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İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE PROGRAMME

WOMEN OF VARDO AS THE "NONHUMAN" OTHERS IN *THE MERCIES* BY KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE

MA THESIS

Onur POLAT

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SUPERVISOR

Asst. Prof. Dr. Javid ALİYEV

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ETHICAL STATEMENT

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- I have obtained the data, information and documents provided within the thesis within the framework of academic and ethical rules,
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PREFACE

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ÖZET

KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE'IN THE MERCIES'İNDE "İNSAN DIŞI" ÖTEKİLER OLARAK VARDO'NUN KADINLARI

Kadınlar tarih boyunca din, ataerkil bakış açısı ve toplum tarafından erkeklerden aşağı ve "insan olmayan" varlıklar olarak görülmüştür. Bu, kadınlığın standartlarını ve sınırlarını belirlemiş ve bu çizgilerin dışına çıkan her kadın "insan dışı" olarak etiketlenmiştir. Halihazırda "insan dışı" olarak etiketlenmiş olmaları, cadılıkla suçlanmalarını kolaylaştırmış ve sonucunda "insan dışı" olarak sunulmalarını "iki katına" çıkarmıştır. Kiran Millwood Hargrave'in *The Mercies* adlı eserinde büyücülükle, dışlanmışlıkla ve sapkınlıkla suçlanan kadınların "insan olmayan" varlıklara dönüşmesi, insan merkezli ve erkek merkezli yaklaşımların kadın olgusuna belirlediği zemin üzerinden kadının "insan dışı" olması çerçevesinde izlenir. Sosyal olarak ayrımcılığa uğrayan ve insanlaştırılmamış kadınlara erkek hegemonyası, din ve sosyal normlar tarafından "insan dışı" özellikler verilir. Kadının "insanlıktan çıkarılmasının" izlerini sürmek için geleneksel hümanizm, insanmerkezcilik ve erkek merkezcilik arasındaki bağlantılar erkek şovenizmi ve erkek merkezli bakış açısıyla irdelenmelidir. Geleneksel hümanizm her ne kadar tüm cinsiyetleri eşit kabul etse ve onlara eşit haklar sağlamalıysa da, erkek egemen yapısı, konunun insan merkezli, hatta erkek merkezli bir bakış açısıyla ele alınmasına neden olmuştur. Androsentrik görüş, kadınları marjinal bir konuma yerleştirir ve kadınları "insan olmayan" olarak etiketlemek için erkek hegemonyasına olanak sağlamıştır. Kiran Millwood Hargrave'in *The Mercies*'inde, köydeki tüm erkekleri yok eden yıkıcı bir fırtınanın ardından, kendi kendine yeten ve geleneklerine bağlı kadınlar, Hıristiyan ve erkek egemenliği tarafından dışlanmış, "insan olmayan" olarak görülmüşlerdir. Cadılıkla ilgili asılsız suçlamalarla sonuçlanan birçok sıradan kadın, erkek merkezli kültürün devamlılığı adına kazıklarda yakılmıştır.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsanlık dışı, İnsan olmayan, Büyücülük, Cadılık, Ataerkil, Erkek Merkezcilik, İnsan Merkezcilik

ABSTRACT

WOMEN OF VARDO AS THE "NONHUMAN" OTHERS IN *THE MERCIES* BY KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE

Women have been seen as inferior to men, and "nonhumans" through the history by religion, patriarchy, and society. This has set the standards and the limits of womanhood, and any woman steps out these lines has been labelled as "nonhuman". Being already labelled as "nonhuman" makes it easy for them to be accused of witchcraft, and they can easily be presented as "double nonhumans". Transformation of women who are accused of witchcraft, of being outcasts and heretics into "nonhuman" beings in Kiran Millwood Hargrave"s The Mercies is traced within the framework of the women being "nonhuman" through the ground settled by anthropocentric and androcentric approaches to the women phenomenon. Socially discriminated and non humanized women are given "nonhuman" traits by male hegemony, religion, and social norms. In order to trace the marks of the "nonhumanization" of women, links between traditional humanism, anthropocentricism, and androcentricim must be examined with male chauvinism, and male centric point of view. Although traditional humanism takes all genders as equal and should provide them same rights, its male dominant structure caused the subject matter to be taken from an anthropocentric, and even an androcentric view. Androcentric view put women into a marginalized place and grants male hegemony to label women as "nonhumans". In The Mercies by Kiran Millwood Hargrave, after a devastating storm that wipes all the men in the village out, self-sufficing women who had bonds with their traditions were seen as outcasts, and "nonhumans" by the Christian and male dominance. Resulting in false accusations of witchcraft, many women were burnt at stakes in favor of continuity of male centric culture.

Onur POLAT, 2023

Keywords: Nonhuman, Inhuman, Witchcraft, Witch, Patriarchy, Androcentrism, Anthropocentrism

INTRODUCTION

In the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe, several works explored women's skills. The genre-organized texts were printed and handwritten. Readers across the world were familiar with European concepts like "illustrious ladies" (Feminae illustres), "learned women" (Feminae doctae), and "the tenth muse" (Musa decimal). During the Renaissance, "feminae doctae" and "feminae illustres" were popular (Alenius, 2011, p.4). There were earlier examples of skilled women, but the drive to recognize, classify, and elevate them appears to have originated during the Renaissance among progressive male learning organizations. "Letter on Humanism" of Heidegger (1947; Engl. Trans. 2001) is a key source for current Western philosophy on this particular subject. The German philosopher connects the etymological roots of the human in the Roman notion of humanitas (242) and emphasizes on the historical importance of humanism. Heidegger thereby highlights man's basic character. Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively. It is based on the belief that individuals have inherent worth and dignity and that society should be organized in a way that promotes human flourishing and fulfillment. The nature of humanism is not inherently masculine or feminine, as it is a philosophy that applies to all humans regardless of gender. However, it is true that historically, many of the prominent figures in humanism have been men. This is largely due to the fact that women have been historically excluded from educational opportunities and positions of power, making it more difficult for them to participate in intellectual and philosophical pursuits no matter how humanism unites all humanity, regardless of gender, to have equality on the issue. Because of this discrimination against anything/anyone rather than men, humanism holds anthropocentric features within, and it is better to look at the subject matter through the anthropocentric window.

Anthropocentrism is the view that human beings are the central or most significant beings in the universe. This worldview has often been criticized for

ignoring the interests and needs of non-human animals, ecosystems, and the environment as a whole. In a similar way, anthropocentrism can also lead to the subordination of women and their interests, as women have historically been viewed as secondary to men in many societies. Anthropocentric thinking often promotes a hierarchical view of the world, in which human beings are seen as superior to other creatures and women are seen as inferior to men. This type of thinking brings the subject matter to an androcentric point, and has negative consequences for women, as it leads to discrimination, marginalization, and oppression.

Androcentrism, on the other hand, is defined as "male-centeredness" and "male-centered thinking" that assumes men are superior to women, while anthropocentrism is defined as "human centeredness" or "human-centered thinking" that assumes people are superior to nature. According to Warren, for instance, an androcentric social organization is one that is built on hierarchies of male power, and an androcentric conceptual bias is one that ignores or downplays claims regarding women's status, such as the links between different forms of male supremacy (2000, p.158). It should also be noted that certain idioms and phrases provide additional insight into these ideas. Assuming that "only humans are ethically considerable" is an example of "human chauvinism," which is defined as "the promotion of human superiority" (Warren, 2000, p.88). Warren uses a quote from Eva Feder Kittay to critique sameness-based models of social justice and equality: "the implicit use of men — middle class white man more specifically — as the benchmark against which equality is evaluated." (2000, p.188). Using terms like "male bias" and "male-gender bias" to characterize incorrect claims about women and incorrect generalizations about humanity is common to characterize a science that in its observations pays no or less attention to female behavior; to characterize canonical Western philosophy because it neglects "the significance of care and care practices;" and to characterize a society that privileges men over women (Warren, 2000, p.113-158).

According to Sandra Lipsitz, it was in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Society from 1911 that the term "androcentrism" was first used. There Gilman exposes some of the structural elements of this idea. In an androcentric society, for instance, males are idolized, and women are relegated to supporting roles. It is only in the realm of procreation that women are given central

importance in an androcentric society. For this purpose, it is necessary to differentiate between male bias, male chauvinism, and androcentrism (or male- centrism or centeredness) in order to clarify some of the meanings connected with 'androcentrism. The very use of these words conjures up mental pictures of physical space. A figure, or something else, is located dead center. When applied to the dynamic between the sexes, Val Plumwood's model of centrism reveals a masculine Center and a Feminine Periphery through the following: the radical exclusion of men from women by dictating that women lack defining male characteristics; the homogenization of women by stating that all women are the same; the denial of women by stating that they are are only the backdrop to male life; and the incorporation of women by stating that they are defined after men.

Since the first interpretation of the woman as a phenomenon, being isolated from the man and being seen as a completely different creature from what she is, the inability to understand both their biological structure and their mental way of thinking has made them “nonhuman” since eternity. This “nonhumanization” has been taken granted throughout the history, and moreover, false accusations of witchcraft have doubled the “nonhumanization” of women in social arrangements and mindsets. Women, whose places, and boundaries were clearly delineated within the framework of patriarchal rules, became human only as long as they were allowed. When what they did or thought went a little beyond these limits, it only hastened their transformation into “nonhuman” through the accusations of witchcraft.

To determine whether these “nonhuman witch women” are human or inhuman, one needs to compare reality to fantasy. These women were suspected of doing things that regular people don't understand. These activities range from healing with medicine to simply sufficing themselves and providing their families. These charges surface due to fear and societal constraints. Fear of common people and not being able to grasp how women may accomplish beyond their given traits, such as curing sicknesses, being adequate for themselves and their family, or merely behaving like a lady, lead people to see terrible demonic beings. All the inhuman features that are given to women made it easy to build a nonhuman perception of them in people's imaginations.

In modern civilizations, allegations of witchcraft may be used to convey or settle social conflicts, but in premodern Western civilization, they had quite different results. During that time, baseless suspicions and a persecuting mindset gave witchcraft a horrible stigma. Allegations of witchcraft help contemporary cultures communicate or resolve social disputes. In the 11th century, Westerners began associating witchcraft with heresy and the Devil. By the 14th century, dread of heresy and Satan added diabolism to the customary witch accusation, maleficium. This was done by fearing heresy. Due to their activities and reputation as representatives of the Devil, they were a distinct species that could be recognized from humans in many ways. From the 14th through the 18th centuries, it was believed that witches rejected Jesus Christ's divinity, worshiped the Devil, made bargains with demonic spirits, worked with them to perform magic, and defiled sacred icons and the Eucharist. Despite no proof, this notion persisted (Holy Communion). Many people believed witches took infants and killed them to devour them or extract their essence for magical rituals, that they shifted shapes to nonhuman forms or disguised in a different human form, that they had family bonds with animals in the form of another animal, and that they flew on broomsticks at night to their secret gatherings, where they had sexual rituals and intercourse with the devil.

For all these individuals living beyond society's restrictions, doing the unknown and inexplicable, or simply being women running their own enterprises, being labeled a “nonhuman” creature became easy. The creator imagined this conceptual fabric. No one has ever been able to complete the notion of the "witch and the inhuman." Despite this, the witch's misdeeds became law. Even while witch hunts appeared varied throughout history, they had a consistent religious and legal foundation. Local priests and judges were frequently not well-versed in religion or law, but they shared a culture that believed these women were inhuman in the same way our society believes molecules are real.

In this thesis, women of a distant Norwegian village Vardo in Kiran Millwood Hargrave’s *The Mercies* will be examined through their so-called “nonhuman” beings. Throughout history, the concept of witchcraft has fascinated many societies but does not reflect reality. Witchcraft is a historical shame that

occurs as a result of direct or indirect accusation of dark magic and witchcraft in the fantasy world of men, of institutions such as Christianity, and even of their fellows such as women who have distanced themselves from their selves and internalized patriarchy with learned helplessness, especially when women contradict the social norms. Women have been accused of witchcraft, presented as "nonhuman" beings as they started to accomplish what is not expected from them. In many resources their "nonhuman" representation grants its place by showing them as some "posthuman" creatures and this is just a justification and a disguise of their "double-nonhumanization."

According to the simplest definition, a posthuman being is formed by going beyond the quality boundaries that are expected and required from human beings, and by removing his/her own limits and loading himself/herself with new qualities in very different horizons. According to this definition, women, as beings whose borders are already narrowly drawn, are actually treated as "non-human" beings only when they want to be self-sufficient and to have full control of their own ideas and actions. In fact, while they want to be normal human beings, the fact that they are already known as "nonhuman" has led them to go beyond the desired limits and become "double nonhuman."

This posthumanization process has actually only justified a negative quality to women when they do anything that any individual can do but not expected from women. The biggest reasons for women to become "nonhuman" and so "posthuman" individuals are patriarchy, religion and envy. In any case, women who were oppressed by male hegemony were easily branded as witches in the ignorant ages and in dark minds. As mentioned, the woman is a tool designed only for procreation or to meet male needs according to patriarchy and religion. Apart from that, almost all the remaining qualities have allowed them to become "nonhuman" and thus "justified posthuman" beings. A woman can only be a wife to a man, take care of her husband and family, cannot work or study. In short, she cannot improve these limited qualities. In other words, if we say that they are already below zero as "nonhumans", they cannot even reach zero to be human.

Furthermore, they get even more negative and become "double nonhuman." What's even worse about this is that most women embrace it and believe that the

wishes of religion and patriarchy are their standards and move away from their own womanhood. This is an even more painful truth that other women who accuse women of witchcraft and turn them into "nonhumans" by showing them as outcasts and pointing them as targets. Some women who have adopted their own otherness have become soldiers of male and religious hegemony by alienating themselves from their own selves. Although women are often labeled as witches by male-dominated authorities, patriarchy has reinforced these accusations many times with the accusations of other women. Women who were jealous of a good feature of their neighbors and envied their life, accused them of witchcraft and caused them to be killed. For example, on a good day, those who gave birth with the healing abilities of their neighbors or who were healed by women who were called "wise women" in the society, claimed that when things went wrong, when they lost their children at birth or when they could not find the remedy they expected, it was not natural and was witchcraft.

We see all these examples clearly in Hargrave's *The Mercies*. On Christmas Eve 1617, as the men of Vardo, Norway, were fishing, a storm hit. Women kept the home running, fished, built, herded reindeer, and slaughtered since no men survived. King Christian IV of Denmark and Norway introduced anti-witchcraft legislation in 1618 modeled on those of King James VI of Scotland. He preyed on the Sámi in the far north and hundreds of Norwegian women. John Cunningham was sent to Finnmark for this. He presided over 52 cases and was happy to see that some Vardo women embraced Sámi funeral rituals in their mourning after a storm. Cunningham ruled Finnmark. Some widows were tried in court and burnt at the stake. Hargrave's historical fiction novel *The Mercies* allows readers to see how the ordinary women of a town turn into nonhuman beings in the eyes of the society and patriarchy. On the one side, Maren, who lost all the men of her family and discovered that the feeling called love for a woman is not actually felt only for a man, and Ursa, who cannot feel the warmth of her loved ones and is not valued by her father and husband, on another side, Kirsten who wants to get rid of the woman roles assigned to her and lead herself and other women around her, on the other side, Sami member Diina, who tries to stick to her family heritage traditions, have always shared the same fate at the end of the story: being accused of witchcraft. Some could escape, some succumbed to

patriarchy and were killed, while the fate of others was left to our inference. The women, who were pushed out of their borders by a storm and trying to continue their struggle for life on their own, upset patriarchy, religion and other women within themselves, were not understood, and as a result, they started their own "nonhumanization" processes.

In the first chapter of the thesis, the relation between being a woman and "nonhuman" and "so called posthuman" will be discussed through various approaches such as traditional humanism, anthropocentrism, and androcentrism. These arguments will hold the basis of the questions; "What made those women witches?" and "How did they turn into "nonhuman" beings?" Further chapter will present some evidence and information on the origins of the false accusations of witches, witchcraft, and "the others" accused of witchcraft. In the final chapter, Hargrave's book *The Mercies* will be analyzed, and the evidence found on how women of Vardo falsely accused of witchcraft and so to say "nonhuman entities" will be presented.

FIRST CHAPTER

1. APPROACHES TO THE "NON-HUMAN"

1.1. Philosophical Posthumanism

A philosophical posthumanist approach requires an account to have a posthumanist sensitivity in addition to a postanthropocentric and a postdualistic one, since these three characteristics should be handled together. Let's define each word carefully. Thus, the humanist tradition, which was founded on a generalized and universalized view of the human, is undermined by posthumanism, which emphasizes an appreciation for the diversity of human experience. Post- anthropocentrism is the practice of shifting the focus away from humanity and toward other species. This shift is motivated by the recognition that most historical explanations of humanity have positioned humans at the top of a value hierarchy and accorded them ontological precedence. Post-dualism is predicated on the realization that dualism has been used as an inflexible means of defining identity, based on a narrow concept of the self and actualized in symbolic dichotomies such as "us"/"them," "friend"/"foe," "civilized"/"barbarian," and so on (Ferrando, 2019, p.54). What prompted this serious reexamination of humanity? Simply put, where does philosophical posthumanism originate from? The process of discovering family connections may be done in several ways. One way to do this is to trace the history of the phrase from its inception backwards. The origins of posthumanism may be found in the postmodern era, namely with the term's creation by Ihab Hassan (1977). By the end of the 1990s, a distinct perspective on the posthuman transition had grown out of feminist contemplation, nourished by gender studies, cultural studies, and literary criticism. Katherine K. Hayles' critical feminist manifesto How We Became Posthuman (1999) is widely credited as the seminal publication that first introduced the concept of what would become known as Critical Posthumanism to

the attention of the academic establishment. Cultural Posthumanism surged in tandem with Critical Posthumanism, with books like Posthuman Bodies (Halberstam and Livingston, 1995) and the reader in Cultural Criticism Posthumanism (Badmington 2000). In the decade after the year 2000, posthumanism developed into its own line of philosophical inquiry by fusing previously separate areas of thought, including the humanities, science, and ecology. Since philosophical posthumanism is a constantly evolving concept that is attracting a lot of interest both within and beyond the academy, it is important that this trend not be seen as a monolithic movement but rather as a diverse set of perspectives. On the one hand, there's the posthuman deconstruction of binaries like "alive" and "not-alive," "human" and "nonhuman," "physical" and "virtual," "black" and "white," "nature" and "culture," and so on. On the other, there's the New Materialisms movement, a distinctly feminist approach that delves deeply into the nature of matter by examining fields like quantum mechanics, cosmology, and theoretical physics. Here, we can speak more directly to the stream of Philosophical Posthumanism that is redefining the Western hegemonic discourse, in an all-encompassing effort to reacquaint ourselves with each area of philosophical inquiry in light of this newfound awareness of the limits of previous humanistic, anthropocentric, and dualistic assumptions.

Posthumanism is generally understood to be a post-humanism and a post-anthropocentrism. For example, The Posthuman (2013) of Rosi Braidotti's; a seminal work in the field of philosophical posthumanism, is divided into four chapters: “Posthuman Humanities: Life Beyond Theory,” The Inhuman: Life Beyond Death," “Post-Anthropocentrism: Life Beyond Species,” and “Posthumanism: Life Beyond Self.” The importance of this map lies in its elucidation of the basic tenets of Philosophical Posthumanism, which de-emphasizes humanity in favor of the "nonhuman" and the "other" (that is, all the human categories that historically have not been recognized as such). On the other hand, it makes use of a critical post- dualism that rejects the idea of a clean break between life and death, and it extends its consideration to the potential political and genetic developments of posthumanities in the future. Thus, the fields of study formerly known as "human sciences" or "humanities" may now be renamed "post-human sciences" or "post- humanities" to reflect this shift. These points were effectively stated by Robert

Pepperell, an early proponent of the posthuman philosophical approach, in his essay "The Posthuman Manifesto," which appeared as a supplement to his 1995 book, The Posthuman Condition: Consciousness Beyond the Brain.

First, It's become abundantly clear that Earthlings are no longer the center of the cosmos. The Humanists have not come around to accepting this.

Second, all of humanity's technical advancements are aimed towards making the human race obsolete.

Third, the belief in Human Being is one of many ideas that has become superfluous in the Posthuman period.

Fourth, much like God, the existence of humans depends on how much we give them value. (2003: 177)

In Pepperell's view, post-anthropocentrism is intrinsically linked to the decline of religion and the corresponding decline of humanity due to technological advancements. Here, we'll use a parenthetical remark to point out that the posthuman overthrow of human primacy isn't supposed to be followed by the rise of other primacies, like the machine primacy. In a broader sense, philosophical posthumanism might be seen as a position that rejects both exclusivism and universalism. Without relying on dualisms, it might be adopted as a philosophy of mediation that seeks to bring about peace between life's many interpretations. By avoiding overt forms of dualism and antithesis, it debunks the mythology surrounding ontological dichotomies in a manner characteristic of postmodern thought. Posthumanism may be seen as a post-exceptionalism since it is not preoccupied with establishing the uniqueness of its own proposition. In The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture (1985; Trans. Engl. 1991), philosopher Gianni Vattimo recognized the "dissolution of the new" as a defining characteristic of postmodern thought. In order to propose anything "new," it is necessary to pin down the topic at hand and provide a response to the question "New to what?" But what is deemed "new" in one community may be common knowledge in another. Furthermore, hegemonic viewpoints fail to recognize the discontinuities hidden within every discursive construction since they do not openly identify all the resistance standpoints which coexist inside any unique cultural-historical paradigm. The stakes of posthumanism go well beyond the profound deconstruction of the

Western discourse's "core" that has occurred at the hands of its "peripheries" (feminists, black, queer, postcolonial theorists, to name a few). Posthumanism, by definition, rejects the singularity of the center in all its hegemonic and resisting manifestations (Ferrando 2012). Posthumanism may be able to identify focal points, but these points are fluid, mobile, and transient. To maintain its neutrality, it must adopt viewpoints that are as diverse, nuanced, and all-encompassing as possible; for example, avoiding exclusivism.

Martin Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism" (1947; Engl. Transl. 2001) is a crucial source for understanding the modern development of Western philosophy. Humanism, which is not limited to Renaissance humanism, but is rooted farther back in Roman humanism, is discussed in this book as the German philosopher traces the etymological origins of the human in the Roman idea of humanitas (242) and focuses on the historical relevance of humanism. Heidegger draws our attention to the importance of man's essential nature by doing so.

Roman Humanism was the earliest form of humanism, and all subsequent forms assume the universal "essence" of man to be self-evident. For all intents and purposes, man is an animal. This is a philosophical interpretation of the Greek zon logon echon, rather than a literal translation. However, the ultimate question that remains is whether or not the animalitas dimension is where man's essence is found. If we continue to separate man as a living being from plants, animals, and God, are we truly getting closer to the core of what it is to be human? (243)

Rather of establishing the human's essence via the conventional contrast or opposition with "others," as Heidegger does in this paragraph, Philosophical Posthumanism consists exactly in reaching the human through other tactics (not only plants, beasts, and Gods, but also women, slaves, and machines, among many others).

