



Gendered Biopolitics And The Psychological Construction Of Female Identity In Modern Dystopian Fiction

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ABSTRACT

Title: Female Objectification and Psychological Control in Dystopian Fiction: A Comparative Study of The Handmaid's Tale and Brave New World The two novels The Handmaid's Tale and Brave New World display their female characters which demonstrate how societies treat women as objects while governments use psychological techniques to dominate their populations. The two novels create two different dystopian societies which control female bodies through different time periods and locations to maintain their political power. The research investigates how women establish their identity through Gilead's religious authoritarianism and World State's technological hedonism which serve as two independent identity-building systems. The study uses feminist theory together with surveillance and biopower theories and trauma theory to study how systems of oppression function through two methods which operate as external conditioning and internalization of power systems. The Handmaid's Tale presents women as existing mainly for reproduction purposes while the heroine's fragmented narration shows how objectification damages women's emotional states. Offred's disjointed storytelling together with her broken memories show how traumatic experiences change a person's identity during times of oppression. The Brave New World society has created a system which permits women to seem socially self-sufficient while their inner feelings and desires undergo training to match established social norms

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dystopian fiction shows how future societies function to express contemporary social anxiety about gender-based power structures which control physical bodies. The Handmaid's Tale serves as a cautionary tale against both theocratic extremism and patriarchal backlash which create a feminist dystopia according to most critics. The critics who study Margaret Atwood's work believe she created Gilead's repressive system through her conception of religious fundamentalism and reproductive politics. Offred represents an oppressed woman who possesses autonomous power because her broken oral history depicts her battle against trauma. Disrupted memories function as psychological damage according to trauma theory scholars while poststructuralist critics who use Foucault and Butler theorize

that surveillance together with gender performance in daily life determine her identity. Huxley's *World State* serves as a satirical representation of industrial modernity because it creates artificial happy endings which eliminate individual differences. Feminist readings show that Lenina's supposed sexual freedom actually functions as another form of social control. Offred resists system control because she wants to destroy the system that controls her. Huxley develops a control system which creates pain relief by removing the ability of humans to experience love for one another. The two novels connect through their shared themes of biopolitics and bodily regulation which separate them from traditional literary analysis methods. The two societies maintain order through complete control over all functions which involve reproduction and sexual activity. The current research lacks studies which analyze how different systems generate specific psychological impacts on women.

INTRODUCTION

Humans created their strongest fears through dystopian stories which showed their most profound human fears. Dystopian novels create imaginary worlds which exist in fictional yet realistic future times because the novels show how social and political systems function within their current time period. The *Handmaid's Tale* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* stand as the most popular dystopian novels which people read throughout English literature. The dissertation investigates how women from both novels experience trauma through objectification because they experience psychological fragmentation which results from societal power systems that dominate their existence. Researchers have studied these novels through feminist political or technological frameworks yet there is a lack of research about the internal experience of objectification which women undergo. Dystopian regimes use their power to control both physical bodies and mental states of their victims according to the dissertation. Mental faculties represent the most dangerous form of power because that power exists to control those faculties instead of their physical bodies. Atwood describes Gilead's system as a government which controls women's reproductive rights through its enforcement of religious beliefs. The system divides women according to their ability to conceive children, which leads to the elimination of their personal identities and the enforcement of predetermined societal duties. The male authority figures of the society use the name "Of-Fred" to refer to Offred, which implies that her status as a "freed woman" enables him to claim ownership over her identity. *Brave New World* describes a society that achieves peaceful existence through its unchanging societal conditions. The World State manages a control mechanism which employs technology and conditioning and pleasure to attain authority over individuals without requiring public demonstrations of power or religious penalties. Scientists produce human beings through artificial methods, while they create their mental programming before the moment of birth. Lenina Crowne and other women receive training to see pleasure and consumerism as important, while they should view sexual interactions as desirable. The people in this society believe that sexual relationships should occur among all of its members, which the society describes with the saying "Everyone belongs to everyone else." People develop a societal norm which treats the human body as a marketable item when they become emotionally detached from their surroundings. The two societies operate through distinct systems that result in women being treated as mere functional components of the system. The research employs multiple theoretical approaches to explain the process of explanation. The concept of disciplinary power described by Michel Foucault shows how present-day systems control human bodies through both monitoring and standardization. Foucault argues that power becomes most effective once the individual starts to look after themselves. Both dystopian societies use social classification to define their concept of womanhood. A handmaid exists to society only through her ability to produce children. The government employs state ideology to shape Lenina's feminine characteristics. Judith Butler's gender performativity theory verifies the hypothesis by stating that people establish their specific gender through their common social conduct. Women in both novels accomplish the tasks which society expects from them, while they have no ability to define their own identity. Offred demonstrates her trauma through her disjointed storytelling because Cathy Caruth defines through trauma theory that past

