Women in Literary and Cinematic Representation: Then and Now, a Comparative Study between Margaret Atwood’s the Handmaid’s Tale and Gillian Flynn’s Gone Girl

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Anglo-American Studies

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Dedication

To the precious soul of my heart, to the memory of my grandfather, Kalli Ramdan.

You left fingerprints on our lives, may Allah grant you the highest degree

of jennet al Firdausi and have mercy and forgiveness on you

May Allah bless you dear Baba. I love you!

To the one who loves me and cares about me, to the one who makes me the

luckiest girl. To my hero and model, to the one who takes the place

of all others, to my adorable dad. I love you

To the perfect woman in the world. To my greatest Teacher of principles

compassion and love. All what I am I owe to you. You are the light

of my life, the source of Strength and happiness

to you lovely mom.
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Abstract

Women have always been represented in a stereotypical way, as submissive, weak and dependent, in both literature and cinema. However, in the last few decades, a new image of women was born. Women started to be depicted as strong, powerful and independent. To trace this shift in literary and cinematic representation, this study chooses two novels adapted into movies. This research inquires into women’s representation in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl* (2012) and their adaptation into movies. So, this study analyses the gradual shift of women from the margin to the centre, through the use of Psychoanalysis and Feminism, mainly the principles of Freud’s Defence Mechanism and De Beauvoir’s Otherness. This study illustrates the change in women depiction through the two main female protagonists of the novels. Offred, the main female character of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, is weak and obeys the rules of the commander. She cannot change her status, in the patriarchal society. On the other hand, Amy the protagonist of *Gone Girl* is the opposite of Offred. She is independent, dominant and manipulative of her husband and her entourage. Thus, this research displays the evolutionary development of the female protagonists and the new image they have achieved to be viewed as new powerful protagonists.
Résumé


Cette étude illustre l'évolution de la femme représentée par les deux principaux protagonistes féminins des romans. ‘Offred’, le personnage féminin principal de La Servante écarlate, est insignifiant obéissant à une société patriarcale où elle ne peut pas changer son statut, au sein de cette même société. D'un autre côté, Amy la protagoniste de Gone Girl est à l'opposé de ‘Offred’. Elle est indépendante, insoumise et manipulatrice de son mari et de son entourage. Ainsi, cette recherche montre le développement du protagoniste féminin et la nouvelle image obtenue, en les considérants comme de nouveaux acteurs puissants.
تمحورت صورة المرأة في ميدان الأدب والسينما في عدة سلبيات تمثلت بالاحتقار والتصغير في كيانها تارة وربطها في قفي الرجل تارة أخرى كان ذلك قدماً، أما خلال العقد الأخير تغيرت تلك النظرة بصورة جديدة مهدت النهوض الجديد للمرأة ويثبت فيها حياة غير سابقتها، حيث ا_Portrayed woman's portrait in the field of literature and cinema in several slanders represented by contempt and the shrinking of her being in a certain period and linking her to the man in another period, which was a past, but during the last decade, this perspective changed in a new way, leading to a new rise for the woman and confirming her life, which was not precedent, as she got a strength and independence that is not dependent on the man and is not subservient to him. 

This study analyzes the gradual evolution of the woman from neglect to leadership, depending on the psychological analysis and the feminine method, and especially Freud's theory related to the mechanism of defense and the theory of the Other by Sartre and Beauvoir. This study has pointed out that the representation of women by the two main characters in the two previously mentioned novels has changed, the main character in the film "The Maids' Tale" taking the role that the woman knew in the past of subordination and humiliation by the community male so she can't change anything from her state and should obey what is imposed on her by the man, on the other hand, we find that Amy, the protagonist of the film "Disappearance" has dressed in her new dress, which allowed her to impose herself and her style, where she distinguished herself in the independence and the struggle with her husband and his entourage. Finally, this research shows how the evolution of the woman's portrait and its reflection on the literary and cinematic field through the women who played their roles in a spectacular way.
GG = Gone Girl

THT = The Handmaid's Tale

TSS = The Second Sex

US = the United States of America

Vs = versus
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General Introduction

The long time stereotyped image of women has changed due to women authors, their influential works and the development of Feminist theory. After having read *The Handmaid’s Tale* by the Canadian Margaret Atwood and *Gone Girl* by the American Gillian Flynn, it has been noticed that they represent the image of women from two different points of view. First, Atwood portrays women as weak sexual objects and inferior to men. On the other hand, the American writer Flynn represents her protagonist as strong and outstanding. What is remarkable about those two works is that they are both adapted to the cinema. In this aspect, this dissertation will investigate the evolutionary development of women’s representation, as it will explore their image in both arts, with regard to their role and value in the western society.

The two represented protagonists undergo hard experiences that really left psychological scars within them and they adapt to their situation using different Mechanisms of Defence. So, this research will focus on the analysis of the two literary works using Feminism and psychoanalysis. These theories, with reference to Freud’s Defence Mechanism and De Beauvoir how men ‘other’ or neglect women, serve our research and shed light on the point we want to investigate. Additionally, the two movies display more the Psychological and Feminist side of the characters.

In fact, many books and several critics and researchers have dealt with the topic of women representation in artistic works. Many writers defended women’s
right and focused on talking about their rights to education and work, like the book of Mary Wollstonecraft *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She tackles the history of their rights’ movement and the political change of that period. Other books like *Women Suffrage and Women’s Rights* by Ellen Carol Dubois, focuses on the political and historical background of the suffragist movement and on gender issues. In *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf tackles the beauty, important, side of women which entraps them at home, work and even in public life. Doane Mary in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* analyses the image of women in the very first filmed movie and in other various documentaries and movies.

Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* questions women’s categories in her book, she talks about gender and sex through comparing “the masculine” and the “feminine” perspectives. The French Simone De Beauvoir, also, has devoted a whole book *The Second Sex*, which is regarded as women’s personal agenda to address women and discuss their demands and inequalities. In addition, Brooks in *Embodied shame Uncovering Female Shame in Contemporary Women’s Writings* has studied females’ fear. He has noticed that women are ashamed of their bodies, as he gives reference to different examples of these women in many novels. *Suffragette My Own Story* is another influential book by Emmeline Pankhurst. An autobiographical book which explains the legacy of the suffragette movement she has founded, it has also been adapted to the cinema.

However, focusing only on the political or historical issues, gender ones and the beauty angle, is not enough to consider the change of women’s representation. For better insights, my research will focus on the social side’s effects, i.e. the relationship between men and women, which illustrate the real depiction of females and how
women writers have represented them as marginalized years ago and as self independent recently.

Thus, this dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter comes as a theoretical background and serves as an introduction to the coming ones. It tackles females’ representation in the literary and cinematic world. It examines their former mistreatment and the way some authors have depicted them as ashamed, submissive and under men’s control. The chapter also identifies, respectively, the three waves of Feminism and the regulations they have been used to give a better image of women. It also introduces the principles of the feminist Simone De Beauvoir and the Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Furthermore, it tackles women’s representation in the cinema; the way they have been seen as sexual object to their progressing role as box office hits.

Chapter two applies De Beauvoir’s and Freud’s perspectives to the two novels. In addition, it studies Atwood and Flynn protagonists’ psyche and how they reach their peak of tension and develop gradually. The chapter will concentrate on the analysis of the protagonists’ traumatic mistreatment and their defence against external imperfect events. This chapter stresses on Atwood protagonist, i.e. reactions and behaviours and then the gradual position of revenge of the powerful protagonist of *Gone Girl*. Thus, we could see the improvement and amelioration of women writers, Atwood and Flynn.

The third chapter will focus on the cinematic version of the two novels. It will exhibit how both novels are viewed and will shed light on the existing differences between both genres; literature and cinema. i.e. comparing between the novels and the
movies. It will also clarify the main aspects of distinction between the narrations, and the likeness between the authors’ use of ideas or style.

Our dissertation aims at studying the evolutionary image and the gradual improvement of women’s position. It will also display the development of female authors’ depiction. My research can clarify and contribute to understanding some women and their representation. This work portrays moments of weakness and submission as well as those of power and control.
Chapter 1

Representation of women and Writing in American Literature and Cinema

Generally, this chapter explores women representation and how they are treated in literary and cinematic works. So, it sheds light on the history of the cinema, with a particular focus on women’s character. It also provides a general survey of Feminism and its waves, to serve the study’s objectives. The analysis of our two novels, The Handmaid’s Tale and Gone Girl, written by Margaret Atwood and Gillian Flynn, does not only deal with the Feminist theory but it will also use the Psychoanalytic approach. The analysis relies on Sigmund Freud and Simone De Beauvoir’s principles: Defense Mechanism and the mode men look at women, respectively.

I. Women In Western Society:

Previously, women have always been viewed as a curse and as a source of mistakes and evilness. Western society created a sort of enduring stereotype that defines women as inferior, submissive, dependent, obedient and subject to man. Women have always been enslaved and could not make their voice heard. Wolf confirms this idea when she says in her book The Beauty Myth: "Women do not feel as free as they want to". Throughout the years, women have always been depicted as servants and sexual objects. They are sometimes seen as a symbol of softness and
smoothness and are meant to be weak. On the other hand, men are the symbol of strength and dominance. Among the negative concepts attributed to women is that, they neither have dreams nor desires or decisions to make and they cannot write about their concerns or expose their ideas, because literature has for a long time been considered a man’s task and male writers are better than women writers. As explained in “The Female Body in Women’s Writing” by Tracy Brain: "...they [women] have no religion or poetry of their own: they still dream through the dreams of men". Oppressed women argue in Feminism is for Everybody by Bell Hooks: "They make us the ‘objects’... we remain unequals, inferior." Commonly, the male literary production confirms the stereotypes created around women and gendered by the society.

Women in societies are, generally, referred to as married or unmarried. Marriage is their only reference. Societies and families bother about single women and believe that the latter are futureless. De Beauvoir in The Second Sex asserts: "an unmarried woman is a pariah; she remains the servant of her father, her brother, and her brother-in-law". The married woman is never mentioned though, but she actually remains the servant of her husband as well, as long as she is alive. Allison Dorothy affirms in Two or Three Things I Know for Sure: "the women of my family were measured, manlike, sexless, bearers of babies, burdens, and contempt".

Men are above women in all domains, at work, at homes, and even when it comes to sex. It is him who decides which position to go through, it is up to him to decide what, when and for how long they sleep together. Women are not given consideration or appreciation; they feel useless just like animals, laying down, acting passively and receiving orders. They can neither enjoy their partners nor express their
gladness, yet, they feel ashamed, stressful, and disgusted (De Beauvoir 456). What a pity! Sexuality is not a practice to be obliged and performed on women, but a special shared feeling of love, respect, compassion and pleasure, it is a used expressive way by which a partner says I love you to his beloved one. Being harsh does not make a man a man, in the contrary, as Wolf argues: "even animals learn how to be sexual." (132)

The previously mentioned ideas are the subject matter of a movement that is called Feminism. This political term was used to defend women’s rights against patriarchy. In the United States, they used ‘women's lib’ to refer to feminism (Hooks 17). It protected the women’s social, political and economic status. It is an anti male, movement as some radical feminists argued in Hook’s Feminist theory From Margin to Centre: "all men are the enemies of all women"6. It is not an easy affair to define Feminism, it has been described as: "a broad movement embracing numerous phases of woman’s emancipation" (23). In addition, it aimed at ending women sexist representation and violence: "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression." (qtd. in Hooks 1)

Numerous figures paved the way to the movement of Feminism. Cleopatra was one of the first female leaders and rulers in history. Mary Wollstonecraft, was born in 1759, mostly famous for her book A Vindication of the Rights of Women, in which she demonstrates that women seem inferior just because they are not highly educated. Emmeline Pankhurst on the other hand, was a British activist who helped women to gain their rights to vote. In addition to the prominent figure Betty Friedan who discussed how hard, it is to be a woman, in The Feminine Mystique’s chapter; ‘Women are the Problem that Has No Name’. "She is to women what Martin Luther King was to
blacks”.

