

The Oppression of Women in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*

Shahneas M I

(20PEN033)

Thesis Submitted to

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education

for Women, Coimbatore-641043

In a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Master's Degree in English

May 2022

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled as **The Oppression of Women in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale** submitted by me for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A) is the record of work carried out by **SHAHNEAS M.I** during the period from **JANUARY 2022 – MAY2022** under the guidance **Dr. Mrs. D. Pearline Priscilla MA., M.Sc. Applied Psy., M.Phil., PhD**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in the University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE FROM THE SUPERVISOR

I certify that the dissertation entitled as **The Oppression of Women in Margaret Atwood's Handmaid's Tale** submitted for the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A)** is the record of work carried out by **SHAHNEAS M.I** during the period from **JANUARY 2022 – MAY2022** under my guidance **Dr. Mrs. D. Pearline Priscilla MA., M.Sc. Applied Psy., M.Phil., PhD** and supervision and that this work has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in the University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

Signature of the

Head of the Department

Signature of the

Supervisor with Designation

ACKNOWLEDMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher thanks the Lord Almighty for the abundant blessings showered on her during the study period.

The researcher expresses her gratitude to Prof. S.P. Thyagarajan, revered Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, for all the good wishes towards the successful completion of the study.

The researcher would like to acknowledge her heartfelt thanks to Dr. V. Bharathi Harishankar, Vice Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, for her constant motivation and encouragement towards academic performance.

The researcher would like to thank, Dr. S. Kowsalya, Registrar, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, for extending full support for the successful completion of the study.

The researcher would like to express her gratitude to Dr. K.T. Geetha, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, for her encouragement throughout the study.

The researcher would like to express her gratitude to Dr. S. Raja, Director, Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, for his constant support for the completion of the study.

The researcher would like to express her gratitude to Dr. S. Devashanthi, Assistant Professor and Head in charge, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore for her help in conduct of the study.

The researcher feels highly elated in expressing her glowing sense of gratitude to her guide Dr. Mrs. D. Pearline Priscilla, M.A., M.Sc. Applied Ps., M.Phil., PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, for her meticulous guidance, deep concern, constructive suggestions, continued motivation, and sincere help and for her constant support to complete the study.

The researcher extends her enthusiastic thanks to Dr. S. Ananthi Balamurugan, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore for her support.

The researcher takes this opportunity to extend her thanks to all the Staff members, Department of English for their support.

TABLE OF CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS	TITLE	PAGE NO.
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	ATWOOD'S FEMINISM IMPACT ON THE HANDMAID'S TALE	11
III	OPPRESSION IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE HANDMAID'S TALE	21
III	CONCLUSION	44
IV	SITATION	50

NOTES

In the text, abbreviation is used for the name of the primary text in the parenthetical references which are as follows:

- *THEHANMAID'STALE* *THT*

References to the pages of the secondary sources are also given parenthetically.

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, women have constantly been vanquished to prejudice and an inferior status to men. Due to sexist testaments of men believing that women are not suitable of controlling their own lives, women have constantly been reduced to the status of property. This generality is prominent in multitudinous pieces of literature to demonstrate the struggles women have to go through in a generally, virile structured world. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood explores how the structure of a dystopian society, the Republic of Gilead, that severely oppresses women relies on womanish characters' internalized misogyny. The author interrogates how both men and women play part into the endurance of a atrocious cycle. By exploring the range of ways women contribute to the perpetuation of Gilead, Atwood's fictional dystopia, Atwood asserts that women contribute to their own oppression. Internalized oppression transforms women into tools for perpetuating their own suffering, as the negative testaments come an ingrained part of their worldview. This transformation results in the creation of three major places the bystander, the abettor, and the facilitator. Addressing the problem of internal oppression, the disquisition paper outlines the ruinous cerebral and indeed physical goods of living with internalized oppression. More importantly, explains how internalized oppression spreads to impact an entiresociety.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

“Literature is not only a mirror, but also a map, a geography of the mind.” – Margaret Atwood. Canadian literature is a literary output arising out of a confluence of the two main streams in the English language-British and French. National character is formed based on national literature. This literature is not something that records the country’s thought process, but it is the outcome of its intellectual life, where it forms the source of national unity and national energy.

“Canada has had no heroic issues, no gigantic wars or adventurous events” (R.K. Dhawan, 45). Canadian writing began with the usual early literature of exploring pioneer settlements, collections of folk tales and poems on Canadian landscapes, stories of immigrant life, local colour sketches and historical romances. The earliest growth of Canadian literature can be traced to oral voices of the original people, the native tribes spread out in the temperate regions. Canada, as a prominent country, has gained importance from the beginning of the 20th century. In Canada, a former British colony, the vast prairies, the freezing winter and the fierce summer have largely inspired the writers to come up with different types of literatures.

Ever since the confederation of the colonies by the British in 1867, critics and commentators have defined and redefined Canada’s self-image by forming English Canadian Literature to fit the country’s immediate political and social ideologies. Carole Gerson is of the opinion that “During Post-Confederation era the English Canadian literary scene was dominated by the Canadian authors who were shaped and influenced by the English romantics” (48).

Canadian literature which was initially cast as a monolithic Anglo-centric and generally dominated by poetry and novel is now being reconstructed as a multi-cultural and multi-generic one. Like other colonial literature, Canadian literature has encountered several obstacles in its growth. Tandon and Chandra quote Northrop Frye who observes that Canadians have an identity crisis with a difference for they are perplexed by the essential question “Who am I?” than “Where is here?” (1) The literature of Canada was slow to develop; it started assuming significance only in the early 20th century.

Canada has witnessed evolution of two national cultures, French and English, developing autonomously and simultaneously. Canadian literature is written in more than one language, and it reflects a regionally diverse and multi-cultural society. It is no doubt Canadian literature is a mosaic and a complete world in microcosm, because it has various social and religious differences. The dual nature of Canadian literature and immigration of people belonging to many diverse countries and cultures is partially responsible for this situation.

Canada's literature is written both in English and French and it expresses three main aspects of Canadian experience. Writers of Canadian literature frequently lay emphasis on the effect of climate and geography on the life and work of their people. Secondly, frontier life is part of Canada's experience that is frequently used in its literature, and thirdly Canadian writers are often affected by the position of Canada in the world. French writers have a feeling that they are influenced by their English rivals. As a result of this they are determined to save their own culture and creed at all costs. But it should be remembered that even the English people go through the same state of mind where they think that they are constantly influenced by the people of United States. A number of poems and other literary works show how the Canadian writers feel about such problems.

One of the notable characteristics of the recent Canadian fiction is the emergence of women writers who depict the newfound freedom of women in their writings. They form a part of the female literary tradition which aims at bringing out "The new woman" in fiction. Canadian fiction of great number was written in the 20th century, and it is outstanding to note that the number of women writers is more when compared with the male writers of Canada. The women writers of Canada kept in mind the global issues of women and wrote about woman's position and her predicaments and power. They rightly took up the problems of women as their major theme.

Although these sweeping changes have promoted the status of woman, her condition has not improved much. Woman and her images are still moulded, reshaped and re-oriented by man and for man. It

is the awareness of her condition and the treatment meted out to her that made women writers take up the question of female identity in a male dominated society. The woman's role as a writer has helped in breaking the cocoons of subordination and emerging with the knowledge of the female power.

The status of women in a country is closely linked to its socio-economic development. The status of Canadian women was not very different from that of the natives until the early 20th century. They were disadvantaged both economically and legally and were under male control. They were not allowed to keep their own earnings. The educational opportunities were also limited. The dominant theme of contemporary women's fiction in Canada is the reconstruction of a new history and a private space as a way of grappling with the patriarchal and hence "political" exile of women from the national.

The women's movement has provided many of these novelists with the courage and motivation to break out of traditional patriarchal forms to depict how women have been abused, exploited and oppressed. Their novels move towards the discovery of the self and women's encounter with the world. They are concerned with the exploitation and survival and tend to project the image of a woman who is confident, intelligent and assertive.

