A STUDY OF FEMINIST POSSIBILITIES OF ESCAPE FROM THE PANOPTICON AND THE MALE GAZE IN PAT BARKER'S *UNION STREET* AND ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF FEMINIST POSSIBILITIES OF ESCAPE FROM THE PANOPTICON AND THE MALE GAZE IN PAT BARKER'S *UNION STREET* AND ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*

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The aim of this thesis is to study Pat Barker's *Union Street* (1982) and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) to explore the novels' treatment of how modern institutions discipline women in the light of Foucault's conceptualization of the "Panopticon" in his *Discipline and Punish* (1977). This study will also be attentive to the works of feminist scholars such as Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo, who in their articles "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (1988) and "The Body and The Reproduction of Femininity" (1993) respectively argue that Foucault's notion of the Panopticon fails to encompass the subjugation of women in particular. This thesis will argue that both *Union Street* and *Nights at the Circus* foreground the ways how women's bodies are rendered more "docile" than those of men. Furthermore, in the light of Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) and her notion of "to-be-looked-at-ness," it will be argued that both novels explore the ways in which women are exposed to "the panoptical male gaze" and "the female connoisseur." This thesis will also explore to what extent the women characters in these novels can actually escape from the Panopticon and the male gaze.

Keywords: The Panopticon, Docile Bodies, The Male Gaze, The Female Connoisseur

ÖZ

PAT BARKER'IN *UNION STREET* VE ANGELA CARTER'IN *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS* ROMANLARINDA PANOPTICON VE ERİL BAKIŞTAN KAÇIŞA DAİR BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu tez, Michel Foucault'nun *Discipline and Punish* (1977) adlı kitabında yer alan Panopticon imgesi ışığında modern kurumların kadınları nasıl boyunduruk altına aldığına dair Pat Barker'ın *Union Street* ve Angela Carter'ın *Nights at the Circus* adlı romanlarını çalışmayı amaçlar. Bu çalışmada aynı zamanda, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (1988) ve "The Body and The Reproduction of Femininity" (1993) adlı makalelerinde, Foucault'nun Panopticon imgesinin genel olarak kadınların boyunduruk altına alınışını ele alma konusunda başarısız olduğunu savunan - sırasıyla - Sandra Lee Bartky ve Susan Bordo gibi feminist akademisyenlerin çalışmaları da dikkate alınacaktır. Bu tezde, *Union Street* ve *Nights at the Circus*'ın, kadınların bedenlerinin erkeklerin bedenlerinden nasıl daha fazla itaatkârlaştırıldığını gösterdiği savunulacaktır. Dahası, Laura Mulvey'in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) adlı eseri ve buradaki "bakılasılık" kavramı doğrultusunda her iki romanın da kadınların "panoptic eril bakışa" ve kadınların bu söz konusu bakışı içselleştirmesiyle ortaya çıkan "female connoisseur"a maruz kalış şekilleri ele alınacaktır. Bu tezde aynı zamanda bu iki romandaki kadın karakterlerin Panopticon'dan ve eril bakıştan kaçıp kaçamadığı incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Panopticon, İtaatkâr Bedenler, Eril Bakış, Female Connoisseur

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a comparative study of Pat Barker's *Union Street* and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*. The novels will be analysed in the light of a critical feminist engagement with Foucault's conceptualization of the Panopticon, his notions of "surveillance" and "docile bodies" in *Discipline and Punish*. Since both novels deal with female characters' exposure to disciplinary practices with a shared emphasis on the role of gender, they both lend themselves to an analysis in the light of Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo's arguments that women's bodies are rendered more docile than those of men in modern society. This thesis will also make use of Laura Mulvey's notions of "to-be-looked-at-ness" and "the male gaze" in the analysis of the novels' treatment of women's position in patriarchy. It will be argued that the female characters in both novels are entrapped in panopticons from which, however, they find ways to escape. Yet, the emphasis on escape is much stronger in *Nights at the Circus* compared to *Union Street*.

Barker grew up in a working-class neighbourhood. Her successful education background that led her to the London School of Economics also secured her a place outside the working-class environment. She knew she wanted to be a writer but she never got to find a publisher until she met Angela Carter in a writing workshop Carter taught. Upon Carter's suggestion to "set aside her apprentice stories of polite and educated people and instead focus on the earthy, tight-knit and sometimes brutal milieu where she spent her childhood" (*New Yorker*), she wrote *Union Street*, which "earned her a place among 'The Best of Young British Novelists' in *Granta* magazine and won the Fawcett Society Book Prize in 1983" (Brannigan 368). Barker is also much appreciated for *The Regeneration Trilogy* (1991-95), which is about the First World War. Yet, all her early novels, *Union Street*, *Blow Your House Down* and *Liza's England*, focus on the conditions of the working classes in industrial and post-industrial England. As Brannigan puts it,

> *Union Street* was followed by *Blow Your House Down* (1984), which explored issues of sexual violence and social deprivation arising from the

> murders of thirteen prostitutes by the "Yorkshire Ripper" in the 1970s and early 1980s. Barker's third novel, *The Century's Daughter* (1986), later published as *Liza's England*, extended her depiction of life for working-class women in northern England back through the twentieth century, using Liza's life story to examine the role of memory in narratives of community and connection. (Brannigan 368)

Brannigan, in her study, *Pat Barker*, states that the early critics of Barker took her as a social-realist writer, whose preoccupation mostly remains within the domains of post-industrial working-class culture of England; yet, she argues that "her canvas has always been broader than her settings implied" (Brannigan 2). Perhaps, in a more general way, it can be held that Barker writes, in a quite unsettling manner, the traumatic experiences of physical and economic survival in the margins of society.

Angela Carter was born in 1940 in London, at a period when Germany imposed aerial attacks on London, forcing her mother to move to the south of Yorkshire, where her grandmother lived. She returned to the capital when the war was over. Carter's father was a journalist, which may have played a role in her starting her writing career as a journalist. She was distinguished from many other writers of her time in terms of her interest in a variety of media, writing for radio, film and television. Carter is the "author of novels, four collection of short stories, four children's stories, one book for verse, four plays for radio, two film screenplays, and two television scripts as well as a huge journalistic output" (Stoddart 3). The scope of her work makes it difficult to categorize Carter as a writer. When asked how she would describe her fiction for someone who never read her before, she answered as follows: "Oh, I do not know about all that. I have always been fascinated by folktales, and the basic structure of storytelling so I guess I have never noticed that big a difference between one genre and another. I guess you could say I just get bored very quickly. I'm always trying to do something different, something I have not done before" (Bradfield 91).

Carter studied English Literature at the University of Bristol with an interest in European medieval literature. She taught creative writing courses in which she had an influence in some of Britain's most prominent contemporary writers such as Ian McEwan, Pat Barker and Kazuo Ishiguro. "Carter moved easily inside and outside of academic institutions and saw no conflict between creative and critical or theoretical work" (Stoddart 4).

It is *Nights at the Circus* that brought Carter the literary attention she had not had before. In other words, with *Nights at the Circus*, her works got the chance of "reappraisal and rediscovery" (Stoddart 6). According to Stoddard, Carter's last two novels, *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children* (1991), received more popularity for three main reasons; first, because they have a lighter tone than the previous ones; second, Carter started to be associated with the magical realism of South American writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez; and, third, those two novels were published by a bigger print house, Picador. Angela Carter died at an early age in 1992. Salman Rushdie thinks that "in spite of her worldwide reputation, here in Britain [Carter] had somehow never quite had her due" (Stoddart 7).

Published prior to *Nights at the Circus*, *Union Street* is set in the England of the 1970s, whereas Carter's novel is set at the end of the 19th century. While *Union Street* is realistic in its representation of the decay of urban life, social and economic depravity, womanhood, motherhood and poverty in post-industrialized England, *Nights at the Circus* is considered as an example of postmodern fiction and magical realism Carter came to be associated with.

Nights at the Circus has already been studied in the light of Foucault's notion of the Panopticon. For example, both Joanne Gass in "Panopticon in *Nights at the Circus*" and Margaret E. Toye in "Eating Their Way out of the Patriarchy: Consuming The Female Panopticon in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*" analyse the ways in which Carter's novel engages critically with Foucault's notion. Yet, there are no critical studies on *Union Street* from a Foucauldian perspective. Furthermore, these two novels have not been analysed in a comparative manner before. Therefore, in addition to exploring the similarities and differences between the two novels in terms of their feminist concern with patriarchal disciplinary practices imposed on women, this study also aims to throw light on the Foucauldian aspects of *Union Street* as well as its feminist revision of Foucault's notion of the docile body by juxtaposing it with *Nights at the Circus*, in which the critical engagement with Foucault's theories is much more explicit compared to Barker's novel.

In chapter II, I will first explore Foucault's notions of the Panopticon, surveillance and the docile body that he develops in *Discipline and Punish*. I will then go on with Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo's critical engagement with Foucault from a feminist

perspective to highlight their argument that modern disciplinary systems and modern institutions render women's bodies more docile than men's. For that matter, Sandra Lee Bartky's "Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" and Susan Bordo's "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" will be studied. Furthermore, notions of the male gaze and women's "to-be-looked-at-ness" that Laura Mulvey develops in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" will be explored to add to the discussion on the feminist revision of Foucault's notion of surveillance.

In chapter III, I will focus on Barker's *Union Street*. It will be argued that the women in Barker's novel, from a very early age on are exposed to power in the institutions of marriage and motherhood. Furthermore, it will be argued that the novel foregrounds how women's constant subjection to the male gaze results in women's internalization and projection of the male gaze on to other women. As a consequence, in keeping with the feminist emphasis on the role of gender in the exposure to power, it will be argued that Barker's novel emphasizes that women's bodies are rendered more docile than those of men in patriarchal society. The chapter will also explore whether the novel suggests any possibility of escape for women from the patriarchal disciplinary power.

Chapter IV, will focus on Carter's *Nights at the Circus* specifically in relation to its heroine Sophie Fevvers, who performs "feminine" attributes in an exaggerated manner, hence emerging as a character who refuses to be pinned down and rendered as a docile body. Compared to *Union Street*, *Nights at the Circus* emphasizes women's possibility of escape from panopticons in a much stronger way. It will be argued that this difference does not only stem from the fact that Carter's novel is a magical realist one in which Fevvers, for instance, manages to escape in some magical ways. This is also due to the treatment of gender in *Nights at the Circus* as performance in that it does not allow the internalization of the disciplinary power.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, first, Foucault's conceptualization of power, the Panopticon as a mode of power, and his notion of surveillance will be discussed. Second, the critical engagement of some feminist scholars such as Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo with these Foucauldian notions will be explored in order to identify the points they find useful as well as the aspects of Foucault's theory that they consider problematic specifically in relation to women's bodily relationship with power.

According to Michel Foucault, power exists everywhere and comes from everywhere. By power, Foucault does not mean a singular relationship between two entities but rather a network of relationships in which every constituent exercises some amount of power onto one another. Foucault argues that knowledge and power cannot be separated from one another; observation of others leads to knowledge which entails power. Unlike the Enlightenment tradition that sees knowledge as neutral, objective and emancipatory, Foucault underscores the inseparability of knowledge from the regimes of power and argues that power is used to have control over knowledge. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault states "Power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (27). In fact, he argues that power *is* knowledge and asserts that throughout history power and knowledge have created different forms of domination.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault historicizes the ways in which power has been inflicted in Western society. He focuses on differing forms of punishment with vivid examples from the seventeenth century, the Enlightenment period, the Industrial Revolution and contemporary Western society. In the first chapter of the book titled "The Body of the Condemned," Foucault recounts the execution of a man named Damiens the regicide (Robert François Damiens), who was condemned to "make *amende honourable*"

in 1757, which was a mode of punishment in France in which the condemned "was to be taken and conveyed in a cart wearing nothing but a shirt, holding a torch of burning wax weighing two pounds . . . whose flesh will be torn from his breasts, arms, thighs and calves with red-hot pincers" (3). As another example, Foucault mentions a certain timetable drawn "eighty years later by Léon Faucher for the house of young prisoners in Paris" (Foucault 6) around which the inmates of the prison had to work. These are two different ways of punishment. There is a period of eighty years between them; but, certainly this is not the only difference. The methods of punishment remarkably differ. So what are the reasons behind this change? Why was the cruel, bloody scenery replaced by a more "civilized" one? According to Foucault, the reasons are more than one.

> Less than a century separates them. It was a time when, in Europe and in the United states the entire economy of punishment was redistributed. It was a time for great 'scandals' for traditional justice, a time for innumerable projects for reform. It saw a new theory of law and crime, a new moral of political justification of the right to punish; old laws were abolished, old customs died out. . . It was a new age for penal justice. (7)

By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, punishment as a festival started to die out in Europe. Punishment started to be seen as equal to the crime itself. This change in the perception of punishment was a consequence of a long process. Foucault describes it as "the disappearance of torture as a public spectacle . . . Punishment of a less immediately physical kind, a certain discretion in the art of inflicting pain, a combination of more subtle, more subdued sufferings, deprived of their visible display . . . The body as the major target of penal repression disappeared" (7-8). Physical pain and corporeal punishment, where the public played a huge role participating in the display of the tortured body as the audience enjoying the spectacle, were no longer the primary elements; therefore, some new methods had to be introduced. "The theatrical representation of pain was excluded from punishment. The age of sobriety in punishment had begun" (14). Although the execution/punishment still went on, the public execution came to an end. The new motive for punishment was to deter people from committing crimes rather than having "the horrible crime repeated in cold blood" (Foucault 9). If physical pain was still necessary to some extent it would be done in "a proper way" according to certain rules and for a "higher aim" (Foucault 11) which is the reformation of the soul. As a result of this new restraint, figures such as doctors (to inject tranquillizers)

and psychiatrists started to be present near the prisoner along with the employment of quicker and less painful methods to kill such as the hanging machine and then the guillotine. By emphasizing the connection between the change in power relations and the change in the punishment system, Foucault historicizes the emergence of the modern penal system. In Europe with the rise of the middle class in the eighteenth century, the monopoly of power shattered. The Monarchs were accused of acting arbitrarily in terms of handling power. The power holders were not only cruel but also the handling of power in terms of judiciary was weak and poorly managed.

> The true objective of the reform movement was . . . to set up a new "economy" of the power to punish, to assure its better distribution, so that it should be neither too concentrated at certain privileged points, nor too divided between opposing authorities; so that it should be distributed in homogeneous circuits capable of operating everywhere, in a continuous way, down to the finest grain of the social body. (80)

Foucault theorizes this new economy of power through the work of an eighteenth-century architect Jeremy Bentham:

> Bentham's Panopticon is . . . at the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. (200)

"The Panopticon (pan=all, optic=seeing)" worked almost like a machine without a stop, making sure that no prisoner inside it could ever see the inspector who surveilled him from that privileged central location. The prisoner could never know when he was being surveilled or whether he was actually being surveilled; that uncertainty and the inaccessibility to the knowledge of whether he was being surveilled, would prove to be the key point of this type of discipline along with no communication and no interaction with others. Instead of putting the prisoners in dungeons and using violent methods of punishment, a practice that had come along since the medieval times, the Panopticon, in a

more powerful and sophisticated manner, puts the prisoners into cells next to one another and renders them devoid of the ability of seeing one another. Yet, at the same, it guarantees maximum visibility and thereby surveillance of the inmates.

> Visibility is a trap . . . Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. (200)

For Foucault the underlying principle in the Panopticon is achieving knowledge and thereby power through observing others. The more one observes the more powerful he becomes, the more powerful he becomes the more control he has: "by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase in power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process" (218). Foucault underlines that prisons as we know them today came into being from that very idea, aiming to deprive the individual from his freedom with an aim to reform him. As Foucault points out, this new mode of discipline and punishment applies to other modern institutions such as schools, hospitals and factories. All these institutions discipline their "inmates" in such a way that they internalize power and discipline themselves.

> If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen, there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, none of those distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect or cause accidents . . . Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power . . . It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. (202)

As Foucault argues, the Panopticon shows itself in society in general: "prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals which all resemble prisons" (153-4). The factories have been designed according to the new discipline of surveillance. The "master" does not have to be present near the workers and apprentices any longer. "Surveillance thus becomes a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power" (175). The same applies to teaching mechanisms where "the details of surveillance were specified and it was integrated into the

teachings relationship . . . where a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching . . . as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency" (175). What Foucault underlines is the anonymous power of surveillance on individuals working like a network of relations from top to bottom, almost like a pyramid as a whole producing power and distributing that power on individuals. In other words, Foucault borrowed Bentham's Panopticon as a model to explain how modern societies work, making people think that they could be surveilled anytime and anywhere, which entails self-discipline and productivity. "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (202-3).

Foucault argues that now (as opposed to the pre-modern times of bodily punishment) much more is required of the body than "mere political allegiance or the appropriation of the products of its labour;" a new discipline now invades the body, by which Foucault means modern forms of the army, the school, the hospital, the prison and the manufactory, as a consequence of which the subjected and the practiced bodies are produced or, as Foucault puts it, what is produced is "the docile body" which may "be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (180). From the eighteenth century onward,

> The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A "political anatomy," which was also a "mechanics of power," was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies. (Foucault 138)

Feminists have long argued about the usefulness of Foucault's work for feminist theory and practice especially in regard to his *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and the *History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction* (1976). While some of the poststructuralist feminist scholars such as Judith Butler "find Foucault's descriptions of the regulatory and normative functions of the category of sex to be richly suggestive for addressing the production of gendered subjects" (Gutting 393), others such as Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo, have criticized Foucault for his gender blindness and for failing to make a distinction between

disciplinary practices that produce “docile bodies”. They argue that Foucault treats the bodily experiences of men and women in the same way without accounting for differences women and men have been subjected to in disciplinary systems. Both Bartky and Bordo agree with Foucault in his assertion that the disciplinary practices produce docile bodies; however, they argue that by means of internalization of these disciplinary practices women subject themselves and one another to the “female connoisseur,” which means women’s internalization of the panoptic gaze. As a result, women live their bodies “as seen by another, by an anonymous male or female” since pressure coming out of the female gaze can be equally powerful and sometimes even harsher. Women police their bodies according to the panoptical male connoisseur which resides within the consciousness of many women. Patriarchy both causes and benefits from women’s obsessive self-surveillance. “This system aims at turning woman into docile and complaint companions of men” (Bartky 37). This self-surveillance makes women conform to patriarchal definitions of womanhood. And in their works, both Bartky and Bordo study Foucault’s idea of power and demonstrate the ways through which women’s bodies have been traditionally subjected to the norms of femininity.