Simone De Beauvoir was an influential philosopher and a second wave feminist. She devoted a whole book, *The Second Sex*, to tackle women issues and rights. Also, the French Helene Cixous, was mostly concerned with L’écriture Féminine.

The previous feminists’ leaders contributed to the history of Feminism. The latter was defined in a conference on the Legacy and Future of Feminism by Camille Pagla. It is a movement which started in the mid 19th century, and was influenced by the movement of abolishing slavery. It has always been associated with democracy, as it aimed at settling equal rights for women and putting an end to men’s domination in all fields. Feminists categorized the movement into three waves; each of these had specific claims and aims. The first wave exhibited enormous efforts during the early 20thc. It demanded equal rights for women and particularly women suffrage right. At first voicing their needs in the streets was considered as a scandal and the suffragist right was refused in some states. Their right to vote was finally given in 1920 after too many years of suffering. In *Desiring Revolution* by Jane Gerhard, Feminists between the period of 1830 and 1920, demonstrated that women’s place was no longer located at homes serving as housewives, yet public open spaces, parks, shopping and working activities were the new actions of the new independent woman.

During the 1940s and 1950s, television and media advanced household management and children as the only objective and ambition of females, they did not mention any tools or subjects of women’s interests. At this highest point the second wave emerged and revolted. It started in 1960 and was a continuation of the first wave. Simone De Beauvoir and Betty Friedan were two of its prominent figures. De
Beauvoir was born in 1908 and died in 1986 in Paris; a French feminist and activist. She wrote a very interesting influential book, *The Second Sex*, in 1949, which was really popular. It was regarded as women’s personal agenda; it discussed their demands and inequalities. De Beauvoir studied with Jean Paul Sartre who was her boyfriend, and she obtained her diplomas from Sorbonne University. She tackled different political events including the Algerian war and women’s rights, as Brison points out in *The Cambridge Companion to Simone De Beauvoir*.

She mainly focused on putting an end to discrimination and violation as she claimed for women’s health care, education and acknowledgement of sexual abuses and rape. It was by all means of media ignored, housework, however, was perfectly observed. Whether in the cinema or on TV, women have been smaller in number if compared to men; in 1950s no more than 20 to 35% females were introduced. They were portrayed as matrimonial victims and housewives, unlike men who were seen as managers, intelligent and dominant. By time females started to occupy important jobs like doctors, lawyers and judges but it was all related to what concerns them like gynecologists and judges particular in women and children concerns.

In the 1970s, when Western females obtained lawful rights, they continued their education and engaged in different occupations (Wolf 9). In *Bodies Knowledge*, Wendy Kline writes that, Feminists fought to locate women’s body as a serious umbrella of their freedom, because they would not gain equality without trusting the power of their physicality. By the time, they struggled to study their bodies in hospitals and private sectors, and the idea of knowing the self body became more and more spread between women. They finally could understand their bodies, fight for a complete health care treatment, reject the drugs cure which may cause them cancer.
and fight for their abortion right and total freedom (14-42). Many feminists were exposed to a medical experience, the pelvic exam, which was an observation that aimed at knowing about internal diseases in female’s pelvis. One argues during the test: "I was naked, he was dressed; I was lying down, he was standing up, I was quiet, he was giving orders" (43). Even in such normal medical situation, females felt of a lesser importance than males.

Third wave feminism arose during the 1990s as a response to second wave failures; it seemed to be not as harsh as the second movement. Naomi Wolf considers second wavers as "victim feminism"; she says that they need women to abandon marriage and beauty. She indicates that they are neither fun nor feminine unlike third wavers who represent sex, fun and femininity. On the other hand, the third generation was not divided and broken, like the previous one, because of diverse issues including Lesbianism and pornography.

Third wavers were diverse and did not include only white women, but those of colors were present from the beginning of 1980s. In contrast the previous generation was seen as racist and all identical (181). Judith Butler is a prominent third wave figure; she was born in 1956, in Ohio, a professor of comparative literature. She wrote Gender Trouble in 1990, which is said to be "indispensable for feminist theory". This essential book deals with women categories, as it considers the feminine and masculine relationships. Butler refers to De Beauvoir and other feminists’ works and focuses on gender and identity troubles. In 1992, Carol Du Bois argued in Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights that women were elected to political office, it was "the year of women". From this point on, the image of the working women started to
replace that of the mother (17). Females’ situation started to be optimistically improving.

The three waves of Feminism aimed at defending women’s rights and equality. Feminists defended a deeply-rooted stereotype in western society. The latter deals with literary production and the mode women used to write and perceive themselves through female characters. Commonly, female western writers despised themselves, because of the bad treatment they received from society. They did not feel valuable in literary terms, and they were concerned with women issues especially those related to their body. This pushed them to write about the following negative aspect which was due to the violation they received. Throughout the history of female writings, the aspect of shame has been dealt with in different writings.

Unlike contemporary writings, many western authors used to depict their characters as ashamed of their bodies. Look at Me was written in 1983 by the British Brookner Anita. The protagonists Dorris and Frances feel disgust, invisible and unattractive of their bodies. Bastard out of Carolina was written in 1992 by Dorothy Allison, it talks about Bone whom her stepfather abuses and rapes her regularly. She hated herself and suffered from his harsh treatment, she sees herself as "dumb, ugly" and disgusting. She blames herself and feels ashamed because of the violation and exploitation her stepfather caused. (9)

Besides, the American writer Allison Dorothy was subjected to rape by her step father, whom grew fear, disgrace and dishonor in her psyche. She admits: "the man raped me. It’s the truth, It’s fact " (qtd. in Bouson 36). My stepfather raped me; she says, slapped us and hated us. He did not like girls, we were abused by him, violated and mistreated (39). As she argues in “A question of A Class”: "I grew up
poor, hated, the victim of physical, emotional and sexual violence, and I know that suffering does not ennoble, it destroys\textsuperscript{16}. She tells how she suffered and felt deeply ashamed of her step father’s treatment. He would say to her: "you’re a dog for breakfast, lunch, and dinner" (qtd. in Bouson 36). In American Nancy Mairs’ novel, \textit{Waist and High in the World}, the protagonist speaks about her miserable experience as an ugly ashamed girl suffering from cancer she says: "I was my face, I was ugliness" (12).

This experience of violation, rape and harm that women encountered and suffered from taught them to be afraid and timid of their bodies. Female writers pictured these injurious emotions of disgust and unjust in their writings. Expressing their harm, damaged feeling and the way society pushed them to consider their persona. De Beauvoir declares that, the public teaches women to disgust themselves and reject any feeling of pride. It trains them to hold responsibility when communicating with their partners. It leads womankind to commit suicide and abortion (458). Modern-day women’s writing, however, gave birth to a new female’s self identity and discovery. As Margaret Atwood says in VanSpanckeren’s \textit{Vision and Forms}:

So I think a lot of energy in women’s writing over the past ten years…has come from being able to say things that once you could not say, and therefore being able to see things that once you couldn’t see, or that you would have seen but repressed, or that you could have seen and put another interpretation on.\textsuperscript{17}

Women resisted and struggled against males’ patriarchy, from being victims of rape to resisters to men oppression via writing. This will be tackled in the next chapter.
The reason behind women’s previous depictions, concerning shame and humiliation, was due to their place and value at that time, which was mostly referred to as "the other". This crucial concept was used in different contexts and theories that related women to the exploited, inferior creature. De Beauvoir makes reference to this principle of 'othering' women. She demonstrates how men are represented as 'norms' and women as 'others'. De Beauvoir asserts: "he is the subject, he is the absolute- she is the other." (7) To break this habit of mistreatment women should find and consider their 'we'; as unique and different. The term ‘other’ has first been used by Gayatri Spivak; it was used as an illustration of a captain who tells his people who their masters are. Spivak argues in Preliminary Notes on Othering and Agency: "the other on his home ground". Indian natives also were portrayed, by the colonized and referred to as 'foreign yoke' (11).

From this illustration, the term 'other' is to be defined as a concept which refers to inferior, weak and different and thus applied to women. Othering woman, is a feminist concept used by De Beauvoir. The aim was to demonstrate the perspective of the patriarchal society towards women. They referred to women as the others through painting them as mysterious and un-understandable. De Beauvoir claimed: "the women...were objectified as the other" (13). Men do not consider the female existence, unlike women who cannot think of themselves without males. Females are said to be nothing but 'sex', De Beauvoir confirms: "he is the subject; he is the absolute. She is the other" (26). Men and women have never been equally represented, women were and still are handicapped and men on the other hand always occupy good jobs and earn the best wages even if they cover the exact same job.
Women are seen as the "others", they should not speak, nor interrupt, must keep silent and be servants. Fathers preferred to have boys instead of girls. Pankhurst Emmeline in her book *Suffragette* claims: "but I heard him say, somewhat sadly, ‘What a pity she wasn't born a lad.’" De Beauvoir also says that women have no essence of being a person. They are being oppressed by their fathers first then by their husbands, once they became their own property, and being a pure virgin is a must (106-7). Many argue that women are incomplete since they have no penis, they hate themselves and feel jealous and envy men. De Beauvoir indicates that: "The penis represents a feeling of advantage and superiority." (277) It is the reason why men have always been favored over women, whether by the society or family members. In Zevallos, "What is Otherness", De Beauvoir describes woman as the incidental, the inessential and the other of the man, to define her, man is the reference.

In her book, Simone De Beauvoir expresses how an adolescent girl describes her painful experience with a man, and the way he abuses her. She argues: "as soon as he came near my sex I pulled away… I cried with pain". She could not handle it. She adds: "he grabbed me from behind….I did not resist." she begged him not to touch her and divest her from the only precious thing, yet he was harsh and threatened her. She says: "I saw traces of blood… and I cried for hours" (461-62). These physical and mental states of abuse, have led to psychological scars. From one hand, abused and raped women had to see psychologists, because they went through a lot of violation. The last mentioned, created a deep feeling on them, of phobias, disgust, depression and even dangerous traumas. No emotions, love or good behaviors but violence and orders which they have been through.
From the other hand, Sigmund Freud’s principle of Defense Mechanism, which is used by the ego, aimed at decreasing stress and conflicts between the Id and reality. It helps depressed women to overcome and ignore their repressed feelings and traumas of rape and despise and turn them into positive acts. Sigmund Freud is known as the father of psychoanalysis, a Jewish figure who lived in Vienna. His patients suffered from hysteria and emotional disorders. This helped him to find out that, repressed feelings and emotions are the origin of most problems. It is exactly the effect of men’s mal-treatment of women. Psychoanalyst’s males related their childhood prejudgment of women to their theories. In "Psychoanalysis and Women", the psychoanalyst idea that women are seen as inferior because they do not possess a penis, was based upon boyhoods idea that girls envy boys for not having a penis.