In their works, Canadian feminists try and awareness at the 'new lady' who's self-aware, impartial and seeks to adapt an identification of her personal. Thus, the goal of lady writing in Canada is to result in amazing modifications within the lives of Canadian ladies and society. They need gender equality in Canadian society. They are enhancing ladies' lifestyles-possibilities and feature the feel that ladies can contribute to the constructing of a main nonviolent worrying world. Sinclair Ross, Ethel Wilson, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Clarke, Mordecai Richler, Alice Munro, M.G. Vassanji, Marian Engel, Gabrielle Roy and Anne Herbert are several the important fiction writers who of their paintings painting the multi-culturalism and the multi-ethnicity of Canada.

Margaret Atwood is a prolific and flexible writer. Her literary profession started in 1961 with the e-book of her first poetry collection, *Double Persephone*, and has grown to encompass 16 poetry collections,

twelve novels, 8 quick fiction collections, six kid's books, and 5 important non-fiction works. Atwood has additionally edited six literary anthologies including, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, 1972, her maximum high-quality anthology, which has been credited with renewing hobby in Canadian literature.

In addition to this normal diversity, Atwood's paintings give thematic diversity: Canadian countrywide identification, members of the family among Canada and the United States, members of the family among Canada and Europe, the Canadian wilderness, environmental issues, biotechnology, human rights issues, and feminist issues, an outstanding topic at some stage in her profession. Atwood's representations of gender discover the social myths defining femininity, representations of ladies' our bodies in art, the social and financial exploitation of ladies, in addition to ladies' members of the family with every different and withguys.

Atwood characterizes her novels withinside the following way: "the primary trio [*The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing*, and *Lady Oracle*] has to do with ladies and guys, closing trio [*The Handmaid's Tale*, *Cat's Eye*, and *Robber Bride*] with ladies and ladies, after which [one] in among [*Life Before Man*] ha[s] to do with both: [...] pointing toward *Cat's Eye* and *Robber Bride* and one pointing toward *Handmaid's Tale* and *Bodily Harm*" (*Waltzing Again* 219). Atwood's first 5 novels show the variety and complexity of her representations of sexual strength politics and offer a stable basis for know-how the evolution of her feminist sympathies and the way they tell *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In *The Edible Woman* (1969), Atwood examines the subject matters of rejection of gender roles, and lack of identification. Marian McAlpin, the protagonist, grapples with self-awareness withinside the face of the constrained alternatives to be had to her as a younger lady withinside the 1960s. She ought to first publish to her parents' expectancies after which to her fiancé's plans. Marian fears that during marriage she can be able to discover herself absolutely beaten with the aid of using her husband's robust personality, always submerging her goals in his personal.

She bakes a lady-formed cake (an "fit to be eaten lady") and gives it to her fiancé, Peter. Natalie Palumbo believes Marian "hopes to fend off her metaphorical intake with the aid of using Peter and remedy her personal ambivalence to marriage" (75). This exploration of the shortcomings of marriage as historically expected re-emerges as a topic in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In *Surfacing* (1972), Atwood returns to the topic of identification, this time exploring countrywide in addition to gendered identification. This narrative is filtered via the unnamed girl protagonist's deteriorating mind, wherein reality, memory, fairy tales, and mythology are fused. The protagonist perceives herself as absolutely remoted and disconnected from humans round her. At the non-public level, she feels alienated from people with whom she is in detail concerned, her lover and her satisfactory girlfriend. At the public level, she feels marginalized and politically dispossessed.

Part of her alienation and dispossession stem from a loss of identification, which Atwood expresses with the aid of using leaving her unnamed. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood once more examines the significance of names, in particular the names of girl characters. As Natalie Cooke observes, while in comparison to Marian McAlpin, the unnamed protagonist of *Surfacing* may "discover herself in a far more potent function as a lady of the 1970s" (68). However, the motion for ladies' liberation has now no longer freed her from male imposed stress to marry, nor has it absolved her of the guilt she feels because of her abortion.

In *Lady Oracle* (1976) Atwood explores duality and multiplicity as features of identification. The protagonist Joan Foster constructs a sequence of identities. This is her mechanism to stable love and acceptance, at the same time as fending off the outcomes of her movements. Foster fails to combine those identities and spends her lifestyles at the run, hiding her actual sports from the guys she is concerned with. Foster is inclined to level her personal loss of life to keep this fragmentation, thereby escaping obligation for her movements and failed relationships. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, we once more see the girl protagonist's war to reconcile conflicting identities: her socially proscribed identification and her genuine identification.

In *Life Before Man* (1979), Atwood explores gestures of resistance and survival on the man or woman level. Carol Ann Howells asserts that those gestures illustrate the "ethical and social evolution of human beings" (67). The novel specializes in home relationships and the way occasions grow to be catalysts for alternate with the aid of using converting the relationships themselves in addition to the humans in the relationships. Natalie Palumbo believes this transformation is genuinely evolution, expressed because the characters cease "to cover in complex myth worlds [...] or in obsessive blaming of the past"(79).

In her 5th novel, *Bodily Harm* (1981), Atwood "scrutinizes social myths of femininity" from the factor of view of a lady whose frame has been "broken with the aid of using most cancers and a mastectomy" (Howells 80). Rennie, the protagonist, struggles to simply accept her frame's betrayal, "the scar on her breast splits open like a diseased fruit and something [...] crawls out" (Atwood 60). As Carol Ann Howells observes, "Rennie's disgust at her personal broken frame unavoidably influences her account of her relationships with guys" (85). The sordid info of those relationships' awareness the narrative on sexual strength politics. Thus, "Rennie is compelled to peer how the non-public and political can't be separated" (Howells80).

The Handmaid's Tale, Atwood's 6th novel, keeps her explorations of gender and identification in addition to home politics. Since its e-book in 1986, *The Handmaid's Tale* has been the challenge of excessive crucial dialog. A dystopian survival textual content set on the quilt of the 20th century at the cusp of attaining equality among the sexes, *The Handmaid's Tale* portrays the dissolution of the United States, ensuing in what Christopher Jones rightly identifies as a "reinvigorated hatred of girls and the explosive boom of religious (patriarchal) fundamentalism" (4).

This hatred is found out withinside the colonizing pressure of the Republic of Gilead, a puritanical, reactionary, militaristic regime. Jones characterizes this cultural shift succinctly; "on this future, guys have had it with uppity girls and 'positioned them again of their place'" (3). A civil conflict is fought so that you can make girls "malleable to guys' desires [...]. They must post to their socially decided roles or be visible as

'demons'" (Goldblatt 3). These regressive social roles are decided through a caste gadget defining requirements for behavior, get dressed, and social duties, thereby disposing of unwanted cultural developments and beliefs, at the same time as controlling an apprehensive and probably rebellious populace.

Understandably, maximum grievance makes a specialty of the "hyper-patriarchy" of Gilead (Jones 3). For example, David Coad's "Hymens, Lips, and Masks: The Veil in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*," examines how the veil, worn through all girls in Gilead, features because the essential device of subjugation, one detail of the politics of get dressed withinside the novel. Debra Raske, in her article, "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: False Borders and Subtle Subversions," explores the connection among language and thought, figuring out 3 language structures gift withinside the novel: the Gilead gadget, the narrator's gadget, and the instructional rhetoric of the unconventional final section. Raske examines those language structures as strategies of control, and in particular, strategies of controlling girls. While each Coad's and Raske's observations are vital for a whole know-how of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the authentic awareness of Atwood's novel lies elsewhere.

A second crucial awareness has been the popular elements of *The Handmaid's Tale*, which can be examine withinside the context of a patriarchal order. In "Utopias of/f Language in Contemporary Feminist Literary Dystopias," Lindley Cavalcanti discusses the duality of language inside this style. Cavalcanti keeps that language has freeing capacity whilst wielded through the girl characters opposing the linguistic enforcement of the masculine electricity structure.

This is an exciting and vital idea; however, Cavalcanti fails to discover how girls use rhetoric to put into effect oppression of different girls. Margaret Daniels and Heather Bowen study 4 dystopic novels from a feminist angle in "Feminist Implications of Anti-Leisure in Dystopian Fiction." Daniels and Bowen hold that girls are denied get right of entry to amusement in those societies via the devaluation or absence of private amusement spaces. They hint this phenomenon in *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Brave New World*, *Player Piano*, and 1984.

