The Destruction of Gilead’s Binary Thought
In Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale

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Abstract:
This paper focuses on interpreting Margret Atwood’s outlook towards the affiliation of power between man and woman, and, likewise, the hidden meaning of her message(s) to women in general. These issues will be explained by interpreting or considering her novel, The Handmaid’s Tale as a pattern of oppositions. The conceptual tool that is used to uncover the keys for the questions of whether Atwood is with or against women and how she visualizes women’s experience and distress under the patriarchal rules are; binary oppositions and Derrida’s concept of différance. Using the binary oppositions Gilead’s central and restricted ideologies and the handmaids’ silent response become comprehensible. Then by reversing these binary conceptions, depending on Derrida’s concept, the incompatibles will be proved. Atwood’s depiction of woman is not always positive and not negative as well. Therefore, this paper assumes that women are being used and dehumanized in Gilead which gives hints for the author’s view of men’s inclination to imprison women and deprive them from their right to live a normal life. Furthermore, the binary thought depicts women as inert and powerless. The second part and after reversing the binary opposition we conclude that the handmaids and women in general are able to convert the hierarchical belief by taking on the same tool that has been used to oppress them.

Introduction:
Margaret Atwood is one of the outstanding figures in Canadian and the world literature in general. Her novel The Handmaid’s Tale (1985) received a great attention locally and internationally and is considered as a feminist writing, yet many studies have been done upon it with different approaches. It may, for instance, be considered as a complicated and ambiguous one; because the author’s intention is not direct and clear.

In The Handmaid’s Tale she shows a dual vision concerning the feminist culture. She presents on one side the utopian society of women that the radical feminism has been claiming for. She introduces, on the other side a society in which females become subject to females’ abuse. For example, in the Red Center in Gilead society the ‘Aunts’ train the women to serve as handmaids to
commanders’ wives. Atwood’s critical view is embodied in the character of Aunt Lydia when she tells the handmaids that for the new generation the matter is going to be healthier because women will live in mutual “harmony” and united “for a common end! Helping one another in their daily chores as they walk the path of life together, each performing her appointed task”. (162-163). In another occasion Offred blames her mother who was a member in a feminist movement who argues for women’s society and fond of burning pornographic magazines, “You wanted a women's culture. Well, now there is one. It isn't what you meant, but it exists. Be thankful for small mercies” (Ibid, 127). In fact, radical feminism has focused on how deeply rooted is the male/female division in the society. They tender for changes that include creating woman-only communities to a sexual approval. Criticism of radical feminism suggests that men and women are two separate species with no harmony and that it romanticizes women and interactions between women (Tolan, 112).

On the other hand, Atwood presents the oppression of women in patriarchal society, which happens in pre-Gilead society when the new government deprives women from having properties and jobs. Offred is dismissed from her work and her money is transferred to her husband, but she no longer can manage the fund accessed by her plastic card. Women are demeaned and became completely dependent socially, physically, and economically.

Culler states that readers interpret the literary text according to their understanding or the techniques they consciously approach it through (Tyson, 115). So, the dual vision of the novel encourages us to interpret it from a new perspective. Therefore, the paper will focus on interpreting Atwood’s attitude towards the relationship of power between man and woman, and the hidden meaning of her message(s) to women in general. These issues taken into consideration here, in this paper, will be explained by interpreting or considering the novel as a combination of oppositions. The conceptual tool that is used to find out the answers for the questions of whether Atwood is with or against women and how she visualizes women’s suffering under the patriarchal rules by using the binary oppositions and Derrida’s concept of différance. Using the binary oppositions Gilead’s dominant and limited ideologies and the handmaids’ silent reaction become understandable then by reversing these binary thoughts, depending on Derrida’s concept, the contradictories will be proved.