In Anna Freud’s book *The Ego and the Mechanism of Defense*, the term 'Defense' has first been used in 1894 in “The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense” in the survey of Freud. The aim was to represent the conflict of the ego in opposition to distressful and unpleasant thoughts. The concept, later on was given over and replaced by 'repression'. Defense mechanism is the superego and Id struggle which asserts that defense mechanism is energized by the ego to fight against perplexity and worry.

Both principles, Defense Mechanism and otherness, of Sigmund Freud and Simone De Beauvoir are to be discussed in the writings of two significant female writers; Margaret Atwood and Gillian Flynn. They contributed, differently, to write about the new persona of female characters; Margaret Atwood, a Canadian writer born in Toronto, she is a writer of poetry, short stories, novels and even children’s literature. Her work encompasses a common feature which is her female’s protagonists, whom she represents as struggling to achieve their freedom and survive
at the end. *The Handmaids’ Tale* was written in 1985. Atwood depicts the power of males and females relationship. In addition to the way her protagonist suffers, Offred, was portrayed as an object of sex, her role was giving birth to children only. She is the property of her commander and his wife and at the end she escapes with eternal fear.

Many of her other works received awards like; *lady oracle*, in which Jean the heroine lives in Toronto depicted as a gothic romance author. She fakes her suicide and goes to Italy with her husband. Yet she regrets because of the miserable painful memories she brought with her of being a fat girl. In her famous novel *Surfing*, the protagonist looks for her father disappearance in Quebec desert. She blames herself because she left her only child and husband. In the desert, the tourists destroyed her childhood; she was hurt for all those painful experiences. Atwood’s literary works were seen via the lenses of the second wave movement, for rejecting all manners of patriarchy and oppression. Her writing has always been in favor of women’s problems, she pictures them as subjected to men’s authority but with a better path they follow to survive at the end.

Gillian Flynn on the other hand, was born in 1971 in the US. She has always dreamt of becoming a crime reporter. Her famous novels *Sharp objects* of 2006 and *Dark Places* of 2009, combined themes of murder and mystery. *Gone Girl* is her master piece and a box office hit, it was written in 2012 and turned into a movie in 2014. It was David Fincher film by the Regency Enterprises, screen played by Gillian Flynn, produced by Arnon Milchan and edited by Kirk Baxter. The movie’s performers are Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike (GG 2012). Amy the heroine wants to take revenge and escapes in her fifth anniversary, because she discovered that her husband Nick started cheating on her with a young student. An outstanding perfectly
performed role, which shows the power of females. In an interview with Flynn, she comments:

I particularly mourn the lack of female villains-good, potent Female villains, no ill-temped women who scheme about landing good men and better shoes…I’m talking violent wicked women… we’ve left no room to acknowledge our dark side. Dark sides Are important.25

The words of Flynn demonstrate how much she needs to give a new identity to women, not the one of kindness, service and fear yet the one of power and darkness. She wants to shed light on the other side which is more important and mostly needed. Wollstonecraft in the Vindication of Rights of Women, as well tries to convince women to be strong. She calls on them to adopt power and smartness, to stand and prove their capability, to refuse to be weak and avoid any men’s exploitation and use. She claims:

I wish to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strengthen, both of the Mind and the body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility Of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste are almost synonymous With epithets of weakness.26

Atwood’s writings slightly differ from Flynn’s. The former depicts females as struggling trying to attain their success at the end. Then again, Flynn represents her protagonists as strong and successful. Despite their contribution, many figures criticized "l’écriture feminine" i.e. female writings. They believe that: "women are emotional and unstable because of their hormones" (Brain 18). Indeed the term female combines different terms like dignity courage, romance, strength love and fidelity. Yet, it does not necessarily mean instability and weakness. Women have always been
strong they fought and struggled for years against all internal and external reasons. They tried to show up and prove their value, existence, merits and their real position. The French Helene Cixous emphasizes: "feminine writing is a dangerous and stylish expression full of traps, which leads to all kinds of confusion" (Brain 21).

II. Women in the Cinema

Besides women in western literature, women also have an essential role in the cinema as well. This section tackles the history of the cinema as well as the role of women during that period. This part sheds light on the very first movies, and the position of women in each, in addition to the manner by which they have been depicted.

The common characteristics of the two novels of Flynn and Atwood, is that they are adapted into the cinema. It can be said that this art has contributed to the representation of women. Movies have a great impact on our daily life; they are swallowed up by a large public. They trace the cultural, social and personal problems; they sway the audience’s thinking and imagination, since they are the mirror of society. In her dissertation, Behind the Curtains, Dutt refers to Berger who pointed out: "like fish, we swim in a sea of images and these images help shape our perception of the world and of ourselves". Women are often represented in movies, as in literature. They are almost depicted as weak, marginalized, occupying dirty jobs, cheaters, unfaithful to men. The latter are most of the time pictured as strong, smart and bosses. Some movies destroyed the image of woman; yet, others favored it, in which she was seen as the free, powerful super woman, which is the objective of this study. Films are the most entertaining media tool, they reflect a real story, and they
help to demonstrate women’s position they whether could meliorate their position or do the opposite. Dutt argues:

They [films] show us what we are, what we were, and what we could, should, or want to be. When at their best, movies give birth to new visions of female strength and freedom. At their worst, movies ridicule, denigrate, deny what real women have long achieved, and replaced it with spectres from the past.

(3)

The depiction of women in media has always weakened and lessened their value, showing them as nothing, yet, objects to be maltreated and bodies’ misapplied. It is confirmed: "little by little, the tease became the truth and they [girls] took off their clothes as the camera recorded them for future viewing by God knows who." (qtd. in Berberick 9) Girls were pushed gradually to pornography via advertisements and pictures in which naked women were exposed. Miller in “Girls on Screen” argued that females were depicted as love profits, single and lovely and a common theme was, obviously, sex. She argues that they were ugly portrayed: "women sleep with their clients or bosses… sleep with their employers. Sometimes they are sympathetically portrayed…the women use sex to advance their careers." A lot has been said fronting women to contradict their works, which was badly improving because of men’s interests, who took advantage and achieved their will through using and abusing females.

The first screening film was in 1895, entitled "The Kinetoscope of Time". It was about new technology and corruption; it combined different feelings of fear and anxiety, related to the concept of time representation. The protagonist was a male who faced walls, no open spaces he was in a placeless location. He considered machines
invented by Thomas Edison "Kinetoscopes", he was asked to direct his eyes through the eye piece to see different scenes of dances. The fiction combines various themes related to the rise of the cinema and its technological aspects like eternity. The cinema saves times of laugh, memories, feelings, preserves moments of love and death. It is a sort of protective archive\textsuperscript{30}. Women were represented at the early stages of the cinematic emergence from 1896 Edison’s "Irwin Rice Kiss" to the "Lonedale Operator" and over other stories. In Edison’s 1903 "What Happened in the Tunnel", the movie firstly shows a mid class woman sitting in the train with her black maid and a man was sitting behind them flirting with the white woman. Once the train enters the tunnel the man kisses the maid who exchanges the place with the white one (Doane 196-97).

In Andersen’s 1974 documentary "Eadweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer", two naked women were pictured. The camera lenses tried to show the flicker effect on them while walking against a black and white ground (199). Both women were kissing each other just to see the flicker effect but it was not actually filmed in the cinema (204). Women’s abuse in the cinema was not basically absent from the early years of film making to distort the image of female’s actresses. Yet step by step, their image improved and their real value returned, and they got what they deserve. Despite the fact that they are a little bit manipulated.

One might argue that women’s position in movies started to change, they acquired new methods and film producers started to respect them. In Nikolaidis’ films for instance, females appear as powerful independent and resisters, they are even pictured as stronger than men. On the other hand, he exhibits men as less important and less directors if compared to women. His films have been constructed in search of
the perfect woman. Males however, are covering secondary roles following women, and are never acting as heroes but portrayed as less puissant, romantic and effective. In 1940s 1950s, Nikolaidi gave rise to the model of the perfect woman, particularly in the movie "Femme Fatale"; in which females were viewed as elegant, strong and attractive. This genre of femme fatale originated and flourished in the paintings and writings of French performers. Chris Straayer claims: "femme fatale operates in an independent agent, always signaling."³¹

Gradually the image of women commenced to make progress and to improve in the cinema. Women started to share heroism and to be portrayed as good actresses. In literature, they started writing about their concerns and interests; they are no longer making use of male’s voice, yet theirs to express what they really feel. Their films were box offices’ hit and people turned their attention more and more into them because their works win big awards. Women were filmed as action, drama and adventure characters they were no longer occupying dirty roles. Movies started to offer a positive means of enlightenment for female characters. Films like The Hunger Games, Gone Girl brought success and exhibited a perfect image of women. Females proved that they can be protagonists who are not afraid of different frigid temperatures, coming from different viewers’ point of view.

The chapter eclaircized previous views of the essence of woman, it exhibited the degree to which she was neglected and imperfectly pictured. Whether in the cinema, society or in literature women were a means of disgust and dishonor. Through De Beauvoir’s idea of the manner among which men used to look at women, extracted from her influential book The Second Sex, females started to think about their essence and personality. This contributed to the emergence of female authors
who decided to give birth to a new image of representing women, like Gillian Flynn. She raised a huge positive mess when publishing her masterpiece *Gone Girl* in which her protagonist was an outstanding character. Freud’s defense mechanism is a method through which the person could pass by to avoid all negative features and replace them by positive ones, to fight repressed feeling and ideas. Besides Flynn, Atwood is another writer who speaks about female characters, and whose her protagonists were viewed from the opposite sex eyes. This will be tackled in the second chapter; comparing both writers’ protagonists to notice the development of female writers and female characters.
End Notes and References


(2) qtd. in Tracy E. Brain, "The female Body in Women’s Writing: from Sylvia Plath to Margaret Atwood," Diss, (Sussex University, 1992): 27.


Chapter 2

From Repression and Submission to Control and Freedom

The following chapter will examine Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl* (2012) with reference to Sigmund Freud’s Defense mechanism principle and Simone De Beauvoir’s how men other women, via painting them as mysterious and unintelligible. It will, also, shed light on the development of the depiction of women and their role in society, taking into consideration the progress of female authors writing

I. *The Handmaid’s Tale: Women’s Defeat and Humility*

Atwood’s futuristic novel is a sort of warning to women’s gradual situation in the future. It focuses on the serious regards and position of women. The female body in Atwood’s novel is colonized by patriarchy. Each handmaid stays two years with the commander; if she does not give birth to children she is declared "unwoman" and sent to the colonies. If, on the other hand, she produces children; since she is considered as "a producing machine", she will be sent to another commander’s house. The handmaids have no right to read and write; they just watch porn movies, for specific reasons, once a week. So, the general image that can be formed about this novel is so stereotyped and limited to one social role “procreation”. Women are treated as objects their bodies, only, prove their existence.
In the novel there exist different instances of Freud’s Defense Mechanism, which was later on divided into various types by his daughter Anna Freud. In The Ego and the Mechanism of Defense Anna argues; it can pass through different steps or different manifestations. The first manifestation is denial, which means refusing reality i.e. to not accept any bad situation or event to take place in your life\(^1\). Denying the truth was used by the protagonist Offred, in The Handmaid’s Tale, to distance herself from actual reality. The descriptive language she uses is a sort of escape from her intensely disordered life. She says:

I sit on my chair, the wreath on the ceiling floating above my head, like a frozen hall, a zero. A hole in space where a star exploded. A ring, on water, where a stone’s been thrown. All things white and circular. I wait for the day to unroll, for the earth to turn, according to the round face of the implacable clock.\(^2\)

Second, repression is another type of defence mechanism. The person ignores and tries to forget an event or an experience. Offred ignores and avoids mentioning her real name. She says: "I must forget about my secret name and all ways back" (153). Offred’s name may have various interpretations. Her name is composed of two parts; a proposition 'of' followed by the name of the commander to whom she belongs 'Fred'. Her name also signifies the act of offering something, like gifts and objects.