Sandra Lee Bartky, in her “Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power” revisits Foucault’s idea of power from a feminist perspective to explore how women and their bodies have been disciplined according to the norms of femininity. Bartky agrees with Foucault, who, in her words, argues that “the rise of parliamentary institutions and of new conceptions of political liberty was accompanied by a darker counter-movement, by the emergence of a new and unprecedented discipline directed against the body” (25). Like Foucault, Bartky holds that this new discipline, “invades the body and seeks to regulate its very forces and operations, the economy and efficiency of its movements” (25). Yet, Bartky thinks that as much liberating as Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* is while he introduces us with his conception of docile bodies he neglects to differentiate between the feminine and masculine body. Instead, Foucault treats them as one, as if their bodily experiences did not differ at all; “as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life” (27). Bartky argues that women are subject to the same disciplinary practices Foucault describes, but he does not mention that as a consequence of these disciplinary bodies, women’s bodies are rendered more docile than those of men. According to Bartky, Foucault does not make a reference to

those forms of discipline that are aiming at creating peculiarly "feminine" bodies. "To overlook the forms of subjection that engender the feminine body is to perpetuate the silence and powerlessness of those upon whom these disciplines have been imposed" (27). Therefore, Bartky thinks that, Foucault only reproduces that sexism which is "endemic throughout Western political theory" (27).

Bartky then goes on to discuss how modern society imposes ideas of beauty on women. She emphasizes how today more women go dieting than men and how women's magazines keep arguing for getting rid of that "winter fat" before the bikini season comes. Appetite must be kept track of at all times and at all costs.

> Since the innocent need of the organism for food will not be denied, the body becomes one's enemy, an alien being bent on thwarting the disciplinary project. Anorexia nervosa, which has now assumed epidemic proportions, is to women of the late twentieth century what hysteria was to women of an earlier day: the crystallization in a pathological mode of widespread cultural obsession. (28)

Female bodily control is not only confined to dieting or women's devoting a large amount of their time to physical exercise. Even with regard to everyday bodily gestures and postures, women appear to be more restricted than men. "An expressive face lines and creases more readily than an inexpressive one. Hence, if women are unable to suppress strong emotions, they can at least learn to inhibit the tendency of the face to register them" (Bartky 29). As an example Bartky gives a case of photographs of over two thousand shots taken in the streets by a German photographer Marianne Max in 1979. In these photographs, there emerges a striking difference between women and men: women's hands are folded together on theirs laps, legs pressed together making themselves small and narrow while men sit legs apart making the most of the space they can occupy. "Woman's space is not a field in which her body intentionally can be freely realized but an eclosure in which she feels herself positioned and by which she is confined. The 'loose woman' violates those norms, her looseness is manifested. . . in her morals. . . and in her manner of speech" (Bartky 29-30). Furthermore, "the nice girl," Bartky says, as opposed to "the loose woman," learns to train her facial expressions, as well: she casts her eyes downward because staring directly at others and not bearing the polite expression is accepted as rude. "The 'nice' girl learns to avoid the bold and unfettered staring of the 'loose' woman who looks at whatever and whomever she pleases" (Bartky 30). In bodily movements too, a

woman has to walk not displaying too much of her hips, not wearing clothes that are too revealing and if she has to, not bending down without great attention is paid. Even in today's magazines there are instructions as to how to climb in and out of a car without making an "inappropriate" scene. There is no magazine in which men are taught not to stare, not to look where they should not, not to touch or not to rape. It is always women who are taught to be more careful so as not to create a scene or a situation in which they will be accused of being provocateurs. A woman has to get rid of her facial and bodily hair by means of a series of painful and expensive methods; she must learn to master a number of devices and products to perfect her hair, follow certain steps to get rid of cellulites, and use just the right amount of make-up. According to Bartky, in the contemporary Western world the ideal perception of beauty in a woman is the body of a slender adolescent, an infantilized body and face that bears no sign of age, wisdom, experience or character, which are, however, admired in men. High-heeled shoes that are no fit for the shape of the human foot and that cause discomfort and even deformity, corsets to control and reshape parts of the body, bras that give the breast the aspired shape and even breast implants and so on are all various types of bodily disciplines imposed only on women. So, fashion functions to discipline women. The economy of smile is generously distributed to women; she is expected to smile much more often than men (Bartky 29-30). However, unlike men, even when a woman "perfects" her appearance, it is never guaranteed that she will gain respect or social power. According to Bartky, it mainly serves "the male gaze":

> In the regime of instutionalized heterosexuality, woman must make herself "object and prey" for the man: it is for him that these eyes are limpid pools, this cheek baby smooth (de Beauvoir 1968, 642). In contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment. Woman lives her body as seen by another, by an anonymous patriarchal Other. (Bartky 72)

Laura Mulvey, who first coined the term "the male gaze" in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) divides the pleasure in looking into two: active/male and passive/female and holds that "the determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure . . . women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey 837). Mulvey focuses on the gaze in terms of its impact in cinema and argues that the male protagonist as the bearer of the look of the audience "controls the

phantasy and emerges as the representative of power" (838). As a result, the audience identifies himself/herself with the active male figure who is in charge of things as opposed to the passive female character. When she says "audience," Mulvey does not make a distinction between the male and female members of the audience; therefore, when a female member of the audience is encouraged to look at the screen through the male gaze, she ends up internalizing this male gaze. This is the very connection Bartky makes when she states above that "a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women."

According to Bartky, "The disciplinary power that inscribes femininity on the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular" (Bartky 36). While Foucault identifies the imposition of discipline with institutions such as the school, the factory and the prison, he tends to overlook the fact the anonymity of the disciplinary power (the lack of a formal sanction mechanism) and the fact that it is unbound creates an impression that the production of femininity is either entirely self-imposed or it comes naturally.

> Nevertheless, insofar as the disciplinary practices of femininity produce a "subjected and practiced," an inferiorized body, they must be understood as aspects of a far larger discipline, an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination. This system aims at turning women into the docile and complaint companions of men just as surely as the army aims to turn its raw recruits into soldier. (Bartky 37)

In contemporary society women are not only "kept in line" with physical or psychological threat they suffer in the hands of men; rather, there is also the "panoptical connoisseur" hidden inside women. It is a state in which a woman regards her own body as seen by another, that is, just like a prisoner in the Panopticon she acts as if she is under the constant scrutiny of an authority figure. As Bartky holds in "Foucault, Femininity and Modernization of Power", "the disciplinary project of femininity is a set up; it requires such radical and extensive measures of bodily transformation that virtually every woman who gives herself to it is destined in some degree to fail" (71), societal and cultural norms (i.e. disciplinary practices and institutions such as cosmetics and fashion) can be oppressive because they represent unreachable and unrealistic standards and socialize its subject to the extent that after some time those subjects start to interiorize those mechanisms of control. Citing Foucault, Bartky underlines that in modern society power is exercised in a

> faceless, centralized and pervasive manner; it does not rely upon violent or public sanctions . . . The disciplinary techniques through which the docile bodies of women are constructed aim at a regulation that is perpetual and exhaustive –a regulation of the body's size and contours, its appetite, posture, gestures and general comportment in space, and the appearance of each of its visible parts. (Bartky 41)

However, as Bartky argues, since it is usually women themselves who practice the discipline on and against their own bodies, the role of patriarchy in regulating women's bodies is often unnoticed.

> The woman . . . just as surely as the inmate of the Panopticon is a self-policing subject, a self-committed to a relentless self-surveillance. This self-survelliance is a form of obedience to patriarchy. It is also the reflection in woman's consciousness of the fact that she is under surveillance in ways that he is not, that whatever else she may become she is importantly a body designed to please or to excite. There has been induced in many women then in Foucault's words "a state of conscious and permanent visibility" that assures the automatic functioning of power. (Bartky 42)

Susan Bordo approaches the same subject from the point of disorders women suffer from in her *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*. "What we eat, how we dress, the daily rituals through which we attend to the body is a medium of culture" she holds (Bordo 165). She argues that "Through the regulation of time, space and movements of our daily lives our bodies are trained, shaped and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity and femininity" (Bordo 165-166). Pursuing an ideal female body with the disciplines of dieting, make-up, and fashion, women without a stop practice focus on self-improvements and modification at the cost of utter demoralization, debilitation and even death. Just like Bartky's proposition that women are almost all the time under male and female surveillance/gaze, Bordo, too, asserts that female bodies are made docile through the disciplinary practices of daily life and "rendered less socially oriented and more centripetally focused on self-modification" (Bordo 166) and those practices make women feel never satisfied with themselves and always in awe of pursuing an ideal that is never to be reached. Therefore, Bordo underlines that in an era in which the ideal is to torment women's lives, there is the need to develop a political discourse about the female body, a discourse that requires the reconstruction of the 1960/70s feminist paradigm of the oppressor vs the oppressed, villain vs victim (Bordo 167). Her suggestion is the feminist

appropriation of Foucault's concepts. She thinks that just like Foucault argues, the idea of power as something possessed by one group against another must be abandoned and instead a network of practices, institutions and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination in a particular domain must be focused on (Bordo 167).

Bordo argues that the "continuum between female disorder and normal feminine practice is sharply revealed through a close reading of those disorders to which women have been particularly vulnerable" (Bordo 168) and then specifies those disorders historically; neurasthenia and hysteria in the second half of the nineteenth century, agoraphobia and anorexia nervosa and bulimia in the second half of the twentieth century. Bordo does not mean to say that hysterics did not exist until the second half of the nineteenth century or the bulimics until the twentieth century. What she rather means is that those disorders started to be taken up on mass scale in those periods that made them epidemics in that specific era. Symptoms such as "Loss of mobility, of voice, inability to leave home, feeding others while starving self, taking up space and whittling down the space one's body takes up" (Bordo 168) have symbolic meanings that have to do with power relations; therefore, when studied closely, it is found that "the body of the sufferer is deeply inscribed with an ideological construction of femininity emblematic of the period in question" (Bordo 168). However, with the use of these disorders femininity is written in exaggerated terms, "at times virtually caricatured presentations of the ruling feminine mystique[1]" the body of the disordered becoming "a cultural statement about gender" (Bordo169).

One of these disorders Bordo focuses on is hysteria; an exaggeration of stereotypically feminine features. The term hysterical was often, specifically at the times it was an epidemic, interchangeable with the word feminine. The nineteenth-century woman was diagnosed as hysteric and that epidemic in contemporary women is followed by vaginismus, premenstrual tension, and infertility and so on.

[1] *The Feminine Mystique*, a book written by Betty Friedan in 1963, is accepted as the starting point for the second wave feminism. According to Friedan, American women, starting from the late 1940's to 1950's and early 60's were forced to be confined inside their homes, as the wife and the mother and were encouraged to neglect their career as opposed to the New Woman of the century who is more career-oriented.

> The nineteenth-century lady was idealized in terms of delicacy and dreaminess, sexual passivity, and a charmingly labile and capricious emotionality. Such notions were formalized and scientized in the work of male theorists from Acton and Krafft-Ebing to Freud, who described normal mature femininity in such terms. In this context, the dissociations, the drifting and fogging of perception, the nervous tremors and faints, the anesthesias and the extreme mutability of symptomatology associated with nineteenth-century female disorders can be seen to be concretizations of the feminine mystique of the period, produced according to rules that governed the prevailing construction of femininity. (Bordo169)

According to Bordo, agoraphobia and anorexia are some of the symptoms of the twentieth-century constructions of femininity. Agoraphobia is "the logical albeit extreme extension of the cultural sex-role stereotype for women" as opposed to the "*career woman*" (Bordo 170). It is a result of women being confined into little spaces to an extent that these women after some time want to stay in those spaces without any physical force exercised upon them. It means situating women indoors to take care of the housework and babies etc., to spend her time inside the house and do all these voluntarily at the expense of being scared of going outside. According to Bordo, contemporary notions of femininity are still associated with the figure of the woman who feeds the others and suppresses the desire to self-nurture. Therefore, women have to control the appetite for food since female hunger whether it is for "public power, independence or sexual gratification" (Bordo 171) has to be contained and kept under control. And this ideal forms the very basis of the anorexic according to which a "ladylike" woman should feed others not herself: "total other-oriented emotional economy," a sacrifice a woman has to make in order to be perceived as a "proper" woman. Female hunger is depicted as needful of containment and control, and female eating is seen as a furtive, shameful, illicit act. According to this interpretation of anorexia, food is not the real issue here; rather, "the control of female appetite for food is merely the most concrete expression of the general rule governing the construction of femininity that female hunger . . . be contained and the public space that women be allowed to take up be circumscribed, limited" (Bordo 171). The ideal of slenderness, to the extent of one's driving herself to bulimia and anorexia, and exercise regiments offer the illusion of meeting the demands of the contemporary ideology of femininity. The anorexic

> at school discovers that her steadily shrinking body is admired, not so much as an aesthetic or sexual object but for the strength of will and self-control it projects. At home she discovers in the inevitable battles her parents fight to get her to eat, that her actions have enormous power over

> the lives of those around her. As her body begins to feel and look more like a spare, lanky male body she begins to feel untouchable, out of reach of hurt (…) for many anorexics, the breasts represent a bovine, unconscious, vulnerable side of the self. The anorexic is also quite aware of course, of the social and sexual vulnerability involved in having a female body; many in fact were sexually abused as children. (Bordo 23)

The anorexic realizes what it feels like to crave and to starve but through the power of her will she overcomes the hunger and with self-mastery will triumph over it. The anorexic may or may not be aware that she is making a political statement. She may not even be a feminist or she may even be hostile to the idea of questioning the cultural ideals as an intervention to her life. "The anorectic's experience of power is deeply and dangerously illusory. To reshape one's body into a male body is not to put on male power and privilege. To feel autonomous and free . . . is to serve not transform a social order that limits female possibilities" (Bordo 179). The same can be applied to the hysteric. The muteness of the hysteric, protesting by going voiceless is also a patriarchal ideal of the silent, uncomplaining woman (Bordo 177). As she summarizes,

> In hysteria, agoraphobia and anorexia then, the woman's body may be viewed as a surface on which conventional constructions of femininity are exposed starkly to view, through their inscription in extreme or hyperliteral form. They are written of course in languages of horrible suffering. (Bordo 174-175)

To sum up what has been argued so far, it has been asserted that while Foucault highlights a change in the form of punishment, from targeting the body directly to taming the soul, the feminist scholars Bartky and Bordo have argued that this change should be re-theorized taking gender differences into account as well. Taking the modern institutions aiming to reform the bodily movements of women specifically, it is suggested that women's bodies are rendered more docile than those of men. However, it should be stressed that it does not mean the panoptic gaze is specifically a male one; although it is correct to say that the gaze is patriarchal, it can also be the gaze of the female connoisseur.

In what follows, Pat Barker's *Union Street* (1982) and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) will be studied to explore the novels' treatment of how modern institutions discipline women in the light of Foucault's conceptualization of the "Panopticon" as well as the works of scholars such as Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo, who revise Foucault's notion of the Panopticon from a feminist perspective. This thesis

will argue that both *Union Street* and *Nights at the Circus* foreground the ways in which women's bodies are rendered more "docile" than those of men. Furthermore, in the light of Laura Mulvey's notion of "to-be-looked-at-ness," it will be argued that both novels deal with the ways in which women are exposed to "the panoptical male gaze" and "the female connoisseur." This thesis will also explore to what extent the women characters in these novels can actually escape from the Panopticon, the male and female gaze.

CHAPTER III

IS THERE A WAY OUT OF THE PANOPTICON AND THE MALE GAZE? : AN ANALYSIS OF PAT BARKER'S *UNION STREET*

The aim of this chapter is to study the representation of women in Pat Barker's *Union Street* (1982) in terms of their subjection to power within the institution of marriage. It will be argued that Barker's novel foregrounds the idea that women's bodies are rendered more docile than those of men as a consequence of power inflicted on them in the institution of marriage as wives and mothers. Furthermore, the novel emphasizes female characters' subjection to the male gaze and their internalization and projection of it onto one another. The chapter will also explore whether women in the novel can escape from these disciplinary systems and patriarchal restrictions.

Although the title "Union Street" suggests a street full of people who are united, this is not the case. The name of the street is ironic because the novel rather emphasizes how characters fail to achieve a sense of solidarity amongst themselves. "Union Street is a symbolic space . . . which functions to delineate the imaginative contours of urban, working class landscape and social structure" (Brannigan 15). In Union Street, the houses are broken: they are not safe places, or sanctuaries. Set in the winter of 1973, the novel depicts the lives of women residing in Union Street in an unnamed city in England in seven chapters with each chapter shedding light on its protagonist who happens to have a traumatic experience of her own, a story of violence or just the trauma of post-war Britain within a hostile environment. Each chapter is named after its main character: "Kelly Brown," "Joanne Wilson," "Lisa Goddard," "Muriel Scaife," Iris King," "Blonde Dinah" and finally "Alice Bell".