Daniels and Bowen have astutely recognized a key approach of the patriarchal oppression in Gilead, even though they do not study how girls deny different girls get right of entry to amusement. Other examples consist of Lionel Shriver's "Population in Literature" and Stephanie Barber Hammer's "The World as It Will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in *The Handmaid's Tale*." Shriver makes a specialty of the remedy of populace troubles in present day fiction, suggesting 3 classes of representation: worry of decline, worry of excess, and worry of populace professionals. It is beneficial to recognize the idea of populace, especially because it informs the status quo of mothering practices inside Gilead.

According to Hammer, Atwood has damaged into the previously male-ruled style of satire and received crucial and monetary success. Hammer asserts that the issues and motifs of the unconventional firmly embed it within the satirical tradition. Atwood selected satire because the best trope for critiquing the practices of Second- Wave Feminism.

A third crucial awareness has been feminism. Evelyn Keller Fox examines the ancient dating among technological know-how and feminism. Keller is especially inquisitive about the impact feminist scholarship has had in this dating. While her article "Feminism, Science, and Postmodernism" is greater of a preferred dialogue of technological know-how and gender, Keller touches particularly on how replica is managed in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Understanding this concept is prime to the impact of Science Fiction and speculative fiction at the introduction of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Shirley Neuman's "'Just a Backlash': Margaret Atwood, Feminism, and *The Handmaid's Tale*" discusses an interview she carried out with Atwood after the operatic variation of *The Handmaid's Tale*. The declare of this study is that language, "truth" and actions, within the body of discourse, are used as a manner of oppressing girls in each Gilead and the society "before". My goal is to expose this through making use of theories of discourse and language collectively with feminist principle on *The Handmaid's Tale*.

It will continue with theories of discourse through Michel Foucault, so that you can finish how electricity, within the shape of oppression, works and the way the phrases language, "truth" and

movement are used to make that feasible in *The Handmaid's Tale*. I will display in what methods the Gilead regime is going approximately controlling girls and the way Offred's flashbacks screen the underlying values of the society "before". In addition, I will display how they are trying to justify their drastic measures to girls, after which finally, I will screen the demanding outcomes of Gilead discourse.

CHAPTER II

Atwood's Feminism Impact on *The Handmaid's Tale*

To apprehend how *The Handmaid's Tale* features as a reaction to Second-Wave Feminism, it's miles crucial to talk about that motion's evolution from its early nineteenth-century roots thru the 1970s. We shall see that Margaret Atwood aligns herself greater with Liberal Feminism, which became stimulated through First-Wave Feminism, than with the Second Wave.

The political and ideological foundations of Second-Wave Feminism attain returned to the 1800s, a duration noted, as Judith Hole and Ellen Levine look at of them examine *The Rebirth of Feminism*, for its "geographic expansion, business development, boom of social reform movements, and a standard highbrow ferment with a philosophical emphasis on man or woman freedom, the 'rights of man' and accepted education" (2). Early advocates for girl's rights targeted on suffrage due to the fact disenfranchisement became the maximum incredible reliable exclusion of girls. They believed that securing girl's proper to vote might convey social reputation of girl's cost which might result in the ethical and social development of the wholepopulation.

In the route of this political battle, feminist pioneers challenged regular soral assumptions. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft tried to dispel the social fantasy concerning girl's inherent sentimentality in her 1792 tract, "A Vindication of the Rights of Women." In "The Subjection of Women" (1869) John Stuart Mill argued in opposition to the Victorian theories of organic determinism. And, in her 1873 speech "On Women's Right to Vote," Susan B. Anthony wondered the validity of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The efforts of those 3 distinguished feminist pioneers illustrate the humanist challenge that stimulated the battle for the equality of girls. In 1895 the phrase feminism became identified because the label of the motion for the political and financial equality of the sexes. First-Wave Feminism

culminated with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, and then the girl's motion became dormant for 40 years (Hole and Levine 14).

In those 40 years—from 1920, to the re-emergence of the motion withinside the 1960s—girl's problems and worries have been not often taken into consideration to have any large social that means or significance. Reflecting in this lull, Mordecai Jane Pollock, a former board member of the National Organization for Women (NOW), explains that a female became "predicted to go into right into a monogamous marriage, stay in a nuclear—frequently emotionally isolated—family, and restrict her sports to home worries, volunteer work, and social hobbies, that [were], withinside the very last analysis, seriously circumscribed" (16).

And, as Hole and Levine factor out, "any discontent [women] felt became believed to have resulted from man or woman maladjustments" (17). However, the re-emergence of the girl's motion fostered a knowledge that their wonderful loss of possibilities—financial, legal, and social—have been in fact, consistent with Pollock, features of a "psychologically enforced cultural fantasy, a fixed of assumptions and values regarding girls that has been transmitted consciously and unconsciously for millennia" (16). Therefore, it has become clear to Second-Wave Feminists that the deep-seated mental roots of inequality needed to be addressed to influence change, and so one can do so, a brand-new method needed to be adopted.

Whereas First-Wave Feminism targeted on formally mandated de jure inequalities, maximum considerably disenfranchisement, Second-Wave Feminism considered unofficial de facto inequalities, together with discrimination and oppression, as similarly crucial. Proponents of Second-Wave Feminism considered the private because the political and have been decided to assist girls apprehend factors in their private lives as deeply politicized, and reflective of a sexist shape of power.

In her article "Changing the Role of Women," Pollock explains that one manner to attain this purpose became to show that "the sexist mythology exists since the dating among male and lady is a political one, a dating of superordinate to subordinate—and a dating that obtains withinside the maximum intimate and

private in addition to the maximum huge and public of our sports" (18). Acknowledging the political measurement of girl's personal oppression became the genesis of the brand-new girl's motion.

Second-Wave Feminism, additionally referred to as the Women's Liberation Movement, started out as what might later be referred to as Liberal or Moderate Feminism. Championed through figures together with Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, Liberal Feminism tried to reform or suitable present political systems to increase girl's hobbies alongside a civil rights model. The booklet of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 recommended girls to confess and renowned the import in their emotions of private dissatisfaction, urging them to are trying to find out its social sources.

This signaled a crucial shift withinside the cultural belief of girls, for the point of interest became shifted from "man or woman maladjustments" to the advocated social order. Like their predecessors, Liberal Feminists argued that girls deserve the equal privileges, protections, pay and possibilities as men. As activist Birgitta Linner astutely noted in 1972, despite the enlightened laws enacted early in the century to improve the status of women and create equality in marriage, those in control of the institutions of society—the politicians and many of the religious leaders—were successful in maintaining the traditional family role system and the public's adherence to it. It was not until the 1960s that real debate, research, and reform exploded. (55)

Prior to the "explosion" Linner refers to, efforts to elevate cognizance have been frequently centered at the political arena. Though the efforts of Liberal Feminists and the reception of *The Feminine Mystique* had a profound effect at the way of life of the United States (Fox 1), the motion became now no longer without its critics. The most important complaint of Liberal Feminism became that it provided itself because the ladies' motion, regardless of its apparent recognition at the malaise of white middle-magnificence suburban ladies. In brief, Liberal Feminism disregarded working-magnificence and minority ladies, who, angered with the aid of using similarly disenfranchisement, channeled their dissatisfaction into the formation of subgroups to similarly their precise reasons and agendas.

Of those subgroups, the maximum pertinent to this discussion, to recognize Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, are: Cultural Feminism, Separatism, Materialist Feminism, and Radical Feminism. Each of those sub-businesses followed and superior a distinct angle withinside the large cultural debate on ladies' issues, and technique Feminist pupil Kristin Rowe-Finkbine rightly characterizes as "consultant of the rifts of the time" (27).

Therefore, rather than collaborating collaboratively as a part of the identical ordinary motion, Second-Wave Feminists regularly took separate, from time to time parallel, regularly conflicting, tracks. The result became that every sub-institution became competing for authority and recognition, undermining ladies' solidarity. Because of this, Atwood, it might appear, became attracted to none of those Feminisms.