In addition, Offred cannot go out with the commander; it is one of Gilead society’s forbiddance. He suggests to her a night out and she refuses, yet, once he brings her party clothes, old fashionable which belong to his wife Serena Joy, she accepts. Offred looks for any detail or feeling that could help her to escape, ignore and forget about her distressful reality. Offred says:
He's holding a handful, it seems, of feathers, mauve and pink. Now he shakes this out. It's a garment, apparently, and for a woman: there are the cups for the breasts, covered in purple sequins. The sequins are tiny stars. The feathers are around the thigh holes, and along the top... All such clothing was supposed to have been destroyed. (242)

Repression could also be seen with Serena Joy, the commander’s wife. She occupies herself in the garden each day; she cleans and takes care of her colored roses to forget about the humility she is being exposed to by her husband. Offred claims: "One day I came upon Serena Joy, kneeling on a cushion in the garden, her cane beside her on the grass. She was snipping off the seedpods with a pair of shears." (161) She witnesses the ceremony between him and the handmaid, which is hard for her to accept. Besides her name, which has been changed, Offred argues: "Serena Joy was never her real name, not even then. Her real name was Pam." (55) Her new name 'Joy' signifies huge emotions of happiness; it is used to substitute those feelings of sorrow. She used to sing and to make speeches. Offred confirms: "She doesn’t make speeches any more. She has become speechless. She stays in her home... she’s been taken at her word." (56)

Throughout the novel, the protagonist has been referred to as of Fred the commander. The pattern of defence mechanism, displacement, could be seen in the novel as well. Whenever Offred feels anxious, she turns her attention to her secret relationship with Nick. So that she can forget about her feelings of anger. Even though it is not a mature act but it was her own cure to neglect her misery. She also tries to pay no regard to her meetings at night with the commander. Offred indicates:
"I remember Queen Victoria’s advice to her daughter: close your eyes and think of England. But this is not England. I wish he would hurry up" (105).

Some researchers argue that the theory of Stockholm Syndrome implies that both the hostage and the captor must keep contact because they do share the same feeling of fear and panic. It is an unconscious feeling which grows between two persons, where one of them abuses or violates the other. This concept is derived from Freud’s theory and could be seen in the veiled relationship between Offred and the commander. Offred meets the commander, although it is forbidden, and develops a positive feeling. He wants to play scrabble with her and she does not refuse, she enjoys the scrabble game for the sake of protecting herself.

Offred’s act is an escape from her sad reality and more precisely her ego practices as a mechanism of defence. The structure of Freud’s theory emphasizes that when the ego is threatened; it turns to Defence Mechanisms to defend the self from hurt and seeks surviving. This is the exact case of Offred who responds to all orders for her protection’s sake.

This binding with the captor can also be seen in the relationship between the Aunts and the handmaids. They hold an authoritarian function in the red centre. The handmaids eat, speak, and take pills regularly without any objection for protecting themselves. The Aunts are strongly represented to teach the handmaids to accept rape and be servants of the commanders. They even use violence and hit them, Aunt Lydia says: "for our purposes your feet and hands are not essential" (102). Atwood’s objective behind the Aunts’ powerful depiction is to put them in parallel position with the commanders. Johnson agrees: "... they [Aunts] have as much if not more power as
the commanders have". Even when it comes to reading and writing, only commanders and Aunts do.

In spite of the fact that both the handmaids and the Aunts are women i.e. belong to the same group, the handmaids are being oppressed by them. This means that the Aunts are more powerful, yet this power is given to them. They are also under control of the commanders. They do manipulate the handmaids for the commanders’ sake. So, they are both under their umbrella. Besides power, Offred’s defence mechanism is related to different aspects like butter.

Further, one can understand that the use of butter in the novel is also linked to Offred’s defence mechanism, so to forget about her stressful reality. She explains: "as long as we do this butter our skin to keep it soft, we can believe that we will someday get out, that we will be touched again, in love or desire" (107). Offred told the commander that they use margarine to hydrate their skin. He gives her some of it. The gift helps the handmaid to forget about actual events and turns her attention to other unimportant objects. Butter in the novel is not a simple aliment; it turns into a concept or a symbol.

When we say "to butter someone up" means to blandish him with complements and fulfilments so to get special advantages. Thus butter has been used by the commander for a profit. He attracts Offred’s attention and gets from her easily what he wants. Butter can also be considered as a temporary hope for Offred in the way that she will not be affected by her actual unfortunate life. Remembering the past is another aspect to escape from her awful reality. She argues: "what I wore to them: shorts, jeans, jogging pants. What I put into them: my own clothes, my own soap, my own money, money I had earned myself. I think about having such control" (34).
Offred is being used, not only by the commander but also by Serena Joy. The latter implicitly blackmails Offred showing her the picture of her daughter to push her to get pregnant from Nick. The commander, too, exploits Offred; he gives her the hand lotion and different magazines to read to get what he wants from her. Offred becomes like a toy that behaves as they want her to. She is always in a position of weakness.

Through Offred’s imagination and flashbacks, she tries to escape from reality. She focuses on her relation with Nick, her friendship with Moira and the scrabble game she entertains herself with. The horrified society, like the wall in which mistaken people’s bodies are hanged, remind them of rules. The society tries to convince them that they are always under men’s control. Janine, who has been raped, is persuaded by Aunt Lydia that it was all her fault. It is always women’s fault; because they are dependent on men and they are in good and better life, thanks to the commanders.

Besides, the clock in the novel has been mentioned several times. It signifies a stressful time for the handmaids and the limited period they have to give birth to children. As it also indicates hope, and that time is running and they may win at the end and leave Gilead community. Offred argues: "we wait, the clock in the hall ticks" (94). "I check the clock, during dessert," (100). "The clock in the hall downstairs strikes nine" (146). At the end however Offred indicates that the clock has no specific meaning because she was leaving the commander’s house. She says: "from here I can see the clock. It’s no time in particular" (306). Offred did not pay attention to it because there will be no baby to worry about, she is finally free.
In Gilead, women are seen as bodies, to overuse. They are not valued, yet seen as babies’ machines. Mounda agrees in her interview:

reproduction, anti abortion, infertility, power, politics, ruthlessness in theocracy, suppression of women in a mole chauvinist society, exploitation of woman as a plaything used for absolute sexual pleasure, ‘as a two-legged wombs’ and as a consumer object of the postmodern world to be enjoyed and thrown denying her even the basic human.⁵

The manner through which the handmaids are treated, and the rights which have been taken from them, stress the patriarchy and the control that men used to have on women. This idea has been the main subject matter in the feminist agenda.

Indeed, Feminism focuses on the idea that women are human beings; however, the handmaids are badly treated. They are considered as producing machines. All their value is when giving birth to children. Women in Gilead society are harshly oppressed by the chauvinist society. In the red centre, their behaviours are restricted and controlled; even the use of bathrooms. Offred argues: "we can go to the washroom... though there’s a limit to how many times a day, they mark it down on a chart" (81). Offred then explains: "we were losing the taste of freedom" (143). All their steps are controlled and restricted; one bad behaviour and they are punished.

Here the idea of De Beauvoir that, men other women and use them for sexual objectives and nothing more exists in the novel. The objective of the red centre is teaching them how to be submissive and accept men’s behaviours and temper. Porn movies are exposed to them, so that to be familiar and intimate with men’s purpose. Aunts teach them to be manipulated by men, to be seen as sex machines. For them, women equal sex, they are the other, the object and the thing. Men however, are the
self, the subject and the dominant. In the novel women are portrayed as oppressed and deprived from their rights of education, work money all of these are under men’s control. Even their names were changed and forgotten, their new ones are linked to their commanders as belongings to them.

Feminists, insist that the oppression of women is the toughest one in the history of humanity. Females’ oppression could be seen from three levels in *the handmaid’s tale*. The society of women in the novel is subdivided into three groups; the Marthas, the wives and the handmaids. The Marthas serve the commander and his wife. The second are the wives who serve the commander, and third are the handmaids. Exploitation of female sexuality by the commander is widely expressed through their mothering objective.

It is the major theme; women are seen as sex object. In this sense De Beauvoir exposes in *The Second Sex*: "Woman has ovaries and a uterus; such are the particular condition that lock her in her subjectivity; some even say she thinks with her hormones". Men judge women as if they do not have hormones; they think they are objective and criticize them. Even when we say, man sleeps with woman, man is the subject, sleeps is the verb and women is the object. Male’s patriarchy could investigate women’s existence and relate it to all substances which are seen as the object and the other.

De Beauvoir’s famous quote points out that unlike men, to be a woman is a tough job. She says "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (303). It is the experience, adventures and problems which create women. It questions woman’s self and that she was born with a vagina, but unless men have associated her with sex, she would not have been considered as a sex object. In *the Handmaid’s tale*, likely,
women are seen from two sides; the maternal and the sexual one. Their persona has been affected, besides medicines, they are ordered, beaten and restrained. Throughout the story, their famous slogan is "give me children or else I die". A self protection or a mental disordered; they are aware that if they do not produce children, they are useless.

Offred admits that their only value is producing children. She says: "I resign my body freely, to the uses of others. They can do what they like with me. I am abject [sic]" (298). The regulation which Gilead imposes on women is disempowering their personality and position. Men continue to introduce to women the idea that their only job is mothering, which unfortunately aims at disqualifying them. De Beauvoir argues: "in the sexual act and in maternity woman engages not only time and energy but also essential values" (92). Women in Gilead have no control on their bodies, rather, they are being regulated by the Marthas, Aunts and the commander and his wife. Such control dehumanizes their persona, especially when it comes to sex and the way they are treated; laying on the wife knees held by her from hands and sexually abused by the commander.

Being a victim of sex abuse requires a strong power of body and mind. In this context, Michel Foucault argues: "to deal with sex, power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition. Its objective: that sex renounces itself. Its instrument: the threat of punishment that is nothing other than the suppression of sex".7 Thus, the regime of Gilead community imposes such a practice on the handmaids. The state of Gilead is the one which has replaced the US, it is the same, yet, its government has changed. The handmaids are imprisoned for the sake of producing children. To be strong, however, is not easy. The latter ideas may reflect the Marxists perspectives, where
one social class directs the other and enjoys leisure i.e. Gilead’s commanders and the lower class are the handmaids suffer and are means of production.

In addition to Marxists’ class division, generally, Atwood depicts often her protagonist as restricted by orders, but with Offred, she insists on picturing her as curious and a little courageous. Without Nick’s help, however, she would not have survived. Nick in the narrative is a helper, so not all men in this community are bad. Atwood, then, makes reference to men. Offred is the commander mistress, none of her dreams and desires are important but the child she produces.

Surprisingly, Offred resists the entire bad situation and survives by the end. In so many instances, she wants to give up but she has had hope. Women in the novel have been victimised because of men’s persecution and racism. They are being treated according to the type of their dresses; white, blue or red. The handmaids use only the backyard’s door; they cannot open windows and are continually watched by the guards. They are head covered for maintaining their modesty. Wives on the other hand are also abused; they cannot work, and are under their husbands’ control. They are, as well humiliated during the sex act, watching their husbands sleeping with the handmaids.

