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Exploring the Gendered Space in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* through Baudrillard's Simulacrum and Simulation

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Submitted by:

ABI Nouha

Supervised by:

Ms. Selt Djihad Afaf

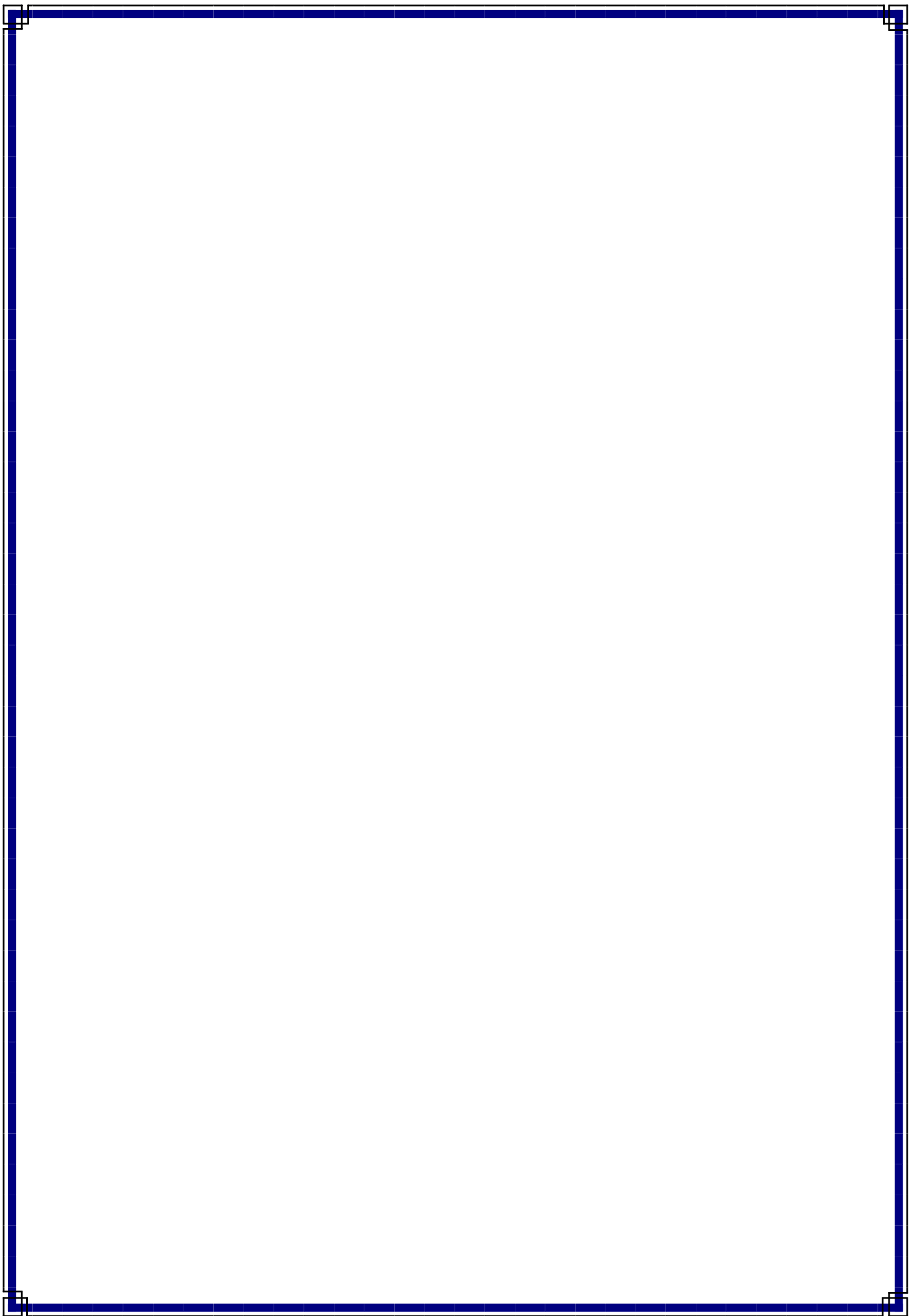
Board of examiners

Examiner: Dr. KHALFA Sayeh

Chairman: Dr. ARIBI Ibrahim

Supervisor: Ms. SELT Djihad Afaf

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Abstract

This work sheds light on the interplay of both: physical and mental spaces linking them to the power relations embedded in a given space wherein power is imposed by the state to control its inhabitants, namely women. The present dissertation, also, consists a study of manipulation of spaces that creates a gendered one in which women are considered as inferiors. It further aims at highlighting the fact that space may be produced through numerous means along with the Panopticon architecture. In this concern, this work is an attempt to manifest how Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* presents a fictional gendered space that is created through "simulacrum". It further investigates how this gendered space –that women are relegated to–imposes a high surveillance on their behaviors and minds to oppress them and subjugate their bodies, considering them mere child-bearing machines.

Résumé

Ce travail met en évidence l'interaction des deux: espaces physiques et mentaux qui les relie aux relations de pouvoir intégrées dans un espace donné où l'état impose à l'État de contrôler ses habitants, à savoir les femmes. La présente dissertation comprend également une étude de la manipulation des espaces qui crée un genre dans lequel les femmes sont considérées comme inférieures. Il vise également à souligner le fait que l'espace peut être produit par de nombreux moyens avec l'architecture Panopticon. Pour cela, ce travail est une tentative de manifester comment le roman de Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale* présente un espace de genre fictif créé via "simulacre". Il étudie en outre comment cet espace sexospécifique - que les femmes sont reléguées - impose une surveillance élevée sur leurs comportements et leurs esprits pour les opprimer et subjuguier leurs corps, en les considérant comme de simples machines pour enfants.

ملخص

هذا العمل يسلط الضوء على التفاعل بين كل من: المساحات الجسدية والعقلية التي تربط علاقات القوة المتكاملة في الفضاء التي تمكن الدولة من السيطرة على سكانها، خاصة النساء. يتضمن هذا المقال أيضا دراسة التلاعب في الفضاء الذي يخلق النوع الذي يعتبر النساء أقل شأنًا. كما تهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على حقيقة أن الفضاء يمكن أن ينتج بطرق عديدة مع الهندسة المعمارية مثل 'بانوبتيكون'. لذلك، هذا العمل هو محاولة لإظهار كيف يمكن لرواية مارغريت أتوود ان تقدم نوع خيالي من الفضاء من خلال خلق "صور مزيفة". هذا العمل يدرس أيضا كيف هذه الفجوة بين الجنسين تفرض مراقبة عالية على سلوك النساء وعقولهم لقهرهم وإخضاع أجسادهم، معتبرتا اياهم مجرد آلات لانجاب الأطفال.

Dedications

- ✚ To my mother, ZERKAK Rachida. Thank you for having faith in me when I did not, for encouraging me in my depression and distress moments, for never complaining about the time I devoted to this project. Thank you for your endless love that will always sustain me.
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General Introduction

In the mid of the twentieth century, the emerging sciences of space witnessed a renaissance that recognized the importance of place and location in the contemporary English literature. Space is becoming one of the key elements in critical theories especially as far the psychological theory is concerned. Various scholars and geographers focused on the substances within space such as Henry Lefebvre, Michel Foucault and Jeremy Bentham. The central idea of their study became spatiality; a concept which is related to the distribution of objects and bodies in space and their relationship towards each other. In this concern, Henry Lefebvre contributed with a social impact on space by introducing his work of *The Production of Space (1991)*. This theory asserts that space is fundamentally bound up with social reality. For him, space does not exist 'in itself'; rather, it is 'produced', depending on people's experiences. Rendering to Lefebvre, the production of space is related to ¹Marxist theory, as it is a conscious process which reflects the social divisions through 'conceived' 'perceived' and the 'lived' spaces. This includes a particular attention to the social hierarchy of space which reminds male of his superiority in society.

The idea of the conscious production of space is illustrated by Michel Foucault as well. He maintains that the space is strictly designed to be stable, consistent, and immovable in order to facilitate the monitoring of people. Foucault's works were always filled with implications and insights concerning spatiality. In his *Of Their Spaces (1967)*, he argues that the produced space serves as a tool of thought and of action, that in addition to be a means of production, it is also a means of control, and hence, a space of domination and power. Power is a complex phenomenon that takes control over people, systems, and ideas. It takes many forms and employs a variety of means to dominate, including social

¹ The political and economic philosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in which the concept of class struggle plays a central role in understanding society's allegedly inevitable development from bourgeois oppression under capitalism to a socialist and ultimately classless society.

pressure, force, or both of them. Furthermore, power aspects are considered at multiple scales, from the macro-scale of state to the micro-scale of a group or individuals.

In traditional forms of power, like that of the sovereign, power is made visible and put constantly on display. It is in which the multitudes are kept in the glooms, appearing only at the boundaries of power's brilliant glimmering. In the postmodern world, power itself seeks invisibility, whereas, the objects; those on which it operates, are made the most visible. This power may be identified vis a vis choosing an intelligible architecture that has served to ground and legitimize the path for controlling people and dominating them. As Foucault puts it, it is this fact of Panopticon architecture that introduces the basic ideas of power and control which lead to high surveillance, resulting in controlling the behaviors of the state's inhabitants, in addition to that, controlling the pedagogical exertion of discipline over the body. This kind of architecture, the Panopticon, aims at individualizing the body, allowing it to be isolated and clearly displayed, rendering it docile to the norms of the permitted, tolerated behavior.

In this regard, Foucault considers the reality of the Panopticon building as living in a prison; yet, people do not apprehend this reality, believing only in its simulation, which is living in the real true world. In this context, Jean Baudrillard believes that truth and reality are understood to be individually shaped by personal history, social class, gender, culture, and religion. It is bound up with human's conception of reality and man's conception of that reality. Based on this belief, he developed the concept of 'Simulacra and Simulation'. According to him, people living in this era cannot distinguish between the real and its simulation which is the unreal. It is, in fact, the hyperreal epoch. It is an epoch of a world dominated by simulated experiences and feelings wherein people have lost the capacity to comprehend reality as it actually exists, since they experience only prepared realities, the realities that the dominant power want them to believe. According to Jean

Baudrillard, the hyperreal is entirely in simulation. The real has become possible to give an equivalent reproduction. Thus, reality is a relative concept which can be understood through social authorities. Hence, space and power imbue each other in a myriad of ways, via simulations, and social, political space and religious control through architectural surveillance and male dominance over female.

Power, then, has shaped and reshaped geographical boundaries, changed identities and enslaved nations as well as genders. It has produced oppressed groups in quest for upsetting the existing balance of power and resisting through various means. History holds great examples of such resistance and revolutions, namely in the United States, women resistance against state and men power was the largest social movement in its history. The history of feminism implicates the story of feminist movements.

Moreover, women voiced their demands not only through protests and marches, but also, through writings. Margaret Atwood's works are labeled to belong to the category of literature that falls under the category of fiction protest. Like other feminist writers, Atwood is extremely concerned to demonstrate women inferiority and oppression in Western society. She wrote, in fact, more than a novel dealing with this theme successfully: *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Surfacing* (1972), *Lady Oracle* (1976) and *Bodily Harm* (1981). Yet, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) is the most explicit one in its protest against the mistreatment of women, attacking male chauvinism, and modern capitalist society. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) is a feminist protest made into a novel, a work of speculative fiction; it depicts the oppressive atmosphere of the society in a time set in the future. Further, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) offers a terrifying scenario of what has become of the United States of America after its "speculative" overthrow.

The novel portrays the author's deep social concerns. It questions the situation of women in the North American society. Atwood develops a structure a patriarchal society founded on the Compulsory Christian regime of the Old Testament. In a country permeated by biological and physical deprivation causing extensive sterility, dictatorship and religious orthodoxy become means by which the Republic of Gilead subjugates women and uses the fertile ones as concubines for reproductive purposes. The new patriarchal regime strips women of their rights to work, read, and have economic independence. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) tells the story of Offred, a woman who used to lead a normal life in a country once called America, and then was victim of the abrupt political change. Caught in the oppressive patriarchal system, Offred loses her husband and daughter. She is then transferred to Rachel and Leah Center where she is indoctrinated in order to become a handmaid. The book recounts Offred's journey from the Red Center to the house of the Commander.

In recent times, a huge attention has been directed to the study concerned with power. Considerable critical attention is paid to the different aspects of dislocations of dystopia in the novel. Some researchers have used *The Handmaid's Tale*(1985) as case study for their research on dystopia. Others have drawn an analogy between the novel and *Orwell's Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949). Likewise, there are those who have linked it to other novels written by Atwood like *Oryx and Crake* (2003). Feminists consider the novel as a means of addressing the antifeminist backlash of the 1980s. Thus, *The Handmaid's Tale* provides a helpful ground on which the aspects of dystopia are explored from a feminist standpoint. The novel presents a textual space in order to investigate the impacts of these elements on the female body.

The reason behind choosing *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) in the present thesis is that in writing a dystopia from a woman's point of view, Atwood puts an accent on

significant issues from the perspective of feminism. By initiating its protagonist Offred into telling the story by her own free will, Atwood's novel enables the female character to articulate her experience, gives life to a personal story and allows this story to be retold. Furthermore, the importance of this project lays in the fact that space and spatiality have become a central attention of scholars recently. This, perhaps, is due to the growing interest in space and place and their effects on the lives of individuals. Harmoniously, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) deals with the study of the woman body in a hierarchical space. It is often connected to the notion of power display, misogyny and patriarchy, regarding the women body as a tool for the dominant gender and the state.

Thousands of studies have previously been conducted to study feminist issues in the postmodern era, neglecting the determination of the source of power and the space influence in which it is exercised. Nevertheless, this present work consists originally an exploration of the gendered space through the simulations, and a demonstration of the importance of negotiating power vis a vis truth and reality. This new idea shall be able to eliminate the gap in postmodern literature relating to three major concepts of the era (gendered space, simulacrum, and power) and highlighting their impact on each other. It gives new analysis about men's superiority and women's inferiority depending on space whether it is real or unreal. The research will certainly clarify the confusion of the power nature on the gendered space in the hyper real world, as well as it will help to examine the bodily experience of women under a totalitarian regime and to understand the ways in which the female body becomes a means of subjugation under male dominance. Placing *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) within the contexts of dystopian literature, feminism, hyper real space and a state of power will lead the research to determine the main problematic which is: How is the gendered space explored through simulation in *The Handmaid's*

Tale? This latter raises the questions: How is the feminine body a means of control in Gilead? Was the space of Gilead a space of the real, or only its copy?

What can be hypothesized at this level is that the place of the Gileadean state in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) produces a conceived and designed space to maintain control over the inhabitants. Gilead's space that controls its citizens is carefully designed to indoctrinate the individual's thoughts, bodies and behaviors. Furthermore, being the conceived space of Gilead, the Panopticon is considered as a prison of the society. People of Gilead believe only in simulations, which the state wants them to believe via its totalitarian regime. This Gileadean regime aims at hiding the real truth using fake texts of Bible and media to control women's bodies. Likewise, it prohibits everything that leads to knowledge on its citizens, like reading or writing in order to keep them ignorant and never discover the real reality. Thus, the production of gendered space is usually linked to power and power relations that are inscribed in space production. Gendered space is the one that is being produced on a gender basis or that is forced to be produced in respect to gender that is usually determined by social implications. In this vein, the gendered space may be explored by producing a conceived space through copies of reality to control the individuals.

In an attempt to give adequate answers to the previous problematic questions and verify the relevance of the hypotheses mentioned above, an analogical along with a geocritical method will be followed in order to explore the gendered space in *The Handmaid's (1985) Tale* through simulation. Furthermore, the present work will be divided into three chapters.

Following an analogical method, the first part of the dissertation introduces the theoretical background escorting the research. It will provide an inductive study that aims

at bringing together the theories used and the historical context that the novel dealt with, highlighting the shift from Modernism to Postmodernism. In addition, it will attempt, through the use of 'The Production of Space' and 'Bio-power' theories, to conceptualize the various issues of space with the focus on its relationship with power and dominance. Moreover, the study conducted in this chapter will provide an overview concerning the concept of 'Simulacrum and Simulation', along with presenting its three different orders.

The second chapter, entitled '*The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) as a Postmodern Feminist Novel', follows an analytical method in order to examine the novel's response to feminism. The chapter, first, introduces an overview about Atwood's work. The chapter will devote a considerable part to examine the feminist issues existing in the novel based on Margaret Atwood's critics of modern feminism and its political passivity, she points out that women risk the loss of freedom as well as identity. The chapter, thus, will concentrate on the Second Wave Feminism mainly because it highlights the psychological roots of inequality which had to be addressed to affect change. Along with depicting religious allusion standing in the novel, this part of dissertation will also examine the constant power over the female body. It aims at perceiving the handmaid's body as a terrain where exterior forces are engaged to satisfy their needs. It is the primary target of patriarchy and social violence.

The third chapter, entitled 'Exploring the Gendered Space in Gilead', will adopt a geocritical method that helps the research to investigate the fictional spaces created by Gilead. This chapter will, thus, discuss the spatiality of Gilead as a produced gendered space. Demonstrating this in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood has depicted the marginalization of women via creating a totalitarian regime which is constructed upon the Panopticon architecture, wherein power is predominantly exercised over women. Then,

this chapter will juxtapose Gilead with the concept of 'Simulacra and Simulation' to investigate whether the Gileadean space is the real or only a copy.

In order to conduct this present research a number of books have been consulted and used as references. In tackling the issue of space, the theory of Henry Lefebvre is of a great importance. In his book *The Production Of space* (1992); that was originally published in French in 1974, and translated into English by Donald Nicholson-Smith in 1991. Within the field of space and spatiality Henry Lefebvre, a Marxist theorist, was concerned with understanding the relationship between the production of space and its social relations. His book raises a search for a settlement between mental and real spaces. Thus, he offers different levels of space: the perceived, the conceived, and the socially produced spaces, being mental, social and physical spaces. Lefebvre holds that they are in fact indivisibly linked, because each one has inherited implications from the others. Moreover, if the social space is a social product, as Lefebvre argues, then the space produced is inherently a means of production which fundamentally leads to a new creation of space where power relations and control exist. Ultimately Lefebvre conceives space as a form of power.

Foucault's work on bio-power and its influence on the present discussion can be highly overestimated. In his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (1975), Michel Foucault offers a description of the space of surveillance which he termed Panopticon with reference to the architectural design introduced by the social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. In the view of the evolution of justice systems, Foucault suggests that the shift away from public performances towards the idea of imprisonment and reform within prison walls were means of reframing the image of the power of society over the individual. By shifting the focus of justice into the prison and out

of the public eye, authorities would have more direct control over the lives of those who had violated the norms of society. Foucault, hence, compares prisons to other collective buildings, military barracks, schools and hospitals. He finds the common threads of common discipline, constant surveillance, enforced work and education, and strict adherence to an internal hierarchy in all of these institutions. The idea of correction and reform has shifted society's focus from the individual's to the individual's mind and soul. This shift in focus, Foucault claims, has not had the reforming effect that the authorities would hope. Instead, it has actually encouraged and refined criminal activity and behaviors. This work, in fact, helped the research to investigate the architectural space of Gilead as a prison for its citizens, by demonstrating how it imposes a strong surveillance on them.

Further, Jean Baudrillard contributes to this present thesis by introducing his work of *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981). Baudrillard's work suggests that simulation is particularly prolific in contemporary culture thereby varying the sense of the hyperreal and the real. Baudrillard uses the concepts of the simulacra, which is the copy without an original, and simulation. These terms are crucial to an understanding of the postmodern, to the extent that they address the concept of mass reproduction and reproduce ability that characterizes the current electronic media culture. He contends the idea that people no longer distinguish between reality and a constructed representation of reality or a simulacrum. Thus, simulations become confusing for the real terrain until it rots away. However, Baudrillard goes on to say in today's world the simulation is no longer a reflection of reality, nor a reference to it, but a creation of a new real by models that are not based on reality. He calls this the "hyperreal", saying the difference between the map and the territory disappears completely. The work of Baudrillard contributes to the present thesis by examining Gileadean society whether it is a space of the real or its simulation.

