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Marxist Mirrors and Panoptic Prisons: A Marxist and Panoptic Study of Joanne Ramos's *The Farm*

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Abstract:

The growing pervasiveness of surveillance technologies has introduced new dimensions of observation and control over our actions. Joanne Ramos's *The Farm* introduces a dystopian society where constant observation spreads even to women's bodies and their reproductive functions, depriving them of identity, agency, and autonomy. Ramos critiques the capitalist exploitation of women, under the pretext of surrogacy in this dystopian setting. The themes of Panopticism and Marxism in *The Farm* question the agency of women in the narrative, which is caused by class distinction and pervasive surveillance. The panoptic control structure ingrained in the Golden Oaks Farm continuously monitors the hosts' daily activities. The paper analyzes the effect of such surveillance and control on the hosts' identity, and agency. It also explores the control imposed on surrogate mothers, who belong predominantly to financially challenged backgrounds, by drawing parallels to the Marxist aspects of class distinctions and commodification of individuals.

Keywords: Surveillance, commodification, identity, agency, autonomy.

Introduction

The intricacies of society can be understood through a blend of socioeconomic theory and literature. The exploration of literature through the lens of these literary theories provides insights into the complex tapestry of human lives and experiences. These theories serve as tools to analyze the intricate themes of literary works, thus understanding the relevance of such works in contemporary society.

The literary theories of Marxism and Panopticism analyze the social system and power dynamics in literature. Marxism as a school of thought was propounded by the German philosopher Karl Marx and the German sociologist Friedrich Engels. Marxism is intended to develop a classless society where the means of production, distribution, and exchange are under the state's ownership. Marxism perceives progress as a result of the struggle for power between different social classes.

The French philosopher Michel Foucault introduced the concept of Panopticism in his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison*. He derived the concept of Panopticism from Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, an architectural infrastructure in which an observer monitors the activities of the people living there without them knowing whether they are being watched or not. The fact that a single observer cannot keep a watch on all at the same time will not affect their behavior, as the awareness of the observer makes them regulate their behavior.

Bentham's Panopticon describes a system of regulation in society that enforces self-discipline among people by instilling a fear of pervasive surveillance in them. According to Foucault, the realization of the possibility of being under constant surveillance makes them conform their behavior to the norms of society. Foucault advocates this idea through his concept of Panopticism.

Ramos examines the extent of the commodification of women's bodies in modern society in *The Farm*, her debut novel. Through the portrayal of the Golden Oaks Farm, which resembles the actual Panopticon in its infrastructure, she focuses on a society where every aspect of a woman is under close surveillance. Surveillance and control are accepted and normalized in exchange for greater fortunes at the Golden Oaks Farm, which can be considered a microcosm of a controlled

society. The hosts are subjected to strict control at the Farm, thus compelling them to question their agency.

Ramos sheds light on the commodification of women in a dystopian society, where they are valued and utilized for their reproductive capacities. Commodification is a result of class discrimination in society. The Golden Oaks Farm is a microcosm of a society where class distinction and subjugation exist under the pretext of pregnancy. This research paper addresses the identity crisis, and loss of women's agency, and autonomy within *The Farm* by delving deep into the complex tapestry of panoptic surveillance, class distinction, and commodification within *The Farm*.

Panopticon in practice at Golden Oaks Farm

Joanne Ramos's *The Farm* delves into the themes of surrogacy, the commodification of women, class distinction, surveillance, and control. Through her debut novel, *The Farm*, Ramos introduces a society where constant observation has spread even to women's bodies and their reproductive functions. This results in the deprivation of their identity, agency, and autonomy. Through the narrative, which is set against the backdrop of a luxurious surrogacy retreat, Golden Oaks Farm, she explores how continuous control challenges the personal freedom of the surrogate mothers who are hired to bear the babies of elite-class people. The panoptic control structure ingrained in the Golden Oaks Farm continuously monitors the hosts' daily activities. The surveillance extends to their interactions with each other in the center, their communication with their family through virtual mediums, their diet, their movement within the set boundaries of the surrogacy center, and even their thoughts.