For Atwood, who has been a politically lively suggest of human rights because the early 1960s, Cultural Feminism lacked an overt political recognition or agenda. This sub-institution became involved alternatively with convalescing cultural and creative expressions and traditions that had been uniquely woman. Cultural Feminists sought to transport far from representing male-ruled establishments and values in prefer of raising ladies' stories and values. Professor Warren Hedges believes their critical catch 22 situation became "a way to create a 'gynocentric' way of life without drawing on a belief of 'universal' sisterhood which can exclude a few ladies" (1). This gynocentric way of life relies on the belief that ladies are inherently kinder and gentler than guys. Atwood criticizes this assumption in *The Handmaid's Tale*, wherein we see a lady's way of life maintained through ladies' cruelty in the direction of eachother.

Separatism additionally fell brief in Atwood's view, for it argued that the manner ladies can high-quality take care of and/or assist each other and fight patriarchy is thru the advent of woman-best areas and relationships. These areas manifested themselves withinside the shape of all-woman banks, businesses, and social agencies, and the like. However, the advent of those woman-best areas might be complex in that ladies had been deciding on simply to split themselves from society rather than trying to train guys and result in a few social reforms. Therefore, Separatism fails to provide a possible opportunity to the prevailing gadget,

which, in line with Pollock, trains guys "to equate electricity with electricity over others, to view aggression as a legitimate way of problem-solving" (16, emphasis author's) for that reason making sure the continuance of patriarchal structures for destiny generations.

Hole and Levine signify the Separatists as ladies who "took a pro-lady anti-brainwashing position," explaining that "those ladies rejected the conventional reasons for woman conduct, agreeing with different feminists that ladies' conduct isn't the result of inherent mental characteristics" (139). Furthermore, as Hole and Levine factor out, Separatists believed ladies' moves had been the result of "continual, day by day stress from guys" (140). By getting rid of themselves from the field of male influence, expectation, and judgment, ladies may want to freely specific their real femininity and woman identity.

Another ability downfall of Separatism became its tendency to inspire resentment among the sexes. The *Handmaid's Tale* incorporates suggestions of Atwood's complaint of Separatism. Offred's mother, a committed Second-Wave Feminist comments: "I do not need a person around, what use are they besides for ten seconds' really well worth of 1/2 of babies. A guy is only a lady's method for making different ladies" (Atwood 121). This marked disdain for the male intercourse simply reversed the extant social attitudes, without providing answers to the difficulty of gender inequalities.

Materialist Feminism had a robust basis in magnificence-consciousness. This department might also additionally had been to start with attractive to Atwood due to her very own liberal political leanings. However, Atwood in the long run rejected the Materialist Feminist technique. Members of this department of feminism had been deeply worried with and devoted to left-wing politics, and antagonistic capitalism in prefer of socialism. They believed that the route to freedom and equality lay withinside the abolition of the defective monetary gadget whose department of exertions always privileged guys over ladies, thereby relegating ladies to positions of inferiority. Hole and Levine issue out that for Materialist Feminists, "ladies'

troubles' [were viewed] as part of the larger warfare for socialist change" (108). Often this meant that ladies' troubles were submerged in the pressure for social, economic, and political revolution.

Radical Feminism, the branch of Second-Wave Feminism Atwood placed most alarming, normally focused on what extraordinary Feminist theorist bell hooks calls "the annihilation of sex roles" (143). Radical Feminists drew on Cultural Feminism and Separatism and advocated, as Hedges elements out, "now no longer whatever an awful lot much less than an entire revolution in terms of gendered oppression and resistance on all fronts, public and private" (2-3). Radical Feminists were concerned with the consequences and outcomes of ladies' oppression beneath the patriarchal social order. Radical Feminists sought to create cognizance of the disparate goals of ladies via the identification and deeper politicization of "ladies' troubles," more specifically, reproductive rights, pornography legislation, sexuality, and equality in relationships. As hooks observes in *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*,

Fundamentally, they argued that all men are the enemies of all women and proposed as solutions to this problem a Utopian woman nation, separatist communities, and even the subjugation or extermination of all men. Their anger may have been a catalyst for individual liberatory resistance and change. It may have encouraged bonding with other women to raise consciousness. It did not strengthen public understanding of the significance of authentic feminist movement. (34-35, emphasis author's) hooks believes this adversarial approach reignited "the war between the sexes" (38).

Hole and Levine keep that as early as 1968 it has become glaring that "the brand-new ladies' motion became now no longer going to restriction itself to statements of ideas or conventional moves of political protest. Targets of what radical ladies considered 'sexism' have been everywhere, and vulnerable to attack" (124). Atwood, who studied in America all through the past due 1960s, appeared baffled with the aid of using this hostile approach. As she commented in a 1978 interview, "I've usually wondered [...] accomplish that

many ladies think about themselves as menaced on all sides, and in their husbands as capacity murderers?" (Waltzing Again 44).

Atwood might trust hooks that this worry ought to probably cause a tremendous false impression of the targets of the Women's Liberation Movement. It might seem, then, that Atwood became against the idea of the struggle fare among the sexes. While she supported social equality for ladies, she did now no longer envision hostile behaviors or strategies because the method to obtain this. Atwood's extensive humanist issues align her greater with the perspectives of First Wave and Moderate Feminists and make her skeptical and cautious of the greater radical expressions of Second-Wave Feminism. For Atwood Second-Wave Feminism contained 3 imperativedilemmas.

The first fashion of Second-Wave Feminism that bothered Atwood became the dearth of girl harmony. Though all Second-Wave Feminists labored to quit de facto inequalities and therefore, regularly pursued complementary purposes, they have been maximum often at odds with one another. Instead of embracing the myriad problems confronting ladies throughout socio-financial lines, Second-Wave Feminists tended to improve an unmarried agenda, issue, or motive on the fee of all others. This led to resentment and mistrust in addition to self-segregation.

In *The Handmaid's Tale* Atwood depicts this disunity typically thru Gilead's caste gadget wherein ladies are assigned a selected function and concomitant get dressed and duties, without a wish of ever breaking unfastened of those roles besides thru prostitution, exile, or death. The Gilead takeover may be study as stemming, in part, from ladies' loss of harmony in pre-Gilead way of life and society. The social shape of Gilead reinforces and heightens those feelings, maximum disturbingly, as we will look at withinside the fourth chapter, thru the matriarchal law and enforcement of Gilead's patriarchy.

The 2nd trouble Second-Wave Feminism posed for Atwood became the converting definition of the word "female," because of the super social upheaval created with the aid of using the re-emergence of the

female's motion within the 1960s. Because the meaning of the word "female" became being redefined, there has been a super deal of lack of confidence approximately ladies' roles in society. Thanks, in part, to the efforts of Betty Friedan, who described the "hassle without a name," many ladies wakened to the realities of the oppression surrounding them. With this attention they became a crucial eye on almost each phase of society and that they discovered expressions of sexism permeating their way of life. Suddenly conventional social expectancies have been stifling. Women discovered themselves stuck in limbo, sure in their dissatisfaction with the socially circumscribed roles however regularly not able to assume possible alternatives.

In her book *Look at Margaret Atwood: A Critical Companion* Carol Ann Howells explains how she sees this warfare pondered in Atwood's work: "the best assignment for a female creator is the way to function herself in reaction to converting cultural definitions of 'female' and its 'constellations' like 'feminine' and 'feminist'" (8). When requested with the aid of using Jo Brans in a 1982 interview if she became "a feminist creator" Atwood replied, "Feminist is now one of the all-motive words. It simply can suggest something from folks who suppose guys must be driven off cliffs to folks who suppose it is O.K. for ladies to study and write.

All the ones may be known as feminist positions" (Conversations 140). Because of the extensive scope of the term "feminist," Atwood is ambivalent approximately being classified as a feminist creator and defines herself alternatively as someone involved with human dignity, characterizing her "feminism" as "human equality and freedom of choice" (Waltzing Again 81). She does accept as true with in social equality of ladies however does now no longer join among the strategies and attitudes of Second-Wave Feminists.