In point of fact, as it is illustrated above, there is a rapidly growing literature on the issues concerned with space, gender, and power. However, less works have been written to set forth the relationship between these three concepts. In the same respect, many subjects remain uncharted; namely, negotiating the concepts previously mentioned in relation to simulacrum and simulation. Therefore, this project comes as a tentative contribution that aims at bringing together these concepts through seeking a theoretical background within the ground of *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

Chapter One

Gendered Space, Power, and Simulacrum and Simulation

1. Introduction

The current period in history has been labeled the postmodern age, an age liberated from the oppressive structures of the past, yet disquieted by its expectations for the future. Many sociologists started to believe that humans have begun to move towards a new kind of society, where previous concepts are becoming confusing and misleading. It is characterized by crisis of human identity and its struggle for legitimization in a new ²dystopian society. The proponents of Postmodernism argue that people are now living in totally dystopian societies characterized by the single-gender (sex) authority and hyper-reality with multi-colored truths.

In this vein, three of the main founders of Postmodernism; Henry Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Jean Baudrillard, introduced concepts that approve the hyper reality and power in the new world's spaces. In his '*Production of Space*', Lefebvre focuses on space as an emergence and production rather than a pre-existing place, depending on analyzing the spatial relations, as a starting point. Aiming at modifying and controlling the biological superiority and the state power phenomena, Foucault, in his side, connects his concept of '*Bio-power*' with race, sexuality and technology. He believes that these concepts appeared only to manipulate the weak persons and to control them by creating simulated spaces. Baudrillard, in his turn, concluded that what was formerly a society of production had now, in the postmodern world and precisely after the Second World War, becomes a simulation. Baudrillard believes that truth and reality are understood to be individually shaped by personal history, social class, gender, culture, and religion. Reality, for him, is bound up with human's conception of reality and Men's conception of that reality . Based on this belief, he developed the '*Simulacra and Simulation*'.

² A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral or totalitarian control.

The present chapter will provide an inductive study that aims at bringing together the theories used and the historical context that the novel dealt with, highlighting the shift from Modernism to Postmodernism. Following an analogical method, this first chapter will also attempt to introduce the theories presented by Lefebvre, Foucault and Baudrillard in order to apprehend the reality of the postmodern world, as well as to have the ability for distinguishing between the real and the representation of the real in the different living spaces, through analyzing power influence, whether practiced by the state or by the superior gender. Thus, it is necessary to draw upon the importance of social spaces that serve to achieve more understanding of how it is produced to differentiate between the genders.

1.1 Modernism Overview

Many critics have attempted to define and discuss Modernism. Most of them introduce it as a period of sudden and unexpected breaks with traditional ways of viewing and interacting with the world. Arising out of the rebellious mood at the beginning of the twentieth century, Modernism was a radical approach that yearned to revitalize the way of modern civilization art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and daily life. Britannica Concise Encyclopedia describes it as follows: “In the arts a radical break with the past and concurrent search for new forms of expression, Modernism fastened the period of experimentalism in the arts from the late ninetieth to the mid twenty century. In an era characterized by industrialization, rapid social change, advanced in science and social sciences (³Darwinism), modernists felt a growing alienation, optimism and convention”. Thus, Modernism, in England, emerged as a reaction against the Victorian

³ Darwinism is a theory of biological evolution developed by the English naturalist Charles Darwin and others, stating that all species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual's ability to compete, survive, and reproduce.

ideals and conventions. ⁴It deepened its roots with progress of the century as a composite of several experiments in expression in the writings of eminent modernists like Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The modernist works were extremely influenced by the existing common trends along with social, political, religious, and economic changes in the early twentieth century.

Two major thinkers of the time played an essential role in leading Europe to Modernism, Charles Darwin in Biology and Karl Marx in political science. ⁵Darwin's theory of evolution undermined the religious certainty of people. Whereas Marx asserted that problems with the economic order were neither transient nor the result of temporary conditions, but were fundamentally contradictions within the capitalist system. In this vein, the modern age in England was an age of 'anxiety' for its unfulfilled and frustrating gap between the ideal and the real. It was the result of social crisis, confusion in the intellectual matters, and absence of a sustaining faith, giving up of traditions, world wars, urbanization, and loss of spirituality.

Using new and innovative forms of expression had a great impact on Modernism, it contributed on the careful and radical move away from tradition. Writers reacted to the increasing industrialization and globalization by turning toward modernist sentiment. Instead of progress, modernist writers saw a decline of civilization. Instead of new technology, they saw cold machinery and increased capitalism, which alienated the individual and led to lowliness. Thus, writers responded to this new world in a variety of ways.

⁴ <http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Modernism>

⁵ <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Modernism.pdf>

⁶Modernist literature was marked by “Individualism”. Writers of the age believed that the individual is more interesting than society; they were fascinated with how the individual adapted the changing world. ⁷Nihilism is the second characteristic associated with modern literature, which is the rejection of all religious and moral principles as the only means of obtaining social progress. Moreover, the modernist writers infused objects, people, places, and events with significant meaning. They imagined a reality with multiple layers, many of them hidden or in sort of codes, and mostly this is what symbolism is about. The carnage of the world wars affected writers of the period; the world was becoming a more absurd place for them so that they depicted this feeling in their writing by emphasizing the absurdity of life. ⁸In this vein, writers proclaimed new techniques of writing to well depict this new world:

- Use of interior monologue.
- Use of Stream of Consciousness.
- Focus on characters ‘consciousness and sub consciousness.
- Disillusionment.
- Break of narrative frames (fragmentation)
- Impossibility of an absolute reality interpretation.
- Multiple narrative points of view.
- Breaking down of space and time limitations.

Modernism was a revolt against the conservative values of realism; it rejected all the old traditions and beliefs. Though modernist literature depicted that new chaos world and dealt with the current issues of that period which had pushed the boundaries of cultural

⁶ <http://examples.essaytoday.biz/essays/Modernism-47199822.html>

⁷ Nihilism is a philosophical doctrine that suggests the lack of belief in one or more reputedly meaningful aspects of life

⁸ http://www.sprog.asb.dk/tt/giddens/lectures/some_characteristics_of_modernism.htm

conventions and were highly controversial in their time, their novelty quickly wore off and they soon became seen as relatively tame.

1.2 Moving towards Postmodernism

In time there are constantly unsteady adulations, and Modernism was a wave which was never still, the current period in history has been called Postmodern age. As a philosophical movement, Postmodernism is a reaction against the philosophical assumption and values of the modern period of western history. Unlike Modernism which has raised little controversy about its meaning, the term 'Postmodernism' has led to different opinions regarding its existing as well as meaning. The cause of the shift in perception can be traced to the academic institutionalization and canonization of Modernism. Therefore T. Eagleton defines Postmodernism this way: "The contemporary movement of thought which rejects totalities, universal values, grand historical narratives, and solid foundations to human existence and the possibility of objective knowledge" (23). This new age seems to punctuate the end of another long century that was on the brink of the information age. It was thought of as the contemplation of the end of world empires in politics, the industrial era in economics, and the end of enlightenment in philosophy. In effect, modernist practices were no longer applicable to the contemporaneous situation.

Postmodernism is a movement that rejects the concept of an ultimate truth. It is applied to various disciplines ranging from culture to architecture. Among the thinkers who anticipated Postmodernism is Nietzsche who announced in 1888 that "Nihilism stands at the door" (qtd. in Lyon 11). Nietzsche's concept of nihilism closely corresponds to the postmodern belief in the multiplicity of realities and the inauthenticity of absolute truth. He gave the slogan "Death of God" (Ibid) which may be taken as the anticipating of postmodern sense of uncertainty.

The contemporaneous conditions that led to postmodernity are centered on the rapid changes in technology and science. This change altered the psyche of people of this era. Individuals are no longer able to differentiate between virtual-reality and authentic reality because the virtual world is, in fact, the one now inhabited. Jean Baudrillard, the next significant scholar who led towards the postmodern thoughts, described this confusion between the real and the imitation as “[...] no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody, it is a question of sustaining the signs of the real, this distorted hyperreality of Postmodernism” (16).

Literature originates from life and reflects it in turn from a higher viewpoint and literary works are set in a certain historical background absorbing nutriment from social reality. Postmodern literature incorporated contemporaneous theories into itself. That is, the texts put aspects of theory into practice, as well as invite the reader to consider the raised theoretical questions. Reading these texts is no longer merely reception of narrative, but rather requires active reading, response to the text, and reflection on the act of reading itself. In his distinguished study *The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge*, Jean-François Lyotard introduces his concept of the “metanarrative” claiming that instead of the modernist quest for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern author eschews the possibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this quest. Strictly speaking, Postmodernism prefers ‘Little narratives’ that offer limited and qualified truths particular to a specific situation.⁹ Here are most important common themes and techniques of postmodern works:

- Metafiction, using irony and self-reflection, it poses questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. It is often employed to challenge the

⁹ <http://www.shmoop.com/postmodern-literature/characteristics.html>

authority of the author, for unexpected shifts, to advance a story in a unique way, for emotional distance, or to comment on the storytelling.

- Intertextuality, the relationship between one text and another one within the interwoven fabric of literary history (Luisiana 36). Considering postmodernism a decentered concept of the universe in which individual works are not isolated, much of the study of postmodern literature is on intertextuality.
- Fabulation, it rejects realism and challenges the traditional notions of literature by integrating fantastical elements, such as magic, myth or science fiction.
- Hyperreality, postmodernity was defined by a shift into hyper-reality in which simulation have replaced the real and forasmuch as technology has become a central focus in people's lives, the understanding of the real is mediated by simulations of the real.
- Fragmentation and the loss of certainty, there is no absolute truth. Postmodern writers believe that the notion of truth is a contrived illusion, misused by both people and state to gain power over others.
- Paranoia, the belief that there is an ordering system behind the chaos of the world.
- Pastiche, it is a literary technique which employs a light-hearted tongue when celebrating the work which it imitates.

¹⁰Moreover, the dominant characteristic of postmodernist novels is that it is impossible to write an original work and their paradoxical themes is writing about "End of writing" consequently the object of imitation and a self-conscious reflexivity emerged. Moreover, concerning architecture, writers highlighted the different functions of various building.

¹⁰ Ibid

Hence, Postmodernism, an emerging movement from Modernism, represents a break with traditional concepts and beliefs. It is often hard to define because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines including architecture and literature. However, postmodern literature challenges the reader to examine the cultural assumptions of the role and function of literature tackling the current themes and issues of the century, by reliance on the appropriate techniques.

1.3 The Break with Modernism

When discussing “Modernism” and “Postmodernism” as time periods, from 1960’s onwards Modernism was losing influence as the dominant belief and system, and was being replaced by the postmodern mind. As doubts emerged about the efficacy of the means and goals of this epoch, it arose in response an anti-modernist movement, Postmodernism. This latter rejected the elements that compromise the modernist worldview, including the ideas of truth, self, meaning, and reason. Modernism believes that human are able to know the world and thus, with the use of knowledge guided by science, creating a better optimistic world.

However, the Second World War and the revolution in science and technology stimulated the emergence of Postmodernism in which the ideas of Modernism were given a new postmodern twist. In contrast to the anti-modern position, an alternative understanding seeks to revise Modernism’s premises and traditional concept, which have become institutionalized, corrupt and entrenched. Postmodernism seeks to recover truths and values from various forms of the existing modern thoughts and beliefs. In this vein, a set of important theories, with numbers of basic elements, grew to describe the world not merely as deceptive appearances but as simulations. In one variation, anti-foundationalism philosophies claim that the belief of knowing “reality” is an allusion. In another, they

describe the self, the society or the reality as fiction using high-tech simulations (computer games and virtual realities) as a model or a metaphor to describe them, denying reality. Furthermore, Postmodernism recommends people to treat life as a symbolic arena for the acting out of fantasies.

Postmodernism was a reaction against Modernism, brought about by the disillusionment followed by the Second World War. It is characterized by the deliberate use of earlier styles conventions, media and a mixture of different artistic styles. With the development of the modern life, certain conceptions started to emerge and others started to change due to the difficulty of reaching the absolute truth. One of the prominent concerns of Postmodernism is the issue of “Gender” in the society which is, in the hyperreal world, a simulation that created another space, a space of power.

2. Gendered space

Across the world, in homes, schools, and workplaces; men and women are often separated in ways that sustain gender stratification. ¹¹The fact that these spatial arrangements are imperceptible increases their power to reproduce prevailing status difference. Cultural differences among various groups within societies have rigid roles for “men” and “women” with attributes, labeled as being “masculine” and “feminine”. Men were considered as the superior gender and women were accorded the role of the inferior one, prized the possession of men. Low argues that “Gender” and “Place” are produced in interactions influencing and being influenced by larger social structures and that gender identity and gender relations are produced in interactions that reproduce the cultural construction of gender differences. Moreover, the gendered space is conceptualized; based on strong gender differences, and rooted in gender ideologies that legitimize masculine

¹¹ <https://philpapers.org/rec/SPAGSA>

hegemony. This distinction between men and women differentiates “Sex” from “Gender” depending on the living space.

2.1 The Binary of Gender and Sex

The biological determination of one’s sex does not always correspond with the gender. However, gender builds on biological sex, but it exaggerates biological differences. “Sex” is typically assigned at birth. It is the biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential; it refers to biological differences, chromosomes, hormonal profiles, internal and external sex organs. The defining feature of the two sexes is the size differences of the gametes, that is to say, male have small and mobile gametes whereas female have large and immobile ones. In addition to that, there are a number of indicators of biological sex including, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia. The selection among these criteria for sex assignment is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes someone male or female. The biological theory suggests that the differences in male and female roles result from the biological differences inherent in both sexes. For most people, gender identity is congruent with sex assigned at birth (McLaughlin & Donahoe 123).

Nevertheless, it is possible to define “Gender” as “Sex”, only when differentiating male persons from female ones biologically, the concept of gender; a word primarily applied to human beings, has additional connotations having to do with general behaviors, social interactions, and one’s fundamental sense of self. Thus, gender is the social elaboration of biological sex. The World Health Organization defines it this way: “Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women”, i.e., ¹²gender refers to the attitudes,

¹² <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/sexuality-definitions.pdf>

feelings and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Moreover, it is the social construction of men's and women's roles in a given culture or location, it describes the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine or feminine. Gender refers to the meanings that societies and individuals ascribe to male and female categories (Eagly 25) and the term gender roles defines prescribed behaviors that are deemed appropriate for women and men (Blumer 52). Hence, gender roles are distinguished from the biological determination of sex roles.

In a human context, the distinction between gender and sex reflects the usage of these terms. Sex usually refers to the biological aspects of maleness or femaleness whereas gender refers to either social roles based on the sex of the person or personal identification of one's own gender based on an internal awareness; i.e. masculinity or femininity. Moreover, it is frequently argued that biological differences between males and females determine gender by causing fixed differences in capabilities and dispositions.

In the nineteenth century, there was a strong distinction among gender relating this to the space, for instance, the parlor, the reception room, and the living room were considered feminine, identified by many decorations in light colors, while the dining room, the billiard room, the library and the studio were considered only as masculine spaces identified by expensive, solid and dark furniture (Hamlett 29). These different masculine and feminine decorations reflect man and woman status and power putting men in the superior position and women in the inferior one. Studies show that some dimensions of women's and men's relationships with the domestic space are changing, changeling normative conventions about masculinity and femininity. In his study, *Heterosexuality and Home: Intimacies of Space and Spaces of Touch*, Morrison argues that the spatial structure and the architecture design of the space and support power relations between men and women (39).

2.2 Power and Space

The architectural discourse has habitually represented buildings as art and dimensional, technical objects. Henceforth, in the postmodern world, simulation creates another space, wherein buildings are regarded as social objects that are invested with social meaning, shaping social relations. The built environment can be seen as a cultural artifact that is embedded in the process through which individuals build and form their identities.

The term ‘environment’ encloses a range of topics, such as how family life and culture affect behavior, but it also holds the sense of how architecture and the city planning affect behavior. In the broad sense it is about how we interact with the world in which we live, and how those interactions shape our psychology. The observations revealed that we unconsciously manifest different behaviors purely based on the change of setting related to architecture. Men and women use space differently because they have different responsibilities and experiences (Anthony 202). An instructive space designed only for men would differ from that designed for women, and space would therefore be exploited differently. In this regard, both Henry Lefebvre and Michel Foucault argued that space manipulates the social relationships between men and women as well as individuals and the state.

2.2.1 Henry Lefebvre: *The Production of Space*

In his “*The Production of Space*”, Henry Lefebvre identifies the space as being produced, and this signifies that the social relations have dual inclusions, which are producing space and being shaped by it. He sought to theorize space as the common aspect

and the inevitable outcome of man's various social activities and practices through investigating what remained shared to spaces by a specific historical differentiation that affects their production. Lefebvre regards space as an active production of the human beings, suggesting that it is variously produced as a result of their different actions. Adding to this, space, for him, is not fixed or constructed on the basis of sensory data nor is it self-identified through history. Considering the space as heterogeneous, he presented the 'Trialectic of space' in which he argued that space needs to be understood not in two ways, as an abstract thought of space or as a concrete reality of space, but in three ways adding the 'lived space' in order to fully transmit the individual's experience of space. He explained that the social and historical space productions can be understood through grasping the three qualitatively combined kinds of spatial production, namely: 'spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces'. These three spatial modes can be understood through other cognitive modes, co-related to three kinds of space: perceived, conceived and the lived space.

The perceived space relates to a great extent to spatial practices.¹³ It represents the visible material space that can be measured and described, with its natural markers as well as those recognizable man-made landmarks that were placed there by those in control. It also takes into consideration the configuration of the buildings. The space which corresponds to the "representations of space" is mostly the conceived one. It may be understood as the interpretations or ideologies concerning the perceived space. It is considered as the space of architects designers and artists, geographers and mappers who construct a representation of the first space. As for the lived space, which correlates with representational space, it is not only about space that is passively lived by inhabitants through unspoken symbols and images but also, it is appropriated by artists and architects

¹³ http://www.academia.edu/14633544/The_Imp

and described by philosophers. The idea of the 'lived space' is presented as a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness which encompasses the real/ perceived and imagined/ conceived spaces and captures real life experience. 'The Production of Space' theory, also, draws a paramount importance on the concept of the social space. Henry Lefebvre defines social space in the light of Marxist philosophies of class struggle and the power of the state over the process of producing it.

Lefebvre's theory of 'The Production of Space' has a remarkable importance in attempting to well understand the domestic space and highlighting the difference between the public and private space apparent. For him, space can only be grasped if the unity between the three fields of space: physical, mental and social one is understood. He believes that spaces are considered: ¹⁴"Mere abstractions that attain real existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships". Henceforth, how characters produce their spaces whether public or private depends on their experiences and the feeling they get from being in that spaces.

The etymology of the word public is derived from the Latin 'publicus' analogous to 'populus' which means 'people'. The noun public concerns totality and completeness in the aggregation of people. As an adjective, public confers to any noun its relationship to the people, or that is perceived or affecting the people, or being in the service of the people. According to Lefebvre, the public space is the social space that is generally open and accessible to people. Private, in the other hand, draws its origins from the Latin 'privatus', Merriam-Webster Dictionary explains it as either restricted to the use of a particular person, group or class, or unsuitable for public use or display. The private space is the region surroundings people which they regard as psychologically theirs. Most people value their personal space and feel discomfort, anger, or anxiety when their personal space

¹⁴ Kanishka Goonewardena. Et al, Space, Difference, Everyday Life (New York: Routledge, 2008) 64.

is encroached. Permitting a person to enter personal space and entering somebody else's personal space are indicators of perception of relationship between the people (Jueves 10).

