



Universitat
de les Illes Balears



Title: Feminist Dystopia and Young Adult Fiction: A
Critical Analysis of Louise O'Neill's *Only Ever Yours*

Feministická dystópia a literatúra pre mladých
dospelých: kritická analýza *Only Ever Yours* od
Louise O'Neill

AUTHOR: Cristina Sánchez Moll

Master's degree in Modern Languages and Literatures / Non-Slavic Languages and Literatures
(With a speciality/Itinerary in Literary and Cultural Studies / British and American Studies)

at the

UNIVERSITAT DE LES ILLES BALEARS

and

UNIVERZITA PAVLA JOZEFA ŠAFÁRIKA V KOŠICIACH

Academic year 2017 – 2018

Date 21 September 2018

UIB Master's Thesis Supervisor: Dra. Aida Rosende Pérez

UIB Master's Thesis Co-Supervisor: Assoc.prof. Soňa Šnircová, PhD.

UNIVERSITY OF THE BALEARIC ISLANDS
PAVOL JOZEF ŠAFÁRIK UNIVERSITY IN KOŠICE
FACULTY OF ART

Feminist Dystopia and Young Adult Fiction: A Critical
Analysis of Louise O'Neill's *Only Ever Yours*

Feministická dystópia a literatúra pre mladých
dospelých: kritická analýza *Only Ever Yours* od
Louise O'Neill

B.A. THESIS, M. A. THESIS

Study programme:	Modern Languages and Literatures / British and American Studies
Study branch:	Literary and Cultural Studies / 2.1.29 NonSlavic Languages and Literatures Centre for Postgraduate Studies /
Department:	Department of British and American Studies
Thesis supervisor:	Degree First Name Last Name, Rank. Aida Rosende Pérez Assoc.prof. Soňa Šnircová, PhD.

Palma, Košice 2018

Bc. Cristina Sánchez Moll



Univerzita P. J. Šafárika v Košiciach
Filozofická fakulta

ZADANIE ZÁVEREČNEJ PRÁCE

- Meno a priezvisko študenta:** Cristina Sánchez Moll
Študijný program: britské a americké štúdiá (Jednoodborové štúdium, magisterský II. st., denná forma)
Študijný odbor: 2.1.29. neslovanské jazyky a literatúry
Typ záverečnej práce: Diplomová práca
Jazyk záverečnej práce: anglický
Sekundárny jazyk: slovenský
- Názov:** Feminist Dystopia and Young Adult Fiction: A Critical Analysis of Louise O'Neill's Only Ever Yours
- Názov SK:** Feministická dystópia a literatúra pre mladých dospelých: kritická analýza "Only Ever Yours" od Louise O'Neill
- Cieľ:** The aim of this Dissertation is to prove that the novel by the Irish writer Louise O'Neill Only Ever Yours (2014), presents, through a dystopic narrative addressed to Young Adult readers, a feminist critique of the postfeminist discourses that are widely spread by the media and popular culture and which are shaping the way young women define themselves, particularly in relation to their bodies, and their understanding of their role in society, which is influenced by their physical appearance.
- Vedúci:** doc. Mgr. Soňa Šnircová, PhD.
Katedra : KAaA - Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky
Vedúci katedry: doc. Mgr. Slávka Tomaščíková, PhD.
- Dátum schválenia:** 18.09.2018

Abstract

From the 1980s onwards, postfeminist discourses have made their way into popular culture spreading the idea that women have gained the rights they were fighting for during the First and Second Wave of feminism and now enjoy the freedom to be independent and have full control over their lives, thus proclaiming that feminism is unnecessary. However, feminist scholars have counteracted these ideas arguing that postfeminism engages with patriarchal discourses and consumer culture to create delusions of equality, agency and empowerment (Faludi 1991, McRobbie 2009, Gill and Scharff 2011). Irish writer Louise O’Neill published in 2014 her debut novel *Only Ever Yours*, a dystopia in which she offers a feminist critique of postfeminist discourses. In the novel, the author envisions a futuristic scenario where young women are both physically and psychologically manipulated to ensure the workings of a frightfully sexist and patriarchal world. The aim of this Dissertation is to prove that *Only Ever Yours* presents, through a dystopic narrative addressed to Young Adult readers, a feminist critique of the postfeminist discourses that are widely spread by the media and popular culture and which are shaping the way young women define themselves, particularly in relation to their bodies, and their understanding of their role in society, which is influenced by their physical appearance. This Dissertation is divided into four main parts. Chapter One sets the theoretical background for both postfeminist discourses and their feminist counter-discourses, which are used as the basis to carry out the critical analysis of the novel. Chapter Two looks at constructions of femininity in the dystopic world of O’Neill’s novel and how they mirror those in our contemporary society dominated by postfeminist ideologies. Chapter Three examines the power structures that underlie such constructions and the set of “disciplinary” practices that reproduce them as they are represented in *Only Ever Yours*. Chapter Four explains why *Only Ever Yours* stands out as a feminist Young Adult dystopian novel and discusses whether instances of resistance and hope are found in it.

Key words: postfeminism, feminism, dystopia, Young Adult, femininity

Abstrakt

Od osemdesiatych rokov 20. storočia sa postfeministický diskurz postupne dostáva do populárnej kultúry šíriac myšlienku, že ženy dosiahli svoje práva za ktoré bojovali počas prvej a druhej vlny feminizmu, a dnes využívajú svoju nezávislosť a majú plnú kontrolu nad svojim životom, tvrdiac tak, že feminizmus je už nepotrebný. Avšak feministickí vedci protirečia týmto myšlienkam tvrdením, že postfeminizmus je úzko spojený s patriarchálnym diskurzom a konzumnou spoločnosťou, aby vytvoril ilúziu rovnosti, zastúpenia a posilnenie postavenia (Faludi 1991, McRobbie 2009, Gill and Scharff 2011). Írska spisovateľka Louise O'Neill v roku 2004 vydala svoj prvý román *Only Ever Yours*, dystopiu v ktorej predstavuje feministickú kritiku postfeministických diskurzov. Autorka vo svojej knihe predstavuje futuristický scenár, v ktorom sú mladé ženy fyzicky, ale aj psychicky manipulované, aby zabezpečili fungovanie extrémne sexistického a patriarchálneho sveta. Cieľom tejto práce bolo dokázať, že kniha *Only Ever Yours* predstavuje, pomocou dystopického príbehu určenému mladým čitateľom, feministickú kritiku postfeministických diskurzov, ktoré sú dnes značne rozširované médiami a populárnou kultúrou, a ktoré formujú spôsob, akým mladé ženy definujú samy seba, najmä v spojitosti s ich telom a s chápaním ich úloh v spoločnosti, ktoré sú ovplyvňované ich fyzickým vzhľadom. Práca je rozdelená do štyroch častí. Prvá kapitola uvádza teoretický podklad k postfeministickým diskurzom, ako aj k ich feministickým protidiskurzom, ktoré sú základom pre kritickú analýzu knihy. Druhá kapitola sa venuje výkladu femininít v dystopickom svete O'Neillovej a tomu, ako sa tieto odzrkadľujú v našej súčasnej spoločnosti, v ktorej prevládajú postfeministické ideológie. Tretia kapitola skúma ako sú v knihe *Only Ever Yours* zobrazené mocenské štruktúry, ktoré predstavujú základ výkladu femininít, a súbor „disciplinárnych“ zvyklostí, ktoré ich napodobňujú. Kapitola štyri vysvetľuje dôvody prečo román *Only Ever Yours* vyniká ako feministický dystopický román pre mladých čitateľov a taktiež skúma či sú v románe prítomné príklady vzdoru a nádeje.

Kľúčové slová: postfeminizmus. feminizmus. dystopia. mladý dospelý. femininity.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Postfeminism and Feminist Counter-discourses in a Dystopian Context.....	5
3. The Construction of Femininity in Postmodern Discourses and in <i>Only Ever Yours</i> ...11	
4. The Power behind the Disciplinary Practices that Produce the Female Body.....	19
5. What Now? In Search of Resistance and Hope in <i>Only Ever Yours</i>	28
6. Conclusions.....	37
7. Resumé.....	39
8. References.....	41

1. Introduction

In February 2017, Margaret Atwood's feminist dystopian masterpiece *The Handmaid's Tale* reached the first position in Amazon's bestseller list, thirty-two years after it was published for the first time. The broadcast of the novel's TV adaptation trailer during the Super Bowl on the 5th of February of the same year, together with the growing concerns about Donald Trump's view on women and the possible political outcome after his election are the reasons that the author herself suggested to account for this new revival (*The Guardian* 2017)¹. Equally remarkable is the outstanding success of the novel's TV adaptation, which won eight Emmy awards and two Golden Globes, also emerging as the most praised series of the year by critics. All this, alongside with the ongoing publication of works of fiction that display seemingly different configurations of the world, and which usually present a female protagonist that questions the status quo and the power hierarchies that exert control over her and other women, allow to talk about a "renaissance" of feminist dystopian science fiction (Thorpe 2017) after the popularity enjoyed by the genre in the mid-80s (Moylan 2000, xv)². Furthermore, some of these recent titles have received distinguished awards, such as the Bailey's Women's Prize for Fiction in 2017 for Naomi Alderman's latest novel *The Power* (2017), and the YA Book Prize, given to Louise O'Neill in 2015 for her debut novel *Only Ever Yours* (2014), which is the object of analysis in this Dissertation.

What the feminist dystopian novels that can be said to form part of the above-mentioned renaissance of the genre have in common is the exploration of a wide array of possible world arrangements. These different possibilities prompt the reader to wonder, on the one hand, if our world and the ones we read about bear any resemblance; and, on the other, if our reality can be constructed in a different way, specifically concerning the representation and position of women. Taking as examples the abovementioned titles, in *The Power* the author envisages a scenario in which women have the ability of hurting men easily and explores its social and political consequences. This change in power relations causes a reversal of gender roles in which men find themselves abused by women on daily situations. However, as Alderman declares, "as nothing happens to a man

¹ For further discussion on the reactions of Trump's election on women, see "Calling for a Coalition of the 'Others': What do you say to women?" by Nicolle Allaire and Shing-Ling S. Chen in *Constructing Narratives in Response to Trump's Election: How Various Populations Make Sense of an Unexpected Victory* (2018).

² My use of terminology regarding the genre will be discussed in the following chapter.

in it that's not happening to a woman right now, if my novel is a dystopia, we're living in a dystopia today" (2017). In the case of Louise O'Neill, the author maintains the (hetero)patriarchal patterns of power relations in *Only Ever Yours* but takes a step further by designing a futuristic setting in which all women are entirely physically and psychologically manipulated to ensure the workings of a frightfully sexist world. Again, it is interesting to point out how the author believes that "the world in which *Only Ever Yours* is set is not as far-fetched as you might assume [because] every single aspect of the world and incident that occurs within the narrative was inspired by true-life events" (Claire 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that very often there is a fine line between the atrocious fictional events found in these dystopias and reality, and a possible explanation for the recent success of this genre is the yearn on part of the readers for finding solutions to prevailing oppressive situations that affect women.

This Dissertation offers a critical analysis of Irish writer Louise O'Neill's first novel *Only Ever Yours*, which I consider an outstanding example of the recent resurgence of feminist dystopian fiction. In her novel, addressed to a young adult audience, O'Neill creates a dystopian world where women are considered merely products of consumption and are wholly exploited to comply with patriarchal constructions of femininity. In doing so, the author provides fertile ground for the exploration of the various ways in which women's bodies and minds are subject to social and cultural expectations as well as surveillance and political control, even within currently prevailing postfeminist discourses of "agency" and "choice". My main objective is to establish a correlation between the practices that the young women in the novel are obliged to perform and the ones women today do because they "choose" to, lead by postfeminist ideologies. I will examine the mechanisms that spread and maintain these ideologies and will discuss why and how feminist issues are dealt with in a dystopia for Young Adult readers.