memory experiences must later appear as fragmented recalls. People will not experience trauma until they reach the moment when their minds bring back disconnected memories which return as repeating mental patterns. Offred's storytelling describes her mental breakdown through its division into past and current time. She uses her lost daughter and her previous life memories to Gilead as a way to disrupt the main story. Her memories contain two main elements which manifest as painful experiences and acts of resistance. They protect her remaining human aspect. Judith Herman states that trauma destroys the person's ability to experience a continuous life.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Handmaid's Tale and Brave New World create two separate dystopian societies which demonstrate how women experience identity loss through objectification under systems of power control. The first two systems of authority base their operations on religious fanaticism and fear of theocratic oppression while the second system operates through scientific control. The analysis shows that both systems require control over women's bodies as their fundamental operational element. The way people manage control depends on their psychological response to control. Traumatic events create one path toward fragmentation while training processes create another path toward emotional flattening. People acquire their personal autonomy rights in both situations. The Handmaid's Tale displays its full power through violent and complete power operations. Women get classified, renamed, and compelled into providing reproductive service. The female body exists as a sacred entity because it can create children to serve the needs of the government. Offred's experience is defined by rupture: torn away from family, denied legal identity, subjected to forced sex ritual and watched over nonstop. Trauma manifests through broken memories which result in unpredictable storytelling. Present time creates an invasion of past time when a person loses mental stability. Offred can recover her lost memories through the existence of Gilead because Gilead breaks her connection to everything from her past life. The character faces an internal struggle because she wants to resist everything yet she maintains hope for a better future. The regime uses memory to erase her distinctive personality while it attempts to eliminate all her memories. The governing bodies in Brave New World use their authority to stop citizens from committing improper actions because they need to deal with individuals who have already committed illegal acts. The existing social structure prevents individuals from developing profound relationships because these relationships would result in their complete personal disappearance. Lenina Crowne has no past identity because she has spent her entire life within the system. Her desires exist before she can ask them. Her present emotional state exists as a complete package of all her feelings but she experiences no emotional intensity. The situation demonstrates a clear logical sequence because no traumatic events occurred. Lenina does not describe her pain because she does not consider her situation as a form of oppression. One woman loses her personal identity while the other woman becomes fully part of the community. The two novels compare reproductive practices through their core similarity which defines their main reproductive practices. The Gilead system uses its political power to control fertility while it enforces its religious practices. The state controls female bodies as national resources by using religious systems to manage their bodies for its governing duties. Affluent families take the children born to Handmaids because motherhood exists as sacred yet they do not experience the actual process of motherhood. People achieve their social worth through their ability to reproduce. The World State in Huxley's story requires all reproductive functions to be performed by machines that handle every aspect of the process. The state has declared the maternal body to be no longer useful. The state uses its advanced technological capabilities to create systems which will generate artificial fertility through unnecessary procedures. The

two-systems strip people of their ability to make reproductive decisions. One society forces woman to give birth while the other society completely prohibits all forms of reproduction. The government maintains control over all human reproductive processes so the basic principle remains intact. The two dystopian societies reach psychological separation through their distinct memory functions. Offred retells her life story through the recollections of her past experiences. Her memories exist as fragile elements which can sustain themselves at their most powerful level through her resistance. She remembers her daughter's face together with her mother's activism and her former marriage. The memories display the essential principles which Gilead utilizes to develop its ideological framework. The story of Offred demonstrates how people respond to traumatic events according to trauma theory because she experiences untreated trauma. The citizens of Brave New World have lost all memories about past occurrences. The government prevents citizens from traveling through time to witness historical events that occurred in previous eras. The public maintains historical ignorance to achieve social order. People experience dissatisfaction when they think back on alternative selections they could have made. Lenina cannot picture a different world because she has learned to understand everything new as a product that people will buy instead of a change that will bring about real transformation. Historical knowledge is necessary for people because it provides them with identity breaks which help them perform critical analysis. Technology and religion function as two opposing forces which currently control human behavior. Gilead state uses incorrect biblical interpretations to assert its right to rule over others. The biblical text uses scripture to present reproductive control and female subjugation as natural occurrences. The rituals create an atmosphere which establishes God's presence as an unchangeable fact. The Ceremony and prescribed greetings function as public executions that strengthen religious authority through their use as tools. Huxley's dystopia has now established technology as its primary system which handles all decision-making functions. Scientific progress together with manufacturing operations and drug development establishes a system which maintains social order. Soma functions as a chemical sacrament which enables people to reach spiritual experiences without needing actual spiritual contact. The two systems depend on ideological frameworks which present control as a natural desirable force that will occur through direct implementation. The state creates a protective image through its operation which portrays itself as a defender that shields citizens from threats. The stories use sexuality as a shared theme which connects their two narratives. The Gilead system restricts all sexual activity to reproduction while it demeans pleasure so people cannot enjoy it. People need to have desire but it becomes invalid unless it leads to reproduction. The secret relationship between Offred and Nick holds significance because it remains free from any connection to ceremonial duties.