The core of the theory of space identifies three moments of production: the material production, the production of knowledge and the production of meaning. Thus, Lefebvre views space as neither significant in itself nor in the order of materials. According to him, space can be grasped in an active sense as a complex maze of relationships that are being produced in relation to the active process that takes place through time. He tends to theorize space through delineating it in a way that contains more than the material and the physical space and directs attention to the social space which explores the space between members of society. This latter, according to Lefebvre, entails how people are positioned, in relation to one another.

Lefebvre's Production of Space is linked to the control of everyday life; allowing the elites to take control of space and consequently have a command over the city dwellers' everyday life (citadins 12) by taking the fact that cities, landscapes, plans, and buildings as forms of representation of space. It is important to hint at the superiority of the ones who control the previously mentioned representations of space. Moreover, the Structuration theory (Giddens 22) articulates the relationship of the social subject to its structural environment. This theory suggests that, although individuals have agency, they are bound or constrained by social structures that they, in turn, reinforce.

2.2.2 A Foucauldian Approach to Space and Power

Foucault's concern with space is centralized on the relations among sites, the intersection between the macroscopic space and the individual space, and the relations of

power. In his *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault states “The utopia of a perfectly governed city” (196) as the description of the space of surveillance which he named ‘Panopticism’ with reference to the architectural design of ¹⁵Jeremy Bentham. This ¹⁶Panopticon architecture is designed in a manner to create space of surveillance; where individuals are constantly scrutinized, to prevent any form of deviance to the rules imposed in a given society and it introduces the basic ideas of ‘Power’ ‘Power-Knowledge’ and ‘Discipline’. This is achieved by means of a meticulous arrangement of the space which is meant to be controlled. Because power exercises its strength without directly intervening or applying any physical instruments, Foucault argued that this type of architecture would directly act on individuals and give power of mind over mind (200). The Panopticon space aims at individualizing the body, allowing it to be isolated and clearly rendering it docile to the norms of the allowed behaviors.

For Foucault, there are spaces which are governed by a set of laws and agreements dictated by societal rules and human conventions. These ¹⁷Heterotopic spaces, described as counter-sites, are about the crossing between the macroscopic space and the individual space. Public spaces, as an instance, have a certain number of guidelines and practices which are commonly and popularly agreed upon, thus it consciously or subconsciously maintain the notion of the sacred. Moreover, Foucault argues that the architecture of the space may become an apparatus for creating and sustaining power relationships,

¹⁵ He was an English philosopher and political radical. He is primarily known today for his ‘Moral Philosophy’, especially his principle of utilitarianism, which evaluates actions based upon their consequences. He designed The ‘Panopticon’ building in the late 18th century.

¹⁶ The concept of the design is to allow all (*pan-*) inmates of an institution to be observed (*-opticon*) by a single watchman without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they are being watched, i.e. this kind of architecture exposes the periphery building totally to be constantly watched and observed without being able to see in return, while the central tower sees everything without being exposed.

¹⁷ This concept appeared in 1966 within the preface to *Les Mots et les Choses; The Order of Things*. This concept introduced a contradictory ‘unthinkable space’, it refers to a different or another place (heteros).

independent of the persons who operate it. That is to say, architectural form can help to engender a form of social control (Leach 120).

According to Foucault, the notion of power holds an array of definitions. He argues that ‘power is everywhere’ because it is not simply a property of the state; rather it is exercised throughout the social body. Power, for him, is a productive relation which is omnipresent at every level of the social operating at the most micro levels of the social relations. “Power is the ability to act or produce an effect; it is the possession of control, authority of influence among others. It is a physical might, a mental or moral efficacy and a political control or influence” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Power, thus, is oriented towards human beings as living members of a species with certain biological characteristics. These characteristics may be studied scientifically and can be affected through multiple interventions. Bio-power, hence, is occupied with multiple life-related phenomena that affect the way human life develops, and which can be modified through interventions.

Bio-power or Bio-politics is a technology of power that consists in techniques, practices and procedures that are aimed at organizing, regulating and governing the phenomena peculiar to life in the context of population. The distinctive quality of this political technology is that it allows the control of the entire populations. It refers to the control of human bodies through state discipline.¹⁸ According to Foucault’s analysis, the modern power becomes encoded into social practices as well as human behavior as the human subject gradually acquiesces to subtle regulations and expectations of the social order. However, bio-power should be understood as a name to designate the general and abstract force that is realized through bio-politics, i.e. strategies to effect on all the things that depend on biology. Thus, bio-politic refers to the specific set of means, including

¹⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biopower>

techniques and knowledge, by which one aims to produce the biological in a specific form (Foucault 198).

In the sense of “The entry of life into the order of power and knowledge, into the sphere of political techniques” (Foucault 141-142), different forms of power may include bio-power, like applying the notion of power over life and highlighting how it is deployed in managing life. Foucault supports the agreement that power over life is characterized by aims of modifying human life in order to render it both manageable and productive (36). He investigates techniques and practices through which individuals become subjected in different institutions, such as prison, and how sexuality has been used in different discursive systems and practice in order to produce particular power effects. Thus power over life, on the one hand, consists in individualization and subjectivities through discipline and surveillance, and on the other, in regulation and manipulation of the overall qualities of population (Bernard 23). Hence, Bio-power brought a radical shift in the existing power relations based on sovereignty and feudal societal relations.

Foucault, then, argues that bio-power is a technology which appeared in the late eighteenth century for managing populations, it is about managing the births, the deaths, and the reproduction of a given population, he believes that power transcends politics and sees power as an everyday, socialized and embodied phenomenon which incorporates certain aspects of disciplinary power, and it is about training the actions of bodies. Furthermore, Michel Foucault was an active social and political commentator who saw a role for the ‘organic intellectual’ and believed in the possibilities of action and resistance. His ideas about ‘action’ were concerned with people’s capacities to recognize and question the socialized norms and constraints. The norm is a dimension through which life and behavior can be measured, qualified and corrected vis-à-vis utility and value, Foucault

states: “A normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centered on life” (144).

Hence, to challenge power is not a matter of seeking the ‘absolute truth’ which is in any case a socially produced power, but of “ [...] detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural within which it operates at the present time” (Foucault 75). Truth, in the context of its relations with power, is something that happens and is produced by various techniques, most frequently by the ¹⁹technology of truth. In the words of Foucault, truth is not simply the gathering of *données*, it is a notion constituted by discursive and non-discursive practices, discourse and power. For him, the one who holds the power through the meaning constructing system that is discourse fabricates truth.

However, power operates through the imagining of the real as well as its simulated reclaiming. The enforcement of the law, the creation of morality, the evolution of those implicit codes of conduct, and those statements which people take for real, create the simulation of society. Power, thus, is produced through media and people daily interactions. Moreover, the tool that is used to reinforce power is the idea of the real and its simulation, as Baudrillard believes, which result in a high oppression and control of both body and mind.

3. Simulacra and simulation

Living in this new world, Jean Baudrillard; a French philosopher, seeks to examine the relationships between reality, symbols, and society by Simulacra and simulation (*Simulacres et Simulation*). Simulacrum comes from the Latin word ‘simulare’ meaning ‘to

¹⁹ It is a vital contribution to the development of cultural studies. It shows the quality of scholarship, the depth of understanding of the research archive, and the intellectual reach, which signal the revitalization of cultural studies for a new generation of writers.

make like', it is related to simulate, which is to imitate, and similarity.²⁰ Simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no original to begin with, or that no longer have original, it is the imitation of the operation of a real-world process or system over time. Simulacrum is something that replaces reality with its representation, in his "*The Precession of Simulacra*", Jean Baudrillard defines it as follow:

Simulacra are no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyper-real. It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real. (1-2)

That is to say, it is an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, programmatic, metastable, and perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real.

In fact, in the 'Simulacra and Simulation' theory, Baudrillard believes that the world which we live in denies all access to the real and simulations take over people's relationship with the real life, creating a copy that has no original, a hyper-reality. This hyper-reality happens when the difference between the reality and its representation collapses. At this stage, people are no longer able to see the image as a reflection of the thing; rather it becomes a symbolic trade of the signifier in culture, not the real world. Thus, for Baudrillard, the simulation is not something which follows the real, but rather a real which does not stalk from any other source or origin, hence, the simulation does not mask itself as the 'real'; it eradicates the actual 'real' which is separated and distinguished from its representations and, henceforth, the hyper-real sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary (81). Simulation threatens the difference between the 'true' and the 'false', the 'real' and the 'imaginary'.

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulacra_and_Simulation

3.1 Orders of simulacra

Jean Baudrillard introduces three orders of simulacra along with a symbolic order. The symbolic order is organized as a fixed system of signs distributed according to rank and obligation. Power structure or God establish the meaning of signs by which the question of reality does not arise. The representation of the territory by the map is the first order; it was associated with the pre-modern period; from the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution. Simulacra, then, aimed to restore an ideal image of nature, true originals caused the fakes. In this pre-modern order, the image is a clear counterfeit of the real. It is recognized only as an illusion and a place marker for the real, however, the counterfeit strongly requires an original for its meaning. The representation of the real, thus, is a great artificial place-marker for the real item. In this historical stage, Baudrillard believed that 'signs' do not yet drift independently of social relations, they are in fact entirely wrapped up in social relations of power.

Jean Baudrillard associates the second order with the modern period and the modernity of the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. It witnessed that the distinction between reality and the image and their representations are unclear and begin to break down because of the mass production and the proliferation of copies. The mass production of copies or replicas of a single prototype appear as real ones, turning them into commodities. Such productions and commodities misrepresent and mask the underlying reality and threaten to replace the authority of the original version by imitating it so well. In this historical stage, 'signs' no longer require an original/counterfeit relation, "since from the outset they will be products on a gigantic scale" (Baudrillard 55).

The third and last order of simulacra, which is associated with the postmodern age, is dominated by 'Precession of Simulacra' in which 'Simulations' replace the relationship

between reality and its representation. Reality itself is lost and dead; things have no more counterfeits or prototypes, just simulations of reality, which is the hyper-reality. In this historical stage, originality becomes a totally meaningless concept.

Hence, Baudrillard describes the power of images and symbols to undermine reality. He draws the distinction between pretense and simulation via the example of ‘illnesses’. He explained that to pretend is to dissimulate whereas to simulate is to feign to have what one does not have; it is to give or assume the appearance or effect of often with the intent to deceive (Merriam Webster Dictionary) one implies a presence, the other an absence. In this regard, Littré comments: “[...] whoever fakes an illness can simply stay in bed and make everyone believe he is ill [...] whoever stimulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms” (19-20). Therefore, pretending preserves the principle of reality, but simulating produces doubts about the truth and the reality of the thing, in this case of illness. It is very difficult, when the simulation is present, to know how to treat the person whether he is ill or not because of the existence of the true symptoms of the illness, and at the same time, it is a false and unreal illness. In this vein, Baudrillard argues that this impossibility of making a distinction between reality and simulation undermines the real itself. This simulation encloses the whole structure of the representation itself as a simulacrum.

Though the image is the own pure simulacrum, the latter breaks the sign-order into four stages and such would be the successive phases of the image. The first stage is about a faithful image or copy which is the reflection of a profound reality; it highlights a good appearance and a representation of the ²¹‘Sacramental Order’. The second stage is the perversion of reality, the image masks and denatures a profound reality which could be an

²¹ The Sacramental Order is a faithful image/copy, where Baudrillard believes that a sign is a “reflection of a profound reality” (6)

evil appearance and of the order of maleficence. In this stage, signs and images do not faithfully reveal reality, but can hint at the existence of an obscure reality which the sign itself is incapable of encapsulating (Wikipedia). In the third stage, the image masks the absence of a profound reality, where the sign pretends to be a faithful image, but it still a copy with no original. It is of the 'Order of Sorcery' in which signs and images claim to represent something real, but no representation is taking place. Finally, the fourth stage is a pure simulacrum in which the image has no relation to any reality, here; it is no longer of the order of appearance, but of simulation. Signs reflect other signs and any claim to reality on the part of images or signs is only the order of other such claims.

Baudrillard suggests that people are being forced to believe the simulacra as reality. He presented the example of "Disneyland" and "Watergate Scandal" to demonstrate the function of the simulacra orders, precisely the third one. The French philosopher uses his perfect model of 'Disneyland' of all the entangled orders of simulacra, saying that it is "[...] presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real" (123). It is first of all a play of illusions and phantasms. He points out that the obvious childishness and factiousness of this world is contrasted to the rest of America, thus, the outside of Disney is the real and true world, yet it is just as childish and based on fictitious ideologies. This imaginary world is supposed to ensure the success of the operation and to conceal the idea that reality no more exists outside than inside the limits of the artificial border. The Watergate scandal, on the other hand, was only portrayed as a scandal to make people believe that such corruption and immorality was a one-off instance, rather than the daily occurrence in the politics, and to restore faith in the system of justice. Nevertheless, Watergate is not a scandal; this dissimulation masks the moral panic approaching the primitive of capital. This false reality, which is the hyper-reality, creates an illusion which makes it more desirable and believable for people to accept it as the only reality.

3.2 Distinction between ‘Reality’ and ‘Simulacrum’

Hyper-reality is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern societies (Digital Education). Jean Baudrillard points a number of phenomena to theorize the lack and the loss of distinctions between ‘reality’ and ‘simulacra’.

3.2.1. Media culture

Media culture is the contemporary media which includes television, film, internet and others, recognized as bridges that display and send information or stories to people. In this era, the functions of media are concerned not just with relaying information or stories but with interpreting our most private selves for us, making us approach each other and the world through the lens of these media images that enable people to echo and interpret themselves.. The media culture is responsible for blurring the line between products that are needed to live and products for which a need is created by commercial images. Therefore, people no longer acquire goods because of desires that are increasingly defined by commercials and commercialized images.

3.2.2. Exchange- Value

According to ²²Karl Marx, the entrance into capitalist culture meant that the value of goods is based on money rather than usefulness, which comes to be quantified and defined in monetary terms in order to assist exchange. Everything began to be translated

²² Karl Marx, on his studies about capitalism, introduces ‘The forces of Production’. The latter is, strictly speaking, the technology and work patterns that men and women use to exploit their environment to meet their needs. These forces of production are expressed in relationships between men, which are independent of any particular individual and not subject to individual will and purposes. While industrialism would be a particular “force of production,” capitalism would be a particular “relation of production.” By relations of production, Marx means the social relationships people enter into by participation in economic life. The relations of production are the relations men (and women) establish with each other when they utilize existing raw materials and technologies in the pursuit of their production goals.

into how much it is worth and what can it be exchanged for. Once money became a 'universal equivalent', things lost their material reality. Thus, Men start to think of life in term of money rather than in terms of the real things they hold in hands. In this regard, Baudrillard believes that in the postmodern age, people have lost all senses of 'use-value' and it becomes 'all capital'.

3.2.3. Multinational Capitalism

²³This class of capitalism separates produced goods from the plants, minerals and other original materials and the processes, including people and their cultures, used to create them. Baudrillard claims that the capital defines Men identity. As the industrial process becomes more and more sophisticated and complex, consumers have lost the track of the real value of the products they consume. According to Baudrillard, the capital is what defines the identity. Thus, people continue to lose touch with the material fact of the laborer, who is increasingly invisible to a consumer oriented towards retail outlets or the even more impersonal internet.

3.2.4. Urbanization

²⁴ Urbanization separates human from the nonhuman world. As geographical locations develop, people lose touch with any sense of the natural world, thus, urbanization causes the dislocation of reality, and changes the conception of the natural world. Originally, the urban area was surrounded by nature, yet distinction between natural areas within the urban area is known as protected zones, hence, they are defined in contradistinction to an urban reality. Besides, the emergence of massive townhouses and

²³ <https://www.studyblue.com/notes/n/socio-211-study-guide-2013-14-jakubek/deck/11087709>

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulacra_and_Simulation

new artificial kinds of urban planning in which they create cultural symbols and commercial identities, are mixed in one place.

3.2.5. Language and Ideology

The earlier understanding of ideology was that it concealed the truth representing a 'false consciousness. People are no more qualified to recognize the real workings of the state, of economic forces, and of the dominant groups in society. On the other hand, Postmodernism understands ideology as, the according to Baudrillard, as the support for the perception of reality, henceforth; societies depend on the use of 'language' to structure this perception. According to this view, any representation of reality is always already ideological, thus, always constructed by simulacra.

4. Conclusion

Along with presenting the postmodern characteristics, highlighting what differentiate them from the modern ones, and denoting the shift from the two periods, the theoretical background introduced in this chapter, provides a general overview about the theories of the 'Production of Space'; introduced by Henry Lefebvre, the 'Bio-power'; introduced by Michel Foucault, and the concept of 'Simulacra and Simulation'; introduced by Jean Baudrillard. Starting with the concept of the 'Production of Space', Lefebvre accentuated three dimensional characteristics of space: the first space which is the perceived represents the visible material space that can be measured and described as well as it takes into account the configuration of the buildings, the second space; which is the conceived space, is the interpretations or the ideologies concerning the perceived space. These two spaces will permit the understanding of the ideology and politics behind the

conception and the perception of the space of Gilead which will be demonstrated in the next second chapter. The fusion of these two spaces results in the third space which is the lived space, it captures the real- life experiences. However, Foucault's concern with space is centralized on the relations among sites, the intersection between the macroscopic space and the individual space, and the relations of power. For Foucault, there are spaces which are governed by a set of laws and agreements dictated by societal rules and human conventions and bio-power emerged to manipulate them. He offered a doubled description to the space which he termed 'the panopticon space' and 'the space of heterotopia'. He suggested that power is not a means that individuals or state use, rather, individuals themselves are the tool of power. Through his work of '*Simulacra and Simulation*', Baudrillard declares that the postmodern world is a 'desert of the real', a cultural space where television, images and others are more real to people than the physical surrounding reality. Hence, this is an epoch of power and hyper-reality. The explained theoretical background in this chapter guides this dissertation to attempt its core, which is exploring the 'Gendered Space' through the use of 'Simulacra'. It helps to have the ability to distinguish between the real and its copy in the lived space, for investigating the imposed power which put men in a superior status, contrary to women. The next chapter will discuss women's inferiority in *The Handmaid's Tale* in relation to the Second Wave Feminism.

Chapter Two

The Handmaid's Tale as a Postmodern Feminist Novel.

1. Introduction

The Handmaid's Tale is a work of speculative fiction written and first published in 1985. Since then, the novel has won considerable prizes and eventually has been projected into a film. *The Handmaid's Tale* depicts a horrific society in the future world in which women are marginalized, disagreement is not tolerated, and even speech is dangerous. The novel can be classified at once as a work of science fiction, a satire, and a dystopia. It is often exemplified by classics like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty four* (1949), because they all depict an oppressive atmosphere of particular societies in a time set in the future. This futuristic state depicts a terrifying scenario of what has become of the United States of America after its "speculative" overthrow and the author's deep social concerns. It, also, questions the situation of women in the North American society. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is thus a provoking novel about the domination and governing of women by both, the state as well as men. It presents a dystopia where freedom for women is restricted because of the new Christian government's extreme policies, developing a structure of a monolithic state and a patriarchal society founded on the Compulsory-Christian regime of the Old Testament by which the Gileadian regime is much influenced. Moreover, Placing *The Handmaid's Tale* within the contexts of feminist literature sheds light on Atwood's dissatisfaction with Feminism Waves and rebellious acts. She, thus, had this reactionary society as a critique of Second-Wave Feminism. She argues that women still face oppression in countless ways, including being perceived as inferior to men and having their identities stem from their relationship to men. In this regard, she created a world filled with policies that are aimed at controlling the functionality of the female body for total reproductive control.