The novel is presented through the perspectives of four female characters: Jane, Ate Arroyo, Mae Yu, and Reagan McCarthy. Jane, the protagonist, is a Filipina immigrant. She becomes a host at the center, hoping to secure a better future for her six-month-old daughter, Amalia. Jane and Amalia live in a dorm with her cousin, Ate Arroyo since Jane's husband has cheated on her with another woman. It was upon her cousin Ate's recommendation that she decided to be a host at Golden Oaks Farm.

Mae Yu is the Managing Director of Golden Oaks Farm, with the discretion to select the hosts by cross-checking the clients' conditions and the hosts' qualifications. She is a woman with great career aspirations. Reagan McCarthy is another host at the Golden Oaks Farm who is of great help to Jane.

Jane, the Filipina immigrant, is the protagonist of the novel. She worked as a baby nurse at the Carters, from where she was fired, before becoming the host at the Golden Oaks. She agrees to become the host at the Golden Oaks Farm, as she has no other means to provide a better future for her six-month-old daughter Amalia. She goes to the Farm as host, entrusting Amalia with Evelyn Arroyo (Ate Arroyo).

Applying to the Farm seems to be a “herculean” task. The applicants are required to complete their background and credit checks and also verify their citizenship. Their medical checkup is also done. Jane also takes a computer test, in which some statements are listed to which she has to either agree or disagree. By completing these procedures, one clears the Host selection process. Mae Yu, the Managing Director of the Golden Oaks Farm, then interviews those who clear the Host selection process. After clearing this selection process, Jane receives an email from Mae Yu inviting her to the Farm for the final interview.

Jane finds the atmosphere of the surrogacy center to be quite indifferent. Her initial excitement, considering the luxurious facilities at the Farm dies out once she realizes the underlying meaning of those "luxuries." The Golden Oaks Farm is located behind a hill lined with oak trees. Jane thinks of Jonah, who was swallowed by a whale, when she enters the surrogacy center for the first time: “She stares above her at the wood beam stretching across the ceiling like ribs and thinks of Jonah, the man in the Bible who was swallowed by a whale. But this whale is a five-star one, filled with five-star furniture.” (Ramos,55)

Once hired, the hosts at Golden Oaks are provided with first-class healthcare services, healthy meals, and luxurious living facilities. Coordinators have been appointed to take proper care of the hosts. There are media rooms for them to communicate with family members through video calls, emails, and voicemails. Exercise rooms have been set up for them to work out regularly according to a fixed schedule. There are also facilities for ultrasound scans at the center. However,

all these comforts and luxuries come with a price: they are subjected to intense surveillance and strict control once they start bearing the babies of the elite. They are being utilized for their reproductive capacities, thus leading to the commodification of their bodies for others' benefit. Mae Yu is concerned with hiring Premium hosts for the clients, as they are paid much more than other ordinary hosts. Their physical and mental health is taken care of to ensure the well-being of the fetuses they carry, which are highly valued commodities for the clinic's elite clients. The narrative, by delving deep into the minute aspects of their lives, explores the themes of surveillance, exploitation, commodification of reproduction, and loss of identity and agency under the pretext of pregnancy. Jane faces many issues after being hired as the host. Being away from Amalia affects her a lot. She becomes mentally down when she learns that Amalia is injured. She shouts at Ate for not taking proper care of her daughter. Mae Yu has also canceled Amalia's visit to Jane twice. She canceled the first visit that was scheduled when she learned about Jane's role in Lisa's secret meeting with her boyfriend. The second visit was canceled because of Ate's health condition. Worried about her daughter, she tries to escape from the center with the help of Reagan. Reagan has always been of great help to Jane. Reagan also offers to help Jane by giving her bonus money.

Even though she manages to reach her home, Mae Yu has already traced her with the help of the Panopticon Help Desk and Data Management System of the Farm. As a punishment for the violation of the norms of the Farm, her financial incentive gets canceled. Mae Yu, out of consideration for her, hires her as the surrogate mother of her child. The novel ends after a leap of two years when Jane and Amalia are living with Mae Yu. Jane then becomes the nanny of Mae Yu's daughter.