Even Heidegger, who famously said, "Man is not the Lord of creatures," retains some anthropocentrism. It is man who tends to the flock of Existence. A human being loses nothing by accepting this "less," and in fact wins everything by discovering the reality of Being (ivi: 254). Man may no longer be the "Lord of beings," but he is still the "shepherd of Being." For Heidegger, "Thinking achieves the link of Being to the essence of man... through thinking Being comes to language"

(255). The home of Being is Language. Humans make their home there. The keepers of this house are the thinkers and the wordsmiths (ivi: 238). This repositioning of man, this newly acknowledged position, yet rests on an ontological advantage, although one that is not absolute but rather relational. There has been a sea change in the Western hegemonic philosophical tradition, which has posited and supported the absolute onto-epistemological privilege of the human. Still, being a post-humanism, Posthumanism does not take a position in any kind of hierarchy. From a posthuman vantage point, the contrasts between humans and other sentient beings are not more significant than those between humans and non-sentient beings. Consider the work of Italian posthumanist philosopher Roberto Marchesini, namely his book II Tramonto dell'Uomo. The human "is no more the emanation or the manifestation of man, but the product of man's hybridization with non-human otherness," as stated in La Prospettiva Post-Umanista (2009). We might restate this idea as follows: because "man" is no longer a universal notion, "man's" manifestation in the human is no longer the human. A deconstruction of this kind is necessary in order to understand humanity as a hybridization process with the nonhuman.

From the standpoint of the metanarrative, such a criticism takes the form of a "post" rather than the introduction of a new word. Using the symbolic concave mirror logics of "we are right, since they were wrong" or "our philosophy is new, because their philosophy had become outdated," posthumanism does not maintain an antagonism to the prior episteme. As a result of this mindset, the very thing that was meant to be opposed becomes central to the hermeneutics of the new paradigm: the "post-modern" concept is posed through a rejection of certain defining elements of Modernism, just as Modernism can trace its own narratives by opposing elements related to the Enlightenment and Romanticism (Lewis, 2007). It's possible that telling the tale of ideas via their failures seems oversimplified, but in fact a more nuanced narrative may be pieced together by seeing the development of ideas and movements as an evolutionary or metamorphic process. Still, it's worth noting that Western paradigms typically establish a movement's legitimacy by contrasting it with earlier paradigms. This epistemological shift from one scientific paradigm to another is how Thomas Kuhn (1922-96) describes the conclusion of a crisis in his seminal work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962): "A crisis may end with the

emergence of a new paradigm and with the ensuing battle over its acceptance" (2012: 84). It's worth noting that while Kuhn considered the feature of a single dominant paradigm to be exclusive to the scientific disciplines, the process of the shift may be applicable in the social sciences as well.

When it comes to Posthumanism, however, a ritual slaughter is superfluous. The evolution of posthumanism is in a continuous conversation with past, present, and future acknowledgements and possibilities; it does not reject the prior episteme, but rather continues down the path established by postmodern and post-structuralist activities. Posthumanism has inherent feminist horizontal practices and methods, so it is possible to appear as a generation rather than as a symbolic death followed by a redemption. Since Posthumanism does not demarcate a distinction between "theory," "poiesis," and "praxis," reflecting on its metanarratives is especially important since the processes engaged in exposing knowledge, production, and action are organically and extrinsically cohabiting each other. Consequently, Posthumanism's metanarratives are both a recognition and a location, since the posthuman's methods of accessing the written histories and herstories of ideas are just as important as its theoretical formulations in overcoming dualism.

1.1.1. Post-dualism

Posthumanism may be seen in terms of the movement away from anthropocentrism, humanism, and dualism. We have examined some of the ancestry of the words post-humanism and post-anthropocentrism, as well as their contributions and limitations, in the establishment of Philosophical Posthumanism. Where does post-dualism fit in? The third reference phrase, post-dualism, has not been explored to its full potential and requires more thought. Before delving into this topic, we must raise the question: What form of dualism is dismantled by Philosophical Posthumanism? Although not all forms of dualism need a hierarchical structure, Western philosophy has often seen the two poles as complementary, with one being viewed as good and the other as negative. To be more specific, the dualism dismantled by Philosophical Posthumanism is a rigid, absolute dualism, not the fluid, moving, and ever-changing dualism that is practiced, for example, in the Tao. In

Taoism, the yin-yang concept is not "what we would commonly term a dualism," as philosopher Alan Watts puts it; rather, it is "an explicit duality reflecting an underlying oneness" (1976: 26). For instance, the sixth-century BCE-approximate author of the classic work Tao Te Ching (attributed to Lao-Tzu) holds water in the highest regard as the ideal metaphor for the Tao's comprehensive dynamic equilibrium.

When it comes to deconstructing the human entirely, post-dualism is an essential intermediate stage. As a society, we may get beyond racism, sexism, and even anthropocentrism; nevertheless, if we don't address the strict type of dualistic thinking that allows for hierarchical sociopolitical constructs, then other forms of discrimination, such as depicting robots as the next "others," may develop. Is there a connection between the ancestry of post-dualism and that of philosophical posthumanism? Given that a similar onto-epistemological approach can be found in ancient Asian traditions like Buddhism, Jainism, and Advaita Vedanta, we will turn to these and other non-Western sources to gain entry to post-dualism. Posthumanism, in reality, stretches across the borders of the academic, technical, and scientific spheres, and may be genealogically traced in many forms of knowledges and understandings. There is a growing interest in nondualism among academics who are attempting to reconcile new findings with traditional thinking. For example, the word "interconnectedness" is employed in Western science to describe a worldview that rejects Cartesian dualism and is thus in line with the posthuman perspective. Fritjof Capra's seminal book The Tao of Physics (1975) paved the way for such an approach when it described "the similarities between the worldview of physicists and mystics" and "the deep harmony" between thoughts and concepts as reflected in quantum physics and Eastern traditions (Capra, 1975, p.10). Similarly, many developed nations, including the United States, are seeing a surge in interest in mindfulness and meditation as a means of coping with the stresses of modern life (Burke and Gonzalez 2011). Should Posthumanism and nondualism be assimilated? The modern attempt to rethink science, technology, and spirituality in a natural-cultural continuum recognizes the ontology of the cyborg, to use Donna Haraway's terminology, and highlights Posthumanism as a suited philosophical platform for discussion. They are not the same thing at all. Since the episteme has repeatedly been

dualistic within hegemonic systems of thought such as human/animal, east/west, female/male, black/white, body/mind, master/slave, human/machine, colonizer/colonized to be considered as sets of a classical mind, posthumanists recognize their own perspectives as post-dualistic rather than non-dualistic.

Posthumanism, in keeping with its deconstructive tenets, recognizes that such dualistic presumptions cannot be readily disregarded, and that the effects of historical redundancy on reductionist and dualistic methods in human cognition and behavior are still ubiquitous.

1.1.2. (De)humanizing

Is "human" something we think about (a noun) or something we do (a verb)? To begin, it must be stressed that "human" functions better as a verb, "to humanize," than as a noun. At illustrate this, we'll look to the history of gender, using a phrase from feminist scholar Donna Haraway: "Gender is a verb, not a noun" (2004: 328–29). Because the same hegemonic subjectivities had symbolic access to the normativization of epistemic roles and social functions assigned to different genders, these same subjectivities were also the (only) ones granted access to the definition of the human per se, there are many similarities between the ways in which gender and the human have been historically constituted. In order to elaborate on this issue, it is important to explore a quick outline of some major themes within feminist theory that may be useful to critically interact with the concept of the human as well. Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), an existentialist philosopher, famously said, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" in her seminal work The Second Sex (1949; Eng. Transl. 1974), which is considered a landmark in feminist philosophy (1974: 301). She continues, "Civilization as a whole develops this creature, midway between male and eunuch, which is labeled as feminine." This creature is the human female, and her societal role is not determined by her biology, psychology, or economic fortune. The only way for one person to become the Other is for someone else to label them as such (ibidem). In what would become the distinction between sex and gender, de Beauvoir describes the idea of the woman as a process rather than an essence. Being born a female and becoming a woman are two distinct

experiences, each with their own set of biological and cultural requirements, in de Beauvoir's view. Until recently, males dominated society and hence defined the cultural norms, thus each cultural paradigm rests on a unique set of assumptions and prejudices.

As in, why does de Beauvoir call women the "Other?" De Beauvoir draws attention to how the concept of the "woman" has been constructed to fit as the structural Other of the subject of Western and non-Western perspectives. In other words, men are men because women are not men; in other words, men are men because women are not women (Ferrando, 2019, p.69). Women's identities are seen as inextricably bound up with men's in such cultural frameworks. In many instances, such "to be a 'real woman,' she must accept herself as the Other," De Beauvoir underlines the woman's symbolic function as the Other (295). This concept of the Other is linked to the age-old dichotomies of nature/culture; body/mind; woman/man, in which the latter is relegated to the lower-status categories of both nature and culture (in an anthropocentric episteme that has traditionally placed a premium on culture as the source of humanity) and body (in the Cartesian split, where the mind has been given primacy, as in "I think, therefore I am"). That the woman is defined by her (possible) sexual relationship to a man is something that de Beauvoir emphasizes: "She appears basically to the male as a sexual person." She represents the pinnacle of sexiness for him. She is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential since she is defined and distinguished in relation to man rather than vice versa (XIX). Although this piece of literature was published back in 1949, the remark it contains is still very much relevant to modern day culture.

Even if much of de Beauvoir's analysis is still pertinent to our day, there is one component of her critique that, from a posthumanist vantage point, we may have to face. Existentialist thinker argues that "Otherness is the essential category of human cognition" and that "the notion of the Other is as primal as consciousness itself" (ibidem) (ivi: XIX). De Beauvoir emphasizes the relational nature of this "Otherness," rather than its absolute nature: "In fact, wars, festivals, trading, treaties, and contests among tribes, nations, and classes tend to deprive the concept of the Other of its absolute sense and make manifest its relativity; willy-nilly, individuals and groups are forced to realize the reciprocity of their relations" (ivi: XX). Since

"alterity" is a cultural choice that cannot be essentialized for the human species as a whole, posthumanists find the argument that "alterity is the fundamental concept of human mind" (2009: 26) problematic. Others may argue that the concept of alterity is not as crucial as other ideas and behaviors (such as interdependence, symbiosis, affinity, etc.) once we highlight the human not as one but as many.

And feminist psychotherapist Luce Irigaray, who put a unique spin on the idea of the woman as the Other, also recognized these contexts as problematic. Her separation with psychiatrist Jacques Lacan (1901-81) and the Ecole Freudienne de Paris, as well as her dismissal from the University of Vincennes, both followed the release of her seminal book Speculum of the Other Woman (1974). For what reason did the academic community lash out so violently against Irigaray's theories? To Irigaray, in contrast to de Beauvoir's account, the woman is not a difference or a "Other" but rather an absence, or better yet, the absence to be filled with male projections; "she" has not been granted an identity of her own, not even as the Object in the submissive relation to the Subject—that is, the Man. She is, in Irigaray's famous formulation, both a mirror and a concave mirror whose depths hold generative possibilities: "But maybe through this specular surface which supports discourse is discovered not the emptiness of nothingness but the glitter of multidimensional speleology. A linguistic and conceptual hollow of such dazzling luminosity that it may ignite fetish items and gold-filled eye sockets (ivi: 143). Woman is not essentialized in her distinctions from man, but rather presented as an absence to confirm the presence of man via masculine concepts and projections; nonetheless, this concavity is also "scintillating and incandescent" and cannot be reduced to a simple vacuum from Irigaray's standpoint. Judith Butler, the postmodern feminist philosopher whose seminal paper Gender Trouble (1990) has had a huge effect on feminist theory for her detailed portrayal of gender as performative and reiterative, makes explicit allusions to both de Beauvoir and Irigaray in her work. According to Butler's account:

The activity of gender involves a performance that is repeated. This repetition is at once a recreation and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially constituted; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation. Although

there are individual bodies that perform these significations by getting styled into gendered modes, this “activity” is a public action. (1990: 178–79)

With this obtained perspective on the public ritualized construction of gender, let’s now go back to the human, and examine it via the various insights we have just offered. The human, in line with de Beauvoir, is not an essence, but a process: one is not born, but rather becomes human via experience, socialization, receipt, and retention (or rejection) of human normative assets (2013, p.71). At the same time, we can see that the human has been founded in denying the nonhuman in an ontological way; recognizing the human has been preserved by a negative reduction of the others, or more accurately, by the lack of a meaningful acknowledgement of embodied alterity and onto-epistemological plurality, via linked concurrent exclusions, designated as “the inhuman, the subhuman, the less-than-human, and so on” (Ferrando, 2019, p.71). Just as gender is gendering, human is humanizing, so too may the performative and historical expression of the idea of the human be seen, according to Butler, as a recurring performance which builds and consolidates the subject, that is, the human. There are significant repercussions to using the human as a verb in one's address. First of all, we should pose the questions: Is there a subject performing the process of humanizing? Is humanization a method or an endeavor? The notion of the anthropological machine might be useful in gaining access to these areas.

1.1.3. Outsiders and Less-than-human

Where can I get a thorough examination of the humanization procedure? Here, it's crucial to emphasize that a posthumanist approach shouldn't restrict its study to dominant paradigms, since doing so would just shine a new light on the same power structures that have always been at the humanistic tradition's heart. To investigate the historical humanization of certain groups of people, a posthumanist perspective would ask, "How did the excluded subjectivities view themselves in connection to the idea of the human?" To set the stage for our discussion of these topics, we should provide a quick introduction to the people we could have in mind when we use the pronoun "they," concentrating on the many groups of people who

have been persistently marginalized and denied full human rights. As we discussed in the last chapter, the nonhuman has played a crucial role in shaping the humanizing process, and not every human being has been accorded full human status. So, we'll ask: Which people have been left out of the definition of "human"? The light of humanity has been intermittently dimmed throughout history. For the sake of elucidation, we will choose four major transhistorical events (among many more) to illustrate the role of denial in the humanizing process. While it would be impossible to draw a comprehensive map of all the identities that have been denied (or excluded from) human status, there are several that may be used as trajectories to help us grasp the significance of the human endeavour. Due to the breadth of the topic, a comprehensive account is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we may examine some representative instances, including chattel slavery, genocide, freak exhibitions, and witch hunts.

Have all "outsiders" in the human population become dehumanized? The answer is no; this is not always the case. The European witch trials of the late Middle Ages and early Modern era are characterized by a number of essential characteristics, one of which is the feminization of magic, which resulted in an estimated sixty thousand deaths, the vast majority of whom were women. Superstition, alongside biological determinism, scientific racism, and ethnocentrism, was shown to be a driving force behind the witch hunt, demonstrating yet another fracture in the human skeleton: not only should the lives of those humans considered inferior be taken, but also “the lives of those who were believed to have supernatural powers shall be sacrificed, in order to keep the human realm safe (Ferrando, 2019, p.80).” In this way, the normalizing dynamics of the historical process and goal of humanizing may be avoided by both the critical deconstructive approach of Posthumanism and the trajectory toward human augmentation of the transhuman. The human body, placed in time and space, may be read as a symbolic text representing mental and social activities. A reoccurring paradigm of human abjection is rooted in the formation of a language of perversion (Foucault, 1976) and the subsequent behaviors of normalizing of the perverse, such as the Holocaust, freak shows, and the witch hunt. It has been argued that the "human" project has formed historically and theoretically through the construction of the "Other"—animals, automata, children, women, freaks, people of

color other than white, queers, etc.—marking the shifting borders of what would become "the human" through processes of performative rejections, much like the monster and the supernatural stand as social and mythical archetypes delimiting the domain of the comprehensible body (Ferrando, 2019, p.81).

1.2. The Non-human

The new materialisms, posthumanism, the new vitalism, critical animal studies, and ecocriticism along with various approaches connected each other, have revolutionized the critical world, reviving how we encounter with classic writings while beckoning us to pay attention to relatively new or overlooked ones in recent decades. Non-human in general context, objects, and forces come in a wide variety and are gradually being recognized as significant actors for their own right. Inspired by human concern for a disintegrating world, ecocriticism asks how significant art works are to protect "nature." Despite "our ecological catastrophe," literature's ability to confront us with the drama of our shared battle for existence and achievement and to take us on unsuspected adventures through the networks of connection and resemblance we share with the world has not decreased. Non-human objects and creatures, ranging from animals to androids, are more prevalent in critical analyses. This complicates our view of the universe by removing the particular subject and tearing down the familiar categories through which we have understood our existence (Raber, 2020, p.1). In this sense, we encounter non-biological entities, tiny organisms, ethereal beings, and intangible objects in addition to animals of all kinds and other biological life forms. The goal is to provide a space for encounters where all forms of interaction between humans and non-humans from different eras and different literatures may be researched and where the disclosures that are made can be discussed by academics, students, and other interested parties.

Diverse academic disciplines have recently accepted the difficulty of tracing the complex relationships between people and other species as they grapple with the rapid technological, economic, social, cultural, environmental changes that encircle, and impact research methodologies and subjects of them. Although a multitude of new conceptualizations, research topics, and methodologies have already been

developed as a consequence of this battle to adapt, neither the demand nor the saturation threshold have yet been fully satisfied. On the contrary, there has never been a greater pressing need to develop fresh perspectives on the entities and situations where people and non-people are entangled in ever-more complex patterns. According to analysis, nonhumanity is not just what humanity rejects, denies, and destroys; it is also seen as the conceptual opposite of humanity (Colebrook & Cohen, 2016, p.8). In conclusion, people are both world-changing actors and observers of processes that they are unable to fully comprehend, foresee, or control (Colebrook, 2017, p.10).

Since post humanist modes of thinking are ultimately driven by ethical concerns as well as practical and epistemological ones, a large portion of the theoretical work generated under the label has, to yet, been concerned with the ethical aspects of the human-posthuman. As numerous studies have remarked, global cultural hegemonies have designated just a few as models of the ideal humanity, while anyone straying from this white, male, healthy, heterosexual norm, that is, the majority of the world's population, are classified in varied degrees of subhuman. These primarily examine a variety of morally complex relationships between humans and nonhumans, and they also resonate with Euro-American cultures' ethical frameworks for dealing with the so-called "others of Man." (Åsberg, 2008, p. 264– 269)

The ideas that place (a particular kind of) humans above all "other" creatures have repeatedly been contested by theorists from the fields of feminist theory, queer and disability studies, ecocriticism, critical studies, and many other fields. Because of their long histories of renegotiating and exposing humanities and social structural hierarchies, the subdivisions of the humanities are actually well-suited for attempting to address power structures and interdependences as well as the gaps and continuities between human and nonhuman, in spite of the alleged humanism crisis.

1.2.1. Anthropocentrism and Androcentrism

The only two definitions given are anthropocentrism, which means centering one's attention on humans rather than nature, and androcentrism, which means

centering one's attention on males rather than women. For instance, Warren claims that a male-dominated hierarchy forms the backbone of an androcentric social organization, while an androcentric conceptual bias is one that ignores or dismisses statements regarding women's status, such as the correlations between various forms of dominance (2000, p.158). As an added point, there are some idioms and phrases that provide some insight into these ideas. The belief that "only humans are ethically considerable" is an example of what is meant by the term "human chauvinism" (Warren, 2000, p.88). When addressing sameness-based models of equality and social justice, Elizabeth Warren references Eva Feder Kittay's research on the implicit use of males as the benchmark against which equal opportunity is evaluated. More specifically, Kittay focuses on the use of white middle-class men as the standard (2000, p.188). The terms "male bias" and "male-gender bias" are employed to refer to false claims about women and faulty assertions about humanity; to define a science that in its observations gives no or less consideration to female behavior, allocates conventional positions to both sexes, and implies that the subjects of study are structured based on a male supremacy hierarchy; and to characterize traditional Western philosophy since it disregards the importance of care and care methods (Warren, 2000, p.113-158).

According to Sandra Lipsitz, androcentrism was first formulated in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Culture (1911). This is where Gilman begins to reveal the framework behind this idea. To give just one example, in an androcentric society, males are revered as the archetypal humans while women are relegated to the role of supporting cast member and inferior partner. If you live in an androcentric society, women only have a central role in procreation. Feminism relies heavily on the idea of androcentrism. However, the reality it portrays is widely acknowledged as one of sexism's essential elements, even if the word itself isn't always present in the literature. Some of the meanings of "androcentrism" can be better understood if three terms "male bias," "male chauvinism," and "androcentrism" are differentiated from one another.

However, it would be helpful to differentiate between sex-context prejudice and gender-context bias in this case. Defining sex and gender can be a controversial issue. However, if we avoid a dualistic interpretation of these terms—for example, if

we recognize that neither the field of biology nor the human body exists independently of culture—then we can use them to characterize two distinct realities. Thus, the study of sex is the province of the biological sciences, while that of gender is the province of the cultural sciences.

"Male bias," when used to describe a sex-context bias, would suggest that men, both collectively and as individuals, are at the center, alongside members of all other sex groups. That biological core, with its particular make-up and position, would color and restrict men's worldviews. Naturally, it is still up in the air whether the typically masculine actually influences the viewpoints, values, judgments, and endeavors of men, and if so, how and to what extent. As used here, "male bias" refers to the belief that certain characteristics of men, or the actions they take, must be attributed to males by definition or necessity. In a similar vein, the statement that at least some of the things women are and/or do contingently or inherently pertain to the female species is referred to as "female bias." This term is used to characterize the assertion.

When used to describe a bias based on gender, the term "male bias" suggests that men, both collectively and as people, are at the center of the focus rather than women or other groups. Men's worldviews would be molded and constrained by the nature and position of this cultural hub. Most feminists, in my opinion, would concur that men's perspectives, beliefs, judgements, and efforts are influenced by what makes them uniquely male. The uniquely feminine also influences women's worldviews, morals, assessments, and actions. The term "male bias" shall be used to characterize the assertion that there are certain characteristics and behaviors that are uniquely associated with men.

When Val Plumwood, for example, asserts that it is both impossible and undesirable to conflate the eradication of so-called "androcentric bias" with the achievement of gender neutrality, she is referring to this meaning of "androcentrism" as it is used in the context of the sentence. There is no requirement for there to be a lack of interest in either male or female positions in order for androcentrism to be eradicated. According to her, the end of androcentrism also signifies the end of a centric model of relationships, which, rather than requiring the removal of all

bearings, calls for "a stronger statement of certain locations and their acknowledgment in specific terms" (1996, p.336)

Conversely, male chauvinism can be understood as the view that women are inherently inferior to males in terms of value, intelligence, or competence. To label the view that men are inherently better to women as "male chauvinism" is to do an injustice to the term. Aristotle's and Rousseau's philosophies, for instance, appear to contain some male chauvinistic components. According to Aristotle, the male is superior to the female in every way, including strength, intelligence, and the maturity of his physical form (Eduards & Guneng, 1983, p.35). In spite of the fact that there are invariably going to be exceptions to the norm, he is adamant that "the male is by nature superior for command than the female" (Eduards & Guneng, 1983, p.32). According to Rousseau, she is not capable of producing the works of a genius, and she does not possess the precision nor the concentration necessary to be successful in the precise sciences. Female infanticide, sex-selective abortion (which almost always results in the death of a girl's unborn baby), as well as the abandonment and neglect of girl children, can all be traced all the way back to the male chauvinist belief that women are of lower social status than men or that a girl's life is not as beneficial as a boy's.

The view that women are inherently better to men in some way or another; that is, female chauvinism and male chauvinism are mutually supportive worldviews. For instance, as explained by Maud Eduards, according to Rousseau, a man's intellect is greater to a woman's, but women are better suited for emotional labor and caretaking (p.145). And as Genevieve Lloyd points out, Kant says that women make up for their inferior grasp of universals with superior taste, sensibility, practical sense, and emotion (1993, p.76). It is essential to make a distinction between the justifiable and unjustifiable belief that men are intrinsically superior to women, as well as the cause why men could be superior and the moral implications of such a belief. The belief that men are intrinsically superior to women is an illustration of masculine chauvinism.