**Conceptual Theory:**

Binary opposition is a key concept in a theory of meaning known as structuralism. This concept is introduced to literature or to theories by the French theorist Jacques Derrida whose works have a significant influence on the feminist criticism. According to Derrida, western
metaphysics is based on oppositions. For each idea, a conflicting idea is presented, for example “God/humankind”. The first term of the opposition always tends to be “superior” and identifies itself by opposing the second inferior term. Consistent with him, there is “truth” because we know “deception” and “good” for there is “bad” etc. (Bressler, 121). Hence, it is not limited to the literal meaning of each pair; the idea of binary thoughts does not depend on the superficial meaning of each term, on the contrary, it deals with the associated meanings of the pair. For example, when we have the oppositions head/ body, it is not necessary to be referring to the exact or the literal head which is a part of human’s body, for it mostly refers to the values and implications that are internalized in it like reasonableness, rationality, and intellectuality. Accordingly, the term body might refer to emotionality, passion, sexuality and etc.

Depending on deconstructionists views, Tyson defines binary oppositions as “two ideas, directly opposed, each of which we understand by means of its opposition to the other. For example, we understand up as the opposite of down, female as the opposite of male, good as the opposite of evil, black as the opposite of white” (213). Consequently, the pair of binary opposition is defined in relation to each other which means the meaning of the term centres on its opposing companion in the system to construct its own meaning.

Derrida states that almost always human’s culture and language are systemically based on binary oppositions, and he found out that these oppositions are not alike in value, that is to say one of the terms in the pair is privileged over the other, creating a hierarchical system. Mostly, the first term is considered the superior and related to men or masculinity and the second term is the inferior and associated to women or femininity. For example, rational Vs emotional, father Vs mother (Abrams, 79). It helps to reveal the mentality of a group of people who have identical values and rules in a certain culture or society. Generally, by spotting out the binary opposition of a certain text or cultural work, the readers will be able to determine its conceptual or philosophical scheme.

However, Derrida found that the correlation between these hierarchical oppositions is constantly unsteady and problematic; truth is always indefinable. He thinks that because male is measured to be superior to female; consequently, the opposition is unequal. To centre on the privileged side of the binary operation would create imbalance of theory and that is what he avoids. Moving far from the restraints of binary oppositions, Derrida states that in literary traditions there is no complete and advantaged meanings and values. As a result, he “inverts the privileged and unprivileged” by developing a new concept: différance. This word is derived from the French “différer”
which suggests “to defer, postpone, or delay”, along with “to differ, to be different from”. This twofold combination has its own significance. According to Derrida’s view, différance has two outcomes in interpretation: first, individual understanding turns into “referential” that means we acknowledge something because it is different from something else not for the reason of its superiority or inferiority. Second, we have to skip closing “because no transcendental signified exist”, each and every analyses regarding “self-identity, and knowledge” can be acceptable and reasonable. Deconstructors believe that the binary opposition in any literary work symbolizes traditional and received philosophy but it does not hypothesize the presence of “transcendental signifieds”. Therefore, it is considered to be rigid and restricted analyses of reality. Derrida suggests that by reversing these opposition, endless procedures for interpretations come out that deny the existence of hierarchy oppositions; yet accept other beliefs (Bressler, 123-127).

Since the concept of binary dualism is proved to Derrida to be inflexible, restrict, and shows women almost always in inferior position to her superior man; he introduced a belief that keeps women in an unflustered state to man, for they both are human being, but biologically different. Naturally, this principle becomes of interest to feminist critics.

Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the significance of the concept of binary opposition and différance for feminist studies. Eagleton argues that the utilization of binary oppositions in the text emerges either intentionally or unconsciously. These oppositions can together form the text and help to create its thematic unity. Feminists’ authors and critics are concerned with the idea of binary oppositions because it assists them, on the one hand, to spot the instruments of subjugation that is practiced against the women in theories that are generated inside a patriarchal evaluation structure. On the other hand, it enables them to dispute the conventional definitions of gender male/female that revokes women’s identity and marginalizes them. Helen Cixous, in an essay entitled “stories” from The Newly Born Woman, a book written with Catherine Clément, lists up the following oppositions: “Activity/Passivity, Sun/Moon Culture/Nature, Day/Night, Father/Mother, Head/Emotions, Intelligible/Sensitive, Logos/Pathos” (64). Since this thought is dependency; the first term depends on or ruins the second one to create its power or superiority, she places “death” at text with this sort of ideology. Furthermore, Cixous asserts the importance of destroying the “couple” to avoid a never-ending struggle over dominancy which in patriarchal society the triumph is almost always for “activity” and failure for “passivity” (63).
In fact, Cixous does not intend to privilege the unprivileged of the oppositions; it can restate the entire belief of opposition. Therefore, the aim of deconstruction (feminism as well) is to figure out the binary oppositions from the text, and then reverse them. Consequently, feminism can employ deconstruction to converse the hierarchy thought of male/ female as a means of emphasizing the exclusion, reliance, and aggression essential to keep that binary in set. Barbara Harpham clarifies, the deconstruction “of a binary opposition is...not an annihilation of all values or differences, it is an attempt to follow the subtle, powerful effects of differences already at work within the illusion of a binary opposition” (xii).