With these objectives in mind, this Dissertation has been structured into four main chapters. In Chapter One I intend to provide a general overview of what postfeminism is for scholars who defend it and for feminist critics who offer a counter-discourse to criticise it. I have introduced feminist scholars Yvonne Tasker, Diane Negra Stephanie Genz, Benjamin A. Brabon, Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff, who provide arguments against postfeminist discourses in their writing and whose ideas I will use in my analysis of *Only Ever Yours*. Chapter One also contextualises the author and the novel, and exposes some of the main characteristics of dystopias that the novel presents. One concern

involving feminist dystopian fiction is whether it should be classified under the label “science fiction” or “speculative fiction”. In her article “What lies beneath the brave new world of feminist dystopian sci-fi?”, Vanessa Thorpe identifies *The Handmaid’s Tale*, among other novels such as *Herland* (1915) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and *The Carhullan Army* (2007) by Sarah Hall as works of science fiction, whereas Margaret Atwood herself defends that her classic is better characterised as the latter because, as she declares, “speculative fiction could really happen” (Potts 2003). However, this idea was resolutely opposed by the also popular feminist sci-fi author Ursula K. Le Guin, who believes that the novel by the Canadian author “exemplif[ies] one of the things science fiction does, which is to extrapolate imaginatively from current trends and events to a near-future that’s half prediction, half satire” (Le Guin 2009). Later on, Atwood explained in her work *In Other Worlds: Science Fiction and Human Imagination* that what Ursula K. Le Guin considered “science fiction” is “speculative fiction” for her, and what Le Guin regarded as “fantasy” includes what Atwood considers “science fiction”. Therefore, Atwood acknowledges that “when it comes to genres, the borders are increasingly undefended, and things slip back and forth across them with insouciance” (2011, 7). In this dissertation, I will consider *Only Ever Yours* to be a speculative fiction novel coinciding with Margaret Atwood’s standpoint as the events in the novel, as I will try to prove in my analysis, are not implausible nor belong to a remote future.

In Chapter Two I look at constructions of femininity in the dystopic world of O’Neill’s novel and how they mirror those in our contemporary society dominated by postfeminist ideologies. First I outline how femininity has been constructed historically departing from Simone de Beauvoir and moving on to Betty Friedan, Judith Butler, Naomi Wolf and Susan Bordo. In a moment when postfeminist discourses have made their way into popular culture and keep being reproduced in numerous cultural manifestations such as films, TV series and advertisements, some authors use fiction as a tool to offer a counter-discourse that defends that feminism is still necessary today. This was one of Louise O’Neill’s aims when she wrote *Only Ever Yours*, since she wanted to “start a conversation about how we see and treat women” today. She openly identifies herself as a feminist and is committed with her writing to “creating a world where gender stereotypes don’t weigh heavily on either men or women or anyone in between, where we are all free to be ourselves without recrimination for failing to conform to a certain idea of what masculinity or femininity represents” (O’Neill 2015). In order to do so, she

creates a futuristic scenario in which compliance with these stereotypes is strictly forced upon young people. By doing this, the author makes the reader reflect on the burden and the artificiality of such demands applied to a Young Adult context.

In Chapter Three I examine the power structures that underlie such constructions and the set of “disciplinary” practices that reproduce them as they are represented in *Only Ever Yours*. I draw mainly on the work by feminist scholar Sandra Lee Bartky to explore concepts such as “disciplinary practices” and “docile bodies”, and issues of self-surveillance that the critic uses in her feminist analysis of the modernization of patriarchal power following Foucault’s theory exposed in *Discipline and Punish* (1979). In this chapter, I also draw on the work by Susan Bordo and Diane Negra. The concept of the “male gaze”, by Laura Mulvey, is presented and is related to the context of the novel to explain how the eyes interiorize the practice of surveilling themselves and the rest of women. This implies that women become active participants in the maintenance of patriarchal values to which women must conform. Finally, in Chapter Four, I explain why *Only Ever Yours* stands out as a feminist Young Adult dystopian novel and discuss whether instances of resistance and hope are found in it.

2. Postfeminism and Feminist Counter-discourses in a Dystopian Context

Born in Clonakilty, Ireland, in 1985, Louise O'Neill moved to New York City in 2010 where she worked as an assistant stylist for *Elle* Magazine. One year later, she returned to her homeland and started working on her first novel *Only Ever Yours*, which was published in 2014. Her work has been regarded as “the most successful YA breakthrough in Ireland”, also including her second novel *Asking for It* (2015), both of which “are explicit in their feminist engagement with the conditions of the teenage girl” (Cahill 2017, 161). Up until recently teenage girls had been almost invisible in Irish literature (Cahill 2017, 156), but in her first two novels O'Neill challenges this invisibility and chooses to address female teenage experiences to raise awareness about feminist issues among young readers: “I was 15 when I first used the F-word [...]”, she stated in an interview, “and although I did become increasingly confident about proclaiming myself a feminist, it is clear to me now that I still didn't understand what it meant” (O'Neill 2015). Since then, O'Neill has become an outspoken feminist activist in Ireland, and she has published two other Young Adult novels that again explore different aspects of teenage girlhood from a feminist perspective: *Asking for It* (2015) and *The Surface Breaks: a Reimagining of The Little Mermaid* (2018). This Dissertation focuses on the analysis of her first novel, which emerged from her own personal story and her professional experience in a fashion magazine, which prompted her to write a novel that would foster reflection on the beauty and fashion industry as part of a larger consideration of gender construction today, in a moment when feminism is being challenged not only by traditionalist and openly conservative forces but also by the popular prevalence of postfeminist discourses.

Most critics discussing postfeminism acknowledge the pluralistic, contradictory and ambiguous implications of the term (Tasker & Negra 2007; Genz & Brabon 2009; Gill & Scharff 2011). The term was popularised by the popular press during the 1980s to signal a separation from the Second Wave feminism that developed during the 1960s and 1970s. The mass media played a crucial role at the end of the 1970s in popularising a negative image of feminists. After the Miss America demonstrations in 1968, the stereotype of the anti-feminine bra burner was widely spread, which, together with the proliferation of popular culture products that undervalued the advances of the feminist movement, resulted in an undeniable backlash that could be still appreciated in the 1980s. During this decade, “new (post)feminist voices would emerge to support a re-articulation of femininity and popular culture” (Genz & Brabon 2009, 24) that would take different

forms and articulations. In *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* (2009), Stéphanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon's discuss the most relevant of these articulations. According to "New Traditionalism", which was promoted by the media during the late 1970s and the 1980s, the domestic sphere is a safe space for women where they can be autonomous and independent, away from the competitiveness of the workplace. "New feminism" developed later in the 1990s and tried to define new styles of feminism. For instance, Naomi Wolf wanted women to stop being seen as victims and supported "power feminism", a form of feminism which is, she states, "unapologetically sexual", "free-thinking" and "self-assertive" (1993, 149, 180). Another postfeminist trend is the so-called "Girl Power", which was embodied by the popular band Spice Girls during the 1990s and that promoted a "re-appraisal of femininity [...] as a means of female empowerment and agency" (Genz and Brabon 2009, 76). According to this idea, women can gain power and control over their lives by exposing their femininity and their sexuality. Similarly, "Do-me Feminism" and "Raunch culture" also developed in the 1990s and defended that women could use their sexuality to attain freedom and power. Femininity is from this point of view therefore considered a feminist means to obtain self-determination. Today, postfeminism is used "to suggest that the project of feminism has ended, either because it has been completed or because it has failed and is no longer valid". The authors that defend these ideas, such as Naomi Wolf, Katie Roiphe, Natasha Walter and Rene Denfeld, "support an individualistic and liberal agenda that relies on a mantra of choice and assumes that the political demands of first and second wave feminism have now been met (enfranchisement, equal pay, sexual liberation etc.)" (Genz & Brabon 2009, 13). In this view, these authors refer to this new period as the "after" of feminism, or even "anti" feminism for those who think such movement was unnecessary.

On the other hand, feminist scholars have taken on a questioning position from which they revise critically the abovementioned ideas. Their criticism departs from the idea that postfeminism engages with patriarchal discourses and consumer culture to create delusions of equality, agency and empowerment (Faludi 1991, Tasker & Negra 2007, McRobbie 2009, Gill and Scharff 2011). Susan Faludi, in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* argues that "the media, popular culture and advertising" offer "an endless loop that perpetuates its own false images of womanhood" (1991, 7) that defend that women have obtained social, political and economic equality and freedom. Feminist scholars Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra maintain that postfeminism excludes

many women in terms of class, age and race because it assumes that the lifestyles that are supposed to empower women are accessible for everybody, without accounting for its obvious consumerist implications (2007, 2). In relation to this idea, postfeminism has also been criticised for seeing women as powerful because they can have access to education and later to successful jobs, which provide some of them with the agency and the money to live the life they want. As Angela McRobbie states, “the abandonment of feminism [...] is amply rewarded with the promise of freedom and independence, most apparent through wage-earning capacity, which also functions symbolically, as a mark of respectability, citizenship and entitlement” (2009, 2). This focus on independence also entails a praise of individualism that puts the emphasis on personal responsibility at the time of leading one’s life. In considering *postfeminism as a sensibility* (2007), Rosalind Gill argues that women change their position from objects to subjects, but it implies “an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline”, “a focus upon individualism, choice and empowerment” and “an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference” (Gill & Scharff 2011, 4). This exemplifies how capitalism appropriates ideas of the feminist discourse to convince women that spending money, they can achieve the bodies that they want, which will give them a sense of self-management and self-realisation. The ideas regarding femininity and sexuality defended by postfeminist discourses in fact correspond to patriarchal ideas of beauty, so “women are offered the promise of autonomy by voluntarily objectifying themselves and actively choosing to employ their capacities in the pursuit of a feminine appearance and a sexualised image” (Genz & Brabon 2009, 79). Therefore, according to postfeminist discourses, women are free to choose what to do with their bodies; yet, what they do coincides with hegemonic patriarchal canon of beauty. Postfeminism has also been criticised for its lack of collective political action and its reliance on individual practices. Rebecca Walker defended the term Third Wave feminism as an opposition to postfeminism. Her aim was to stress her resolution in transforming her anger and awareness towards women’s devaluation “into tangible action”. To do so, the activist asks women to mobilise stating that “the fight is far from over” and that anger must be “turn into political power”. She closes her article remarking “I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave” (Walker 2002). Thus, Third Wave Feminism “is not only concerned with cultural and sexual politics, but also with political and social issues ranging from ongoing wage discrimination, access to education, and domestic violence to eating disorders, globalization, and the effects of racism and classism on the movement – all

historically feminist concerns” (Sanders 2004, 51). The maintenance of the use of the metaphor of the waves is used to signal the continuity in concerns that postfeminism takes as surpassed, but that feminism still pays attention to today.

Louise O’Neill’s *Only Ever Yours* takes issue with the positive appraisal of postfeminism and poses a critique of its discourses that is more in line with the views of critical authors such as Susan Faludi, Yvonne Tasker, Diane Negra, Rosalind Gill and Angela McRobbie, which will be used in the critical analysis of the novel. In order to offer her critique, O’Neill chooses to set up a dystopic world where most of the concerns delineated above are fictionally recreated and developed. A dystopian world or a dystopia can be understood as the negative counterpart of a utopia, a term coined by Thomas More in his eponymous satire *Utopia* (1516) to refer to an island where the social, economic and political systems work perfectly. On the contrary, “all dystopian texts offer a detailed and pessimistic presentation of the very worst of social alternatives” (Moylan 2000, 171)³. In the dystopian world of *Only Ever Yours*, all women are genetically manipulated in order to suit Western beauty standards. From the moment they are born they receive instruction on how to take care of their physical appearance as well as on how to behave according to expectations of femininity. This instruction is based on strict norms by which the young girls live until they are seventeen years old, the moment when their fate is decided. The ones who perform better will become companions of the Inheritants, the men who belong to their same generation and who need a wife to be the mother of their descendants. All the other girls will become either concubines, women whose only function is to be readily available to be sexually exploited; or chastities, women responsible for the instruction of the future generations of women.

The action of the novel is set in a future when the configuration of the world has changed dramatically due to environmental issues. People inhabit “the Zones”, which is the name that the land that remains after the globe’s ice melted and the sea levels rose drowning “the doomed low-lying countries” receives (*OEY* 47-48)⁴. Even though our world is not divided into Zones, this world design cannot be considered implausible since environmental problems such as global warming and climate change have been proven scientifically to be threatening our planet. Certainly, facts such as the United States of America’s president Donald Trump abandoning the Paris Climate Accord or revoking the

³ I will expand further on what a dystopia is and how it has been used in literature in Chapter Four.