In the novel, the stories of seven different women from different ages are structured around a cyclical time, which shows us how women of *Union Street* are trapped and basically cannot move beyond the vicious cycle of femininity starting from childhood, continuing with youth, childbirth, maternity, old age and death. Their lives

echo those of their mothers and grandmothers. Each chapter focuses on the lives of one of these women, starting from growing up and making a living to attempts at maintaining a family, and growing old. These seven women, imprisoned as they are in their lives, without the ability to move beyond, are "trapped in a relentless cycle of poverty, casual underage sex, backstreet abortions, abusive relationships, and early signs of illness" (Brannigan 8). Therefore, their lives echo not only those of their (grand) mothers but also one another; in other words, their lives are linked: when reading the story of Kelly Brown, for example, one can come across Iris King; or, in the same way, Joanne Wilson appears in Lisa Goddard's story. Actually, as Brannigan puts it, "The characters are really versions of one character's progress through life. Barker indicates this in the recurrent scenes in which characters see their younger or older selves reflected in the other characters" (10).

Starting from the very first chapter, all these women lead their lives that seem to have been determined even before they were born. Barker portrays lives that have been constantly oppressed in the hands not only of women's husbands and fathers but also, very importantly, as a consequence of the social and economic conditions women have to go through. Yet, this does not mean that the novel is blind to the predicament of men. The novel highlights the fact that working-class men are, too, oppressed in the post-industrial era: they are represented as uneducated, jobless, penniless characters who lack the means to provide for their families and some of whom find relief in domestic violence.

Barker's novel foregrounds marriage as one of the institutions of modern life to which men and women do not bear the same relationship. According to Foucault, institutions use strategies to have control over the individual in the maintenance of disciplinary power. Yet, as discussed in the previous chapter, Sandra Lee Bartky criticizes Foucault for treating the bodily experiences of men and women the same without making a difference between them as if they "bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life" (Bartky 27). What Bartky points out is Foucault's disregard of the disciplinary practices "that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine" (Bartky 27). *Union Street* foregrounds not only the psychological and bodily war women go through with their husbands and children,

but also how they shoulder the finance of the house most of the time. It does not make a difference whether or not these female characters work outside the house: they are to perform "womanly duties," socially expected gender roles, under every circumstance in the so-called domestic sphere.

An example for one of these women is Lisa Goddard, who leads a difficult life not only as a consequence of economic conditions but also because of an indifferent husband who neglects her and their two children and the third one on the way. Lisa is introduced to the reader while in the supermarket. She is so fed up and exhausted that she snaps at her little son and "hit(s) the child across his face. . . and she hit him again and again, stinging, hard slaps, her face distorted by hatred as she looked at him" (*US*[2] 108). This is surely the tipping point for her; she is not only angry at the child, but also angry at herself, at the choices she has made, and her husband Brian, who never shares his part of the burden. After it becomes obvious that her husband cannot get a decent job for he does not even care to look for one, all the responsibility of the household is now on Lisa, who is pregnant with another baby:

> She did not want this baby. They could not afford it: Brian had been out of work for the best part of a year. . . Brian was out drinking. As always. She did not want to have his child. The two she had already were as much as she could manage. More. There were times when she doubted whether Brian would ever work again. Oh, he said he was still looking. But she didn't believe him. He had given up (*US* 112).

As Sarah Falcus puts it, "Motherhood becomes another way in which women are imprisoned in these texts [*Blow Your House Down, Liza's England, Union Street*]. When combined with poverty and class, motherhood becomes constricting and repetitious, particularly when mother is left holding the baby in the absence of an inadequate father figure" (249). Motherhood is presented as a trap in which the mother figure, inevitably and in a predestined manner, is doomed to "fail" in the eyes of other women. Due to the way in which she is "embodied" within the institution of marriage, Lisa can barely remember the times prior to her marriage, that young girl who would work at the cake factory and then go dancing all night long. She remembers those memories as if they are not hers, which indicates how much she has been alienated from

[2] *Union Street* is abbreviated as *US* throughout the chapter.

her former self since she became a wife and mother. On the other hand, her husband Brian, even though he is either in between jobs or unemployed most of the time, is much freer when it comes to having some leisure time. He goes out drinking every night with money he finds or borrows from here and there, and he still expects to be served dinner on time upon arriving home: "He always wanted a hot meal whenever he came in: there was a row if he didn't get it" (*US* 112). While waiting for Brian to come home, Lisa starts to question where he could be finding the money to drink every night; she checks the jar where she has kept the money only to find it empty. After her confrontation with her husband about the missing money, he does not hesitate to beat her:

> He had to silence her somehow. So he stood up and hit her, not very hard, on the side of the head. But the blow liberated something in him, an enormous anger that had been chained up waiting for this moment. He hit her again. And again. It was easier now. She was driven back against the wall. When it was over he stood and stared at what he had done. (*US* 117)

As if it is a daily routine, or a recurrent incident, Lisa's only reaction after the beating is to ask for a flannel to wipe out her mouth. This seems to be partly the result of Lisa's internalization of violence exercised on her. She has gotten used to it to the extent that she neither resists the power exercised upon her nor reacts to it. "She was sorry for him. She felt how like a child he had become. Underneath the drink and blustering and violence he was like this all the time" (*US* 120). The novel also suggests that, Brian's situation represents all the male characters of *Union Street* who are "the walking wounded of a post-industrial Britain in which the old heavy industries which invested their daily lives with purpose have been dismantled and nothing else put in their place" (Joannou 75). The male characters resort to alcohol and violence as the only way for escape and survival.

Another character who has been subjected to male violence starting from her childhood and throughout her marriage is Iris King, who is happy to be regarded as the mother of the street. She is a woman obsessed with cleanliness, order and decency. Iris's obsession with cleanliness and order is a consequence of her reaction to her background; or, more specifically, to the street where she grew up: Wharfe Street, near the river where "they lived in a series of boarding houses and some of them weren't much better

than brothels and some of them were brothels" (*US* 187). This is the place she never wants to go back to because she associates the place with dirt. Iris thinks she has risen on the social ladder by moving from

> the city's most derelict district, where "suicide, mental illness, crime, incest had flourished". Iris is unable to forget its horrors, and, as compensation for these disturbing memories, becomes overwhelmingly concerned with maintaining her reputation as the "cleanest woman in the street" even as she is haunted by the undoing of her hard-won status. Barker's sketch of Iris's mental state emphasizes her preoccupation with preventing her own and her family's slide back to Wharfe Street. (Brophy 33)

The novel underlines that Iris's relationship with her father was troublesome, as well. "Her father paid a long succession of women to look after her. Some of them did a good job, some didn't. Mainly they didn't" (*US* 187). Upon her mother's death, Iris is left in the hands of her rather cruel father, who does not hesitate to beat Iris and treat her badly.

> As she got older the beatings got worse . . . Her father had been terrible when she was in her teens . . . A young girl growing up in that area among a lot of old pros. He didn't know what to do about it and finished up beating the hell out of her every time she looked at a lad. At the finish she set her cheek up at him that bad he picked up a pan of boiling soup and poured it over her head. It'd been a hospital job that time, and when she come out she went to stay with her Auntie in Jarrow. And when she come back she got on with Ted, and married him. 'Course she had to, but by that time she'd've married anybody, just to get out. (*US* 189)

This is the environment she grew up in and compared to Wharfe Street, even Union Street seems a much better place to her. To free herself from the beatings of her father, Iris rushes to marriage. "She was in love with the idea of marriage. A home. She had never had a home" (*US* 189). Only three weeks after their marriage her husband, Ted, hits her for not having the supper ready on time. "He came in and found her still ironing his shirts when he thought the supper should've been ready. He belted her across the ear; hard enough to make her see stars, and slammed out to the pub" (*US* 190). She then remembers that Ted is famous for his temper and for a moment considers going back to ironing and prepare the dinner but then she does not want to be like her mother, victimized in the hands of her father. Instead of accepting to be victimized and living in constant fear, Iris takes her revenge and waits for her husband to return home only to strike him a blow with a meat chopper. Although it does not stop the beatings, it ends the fear inside her: "she never lost her self-respect" (*US* 190) again.

Not willing to be economically dependent on her husband, Iris also works outside the home. Even though she is not content with the wages, she is still more than satisfied for having an income entirely independent of her husband. She is no longer worried about the money but still "she hated the rows, the violence, the way the children went quiet whenever their father walked into a room" (*US* 192). Interestingly, even then she tries to justify her husband. She thinks to herself that at least he is not lazy and he still has a job. However, one night, while she is wondering where he might be, her husband brings home two men, to have them have sex with Iris:

> There were two of them. He'd brought two complete strangers home and sent them up here. "Get out" she advanced on the first man. He backed away until brought up hard against the banisters . . . She thought afterward, she could have broken the man's back. At the time she wouldn't've cared if she had. He staggered to his feet. The other man grabbed him by the arm and they fell over each other to get out of the front door . . . She went downstairs to find Ted. He was curled up on the floor like a foetus, retching. The final stages of his drunkenness were always like this. She bent over him and said, "I ought to kill you. But I won't. You're not worth doing time for." . . . She never willingly had sex with him again. Perhaps once or twice a year when he got too bad, to shut him up; never more than that. (*US* 193-194)

So it does not matter much, the novel seems to suggest, whether a woman is relatively stronger or more resistant compared to others as in the case of Iris King. In the end, and from the very beginning, all the women characters in the novel have been subjected to male power and violence within family. When it comes to physical or psychological abuse within or outside the family, it is not really easy to fight back for a woman, and whether she is 11 or 60 does not really make a difference, and that is what makes this cycle of predetermined life these women lead difficult to unravel and break free.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Foucault divides the modes of punishment into two. While the earlier form of punishment used to be a corporeal one directed against the body under the control of the sovereign, with the reformist interference into the system and the excessive control the sovereign holds on to, the punishment and public display of the body was replaced by the attempt to discipline the soul. In this new power regime, the primary objective is not the body anymore; the soul has to be taken under control now. In the modern world, punishment is no longer in the words to be uttered by the sovereign; rather there has emerged a whole disciplinary system for it.

Physical punishment is no longer the preferred method. However, Barker's novel reveals that this is not the case for women in the domestic sphere. They are still subjected to a corporeal form of punishment ordered and practiced by their fathers and/or husbands in addition to being exposed to the ideologies such as domesticity targeting women's "souls." They are still beaten; their bodies are still the means to bring them to their knees as seen in the examples above. What is more, the novel shows that there is also another, much more damaging form of physical violence inflicted upon women, which is rape. "Sex and violence seem almost inseparable in the novel, whether in the form of a rape in a public place or conjugal violence: men and women are actually pulled apart by the act of sexual union, at least physically if not psychologically, creating sort of traumatic memories" such as Kelly's (Waterman 20).

Kelly Brown, who is only 11, is raped by a man much older than she is. Referred to as "The Man," with no specific details given about him, the rapist seems to come from a wealthy background with his shiny black shoes and jacket. He shows Kelly affection and attention no one has ever given her before: "He looked at her so intently. Other people [her mother, Linda, the teachers at school] merely glanced at her and then with indifference or haste, passed on. But this man stared at her as if every pore in her skin mattered. His eyes created her" (*US* 16). As discussed in the first chapter, Mulvey theorizes what she considers the traditional role of women as to-be-looked-at-ness. She explains the male gaze in terms of narrative cinema and argues that the spectator identifies himself with the main protagonist and projects his look since woman is an object to be looked at and to have pleasure from looking at while the man is the dominant figure, rendering the woman into the status of an object to be admired for sexual fantasies. In her relationship with the Man, Kelly becomes fully aware of her "to-be-looked-at-ness" which "creates" her. This, however, is not only because of her internalization of the male gaze but also her desperate need for attention. This makes her even yearn for the attention of her rapist. In their first encounter at the park, Kelly is alarmed by this man's gaze, but she still stays with him to feed the geese in an abandoned lake. Even though she senses the danger, she "is drawn to him because he appears to fill a void in her identity" (Brannigan 20) and in a way treats him like a surrogate father - a father who has been long gone from her life.

The Man leads Kelly into a deserted factory where there seems to be no way out. She feels the threat yet again and this time wants to run away: "Climb the walls? Too high. Get into a yard and dodge round him there? Yes. She darted forward, but already it was too late. He came round the corner and stopped for a moment, watching her" (*US* 28). Not being able to run away from him, Kelly is raped by this man.

> At first he had just wanted her to touch him. "Go on," he whispered. A single mucoid eye leered at her from under the partially-retracted foreskin. "Touch me," he said, more urgently. "Go on". But even when he had succeeded in forcing her hand to close around the smelly purple toadstool, it wasn't enough. He forced her down and spread himself over her, his breath smelling strongly of peppermint and decay. At first her tight skin had resisted him, and he swore at her until he found his way in. She stiffened against the pain, but even then did not cry out, but lay still while he heaved and sweated. Then, with a final agonized convulsion, it was all over and he was looking at her as if he hated her more than anything else on earth. (*US* 29)

Since the sentence "'Touch me' he said, more urgently" follows immediately the sentence in which The Man's sexual organ is personified as an image with an eye "leering" at Kelly, the pronoun "he" in this second sentence seems to refer both to The Man and his penis. The entanglement of the two in this scene of rape underlines The Man's phallocentric power, his dominance and authority over Kelly as a male. Furthermore, "the single mucoid eye" Kelly sees on the Man's penis suggests a connection between her rape, an extreme form of male violence inflicted on her body and, the phallocentric surveillance on women. The male gaze, in other words, emerges in this scene as a means of enforcing power on women.

Barker's novel adds one more dimension to the rape scene. As Brannigan argues, considering the social background of the rapist, it is significant where he led Kelly, to rape her:

> His choice of location is also symbolic, for if the community of Kelly's birth once thrived upon the monumental power of industry, the deserted factory yard is now the symbolic core of a deserted, vulnerable community. Set in such a bleak landscape of loss and dereliction, the rape has obvious allegorical significance for the community as a whole. It destroys any sense of connection, cohesion or self-validation so that when Kelly realizes that the rape defines her . . . she also recognizes that she is now made in the image of her surroundings. The man has

> deprived her of the last tissue of protection between her and the painful, blighted landscape around her. (qtd. in Monteith 7)

In the post-industrial society of the 1970s Britain suffered an economic depression, with unemployment rate getting higher and making it much more difficult for people to get a decent and steady paying job. Although both men and women were affected by the reality of unemployment, it was women who suffered the most the setbacks of this environment where their bodies, as seen throughout the novel, are rendered more docile than those of men. Accordingly, in this "derelict society symbolized in" *Union Street*, women's bodies are rendered into economic commodities "for use and exchange, their value determined in the impoverished system of social and cultural relationships of their ruined community" (Brannigan 8).

Just as they are under the surveillance of the never resting Panoptic male gaze women are also under the scrutiny of the female connoisseur/the female gaze, which emerges as a result of women's internalization of the male gaze. As Susan Bordo argues, patriarchy is a system in which women, too, participate in reproducing cultural norms and are rewarded for doing so. Patriarchy, therefore, is a system in which both men and women participate. It is true that the gaze is patriarchal but it is not necessarily male. At the beginning of the chapter on Kelly Brown, Mrs. Brown gets jealous of her elder daughter Linda, who comes downstairs in the morning wearing only a bra and pants. With that look Linda attracts her mother's latest "Fancy Man" Arthur's attention: "Arthur, his eyes glued to Linda's nipples, opened and shut his mouth twice . . . Mrs. Brown looked suddenly older, rat-like, as her eyes darted between Arthur and the girl" (*US* 7-8). This is the first time Mrs. Brown does not see her daughter as her daughter anymore; she looks as a rival, who has the advantages of youth and with whom she has to compete in order to get men's attention. In this scene Mrs. Brown sees Linda through Arthur's eyes and this marks the beginning of a rivalry in the already troubled relationship between the mother and her daughter. We see this rivalry continuing with Kelly, as well. In Mrs. Brown's eyes, the rape transforms Kelly into a woman, "promoting her in her mother's eyes into a repellent maturity, to the status her elder sister has already assumed as sexual rival in relation to the transient 'uncles' who have taken the place of the father" (Rawlinson 25). However, this change in her mother's perception comes only after Kelly is raped; her mother notices her figure, as if for the

first time, beneath the nightdress that is "slightly transparent," with her nipples that "seemed to demand attention. Like eyes in a chest" (*US* 43). This marks the first time Mrs. Brown starts to see Kelly not as a girl in her early adolescence, but as someone who is about to become a woman with her bodily change apparent to the eye. The language used to reflect Mrs. Brown's perspective is significant, because her seeing Kelly's nipples like eyes, demanding to be looked at, seems to justify the male gaze. It is also very similar to the gaze of the rapist, The Man, whose scrutinizing eyes first created her and then "defined" her.

Mrs. Brown is blamed for what has happened to her daughter by her neighbours and the police. They seem to think, if only she had been a more caring mother, if only she had paid just a little attention to her daughter's whereabouts. However, this judgemental attitude is not shared by the implied author. The novel rather emphasizes that the responsibility is not solely on Mrs. Brown's shoulders. In contrast to the neighbouring women who assume that a mother has to protect her daughter, watch her every move constantly, the novel foregrounds the ideological and economic factors that render a young girl vulnerable to rape. This brings us to the very idea of the female connoisseur, which causes the internalization of disciplinary practices; in other words, women tormenting other women, internalizing the panoptic gaze of the male connoisseur. Bartky argues that as a result of women's internalization of patriarchal norms, women live their bodies as seen by another disciplinary gaze. Women are produced as disciplined docile bodies. "Under the Panopticon, the subject watches, judges and polices himself/herself according to the disciplinary norm because he/she never knows when she is being watched and judged" (Palmer 51). Women police their bodies according to the panoptical male connoisseur who resides in the consciousness of most women. Women watch themselves from the perspective of the male connoisseur because they are everywhere watched; "discipline is institutionally unbound" (Bartky 75). A failure to perform femininity may result in being shamed, disciplined or worse yet "the refusal of male patronage" (76) which is a severe punishment in a world dominated by men. As Bartky argues, patriarchy both causes and benefits from women's obsessive self-surveillance. (Bartky 75)

> She (Mrs. Brown) needed a woman to talk to, but in all this sodding street there wasn't one of'em you could trust. They'd all turned against

> her, because since Tom left there'd been other men in the house. Jealous cows. And how they'd talk! Coo and sympathise, oh, yes. But talk. She could hear them now, "Well what can you expect, leaving the bairn alone half the bloody night? You knew where she'd be don't you? Out boozing at the Buffs with that Arthur Robson. Eeeee!" (*US* 35).