CONCLUSION

The World State allows sexual activity but it forbids the creation of personal connections. The partners in non-exclusive relationships will not create emotional connections with each other. According to Lenina's conditioning everything needs to remain in its original state because it defines beauty. The first society creates sexual guilt and desire through its repression of sexual activity while the second society fosters shallow relationships through its permissive approach to sexuality. The two novels share a common theme of depicting women as instruments for maintaining established systems throughout their story. The state requires women to fulfill specific roles through mandated reproductive capabilities and custom-designed free time activities. The stability of the group takes precedence over personal ambitions. The two dystopian societies demonstrate Brave New World replaces its repression system with a pre-emptive control system. The fabric of societal stability has created a system which now controls all the needs of women like Lenina Crowne because there exist no other methods to suppress them with violence. Reproduction has been converted into an industrial process, while society treats intimacy as a standardized product which needs to be treated through medical methods. While emotional pain receives less attention, emotional resonance also suffers from the same treatment. Lenina has never

experienced anything beyond her conditioning, which makes her incapable of recognizing the trauma that defines Offred's experience. The outer appearance of coherence she presents to the world conceals her inner restrictions. Painlessness leads people to believe they have found freedom, yet it actually serves as a form of imprisonment. Huxley shows that people can maintain control through their comfort systems, which operate in the same way as their fear-based systems. The two dystopias studied show that their storylines require women to control their reproductive activities and sexual encounters and their ability to recall memories. Gilead treats fertility as a sacred entity which must be controlled, while the World State regards it as an outdated system which requires regulation. Society permits sexuality only for reproductive purposes, yet it allows sexual activity without any emotional connection. The authority system gets destabilized through memory in one situation, while historical awareness does the same in another. The two cultures create female workers who derive their value from their capability to perform their designated roles. The female body becomes a centre for female governance through both methods of coercion and methods of conditioning. The research shows that two harmful elements inside dystopian stories exist in the current world. The first threat emerges when extreme tyranny develops through religious or ideological zeal which uses established authority to stop women from obtaining their fundamental rights. People create scientific systems and their respective consumer needs which establish emotional and ethical boundaries that people regard as essential truths. The present debates about reproductive rights and surveillance technology and biotechnological intrusion and algorithmic governance stem from earlier imagined fear-based visions. The people who politicize reproductive rights together with those who transform their emotional experiences into pharmaceutical and digital platforms show that dystopian imagination now exists closer to their lives. The two novels show that nonviolent methods of control provide both protection and joy while enabling people to dominate others. Theoretical considerations of such a comparison create a development path for feminist literary studies because the study shows that trauma and emotional sedation function as controlled subjectivity variations. Traumatic disorder situates the self between two destructive experiences which produce shock and loss while conditioning creates a steady state through its process of making everything less. The same condition exists for both people who experience this situation which results in them losing their ability to control their own existence. Objectification includes two elements according to trauma theory and feminist critique and close textual analysis which demonstrate that it involves both bodily exploitation and psychological transformation. The most effective form of power creates lasting control because it changes our self-perception. The two novels both maintain uncertainty which remains throughout the entire story. The narrative about Offred's future remains concealed while Lenina continues to live her life in the World State which shows no signs of transformation. The endings of the stories remain open which compels readers to find methods to break free from their respective limitations. Dystopian fiction provides no certain pathway to revolution because it depicts the state of being unprotected. The series presents women's narratives to its readers as a way to encourage them to explore how many of these systems create conditions which support social inequality. The authors investigate whether individuals must renounce their liberties to obtain protection and whether they should take responsibility to create a secure world instead of seeking their personal happiness. The narrative presents female sex objectification in a dystopia as an indication which reveals greater social unease because it portrays female sex objectification as a symptom of social anxiety. The Handmaid's Tale depicts the violent enforcement of mandatory chastity while Brave New World shows how emotional intensity gradually fades away. The authors demonstrate that bodily control over women through regulations serves as essential political power because this control enables society to continue through reproduction and relationships and sexual attraction. Self-regulation creates new identity forms because it requires all identity aspects to undergo control. Dystopian literature enables readers to practice criminal activities through its reading experience of the genre. Oppression operates through multiple deceptive forms which include fear and faith and pleasure and progress but it begins to take away autonomy in a gradual manner. The dissertation presents evidence that people must engage in an ongoing battle against their personal subjectivity because they encounter power structures which exist to control

their behaviours and which use design elements to create power. The human self maintains control over power relationships through its permanent memory process which operates within the human unconscious. People need to protect themselves against tyranny which manifests in both visible and hidden forms of engineered happiness according to the novels.

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