It is compulsory on them, if one of the handmaids refuses to produce children, she would die cleaning the garbage in the colonies. These colonies are open spaces across the community of Gilead; they signify that part of the US which has been devastated. So those handmaids who do not wish to give birth to children are sent there. The Aunts role is brainwashing their minds, through the movies of murder, rape and sex abuse, so that the handmaids would think that they are in better situations. Men in Gilead look at women as inferior, producers of babies and subordinate.
Different measurements are taken in the pre Gilead society. Women suffer from the commanders’ control, since children are their only wish. Women are different, their "red dresses" signify blood. Offred argues: "the colour of blood which defines us" (18).

Throughout the novel, Offred apologizes for the miserable story she says. Despite the fact that she is the one who is being abused, manipulated and mistreated but she feels guilty as if it was all her fault. Women at this period feel disgust and useless, Gilead has taught them to be responsible for their acts. Offred argues: "I wish this story were different. I wish it were more civilized. I wish it showed me in a better light, if not happier, than at least more active, less hesitant". It is noticed that, although Offred has suffered but she is blaming herself she says: "I’m sorry there is so much pain in this story... I’ve tried to put some of the good things in as well. Flowers, for instance" (279).

The handmaids have to be fruitful, belong to their commanders and obey orders. They are pathetically depicted. Offred affirms: "we can go to the washroom if we put our hands up, though there’s a limit to how many times a day" (81). Moira is one of the rebellious characters who in the whole narrative does not accept to be oppressed and treated as a handmaid. At the end she escapes from the centre. She is considered as a source of hope to Offred. Without her friend Moira, Offred continues her journey in Gilead which is recorded into tapes after her survival. At the end, Offred is seen as hope to other women to constitute and fight for a new beginning.

Atwood’s representation, does completely differ from Flynn one. The way Atwood sees her protagonists is totally the opposite of the American writer. The style and the message they both want to convey has different views on females. The former
protagonists’ are in a stereotypical way depicted. In Lady Oracle, the heroine suffers from obesity and hates herself. In Robber Bride, the heroine suffers from her parents’ exploitation and abuse. In *the Handmaid’s Tale*, the heroine has no name but is viewed as the commanders’ property; of Fred, she eats, sleeps and produces children. On the other hand, Gillian Flynn’s manner of presenting her protagonists’ will be discussed in the next section. A huge and remarkable representation shift happened in *Gone Girl*. Flynn portrays an outstanding female role which proves the value and significance of women. *Gone Girl* shows women’s capacities, value and their importance and the image of the new heroine image which should not be undervalued. It is a sort of message to western women so to consider their abilities and weight.

II. *Gone Girl*: Women’s Triumph and Control

*Gone Girl* is written by the American writer Gillian Flynn. It is first about the perfect writers’ couple. The husband Nick one day goes to the bar he owns, and then receives a call. When he goes back home, he does not find his wife Amy. She is missing, on the day of their fifth anniversary. Too many clues prove that Nick is the only suspect, and has a hand in his wife disappearance. Amy is framing her husband for her death. He cheats on her and she wants to take revenge. She writes a whole diary with evidence against him. The investigators and the Americans hate Nick. Amy comes back home and convinces the police that she has been raped and abused by an old friend. Nick and Amy are home together, Nick has definitely been taught a lesson.

Defence mechanism is used by Freud to help the conscious mind to turn all stress and worry into some positive acts. In *Gone Girl*, several events related to the protagonist Amy and her husband Nick, have a link with this theory. Amy tries to
ignore and refuse her feelings towards her husband when she misses him. Despite her intense like to him and their internal love, Amy acts normally and remembers how he has had treated her. She points out in Flynn’s novel:

> With Nick, I understood finally. Because he was so much fun. It was like dating a sea otter. He was the first naturally happy person I met who was my equal. He was brilliant and gorgeous and funny and charming and charmed. People liked him...I thought we would be the most perfect union: the happiest couple around.⁹

Another pattern which exists in the novel is the reaction formation. According to Blake’s chart; it is transferring anxiety and worry conceptions into "incompatible" idea⁸. So, Amy contradicts her feeling and her deepest hate to her husband, she behaves as if everything is going well so as to accomplish her goals and plans.

In addition Rationalization is justifying one’s miscarriage and shortcomings. Nick tries to explain his behaviour and reasons for cheating on Amy. He gives suitable reasons to justify his bad behaviour. He defends himself saying that, it has been an infantile behaviour, and that Andie means nothing to him but sex. Nick also argues: "just like Nick, she would say [Amy]. It was a refrain of her: just like Nick...whatever was just like me was bad" (⁵). This is called; projection, which is linked to people who project their insecurities towards others, even if they have not said such a particular detail.

Clearly, Projection could be seen in the day Amy sees her husband cheating on her, she does not act stupidly. She behaves as if everything is great and keeps her relation with Nick regular. She says: "No, he does not get to win. So I began to think of a different story, a better story... A story that would restore my perfection. It would
make me the hero, flawless and adored" (263). Displacement is a third type, it stresses on shifting repressed feelings into aspects of a lesser importance. Cheating on Amy makes her suffer. So, when she is about to go down depressed and kill herself, she changes her plans and escapes.

Additionally, identification is acting differently and identifying with the aggressor for various reasons; profit, or self-protection. Amy as an example does not love Desi, her high school friend; neither does she handle his attitudes, manipulation of food, hair and control over her. She however, behaves as completely the opposite. She shows him that she loves him and feels more protected when he is there. Amy admits: "I have to face this. With you [Desi]. ‘I can do it with you’. I put my hand in his. Now shut the f[***] up." (393)

Then, she says: "I look at Desi with outright disgust now. Sometimes I feel my skin must be hot with repulsion...I thought I could control Desi but I can’t" (404). Amy and Nick’s situation after she is back seems to be steady and fixed for the public but it is not the case. Nick and Amy just pretend that they are in love and do things they used to do together.

Andie, on the other hand, Nick’s mistress loves Nick although he is married and makes him cheat on his wife. She, on the contrary, has nothing against Amy, she loves her, and this annoys Nick. He admits that Andie loves Amy and loves to talk about her especially with him. Nick’s other Defence mechanism is when he tries to forget his childhood, marked most importantly by his sick father. He let slip from the mind events which relate him to his dad. Nick believes his father is a character and not a person who properly does his fathering job.
For all of those events, Amy leaves because of her husband’s ignorance, selfishness, hypocrisy and cheating. As a response to what he did, she frames him for killing her. In an interview, De Beauvoir argues: "the point is not for women simply to take power out of men’s hands, since that would not change anything about her world. It’s a question precisely of destroying that notion of power" (190). Amy does exactly the same. She makes of him a poorly, pathetic represented character. Not like previous men representation, Nick is afraid because the police suspect him. His father’s attitudes are affecting his personality and the way ofconducting.

Nick admits that his father, who also exemplifies the society, hates women, he says: "He just didn’t like women. He thought they were stupid, inconsequential, irritating. That dumb b[***]. It was his favourite phrase for any woman who annoyed him" (Flynn 66). He has been taught, by him, that men never cry, never get weak and should mistreat their wives. These attitudes, his father teaches him, made of him an unemotional person. The best example is when Amy was missing and he was passionately cold, careless and absent. He does not know his wife’s blood type, who her friends are, and what she likes or dislikes.

As a strong, wealthy, intellectual and financially independent woman, Amy could never accept to be humiliated, abused and oppressed. She breaks all the negative stereotypes created around women. Amy has been described from the first pages as brilliant, smart and beautiful. Nick argues: "When I think of my wife, I always think of her head. The shape of it...her mind. Her brain, all those coils, and her thoughts shuttling through those coils like fast, frantic centipedes." (3) She believes in herself and would never permit a man to mistreat her. Women spend much time disregarding their capacities and selves. Amy is not one of them. She strives to save
her marriage and does all the possible ways, although she hates this, to make their life valuable. Nick’s infidelity, cheating and carelessness make of her the opposite. Thus, Amy decides to reduce Nick to grease spots. All her reaction is a response to his control and disloyalty.

De Beauvoir’s perspective of how men other women is quite parallel to how Nick sees Amy or does not even see her. Nick’s narration and his view and regard for Amy shifts, in terms of what he believes she is able or not able to do. At first he depicts her as smart and brilliant and claims: "she has a master's in psychology...she’d made an intense study of French cooking, displaying hyper-quick knife skills... she needed to be amazing Amy" (50). Later on, because of his cheating, she reacts aggressively, thus he starts to see her as a s[***] and insults her. Nick describes Amy: "my wife was crazy. I was married to a crazy woman it's every a[***] mantra: I married a psycho b[***]." (304)

Amy represses her feelings and changes herself for Nick. She understands what her husband wants and pretends to be a different woman 'a cool girl' she is not. Amy is sadly seen, she tries to be 'a cool girl' for Nick. She pretends that she loves football games, eating chips, and watch 'dumb movies' to please him. He, on the other hand does not do any efforts, but forgets about their anniversary dates, comes home late and forgets their plans. He never cares about what Amy says or does; he does not even listen to her when she speaks. He confirms: "It was enough to be near her and hear her talk, it didn’t always matter what she was saying. It should have, but it didn’t." (22) Nick does not care about Amy; she is just a wife he wants to find home. Amy is an option to Nick. He never understands her or tries to. He always asks what she is thinking about, what she likes and dislikes and who Amy is. De Beauvoir
affirms: "the truth is that for man she is an amusement, and pleasure, company, an inessential boon" (854).

Amy is persecuted by Nick and all his family. She is all the time a housewife, from the day they move to Missouri. She stays home by herself doing nothing but house managing, laundry and food for her husband who comes late. He sleeps with her whenever he wants to, without respecting her feelings. When Amy wants a baby, he refuses. His excuse, all the time, is that they are broke and could not take care of another person. The ‘cool girl’ pretence could not last long. Nick does not help Amy, but destroys her day by day. In this manner, the hot, funny girl could not deal with his behaviours anymore. She clarifies:

If you let a man cancel plans or decline to do things for you, you lose. You don’t get what you want. It’s pretty clear. Sure, he may be happy, he may say you’re the coolest girl ever, but he’s saying it because he got his way. He’s calling you a cool girl to fool you! That’s what men do (Flynn 253).

The dark side of the real, smart Amy starts to appear. Nick is cheating on her with the young Andie; this is the actual reason of the baby refuse.

Amy did a lot of sacrifices for the sake of Nick. They left New York City where Amy was born and was working. They moved to Missouri because of Nick sick mother. Nick, however, does not even ask about Amy’s point of view and whether she accepts his decision or not. Amy feels that she is forced to go, leaving the place she belongs to. She even resembles herself to Victorian women because of the unfairness and absolutism. Women in the Victorian age were obliged to leave their hometown forcibly. Amy argues: "isn’t that what they write in Victorian novels where the doomed heroine is forced to leave her ancestral home?" (114)
Amy takes care of Nick's sick parents in Missouri. She participates in charity walks for his dying mother. She also cooks dinner for his father who suffers from Alzheimer. Amy gives money as well, to Nick and his sister Margo to run the bar. Her husband never appreciates what she does, for him and all his family, and all the efforts she offers to help. Nick takes her hope, money, and dignity until she is no longer a 'cool girl', the girl he has always loved, besides cheating on her. Nick is dating a twenty-three-old student girl. Amy knows about his relationship, from that day on the plot of the story twists. In this manner, the hot, funny girl could not deal with his behaviors anymore. Nick pushes Amy to do what she has done.