While "community" connotes terms such as shelter, support and belonging, the community introduced in *Union Street* is indeed a ruined and a broken one. Women in this particular community are ignorant of one another's problems as women; they seem to project their anger against patriarchy onto one another instead of patriarchy itself. Motherhood as an institution defines Mrs. Brown as a failure who could not keep her family together and her daughters safe. She cannot cope with gossip going around her in the neighbourhood. With a guilty consciousness, she even reacts to it by calling the women in Union Street "jealous cows" (US 35). She goes to Iris King looking for some comfort. Iris is someone who can see Mrs. Brown's state of mind and pity her and spread to the neighbourhood the news that she is in fact not that of a bad mother for she is so devastated. Even though they share common experiences of motherhood and poverty, Iris, it seems, does not want to show solidarity for Mrs. Brown, whose house she scrutinizes with "a single glance of disapproval for the messy room and the unwashed hearth" (39). Even in such troubled times like this, it seems the women in the street not only fail to form solidarity but they also keep judging each other according to norms of "femininity" they are supposed to live up to.

Another example of women's internalization of patriarchal norms is seen in the case of Iris King. Iris's life has been shaped by her decision to leave Wharfe Street only to move in to Bute Street, which was not enough for her, either. "The house was kept fanatically clean. Iris looked out at her neighbours: the men in prison, the women spending the social security money at the prize Bingo, kids dragged up anyhow. . . . It was the women she despised" (*US* 191). Her obsession with order and cleanliness comes from her ambition to climb the social ladder and secure for herself and her children a much better place in society. In addition to her obsession with tidiness, she is very much concerned about her reputation as an ideal mother.

> She valued her reputation in the street. She knew she was respected and her family was respected. Her reputation mattered more to her than anything else. It was the measure of her distance from Wharfe Street,

> the guarantee that the blackness that came from her past would never finally return. (*US* 196)

Iris's attachment to the notions of cleanliness, tidiness and motherhood reveals her unquestioning acceptance of and obedience to the domestic ideology. Nancy Armstrong explains the domestic ideology in her *Desire and Domestic Ideology* as follows: women who were excluded from the political and economic realm were granted power over the domestic sphere. Hence they were excluded from the workplace and were confined in their homes. It was a kind of a contract signed between men and women. The woman was awarded with a certain kind of economic security and a control over domestic life with her submission to this traditional domestic role while political control was reserved only for men. So their areas of control were entirely different from one another (Armstrong 255). That is the reason why Iris's world shatters when she learns about her sixteen year-old daughter Brenda's five months long pregnancy. As a mother and a dominant figure in the household who believes she did everything she could in order to raise her children in a rather decent environment and as for someone who inwardly thinks she did her part of the bargain, controlling the household, raising the children while her husband is off doing the "manly duties" of bringing home food, Iris has a difficult time processing the truth about the pregnancy.

Upon learning her daughter's pregnancy, "The little cow," she thinks to herself. "Iris felt the blood rush to her head. For a few seconds she was literally blind with rage" (*US* 181). What makes Iris angry is what other people will think of her when they find out about Brenda's pregnancy. She feels that her image as a good mother is shattered. "It was this [her reputation] that Brenda threatened to destroy. Well, she wouldn't be allowed to. . . She wouldn't have Brenda back in this house. Would not, would not, would not. She didn't care where she went. Her or the baby." (*US* 196). She gets so angry that she does not hesitate a moment before hitting her pregnant daughter:

> Iris's fist came up and hit the girl on the mouth. It was such a lovely relief that she did it again. "Hey, steady on!" somebody shouted. Further down the ward another woman could be heard summoning the nurse. By the time they arrived, Iris was dragging Brenda around the ward by her hair. The girl was white lipped and moaning with fear. She had both hands pressed together over the wound in her belly. "I'll give you shut your face, you little whore.". . . "I'll murder the little bitch." (*US* 184).

Iris cannot accept the idea of her daughter ruining her life for what she thinks of as "five minutes of pleasure and a lifetime of misery" (*US* 198). Iris is not only concerned for what will happen to "her reputation" once people learn about Brenda's pregnancy, but she is also, in her very own way, worried about her daughter, whom she thinks will regret her choice of giving birth at such an early age. She wants none of these things that have happened to her, to happen to her daughter, either. She does not want Brenda to marry at 16, get a job that barely pays and raise her child while at the same time she shoulders the burden of maintaining a household as in the case of many other women in their neighbourhood: "A man can put his cap on, you can't, you are stuck with it," (*US* 201) she warns her daughter.

Brophy states that, "Barker's sketch of Iris's mental state, emphasizes her preoccupation with preventing her own and her family's slide back to Wharfe Street and suggests that it even fuels a dangerously manic will to destroy what she has created before someone or something else does" (qtd. in Monteith 33). Hence it is ironic that Iris, who is terrified by the idea of going back to Wharfe Street, has to go there to get Brenda's illegal abortion done, after persuading her daughter to go with the process. She mentions the name of Big Irene to her daughter, who "used to help girls out of a jam" (*US* 205). But even after she persuades Brenda for an abortion, she quickly has second thoughts. She thinks about the possibility of Brenda dying, since she is five months into her pregnancy and this entails serious risks even in a hospital, let alone in the hands of a backstreet abortionist. "Brenda might die. Iris wanted to run back, to stop it happening: the child would grow up as thousands before it had done. But she didn't. Instead she went on clinging to the spikes, pulling on them as if she was in pain" (*US* 211). She fears for her daughter's life: "She thought, It's funny – yesterday I could've killed her. Now if I could bear the pain for her I would" (*US* 214). After Big Irene is done with Brenda, the mother and daughter go back home and the process of giving birth begins with all its pain and difficulty. A live foetus is born. Iris then buries it, and that memory hunts her for the rest of her life.

This story can be considered another example of the novel's emphasis on how women's bodies are rendered more docile than those of men. It is true that both men and women have to endure the difficulties the working-class life has put on them; however,

the novel emphasizes, it is women like Brenda who have to suffer a double burden. The father of the baby walks out free as a bird, even if he is aware of Brenda's situation. It is Brenda who is impregnated; it is her who has to make a choice between giving birth at 16 and ending the life she thought she would have, or abort the baby risking her own life and live with the memory of this painful incident.

Is it ever possible for women characters to escape from the Panopticon? *Union Street* is a realist novel which depicts the conditions of working-class women, whose lives have been made more difficult with the economic conditions they suffer from. In a realistic way *Union Street* explores the lives of these women and for that matter it offers little resolution.

> Barker is thoroughly feminist not just in pursuing these anguished cries of oppressed women, but also in showing such oppression as the product of a bankrupt social economy. Everywhere, in fact, in Barker's landscape are the signs of a failed social system. (Brannigan 8)

Yet, the novel contains some scenes which suggest possibilities for women's rebellion against the phallocentric power. These scenes can be divided into two: first there are individual acts of rebellion: Some characters cause harm to authority or authority figures, but only momentarily, not causing effective or enduring results. Second, there are moments suggesting a way for women out of the Panopticon. The scene where Joanne Wilson tells her boyfriend, Ken, that she is pregnant illustrates the first category. His first reaction is to ask her if she tried "anything". It is ambiguous what he means by "anything": It seems he wants to learn whether she used any birth control pills prior to pregnancy or if she did anything to terminate the pregnancy altogether. His question indicates his assumption that it is solely her responsibility to deal with birth control or to rid herself from the situation they are in. Joanne's boyfriend Ken reacts to the news of his baby by trying to "screw it [the baby] out of her" (*US* 100) by having sexual intercourse with Joanne, leaning her against the wall, not necessarily forcing her at first but it is obvious he wants to rid himself of the baby with his "mechanical moves". Joanne, at first complies with this movement:

> There was something exciting in being used like this, in giving way to this impersonal, machine-like passion. For a moment she let herself relax, and his flesh bit into her like steel. The goods train clanked and rumbled overhead, no longer roaring, but deadly and monotonous. She

> could see in her mind's eye the oiled pistons moving round. And round. Almost matching the thrusts of Ken's bum. (*US* 101)

Yet, she realizes his intentions that his mechanical "thrusting turned into an instrument of abortion" (Rawlinson 27) and "With deadly corrosive hatred she began to move against him, imposing upon him the rhythm of the train, which was at first exciting, and then terrible and then, abruptly, ridiculous, so that he lost his erection and slid ignobly out of her" (*US* 101). The scene ends with Joanne rendering Ken impotent by rebelling against his will, the will he tries to project on her. She wins for that moment; yet, it should be noted that this is a momentary disempowerment. The novel does not suggest anything hopeful for Joanne's future life with or without Ken or the baby.

Another example of an individual act of rebellion against patriarchal norms rendering women's bodies more docile than those of men is Kelly's transformation into a rebellious outcast. After the rape, Kelly changes her appearance along with her attitude. She cuts her hair first. "Suddenly it was gone. She cut it off" (*US* 46). She wants to dismiss her feminine traits that can be the object of the male gaze. Inwardly, to protect herself from further danger and damage, she starts to change her feminine attributes starting from her hair. Furthermore, she starts to dress in "harsh, androgynous clothes, as if to deny the sexuality that has been forced upon her" (Falcus 250). With the change of clothes she unsexes herself in way of protecting herself from further damage. Yet, as Bordo puts it, "To reshape one's body into a male body is not to put on male power and privilege. To feel autonomous and free while harnessing body and soul to an obsessive body-practice is to serve, not transform, a social order that limits female possibilities" (179). After the incident of rape Kelly also starts sneaking into other people's houses, people wealthier than her family:

> She approached the house, telling herself with every step that she would turn back now. The French windows were open. She stood outside and sniffed. Her nose told her at once that the house was empty. . . she stepped inside. When she closed the door behind her and stood in the big hall, everything seemed to stir around her, as if resenting the intrusion. (*US* 51-52)

The place she damages the most is a wealthy home she will never be a part of, a home that represents the life style she identifies with the Man. And the part of the house she damages the most is the pink bedroom, "woman's room, temple of femininity" (53)

where femininity is constructed. “The parents’ bedroom was best, though at first she could hardly take it in, it was so different than anywhere else she had been. . . There was a pile of cushions at the head of the bed: big, soft, delicately-scented, plump, pink, flabby cushions, like the breasts and buttocks of the woman who slept in the bed” (*US* 53). It is not known what she exactly looks for; it is not the envy she feels, however, because she does not know how to envy. On entering the little girl’s bedroom she thinks to herself that she could have pitied or despised the girl whom this bedroom belongs, but, she would not have known how to envy her because the life this rich girl lives is so different than the one Kelly leads.

> There is no more stark comparison than this middle-class domestic interior to her own broken, neglected home and childhood, nor more salient reminder of the impermeability of the social and cultural barriers between classes. The interiority of working-class culture . . . is explored in *Union Street* as a post-industrial hell, an abyssal ghetto, from which there is neither respite nor escape. (Brannigan 9)

Kelly’s wanderings are not only confined to the temples of femininity she wants to be rid of. One of those nights, she also enters the school she attends, another disciplinary institution. As Waterman puts it, “she seeks revenge, an outlet for her anger, vandalizing the school, and a wealthy home. . . because they represent the official version of success and integration” (20). This is mainly driven by the fact that she does not feel secure inside the context of a nuclear family, her sense of a family is broken and she feels more at ease wandering in the streets or even inside the homes of total strangers.

> She went into a corner of the room, pulled her jeans and pants down, and squatted. A lifetime of training was against her and at first she could do nothing but grunt and strain. But finally there it was: a smooth, gleaming, satiny turd. She picked it up and raised it to her face, smelling her own hot, animal stink. It reminded her of The Man’s cock, its shape, its weight. She clenched her fist . . . She almost ran at the blackboard, and wrote, sobbing, PISS, SHIT, FUCK. Then scoring the board so hard that the chalk screamed, the worst word she knew: CUNT. (*US* 55-56)

Taking school as one of the major disciplinary institutions in Foucauldian terms, her rebellion and her assault against the school is actually a rebellion against all sorts of mechanisms, teachings, ideologies aiming to regulate her conduct and her body. By chalking the worst words she knows on the board, Kelly actually rebels against the

authority of the school, in a way she could not revolt against the authority that The Man inflicted on her, resulting Kelly to define herself as being nothing and no one. Brannigan comments on this scene as follows:

> She screeches in chalk the 'worst word she knew', the word that sums up her worth in a society in which she has only ever been valued by a man intending on raping her. This is Kelly's exasperated cry at the knowledge of what she will become. It is the fate of her mother, of Linda, and of the characters in the later stories, of Iris King, for example, whose husband invites his drunken friends to rape her. (8)

In addition to Joanne's and Kelly's rebellious acts, Iris King's assaulting her husband with a meat chopper, and her refusal to let her daughter enter into that vicious cycle of poverty and violence by giving birth to a child can also be considered some other examples of women's individual efforts to interfere with the system victimizing them and their daughters.

The novel also contains two scenes that are suggestive of possibilities of escape for women from the phallocentric power. The first one takes place in Lisa Goddard's story. As discussed early on, she is stuck in a marriage with two kids and another one on the way. She is pregnant and she has doubts as to whether she really wants the baby. Her concerns are mainly driven from the fact that her husband never shoulders familial responsibilities. He is like another child whom Lisa has to look after. After giving birth in the hospital, alone, and when the nurses bring her daughter to Lisa, she feels: "There was nothing about this baby she recognized as hers. If she had been an animal she would have rejected it, would have sniffed at it and turned away, at once and finally" (*US* 133). Since she has been all by herself from the beginning of the pregnancy and since a new baby means even more responsibilities especially economically speaking, the baby is not something she looks forwards to. She is so terrified of taking care of the baby all by herself that she cannot even hope to be released from the hospital: "Its weakness terrified her" (*US* 136). However, her feelings change when she finds a smear of blood on her new-born's nappy. At first, she is devastated for she thinks something is wrong with her. Yet, she soon finds out this is natural for baby girls and for the first time she willingly holds her in her arms: "the thought that inside that tiny body was a womb like hers with eggs waiting to be released, caused the same fear, the same wonder. She walked across to the window holding the child in her arms . . . My

daughter" (*US* 139). Until that moment Lisa cannot identify her baby with herself, she even refrains from calling her "she" and instead keeps calling her "the baby" or "it". But upon seeing her daughter's first menstrual blood, she starts to feel the excitement of giving birth to a girl. Now, she can associate herself with her daughter and anticipates what she will be going through in life as a woman as she grows up. Only after this realization does she call the little baby Katherine, "my daughter" (*US* 139). This scene marks the beginning of an understanding and the building of a bond between Lisa and her daughter, which suggests that it may be possible for Lisa to interact with her daughter in ways beyond patriarchal norms and expectations.

The second scene which suggests the possibility of a hopeful solidarity and understanding between women takes place at the end of the novel. The novel starts with Kelly's story and ends with Kelly meeting Alice Bell at a park. The cyclical and repetitive nature of the novel emphasizes a bleak perspective; but, at the same time, it underlines Barker's "effort to create a collective experience and consciousness, rather than the individualistic one associated with the novel of middle class life" (Kirk 612). Alice is the main female character of the last chapter in the novel. She is a woman who lives alone in her home, but after a fall and a stroke she has suffered[3], her son and daughter-in-law want to remove her into a facility where she will be "taken better care of". However, she identifies herself with her home and does not want to leave it to such an extent that she would rather die at the park on a bench in dignity than be stuck in some place where she will not feel comfortable.

> For Alice, home is equated fully with self-identity, so that she conceives the attempt by social services to remove her from her home as equivalent both with rape and death. . . . Alice clings to what her home symbolizes, therefore, long after it has ceased to afford her the comforts of a home, because even the fact of its possession effectively signifies

[3] The reason behind the falling and the stroke is also significant. The women in the street have made it a habit to stop by Alice's house, to make her tea or to light the fire etc. But that time she fell, Mrs. Harrison, a neighbour in the street, and Iris King have some kind of a dispute over politics. Mrs. Harrison and Iris are at odds with each other, and Alice supports socialism against conservative Mrs. Harrison; therefore, over this dispute the two women leave Alice's house hastily forgetting to light the fire. So, Alice in order to do that tries to make fire by herself and in search for the coal she falls and the result is a stroke. Even when it comes to helping out another neighbour, the women find something to argue about instead of coming together. This marks the suggestion that those moments of ever forming solidarity are only temporary.

> her social elevation above the level of a pauper in the workhouse, which is her anachronistic marker of indignity. (Brannigan 11)

Alice Bell leaves her home to die in dignity and independence; rather than being hospitalized in a nursing home in the hands of her son and her daughter in law and most importantly the welfare system. “The memories threatened to overwhelm her. These fragments. Were they the debris of her own or other lives? She had been so many women in her time” (*US* 263). Here the novel suggests that these separate stories could actually be the life story of a single woman: “Every older woman became an image of the future, a reason for hope and fear” (94). Some of them being mentioned in another’s story functions like a mirror through which the characters see younger or older versions of themselves. For that matter too, they have little or no hope as to what the future holds.

