

Power and Metaphoric Discourse in *The Handmaid's Tale*

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Abstract

This study proposes an analysis of the social and cognitive aspects of power as expressed and reproduced in the metaphoric discourse of Atwood's dystopian world of *The Handmaid's Tale*. The purpose of this study is to show how metaphoric discourse produces power through constructing ideological knowledge. According to this research, metaphoric discourse gives meaning to things and creates representations of reality. Representations shape our cognition of the world and construct our knowledge. Knowledge produced engenders some forms of power such as ideological power. This article relies on cognitive linguistics to unveil how metaphoric structures shape knowledge. It draws on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory which maintains that our knowledge of the world is basically a matter of metaphor. In order not to mechanically and unconsciously submit to stealthy forms of power, this research aims at creating awareness of how systems of power make use of metaphoric discourse to control people, influence their knowledge and in Althusserian terms, produce ideological subjects who reproduce the social order. The findings of this study show that structural, ontological and orientational metaphors draw correspondences between different domains of knowledge to sustain specific ideological positions, evoke emotional effects, shape identities and responses, generate social consequences and establish a reconceptualization of reality.

Keywords: power, ideology, knowledge, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

1. Introduction

Research on power reveals that power in modern history is no longer recognized in terms of the power X has over Y. It is no longer centralized in agents, but dispersed in societies. It does not resort to overt conflict but is insidiously enacted through manipulating our knowledge and view of reality (Digeser 1992; Foucault 1981; Hayward 2000 & Lukes 1974). This study finds dystopian literature a realistic testimony and a terrifying depiction of power in the modern world. Through criticizing the flaws of contemporary societies and creating an extremely repulsive fictional representation of these societies, dystopian fiction stimulates the readers to draw comparisons between the represented world and their own and question their society has taken for granted knowledge and values. Knowledge is known to be tied to discourse (Burr 1995; Gergen 1985). Through discourse or linguistic representations, meanings are attributed to physical things and knowledge is constructed. Mainly through metaphor, structures of language are capable of shaping knowledge on which power is based to produce ideological subjects. Therefore, discourse plays a decisive role in the construction of our knowledge about the world and influences how knowledge is put into practice.

The current research aims at exposing the complex relationship between power, knowledge and discourse and exploring Althusser's approach to power as displayed in the metaphoric language of Atwood's dystopian world. These objectives are to be achieved through investigating how power is enacted on individuals through controlling their knowledge by means of discourse. In other words, it explores how metaphoric discourse could construct meaning, diffuse ideological representations of reality and shape our knowledge of the world. The aim of this study is to develop readers' critical language awareness of the role of discourse in producing insidious forms of power. Critical thinking makes people conscious of specific structures of discourse that manipulate our conceptualization of reality and impose ideological positions on its subjects and are thereby responsible for turning people into ideological subjects.

2. Review of literature

Some reviews of dystopian literature focus on the strategy of controlling people's cognition and knowledge through language manipulation. Orwell (1968) points out the existence of a natural unity between reality and thought (i.e. our knowledge of that reality). He believes that the corrupt use of language, either "ill-chosen or ill-intentioned words", breaks this unity and causes thought corruption. He depicts how discourse distorts people's conception of reality in the interest of some parties through mystifying reality and sharing a constructed representation of reality that disguises an ideological stance and induces people to genuinely believe in it. It is an act of controlling thought through producing a new body of knowledge. For constructing this new knowledge, a new language is imposed on people that Orwell referred to as Newspeak. The role of this new language is to propagate certain constructions of reality and present them as the only acceptable reality.

In another attempt to show the impact of language on the individual, Blakemore (1984) points out that man is “essentially linguistic” (p. 349) in the sense that he conceptualizes the world through language and communicates himself and his world view in language. Thus, language is recognized as a means of control as it is crucial to the process of recognition of reality. Blakemore draws a correlation between human thought and human language, showing that human thought is diminished by assaulting man’s linguistic reality. Blakemore highlights how language is abused in the dystopian world. Language is used to alter reality and mislead citizens, through replacing words’ old meanings with new faked meanings or through going to the extreme of utterly abolishing undesirable old words.

Sisk (1997) focuses on exploring the role of language as a means of control in dystopian literature. He pinpoints that language and power are closely interrelated subjects in dystopian fiction where language is used as a means of control and repression as well as a means of rebellion. Sisk’s main argument is that the world could be controlled through controlling the word and narrowing its meaning.

Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1956) refuse to regard language as a transparent medium of communicating meaning and thought. They demonstrate that language influences the process of meaning cognition through arranging data and choosing between different linguistic forms. Any change in the linguistic form directly corresponds to a change in the communicated meaning (i.e. content). Sapir-Whorf linguistic hypothesis indicates that language shapes our knowledge and cognition, in the sense that the way in which we see the world is influenced by the kind of language used. Language provides us with categories and conceptual frameworks that shape the way we think and act. Therefore, language is perceived as a representational vehicle, an instrument that provides meanings about the world, meanings that constitute our ways of understanding the world and our knowledge about it.

From the above reviews, it is remarked that scholars have started to develop an awareness of the role of discourse in enacting power through manipulating meaning and knowledge. Yet, there is still no integrative analysis of how the workings and techniques of power could be realized linguistically, socially and cognitively. One of the objectives of this study is to relate structures of discourse to structures of power. It attempts to investigate how modern power, mainly Althusserian model of power, is expressed and produced in discourse through studying cognitive structures reflected in language, which are responsible for shaping our knowledge and cognition of reality.