Besides Nick, even Amy's parents have taken advantage of her situation. They take care of Amazing Amy book series and have included different details of her life in it. Amy knows that her parents are taking the money of her efforts; physical and mental energy. They are famous and wealthy due to the children book Amazing Amy. Satisfying her husband and her parents at the same time has been a tough job. Even though she has serious issues with Nick, but she tries all the time to be happy and pretends that she is fine. She says when she remembers her parents while she is missing:

My parents are worried, of course, but how can I feel sorry for them, since they made me this way and then deserted me? They never, ever fully appreciated the fact that they were earning money from my existence, that I should have been getting royalties. (267-68)

Amy could not handle the inferior role she is being portrayed by. De Beauvoir argues: "she can only abolish this inferiority by destroying male superiority...to dominate man, she contradicts him, and she denies his truth and his values. But in
doing this she is only defending herself" (849). Therefore, Amy decides to make him pay for all the silly behaviours he has made her pass by. She wants to teach him a lesson he would never forget. Amy’s revenge is a kind of women’s revenge from all sorts of mistreatments they have been exposed to. She confirms: "It had to stop. Committing to Nick, feeling safe with Nick, made me realize that there was a Real Amy in there, and she was so much better, more interesting and complicated and challenging, than Cool Amy." (Flynn 254)

Amy does not accept competition but winning. Before Nick, she frames one of her friends, Hillary, who tries to steal Amy’s personality and friends. Amy also has been framing Tomy, because he has been dating another girl besides her, she says he raped her. She teaches lessons to people who hurt her. All these details and stories she puts together, for the sake of accusing Nick of her death. From the day she has known he is cheating on her, she starts collecting events against him. It has been a year, but all the details have been smartly done. It has been creative, all her plans and the perfect placed clues are original. Amy is seen as a different woman, she does not react as all women do through; divorce, shouting and forgiving. It is a self powerful control. She is depicted as curious, gathering all the information which could help her to better inform against Nick.

In this narrative, women are the most powerful important characters. The perfect wife Amy has been presenting an incredible role. The wise sister Margo, could stand beside her brother although he has not been innocently seen. The brave female detective Rhonda Boney as well has an important role. Men, in the contrary are being pathetically represented like Nick and his sick complaining father. Even the well famous detective Tanner Bolt could not win the case. He could not resist Amy’s
power and loses at the end. Amy says that she is happy and does not regret framing her husband, because he deserves. She claims: "I grew up feeling special, proud. I was the girl who battled oblivion and won" (249). Amy plans to make Nick the husband who kills his pregnant wife, although she isn’t. She has been through this because she could not take hold of all the problems of cheating. Nick literally destroys Amy, so she takes revenge and restores her life.

Throughout the novel Amy is in control. She is the heroine it is no longer about the hero, but about Heroines protagonists. Amy is the centre of the story. Even when it has not been her diary part, Nick’s one is about her. Nick is in a bad situation; his parents in law has bought them the house, Amy has given him money from her personal trust fund, to run the bar along with his sister Go. Nick is inadequately depicted, whereas Amy is brilliantly seen. She has that effect on people; all girls envy her and all boys want to date her.

She is not like previous women, but strong, smart and refuses to be oppressed. Despite her kindness, however, she could turn someone’s life into a nightmare. The poor Nick is his mother's kid, Amy says: "his mother had always mothered him...He is mama’s boy whose mama is dead" (210). The mirror of Amy’s acts reflection relies on De Beauvoir’s quote. She points out: "she replies to his lack of confidence in her by assuming an aggressive attitude" (849).

Amy’s goal is achieved. Nick is a complete destroyed looser. He begs Amy to come back to him to compensate on her. He admits in his interview that he loves her and wants her in his life. Amy is home, more powerful and admired by the Americans. Nick is so grateful because without her help he would not have survived. He is behaving as a good lovely husband. He holds her hands publically, as they are
expecting a baby, a real one. He at a certain moment thinks of killing Amy but he
knows that she is the one who has saved him and now he is just being a good husband
following her orders. Amy, proudly, claims:

Tomorrow happens to be our anniversary. Year six. Iron... It’s so strange to
think: A year ago today, I was undoing my husband. Now I am almost done
reassembling him. Nick has spent all his time these months slathering my
belly with cocoa butter and running out for pickles and rubbing my feet... He
is learning to love unconditionally, under all my conditions. (Flynn 462)

Normally, many readers would criticize the novel since they are not used to
read such narratives, in which women win, and are seen as the powerful characters,
wealthier and smarter. They are used to study books, where men are the city type and
woman is the country one. This is not quite parallel in Gone Girl. Amy is prettier
funnier, and lives in the city of education and adventures. Nick nevertheless is infidel,
emotionless and his father is a psychopath.

The chapter has scrutinized both novels The Handmaid’s Tale and Gone Girl,
which contribute to display the role of women in the western society. As they both
disclose the development of female writers. Atwood mode of writing is special it
pictures women as strugglers and submissive. Like the overpowered Offred, who was
pathetically viewed. Her manner is dissimilar from that of Flynn. The latter delineates
women as smart and more powerful than men. She wants to refines their darkest side,
because she has enough of oppressed female characters. She, thus, promotes a crucial
exemplar of courageous women as Amy, to push women to behave as such and refuse
any denial and decrease of the self and identity. In the next chapter, a different criteria
would be examined which is; the representation of these female characters in their
cinematic work and whether the screenplay differs from the original novels or not. The following chapter will also crystallize the differences and similarities of both literary works.
End Notes and References


Chapter 3

Cinema Vs Literature in the Handmaid’s Tale and Gone Girl

This chapter will tackle the cinematic representation of the two novels, and whether this representation serves at depicting women as the writers have done or vice versa. This chapter will also explore both literary works’ protagonists, the one of Atwood’s in The Handmaid’s Tale and Flynn’s in Gone Girl. The reader will look at the similarities and differences between Atwood’s and Flynn’s depictions. So, the aim of the following chapter is to consider both arts; literature and cinema, in addition to the development of the protagonists’ depiction.

Literary texts and films are two different genres. Each of these has different techniques and methods. They also focus on different aims; each tries to represent a distinct particular event or detail. Storytelling and screenplays are based upon various disciplines. Films are first related to optic i.e. to the vision, unlike novels which are literal i.e. expressed in words. The former focuses on techniques of images and sounds. On the other hand, the latter focuses on words only. Movies last for about three hours maximum because the image expresses hundreds of pages which could be written in a novel. A picture could stand for thousands of words. So, not everyone would be fan of literature because people are really busy, the movie, yet, is easily available and attracts the audience to watch it.

Movies are another tool which facilitates understanding and comprehension to students, especially if they have been required to read different stories, at this level, films help them in their research. One could not say that a movie has been faithful or not to the story, because both techniques differ. By reading a book, one would be
passive because the reader imagines the setting, the characters and the atmosphere according to his own imagination. People are free to imagine and interpret the literary text the way they like, but they cannot say they are disappointed, because cinematic representation has basic rules to follow. These differences are the standpoint, upon which comparative study takes place like; omitting or adding scenes, modification and cutting.

I. **THT: Movie Vs Novel**

*The Handmaid’s tale* is pretty close to its movie filmed five years later, screenplay written by Harold Pinter in 1990. There are however, some differences, since a novel could never be fully covered by a movie. One of the crucial differences between both is that in the movie, unlike the novel, the protagonist real name has been provided. Besides Offred, her real name is Kate. This aspect which exists in the film and not in the book serves to diminish the extent of confusion and mystery, on the viewers, which is present in the novel. Her name has also been mentioned to offer some extent of freedom which is totally absent in the literary work.

Another point which is tackled in the movie and not in the novel is that Offred kills the commander at the end¹. This helps in clarifying more the intention of the protagonist and her definite survival which is ambiguous. The movie also aims at showing the protagonist revenge and that she has had enough of the previous mode of living, as a servant, and wants to change and improve her life.

In the movie Moira tries to escape from the red centre and Offred helps her to get out. They take Aunt Lydia to washroom where they tie and undress her. Moira
steals her clothes so that she could easily walk through the centre door (THT 1990). In the novel however, Moira by herself escapes and takes Aunt Lydia’s clothes without any help from Offred. This is a technique of unrespectable representation to devoice females’ power in the novel. Offred says:

Moira took Aunt Elizabeth along the corridor of empty lockers, past the door to the gymnasium, and into the furnace room. She told Aunt Elizabeth to take off all her clothes... Moira took off her own clothes and put on those of Aunt Elizabeth, which did not fit her exactly but well enough...and disappeared.\(^2\)

The cinematic techniques in the movie exhibit Offred’s final actions. The audience thus could grasp the idea that she is finally free, unlike in the novel, which is an open ending. Techniques like: the light, the day and night pictures also the zoom close, the gaze or look, the scene and medium shots explain that Offred wins some liberty and escapes from her previous life. Cinematic techniques are thus helpful in the case of transmitting such ideas, unlike the literary text, which shows a complete weakness and acceptance of her destiny and future life.

The movie has done a good job keeping the essential event and relation between the characters. Transmitting the rules and conditions of Gilead has been well conveyed. Moira for instance is seen as a prostitute in the movie. After she escapes from the centre, Amy meets her out wearing like street- night walker. The film on the other hand has modified the handmaids’ outfits. In the literary work, they are dressing a fully well covered dress but in the movie they have been wearing knees dresses not so long. They are neither putting head covering which block their vision nor white veils unlike in the novel. The cinema here stresses on diminishing the extent of oppressing the handmaids. It gives them some freedom to remove extreme ambiguity.
Despite the fact that the cinematic representation exemplifies some better depiction of some freedom and hope unlike the story, this could distort the whole essence of the novel and what it actually is about. The movie better represents Offred with a final image, unlike at the beginning. Offred, yet, in the movie has been viewed as a sex object especially at the ceremony with the commander. At the end however her image shifts and improves, this indicates that females’ image is getting better and is improving.

In addition, the movie is so unjust; it tries to depict Offred as unfaithful wife, cheating on her husband Luck whom normally has passed out. It displays her as forgetting about him and engaging in a new relationship with Nick, which is not the case in the novel. Offred, in the narrative, expresses how shameful and guilty she feels about her behaviours. In fact, Serena Joy, the commander’s wife imposes on her to sleep with Nick, at first, so that to give birth to children and they cannot refuse any request. The movie, however, fails at depicting the suffering and depression of the handmaids. It does focus more on the relationship between Offred and Luck which is turned to be a romantic story rather than a male dominated one.

Despite the fact that the movie focuses on romantic scenes, between Offred and Luck and even the commander, during the ceremony, in the novel it has nothing to do with romance. Offred says: "it has nothing to do with passion, love or romance or any of those other notions we used to titillate ourselves with" (105). Cinema’s producer’s maybe stressing the importance of romance theme to attract the audience, because love stories do have a special touch of happiness and this is what the watchers want to see. They want to know more about intimacy and love relations. Even if in the novel of THT there is no love between Offred and the commander, it is
just a business as Offred calls it. People consume romance movies more than any other type of movie. Galician argues "...because they depict relationships as relatively easy and full of possibilities". And then adds: "people seek romantic content in the media in order to see relationships that appear to work despite all obstacles." (2)

The movie is always better received by a large public and very well explained than the novel. The film raises somehow females’ voice and does not much represent their total endurance. It draws their destiny by hope and freedom; like the example of Moira and Offred who could escape. The movie contradicts the writer at some level of serious and strict representation.