Alice’s meeting with Kelly who has been traumatised by the rape incident is the meeting point of the novel, where the meeting of the oldest character, Alice, seventy six years-old, who has been “many women in her time” (*US* 263) and Kelly, the youngest, who is eleven, offers resolution. “Renewal is suggested: the coming together of young and old, the past and present, to resist the faceless forces that threaten their lives. Throughout Barker’s writing, the mutual determinacies of gender and class are figured in a constellation of conditions” (Kirk 615-616). While Alice sees in Kelly the young girl she used to be, Kelly for the first time sees death.

> But there was a child there, now, a girl, who, standing with the sun behind her, seemed almost to be a gift of the light. At first she was afraid the child had come so suddenly. Then - not afraid. They sat beside each other; they talked. The girl held out her hand. The withered hand and the strong young hand met and joined. There was silence. Then it was time for them both to go. (*US* 265)

Their sitting together and joining hands even though they do not know each other stands for the recognition of “a mutual pain and a kind of sisterhood which transcends age and is grounded in identifications of gender, class and community. For both, survival is the main priority” (Kirk 614). Although to call it a “sisterhood” would be an overstatement, it is definitely a moment of two women’s coming to understand one another, maybe for the first time in the novel.

Pat Barker's *Union Street* offers little hope as to whether these women's lives can ever change for the better. But, of all the glimpses of possibility of escape discussed above, the final scene where Kelly meets Alice, signals a possibility of escape from the Panopticon and the system it represents. The youngest and the oldest women in the novel meet, and their meeting marks mutual understanding for the first time as if their eyes have opened or as if they have seen each other for real, for who they really are. Thinking that each woman in the novel represents a certain period of time in one woman's life, the meeting of Alice and Kelly, and their reaching a mutual recognition marks a final connection between all the others. "The brief encounter between the two signals a barely formed possibility of communication, humanity, perhaps understanding, as Kelly "stared at the old woman as if she held, and might communicate, the secret of life" (Brannigan 10). They are indeed stuck in a vicious cycle, suffering in very similar ways. Yet, this shared suffering is also a means for them to understand each other well if they ever try to do so.

CHAPTER IV

ESCAPES FROM THE PANOPTICON: A STUDY OF ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*

The aim of this chapter is to study Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) particularly in relation to its heroine Sophie Fevvers. Fevvers succeeds in escaping from the male gaze by rewriting/performing, in a parodic manner, patriarchal accounts of femininity; therefore, she emerges as a female character who does not allow her body to be rendered docile by technologies of power imposed specifically on women. In Carter's novel, there are other female characters, as well, who revolt against the Panopticon in solidarity and manage to escape from it. In contrast to Barker's realist novel, *Union Street*, Carter's magical-realist novel, *Nights at the Circus*, puts an emphasis on the possibility of escape for women from the patriarchal disciplinary regime.

Nights at the Circus narrates the story of a huge woman, Fevvers, who claims to have been hatched from an egg and have the wings of a bird, making her a unique aerialist of her time. The novel starts with Fevvers, along with her surrogate mother Lizzie, being interviewed in the dressing room following her performance at the circus she works for by an American journalist Jack Walser, who is highly doubtful of Fevvers's "story." The interview starts with flashbacks relating to Fevvers's life as she continues to answer Walser, whose agenda is actually to unveil the mystery surrounding Fevvers. It then continues with Walser joining the circus, curious to learn more. In his journey Walser changes from a pragmatic and sceptic journalist whose mind works based on facts and "truth," to literally into a clown as a member of the circus. During that period of time, Walser falls in love with Fevvers and becomes her mere scribe. In other words, Fevvers does not let him author a life story for her.

The novel's portrayal of Fevvers as a woman claiming to have been hatched rather than conceived, contributes to the emphasis on Fevvers as a parentless character who writes

up her own life story. A major question the novel is structured around is whether Fevvers is real or whether she is a mere fraud. With her slogan "is she fact or is she fiction," "Fevvers mocks the spectators' (or the readers) epistemophiliac, fetishistic gazes, [because] she never provides a final answer to her being a fact or fiction" (Kerchy 99). As "the pure child of the century that just now is waiting in the wings, the New Age" (*Nights* 25), she is not "bound down" (*Nights* 25) to the ground. As will be pointed out, Fevvers is an embodiment of dualities: she is a bird/animal and human, a giantess and an aerialist, vulgar and sublime, a virgin and a whore, which make her too slippery to pin down or categorize.

The novel starts with one of many references to the legend of Helen of Troy, who is the first female figure revisited by Fevvers: "they could just as well'ave called me 'Helen of the High Wire,' due to the unusual circumstances in which I come ashore – for I never docked via what you might call the normal channels, sir, oh, dear me, no; but, just like Helen of Troy, was hatched" who "took after putative father, the swan, around the shoulder parts," she tells Walser (7) . As her argument goes, she, just like Helen of Troy, was not born but hatched and as a proof of that she claims not to have a navel. Like Helen, for whom "a thousand ships were launched," Fevvers, too, is an object of desire. This new, demythologized Helen, however, is not a breath-taking beauty. On the contrary, Fevvers, does not have "womanly" manners and facial traits. Her voice is "raucous" (8); her gestures are "grand, vulgar" (9); her handshake is "strong, firm, masculine" (40). According to Walser, she is "more like a dray mare than an angel" (9). He describes her as "large as life" (13), being "divinely tall" with a face "broad and oval as a meat dish" (9).

Food imagery and Fevvers's endless and "shameless" appetite for food plays an important part in the novel. Her so called appetite is in stark contrast to that of the "anorexic," who Susan Bordo describes as follows: the anorexic, by controlling her appetite whether it is for "public power, independence or sexual gratification," (171) is contained in a little space given to her. Even though the food is not the only issue at all, "femininity" demands female hunger as something to be controlled. In the construction of models of femininity, especially, from the nineteenth century onwards, women's eating habits have come to be a topic related to women's place in society. Men's eating habits, on the other hand, have not received as much attention. Fevvers, however, is drawn as a

character whose relationship with food is not disciplined by idealized notions of the female body. She is a woman of appetite and is not ashamed of it. As Dennis puts it, Fevvers is,

> the antithesis of the pathetic woman and of the delicate and sickly Victorian ideal . . . Rather than attempting to downplay her desires as social norms demand, Fevvers consciously even ostentatiously, performs them. She intends her displays of appetite to be witnessed, just like one of her circus performances as an *aerialiste extraordinaire*: she is an artiste of appetite (120).

From Walser's point of view, her endless appetite is narrated as follows: "She gorged, she stuffed herself, she spilled gravy on herself, she sucked up peas from the knife; she had a gullet to match her size and table manners of the Elizabethan variety" (*Nights* 21). Actually Fevvers, too, is aware of her "performance" which constitutes a deviation from norms of femininity and expects Walser to be shocked by her appetite because she gives him a look, hoping "the spectacle of her gluttony would drive him away" (21). Instead of regulating her body according to the dominant norms of female beauty at the turn of the century, Fevvers takes as much bodily place as she can and refuses to have a fragile and weak body. She lets instead her appetite determine the flow of her life.

Fevvers's rejection to be minimalised to the portion of the "ideal" female body is in keeping with her ideas about marriage and family. Fevvers sees the institutions of marriage and motherhood as restrictions to her freedom. "To Fevvers, domesticity leads to abandonment of self" (Keating 24). In other words, to devote her life to a man is equal, for her, to self-sacrifice. It seems that her notion of marriage has been shaped under the influence of her suffrage activist, Marxist-feminist, surrogate mother Lizzie, who early in the novel asserts: "Marriage? Pah! Out of the frying pan into the fire! What is marriage but prostitution to one man instead of many? No different!" (21). Through Lizzie's voice, marriage and prostitution are placed in a more common ground than one may think. *Nights at the Circus* reduces marriage into a "false ideology of happiness" (Michael 504) with Lizzie asserting, "The name of this custom is a 'happy ending'" (281). Lizzie's critique of marriage highlights "the economic exploitation of women within the institution of marriage that is covered by fictions of romance" (Michael 504), for it only means, according to Lizzie, a woman's giving herself and also her bank account to a man willingly. The only difference Lizzie makes between a prostitute and a wife is that the former is aware of the contract she has made or of what she is in for. Carter, too, in her book, *The Sadeian*

Woman, argues in a similar way: "Prostitutes are at least decently paid on the nail and boast fewer illusions about a hireling status that has no veneer of social acceptability" (9). Unlike prostitutes, wives, on the other hand, get nothing in return for their commitment to one man; except perhaps the "veneer of social acceptability" and, while both the prostitute and the wife engage in sex as part of an economic exchange, only the prostitute is aware of the contract she has made. Hence, the prostitute "comes ahead in the novel, precisely because she is depicted as more aware of her position within an economic system in which all women necessarily participate" (Michael 505).

The novel undermines the notion of family founded on the marital unity of the husband and the wife and employs it instead in connection with a collective of women working and living together in a brothel. Fevvers tells Walser that she "was reared by these kind women as if I was the common daughter of half a dozen mothers" (*Nights* 21). She recalls her time in the brothel, under the roof of Madame Nelson, with joy and happiness. Fevvers was left on the steps of Ma Nelson's brothel when she was a baby and was raised by Lizzie, one of the prostitutes. Despite being an "old-fashioned whore house," the brothel's physical condition is depicted in a positive manner through the employment of adjectives traditionally reserved for "sanctioned" (Michael 507) institutions: The brothel is surrounded by "an air of rectitude and propriety . . . a place that, like its mistress, turned a blind eye to the horrors of the outside, for, inside, was a place of privilege" (26). When not working, the prostitutes seem to be pursuing their "classical" pursuits: "Grace practised her stenography or the lyric ripple of the flute upon which Esmeralda was proving to be something of a virtuoso" (*Nights* 42). The brothel, as described by Fevvers and Lizzie, is a representation of sisterhood. It is drawn as an alternative sphere for women as opposed to the outside world:

> It was a wholly female world within Ma Nelson's door. Even the dog who guarded it was a bitch and all the cats were females, one or the other of 'em always in kitten, or newly given birth, so that a sub-text of fertility underwrote the glittering sterility of the pleasure of the flesh available within the academy. Life within those walls was governed by a sweet and loving reason. I never saw a single blow exchanged between any of the sisterhood who reared me, nor heard a cross word or a voice raised in anger (42).

In the brothel, Ma Nelson works fully dressed in the "uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet" (34). Her choice of dressing is a parody of a historical figure, Lord Horatio Nelson[4]. As a "subject of countless books, paintings, films and documentaries, Nelson has been celebrated and immortalized within epic narratives of nationalism, heroism and sacrifice" (Stoddart 102). How history is written as well as the notions of "real" and "fiction" is problematized throughout the novel. Therefore, through a parodic representation of such a historical figure, "a national hero," *Nights at the Circus*, makes fun of men's centralization as heroes in official histories and highlights the "constructed-ness" of history altogether "by challenging the official history's claims to veracity, fixity and authenticity" (Stoddart 102). In the brothel, Fevver's childhood is spent posing in *tableau vivant* as Cupid in the main room during the day. Yet, in time, when her wings develop, she begins to play the part of the Winged Victory, which is another female figure Fevvers impersonates. Fevvers describes it as "a perfect, active beauty that has been, as it were, mutilated by history" (*Nights* 40). The Winged Victory[5] is a marble statue missing the parts where the head and the arms are supposed to be. Fevver acts as a living statue and she is also armed with "a ceremonial sword that come with Nelson's Admiral uniform," "as if a virgin with a weapon was the fittest guardian angel for a houseful of whores" (40). Fevvers's performance as the Winged Victory, as in her performance as the Helen of Troy, is significant in terms of Fevvers's rewriting patriarchal history. By appropriating the figure, that is, by giving the sculpture the arms in the form of wings, and also a sword, Fevvers fills the missing parts; she rewrites the way official history represents women as headless and armless figures both metaphorically and literally. Fevvers's description of the statue as "mutilated by history," emphasizes history's treatment of women in general. So, by putting a head to a headless figure, Fevvers becomes "a metaphor that comes to life" (Day 178). Therefore, "Fevvers is a reappropriation on behalf of women of what had been appropriated – the figure of a woman – on behalf of men. With the reappropriation comes a rehistoricisation and re-

[4] "Lord Horatio Nelson was a national hero, famous for his bold actions and victories against the French during the Napoleonic Wars. He entered the French Revolutionary Wars in 1793 and destroyed Napoleon's fleet in 1798 at the Battle of the Nile"
Web. < http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/nelson_admiral_horatio_lord.shtml>

[5] The Winged Victory (of Samothrace) is a marble statue found in a Greek island Samothrace and a masterpiece dating back to the Hellenistic period. It is a statue missing the head and the arms. (Moreira and Valente 101)

humanisation of what men simply dehistoricised, transcendentalised and dehumanised" (Day 178).

Following Ma Nelson's sudden death caused by an accident, her religious brother inherits the house and gives the women one day of notice to leave. Since Ma Nelson was prescient enough to make sure all of her girls are prepared for the future, they are not left on the street with nowhere to go. Rather, they all have their plans to start a new life of their own. Leaving their past behind, they burn the brothel down, and go their separate ways looking for opportunities either in business or schools or even marriage, even if it means the dispersal of the sisterhood they once had. But only after the prostitutes open the curtains for the first time since ever, do they realize "the luxury of that place had been nothing but illusion" (*Nights* 54). They realize it has been that very sisterhood and solidarity among them, and also the motherly presence of Ma Nelson that has kept the place running for them like a little community, almost entirely cut off from the brutality of the outside world.

Only after Fevvers is out in the world where she needs to earn money, does the novel begin to foreground women's exposure to the male gaze: first, in the Museum of Women Monsters run by Madame Schreck, and, later at the circus where Fevvers narrates her life story. After burning the house down, Lizzie and Fevvers head to Battersea to stay with Lizzie's sister; however, things take a turn for the worse, leaving them financially destabilized with all the money they saved up back in the brothel gone. At that time, Fevvers is visited by a Madame Schreck, who proposes Fevvers a position in her museum of women monsters, which Fevvers has to take against Lizzie's protests. Fevvers makes a striking comparison between Nelson's brothel and Madame Schreck's museum as follows: "Nelson's Academy accommodated those who were perturbed in their bodies and wished to verify that, however equivocal, however much they cost, the pleasures of the flesh were, at bottom, splendid. But as for Madame Schreck, she catered for those who were troubled in their… souls" (63). The museum was a house for wealthy men to satisfy their "perversions" by gazing at and/or having sex with a variety of women with strange physical oddities such as "Dear old Fanny the four Eyes; and the sleeping Beauty, and the Wiltshire Wonder, who was not three foot high, and Albert/Albertina, who was bipartite" (66). Every night, the girls are made to stand in stone niches covered with curtains so that

what is inside can at once begin to excite the customers. In this museum, women "monsters" are displayed as objects. They are dehumanized and treated as such for the pleasure of some perverted rich men. According to Magali Cornier Michael, Carter's novel makes a distinction between pornography and desire specifically through the account of the museum of women monsters, which "reinforces the notion that pornography is a representation of male domination":

> The male engages in sexual actions without the female in this pornographic situation and thus remains in control; she serves merely as a visual stimulus. The novel's depiction of pornography as a staged representation of sexuality rather than as sexuality itself supports Marie Françoise Hans and Gilles Lapouge's view of pornography as a "sexual spectacle, its reproduction or its representation, the discourse on sexuality and not sexuality" (510).

In line with what Mulvey discusses in terms of the gaze, in the museum, too, women are depicted merely as objects and images and they are coded for erotic impact that connotes "to-be-looked-at-ness," where the man enjoys the spectacle, what he sees, as the bearer and holder of the voyeuristic gaze. Therefore, male domination is seen in the individual stories of the women in the museum. For instance, Wiltshire Wonder, who is a less than three feet tall, dwarfish but "perfectly formed" (72) woman is passed around from one dwarf to another for months because they are "brothers" and for they believe in "sharing," an idea which reduces Wonder to the state of a commodity. Wonder, like other women monsters in the museum, has a symbolic deformity. These women's abnormal looks seem to symbolize various patriarchal constructions of femininity. In addition to commodification as well as infantilization, as in the case of Wonder, women monsters symbolize women's entrapment in the notion of motherhood as well as their silencing. For example, Fanny the Four-Eyes, who is endowed with another pair of eyes where her nipples should be, believes she cannot feed a baby her salt tears, even though she yearns for one. This imagery of nipples/chests being associated with eyes also connotes how the male gaze is constructed as in the case of Kelly Brown in *Union Street.* Fanny works at the museum because "she saw too much of the world altogether" (*Nights* 78). Another woman monster, the Sleeping Beauty, remains asleep since her adolescence, with the exception to wake up once a day to eat and urinate. Her sleep is associated with death, for every day she grows less and less reluctant to wake up. This certain "deformity" of hers is associated with the femininity of the Victorian period, when the women were mostly applauded as the

"angel of the house," a symbolic angel who is supposed to perform the "womanly" duties, which most importantly includes the silence she has to assume while performing those duties. The original Sleeping Beauty is a representation of a young woman whose fate is controlled by her father, first, then her husband. Carter's Sleeping Beauty, on the other hand, resorts to sleeping as a way of escape from being defined and given away by her possible controllers, father and husband figures, and sleeping seems her only way of escape from this possibility despite the fact that it is very much like being dead while still alive. It could also be related to her refusal to be woken up by a prince. Therefore, she, too, in her own way escapes from her predetermined fate, by rewriting and subverting the role imposed on her traditionally. The women in the Museum of Women Monsters, who are constructed as the "commodified other" by the male gaze, are freed only after Fevvers causes Madame Schreck's death.

Thinking that women commit their "voyage through the world" to the "mercies of the eyes of others" (42), Fevvers willingly confronts the male gaze, by presenting herself as an aerialist with actual wings, instead of hiding in the shadows for fear of being labelled as a freak.