Ramos uses this narrative to project the themes of class discrimination, the commodification of women, restrictions imposed through surveillance and control on women, and their loss of identity, autonomy, and agency from this surveillance. It also aims to analyze how the personal bonds of these women of financially challenged backgrounds are strained due to this commodification.

Living in Panopticon: Analyzing the observational dynamics at Golden Oaks Farm

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* studied the evolution of the modern penal system. He analyzed the effect of the change in power relations on punishment. The section "The gentle way in punishment" in the second section "Punishment" in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* dealt with the evolution of imprisonment as a general form of punishment. He studied different models of imprisonment, including the Philadelphia model, Walnut Street Prison, where a schedule is organized for the prisoners' activities. He explained the lives of the prisoners as follows:

Life was partitioned, therefore, according to an absolutely strict time-table, under constant supervision; each moment of the day was devoted to a particular type of activity and brought with it its own obligations and prohibitions:(Foucault,124).

The management of the Golden Oaks Farm schedules the hosts' daily activities, which resembles this structure. The infrastructure and the staff members give the hosts an aura that is not much different from a prison. All their activities are under the control of the coordinators. Mae Yu has appointed separate coordinators for the efficient working of the system. Carla and Hanna are the main coordinators. Hanna, the Wellness Coordinator, is in charge of the hosts' daily exercise and workouts in the gym. A daily workout is a scheduled item on their list. The Data Management Team and Panopticon Help Desk have been arranged to monitor the hosts continuously.

The hosts have put their privacy and autonomy at stake for the financial gain they have been offered by the clients and the Golden Oaks authorities. They become the hosts as per their wish, but the resulting control over them in the center makes them question their agency over them and their own decisions. Thus, the objectification of their bodies and reproductive capacities is brought into the spotlight.

Objectification is a result of the exercise of power I refer to as watching. To watch is to construct and therefore objectify. The many theories surrounding the matter of watching, or "the gaze," have been elaborated by, among others, Michel Foucault, Laura Mulvey, Teresa de Lauretis, and John Berger. To have the power to watch means to have power over (a certain) behavior and appearance of the object in the watcher's eye. In the eyes of a watcher, a subject becomes an object,

and watching is, in this sense, similar to a subtle type of surveillance system. (Gregersdotter, 13–14).

Once they start bearing the clients' babies, they have to live in the Golden Oaks surrogacy clinic during the term of pregnancy. At Golden Oaks Farm, they are not addressed by their names. Instead, numbers have been given to each of them, like criminals in prison. This adds to the resemblance of the Farm to the prison. This implies the loss of their individuality once they become the hosts. Their identity is reduced to mere numbers. This is the first step in the commodification of these women.

All the hosts, including Jane, are allowed to meet their families only with the permission of their respective clients. The authorities of the center take all possible steps to make sure that the hosts are not exposed to any kind of stress, as that will affect the well-being of the babies. For this reason, proper care of their family members is initially taken care of so that they won't be stressed thinking about their families.

They can communicate with families via video calls, emails, and voicemails in the Media room. Their conversations with their families via calls are recorded. They have to agree to the policy of their calls being recorded by clicking 9 before entering the required contact number. This surveillance forces them to limit their open interaction with their families. This has a profound impact on the hosts' psyches, as they cannot be themselves during such interactions.

Mae Yu has implemented restrictions and surveillance on their interactions to make sure that they are not going through any kind of stress. In contrast to her intentions, such restrictions and surveillance cause them much stress, as they are not able to call their loved ones as and when they want and talk freely, expressing their emotions. Their emails are also monitored, about which they are aware. The awareness that their calls and emails are being recorded and monitored enforces a sense of self-discipline within them. The Data analysis keeps track of the frequency of the hosts' calls to their family members.