To sum up, binary oppositions and différance can be regarded as two related opposite notions because from their definitions it becomes clear that binary oppositions have a definite single meaning which depends on its conflict. While différance is defined to have multiple meanings that emerge from identifying both sides of the supposed opposition to be equal; yet different, for instance, when the opposition male/ female has one limited belief which is man superior over woman, différance on the other hand shows them as equal in values and position. Derrida’s différance does not refute the differences between male and female other than contravening the hierarchies. Ideas and words cannot be understood clearly in a sort of fixed structure or in isolation but by their differences from the others which are to some extent related. différance also depends on binary opposition, for it cannot be applied on the text unless the conflicting ideas are highlighted. In addition, Derrida views meaning as a changeable entity; then there is not a complete interpretation; rather there may be different understandings for a single meaning. In “The Handmaid’s Tale” the oppositions are created to present the values and beliefs of Gilead’s society. différance is employed to prove the inflexibility of that ideology. The center of this study will be the Gileadeans and the handmaids.

Analysis:

As a crucial introductory step in the analysis of the text, I will spotlight on some of the tensions inside Gilead society. The conflicting idea that the readers come across through reading “The Handmaid’s Tale” is gender differences. In Gilead, woman is oppressed and subjugated in various means and this by itself can be interpreted in the form of binary oppositions. Thus, the first term as it is known earlier, refers to male and the second to female. Consequently, the first opposition that comes into sight in The Handmaid’s Tale, is totalitarianism versus individualism. As we know that Gilead is created for several reasons one of which is to fix the birth rate problem. So they taught the fertile women to serve the
infertile. In order to reinforce their system, they restrict the handmaid’s with rigid and tough rules by controlling their wish and need. They deprive the handmaids from their right of living normal life. They are in Gilead only for specific reasons that benefit men only; giving birth and free sex. Handmaids don’t have opportunity of free movement, possessing, and privacy. They are obliged to cover up their bodies with red clothes and veil that keep them hidden and unseen. Moreover, they cannot act according to their free will; accordingly, they lost all hopes in future. Their severe punishments cannot be avoided; since they face penalty for intentional and unintentional crimes. For example, there is a physical punishment in case of breaking the rules and if infertility is approved, the handmaid has two choices: serving in colonies as unwomanly worker “for infertility, have me shipped off to the Colonies, with the Unwomen” (Atwood, 61) or being a prostitute at Jezebel. So, in Gilead, handmaids are dehumanized and treated as machine rather than individuals.

Hammer matches up the brutal restrictive system imposed by Gileadeans to Michel Foucault’s model of disciplinary mechanism “whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behavior must be imposed” (48). He concludes that an establishment of any political point of views might and, actually utilize “discipline” to have power over the behavior of its nations (ibid, 48). One of the strategies that the regime uses to deny women’s individuality is by taking away their names. Handmaids are named after the commanders’ names, for example the protagonist’s name is “Offred” which, according to Loigui, the derived name of Offred on one hand, refers to her possession by a commander called Fred “of plus Fred”. There are also the Ofglen, Ofwarren etc. On the other hand, it proves the supremacy of the person giving the name (Commander) (40). This means the handmaids no longer belong to themselves but to others, erasing their names leave them suffer from internal conflict since they lost the sense of their personal identity. Twohig claims that the regime wiped out the handmaids’ character to the extent that no one can trace them in the future.