1.2.2. Male-centrism and Androcentrism

The use of these terms conjures up a picture of space. In this example, something, specifically a man, is located in the exact middle of another object. There are a variety of contexts, such as androcentric societies, androcentric cultures, and even androcentric philosophies, in which it is possible to argue that men inhabit the center of those contexts. When it is applied to the interaction that exists between men and women, Val Plumwood's model of centrism and what it indicates about the nature of that relationship reveals a masculine Center and a feminine Other, in addition to incorporating the following components:

The first is a complete separation between the sexes, with males being shown to be completely separate from and superior to women. Their sense of being a man comes down to the superficial distinctions between sexes. The masculine virtue emerges when characteristics traditionally associated with women are overlooked. Women are portrayed as devoid of the traits that define males. Consequently, males feel less continuity or kinship with women as a result of all this.

Second, all female characters are treated the same way. All of them allegedly have the same fixed characteristics. Only when differences are thought to impact men's desires and well-being are they acknowledged. Class, ethnic, societal, and, of course, individual differences are all grossly underappreciated.

Thirdly, ignoring the existence of a problem by portraying women as irrelevant and secondary to men's lives. Their efforts and results are dismissed or undervalued. Women are routinely devalued or ignored for the many ways in which they contribute to society: as caretakers for children, the sick, and the elderly; as housekeepers; as providers of love and intimacy; and as makers of cultural, artistic, and historical artifacts.

Fourth, integration: women are classified in relation to males. They are portrayed either as devoid of or the antithesis of what is seen as traditionally masculine traits.

Fifth, a reliance on instruments means that females have no power of their own. To illustrate this point, they are portrayed as having no goals of their own. Their primary responsibility should be to their husbands and offspring. In this view,

women exist solely for the benefit of males, who treat them as objects to be used to fulfill their own desires. The only way males see value in them is in what they can contribute to society. They are only valued for being excellent housewives and mothers. In Rousseau's view, for instance, a woman's role is "to be pleasing in his sight, to gain his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend to him in adulthood, to advise and console, to make his life pleasant and happy" (p.92).

Lipsitz is the other main source that explains what androcentrism is. Along with gender polarization and biological essentialism, androcentrism is one of the "gender filters" that organizes reality, according to Lipsitz. Invisible and systemically reproducing masculine power, gender lenses are "hidden assumptions about sex and gender [...] embedded in cultural discourses, societal institutions, and individual psyches" (1992, p.2). For Lipsitz, "androcentrism" describes the elevation of men and their experiences and actions to the status of cultural and sometimes racial norms and reference points. Everything, including women, female experiences, and female pursuits, and really anything else, is defined in relation to that perspective. Everything is seen through a masculine perspective and categorized according to how it relates to or benefits the male core. Therefore, women are viewed as a "departure" or "deviation" from the masculine norm. Thus, the androcentric presumption that the male and his world are to be prioritized, while the female and her universe are to be otherized, aids in the reproduction of male dominance. Those in positions of authority, who are overwhelmingly male, are responsible for embedding this assumption in cultural discourses and societal institutions. Not only do Plumwood's incorporation and instrumentalism find recognition in Lipsitz's androcentrism, but so do the phenomena described above as "male prejudice." There is a center for each gender and sex category. Lipsitz argues that "whatever basic notions about truth they came to have by virtue of their specific position in the social structure" are reflected in discourses and social structures because men constitute the dominant social group in Western societies (Lipsitz, 1992, p.132).

Lipsitz also identifies gender polarization as a distinct gender lens. Many presumptions underpin this perspective. To begin with, the male and female species are the only two that exist. So, there is no third option; an individual is either a man or a woman. They are then given a "plan" to follow based on their gender. These

narratives, which define what it means to be a male and a woman, are incompatible with one another. An individual cannot possess qualities of both sexes. Second, people and actions that deviate from the norm are labeled as abnormal, wrong, evil, or pathological. These two primary hypotheses successfully integrate a person's libido, mental health, and behavior. Third, the gender gap is so pervasive in our society that it serves as "an organizing force for the social life," as Lipsitz puts it (1992, p.2). Indeed, it penetrates just about every conceivable social form. Examples of ways in which people of different sexes are stereotyped include differences in their preferred activities, careers, skills, communication styles, expectations, treatment, beauty ideals, roles, clothing, hairstyles, toys, voice inflection, life experiences, values, sexual and affectionate partners, and the way in which they experience and express sexual desire.

The rise of gender stereotypes and androcentrism go hand in hand. For androcentrism to function, the binary distinction between sexes is essential. These three functions are central to the perpetuation of masculine authority. In the first place, gender polarization creates a world of work in which males are stereotyped as breadwinners and women as caregivers. Since each sex is in charge of its own territory, there's no need to invent a method by which a person can engage in both simultaneously. So, the prospect of equal participation in economic and political decision-making is eliminated by this setup. Second, people are compelled to construct their identities according to a manly or feminine polarity as a result of gender polarization. This dichotomy is consistent with the social stratification that emerges from an androcentric view of relationships. It's expected of men to take the lead. Ladies should act submissively. And third, androcentrism is supported by and rendered undetectable by the polarization of gender roles. The gender gap normalizes this sexual disparity into a normalized sexual dichotomy. Both sexes are the same way. The two are not the same. Each person has unique tastes.

The third gender perspective serves to justify and validate the first two. According to the theory of biological essentialism, the biological differences that exist between men and women inevitably lead to the social phenomena of androcentrism and gender discrimination, also known as unfairness and difference. Lipsitz outlines three broad justifications for the gender gap: Humans have unequal

and different natures because -according to the theology of Judeo-Christianity- God, or according to ancient Greek Philosophy- the nature made them that way, and our species' unique path through biological evolution according to Sociobiology, and according to Freud, women's and men's psychological development are different.

Following Val Plumwood's line of thought, one could say that androcentrism is basically a framework of beliefs and views that generates a multitude of delusions, in addition to the concrete effects of such a societal disparity, which disproportionately impact women. Lipsitz details the nuances of the male and female experience being intentionally separated:

I It ignores the fact that men and women are not carbon copies of one another and that not all members of either gender blindly adhere to the norms and expectations placed upon them based solely on their gender. Some people are comfortable identifying as the opposite gender.

There is a polarization between traditionally male and traditionally feminine modes of interacting with the world. It contrasts, for instance, the independent male way with the reliant female way, the logical male way with the emotional female way, and so on. To deny that individuals are both independent and interdependent, intellectual and sentimental, is androcentric.

In addition to a biological man and a biological woman, two intriguing new ideas are born: a real man and a real woman. Androcentrism encourages individuals to view their gender as something they must earn, achieve, and protect at all costs; in other words, something they cannot take for granted.

Human potential is not being realized for either gender. Human inclinations that don't fit into one's predetermined role must be repressed. The authentically male, for instance, includes "the desire to exclude and distance from the feminine," as Plumwood contends about the construction of male identity and virtue in opposition to the emotional (1996, p.164). More specifically, the central tenet around which male identity and value have typically been construed, Reason. Rational thought has been seen as "transcending the feminine," as Genevieve Lloyd puts it (1993, p.104). The feminine aspect represents feelings, the physical body, the sensual and temporary, the specific and the ephemeral, while the masculine aspect represents the universal, the essential, and the eternal.

1.2.3. Women As “Non-human”

Apart from what we call human in the frame of all male qualities given to its term, women have been regarded as nonhuman both directly and indirectly throughout the history for many reasons. They were labelled as nonhuman sometimes just because their physical and biological qualities couldn’t be understood, or sometimes because they denied living under the shade of men and tried to stand on their own. It is widely known that women have been considered inferior to their male counterparts and they don’t have the right to be as human as men. They are thought to be an instrument for the existence of men and their capability of self-sufficiency has always been a nightmare to the men. They have faced being accused of prostitution, being outlaws, and even witchcraft. No matter what century they lived in, they have been put under some categories and labels, were instructed to live by some certain rules set by men. Whoever breaks these rules are destined to be labelled more.

In the 16 and seventeenth centuries in Europe, there were many works of great quality and quantity that discussed the abilities or lack thereof of women. Both printed and handwritten versions of the writings were accessible, and they were arranged according to genre. It is well known that readers from all over the globe were acquainted with notions from Europe like "illustrious ladies" (Feminae illustres), "educated women" (Feminae doctae), "the tenth muse" (Musa decimal), and so on. It seems that "feminae doctae" or "feminae illustres" were popular during the Renaissance (Alenius, 2011, p.4). There were, for sure, earlier instances of women with good education, however it seems that the impulse to identify, categorize, and even elevate them emerged during the Renaissance among the progressive male learning groups.

Women were declared not to be human in 1595, and the claim was more than carefully supported by fifty consecutive examples in the same work. The argument ran that if women are not human, then Jesus, who is the Redeemer of Humans, cannot redeem them. Biblical maxims were subjected to Classical Aristotelian logic by a writer who was conversant with the university debate genre. The lady is not a

human person, a conclusion that was reached with confidence via reasoned reasoning based on religious principles.

A treatise written in 1595 titled Disputatio Nova Contra Mulieres, Qua Probatur Eas Homines Non Esse which is translated as A New Argument Against Women demonstrated that women are not human beings and was presented as evidence. The title page did not list the author or the printing facility. The reader was led astray by the use of a made-up date. The treatise was actually published in Leipzig's Lutheran context, and it would have clearly been regarded as impious and never been given the official seal of approval allowing it to be printed. The tract was really a discussion piece written by Lutherans with the Socinian Anabaptist group in mind. Women were in fact the only subject of this very satirical book even while it would have looked nice for them to be the focus of discussion. Their duty was shedding light on an unrelated issue the denial of the Christ is all clear from the beginning:

> "From the Sarmatian times, everyone believed and has been tought that, together with the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, savior and redeemer of our souls, is not God, I believe I may also freely believe and teach something much less serious – namely, that women are not fully human and what follows as a consequence: that Christ did not suffer for them and that they will not be saved" (Acidalius, 1595, p.4).

Regardless of the treatise's initial setting, it was firmly established in the European discussion of women's status. Simon Gediccus' Defensio sexus muliebris, written in Latin and with an intellectual tone, was published the same year as the original. The two treatises continued to be produced, revised, and translated in multiple editions, either independently or together, for approximately 200 years.

The 9th section of the treatise which gives information on the exicient cause (causa exiciens) and the instrumental cause (causa instrumentalis) is an example of the style of reasoning used in Acidalius' book on women:

> "Common experience shows us, and it is the agreed opinion of all people who think in aphilosophical [way], that in all natural matters nothing can be done where these two causes, exicient and instrumental, are not found together. A smith cannot forge a sword without the help of a hammer; in the same way a scribe cannot write without the help of a pen; a tailor cannot sew without the help of a needle; a man cannot beget offspring without the help of a woman. Now, just as the hammer is not the smith, the needle is not the tailor, the pen is not the scribe, so the woman is not the man. For an instrument is never a natural born part of the exicient agent, but is separate from it (Acidalius, 1595, p.9)

1.2.4. Witch As "Nonhuman"

In order to clarify the question whether the witches are human or nonhuman, one should analyze the dilemma by differentiating reality with fantasies. Witches are the beings that have been accused of dealing with some actions that are not been understood by ordinary people. These actions vary from the practice of medicine to heal those who need to some kind of sorcery that are done with the intention of harming people. These accusations come into light mostly with the fear and the boundaries that the society allocates to them. Fear of ordinary people around and not being able to understand how women can perform outside the given qualities of them such as having the healing power of some diseases, being sufficient for themselves and their families, or just acting lot like a woman caused to create some deadly demonic creatures in the vision of people. Knowing that women have been the problem of the societies throughout the time, and they have been put in boundaries, all the nonhuman qualities that are given to the women made it easier to create a nonhuman vision of them in people's minds. Most witches are depicted as wart- nosed, ugly, mysterious women who puts spell on the things and people. They are said to fly in broomsticks, have a pact with the devil, talk to the animals and control them, be able to summon some powers.

Although accusations of witchcraft provide a channel via which social tensions might be expressed or resolved in contemporary societies, charges of a similar kind

in premodern Western civilization led to quite different outcomes. During that time period, the stigma of witchcraft as being inhuman came up as a result of unfounded fears coupled with a mentality that encouraged the practice of persecution. On the other hand, allegations of witchcraft give a mechanism to communicate or settle social conflicts in modern communities. It was in the 11th century that a change in viewpoint took place, a movement that would later cause Westerners to associate witchcraft with heresy and the Devil in their minds. By the 14th century, the traditional charge of witches, known as maleficium, had been augmented with claims of diabolism due to fear of heresy and Satan. This was done out of fear that heresy would spread (malevolent sorcery). Due to the fact that they engaged in magical practices and were sometimes seen as representatives of the Devil, they stood out as a unique form of creature that could be distinguished from humans in a number of important ways. From the 14th to the 18th centuries, it was a commonly held belief that witches denied the deity of Jesus Christ, worshiped the Devil, made deals with the evil spirits, collaborated with them to perform magic, and defile the holy symbols as well as the consecrated the Eucharist. This belief persisted despite the fact that there is no evidence to support any of these claims (Holy Communion). Many people also believed that witches took the infants away and killed them for devouring them or extracting their essence for useing in magical rituals; that they shift shapes to some nonhuman forms or disguise in a different human form; that they generally possessed family bondswith the animals in the form of another animal; and that they fly on broomsticks at nights to their secret gatherings, where they had sexual rituals and had intercourse with the devil.

For all these people living outside the constraints of the society, doing the unknown and the incomprehensible, or just being women doing their own businesses, to be marked as a nonhuman creature became the easiest thing. This conceptual fabric existed only in the author's imagination. Despite the fact that some people have practiced sorcery with the intention of causing damage, and despite the fact that some humans may have even worshiped the Devil, no one has ever been able to fulfill the concept of the "witch and the inhuman." Despite this, the sins committed by the witch were written down and made into law. Even while witch hunts looked quite different depending on when and where they took place in history, there was a

fundamentally constant theological and legal structure behind them everywhere. Even while local priests and judges were often not particularly well-versed in either religion or law, they did share a culture that held the view that witches are inhuman to the same extent as our present society holds the opinion that molecules are real. This belief that witches are inhuman is analogous to the belief that our culture now holds that molecules are real.

1.2.5. Represantations of Witches as Non-human in Literature

Dating back to the 1400s, witchcraft has a long and storied history. In this time period, civilizations like the Aztecs and Joan of Arc flourished. In the past, people simply referred to witches as "wise women," the kind you could see if you needed a cure for a cough or some counsel about your future. Misconceptions about witches and their practices spread as time went on. Many individuals thought they had supernatural healing abilities, but also potentially harmful ones. Some others even thought they could have conversations with the departed. The Grimm Brothers' classic story Hansel and Gretel was one of the first stories to include a witch. The earliest accounts of witches were found in texts from antiquity. These ladies had authority and strength, which naturally frightened the males. More than real events or experiences, tales and rumors were to blame for this rising societal anxiety.

As two of Greek mythology's most recognizable witches, Hecate and Circe are a dynamic duo. Both of these women have the title of "goddess of witchcraft," and their enigmatical abilities are well-known. After attracting men to her island with her attractiveness, Circe takes pleasure in turning them into pigs. She is a common figure in Greek mythology and in Homer's Odyssey. The goddess Hecate attracted devotees from many walks of life, and she was the subject of ancient compositions called Homeric Hymns. When witches in movies chant or call on a higher force to do their bidding, Hecate is often the deity they invoke.

Women made up a disproportionate share of those who were publicly executed or burnt for witchcraft. With the proliferation of witch stories in literature, it's become common to portray witches as strong and alluring ladies. There is,

nevertheless, a continuing negative perception of witches. It's a common misconception that only young witches are kind, while older ones are ugly and nasty.

Despite the fact that many contemporary and historical representations of witches in film and television make an effort to utilize witches as a symbol of female strength or feminism, these depictions fall short in a number of important ways, notably when it comes to interconnectivity. Think of Glinda, the fair-skinned and lovely good witch, and her wicked sister in the west who is portrayed as ugly with a bigger nose and green skin. Both are examples of the beauty/good witch and ugly/bad witch cliche that has been prevalent in the culture for a long time. This damaging cliche reinforces the notion that being white and conventionally pretty is desirable, while everything else is terrible or wicked. This is an inaccurate and detrimental representation of reality.

Even while people of color, including Black, indigenous, Hispanic people, and others, are major practitioners of witchcraft and magic, the image of witches in the media often fails to do justice to the diversity of those who engage in these practices. Even while most depictions of witches in the media are of cisgender individuals, certain works of contemporary literature attempt to redress this imbalance.

The witch has always captured the imagination of writers and audiences alike. Despite the image's endurance, witches in literature tend to have certain similar characteristics due to the strong history associated with the witch hunts in Europe and America during the early modern period. The term "witch hunt" has taken on a potent metaphorical meaning that has a role in today's global culture, despite its historical affiliation with religious purges that cast the witch as a person working in league with the devil to overturn the Christian religion. So the witch is no longer only a lowly rural woman who may be easily banished by a fellow villager spinning some yarns about midnight flight. The three centuries of modernity since the Salem witch hunt has seen the notion of the witch take root and modifying itself in many cultures along with the enormous changes to living practices in our society. Despite remarkable processes of diversification in both witch imagery and the meaning of witchcraft and witchery, witchcraft and witchery continue to be major themes in modern literature. Despite their often disturbing function in fiction, witches have been a fascinating presence in stories for millennia. They are often portrayed as

murderous monstrosities, such as Medea, the murderous mother from Greek mythology, or the Grand High Witch from Roald Dahl's books, who is fascinated with rats and hates children. In other contexts, such characters are portrayed as ethically dubious and unreliable; for example, it's not clear if Shakespeare's Weird Sisters or Baba Yaga from Slavic mythology are looking out for the protagonist's best interests.

In terms of enduring cultural interest, few topics can compare to witchcraft in terms of both time and volume of literature produced. Although the term "witch" originates from Old English (wicce), the notion itself has far deeper and more extensive historical origins. Two much talked-about recent works are 1962's Witches of America by Alex Mar and The Witches: Salem by Stacy Schiff, although written records of women who perform magic have been around since the beginning of written history. And although there is a wide variety of witch tales, they all have a basic thread: witches are women whose femininity goes beyond the norms of society in some manner either because they are too strong, old, aggressive in sexual ways, egotistical, or unpleasant.

7th Century, B.C.E. Hecate

We have a long history of witchcraft in our society. Naturally, the most interesting examples weren't usually the most witty ones. Not exactly a promising beginning when you think about it: much of what we know now we learned in grade school, thanks to the story of the Salem Witch Trials. Many literary works portray witches in a bad light even when they include other forms of magic that are lauded.

Witches, like Hecate from Greek mythology, were often portrayed negatively in early written accounts. Hecate, Perseus and Asteria's the sole child, was a powerful goddess in Greek mythology. She was linked with a wide variety of topics, from magic and witchcraft to the moon and ghosts to birth and even cattle care. She was often shown in triple form in later centuries, in relation to the phases of the moon. Because she and Helios are the sole witnesses to Persephone's abduction by Hades, Hecate plays a pivotal part in the story by carrying the iconographic torch and assisting Demeter in her search for her daughter who was missing. Ovid's

Metamorphoses and Hesiod's Theogeny mentions Hecate. She is singled out as Zeus's favorite goddess. According to the Orphic Hymns, Hecate is gloomy, dressed in a veil, accompanied with gloomy spirits that walk through the shadows.

1150's Morgan le Fay

Geoffrey of Monmouth first mentioned Morgan le Fay in his biography of Merlin, Vita Merlini. Her name has been spelled so many various ways over the years that it seems like a witchcraft ritual in and of itself. Morgan le Fay's story, like Hecate's, became darker as it progressed. In the Monmouth and Chrétien de Troyes' earlier chivalric romances, she is a healer, but in the later medieval stories, She is King Arthur's sworn enemy, half-sister, and a conspirator who opposes Excalibur. She is also Merlin's apprentice and a sexually frightening temptress whose love with Lancelot in an obsessive manner is rejected. All of these things make her King Arthur's most dangerous foe. Morgan le Fay is the one who carry a wounded Arthur to the Avalon island at the end of the Battle of Camlann, and this is despite the fact that she is at her most clearly wicked at this time.

1487's Malleus Maleficarum

Malleus Maleficarum, also known as Hammer of the Witches is a manifesto authored by a Catholic cleric Heinrich Kramer in support of the hunt of witches in Germany. In addition to its main goal of discrediting anyone who denied the reality of witchcraft, the Malleus Maleficarum also claimed that women were more likely than males to engage in witchcraft. The Malleus Maleficarum was used as a key literature throughout the harsh witch trials in the sixteen and seventeen centuries, despite having been denounced by the Catholic Church in 1490.

1611's The Weird Sisters

The Weyward sisters in Macbeth, give two prophesies that set the play in motion: that Macbeth, the Scottish commander, would become king, and that

Banquo, his friend, will produce a line of rulers. Shakespeare's Weird Sisters are depicted as both hag-like and manly, with beards and "chappy fingers" and "thin lips." Their desire to be "unsex[ed] here" is reminiscent of the other wicked female figure of Macbeth's, Lady Macbeth, who makes a similar request to the spirits before murdering King Duncan. The Weird Sisters make a return appearance in the act three during a contentious scene, when Hecate reprimands them for interfering with Macbeth's destiny without consulting her. In their last scene together, the witches foretell Macbeth's downfall via a sequence of disturbing visions in Act 4.

1812’s Kinder und Hasmärchen

Grimm's Fairy Tales are better known today as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's Children's and Household Tales. At the time of their initial publication, critics panned them for being inappropriate for both children and the home due to the graphic depictions of sexual and violent acts that they contained. Today, we know them as Grimm's Fairy Tales. Despite this, Snow White and Hansel and Gretel are two of the most recognizable witches in history, and both of these stories are included in the collection of tales compiled by the Brothers Grimm. Both the stepmother from "Snow White" and the woodland witch from "Hansel and Gretel" are perversions of the virtuous and repentant mother, which is the ideal figure of femininity in the eyes of the christian community. Both of these characters consume kids rather than create and nurture them, which is a significant difference between the two.

1819's La Belle Dame Sans Merci

The main character of the ballad written by John Keats in 1819 is referred to as a "faery's child," and he has long hair and wild eyes. The knight narrator discovers him in a field. Given that the poem makes extensive use of double entendres, a fanciful love affair between the two characters emerges, that might or might not include sexual behavior. When La Belle Dame leads the knight somewhere, where he finds himself encircled by the corpses of the other princes, kings, and soldiers who

were similarly captivated by her, the knight is plunged into a nightmarish experience. He discovers that he is "On the icy hill's side" when he is worn out and drained.

1841’s Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds

After the Enlightenment, people throughout the Victorian era began to rethink witchcraft by characterizing it as a widespread harsh illusion. Charles McKay, a Scottish writer, developed a history of public hysteria around the middle of the nineteenth century, and within that history was a whole section devoted to "Witch Mania." McKay pointed out that throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, accusations of witchcraft were regularly begun out of anger or to settle conflicts between friends and neighbors, and that the threshold necessary to accuse someone of witchcraft was astonishingly low. In addition, McKay pointed out that in order to convict someone of witchcraft, all that was required was a little amount of evidence.

1900's The Witches of Oz

Both the North and the South witches are benign, whereas the East and West witches are evil in L. Frank Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. Dorothy, a little girl from Kansas, arrives in this enchanted country thanks to a storm and unwittingly kills a man. As a token of her happiness at the news of the Witch of the East's death, the Good Witch of the North gives Dorothy a pair of her silver shoes, which infuriates the Wicked Witch of the West, who wants the shoes for herself so much that she would do everything to get her hands on them. The West Witch of the novel lives in opulent quarters and carries an elaborate umbrella, in contrast to the green- skinned, broomstick-riding, fortress-dwelling version in the classic 1939 film adaptation. But she's blind in one eye and has some kind of mystical control over animals. Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, the last of Baum's witches, is claimed to be as old as the others yet to have managed to maintain her youthful beauty. She also serves as a mother figure to Baum's eventual Oz heir, which is a happy coincidence.