⁴ The initials OEY will be used to refer to the novel *Only Ever Yours*.

Clean Power Plan and the Clean Water Rule (Chen et al. 2018, 51-2) short after assuming office, while defending that global warming is a hoax (@realDonaldTrump, December 3, 2013) moves us closer to a similar situation to the one described in the novel.

The protagonist of the novel, freida, has been raised in a school in the Eurozone, which becomes the specific setting of the novel. Yet, while other areas such as the Afrika and Chindia Zones indeed exist, the reality is exactly the same everywhere to the point that “it’s rumoured that nowadays only blonde, blue-eyed girls are designed” (*OEY* 58), a fact that signals a homogenization of female bodies and of standards of beauty on a global level. As Keith M. Booker states, “dystopian societies are generally more or less thinly veiled reconfigurations of a situation that already exists in reality” (1994a, 15). In the novel, race differences have been erased among women as a symptom of a globalised world that closely resembles our own because of the homogenizing role of, for example, the beauty and cosmetic industries.

Technological development and its effects on women is therefore another dystopic feature in *Only Ever Yours* that is far from implausible. In the novel, those who outlived the environmental catastrophes realised within a few years that “no female babies were born” because women “learned that a female baby was an invader, come to steal her mother’s beauty” (*OEY* 49). Therefore, genetic engineers “were forced to *create* women to ensure the survival of the human race” (*OEY* 49) and some schools were created to educate them so they could be “of some use” in the future (*OEY* 50). The fact that all women are designed and created by genetic engineers is another characteristic that takes the reader to an imagined future in which “undesigned, natural women” who present “lack of symmetry in the face, [...] bulbous noses” and “dilated pores over the forehead and chins” are considered undesirable and obsolete (*OEY* 59). Yet again, this conception of women is not so far from the one the beauty industry promotes prompting women to spend more and more money in “improving” themselves.

Moreover, a world in which babies are genetically modified is not that far from where we are now. In *Gmo Sapiens: The Life-Changing Science of Designer Babies*, Paul Knoepfler explains that “researchers in China reported the creation of the first GM human embryos made using a new genetic technology, sparking a fiery controversy” to later suggest that it will be quite likely that human beings will be able to choose to make their babies smarter, stronger or prettier if they can afford it in a not too distant future (2015, 1). In the novel, “since [the genetic engineers] had the opportunity, it would have been

foolish not to make necessary improvements in the new women” (*OEY* 49), so they create them to be “perfect” (*OEY* 53)⁵. This society is able to create women biologically as a reflection of how women are socially constructed in our contemporary society by postfeminist discourses of agency and choice, according to which women end up reproducing stereotypes of femininity. O’Neill takes these issues a step further introducing biological engineering, constructing this way a truly nightmarish dystopia, which evidences the author’s take on postfeminist principles and her defense of the need for feminism.

⁵ The presence of technology together with the rejection of natural women raises the question of whether they can be considered human or are rather “posthuman” beings. The later is reinforced. Even freida regards herself and her sisters as “mechanical dolls” (*OEY* 46) and on her birthday she wishes herself a “happy design date” (*OEY* 357). This shows how they are self-conscious subjects of their artificial nature. However, issues regarding posthumanism and transhumanism are out of the scope of my Dissertation and will not be further discussed.

3. The Construction of Femininity in Postmodern Discourses and in *Only Ever Yours*

The female body, one of the fundamental issues discussed and theorised by feminist critics, is one of the key concerns in the novel. By stating that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (273, 1956), Simone de Beauvoir was a pioneer in defending that biology does not account for the behaviour and attitudes that are expected from women, but rather patriarchal cultures and societies have constructed the idea of what a woman should be. Therefore, the traits that have been related to femininity throughout history were attributed to women arbitrarily since no evidence exists that there is a real correlation between the biological sex and the set of physical and psychological traits that outline gender. De Beauvoir was the first to discuss the concept of gender even though she did not use this exact term. In the introduction of *The Second Sex* (1956) she asks rhetorically “What is a woman?”, which she responds with “it would appear that [...] every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as *femininity*” (1956, 13; my emphasis). De Beauvoir’s contribution was the beginning of the debate around the concepts of “gender” and “femininity” that feminist theory and criticism have since then developed. A few years later, in *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan argued against the idea that “the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfilment of their own femininity” (1974, 37). Friedan opposes the widespread conception existing at her time that there is an essential womanhood dictated by nature that defines women’s role as wives, mothers and housewives and that in order to be fulfilled, women should take care of their husbands and children, as well as perform repetitive tasks at home. Domesticity, Friedan argued, stops women from developing as full individuals. The contemporary theorist that has thoroughly discussed these concepts is Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler develops the notion of “performativity” to define gender as “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (1999, 43). The emphasis here is on the idea of repetition: the recurrence of a series of acts is what gives the impression of naturalness but, as Butler mentions, it is just appearance. Therefore, gender and femininity are artificial constructions that affect both the mind and the bodies of women.

Susan Bordo relates this idea to the body when she states that “the body is a tabula rasa, awaiting inscription by culture” (2003, 35). Bordo focuses on the effect that culture

has on the female body and on how discourses of femininity can leave deep marks on them. In her influential work *The Beauty Myth*, published at the beginning of the 1990s, Naomi Wolf argues that, even though at that point women had already achieved many of the objectives they were fighting for during the first and second waves of the feminist movement (e.g.: access to higher education and to the labour market, legal and reproductive rights), they still did not feel free. Even if it is true that Wolf's work was published more than twenty years ago, many of the ideas exposed in *The Beauty Myth* are still applicable in our contemporary society. This is because we are still being constantly bombarded with images of women who represent the physical ideal women must aspire to as well as the type of behaviour women should follow to achieve it. The spread of images started at the beginning of the 1970s "when the restless, isolated, bored, and insecure housewife fled the Feminine Mystique for the workplace [and] advertisers faced the loss of their primary consumer" (Wolf 1991, 66). Domesticity used to be promoted in advertising with an interest in selling household products. When women started to detach themselves from their homes, "a new ideology was necessary that would compel the same insecure consumerism" (Wolf 1991, 66). According to Wolf, this new ideology defends that beauty is attainable and that women can and must strive to possess it. These images were first spread in magazines, but later on, due to technological development, all the media started to be responsible for the reproduction of images of the current ideal. This new and widely spread obsession with beauty coincided with the access of women to higher positions. Wolf does not consider it to be a coincidence since the myth causes that "professional, high-achieving women have, because of it, just enough energy, concentration, and time to do their work very well, but too little for the kind of social activism or freewheeling thought that would allow them to question and change the structure itself" (1991, 53). Women that are preoccupied with dieting, exercise and fashion, among others, live in a constant state of distraction that absorbs them entirely, even more so if we consider that this ideal is out of reach, which means that there is always work to be done.

The young women in *Only Ever Yours*, who are called "eves", are designed by genetic engineers to be perfect. However, one of the *Rules for Proper female Behaviour* dictated by the Original Father, "the man who led the Noah's Project for the Euro-Zone" (*OEY* 89), is that "there is always room for Improvement" (*OEY* 53), an idea that always remains at the heart of their education. One of the core ideas defended by postfeminist

discourses is that women can choose to improve themselves in a number of different ways. Rosalind Gill argues that there is a “makeover paradigm” which imbues postfeminist media culture. According to this paradigm, women must believe that “they or their life is lacking or flawed in some way” and “that it is amenable to reinvention or transformation by following the advice of relationship, design or lifestyle experts and practicing appropriately modified consumption habits” (Gill 2007, 156). Advertising and the media play a crucial role here as self-improvement is strictly linked to consumerism. In order to install thoughts related to the necessity of improving themselves into their minds, in *Only Ever Yours*, the eves are obliged to listen repeatedly to “Improvement soundtracks” that send instructive messages such as “fat girls must be obsolete” to ensure they interiorise such ideas and act accordingly. Similarly, the eves have a Personal Stylist Program in their rooms that provides them with clothes, applies make up and styles their hair every morning. Before the process starts, the program asks them “how do you want to improve yourself today?” (OEY 12). The rhetoric of the necessity of being constantly aware of their appearance and improving it because it is never good enough, is what maintains the myth alive and is what keeps the eves immersed in a never-ending anxiety about their bodies because, as women, beauty is what makes them “valuable” (OEY 4).

The beauty ideal that prevails nowadays in our contemporary society dictates that the female body must be or must strive to be slim. In “Hunger as Ideology”, Susan Bordo discusses how during the 1980s and the 1990s, there was an “increasingly universal equation of slenderness with beauty and success” an idea that still prevails today (2003, 102). As the author states, “women are continually bombarded with advertisements and commercials for weight-loss products and programs” (Bordo 2003, 99), which still occurs in our contemporary society. Postfeminist discourses that get into advertising sell the idea that “the surface of the body needs ongoing vigilance” (Gill 2007, 156) and again a set of products and techniques are made available for the body’s improvement. In *Only Ever Yours*, the eves are strictly responsible for taking care of their weight. All of them know their target weight and must eat and exercise to maintain it or achieve it bearing in mind that being under or over it is wrong. The Personal Stylist Program tells them how many pounds they are on a daily basis, so they can know what type of food they should pick at the Nutrition Centre for breakfast: food from the BeBetter buffet, which has a “lo-carb section”, a “tasty/healthy section” and a “0-kcal section”; or from the Fatgirl Buffet, which “everyone knows it’s only there to tempt the *weak*” (OEY 31). The eves avoid

falling into temptation because they discipline themselves, and because eating from the Fatgirl Buffet while they are being watched by the rest would awake feelings of shame and poor self-control. At the beginning of the novel, freida is told that she weighs 118.8 pounds and, since her target weight should be, according to the norms established by the school, between 115 and 118 pounds, she has to take “extra kcal blockers” (OEY 13). The high level of rigorousness demanded on their weight, with no margin of error allowed, requires them to live in constant watchfulness of their bodies and of what they eat. As a consequence, their mind is constantly focused on their physical appearance and they have no time nor energy left to question such practices.

The connection between beauty and slenderness was established less than a century ago. In fact, as Naomi Wolf states, “until seventy-five years ago in the male artistic tradition of the West, women’s natural amplitude was their beauty” (1991, 184), which shows how beauty cannot be considered an objective static quality, but it is totally tied to the ever-changing socio-political contexts. Diane Negra states that “contemporary beautification discourses place strong stress on the achieved self” (2009, 119). In this sense, a disciplined female body is perceived as a symbol of agency and empowerment. However, according to Wolf, in a time when women have been gradually gaining public ground, it was necessary to turn this feeling of success into a major feeling of failure that would make them focus on more trivial matters such as counting calories. Thus, “a cultural fixation on female thinness is not an obsession about female beauty but an obsession about female obedience [...] Dieting is the most potent political sedative in women’s history; a quietly mad population is a tractable one” (Wolf 1991, 187). As a consequence, women’s lack of energy together with the sense of hunger that occupies their minds and bodies makes them more manipulable. In Calorie Calculation class, the eves are taught how to count the calories (OEY 82), which is also a mental activity that keeps them distracted. Moreover, this sense of hunger is reinforced by the existence of the Fatgirl buffet which makes their mouth water at their smell (OEY 28). Therefore, they are not only demanded to eat food with less calories, but they are also taught to resist the temptation day after day. Finally, if the eves lose weight, they perceive it as a sign success and an instance of self-realisation as their value increases.