Another pair of opposing ideas that uncovers the patriarchal belief of Gilead’s rulers is head versus body. To be different from the men, they denied the handmaids writing, reading and uttering some words in addition to anything related to rationality or thinking. Handmaids have limited words to use in their speech, therefore they cannot express what are in their minds, and as a result they would no more have intellectuality “It was like using a language I'd once known but had nearly forgotten” (Atwood, 156). The handmaid’s are treated as bodies without head. Their identity in Gilead is described as “two-
legged wombs, that's all: sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices” (Ibid, 136). They have nothing with the other parts. What is important for Gileaden is the belly for it contains the womb; for evidence when Moira is tortured for her rebellion act, they used hot steel cables for burning the feet and hand only “said Aunt Lydia. For our purposes your feet and your hands are not essential” (Atwood, 91). They do not touch the other parts that serve them. As Offred notes, in her service as a Handmaid, her body is no longer "an implement for the accomplishment of [her] will" Aunt Lydia has urged them at the Center to renounce themselves and become "impenetrable" and therefore pure breeding machines. The doctors in Gilead also portray the women as bodies that can be used to fulfil their lust for sex, for instance, when the women go for their monthly check up, the doctors offer as they say “help” to impregnate them which increases the hope of their survival. In addition, the handmaids are not supposed to be seen by the doctors which means the doctor just “deals with the torso only” (Atwood, 60) so he is interested in the body only.

The head and intellectuality is honestly left for men; for they are the ones who control those bodies, run, and use them whenever and however they want. They think of themselves as superior to women; they are rational and attentive. Moreover, they look down at women as who are not able to think abstractly. For instance, during one of Offred’s visits to the Commander’s office, he tells her “Women can't add … For them, one and one and one and one don't make four” (Ibid, 186). As Feuer comments the Commander means that because they “can abstract” it will be able to destroy women’s life. They are denied of fairness and autonomy, along with the chance for enriching their lives through scholarly pursuits. On the other hand, the Commanders still have the books and magazines in their rooms which mean they still have the opportunities of enhancing their knowledge.

A chiefly revealing dilemma is with the novel’s disagreement of function against personality. It is seen in the categorizations of handmaids and men the definite illustration of the power of masculinity in Gilead state. In Gilead, women are valued according to their functions in the society after denying their personalities. The role distribution in Gilead takes women back to their early functions in family and world in general which is clearly show the inequality between male and female. Men as usual occupy the higher ranks and they all hold governmental jobs, their arrangements are respectively: “Commanders”, then “Eyes”, next “Angles”. Women, on the other hand, do not have any highly regarded positions in that patriarchal republic except the Aunts and wives who are also governed by the men (but here in this essay as mentioned earlier, the focus will be on the handmaids). Women are known as “Aunts” who teach the other
women to be handmaids then the Commanders’ “wives”, “handmaids” who are the fertile women, “Marthas”; the infertile who work as households, and “Unwomen” the old or the purposeless women who are sent to the colonies to clean the toxic waste and do severe labor (Snodgrass, 32-35). So the term “Unwomen” is meant for those who have no product to the society, therefore they have no value in Gilead. The handmaids’ roles are described by Aunt Lydia as “a worthy vessel” (Atwood, 65).

A quite relevant evidence that supports the idea of how the power of the obligatory role in male dominant organization eliminates woman’s real personality is the color code that is related to each social function. Twohig in his study on the psychological and social meaning of the color is able to come out with an interesting and convincing understanding. Depending on Pawlik’s _Goethes Farbenlehre_, Twohig argues that the black, like the white, is not a color (colorless) and the “intelligent” along with the “educated” people have an inclination to detest colors and turn to either black or white (12). As a result, the non-coloured outfits of the men specially the Commanders are justified. It shows the high role or importance that the men occupy in Gilead. Apparently the red color has many interpretations as it is the color of many signs like danger, attention, and waiting; in addition to being the color of blood. Miner in her study on the images of colors in this novel, confirms that it signifies a relation with death, blood, pain, and destruction. That's why, the handmaids’ red clothes can be seen as a symbol of productiveness, along with repression similar to the “blood-red” smile and flower, all might give a momentary pleasure, but at a great price (152). Thus, Gilead’s forceful functions each with its specific color, matches its exact meaning and shows their belief in also depending on the sexual category. Moreover, it gives the readers an idea about the harsh methods that the handmaids are subject to. They replaced their personal importance in the society and world in in general to categories and groups to make it easier for controlling.