1938’s Tell My Horse

For her anthropological dissertation, Zora Neale Hurston spent the years 1936 and 1937 in Jamaica and Haiti, researching voodoo and the islands' politics and histories. Voodoo is a religion of creation and life, according to Hurston, and she calls it "the ancient, old, mysticism of the universe in African language." Sun, water, and other elements of nature are worshiped. She writes like an initiate, not a skeptic, and even includes photos of a supposed zombie to back up her claims about the religion and its ceremonies.

1950's The White Witch

Because of his well-known Christian leanings, it should not come as a surprise that C.S. Lewis, via the character of Jadis, reinstated the witch to her rightful place as an antagonist. The White Witch is a character from the Chronicles of Narnia literature. She is described as being stunningly beautiful and very strong, having the ability to break iron with her bare hands. When the story of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis first begins, Jadis is reigning as Queen of Narnia. By not celebrating Christmas, she has ensured that the nation would have to endure a never-ending winter.

1953's The Crucible

Some have argued that Arthur Miller represents McCarthyism in his retelling of the Salem witch trials. During McCarthyism, the United States government kept a blacklist of people they believed to be communists. People from the arts and entertainment industries were featured in this list. Tens of thousands of people lost their jobs and hundreds were thrown in prison because Joseph McCarthy worked with J. Edgar Hoover's FBI and the House Un-American Activities Committee. Abigail Williams, the play's main adversary, isn't a witch herself but rather an accuser of witchcraft. Abigail's portrayal as a seductress stems from the fact that she had an affair with the married John Proctor while she was just a teenager and working as a maid in the Proctor mansion, a stereotype that is defied throughout the

play. In contrast, Proctor is forgiven and dies a martyr; even his cold-hearted wife Elizabeth admits fault for his adultery and apologizes to him. Yet, in contrast to this, Proctor is ultimately redeemed and sacrifices himself for what he believes in. Abigail targets the helpless and outcasts of Salem, like Tituba the slave, but she later becomes opportunistic and uses the accusations for payback. To use this tactic, read Charles McKay's Extraordinary Popular Delusions. Extraordinary Popular Delusions may have been written about Abigail.

The history of witchcraft spans centuries, from the Aztecs in the 1400s through the Middle Ages. In the past, people simply referred to witches as "wise women," the kind you could see if you needed a cure for a cough or some counsel about your future. Misconceptions and stories about witches spread throughout time. Many individuals thought they had supernatural healing abilities, but also potentially harmful ones. The earliest accounts of witches were found in texts from antiquity. These ladies had authority and strength, which naturally frightened the males. More than real events or experiences, tales and rumors were to blame for this rising societal anxiety. The witch has always captured the imagination of writers and audiences alike. Despite the image's endurance, witches in literature tend to have certain similar characteristics due to the strong history associated with the witch hunts in Europe and America during the early modern period. The term "witch hunt" has taken on a potent metaphorical meaning that has a role in today's global culture, despite its historical affiliation with religious purges that cast the witch as a person working in league with the devil to overturn the Christian religion.

SECOND CHAPTER

2. THE WITCHES

2.1. Origins of Witch Hunts

Throughout spite of the fact that accusations of witchcraft were common in the Middle Ages, and in the years following the European Renaissance, trials and deaths of so-called witches skyrocketed (Green & Bigelow, 1998). Florence, Italy, was the birthplace of the Renaissance in the 14th century; by the 16th century, the movement had spread across Europe (ibid). First, I'll explain witchcraft and the status of women in Western Europe throughout the Middle Ages so you can grasp how allegations escalated to trials and deaths. Many historians have noted a connection between the growth of Christianity and the emergence of sexism (Bange 2010, Borman 2015, Van Gilst 2017), and I will detail how these shifted under Christian influence.

The early medieval period was a time when people gave equal weight to both the material and spiritual realms. Various anthropomorphic gods and goddesses were worshiped by Germanic peoples, while natural phenomena like trees, rivers, and stones were endowed with supernatural abilities. Most inhabitants in Western Europe in the first millennium AD lived in rural areas. Van Gilst (2017) and Borman (2015) both report that sex equality existed in these societies. Women were revered for their role as keepers of the home and family. Their level of experience and insight made them sought after as sources of guidance. In addition, some ladies had information about medicinal herbs and spells (Borman, 2015). Ability to produce offspring was recognized in addition to their productive capacities (Hanawalt, 1986). In addition, numerous goddesses were revered just as highly as gods. Already in the eighth century, people thought witches existed and that they struck deals with the devil. These were utilized as educational tools in relatively harmless texts. Witches were sought for using the terms malefica (which means "evil witch") and striga (Bange, 2010). During epidemics, for example, women were sometimes blamed for poor

sourcery. Those found guilty of this were not executed, but rather given monetary fines or temporary exclusion orders (Borman, 2015, p.37).

Christianization of Western Europe was an early goal of missionaries in the 9th century. However, Germanic peoples already had their own religions, which included the worship of a number of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses and the attribution of magical abilities to various elements of nature, including trees and stones. Christian doctrine was woven into preexisting faiths by missionaries. The Germanic goddess Ostara provided the inspiration for the Christian celebration of Easter (Van Gilst, 2017, p.31). Witches, however, were gradually transformed from some Germanic deities or devils. This non-violent technique was so effective that by the ninth century, open paganism had been all but abolished. Many people who disagreed with the new faith were considered heretics. Heresy and witchcraft both went up at the same time. The belief in witchcraft and demonology was being seen as heresy. The earliest recorded heresiological executions occurred in the eleventh century (Bange, 2010, p.27). This had never happened before, back when it was still preferred to convert heretics gradually. Now when witchcraft, diabolism, and heresy were lumped together, however, they were considered as more dangerous and less benign than they had been individually. Followers of the witchcraft belief were put on trial and given a two-year sentence of hard labor. So, it's reasonable to believe that after heresy trials, people started burning the "witches". Borman notes that before convicted witches were burned to death, templars, cathars, and Jews were among those persecuted in this way. They discussed allegations of murdering infants, sexual assault, and other horrific acts (Borman, 2015, p.14-37). As a result, I think it's safe to say that the church methodically eradicated groups it saw to be dangers to Christianity. However, the issue of why almost exclusively women were killed for witchcraft remains unanswered.

Christianization of Western Europe, according to Van Gilst (2017) and others, led to a rise in sexism. Midwives were a prime example; they could perform abortions and manage births, but the church only valued women for their offspring. The church thus hated midwives who used this information (Federici, 2004, p.123). Furthermore, as one aged, their value diminished (Van Gilst, 2017). This was expressed in monetary terms in Leviticus 27. After the age of 60, women were only

worth 10 shekels, while males were valued at 15 shekels. Both men and women between the ages of 20 and 60 were valued at 50 shekels (Van Gilst, 2017, p.28). On the other hand, ageism was prevalent before the beginning of the Christian period. According to my theoretical framework, elder members of society were not afforded any special privileges or care in feudal civilizations.

2.1.1. What Makes a Witch a Witch?

In the first place, we must think about what a witch was like back then. The maleficum and the Witches' Sabbath, two of witchcraft's most defining features need to be discussed more deeply. The escape of the witches, the making of a contract with Satan, and a sexual liaison with the devil are all hallmarks. As time went on, the accusation that witches ate the flesh of young children became another defining feature of the stereotype of witches (Roper, 2006, p.103).

We already know that the maleficum is what sets heretics apart from witches. It was believed that women who entered into a pact and had a sexual connection with Satan were granted the ability to cast the maleficum, a supernatural force that is used to kill humanity. These women would also be granted the ability to control it. Children's deaths, miscarriages, infections, and agricultural failures are only some of the calamities that might be attributed to maleficum.

The prevalent belief in a Satanic plot was linked to the common belief that witches kept the Sabbath. The inclusion of demonic forces is what sets apart a Satanic conspiracy from a "regular" conspiracy. It was thought that women might receive aid from demons to carry out a plot against males in exchange for marriage, sacrifices, and worship to Satan. This would enable the women to carry out the plot. The elite was worried that these conspiracies might lead to uprisings, and so they cracked down. Consequently, the concept of conspiracy was important, since even the secular authorities relied heavily on this argument to justify their participation in the witch hunts.

Outbreaks of leprosy and the plague were seen as conspiracies by both the lepers (who were regarded sinners) and the Jews (who were considered deicides under Satan's direction). These beliefs informed the development of the concept of

conspiracy. This persecution of Cathars occurred in the same area as lepers and Jews were targeted. Antisemitism and persecution of Jews at the period gave rise to the term "Witches' Sabbath" because of the widespread belief that Jews had made a deal with the devil to bring about the downfall of Christianity. Antisemitic segments of society misused and perverted the word Sabbath, which originally refers to the seventh day of the week, which in the Jewish religion is considered to be a day of rest, in order to link Judaism to heresy.

The Waldensians, a group of pre-Protestant Christians, also faced persecution for their beliefs. These people thought they were practicing cannibalism, child sacrifice, and witchcraft, and that they were working with Jews to do so, and the worship of demons and Satan, among other atrocities. They were also said to have had sexual orgies, something specifically linked to the Witches' Sabbath. The widespread conviction in a massive, well-organized plan intended specifically against the Orthodox and Catholic churches was a common thread connecting all of these tragedies.

Lyndal Roper, an Australian historian, has dedicated an entire chapter of her book to the topic of cannibalism. She says that women in particular were tortured into confessing to cannibalism, and that this was particularly true when it came to consuming the bodies of infants (2006, p.103). Roper's work principally links cannibalism to the murder of children. In 1532, she writes, the Constitutio Criminalis Carolina made it a crime to kill a child. The legislation was enacted after reports of mothers murdering their children for want of food (Friedrich Ed., 1819, p.183).

There was a widespread notion in the Middle Ages that witches would ride broomsticks to the Witches' Sabbath, a tradition when they would feast on the flesh of children they had murdered and mutilated for their sexual pleasure. The concept of the Wild Hunt and related phenomena, such as female fairys, also contributed to this.

In light of this, it is evident that the aggregation of beliefs, concerns, and the unique environment of the time did not give birth to a new phenomenon but rather transformed the image of the heretic into the representation of the witch. It is evident that witch trials were also trials of heretics, such as the Waldensians, since they were commonly accused of witchcraft. At the end of the day, we have to admit that the past and the present of heretics and witches are inextricably linked.

2.1.2. What Makes a Woman a Witch?

It's important to clarify what characteristics of females make them susceptible to being labeled as witches once the connection between heretics and witches has been explored. During the Medieval persecutions, this is a legitimate worry since both men and women were accused of witchcraft and heresy. In addition, witches are almost always represented by women in current films, and they play a significant antagonistic role, whereas other movie characters, played by men, are presented as protagonists while playing a traditional antagonist role such as a hitman, a vampire, or a serial killer.

The ties that bind witches to the unrepentant have been established, but what is it that makes witches so strongly associated with women? The role of women in the workforce during the period of witch-hunts must be explored in order to make sense of this shift.

Smart women were in particular danger in the late Middle Ages. At the period in question, both sexes were said to be "smart" if they had any level of magical expertise. The term "wise woman" was used to describe a midwife back then, although not all midwives were thought to have magical powers. Because of their conventional roles, women were seen to be in greater risk during witch-hunts, and the widespread persecution of smart women lends credence to this theory. Cooking, nursing, and giving birth are all traditionally female occupations, but she believes they make women vulnerable to charges of witchcraft because of the close association between these tasks and disease and death. If a stillbirth happened, for instance, the midwife may be accused of witchcraft because of the suspicion that she had a hand in the child's death.

Australian historian Lyndal Roper provides support for this theory by claiming that female visitors and caregivers to new mothers, such as housekeepers, nurses, and nannies, were often blamed for the child's or mother's illness or death. Roper also considers age, suggesting that older women were more likely to be accused of witchcraft because of their proximity to mothers and children under their care (2006, p.176-177).

These accusations were grounded on both religion and science, namely the then-dominant Humorism theory of medicine. A person's temperament may be affected by their blood, urine, saliva, and sweat, according to the humorism system. It was believed that the absence of body fluids in elderly ladies made them vulnerable to Satanic seduction. There was widespread prejudice towards senior women at the time. Most women burned at the stake for witchcraft were well into their 40s or after the menopause, according to the numbers. The obvious aging process of these individuals had a significant influence in shaping the archetypal witch. Gray hair, a hunched back, and a few wrinkles are still the hallmarks of a witch's appearance in modern portrayals, just as they were during the height of witch-hunts (Roper, 2006, p.217-222).

In addition, women who had many stillbirths were seen as witchcraft victims or witches. If a woman could provide a detailed account of how her kid died, she was probably being questioned as a suspect (Roper, 2006, p.182, 183).

Even childless women ran the risk of being labeled witches because of the perception that they would curse the mother or the infant out of jealousy. Because of the economic hardships of the period, marriage was reserved for the wealthy. If a woman did not marry and have children by the time she was thirty, she risked being a spinster and an outcast in society. In spite of this, spinsters were often accused of witchcraft due to the widespread belief that they collaborated with Satan and murdered their own or other people's children because of their inability to produce offspring (Roper, 2006, p.182).

2.2. False Accusations of Witchcraft

Women were prosecuted as witches significantly more often than males were throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries across Europe, especially Western Europe, according to information compiled by Belien and Van der Eerden (1985). With the numbers more than 75% in France, Germany, and Geneva, women make up a majority of those accused of witchcraft in those jurisdictions (p.167). To counter the notion that European witch hunts were discriminatory on the basis of gender, Briggs (1996) claims that, on average, just 25% of those tried were male. Briggs cites

a similar situation in Paris, where males made up around 40-50% of the accused. Even yet, the larger-scale percentages reported by Belien and Van der Eerden (1985) appear more credible.

Although any woman, whatever of age, was potentially accused of witchcraft, the elderly and middle-aged were particularly vulnerable to being accused, tried, and executed (Rowlands, 2001, p.54). The ages of the accused witches are difficult to determine since, in many trials, ages were not put under record. Still, 75% of those tried were believed to be postmenopausal women over the age of 50, according to the conventional literature on witch hunts. It is examined in 31 witch trials in Belgium, and is discovered that, with the exception of five males, all tried persons were postmenopausal women older than 40 between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As well, in witch hunts in France and Switzerland, it is found that accused witches often lied about their age throughout trials, claiming to be 10 to 15 years younger in the first trial than they really were. Nevertheless, he concluded that the average of the so-called witches tested in his research was somewhere about 60 who were strange, raving, elderly ladies who had previously failed at all they attempted. Aged women who were no longer fertile and knew about abortion and contraception were often linked to the alleged witches who were blamed for ruining crops, food, and pregnancies.

This meant that the elder lady was a destructive force and, by extension, a witch. Ugliness, at least in people's eyes, was a contributing element. Women in the seventeenth century worried that becoming older would lower their social status. Moreover, they knew that a witch's appearance was often associated with advanced age (Reinke-Williams, 2018). Women who were suspected of being witches were often portrayed as elderly and ugly, hunched over with wrinkles, warts on faces, untidy teeth, and who reeked and hobbled (Briggs, 1996, p.84). Based on testimony from the Nieuwpoort trials, Monballyu (2015) learned that some of the witches were physically grotesque. Also, he details instances of women who suffered from demon punishment, resulting in black eyes or facial scarring. Another 58-year-old lady was quoted as saying that she had a terrible face because of an illness that made her constantly fall. As part of the Devil's punishment, this was presented (p.97).

Numerous scholars, as we have seen, contend that the majority of women accused of witchcraft were in their twilight years. However, this is seldom followed up with an examination of why it was mostly elderly women who were targeted for witch trials. Some of the many risk factors for being accused of witchcraft include advanced age. Below, I will outline a few hypotheses that attempt to explain the increased vulnerability of elderly women. Bange (2010, p.9) claims that in the past, communities were led by elder women. She speculates that this may cause younger generations to accuse older ones of witchcraft out of envy. There are no documented cases of younger generations singling out elder women in their society to accuse of witchcraft. It is suggested that the decline in social cohesion and support for the elderly is more likely attributable to changes in social connections within farming communities. This might cause people to feel guilty, which in turn could spark charges of witchcraft.

Furthermore, civic and religious legislations gradually phased out female healers beginning in the 15th century. Female healers traditionally learned through their elders and other practitioners, but in recent decades, medical education has shifted more toward academic institutions. In the modern world, harmful witchcraft has replaced traditional plant-based medicine. Midwives were still vitally important in gynecology, but they required instruction from male physicians (Juárez- Almendros, 2017). In addition to lowering the respect for older women in the role of female healer, this also rendered many of them unemployed or in a precarious situation if they continued to work in the field. There is a risk that they may be accused of witchcraft if their actions are linked to infant deaths or birth defects (Ibid). There was a rise in syphilis in Europe in the 16th century, affecting largely women and causing stillbirths in pregnant women who got the illness (Ross, 1995). The midwife, as has been shown before (Ross, 1995; Juárez-Almendros, 2017), was the convenient scapegoat. Moreover, the syphilis epidemic may cause syphilic dementia, a kind of severe cognitive impairment (Ross, 1995). It is important to note that severe syphilis was a key factor of the dramatic increase in witch trials that occurred in the sixteenth century (Schoeneman, 1997). By heavily modifying and criticizing previous research, Schoeneman (1977) disproves the bold claim that almost all female defendants were mentally ill. Schoeneman came to the conclusion

that many of the women facing charges were not mentally ill, despite their accusations. In spite of this, The possibility of mental illness in the complex series of events leading to witch accusations is raised. Insanity, dementia, and suicidal ideation are all listed as potential causes for suspecting someone of being in league with the devil. People used to think that antisocial behaviors like hopelessness, sadness, and insanity were signs that the devil had "nested" in their bodies after being invited there (Ross, 1995, p.335).

The excess of women after the England-France conflict from 1350 to 1450 is also mentioned as a possible explanation for the rise in witch accusations. They were regarded worthless since they couldn't start a family of their own. Dating prospects were already limited for poor women. As the murders occurred over a longer time span and in different parts of Europe, this would only provide a partial explanation for why impoverished, older women were targeted.

2.2.1. Proper Christian or “Non-human Witch”

The Simon Gediccus vs. Valens Acidalius (1595) argument was not at all unusual. There were several works of high quality and quantity that discussed the abilities or lack thereof of women. Although the listed books were well-known throughout the Nordic region, they simply serve as an example of the literature that is now accessible. During this time, a vast body of literature was read in Europe about women. Both printed and handwritten versions of the writings were accessible, and they were arranged according to genre. It is well known that Nordic readers were aware with European ideas like educated ladies, the tenth muse, illustrious women, and so forth. Of course, the spoken word was the primary method of upbringing and education. It is also obvious that the most inventive and ground-breaking educational works created throughout the humanist period were written for boys and men, especially princes. The thinkers published their fresh concepts in Latin and disseminated them across Europe; at best, these concepts aided in defining a new period for each state. The way the future king treated his fellow citizens would have a significant impact on how he handled high-level political matters.

Such pursuits have little impact on females' upbringing. There was a limit to the amount of mayhem that women could cause if they violated unwritten rules since they did not have access to any kind of public position. Women and children, on the other hand, needed to be kept in control since they didn't always follow the rules that were set down for them. Therefore, it could be practical to enforce a set of basic norms to keep the family patriarch happy and ensure that everyone else's life runs as smoothly as possible. Many books were produced on what young women and girls should and shouldn't do, as well as what is not acceptable, or out of allowance, in order to achieve this. These writings, which were often published in the native tongue, might range from carefully considered moral philosophies that reflected an autonomous outlook on life to lists of generally accepted acceptable behaviors. The Instruction of a Christian Woman, three sections on which were written by Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives and published in 1523, is one of the works that is unquestionably the most interesting in this context. One of the four daughters of the Spanish King Ferdinand II, the English Queen Catherine of Aragon, received the work's dedication.

Nothing revolutionary could be found in The Instruction of a Christian Woman. The author keeps women focused on their domestic duties, offspring, morality, and prayers. He approaches the typical issues that affect women's daily life and interactions with males meticulously. Thus, the book is a fascinating source of knowledge concerning historical perceptions of women. Vives choice of Latin language to write the book makes it clear that he aimed to take the intellectuals as the target audience which would happen to be men.

Vives, who lived from 1492 to 1540, was acquainted with Thomas More and Erasmus of Rotterdam. In his early years, he spent a lot of time in England and attended European colleges. Women's issues weren't his sole area of interest; he wrote on a variety of subjects. He has written on language, ancient literature, grammar, Christian theology, letter writing, and moral philosophy among other typical humanist topics. The education philosophy, especially the education of a woman, was of importance to humanists. Among Vives' well-read and well-known writings are his tract on the responsibilities of a husband, and in particular his book on the education of princes.

The single Vives weighed his colleague More's educational initiatives at home, much as the bachelor Erasmus did. Lessons in literature and languages were offered to More's daughters, who were renowned for their intelligence. During their lifetimes, they served as living examples of how women might absorb complicated concepts without suffering harm or becoming into threats to society due to their knowledge. This positive illustration led both Vives and Erasmus to the same conclusion that some of the early humanists of Italy had previously reached: it may be useful for certain women with the capacity for study if they had the permission to follow their intellectual sort of goals. Of course, there would need to be certain restrictions, and Vives was not supporting women to be educated on things like anatomy and medicine.

Vives examines the girl's early years in the first three chapters of his The Instruction of a Christian Woman. He expresses his belief that women should breastfeed their infants themselves, even if he is aware that not everyone agrees with him. He presents vice as a hazard to the adolescent female in the part on the rearing of "maidens." The girl may succumb to temptation, and it would be simple to convince her that something is desirable when it is really wrong. In his discussion of how to protect the girl from vice, Vives comes to the conclusion that education would be beneficial (Vives, 1523).

This small group of talented women is mentioned by Vives in his essay on Christian women's education. Even if he was only interested in axluent women—and no matter how few of them he may have believed to be intelligent—it was very important that he brought them up at all. He didn't need to include this group in his particular kind of instructional book. Apart from the fourth chapter which is about learning, it reveals nothing to surprise in the work's contents list. The first part on the virgins asks the ways of getting away from the vice. And gives an answer, reading and education. Then he responds to fictitious objections by saying “[…] but it is much better to make guidelines for what is acceptable behavior than to indicate what is not permitted" (Vives, 1523). The latter might offer the females negative thoughts. He replies, "[…] Rules as to what is proper may be all very well in typical situations, but it is preferable to know what is right and wrong when in an unanticipated event." (Vives, 1523). Unexpected events will in fact happen. Thus, girls should acquire a

higher level of education than previously customary. Not that girls should get less than boys, since boys need to be highly well-informed so they may act autonomously later on for the good of the group, or in this case, society as a whole. On the other hand, as instructed by Saint Paul, adult women are to stay at home and be quiet while they are out. They need to be able to balance acting in their own best interests with, to some degree, their husbands'. Once they have finished their chores and prayed, they need to have something to do. For this, reading and studying are helpful.

In light of his deliberations, Vives comes to the conclusion of positive influence of academic education on girls rather than a negative one. He then spends an entire chapter instructing which authors are readable and which are not. He starts out by highlighting how much subpar reading is accessible to those who have leisure time, which is for sure a questionable point on its own. He finds it especially odd that some dads let their wives or daughters read books about love and war. He questions the preachers who do not condemn this in every sermon when they make such a fuss about so many other issues.

Vives advises that women need to be protected from bad literature in the same way they protect them from serpents and snakes. If there is a relapse later, the books must be taken away permanently.