Mobile phones and access to Wi-Fi connections are also restricted at the Farm. They can access the internet only in the Media room, where they can communicate with their families. The restrictions imposed on the usage of mobile phones are a step taken by the authorities to stop any

interaction with others, thereby spreading information about the surrogacy center. Mae Yu even stops Jane from taking a photo at the Farm. "Sorry, no pictures. In fact, we disable cellphone signals and Wi-Fi, so you couldn't send the photo anyway." (Ramos,61). This gives an aura of mystery to the Farm.

Everyone is provided with a badge that serves as their proof of identity. Thus, the Golden Oaks Farm questions the hosts' and staff members' identities. These badges record their entry into different rooms of the surrogacy center. The lab, Examination room, Exercise room, Media room, and Wellband are meant to keep a close watch on the activities of the hosts.

Technological developments play a key role in controlling these hosts. The Wellband serves to monitor all their activities and any irregularities in their heartbeat. It is custom-made for the hosts. It is synced up with the Data Management Team, which tracks all the activities of the hosts. It has monitors, timers, alarm and snooze buttons, panic buttons, GPS locators, calendars, and alerts. Announcements and messages are also circulated via Wellbands. Surveillance cameras are also mounted on the walls, which will monitor their interactions.

The Panopticon Help Desk records the movements of all the hosts by tracking the GPS locators in the Wellbands. This team provides Mae Yu with details regarding their interactions with each other. After knowing Jane's role in Lisa's secret meeting with her boyfriend, Mae Yu cancels Amalia's visit to Jane. When Reagan questions Mae Yu about this, Mae Yu collects the dedicated feed for Reagan with the help of the Panopticon Help Desk's coordinator. From the information provided by the Help Desk, she tries to analyze Reagan's interaction with Jane during the previous days. This shows that technological advancements in surveillance methods are extensively used to control them. Mae Yu constantly monitors their interaction to make sure that they are not plotting anything against her or her surrogacy center. Such control and surveillance put their agency and autonomy in a dilemma. They have lost their individuality as they are not allowed to interact as they want. Instead, they are forced to be mere puppets of Mae Yu, her clients, and the other coordinators. Their walking, talking, breathing, eating, and sleeping are under surveillance.

Jane is being punished by Mae Yu's cancellation of Amalia's visit to the center. This system of punishment in the Farm resembles the practice of punishing criminals in prison for any minor

fault they commit during their imprisonment. This has had a profound impact on the psyche of Jane, who is impatiently waiting for her reunion with her daughter. Jane has left Amalia with Ate, who has promised to look after her in her absence. Jane has been impatiently waiting for the moment when she can embrace her daughter in the warmth of motherhood. But Mae Yu's decision has strained Jane's bond with Amalia. This also questions the agency and autonomy of Jane as a mother. Even though she has all the rights to see her daughter, she is forced to suppress all her feelings according to the rules set by Mae Yu and her clients. When she attempts to escape from the Farm to see her daughter, this Panopticon team sends an alert as soon as it detects that she has moved a considerable distance by tracking the GPS locator in the Wellband. This team is so technologically well-equipped that after Jane's attempted escape, it has scoured all outgoing communications between Jane and Reagan over the past month to spot their conspiracy in Jane's escape. It can also track the hosts' communication with their own families.

In addition to the technological surveillance, the activities of the hosts are strictly scheduled to avoid much interaction between them. The Host log is also used to review their interactions. Mae Yu tries to understand the depth of the bond among the hosts by reviewing the host log. Reagan has always been a guardian Angel for Jane. She also expresses her willingness to give her delivery bonus to Jane, as she understands Jane's financial problems. Mae Yu has always kept an eye on their interactions. She makes sure that Jane has distanced herself from Reagan and Lisa by reviewing the Host log.

Mae Yu uses the Host log after Jane's escape from the Farm to know whether anyone within the facility has helped her with her plan. From the Host log, she understands that Reagan and Jane had spent a considerable time together the day before she escaped, though it has not raised any red flags indicating danger in their conversation.