2.1. Althusser’s Conceptualization of Power

Althusser (1971) turns to the realm of ideology to conceptualize the phenomenon of power. He defines ideology as a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Ideologies are the ideas individuals use to interpret how their social world operates. Thus, ideology is a matter of recognition of reality which is based on relations of power. For Althusser, in order to maintain the privilege for the powerful party, a particular form of relation should be established between the dominant party and individuals. It is a relation of consent and submission founded on ideologies of the dominant group. The function of these ideologies is to create subjects who reproduce and maintain the social order which benefits the dominant party. This relation of submission is mainly set up by ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) that exist in a society and function mainly by ideology. ISAs are constituted of religious ISA e.g. churches, educational ISA e.g. schools, family ISA, communication ISA e.g. press, television...etc.

According to Althusser (1971), ideology is everywhere and people are perpetually imprisoned in ideological constructs that turn individuals into subjects. State apparatuses incorporate institutions that operate people and subject them to ideological processes that build into them particular values and ideas and guide their behaviour in a way that ensures their subjection to the ruling ideology and maintains the control of the dominant group. Ideologies integrate individuals into the social order and could induce people to act against their own interests by altering their knowledge and beliefs. For Althusser, power depends on knowledge as a socially constructed body which is responsible for constructing social realities in which people live. So, if knowledge is a construction then the question is: how is knowledge constructed?

2.2. Knowledge Construction

Constructionism focuses on studying the social construction of knowledge and states that there is no direct access to the world because knowledge of the world is always communicated to us through a medium, be it linguistic or semiotic signs. Seeing the world through a mediator provides us with only a picture of this world, a kind of representation of the objective world from a specific perspective and in service of some interests. These representations of reality are ideological because they are always shaped by linguistic factors and social conventions which are responsible for diffusing specific representations and excluding others. People could create multiple representations of the same reality through using, for example, different linguistic metaphorical expressions such as ARGUMENT IS WAR or ARGUMENT IS JOURNEY which produce different forms of knowledge of “argument”. The former represents argument as a competitive process, while in the latter it is a cooperative endeavour to reach a solution.

Language used to represent the world is supposed to signify reality but what if representations do not correspond to reality. According to Hall (1997), if meaning is a social construction, not bound to fixed objects in the extensional world, then it could change as a result of changes in social and linguistic conventions. He warns us against meaning manipulation saying that “this approach to language unfixes meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant ‘play’ or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations” (p. 32). New meanings signify new descriptions and representations of the world and consequently new bodies of knowledge which bring forth different world outlooks. So, to understand how knowledge is constructed, we have to investigate the role of discourse in shaping our knowledge of the world.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study is concerned with exploring the relation between power, knowledge and discourse as expressed and produced in/through the metaphoric discourse of the dystopian world of Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*. To show how discourse shapes knowledge, this paper draws on cognitive linguistics (CL) to reveal the social and cognitive dimensions of discourse such as representation, meaning and knowledge construction. This study employs Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980; 2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to analyse the conceptual metaphors constructed in Atwood’s Gileadean world through: 1) identifying which source domain concepts are used to represent major target domain concepts in Gilead, 2) pinpointing the linguistic metaphorical expressions used to express relations between

source and target domains and 3) exposing relations and correspondences formed between the two domains and the realities they bring about and their implications which influence people's knowledge and cognition of the world and the way they react. To provide revealing insights into Althusserian ideological model of power adopted in this study, its techniques and how it operates, this study attempts to show how knowledge generated through metaphoric representation of reality is subtly ingrained in the individual and shared in society, creating ideological subjects.

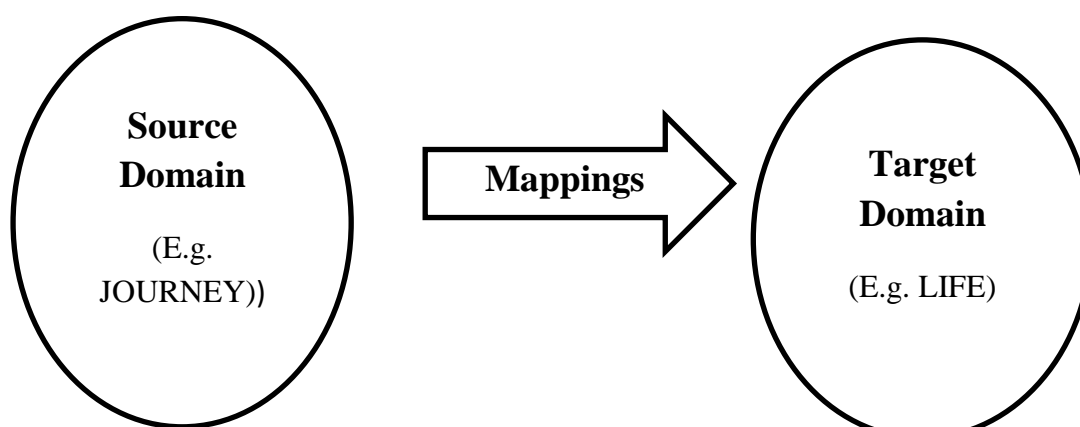
3.1. Cognitive Linguistic Approach (CL)

Our cognition of the world is firmly bound to epistemic perspectives that are made up of knowledge which is constituted of values, norms and worldviews, "just as each act of seeing quite naturally entails an optical perspective, each act of cognition is linked to an accompanying epistemic perspective" (Gerhardt, 1992, as cited in Meusburger, 2015, p. 51). Since language is known to be an inextricable element of cognition which contributes to structuring meaning and our conceptual system, cognitive linguistics is to be integrated into this study. Cognitive linguistics (CL) views language as one of the most distinctive elements of human cognitive activities as it reflects patterns of thought and contributes to shaping our knowledge about the world and our ideological positions. One of the major areas of research in CL is cognitive semantics which is integrated into this research as it is mainly concerned with studying knowledge representation and meaning construction. The aim of cognitive semantics is to investigate the conceptual conditions of producing and understanding linguistic meaning (Croft & Cruse 2004).