There aren't many books from antiquity that ladies should read, unfortunately. It is filled to the brim with immoral women who act whatever they choose, lie, and mislead, live extravagant lives which are not even to be a discussion for a Christian virgin, interfere in financial and political affairs, etc. One must go to the Christian Middle Ages for respectable, edifying literature. Of course, the Bible is the best. The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the historical and moral writings of the Old Testament, Cyprian, Hieronymus, Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostomus, Hilary, Gregory, Boethius, Fulgentius, Tertullian, Plato, Cicero, and Seneca all appear on Vives' list of recommended works for women (Alenius, 2011, p.8). The final writer's relevance for the educated ladies is what makes this lengthy list the most intriguing. Nobody should have been particularly astonished that they were permitted to read the Bible, and the same goes for the works of the Church Fathers and Christian commentators. Three philosophers are among the drastically censored pagan authors of antiquity found at the bottom of the list. No fiction, history, romance, or poetry are

welcomed. But it was a start since it is impossible to know which volumes the lady who could visit the home library and find a book in Latin which was in fact removed from the shelves?

2.2.2. The Educated Woman

Without fire, there would be no smoke. Of course, there cannot be a discussion on knowledgeable women without including learned women. Although the word "learned ladies" is ambiguous, it was thankfully less "dry" throughout the Renaissance and up to the Romantic period than it sounds now. A learned woman was a woman who had distinguished herself as an individual and in her own name— or concealed behind a play on words or an abbreviation of her name, which her contemporaries could decipher—by virtue of her academic expertise and artistic or intellectual achievements, such as her fluency in a language and her teaching—in the eyes of her peers (Alenius, 2011, p.11). A knowledgeable lady with just one area of skill was uncommon. Having broad knowledge was definitely respected. Academic and creative accomplishments are often included in every list of the educated women's skills. These may be listed, for instance, as follows: She had grown up learning several other languages, including her own tongue. She had composed a poem which was dedicated to the monarch at the age of fourteen and had subsequently learned about the past of her family and nation. She was renowned for her stunning voice and delicate use of her musical abilities. She also embroidered and painted.

It was debated whether knowledge of Latin and Greek was required to qualify as "learned" in this context. Although these latter abilities were historically thought to be crucial, only a small number of educated women were genuinely proficient in them.

It seems that "feminae doctae" or "feminae illustres" were popular along the Renaissance period. It is for sure that there were earlier educated women as examples, however the urge to categorize, identify, and even elevate them emerged during the Renaissance among the progressive male learning groups. The ladies often hailed from affluent backgrounds when we look at their social backgrounds. What

we may anticipate is this. We find intellectual persons, prominent figures, clerics, legislators, physicians, and so on in these communities. Through their own literary originality, assessment of innovation, and the preservation of tradition, they processed the academic culture. However, northern European male intellectual circles began to move toward the upper middle classes and away from the aristocracy as early as the 1500s, although no such trend seems to be common among the women. The aristocracy was the social class where educated women were most prevalent well into the 1700s. Additionally, this was the only segment of society where women had an opportunity to interact regularly with literature. Their residences had libraries. There were books at both the middle-class man's university and the nobleman's home where he was working as a private instructor. Nowhere have books been made available to women. There were no public libraries, and middle-class families seldom had room for a sizable library.

The only women who received genuine reprieve from domestic duties were those who came from the aristocracy, yet even they were not entirely spared. They had to set up the household management and decide on both the specifics and broad tactics that would affect the economy of their families. They were required to reproduce and pay for their upbringing. It is remarkable to observe how willingly women who did succeed in writing accepted the restrictions on who was permitted to read and write. The examples of women in the Netherlands and Denmark such as Birgitte Thott, and Anna Maria van Schurman, at least, convey the impression that they directly requested the permission to pursue their education.

2.2.3. The Healers: Transmitters of a Popular Medicine

Women who served as healers in their communities made up a significant portion of the women who were executed during the centuries-long witch hunt. There has been a long history of healing women, and they have performed this role for generations. They were the transmitters, reviewers, and the transmitters of an ancient common knowledge that was lent by mothers to their daughters in Europe, and they were in charge of the community's health up until the witch hunt started. In fact, because of their civilizations and collections of medicinal plants, many scholarly

men and women believe they were the first anatomists and physicians in Western history, as well as the first pharmacologists. They were experts in empirical medicine and knew its mysteries.

They earned the reputation of "wise ladies" in the neighborhood as a result. However, the institutions first referred to them as "gossips" before labeling them witches out of fear of their influence. From a trial in south Germany, we find a portrait of a woman who typified the witch image, Walpurga Hausmanin of Dillingen. Walpurga, an elderly widow, supported herself by midwifery (Barstow, 1994, p.16). Many herbs and plants had medical uses, and women were familiar with them since many of them were passed down from generation to generation before Christianity became institutionalized. Through testing, they produced new formulations and applications at the same time. The rulers of the states and the leaders of the Christian churches both thought that this information was a kind of sorcery. It indicates that these ladies combined ancient pre-Christian pagan ceremonies with their healing techniques. These ancient religious practices seem to be the source of the mysterious patina that surrounded plant knowledge and the creation of lotions and ointments. This was one of the elements that went into the idea that these women had a unique relationship with their bodies, both in terms of physical healing and the body-mind connection. There are written documentations of the practice of certain women who were accused of being witches and using their own homemade ointments to cleanse oneself.

The inquisitors sometimes connected the use of ointments with the alleged ability of witches to fly, as is seen in one of the witchcraft trials of Puigcerdà in 1620. In that trial, there is a group of witches that are shown, including a lady called Jonga who encourages another to strip off her clothing and apply ointment before causing the latter to fly out the chimney. Despite the Church's opposition, which held that because of original sin, women should give birth with agony, the witches-healers utilized analgesics, sedatives, and digestive remedies, among other concoctions, to ease birthing pangs. In the event of a potential miscarriage, belladonna was used to control uterine contractions. Some stories credit an English witch with discovering digitalis, which is currently used to treat cardiac disorders. These enlightened ladies performed abortions and counseled other women on birth control options. In fact, the

"father of modern medicine," Paracelsus, claimed to have learnt everything from witches in the sixteenth century. A portion of this information was lost during the witch hunt.

However, the materials that have been examined up to this point indicate that they developed networks and regularly met to share information about therapeutic plants while also establishing themselves as middlemen for the dissemination of other types of news, so fostering ties amongst women. It's conceivable that these networks supported and propagated the era's peasant rebellions.

As its ultimate goal, the process of institutionalization and professionalization would have its legitimization of the social order that was established from the various sectors of power as soon as universities began to appear linked to the Church in the twelfth century. This implied that subjects like law and medicine were taught inside the limits of this institution. It was vital for the males in the ruling social strata to control the sources of information. Within the bounds set out by the Christian faith, the disciplines were established under the scrutiny of the Church. In reality, lawyers and medical professionals worked together, and each played a part in the witch hunt, providing guidance to the tribunals or providing it with a legal foundation.

Due to their lack of access to higher education, women were denied the opportunity to apply medicine as healers, and all those without a certification were not allowed to do so. The ladies who had been practicing as healers for centuries discovered that they were no longer allowed to carry out their profession. However, eliminating their influence in the neighborhood and decreasing the respect they received from the populace were required for the ban to be more successful. It was also vital to put a stop to these women's abilities, which allowed them to cast doubt on the professionalism of those receiving university degrees.

The wealthy men professionals with a wealthy background, fought against the potential competition of the healing women with the support of the privileged social classes, who recognized the necessity of controlling the knowledge such as medicine as one of the primary disciplines that the state and the church had a special interest in controlling. Due to the status and reputation, it provided, but more importantly because it meant controlling judgments on life and death, crazy and non-madness, etc., the institutional structure of medicine was significant in this process of

controlling the sources of information. Of course, women were not allowed in this exclusive group.

The earliest female healers were educated women who treated customers from similar social strata, or members of the affluent social classes. The University of Paris charged Jacqueline Felicie of practicing medicine in the thirteenth century. She was not questioned for her ability or professionalism, but on the contrary, they were used against her since she, as a woman, dared to heal people, casting doubt on medical community's expertise, and demonstrating her ability to recover patients in whom other physicians had given up.

In actuality, the medical professionals learnt relatively little in those era's colleges. It was mostly constrained to Galen's writings and the whole of Hippocratic medicine, along with all of the attendant preconceptions. They didn't get any instruction that might be considered practical or that may cast doubt on Christian truth. Bloodletting was the most popular method in this situation, especially for wounds. In addition to the fact that physicians required the guidance of the priest and were unable to treat patients who had not made a confession, superstition was also prevalent in the form of prayers, religious ceremonies, and in the use of spells.

It is at least debatable if the assumption that the development of universities resulted in a good evolution and progress in which common superstition was replaced by science. The more accurate statement would be that the new "professionals" forced their "superiority" on individuals who troubled them and presented a problem. According to historians Cavallo and Rivera, there is a connection between the changes in social interactions between the sexes and the control of science, which occur at the same time as the prosecution of witches becomes more severe. The divide between natural magic which was a pre-modern branch of science seized by males, and black magic, which was illegal and punished and defined what women performed, makes this relationship evident.

According to some researchers, the Church may have had further motives for seeking to restrict the function of female healers. For instance, some witches-healers gave advice to individuals to limit their sugar intake since they had seen diseases associated with it. However, the Church, which had financial stakes in the sugar business, saw it as advantageous for consumption to rise rather than decline.

It was the turn of the lower-class ladies after the professionals like Jacqueline ceased to be an issue. They were the primary targets of the witch hunt.

2.3. Witch Hunts Justified by Accusing Women of Being "Nonhuman"

Prior to the establishment of universities, guilds, and municipal governments, women were active in all spheres of life during the Middle Ages. They worked as peasants, writers, abbesses, settlers, and researchers in a variety of fields of human knowledge, including those that would later come to be known as "science." During this time, women were primarily engaged in the study of medicine. Women surpassed the boundaries set by the prevalent gender ideologies and presented a challenge to the feudal and patriarchal male elite.

A sexist thought current that was circulating among priests and intellectual men in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was countered by women like Christine de Pisan, mother of the term "querelle des femmes." The sexist movement emerged during the Renaissance, which led to a period of retreat for women in all spheres. Additionally, the witch hunt started at this time, intensifying the struggle between men and women for the dominance of science and knowledge.

In a stereotypical manner, witches are the women which are commonly old, lame, bleare-eied, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkle, old, unattractive, disliked, and female (Scot, 1973, p.7). But apart from these stereotypes the reality shows us that any woman who pursued independence or had any thoughts of it in any way was liable to be marked as a witch. The inquisitors considered the women who lived beyond the frames of the guardianship of their family, who resisted to submit to authority of the male, or who didn't want to pay attention to their so-called feminine duties to be unsettling components of the social order of their time. The range might include women who are alone, widowed, or single, destitute, elderly, foreign, sad, or healers.

The widows, single ladies, and elderly women without males may all be branded witches, but many of them were also young, happily married women. Given that they were seen with suspicion as women and immigrants, foreign women may likewise be an easy target. Many witches were strong, independent women who were

ready to speak out for themselves and protect themselves. Since they learned to swim because the sea had rejected them, women who could swim in England were thought to be witches.

Witches were often impoverished and of peasant descent. Although some of the healing ladies came from affluent socioeconomic backgrounds, this is true with the majority of them. The healers from the lower classes and peasantry served the community and the working classes. They were often the sole ones caring for the underprivileged.

However, midwives were yet another group that was persecuted during the witch hunt. Midwives made up a large portion of the witchcraft accusers. This may be explained by the widespread belief that birth had magical properties throughout the Middle Ages and the Modern Era, and that as a result, midwives who understood the secrets of birth had extraordinary abilities. Obstetrics was the only field of medicine that was still largely for women until it was also taken away from them in the 19th century due to the institutionalization of medicine in colleges. Within some exceptions, women were not allowed to practice medicine until the end of the nineteenth century, when the nurse, particularly Florence Nightingale, emerged. The nurse seems to be closely related to the position of women as caregivers, entirely deferring to the physicians.

According to Mary Daly, the presence of remains of what she refers to as "Old Religion," a goddess-worshipping tradition that was preserved by women, pre-patriarchal and pre-Christian, should be considered while studying the history of witches and the witch hunt. The Goddess represents the powerful, autonomous, and intelligent female presence in society that the witch hunts would aim to eradicate by slaying and dismembering the Goddess.

2.3.1. A Guide to Torturing “Non-human” Women

In the year 1487, the inquisitors Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer published their book known as the Malleus Maleficarum. Both historians and feminists believe that this piece of writing is among the most misogynistic that has ever been put on paper. Identifying witches, coercing confessions, torturing and

killing them were all included in the Malleus Maleficarum. The writers focused mostly on women, although they did include a chapter about witchcraft practiced by males. They are more likely to collaborate with the devil since they are more easily influenced and are the weaker sex. There were rumors that older women were encouraging young girls to engage in witchcraft by acting as role models. Even more disturbingly, "witches" used infants as a source of nourishment. They were the polar opposite of a nurturing mother figure, doing more harm than good and only caring about themselves (Kramer & Sprenger, 1487).

Although the Malleus Maleficarum is today generally recognised by both the Catholic and Protestant faiths, when it was initially published, it was met with suspicion, and there was no spike in the number of witch hunts that took place shortly after the book was published in a given region. Nonetheless, Malleus Maleficarum should be included because it provides some insight into the prevailing attitudes and political atmosphere that allowed the book to be widely distributed.

The explanations of healing as a skill, applying medicine as a profession, or the control and institutionalization of science by the authorities are insufficient to comprehend the significance of the witch-hunt. The witch hunt was a deliberate act of gynocide by the ruling class, which benefited from a resurgence of sexism that started in the fourteenth century. Under the influence of Thomas Aquinas' writings, the Church encouraged this misogyny, which manifested in the fourteenth century from France to all Europe.

Previously stated, mentioned resurgence of sexism would be followed by a move backward for women in all facets of their existence during the start of the Modern Age, which coincided with the Renaissance. These alterations line up with the timeline of the witch hunt. Where there are many women, there are many witches, according to theologians and inquisitors.

Numerous studies have shown that the witch hunts were primarily a political phenomenon rather than religious or of any other type. It also seems to have been connected to a process of cultural standardization, which in turn was directly connected to the growth of the authority of the state. Majority of those who were convicted and sentenced were women, and this is not by accident. Authorities took advantage of this aspect as a diversion of the unhappiness among public because of

social causes that might incite revolt. At the same time, they got rid of disturbing elements. The witch hunts were more than just mass hysteria that took the so-called witches as scapegoats; rather, it was a deliberate action promoted and directed against the women who were targets because of their wisdom, independence, or simply their femininity.

From the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the witch-hunt persisted, although it peaked in the sixteenth and, particularly, the first half of the seventeenth. The majority of witchcraft offenses were punished with penalties up to the end of the fourteenth century. In 1486, two German-Dominican inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger wrote Witches' Hammer, also known as The Malleus Malleficarumor, and the bull of Pope Innocence VIII coincidentally came out at the same time that the cycle of death was turning. This inquisitor's manual's dissemination was aided by the invention of the printing press.

The inquisitors said that the power of witches was not their own and instead derived from having sex with the devil since they could not believe that women possessed intelligence or strength due to their patriarchal worldview. The inquisitors' sexual perversion became clear throughout the trials when their thoughts of the witch and the devil engaging in sexual activity were described in explicit detail. Supposing that they already were in assistance with the devil, the ladies were functioning as instruments of the devil whenever they behaved logically. This might be a reference to the networks of women that existed and were used to coerce women into disclosing the identities of their neighbors, acquaintances, etc.

Witchcraft was seen as a "crimen exceptum," or a unique crime apart from the others. The distinction between good witches and wicked ones completely vanished in the sixteenth century (many of them were healers). The good ones, according to the inquisitors, were worse than the evil ones. This was made possible by individuals like Jean Bodin, whose demonology helped to revive the witch hunt through the end of the 16th century. They gave witches less rights than normal convicts, and torture was almost always used during their trials. Suspicion was sufficient grounds for execution.

The inquisitors asked for a different name from each accused person, which started a cycle of violence and murder. The cycle started when the first witch was

denounced, which anybody may do. And in this "crime," the inquisitors utilized kids, especially young girls who were coerced for giving testimony mothers. Around the beginning of the 1700s, there came a moment when the charges became out of hand. Even the accusers themselves, as well as the spouses of the officials and inquisitors, may be implicated. Stopping the whole procedure was the only way to avoid this. The authorities who had encouraged the cycle of fatalities started to refute and dismiss the claims of witchcraft as a result.

The difficulty in estimating the massacre's scope stems from the fact that, despite several studies, there is still a lack of knowledge on the topic, as well as male scholars' propensity to sidestep the issue or approach it with excessive caution. The most cautious estimates place the number of individuals put to death during this time at at 200.000. G. R. Quaife estimates that there are around a million people in the world, and Mary Daly would agree with Matilda Joslyn Gage's estimate of 9 million that she made in 1893. Depending on the period and area, there are 80–100% more women than males.

The witch-hunt started in the mountains of Italy and Germany and quickly spread across these nations as well as to France, England, the Nordic countries, and Spain. The persecution was worse in Germany, France, and Belgium than it was in other nations. The persecution is said to have been more severe in the Protestant countries, despite the fact that there do not seem to be many distinctions between Catholic and Protestant nations. Although the Spanish inquisitors also happened to be involved in the witch hunts at its height, at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th, they focused on specific religious heresies more because witchcraft was less likely to be believed.

Due to the Spanish Inquisition's greater care in this kind of trial, persecution in Spain was thus less severe than in other European nations. The number of executions did, however, notably increase during the peak of the hunts, but not to the extent seen in other nations. The Spanish Inquisition maintained a more skeptical stance against witchcraft than the rest of Europe. Since the Inquisition itself claimed that torture or the threat of it, as well as directed inquiries, may compel the statement of what had in reality never occurred, it was required to establish evidence and confessions alone were insufficient. In Germany, torture might endure anywhere

from a day and a night to many, but in the United States it was only allowed to last an hour.

Witches might be discovered everywhere, particularly in rural areas, despite the appearance that there were more occurrences of witchcraft in certain places than others. The availability of medicinal plants in the region and the continuation or lack thereof of pre-Christian religious practices seem to be connected to the concentration of witches. The majority of convictions occurred in the Basque Country. The Zugarramurdi witches were given prison terms in 1610. The trials in Toledo and Granada are additional noteworthy ones. Valencia executed 40 individuals in 1655, 31 of them were women. Galicia was also thought to be the home of witches. Between 1616 and 1619, 300 women in Catalonia were executed by hanging. Witches were said to exist in various places within the Catalan Principality; famous examples include, Girona, Terrassa, Vallgorguina, Ullastret, and Caldes de Montbui. Some memories, such as the toponym Pla de les bruixes which means Witches Plain or the palm leaf that was used in the balconies to drive the evil spirits away, have persisted until recently.

THIRD CHAPTER

3. ABOUT *THE MERCIES* BY KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE

3.1. About the Author and the Book

Kiran Millwood Hargrave wanted to be a cat since she was a little girl. She was born in Surrey, England, in 1990. She soon replaced this ambition with the drive to own a cat one day or be the first woman to step foot in space. Though she only managed to accomplish one of her goals, she has realized that writing gives the ability to imagine anything. In her last year of college, she started writing poetry, and she eventually published three books of poems and a play before turning to writing children's literature. The Girl of Ink & Stars, her first book, is about the daughter of a mapmaker whose duty is to protect the island. In 2017, this book brought her the Waterstones Children's Book Prize and the Children's Book of the Year award at the British Book Awards. Both honors were handed out last year. "The Island at the End of Everything" which is her second published work, was nominated for three prizes: the CILIP Carnegie Medal, Costa Children's Book Award, and the Blue Peter Book Award. In 2018, the Blackwell's Children's Book of the Year 2018 award was given to Hargrave's third book, "The Way Past Winter."

Being Hargrave's first novel for young adults, The Deathless Girls has been listed for the Diverse Book Awards 2020 and nominated for the Foyles Children's Book of the Year and the YA Book Prize. Her first novel for adults, *The Mercies*, debuted on top on The Times Bestseller Chart and placed on number five on the Bestseller List of The Sunday Times after being the subject of a 13-way auction. In addition to being named a New York Times Notable Book of the Year, this work also won the Betty Trask Award.

First published in *The Mercies*, Hargrave's book for older readers. There, she reveals the inspiring people and harrowing circumstances that were the basis for her novel. Books that are set in early modern Scandinavia that deal with questions of gender and sexuality, such as Burial Rites by Hannah Kent, The Sealwoman's Daughter by Sally Magnusson, and The Glass Woman by Caroline Lea, have

recently seen a resurgence in popularity. The region is now witnessing a period of unstable theocracy, which may make it especially relevant for Anglophone writers interested in stories of female resistance. Isolated towns, severe weather, and patriarchal violence might be understood as a mirror image of the present trend in feminist science fiction dystopias in historical literature.

The Mercies is the first novel by Kiran Millwood Hargrave intended for an adult audience. When the men of Vardo, Norway, were out fishing on Christmas Eve 1617, the island was devastated by a violent storm. No males made it off the island alive, so the women did everything from keeping the house running to fishing, building, herding reindeer, and slaughtering. King Christian IV of Denmark and Norway adopted anti-witching laws in 1618 that were based on those passed by King James VI of Scotland the previous year. He mostly preyed on the Sámi people of the far north, but he was also responsible for the murders of hundreds of Norwegian women. Scottish native John Cunningham was sent to the Finnmark area for that such purpose. He presided over 52 trials and was especially thrilled to discover that some of the Vardo ladies had included local Sámi burial practices into their grief after the odd storm had passed. When it came to controlling the Finnmark area, Cunningham was the man for the job. Some of the women who had lost their husbands were tried in court and given the death penalty by being burned at the stake. The monument by Louise Bourgeois and Peter Zumthor that stands there now served as inspiration for this novel. Some of the greatest regional witch trials took held in Scandinavia, which served as inspiration for Kiran Millwood Hargrave's first novel for adults. An interesting and well-written story, *The Mercies* explores themes of love, mistrust, and the dangers women face while seeking to assert their individuality. To provide insight on the true nature of *The Mercies*' past, Kiran provides the following explanation.

The Mercies is a work of fiction, although it is bookended by two terrible incidents that really occurred. A storm occurred on Christmas Eve, 1617, off the coast of a remote island called Vardo, which is situated in the Arctic Circle. Those who saw the storm's beginning said it was "as if [it] were unleashed from a bag." Fifty fishermen were killed in an instant. Three years later, at the fortress of Vardhous, which acted as the regional center of power at the time, the first trial of

the largest Scandinavian witch hunts took place. At the end of the hunts, eighty women were burned to death on a small piece of land in plain sight of the fort as a kind of sacrifice.

As a result of Dr. Liv Helene Willumsen's extensive investigation, we know who these ladies are and what their lives were like before the experiments began. Because of Hargrave's careful translation into English of their comments, she had a booklet with their words close at hand while she worked on the text. This served as a constant reminder of the gravity of the situation, inspiring a serious and reverent approach to the story. That being said, she made an early decision to never base any of her characters on real people. She avoided using specifics, such names, and avoided making any conclusions about the stories out of respect for the people who inspired them. The little information on them that we have comes from witness accounts. All the women's names in her book are thus amalgams of several victims. Names like Maren Magnesdatter, which combines the names Maren Sorensdatter and Kirsten Madnesdatter, are wonderful examples of this.

Because of this, she was able to let go of the past and create her own take on *The Mercies*. She could make the men leave the women alone, allow the women to go fishing, and build a matriarchy when she did not think they had these rights. Moreover, she gave them Ursa, an outsider who not only brings new life to the neighborhood but also gives Maren the love and company she's always longed for but never thought she could find.