Medical surveillance is a prominent factor. The hosts' bodies are being subjected to continuous surveillance at Golden Oaks Farm. They have to go through ultrasounds and checkups according to a fixed schedule. The pulse rates are taken as a measure of their activity and stress level. They have to attend exercise classes regularly, lest reports be sent against them. Their diet is also controlled. The coordinators of the Farm make sure that they eat healthy food rather than tasty food that satisfies their cravings. Snack time is scheduled between meals and evenings. The hosts

are allowed to have snacks as long as they stay within the appropriate weight range. Food Log reviews every detail regarding their diet. Fitness classes and prenatal massage centers are also arranged for the hosts.

Restrictions have been imposed even on their internet browsing history. Reagan has been diagnosed with a lump near her collarbone. She browses it on the internet. She gets a list of three diseases that show similar symptoms. She understands that, except for one, the other two mostly affect older patients. She clicks on the link to get more details about the one that affects adolescents and adults, but the screen remains stuck. She is unable to browse further regarding the same.

Reagan is in such a helpless situation that she does not have the right to know about her health condition. This poses a question about her individuality. Others have access to information regarding her health condition, which is denied to her. This also has a significant impact on Reagan's psyche. "...clicks the Hodgkin's lymphoma link again, then a second time. A third. Click, click, click. She opens the Business World website as a test with no problem, but when she retypes Hodgkin's lymphoma in the search engine, the screen freezes." (Ramos,190). They have consciously ignored the possibility of Reagan being affected by the disease because, if she understands it, treatment has to be taken and any medicines during pregnancy may cause negative effects on the baby.

The hosts are not given the freedom to maintain basic information, even about themselves. They are denied this information to satisfy the selfish needs of wealthy clients. The management and the clients are only concerned about the health of the baby the host is carrying, and any kind of stress on the host means danger to the baby. Thus, any health issue that does not affect the baby directly is consciously ignored by Mae Yu and the clients.

Unveiling Capitalism and Class Struggle at Golden Oaks Farm

Ramos's *The Farm* is fertile ground for a Marxist analysis of women's identity being questioned through commodification, class struggle, alienation, false consciousness, ideological control, labour exploitation, consumerism and materialism, and the distinction between class and race. The fetus the host carries is considered to be the most valuable "commodity" in Ramos's dystopian society. Thus, the hosts are the means of producing these valuable commodities and are

thus assigned a value until they are the bearers of the most valued commodities, the babies. This implies that they are perceived as mere vessels for the clients' babies and are controlled.

Marx and Engels precisely studied the socio-cultural conditions of England after industrialization during the nineteenth century. Queries regarding political power and economic conditions were the focal point of their study. They understood 'class' as the key element in all those societies where political power rested with all those individuals who owned the means of production, the factory, or the industry. They argued that there were chances of conflicts between the classes in such societies when the upper class, or the ones who own the means of production, tried to exert their control over the working or lower class. Thus, hegemony, or dominance, became a prominent aspect of Marxist thought.

Class conflict is a result of the discrimination between the upper class, or the bourgeoisie, and the working class, or the labour class. The bourgeoisie owned the means of production, whereas the working class or the proletariat owned only the labour power and their labouring bodies.

The distinct class discrimination prevailing in the Farm can be analyzed through the lens of the bourgeois and proletariat. The wealthy clients can be considered the high-class bourgeoisie, the capitalists who own the means of production. The clients hire these hosts by paying large amounts of money. Thus, they are claiming ownership over these hosts. They are then vested with the authority to control their "means of production," the hosts, during pregnancy. Due to this authority, the hosts are compelled to live at the Golden Oaks Farm. "The dominant classes seek to control the working classes because their profits depend on the efficient management of the working class." (Nayar,122). The clients, like the capitalists, try to reap maximum benefits from their hosts by controlling them. Here, the valuable commodity is the baby. They are "efficiently" managed and controlled to ensure that they are not subjected to any kind of stress, which will affect the quality of the "commodities"—their babies.

The hosts can be considered the proletariat or the working class, who have no right over the means of production or the result of their labor. They are forced to sell their labor power, that is, their ability to reproduce, for a living. They are commodified for their labour power. That is

why they are treated in such a way that they are denied their identity and autonomy, even over themselves.