As it is mentioned earlier, Gilead republic denies the handmaids’ individuality, relations with themselves and with others as well; above all it sets strict rules for punishment in case of any kind of relations approved. In doing so, Gileadeans ensure keeping them silent and passive in contrast to men who have active voice. Offred’s comment on her colleague is a clear example for their shut up “Beside me, Ofglen is also silent” (Atwood, 26). Day and Fisher in their study state that woman’s self is relational; it defines and develops through the communications with others whether male or female. They assert that in case of separation or isolation, she may lose her sense of self (1-3). In Gilead, they cut the handmaids with even the lifeblood relations and leave them with leaking breast “sit on our benches, facing one
another, as we are transported; we're without emotion now, almost without feeling, we might be bundles of red cloth. We ache. Each of us holds in her lap a phantom, a ghost baby” (Atwood, 127) that is, when they took from Janine her new born babies after being nursed for a few months “they believe in mother's milk.”; then she will be sent to another Commander and go on with the same plan (Ibid, 127). In order to guarantee the success and the continuity of their system, they structured false religious faith in addition to the military canon. They established teaching centres like Red and Rachel and Leah Re-education, for indoctrinating the fertile women. The aim of these centres is to brain-wash the trainee and directs her for silence and obedience. Margaret Atwood herself admits that "The aim of all suppression is to silence the voice, abolish the word, so that the only voices and words left are those of the ones in power.”(qtd. in Wood,140).

Men on the other hand still have access to everything and active role in Gilead. They are the people who suggest this world for women and the high statue of them (the Commander) form the rules which are practiced by other men like the Eye and the Angel upon the women (the handmaids). For instance, when Moira attempts to escape from the Red Centre, she seduces the Angels to practice sex with her but they refuse and arrest her. This incident illustrates that no matter the position of the male in the republic; all the men support in muting women. Men's active life is evident in changing or more probably breaking the rules whenever they desire. They have their own sexual activity that is forbidden for the handmaid. For instance, they have a secret kind of place just for their entertainment again at the handmaids’ expenses. The offenses of the handmaids are serving in a brothel called Jezebel where the Commanders and other Gileadeans are going to have free sex.

In Jezebel women are trained by the Aunts to serve not only native men but foreigner as well. The Commander tells Offred that it is a place for the officers, rulers, official men but Offred sees Arab and Japanese traders (Atwood, 236). Women in the whorehouse are controlled by top secret regulations. They have specific times for doing their jobs, taking break and even punishment for becoming overweight. The female in Jezebel are of different kinds, the Commander says there is the “sociologist”, “lawyer” he adds pointing to a woman “That one in business, an executive position; some sort of fast-food chain or maybe it was hotels” (Ibid, 237-238). So the women who have been dehumanized and used as a business token are well educated. In addition, they were once in respectable positions. Hence, men have their own dynamic scheme without being penalized which stand opposite to women position. Hammer comments that the
handmaids justify their choice of non-action speechlessly, by putting on view to us that any practice of self-assertion against this new society must be unsuccessful. Suggestively, the rebellious women of the handmaids’ world are all beaten; Ofglen’s commits suicide to keep May Day secretive and Moira's flight effort is let down and she is locked in as prostitute in Jezebel, the city's brothel, for some years before being sent to the boneyard (42). Therefore, to survive, handmaids have to surrender. Thus, Gilead seeks to take away women’s personality in order to make them passive transporter of the next production.

Relating to what has been done so far, it can be concluded that Atwood is able to create a sort of society that the man is portrayed theoretically to be the dominant and the master; trying in different manner to suppress woman. Women are subjugated whether directly or indirectly under the patriarchal ideology of Gilead. By using the concept of binary opposition the ideology of Gilead and the meaning of their beliefs are mostly revealed. The binary thought of men in Gilead is limited to the point that women have no any alternatives for a better life but for a worse one.