Thus, the second part of this present dissertation opens with introducing the novel of *The Handmaid's Tale* as a feminist postmodern work, focusing on the existing women dilemma in the new futuristic society. Hence, based on Margaret Atwood's critics of modern feminism movements, the chapter will devote a discussion for the Second Wave Feminism. Moreover, following an analytical method, this second chapter will investigate the feminine body a terrain of oppression and subjugation by Gilead, justifying it from biblical fake texts. This latter will motivate the study to examine the allusions in the novel.

2. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* Overview

Margaret Atwood is a high-volume and multipurpose writer, her first novels demonstrate the range and the complexity of sexual power politics' representations , and provide a solid foundation for understanding the evolution of her feminist sympathies. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), a dystopian survival work, is set at the end of the twentieth century on the cusp of achieving equality between the two sexes. Atwood's sixth novel continues her explorations of gender and identity as well as domestic politics, portraying the dissolution of the United States, resulting in what Christopher Jones rightly identifies as a 'reinvigorated hatred of women and the explosive growth of religious fundamentalism' (4). *The Handmaid's Tale* presents a gloomy futuristic vision that reflects the repression of women leading down to the reduction of their image to child-producing machine in a strong ²⁵totalitarian state, concentrating on some predominant feminist issues like reproduction, anti-abortion, infertility, power politics, and the suppression of women in male ²⁶chauvinistic society. Atwood projects, through the present dystopian novel, on one hand, the culmination of the feminist issue where the identity of 'women' has been

²⁵ A government that subordinates the individual to the state and strictly controls all aspects of life by coercive measures (Vocabulary.com Dictionary)

denied and dragged down by the superiority of the other gender; they were regarded only as a ‘plaything’ used for sexual pleasure and as a ‘two-legged womb’, and terribly treated by the power politics in numerous spheres on the other.

The novel of *The Handmaid's Tale* recounts Offred's journey from the Red Center to the house of the Commander. Worth to mention, the novel is told by recollection; sequences of remembered events in which daily happenings are separated by sections of “night”. It is set within male superiority and the political power across the fictional republic of Gilead, envisaging a miserable scenario of a totalitarian state of theocracy reflecting the rejection of moral values and denying all women's rights counting the right to read, to work, or even to walk alone. Gilead is the republic where *The Handmaid's Tale* takes place. It is located in the United States, more precisely in Cambridge, a city of the state of Massachusetts. However, the city does not exist in the real world; it was entirely imagined by the writer who started to describe the terror and the uneasiness felt by its inhabitants from the very beginning of the novel. In Margaret Atwood's vision of the future, the government of the United States has been tumble by a group conservative Christians who decided on transforming what they see as a corrupt society into a theocracy. Atwood draws on the nineteen eighties' culture of the United States and induces what might happen if the same trends were to continue into the future. This puritanical society, which is run by Christian extremists, denied the existence of women despoiling all the democratic rights that were taken for granted in the United States have vanished in this future world including a woman's right to marry, to hold a job, or to do anything without the approval of her male counterpart. It uses dress codes as a way to subjugate them choosing a red dress with a white veil for ‘Handmaids’ and a striped dress for women of lower status to signify that their husbands are not yet commanders.

²⁶ People who strongly believe in the superiority of their own gender or kind. A chauvinistic man might say women are too emotional to hold stressful jobs (Vocabulary.com Dictionary)

The role of this social hierarchy present in the city is to differentiate men from women. Because nuclear and biological warfare has polluted vast areas and contaminated the air, the water and the earth of the state, the population started to suffer a sharp decline in viable births and a rise in birth defects which result in birth rate break-down, hence, having children became very difficult and handmaids are formed to act as a reproductive mechanism to bear children for elite, childless families. The tale opens with the narrator, who is the protagonist, Offred, remembering the time when she was held against her will in an old gymnasium, known as the Red Center, where women are trained to become 'Handmaids'; guarded by women known as 'Aunts' and by armed guards known as 'Angels'. She had been a working wife and a mother before the Republic of Gilead evolved, she was captured while trying to escape to Canada with her family (husband and daughter) and then separated from them to be trained as a handmaid, she has chosen to bear babies of important men on behalf of their infertile wives rather than the alternative which is living out in a radioactive colony where she will eventually die of radiation poisoning. Living in a society governed by oppression and knowing what a great risk she is taking, Offred agrees to have a secret relationship with her Commander, using his attentions to win a few freedoms for herself. Unexpectedly, Serena, the Commander's wife, suggests to Offred to have a secret forbidden relationship with the Chauffeur, Nick, and tries to be pregnant with him, judging her husband as a sterile. However, instead of seeing Nick only once, Offred started to love and meet him, eventually, her sins are discovered. Although the state, sent a dark car to take her away, Offred did not give up nor lose hope and waited for the Maydays, an underground organization dedicated to overthrow Gilead, to save her and help her flee.

3. Feminist Reading of *The Handmaid's Tale*

The nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties (70s & 80s) became a point of evaluation and reinvention for feminism, thus, the feminist fiction of this epoch had an important political functions. Writers used it as a tool for exploring ideas, creating alternative worlds, documenting women's lives and reclaiming their forgotten stories. Margaret Atwood is well known for her feminist views and *The Handmaid's Tale* is catalogued as one of her feminist protests made into a novel. She has chosen, by criticizing the treatment of women, modern feminism and political passivity to reveal to the reader that if the society does not defend and fight for freedom, it risks losing everything. The novel provides a brief history and critique of the ²⁷'North American Feminist Movements' since the nineteen sixties and depicts the author's deep social concerns and questions vis a vis the situation of women in the North American society. Hence, the novel emerges as a warning against what might come if women do not keep struggling for their rights. It raises many questions about the role, status and treatment of women in the modern world. Atwood shows her feminist side in the novel putting her female characters into situations in which everything is taken from them even their real names and shows, throughout the narration, how women are used to increase a political ideal. She raises the feminist issues by depicting Gilead as a regime in which men have all the power and uses the feminist attitudes in the society taking them to an extreme illustrating the complexity of feminism. The feminist movement took place at an appropriate time as women's rights needed to move forward, however, in this futuristic sate, this type of feminist movement is no longer appropriate as the society is different and the situation is therefore different. Margaret

²⁷ The movements were largely based in the United States of America, seeking equal rights and opportunities for women in their economic activities, personal lives, and politics. It is recognized as the "second wave" for being the larger feminist movement.

Atwood is a feminist in the general sense, as possessing a ‘Belief in the rights of women [as] equal human beings’(Meese 183), but she is heavily critical of Second Wave Feminism. She argues that feminists were splitting into various subgroups, each of which had their own perspectives and opinions in the larger cultural debate on women’s issues, which was representative of the various rifts in society at the time. Therefore, instead of participating collaboratively as part of the same overall movement, second wave feminism took separate and conflicting tracks which resulted in the undermining of women’s solidarity. Atwood’s definition of equality focuses on “Humanistic Ideals” (Akbar 23) and solidarity rather than biological similarities. To understand how *The Handmaid’s Tale* functions as a response to the second wave feminism, it is important to discuss the movement’s evolution from its early roots.

3.1. The Feminist Movement in Relation to *The Handmaid’s Tale*: Second Wave Feminism

The women movement of the 1960s and 1970s was the largest social movement in the history of the United States. The political and ideological foundations of the ²⁸Second Wave Feminism reach back to the 1800s, a period noted, as Judith Hole and Ellen Levine observe in their study *The Rebirth of Feminism*, for its “Geographic expansion, industrial development, growth of social reform movements, and a general intellectual ferment with a philosophical emphasis on individual freedom” (2). Early activists for women’s rights focused on suffrage because disenfranchisement was the most notable official exclusion of

²⁸Second wave feminism refers to the resurgence of feminist activity in the late 1960s and 1970s, when protest centered on women’s inequality, not only in terms of women’s lack of equal political rights but in the areas of family, sexuality and work.

women. They believed that securing women's right to vote would bring social recognition of women's value which would lead to the moral and social improvement of the entire population. The First Wave Feminism culminated with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, after which the women's movement was almost inactive for forty years (Hole and Levine 14). During these years women's issues and concerns were rarely considered to have any larger social significance which resulted in a growing revolt by women against their oppression as a 'second sex', besides, they were forced out of the workplace and the government failed in ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment. In this vein, the Second Wave Feminism came in form of organizations which were formed to change the way women viewed themselves and legislations which were designed to give women more equal opportunities with the opposite sex. This feminist movement focused on dismantling workplace and salary inequality via anti-discrimination laws. Although few women were raising gender issues at that time, some female leaders were active in social justice and human welfare campaigns within the communist party, which was itself a large-scale social movement in the 1930s and 1940s. Proponents of the Second Wave Feminism considered 'the personal' as 'the political' and were determined to help women understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and reflective of a sexist structure of power. Reflecting on this, Jane Pollock; a former board member of the ²⁹National Organization for Women (NOW), explains that a woman was "[...] expected to enter into a faithful marriage, to live in a nuclear family, and to limit her activities to domestic concerns, volunteer works, and social interests, that [were] severely circumscribed". In other words, the world of American women was limited in almost every respect, from

²⁹It is an American feminist organization founded in 1966. The organization consists of 550 chapters. It was founded when the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission failed to enforce a clause in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender. One of its founders was Betty Friedan. NOW has worked to promote occupational opportunities for women and has supported legislative proposals that would guarantee women equality with men.

family life to the workplace. In this regard, Hole and Levine point out that any dissatisfaction women felt was believed to have resulted from individual alienation, that is to say, according to Pollock, functions of “Psychologically enforced cultural myth, a set of assumptions and values concerning women that have been transmitted consciously and unconsciously for millennia” (16). Therefore, it became clear for the Second Wave Feminists that the psychological roots of inequality had to be addressed to affect change, and in order to do so, the Second Wave Feminism, also known as the Women’s Liberation Movement, began as Liberal or Moderate Feminism adopting a new strategy.³⁰ Liberal Feminism is an individualistic form of feminist theory, which focuses on women’s ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. Liberal feminists argue that society holds the fake belief that women are, biologically, less capable intellectually and physically than men. Thus, it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace. With her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan broke new ground by exploring the idea of women finding personal fulfillment outside of their traditional roles (Fox 23). The book encouraged women to admit and acknowledge the significance of their feelings of personal dissatisfaction, urging them to seek out its social sources. Friedan also helped to advance the women’s rights movements as one of the National Organization for Women (NOW) founders. This signaled an important shift in the cultural perception of women and the focus was shifted from ‘individual maladjustments’ to the permitted social order which resulted in the agreement that women deserve the same privileges, protections, and opportunities as men. Through their revolutionary demands, feminists constituted a threat to male culture, trying to free the wife from the supremacy of her husband. They demanded legal equality in a wide range of issues; sexuality, family, and the improvement of workplace conditions and salaries. The Second Wave Feminism

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_feminism

attacked the so called 'natural' rights and responsibilities of men to lead and impose their rules in the family. Feminist activists called for women's autonomy and economic independence, asserting that the latter have the right to decide over their own lives without the hegemonic interference of men.

Though the efforts of Liberal Feminists and the reception of *The Feminine Mystique* had a profound impact on the culture of the United States (Fox 1), the movement was not deprived of its critics. However, Liberal feminism dishonors the importance of the community by focusing on the individual. Critics of liberal feminism argue that its individualist assumptions make it difficult to see the ways in which underlying social structures and values disadvantage women. They argue that even if women are not dependent upon individual men, they are still dependent upon a patriarchal state. Moreover, critics, such as black feminists and postcolonial feminists, assert that mainstream liberal feminism reflects only the values of middle-class, heterosexual, white women and has largely ignored women of different races, cultures or classes. In short, Liberal Feminism ignored working-class and minority women, who, angered by further disenfranchisement, guided their dissatisfaction into the formation of subgroups as a means to further their specific causes and agendas. Of these subgroups, the most relevant to this study, as a means to understand Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, are: Cultural Feminism, Separatism, and Radical Feminism. Each of these sub-groups adopted and advanced a different perspective in the larger cultural debate on women's issues. Therefore, instead of participating collaboratively as part of the same overall movement, Second-Wave Feminists often took separate conflicting tracks. The result was that each sub-group was competing for authority and recognition, undermining women's solidarity.

Early Cultural Feminists sought to reclaim and redefine definitions of femininity and masculinity through identifying and celebrating women's unique characteristics, thus, 'Cultural Feminism' emphasizes on gender differences between men and women in order to seek the understanding of women's social locations in society. It believes that women's liberation can be achieved only through individual change, the recognition as well as the creation of "women-centered" culture, and the redefinition of femininity and masculinity. This type of feminism is of the foundations of the concept that women are "inherently kinder and gentler", in other words, cultural feminists believe that women are inherently nurturing, kind, gentle, egalitarian, and non-violent. A similar concept held by some cultural feminists utilizes essentialist understandings of male and female differences as the foundation of women's subordination in society. For Margaret Atwood, as a politically active supporter of human rights, 'Cultural Feminism' lacked an overt political focus or agenda and was concerned only with recovering cultural and artistic expressions and traditions that were uniquely female. This sub-group sought to move away from representing male-dominated institutions and values in favor of elevating women's experiences and values. Professor Warren Hedges considers "How to create a 'gynocentric' culture without drawing on a notion of 'universal' sisterhood that may exclude some women" (1) as their central dilemma. This gynocentric culture is based on their believed concepts. Atwood criticizes this assumption in *The Handmaid's Tale*, where she presented a woman's culture maintained through women's cruelty towards one another. Atwood often places powerful females in her novels using power against other females, and the ³¹'Aunts' in *The Handmaid's Tale* is a clear type of this feminine power. In this regard, many scholars dismissed the ³²'Aunts' in Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel as

³¹ The class of women assigned to indoctrinate the Handmaids with the beliefs of the new society and make them accept their fate

having granted power from the commanders; since they are given a full responsibility for creating and maintaining the theocracy of Gilead. Critics such as Roberta Rubenstein, in her article “*Nature and Nurture in Dystopia: The Handmaid’s Tale*” believes that the Aunts only “[...] retain power in the puritanical state through their roles as indoctrinators of the handmaids” (104). Offred voices:

I find the entrance to the women's washroom. It still says Ladies, in scrolly gold script. There's a corridor leading in to the door, and a woman seated at a table beside it, supervising the entrances and exits. She's an older woman, wearing a purple caftan and gold eyeshadow, but I can tell she is nevertheless an Aunt. The cattle prod's on the table, its thong around her wrist. No nonsense here “Fifteen minutes,” she says to me. She gives me an oblong of purple cardboard from a stack of them on the table [...] To the woman behind me I hear her [the Aunt] say, “You were just here”. “I need to go again,” the woman says. “Rest break once an hour,” says the Aunt. “You know the rules”. (Atwood 129)

When Offred went to the club with the Commander, she got surprised to see an Aunt responsible for regulating the behaviors of her friend Moira and the other prostitutes along with making decision concerning their breaks. This latter strengthen the role of the Aunts, being responsible for directing the females, even not handmaids.

Separatism is the second relevant sub-group for Margaret Atwood.³³ Separatism is the advocacy of a state of cultural, ethnic, tribal, religious, racial, governmental or gender separation from the larger group. Separatist feminism is a form of radical feminism, which focuses solely on women while opposing patriarchy entirely. Its core idea is the ‘separation’ of women from men, they do not support heterosexual relationships, nor do they tolerate working with or having personal or casual relationships with men. Some separatist feminists consider the political and sexual inequalities between men and women cannot be resolved and that men cannot make positive contributions to the feminist movement and even well-intentioned men replicate the dynamics of patriarchy. These

³³ <https://www.concepts.org/index.php.title=Separatism>

women focus on directing their energies and allegiances towards other women including the choice to work with them towards political and social goals. They think that women could freely express their femininity and female identity, merely by removing themselves from the sphere of male influence, expectation, and judgment. Marilyn Frye, an American philosopher and radical feminist theorist, describes separatist feminism as: "Separation of various sorts or modes from men and from institutions, relationships, roles and activities that are male-defined, male-dominated, and operating for the benefit of males and the maintenance of male privilege, this separation being initiated or maintained, at will, by women" (40). Separatist feminists believe that women can best care for and support one another and combat patriarchy through the creation of female-only spaces and relationships. These spaces manifested themselves in the form of all-female banks, businesses, and social agencies. This movement has been highly criticized for being sexist in and of itself. Hole and Levine characterize the Separatists as women who "Took a pro-woman anti-brainwashing position," explaining that "these women rejected the traditional explanations for female behavior, agreeing with other feminists that women's behavior is not the result of inherent psychological characteristics" (139). Moreover, critics ponder the creation of those female-only spaces could be problematic in that women were choosing merely to separate themselves from society instead of attempting to educate men and bring about some social reform. Therefore, Separatism fails to offer a viable alternative to the existing system, which, according to Pollock, trains men "To equate power with power over others, to view aggression as a valid means of problem-solving" (16), thus, ensuring the continuance of patriarchal systems for future generations. Another potential plunge of Separatism was its tendency to encourage hatred between the sexes. *The Handmaid's Tale* contains indications of Atwood's criticism of Separatism depicting this on her choice of Offred's mother character. Offred's mother seemed to have a low opinion of men for what

she saw as their oppression and abuse of women, and was a firm, almost militant support of the women's rights movement. Offred's mother tried to impart her own values into her daughter but Offred was resistant, she was frustrated by this, saying her daughter took her freedom and rights for granted, she adds: "You young people don't appreciate things, she'd say. You don't know what we had to go through, just to get you where you are" (Atwood 61). Offred's mother does not seek equality for men and women; rather she would most likely be pleased if the male gender was wiped out completely, she claims that she has no room for a man in her life, commenting: "[...] anyway what do I need it for, I don't want a man around, what use are they except for ten seconds' worth of half babies. A man is just a woman's strategy for making other women" (Atwood 60). This marked disrespect for the male sex merely reversed the present social attitudes, without offering solutions to the issue of gender inequalities.