While it's possible that Absalom Cornet, the commissioner assigned to oversee Vardo's return to order, exists only in her imagination, his ideas and methods are very much real. John Cunningham, the Lensmann of Finnmark and the guy in charge of starting and overseeing the proceedings, is the actual culprit here, and he uses him as a tool. No one in Norway had ever been tried and convicted for witchcraft before he took office. By the time he went away, far over a hundred had.

Hargrave claims that a visit to Vardo will give you a strong feeling of being transported back in time. The town's proximity to Russia meant that the Nazis saw it as a crucial strategic outpost during World War II. The settlement was wiped off the map as a consequence. None of the quaint fishing houses or other remnants of the 1600s way of life in which the residents of Vardo formerly indulged can be

discovered now. Nonetheless, the land, the sea, and the sky exist beside the structure as well. Twice, she came to see Vardo. There was a time when the sun never set; as the sea fretted rolled in, the perpetual light became a ghostly glow, and the terns cried out from the port. A wintry chill cut through any exposed flesh the second time around. The sun was not up, but it was shining towards the horizon, giving the sky a deep, navy blue color. It was at this point that she felt the full force of the savagery, when the inhumanity of what had been done to the women hit her like a punch to the chest. Gasping for oxygen, they were dragged under the waves and then yanked up onto the stony shore. After holding them captive within the stone fortress, they were burned alive on an open grassy field outside the fort's perimeter. Nobody was making anything up, and even though her story is fictional, everyone felt like they could identify with the characters she created. Everything about their interactions, the love and hope they find, and the rest of their lives, comes alive. The actual women of Vardo are her greatest hope, and she wants them to feel like she's done them fair. Her hope is that her book would give readers a sense of connection to these people and their experiences.

3.1.1. Vardo Storm and Norwegian Witch Hunts

Before the advent of Christianity, supernatural abilities were widely acknowledged in medieval literature. The use of magic, shapeshifting, flight, spells to manipulate the elements, and summoning the undead were all used. The church eventually disapproved of these abilities and prohibited both belief in and practice of "witchcraft."

The belief and charges, however, are historical in nature because of the well-known European witch trials of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the distant area of Finnmark, there is a settlement on the seaside called Vardo, which is referred to as the "Witch Capital of Norway," where witches have been discovered. In this little community, there were more than 140 witch trials between 1593 and 1692. Ninety-one persons were tortured or burnt at the stake after being judged guilty of sorcery. For such a remote location, this is a relatively sizable population. Since the trials were documented, current historians have a better understanding of the charges and

the trials related to the witch hunt. But why were witch hunts so prevalent in this isolated region?

Local governments had a considerable degree of influence in the 1600s. Men from Scotland, Denmark, and Germany often go on witch hunts. The idea that "evilness might be found in the North" was widely held in Europe. It was thought that people in this region were more likely to be evil than individuals in other regions of the globe. Satan was thought to reside in these far-northern regions, and Finnmark was on the periphery of the Christian world. The very chilly North winds carried the "evilness." Many of us have heard the ferocious and shiver-inducing noises of a snowfall and heard the winds scream with dreadful terror.

Between Vardshous and Russia, the Dutch would cruise for commerce while admonishing their fellow citizens about the evils of Satan. Through the vile winds, demons' and devils' abodes soared. Witches near the shore might summon powerful whirlwinds, bad weather, fog, thunder, and lightning. It was a unique nautical sorcery performed by witches from Norway. Norwegian ladies were at home while the men were out long hours fishing. They were being investigated for alleged adultery with demons at the time. The Sámi were another group that those who believed they had a unique relationship with the Devil dreaded.

When they came home, many Europeans who had traveled to trade and attempted to discover a sea route across the Northeast had been plagued by harsh weather and ice packs. It became known that Norway was home to the most renowned witches. There were rumors that large-scale witch sabbats were conducted on the mountain Domen between the communities of Vardo and Kiberg. Additionally, this was the way into hell. Several of the alleged ladies described a long, dark valley with a dark lake at the bottom. When Satan poured fire from an iron conduit, the water in this place began to boil. In the water, men and women floated while making cat-like noises. It was believed that devils and demons originated in this cave, traveled around the globe, and wreaked havoc on Europe by sending corrosive, violent winds and diseases.

Heksejakten I Vardo, often known as the Vardo witch trial, occurred in 1621 in Finnmark, a region of northern Norway. One of the largest in Scandinavia, it was the first witch trial to take place in northern Norway. Three years earlier, on

December 24, 1617, a sudden, powerful storm struck northern Norway. The storm caught the men of Vardo off guard since the vast majority of them were at sea at the time. Forty men perished and eleven boats were sunk. It was thought that witches were to blame for the storm.

Mari Jgensdatter and Kirsti Srensdatter, two women who were subjected to tortured interrogations, were the focus of the trial. Mari admitted that the catastrophic storm of 1617 was caused by witches. The water "looked like ashes and people were murdered," she said, after they knotted a fishing line three times, spit at it, then untied it. Another lady named Else was detained when she was seen with black cats and dogs and subjected to the water's ordeal: if you floated when you were tossed into the water, you were thought to be a witch. The Devil, according to Anne Larsdatter's confession, bound the witches' mouths so they could not weep or confess before going through the water's experience. She joined 40 other people who had flown to a witches' Sabbath outside of Vardo. Due to her excessive drinking, she barely had time to get home and into bed before it was time to get up for Christmas morning.

In January 1621, Mari and several others were found guilty and executed by being burnt at the stake. Months later, Kirsti returned home and was also interrogated. Anne identified Kirsti as their leader, as did many of the ladies questioned. Kristi said that she had studied magic from an elderly lady while being tortured. A few months after 10 other women were burnt at the stake for sorcery on April 28, 1621, she was executed by burning alive at the stake. She was the last victim of the infamous 1621 witch trials.

Between 1621 and 1663, almost 150 persons were put to death for practicing sorcery. All of the males were Sámi, whereas the majority of the women were Norwegian. Norway's Queen Sonja dedicated the Steilneset monument to the victims of the Vardo witch trials on June 23, 2011. The monument was designed and built by Peter Zumthor and Louise Bourgeois. The monument was created to bring tourists to a region of Norway that is both incredibly scenic and economically struggling. The monument fits with the contemporary practice of apologizing for historical injustices, making amends, and officially recognizing the victims. The monument is located on the same plot of land where the 91 alleged witches were allegedly beheaded.

Over a picket fence of the nearby cemetery, on a windswept point with a rocky coastline shattered by rushing waves, you can view Zumthor's invention in two different structures. Memory Hall is a basic long crosshatched structure constructed of untreated timber, hanging in a white cloth cocoon. Steel cables are utilized to draw tight the hand-sewn sailcloth, which was inspired by the local fish drying racks.

There are 91 lighting throughout the hallway. Each one lights a window and a plaque that tells the narrative of the individual who was slain using testimony from the trials. It seems like entering a dark tunnel as you step onto a wooden gangplank and go through a steel door into the void. With strong gusts of wind, the walls tremble. A black spiral box with a chair and a flame in the centre is situated next to this. Three mirrors that reflect the flames and stand in for the Damned, the Possessed, and the Beloved are located above it. Mirrors distort the flames and give you the impression that you are really in the fire.

3.2. Book Analysis

3.2.1. Book Summary

The Mercies is a piece of historical fiction written by Kiran Millwood Hargrave. It is a reworking of the historical storm and witch trials that happened in the early 17th century in the modest Norwegian village of Vardo, which was decimated by both occurrences. At the beginning of the novel, the heroine, Maren, is a twenty-year-old woman who lives with her parents, her elder brother Erik, and Erik's pregnant wife, Diinna. Maren is reportedly engaged to be married to a young man named Dag Bjrnsson. Maren regularly experiences scary dreams in which a whale plays a part.

An unexpected storm hits when almost all of the men in the town are out fishing. All the sailors perish in the storm, including Maren's family and her fiance. Toril Knudsdatter is a severe, pious lady who gets more hostile and devoted as time goes on, while Kirsten Srensdatter is a bold, independent woman who defies gender norms. Despite the fact that the women first join together to survive, there are definite power lines formed between Kirsten Srensdatter and Toril Knudsdatter. It is

stated that the village of Vardo will soon have a new Commissioner who will come to drive out non-Christian elements. Although Pastor Kurtsson does not declare this openly, it is thought that the commissioner will also be aiming to weed out any Sámi influences, especially Diinna. He is a fairly incompetent and average Pastor. Pastor Kurtsson arrives to Vardo. He then informs that the town would soon have a new Commissioner.

It comes out that Absalom Cornet, a Scotsman, is the Commissioner. Cornet is infamous for his involvement in a prior witch trial, in which he oversaw and participated in the beating, torture, branding, and eventual death of a twelve-year-old girl suspected of witchcraft. In order to locate a spouse before moving to Vardo and marrying Ursa, who is twenty years old, Cornet travels to Bergen, Norway. Ursa fears she will have to leave her father and her younger sister, Agnete, if she chooses to marry, but she is not given much of a choice in the matter. Even though Ursa and Cornet are on their way to Vardo, she had a miscarriage on the boat.

Both Ursa and Cornet have made it to Vardo. Ursa realizes she has no clue how to keep a home or make food, especially in the harsh climate of Vardo, as she observes Cornet begin to scan the hamlet, taking note of the individuals who do not attend the church and the local Sámi community (particularly Diinna, since she is both). She employs Maren as her teacher, and the two rapidly become extremely close, with feelings of love and sexual desire shared by both parties. Meanwhile, tensions between Maren's mom and Diinna continue to rise, forcing Maren into the role of peacemaker. Diinna decides to leave Vardo clandestinely for the sake of her and her child's future. She wishes Maren well and says goodbye.

Cornet initiates a formal investigation into the claims of witchcraft in Vardo. Toril, along with some of her Kirke-women and Maren's mother, formally accuses Fru Olufsdatter (Dag's mother) and Kirsten of witchcraft and of planning to bring on the storm. These two women have been arrested and are being treated quite roughly. Kirsten is dunked in a body of water as part of a brutal ceremony meant to ascertain whether or not she is a witch. She was tried, found guilty, and burned at the stake for her crime. After seeing such a disturbing scenario, Toril and Maren's mother may begin to second-guess and feel bad about their children's behavior.

The chaos only serves to bring Maren and Ursa closer together, and they decide to consummate their love by making physical contact. When Maren learns that she is being accused of witchcraft, she rushes back to Ursa, only to find her in the company of Cornet. Cornet, under the influence of alcohol, blames Maren for Ursa's disappearance, accuses her of putting a spell on her, and then tries to drown her by holding her under water in the bathtub. Ursa tries to draw him away from Maren, but in the end she kills him to save Maren's life. Maren decides to go away after understanding that she would be held accountable for Cornet's murder if she is convicted of witchcraft. Despite Ursa's best efforts, Maren makes her stay behind so that she may return to Bergen. Maren goes to the cliff's edge after saying farewell to her friends and family and considers taking a flying plunge. There is no way to know what will happen to her in the future. At the end of the book, the author includes a brief note that fills in some of the historical context. The author argues that the storm and the witch trials were true events, and that around a hundred people were killed as a result of them.

3.2.2. A Path to “Non-human”

Witchcraft has fascinated many cultures but is untrue. Witchcraft is a historical shame caused by direct or indirect accusations of dark magic and witchcraft in the fantasy world of men, institutions like Christianity, and even their fellows like women who have distanced themselves from their kind and internalized patriarchy with learned helplessness, especially when women contradict social norms. Since the first interpretation of the woman as a phenomenon, isolated from the man and seen as a completely different creature from what she is, the failure to understand their biological structure and mental way of thinking has made them "nonhuman" since eternity. False witchcraft allegations have doubled women's "nonhumanization" in society and mindsets. As long as they were allowed, autocratic women became human. When they did or thought outside these bounds, it accelerated their "nonhuman" transformation. And this phenomenon has found itself a justified place through presenting these women as if they have posthuman qualities.

The simplest definition of a posthuman being is someone who goes beyond the quality boundaries expected and needed of humans, removes their own limits, and loads themselves with new qualities in very different horizons. According to this definition, women, whose borders are already narrow, are viewed as "non-human" only when they want to be self-sufficient and in charge of their own thoughts and actions. They want to be normal humans but being "inhuman" has made them "double nonhuman."

This posthumanization process has only justified a negative trait to women when they do anything anyone can do but not expected from women. Patriarchy, faith, and envy are the main reasons women become "posthuman." In ignorance and darkness, women oppressed by men were easily labeled witches. As stated in previous chapters, patriarchy and religion view women as tools for procreation or male needs. The rest of their traits have made them "nonhuman" and "justified posthuman." A woman cannot work or study, only take care of her spouse and family. She cannot enhance these limited qualities. As "nonhumans," they cannot even hit zero to be human.

They become "double non-human." Worse, most women accept it and abandon their womanhood to follow faith and patriarchy. This is even more painful than other women who accuse women of witchcraft and make them into "nonhumans" by outcasting and targeting them. By rejecting themselves, some women have become soldiers of male and religious power. Patriarchy has often used other women to accuse women of witchcraft. Jealous neighbors accused them of witches and killed them. On a good day, those who gave birth with their neighbors' healing skills or were healed by society's wise women claimed that when things went wrong, when they lost their children at birth, or when they couldn't find the remedy they expected, it was witchcraft.

Hargrave's The Mercies illustrates these. Maren, who lost all the men in her family and discovered that the feeling called love for a woman is not actually felt only for a man, and Ursa, who cannot feel the warmth of her loved ones and is not valued by her father and husband, Kirsten, who wants to get rid of the woman roles assigned to her and lead herself and other women, and Sami member Diina, who tries to stick to her family heritage traditions, have different perspectives. Some escaped,

some were slain by patriarchy, and some were left to our inference. The storm-driven women, who upset patriarchy, faith, and other women within themselves, were misunderstood and began their own "nonhumanization" processes.

3.2.3. From Patriarchy to Matriarchy: Evolution of Women into "Nonhuman"

Although Hargrave's *The Mercies* seems like a feminist revolt revolving around witches and witchcraft, another inference that can be made in the subtexts of this work is the evolution of women because of historical oppressions and being declared as "nonhuman." The only duty of woman seen by social norms, patriarchy and religion is to be a decent Christian woman with unconditional devotion to her husband, family, and religion. However, it has been revealed that the adventures of some of the characters in the story go in the opposite direction and that these are not what they really want but to discover their own selves. The devotion of the two female main characters in *The Mercies* to their families and loved ones, not being seen as human by men, has turned into a lesbian love story with a unique transformation. Let alone not doing the things that are asked and expected of a woman, this love between two women has allowed women to transcend their own limits to the highest degree possible and become "nonhuman" beings. The fact that they were not aware of this until almost the end of the book, while the events in Vardo became catastrophic for the others, made their adventures progress very differently.

In Vardo, Maren dreams of a beached whale on the rocks outside her house. She climbs down the cliff and rests on its body, wrapping her arms around it. The men come to the whale and begin to destroy it, pouring its blubber into lamps. Maren dreams that her arms grow wide and protective over the whale even as it is killed. Maren sinks down to the ocean floor, drowning, and smelling and tasting burning blubber. She awakens with the feeling of drowning (p.11). Hargrave sets the tone of the novel with Maren's semi-prophetic dream, as she tries to project the upcoming events for the women of Vardo and Maren's position on what will go on. She seems to protect a piece of nature from the destruction of men which foreshadows her

process in turning into a “nonhuman” position in the story leaving the zone of being a woman with the standards of men by rejecting what they do and what they tell them to do. She also gives the signals of rejecting the nonhuman standards of being a woman which includes not to interfere with the men’s things by trying to stop men doing what they do in a regular commune life with just a single dream. But in the first chapter, the precise opposite happens, and nature wreaks destruction on the men of Vardo, and Maren has no way of protecting those she holds dear.

The attempts of humanity to collect from nature, even when it is necessary for survival, comes with apparent inevitable destruction and devastation. This is what happens throughout the story for the protagonist; she tries to conduct a life sufficing and protecting herself and her community as a woman but is prevented by men, she tries to find the love that she lost from her grasp and marked with being a witch. While she tries to survive from what she experiences as a woman, she finds herself in severe conflicts that appointed to her being a more-than-human, or that is to say; less-than-human. In either case, she accelerates the transition of becoming a “nonhuman” being by demolishing the framework of a woman that are drawn by society. Maren’s dream also foreshadows her relationship to Ursa, and how she will try to shelter her from having her body be abused by men, like the whale’s body is physically plundered by men. Here, she positions herself with a male quality that undertakes the role of him protecting a wife. In further chapters, we see her having a love affair with Ursa. On the other hand, smelling the burnt and being drowned at the same time can here be the footsteps of what will go on in the town in the aspect of the witch trials which are done by burning or drowning of the women, or both.

Being one of the two protagonists and one of the two point of view characters in *The Mercies*, Maren begins the novel as a quiet, kind-hearted twenty-year-old woman, living by the rules but deep down inside she knows something is wrong in her life. Before the storm struck, Maren was engaged to Dag Bjørnsson and preparing to live in his father's second boathouse with him. She was close with her father and brother, Erik, but more enjoyed spending time with her mother and sister- in-law, Diinna who is one of the Sami people in Vardo. As we see her introduced as a decent woman as it is expected by the society, we know that she is living a quiet life without any troubles that might bring her face off the accusations of patriarchy.

After the storm, Maren finds herself playing the role of arbiter between her mother and Diinna, who are increasingly at odds, and aligns herself with Kirsten and the more iconoclastic women, as opposed to the Kirke-women, like Toril who start the fire of witch accusations. All these qualities of her make the reader think that she starts her journey in the story as "a normal woman" with "normal human qualities" as a woman. Maren is headstrong, but practical. She knows, and respects, that Diinna's traditional Sámi beliefs preclude her from believing in Christianity, but still tries to convince her to come to Kirke anyway, to avoid unneeded scrutiny. Innerly, as a woman, she knows how dangerous to oppose the Christianity and to have close relationship with the Sami who are known to be shamans and tries to suppress her objective thoughts. She is fascinated by Sámi belief and customs, but respects when she cannot participate as a non-Sámi and defends Diinna when she can.

Maren is horrified by the witch trials and executions, and her anger at being unable to save Kirsten helps lead to her being accused and her relationship with Ursa faltering. As it is seen, throughout the novel, she plays it by the rules knowing the dangers and what might happen to her if she tries to cross the boundaries of a woman but her affair with Ursa leads her destiny to be charged just like the others and end up being accused of being a witch. Her story clearly presents how a normal woman doing what is expected from her becomes a "nonhuman" being by defying the norms and transforming herself from a decent Christian woman to a sinner, and eventually, a witch as a queer lover.

Like Maren, Ursula, or Ursa as she is mostly known and referred to, begins the novel as a twenty-year-old woman devoted to her family, specifically her sickly younger sister Agnete. Ursa's family was once happy and wealthy, but after the death of her mother, her father, a shipbuilder, lost quite a bit of money and dismissed most of his household staff with the exception of Siv. Ursa never imagined her life outside of the city of Bergen and is shocked and afraid when her father arranges for her to be married to Absalom Cornet, the Scotsman and incoming Commissioner of Vardo. Ursa has mixed feelings about her husband, finding him controlling and hard, her negativity toward him compounded by his taking her away from Bergen. As it is seen, Ursa starts her journey in the novel as a decent Cristian woman, as well. She has no right to oppose men and has to do whatever is told. She is exactly what she is

expected to be, is stuck in a “nonhuman” woman body with no choice. In Chapter 9, the narrator tells her being stuck by defining her fears, “[B]ecause they will use his customs for naming, she is Mistress Absalom Cornet. Herself, lost inside his name” (p.73). In this quote, Ursa indirectly spells out one of her biggest fears of her newfound marriage to Cornet: losing her identity inside his. It is not an unfounded fear. For a start, she will lose some of her own name, pushed inside his. She is also losing her home, her family, and everything she has ever known her whole life. Her identity as Ursa is now become the identity of the wife of a commissioner, with no importance beyond her husband's work. She becomes a possession, a “nonhuman” object for a man’s dominance. Because the reader sees Ursa's point of view, we know her to be more than her marriage, but this perspective is unseen by most of the other characters, Maren being an obvious exception. Even Ursa's husband will come to think of her as an extension of himself, to be bent to his will.

In Vardo, Ursa feels even more isolated, and also feels inadequate as a wife since she cannot really cook, clean, or keep a household. She hires Maren to teach her how to perform domestic labor, and the two quickly become close friends, with Ursa thinking she has never been so close to another person, with the exception of Agnete. Though Maren is not necessarily the most skilled in the village at these tasks, she is competent enough to teach Ursa, who grew up with servants and does not know anything about these tasks. As she works with Ursa, the women become closer and begin spending time together outside of the lessons, sharing their grief and pain with each other. Maren begins to feel romantic and sexual feelings toward Ursa, which she initially tries to repress fearing what might happen to her, eventually giving in to them toward the very end of the novel.

Her disappointment and fear about her husband and her marriage forces Ursa to choose a different path in her life and eventually leads her to find herself in an intimate but forbidden affair because of not finding her ideal marriage and husband. Through the chapter ten narrator reveals more about her disappointment: “Inwardly, she [Ursa] rails against Agnete's beloved stories, at Mother's tender glances at Father, at the bawdy laughter of the kitchen maids...Did they all know what love was, and lie?" (p. 79). After experiencing marriage and sex, Ursa (rightly) feels cheated of romance and tenderness of love she had come to expect growing up, from the stories

she and Agnete heard from the model of love her parents presented, and even from dirty jokes. Of course, Ursa is not experiencing love at all, but she is experiencing what is unfortunately a side effect of marriages that are orchestrated without both partner's consent or desire. Ursa had no choice in the matter of marriage. And of course, Cornet did not choose Ursa for any specific reason, and was not attracted to any part of her personality or identity. Instead, she was mostly picked as a convenience, as Cunningham had suggested to Cornet. Luckily for Ursa, she does wind up experiencing genuine romantic love and sexual pleasure with Maren later in the novel, however briefly.

Even though she is distant and a bit fearful of her husband, Ursa occasionally uses her authority to her advantage, including defending Fru Olufsdatter from Toril's attacks. When Ursa and her husband take a trip to Vardohaus to meet with the Lensmann and other officials, she learns that he oversaw, and personally participated, in the torture and murder of a young woman accused of witchcraft in Scotland. Ursa is not as prejudiced as her husband when it comes to the Sámi people and others, but she does refer to them with slurs and speak poorly of them, occasionally. After the trip, Ursa is horrified, and any positive feelings she had toward her husband are completely dissipated. As he begins the witch trials in Vardo, Ursa feels helpless and disgusted at his cruelty, which come to a head when he actually tries to kill Maren, and Ursa winds up killing him to save her. At this point, we see another decent woman completes her "nonhuman" transformation. A "nice" woman who lives by the rules finally breaks her chains, sets her mind and feelings free, murders a man in high status in her life and in the society, and most importantly has an affair with another woman. Their destiny is left unclear through the end of the book, but it is not hard to guess it doesn't end for Ursa as it ends for Maren because of her position with the status of her husband. Maren is accused of witchcraft and becomes a refugee, Ursa on the other hand, probably continues her life.