3.2. Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Within the field of cognitive linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson introduce the CMT as a theoretical framework for the study of metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize the central role metaphor plays in structuring thought and reality. They remark that we understand every day concepts by means of metaphor. Metaphor is regarded as a kind of representation. It is a way of organizing our knowledge of the world through drawing conceptual correspondences or relations of similarities or analogies between two domains of knowledge; namely, the target domain and source domain and it takes the formula A IS B. The target domain is the one we try to comprehend or represent and the source domain is the more tangible or physical domain that helps us understand abstract or complex concepts. According to CMT, conceptual metaphor is: understanding one conceptual domain of experience (i.e. A) in terms of another conceptual domain (i.e. B).

Figure 1. Source and Target Domains



CMT identifies metaphor as a basic part of human thought as we conceptualize the world through the metaphors we use. Lakoff (1987) highlights how metaphor projects our direct knowledge of the real world onto abstract domains. Through metaphorical mappings, or correspondences, our knowledge (i.e. basic ideas, culture, experiences, etc.) about the source domain is mapped onto knowledge about the target domain as exemplified in DISEASE IS INVASION. Disease is the target domain and invasion is the source domain. We know that invasion is an attack that threatens others and may cause loss or death but also it could be fought and resisted. In this example, our knowledge is transferred from the source to the target domain. In other words, our knowledge of invasion is mapped onto corresponding knowledge about the target domain, providing us with a metaphorical configuration of our thought of a disease. In this process of representation (i.e. representing disease as an invasion), metaphor determines and structures meanings of concepts through establishing patterns of association in thought.

INVASION	Metaphorical Mappings	DISEASE
Invader/enemy	→	Disease
Battle field	→	Human body
War strategies	→	Medical Treatment
Weapons	→	Medicine
Victory	→	Cure/remedy

It is worthy to note that a single concept, such as ARGUMENT, might be represented by a diversity of source domains and understood in terms of more than one conceptual metaphor as ARGUMENT IS WAR and ARGUMENT IS DANCE. Each source domain highlights some aspects of the concept of ARGUMENT. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor refers to argument as a competitive issue that could be won or lost and to its participants as opponents, defending their viewpoints and attacking others'. On the other hand, representing argument as a dance induces a different meaning of argument as a cooperative process between participants who attempt to harmoniously work together. This metaphor constructs different conceptual configurations and thereby evokes different attitudes, relations and actions. So, changing our metaphors means changing our thought and consequently our life. The question the current research brings about is: Could metaphors be recruited for ideological purposes and function as an instrument of power? Studying metaphor, its functions and effects, is of major significance to our understanding of how, through metaphor, power could yield to a change in our conceptual system.

CMT regards metaphor as a means of structuring our conceptual system. According to Goatly (1997) and Kress (1989), metaphors bring about a reconceptualization of experience. Metaphors, through their "unfamiliar categories", prompt us to view the world from different perspectives. For Goatly, they could even yield to a "permanent revolution in thinking". Metaphors are classified, according to the cognitive function they perform in shaping our understanding of the world, into structural, ontological and orientational metaphors. 1) Structural metaphors enable us to understand target concepts by means of the structure of the source through mapping knowledge of one structure onto another; e.g. LOVE IS A JOURNEY, etc. 2) Ontological metaphors represent an abstract entity, such as an event, idea, activity, in terms of a concrete object, a container or a person; e.g. IDEAS ARE FOOD, etc. 3) Orientational metaphors determine the orientation of the target concept such as HAPPY IS

UP and SAD IS DOWN. By supplying target concepts with spatial features, orientational metaphors perform an evaluative function.

Metaphors have ideological implications and could establish social consequences and create different realities. They could be employed as a tool of ideology. Goatly (2006) illustrates how capitalist industrialization fostered a sequence of metaphor themes such as ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING/COMPETITION and QUALITY IS MONEY, to instil and sustain its ideologies. The diffusion of such metaphor themes nurtures a culture of competitiveness, survival of the fittest and wealth possessed equals personal value and imposes a certain structure on people's way of living. Metaphor is capable of producing social and political consequences through controlling the way we conceive target domains, as illustrated by Scheper-Hughes (1997). She demonstrates that metaphors such as those used to describe street children in Brazil have the power to evoke in people genocidal capacity. Street children are represented in terms of "dirty vermin" and metaphors of "street cleaning", "trash removal", "fly swatting", "pest removal" and "urban hygiene" are propagated in society managing the masses to accept and support the act of police shooting 50 street children lying near a church in Rio. Citizens have justified the massacre through conveying their "being 'fed up' with the criminal, dirty and disorderly behaviour of street children" (Scheper-Hughes, 1997). Street children metaphors manage the mind to think of "street children" in terms of "vermin". In the STREET CHILDREN ARE VERMIN metaphor, we can recognize the biased nature of metaphorical mappings which highlight some aspects of the target domain to hide and ignore other aspects. Metaphor is used here to establish a partial representation of reality and evoke an emotional and mental effect in order to prompt aggressive reactions against homeless children. It communicates a negative evaluative representation of street children by referring to them as an "it"; as a kind of "dirt" or "pest" to demonize them and thereby brainwash people into accepting illegitimate actions towards them. Obviously, some metaphors do not necessarily highlight actual correspondences or similarities between source and target domains but rather create correspondences to serve the interests of some groups and justify their actions.