Thus, this class distinction has become the cause of the objectification of the hosts at the Golden Oaks Farm. They are deprived of their rights to speech, think, and act according to their will. They are forced to stay away from their families to satisfy the requirement that wealthy clients take good care of their physical health. But neither the management of the Golden Oaks Farm, including Mae Yu and the other coordinators nor the clients think of the effect of their compelled “imprisonment” of these hosts. Their actions have a profound impact on the psyches of these hosts.

The class distinction does not solely exist between the clients and the hosts. It exists among the hosts as well. Non-black hosts, particularly from the Philippines, Poland, and America, are in much greater demand as compared to black hosts from the Caribbean. Mae Yu tries to select particularly non-black hosts, as they are more popular among the clients because of their linguistic proficiency and mild, service-oriented personalities. By focusing on this class distinction, Ramos points to the attitude of contemporary society, where one's behaviour and speaking are determined by the colour of the skin and the foreign language that one can use.

“But when paging through the dozens of online Host profiles in Mae's sleek office, Clients...settle on a prettier Filipina with paler skin, or a Polish girl with a fresh-scrubbed face and freckles across her nose, or a slender Trinidadian with glossy eyes and dimples.” (Ramos,41). This implies the extent of commodification. All are not given equal consideration as individuals; rather, they are valued only based on their ability to meet the concepts and requirements of the clients.

The allotment of register numbers to the hosts is yet another aspect of them being reduced to mere commodities or baby-bearing vessels. The surrogate mothers, who are referred to as hosts, are stripped of their identity as soon as they start bearing the child. They are addressed by the register numbers allotted to each of them. This shows that they are considered mere entities by the management of the Farm as well as by the wealthy clients of the Farm.

The continuous surveillance of the hosts' activities is done by the Panopticon Help Desk, Data Analysis, and other technological advancements on the Farm. All the data is collected and

recorded in terms of their numbers, not their names. Any discussions regarding the hosts that Mae Yu makes with the coordinators are done in terms of these numbers.

The Marxist concept of false consciousness is seen in the lives of the hosts. The concept of false consciousness in Marxism explains how the bourgeoisie imposes their ideology upon the proletariat or the working class, thus maintaining power over them and controlling them. This imposed ideology makes the working class accept the exploitations and subjugations to which they are subject without questioning them. The true nature of exploitation is masked, and the working class internalizes the beliefs and value systems of the upper class. Thus, a false consciousness is cultivated in them.

At the Golden Oaks Farm, the hosts are made to believe that there are only benefits to being hired. The management masks the fact of the continuous control and surveillance to which they will be subjected after being hired. They are made to believe that all the controls, rules and regulations, and scheduled activities are for their good. Mae Yu glorifies the Farm while introducing it to newly hired hosts: “It isn’t like we force our Hosts to be hosts. They choose to work for us freely—I’d argue: happily. They’re treated extremely well, and they’re compensated more than adequately for their efforts.” (Ramos,49).

She consciously omits the plights of the ones who are already hired. “A significant number of Hosts decide to carry second and even third babies with us. A few have gone on to work for their Clients after delivery. For someone with drive, Golden Oaks can be a gateway to a better life.” (Ramos,49). Mae Yu omits the fact that many have gone for childcare services and household services after their course of pregnancy. This implies that the promised benefit is not reaped by everyone who is hired to be the host. By inculcating all these promises, she makes the hosts internalize the rules and regulations of the surrogacy center without any questioning, as they are made to believe that the center works for the well-being of the clients.

The system of capitalist society, where the labour power and the labourers are commodified and separated from the products of their labour power, estranges individuals from several aspects of human nature, which is termed alienation in Marxism. This alienation occurs in several ways: as the product of labour, self, and others.

The hosts are alienated from the babies they bear, who are the product of their labour. This defines the alienation of the labourer from the product of their labour. They are also alienated by the process of the labour. They are alienated from themselves. During pregnancy, they lose their identity as individuals and are treated as vessels. This alienation from themselves strips them of their autonomy and agency. They are also alienated from others within and outside the center. They are neither allowed to freely communicate with their family members outside the center nor with the other hosts within the center. This controlled environment thus leads to their alienation from others as well. Ramos illustrates how the individuality and individual needs of the non-privileged are interconnected in society, where only the privileged benefit at the cost of other non-privileged.