Falling into Radical feminism, which is a philosophy emphasizing the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women, or, more specifically, social dominance of women by men, radical feminists views patriarchy as dividing rights, privileges and power primarily by gender and as a result oppressing women and privileging men (thought.com). For them, true equality between the sexes can only be brought by abolishing gender roles and taking an aggressive approach. Since they were concerned with the implications and effects of women's oppression under the patriarchal social order, they sought to create awareness of the disparate needs of women through the identification and deeper politicization of "Women's Issues" such as reproductive rights, pornography legislation, sexuality, and equality in relationships, and focused on what prominent Feminist theorist Bell Hooks calls "The annihilation of sex roles" (143). Radical feminism was rooted in the broader radical movement, where women participated in anti-war and New Left political movements of the 1960s. They found themselves excluded from equal power by the men

within the movement, even with underlying theories of empowerment. Hole and Levine maintain that as early as 1968 it became evident that “The new women's movement was not going to limit itself to statements of principles or traditional actions of political protest. Targets of what radical women considered ³⁴‘sexism’ were everywhere, and susceptible to attack” (124). In this regard, in a 1978 interview, Atwood mentioned: “I've always wondered [...] do so many women think of themselves as menaced on all sides, and of their husbands as potential murderers?” (Waltzing 44). Consequently, Atwood became skeptical and wary of the more radical expressions of Second-Wave Feminism, because, she did not envisage antagonistic behaviors or approaches as the means to achieve this, while supporting social equality for women. Liberal Feminists, including Margaret Atwood, often see the radicalism of Radical Feminism as potentially undermining the gains of the women's movement with polarizing rhetoric that invites backlash and contend that they overemphasize sexual politics at the expense of political reform. According to Margaret Atwood, the Second Wave Feminism contained some dilemmas and ‘The lack of female solidarity’ is one of these dilemmas. Though all Second-Wave Feminists worked to end the inequalities between the two genders, it often pursued complementary purposes; they were most frequently at odds with one another. Instead of embracing the numerous issues confronting women across socio-economic lines, Second Wave Feminists tended to advance a single agenda, issue, or cause at the expense of all others and, unfortunately, this resulted in hatred and distrust as well as self-segregation between women. Atwood depicts this disunity, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, through Gilead's class system in which women are denied and given a particular dress as well as duties, with no hope of breaking free of these roles except through prostitution, exile, or death. The social structure of Gilead reinforces and heightens the feelings of women's lack of solidarity through the matriarchal regulation

³⁴ Behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex.

and enforcement of Gilead's patriarchy. Nevertheless, in *The Handmaid's Tale* various female characters react and respond in different ways to the oppressive nature of Gilead, some displaying acts of rebellion more than others. Contrary to others, Offred rebels in a discreet manner that can only be identified by the readers of her tale. She rebels through her mind and thoughts, in an extent that does not endanger her safety. Specifically, she achieves this by taking on the role of the storyteller in her mind, mentally reading the world around her, and escaping her reality through memories. Although Offred fails to explicitly resist and rebel against the social structure of Gilead, she cleverly defies its constraints through means of her inner conscious; she makes this clear as she says:

It's also a story I'm telling, in my head, as I go along. Tell, rather than write, because I have nothing to write with and writing in any case is forbidden but if it's a story, even in my head. I must be telling it to someone. You don't tell a story only to yourself. There's always someone else. Even when there is no one. (Atwood 20)

Offred expresses her animosity toward ruthless Gilead law through her subtle rebellions: no woman in this society has the right to read, socialize, or love, but she manages to do all three.

Atwood's critic and exploration of some Feminism dilemmas and passivity provides the catalyst for the backlash scenario envisioned by her in the creation of her feminine characters, which are often carefully crafted with their actions and beliefs. The genders in the Republic of Gilead are divided and live in separate spheres. They are divided into six statuses in legitimate; they make up the mainstream society. There are also two sections of women who reside in illegitimate society, existing outside this society. All of the castes are separated by the color and style of the required dress codes that they wear. Handmaids are assigned slave names that describe their function, which is belonging to a master; such as Offred: Of-Fred. Their clothing consists of red gowns that are tailored to conceal the

shapes of their bodies, along with red shoes and red gloves, wearing white wings around their heads to cut off their peripheral vision, forcing them to only see the person standing in front of them. They are fertile women whose sole function is to bear children for 'The Wives', categorized by wearing the blue color, since they are the spouses of high ranking party officials and considered as the top social level permitted to women. Handmaids are created by re-educating women, 'The Aunts', who have broken the gender and social laws. The "Daughters" are the natural or adopted children of the ruling class. The "Marthas" wear a green dull; they are the older infertile women whose submissive nature and domestic skills lead them to a life of domestic servitude. Whereas the "Econowives" are recognized by the blue and green stripes, they are women who have married relatively low ranking men. "The Jezebels" belong to Gilead's illegitimate class and are women who are forced to be prostitutes and entertainers. They work in state-sanctioned brothels, which are unknown to the majority of the general populace, and allowed to drink alcohol and socialize with men. However, all women who are incapable of integrating socially with Gilead's gender division, like the sterile women, widows, feminists, lesbians and others, are the 'Unwomen'. The division of labor between women is what plays a great part in engendering the feeling of resentment between them, Marthas, Wives and Econowives perceive the Handmaids as being sluttish, and look down upon them with great disgust, though the continuity of society is placed in control of the handmaids. The latter believes that they should be placed in a more superior position, Offred says: "The two young Guardians salute us [Handmaids], raising three fingers to the rims of their berets. Such tokens are accorded to us. They are supposed to show respect, because of the nature of our service" (Atwood 11). Moreover, Margaret Atwood looks at how women's own misunderstanding of men and feminism could result in a backlash and repression leading to a women's way of survival that could be critical. She condemns the non-solidarity of

feminism waves through the division the labor and the caste system of women which causes hatred between one another. Via the regime of Gilead, the author demonstrates that women are united in subjugation, yet divided by oppression.

4. Postmodernism and the feminine body as an object of oppression

With all of its contradictions, Postmodernism created a world of disorder and fragmentation, an era that blasted the continuous yarn of history to provide counter-histories and incredible potentials. Postmodern literature is part of the socio-cultural and historical development in the society, which can be seen as a specific way of a depiction of the postmodern life and culture. It shows a crisis of identity of human being (ethnic, sexual, social and cultural) and its struggle for legitimization in that society. *The Handmaid's Tale* is a grim, first-person narrative about the futuristic state of Gilead. The protagonist, Offred, struggles to fit into this patriarchal theocracy, her technique of revealing the patriarchal male discourse is by describing Gilead using the language and reality of the new regime. There is a postmodern paradox in the incompatibility between Offred's mastery of language and her position that she occupies as a handmaid. It can be argued that it is Atwood's presumption that when such narrative intelligence could be subjugated and enslaved, anyone can be. It also surmises her speculation that the oppression that Offred experienced was evil of power wrought upon society. Though Atwood herself has dismissed the idea of her novel being science fiction, there are components from science fiction, political satire, and speculative fiction to name a few, that the novel incorporates. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* elaborates this postmodern fiction and questions the possibility of 'Truth', using important literary devices and language such as, parody, satire, pastiche, foreshadowing and so many others. Yet, Allusion is the most prominent one.

4.1. Allusions in *The Handmaid's Tale*

The allusions in "*The Handmaid's Tale*" are very wide-ranging, extending from the Bible to late twentieth century feminism and environmental issues. There are also references to some motifs from fairytales when Offred sees herself, in chapter two page 3, as: " [...] some fairytale figure in a red cloak, descending towards a moment of carelessness that is the same as danger" and imagines herself, in chapter 17 page as a figure, "In the wood at midnight [...] seeking a magic flower". In the page 74 from chapter 24, there is an example of quotations from Shakespeare when Offred says: "[...] context is all", alluding King Lear "Ripeness is all". Another literary text reference is present in chapter 44 page 154 from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* which is, "Big Brother is Watching You" when Offred says: "Under His Eye trying to sound fervent". Sigmund Freud's psychiatric theory of 'Penis Envy' is the reference that Aunt Lydia uses when she was warning the handmaid's away from writing tools like the pen, Offred claims: "Pen Is Envy, Aunt Lydia would say, quoting another Center motto, warning us away from such objects" (Atwood 98). Yet, the Biblical references in *The Handmaid's Tale* are in an effort to set Gilead within an international history of totalitarianism and various forms of institutional oppression. Gilead is basically, a state run by religion. Atwood criticizes the 'right wing' religious fanaticism revealed to be at the heart of Gilead's government. However, biblical references, mostly from Jeremiah, Genesis, and Job, run through every aspect of Gilead daily life. The Bible plays an important role in the naming of objects and people in the state. Almost all names of women in Gilead occur in the bible. The name Martha refers to the sister of Mary who served Jesus. The handmaid refers to the Old Testament:

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, Give me children or I shall die![...]Then she said, Here is

my maid Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees, and even I may have children through her. (Genesis 30)

Rachel insists that her husband Jacob bed his handmaid because she has failed to conceive. It is exactly this function that the handmaids in Gilead have and that is justified by biblical statements.

On the other side, men according to their role in society are called “Commanders of the Faithful”, “Guardians of the Faith”, the police force, “Angels” or “Eyes of the Lord”. The “Angels” are the soldiers of the army, and they have names like “Angels of the Apocalypse” or “Angels of Light”. Whereas the word “angel” suggests something innocent or holy, the “Angels” in Gilead fight in wars. The names seem to suggest that it is a religious war they fight. The “Eyes” are the secret police who are supposed to spy on the people in Gilead. The name is also taken from the Bible (Willi Real). The fact that nearly all the names given to the people in Gilead refer to the Bible suggests that the regime justifies the roles these people have in society with certain events in the Bible. By doing this, the citizens' roles are given biblical significance. However, the most important biblical allusion is that of the Republic of Gilead. It has been named after the place where the patriarch Jacob set up his “heap of stones” and established his household which means “hill of testimony” or “mount of witness”: “Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Jacob said to his kinsmen “Gather Stones” So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed [in the King James version, Gilead]” (Genesis 31). Furthermore, Gilead is mentioned several times in the Bible as a place of fertile lands (145 times), such as: “To the east [The Israelites] occupied the land [...] because their livestock had increased in Gilead” (Jeremiah 32) and “who [The tribes], led very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock” (Chronicles 5). The Biblical land of Gilead was a land of prospering livestock; people came to it because of the land's green and fertile

soil. Ironically, The Republic of Gilead was also a land of prosperity, except the green and fertile land was that of the handmaid's womb; showing how the state tries to appear clean and pure, although it is not. It is a wasteland that has been devastated by pollution and war and whose citizens are oppressed. Every handmaid is used as an alternate mother for the wealthy families in the Republic of Gilead. This allusion is applied with this quote from Aunt Lydia: "This is the center, where nothing moves. The Republic of Gilead knows no bounds. Gilead is within you" (Atwood 12). That is to say, the lush soil, and the future, of Gilead were located 'within the Handmaids'. Another place which was named in reference to the bible was "Rachel and Leah Centre", which was after the two sisters Rachel and Leah, the two wives of Jacob who both use their maids as surrogate mothers:

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed". He took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant). (Genesis 17)

This Genesis passage from the Bible introduces Jacob's two wives Rachel and Leah which highlight the biblical allusion existing in the novel of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Atwood connected the naming of the center, in which women are trained to be handmaids, to Rachel and Leah because the two sisters could not have children which make them order Jacob to intercourse with their handmaid Bilhah. Gilead may consider this latter as a religious justification for the practices related to the role of the handmaids.

As a postmodern feminist novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* deals with the evils of political system which triggers the women's dilemma and exploitation. Simone de

Beauvoir's comment asserting the subjugation of women in *The Second Sex* clearly illustrates the predicament of women in Gilead: "For him she is sex- absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not with reference to her; she is the incidental as opposed to the essential. He [the superior gender] is the Subject, he is Absolute – she is the other" (84). He points out that the biology is one of the most crucial factors for men to determine women's subordination, he asserts: "He [the man] thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection to the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it" (15). Beauvoir's views justify the feminine role that society favors it being the most suitable role for women. The latter has long been restricted to her body, thus, it is evident that women's inferiority and oppression are rooted in the female body. The study of the body in scholarship on *The Handmaid's Tale* often has to do with Offred's narrative. Critics observe that the fragmentation of the handmaid's narrative reflects the dismemberment of her body. In Jacques Leclair's words, "Offred's body has been fragmented and reduced to a womb on legs" (87). Roberta Rubenstein argues in *Nature and Nurture in Dystopia* that "The imagery of mutilation and dismemberment permeates the narrator's own language" (VanSpanckeren and Castro 105). Offred's "fragmented selfhood" mirrors her "amputated speech" (Atwood 105). Examining the way in which patriarchy splits the female body, Rao suggests: "The connection existing between self/text/body is indicated by the fact that the story itself is described in anthropomorphic terms" (83). The handmaid's body can be pictured as a terrain where exterior forces are colliding in order to colonize it. According to Rich; the female body is exactly: "The terrain on which patriarchy is erected" (55). Henceforth, in a conflict between the state and the women, 'the body' is transformed into an object of repression, exploitation and containment. In *The Handmaid's Tale* women are divided into categories

according to the demands of the state, their bodies are made to comply with the rules, they must be docile, and those who are infertile are sent to death. Hence, their bodies define them, yet, enslaving them in the process. Offred exemplifies just how fertile women are prominent within her society as she describes what it is like to publicly see an impregnated woman, “She’s a magic presence to us, an object of envy and desire, we covet her. She’s a flag on a hilltop, showing us what can still be done: we too can be saved” (Atwood 13). This “magic presence” represents pregnancy to be one of the most celebrated stages in a woman’s existence within her society.

5. Reflecting Foucault’s “Body Politics” on “Offred”, *The Handmaid’s Tale* Protagonist

In the beginning, Offred’s body is a source of empowerment, one thing that she thinks they cannot take away from her, something that could possibly be used to her advantage. Upon looking back to her days at The Center, Offred speaks for her fellow handmaids and says, “We still had our bodies. That was our fantasy” (Atwood 2). They may have taken away everything, even their names, but Offred and the other women still have their bodies, their own skin and blood, yet, not for long time. The patriarchal regime of Gilead is obsessed with the female body and its reproductive system; women started to be given primary importance only on the basis of their reproductive capacity, which reflects the sick attitude of society. Offred, then, complains in one place, her pitiable condition stating: “We are for breeding purposes[...]there is supposed to be nothing entertaining about us; no room is to be permitted for the following secret lusts[...] We are a two-legged womb, that’s all: sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices” (176). In the light of this context, Reshmi writes in his *Ecofeminist Vision: A Study of Margaret Atwood’s Surfacing and The Handmaid’s Tale*, “In the Gileadean patriarchy, a woman is denied the right to possess or to have control over her own body. Her body is segmented and her value is

determined on the basis of her reproductive capability". Offred, the protagonist of *The Handmaid's Tale*, begins to speak out of her body and for her body. Her body is a subject that hunts the novel and, as a female victim of a patriarchal social order, she cannot separate her body from her story because her body is already the story. In this vein, she comments: "I [Offred] 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 (Atwood 38). In fact Offred's oral tale is a feminine writing which is associated with the female body; through writing she will recuperate her body as well as herself. Atwood's text is extremely rooted in the physical. The body is quite literary a commodity, since women are hired for their fertility. Consequently, the body is stigmatized in order to keep the women in submission. As a result, the handmaids, the most sexualized women of Gilead, are forced to keep their bodies covered from head to toe by red cloth and white wings. Offred also refers to herself in the plural, indicating that her individual identity has been subsumed by a collective identity. She tells the Commander that "our [Handmaids] skin gets very dry" (Atwood 80), when speaking of her own skin. This collective ownership of Offred's body replaces her personal ownership of herself. She no longer connects with her body; she exists outside of it. Offred Claims:

I cannot avoid seeing, now, the small tattoo on my ankle. Four digits and an eye, a passport in reverse. It's supposed to guarantee that I will never be able to fade, finally, into another landscape. I am too important [...].I am a national resource. (Atwood 33)

Having an eye tattoo on her ankle is a symbol of a present reminder that her body is under surveillance, which controls her mind, body, as well as behaviors.

Foucault's Panopticon metaphor affords insight into the intensive surveillance of the handmaids. The Eyes and Guardians are the novel's agents of social surveillance. They watch and control every move the handmaids do through observing their bodies. Therefore,

the female body cannot be detached from the social values and cultural constructs in which it is occupied; however, it is trained and shaped by the Gileadean mimicry of gender roles. Gilead's perception of the body as solely a means of production holds up the relationship between woman and her body. For Offred, she is dispossessed of her body; she is reduced to a womb that has to carry the seeds of the next generation. She no longer knows where to place herself or her mind within her body. She exists outside of it and exiled from it. She declares "My nakedness is strange to me already. My body seems outdated" (Atwood 32).

6. Conclusion:

In the long run, Feminists tried to free the wife from the supremacy of her husband. They demanded legal equality in a wide range of issues and called for women's autonomy and economic independence, asserting that the latter have the right to decide over their own lives without the hegemonic interference of men. Nevertheless, Margaret Atwood is not satisfied with Feminism rebellion and claims that women's passivity will lead to a living conditions as Gilead's ones. *The Handmaid's Tale* depicts Atwood's dissatisfaction and criticism through creating a dystopian society, which in a terrifying way contrasts with the ideologies and beliefs of contemporary society and presents a strong connection between government and church in which ones ideals fall onto the other.

Atwood argues that the Second Wave Feminism had swerved away from its main goals and was unintentionally leading women to an anti-feminist future. However, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the dramatic pervasion of sterility in the United States of America has led the political figures to build a social structure founded upon religious extremism and severe political hierarchy, the goal of which is to have total control on women's bodies. Gilead's aim is to strip women of their freedom in order to make of them docile vessels and reproductive instruments that would ensure the breeding of next generation. Since

woman's identity is confined to her biological functions, she becomes entrapped and imprisoned by her body. Atwood generates a world filled with policies that are aimed at classifying women on the basis on their function or status in society controlling the functionality of the female body for total reproductive control. As rewards and prize for men, the fertile women, are made the 'Handmaids' as reward objects sent to the Commanders' households.

After analyzing *The Handmaid's Tale* as a feminist postmodern novel, it might be claimed that Gilead takes the Bible as a justification for its subjugation, oppression and even the roles devoted for women. The chapter, also, investigated these inequalities and oppression of women by demonstrating the fact of their bodies as a means of subjugation. However, the up-coming third chapter will portray the means by which the woman body is subjugated. It concluded that the society has taken ownership of all bodies, but especially of the handmaids' bodies through a mechanism of diffuse but omnipresent surveillance. Depending on Foucault's Panopticon concept, handmaids become a collectively owned property whose ultimate goal is to produce collectively owned babies, hence, the story emanates from not only a female voice but also a female body.

Chapter Three

Exploring the Gendered Space in Gilead.

1. Introduction

The position of women in society and their subordination, oppression and marginalization have attracted the attention of scholars, activists, feminists, and namely postmodern theorists. Women are being reduced to a second-class inferior gender. As mentioned in the second chapter, the notion of the body is essential to the feminist analysis of the oppression of women because biological differences between the two sexes are the foundation that resulted on gender inequality. By means of an appeal to historical biological characteristics, the idea that women are inferior to men is naturalized and legitimized. Thus, the state has created a comfortable superior space dedicated merely for the superior gender. These kinds of spaces are prohibited for women to be in. Depicting this in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood, in her work of speculative fiction, has depicted this marginalization of women via creating a totalitarian regime which is constructed upon the Panopticon architecture, in which power is predominantly exercised over women. Foucault has further argued that the Panopticon was some sort of a laboratory of power which could be used to train or correct individuals or even to impose surveillance on them. This architecture has the ability to penetrate into peoples' behaviors via a physical surveillance and separating people from each other, similarly, surveillance is carefully structured. In many ways *The Handmaid's Tale* could be seen as an examination of power. The most obvious form of power in the novel is the regime of the Republic of Gilead. It creates simulations and makes people believe to consider them the only reality. In this regard, Baudrillard states that media of the hyper real world has a great role to control people regarding their diverse spaces. It produces simulations that may alter one's sense of reality, further mediating a character's experience with his surroundings. The production of simulation by media can be seen, primarily, in the fake information it shares.

This third chapter will adopt a ³⁵geocritical method to analyze the concept of space. It aims at demonstrating Gilead as a gendered space. Depicting the concepts of space and gender in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the present part of the dissertation highlights Margaret Atwood's representation of women marginalization via creating a totalitarian regime which is constructed upon the Panopticon architecture, wherein power is predominantly exercised over women. In this regard, this chapter will also juxtapose Gilead with the concept of 'simulacra and simulation' to investigate whether the Gileadean space is the real or only its copy.