Charteris-Black (2004) advocates approaching metaphor as a means of personal empowerment. He elaborates that "metaphor both reflects and determines how we think and feel about the world and, therefore, understanding more about metaphor is an essential component of intellectual freedom" (p. 253). He illustrates that since metaphor is a way of creating meaning and knowledge about world subjects and issues, then studying metaphorical structures and what motivates the choice of metaphors enables us to challenge existing ways of thinking and replace them with different ways. He warns us against blind mechanical acceptance of metaphors imposed on us without thinking of the meanings and values they suppress or propagate and the social and political effects metaphors bring into existence.

3.3. Contextualizing *The Handmaid's Tale*

In Atwood's (1985) dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* (henceforth *THT*), the USA is destroyed by terrorism and is controlled by some revolutionaries. Gilead is a theocratic state in which the government rules by religious guidance. Due to the widespread of radiation, Gilead encounters fertility problem. To overcome the dramatic decline in birth rate to be able to supply the state with its need of future soldiers for its military causes, the ruling system in the Republic of Gilead establishes a warped reading of the Bible to maintain control over women's bodies. Women whose fertility tests show their reproductive fitness are known, in Gilead, as Handmaids and are sent to Rachel and Leah Re-education centre to be

indoctrinated by Aunts into the ideology of the ruling system. In this process of brainwashing and rehabilitation, Handmaids are subjected to a kind of totalitarian knowledge that honours their being sexually enslaved by their commanders to fulfil their sacred duty in raising their country's population. Gilead's values and practices are claimed to have religious grounds that legitimize objectification of women, patriarchy, discrimination, knowledge control, surveillance and compulsory copulation. Atwood's novel is a vivid illustration of Althusser's conceptualization of power and how it insidiously works through controlling our knowledge and sharing certain social constructions of reality as the natural order of things.

4. Analysis of Metaphoric Discourse in *The Handmaid's Tale*

If metaphors are responsible for structuring our thought, then studying metaphor is crucial to our study of knowledge construction on which modern forms of power are based. That is why this paper is concerned with exploring how power is enacted through controlling our metaphors to shape our knowledge. How can metaphor define reality and alter people's conceptualization of experience? How can it provoke emotional effects, propagate values and cultural constructs and produce social and political consequences? How can metaphor spotlight existing similarities between domains of knowledge and how can it generate similarities between them? In answer to these questions, this paper focuses on some pervasive metaphor themes propagated in the state of Gilead, in Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, to explore their impact on human thought and knowledge and how they enact ideological power. Obviously, one of the major themes in Atwood's novel is the control and exploitation of women, turning them into ideological subjects. Atwood employs first person method of narration in *The Handmaid's Tale*. So, all what we know is communicated to us through the narrator, Offred, one of the exploited Handmaids through whom we are going to scrutinize the world. In Gilead, ISAs attempt to indoctrinate women into accepting their assigned role in society through denigrating former knowledge, putting constraints on their thought and behaviour and ingraining their own values and beliefs.

4.1. KNOWLEDGE IS EVIL

In Gilead, knowledge is one target domain which is referred to by a range of source domains.

4.1.1. KNOWLEDGE IS TEMPTATION

At the red centre, "knowing was a temptation. What you don't know won't tempt you, Aunt Lydia used to say" (*THT* 11:205).

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
TEMPTATION	An evil A stray from reason A whim A flaw	KNOWLEDGE

In this example, mapping is drawn between KNOWLEDGE, the target domain, and TEMPTATION, the source domain, to stimulate the mind to conceptualize KNOWLEDGE in terms of TEMPTATION. The recipient summons all his knowledge, culture and experience of TEMPTATION and projects them onto the abstract realm which is KNOWLEDGE in this example. So, KNOWLEDGE is conceptualized in terms of

TEMPTATION as an evil, a stray from reason, a whim that should be resisted and constrained and a flaw which has negative consequences. The function of the structural metaphor KNOWLEDGE IS TEMPTATION is constructing similarities between the two domains to negatively impact people's conceptualization of knowledge as a misleading or unwise experience.

4.1.2. KNOWLEDGE IS GUILT/CRIME

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
GUILT/CRIME	→	KNOWLEDGE
	An accusation to be denied	
	Forbidden/illegal	

Another dominant metaphor is KNOWLEDGE IS GUILT as indicated by Offred's saying, "But I haven't done anything, I tell myself, not really. All I did was know. All I did was not to tell" (*THT* 14:297). Offred's words depict the act of Knowing as a crime or guilt which one denies and justifies. According to Gilead's doctrine, all citizens have to spy on one another. Not spying or concealing news is regarded a crime according to the laws of Gilead. Offred's use of parallel structures "All I did was know" and "All I did was not to tell" establishes an analogy between "knowing" and "not spying" and sets them both as equal crimes. In Gilead, books and all sources of knowledge, which are referred to as "an oasis of the forbidden" (*THT* 8:147), are banned. Metaphors put constraints on people's access to knowledge by representing it as a forbidden act.

To maintain control over the masses, Gilead's system provokes fear of knowledge and restricts people's behaviour and view of knowledge through the use of such evaluative metaphors KNOWLEDGE IS TEMPTATION and KNOWLEDGE IS GUILT.