Therefore, she is hesitant to be appeared as their champion. Indeed, she asserts that her "characters aren't function models" nor does she "try and remedy the troubles of the living [or] deal out the answers" (Waltzing Again 33). Rather, her function is greater reflective. Instead of dealing out the answers, Atwood poses questions and explores the opportunities of social movements.

The situation of Second-Wave Feminism became the hostile mindset in the direction of guys followed with the aid of using many segments of the Women's Liberation Movement. This mindset discovered quite a

few expressions starting from the 1968 Miss America festival protest, to "take again the nighttime marches," to a few ladies' refusal to interact with guys in any capacity. This inherently hostile mindset regularly fostered a response in a few guys Atwood characterizes as, "Here is that this tremendously effective and malevolent girl, and she or he is going to get" (Waltzing Again 19). This sentiment may be study as a mirrored image of the social milieu that might deliver upward thrust to an anti-feministbacklash.

Critics of Radical Feminism from the political left, inclusive of Materialist Feminists, strongly disagree with the Radical Feminist function that the oppression of ladies is essential to all different varieties of oppression. These critics keep those problems of race and of sophistication are as a minimum as critical as problems approximately gender. Liberal Feminists, which consist of Margaret Atwood, regularly see exactly the radicalism of Radical Feminism as probably undermining the profits of the ladies' motion with polarizing rhetoric that invitations backlash and contend that they overemphasize sexual politics on the fee of political reform. *The Handmaid's Tale* is Atwood's exploration of those imperative dilemmas of Radical Feminism, which gives the catalyst for the backlash situation expected with the aid of using Atwood in her advent of the dystopian society of Gilead.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

Oppression in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a concept frightening novel approximately the domination and governing of ladies with the aid of using men. It provides a dystopia in which freedom for ladies is constrained due to the brand-new Christian authorities' excessive policies. This new society, The Republic of Gilead, is defined with the aid of using a girl referred to as Offred. She is so referred to as Handmaid, a type of breeding device for the republic. The ideology and thoughts of this Christian authorities are offered to us via Offred's first-individual narrative. Flashbacks additionally offer a photograph of the society "earlier than" Gilead.

Gilead is defined with the aid of using Offred in an assorted manner. She depicts Gilead withinside the framework of the discourse however she additionally describes it in an important manner with ironic undertones. Furthermore, in her flashbacks, she depicts the society "earlier than" the revolution, earlier than the introduction of Gilead, that is vital if one is to apprehend why Gilead exists. A critical a part of the show of those specific societies is the manner wherein Offred highlights gender inequalities and energy structures. This is maximum obtrusive in Offred's description of Gilead and greater diffused withinside the description of the society "earlier than". Although Offred apparently describes the latter as better, the sort of language she makes use of while describing her former existence suggests that isn't always the case.

The declare of this study is that language, "truth" and actions, withinside the body of discourse, are used as method of oppressing ladies in each Gilead and the society "earlier than". My purpose is to reveal this with the aid of using making use of theories of discourse and language collectively with feminist idea on *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Gilead Discourse:

The regime in Gilead makes use of essential gadgets to manipulate girls. Firstly, they use a positive sort of language to preserve the oppression of girls. Secondly, they use moves or violence, which constitute an extra direct and vicious sort of oppression. By combining those the regime continues it manipulate of girls in Gilead.

To speak about the intrinsic hyperlink among language and oppression in *The Handmaid's Tale*, these studies will employ Michel Foucault's standards of discourse. It will, on these studies, check with positive guidelines of what the "reality" is. According to Foucault, interpretations, opinions, moves and statements ought to be withinside the subject of what the fundamental "reality" of the values of that discourse is. "Each society has its regime of reality.

Its 'popular politics of reality – this is, the styles of discourse it accepts and makes characteristic as proper, the mechanism and times that permit one to differentiate proper and fake statements" (Essential 131). Hence, what this indicates in Gilead is that positive statements, as an example that girls need to know no longer be allowed to get dressed the manner, they prefer lies inside this "reality". It might now no longer be a "fake" assertion. In the society "earlier than", making this sort of assertion might be to assignment the respectable equality among ladies and men and might now no longer be withinside the "reality" of the commonly time-honored discourse. However, there's a problem. Even unstated or unofficial "truths" are a part of discourse, because of this that that at the same time as an assertion just like the one above might be violating the respectable discourse of the society "earlier than", it has its roots in that very society.

The motive for that is that no discourse comes out of itself, however "All Manifest Discourse is primarily based totally on 'already said'" (Archaeology 25). It is meant that the whole thing this is formulated in discourse turned into already articulated in a semi-silence that precedes it. "This 'now no longer said' is a hole that undermines from inside all this is said" (Archaeology 25). Subsequently, the society "earlier than" turned into now no longer loose from the thoughts and values displayed in Gilead, however they have been incubated withinside the discourse. This is the motive why it'd be tricky to view

Offred's tale as though it describes the "good" society "earlier than" and the "evil" Gilead that followed. It might now no longer be viable to say that she describes them with completely exceptional values and "truths".

The values of Gilead are grounded withinside the society "earlier than". As a result, the discourse of Gilead has already been built earlier than it regarded however on the identical time it's far something new. It has been built in what Foucault calls "semi-silence". Consequently, the discourse of Gilead will incorporate functions of the society "earlier than" and vice versa and the translation of Offred's narrative is consequently tricky. Offred's tale is depending on the framework of Gilead discourse, however on the identical time her narrative incorporates remnants of the society "earlier than". She movements among those discourses. In different phrases, what she tells in her tale relies upon each at the "truths" of Gilead and the society "earlier than".

Furthermore, the bounds of the way language can be used are primarily based totally at the discourse of the brand-new regime in Gilead. At a decrease degree phrases and phrases used are depending on the "reality" and guidelines of the discourse. Thus, positive rhetoric may be favored as it lies withinside the "reality" of that discourse. This is what this essay will check with as language.

In the arena of the unconventional discourse oppresses girls, consequently the critical courting with feminism. In her paintings *Feminism*, Judith Harlan discusses a few factors that essentially all feminists agree upon. She says that feminists are seeking for get entry to education, economics, and politics, and they moreover are seeking for a extrude on top of things over reproduction, sexuality, violence, and society (79). Obviously, those are quite popular factors and the way this is meant to be accomplished is wherein the exceptional colleges of feminism disagree. Yet, the critical factor for this essay is that each one those exceptional elements of human lifestyles are managed particularly via way of means of guys, that they particularly paintings to be useful for guys and that guys use language, reality, and movement as approach of

keeping the manipulate all feminists attempt to acquire. This, as may be shown, could be very outstanding in Gilead.

Offred in Gilead Discourse:

The first-person, female, narrative angle in *The Handmaid's Tale* is vital to the feminist message of the unconventional and Offred's account of her existence in Gilead and "before" is captivating in its personal right. As Karen F. Stein explains in her essay "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: Scheherazade in Dystopia":

"Feminists are specifically inquisitive about tales, due to the fact as a marginal organization of society, girls have regularly been the gadgets in preference to the creators of narrative: their tales have regularly been untold. People at the margins of societies regularly locate they're denied get right of entry to the discourses that confer energy and status"(269).

As Stein factors out, that is Offred's narrative. However, it isn't unfastened from male interference. What is critical for this essay is the manner wherein Offred tells her tale. Despite the reality that she tells it looking back it isn't one which takes on an entirely vital standpoint, away from it. The language she makes use of is to a first-rate volume the only practiced and established in Gilead. It is a language this is male ruled and Offred may be visible to exist inside a male discourse, which limits her function withinside the society of Gilead. Hence, Offred's narrative is, even though written in an area out of doors Gilead's discursive reach, now no longer unfastened from the frames of what Gilead discourse permits her to think.

Although Offred certainly produces her tale, analyzing and writing are banned for maximum humans due to the regime's trying to manage and repress opposition, however that the capacity to apply language is critical to Offred, may be visible the primary time she is invited to the Commander's personal chambers. The Commander is a high-rank member of the regime and additionally the boss of the family she has been assigned to. He needs her, for instance, to play board video games with him.

“We play video games. Larynx, I spell. Valance. Quince. Zygote. I maintain the smooth counters with their clean edges, finger the letters. The feeling is voluptuous. This is freedom, an eyeblink of it” (149).