> As a winged woman, Fevvers is unashamedly aberrant, freakish. However, she is also a desiring subject, and a self-creation who chooses the ways in which her unnaturalness, and her appetites, are performed, thus rejecting the victimization that normally attends freakishness. Eroticism, rather than monstrosity, defines her identity as a performer and celebrity; as Sally Robinson and Magali Cornier Michael suggest, Fevvers creates herself as spectacle. Her performance always engenders a new center of attention – she evades marginalization to occupy center stage. (Dennis 117)

Instead of letting herself be victimized due to her aberrant body, Fevvers emerges, as Kerchy argues, as a "self-parodic and self-made woman" (101). Fevvers has "six inches of false lash," (3) she is "blonde of blondes" (345) "hair made up with the help of peroxide, hidden away under the dyed plumes that added a good eighteen inches to her already immense height" (12). Fevvers reveals the constructedness of femininity by performing it in exaggerated terms. In this respect, the novel anticipates arguments of Irigaray in "This Sex Which Is Not One" (1985) and of Butler in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) in its treatment of femininity (or gender in general) as a performance. According to Butler, "acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are

performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and discursive means" (173). This approach to gender problematizes understandings that assume an intrinsic/essential relationship between gender and body. The understanding of gender as performative, or, as a performance we can see on and through the body, paves the way for the possibility of revision and subversion of gender. As Irigaray puts it, by "playing with mimesis," that is, by "deliberately assum[ing] the feminine style and posture assigned to her," a woman can "uncover the mechanisms by which it exploits her" (220). Deliberately overdoing "the feminine style" assigned on women, Fevvers discloses its constructedness.

Dennis holds that, "Fevvers chooses to sell the spectacle of herself, her consciously performed freakish sexuality, because she is aware that as a woman – and a bird woman at that – she has no choice but to be the focus of the masculine gaze" (123). This, however, gives her the power to determine the terms of her service as a commodity, which at the end enables her to appropriate the gaze to herself while at the same time gain control of her narrative (Robinson 24). The ultimate seductress Fevvers, defies the male gaze by taking advantage of her "to be looked-at-ness," to put it in Mulvey's words, with her catchy slogan of "LOOK AT ME!": "Look, not touch… Look! Hands off" (*Nights* 13). She presents herself as an object intended "to be seen, not handled," exhibiting herself before the eyes of the audience during her performances at the circus, "as if she were a marvellous present too good to be played with" (*Nights* 13). Fevvers escapes the gaze by using it to her advantage, by controlling how much she will allow the audience to consume her. Actually, Mulvey argues that femininity is defined as passive since "to-be-looked-at" grants to the one doing the looking an active position, while being looked at is a passive position. According to this argument, women are rendered passive while men hold onto power. Fevvers, on the other hand, disrupts this binary opposition of the active man/passive woman and positions herself under that gaze willingly: "I served my apprenticeship in being looked at - being the object of the eye of the beholder" (*Nights* 23). Later, she shares with Lizzie, "To sell the use of myself for the enjoyment of another is one thing. I might even offer freely, out of gratitude or in the expectation of pleasure . . . But the essence of myself may not be given or taken" (333). This passage is indication of Carter's critical engagement both with Foucault's and Mulvey's conceptualization of the (male) gaze. Fevvers protects "the essence of [her] self;" in other words, she does not let her self be

disciplined in Foucauldian terms. By performing gender, Fevvers manages to escape the male gaze.

There are two instances in the novel where Fevvers faces directly the threat of rape and murder and manages to escape narrowly. These instances, where Fevvers succeeds in running away with the help of her magical wings only may serve to remind the reader of the violence in real life that women are exposed to, such as the ones in Barker's novel, and can hardly escape from. Madame Schreck sells Fevvers to a rich man named Rosencreutz, who wants to sacrifice her, imagining that she is Azrael, the Angel of Death. His intention is to gain immortality. However, Fevvers fights him using the sword that Ma Nelson once gave her. The sword she carries with her all the time matches his phallic power, which, the novel underlines, does not mean his penis but something "more aggressive than his other weapon, poor thing, that bobbed about uncharged, unprimed, unsharpened" (*Nights* 95). To run away, Fevvers uses her wings and flies away from the grip of Rosencreutz. Her use of wings, "a weapon not phallic in nature," is obviously not a solution that every woman can relate to or apply; yet, this imagery here is suggestive of "the liberating quality of strategies of empowerment that are not phallic and violent" (Michael 513).

The second instance where Fevvers again almost "falls victim" to a man takes place in Siberia, where a Russian Grand Duke tries to make her a part of his collection of exotic toys. "'You must know. I am a great collector of all kinds of *objects d'art* and marvels. Of all things, I love best toys—marvellous and unnatural artefacts'" (*Nights* 220). This time however, when faced with the Duke attempting to rape her, Fevvers cannot make her way out with her sword since the Duke breaks it. She distracts the Duke by masturbating him and running away at the moment he ejaculates. According to Michael,

> The novel does not jettison the conventions of realism, even if it does push toward the postmodern, since it ultimately grounds seemingly extraordinary incidents - such as her narrow escapes from the wealthy gentleman and the Russian grand duke - in the daily victimization of women and thus challenges accepted notions of women as naturally and inevitably passive objects. (502)

The novel's most explicit engagement with Foucault's notion of the Panopticon takes place through the story of an all-female Panopticon in which everyone, including the Countess P., who runs the prison, the prisoners and guards, is women. This private Siberian

asylum of women is managed by the Countess, who, "successfully" poisoned her husband and somehow "got away with it," (246) and thinks that other women who had committed similar crimes "with less success" should repent for their crimes. Ironically, "it was a sense of sisterhood that moved her" (246) to create "a machine designed to promote penitence" (248) for "charitable" reasons. From various Russian cities, she selects women found guilty of killing their husbands and makes them build the place.

> It was a Panopticon she forced them to build, a hallow circle of cells shaped like a doughnut, the inward-facing wall of which was composed of grids of steel and, in the middle of the roofed, central courtyard, there was a round room surrounded by windows. In that room she'd sit all day and stare and stare at her murderesses and they, in turn, sat all day and stared at her. (*Nights* 247)

The description of the doughnut-shaped prison of "the Countess' scientific establishment for the study of female criminals" (247) echoes that of Foucault's, who highlights that setting a central tower from which a permanent gaze has a controlling force makes it possible to hold the prisoner under constant visibility and surveillance (Foucault 248). Each of the inmates is fully visible to the Countess in the middle while they are invisible to one another. "Isolation is complete. She [the inmate] is always subjected to the warden's scrutinizing gaze" (Gass 72). The paradox here is the fact that even though the Countess is there to guard the women, she is inevitably imprisoned by their gaze in return: "the price she paid for her hypothetical proxy repentance was her own incarceration, trapped as securely in her watch-tower by the exercise of her power as its objects were in cells" (251). This seems to suggest that those women who internalize a patriarchal worldview and as a consequence fail to stand by other women are entrapped and harm themselves, too.

As Joanne Gass argues, although the textual space given to this all-female Panopticon in the novel is small, it is a dominant image and its treatment is in keeping with ways in which Fevvers acts because she functions as "the instrument of destruction of panopticons" (Gass 57) throughout the novel. As discussed early on, Foucault defines the Panopticon as a method of discipline in which the corporeal punishment based on spectacle is replaced with one that targets to reform the "soul" with surveillance and self-discipline. Although Carter builds her Panopticon in the novel on the basis of Foucault's conceptualization of it, there are also very remarkable differences between them. First of all, whereas Foucault disregards women in his discussion of the Panopticon as a

disciplinary system, Carter builds hers entirely on women to point to the conditions of women in general in a patriarchal society. “This female Panopticon reflects the conditions of the modern nuclear family, which cuts women off from one another, places them in different ‘cells’ and makes them work against each other. It requires their participation . . . in order to function” (Toye 485). In other words, both the Countess’s Panopticon and M. Schreck’s museum function only because those in charge of these institutions, Schreck and Countess P., despite being women, participate in the punishment of other women, and, therefore, contribute to the functioning of the patriarchal society. The Countess can be taken as an anonymous figure who stands for a specific type of woman; in other words, this is a critique of not one particular person but all women who hold onto power against other women and who control them (Toye 487-8). Just as Susan Bordo argues, patriarchy requires the participation of not only men but also women who participate in reproducing cultural norms and are awarded for doing so. As a consequence, the gaze is, although patriarchal, not necessarily male. Therefore, like Barker’s *Union Street*, Carter’s novel, too, suggests that patriarchy cannot function without the willing participation of women.

A feminist revision of Foucault’s notion of the docile body informs Carter’s novel, as well. As in *Union Street*, in this novel, too, women’s ongoing corporeal discipline in the institution of marriage is underlined. The women in the Panopticon, for instance, all come from abusive backgrounds where they are mistreated by their husbands, partners and lovers. They are “like wine bottles that might conveniently be smashed when their contents were consumed” (Nights 247). The mistreatment still goes on with the turnkey, who, prior to sending the women to the Countess’ asylum, rapes and chains them.

Unlike Foucault’s envisioning of the Panopticon, in which the inmates having served his/her time are released, none of the women in the asylum’s history has been released since letting go, according to the Countess, requires their “repentance.” Yet, the inmates feel no responsibility nor remorse, for they view their “crimes” as a freedom from the “tyranny of their husbands whose cruel act is justified and legitimized by the state . . . each inmate is victim of an observing and defining authority both inside and outside the prison, and it is this model of observation that controls the novel” (Gass 72). Whereas Foucault conceptualizes the Panopticon as a disciplinary mode of power succeeding in reforming the souls of the inmates, Carter’s Panopticon fails to discipline the women

inmates' souls in that women prisoners find their way out eventually. This idea is in parallel with Fevvers's rejection of her self be disciplined in Foucauldian terms, even though she serves her body for the pleasure of the male gaze. Therefore, the women in the Panopticon, too, save their souls" by not accepting to repent for their "crimes" of killing their abusive husbands.

Nights at the Circus does not only deal with women's exposure to the disciplinary power of patriarchal institutions but it rather emphasizes the possibilities of escape for women from the Panopticon. Some of them are individual and fantastic ones as seen in the example of Fevvers flying away from entrapments by Rosencreutz and the grand Duke in Siberia. As for the inmates of the Panopticon, they find the solution in lesbian love as an alternative to heterosexual love. Their escape from the Panopticon is made possible after Olga Alexandrova, one of the inmates, attempts to make contact with Vera Andreyevna, one of the guards, whom the Countess makes sure are covered in hoods except for the eyes for she wanted them to "remain anonymous instruments" (*Nights* 252). The guards, therefore, denied the ability to look and touch just like the inmates, are also imprisoned. Olga's physical contact with one of the guards, Vera, turns into a note tucked in the center of the bread roll given to her by Vera, to which Olga, having no means such as a pen or pencil responds by dipping her fingers in her womb and uses menstrual blood to write an answer to Vera's love words. "Olga's use of her menstrual blood to assert herself as an active subject challenges the traditional association of menstrual blood with dirtiness and inferiority to men" (Michael 516). So by using menstrual blood, a womanly fluid used against women in patriarchal discourses, Olga asserts power and challenges the established order. It is also the power of touch and love that sets the women free. They break through the Countess's Panopticon to go set themselves a society all made up of women. This new sisterhood of women set forth to start an all-female Utopia where men are excluded for they would need no fathers, and no last names.

The second example of love a woman finds in another woman is in the story of Mignon and the Princess of Abyssinian, both of whom work at the Circus. Mignon is married to the Strong Man in the circus, who abuses her and continually beats her. When Walser rescues her from an attack by a tiger in the circus, and after being beaten up by the Strong Man, Fevvers and Lizzie take her up and help her after they realize that her skin is

"mauvish, greenish, yellowish from beatings from her husband, showing how heteronormativity can violently visibly mark bodies" (*Nights* 129) When it is revealed that Mignon has a lovely voice, Fevvers finds Mignon a job of accompanying the Princess of the Abyssinian, who is a tiger tamer, and while she plays the piano, Mignon sings to the Princess, which is their way of communication. Mignon's relationship with the Princess "is a model of a happily united couple whose peace and harmony radiates even to the wild tigers and soothes them. Ironically with the Princess mute and Mignon not knowing the language, it is not speech but music that becomes a tool of communication" (Kılıç. Web). It is also significant that they communicate through music rather than words as an escape from the patriarchal language. In other words, Carter saves Mignon, who has been abused in every relationship she has ever had, and she finds peace and happiness in her lesbian relationship with the Princess. Therefore, in this example, too, the same-sex relationship is represented as a kind of sisterhood, as an alternative ending to the happily-ever-after that supposedly comes with marriage, hence an alternative to a patriarchal institution.

Later in the novel it is revealed that the women running from the Countess's Panopticon run into Walser and ask him to give them his sperm to ensure the continuation of their lineage. Upon hearing Walser's account of the story, Lizzie questions, in a sarcastic way, what these women will do should they give birth to baby boys. For that matter, even when the novel suggests that there is a possibility of life outside norms and conventions of a patriarchal society; it also seems to suggest that the exclusion of men from imaginings of a feminist Utopian world may not work so well. Therefore, although women can find solace and comfort in lesbian love, especially given their abusive background filled with beating husbands, a lesbian community may not be the perfect answer for the wider problem of patriarchy.

To conclude, like *Union Street*, *Nights at the Circus*, too, deals specifically with the predicament of women in patriarchal worlds. They both foreground women's surveillance under the male as well as female gaze and the ways in which women are rendered more docile by disciplinary institutions. In these respects, both novels revise Foucault's Panopticon from a feminist perspective. Yet, while Barker's novel does not emphasize much the possibility of escaping from the Panopticon, and thereby stays more in line with

Foucault’s notion, Carter’s novel puts the emphasis on escape by engaging more critically with Foucault’s conceptualization of the Panopticon.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that both Pat Barker's *Union Street* and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* foreground how modern institutions render women into docile bodies. Michel Foucault's conceptualization of the Panopticon, his notion of docile bodies and the works of prominent feminist scholars such as Sandra Lee Bartky and Susan Bordo, who engage critically with Foucault's work constitute the theoretical framework in this thesis. In addition, the notions of the male gaze and women's to be-looked-at-ness, developed by Laura Mulvey, have been used in order to highlight both novels' concern with women's exposure to the male gaze, one result of which is women's internalization and projection of it back on other women.

In writing this thesis, first, Foucault's Panopticon has been taken as a starting point to draw a parallelism between *Union Street* and *Nights at the Circus*. Although there is an explicit engagement with the Panopticon in the latter, this is not so in the former. Yet, re-reading *Union Street* in the light of Carter's critical engagement with Foucault's notion may enable one to notice the feminist position the novels share. Both Barker's realist novel and Carter's magical-realist novel emphasize the ways in which women's bodies are rendered more docile in modern society due to patriarchal disciplinary power.

The chapter titled, "Is There A Way Out Of The Panopticon? A Study of *Union Street*" argues that in the novel institutions of motherhood and marriage emerge as disciplinary institutions. It also highlights the ways in which women in the novel are subjected to the male gaze, which sometimes results in extreme physical violence such as rape within and/or outside marriage. The chapter also argues that in Barker's novel women's internalization of the male gaze and their projection of it on one another, in the forms of shaming, judging and criticising one's womanhood or motherhood, are foregrounded. The male figures in *Union Street* are depicted as jobless and impotent beings who have remained in the background; yet, they do not refrain from contributing to

women's docility whether it is in the form of rape or domestic violence within the domestic sphere. As the title of this chapter indicates, the chapter also deals with the question of escape from the Panopticon. Yet, the answer that the novel gives to this question is not a strong yes. It has been found that there are some moments suggesting hope for women to escape; but the emphasis rather remains on women's imprisonment within the Panopticon.

The following chapter titled "Escapes From the Panopticon: A Study of *Nights at the Circus*" studies the ways women in the novel, especially its heroine Fevvers, escape from Panopticon. Since in this novel the emphasis is on escape, this chapter, as the title indicates, does not focus on "whether" women can escape; rather, it is built on the question of how they do it. The novel contains a section where there is an all-female Panopticon in the middle of nowhere in Siberia. These women, like Fevvers, find a way out of the Panopticon and set out to form a Utopian community.

Although it is the similarities that bring these two novels together in this thesis, there are also some significant differences between the two that should be addressed. First of all, Barker's *Union Street* portrays a world more in keeping with Foucault's conceptualization of the Panopticon in that, it emphasizes entrapment rather than escape. The female characters are trapped in their failed marriages and dysfunctional relationships, and the socioeconomic conditions in post-industrial Britain give them little space and desire to change the course of their lives. Therefore, their escape remains on an individual level, making hardly any changes in the lives of women collectively.

Nights at the Circus, however, stresses escape on many levels. Fevvers, for example, simply flies away from any threat she sees in her various encounters with men, who attempt to rape and kill her. Carter's novel is a magical-realist one as emphasized before. Therefore, it is true that the magical part of the novel makes escape achievable as opposed to Barker's *Union Street*. Yet, this is not the only way escape from the Panopticon is made possible in the novel. The novel, through its emphasis on gender as performance, shows a way out for women from the male gaze. Fevvers, with her deliberate choice of displaying her body as a performance to the audience, emerges as a self-made woman. Barker's novel does not have this approach to gender, and, perhaps that is why it emphasizes entrapment rather than escape.