4.1.3. KNOWLEDGE IS SIN

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
SIN	Temptation Fall Guilt/Crime	KNOWLEDGE

Each source domain contributes to structuring part of the meaning of the target domain. Together they collaborate to portray knowledge as a sin which tempts the individual and leads to his/her fall. The conceptual metaphor KNOWLEDGE IS SIN brings to minds of recipients Adam's fall from Heaven when he was tempted to know. It creates analogy between Handmaids' and Adam's disobedience, questing after forbidden knowledge, as well as it serves as a warning against reaching Adam's ending. Adam was expelled from Paradise and Handmaids, accused of approaching knowledge, are punished by being expelled to toxic areas outside the borders of Gilead. Obviously, the ruling regime uses metaphor to create correspondences between sin and knowledge to manage people's mind. Through using such evaluative metaphorical structures which relate knowledge to sin and ignorance and unawareness to innocence, people's conception of knowledge is being shaped in the interest of the ruling ideology which denies people their right to know because knowledge would bring about resistance.

4.1.4. KNOWLEDGE IS FALL

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
FALL	→	KNOWLEDGE
DOWN	→	KNOWLEDGE
UP	→	IGNORANCE

KNOWLEDGE IS A FALL is another metaphor diffused by Gilead's ISAs and grasped by Handmaids as expressed in Offred's saying, "[t]he fall was a fall from innocence to knowledge" (*THT* 11:205). Using the orientational metaphor KNOWLEDGE IS FALL, the target concept KNOWLEDGE is given a down orientation through the use of FALL as a source domain. By presenting KNOWLEDGE IS DOWN, orientational metaphor performs an evaluative function. It induces the recipient to negatively think of knowledge as a dragging force which draws people downwards to an inferior rank while ignorance is given an upward position. Thus, metaphor is used as an instrument of enacting power and constraining people's thought, turning them into ideological subjects.

4.2. THOUGHT IS DISEASE

Knowledge, as epistemology confirms, is acquired either through reason or perception (i.e. touch, hear, etc.). Since knowledge is forbidden in Gilead, then restrictions should be put on all sources of knowledge, be it thought or language (spoken and written), to guarantee that only Gileadean values and norms are diffused in society. These constraints are detected in the metaphorical representation THOUGHT IS A DISEASE.

DISEASE	Mappings	THOUGHT
Pain/hurt	Symptom/Impact	Thinking/ideas
Death	Consequences	Ruinous consequences
Manage pain	Treatment	Ration thought

Offred is taught that thinking is a disease that causes pain as depicted in her use of the metaphor verb "hurt" saying, "thinking can hurt your chances, and I intend to last" (*THT* 2:17). She is indoctrinated to control her thought to reduce and combat her pain "thought must be rationed" (*THT* 2:17), otherwise she will die "We are a society dying, said Aunt Lydia, of too much choice" (*THT* 2:35). Employing THOUGHT IS DISEASE metaphor sends a warning against such a threat that could have ruinous consequences and leads to death. Also, such metaphor motivates the recipient to defend himself against such danger and presents "rationing thought" as a natural, commonsensical way of treating disease. It dictates the individual that to survive in life, you have to stop thinking. In such way, metaphor is used to shape people's attitude towards the act of thinking and control their mental activity.

4.3. COMMUNICATION IS CRIME

Not only thought but also written and verbal interactions are restricted in Gilead as depicted in the following metaphorical expressions:

- i) Power holders "decided that even the names of shops were too much temptation" for people that they were effaced and replaced with signs (*THT* 2:35).
- ii) "Writing is in any case forbidden" (*THT* 3:49)
- iii) "Such songs are not sung any more in public, especially the ones that use words like *free*. They are considered too dangerous" (*THT* 4:64).
- iv) What had to be considered a trivial remark in the past "right now it's treason. . . Subversion, sedition, blasphemy, heresy, all rolled into one" (*THT* 10:177).

Source Domain	Mappings	Target Domain
CRIME	→	COMMUNICATION
	Temptation	
	Forbidden	
	Dangerous	
	Treason, subversion, sedition, blasphemy, heresy	

In the previous set of metaphorical linguistic expressions, written words are metaphorically represented as “temptation” and they are “forbidden”; sung words are “dangerous” and a trivial spoken comment is “treason”, “subversion”, “sedition”, “blasphemy” and “heresy”. All these metaphors, insidiously, entrap people of Gilead in a system of norms. They put constraints on people’s conceptualization of written and verbal communication through defining them in terms of a crime or a dangerous, forbidden transgression that tempts the individual to act against the accepted norms and codes of conduct in society. In this sense, COMMUNICATION IS CRIME metaphor performs an evaluative function and comes as a warning against all forms of written and verbal interaction. It also brings about social consequences. It legitimizes acts of surveillance in Gileadean society. In illustration, if communication is represented in terms of a crime, then acts of restricting it, such as surveillance, are justifiable.

4.4. GUARDIANS ARE EYES

The Guardians, who are secret police officers in Gilead, are referred to as “eyes”, as pointed in Offred’s saying “He is an Eye” (*THT* 2:28). The term “Eyes”, in this example, is a part for whole metonymy used to substitute for the Guardians who perform the act of watching citizens’ behaviour. Notice the significance of choosing the part “eye” to refer to the whole “Gaurdians” rather than any other part of the body be it hand, face, brain, arm, etc. It has a referential function as the selected part, which is the “eye”, determines which aspect of the whole is meant to be highlighted. Obviously, it is the aspect of watching which is always associated with the eye in an indication that Guardians are instruments of surveillance.