Negra’s idea of “the achieved self” implies that the desired body is something that women can obtain. If it is women’s choice to discipline their bodies, it means that it is also their choice not to do it. Susan Bordo starts *In the Empire of Images* describing a

young girl staring at the bodies of her idols and feeling “self-hatred and shame” (2003, xvi) when she compares them to hers. Bordo explains that “burgeoning industries centered on diet, exercise, and body enhancement glamorize self-discipline and code fat as a symbol of laziness and lack of willpower” (2003, xxi). The result is that women who do not strive to approach the Western contemporary body ideal are perceived as being irresponsible. In *Only Ever Yours*, the eves that diverts their course towards perfection receive harsh punishment, as it happens to one eve named christy. She was forced to stand in front of the class in her underwear to show the rest of eves how “small lumps of flesh spilling over the knickers” and “the inner edges of her thighs close to touching” made her body an object of shame (*OEY* 60). Making other women feel bad about their bodies is essential to sustain the belief that there is a necessity to work hard to improve one’s physical appearance. [C]hastity-ruth then draws “vivid red circles” over her body while telling the rest of the eves that “she’s fat, girls. She’s fat and disgusting. Say it with me. She’s fat. Fat. Fat” (*OEY* 61). These practices and the repetition of such ideas are what makes the eves internalise these thoughts, up to the point that ideas such as “I would kill myself if I got that fat” (*OEY* 64) pop in their minds as a result of the repeated exposure to these ideas. This exemplifies how gender and femininity in relation to the female body are constructed: the eves are internalising a particular way of femininity or what it means to be a woman that corresponds with patriarchal discourses. As Sandra Lee Bartky explains, “something is ‘internalized’ when it gets incorporated into the structure of the self” (2003, 38), which implies that such ideas are not regarded as learned, but natural.

As a consequence of the central preoccupation with food, many women end up suffering from some eating disorder, among which anorexia nervosa and bulimia are the most common. For feminist scholars who have addressed these issues, these disorders reflect to which extent power relations and gender oppression leave a mark on the female body, since the vast majority of its sufferers are women (Bartky 2003, Bordo 2003). During the last century the definition of the ideal body size changed and many women saw that they could not fit into it, in a way that starvation and purging became strategies that would bring them closer to that ideal. However, postfeminist discourses have tried to revoke these ideas and defend that these disorders are the result of women’s personal decisions. In the article “Disordered eating and choice in postfeminist spaces”, the authors declare that “postfeminist discourses offered a rebuttal to this critique of passive bodies through a re-engagement with agency and choice” (Musolino et al. 2015, 4) and this idea

was also adapted to the context of the relationship between women and food and the effects on their bodies. The authors defend that “what is different in this neoliberal postfeminist space to earlier accounts by Bordo and Bartky is the productive effects of these disciplinary regimes. They are no longer viewed as oppressive patriarchal social norms, but embodied as productive practices that enact moral values of self-fulfilment, lifestyle choices and individual responsibility” (Musolino et al. 2015, 7). In this light, women succumb to these disorders because they are free to choose to have the body they want to and depriving themselves of food gives them a sense of control over their bodies. In *Only Ever Yours*, the obsession with thinness derives into an obsession with food, which leads most of the girls to suffer from some eating disorder, mainly anorexia nervosa and/or bulimia. As a matter of fact, suffering from them is what is more common, and it is even expected from them as these disorders are normalised in a context in which being thin is a life priority. The fixation on and restriction of food is the main characteristic of anorexia nervosa. The vast majority of eves are preoccupied with what they eat and base their diets on meals that restrict their calorie intake. [M]egan looks herself in the mirror “as if to see if she’s thin enough to merit eating breakfast” (*OEY* 278). [J]essie only eats food that is purple during one week (*OEY* 111), implying that she changes the colour of the food she eats every week. In another occasion, she prides herself on the fact that she “[hasn’t] eaten dinner in two whole weeks” (*OEY* 133). With this behaviour, jessie transmits the idea that she is always in control of the situation. She chooses the food she wants to eat and she is the one that disciplines her body deciding not to have dinner. For others, controlling hunger at all times becomes a hard task, moreover in the consumerist modern societies that demand women to be slim while they must keep on buying products. As a consequence, “bulimia emerges as a characteristic modern personality construction” (Bordo 2003, 201). The bulimic eats all that she wants, in huge quantities; she devours what is put in front of her. Yet, at the end, she must conform to the norms, and vomiting is the remedy. In the novel, the school offers a space called “the Vomitorium” (*OEY* 31), name that transparently reveals its purpose. It is located right next to the “Fatgirl buffet”, so the straightforward message is that if someone falls into temptation, the direct consequence is that they must get rid of the calories that threaten to transform into fat. The walls of the Vomitorium are covered by pictures from the Zones, red circles around what are considered objects of shame, such as a “sweaty face” or “cellulite” on the thighs (*OEY* 99). Vomiting after eating is so taken for granted that the school offers them “Iperac syrup”, a drug used “for easy, predictable regurgitation” (*OEY* 33). This is another

example of how scientific development is put at the service of disciplining the female body in this dystopia.

In case that dieting, clothes, make-up are not enough to attain that body ideal, the development of cosmetic surgery comes forward as another strategy towards self-improvement. In her analysis on the increasing number of women undergoing cosmetic surgery, Kathryn Pauly Morgan reflects on the violence that is exerted over the female body when women decide to have their skin cut by knives at the promise of “restored youth” and/or “permanent beauty” (2003, 165). Debate was held between scholars Kathy Davis and Susan Bordo around the issue of cosmetic surgery. In *Reshaping the Female Body*, Davis stated that plastic surgery can be described as “*first and foremost* [...] about taking one’s life into one’s own hands” (cited in Bordo 2003, 31). Bordo opposed this idea claiming that there is an “institutionalized *system* of values and practices within which girls and women [...] come to believe they are nothing [...] unless they are trim, tight, lineless, bulgeless, and sagless” (2003, 32). From a postfeminist point of view, which coincides with Davis’, it is women today who decide to change their bodies, as well as how they want to do it, even though they change them according to the same standard that patriarchal culture establishes. In *Only Ever Yours*, cosmetic surgery is presented as a proper means to defy age. Naomi Wolf declares that “when [a woman] ages, she is asked to believe that without ‘beauty’ she slides into nothingness and disintegration” (1991, 230). As the eves have been designed to be perfect and their lives are strictly based on looking the best they can, the main focus on the use of cosmetic surgery is to erase the signs of aging. This can be appreciated when chastity-ruth remarks, as she stares at the eves: “I see a lot of cross faces here. Do you all have some strange desire for an anti-age re-design by the age of twenty?” (*OEY* 133). Moreover, aging has such negative implications that they even have “the luxury of a Termination Date” at the age of forty (*OEY* 51), implying that after that age they cannot be beautiful anymore and, thus, become useless. According to Sadie Wearing, there is an “increasingly, if problematically, contested understanding of age primarily in terms of decline and disintegration rather than accumulation and growth” (2007, 280). Media images and advertising nowadays reinforce these ideas as many products with anti-aging proprieties promise rejuvenation and there are cosmetic surgery procedures to defy aging signs as well.

The reproduction of femininity goes beyond the material body and affects roles, attitude and behaviour. The eves do not only have to look feminine but also have to act according to expectations associated to femininity. One idea that has been closely linked to femininity throughout history and that is rescued by postfeminist discourses is motherhood. As Diane Negra states, popular culture “frequently equates motherhood with full womanhood” (2009, 63). Postfeminism retrieves ideas that had been revoked by feminism a long time ago, as the ones exposed in *The Feminine Mystique*, which has been discussed in Chapter One. A plausible explanation to why postfeminist discourses praise motherhood is due to the fact that “the 1990s could be characterized in the history of reproductive technology as a decade in which the institution of motherhood was publicly declared in crisis. Since the birth of the first test- tube baby in 1978, pregnancy’s categorization as a ‘natural’ act has been contested medically and scientifically” (Garret 2007, 167). Therefore, it was necessary to spread a discourse that would convince women of all the advantages that motherhood could bring into their lives. In *Only Ever Yours*, all the eves have to be prepared to be mothers, even though only a third will become companions and, as a consequence, bear children. When the eves are very young, they receive “Little Mama classes” in which they learn “how to change nappies on [their] training dolls” (*OEY* 40). Being a mother is strictly demanded on women who are companions as it is referred to as their “purpose as women” which they have to fulfil (*OEY* 364) as well as “a contribution to society” (*OEY* 362). The moment a companion is found to be barren “she was sent to the pyre, naturally” (*OEY* 227). On one occasion, a baby died two days after he was born, so the mother “was sent Underground for testing” to find out if it was due to her “bad genes” or to “neglectful mothering” (*OEY* 227). Issues around maternity are considered of essential importance in the novel to the extent that if any misfortune occurs, the outcome is their death, either as a penalty or because if they are childless their existence loses all sense. Moreover, it is out of question that the man would be blamed for such misfortunes.

4. The Power behind the Disciplinary Practices that Produce the Female Body

In his influential work *Discipline and Punish* (1979), the French philosopher Michel Foucault describes how modern institutions produce “docile bodies” through “disciplinary practices”; that is, bodies whose operations are regulated and controlled by means of inflicted actions and behaviour. For instance, the school obliges the students to sit erect in a desk placed within four walls they cannot abandon; in the case of the army, the soldiers are subject to military drills that systematise their actions and response (Bartky 2003, 26). In order to exert this type of control, surveillance becomes a basic requisite. Foucault discusses Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, a model prison that locates a tower at the centre of a circular structure that is divided into cells. All inmates are isolated and permanently visible from the tower, which guarantees their obedience, for they do not know when they are being watched. Thus, “self-surveillance” comes into play as an essential form of power that ensures the workings of this model, since all individuals must be constantly alert and always adhere to the rules to avoid being caught disobeying them at any moment. Foucault noticed how this model is reproduced by many other institutions and how it affects society in general terms. Schools, factories, hospitals look very similar to this prison design and they all produce the same effect: the subject feels constantly monitored as this form of control is exerted over their wary minds.

In her much-quoted essay “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power”, feminist scholar Sandra Lee Bartky connects Foucault’s concept of “docile bodies” specifically with the female body to describe particularly “those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine” (2003, 27). In her analysis, Bartky describes three different categories under which a wide range of practices related to the construction of the feminine body can be classified: the first category involves the size and the configuration of the body; the second, its gestures, movements and postures; and, finally, the third comprises all those practices that aim at adorning the body. After providing several examples of each category, the majority of which coincide with the rituals the eyes go through every day and which have been described in the previous chapter, Bartky’s aim is to “examine the nature of these disciplines, how they are imposed and by whom” (2003, 27-28). Thus, the author reflects on who is responsible for this particular construction of the feminine body in society and the methods that are used to reproduce it. Following Bartky and other renowned feminist critics such as Bordo, Negra, or Wolf, who have all engaged with the concept of the

“docile body” in relation to femininity and patriarchal power, this chapter will analyse how these issues are represented in *Only Ever Yours* where the eves are portrayed as their perfect embodiment.

In her article “Patchwork Girls: Reflections of Lost Female Identity in Louise O’Neill’s *Only Ever Yours*”, Donna Mitchell identifies the concept of the “the male gaze” in the novel, a theory developed by the film critic Laura Mulvey (1999) which explains how women in the arts have been represented throughout history from a male perspective. This fact entails that men act as observers and are entitled to describe women according to their judgement. The Inheritants enjoy the freedom to observe the eves without reserve to conform an opinion of who will be the most valuable as companion. A basic principle is that “the men must have the right to choose. It is their future that is at stake” (*OEY* 128). For that reason, the eves welcome them walking down a catwalk in bikini, so the first type of input they receive of the young women is purely about their physical appearance as the first thing they see is their almost naked bodies. Mitchell explains that “the eves [...] are united by a shared existence of constant self-surveillance and comparison which is encouraged by the omnipresent mirrors in the training school” (2017, 184). The mirrors become a key element of their daily life because they are all around offering a reflection of their appearance. Before the Inheritants arrive in their lives, the mirrors are responsible for giving them the feedback on how they look, as well as the other eves in classes or outside them, and in social media. They know that photos of them are published weekly for the people in the Zones to vote, so they are constantly paying attention to their appearance. After their first visit, freida notices that “I’m not the only one taking extra care with my wardrobe choices these days, examining myself from every conceivable angle, trying to figure out what Darwin might see if he was looking at me” (*OEY* 158). This exemplifies how the eves have suffered an interiorisation of the “male gaze” as they comment on themselves critically as the men would do. As Barkty explains “in contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment. Woman lives her body as seen by another, by an anonymous patriarchal Other” (2003, 34). In the novel, the eves lead their lives according to firmly established rules. In our everyday world, many women discipline their bodies even though there are no rules that demand it nor rulers that enforce them. Margaret A. McLaren states, commenting on Barkty’s essay, that oppressive patriarchal structures of power collaborate with the

disciplinary practices that produce the female body (2002, 93). Therefore, there is no one who holds a position of unimpeachable authority to impose such strict demands that are so broadly met. Very often the disciplinarians are women who discipline other women as well as themselves. Bartky's conclusion is that "insofar as the disciplinary practices of femininity produce a 'subjected and practiced', an inferiorized, body, they must be understood as aspects of a far larger discipline, an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination. This system aims at turning women into the docile and compliant companions of men" (Bartky 2003, 37). Susan Bordo also draws on Foucault to produce her feminist analysis and considers that "we must first abandon the idea of power as something possessed by one group and levelled against another; we must instead think of the network of practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination in a particular domain" (2003, 167). Diane Negra contributes to this discussion arguing that postfeminist discourses spread by popular culture establish a connection with patriarchal values and the capitalist system creating a "broad promotional rhetoric that (re)assures female clients that they are demonstrating agency and self-management when they avail themselves of such services rather than capitulating to regressive (sometimes misogynist) appearance norms" (2009, 121). Therefore, many are the agents and the forces that intervene, some of which appear in the novel and will be discussed in this chapter.