Conclusion

The Farm is a critical lens to view contemporary issues regarding bodily autonomy, agency, maternal attachment, and their implications. Joanne Ramos, by criticizing the capitalist attitude of people in such a dystopian setting, explored the complex landscape of class struggle, commodification, false consciousness, and alienation. Society, characterized by distinct layers of classification based on class and race, becomes fertile ground for the demonstration of deeply rooted socio-economic dynamics, as put forth by Marx.

The Marxist and Panoptic analysis of the narrative is an effective instrument for unveiling its ideological undercurrents. Ramos's *The Farm* makes people aware of how the inherent struggles shape human endeavors. The parallels between Marxist elements and the lives of the hosts in Ramos make the readers envision a world beyond the narrow confines of materialism.

Ramos, by dealing with these themes of contemporary relevance, prompts the readers to raise questions regarding the tapestry of the prevailing socio-economic systems. The struggles and problems she portrayed are not confined to the realm of fiction but have their roots in the lives of those who live in societies marked by materialism and dominance.

All women in the narrative grapple with problems and pressures from society throughout their lives. The questioning of identities comes to the forefront not only in the case of the hosts but also in the case of the elite-class people. The clients' identities are not revealed to the hosts, reflecting a sense of mystery. Collecting the hosts' complete data for capitalist needs, digital

surveillance, and the enforcement of self-discipline among the hosts explain the relevance of Foucault's concepts and ideas in the contemporary era.

The class discrimination at the Golden Oaks Farm makes the hosts aware of their situation in society as a whole. This highlights the differences that exist between the wealthy clients, who can afford to buy any services, and the lower class, who are providing such services at the cost of their identity and autonomy. This reflects the effect of class discrimination on the identity, agency, and autonomy of these hosts. The hosts being commodified by the elite shows how inconsiderate they are of the lower class, who lack the "status" and "power" in a materialistic society. They are valued as long as their babies are part of them.

The false consciousness imparted to them is a kind of manipulation. They are becoming victims of such manipulation, at the cost of their individuality. This manipulation has led to the controlled thoughts of the hosts. They internalize the policies of the Farm and are made to think as per their control.

The pervasive surveillance exerted on the hosts has a profound impact on their identity, agency, autonomy, and psyche. They have a desire to live a better life but try to acquire it at the cost of their freedom. They are made to live away from their families. Their prior experience of bearing a baby and giving birth is added to their credit, counting it as proof of their capability to endure the pain and problems of pregnancy. But no one is concerned about the emotional trauma to which they are subjected, being compelled to stay away from their children. Thus, this control has an impact on the psyches of these hosts.

The surveillance extended over their calls, messages, and emails to their family members makes them stressed, as they are not allowed to relieve the tensions within their minds. The surveillance of the interactions within the center, using the Host log, is meant to limit attachment among the hosts. This shows the capitalist attitude of the management. They are not giving value to the emotional attachment that the hosts cultivate with anyone. This also shows the extent to which they are being commodified. They are perceived as mere vessels who are not supposed to have any kind of connection with others.

Thus, Marxism and Panopticism go hand in hand in the exploration of the hosts' commodification and control under the pretext of surrogacy. Ramos, by using the dystopian setup

of a surrogacy clinic, emphasizes the extent of manipulation to which women are subjected in different scenarios in the contemporary world. The Marxist aspects of commodification, class struggle, and false consciousness, as well as the panoptic aspects of surveillance and control, have resulted in the loss of the hosts' identity and autonomy in society.

Further exploration of the aspects of race, gender, postcolonial theory, and psychoanalysis will help to understand the novel's varying dimensions. Thus, along with the Panoptic and Marxist analysis, it opens up new avenues for socio-literary explorations and reinforces the fact that literature is a reflection of society.

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