She makes use of the phrase freedom, as though to mention that for an example she is uncontrolled. In different words, for the moment, she controls language, language does now no longer manage her. However, the reality is that Offred isn't truly on top of things of language. Now, she is probably capable of assemble a few self-selected sentences in a game, however her tale can't be expressed completely out of doors the frames of Gilead discourse. Offred additionally mediates issues approximately the male manages of the show of girls in one in all her flashbacks:

“I keep in mind taking walks in artwork galleries, thru the 19th century: the obsession that they'd then with harems [...] [s]tudies of sedentary flesh, painted via way of means of guys who'd in no way been there” (79).

This is one in all numerous of Offred's flashbacks in which she rethinks her former ignorant and possibly naïve picture of the society “before” as something good. It suggests that she has found out that the manner she lived her existence contributed to the advent of Gilead, considering that she allowed herself now no longer to impeach the manner girls had been displayed, adjusting to that picture to benefit private success, something that might possibly now no longer had been feasible if she had wondered the official “truth” of girls.

Shirley Neuman additionally discusses this in her article “‘Just a Backlash’: Margaret Atwood, Feminism, and *The Handmaid's Tale*”. “Her statement is regularly ironic, regularly analytic, regularly vital of herself and her friends in ‘the time before’. It additionally suggests her as having received political recognition and as reassessing her in advance greater individualist positions” (861). Although Offred has reached a few shapes of “recognition” of the country of things, which Neuman manifestly sees as a critical technique for Offred, she isn't robust sufficient to behave on that during any shape of resistance. I will go

back to her loss of movement later. Nevertheless, Offred has found out that Foucault's "truth", which in this example might be the "truth" approximately girls, is managed and decided via way of means of guys.

Offred's method of exposing the patriarchal male discourse is via way of means of describing Gilead the usage of the language and "truth" of the brand-new regime. The trouble to hand right here is whether this "truth" is portrayed from an entirely vital standpoint. I might argue that Offred is privy to a different "truth" however gives it in a manner that creates a hesitancy of whether she has been "affected" via way of means of the Gilead "truth". In different words, it's miles uncertain whether Gilead discourse has led her to view its values as extremely acceptable. An instance of that is while she is on the medical doctors to check her fertility considering that her feature as a Handmaid is simply to conceive a child. The medical doctor gives to impregnate her himself as her commander is probably sterile. This is forbidden however the threat of having stuck is minimal. Despite this she hesitates:

'I could help you', he says. Whispers. 'What?' I say [...] 'I could help you. I've helped others' [...] [t]her door is locked. No one will come in. They'll never know it isn't his.' [...] 'Most of the old guys can't make it anymore [...] or they're sterile.' I almost gasp: he said a forbidden word. *Sterile*. 'It's too dangerous,' I say. 'No, I can't.' The penalty is death. I put on my clothes again behind the screen. My hands are shaking. Why am I frightened? I've crossed no boundaries, I've given no trust, taken no risk, all is safe. It's the choice that terrifies me. A way out, a salvation. (70-71)

It isn't always likely that worry by me could influence Offred since if she does now no longer get pregnant in 3 tries together along with her commander, she might be declared an 'unwoman' and dispatched to the Colonies. She suggests no signal of hesitation primarily based totally at the real sexual act with the physician. It could rarely be any different (or extra disgusting) for Offred than the sexual act with the Commander. Thus, it's far affordable to mention that it's far in reality the values of Gilead, or patriarchal discourse, which has intruded on Offred's manner of thinking.

This factor has been defined via way of means of Hilde Steals as “the discursive regulation of the theocracy”. She distinguishes this from Offred’s “personal, aesthetic discourse with which she counters the authoritarian speech of Gilead” (456). Subsequently, notwithstanding the reality that the theocratic values have affected her, she additionally acts out of the “truth” of any other discourse. As a result, she does now no longer file the physician for his sexual suggestion, something that a lady who knew no different values would possibly have done. She may not have any actual perception withinside the theocratic values, however they influence her lifestyles and movements none the less. Sometimes she is aware that she acts according to the Gilead discourse, like when she goes to the store with Ofglen, and they encounter some Japanese tourists.

Their heads are uncovered, and their hair too is exposed, in all its darkness and sexuality. They wear lipstick, red, outlining the damp cavities of their mouths, like scrawls on a washroom wall, of the time before. I stop walking. Ofglen stops beside me, and I know that she too cannot take her eyes off these women. We are fascinated, but also repelled. They seem undressed. It has taken so little time to change our minds, about things like this. (38)

What was once Offred’s manner of dressing withinside the time “before” has now come to be something that isn’t always done. She thinks it is incorrect to get dressed in that way and to put on makeup. She can’t assist herself having that opinion. The discourse of Gilead is just too powerful. However, she is privy to it and she or he is aware of that she surely does now no longer need to assume like that, but it’s far unavoidable.

Furthermore, what’s similarly thrilling is a difficulty that lies withinside the place of discourse, namely: understanding. The one who’s on top of things of understanding is on top of things of electricity and sooner or later controls what may be stated and claimed. This is electricity and Foucault concludes that “[t]right here are meanings of the word “difficulty”: difficulty to a person else with the aid of using manage and dependence and tied to his very own identification with the aid of using a moral sense or self-

understanding. Both meanings recommend a shape of electricity that subjugates and makes difficulty to” (Essential 331).

Hence, the “topics to”, or girls like Offred, aren't allowed to study so that you can maintain them from gaining understanding. The televised broadcasting, she is authorized to look at is state-managed and pronounces simplest government-pleasant content material and on the identical time it does now no longer display any bad information of the wars the republic is concerned in, and it does now no longer display any information of a prepared resistance, that is what Offred is maximum keen to recognize about.

About the information she says: “who is aware of if any of its far true? It might be antique clips; it is able to be faked. But I watch it, anyway, hoping that allows you to study below it. Any information, now, is higher than none” (92). At the identical time she must combat towards part of her that desires to provide in to the “truth” of the regime. She describes the propaganda-elocutionist: “he tells us what we lengthy to agree with. He’s very convincing. I warfare towards him. He’s like an antique film star, I inform myself, with fake enamel and a face job. At the identical time I live closer to him, like one hypnotized. If simplest it had been true. If simplest I ought to agree with”(93).

It is apparent that Offred is suffering with different “truths”. She is aware of that what they are saying on tv might be fake, however part of her desires to agree with it. It could be simpler simply to provide in and take delivery of that “truth”, like it'd be simpler simply to permit the health practitioner impregnate her, however she can't do it. Yet, it might imply that she could regain manage of understanding, of electricity. Subsequently, Offred can't offer the real “truth” in her tale due to the fact she does now no longer recognize it. Her “truth” is consequently constrained to the discourse of Gilead, which indicates the electricity of the regime. The importance of knowledge for Offred is further suggested in one of her private encounters with the Commander.

“What would you like”? He says, still with that lightness, as if it’s a money transaction merely, and a minor one at that: candy, cigarettes. “Besides hand lotion, you mean” I say. “Besides hand lotion,” he

agrees. "I would like [...]" I say. "I would like to know." It sounds indecisive, stupid even. I say it without thinking. "Know what?" he says. "Whatever there is to know" I say. (198)

At first, Offred needs cloth things, however as their encounters keep those modifications and he or she realizes that what she simply needs is information. It isn't understanding the real "truth" this is worst for her. Keeping human beings in lack of information is a crucial tool for the regime, considering one cannot exert any resistance without information of an alternative. Resistance is primarily based totally on a "cause", which, in its personal right, is primarily based totally on an understood "truth". The regime hinders Offred from distinguishing the alternative, hence, maintaining her inside their discourse.

The Women of Gilead:

Offred is, in a few respects, an alternatively vulnerable person. There are numerous examples of different girls within the novel who've now no longer been almost as suffering from the "truth" of Gilead as Offred. They are energetic and decided now no longer to stay through the regulations of the Gilead discourse. Offred's mom became concerned within the feminist motion within the society "earlier than", burning pornographic fabric and marching in aid of girl's proper to abortion. She became angry approximately Offred's loss of hobby within the girl's motion and her dependency of taking her rights for granted. "You younger human beings don't admire things, she'd say. You don't recognize what we needed to pass through, simply to get you wherein you are" (131). Offred's mom fears the outcomes of slacking on this area, a worry that could show to be justified, and after the advent of Gilead she is dispatched to the Colonies.