To start with, one of the most powerful agents that intervenes in the discipline of the female body is advertising as a crucial part of the beauty and fashion industry. As Bartky suggests, "the media images of perfect female beauty that bombard us daily leave no doubt in the minds of most women that they fail to measure up" (2003, 33). The constant exposure to images of women that embody this ideal results in an relentless comparison with a specific body type that is presented as the best version of the female body but that only represents a minimal percentage of women. Moreover, as Susan Bordo states in *In the Empire of Images*, "virtually every celebrity image you see – in the magazines, in the videos, and sometimes even in the movies – has been digitally modified" (2003, xviii). This means that this percentage is even inferior to what it seems and women are shown as referents women that are not real. However, these advertisements are intended to sell women products that make the promise of attaining such an ideal seem real. The capitalist system in which we live plays a crucial role in the construction of this body ideal and puts presumably at everyone's disposal a set of

products that are presented as necessary to attain it with the purpose to foster consumerism. Postfeminist discourses present the idea that women, assuming they have the time and the money, can make an effort to improve their bodies.

Michelle M. Lazar has analysed advertisements that use the postfeminist rhetoric of freedom and choice, concepts which have been already introduced in the Chapter One, to try to convince women that they deserve to be beautiful, so they can strive for that ideal as a means towards self-realisation. As examples, she provides adverts that appeared in *The Straits Times*, such as “FREEDOM FROM OILY SKIN (Nivea Visage 3/06/07)” and “what are your make-up choices? (Clinique 28/04/06)” (2011, 44), which use the words freedom and choice explicitly. Other adverts make use of the words “right”, as in “FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO OWN THE PERFECT BODY (Slimming Sanctuary 10/3/04)” in which “the achievement of the body beautiful is overtly represented as a feminist right” (2011, 41). The spread of this discourse goes hand in hand with the economic interest of big industries that create what Naomi Wolf calls a “conscious market manipulation” (1991, 17). As the author explains, “powerful industries [diet industry, cosmetic industry, cosmetic surgery industry, pornography industry] have arisen from the capital made out of *unconscious anxieties*, and are in turn able, through their influence on mass culture, to use, stimulate, and reinforce the *hallucination* in a rising economic spiral” (1991, 17; my emphasis). The word “anxieties” stresses the psychological impact that the images have on women and the danger that they can possibly lead to mental disorders associated with the body image, as can be anorexia and bulimia, which have been discussed in the previous chapter. The fact that they are “unconscious” highlights that the images have a profound impact on women’s minds to the extent that the effort and willingness to emulate them arises without them being consciously aware of it; and, even when awareness is built, it is sometimes still an arduous task to erase those firm well-integrated patterns of thought. In *Only Ever Yours*, several examples that illustrate the leading role of advertising in the spread of these images can be found. All the eves have got an “ePad” with access to selected TV channels. The adverts the eves watch reinforce the idea of constant improvement and prepare them for their future lives outside the school: “an advert for vaginal bleaching cream. One for a new laser treatment that promises to remove any unsightly body hair” (*OEY* 63). The girl in the iperac syrup ad promotes it claiming that it is “for easy, predictable regurgitation” (*OEY* 33). The focus of all the adverts to

which the eyes have access is on the necessity they have to improve their bodies and to have a more youthful appearance.

Additionally, the TV programs also display women whose bodies work as referents. Laura Harvey and Rosalind Gill discuss “the sexualisation of culture”, a phenomenon that defines the increase in sexual representations in popular culture. The authors also introduce the figure of the “sexual entrepreneur”: a woman who defends her sexual freedom and that is not represented as objectified anymore, but she takes initiative in being presented as a sexualised subject (2011, 52). For many feminist critics, “it is merely a postfeminist repackaging of feminist ideas in a way that renders them depoliticized and presses them into the service of patriarchal consumer capitalism” (Harvey & Gill 2011, 54). Therefore, the display of the sexualised female body is just another example of how women are led to believe that they show agency and control over their lives. In *The Americas-Zone’s Next Top Concubine*, “newly designed concubines participating in tasks to select the one who will be chosen as the American Father’s personal concubine for a year” appear (OEY 63). It goes without saying that in a contest aimed at selecting the best concubine, the main and only criterion to be considered is beauty. On Rap TV, the eyes can see “the newest rapper from the Americas, Lil’ Pete’s video” (OEY 69). The singer appears with “five naked blonde concubines at his feet”. After uploading the video on her MyFace, freida can hear within a few minutes some other girls singing Lil’ Pete’s song (OEY 70). This example shows how they are more than accustomed to see these images because they have been raised in a context in which they are part of the commonality of their lives because of the “sexualisation of culture” (Harvey and Gill 2011, 53), so they accept them as the natural order of things. This acceptance is demonstrated when freida affirms “I copy what they do on TV” (OEY 204), hence confirming the enormous influence that the media has on its audience and how the constant exposure of certain images produce that they are accepted as normal.

Even more powerful today are the effects that social media has on people, especially on teenagers. Social media is undeniably an indispensable constituent of teenager’s lives. As Jill Walsh argues

adolescence is a period in which we know that the self is in flux, and yet in the midst of this evolution, answering the question ‘who am I’ might be considered one of the most important tasks of adolescent development (Erikson 1980). In an interesting way, social media offers an opportunity for teens to try to answer this,

and other questions, by serving as a platform through which the developing self can be seen as judged by both the individual and the broader social audience. (2018, 2)

In the case of the eves, social networks do not only work as a means to discover they are, but, more importantly, they allow them to establish a sense of self. The social network that the eves use is called “MyFace”, a space where they can update their status and post videos and photos. It is a clear reference to the social network “Facebook”, but in this case the emphasis is evidently on the self, which is what they are going to display publicly. At the beginning of the novel, freida updates her status right after she wakes up and her severe dependence on the social network is very soon revealed: “a shiver of satisfaction runs through me as the videostatus uploads, as if this somehow proves that I’m real. I exist” (*OEY* 5). This idea reappears the moment she thinks “the need to record my life is a fundamental need as my need to breathe. Without MyFace, I’m floating. I have nothing to anchor me down, to prove I exist” (*OEY* 100). In both occasions, the use of the verb “exist” demonstrates how the participation in virtual life is an integrating part of her sense of being, to the extent that the moment when they are banned from access to MyFace, freida describes it as “I feel like my arm has been hacked off with a rusty saw” (*OEY* 107). The lack of social media in their lives is perceived as violent, even painful, as the social media reproduces the model of the Panopticon virtually: the eves feel the urge to expose themselves publicly to make constantly visible to the rest that they are adjusting to the norms and disciplining their bodies, thus making themselves valuable.

In addition, the use of social media entails some other dangers that affect the real life experiences of teenagers, and which also make their way into the lives of the eves. First, technology platforms allow for acting under the protection of anonymity. For instance, it is very easy to send anonymous messages such as this one that isabel received: “no one likes you. Everyone wants you to die. Why don’t you just kill yourself and get it over with?” (*OEY* 120), and this is something they are fully conscious about, as freida demonstrates when she thinks: “we make comparisons constantly, of course, but in private, protected behind the anonymity of our computers” (*OEY* 80). This anonymity is even used profitably in classes such as Comparison Studies Class, in which they are asked to record VoiceNotes explaining the weaknesses of the two eves whose pictures are projected in the board in front of them. Before they start, chastity-ruth reminds them that “[their] voices will be disguised to maintain anonymity, so [they] may speak freely” (*OEY*

56). Ironically, judgements can vary from “your skin is too dark [...] I think that you should ask about some lightening cream” to “your hair colour washes out your skin tone [...] I think you should ask about a tanning cream” (*OEY* 57), which reflects the subjectivity behind each particular thought and the variability of what is considered to be the ideal body.

Images that appear on social media allow women to compare themselves to others, in the same way they compare themselves to the images that appear on advertisements or the media. As it happens with the latter, images that appear in social media are digitalized, which implies that very often they are “filtered, smoothed, polished, softened, sharpened, re-arranged” (Bordo 2003, xviii). Nowadays, most social networks and applications offer filters and editing tools that improve the image that the self projects to the rest of the world. As a result, young women compare themselves to “digital creations” (Bordo 2003, xviii), which train them to perceive that what is not perfect is a defect. In the novel, when freida sees the selfie that cara has taken of the two of them, the first thought that comes to mind is “is she prettier than me?” (*OEY* 34). The eves also have an application they use to upload photos in which two of them wear the same items of clothing and the other eves can vote who wears it best (*OEY* 161) in a similar way in which some magazines have sections that do the same with celebrities. Another similar application is “Your Face or Mine” (*OEY* 71), which again allows them to choose from two photos the prettiest eve. Therefore, the eves do not only compare themselves to models and TV stars, but they constantly do it among their peers and social networks are put at the service of this purpose.

Women who struggle to improve their appearance compare themselves to other women. As Carole Spitzack states, “in order to appear more attractive, and indeed, more *moral* than others, a woman takes up competitive sensibilities regarding herself in relation to other women” (1990, 109). Her success can be evaluated according to other women’s success; a woman will be more beautiful if the woman next to her is in a worse position in the pursue of the beauty ideal. As Naomi Wolf states, “competition between women has been made part of the myth so that women will be divided from one another” (1991, 14). In order for the system to work, it is highly relevant that the eves are entirely focused on competing with each other to reach the ideal of beauty and that they do not find chances to start a discussion that concerns the nature and the workings of the system that surrounds them. In the novel, the eves are weekly situated in a position of a beauty ranking

determined by the Euro-Zone Inheritants (*OEY* 15), something the eves take very seriously because they believe their fate will be chosen according to these positions. However, right before they meet the Inheritants, they are told that the rankings are not valid anymore and they will not influence the final decision. When Freida reflects on it, in a state of shock as the rest of her colleagues, she thinks: “Sixteen years of being told that the rankings are *everything*, that they are our self-worth and the only indicator of our value. *Meaningless?*” (*OEY* 127). In fact, the rankings have not been meaningless in the least, since they contribute to the widespread sense of rivalry that prevails in everyday interactions. The fact that the eves compare themselves to their peers ensures that they will be monitoring the rest as well as themselves at all times to try to be the best. Again, this behaviour reproduces the Panopticon model introduced at the beginning of the chapter: the subject feels constantly monitored so self-surveillance becomes a requisite not to be caught disobeying the norms. In the novel, while staring at Megan during a VideoChat, Freida cannot avoid thinking “I want my hair to be that shiny. Ugh. Why am I so useless?” (*OEY* 65). Even staring at her best friend, Isabel, she cannot avoid thinking “*I wish I looked like you. Everything would be easier if I looked like you*” (*OEY* 8). However, when Isabel gains weight, “a shameful relief slashes through [her]” when Freida ponders “I’m not the only one who isn’t perfect. I’m not the worst” (*OEY* 37). At the sight of someone whose looks do not fit into the body ideal, many women feel relief as well as rejection. This exemplifies Naomi Wolf’s idea that “women can tend to resent each other if they look too ‘good’ and dismiss one another if they look too ‘bad’ ” (1991, 76). Whichever the situation is, women are taught to reject each other on the grounds of both a good or a bad physical appearance. Rivalry and aversion is omnipresent in the relationships among women: either they strive to be the one that looks the best, or they reject each other because their inner shame projects itself on another subject. [F]reida’s relationships with most of her colleagues are based on jealousy and self-interest although they consider themselves to be friends. In addition, rivalry is also encouraged among generations of eves. When Chastity-Ruth orders the eves not to “discuss any details of the Inheritants module with the younger eves” because “it might give them an unfair advantage when it comes to their own final-year Interactions” (*OEY* 131), Freida and the other eves find it very obvious and struggle not to laugh. [F]reida thinks: “none of the eves in the years above us gave us any help or advice. Why would we offer it to anyone else?” (*OEY* 131), which demonstrates that the system works and the eves are sufficiently brainwashed so as to perpetuate its workings. Therefore, the eves are taught not to have

any contact with the younger generations in the same way that contact is limited with the enforcement of Isolation among the eves of the same generation.