Source Domain	Mappings	Target Domain
EYES	Surveillance	GUARDIANS

GUARDIANS ARE EYES metaphor draws similarities between the two domains as both perform the act of watching. In Gilead, “Eye” is also frequently used to refer to God such as “Under His Eye” (*THT* 4:54) and “The Eyes of God” (*THT* 11:203) which creates in citizens’ minds association between governmental and divine surveillance. Establishing this kind of association gives State’s surveillance equal supremacy as divine surveillance and thereby acknowledges, legitimizes and naturalizes it. It establishes total control over citizens as people should be aware that “eyes” are everywhere no matter whose eyes are watching them, but they are constantly being watched. They are subjected to an omnipresent gaze, and consequently should adjust their behaviour to the acceptable norms.

4.5. REPRODUCTION IS BATTLE

In the Republic of Gilead, pre-Gileadean knowledge is stigmatized and constraints are put on thought, contact and behaviour to implant new Gileadean values and beliefs. These values are inculcated through metaphors which are recruited for ideological purposes to disseminate new conceptualization of experience. In illustration, to mould women into their reproductive function to serve the interest of the state and raise its birth rate, Gileadean ISAs value women in terms of their reproductive capacity. ISAs in Gilead manage to ideologically

shape women's view of themselves through metaphors used to signify and categorize them into fertile and infertile women. Throughout the novel, the process of reproduction is presented in terms of a battle.

Source Domain	Mappings	Target Domain
BATTLE		REPRODUCTION
Elements of Source Domain	Mappings	Elements of Target Domain
Victory	→	Pregnancy
Failure/Defeat	→	Non-pregnancy
Crowning/Glory/Victory Flag	→	Childbirth
Heroines	→	Pregnant women
Victory parade	→	Boasting
Source of power	→	Belly
Defending source of power	→	Taking care of her pregnancy
Ruin caused after losing a battle	→	Psychological damage of failing to get pregnant

In REPRODUCTION IS BATTLE metaphor, FERTILITY IS VICTORY and STERILITY IS DEFEAT. Pregnant women are represented as the winners / superiors and non-pregnant are the losers / inferiors. This conceptual metaphor governs the linguistic metaphorical expressions exchanged in Gilead as depicted in Aunt Lydia's speech to the Handmaids, in the Red Centre, describing Commanders' wives as "defeated women" by saying "you must realize that they are defeated women. They have been unable..." (*THT* 4:56). Obviously, she means they are defeated in the battle as they have been unable to procreate children. Further, Offred refers to the state of being not pregnant as a failure in the battle of reproduction, saying "each month I watch for blood, fearfully, for when it comes it means failure" (*THT* 5:83). Offred is also taught that the consequences of losing the battle is destruction and ruin "it's only women who can't, who remain...damaged, defective" (*THT* 12:215). On the other hand, fertility is recognized in Gilead as "a position of honour" (*THT* 2:23) and giving birth is metaphorically represented as "the crowning, the glory" (*THT* 8:136) and "a victory" (*THT* 8:137). A pregnant woman is represented as a victorious heroic figure performing a patriotic mission to her country "she's a magic presence to us, an object of envy and desire . . . a flag on a hilltop". Similar to victory parades in which soldiers proudly march and practice military movements to celebrate their victory in wars, a pregnant Handmaid comes "to display herself. She's glowing, rosy, she's enjoying every minute of this" (*THT* 2:36). Due to its being her source of power, her belly "swells triumphantly" and "her hands rest on it as if to defend it, or as if they're gathering something from it, warmth and strength" (*THT* 2:37).

Through this metaphorical configuration, Gilead stimulates Handmaids to conceptualize reproduction as a battle that should be won for a glorious life. It is an evaluative metaphor which provokes in Handmaids positive emotional and mental effects by highlighting the bright aspects of reproduction as a source of pride and power in contrast to the dull image of sterility as a failure and shame. It further creates an attractive, noble and heroic image of pregnant women which prompts women to reproduce and supply the State with children to be trained to become soldiers to support the Republic against rebels. No wonder Handmaids, in Gilead, are metaphorically referred to as "national resource" (*THT* 4:75) as they are part of the country's natural sources which provide them with future fighters. Thus, through defining the role and value of women and categorizing them according to their reproductive capacity, metaphor inculcates beliefs and generates ideological effects to maintain control of the social order. Such metaphors instil and

naturalize the idea that women are for reproduction and legitimize exploiting and misogynistic attitudes towards them such as sexual servitude.

4.6. SEX IS BUSINESS

In The Republic of Gilead, sex is metaphorically referred to in terms of a “Duty” (*THT* 6:105 & 8:127), “business transaction” (*THT* 2:25) and “serious business” (*THT* 6:105). SEX IS BUSINESS metaphor, propagated in Gilead, provides Handmaids with a framework which determines their conceptualization of the sexual act.