The beginnings of the book and the movie differ. In the movie events start by Offred, her husband and her daughter in the car trying to cross the borders where they have been caught and Nick dies. In the novel, however, the story starts by the handmaids in the red centre exchanging names while lying in the floor of the gymnasium. In the novel also, Nick does not die, he just disappears. So many essential changes have been viewed in the movie and not in the novel, which could be disliked by the audience; reader or watcher. In “China Education Review”, Monaco points out: "The audiences reacted angrily... because they weren’t able to believe that the image could lie". Although many movies are based on novels yet, each genre presents events differently. Bluestone claims that: "the novel has three tenses; the film has only one" (2).

The film is more dramatic. The commander is seen as the head of managers of the community. He is depicted as severe and serious. In the novel yet, he is viewed as understandable and funny especially in his relation with Offred. They share good
times of games. He is also one of the commanders who share the same status. In the movie, yet, he is portrayed as a controlling serious man.

Offred imagination and flashbacks about her husband and her daughter do not appear in the movie. The novel and the film do not share the exact events’ chronology, nor do they share similar ending. In the literary work, Offred recalls to mind her daughter along the story and even her husband Luck. She misses them and passes nights crying remembering their relationship. In the novel yet, the ending is not obvious whether she survives or not. In the movie, Nick helps her to make it through and promises her that he is going to find her daughter. Offred lives far from Gilead with the hope of the child she is bearing. Happy Vs a confusing end, to denote that female’s destiny is still ambiguous.

The historical notes also in the movie do not take place. In the novel, they explain how Offred could survive and how she tells her personal experience and story in Gilead via the recording tapes she has had saved. Such information is completely absent and omitted from the scenes of the film.

The previous existing differences between the novel and the movie of *The Handmaid’s Tale* come in sight in almost all literary productions, which have been turned into movies. Novels’ events could never be one hundred percent reflected into the movie; because these two arts; novels and film have distinct ways of presenting their works to the audience. The next section examines the same issue, *Gone Girl* novel Vs *Gone Girl* movie.
II. **GG: Movie Vs Novel**

*Gone Girl* has been written in 2012 and its screenplay in 2014 by the same writer Gillian Flynn. They share the same plot and major events, yet, some detailed incidents are different. In the film, Nick romantically proposes to Amy in her last party book Amazing Amy between her parents and friends. Then, their relationships continue and they get married. All of these events of proposing to her have not been mentioned in the book at all. In the novel, on the other hand, they meet only once, and then he does not see Amy for a long period, eight months, until they meet again by chance.

Another major event is the death of Desi. In the movie, he dies during a sex act which Amy plans for. She prepares it on purpose so as to kill him because he has been annoying her. She forces him to sleep with her then she stabs him when he is on top of her. In the novel however, she drugs him then kills him. The movie at this level exhibits positively women and how harsh and strong female characters are and how brave they become unlike previous ones.

In the novel, Amy acts as if she is horrified of blood, even when she visits Nick’s mother she does not handle drops’ scenes of blood, they cause her to swoon. In the movie on the contrary, Amy is courageous, she cuts her arm and spreads widely her blood on the floor.

In addition, the movie has not focused on Nick’s bad behaviours, mistreatments and how imperfect he is in their relationship. In the anniversaries he always misses and forgets about their plans, and arrives home late. Nick loves Amy but once he started cheating on her he becomes ignorant about their marriage relationship. Amy’s good actions also have not been portrayed, especially when she
helps his sick mother who dies at the end, she also used to cook to his father who dislikes her. The movie focuses more on painting Amy as bad and a psychopath; framing her husband and killing her ex boyfriend and ignores Nick’s bad attitudes and abuses.

Some clues Amy organizes in the novel have been missing in the movie like the one of Hannibal where she has been, with her husband Nick, before visiting the place. He later on, went with his girlfriend Andie; they both have been taken to Hannibal. The movie tries to protect men’s good representation and display females as the opposite, bad psycho and harsh. When Nick ends his relationship with Andie, she shouts and even slaps him. These events have been written about by Flynn. The movie, however, has not portrayed the exact details which have taken place in the novel.

On one hand, the female character is still a target to humiliation and marginalization, and if not the previous mentioned, it is shown as bad and harsh. The movie has omitted events about good, brilliant Amy and only concentrated at depicting her as the crazy wife. It also has not focused on Amy’s argument about her husband behaviours and the reasons which have led her to do the things she has done. The movie also does not focus much on Amy’s transition from her diary to the real part.

On the other hand, Amy is a strong character, she has proved her value. In the past men were seen as the oppressors, the superior and the powerful. Women were viewed as the inferior the weak and the oppressed, however, the view of both has changed. Thus, deconstruction implies that the position of women has decentralized the centre. At present they are seen exactly like men. Their role has had changed, and
GG proves it. The role of Amy and of Nick illustrates this deconstructed idea. Wrenn proves in “The Woman in Modernism”: "In literature, as well as in society, the change of gender roles was gradual. The feminine myth is a strong one." Women were oppressed but their image has deconstructed.

Moreover, deconstruction could also be seen in the decentralized blonds’ view. Men used to think that blond women are associated with stupidity. Amy, yet, has decentralized the blond stereotyped women. Despite the fact that she is blond she has proved her utility and defied rooted views about blond women. Atwood has chosen Amy to challenge the previous views about female characters and the pathetic roles they have been exposed to.

Amy saves her vomit in the refrigerator, after she poisons herself, and keeps it as a proof to menace Nick. In case he annoys her she will frame him for willing to kill her. Nick argues: "All that vomit, so shocking. An innocent, frightened wife might have saved some of that vomit, just in case. You can’t blame her, being a little paranoid.’ She gave a satisfied smile. ‘Always have a backup plan to the backup plan.’ This evidence has not been viewed in the movie and has been completely omitted.

Several events have been missing from the movie. Hilary, is Amy’s friend who once tried to be like Amy, takes her personality as well as her friends and acts like her is completely absent from the scenes of the movie. The interview between Rebecca and Nick, also, when he has drunk and admitted that he loves Amy and wants her back. Nick’s mother likewise has not been showed at all, besides his father who has had major role in the novel and not in the film. Amy’s pregnancy date has been close at the end of the novel, but never showed in the movie. One can notice
here that the writer of the novel will have, absolutely, no relation with the movie.

Andrey Tarkovsky argues in *Sculpting in Time*:

The film then becomes something beyond its ostensible existence as an exposed and edited roll of film, a story, a plot. Once in contact with the individual who sees it, it separates from its author, starts to live its own life, undergoes changes of form and meaning.  

Despite the fact that *The Handmaid’s Tale* has been written in 1985 and *Gone Girl* in 2012, the scripts of both share similar goals. One could notice that there still much work to do about female characters. Indeed their image has improved, yet there are some incomplete issues, especially in the cinematic side. The reader could notice that the image of females have improved in the literary narratives from tyranny to revenge and control. Besides, almost all women work nowadays, are made into movies and heir movies are box office hit. Males dominance does no longer exist, females have take the role.

Both movies try to keep the masculine character different and strong. Although in *Gone Girl* the depiction differs from that of *the Handmaid’s Tale*, but the image of the protagonist has not been very well viewed as in the novel. Amy has, most of the time, been seen as a crazy wife. All her argument, which have been said in the novel and lead her to frame her husband have not been much focused on. The next section will focus on the relationship between *the Handmaid’s Tale* and *Gone Girl* novels.
III. The Similarities and Differences between Both Narratives

Besides the cinematic representation of the novels and the changes and modifications which have taken place in the screenplays, there exist some remarkable similarities and differences between the works of Flynn and Atwood. Although they have two distinct backgrounds, origins and period but their females’ representation has common parallelism. In spite of the existing differences in the fictitious narrative of both writers, the literary production of Atwood and Flynn meets at some remarkable spots, where the authors used a similarly idea concept or even a feeling.

Hope, is a positive feeling of confidence and faith. It encourages the person to look at the bright side of any miserable experience. This aspect exists in the writing of both writers. Offred the protagonist of The Handmaid’s Tale has had hope on seeing her daughter again. She believes that she is alive and things would get better once they meet. She says: "there is always a black market" (24). Offred adds: "I’m [am] ravenous for news of kind of news, it must mean something" (29). Despite her bad conditions, she never loses hope and that one day she may survive. Amy, similarly, believes that Nick would change of his bad attitudes. She thinks that he would not be late anymore, that he would not forget about their plans and come home late. She plays the cool girl role of being funny and hot to give Nick a chance to change. She says: "I waited patiently- years- for the pendulum to swing the other way... but it never happened" (251).

Besides hope, flashbacks are events re-experienced or remembered by a person for various reasons; they could be happy or sad ones. Offered the protagonist compares between old good times, and new stressful ones. She remembers her husband Luck and her daughter. She misses her old life and happy moments. She
reacts: "it smells of me in former times when I was a mother" (57). Amy on Gone Girl also, recalls to mind her romantic times with her husband before he starts cheating on her and the way he makes her feel. She says: "I was crazy about him...he teased things out in me that I didn’t know existed... I was living in the moment, and I could feel myself getting shallower and dumber. But also happy" (252).

People consider their equal, similar or different qualities in comparison to other persons. The handmaid compares herself to Serena, the commander’s wife. Through her depiction, Offred disregards herself and is convinced that she is not worthy as Serena. She explains: "possibly she’ll put a hand on my shoulder, to steady herself, as if I’m a piece of future. She’s done it before" (89). Even the way Offred looks at her is pathetic. She never looks at her but, always down. She claims: "I look away from her face, down at the ground, at her feet, the tip of her cane" (299). In addition, Amy compares herself to her husband mistress. When he starts cheating on her, she has had that feeling of being ugly and unattractive. She feels older then her, and thinks that people would be happy hearing Nick cheats on Amy. They would say that Nick cheats on his wife and changes her because of the young beautiful Andie and he is happier than before. Amy says: "Nick named me when I was young, rich, beautiful woman and now I am poor, jobless... my value has decreased" (230).

To take risky chances means involving one’s self in insecure danger. Offred misses feelings of love and care in this cold country, so she sleeps with Nick to please herself. She knows it is a wrong behaviour but she has taken a risky act yet a temporary feeling only. She indicates: "being here with him is safety; it’s a cave, where we huddle together...this room is one of the most dangerous places I would be...if I were caught there would be no quartz, but I’m beyond caring" (281-82). Amy similar case is when she plans her fake death. She has had enough of Nick
mistreatment and wants to feel important taking this dangerous step. She confirms: "I’ve suffered betrayal with all five senses...I do know that framing your husband for your murder is beyond the pale of what an average woman might do. But it’s so very necessary" (264).

The hero is the exceptional principle character of any narrative. In THT and Gone Girl, the story is no longer based on the hero but it is about the heroine. Although Offred suffers physically and mentally in the story, she is the main protagonist. The narration is about her, describing her pitiable and ill-fated feeling. Amy as well, she is the centre of the story and the light of Gone Girl ambiguity. The novel is divided into two parts: Amy’s diary and Nick’s one. Even when it is not her part, it is all about her. The existence of the hero does not anymore exist, now it is all about female heroines.

The patriarchal society is where men are in control, dominant and powerful. In both writers’ literary texts, patriarchy is the major reason of females’ loss of job. Offred used to work at a library, a book fascinating world, yet it has all been taken from her with the new regime of Gilead. She says: "I worked transferring books to computer discs to cut down to storage space and replacement...I took them home with me. I like the feel of them, and the look" (182). Amy as well has had a respectable job, a writer of Amazing Amy books, but she is and Nick jobless at the end she explains how Nick behaves coldblooded when she tells him that she, also, has lost her job and they would both remain jobless.