To prove Derrida’s concept of différance on *The Handmaid’s Tale* it is necessary to reverse temporary the earlier couples of binary opposition; to find out the other meanings of the text and to prove that the position of power or is not fixed, rather it can be changed according to the concept that is applied on the text, by reversing the oppositions in order to find out how they are related and how they can be defined in relation to each other.

Starting with the first pair which is totalitarianism/ individualism; both terms are related in the sense that there cannot be individual without society since society can be created only through individuals. Hence there is a kind of giving and taking relationship between them. In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, as it is said earlier, Gilead exploits women to give birth; so they depend on women for creating a new generation. Relating to the text itself the handmaids in some way or another tried to establish their own individuality: for example, Of warren after giving birth and before going to another of, was called Janine by Offred, who also reveals her real name to Nick, her illicit lover, so she regains part of her individuality. Furthermore, many of the handmaids break the rule of the society as a rebellion act for gaining part of their identity. They secretly help, and support each other; for example, when Moira is punished they “stole extra paper packets of sugar for her, from the cafeteria at mealtimes, smuggled them to her, at night, handing them from bed to bed” (Ibid, 91) and this proves that they still have the sense of community. Irele comments that in a normal community “individuals only partially embody the values of the
community even when these are presumed to have been fully internalized, for in the very process of acting out these values, they can also be found to strain against them” (20). To sum up, this point we can say that the society and individual are two related pair that the first one depends on the second and vise versa.

Another couple of opposition that is dealt with in this paper is head/ body. The relationship between them might be clear from the fact that although women are treated as only machine and tool for carrying out men’s desire, yet they still have intellectuality, reason along with emotion. The handmaids too can reverse the act of exploiting them, for instance, although committing suicide is a sin according to religion, but the act itself signifies the achievement of controlling their body. Ofglen is able to save the community of May Day that she belongs to and has faith in by committing suicide, as the handmaid before Ofred did, and also it can be considered as a way of gaining autonomy. To prove that the meaning between the two opposite ideas differs from dominance; the men on the other hand in Gilead knowingly or not destroy the society that they produced. The Commander helps Ofred and she alternatively, uses her body as a tool of power to control him, to some extent “It’s difficult for me to believe that I have power over him, of any sort, but I do; although it’s of an equivocal kind ... There are things he wants to prove to me, gifts he wants to bestow, services he wants to render, tenderness he wants to inspire” (Ibid, 210). He reveals to her official information and breaks the rules that he formed by bringing magazines and lotion to Offred who is supposed not to use them. Hence by overturning the binary oppositions head/ body, we, still have a meaningful and acceptable idea from the text itself, it can be said that although they vary from each other but they are still related. Neither the handmaids are far from intellectuality nor are the men stupid.

Breaking the binary thought of function/ personality, Atwood is intelligently able to produce many examples to show the reader how women are able to change and subvert hard reality. After imposing the specific functions as handmaids and prostitutes on the women in Gilead, defiantly they could change the hierarchical belief among themselves at least. For instance, Moira who was a lesbian before Gilead formation, ended in a place that is not actually what she wanted but at least finds some part of her personality that suit her more than being a handmaid in a commander’s house. She describes her situation in Jezebel “it's not so bad, there's lots of women around. Butch paradise, you might call it… [Other women in Jezebel] they're not too fond of men” (Ibid, 249-250). She adds that she has free time to do what she wants and the Commanders no longer interfere. Ofred as well is able to practice her role as human being breaks the rule of
forbidding love; she loves Nick and willingly offers her body to him as lovers not as handmaid. She even no longer wants to leave Gilead because she has something in common with it. She is able to make herself out of the red outfit of handmaids. When she goes with the Commander to the brothel, she wears his wife’s nice dress. Although the two terms of function and personality are different but the handmaids managed to hold the function and struggle for getting back what have been taken from them.