Finally, it should be added that one thing both of the novels suggest is that for women escape is possible by forming solidarity among themselves. Women should be able to learn to love one another by recovering from their internalization of the male gaze which forces them to see each other through patriarchal norms. Forming a solidarity and sisterhood is possible only through love; however, love does not necessarily mean lesbian love as in the case of Carter's *Nights at the Circus* where lesbian relationship emerges as a means of escape from the Panopticon in Siberia. Barker's novel, too, emphasizes the significance of women's solidarity; yet, it is through Lisa Goddard, who learns to love her new-born daughter; or, Iris King, who comes to terms with her daughter's pregnancy after almost losing her as a result of abortion. The novels' handling of the issue of sisterhood is different from one another. While the women residing in the same street do not seem to be able to form sisterhood although they have every means to do so, Carter's novel makes it easier even within a brothel where women's "job" is to get more and more male attention and the prison in Siberia, where they are deprived of every means to communicate with one another. So despite the obstacles, the women in *Nights at the Circus* are more aware of their position in the society as women and try hard to break it by coming together. Yet, it is still possible to say that the ending of Barker's novel emphasizes solidarity as a means for women to see one another outside patriarchal norms. Alice King and Kelly Brown hold hands at the end of the novel: "At first she [Alice] was afraid, the child [Kelly] had come so suddenly. Then – not afraid. They sat beside each other; they talked. The girl held out her hand. The withered hand and the strong young hand met and joined. There was silence" (*US* 265).

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APPRENDICES

APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY

Pat Barker ve Angela Carter metinlerinin biçemleri açısından birbirlerinden tamamen farklı iki yazar olsalar da romanlarında ele aldıkları kadın karakterlerin maruz kaldıkları eril bakış ve Panopticon imgesinden kaçma hikâyeleri bakımından benzerlik gösterdikleri için bu tezin konusu olmuşlardır. Bu tezde bu iki yazarın yanı sıra teori kısmında Michel Foucault'nun *Discipline and Punish: Birth of Prison*, (Türkçe ismiyle *Hapishanenin Doğuşu*) kitabından faydalanılmıştır; zira söz konusu kitapta Foucault, iktidarın yüzyıllar içerisinde evrim geçirerek görünmez bir hâl alıp çeşitli mekanizmalar aracılığıyla bireyleri gözetim altına aldığını ve bu vesileyle bireyleri kontrol edebildiğini savunmaktadır. Gözetime dayalı bu sisteme ilaveten bu tezde, Laura Mulvey'in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" adlı makalesine de başvurulmuştur. Bu makalede, Mulvey, "eril bakış" (male gaze) adını verdiği bir bakıştan bahsetmiş ve bunu sinematografi üzerinden anlatmıştır. Buna göre, kadın izleyici pasif bir alıcı olarak ekrandan kendisine empoze edilen eril bakışı benimser ve içselleştirir ve buna bağlı olarak da resmedilen kadın karakterleri de bu şekilde görmeye başlar. Bu anlayışa göre sinemadaki kadın karakterin tek başına hiçbir anlamı yoktur, aksine o, erkek kahramanda uyandırdığı hissiyatla var olmaya mahkûmdur. İzleyici erkek kahramanla kendini özdeşleştirir ve erkek kahramanın bakışını esas alarak onun gücüne sahip olma yoluyla dolaylı da olsa kadına sahip olabilir ve bu vesileyle de iktidar sahibi olmanın tatmin edici duygusunu yaşar. Oynadıkları rolle kadınlar seyirciye bir bakıla-sılık mesajı veren ve erotizm ve teşhir amacı güden, teşhire açık nesnelerdir. Dolayısıyla (edilgen) kadın imgesi, (etken) erkeğin bakışının bir malzemesi haline gelir. Bu bakışın, kadınlar tarafından içselleştirilmesiyle oluşan ve kadınların birbirlerini bu gözle görmesine neden olan biçimine ise "female connoisseur" adı verilmektedir.

Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*'in başlangıcında, biri 18. yüzyılın ortalarından diğeri ise 19. yüzyılın başlarından iki farklı cezalandırma yöntemini anlatır. Bunlardan birincisi Kral katili Damiens'dır ve işlediği suçun cezasını, bir dizi cezalandırma

yönteminin ardından bedeni en sonunda canlı canlı parçalara ayrılarak ödeyecektir. Diğer bir örnekse Paris'te genç mahkûmların hapishanede uymaları gereken kurallardan bahseder. Bu iki yöntem arasında yalnızca 80 yıl olmasına rağmen cezalandırma yöntemlerinin bu süreçte gözle görülür bir değişikliğe uğradığı gözlemlenmektedir. Foucault bu değişimin nedenini, cezalandırmanın bir şölen olmaktan çıkmasıyla açıklar. Buna göre cezalandırma suçun kendisi ile eş tutulmaya başlanmış ve insanlar tarafından, yani idamı izleyen seyirci tarafından aynı suçun soğukkanlılıkla tekrar edilmesi olarak görülmeye başlanmıştır. Cezalandırmanın görsel bir şova dönüştürülmesi artık beklenen ve talep edilen bir yöntem olmamaya başlamış ve bedene uygulanan fiziksel acı ve işkenceye uğrayan bedenin sunulmasında önemli bir rol oynayan seyirci, cezalandırmanın ana unsurları olmaktan çıkmıştır. Benimsenen bu yeni yönteme göre yeni amaç artık bedenden ziyade daha ulvi bir amaç olan ruhu ıslah etmektir. Sırf da bu yüzden cezalandırmanın daha seri, daha acısız ve daha temiz olması için cezalandırma sırasında sakinleştirici enjekte etmeleri için doktorlar, mahkûmların ruh halleri için yanlarında psikologlar bulundurulmaya başlanmış ve giyotin ve asarak idam etme gibi yeni ve daha çabuk idam usulleri getirilmiştir. Foucault cezalandırma yöntemindeki bu bariz değişimi, 18. yüzyılın ortalarına doğru Avrupa'da orta sınıfın yükselmesi ve buna bağlı olarak iktidar tekelinin bozulmasına bağlar. Bu süreçte Krallar, iktidarı elinde tutma bakımından keyfi davranmakla suçlanmaya başlanmış ve yargının da zayıf olduğu öne sürülmüştür. Oluşturulacak yeni sistemde iktidarın eşit bir şekilde dağıtılması, tek bir elde toplanmaması ve düzenli ve sistematik bir biçimde her katmana yayılması esas alınmıştır. Foucault, bu tanımlamanın mükemmel bir örneği olarak Jeremy Bentham'dan esinlendiği Panopticon imgesinden bahseder. Panopticon, tam ortasında bir kulenin olduğu halka şeklinde bir binadır ve iç kısmı hücrelerle bölünmüştür ve bu kule, tek tek bölünmüş her bir hücreye net bir bakış sağlamaktadır. Buna karşılık hücrelere yerleştirilen kişiler, kulede birinin olup olmadığını bilememektedir. Hücredeki kişi sürekli gözetim altındadır ve bu gözetimden kaçmasının bir yolu yoktur. Buradaki amaç söz konusu hücrelere yalnızca suçluların yerleştirilmesi değildir zira bu hücrelere deliler, çocuklar veya işçiler de konulabilir böylece, karşılıklı şiddet; kopya çekme, gürültü; kavga, hırsızlık, anlaşmazlık veya iş geciktirme gibi engellerle karşılaşılmayacaktır. İşte Panopticon'un etkisi de tam olarak budur: sürekli bir görülebilirlik hali yaratmak. Kuledeki kişi kendi görünmeden, hücredeki kişi üzerinde sürekli bir gözetim hali yaratarak bu kişinin davranışlarını kendi kendine

kontrol almasını sağlayacak, aynı zamanda da iktidarı bireysellikten çıkararak, iktidarı tek bir kişiden çok düzenli işleyen isimsiz bir mekanizma üzerine oturtacaktır. Panopticon aynı zamanda bu mekanizmayı da kontrol edebilecek bir işlevselliğe sahiptir. Ortadaki kulede bulunan kişi, altında çalışanları ve bu kişilerin işlerini yapıp yapmadığını da gözlemleyebilmektedir, aynı zamanda Panopticon'un bir parçası olan bu kişi de ani bir teftişle birlikte izlenebilecektir. Panopticon aynı zamanda başka görevler de görebilmektedir, hükümlü kişileri cezalandırmaya, hastaları tedavi etmeye, öğrencileri eğitmeye, delileri bir alanda tutmaya ve işçileri gözetim altında tutmaya yaramaktadır. Bedenlerin bu şekilde kullanımına, hastanelerde, atölyelerde, okullarda, hapishanelerde başvurulabilir.

Foucault'ya göre Panopticon'un amacı bireyleri gözetim altında tutarak bireyler hakkında mümkün olduğu kadar çok bilgi sahibi olmaktır, çünkü bir kişi ne kadar gözlemlerse o kadar bilgi sahibi olabilir. Foucault, günümüz hapishanelerinin de bu fikirden, yani Panopticon'dan, yola çıkılarak oluşturulduğunu ve amacın, bireylerin özgürlüklerini ellerinden alarak onları ıslah etmek olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Foucault, günümüz hapishanelerini okullara, kışlalara ve hastanelere, bunların hepsini de nihayetinde hapishanelere benzetmekte ve bu yeni disiplin şeklinin günümüz kurumlarının içine işlediğini, bu kurumların da bireyleri, iktidarı içselleştirecek raddeye kadar disiplin altına aldığını savunmaktadır. Buna göre ordu, okul, hastane, hapishane ve atölyeler, bu yeni disiplin sistemiyle birlikte kullanılabilen ve geliştirilebilen, yani Foucault'nun deyimiyle "itaatkâr bedenler" oluşturmaktadır.

Feminist eleştirmenler Foucault'nun bu argümanının feminizm açısından bir faydası olup olmadığını tartışmıştır ve de tartışmaktadır. Bu konuda yaygın iki görüş vardı, bir görüş Foucault'nun öne sürdüklerine katılırken bir görüşe göre de Foucault, itaatkâr bedenler oluşturan disiplin yöntemlerinden bahsederken cinsiyetler arasında bir ayrım yapmamakla suçlanmaktadır. Buna göre Foucault, sanki kadın ve erkek bedenleri aynı sistemlere aynı derecede maruz kalmışçasına kadın ve erkek bedenleri arasında bir ayrım gözetmemektedir; oysaki kadın bedenleri erkek bedenlerinden daha fazla itaatkâr hâle getirilmiştir. Sandra Lee Bartky ve Susan Bordo her ne kadar Foucault'nun çıkış noktasını kabul etseler de yazdıkları makalelerde Foucualt'nun, *Discipline and Punish*'te öne sürdüğü "itaatkâr bedenler"den bahsederken kadın bedenlerinin erkeklerin bedenlerinden

daha fazla boyunduruk altına alındığı ve bu süreçte kadın bedenlerinin erkek bedenlere kıyasla daha fazla dış güce maruz kalmak suretiyle yıpratıldığından bahsetmeyerek bir eksiklik yarattığını dile getirmektedirler. Kadın bedenlerin itaatkârlaştırılmasının temelinde eril bakışa maruz kalmalarının yanı sıra bu bakışı içselleştirmelerinden ve diğer kadınlara yöneltmelerinden kaynaklanan bir "female connoisseur" da vardır. Bu bakış, kadınların panoptik eril bakışı içselleştirerek kendi bedenlerini başkalarının gözüyle görerek yaşamaları ve kontrol altına almalarıdır ve unutulmamalıdır ki kadın bakışı da eril bakış kadar, hatta belki de daha sert ve eleştirel olabilmektedir. Bartky'ye göre kadın ve erkek bedenleri arasında bir ayrım yapmamak cinsiyetçiliği yeniden üretmekten başka bir şey değildir. Bartky itaatkâr hâle getirilen kadın bedenlerinden bahsederken bazı örnekler vermektedir. Bunlar arasında, kadınların iştahlarının sürekli olarak kontrol alınması gereken bir şey olarak görülmesi, görünüşlerinin çeşitli dergiler ve programlar aracılığıyla tek tipleştirilmeye ve belirli bir kalıba sokulmak istenmesi gibi örnekler vardır. Ancak ironik olan da şudur ki bir kadın kendisinden "beklenen" tüm bu istekleri yerine getirse bile bu, ona, toplumda erkeklere verilen konumu sağlamayacaktır. Bartky'ye göre kadın bedeninin bu şekilde disiplin edilme yöntemi, Foucault'nun Panopticon'undaki isme ve cisme sahip olmayan kuledeki kişisi gibi, isimsizdir. Burada suçu yalnızca erkeklere ve eril bakışa atmak doğru değildir; nitekim kadınlar da içselleştirdikleri bu bakışla birlikte sürekli gözetim altında yaşıyor gibi davranmaktadır. Modern toplumda iktidar, beden üzerinde fiziksel ve şiddetli yaptırımlar uygulamayan isimsiz bir şekilde yürütülmektedir, gözetim altında olmasa bile kişi sürekli bir gözetim altında olduğu hissi uyandırılarak kontrol altına alınmakta, bu da kişilerin kendi hareketlerini kendilerinin kontrol etmesiyle sonuçlanmaktadır.

Susan Bordo da aynı konuya daha farklı bir şekilde, kadın bedenlerinin çektikleri üzerinden yaklaşarak Bartky ile aynı şekilde, kadın bedenlerinin günlük yaşamın işleyen süreci içerisinde bile itaatkârlaştırıldığından bahseder. Bu aşamada Bordo da tıpkı Bartky gibi eril bakışa vurgu yapar ama onun asıl vurguladığı aynı zamanda, bu bakışın ataerkil olsa da bilhassa eril bakış olmadığı ve kadın bakışının da eril bakış kadar etkili olduğudur. Bütün bunlar ışığında bu tezin amacı Pat Barker'ın *Union Street* ve Angela Carter'ın *Nights at the Circus* romanlarında kadın karakterlerin maruz kaldıkları eril bakışı ve toplum içerisinde kurumlara entegre olmuş panopticonlardan kaçışın mümkün olup olmadığı incelenecektir.

Union Street, adıyla aynı ismi taşıyan sokakta yaşayan yedi farklı kadının, Kelly Brown, Joanne Wilson, Lisa Goddard, Muriel Scaife, Iris King, Blonde Dinah ve Alice Bell, birbirinden bağımsız ancak aynı zamanda birbirine teğet geçen hikâyelerini anlatmaktadır. Roman yedi bölümden oluşmaktadır ve her ne kadar her bir bölümde farklı bir kadın ele alınsa da bu kadınların her biri bir diğerinin yaşamına dokunmaktadır. Romanın en genç karakterle başlayıp en yaşlı karakterle son bulması, romanın sunduğu kısır döngüye dair bir ipucu vermekte aynı zamanda kadınların bu yapıda sıkışıp kaldığı ve kaçamadığına dair bir karamsarlık hissiyatı yaratmaktadır ki zaten ilgili romanın incelendiği bölümün amacı da kadınların işte tam da bu kısır döngüden kaçıp kaçamadığını ele almaktır. Roman boyunca kadınlar yalnızca toplumsal ve ekonomik baskılara değil aynı zamanda evlerinde kocalarının yarattığı sözlü, fiziksel veya psikolojik şiddete de maruz kalmaktadır. Roman her ne kadar kadınlarla ilgili olsa da erkeklerin kaderine de aslında duyarsız kalmaz; sanayi sonrası Britanya'da işçi sınıfının yaşadıkları tıpkı bir domino etkisi yaratmakta ver her bir mensubunu derinden etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda erkekler de işsiz, parasız, eğitimsiz ve yaşadıkları baskının sonucunu kadınlarından veya çocuklarından çıkaran bireyler olarak tasvir edilseler de bu romanın başkahramanları kadınlar olacaktır. Barker'ın bu romanındaki evlilik ve annelik kurumları, bu tezde, kadınların belirli kalıplar içerisine sıkıştırılmaya çalışıldığı birer kurum olarak ele alınmaktadır. Kadınlar psikolojik ve fiziksel bir savaş yürütmenin yanı sıra bu romanda, evin maddi açıdan bütün yükünü de sırtlanmış gözükmektedir. Buna ilaveten kadınlar çalışıp para kazansın veya kazanmasın, ev içerisinde kendilerinden bütün "kadınlık görevlerini" yerine getirmeleri beklenmektedir.

Bu kadınlardan biri kitaptaki Lisa Goddard'dır. Lisa, hâlihazırda iki çocuğa ve işsiz bir kocaya sahipken bir de istemediği üçüncü bir çocuğa hamiledir. Lisa karakterinin anlatılışı, romanın kendisiyle ilgili bölümünün açılış sahnesinde oğluna vurmasıyla başlar. Bu ilk bakışta acımasız bir hareket olarak gözükse de aslında suçu Lisa'da aramak yanlıştır çünkü kendisi de istemediği bir çocuğun, evin mali yükünün ve işsiz ve iş arama tenezzülünde bile bulunmayan bir kocanın sorumluluğunu taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda annelik aslında bu romanda, kadınların boyunduruk altına alındığı bir kurum olarak sunulmaktadır; bir nevi tuzaktır ve anne, baba figürünün ortada olmayışından dolayı "ideal" bir evlilikte olduğundan daha fazla yük taşımaktadır: Hem annelik yapmakta, hem çalışıp para kazanmakta hem çocuklarına hem de kocasına bakmakla yükümlü görülmektedir. Öte yandan kocası Brian ise işsiz olmasına rağmen bunu telafi edecek bir davranışta

bulunmamakta, Lisa'ya yardım etmemekte hatta Lisa'nın doğum için biriktirdiği parayı çalıp içkiye harcayarak hâlâ kendisine hizmet edilmesini beklemekte ve Lisa bu konuda ona çıkıştığında da karısını dövmektedir. Asıl korkutucu olansa Lisa'nın bunu günlük bir rutinmişçesine sineye çekmesi yani kendisine uygulanan bu fiziksel şiddeti içselleştirip belki de normalleştirmesi, kabullenmesidir.