2. Apprehending Gilead as a Gendered Space

In the concern of power imposed in the postmodern world, gender and space have historically been overlooked, both empirically and theoretically. Actually, gender and space share a cross-disciplinary relationship in the spatial theory as well as the concept of power. This is due to the fact that the different existing spaces entail certain activities that are attributed either to men or women. However, neither space nor gender roles are passive, 'natural', entities, rather, they are socially produced. The living space implies a simultaneous division in placing people according to their biological nature. Low argues that the genderization of spaces is effected through the organization of perceptions, which leads, in the sense of a somatization of social order, to a choice of place and placing practice that reproduces including a gendered space (129). Attributing with a significant work on 'space', Lefebvre, influenced by Marxist theory, suggests that gendered spaces are created by socialism, whether of the state or the superior gender, to manipulate and control women, putting them in an inferior status. The Marxist philosopher is interested in how

³⁵ A geocritical approach is a theory elaborated by Bertrand Westphal to engage with fictional spaces. He believes that the understanding of a specific place is a subjective matter which will differ from one person to another, depending on their experiences. Westphal suggests that the experience of space may be translated through literature via modes of perception, presenting a critic of reality.

space is produced conceptually as well as materially. He suggests that the social production of space works through different processes which can be classified within both physical and mental categories. The model of 'the separate spheres', which is a hierarchical system consisting of dominant public male realm of production in the public space and a female subordinate realm of reproduction in the private space, might be considered as a suitable representation of the gendered space. However, space for Foucault is not only 'a means of production' but also 'a means of control'.

2.1. Space as a Means of Control in Gilead

The world had dictated men and women relationship for centuries and rooted male domination into the structure of social spaces at all levels of leadership. However, the countries as well as states are under the influence of a given power, which can be political, military or economic, wherein their societies are patriarchal. These patriarchal societies adopt a political-social system that insists on male superiority. They consider the male gender as an inherently dominating, superior to everything, namely females, and awarded the right to dominate and rule them through various forms of psychological terrorism and physical violence. Despite the many gains of contemporary feminist movement, patriarchy as a system remains intact. Feminist theorists argue that in any of the historical forms, patriarchal society takes the dominated- gender system as well as the political system of discrimination as a regime of the state. They characterize patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. As a feminist and political theorist, Carole Pateman writes, "The patriarchal construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjection" (207). Thus, for feminist theories, the concept of patriarchy often includes all the social mechanisms that reproduce and exert male dominance over women. They characterize patriarchy as a social

construction, which can be overcome by revealing and critically analyzing its manifestations (Ann 21). Women, thus, are considered only as an available object for satisfying men's desires. However, radical feminists argued that "Unlike economic class, sex-class sprang directly from biological reality: men and women were created different, not equal" (Firestone 172). The position of the radical feminists has been criticized for putting too much emphasis on reproduction and sexuality. Some scholars have pointed out that it is curious that feminists should "[...] succumb to such blatant biological determinism" (Jackson 199).³⁶ The postmodernists contend that women subordination results from the cultural construction of who a man or woman is. They point to the effectiveness of the capacity of language to shape people's thoughts and desires. Postmodernist conceptions of why women are oppressed has been criticized for neglecting the social context of power relations and failing to recognize the systematic oppressions of gender, class and race (Walby 12).

Looking through Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, the space is not recognized as a container that simply needs to be filled but it is an active designer of the social relations. For him, space is a politically contested field. It determines who the dominant gender is and who the oppressed one is. Furthermore, Space and power share social relations and as such, they are produced and reproduced through overlapped dimensions that are simultaneously material, ideal, and quotidian.

In this regard, Jeremy Bentham's nineteenth-century prison reform provides Foucault with a representative model for what happens to society in the nineteenth century. He created the concept of "Panopticon", of Greek origin meaning "all seeing eye". Bentham received the idea in 1786 when visiting his brother's workshop in Belarus. The

³⁶ <http://paperity.org/patriarchy-and-gender-inequality-in-nigeria-the-way-forward>

workshop's employees were spread out in a circle and in its center was the manager's office from where he could constantly watch all the workers (20). Bentham's idea was to employ this structure for the construction of a prison. Bentham argued in ³⁷*The "Panopticon"* that the perfect prison would be structured in such a way that cells would be open to a central tower. In the model, individuals in the cells do not interact with each other and are constantly confronted by the panoptic tower. They cannot, however, see when there is a person in the tower; they must believe that they could be watched at any moment, "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault 201). He considered this prison reform as a model for how society should function, and people need to believe that any person could be surveyed at any time in order to maintain order in a democratic and capitalist society. In this vein, Foucault comments:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (202-203)

As Foucault puts it, the Panopticon is a type of location of bodies in space, he adds: "Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behavior must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used" (205). Likewise, Henry Lefebvre explained that the creation of a space is a conscious process that goes through two different phases: the 'Perceived' and the 'Conceived' while the third phase which is the 'Lived' serves as a report of the individual experience with the space that have been passed through the two first phases. Lefebvre argued that the space is shaped and modeled through a political process since its production has obvious political aspects

³⁷ The prison's architecture consists of an annular building at the periphery and a tower at the centre. The annular building is divided into cells with two windows one on the inside which exposes the cell to the tower in the centre and one from the outside which allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. Therefore, the full lighting and the position of the supervisor in the tower would permit to capture every single movement of the inmates.

claiming: “There is a politics of space because space is political” (qtd in Alden 125). However, according to Foucault, space has so often been consigned to the fixed and the dead to the realm of the already-given. He discusses how seeing and being seen affects human behavior in his book: *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, examining the development of the penal institutions of the West and he considers the topic of surveillance in relation to this. One of the ways in which the power of ³⁸the gaze manifests itself is through surveillance. Surveillance functions to observe the citizens in a country or city and to some extent control them. This is present in the architectural structure of Bentham’s Panopticon, which is a structure designed to observe and control its inmates in an efficient way (Foucault 200). Michel Foucault identified the role of surveillance as being the main force of power structures within the modern period and its effect and use of space and planning. He, also, illustrated the idea of ‘the production of space’, in the book mentioned above, starting the chapter of ‘Discipline’ with the measures adopted in the seventeenth century when the plague appeared in town. These measures involved a strict spatial partition and the division of town into distinct quarters, each placed under a strict surveillance, in order to prevent the plague from spreading. Hence, Discipline is the technique of power, which contains a constant and perpetual surveillance of individuals because it is not sufficient to observe them occasionally or see if they work to the rules. Thus, it is needed to keep them under surveillance to ensure that the activity takes place all the time and submit them to a perpetual pyramid of surveillance. Michel Foucault argued that the Panopticon embodied the perfect architectural representation of the mechanism of surveillance. This architecture turned around two central concepts: partitioning and scrutinizing. He further explained that this model of disciplinary mechanism demonstrated the way of exercising power over people, by scrutinizing them, controlling their relations

³⁸ The notion of seeing and being see.

and separating them to avoid any threatening combinations. This particular use of space and the careful distribution of bodies into specific places results in a powerful space of surveillance and control, thus, this architectural apparatus will sustain the power relation, as the inmate will never be able to tell whether he is being watched and hence will maintain the discipline maintained on him. Physical surveillance of this kind is important in order to internalize a watcher in their subjugated population. In addition, surveillance is carefully structured. In order to keep a prison institution calm and tidy, Bentham Thought that prisoners should be separated (9). However, the buildings' structure in *The Handmaid's Tale* resembles the surveillance system described above; even the kind of surveillance 'via separation' is present.

One of the central themes in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is the power of the gaze. It includes elements which correspond to the discussion of surveillance and the Panopticon. In Gilead, the state has founded many buildings similar to Bentham's Panopticon tower, like the towers with armed guards, and high posts with floodlights which are outlined by walls and armed guards, where in people are isolated from friends and family and put into different social groups with different assignments. The state is constructed of barriers, gates and checkpoints that serve the purpose of enclosing the streets. Guardians working for the government located at the checkpoints have to check the identification passports belonging to the passing citizens. This architectural structure of the city functions as a physical controlling mechanism designed to restrict the citizens' movement. In this regard, when studying punishment and discipline in prisons, Foucault noticed that the main punishment for misbehaving inmates was to lock them up in their cells. Foucault comments that "The entire parapolitical institution[...] culminates in the cell, on the walls of which are written in black letters: 'God sees you'" (294). This form of isolation in their rooms is what the 'Handmaids' endure many hours a day. It might be a

way to leave them alone with their internalized watcher making sure they stay on track with the Commanders' moral nature. The only written word Offred has access to is printed on her pillow and it seems as if she is constantly devouring it due to her lack of all other texts: "I can spend minutes, tens of minutes, running my eyes on the print: faith. It's the only thing they've given me to read" (Atwood 67). This obsessive repeating and reflecting over the word is probably part of the plan to keep Offred docile. The Gileadean society is structured like a feudal society in medieval Europe, which lightens what Foucault calls a ³⁹carceral continuum (297). At the top there are Commanders, who are in possession of all the power in the state. At the second highest layer in society are the Eyes, which is a fitting name for this male military group "who sees all." Atwood uses the symbol of the 'Eyes' to represent this oppression. They not only monitor and perform extensive surveillance on the public, but also ask as a paramilitary force that forcibly removes people from the public environment for displaying or expressing thoughts about the current government and the social structures they have put in place. The next are the Aunts, a female group who is responsible for the training of women into Handmaids. Below them there are different groups separated by skin color, religion or occupation. Near the bottom the Handmaids are to be found. All the groups have their own uniforms. The handmaids wear long red dresses with long sleeves since it is important not to attract anyone. While the Eyes attain power by seeing and knowing, the handmaids' experience is quite the opposite, which is why they wear hats with blinkers on them outdoors (Atwood 52). This hierarchic system keeps everyone involved in the Commanders' cause since everyone has someone to report to. The handmaids and other exposed groups at the bottom are the ones that act most out of fear and self-preservation. Even in the same societal layer trust is a rare phenomenon. This

³⁹A prison consisting of a series of islands. It appears in social theorist Michel Foucault's work on surveillance systems and their technologies over modern societies and its practice of social control and discipline over its population in all areas of social life.

system disciplines the population and implements a transparency all the way from the top to the bottom. Thus, surveillance in Gilead is both physical and mental. Moreover it exists between people. This “social” surveillance contributes to strengthening the internalized watcher. To be categorized and put into a group and treated accordingly is offensive and demeaning. Another tool, directed solely against women, to suppress their individuality and discourage independent thinking is the patriarchal categorization. The handmaids do not even have their own names; they are named after their present master, their Commanders. To ensure that the population is kept docile, they, as the top of the power pyramid, have implemented the Christian god as their ally employing him as a judging eye. Norberto Bobbio claims that, “A power founded on force alone may be considered effective but not legitimate” (81). The Christian oligarchy in Gilead took the power over Gilead by force, justifying their action by referring to Christian beliefs; they modify ordinary Christian beliefs to build a better foundation for their cause. The rulers have altered passages of the bible and turned god into an omnipresent and judging power in favor of their agenda. Bobbio mentions different principles of legitimating force and questionable methods that societies all over the world have been using to obtain power. To build and support his theory about what the strongest principle is, he uses the English Philosopher Thomas Hobbes’s statement: “Authority and not Reason makes the Law” (84) and he comes to the following conclusion: “In a pyramidal conception of authority the ultimate authority is the will of God” (84). This illusion of “God’s will” is what the Commanders are convincing their subjects that they practice in Gilead. Katharina Harju is of a similar opinion claiming that, “In the Gileadean society it is the bible that controls the government; it is a holy text and nobody except the people from the higher social class who are allowed to own one”. Thus, Biblical passages are detached from their original context in order to serve the purpose of the authorities. Offred says:

For lunch it was the Beatitudes. Blessed be this, blessed be that. They played it from a tape, so not even an Aunt would be guilty of the sin of reading. The voice was a man's. Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed be the meek. Blessed are the silent. I knew they made that up, I knew it was wrong, and they left things out, too, but there was no way of checking. Blessed be those that mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Atwood 45)

Offred cites one of the altered biblical passages that she and the other handmaids were fed every day during their handmaid training via speakers. The parts, about meekness and silence are the ones that appear most frequently in Offred's world to insist on their roles. However, in medieval Europe, it was common to torture and execute criminals in public. Foucault writes about the function of such punishments and the reasons for making people watch, he declares:

People were summoned as spectators: they were assembled to observe public exhibitions and amends honorable; pillories, gallows and scaffolds were erected in public squares or by the roadside; sometimes the corpses of the executed persons were displayed for several days near the scenes of their crimes. Not only must people know, they must see with their own eyes. Because they must be made to be afraid; but also because they must be the witnesses, the guarantors, of the punishment, and because they must to a certain extent take part in it. (58)

The equivalent in Gilead is 'the wall, which is built close to the church; a red brick wall. On the top of the wall, there is a broken glass in concrete and the gates are guarded by soldiers. Floodlights mounted on metal posts above it to search the area, and the most frightening thing about the wall is its hooks. These hooks are for hanging up dead people on display to remind people of the threat to their protected society. People are supposed to learn the lesson without doing anything they are not supposed to. Besides, they should also feel that it is necessary to be rid of rebels and be reminded that the rulers are needed, caring and protective of their people. Offred expresses her feelings about walking past the wall and noticing that no one was hanging on it:

I don't turn at once, though, but remain standing where I am, taking a last look at the Wall. There are the red bricks, there are the searchlights, there's the barbed wire, there are the hooks. Somehow the Wall is even more

foreboding when it's empty like this. When there's someone hanging on it at least you know the worst. (Atwood 84)

The individuals who are executed and hung up on the wall may have committed crimes such as adultery, practicing a different religion than Christianity or been engaged in conspiratorial behavior or breaking any of the arbitrary rules such as homosexuality in Gilead. The people walking past the wall are constantly reminded of the regime's power.

2.2. Male Power over Female Characters in Gilead

The greatest power that someone can have is independence, especially in regards to one's sexuality, but this power is not always equally given to both genders. Women are not given the proper tools to exercise their sexual autonomy and thereby have difficulties overcoming sexual discrimination and resisting the physical power of male sexuality. Since women are the only individuals with the ability to give birth their biology has often led their culture to isolate them to specific roles and identities. In this esteem, Foucault's analysis of power emphasizes micro level power relations. The identification of the body and sexuality as the direct spot of social control is Foucault's most fertile insight into the workings of power at the micro-political level. He argues that, power functions throughout the social body; hence, it is best snatched in its concrete effects and in the everyday practices which sustain and reproduce power relations. In an effort to avoid the conflation of the social category of woman with biological functions, earlier forms of feminism developed a theory of social construction based on the distinction between sex and gender. The sex/gender distinction represents an attempt by feminists to sever the connection between the biological category of sex and the social category of gender.

The Women in Gilead are not considered as human beings but rather they are regarded as tools by which the patriarchy can take benefit for the betterment of the infertile

land. Concerning this, Jane Armbruster Claims “The very existence of Gilead Depends upon the suppression and manipulation of human feelings” (148). Moreover, the connection between sex and power indicates how the sexual abuse of the female body, whether it is via childbirth or rape, creates an inferior status for women. Power in Gilead is directly connected to the sex roles of both genders that give men all the control over the relationship. Atwood has portrayed a picture of the society in which men enjoy the privilege of freedom and women have been reduced to the status of slaves

Women are the most obviously oppressed group in state; they are used for domestic service, reproductive purposes, prostitution, to control other women. Some women may have a privileged position yet used by the men as instruments of control and all have their lives dictated and controlled by the men who run Gilead. The female gender is socially powerless in respect to the very reproductive capacities that might make them powerful, because the ruling males of the regime so powerfully and strongly control them (Eisenstein 237). Fertile women hoped for a power and significance over all infertile members of society yet, because males already had an extreme authority, the women never had the chance to become powerful. Conversely, when bound by the chains of their positions, the handmaids lost all power and could not even run away without being threatened by the government. The greatest control over women was seen in “those other escapes, the ones you can open in yourself, given a cutting edge” (Atwood 67). Furthermore, women were not only prohibited from killing themselves, rather they were not given any opportunities to attempt suicide as their rooms were detailed with extensive preventative measures and they were always being watched. This control over their choice to live or die highlights their complete absence of power, freedom, and independence. The women are forced into their duties with no emotional or physical escape. Women in Gilead are subjugated in every way. In the novel’s backstory, the narrator tells that on taking

control the regime seized female financial assets, removed their children from second marriages, split up their families and took control of their bodies. Adding to that, women are forbidden to read or walk alone. There is a climate of fear and paranoia in Gilead, created by the regime and prolonged by its military forces ironically named: the Angels, the Eyes of God and the Guardians of the Faith. Although Atwood has posed some females on the powerful positions to depict the existing exploitation in Gilead, yet these women with high status like the Aunts are not given the same rights as men. Starting from the first chapter, the narrator, Offred, demonstrates the gender roles in the Gileadean society, she asserts: “The lights were turned down but not out. Aunt Sara and Aunt Elizabeth patrolled; they had electric cattle prods slung on thongs from their leather belts. No guns though, even they could not be trusted with guns. Guns were for the guards, specially picked from the Angels” (Atwood 2). The Aunts are not allowed to have ‘guns’, Offred explains, contrary to the Angels and the Guards, she voices:

Sometimes the movie she [Aunt Lydia] showed would be an old porno film, from the seventies or eighties. Women kneeling, sucking penises or guns, women tied up or chained or with dog collars around their necks, women hanging from trees, or upside-down, naked, with their legs held apart, women being raped, beaten. (Atwood 59)

Offred here demonstrates that the Aunts, being the voice of the patriarchy, wanted to indoctrinate the Handmaids with the beliefs of the new society and make them accept their fates through exposing kind of movies that depicts the handmaid’s reality.

Likewise, the heterosexuality is a ‘form of power’ of male in the society. MacKinnon believes that Sexuality is the major device of men’s domination and control over women. It is considered as the key instrument of gender inequality as well. “Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality” (MacKinnon 533). Thus, she considers homosexuality is the center point of male power. Because of this latter, the patriarchy has created gender

inequality i.e. male as superior and female as inferior. *The Handmaid's Tale* reveals the nature of patriarchal society, which is full of male sexual violence of female sex. Under this institution, heterosexuality, women's identity is reduced to an object, namely, a sexual object. The novel reflects upon a world that is full of male sexual violence or abuse of female sex. As Mackinnon assumes, "All the ways in which women are suppressed and subjected [...] as what sex is for women and as the meaning and content of femininity" (6). The novel corresponds to Mackinnon's idea that the experiences of sexual objectification within the institution of heterosexuality are inevitably linked with sexual violence and violation on women and also stimulate gender inequality in the state. Moreover, the patriarchal society controls women's sexuality mainly through sexual abuse and sexual violence. Mackinnon indicates that rape, sexual harassment, pornography are the primary abuses of the female sex (33). In her views, women's experiences of sexual objectification mentioned above are the true core of women's oppression. Similarly, in Gilead, the sexual harassment is present when the handmaids consult the doctor. Offred admits that the examination process looks more like sexual harassment than a simple medical checkup. She clearly feels the doctor is constantly sexually harassing her by calling her 'honey' and by touching any part of her body that he wishes to. During the examination, the doctor appears the master of the situation and the handmaid is only a passive tool who offers the opportunity to the master inspects the very interior of her body.

Besides, Atwood analyzes symbolic language to reveal the implications of power and subservience. Language; both dominated by masculine words and controlled by male leaders, allows men to maintain a dominant role while oppressing women. With her puns and deconstruction of words and their definitions that readers may have missed, Margaret Atwood exemplifies the ease with which the power in language is overlooked. She reveals that a closer look would expose the danger in ignoring this power. It is, in fact, a choice to

ignore the submissive roles women participate in through language because it requires an acceptance of the discourses chosen for them by male leaders. Further, the novelist uses also simulacrum as a means of power in Gilead.

3. Simulacrum and Simulation Juxtaposed with Gilead

Because of his dissatisfaction with Marxism, Jean Baudrillard incorporated⁴⁰ Structuralism and Semiology into his analysis of the current world's reality, regarding the consuming objects as system of signs that had to be decoded. In the 1980s and 1990s, he turned away in a large degree from Marxism and Structuralism to post-structuralism. Fascinated by how media affect the perception of reality and the world, the French philosopher became the high priest of postmodern culture. He added that in the postmodern media-laden condition, people do experience something called 'the death of the real', i.e. people live their lives in the realm of hyper-reality, connecting more and more deeply to things like television sitcoms, music videos, virtual reality games, or Disneyland, things that merely simulate reality. Baudrillard has built his whole post 1970s theory of media effects and culture around his own notion of the simulacrum. He argues that in a postmodern culture dominated by TV, films, news media, and the Internet, the whole idea of a true or a false copy of something has been destroyed. Throughout this broad work, there is more than one definition for the simulacrum. Similarly, he claims that there are levels to the different instances of simulacra found in the present society. Although they all point to a subversion of the model and its potential freedom from it, as it is already mentioned in the first chapter, simulacra may be categorized into three different levels,

⁴⁰ A movement of thought in the humanities, widespread in anthropology, linguistics, and literary theory, based primarily on the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure. Structuralism considered language as a system of signs and signification, the elements of which are understandable only in relation to each other and to the system. In literary theory, it challenged the belief that a work of literature reflected a given reality; instead, a text was constituted of linguistic conventions and situated among other texts.

according to what they are based on. Baudrillard, then, construes the categories of the simulacrum as a strategy for tracing the connection between humankind and the system of producing copies and dealing with representation, considering operational practices and their intention. Further, the theory of simulation relies strongly on the ideas of mediation, models and their manipulations. Paradoxically, the idea of reality is obvious to the point where reality is a simulacrum within itself, since people cannot fully perceive their surroundings, cannot fully understand their experience and even communication among humans is controversial.

Thus, by serving as a substitution for the original rather than as a representation of it, the simulacrum creates a distance between itself and the original that negates its origin or reality. This lack of origin creates what Baudrillard calls the “hyper-real.” In hyper-reality images; or signs, no longer allude to their respective original, which is considered unnecessary. Simulation is regarded as the central concept on which the ideas presented by Jean Baudrillard in “precession of simulacra” are built. He developed his notion of symbolic trade to account for the manners in which the world is perceived and organized. Following Foucault, Baudrillard sees the world as governed by impersonal power or a system which decodes control over knowledge of the world which is distributed across society. Baudrillard identifies three orders of simulacra. The first order of simulacra is a representation of the real in the pre-modern period, and it is obviously artificial, in other context, it creates the real as distinguished from. Baudrillard ties this order of simulacrum to the Renaissance in which the attempt to accurately represent reality was the attempt to ratify its existence regardless of representation. In the second order of simulacra, according to Baudrillard, the representation has become as real as the thing it represents. He ties this development to industrialization and mechanical reproduction, which allows for serial production of representations that eclipses the original. Hence, in the modern period, the

original loses its meaning in relation to its copies. The third order of simulacra is at the center of Baudrillard's 'Precession of Simulacra'. For him, in the postmodern age, the representation precedes the real, and in fact, produces it. What it produces is "hyperreality". Baudrillard thinks that this has become the dominant way of understanding and experiencing the world. This imagined real, which is falsely believed to be the actual reality, is lost when moving into this order of simulacra, that of simulation.

As a proof of Baudrillard's views, the copies of the famous works of literature of virtual reality that is created as a simulation of true reality may be recalled. In her novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Canadian writer Margaret Atwood follows the path of postmodernists by questioning the traditional values of Western society. She questions the value of religion in modern society and warns against religious fundamentalism that can lead to the horrible distortions. The story shares the common traits of postmodern works as its very form portrays the view of the world as fragmented and unstable. In the novel, Atwood takes the 'Ecofeminist' view that sexual repression and control of women's reproductive powers are the key mechanisms used to maintain the patriarchal hegemony. Baudrillard's views shared in his book ⁴¹*The System of Objects*, offers the notion of the present world. He believes that the world is no longer given but instead produced, mastered, manipulated, inventoried, and controlled: a world, in short, that has to be constructed; similarly, *The Handmaid's Tale* speaks Baudrillard's concerns by presenting a controlled and constructed world, using examples of recycled culture both as escape and as a method of control and silence a population (Irvine 209). Glenn Deer points out that in *The Handmaid's Tale* "male power and the control over reproductive rights are central issues" (130). He adds that "Atwood assumes that men and women are definable by the power relations between them, that they are perpetually trapped in tactics of self-

⁴¹ It is a tour de force of the materialist semiotics of the early Baudrillard, who emerges in retrospect as something of a lightning rod for all the live ideas of the day.

preservation, in strategies of control, and in the pleasure that comes from the control of others” (131). Coomi S. Vevaina also asserts that, “The architects of Gilead, like the colonial Puritans, desire to create a replica or the kingdom of God on earth by closely following the tenets laid down in the Bible” (233). Hence, by establishing the republic of Gilead in the postmodern period, Atwood is depicting the third order of ‘simulacra’. In this regard, Arnold Davidson postulates that the Bible can be used to justify any end (Jacob 31) and Atwood agrees. She remarks that “A new regime would never say, 'we are socialist, we are fascist'. They would say they were serving God [. . .] you can develop any set of beliefs by using the Bible” (qtd. in Vevaina 224). The regime of Gilead defends and legitimizes its racist sexist policies as having biblical model. The central narrative device of the Handmaid and her services to Gileadean society is a literal re-enactment of the Leah Jacob Bilhah episode from the Bible as given in Genesis 30, quoted as an epigraph in the novel. The Commanders, who regard themselves as latter-day Jacobs, use their Handmaids in a similar way in this new Gilead. Atwood created a fake Gilead which is not is not a place of refuge, unlike its biblical counterpart, where David found help when he fled from Absalom. The Gilead of the Bible was famous for the balm from its trees but in the republic of Gilead, contrary to the hymn, “There is a Balm in it” sung at group weddings called Prayvaganzas in the thanksgiving day; there is no remedy, instead, “There is a Bomb in Gilead” (Atwood 115) says Moira. Furthermore, even the text of the Bible is faked in Gilead. Offred knows that the prayers that the Aunts play in the Rachel and Leah Center are not the words that actually appear in the Bible, but she cannot check it. She says:

Blessed be this, blessed be that. They played it from a disc, the voice was a man's. Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed be the meek. Blessed are the silent. I knew they made that up, I knew it was wrong, and they left things out too, but there was no way of checking. (Atwood 45)

Offred knows that this is not the original passage from the Bible, but she cannot look up the original words because reading and writing are prohibited and the Bible is locked away. The Commander is the only person in the household who is allowed to read it, Offred says: “The Bible is kept locked up, the way people once kept tea locked up, so the servants wouldn't steal it. It is an incendiary device: who knows what we'd make of it, if we ever got our hands on it? We can be read to from it, by him, but we cannot read” (Atwood 43). Offred's mention shows that she is aware of the situation she is in. The state prohibits the reading of the Bible so they can keep using it the way they want without the citizens questioning it or proving it wrong because it is just a copy of the real. They want to make sure that the public do not find out that they sometimes even pretend that certain statements they use are taken from the Bible although they are not. Moreover, Atwood illiterates the theory of simulacra, the “loss of the real” to symbols and signs. She shows that every original of anything has been replaced by many copies. Offred acknowledges the possibility that the footage she is shown is “faked”, she declares:

I'm allowed to watch the news. It seems to be an unspoken rule in this household: we always get here on time, he's always late, Serena always lets us watch the news. Such as it is: who knows if any of it is true? It could be old clips, it could be faked. But I watch it anyway, hoping to be able to read beneath it. Any news, now, is better than none. (Atwood 41)

Offred comes to recognize that the media is complicit in spreading Gilead's ideological message via fake and simulated news, and she no longer uncritically accepts the messages she receives from television. Instead, when she has the chance to watch television, she looks for evidence in the types of stories that are reported, as well as those that are not reported, as to developments in Gilead's war and the progress of the resistance movement. Again, relating this to Baudrillard's simulacrum, it seems evident that the naming in *The Handmaids Tale* is not real, like Ofwarren and Ofcharles. The handmaids' names are only

signs that stimulate the reality of the handmaids and indicate their position, which are slaves of their masters.

3.1. Exploring the Gendered Space through Simulacrum in Gilead

The Handmaid's Tale introduces its readers to a world in which women are reduced to their reproductive organs. Given the role of "Handmaids", these women are stripped of their identity and turned into baby making appliance. Altogether, men and state, control the feminine gender via power whether through surveillance, knowledge, language, creating gendered spaces, or even media. The media theorist, Jean Baudrillard, have been intensely concerned with the concept of the simulation rather of its interaction with the concept of the real and the original, revealing in this preoccupation media's identity not as a means of communication, but as a means of representation. Nostalgia is strikingly credible in this concern, specifically nostalgia for the real and for the meaning. The identity of meaning within concepts of reality is striven for, yet Baudrillard considers it to be irretrievable in a postmodern world, and the media is regarded as an example of the theoretical application in modern society (Devin Sandoz). In this latter, the media function as a distorter of reality. Thus, Baudrillard confirms that the truth is distorted through the "misinformation" of the media. He argues that it shapes the distinction between what is real and what is a representation, to the point where people become unsure whether their experiences are real or not. Baudrillard has referred to Disneyland as an example of hyperreality, where an illusion of reality is created, and people's imagination about the real world is satisfied by manmade, contrived structures. It brings fiction and imagination to something that seems real Baudrillard states:

The Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false: it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real. Whence the debility, the infantile degeneration of this imaginary. It's meant

to be an infantile world, in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the “real” world, and to conceal the fact that real childishness is everywhere, particularly among those adults who go there to act the child in order to foster illusion of their real childishness. (238)

Hence, Disneyland is not just a second order of simulation; where fake mountains look more real than real, but a third order since it conceals the fact that it is the ‘real’ country, all of ‘real’ America. It is presented as imaginary in order to make individuals that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation.

Atwood consciously places Gilead in New England; Landmarks such as ‘the library’ and ‘the wall’ are obviously booked from Cambridge. The choice of Cambridge as a setting is significant because it is the location of ⁴²Harvard University. Under Gilead’s rule, Harvard Yard and its buildings have been transformed into a detention center run by the Eyes. In the first place, Massachusetts was first established as a theocracy by the Pilgrim Fathers. Being the premier site of learning in the United States, it applied a strict interpretation of the Bible to all aspects of life. Gilead, by contrast, is a theocracy ruled by keeping people ignorant. Written and read language is reserved only for the powerful and dominant gender in the state. The setting emphasizes the way Gilead controls its citizens, namely women considered as the inferior gender. The hierarchy of Gilead aims at keeping women; especially handmaids, ignorant by prohibiting reading, writing, or even talking to other people, in order to lose all the means for discovering the real truth. The handmaids have only the television as the only means to gain information. , which reflects the possibility of subversion of current technology and social control devices. However, Offred is aware that the television does not tell the truth of Gilead, but the truth that the state of Gilead wants them to believe. She claims: “You can't just do that, said the woman who sat next to me.

⁴² One of America’s most famous institutions of higher learning

This sounded false, improbable, like something you would say on television” (Atwood 91). She asserts that everything told in television is false in reality, but relating to Gileadean patriarchy, all is real. She adds: “[...] this is one of the places where we can exchange news more freely, pass it from one to the next. It's hard for them to single out any one of us or hear what's being said. And they wouldn't want to interrupt the ceremony, not in front of the television cameras” (Atwood 113). Saying that the ceremony cannot be interrupted in front of the television emphasizes the idea that what is shown in the television is not the reality. In this vein, the patriarchy creates an isolated environment and atmosphere for women in order not to discover the reality of the simulation. By imposing such powerful regime on women, the state, using media as a strong weapon, aims at controlling them by making them believe the reality that women are made only to satisfy men's needs. Related to this concern, Foucault argues that prisons are a simulation for the society, hiding the fact that society itself is a prison. Considering the fact that prisoners lose their freedom, Gilead's citizens; namely women, have no freedom at all. Starting by its architecture, Gilead integrates the Panopticon architecture in their buildings aiming at controlling people via high surveillance. In the society of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the handmaids are restricted to their bedrooms except for authorized outings to childbearing Ceremonies, and executions. From the very beginning, the handmaids were being brainwashed in the Red Center. Offred recounts various tales that indicate what it means to be a handmaid in Gilead. She tells how all the handmaids were removed from the society and brought to the Red Centre, which was a training center in which they learned their new roles. She recalls Aunt Lydia saying, “A thing is valued [...] only if it is rare and hard to get. We want you to be valued girls [...] Think of yourselves as pearls” (Atwood 56). However, Offred later claims that, rather than being valued as a human being, they are truly valued as things. Yet, they are unaware of the true reality. They must learn to renounce their previous identities,

to know their place and their duties, to understand that they have no real rights but will be protected up to a point if they conform, and to think so poorly of themselves that they will accept their assigned fate and not rebel or run away. The handmaids sit in a circle, with the Aunts forcing them to join in and believe that their own duties are to be productive machines.

4. Conclusion

By referring to the proponent of postmodernism theories, 'Simulacra and Simulation' of Jean Baudrillard, 'Bio-power' of Michel Foucault and 'The production of Space' of Henry Lefebvre, it is clear that the republic of Gilead impose a strict and oppressive system against its citizens, especially women. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood delineates a story of victimization, exploitation of female sex for procreation, gender politics of patriarchy reducing women to the point of inferiority, and power politics of the postmodern world. Gilead uses different main devices to control women. Juxtaposing Lefebvre's and Foucault's works with the regime of the state, Gilead preferred to apply the surveillance control through choosing the Panopticon architecture as a way to build the society. Being watched all the time, people of Gilead are conducted to specific behaviors. Because this latter has founded many buildings similar to Bentham's Panopticon, Foucault argues that power is reproached and related to the living space. He regarded the state as a prison in which the superior gender dominates the inferior one. As part of her larger exploration of power, Atwood's emphasis on visual culture focuses on learning to see the ideology hidden within visual images. Related to this, the simulacrum is advocated as a cover or representation which conceals the lack of truth within reality. Media carries ideology into the ordinary activities of everyday life through the packaging of consumer products and through entertainment such as television and film, helping people understand

their relationship to the state power, to their own identities, and to those defined as inferior gender. Yet, in Gilead, everything exposed through the media is simulations. In this vein, Baudrillard's hyperreal can be seen under a different light. The hyperreal, as that sphere where signs deal with each other, is both a presence and a proof of absence regarding signs and narrative. As the mentioned illusions expose the fragility of binary and unambiguous concepts of signs, the emergence of the hyperreal can indicate a break from labels, as a flood of language, allowing for a rebirth that would provide less mediation in interpersonal relations.

This chapter investigated the relationship between space and power through simulacrum in the novel. After analyzing these different concepts, it is legitimate to claim that the unreal space of Gilead in *The Handmaid's Tale* is gendered through its buildings and its media. This chapter aimed at highlighting the position of women in society in relation to men. It concludes arguing that *The Handmaid's Tale* exposes a gradual loss of reality in different contexts.

General Conclusion

Over the last decades the studies of space sprung out to be one of the most prominent issues that attract academic scholars. Its significance is manifested in the impact of space on individuals. The central idea of the study of space is the distribution of objects and bodies in space and their relationships towards each other. In literature, the concept of 'space' is regarded as the physical element of the events occurring in the novel. In other words, any artistic creation is accompanied by its own space being real or fictional; it serves as a container for the plot and the events of any narrative. Related to this concern, power is imposed through the dominant state over its citizens, through creating various spaces by which it may rule and control its citizens, resulting in subjugating women considering them as an inferior gender. Hence, the position of women in society in relation to men and their subordination, oppression and marginalization has attracted the attention of scholars, activists, feminists and writers for a very long time. The feminine sex is regarded as the inferior gender when compared to men and thus reduced to a mere infidel and a second class citizen. Furthermore, there is the commonality of general belief system that the best place for women must be different and inferior from that of men. In this vein, the dominant power of the state tends to create and produce spaces wherein women are subjugated and oppressed.

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a provoking novel about the domination and governing of women by men. Atwood created a futuristic unreal world in which she disclosed the patriarchal oppression of women. She presented a dystopia where freedom for women is restricted because of the new Christian government's extreme policies. This new society, The Republic of Gilead, is described by a woman called Offred. The space from which the novel's narrator speaks is where her sense of self is defined by her culture as residing solely in her female body and its capacity for reproduction, and where her body is located within a system of technological surveillance. In the state,

physical surveillance is important in order to internalize a watcher in their subjugated population, realizing this by creating a Panopticon building. In addition, surveillance is carefully structured. In order to keep a prison institution calm and tidy, Bentham Thought those prisoners should be separated. In Gilead people are isolated from friends and family and put into different social groups with different assignments. In this regard, Foucault considers the reality of the Panopticon building as living in a prison; yet, people do not apprehend this reality, believing only on its simulation, which is living in the real true world.

This present thesis aimed at investigating the gender inequalities in the fictional space of Gilead through simulacrum and simulation. It assumed the negotiation of power relations, and the hyperreality of the modern world through the use of two major concepts, discipline and simulacra. These latter concepts are important components of both the improvement of the conditions of the inferior characters in the productive spaces as well as the right identification of the reality of *The Handmaid's Tale* world. The research tended to clarify the confusion of the power nature on the gendered space in the hyper real world, as well as it examined the bodily experience of women under a totalitarian regime along with apprehending the ways in which the female body becomes a means of subjugation under male and state dominance.

Seeking to achieve the research's aims, the work was divided into three chapters. The first chapter followed an analogical method in which it introduced the theoretical background escorting the research. It provided an inductive study to bring together the theories used and the historical context that the novel dealt with, highlighting the shift from modernism to postmodernism. In addition, it attempted, through the use of 'the production of space' and 'biopower' theories, to conceptualize the various issues of space with the focus on its relationship with power and dominance. This chapter also focused on

Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum and simulation as a substantial theory on which the work is founded.

As for the second chapter, it followed an analytical method that assisted the examination of the novel's feminist reading. It launched with presenting an overview about the novel dealt with, *The Handmaid's Tale*. Besides, the investigation of feminist issues in Atwood's novel occupied a serious part in this chapter; it also analyzed its current religious allusion that elaborated as a justification for the oppression of women in Gilead. Adding to that, the chapter dealt with the handmaid's body as a terrain of subjugation.

The thesis followed a geocritical method to fulfill its third and last chapter. This method, in fact, contributed with its based approach to investigate the fictional spaces created by Gilead. This chapter, thus, devoted a discussion of the spatiality of Gilead as a produced gendered space through Panopticon architecture. Then, this chapter juxtaposed Gilead with the concept of 'simulacra and simulation' to investigate whether the Gileadean space is the real or only a copy of the real.

It has been hypothesized in this dissertation that the place of the Gileadean state in *The Handmaid's Tale* produces a conceived and designed space to maintain control and power over its female inhabitants via simulations. Through conducting this research, this hypothesis is partially confirmed in the sense of the ideology of power from the perspective of space and spatiality. Consequently, it becomes evident in *The Handmaid's Tale* that the production and manipulation of space were instrumental in maintaining surveillance and control, as well as usurping power, this latter results in producing a gendered space through a simulated world.

However, it is worth to mention that the accomplishment of this research was not as manageable as it was expected. Aside from the difficulty in purchasing the documents

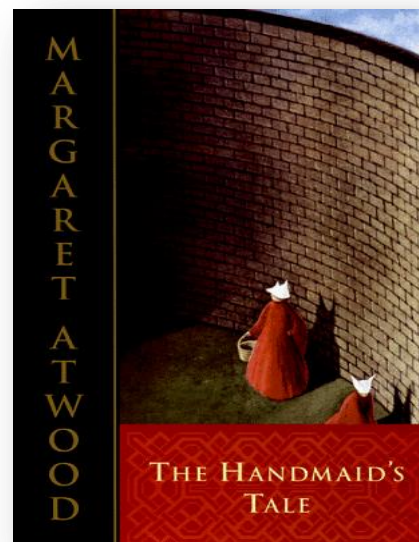
needed to conduct this research, their availability in a compatible way to the title of this project was humbly present. Besides, what was considered a difficulty too was dealing the emergence of other ideas concerning *The Handmaid's Tale* that sprung out amid the process of this research. Among these ideas, to compare the novel's writer views with a male feminist writer and examine the source of female characters subjugation and oppression. Investigate the novel from the spatial perspectives whether it is a dystopian novel or a non-utopia one. Another prominent idea to conduct a research about is examining the impact of the surveillance via control and power on the psyche of the protagonist Offred. Dealing with these ideas could be interesting topics to launch a new journey of an interesting research.

Appendices

Appendix 1

The Handmaid's Tale: Synopsis (Plot and Characters)

Set in 1986 in a futuristic and dystopian world, the totalitarian state of Gilead, situated near Boston, Massachusetts, has brutally overthrown and replaced the United States of America. A cabal of rightwing fundamentalists murders the United States President and members of Congress, disenfranchises women by impounding their credit cards and denying them jobs and education, and sets up Gilead, a repressively conservative state set on crushing homosexuals, abortionists, and religious sects other than their own, and resettling Jews, old women, and nonwhite people in radioactive territory, known as the Colonies. Because nuclear and biological warfare has polluted vast areas, the population suffers a sharp decline in viable births and a rise in birth defects. Consequently, infertile and aged females, as well as homosexuals, are dispatched as clean-up crews in the Colonies. Fertile women involved in illegal relationships or second marriages are indoctrinated and parceled out to Commanders of the secret police as Handmaids. These red uniformed breeders live in seclusion and virtual slavery and are deprived of their real names and labeled with a patronymic of the men who control their lives as in “Ofcharles” and “Ofwarren”. The story opens up with a woman named Offred who describes herself as a Handmaid. As the government is erased, the rise of a totalitarian government slowly begins. Women lose jobs, the right to education, paper currency, and many other basic rights. Even in public, thanks to Gileadean architecture’s structure, every citizen is watched secretly by the



“Eyes”. Offred is a handmaid which is by definition a fertile woman whose role is to bear children for elite, childless families. She works for a Commander of The Republic of Gilead. Throughout her life as a handmaid, she also reveals the details of her previous life. Offred provides several flashbacks in which she tells stories about her family when the Republic of Gilead did not appear yet, but rather, United States of America. She had an affair with a married man named Luke and had a daughter with him. In an attempt to flee the state’s brutality, Offred tries to escape from Gilead but unfortunately is caught and separated from her husband and daughter as he had a divorce, which became forbidden in the new regime. After a while, Serena, the Commander’s wife, judging that her husband might be sterile, suggests to Offred to try to get pregnant with Nick, their chauffeur, with whom she starts her second secret forbidden relationship, after the one with the Commander, instead of seeing him only once. Soon after, a black van, a signature of the “Eyes” comes to take Offred away as her sins are discovered. Despite the tragic situation, Offred still has hope left as it could also be the Maydays, sharing a common hope, Nick tells her to go for helping her flee. After this, her fate remains unknown.

List of Prominent Characters

Offred: The novel’s narrator and the Handmaid whose “tale” is re-constructed. She had been a working wife and a mother before the Republic of Gilead evolved, however, she was captured while trying to. Early in the novel, before she has become “Offred”; her given name remains a mystery and replaced with the patronymic “Offred” marking her as a possession of a Gileadean Commander ‘Fred’, she is separated from work and, hence, she feels the stimulations of paranoia, and agrees to attempt flight across the Canadian border. After becoming the psychologically conditioned Handmaid and mistress of Commander Frederick, she fails her state-mandated mission, which is to conceive a child. Agreeing to the urging of Serena Joy, Offred becomes the lover of Nick, the family chauffeur. At

Nick's instigation, Offred flees with double agents posing as the secret police. Evidence suggests that she departed the Boston area via the Underground Female road, settled in a Quaker way station in Bangor, Maine, and taped a narrative about her servitude in Gilead. Like other escapees, Offred may have relocated in Canada or England, possibly to live in privacy. However, at the conclusion, readers discover that the "tale" was recovered from a series of audio cassette tapes in Maine, indicating she likely escaped the regime.

The Commander: A gray-haired former market researcher and semiretired top military official of the Eyes, his sober posture and stooped shoulders give away his age. Mild-mannered, but cynical and acquisitive, he rules over Wife and Handmaid as though they are chattel and interprets the ban on pre-Gilead decadence as it suits his needs and desires. After the Commander gets to know Offred, he treats her like a precocious child or lap dog and takes pride in her skill at Scrabble. She sees him as "daddyish" and recognizes his loneliness and need for heavy nighttime drinking. Tentatively identified by historians as either Frederick R. Waterford or B. Frederick Judd, Professor Pieixoto's description seemingly pinpoints the former as Offred's mate. Waterford was the designer of the Handmaids' uniforms and originator of the term "Participation." He succumbed to a political purge as a direct result of his "liberal tendencies" for retaining banned pictures and books and for "harboring a subversive."

Moira: A next-door friend to the novel's central character during college, Moira, who shares internment at the Rachel and Leah Re-Education Center, remains "quirky, jaunty, athletic . . . irreverent, resourceful." She organizes an "under whore party" to sell lingerie to college girls, and later she works for the publishing division of a women's collective. After the takeover of the Congress and suspension of the Constitution, Moira warns her friend that something bad will happen. A logical, skillful survivalist, after being remanded to Handmaid training, she lifts Offred's spirits in clandestine meetings in the

washroom. Moira suffers torture for feigning an attack of appendicitis, then overpowers a matron and escapes. Reunited with Offred, Moira continues their tradition of washroom conspiracies at Jezebel's, a nightclub where Moira works as a prostitute. Moira, who is happy to coexist among other lesbians, explains how she was remanded there because of her incorrigible behavior. After Offred's only visit to the night spot, she learns no more about Moira's fate.

Nick: A trusted, over-confident chauffeur for the Commander, he bears messages that summon Offred to the office and supplies black market cigarettes to Serena Joy. When Offred first enters the Commander's household, she notices Nick, who is polishing the staff car; soon afterward, he regularly stares at her, shows off his muscles, whistles, and displays an insouciant cockiness that belies his later importance in her life. As Offred's lover, Nick listens dispassionately to her recital of past history and emotional outpourings during their fervid lover naking. On the day that Serena confronts Offred with evidence of adultery and calls her a slut, Nick, purportedly an operative for the Eyes and double agent for Mayday, sets up a phony arrest and has her spirited away in an Eyes van, possibly to an Underground Fernaleroad way station in Bangor, Maine.

Aunt Lydia: Caught up in her fervency as a vigilant matron at the Rachel and Leah Re-Education Center, Lydia, with her uplifted face, protruding yellow teeth, and steel-rimmed spectacles, spouts a tedious line of platitudes and truisms, warnings against immodesty, materialism, and a lack of interest in the traditional maternal role, especially motherhood. She seems sincere in her belief that the "Republic of Gilead . . . knows no bounds. Gilead is within you". Like a glory-struck drill sergeant, Aunt Lydia, armed with pointer, whistle, and cattle prod, stalks the gymnasium/barracks and administers mild, authoritative taps, a demonstration that "a little pain cleans out the mind." In class, she

inculcates Gilead's future Handmaids with simplistic dogma: "It's a risk you're taking . . . but you are the shock troops, you will march out in advance, into dangerous territory. The greater the risk the greater the glory".

Luke: Offred's husband is recalled in wisps of memory — the two of them walking down the street as they discussed buying a house or starting a family, throwing out accumulated plastic grocery bags to protect their daughter from suffocation, making up the term "sororize" to mean "acting like a sister". After fleeing his first wife to rendezvous with the novel's main character during afternoons in hotel rooms, he enjoys lying close with her. A good-natured man, Luke teases his feminist mother-in-law about the differences between men and women. She refers to him as a chauvinist "piglet." After the creation of the despotic state of Gilead, Luke exhibits what his wife interprets as paternalistic attitudes and behaviors toward her disenfranchisement and impounded bank account. He devises an escape plan and helps ease her tensions as the family packs a picnic and drives leisurely toward the Canadian border. Gunshots indicate that the foiled escape may have caused his death or, at best, grave injury during his capture.

Ofglen: The second of three Handmaids "of Glen" during the story, this current Ofglen serves as a daily shopping companion for Offred three weeks after her arrival at the Commander's house. Giving the impression of exhibitionistic piety, Ofglen asks to divert their return from town so that she can pray at the churchyard. Later, Ofglen reveals that her sanctimony is pretense, a cover-up for "us," an ill-defined rebel group. A rabid participant at the Salvaging, Ofglen, a target of the Eyes, hangs herself before she can be arrested. Her replacement becomes the novel's third Ofglen.

Offred's Mother: An ardently militant feminist, she gave birth to her daughter at age thirty-seven and would be seventy at the time of the story, if she survived. Offred's

mother maintained a platonic relationship with her mate and engaged in harmless badinage with son-in-law Luke, but was in deadly earnest on the Saturday when her companions burned pornographic magazines in the park. In Offred's dim memories, after a pro-feminist balloon release, her mother fades into the crowd as though losing her identity in mob mentality. At the time of the takeover, she lives in Boston and makes frequent visits to Offred's residence. Moira recognizes Offred's mother as an Unwoman in a documentary film about the nuclearpolluted Colonies, where the life span of clean-up crew members averages three years.

Appendix 2

Short Biography: Margaret Atwood



November 18, 1939

Margaret Atwood was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada to a nutritionist mother and entomologist father who fostered a love of nature. Likewise growing up in Quebec and showing a passion for writing at an early age, Atwood eventually pursued her undergraduate studies at Victoria College at the University of Toronto, graduating in 1961. She then earned her master's at Radcliffe the following year. Over the course of her career, Atwood went on to teach at a variety of colleges and universities in both Canada and the United States. Atwood's first published work was the pamphlet of poetry *Double Persephone* (1961). More poetry followed during the decade as seen with the books *Talismans for Children* (1965) and *The Animals in That Country* (1968). She then published her first novel, *The Edible Woman*, in 1969, a metaphoric, witty work about the social status of a woman about to wed. "*The Handmaid's Tale*, was among an array of other great works. Further, decades later, *The Handmaid's Tale* was adapted into a spring 2017 TV miniseries for Hulu.

Source: <http://www.biography.com/people/margaret-atwood-9191928>

Appendix 3

Short Biography: Henry Lefebvre



June 16, 1907- June 29, 1991

Henry Lefebvre was born in Hagetmau, Landes, France. He studied philosophy at the University of Paris, The Sorbonne, and graduated in 1920. By the year 1924 he was working with Paul Nizan, Norbert Guterman, Georges Friedmann, Georges Politzer and Pierre Morhange in the Philosophies group seeking a “Philosophical Revolution”. He was a French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, best known for pioneering ‘the critique of everyday life’, for introducing the concepts of the right to the city and the production of social space. In his prolific career, Lefebvre wrote more than sixty books and three hundred articles. However, he dedicated a great deal of his philosophical writings to understanding the importance of space in what he called the reproduction of social relations of production. This idea is the central argument in the book *The Survival of Capitalism*, written as a sort of prelude to *La Production de l’espace* (1974) (*The Production of Space*). These works have deeply influenced current urban theory, mainly within human geography, as seen in the current work of authors such as David Harvey, Dolores Hayden, and Edward Soja, and in the contemporary discussions around the notion of spatial justice. Since Lefebvre is widely recognized as a Marxist thinker, he was

responsible for widening considerably the scope of Marxist theory, embracing everyday life and the contemporary meanings and implications of the ever expanding reach of the urban in the western world throughout the 20th century.

Appendix 4

Short Biography: Michel Foucault



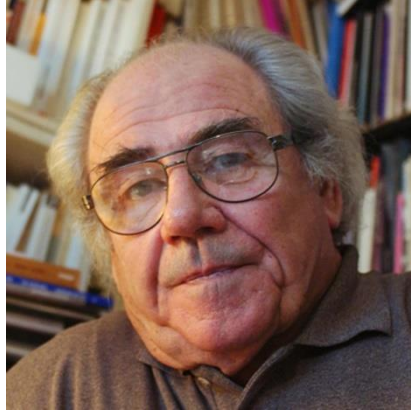
October 15, 1926 - June 25, 1984

Michel Foucault was a French social theorist and philosopher. He is remembered for his method of using historical research to illuminate changed in discourse over time, and the evolving relationships between discourse, knowledge, institutions, and power. During the course of his studies at the level of university, he was influenced by Nietzsche, Marx, Bachelard and Canguilhem, and in 1951 he received his aggregation in philosophy. After two suicide attempts, his psychiatric assistance develops in him a taste for psychology. In 1961, Foucault defends his doctoral thesis on 'L'Histoire de la Folie à l'âge Classique'. Foucault's work inspired sociologists in subfields including sociology of knowledge, gender, and sexuality. Michel Foucault's works is imprinted on the subject of government and power; his most well-known works include *Discipline and Punish*, and *The History of Sexuality*. Moreover, Foucault was a supporter of a communist party as well as activist for the left wing during most of his life. His academic career allowed him to find

occupation in different field such as in Sweden, where he was in charge to spread the French language and culture and he occupied a position where he taught philosophy.

Appendix 5

Short Biography: Jean Baudrillard



July 29, 1929 - March 6, 2007

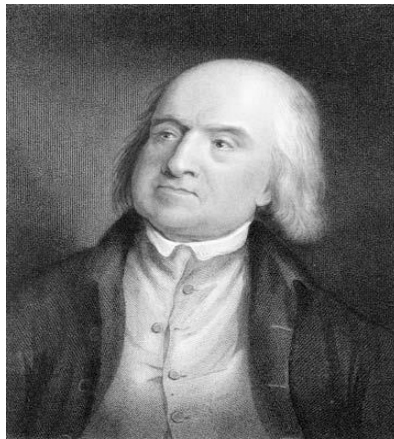
Jean Baudrillard is a French sociologist and cultural theorist whose theoretical ideas of “hyperreality” and “simulacrum” influenced literary theory and philosophy, especially in the United States, and spread into popular culture. After studying German at the Sorbonne, Baudrillard taught German literature in secondary schools (1956, 1966), translated German literary and philosophical works, and published essays in the literary review *Les Temps Modernes*. At the same time, he attended the University of Paris X at Nanterre, where in 1968 he completed a dissertation in sociology, *Le Système des objets* (*The System of Objects*), under the direction of Marxist historian Henri Lefebvre. Baudrillard taught (1966–1968) in the sociology department at Nanterre, which was one of the centers of the May 1968 student revolts, with which he was in sympathy. He then moved to the University of Paris IX from which he retired in 1987. Baudrillard’s early work, including *The System of Objects*, *La Société de Consommation* 1970 (*The Consumer Society*), and *Pour une Critique de L’économie Politique du Signe* 1972 (*For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*), combines Marxist political economy and a semiotics;

theory of signs, influenced by Ronald Barthes in a critique of everyday life in consumer society, in which, according to Baudrillard, things have symbolic value in addition to values derived from Marxian use and exchange. In *Le Miroir de la Production 1973* (*The Mirror of Production*) and *L'Échange symbolique et la mort* (1976); *Symbolic Exchange and Death*), Baudrillard broke with Marxism to develop an account of postmodern society in which consumer and electronic images have become more real, hyperreal, than physical reality and in which simulations of reality (simulacra) have displaced their originals, leaving only “the desert of the real.” This phrase was quoted in the popular American science-fiction film *The Matrix* (1999), whose hero hides contraband in a copy of Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation* (originally published as *Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981). An accomplished photographer, Baudrillard asserted that “every photographed object is merely the trace left behind by the disappearance of all the rest”.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Baudrillard>

Appendix 6

Short Biography: Jeremy Bentham



February 15, 1748 - died June 6, 1832

Jeremy Bentham was an English philosopher, an economist, a theoretical jurist, and a chief expounder of utilitarianism. He studied Latin at the age of three and enrolled in the Oxford University at the age of twelve, where he received his under-graduate degree at the age of sixteen. He studied law at Lincoln's Inn, Westminster, and was called to bar in 1772. Instead of practicing the law, he decided to work out a system of jurisprudence, and to codify and reform both civil and penal law. He spent his life analyzing the existing law and suggesting ways for its improvement. So he is aptly known as English utilitarian philosopher, Jurist, social and legal reformer. Bentham brought out his first major work, *A Fragment on Government* (1776). Yet, his most important theoretical work is the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), in which he propounded the principle of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number". Bentham made important contributions in the fields of ethics, law and political thought. Further, he designed a modern prison; Panopticon. After his death, many prisons were built on his design. He argued in favor of individual and economic freedom, including the separation of Church

and State, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, animal rights, the end of slavery, the abolition of physical punishment the right to divorce, free trade, and in defense of usury and homosexuality. He supported inheritance tax, restrictions on monopoly power, pensions, and health insurance.



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Abstract

This work sheds light on the interplay of both: physical and mental spaces linking them to the power relations embedded in a given space wherein power is imposed by the state to control its inhabitants, namely women. The present dissertation, also, consists a study of manipulation of spaces that creates a gendered one in which women are considered as inferiors. It further aims at highlighting the fact that space may be produced through numerous means along with the Panopticon architecture. In this concern, this work is an attempt to manifest how Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* presents a fictional gendered space that is created through "simulacrum". It further investigates how this gendered space –that women are relegated to–imposes a high surveillance on their behaviors and minds to oppress them and subjugate their bodies, considering them mere child-bearing machines.

Résumé

Ce travail met en évidence l'interaction des deux: espaces physiques et mentaux qui les relie aux relations de pouvoir intégrées dans un espace donné où l'état impose à l'État de contrôler ses habitants, à savoir les femmes. La présente dissertation comprend également une étude de la manipulation des espaces qui crée un genre dans lequel les femmes sont considérées comme inférieures. Il vise également à souligner le fait que l'espace peut être produit par de nombreux moyens avec l'architecture Panopticon. Pour cela, ce travail est une tentative de manifester comment le roman de Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale* présente un espace de genre fictif créé via "simulacre". Il étudie en outre comment cet espace sexospécifique - que les femmes sont reléguées - impose une surveillance élevée sur leurs comportements et leurs esprits pour les opprimer et subjuguer leurs corps, en les considérant comme de simples machines pour enfants.

ملخص

هذا العمل يسلط الضوء على التفاعل بين كل من: المساحات الجسدية والعقلية التي تربط علاقات القوة المتكاملة في الفضاء التي تمكن الدولة من السيطرة على سكانها، خاصة النساء. يتضمن هذا المقال أيضا دراسة التلاعب في الفضاء الذي يخلق النوع الذي يعتبر النساء أقل شأنًا. كما تهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على حقيقة أن الفضاء يمكن أن ينتج بطرق عديدة مع الهندسة المعمارية مثل 'باتوبتيكون'. لذلك، هذا العمل هو محاولة لإظهار كيف يمكن لرواية مارغريت أتوود ان تقدم نوع خيالي من الفضاء من خلال خلق "صور مزيفة". هذا العمل يدرس أيضا كيف هذه الفجوة بين الجنسين تفرض مراقبة عالية على سلوك النساء وعقولهم لقهرهم وإخضاع أجسادهم، معتبرتا اياهم مجرد آلات لانجاب الأطفال