The relationship of Maren and Ursa becomes intimate due to the dualisms they experience within themselves. The fact that these two characters do not like patriarchy from the inside, they get close to each other and evolve into an emotional relationship, lead them to step out of their feminine roles dictated by the social and religious norms assigned to them, and lay the foundations of the lesbian relationship,

which is actually contrary to Christianity and womanhood. In this way, from the beginning to the end of the novel, we see that especially Maren and Ursa are "normal" people who go to church, fulfill their womanly duties, but are tired of these features and impositions in the subtext and look for a way out. The author effectively draws easy comparison between the two point of view characters, Ursa and Maren. Ursa wants to ease Agnete's burdens of sickness in any way she can. Similarly, Maren wants to ease the burdens of racism that her sister-in-law Diinna experiences, though in both cases neither can truly eliminate the cause of pain from their family's lives. And notably, while the storm dashed Maren's chances at marriage to a man she loved, the storm has the exact opposite effect, and brings way for Ursa to marry a man she will eventually grow to despise. The way out these two characters find causes them to turn into a "nonhuman" being and accelerate their "nonhumanizing" process. The climax of the story at the very end of the novel eventually completes the transformation of these young women from decent women to sinful heretic "nonhumans" as they have no boundaries as a woman on the path to find her real love and feelings that they were in search of.

3.2.4. Kirke Women as the Soldiers of Nonhumanizing

In the second chapter, after the storm, the fire goes out and none of the women re-light it, as it had always been Pappa's job. Finally, three days after the storm, a neighbor, Kirsten Sørensdatter helps and restarts the fire. As it is the Sabbath, Kirsten beckons them to come to Kirke (Church). Though Diinna does not believe in the Christian God, she comes along anyway. The women offer some debate over if all the men are truly dead or not, if the beached whale had been an omen, and if the storm was sent by the devil himself. Accusations of witchcraft start sparkling in some women's minds, but nobody utters it. Kirsten seems to take over as a leader.

The author is able to explore how tragedy both unites and divides communities. Though everyone knows it is in their best interests to work together to survive their new reality after the storm, fault lines are still beginning to be drawn in Vardo, setting the stage for the more intense conflict that will reign later in the

novel. Hargrave introduces Kirsten to the reader, giving us our first impressions of her not being similar to majority of the women in Vardo. She is self-sufficient, brave, and stubborn. The tense atmosphere between Kirsten and Toril gives clues about her not seeing any self-sufficient women as normal and her obvious hostility against Diinna reveals another truth for the character and the story; village is not pleased to have any non-Christian among them. With the devastation of the storm, the remaining people of Vardo are forced to reassess their own identities as well. As an island that mostly relied on fishing, the fact that the ocean has wreaked such destruction on them after it provided so much for them is a shock indeed. "Maren learnt nets before she learnt hurt, weather before she learnt love…Pappa used to say that the sea was the shape of their lives. They have always lived by its grace, and long have they died on it. But the storm has made it an enemy" (19). Hargrave deliberately uses language to speak of the ocean as a living, sentient being, worthy or respect and awe and fear in the same way that some of the characters will speak about God. Kirke women seem to start thinking about their ocean turned its back to them because of the non-Christian and started seeing Sami women in village as a cause and accusing them sending the curse deliberately.

Nine days after the storm, Diinna, who is Sámi, suddenly disappears after the bodies return, leading Mamma to curse and insult her, worried that she is leaving to raise her baby with the Sámi. Diinna's father had been a noaidi (shaman) and provided charms and prayer to the people of Vardo before it was outlawed, though still practiced in secret, to the dislike of some in the village. Within the week, news arrives from Kiberg, where the storm's damage was apparently minimal, leading more women to suspect that the storm was specifically sent to Vardo by supernatural means. Diinna comes back with a Sámi shaman (not her father), with a birch bark cloth to bury the men in. Toril Knudsdatter, a woman who is generally hostile to Sámi, scoffs at this idea and insults Diinna, claiming that her husband was god- fearing and she never trusted sorcery, though Diinna and Maren remind her that she used Diinna's help to get pregnant.

With the news from Kiberg and the washing up of the men's bodies ashore, the people of Vardo are forced to reckon not only with the sheer damage of the storm, but of the fact that it seems to have only devastated Vardo, and not the

surrounding areas. When Diinna's return with a shaman is combined with the news from Kiberg, Kirke women becomes free to utter their thoughts about Sami people being "nonhuman" and to suspect that the storm was not a mere natural phenomenon or coincidence, but an event brought on by a higher power. This accomplishes two actions to set the plot forward: first, it creates a strong line between those in the village who see the storm as punishment by a nonhuman power, such as Toril, and those who do not believe it that strongly. It should be noted that the residents do not split on lines of logic and rationality versus superstition, but between those who see the storm as punishment for not being Christian and God-fearing, and those who do not see the storm that way, and might practice a less stringent version of Christianity, or may practice traditional Sámi customs, like Diinna, or some mixture of those two. Additionally, the idea of the storm being a deliberate action foreshadows the main charge that will be laid on those accused of witchcraft toward the end of the novel, namely that they brought the storm on purpose through witchcraft. Additionally, the fourth chapter reveals more about Diinna's character and foreshadows her genuine exit toward the end of the novel. Diinna's leaving and returning with a shaman, rather than show her alienation or remoteness to her Norwegian family or the people of Vardo, shows the opposite. She cares enough, not only for husband and father-in- law, but also other men of the village, that she wants to share her own spiritual practices with them. Diinna birthing her son, using only Maren and Mamma's assistance, further shows her devotion to them specifically, and her ensuring that her son will be a part of their family, and not just hers, or hers with the Sámi. Unfortunately, Diinna giving birth marks both the height of her relationship to her mother-in-law, and the beginning of its end.

Six months after the storm, Kirsten gets in front of the Kirke and notes that they must become more self-sufficient, beginning with going back to fishing. The trip is physically demanding on women, but they, even Toril are overjoyed to haul in two large nets full of all kinds of fish. Kirsten takes the initiative and announces that the women must begin fishing or risk starvation. In this case, it becomes clear that fear of hunger trumps any concerns over propriety or traditional gender roles, which Kirsten herself notes wryly. She tells Toril, "propriety doesn't feed us…Only fish can do that." (41) She also notes in that same conversation the absurdity of the

Pastor's weak and feeble attempts to prevent the fishing trips. "And whatever Pastor Kurtsson decides to mumble at us this Sabbath's Day, I shall not be able to hear him over the grumble of my stomach." (41) Despite the soundness of Kirsten's logic, Maren does feel that it is her bold and stubborn nature which would allow her to put forth the idea of women fishing in the first place and coming from anyone else the idea would have fallen flat. Still, hunger continues to be more of an issue than religious dogma. Even Toril and the other Kirke-women are grateful, though Toril thanks God for the fish and not the women who did the actual fishing, something which obviously annoys Maren. "'God provides,' says Toril, but the ache in Maren's arms tells her it was not God but they who brought this catch home." (46) Still, the rules of propriety do keep Kirsten from making a Christmas sermon, so even she does respect or fear them, or their consequences, at least slightly.

Meanwhile, tensions between Mamma and Diinna are increasing, with Maren being forced to intercede between them. Diinna does not even call the baby Erik as Mamma had insisted, but Eret, which is the Sámi pronunciation. Maren worries that her own connection with Diinna is weakening. Maren begins to see Diinna, and her relationship to her baby boy, as strange or unnatural, even comparing it unfavorably to Toril's relationship to her child, despite Maren's obvious dislike of Toril. "Where Toril walks about with her bundled child on her hip easy as a basket made for her, on Diinna's narrow body Erik looks like a burden...There is something unnatural in how she is with him. Maren thinks Diinna watches him with her hooded eyes as a wolf watches another wolf: he is kin, but she is wary...There's no cruelty there, but there is also little warmth" (101). It may seem like a contradiction that Maren describes Diinna and her parenting style as "unnatural", but also compares her to a wolf. But this is the common refrain of implicit (or explicit, as the case may be) bias and racism against the Sámi and other Indigenous peoples: that they are somehow both unnatural and "nonhuman", while at the same time being too wild and close to actual nature. Maren thinking of the physical features which separate Diinna from her half- white child, like her hooded eyes, also shows that Maren's bias against her has little to do with Diinna herself, but what she has been raised to believe about the Sámi.

On the Sabbath, the rain stops and Maren and Mamma head to Kirke for the service and sermon where the entire congregation awaits Cornet to speak. He asks

everyone to come to him with their names so he can have a register. Toril asks about those who do not attend Kirke, and Cornet says that "there will be no more of that" (131) and asks for their names as well. As Cornet walks back to his home, Maren, and her mother pass by, and Maren's mother introduces herself as Freja. She, while carefully distancing herself from Diinna, explains that Diinna is Sami, and she made the runes that Cornet saw recently in the village. In panic, Maren explains the purpose of the runes are merely to mourn Diinna's losses. On the Sabbath, Maren urges Diinna to come to Kirke, warning her of the commissioner's disapproval of her being Sami and his demand on everyone to be in Kirke. Diinna evidently does not care about that, no matter what warnings Maren gives her, but does allow Maren to take baby Erik with her to Kirke.

In chapter twenty-three, the day before the meeting, Mamma works Maren hard. She sends Maren to Toril's house to pick up mended winter clothes. Toril reminds Maren of her newfound power in her connection to Cornet, and insults Diinna. Maren returns home and tells Diinna of this, begging her to come to Kirke the next Sabbath. She reminds Diinna of the Sámi murdered in other nearby villages, but Diinna still refuses. Maren begs Diinna to at least come to the Wednesday meeting, but Diinna does not respond. Maren briefly discusses the matter with Diinna, worrying to herself that Mamma may truly hate Diinna.

In chapter twenty-four, Maren arrives Ursa's home with her mother and Diinna to collect Ursa, and Ursa notes Freja's immediate hostility to her and realizes Diinna is the Sámi woman who did not come to Kirke and made the runes. She also sees Diinna holding Erik like a baby, though Ursa thinks he is too old to be held that way. They head to the meeting. Toril and Sigfrid arrive, wishing to speak with Ursa, and Ursa realizes her husband has already spoken with them. Sigfrid drops a basket and when Diinna moves to help, Toril insults her and Diinna takes Erik and leaves. Toril appears to jockey for Ursa's favor, subtly insulting the other women of the village. When Toril makes a veiled threat to Fru Olufstadder, whose home is the meeting place, Ursa rushes to her defense, wielding her husband's power. Toril leaves, seeming to threaten Ursa somewhat.

In the following chapter, After Kirsten congratulates Ursa on standing up to Toril in the meeting with women of Vardo, Ursa and Maren leave the meeting early

after some time, leaving Mamma behind. They arrive at Ursa's home and hear Toril speaking with Cornet which appears to be Toril, and Cornet have begun hosting meetings of their own, attended by Mamma. At this point political fault lines growing between Kirsten and Toril. Toril's close relation with Cornet and her snitching the others provides her become the new leader of Kirke women with the support of him.

Through the final part of the book, in chapter thirty-one, Ursa awakens to commotion and crying outside. She sees Fru Olufsdatter's door wide open but cannot see what is inside. A delighted Toril tells Ursa that Cornet has arrested Fru Olufsdatter. The Fru comes out, with her hands bound, Cornet leading her away. Ursa asks her husband what is going on, and he explains she is being arrested for witchcraft and being taken into the jail in Vardhous. Toril proudly tells Ursa that she informed Cornet of the poppets in the Fru's house. Ursa races to Maren's house and tells her to warn Diinna, but Maren quietly relates the news that Diinna has left.

The commissioner arrives to arrest Diinna, and Maren pretends to be shocked when they cannot find her or Erik. Maren and Ursa leave the house and see Kirsten trying to fight off another of Lensmann's guards, as she is also being arrested. Kirsten asks the women who accuses her of witchcraft. Toril, Sigfrid, and Maren's mother all accuse Kirsten. Notably, one of the main reasons Toril 'suspects' Fru Olufsdatter of being a witch is because of her house. "Witchcraft. Her fine house— how would she keep it so well alone, other than with help from familiars?" (273) Maren takes this a step further, suspecting that Toril wanting Fru Olufsdatter's house helped motivate her to add to the accusations of witchcraft. "'Toril always had an envy of it [Fru Olufsdatter's house]'...Maren doesn't want to say it [that envy caused Toril to accuse], though she does think it" (281-282). The reader should note the parallels between this and one of the possible causes of the infamous witch trials of Salem, Massachusetts, where many neighbors used accusations of witchcraft as a ploy to steal property and land. Other parallels to those trials include but are not limited to the figure of the lone, Indigenous, and non-Christian woman whose supposed acts of witchcraft serve as the starting place of accusations. In Salem, the figure was Tituba, an enslaved woman who originally hailed from either South or Central America, who was alleged to teach and practice voodoo, though by her own

forced confession did not mean to cause harm or evil (if she even practiced it all, which she may not have). Similarly, Diinna serves as an easy target to scapegoat because she is a Sámi, whose presence threatens the white Christian hegemony of Vardo, and because her religious practices deviated from Christianity to the point where they could be called witchcraft.

Chapter thirty-four starts with the day of the ducking; a small crowd arrives including Maren. Lensmann asks Kirsten to confess, which she does not. They tie her with rope and throw her in the water and she manages to wriggle up, which the Lensmann takes as proof of her being a witch. They take her back to prison to be tried for witchcraft. The day of the sentencing, the rest of the village arrives at the court to watch the proceedings. As the women begin to burn, Ursa hears someone call for Kirsten to breathe in deep, and Ursa realizes that it is so Kirsten will die more quickly and painlessly from smoke inhalation, rather than being burned. For Maren, however, though she cannot change the outcome of the events, she at least wants to provide support for Kirsten, if she can give nothing else. And for her own sake, Maren knows someone must stand apart from those who have already judged Kirsten as guilty, even if she herself is hurt in the process. "Though Maren knows it would have been best to remain behind too, she could not. Kirsten can't be alone with a group of Kirke-women and men, intent on drowning or damning her. She must bear witness, too" (297). To her surprise, it is Toril, and Sigfrid, and many other women who accused Kirsten, calling it out. Ursa and Maren join them. For the absurdity of Kirsten's ducking and persecutions, Ursa notes the inherent trap of it, since Kirsten could only be proven innocent if she drowned, and by floating she will be proclaimed guilty and executed anyway. Maren leaves and Ursa runs after her to her house only to find Mamma (Freja) mournfully tells her daughter that Fru Olufsdatter named Maren as a witch, and Toril also joined in the accusation. Maren asks her mother if she thinks Maren is witch. Mamma says she does not and cries out in grief over how Kirsten was burned and apologizes to her daughter.

Nobody can deny the impact of male dominance on witchcraft accusations. With the authority of being a man and so of having a high status, they have always found a fault in women beings and accused them of witchcraft. Even more deplorable is the fact that the vast majority of women subscribe to the idea that the

dictates of religion and patriarchy should be their standards, and as a result, they distance themselves from their natural womanhood and accept their being "nonhuman." This is an even more harrowing reality than other women who accuse "other women" of practicing witchcraft and transform them into nonhumans by portraying them as social outcasts and pointing their fingers at them as targets. Some women who have embraced their own otherness have become soldiers of manhood, and religious hegemony by distancing themselves from their own selves in order to conform to the norms of the dominant culture. Even while male-dominated authorities often accuse women of being witches, patriarchy has frequently reinforced these charges by having other women make the accusations against one another. In *The Mercies* by Hargrave, we observe some of the female characters such as Toril who is a fervent, extremely devout Christian with Sami suspicion, and having joy by the commissioner's arrival, and Freja (Mamma) who is also strict, religious, and hostile even to her kin because of being Sami, turning against the others to possess higher ground in the eyes of male hegemony by outcasting and accusing them of witchcraft. In this part of the analysis, "non-humanization" process of "other women" is started by their own kind.

Basically, all these accusations root from the same problem; male dominance and patriarchy but by embracing and internalizing the problem and standing against the "other women" as if they were the soldiers of patriarchy, these hostile women are behaving them as "nonhuman" beings and "non-humanize" them in public and in authority eyes. Even Hargrave sublimes the readers by calling them "Kirke women" and makes us regard them as an army of the ungrateful controlled by male hegemony. On the other hand, while these Kirke women are "nonhumanizing" and the others, they are indeed "nonhumanizing" themselves by excluding their selves of being a woman. In this case, male dominance wins again and all the women no matter which group they belong to become "nonhumans" withing the frame of having "nonhuman qualities." They wake up from the delusion that the patriarchy imposes on them at the very end of the story, but at this point, what is done is done and there is no way back for "the other women" of Vardo as they are sacrificed for "the sake of society".

3.2.5. The Men versus "The Nonhuman"

In chapter four, four months after the storm, Maren discovers that the ground has thawed enough to allow for proper burials. She goes to Kirke to announce this discovery and is shocked to see a man at the pulpit. Pastor Nils Kurtsson has been sent from Varanger, though he is not a great speaker and seems wary of the sea, leading Maren and Kirsten to suspect he has been placed in Vardo as a punishment. His arrival is the turning point for the women of Vardo who were living without the supervision of any men until that moment. It stands as a proof that no women can stand alone in Vardo without the supervision of any man since they behave like unpredictable "nonhuman" creatures. The narrative is suddenly interrupted by a letter, from John Cunningham, or Hans Køning which is his Norwegian name, the Lensmann (vassal, or sub-leader) over Vardohus County, which includes Vardo. The letter is addressed "To the Esteemed Mr. Cornet", a Scottish man who has previously presided over witch trials. John urges Cornet to move to Vardø to root out and seek out any evil or non-Christian forces in Vardo, especially from the Sámi population. Placing the first letter from Cunningham to Cornet at the point in the plot where they women of Vardo are just beginning to adjust to their new circumstances show how quickly their lives will be overturned again, once the Commissioner arrives. The letter itself is not only a break from the plot of the novel at that point, but the narrative style as well. The first-person letter, with its explicit point of view and formal language mark a major importance on how vital the supervision of women in Vardo is considering the number of non-Christians and so Sami people.

In chapter six, months go by, and more women join the fishing expeditions, sustaining the village. More women also begin to lose interest in the Kirke and become more interested in the old traditions and Sámi rituals. Maren notices a line being drawn between women like herself and Kirsten, who go fishing and care less about Kirke, and Toril and the other Kirke women, who draw more fervently to Christianity. With the concerns about the actions of women in the village, The Pastor announces the appointment of Hans Køning as governor of all of Finnmark with joy, and the impending arrival of Mr. Cornet (though the Pastor does not mention his name) as a commissioner to help oversee the town. The women worry about what the

commissioner's arrival will mean and how it will affect their lives. They are hopeful he will be as inconsequential as the pastor, though the narrative sharply tells the reader that this will very much not be the case. The narrative is interrupted again by another letter from Køning to Cornet, thanking him for his accepting the post and encouraging him to find a Norwegian wife before he arrives in Vardo. Through the end of the chapter seven, Hargrave suddenly switches perspectives entirely, from Maren in Vardo to Ursa in Bergen, Norway for the introduction of the man as Herr Cornet, or Comissoner Absalom Cornet. Twenty-year-old Ursa watches the maidservant, Siv, light fire in the drawing room and hanging good curtains, so she knows that something important or consequential will be happening soon. She finds out a suitor will come for Ursa, and her father is arranging a marriage. Her father commands servants to prepare Ursa in one of her dead mother's best gowns. Right after Ursa's father introduces her to Comissoner Absalom Cornet, he announces his need of a wife, and they begin to make the arrangements. Ursa is shocked that she will be heading so far north with this strange man and worries that her father is making yet another bad decision among the many he had made following his wife's death. At this point, the author firmly entrenches the story in a female perspective. Moreover, the author makes it clear to the reader that the story is not about Cornet himself, though he obviously has, and will have as the narrator warns us, a major effect on the plot threads from this point out. The reader might also be disturbed by the contrast between the richness of Ursa's character and the way Cunningham discusses Cornet finding a wife in a flippant manner, as though all women are simply interchangeable and serve few purposes beyond what they can provide for men. Mentioning a wife to find on the road like an object you need to take before setting off a journey clearly proves the patriarchal place of a woman: a tool to have in order to gain seriousness, a way to reproduce; anything but human.

The issue of language and country is also briefly examined in this section. Many of the women in Vardo, from both sides of the ideological lines between Kirsten and Toril, are wary at the thought of a foreigner, a Scotsman to be exact, dictating the terms of their lives in Norway like some animals to be herd since women have no capability or allowance to suffice themselves. As for Ursa, she is shocked to discover that she will be marrying a Scotsman who can barely speak

Norwegian. On the flip side, Cunningham specifically suggests Cornet get a Norwegian wife, to help him become accommodated in Norway, before going to Vardo. Ursa awakens the next morning and feels some trepidation at her upcoming marriage. She knows so little about Cornet that she is not sure how to feel. The night before the wedding, Ursa dines with her father and talk about Cornet, with Father revealing that Cornet had approached him at the harbor after seeing his cross and was in need of a wife and a ship, both of which he paid Father well for. In chapter nine, Ursa and Cornet, now married, go to a tavern where Cornet has booked a room for their wedding night. Ursa has received a beautiful handmade nightdress from her servant, and her mother's blue kerchief from her sister. Ursa thinks about how different her actual wedding was from what she had imagined. She dozes off in bed while waiting for Cornet, having been given some sense of what to expect but not much. Ursa awakens when Cornet comes to join her. He hesitates at first, and Ursa is about to speak to him when he suddenly rolls on top of her and begins taking off her clothes. She feels tremendous pain and fear as he has sex with her, and when she shifts slightly, he puts his hand on her to keep her still. Afterward, she feels miserable and is in tremendous pain. Cornet, once again clears minds about his idea of a woman; a possession to use as his will, an object, a tool to please himself.

Ursa and Cornet begin their journey to Vardo. On the ship, Captain Leifsson invites Ursa up to see them. She asks him to tell her about Finnmark and Vardo, and he gently corrects her when she refers to the Sámi as "Lapps". Later, Cornet admonishes her for speaking Norwegian in front of him, saying a man should understand everything his wife says. The ship stops at a town. Ursa, hearing her husband and the captain have both gone ashore, goes ashore herself and does some shopping, accompanied by a young ship boy, whose name is Casper. They return to this ship, where Cornet admonishes her for having gone shopping instead of going to Kirke, and also for keeping money away from him, and demands she give him the rest of her money, which Ursa does but regrets. After her disastrous wedding night, sexual relations with Cornet do not become any easier or less painful, nor does he warm to her in any way. Indeed, now that they are married, his sense of control over Ursa increases greatly. This is best exemplified by their exchange over the money. He masks his controlling nature in obsessions over traditional marital roles and

religious propriety, thus making himself seem more innocent in his exchange with her. “It is the first day we have had a Kirke at our disposal...And you take the chance to purchase things...A husband should know of his wife’s money” (96). He tries to make her feel guilty and foolish for not attending Kirke and makes her feel irresponsible for having spent money. He also shows this controlling nature in the chapter, when he admonishes Ursa for speaking Norwegian in front of him. “Do not speak Norwegian with him [Captain Leifsson] in my presence. A man should understand what his wife is saying” (91). Given his patriarchal, stringent nature, it is quite likely that he thinks he should be able to always understand her. Of course, his admonishment about Ursa speaking with the captain is likely motivated just as much by jealousy as it is by his own traditional, misogynistic beliefs and attitudes.

In chapter twelve, the narrative returns to Vardo and Pastor Kurtsson announces that the Commissioner has begun his journey to Vardo and that the second boathouse, which was to be Maren’s home with Dag, will become his household. Maren and Kirsten gossip about the incoming commissioner and his big-city wife. Kirsten reveals that the incoming Lensmann, Hans, has carried out arrests for witchcraft, mainly of the Sámi, for the supposed crimes of wind-weaving and drumming. Maren worries for Diinna’s safety. In the next section of the book, the villagers of Vardo gather at the edge of the harbor to watch the boat arrive with the commissioner and his wife. Maren sees Ursa in a yellow dress and finds it somewhat absurd, given the weather. While the Pastor shows the way to the Kirke for them, Cornet speaks curtly to the Pastor, partly because he does not speak Norwegian very well and partly out of a sense of authority.