Gileadean aimed at keeping women silent without any voice of compliance, but what will happen if the boundary between active men and passive women is destroyed. In The Handmaid’s Tale, the author skilfully proves how women can no longer be kept silent in a patriarchal state. Handmaids’ passivity in Gilead can be taken as a revolutionary act for survival, yet they are not completely silent; they take part in an underground movement called May Day where Ofglen was a member and Nick as later suggested to be one of their members. They create their own language after being deprived of the old one “We learned to whisper almost without sound. In the semidarkness we could stretch out our arms...and touch each other's hands across space. We learned to lip-read, our heads flat on the beds, turned sideways, and watching each other's mouths. In this way we exchanged names, from bed to bed” (Ibid, 2). Through passivity, Ofred is capable to survive and resist although she seemed to be silent or she was actually being muted but intelligently she could defeat them and she noiselessly decided not to give them her child any more. It belongs to her and Nick not to a barren Commander.

Conclusion:

Overall, the twofold visualization of Atwood along with the open ending of the novel might be clearly expressed through the notion of binary opposition and Derrida’s concept of différance. Atwood’s portrayal of women is not always positive and not always negative as well. From the first part of this paper, we conclude that women are being used and dehumanized in Gilead which gives hints for the author’s view of men’s inclination to imprison women and deprive them of their rights in living a normal life. Furthermore, the binary thought depicts women as inert and powerless. The second part and after reversing the binary opposition, we conclude that the handmaids and women in general are able to convert the hierarchical thought by employing the same tool that has been used to repressive them. Women’s body can be seen in Atwood’s fiction as an instrument of domination and resistance. Moreover, human’s nature as God created it, cannot be easily denied that is to say man and woman are created to live and have a kind of mutual dependent life. In case of breaking the rule of nature, of course there possibly will no longer be a natural time.
for both. Women also are not so innocent neither any more silent. Therefore, *The Handmaid's Tale* can be regarded one of those writings that have ambivalent views of the world of man and woman. It provides the input to understand female beyond male’s agendas. Through a new style of writing, Atwood is able to encourage women to reject passivity by breaking down the oppositions which undervalue them. She rebuffs the ideology of comparing man to woman and claiming for a new belief that shows them differently.

**Work Cited**


تدمير مبدء المتناقضات الثنائية لمجتمع جيميد في رواية مارجريت اتوود

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قسم اللغة الانكليزية

الخلاصة:
تركز هذه الدراسة على تفسير وجهة نظر مارجريت اتوود نحو الانتماء للسلطة بين الرجل والمرأة. وكذلك تسلط الضوء على غرض الكاتبة ورسالتها المشروعة في مواجهة التمييز، للمرأة بشكل عام. وسيتم شرح هذه المسائل بتفسير روايتها، "حكاية أمو"، واختيارها نمط من المتناقضات الثنائية. وهذه الدراسة تعتمد على مفهوم المتناقضات الثنائية وفهوم الفروق للفيلسوف الفرنسي جاك دريدا للكشف عن مفاتيح إيجابية في ماهيةما كانت اتوود ت görüş مع أو ضد حركة المرأة وكيفية تجسيدها لتجربة المرأة ومعاناتها في المجتمعات التي تعتبر الرجل هو المتسط. باستخدام المتناقضات الثنائية نستطيع الكشف عن الأيديولوجيات المتسلطة والصارمة ضد المرأة للمجتمع السائد أو الحاكم في الرواية والتي تسمى جيميد. وكذلك ردة فعل الجامدة للمراة في الرواية تصبح مفهومة. ثم، يمكننا توضيح هذه المتناقضات باستخدام مفهوم دريدا يتبين لنا العكس وإشاع أخرى غير مذكورة بصورة مباشرة في الرواية. نظرية اتوود للمرأة كعنصر ضد الرجل ليست دائماً إيجابية ولا سلبية في الوقت نفسه. من خلال هذه البحث نستطيع أن المرأة تستخدم في مجتمع جيميد كشيء (كجماد) وبوحشية لتسخيرهم وسجنيهم في الحياة تحت مفهوم النظام الأساسي، بالاعتماد على مبدأ المتناقضات الثنائية المرأة تظهر كعنصر خامل وعاجز ومعتمد على الرجل في الحياة. ولكن من خلال مبدأ الفروق للنوريدا بنت نبا الكعبي حيث أن المرأة في الرواية تستطيع أن تستخدم الوسيلة التي استخدمت لظلمهم وظهر شخصيتهم كوسيلة لخلاصهم.