Fiziksel şiddete maruz kalan diğer bir karakter de mahallenin annesi gibi görülen ve bundan keyif duyan, kitaptaki kadınlar arasında belki de en güçlü ve en dominant olan Iris King adlı kadındır. Ancak bu bile onun fiziksel şiddetten kaçmasını sağlayamamıştır. Iris, iyi bir anne ve iyi bir ev kadını olmayı saplantı hâline getirmiş bir kadındır. Şu anda yaşamakta olduğu Union Street'ten çok daha fakir bir mahalle olan Wharfe Street'ten geldiği için temizlik takıntısı vardır. Annesi kendisi küçük yaştayken öldüğü için babasıyla kalakalmıştır ve babası ise ona bakması için başka kadınlar tutmuş ve onu sık sık dövmüştür. Bu nedenle Iris, hem bu dayaklardan kaçmak için hem de evlilik fikrine âşık olduğundan bir an önce evlenmekte gecikmemiştir. Evlendikten üç hafta sonra ise kocası Ted onu ilk kez döver, sebebi de yemeği zamanında hazırlamamış olmasıdır. Ancak Iris annesi gibi bir kurban olmayı reddederek eline geçirdiği satırla kocasına karşılık verir. Bu daha sonraki dayakları durdurmasa da Iris'in kendine duyduğu saygıyı yitirmemesini sağlar. Bundan bir süre sonra da bir gece eve sarhoş bir halde yanında yabancı iki adamla gelir ve bu adamları Iris'le odalarına yönlendirir. Iris adamları kovar ve bundan sonra kocasıyla bir daha hiçbir zaman kendi rızasıyla birlikte olmayacaktır. Bir kadın diğerlerine göre daha güçlü olsa veya gözükse bile romandaki bütün kadın karakterler, Iris de dâhil, erkeklerin iktidarından ve kendilerine uyguladığı şiddetten kaçamaz. Romanın, Foucault'nun Panopticon kavramlaştırmasından farkı, Foucault şiddetin evrim geçirerek artık doğrudan bedenin hedef alındığı bir biçim olmaktan ziyade ruhu ıslah etmeyi hedeflediğini savunurken Par Barker'ın *Union Street* romanında görüldüğü üzere kadın bedeni üzerinden yürütülen şiddet, gerek aile içi şiddet olsun gerekse tecavüz, her şekilde devam etmektedir.

Diğer bir karakter olan 11 yaşındaki Kelly Brown, ilk olarak parkta tanıştığı ve gün içerisinde tekrar karşılaştığı kendisinden yaşça büyük ve giyinişine bakılırsa zengin bir sınıftan gelen bir adamın tecavüzüne uğrar. Bu kişiyle diyaloğa girmesinin bir sebebi bu adamı hiç tanımadığı babasının yerine koyması ve bu adamın kendisine, daha önce hiç

kimsenin, annesinin, kız kardeşinin bile bakmadığı bir şekilde bakması, hatta bu bakışların onu "yarattığı" hissi vermesidir. Burada Mulvey'nin bakıla-sılık kavramına atıfta bulunulmaktadır. Kelly'nin, adamın bakışlarının, yani bakıla-sılığın tamamen farkındadır hatta bu bakışı da içselleştirmektedir. Günün sonunda adam, Kelly'ye kestirme bir yol gösterme bahanesiyle onu terk edilmiş bir fabrikaya yönlendirir. Aslında bu tecavüzün sınıfsal bir boyutu da olduğunun bir göstergesidir. Zengin ve canının istediğini yapabileceğine inanan bir adam ve terk edilmiş bir işçi sınıfı fabrikası, sınıflar arası bir çatışmanın ve sanayi sonrası Britanya'nın da içinde bulunduğu durumun bir göstergesidir. Kelly, ne yazık ki tecavüzünden kaçamaz ve bu olay Kelly'yi kendi topluluğuna duyduğu son güven duygusundan da koparacaktır. Sanayi sonrası toplumda, aslında erkeklerin de kadınların da gerek işsizlik oranları, gerek ekonomik buhran dolayısıyla etkilendiği doğru olsa da bu örneklerde görüldüğü üzere kadın bedenleri bu süreçlerden daha fazla etkilenmekte, çünkü fiziksel olarak daha güçlü olduğunu hisseden ve hissettiren öfkeli erkekler de öfkelerini kadın bedenleri üzerinden çıkarabilmektedir. Tecavüz aslında yalnızca evlilik müessesesi dışı gerçekleşen, bir tarafın rıza göstermediği ilişkiler değildir; nitekim Iris'in kocasıyla – eve bir gece iki adam getirmesinin ardından – bir daha asla isteyerek birlikte olmaması da Lisa'nın istemediği hamileliğinin temelinde yatıyor olabilir.

Romandaki kadına yönelik şiddet ve eril bakışın yanı sıra bir de kadınların bu bakışı içselleştirmesi ve diğer kadınlara yöneltmesinden kaynaklanan "female connoisseur" vardır. Susan Bordo bunu, ataerkilliğin, kadınların da katkıda bulunduğu ve bu katkıdan dolayı ödüllendirdiği bir sistem olarak açıklar. Buna göre kadınlar, "erkekler kulübüne" dâhil olmak veya belki de varlıklarına erkeklerin gözünde bir meşruiyet kazandırmak açısından diğer kadınları radarlarına alarak ve eril bakışın onlara yaptığını tekrar üreterek mevcut baskıya bir yenisini daha ekler. Bu nedenledir ki Bordo'ya göre bakış, ataerkil olsa da aslında tam olarak erkeğe ait değildir, kadınlar da buna dâhil olabilmektedir. Bunun romandaki en belirgin örneği, Kelly'nin annesi Mrs. Brown'un, Kelly'nin tecavüze uğramasının ardından – ki Kelly'nin tecavüze uğradığı olayın üzerinden haftalar geçtikten sonra Kelly'nin bir gün artık dayanamayıp çığlık çığlığa veryansın etmesinin ardından ortaya çıkar ki kadınlara göre bu da Mrs. Brown'ın annelik müessesindeki eksikliğinin bir diğer dışavurumudur, çünkü Mrs. Brown gecelerini barlarda içki içerek ve eve erkek getirerek geçirmektedir. Ancak şu vurgulanmalıdır ki romanın Mrs. Brown'ı yerden yere vurmak gibi bir derdi yoktur, roman yalnızca olan biteni aktarmaktadır, tam olarak bir

suçlu aramaz zaten arasa dâhi suçlu tek tek bireyler değildir – mahalledeki diğer kadınların eleştirel ve ayıplayıcı bakışlarına maruz kalmasıdır. Bu kadınlara göre Mrs. Brown kızını korumalı ve onu daima gözetim altında tutmalıdır ancak aslında burada eleştirilmesi gereken genç bir kızı tecavüz mağduru yapan ideolojik ve ekonomik etmenlerdir ve roman da aslında bunu vurgulamaktadır.

Peki, romandaki kadınların Panopticon'dan kaçışı mümkün müdür? Aslında bu tek tek bireylere indirgenirse buna dair birkaç örnek vardır. Bunlar doğrudan Panopticon'dan kaçış olmasa da kadınların bireysel olarak kendilerini kurban hâline getiren sisteme yaptıkları müdahalenin birer örneğidir. Bunlardan birincisi bir başka karakter Joanne Wilson'ın, hamile olduğu haberini erkek arkadaşıyla paylaşmasının ardından erkek arkadaşının onunla ilişkiye girmek istemesi ve bu ilişkinin seyrinde oğlanın, sanki bebeği düşürmek istermişçesine sert hareketlerde bulunurken Joanne'in de ilk önce buna uysa da sonrasında koruma içgüdüsüyle buna direnmesidir. Bu sahnenin ardından Joanne erkek arkadaşı Ken'i, bir nevi iktidarsızlaştırır ve etkisiz hâle getirir, kendi iradesini devreye sokarak Ken'in iradesine karşı koyar ve bu kendi başına ele alındığında yapısı itibariyle bir tür isyandır.

Bir diğer örnek Kelly'nin, tecavüzün ardından kendini koruma içgüdüsüyle erkek kıyafetleri giymeye başlayıp saçlarını kısacık kestirmesi, geceleri hâlâ sokaklara çıkmaya devam etmesi ve bu süreçte zengin bir ailenin evine girmesi, evin yatak odasını darmadağın etmesi, daha sonra okuluna gitmesi, bildiği en ayıp kelimeleri tahtaya yazması – bu dışavurum aslında içinde yaşadıklarının çok küçük bir yansımasıdır nitekim dil, Kelly'nin yaşadıklarını ifade etmesi konusunda yeterli gelmemektedir – ve sonrasında da sınıfın ortasına tuvaletini yapması vardır.

Bu kitapta kaçışa dair iki ana örnek vardır. Bunlardan ilki, Lisa Goddard'ın istemediği bebeği doğurduktan sonra onu asla kabullenemeyişi ve bebeğe annelik içgüdüsüyle yaklaşamayışının, bebeğin bezinde kan görmesinin ardından değişmesidir. O bebeğin annesi olduğunu ilk defa o zaman hisseder ve kanı görünce kötü bir şey olduğundan endişe eder ancak hemşirelerle konuşmasının ardından bunun adet kanaması olduğunu ve bunun kız bebeklerde görülebildiğini öğrenir ve ilk defa o zaman kızıyla arasında bir bağ hisseder; kadın olmanın ve kızının da kendi yaşayacaklarını yaşayabileceğini düşünmekten kaynaklanan bir bağ. İkinci örnekse kitabın en son

bölümünde görülmektedir. Romanın en yaşlı karakteri olan Alice Bell, kendine bakamadığından ötürü oğlu ve gelini tarafından hastaneye yatırılmaktansa onurluca ölmek için bir parka gider ve banka oturur ve Kelly ile karşılaşır. 76 yaşındaki Alice ile 11 yaşındaki Kelly'nin bu karşılaşması ve el ele tutuşmaları romanın da buluşma noktasıdır ve kadınların bu kaçınılmaz kaderlerini yaşamaktansa bu gidişatı değiştirebileceklerinin, ortak bir acı ve bir tür dayanışma çerçevesinde bir araya gelebileceklerinin bir kanıtıdır. *Union Street* genel anlamda geleceğe dair çok az umut vermektedir ancak romanın sonundaki bu sahne, kadınlar için birbirlerini gerçekten anlamaları durumunda Panopticon'dan kaçışın mümkün olduğunu göstermektedir.

Tezin konusu olan ikinci roman Angela Carter'ın *Nights at the Circus* adlı eseridir. Roman aslında Sophia Fevvers adlı bir kadının hikâyesini anlatmaktadır. Bu kadın bir yumurtadan çıktığını, normal bir doğum süreciyle dünyaya gelmediğini – hatta bunun kanıtı olarak da göbek deliği olmadığını – iddia etmektedir. Fevvers, annesi yerine koyduğu Lizzie ile birlikte başına gelenleri anlatır. Roman, Fevvers'ın hayat hikâyesini, kendisiyle bir mülakat yapan Amerikalı gazeteci Jack Walser'a anlatmasıyla başlar. Fevvers bir sirkte çalışmaktadır ve meraklı gözlerin kaçınılmaz adresidir ve bütün dünyanın merak ettiği soru da Fevvers'ın gerçek mi olduğu yoksa bir sahtekâr mı olduğudur. Walser'ın da amacı Fevvers'ın maskesini düşürmek ve onun bir sahtekâr olduğunu kanıtlamaktır, bu nedenledir ki Fevvers'ın çalışmakta olduğu sirke –palyaço göreviyle – katılır ve hikâyesini yakın bir şekilde incelemeye başlar. İlerleyen bölümlerde sevgili olacaklar ve Walser da aslında avcıyken bir nevi av konumuna düşecektir.

Fevvers, anlattıklarına göre daha bebekken Lizzie'nin çalıştığı genelevin kapısına bırakılmış ve burada Lizzie ve diğer kadınlar tarafından büyütülmüştür. Aslında üzerindeki en büyük emek de genelevin sahibi ve kadınların bir nevi yol göstericisi Ma Nelson'dır. Fevvers, görünüş olarak da davranış olarak da "geleneksel" kadın imajından uzaktır. Upuzun bir boyu, iri bir vücudu, sapsarı saçları ve yemeğe dair büyük bir iştahı vardır. Bu iştah ve vücut hareketleri öyle bir boyuttadır ki onunla görüşme yapan Walser ilk başta Fevvers'ın bir erkek olabileceğinden bile şüphelenir. Fevvers aslında bedensel formuyla bilindik kadınsılığın ve kadınlığın dışarısına çıkmıştır. Kendisini Susan Bordo'nun öne sürdüğü gibi, ne minimal boyutlara indirger ne de iştahına dem vurur. Fevvers'ın bu duruşu evliliğe bakışını da yansıtmaktadır, bu görüşler de Lizzi'nin fikirlerini yansımasıdır. Bu

fikirle birlikte roman aslında karı ve kocanın evlilik müessesesinde birleşmesiyle elde edilen birliğin yalnızca evliliğe has olmadığını söylemekte ve bu genelevi, oldukça olumlu bir havada, bir tür kız kardeşlik yuvası olarak göstermektedir. Ma Nelson'ın ani ölümünü takiben ellerindeki para da bitince Fevvers mecburen çalışmak durumunda kalır ve bu sebeple Madam Schreck'in kadın canavarlar müzesinde, Lizzie'nin karşı çıkmalarına rağmen işe başlar. Bu müzede kadınlar birer obje olarak erkeklerin fetişistik zevkleri için sunulmaktadır. Burada çalışan kadınlar da kadınlara atfedilen ve kadınlarla bağdaştırılan çeşitli bozuklukları temsil etmektedir. Wiltshire Wonder çok küçük neredeyse oyuncak bir kadın boyutundadır ve bu erkekler arasında elden ele dolaştırılmasına neden olmuştur. Fanny the Four Eyes, göğüs uçlarının olması gerektiği yerde bir çift göze daha sahip olduğu için bebek sahibi olamayacağından çünkü bebeği gözyaşıyla besleyemeyeceğinden korkmakta ve üzülmektedir. Uyuyan Güzel ise ergenlikten beri günde sadece bir kez uyanan bir kızdır. Uyku aslında bir kaçış yöntemidir onun için. Kadın Canavarlar müzesindeki kadınlar ancak ve ancak Madame Schreck'in ölümünün ardından kurtulabileceklerdir.

Fevvers'ın bütün bu nesnelleştirilmeden kaçma şekillerine gelinirse Fevvers, eril ve/ya kadın bakışın merkezi olmaktan kurtulamayacağını anladığı için bu bakışı kendi istediği doğrultuda ve istediği kadar kullanmayı seçer. Onun için temsil ettiği görüntünün bir önemi yoktur, o sadece ruhunu Foucault tarzı bir disiplin yöntemine maruz bırakmaz, bedenine ne yapıldığı umurunda değildir.

Romanın Panopticon imgesi ile en açık uğraşısı, romanın içerisinde yer alan tamamen kadınlardan oluşan Sibirya'nın ortasında inşa edilmiş bir hapishanedir. Bu kısım çok kısa olsa da romanın merkezlerinden birini oluşturmaktadır. Burada, kocalarını veya partnerlerini öldürmüş olan ve bunun cezasını çekmek, tövbe etmek için Panopticon tarzı hapishanedeki hücrelere yerleştirilen kadınlardan oluşmaktadır. Carter bu romandaki Panopticon'u, Foucault'nun Panopticon'u üzerine inşa etse de aralarında farklılıklar vardır. Bunların birincisi, *Nights at the Circus*'daki hapishanenin tamamen kadınlardan oluşmasıdır. O kadar ki, görevli gardiyanlardan kuledeki kişiye kadar hepsi kadındır, çünkü daha önce de vurgulandığı gibi ataerkil yapının, sürekliliğini sağlamak için dayanışma göstermeyen kadınlara da ihtiyacı vardır ve kuledeki Countess P. de tıpkı müzedeki Madame Schreck gibi bu kadınlardan yalnızca biridir. Diğer bir fark da Foucault, kaçışın

mümkün olmadığını söylerken *Nights at the Circus*'taki hapishanedeki kadın mahkûmların Panopticon'dan kaçabilmesidir. Bu bakımdan *Hapishanenin Doğuşu*'nda öne sürülenin aksine Carter'ın romanındaki kadınlar ruhlarının ıslah edilmesine karşı koyabilmektedir.

Sonuç olarak her iki roman da kadınların toplum içerisinde maruz kaldıkları bakış ve bu doğrultuda sürdürdükleri Foucault tarzı bir modern sistemdeki yerinden bahsetmektedir. Barker'ın *Union Street*'i gerçekçi (realist) bir romanken Carter'ın *Nights at the Circus*'u büyülü gerçekçilikle (magical realism) bağdaştırılan bir romandır. Her ne kadar kaçış temasının Carter'da daha mümkün gözükmesinin altında romanın biçemi yattığı düşünülse de aslında sebep yalnızca Fevvers'ın içinde bulunduğu zor durumlardan kanatlarını kullanıp kaçabilmesi değildir. Fevvers bunu yapmasının yanı sıra cinsiyetin kurgusallığına yaptığı vurgu ve bu amaçla üstlendiği aşırı kadınsı davranışlarıyla Panopticon'dan kaçabilmektedir. *Nights at the Circus* aynı zamanda Fevvers karakterinin yanı sıra diğer kadın karakterlerin de toplum içerisindeki panopticonlardan kaçışının başarılabilir olduğunu vurgulamaktadır ancak bunu yapmanın tek yolu kadınların birbirlerini sevmeyi ve anlamayı öğrenmesinden geçmektedir. Bu demek değildir ki *Union Street* bu konuda başarısız olmaktadır. Tam tersine romanın sonundaki sahnede Kelly ile Alice'in el ele tutuşması kadınların bir tür kız kardeşlik ve dayanışma kurma yolunda olabileceğine dair bir umut taşımaktadır.

APPENDIX B: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	X
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	
Enformatik Enstitüsü	
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Atar
Adı : Merve
Bölümü : İngiliz Edebiyatı

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Feminist Possibilities of Escape From the Panopticon in Pat Barker's *Union Street* and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*

TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans [X] Doktora [ ]

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. [ ]
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. [ ]
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. [X]

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: