but mentally frees herself, thus, this madness empowers her as appears in her creeping in a daylight and with the presence of John (Suess, 90).

3.5 Sexuality

Michel Foucault in his book, *The History of Sexuality* argues, "sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality; useful for greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (108). Foucault explains that although sexuality does not produce power directly compared to language, but it can support it for various strategies, therefore, women use it as tool for resisting the patriarchal rules of their societies. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, sexuality aids Offred to go to the Commander's office and gain knowledge about the state. Offred also through her sexuality creates an alliance with Nick in order to make him help her escape from Gilead. Therefore, Offred uses her sexuality to achieve control over the other characters in the story, and to gain what she wants and needs. The first example of Offred's awareness of her sexuality appears as she goes shopping with a partner, as she says, "As we walk away I know they're watching, these two men who aren't yet permitted to touch women. They touch with their eyes instead and I move my hips a little, feeling the full red skirt sway around me, I enjoy the power of a dog bone, passive but there" (Atwood, 30). Here, Offred

realizes the power of her sexuality, therefore, she tries to use it to manipulate the guards through making her body appears attractive to them. She takes advantage from the guards' lack of sexual relation to make them be busy with watching her body instead of observing her behaviors.

When the Commander calls Offred to his office for a romantic meeting, she invests this chance by using her sexuality as a tool for gaining what she needs, such as, magazine, paper, pen, radio, and hand lotion. From this point, Offred discovers the power lies behind her sexuality as says, "It's difficult for me to believe I have power over him, of any sort, but I do; although it's of an equivocal kind" (Atwood, 272). After she recognizes the power of her sexuality, Offred began to use it to learn her daughter's place, therefore, this indicates her superiority over the Commander's wife, although she is not valuable as a handmaid, but she makes herself valuable through her fertility.

Through her meeting with Nick, Offred first of all will have a passionate time with Nick that is differ from her time or meeting with the Commander during the ceremonies, as says, "whether it is or not we are touching, two shapes of leather. I feel my shoe soften, blood flows into it, it grows warm, it becomes a skin" (Atwood, 81). Beside her romantic relation with him, Offred discusses serious issues with Nick like finding her daughter and planning to escape from Gilead, therefore, Offred learns how to use her sexuality and fertility against the regime in order to survive. According to Hilde Staels, Offred through her sexuality "regenerate subjectivity and undo frozen dichotomies in the object world. She wishes to resuscitate the life of the soul or the heart" (234). Offred uses her sexuality as a weapon against the regime to

reclaim her body, mind, and identity, therefore, it becomes her effective tool that aids her escape from Gilead.

3.6 Night

In the tyrant societies night can be considered as an essential element that aids women's resistance because it gives them free time and space to go, think, and speak. Women find in night the absence of authority that empower them to break the rules that imposed upon them at daytime. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the narrator in the moonlight which symbolizes the absence of patriarchy tries to write, think, and imagine about her problems, while at the day time she spends most of her time by sleeping, as she writes, "I do not sleep much at night, but I sleep a good deal in the daytime" (1665). For her, the moonlight means the end of autocratic masculinity that deprives her from her rights. Although she is still imprisoned physically at night, but mentally she is free, she can write, imagine, and observe the yellow paper.

At night, the narrator wakes up from sleeping, starts thinking of her conditions, and regains her voice to speak with John, as she writes, "It is so hard to talk with John about my case, but I tried it last night, As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her, The last night I have locked" (1662-68). It might be said that at night the narrator's condition changes because it gives her self-confidence to resist the patriarchal pressure that imposed upon her. At night, the narrator not only seeks her freedom, but also tries to free others as she stands to free the woman inside the yellow wallpaper. Susan Lanser says that "the narrator at night escapes her husband's sentence" by achieving self-expression in a way the tone of her voice changes, from

“John says”, to “I want”, from following to order, and from acceptance to resistance (422).

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the women consider night as an absence time of tyrant society of Gilead, therefore, women's activeness can be observed clearly in this novel at night, in which they are breaking rules through speaking to each other, planning for escape, and moving according to their wishes. The handmaid's awareness about the importance of night appears at the beginning of the story when they pronounce their real name with each other while they are in their bed, as Offred narrates:

We learned to whisper without sound. In the semi-darkness we could stretch out our arms, when the Aunts weren't looking, and touch each other's hand across space. We learned to lip-read, our hands flat on the beds, turning sideways, watching each other's mouth. In this way we exchange names, from bed to bed: Alma. Janine. Moira. June.
(Atwood, 2)

It is reasonable to say that the handmaids consider night as their time since they possess a limited kind of freedom, which they use it to reclaim their real names. Besides pronouncing their names, the handmaids learn to touch each other's hand at night in order to show their solidarity to each other, and at the same time they learn a technique for communication that Offred called “lip-read” communication (Atwood, 2).

Moira at night turns her dream for escaping into practice, as she plans with Offred to escape from the Red Center. When night comes, both of them go to the

bathroom and call the Aunt to the bath room, in there, they capture and disarm the Aunt, and then Moira escapes. This act demonstrates that the handmaids at night reclaim their body and mind, and resist the rules of the male-dominated society even in a disciplinary place like the Red Center.