Furthermore, Offred's fellow Handmaid, Ofglen is every other girl who's apparently tons braver than Offred. Ofglen is concerned within the resistance and she or he is the only who pushes their courting past what's usually commonplace amongst Handmaids. She offers Offred data approximately the resistance and desires Offred to by skip on data obtained from her Commander, that's something Offred does now no longer dare.

When Ofglen hangs herself as opposed to being arrested through “The Eyes” (the name of the game police in Gilead) Offred is relieved when you consider that Ofglen then can't monitor something approximately her. “She did it earlier than they came. I experience super alleviation. I experience grateful to her. She has died that I can also additionally stay. I will mourn later” (298). Offred does now no longer explicit any sadness, however alternatively alleviation that she, for the moment, is safe. While different girls, like Ofglen, sacrifice their lives in place of to expose something that would harm the resistance, Offred is glad simply being alive.

In her essay “From Irony to Affiliation in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*” Jennifer A. Wagner-Lawlor additionally notes this. “She is flooded with alleviation while the primary Ofglen kills herself, as its manner that nobody will study of her personal disobedience and oblique affiliations with Mayday (the resistance, personal note). Immediately afterward, she realizes that during feeling so, she has betrayed herself: “I am abject”, she says. “I experience, for the primary time their actual electricity” (Wagner-Lawlor 86). The powerful Gilead discourse has made Offred “betray” her comrade Ofglen, through feeling alleviation in place of sadness. She turns into conscious that the regime’s electricity has clearly affected her mind.

Yet every other instance of that is Offred’s buddy from the time “earlier than”, Moira. In the society “earlier than”, Moira became, like Offred’s mom, an energetic feminist. The novel well-known shows times of this in Offred’s flashbacks. “Now, stated Moira. You don’t want to color your face, it’s best me. What’s your paper on? I simply did one on date rape” (47). These interjections just like the one above as regards to date rape offer the critique in opposition to the society “earlier than” because it shows the situations for girls then. Moira additionally turns into a Handmaid; however, she manages to break out from the Red Centre. However, she is ultimately captured and positioned to paintings in a brothel. The not unusual place trait for these types of 3 girls is their failure, which Stephanie Barbé Hammer discusses in “The World as It Will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in *The Handmaid’s Tale*”.

Significantly, the rebellious females of Offred's world are all defeated: Ofglen commits suicide to protect the May Day under-42 ground; Moira's escape attempt is thwarted, and she is imprisoned in the city's brothel; Offred's own mother is glimpsed in a film-documentary about the dreaded toxic-waste colonies. To survive, Offred seems to suggest, one must surrender. (6)

As Hammer notes, Offred surrenders to survive. All her existence she has been surrounded with the aid of using girls who combat and sacrifice themselves for the cause, however she has now no longer been capable of being part of them. As a result, she offers into Gilead discourse to be able to survive, at the same time as the girls who do now no longer give up emerge as dead. Offred wishes Gilead to fall, however she does now no longer have the energy to take part in making it happen. Consequently, she is based on different girls, however they fail. In a critical way, however, her approach did paintings as she honestly manages to get away and her tale is stored and later rediscovered. According to the ancient notes, this will have taken place within the early years of Gilead, which could imply that Offred possibly did now no longer witness its fall.

The regime is alternatively a hit in preserving the regulations in their discourse uncritically due to the extreme punishments all people who criticize the regime could be subjected to. The hassle for the competition is the full-size gadget of reporting all people who speak negatively of the state. Some humans are hired as 'eyes', with the intention to in no way recognize who to entrust with one's discontent.

Although Gilead is a society constructed on male dominance there are lots of girls who assist preserve that gadget, that's a not unusual place and effective "divide and conquer" tactic. A restricted quantity of energy is given to a small section of the organization of individuals who are the goal of control, accordingly, growing a crack within the harmony of that organization. Those who've been given this energy will try to preserve it due to the blessings it gives however also, inevitably, in worry of retaliation; at the same time as folks who are virtually in energy, in this situation the ruling adult males of Gilead, have created a safety buffer among them and the oppressed girls.

Men (or a minority of the men) are the rulers, a few girls have restricted (however no actual) energy, and maximum girls are managed and haven't any energy. The representatives of those girls with restricted energy withinside the novel is the 'Aunts'. They are girls who're satisfied that this form of rule is justified and that they assist to manipulate the opposite girls. The 'Aunts' are in price of the re-schooling of the girls who're Handmaids. This type of tactics is described by Rhonda Hammer in *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism*, where she is especially interested in the anti-feminist movement and the women who aidit:

The most effective way to both paralyzes and prevent widespread support for the feminist movement was not so much to disseminate those voices who represent the hardcore conservative and patriarchal opponents to feminism. Rather, publicizing and exploiting critiques by women was a more effective antifeminist tactic, employing members of the very disenfranchised groups the feminist platform resolved to empower. (13)

Although now no longer especially discussing *The Handmaid's Tale*, Hammer in a roundabout way describes how the Gilead regime makes use of girls to oppress girls. Hence, using girls to symbolize antifeminist thoughts it receives that extra effective, given that it'll be extra hard to understand that different girls could need to save you the evolvment of girl rights and electricity, therefore convincing different girls that the feminist thoughts and arguments aren't legitimate.

Moreover, those girls assist to put into effect the perception that it's far girls who're to be blamed for the sexual violence of guys. Hammer similarly describes an evaluation in New York Times from 1999 in which Katha Pollit discusses antifeminist Wendy Shalit's paintings. In *A Return to Modesty*, the 23-year-vintage conservative journalist, Shalit, cites her revel in in fourth grade intercourse ed to argue that feminism and liberal sexual mores have recommended guys to degrade girls.

"The solution: girls must live virgins and arm themselves [...] with blushes and lengthy skirts to encourage chivalry in guys" (15).

Hammer addresses a critical trouble of feminism here. Despite the reality that it's far guys who're committing sexual crimes the common sense is that girls must extrude their conduct and now no longer the alternative manner around. This common sense is precisely what the 'Aunts' have followed and are coaching the Handmaids. The absence of this modification of mindset withinside the society "before", which ended in a massive number of assaults on girls, is one of the pretexts for developing Gilead. However, I will go back to this later.

Here, I would love to show to the difficulty of the way the 'Aunts' paintings to extrude the minds of the Handmaids: "It's Janine, telling approximately how she became gang-raped at fourteen and had an abortion" [...] "But who's fault became it? Aunt Helena Says, maintaining up one plump finger" [...] "Her, fault, her fault, her fault, we chant in unison" (82).

As one could see from the examples above, Shalit's and the aunts' common sense is comparable because the result of each of them is that the violence of guys isn't always guys' fault however girl's "for main them on". Anti-feminist reasoning hence holds that girls must, for example, cowl our bodies to an extra quantity and restrain from sexual activity. Hence, those "opportunistic anti-feminist girls" (Hammer 14) "take advantage of and commodify feminist issues" (Hammer 16), each for his or her personal private earnings however unavoidably for the earnings of the complete anti-feminist movement. In theory, those trends defined through Hammer, are pretty much like the trends of the 'Aunts', who advantage private make the most of their form of paintings, however, it'll be very restricted, and the important result might be a strengthening of electricity for the Gileadgovernment.

In addition, there are severe outcomes for the girls who Hammer describes as "collaborators" whilst electricity is withinside the arms of the anti-feminist movement. Serena Joy, the spouse of Offred's Commander is, ironically, an image of the lack of electricity for girls. Before the revolution she became an agitator of the values that could later be regulation in Gilead. Offred recollects looking her on TV. "Time or Newsweek it became, it must have been. She wasn't making a song anymore through then, she became

making speeches. She became right at it. Her speeches had been approximately the sanctity of the home, approximately how girls must live home” (55).