Oppression is when someone is being unjust and uses tyranny and authority on people. Moira is an exceptional character used by Atwood in the Handmaid’s Tale. Moira prefers to be viewed as a prostitute rather than a handmaid. She escapes from
the centre and works as a lesbian. Moira refuses to give birth to children and to be ordered by the Aunts. She does not follow instructions and does not take pills given to her. She struggles until she makes her way out of this community. Amy in *Gone Girl* is the perfect matching example. She does not only refuse to be oppressed, she fights for her identity and dignity. Amy calls women to stand and struggle to survive.

Happiness is a state of joy, pleasure and emotions. It is a feature which appears in the previous life of the protagonists of *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Gone girl*. Offred is happily seen in her former life with her husband Luck and her daughter. She describes how they have been enjoying each moment together, especially that their story has been a love fairy one. After Luck’s divorce from his first wife he meets Offred and marries her. Amy on the other hand, has enjoyed a peaceful true love story. She and Nick have been their friends’ envy. Everyone wishes to be like them. Happiness has overflowed the life of both characters before the plot twists and changes completely to a terrible nightmare.

To change yourself is to vary or modify some traits of yours because of some marked occurrence. The wife of Luck and the mother of a beautiful daughter is no longer the same. She is Offred, she is different. She has to change because the society imposes on her the new identity. She has to accept this shift from freedom to exploitation, so that to live. Amy at a certain time has been facing the same change. She changed her identity, her name and even her look in the new environment after accusing her husband.

Both authors embody few of their personal peculiarity in the narrative. Atwood has not been to school regularly when she has been young. She used to study at home. She has married in 1968 but divorced five years later. She, then, has had
another relationship. These events are in away incorporated in *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Women do not study but stay in the red centre and follow rules. Their personal relationship and divorce could be reflected in Offred’s separation with Luck and her later relation with Nick.

Flynn’s early life has been characterized by shyness. Flynn is a timid person, it is the reason why she wants to represent her heroines in the novels as powerful and challengeable. She has been exposed to horror movies in her childhood by her father. This is incorporated in her psychological psyche and from where she may have had this sense of violence. She, thus, needs to stand out and forgets about shyness via writing. In the novel Nick represents Flynn real psychology, they even share common characteristics, and they both lose their job and remain broke. Amy on the other hand is Flynn real inner strength. She resembles herself to Nick to say that she is strong as man but since Nick hurt Amy, she is even stronger than him. It is the reason why he seems weak.

In addition to the common, similar aspects between both novels, there exist also various differences. The first is hitting, which is an act of beating someone, because of the latter misbehaviour. The handmaids are beaten by both wives and Aunts. Offred affirms: "they can hit us, there’s scriptural precedent. But not with any implement only with their hands" (26). The Aunts however, hit also their faces, feet and hands. In *Gone Girl*, Amy has never been a target, thus never beaten. She would never permit such enact on her. Although, in her version of the diary she says that Nick hits her but he has never did. She has been framing him however, and such details are needed.
Sex scenes are common acts in both novels. The use of them however differs from Atwood to Flynn. In *The Handmaid’s Tale* Offred is offensively used. At night with the commander, during the ceremony, she lies on Serena’s belly and does absolutely nothing. Held from hands by her, she can neither move nor utters a word. The commander gets what he wants and goes, Offred is then sent to her room. Amy on the other hand, manipulates her body the way she wants. With Desi she is the one who forces him to get what she wants i.e. kills him. It is no longer the man who uses the woman’s body as before.

Smartness is intelligence; it means being bright and clever. Unlike Amy, Offred is represented as marginalized, receiving orders. The handmaids lack intellectual sharpness they can neither read nor write. They are subordinate. Amy, in the contrary, is smartly seen. She plans and programs for accusing her husband. She loves mind games which her husband struggles to understand their meaning. Amy proves her position not like ancient females. She gives complements about herself, she is confident and most of all different. She knows that she is pretty and smarter than her husband. She knows that she is the dream of everymen.

Independence is freedom from anybody’s control and mastery. On *The Handmaid’s Tale*, women are dependents on the aunts in the red centre and on commanders. They have no credits card or personal funds. Amy in *Gone Girl* has her own trust fund, and it is Nick who is jobless and dependent on her. She lends him money to open the bar; he uses his wife credit cards and buys drinks to his jobless friends. The only reason which has not permitted him to divorce Amy, when he has been cheating on her with Andie, is her wealth.
The position of men in the novel differs from \textit{THT} to \textit{GG}. In the former, the commander is in control. He is the one who gives orders and is mostly served. He is the master of Gilead society, the manager and controller. In \textit{Gone Girl}, Nick is pictured as unconfident, stressful and weak. He is different from previous controlling dominant men. He is his mother’s kid. He asks forgiveness and begs Amy. His father also is seen as weak and unwise, it is clear when he escapes from the hospital and feels powerless, a total shift.

Other female characters in the novel have major roles likewise protagonists. In \textit{THT}, women are obedient and submissive. They are respectable to men’s orders and oppressed. They are maltreated and beaten. In \textit{Gone Girl}, Nick’s mother speaks to her husband impudently. She even gives him orders, she shouts on him and asks him to not do some childish acts and he listens to her. This exhibits how men’s position devalued and decreased if compared to ancient ones. The way Amy’s father describes her the day she has been gone is totally fascinating if compared to previous fathers who want to have boys and not girls. Let alone Nick and the manner like which he behaves.

To escape is to get away for several reasons; to avoid danger or difficulties for instance. Both Offred and Amy escape but for distinct reasons. Offred at the end of the novel escapes with Nick’s help. She is scary and wants to live peacefully. The end, yet, is open and the reader does not know whether she finds her daughter and survives. It could only be guessed through the historical notes where it is said that, she has recorded her experience into tapes. Her feelings of fear have been obtained from the society, which has taught her to be so. Offred is first seen as weak but later on, she starts drawing her path with the assistance of Nick. Then again, Amy leaves in the beginning not because of fear but to prove herself. She does not need help like Offred;
she achieves her goal by herself, after planning and organizing her project. She then comes back home more strong. The ending is not open and Nick is obliged to stay with her.

The name of a person signifies his identity and characteristics. In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, women’s names and identity are erased. They are being named according to their masters, commanders names like; of Fred, of Glen and of Warren so that to denote to whom they belong. Offred real name have not been mentioned at all except in the movie. She argues: "my name isn’t Offred; I have another name, which no body uses now because it’s forbidden" (94). The name of the wives also is not the same; they are all the commanders’ property. Amy on the contrary, her name is strongly referred to. She is labelled; brilliant Amy, smart Amy. People refer to her as ‘Amazing Amy’ because of the children book, which exists in reality. Her husband Nick also admits that she is strong and clever. She has proved her essence unlike Offred.

These are the most and common similarities and differences used by both females’ writers in their series of events. The purpose is to denote the changes that happened to the status of women. Each has her own way of thinking and imagining the story as well as portraying females’ characters and other incidents. The shift and the development of female authors are well observed. Atwood first represents female subjugation and restriction, then Flynn makes appear the mighty over dominance of her powerful personage.

The chapter summarizes the view of both novels from the cinema’s part and narrative one. It also stresses on the distinctive female image between both movies and narrations. The literary production of female writers has gradually improved, it is
very clear if one compares Atwood writing to Flynn’s one. They are marked differently, as they have dissimilar manner of depicting their protagonists. The cinematic version however is still a bit manipulated; the image of women has not well improved. Even if the story’s screenplay is written by the exact female writer i.e. the work is authentic, the composer of the script, i.e. the Director, however would be unreliable. He could change the plot when filming the movie, as we have noticed above, and modify from it according to his movie outline. So, both disciplines have separate forms, they cannot raise parallel reception. It has been argued in Theories of Adaptation: Novel to Film that: "A film script writer adapting the play may use the existing work of art merely as raw material, regard it from the specific angle of his own art form as it were raw reality, and pay no attention to the form once already given to the material." This chapter also searches into the different resemblances and variations between both tales, whether those of characters, ideas or even chronological events.
End Notes and References

(1) "The Handmaid’s Tale". Dir. Volker Schlondorff. Perf. Harold Pinter, Natacha Richardson, Faye Dunaway and Robert Duvall (Cinecom entertainment group, 1990) Film.


(3) qtd. in Veronica Hefner, "from Love at First Sight to Soul mate: Romantic Ideals in Popular Films and Their Association with Young People’s Beliefs About Relationships" (University of Illinois, 2011): 2.


General Conclusion

This dissertation demonstrates the shift of women’s representation and how they were firstly seen as inferiorly marginalized and then as superiorly manipulative. This study draws upon two different works; *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and *Gone Girl* (2012). The first considers women as handmaids i.e. inferior, submissive and over control. The theme of marginalization is clearly seen in the novel of Margaret Atwood. The protagonist Offred suffers physically and mentally from the patriarchy of Gilead society. The novel exhibits women submission and weakness to the control of both the commanders and the Aunts. Thus, the theory of Freud’s Defence Mechanism helps the overpowered protagonist to overmaster her repressed feelings and emotions and turn her negative aspects into positive ones. Also, the novel asserts the theory of the French Simone De Beauvoir, that men other women and use them for sexual desires only, "She is the other".

The second work, however, represents women as strong and confident. It emphasizes on their darkest and violent side, as it tries to show the gradual development of females’ protagonists. The protagonist Amy manipulates her husband and uses her power and smartness to control him, she gives references to her Defence Mechanism and forgets about her real love to her husband and then decides to take revenge. *Gone Girl* first, asserts how Nick abuses Amy and takes advantage of her, which goes hand in hand with De Beauvoir’s idea about men. Later on, however, Amy takes the role and proves her value and position. She teaches lessons to her husband and illustrates a good example to women who wish to overmaster their strength and representation.
Despite the fact that the novels are not similarly alike, and the writers hold distinct way of representation, both writers share some common points of themes and ideas. These resemblances contribute at showing the frequent thoughts of the writers and the progress between the subordinate and dominant female heroines. The study also focuses on the movies version and whether the depiction of female protagonists is similar to that of the movie or not. It is important to stress on the latter idea, to exhibit the intention and the position which the cinema draws and deduce about women. This investigation asserts that there are, still, some inequalities about females in the society.

The results of this study could be seen in three main results. On one hand, Offred, Atwood protagonist, is being manipulated and marginalized; yet, she has gained some remarkable freedom at the end, after many sacrifices and suffering. Amy, on the other hand, Flynn’s heroine has proved her position and taught her husband a lesson that he will never forget, she is an outstanding example and represents contemporary women. And finally, in contemporary literature, it has been noticed that the representation and the position of women has improved and developed. Offred and Amy are the best example. In the cinema, however, there are still some inequalities. Despite the fact that Amy has been well portrayed, yet the general image of women is not evidently improved.

Finally, from one hand, this study attempts to convey the message to all women around the world and raise their awareness about patriarchal unfairness and dominance. From the other hand, the work informs them about Westerner women’s courage and success. So, they can take them as an example, follow their steps and meliorate their way of life.
This dissertation has focused on Western women. So, it could also be considered as an attempt for further explorations and researches about women’s view; particularly about Algerian ones.
Works Cited

I. Primary Sources

A. Books


B. Movies


II. Secondary Sources

A. Books


**B. Articles**


**C. Lecture**


**D. Internet**


**E. Dissertations and Studies**