In *Only Ever Yours* it is an easy task to identify who the responsible for the imposition of the “disciplinary practices” are, because clear figures that exert this type of power over women exist; yet, in our contemporary world, the identification of such figures does not come so straightforwardly. After describing the whole range of disciplinary practices that women exert over their bodies, Sandra Lee Bartky poses the question “who then are the disciplinarians?” (2003, 36). In the novel, the Original Father occupies a position of ultimate power as he established the “Rules for Proper Female Behaviour” (*OEY* 1), which have the form of religious commandments and are instructed in the school. Along the same lines, the Father of the Euro-Zone is in charge of keeping in touch with the eves and reminding them about the necessity of conforming to the norms. In this dystopic setting, O’Neill has decided to use personifications of the patriarchal system by which we live with the figure of the Fathers. Similarly, the chastitites are women who participate actively in the perpetuation of the system. In that sense, in the imagined world of the novel, there are tangible responsible figures that impose norms over women’s bodies and conduct. However, in our contemporary society, the identification of prominent figures that imposes norms of femininity over women does not come so straightforward; yet, as we have proved in the previous chapter, many women very often conform to these norms, proving that the patriarchal system works: women interiorize patriarchal values and they monitor themselves so the system can keep on working.

5. What Now? In Search of Resistance and Hope in *Only Ever Yours*

The relationship between science fiction/speculative fiction and feminism dates back to the end of the 1960s with the publication of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), a science fiction novel that presents a planet whose inhabitants do not have a fixed gender. Other novels that followed, such as *The Female Man* (1975) by Joanna Russ and *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) by Marge Piercy, went hand in hand with the feminist concerns of the Second Wave feminism and dealt with issues regarding the construction of gender. Some years later, the publication of the feminist dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) by Margaret Atwood, set the ground of what was going to be a flourishing genre that worked for many authors to envision a worse scenario than the one surrounding them to express their concerns about the political, social and cultural position of women. The success of such a genre makes sense in a moment when postfeminist discourses started to defend that women are free and feminism is unnecessary, since dystopian fiction is seen by many contemporary writers as a proper tool to fight back this idea. Moreover, as Juan F. Elices argues that "it seems that the analysis of the role of women in this literary genre is doubly valuable. On the one hand, it has enabled authors not only to recuperate those female characters that have been systematically ostracised in dystopian narratives but, most importantly, to bring many controversial issues to the fore" (2016, 75). Classic dystopias, such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) did not offer any important role to female characters nor any reflection on how women feature in the dystopic world they imagine. In feminist dystopias, women take leading roles and confront the obstacles of a distant yet relatable context. As Keith M. Booker claims "the principal technique of dystopian fiction is defamiliarization: by focusing their critiques of society on spatially or temporally distant settings, dystopian fictions provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable" (1994b, 19). For example, in the case of feminist dystopian fiction, gender and constructions of femininity, which are seen as "natural", but revealed as "construction" in both feminist theory and feminist dystopian fiction. Therefore, it can be argued that dystopian literature criticises fundamentally a present that is set in the future. Louise O'Neill explores in the futuristic scenario of *Only Ever Yours* postfeminist discourses and practices that are integrated in our contemporary society making use of

distinctive features of dystopian literature: an all-controlling state with absolute authority, scientific development used for the exploitation of human beings (women, concretely) and technological advances at the service of disciplinary practices and surveillance.

Only Ever Yours stands out mainly because feminist issues are addressed to a Young Adult audience, a necessary target because they are in contact with postfeminist discourses daily. For that purpose, O'Neill uses referents the adolescents can feel familiar with to catch their attention, such as the fashion industry, the use of social media, a TV show called *The Carmichaels* (which sounds very similar to *The Kardashians*) and elements of romantic love. Even if it is true that dystopian fiction has been cultivated for a Young Adult readership from the first decade of the twenty-first century (Day et. al. 2014, 6), no other work had previously engaged with postfeminist discourses of "the body beautiful" as epitome of femininity and the pressures young women are subjected to as a consequence of these discourses. The most relevant example of the success of dystopian literature among young readers is *The Hunger Games* trilogy by American novelist Suzanne Collins⁶: In this trilogy, as well as in other dystopian fiction for young readers, such as Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy (2005 – 2007) and Veronica Roth's *Divergent* trilogy (2011 – 2013), what we find is a "celebration of the defiant teenage girl, as female protagonists are catapulted to the centre of their society's attention because they dare to test their boundaries by fighting against the laws and norms of their deeply flawed worlds" (Sawyer Fritz 2014, 18). In O'Neill's novel, the female protagonists Freida and Isabel are at the centre of the narrative, yet to which extent they fight against the norms is to be discussed in this chapter.

As it happens in all dystopias, *Only Ever Yours* presents instances of resistance and rebellion. As Sara K. Day, Miranda Green Bartet and Amy Montz state, "in very broad terms, qualities of redefinition, resistance, and, most importantly, rebellion, color good dystopian literature" (2014, 8) and O'Neill's novel is no exception. All these characteristics are mainly embodied by the character of Isabel. She is introduced in the novel as Freida's best friend but during the last academic year, their friendship deteriorates due to Isabel's change of physical appearance. [I]sabel has gained weight and now has "a thickening at the waist, a roundness at the thighs" (*OEY* 9). The first day she enters the classroom with "her tangled hair pulled into a high ponytail away from her make-up free

⁶ The trilogy is composed by *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010).

face” (*OEY* 20) everybody is shocked at the sight of her new appearance. [I]sabel used to be the first in the ranking for the previous twelve years, but the last one she is not ranked. As Carole Spitzack states commenting on female friendship “women comprehend outward appearance as a primary factor in societal evaluations or feminine worth; women who conform to beauty ideals seem to be valued highly” (1990, 108). The general admiration that was felt throughout all those years evaporates and her value is totally lost because she cannot be considered beautiful anymore. Moreover, she is ostracized because she does not conform to the rules anymore, which goes against postfeminist discourses of improvement. Her attitude produces criticism because, from the outside, she is not sacrificing herself enough. After seeing her new appearance, the eves adopt a distant attitude towards her and start criticizing her body. This attitude is again an example of the interiorisation of the “male gaze” and how this is projected not only to themselves, but to other women. [F]reida reckons “my natural place [is] with isabel, but now I don’t know what to do” (*OEY* 21) referring to whether she should sit next to her or not in class. This thought indicates the type of relationship that freida and isabel will have from now onwards: she will constantly slip between the urge to recover her dear friend and the desire to fit in a group of young women who are going to surveil every move to criticise her. Open communication is never established between them and freida is unable to get closer to her and talk about what isabel is going through. As the focalisation in the novel never changes from freida’s perspective, as readers do not get any insight of isabel’s mind and the reasons behind her attitude are never transparently revealed. It is only when freida sees isabel exercising that she thinks: “if she keeps working out like this, she’ll lose weight. She’ll be pretty again, and popular. We can go back to the way things were before” (*OEY* 117). [F]reida only considers restoring their friendship if her friend is able to change her neglected body; that is, when she becomes again valuable.

[I]sabel embodies resistance since most of her actions during the last school year go against the norms. For Juan F. Elices, isabel is one of “those characters who stand up to the degeneration they perceive around and who lead a silent rebellion against the established powers” (2016, 79). [I]sabel acts as if she is aware of the oppression that is all around her and carries out acts of defiance. For instance, she eats at the Fatgirl buffet “seemingly oblivious to the girls in the BeBetter line openly pointing at her” (*OEY* 30). [I]sabel takes control of her body and breaks with the disciplinary practices that have governed her life so far. “Why, isabel? Why are you doing this to yourself? To your

body?” freida asks her at the sight of her friend eating chocolate bars desperately, to which she replies “because I can [...] because it’s my body” (*OEY* 139). [I]sabel demonstrates with this powerful statement that she is self-conscious of the possibility of acquiring control over her own body, something that was supposedly out of question in an all-controlling world that treats women as products at the service of the consumer. As Susan Bordo states, “the discipline and normalization of the female body has to be acknowledged as an amazingly durable and flexible strategy of social control” (2003, 166). By challenging the norms that are meant to discipline her body, isabel is questioning this form of control. However, feelings of shame and guilt invade her and she tries to undo or compensate for her behaviour. [F]reida finds isabel “pedalling furiously on a rusted exercise bike” (*OEY* 116) trying to burn the extra calories she has consumed; in another occasion, after devouring chocco bars, freida takes her to the bathrooms, where she “falls to her knees” (*OEY* 138) and gets rid of the food. With this particular attitude, isabel’s rebellion can be said to be partial, and she represents the duality experienced by those women who have interiorised and who have lived according to specific demands for such a long time that erasing those mental structures becomes an arduous task.

However, once again the authority intervenes and cosmetic surgery is presented as a procedure to restore the body back to “normal”, back to how it should be, according to hegemonic patriarchal standards. Kathryn Paulin Morgan states that cosmetic surgery prevails today since it succeeds at “transforming the human body into an increasingly artificial and ever more perfect object” (2003, 168). Again, undergoing cosmetic surgery is explained by postfeminist discourses as an instance of freedom and choice. Women are said to be free to have the body that they want and no one, not even nature, should impose their will over them. [C]hastity-magdalena says to freida regarding isabel that “they’re going to fix her up. She will be as good as new when you see her again” (*OEY* 146). The implications are that cosmetic surgery rejuvenates and improves the body. The next time isabel appears on scene, she is slim, her hair is longer and blonder, and she is well-dressed. Yet again she decides to take control over her body and do what is necessary to fight against the expectations imposed on her: “within a week isabel has begun to look as if she’s folding in on herself, her bones eating her flesh from the inside. ‘I’m not hungry,’ she says, turning away from yet another untouched tray of food. ‘I’m never hungry any more’. [I]sabel is the skinny eve in the class now (*OEY* 181). Instead of eating all she wants, she starts starving herself. The eves must be at her target weight, so both extremes

are equally undesirable. [I]sabel chooses anorexia as a self-controlled mode to configure a body that will escape from the imposed ideal to illustrate that “dictation to nature of one’s own chosen design for the body is the central goal [...] for the anorectic” (Bordo 2003, 152). Despite her efforts, she does not manage to avoid being chosen as a companion and, what is more, she is chosen as the most important companion of her generation: the companion of the Father of the Euro-Zone. Even though this fact awakens the envy of some of her colleagues, she had been struggling throughout the year to escape from this fate. Her last act of rebellion emerges as the ultimate option to end with this situation: isabel commits suicide to avoid being the Father’s companion. Death is presented as the only way for isabel to go out of a system that possesses women and gives them no other option than being subject to the strict laws that cancel them as human beings.