Source Domain	Mappings	Target Domain
BUSINESS	→	SEX

Elements of Source Domain	Mappings	Elements of Target Domain
Business partners	→	Sexual partners
Transaction/Duty	→	Sexual relation
Profit	→	Childbirth

It dictates and regulates the relationship between sexual partners as a business relation void of intimacy, passion and romance and governed by a mutual goal to be achieved. By conceptualizing sex in business or economic terms, focus is diverted towards profits expected to be achieved out of this business which is the main concern of the ruling system in Gilead. In this goal-oriented sexual business, offspring birth is the target profit looked forward to from this sexual bargain of ovulation and insemination. Obviously, metaphor also functions as a means of establishing and disguising abusive power relations. SEX IS BUSINESS metaphor reinforces a utilitarian approach to sex by focusing on profit rather than the interpersonal relation between its partners. Men and women are both objectified in this kind of relationship which reduces sexuality to a business transaction in which “men are sex machines” (*THT* 9:153) and women are “for breeding purposes” (*THT* 8:146). They both work for the interest of the system which controls their sexual behaviour and masters their bodies. In another example, the relationship between sexual partners is metaphorically represented as “a bee to a flower” (*THT* 10:170) which reflects a mechanic relation drained of all human passion and only concerned with fulfilling its duty of fertilization. It could be rather identified as a relation where both men and women are sexually abused within the metaphorical framework of SEX IS BUSINESS propagated by the system. Thus, to maintain power relations, Gilead makes use of metaphor to construct reality that serves Gileadean targets, disguises and naturalizes mechanisms of abuse and exploitation of its citizens. That is to say, in representing reproduction as a battle and sex as business, metaphors are used to dress up ugly facets of reproduction and sex concepts like physical exploitation, prostitution and sexual servitude in “pretty, attention-grabbing, or concealing clothes” (Goatly, 1997, p. 159).

4.7. WOMEN ARE THINGS

Negative connotations are attributed to women through the metaphoric discourse used to depict them as objects, plants and containers.

4.7.1. WOMEN ARE OBJECTS

In Gilead, linguistic metaphors such as woman is “a doll” (*THT* 2:26), “a prize pig” (*THT* 5:79), “pearls” (*THT* 8:124), “clothes” (*THT* 12:249) and “torch” (*THT* 14:286) are used abundantly to refer to Handmaids. Obviously, women are not only relegated to their reproductive role, but also they are objectified.

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
Objects	→	Women

FERTILE WOMEN ARE OBJECTS metaphor leads to view Handmaids as passive agents to be owned, exchanged or exploited in a subtle reference to their having no control over their bodies and lives. Offred recurrently refers to herself through this set of metaphors which indicates that the ruling system has successfully fulfilled its indoctrinating task by turning her into a docile and ideological subject who internalized the culture of her society and started to define and judge herself from the epistemic perspective of her society as an object.

4.7.2. WOMEN ARE PLANTS

Aunts, in Gilead, teach Handmaids to be like trees which bring forth fruits saying, “think of yourselves as seeds . . . let’s pretend we’re trees” (*THT* 2:28) and “blessed be the fruit” (*THT* 2:29).

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
PLANTS	→	WOMEN
Elements of Source Domain	Mappings	Elements of Target Domain
Seeds	→	Women
Soil	→	Womb
Fruits	→	Babies

FERTILE WOMEN ARE PLANTS metaphor draws mappings between our knowledge of plants and women. Women are identified as soils for planting seeds and babies are the produced fruits. This plant metaphor for women limits their value and function in life to the process of reproduction which is further emphasized through the use of WOMAN IS CONTAINER metaphor.

4.7.3. WOMAN IS CONTAINER

Woman in Gilead is depicted in the following metaphorical linguistic expressions: “she’s the carrier of life” (*THT* 2:36) “you must be a worthy vessel” (*THT* 4:75), “we are containers” (*THT* 6:107), “sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices” (*THT* 8:146), “a boat with no cargo, a chalice with no wine in it, an oven . . . minus the bun” (*THT* 10:172), “the cradle of the race” (*THT* 14:286). Through ontological metaphors, women are represented in terms of mere “carriers”, “vessels”, “containers”, “chalices”, “boats” and “ovens” to be filled with components which give them value as women in Gilead have no value themselves.

Source Domain	Mapping	Target Domain
Container	→	Woman

This type of metaphor categorizes women into valuable and valueless entities. As long as women are full containers e.g. “carrier of life” and “cradle of the race,” they are regarded as valuable bodies. In contrast, empty containers-- e.g. “a boat with no cargo, a chalice with no wine in it, an oven . . . minus the bun”-- are no good and worthless beings. This metaphorical classification brings about social consequences by generating specific reactions towards infertile women such as feelings of prejudice and discriminative behaviours. Not only could metaphors cause fertility discrimination, but also it could impact and alter women’s perception of themselves. It could evoke feelings of disgrace and debasement in non-pregnant women. Referring to Handmaids using metonymic expressions such as “two-legged wombs” (*THT* 8:146) and “wandering womb” (*THT* 9:156) makes their reproductive capacity the most remarkable aspect of their identity. Offred internalizes Gilead’s view of Handmaids and

begins to present herself in terms of her reproductive organs saying “I am thirty-three years old. . . I have viable ovaries” (*THT* 9:153). Her linguistic metaphorical expressions show that the system has stripped her real identity and built into her a new degraded one. In other words, it altered her knowledge of herself.

4.8. SIZE IS QUALITY/VALUE

Offred metaphorically compares between pregnant and non-pregnant women saying, “we . . . go out again, past the pregnant woman and her partner, who beside her looks spindly, shrunken; as we all do” (*THT* 2:36). In this comparison, representing non-pregnant women as “shrunken” in comparison to pregnant women who “swells triumphantly” is an expression of SIZE IS QUALITY/VALUE conceptual metaphor. It stimulates the mind to think of FULL IS VALUE and EMPTY IS VALUELESS which emphasizes Gilead’s view of women as valueless containers. Also, Offred’s description “shrunken” and “swells” is an expression of the orientational metaphor FULL IS HIGH in contrast to EMPTY IS LOW.