In chapter fifteen, following the service and sermon, the entire congregation awaits Cornet to speak. He stands up at the pulpit and begins to speak in English, directing the Pastor to translate. He announces that he has come to be the eyes and ears not only of the Lensmann, but of God, and discusses his past experiences in a witch trial. He also announces his intention to be a mediator and judge over the village, and announces a census, asking everyone to come to him with their names so he can have a register. Toril asks about those who do not attend Kirke, and Cornet says that “there will be no more of that” (131) and asks for their names as well. Cornet broods over his anger about the situation in Vardo. It takes an hour for

Cornet to collect everyone's names, and he also speaks with a few people individually including Toril, allowing him to get the names of those who don't attend the Kirke. Still, he is furious to learn about six individuals who belong to Sami community and have not come to Kirke. As they walk back to their home, he becomes more upset to see wood-carved runes, presumably made by the Sámi, and points them out to Ursa. Maren and her mother pass by, and Maren's mother introduces herself as Freja. Cornet demands explanation of the runes, as they are not Christian symbols. Freja, while carefully distancing herself from Diinna, explains that Diinna made them, and she is Sami. Maren reassures Cornet that Diinna only watched over the bodies and used no drums, but Cornet still is upset and says the Lensmann will be informed. While Cornet's need to oppress the Sámi was not a secret to the reader, nor is it a surprise, his immediate desecration of the runes Diinna created for her husband and father-in-law read as cruel and "dehumanizing." He destroys them, because they are not Christian and white, and therefore evil in his mind. Right after coming to Vardo, Cornet positions himself at the top of the village, imposing himself some divine qualities playing the God. He thinks that evil is going on in Vardo, and it is God himself who appoints him at the top of the authority here to wipe the evil out. By telling his witch trial experience, he intimidates the women in Vardo, letting them imagine their identity means nothing to this man and whether there is evil or not, he is here for them.

In the chapter twenty-six, four months after their arrival in Vardo, Cornet receives a letter from the Lensmann. Cornet informs his wife of the letter's contents: Cunningham has finally arrived and is settled in Vardohaus and has invited the two of them to dine at the castle and remain overnight. They arrive at the castle and see a small jail, which a guard informs them holds two Sámi, allegedly sorcerers. Ursa and Cornet get dressed for dinner and head back down. At dinner, they discuss the storm, and Cunningham states that it was not natural, but brought on by witchcraft. Cunningham overhears the talk of the Sámi, and the table conversation turns to them and their supposed witchcraft. Cunningham tells Ursa of Cornet's 'achievements' in a prior witch trial in Scotland, involving a twelve-year-old girl named Elspeth who supposedly carried and birthed two children for the devil. To get her to confess, Cornet himself branded her with crosses, strangled her, and then

burned her. Ursa is horrified at the story, and her husband's apparent pride in it. At the dinner, with the proud of identifying some kind of devilry going on in Vardo, Cornet derisively refers to Maren, Diinna, and some others as being kin with Sámi dealing with some kind of sorcery. Cornet comes to bed later that evening, holding a full glass and some papers. He tells Ursa he did not mean for her to find out about Elspeth that way. She refers to it as murder, but he tells her there was a trial and she was found guilty. Ursa asks why he personally had to kill her, and he simply tells her that he prayed afterward, and God forgave him. He tells her about his background, how he grew up as a poor sheep farmer and found his destiny in Kirke. While Ursa and Cornet confront the truth of his actions, e dismisses any of his own guilt in the manner, acknowledging the terror but refusing to take blame, professing that "It was a grave matter. I took no joy in it, though she deserved to die, and I prayed for it after. God forgave me" (246). On the one hand, there is a definite level of absurdism in Cornet's belief in a God merciful enough to forgive someone for branding, torturing, beating, strangling, and burning a child, but not merciful enough to forgive that child for supposedly engaging with the devil. While Cornet's part in the trial and execution of Elspeth Reoch had been mentioned, it is only at this point, more than halfway through the novel, that the explicit, grisly details are fully revealed. Ironically, Cunningham calls the story "vulgar", but only in discussing what Elspeth supposedly did to create a covenant with the Devil, in allegedly bearing two children for him. And yet, he and Cornet almost delight in rehashing the details of what was done to her body. "Branded her. With crosses at her throat and arms.' Absalom is not looking at Ursa. She hopes it is because he is ashamed, but hears none of that in his voice...she watches him enjoy the Lensmann's attention" (239). He has a great pride of being admired by the Lensmann and other men at the table. The narrator reveals what this execution means for Cornet through the Ursa's perspective: "She has not guessed at the pride he takes in the telling of this story. She can feel his pleasure in the admiration from the others coming off him, tangible as the smell of drink" (241). Once again, Cornet plays the divine entity, mentioning his actions are all coming from God. And the joy of men at the dinner talking about so called witches feels like they seem to take these witch trials and executions as some kind of sport that they do with "animals."

Cornet spends his next days poring over a list he is creating, planning to take actions over what he observes in Vardo. It doesn't take much time for him to start the executions as in chapter thirty-one, he arrests Fru Olufsdatter in her home. He leads the way proudly taking her out of her house with her hands bound. He explains she is being arrested for witchcraft and possession of puppets and being taken into the jail in Vardohaus. Shortly afterwards, he arrests Kirsten with the accusation of witchcraft that were done by Toril and Freja. In fact, the narrator draws a clear image of Kirsten throughout the story, leading her towards her very end by emphasizing her leader abilities which question the propriety or her rebellion against patriarchy through her trousers that she insists on wearing. She is one of the most headstrong, confident, and daring women in Vardo. She has natural leadership abilities and uses these to rally the village to survival after the storm, organizing regular meetings among the women and a few fishing trips, along with regular trade. She is extremely willful and flippant of the traditional gender norms, wearing trousers and even threatening to make a public speech on Christmas Eve, though she eventually backs off from this. And indeed, perhaps she wore the trousers with the intent of Cornet's wife seeing them and reporting to her husband, as though to rub her brazenness in his face, to show that his arrival would not signal her acquiescence to his strict, patriarchal gender norms. Though she might have truly had practical reasons to wear them, Kirsten was surely not ignorant to the inherent danger of being seen in trousers, and likely wore them on purpose. Kirsten leads a group of women in Vardo, including Maren, as a type of opposition to Toril's Kirke-women and when this comes to the ear of Cornet, it is more than enough for her to become a witch. Wearing a man's cloth can mean nothing but a rebellion to the power of men and women doing this must be "anything but human" since they exceed the limits of their identities given by men.

Fru Olufsdatter has confessed to witchcraft after being branded and tortured, and Kirsten has refused to confess and will be subject to 'ducking' she will be tied and bound and thrown in the sea: if she drowns, she is innocent, and if she floats, she will be considered a witch. The day of the ducking, a small crowd gathers watching the Lensmann arrive. They ask Kirsten to confess, which she does not. They tie her with rope as Maren watches helplessly. They throw her in the water and she manages to wriggle up, which the Lensmann takes as proof of her being a witch. They take her

back to prison to be tried for witchcraft. The day of the sentencing, Majority of the village arrives at the court to watch the proceedings. There is a huge crowd, Lensmenn from other places and representatives of the King. Cornet makes Ursa wear the yellow dress she arrived in Vardo in, so she can seem like an impressive wife to the other commissioners at the court. Ursa sits in the courthouse with Christin and other wives of other commissioners and Lensmenn. Ursa watches them drag Kirsten and is shocked by her haggard appearance. The trial begins, overseen by Cunningham, who reveals Kirsten confessed after the ducking. Cornet reads the charges, which are mostly absurd or rehashing of old domestic squabbles, before reading the most grave one, that Kirsten and other witches brought on the storm that killed the men. Kirsten refuses to name the other 'witches', and she is sentenced to burn to death. The cruel irony and absurdity of Kirsten's ducking is not lost on anyone. In the previous chapter, Ursa noted the inherent trap of it, since Kirsten could only be proven innocent if she drowned, and by floating she will be proclaimed guilty and executed anyway. The novel reminds us that Kirsten's trial is a farce, almost like a performance. Indeed, Cornet even specifies his wife's dress on the day of the trial, like a stage manager picking out a costume. "Absalom has made Ursa wear her yellow dress, though she protested it was surely not proper for a courthouse. 'I want you in your finest...The other commissioners will be there'" (305). Clearly, Kirsten's trial is more of a way for Cornet to show his power, to flaunt himself to the other Commissioners and to the Lensmann, far more so than it is for anyone to discover the truth of the matter. The comparison between the trial and a performance is also underscored when Ursa gets to the courthouse. "She is led to a smaller gallery up and to the side of the dock, so she will see all in profile and be separate from most of the—what are they? An audience? Witnesses?" (306). Servants even offer Ursa a refreshment, like they are in a theater.

Through the end, Maren and Ursa meet in Ursa's home just to discover their intimacy more deeply resulting in having sex. When Cornet comes home and sees Ursa's dresses piled up on the floor, he realizes his suspicion about Maren is true and accuses Maren of bewitching Ursa and grabs Maren forcefully. After a quarrel, Maren finds a chance to kill him and so she does. Though their relationship is a surprise to them both, it becomes clear by the penultimate chapter that Cornet

suspects what is going on between them, and perhaps he has for some time. Later, he makes it even more clear that he has some idea about Ursa and Maren's relationship. And yet, a combination of his own personal views with his arrogance, instead of leading to the conclusion that Maren and Ursa are in love, leads him to think Maren has somehow bewitched Ursa.

These women definitely crossed the boundaries that are drawn by religion, men, and their authority. From post-humanist perspective they denied what they are seen as and added some extra qualities themselves that are not expected from them. They interrupted male dominance, and they disturbed religious authority. All these were enough to mark them as "nonhuman" creatures. Given the time they lived, accusing them as witches was the easiest thing to make them suffer and raise the divinity of men. This "dehumanization" has been tolerated over the course of history, and furthermore, it has contributed to a doubling of the degree to which women are "dehumanized" inside societal arrangements and mentalities. Within the framework of patriarchal regulations, women's roles and bounds were clearly established, and the only time they were permitted to become human was when they were granted permission. When they performed things or thought things that went somewhat beyond these bounds, it just sped up the process of their change into beings that were not human. Women, whose boundaries are already closely defined, are only genuinely considered as "non-human" creatures when they seek to be self-sufficient and to have complete control over their own thoughts and acts. This is because women are beings whose borders are already narrowly drawn. In point of fact, despite the fact that they have the desire to live as typical human beings, the fact that they are already recognized as being "nonhuman" has driven them to push themselves beyond the boundaries of what is considered acceptable, causing them to become individuals who are "double nonhuman." According to patriarchy and many forms of religion, a woman's only purpose is to have children or to attend to the requirements of a man's lifestyle, as was discussed. Aside from that, practically all of the other attributes have enabled them to develop into creatures that are neither human nor humanoid and are thus justified posthuman.

CONCLUSION

There was a real dread of witchcraft in early modern society, and people who were accused of practicing it could be tried and executed, sometimes in large numbers. The so-called "witch crazes" of the past can be puzzling to contemporary ears. Can anyone describe the types of women who were stigmatized as witches? Why? Just how real were people's fears? And what sort of proof was needed to put a lady to death? At its roots, the dread of witches, witchcraft, and bewitchment can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church spread warnings about the evils of witchcraft and printed texts like the Malleus Maleficarum depicted their gruesomeness for the masses. After the reformation, witchcraft was still seen as a danger to the church and well-ordered society, and the popular imagination continued to depict it as such into the early modern era. For this reason, war and famine often saw a rise in witchcraft accusations, as did other periods of unrest and disarray. Someone who is disliked by their neighbors may be more susceptible to accusations of witchcraft because societal fears of witchcraft can contribute to specific accusations that begin within local community. Lots of regular women who lived in this area were falsely accused of witchcraft by their neighbors, and their stories can be found.

Even in the modern age, the premodern association of witchcraft with women persisted. There are numerous instances of the modern witch stereotype —a woman in a pointed hat, flying around on a broomstick. The stereotype of witches, however, has been around for quite some time, as evidenced by a witch image from the seventeenth century. The church's doctrine that women were the weaker sex made them a prime target for accusations of sexual misconduct. As a result, allegations of witchcraft became yet another means by which women in early modern society were subjugated. Fear of witchcraft was widespread, but it also became accepted as part of daily life in many communities. Some women who have recently moved into a community may have been falsely accused of witchcraft by wary locals. As a form of entertainment or financial gain, pretending to be possessed is not unheard of, as well.

When the harvest failed, people became more suspicious of witchcraft as they searched for an explanation. People's complaints and disputes were voiced during witchcraft trials, and witnesses testified either in favor of or against their neighbors. Thus, learning about witchcraft's past reveals more about the daily experiences of ordinary women than it does about anything supernatural.

Since the Roman concept of "humanitas," humanism has been using preexisting frames that, deliberately or not, dehumanize women. In its definition of "human" in connection to "menliness," humanism excludes women. This is despite the fact that humanism calls for all people, regardless of gender, to be treated equally and that humanists have long advocated for gender equality in education and in positions of power. This has made it more difficult for women to engage in intellectual and philosophical endeavors. Humanism is inherently anthropocentric due to its bias against women and “non-humans” in favor of males, so it's helpful to view the topic from a human perspective. Although anthropocentrism is the belief that humans are the most important or central beings in the universe, this view can also result in the subordination of women and their interests, given that in many cultures women have traditionally been seen as second-class citizens.

Humans are elevated to godlike status in anthropocentric worldviews, while other animals and women are relegated to second class status. Taking an all-male perspective on a topic has detrimental effects on women because it promotes bias, exclusion, and oppression. However, anthropocentrism is defined as "human centeredness" or "human centered thinking" that assumes people are superior to nature, while androcentrism is defined as "male-centeredness" and "male-centered thinking" that assumes males are superior to women. For example, in Warren's view, an androcentric social structure is one based on male power hierarchies, and an androcentric conceptual bias is one that disregards or minimizes arguments for women's equality (2000, p.158). It's also worth noting that certain expressions and phrases shed light on these concepts in a more nuanced way. Human chauvinism is "the promotion of human superiority," so the belief that "only humans are morally considerable" is an example of human chauvinism (Warren, 2000, p.88). Warren cites a statement by Eva Feder Kittay to argue against sameness-based models of social justice and equality: "the implicit use of men — middle class white man more

specifically — as the benchmark against which equality is assessed." (2000, p.188). To describe a science that in its observations pays no or less attention to female behavior, to describe canonical Western philosophy because it neglects "the significance of care and care practices," or to describe a society that privileges men over women, it is common to use terms like "male bias" or "male-gender bias" (Warren, 2000, p.113-158).

Sandra Lipsitz claims that the word "androcentrism" was first used in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Society (1911). There, Gilman lays bare some of the supporting framework of this theory. For example, in an androcentric culture, men are admired while women play secondary or even tertiary positions. In an androcentric culture, women are only valued for their ability to reproduce. Therefore, in order to explain some of the meanings associated with 'androcentrism,' it is necessary to distinguish between male bias, male chauvinism, and androcentrism (or male-centrism or centeredness). Simply uttering these phrases evokes images of real-world locations in one's mind. Some kind of figure or other object occupies the exact middle. Applying Val Plumwood's model of centrism to the relationship between the sexes shows a masculine Center and a Feminine Periphery through the following: the radical exclusion of men from women by dictating that women lack defining male traits; the homogenization of women by stating that all women are the same; the denial of women by stating that they are only the backdrop to male life; and the incorporation of women by stating that they are defined after men.

Since the beginning of time, women have been considered "nonhuman" due to a lack of understanding of their biological structure and mental way of thinking. This has been the case ever since the first interpretation of the woman as a phenomenon, when she was separated from the man and seen as an entirely different creature from what she is. As a matter of fact, this "nonhumanization" of women has been taken for granted throughout history, and these false charges of witchcraft have only served to amplify the "nonhumanization" of women within institutional frameworks and cultural mindsets. In a society where women's roles and limits were strictly defined by patriarchal norms, they were only permitted to fully participate in society when they were granted permission to do so. When their actions or ideas

slightly overstepped these boundaries, they were swiftly transformed into "nonhuman" by charges of witchcraft.

Many of the usual suspects for witch hunts are apparently present in Hargrave's *The Mercies*. In 1617, the entire male population of Vardo, a small fishing village off the coast of Norway, is wiped out by a storm that blows up so abruptly that it seems like evil magic. In horror, the women watch as their husbands, fathers, and siblings are sucked into the depths of the ocean. They have to bury their sorrows and focus on staying alive now that they're on their own. Even after it seems like everyone has forgotten about their community, the unexpected arrival of a new Commissioner to oversee its crumbling remains comes as a rude awakening. Soon it is obvious that he has come for nefarious reasons, specifically to rid Vardo of the magic that he believes is responsible for the storm and continues to corrupt the women of the city. Finding and killing so called “demons” is not his first rodeo. In popular culture, witches seem to be having a long and continuing period. Strange how the cultural mindset gravitates toward witchcraft when the protection of women's rights is at stake.

However, evil plays no significant role in *The Mercies*. The Commissioner's target females aren't genuine “nonhumans.” They are instead charged with variants of two crimes: The first is taking solace in non-Christian rituals, and the second is behaving more traditionally masculine. They'll be burned at the stake for committing such heinous crimes as wearing pants, going fishing, or showing an excessive interest in other women. The allure of witchcraft lies in its acceptance of women's agency. Men set them on fire because they are afraid of losing control of themselves.

An overwhelming sense of helplessness permeates any novel about witch trials. When the law upholds malicious nonsense, what kind of reasoning and reason can be applied? Why, when there is so much in the here and now about which to feel powerless and helpless, do we need to read about women's pointless pain 400 years ago? The fun comes from seeing them complement each other's weaknesses. They toil, they educate one another, and they confront the harshness of the ocean and the random brutality of men. All the way to the most remote and dreary corners of this book, the women within its pages have devised ingenious methods to stay alive, and they have learned to accept death on their own terms.

Hargrave's writing reflected both the power and vulnerability of women. She aimed to personify the prejudice and sexism felt not only by the women of Vardo but by all women who have been falsely accused of witches for no other reason than their gender. She wanted her art to be a tribute to women who were able to provide for themselves despite enormous obstacles. In this sense, *The Mercies* is a hymn to the things that last. The brightness and optimism that can be discovered even in the deepest night. Her curiosity led her to wonder what led them to admit guilt for acts in which they had played no role. As a curious outsider, I was curious as to what factors caused this tiny community to turn against one another after the storm of 1617.

The Mercies by Hargrave may appear to be a feminist rebellion centered on witches and witchcraft, but a deeper reading of the work reveals the evolution of women as a result of historical oppressions and declarations of "nonhuman" status. According to patriarchal society and religious dogma, a woman's sole role in society is to be a good Christian wife and mother who adores her faith and her family. It has been revealed, however, that the journeys of some of the story's characters take them in the opposite way, and that these are not what they really want at all but to find themselves. *The Mercies* is a lesbian love tale with a distinctive twist, whose two female protagonists' unwavering devotion to their families and loved ones despite being treated as “less than human” by men. This love between two women has enabled women to transcend their own limits to the greatest extent possible, turning them into "nonhuman" beings who no longer need to do the things that are asked and expected of a woman. The fact that they didn't find out until nearly the end of the novel, when things in Vardo had already reached a catastrophic level for the others, greatly altered the course of their adventures.

Maren and Ursa grow close to one another as a result of the inner conflicts each is forced to confront. Because of their deep-seated distaste for patriarchy, these two characters grow emotionally close to one another, thereby breaking free of the gender roles society and religion have assigned them, and laying the groundwork for a lesbian relationship that runs counter to Christian values and traditional notions of femininity. As the book progresses, we see that the two main characters, Maren and Ursa, are "normal" people who go to church and do the things that are expected of women, but who grow tired of these underlying features and impositions and seek an

escape. The author successfully contrasts Ursa and Maren from two distinct perspectives. Ursa wishes to do everything she can to help Agnete cope with her illness. Like Maren, Diinna's sister-in-law, wishes to lessen the effects of racism on her life, but they both know they can't completely eradicate the source of their relative's suffering. And while Maren's hopes of marrying the man she loved were dashed by the storm, Ursa's were raised, as the storm cleared the way for her to wed the man she would come to detest. The solution they discover hastens their "dehumanization" and makes them more like "nonhumans" than they were before. The novel's climax cements the characters' descent from morally upstanding women to sinful heretic "nonhumans," with no moral or ethical limits to hold them back from discovering the true love and emotions for which they were searching.

No one can dispute that male dominance played a role in the rise of witch hunts. Men in positions of power have traditionally looked for weaknesses in female humans and accused them of witchcraft. What's worse is that most women believe religious and patriarchal norms should serve as their guideposts, so they deny their femininity and come to terms with the notion that they are "inhuman." This is a more terrifying reality than the one where some women accuse "other women" of being witches and turn them into objects of scorn and hatred by casting them in the role of societal outcasts and making them the objects of their ire. By rejecting their own identities in order to fit in with the standards of the dominant society, some women who have accepted their “otherness” have become soldiers of manhood and religious hegemony. It's not just male-dominated institutions that have been guilty of accusing women of witchcraft; patriarchy has also often encouraged women to blame one another. Toril, a fervent, extremely devout Christian with Sami suspicion, and having joy by the commissioner's arrival, and Freja (Mamma), also strict, religious, and hostile even to her kin because of being Sami, are two of the female characters we observe in *The Mercies* by Hargrave. Freja (Mamma) turns against the others to possess higher ground in the eyes of male hegemony by outcasting and accusing the others of witchcraft. Here, it is "other women" who initiate the "non-humanization" of their own kind.

These accusations all have the same root: male dominance and patriarchy. However, by internalizing this problem and taking a stance against "other women" as

if they were soldiers of patriarchy, the hostile women are treating them like "nonhuman" beings and "de-humanizing" them in the eyes of the public and those in authority. By referring to them as "Kirke women," Hargrave elevates their status in our eyes and convinces us that they are an ungrateful army under the command of males. While these Kirke women may be "nonhumanizing" others, they are, in fact, "nonhumanizing" themselves when they deny their own gender. In this scenario, males prevail over women, and all women, regardless of their social classification, are deemed "nonhuman" due to their innate "nonhuman qualities." At the conclusion of the story, "the other women" of Vardo come out of the delusion that patriarchy imposes on them, but by then, the damage has been done, and there is no turning back.

Defiantly, these women went beyond the limits set by society, family, and even males. From a posthumanist point of view, they rejected their stereotypes and embraced an identity that went beyond what was anticipated. Both masculine hegemony and religious authority were disrupted by these women. It was clear from all of this that they were something other than human. Accusing them of witchcraft was a quick and easy way to cause them pain and elevate men to godlike status in their time and place. Over the course of history, this "dehumanization" has been accepted, and as a result, the degree to which women are "dehumanized" within societal arrangements and mentalities has been increased by a factor of two. Women's duties and limits were clearly defined within the patriarchal regulatory framework, and they were only allowed to fully participate in human activities when specifically sanctioned to do so. When they did things or had thoughts that were just slightly outside of these limits, it merely hastened their transformation into creatures that were not human. To be truly viewed as "non-human," in a world where women's boundaries are already strictly enforced, women must desire independence and complete control over their own thoughts and actions. This is due to the limiting nature of women as a species. In reality, despite their desire to exist as typical human beings, the fact that they are already recognized as being "nonhuman" has pushed them to the limits of what is considered acceptable, resulting in the emergence of individuals who are "double nonhuman." As was previously mentioned, many religions and patriarchal societies view women as having no value beyond

reproducing and supporting men's lifestyles. In any case, aside from that, nearly all of the characteristics have allowed them to evolve into beings that are neither human nor animal.

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