One indicator that a woman is performing well in disciplining her body and mind is the existence of a masculine figure that provides positive feedback, being romantic love a valuable example. According to Ann M. M. Childs, one characteristic present in contemporary Young Adult dystopias is the presence of stereotypes that prevent female empowerment. One stereotype concerning friendship entails that “young women will always abandon friendship for a young man, as they seemingly value romance over platonic friendship” (Childs 2014, 188). [F]reida shows more interest in cultivating her relationship with Darwin, the highest-ranked Inheritant of the Euro-Zone, rather than renewing her friendship with isabel. From the moment Darwin shows an interest in her, a sense of hope starts to pervade in her life as she takes on faith in the possibility of being chosen as a companion and enjoying the best of possible fates that this dystopic world can offer. In this sense, the hopeful aspect typical from Young Adult dystopias makes their way into the narrative. As Darwin’s interest in her does not disappear, she cannot avoid thinking: “I keep waiting for him to lose interest in me, but he doesn’t. He chooses me every time, again and again” (*OEY* 225). As it is common for the eves to think that they must always improve, and that other women are better than they are, it is common to feel constantly threatened by the idea that the man who is interested may change their mind when he realises how defective they are. This pattern of action bears a strong resemblance with the ones found in classic fairy tales in which a woman relies on the appearance of a charming man, usually a prince, to save her and grant her a life full of love, wealth and status. The woman cannot fend for herself, and her success in life

depends on getting married and having children, which depends exclusively on the male character, who ends up choosing her on the grounds of her exceptional beauty. In *Only Ever Yours*, the eves devote their entire youth to become beautiful enough to get married and have children. Darwin centres his attention on freida's physical appearance, and in their following intimate meetings, it can be appreciated that the qualities he values about her are the ones that the school has taught her. For instance, he praises her on being a good listener (*OEY* 226), and when she expresses her yearning to be able to read, he answers "I'll read to you whenever you want" (*OEY* 229), the possibility of teaching her how to do it by herself remaining out of question. Women who read can be dangerous since access to knowledge and information could give them the power to question the system that oppresses and excludes them.

Yet in this dystopia there is no place for a happy ever after and all sense of hope disappears in the end. Popular culture has presented during the last decades an overt sexualisation of the female body and postfeminist authors link it to ideas of empowerment and choice. According to Laura Halvey and Rosalind Gill, "recent representations of women [...] constitute a clear break with representations from the past in which women were passive and objectified, now showing them as active, desiring and 'taking charge' sexually in a way that clearly reflects feminism's aspirations for female sexual self-determination" (2011, 54). However, this image is presented as women's choice because it will grant them the opportunity of having a better job, a better husband, or a better life in general. In *Only Ever Yours*, freida betrays Darwin spreading a secret he has confidently shared with her and he finally pays attention to his dad's advice and tries to find "someone who will *fit* as a Judge's wife [...] someone who is controlled" and "who can be trusted to be discreet" (*OEY* 310). At this point, freida makes use of the last resource she has to try to retain him next to her: she decides to have sex with him to make sure he will choose her as a companion. Apparently, it is freida's choice to have sexual intercourse with Darwin, but in fact she is using sex and more concretely her body as a tool to gain power and to obtain the most decent position of female subjugation. However, it proves useless the day of the ceremony, when Darwin chooses megan as his companion. In the end, submissiveness is the quality most valued, even more than beauty and sexuality. Darwin's father decides freida's fate: "you are to become a chastity. In a non-teaching role of course. We can't have you infecting the younger eves with your abnormalities" (*OEY* 351). With her attitude, freida demonstrates she does not have a

“docile body” as the system has created and trained her to be, so she does not fit into the “normal” or common construction of what a woman should be. Nevertheless, at the end of the novel it is revealed that this was Isabel’s personal request. After her death, Freida is sent Underground for testing so the engineers can do research to know what went wrong during her design and can find the reasons why she tried desperately to convince Darwin to choose her, which made her find it impossible to stick to the rules that oblige her to be submissive and controlled. In the end, there is no happy ending because Freida has to receive punishment since she did not manage to discipline her body and mind enough to make it docile.

Only Ever Yours stands out as a young adult dystopia for this pessimistic ending that leaves no hope nor offers a solution neither for Freida nor for Isabel. As Sara K. Day, Miranda Green Bartet and Amy Montz, “dystopian literature for young adults frequently shares [a] hopeful aspect; indeed, the potential for hope has often been identified as a feature that distinguishes young adult dystopias from those written for adult audiences” (2014, 10). However, the novelty in this novel lies in the fact that this point is far from true. Death is the only means to escape from the pain inflicted by this oppressive system to which women have to conform or it destroys them. [I]sabel chooses death after she has tried impetuously to fight against the norms that ruled her body by changing it to be different from what the ideal demands, but it is not enough to avoid the destiny that has been chosen for her. On the other hand, Freida, struggles hastily to be worthy of being a companion, but once her final aim is out of question and realises all will be over soon, her last words reveal her psychological exhaustion after all those years: “I am ready now too. I am ready to feel nothing, forever” (*OEY* 390). Relief and freedom can only be attained by putting an end to their existence, a metaphor O’Neill uses to express how this system treats women for not being obedient and to denounce how hard it is to escape from the violence it exerts over women, especially young ones.

Such a pessimistic closure makes one wonder what is the message that is intended from a feminist perspective. The idea that ending one’s life is the solution to escape from a system that exploits women in all possible manners works because it turns out as an astounding, even unexpected, election by the author, moreover if we bear in mind that we are dealing with a novel addressed to young readers. Yet, it is this particular shocking effect on the reader that fosters reflection on these issues. Even though the ending is closed for our protagonists, it is open to the imagination what will happen to the next

generations of eves, as well as to the young women in our contemporary society, who live, as we have proved, in a not so different world than the one presented in the novel. Resistance and rebellion are present in the narrative, but in a very small scale as it happens on an individual level. Therefore, individualism is criticised as it is shown it cannot lead to significant changes in society. [I]sabel does not share with freida her inner thoughts nor her particular motivation behind the way she acts. This lack of communication between the former best friends prevents the possibility of creating bonds based on the commonality of experiences they share on a daily basis. This also happens with the rest of eves: Isolation is a preventive measure to stop the eves from having the opportunity to share personal thoughts. The eves are required to suppress all their emotions, but as readers we have a direct access to freida's inner voice and her anxieties and psychological deterioration come forward as evident. The idea that there is always room for improvement causes substantial damage in her minds because they can always try harder. Towards the end of the novel, freida expresses how she feels:

they have told us that in order to succeed we need to be good girls, we need to follow the rules, we need to look pretty and speak nicely and be pleasant. I've tried. I've waxed every last hair on my body. I have taken my pills. I have gone to bed hungry every night since I was four years old. I've done everything they have told me to do and here I am, ten days left, and I don't know if it's enough. (*OEY* 283)

This insistent feeling of never being enough is stuck in her mind and results in the emergence of suicidal thoughts in different occasions, such as: "I would search among the shattered shavings of glass for the perfect one, the sharpest one. I would open my veins with it" (*OEY* 148) and "I fold the pillow over my head, wondering what would happen if I held it over my mouth, pressed the life out of myself" (*OEY* 258). However, freida never shares these thoughts with no one else, and no one shares related thoughts with her, even though at the end it is clear that isabel was going through a similar situation. If they had opened up and shared their preoccupations with other eves, the story may have had a different ending.

As it has previously been mentioned in the theoretical chapter, one of the reasons why postfeminism has been criticised is because of its lack of political action. A particular attention on individual practices is considered by feminist critics to have eradicated the collective activism that defines the feminist struggle. Postfeminism works because it

portrays women as free, and if women think like that, there is no need to make any changes. As it has been discussed, postfeminist discourses are present in advertising, the media, popular culture, among others, and escaping from their influence is, as it is also demonstrated by the novel, an arduous task. Authors such as Shelley Budgeon defend that this individualism can be a promoter of social change stating that “while individualism privileges the worth of the individual at the expense of the collectivity it can also be a source of agency at the micro-level of everyday practices” (2001, 18). [I]sabel proves that her everyday practices that make a statement about the ownership of her body are not enough to overcome her situation, even less to dismantle the system that surrounds her. This can be understood as a critique to the appraisal of individuality since it is not sufficient to fight patriarchal structures of power, and it is even harmful because it separates women fostering rivalry among them, which indeed maintains the system working. As an alternative to postfeminism, the term Third Wave Feminism started to be used in the 90s by feminist scholars who believed in a movement that “acknowledges that it stands on the shoulders of other, earlier feminist movements and in this sense acts as a stance of resistance to popular pronouncements of a moratorium on feminism and feminists” (Siegel 1997, 158). Third Wave Feminism has been described as the opposite of postfeminism as it seeks a continuity with its feminist predecessors, being political engagement one of its most solid grounds (Siegel 1997, Heywood and Leslie 1997, Walker 2002). If the eves had found the opportunity to share their individual anxieties, action may have followed. Communication may have resulted in union to fight for common objectives. However, the school and the system try fervently to avoid it and foster rivalry among all women to avoid sorority and stop resistance.

6. Conclusions

In *Only Ever Yours*, Louise O'Neill creates a futuristic world in which women are designed and raised to be perfect. However, the road towards perfection is never-ending as there are always ways to improve themselves. The eves are raised in a school where they receive strict instruction on how to look and behave according to stereotypes of femininity. Through "disciplinary practices", they monitor their bodies and behaviour to stick to the norms of a system that treats women as state property. The main objective of this Dissertation has been to demonstrate how through a dystopic world Louise O'Neill offers a critique of the postfeminist discourses that prevail in our everyday society. These discourses are spread by advertising, the media and popular culture, and have a direct impact on how women and adolescents define themselves in relation to their bodies, and to their position in society, which is influenced by their physical appearance.

In Chapter One I have presented the theoretical background for both postfeminist discourses and their feminist counter-discourses, which I have later used to offer a critical analysis of the novel. Feminist scholars Susan Faludi, Yvonne Tasker, Diane Negra, Rosalind Gill, Christina Scharff and Angela McRobbie have been introduced together with some of their most relevant arguments that counteract postfeminist ideas.

I have also discussed the constructions of femininity in the dystopic world of O'Neill's novel and I have compared them to those constructions that exist in our contemporary society lead by postfeminist ideologies. Concretely, I have paid attention to what postfeminist discourses say about issues around self-improvement, weight management, shame, eating disorders, and cosmetic surgery. My analysis has demonstrated how practices performed by women following postfeminist ideologies of empowerment, agency and self-realisation coincide with those the eves are subject to and which make them slaves in a system that oppresses them entirely and treats them as objects.

Later on, I have examined the power structures that underlie constructions of femininity and the set of "disciplinary" practices that reproduce them as they are represented in *Only Ever Yours*. Postfeminist discourses are spread by advertising, TV and social media, to which young women have a direct contact. Through exposure and repetition of images that surround them, patriarchal values are reproduced and maintained. Moreover, women become active participants in the perpetuation of the

system by monitoring other women and monitoring themselves as they know they are being watched by the others.

Finally, I have defended that *Only Ever Yours* stands out as a feminist Young Adult dystopian novel because it focuses on postfeminist discourses that put a strong emphasis on physical appearance and on the pressures exerted over young women as a consequence. I have also discussed how resistance is present in the novel embodied by the character of Isabel, who takes control over her body and changes her physical appearance to rebel against the system. However, her individual actions are not enough to gain control over her life. O'Neill also offers a critique of romantic love, which is presented in Young Adult novels as an aspect that brings hope into women's lives.

All in all, *Only Ever Yours* is a feminist critique of postfeminist discourses that challenges the postfeminist rhetoric of "choice", "agency", "empowerment" and "self-realisation" dismantling the patriarchal and consumerist motives behind these ideas. Finally, it is a call for reflection for women, who through awareness, communication and union, can together question and engage in action to demolish the system that keeps on oppressing them.

7. Resumé

V knihe *Only Ever Yours* Louise O'Neill predkladá futuristický svet, v ktorom sú ženy predurčené a vychovávané k tomu, aby boli dokonalé. Cesta k dokonalosti však nikdy nekončí, pretože vždy existujú spôsoby, ako sa zlepšiť. Dievčatá sú vychovávané v škole, ktorá kladie dôraz na ich vzhľad a na to, aby sa správali podľa určených feministických stereotypov. Pomocou „disciplinárnych zvyklostí“ sledujú svoje telá, aby sa stali „poslušnými“. Hlavným cieľom tejto práce bolo poukázať na to, ako autorka Louise O'Neill, pomocou dystopického sveta, kritizuje postfeministické diskurzy, ktoré prevládajú v našej každodennej spoločnosti. Tieto diskurzy sa šíria prostredníctvom médií a populárnej kultúry, ku ktorej majú ženy, ale aj mladiství, deti a muži priamy prístup a ktoré majú silný vplyv na to, ako sa ženy definujú vo vzťahu k svojmu telu a k ich miestu v spoločnosti, ktoré je ovplyvnené ich fyzickým vzhľadom.