Source Domain	Mappings	Target Domain
Quality/Value	→	Size
Up/High/Value	→	Full
Down/Low/Valueless	→	Empty

Metaphors influence the way we orient target concepts and refer to them. Employing orientational metaphors which attribute spatial features (i.e. HIGH - LOW) to target concepts also performs an evaluative function. It supplies target concepts such as fullness or fertility with an up orientation and gives a lowering down orientation to emptiness and sterility. Thus, women are valued according to the size of their body. A full body, which signifies fertility, highly elevates and exalts women while an empty body, which is a sign of infertility, debases them and reduces their value to a lower rank. Such metaphors further disguise relations of women exploitation. WOMAN IS CONTAINER and SIZE IS QUALITY/VALUE metaphors stimulate women to gain value through being filled as marked by Offred’s saying, “what we prayed for was emptiness, so we would be worthy to be filled: with . . . semen and babies” (*THT* 11:204). Being filled with babies has turned to be the target of Handmaids as much as it is the ruling system’s target. Metaphor has obviously united Handmaids and the regime for a common end through influencing Handmaids’ thought to correspond to that of the system. It creates ideological subjects who will reproduce the social order of Gilead. In other words, it establishes a relation of submission of the Handmaids to the ruling system through diffusing an ideological representation of reality, internalized by handmaids, that serves the system’s interests.

5. Findings and Implications

The ruling system in the Republic of Gilead attempts to control citizens through turning them into ideological subjects. To control people and drive them to play their assigned role in the process of production, Gilead draws on diffusing a kind of knowledge that propagates its values and practices. Obviously, language in Gilead does not only reflect the working of power, but it also enacts power over people. Through studying metaphorical structures, this article reveals how language shapes people’s knowledge, shares certain social constructions of reality as the natural order of things, controls people’s conduct and consequently enacts ideological power.

As revealed from the analysis of metaphorical structures in *THT*, people's conceptualization of reality is governed through manipulating the kind of metaphorical themes shared in their society. Some metaphorical representations of reality are employed as means of diffusing ideological positions and controlling people's social relations. According to Gilead's ideological principles, knowledge is a threat which might bring about resistance. So, to keep the status quo and to keep the masses unaware of their savage and abusive life conditions, citizens should be kept ignorant. That is why KNOWLEDGE is metaphorically represented in terms of TEMPTATION that should be resisted, FALL that should be avoided, GUILT to be denied and SIN which brings ruinous consequences. Mappings drawn between the concept of knowledge and such source domains impact people's view of knowledge in interest of the dominant ideology which seeks to keep the masses unenlightened. Gilead's ruling system uses metaphor to draw or rather generate similarities between citizens' sin of knowledge and Adam's sin in Heaven to intimidate people, evoke emotions of fear of knowledge and consequently control their view of reality and restrain their pursuit of knowledge. Such conceptual metaphors produce social consequences such as legitimizing restrictions on all sources of knowledge. Thinking is depicted in terms of a threatening disease that should be eliminated and written and verbal communication is rhetorically referred to as a crime. Thus, metaphors are used to devalue all forms of knowledge but Gilead's.

The analysis of metaphor in *THT* further shows the significant role of metaphor in ingraining Gilead's knowledge in people's mind. REPRODUCTION IS BATTLE metaphor is one of the most pervasive metaphors in Gilead propagated to alter women's view of themselves and their value in terms of their reproductive capacity and in the interest of Gilead's target of raising its birth rate and maintaining the status quo. In Gilead, SEX IS BUSSINESS and REPRODUCTION IS BATTLE metaphors legitimize illegitimate power relations of exploitation and sexual abuse of both men and women who are denied control over their bodies and sexual behaviour. Sexual politics is diffused in society through such metaphors which present an ideological representation of the concepts of sex and sexual relation. They set the principles of sexual behaviour between men and women to achieve national goals and profits. In Gilead, metaphorical representation determines reality. It shapes women's identity, value and role as women are regarded as important national resource for maintaining control of the social order. Women's value is metaphorically depicted in terms of FULL IS HIGH and EMPTY IS LOW metaphors as women are regarded as mere containers void of self-value. This kind of metaphors exalts fertile women, evokes feelings of prejudice and discriminative acts towards infertile women and unites all women in pursuit of a common target which is the target of their ruling regime. Propagating metaphorical representations such as WOMEN ARE TREES and WOMEN ARE OBJECTS insidiously stimulates women to act according to the desirable standards of society to be regarded as beneficial and valuable. In other words, they are interpellated by internalizing Gilead's view of women and acting according to the norms and goals of society. Obviously, women internalized Gilead's knowledge imposed on them and began to view and present themselves in terms of their reproductive organs as "two legged wombs" and "viable ovaries." Metaphor, through the kind of knowledge it generates, is used as a means of enacting power. It objectifies women and creates an "it" of them and thereby turns them into ideological subjects. Atwood's novel is an embodiment of Althusseur's view of power and how theocratic ideological state apparatuses could make use of metaphorical language to reproduce a relation of submission to the established order and create subjects who reproduce the social order as admitted by the protagonist in the novel saying, "I want to keep on living, in any form. I resign my body

freely, to the uses of others. They can do what they like with me. I am abject. I feel, for the first time, their true power” (*THT* 14:298).

Thus, metaphor analysis shows the way in which power operates in Gilead through controlling metaphors to shape people’s knowledge. It analyzes the way in which metaphor could alter people’s view of themselves and their world. It explores the way in which it could bring about social and political consequences such as legitimizing surveillance and compulsory copulation. In other words, the analysis unveils how metaphor could manipulate people’s knowledge and turn them into ideological subjects who willingly fulfill their prescribed role in the institution to which they belong.

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