Offred also considers night as her own time as she says, “the night is mine, my own time, to do with as I will, as long as I am quite” (Atwood, 31). Offred at night thinks, speaks, and moves as she wishes. She thinks about her problems, thereby, turns her thoughts and dreams in to action to end her suffering. At night, Offred cuts off herself from the male-dominated society and go to the Commander’s office to gain things that are prevented from her in daytimes. At night, she meets with Nick to have a romantic time, and to discuss her plan for escaping from Gilead, and eventually at night Offred kills the Commander and escapes with Nick’s from Gilead. So at night, women in this story reclaim their body and mind, think of their condition, find solutions, plan, and escaping form Gilead.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This thesis provided a literary analysis of Charlotte Parkinson Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and Margret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* from a feminist perspective. It examined the elements that aid the patriarchal society's control over female body and mind, and at the same time, it examined the elements that assist women's resistance to the patriarchal control. In *The Yellow Wallpaper* the narrator is controlled through separation, discipline, surveillance, and language use, and the elements that aid her resistance are; writing, and language. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, women are also controlled through separation, discipline, surveillance, and language use, but the elements that aid their resistance are; memory, use of language, and sexuality.

In the two works, the patriarchal society starts the process of controlling women's body and mind by separating them from their society and home. Through separation, the society wants to treat women individually, and thereby, reconstruct them according to the society's preferences. Women after separation, loose contact with each other, lack knowledge about those who share the same fate with them, and they cannot make alliances to resist the patriarchal control. Therefore, the aim of separation is to create a condition of isolation in women's life.

After separation, the society employs discipline to regulate every aspect of women's life. The discipline manifests itself of establishing timetables and schedules in order to program women's body. Through discipline, the patriarchal society creates routine in the women's life, and make them be in a continuous busyness in

order not have a space to think about their condition. The society, through applying this discipline for a long time, changes women behaviors because this discipline gradually becomes habit in women's daily life, and thereby, the women become subjects of the patriarchal society.

To ensure women's docility, the patriarchal society in the two works employs surveillance to change the individuals' behaviors, and train them according to some specific rules. When individuals being subjected to it, they internalize the fear of being watched by the authoritative power, thereby, even in the absence of the monitor the subjects perform their duties regularly. Therefore, the importance of surveillance lies in its invisible power that regulates the subject's body with minimum effort.

After producing women's docile body through separation, discipline, and surveillance, the society uses language to control women's mind. Through language, the society tries to fix its patriarchal rules in the women's mind by redefining truth that makes them normalize their condition and accept their roles that imposed upon them. Therefore, language helps the patriarchal society in the two works to colonize women's mind and brainwash it in order to make them accept their functions in the society.

As a result of the absolute control of the male-dominated society over women's body and mind, women's resistance appear in order to reclaim their body and mind. The forms of resistance in the two works are different because of the different position of women, but the aim behind it is the same, which is to reclaim their body and mind. Women in the two works use writing and memory for

reclaiming their mind, while they use language and sexuality for reclaiming their body.

This paper concluded that although *The Yellow Wallpaper* is written in 1892 and *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1985, it seems that the patriarchal believes and controls remained the same in the two works. Although, a lot of changes occurred in the condition of modern women, in which they could come out of the house and get paid works, but they could not get rid of the patriarchal control and restrictions of Victorian age that follow them even at their work places. Through theorizing the patriarchal control in the two works, we have proved that although the societies of the two works are different, their methods of disciplining and resistance to that difference were similar.

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ÖZET

Bu tez feminist bir bakış açısıyla Charlotte Perkins Gilman' ın The Yellow Wallpaper' ı ve Margaret Atwood'un The Handmaid Tale analiz edilmiştir. İki eserdeki ataerkil toplum tarafından kadınların beden ve zihin üzerinde mutlak kontrol sağlama çeşitliliklerini inceler. Bu tez aynı zamanda kadınların toplum baskısına karşı koymasına katkıda bulunan unsurları da inceler. İlk bölümde The Yellow Wallpaper Viktorya çağında yazılmış olduğu için, iki dönem kadınların konumu hakkında tarihsel bir arka plan sağlar ve The Handmaid Tale modern çağda yazılmıştır. Bu bölümde ayrıca patriyarkal kontrolün yanı sıra, kadın direncinin teorik bir arka planı verilir. Ataerkil kontrol ve kadınların karşı koymasını teorikleştirmek için, bu iki eserdeki konunun daha iyi anlaşılması için Michel Foucault'nun iktidar ve direniş teorileri kullanılır. İkinci bölüm, ayırma, disiplin, gözetleme, dil, ve yeniden yapılandırma doğa gibi kontrolün unsurlarını analiz eder. Üçüncü bölüm iki eserde kadınların karşı koymasına yardım eden geçmiş, dil, delilik, cinsellik ve gece yeniden yazma gibi unsurları inceler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gilman, Atwood, Ataerkillik, Foucault, Kontrolü, Direnç.

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* from a feminist perspective. It explores the patriarchal control and women's resistance in the two works. The paper examines the elements that aid the patriarchal society's control over women's body and mind, and it focuses on the elements that assist women to reclaim their body and mind. Since *The Yellow Wallpaper* was written in the Victorian age, and *The Handmaid's Tale* was written in the modern age, therefore, the first chapter provides a historical background of the condition of women in the two periods, and theorizes the patriarchal control as well as women's resistance with reference to Michel Foucault's theory of power and resistance. The second chapter examines the elements of control in the two works which are; separation, discipline, surveillance, language, and reconstructing nature. The third chapter explores the elements that aid women's resistance in the two works which are: writing, reconstructing the past, language, madness, sexuality, and night. The paper concludes that since late Victorian age until the early modern age, the patriarchal beliefs remained the same.

Key Words: Gilman, Atwood, Patriarchy, Foucault, Control, Resistance