V prvej kapitole som predstavila teoretické východiská pre postfeministické diskurzy a ich feministické proti-diskurzy, ktoré boli neskôr použité ku kritickej analýze románu. V tejto časti je spomenutých aj niekoľko feministických bádateľov, ako napríklad Susan Faludi, Yvonne Tasker, Diane Negra, Rosalind Gill, Christina Scharff a Angela McRobbie spolu s ich najrelevantnejšími tvrdeniami, ktoré protirečia postfeministickým myšlienkam.

Druhá kapitola sa zaoberá výkladom femininity v dystopickom svete O'Neillovej románu a porovnáva ich s konštrukciami, ktoré sa vyskytujú v našej súčasnej spoločnosti vedenej myšlienkami postfeminizmu. Zvláštna pozornosť bola venovaná tomu, čo hovoria postfeministické diskurzy o témach ako je vylepšovanie, regulácia telesnej hmotnosti, hanba, poruchy príjmu potravy, kozmetické zákroky, emócie, sexualita a intelektuálny rozvoj. Analýza poukázala na to, v akom súlade sú zvyky, ktoré ženy vykonávajú na základe ideológie postfeminizmu s tými, ktoré zo žien robia otrokov v spoločnosti, ktorá ich utláča a považuje ich za majetok.

Tretia kapitola skúma ako sú v knihe *Only Ever Yours* zobrazené mocenské štruktúry, ktoré predstavujú základ výkladu femininity, a súbor „disciplinárnych“ zvyklostí, ktoré ich napodobňujú. Postfeministické diskurzy sa šíria pomocou reklamy, televízie a sociálnych médií, ku ktorým majú mladé ženy priamy prístup. Patriarchálne hodnoty sú neustále reprodukované a udržiavané pomocou vystavovaniu a opakovaniu sa istých obrazov, ktoré ich obklopujú. Ženy sa navyše stávajú aktívnymi účastníkmi na

zachovávaní systému sledovaním iných žien a monitorovaním seba, pretože vedia, že ich ostatní pozorujú.

Kapitola štyri objasňuje, že *Only Ever Yours* vyniká ako feministický dystopický román pre mladých dospelých, pretože sa zameriava na postfeministické diskusie, ktoré kladú dôraz na fyzický vzhľad a na tlak vyvíjaný na mladé ženy. Pozornosť bola venovaná aj tomu, ako je vzdor v románe stelesnený v postave Isabel, ktorá sa ujíma kontroly nad svojim telom a mení svoj fyzický vzhľad, aby sa vzoprela systému. Avšak jej jednotlivé kroky nestačia k získaniu kontroly nad svojim životom. O’Neillová taktiež kritizuje romantickú lásku, ktorá je v románoch pre mladých čitateľov prezentovaná ako prvok, ktorý prináša nádej do života žien.

Záverom, *Only Ever Yours* predstavuje feministickú kritiku postfeministických diskurzov, ktorá spochybňuje postfeministickú rétoriku „výberu“, „zastúpenia“, „posilnenie postavenia“ a „seberealizácie“ búrajúc patriarchálne a konzumné motívy. Koniec koncov, ide o výzvu k reflexii pre ženy, ktoré prostredníctvom povedomia, komunikácie a jednoty môžu spoločne spochybniť a zapojiť sa k zničeniu systém, ktorý nás neustále utláča.

8. References

- Alderman, Naomi. 2017. "Dystopian Dreams: How Feminist Science Fiction Predicted the Future". In *The Guardian*. 07/05/2018
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/25/dystopian-dreams-how-feminist-science-fiction-predicted-the-future>
- _____. 2017. *The Power*. London: Penguin Books.
- Allaire, Nicole and Chen, Shing-Ling S. 2018. "Calling for a Coalition of the 'Others': What do you say to women?" in *Constructing Narratives in Response to Trump's Election: How Various Populations Make Sense of an Unexpected Victory*, edited by Chen, Shing-Ling S., Allaire, Nicole and Chen, Zhuojun Joyce.
- Atwood, Margaret. 2016 (1985). *The Handmaid's Tale*. London: Vintage.
- _____. 2011. *In Other Worlds: Science Fiction and Human Imagination*. New York: Double Day.
- Bartky, Sandra Lee. 2003. (1998). "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power". In *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behaviour*, edited by Rose Weitz, 25-45. New York: Oxford University Press. Originally published in *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*, edited by Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).
- Booker, M. Keith. 1994a. *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*. Westport and London: Greenwood Press.
- Booker, M. Keith. 1994b. *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide*. Westport and London: Greenwood Press.
- Bordo, Susan. 2003 (1993). *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Budgeon, Shelley. 2001. "Emergent Feminist (?) Identities: Young Women and the Practice of Micropolitics". In *European Journal of Women's Studies* 8(1): 7-28.
- Burgess, Anthony. 2012. (1962). *A Clockwork Orange*. New York: Norton & Company.
- Butler, Judith. 1999 (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Cahill, Susan. 2017. "A Girl is a Half-formed Thing?: Girlhood, Trauma, and Resistance in Post-Tiger Irish Literature". In *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 28(2): 153-171
- Carpenter, Laura M. 2005. *Virginity Lost: An Intimate Portrait of First Sexual Experiences*. New York and London: New York University Press.

- Chen, Sching-Ling S., Allaire, Nicole and Chen, Zhuojun Joyce. 2018. *Constructing Narratives in Response to Trump's Election: How Various Populations Make Sense of an Unexpected Victory*. London: Lexington Books
- Childs, Ann M. M. 2014. "The Incompatibility of Female Friendship and Rebellion". In *Female Rebellion in Young adult dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green Barteet and Amy L. Montz. London and New York: Routledge.
- Clarie, Ella. 2015. "Louise O'Neill: Sometimes we become so accustomed to the world we live in that we fail to see the problems in it". In *The Guardian*. 07/05/2018
<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/mar/08/louise-oneill-feminism-international-womens-day-interview>
- Collins, Suzanne. 2008. *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- _____. 2009. *Catching Fire*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- _____. 2010. *Mockingjay*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Day, Sara K, Green Barteet, Miranda A. and Montz, Amy L. 2014. "Introduction: From 'New Woman' to 'Future Girl': The Roots and the Rise of the Female Protagonist in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopias". In *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. 1956 (1949). *The Second Sex*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Elices, F. Juan. 2016. "Othering Women in Contemporary Irish Dystopia: The Case of Louise O'Neill's *Only Ever Yours*". In *Nordic Irish Studies*, 15(1): 73-86.
- Faludi, Susan. 1991. *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage.
- Friedan, Betty. 1974 (1963). *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Dell Publishing.
- Garret, Roberta. 2007. *Postmodern Chick Flicks: The Return of the Woman's Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Genz, Stéphanie and Brabon, Benjamin A. 2009. *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2007. "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility". In *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10(2):147-166
- Gill, Rosalind, and Sharff, Christina. 2011. *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism, and Subjectivity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hall, Sarah. 2007. *The Carhullan Army*. London: Faber and Faber.

- Halvey, Laura and Gill, Rosalind. 2011. "Spicing It Up: Sexual Entrepreneurs and *The Sex Inspectors*". In *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism, and Subjectivity*, edited by Rosalind Gill and Christina Sharff. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Heywood, Leslie, and Jennifer Drake. 1997. *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist Doing Feminism*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Huxley, Aldous. 1994 (1932). *Brave New World*. London: Vintage.
- Kingston, Anne. 2004. *The Meaning of Wife*. London: Piatkus.
- Lazar, Michelle M. 2011. "The Right to Be Beautiful: Postfeminist Identity and Consumer Beauty Advertising". In *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. Ed. Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff, edited by Rosalind Gill and Christina Sharff. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. 2010 (1969). *The Left Hand of Darkness*. New York: Penguin Group.
- _____. 2009. "The Year of the Flood by Margaret Atwood". In *The Guardian*. 08/05/2018
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/aug/29/margaret-atwood-year-of-flood>
- McLaren, A. Margaret. 2002. *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*. New York: State University of New York press.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage.
- Micale, Mark S. 1993. "On the 'Disappearance' of Hysteria: A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis". In *Isis* 84(3):496-526.
- Mitchell, Donna. 2017. "Patchwork Girls: Reflections of Lost Female Identity in Louise O'Neill's *Only Ever Yours*". In *Posthuman Gothic*, edited by Anya Heise-von der Lippe. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Morgan, Kathryn Pauly. 2003. [1998] "Women and the Knife". In *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behaviour*, edited by Rose Weitz, 164-183. New York: Oxford University Press. Originally published in "Women and the knife: Cosmetic surgery and the colonization of women's bodies." *Hypatia* 6(3):25-53
- Moylan, Tom. 2000. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia and Dystopia*. Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press.
- Mulvey, Laura. 1999. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press

- Musolino, Connie, Warin, Megan, Wade, Tracey and Gilchrist, Peter. 2015. "Disordered Eating and Choice in Postfeminist Spaces". In *Outskirts: Feminisms along the Edge*. 33: 1-17
- Negra, Diane. 2009. *What a Girl Wants? Fantasizing the Reclamation of Self in Postfeminism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- O'Neill, Louise. 2014. *Only Ever Yours*. London: Quercus.
- _____. 2015. "Louise O'Neill: my journey to feminism". In *The Guardian*. 29/05/18
<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/jan/21/teenager-feminism-louise-o-neill-only-ever-yours>
- _____. 2015. *Asking for It*. London: Quercus.
- _____. 2018. *The Surface Breaks. A Reimagining of the Little Mermaid*. London: Scholastic.
- Orwell, George. 1949. *1984*. New York: Harcourt.
- Pelkins Gilman, Charlotte. 2008. (1915). *Herland*. EBOOK.
- Piercy, Marge. 1976. *Woman on the Edge of Time*. London: Penguin Random House.
- Potts, Robert. 2003. "Light in The Wilderness". In *The Guardian*. 07/05/2018
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/apr/26/fiction.margaretatwood>
- Roth, Veronica. 2011. *Divergent*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Russ, Joanna. 1975. *The Female Man*. New York: Open Road.
- Sanders, Lise Shapiro. 2004. " 'Feminists Love a Utopia': Collaboration, Conflict, and the Futures of Feminism". In *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, edited by Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sawyer, Fritz. "Girl Power and Girl Activism in the Fiction of Suzanne Collins, Scott Westerfeld, and Moira Young". In *Female Rebellion in Young adult dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green Barteet and Amy L. Montz. London and New York: Routledge.
- Siegel, Deborah L. 1997. "The Legacy of the Personal: Generating Theory in Feminism's Third Wave" In *Hypatia* 12(3): 46–75.
- Spitzack, Calore. 1990. *Confessing Excess: Women and the Politics of Body Reduction*. New York: Statea University of New York Press.
- Tasker, Yvonne and Negra, Diane. 2007. *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

- The Guardian. 2017. "Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale sales boosted by fear of Trump". 09/04/2018
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/feb/11/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-sales-trump>
- Thorpe, Vanesa. 2017. "What lies beneath the brave new world of feminist dystopian sci-fi?". In *The Guardian*. 09/04/2018
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jun/24/feminist-dystopian-sci-fi-naomi-alderman-handmaids-tale>
- Trump, Donald (@realDonaldTrump). 2013. "Ice storm rolls from Texas to Tennessee – I'm in Los Angeles and it's freezing. Global warming is a total, and very expensive, hoax!". Twitter, December 3, 2013.
<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/408977616926830592>
- Walsh, Jill. 2018. *Adolescents and Their Social Media Narratives: A Digital Coming of Age*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Waker, Rebecca. 2002. "Becoming the Third Wave". In *Ms Magazine*. 30/05/18
<http://www.ms magazine.com/spring2002/BecomingThirdWaveRebeccaWalker.pdf>
- Wearing, Sadie. 2007. "Subjects of Rejuvenation: Aging in Postfeminist Culture". In *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, edited by Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Weitz, Rose. 2003. *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behaviour*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Westerfeld, Scott. 2005. *Uglies*. New York: Simon Pulse.
- Wolf, Naomi. 1991. *The Beauty Myth*. London: Vintage.
- _____. 1993. *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How to Use It*. New York: Random House.