Obviously, the irony is that Serena Joy became advocating that girls shouldn't be managing public affairs, however that became precisely what she became doing. Nevertheless, Serena Joy does now no longer appear thrilled with what Gilead has emerge as, she appears bitter. Offred notices this. “She doesn't make speeches anymore. She has emerged as speechless. She remains in her home; however, it doesn't appear to accept as true with her. How livid she must be now that she's been taken at her word” (56). What is thrilling is that even as Serena Joy had the electricity of expressing herself, she used it to undermine that very electricity.

As Offred notices, she isn't always satisfied with the situation. Consequently, advocating such thoughts became all thoroughly in theory, however the next fact became now no longer what she had predicted it to be. Her bitterness has made her lose conviction and admire of the difficult legal guidelines of Gilead. This is proven whilst Serena shows that Offred must attempt to get pregnant with a person else because Commander won't be capable of do it.

“‘Maybe he can't’, she says [...] ‘No,’ I say. ‘Maybe he can't’ [...] ‘Maybe you should try it another way’ [...] ‘what other way?’ [...] ‘Another man’, she says. ‘You know I can't’ I say, careful not to let my irritation show. ‘It is against the law. You know the penalty’” (215).

Firstly, Serena Joy recognizes that she does not believe in the official notion that men cannot be sterile. Rather, it seems she actually suspects that her husband in fact is, sterile. Then she suggests that Offred should commit a crime punishable by death. All this indicates a disrespect of the values of Gilead unfitting a person of conviction. Serena Joy has been transformed from a “collaborator” to a woman who seemingly regrets her choices in life which led her to lose the power of expressing her opinions.

Re-identification:

To similarly eliminate strains of the discourse withinside the society “before”, the Handmaids are subjected to a re-identity technique wherein their former identification is to be exchanged for a brand new one extra befitted to the values of Gilead. One step in that technique is to present them new names. “So, the planners of Gilead have taken it upon themselves to alternate the names of the girls who turn out to be Handmaids [...] As part of the device promoted on the Red Center, every Handmaid will finally be pressured to surrender her call and undertake a patronymic such as the preposition “of” and the primary call of the commander to whom she is quickly assigned” (Thomas92).

As a result, the protagonist of the radical is referred to as Offred, as her Commander’s first call is Fred. The regime desires the Handmaid’s to overlook their former lives and their values of that time. Their former character and manner of self-identification ought to be removed, and one tool is to alternate their names. Although this case might also additionally appear inessential in comparison to other, extra severe, measures, the male ruled language of Gilead will become ever so clean because it suggests how the regime works to restriction any “electricity” for girls, even the electricity of getting a character this is separated from guys and for that reason in a manner, “uncontrolled”.

The re-identity technique is essential for the survival of a totalitarian regime like Gilead. It ought to make certain that humans who've lived withinside the society “before” and act now no longer handiest withinside the body of Gilead discourse however additionally every other discourse and are privy to every other “truth”, do now no longer switch their understanding and critiques to the subsequent technology.

The regime’s device is, as formerly mentioned, the use and manage of language to make their discourse the handiest one. Moreover, they'll additionally use harsh violence (action) to save you any chance of an opportunity discourse gaining public access. The subsequent technology of Handmaids could have it less complicated considering they'll don't have any reminiscence of every other manner of dwelling and can be added up with the values of the regime.

You are the transition generation, said Aunt Lydia. It is the hardest for you. We know the sacrifices you are being expected to make. It is hard when men revile you. For the ones who come after you, it will be easier. They will accept their duties with willing hearts. She did not say: Because they will have no memories, of any other way. (127)

This is a superb instance of ways language is manipulated to cowl up the poor components of Gilead. Indeed, it is going to be simpler for the destiny Handmaids to just accept their role on account that they haven't any understanding of an alternative. However, the query of its ethical legitimacy isn't always modified via way of means of thisfact.

Truth Redefined:

The problem of sterility of fellows in Gilead, or instead the absence of sterility, is some other instance of the way the regime works to devalue ladies through claiming that the failure of manufacturing kids can best be the fault of the woman, in no way the man. It is her frame this is broken. A Handmaid will, if unlucky, emerge as with a commander who's in truth sterile. However, she might be blamed for the dearth of kids and declared an 'unwoman' that's nearly a dying sentence. The cost of ladies is decided through their capacity to provide offspring. Everything else is secondary or maybeirrelevant.

Consequently, what the regime says is actual becomes actual, regardless of what the fact truly is. This isn't always uncommon in dystopian fiction. It is likewise utilized by the totalitarian regime in George Orwell's 1984 as Lois Feuer notes in her article wherein, she compares *The Handmaid's Tale* to 1984: "O'Brien forces Winston to well known that plus can identical 5 if the Party says so [...] O'Brien's factor is that fact, even the a priori fact of mathematics, is relative and problem to the violence-enforced will of whoever is in electricity." (87-88). Hence, the "mathematics" of *The Handmaid's Tale*, i.e., the technological know-how of physical deficiency, is regardless of the male ruled regime wishes it to be. They have taken "fact" to a degree wherein it can now no longer be puzzled but absurd it would appear.

Moreover, Steals factors out that: “[i]n the Handmaid’s Tale Offred retrospectively witnesses her private victimization as a Handmaid in Gilead’s theocracy. The totalitarian regime forces the population to publish to the electricity of one (moral) law, one actual religion, one language code” (475). Steals describes how the society “before” modifications into Gilead. However, as cited within the Foucault discussion, no discourse may be constructed from nothing; one cannot without a doubt create a “fact”. Even if the new “truths” would possibly appear absurd, it has to be justified on the subject of the situations of the previous “truths”. In the following segment I’m able to display how the regime justifies their “fact”.

Why Gilead?

The regime’s motive is a Christian society and that they take benefit of the terrible components of the society earlier than to justify Gilead. By the flashbacks of Offred we’re informed approximately the hazardous situations for ladies within the past.

Women were not protected then. I remember the rules, rules that were never spelled out but that every woman knew: don’t open your door to a stranger, even if he says he is the police. Make him slide his ID under the door. Don’t stop on the road to help a motorist pretending to be in trouble. Keep the locks on and keep going. If anyone whistles, don’t turn to look. Don’t go into a Laundromat, by yourself, at night. (34)

The unstated rules, which have been mentioned within the introduction, go back on this passage from the novel; even though attacks on girls have been now no longer legal, the mind-set amongst guys within the society “before” ended in girls continuously having to fear approximately being assaulted and raped. The discourse contained male values approximately girls that have been degrading, and even though the liberty for girls may be very confined in Gilead, the want of continually having to take measures now no longer to be attacked is a sort of restrained freedom as well.

The Handmaids are advised testimonies approximately those situations to justify their situation. They are advised that “[men] are intercourse machines [...] and now no longer a lot more. They most effective need one thing” (153). Again, the Gilead discourse returns to the truth that guys can't be blamed for his or her conduct given that it's miles something “natural”. The Handmaids are advised that: “It’s as much as you to set the boundaries” (55). This is a part of converting the “truths” in Gilead, much like the “truth” of sterility. In addition, the ‘Aunts’ describe the conditions of Gilead as a different kind of freedom:

“There is more than one kind of freedom said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of the anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are given freedom from. Don’t underrate it” (34).

Subsequently, the common sense of Gilead is that the dynamic freedom, in different phrases the liberty to actively do what you like, may not had been something bad, however the effects had been too severe. This freedom became the reason of fellows’ violence towards women and because common sense is that guys can't be chargeable for their actions, girl’s freedom ought to be taken away.

Instead, girls now have static freedom. In different phrases, they've the liberty now no longer to be negatively tormented by guys’ dynamic freedom. Feuer discusses this as “the choice-among happiness without freedom or freedom without happiness-is presented [...] with the aid of using Atwood’s Aunt Lydia, teacher of handmaids and explicator of the regime’s cause for its oppression” (83).

Feuer’s description of the Handmaid’s situation as happiness or pre-Gilead girl’s situation as definitely missing happiness is probably a stretch too far. Nevertheless, the factor is well worth making because the irony of this is, of course, that even though girls did now no longer abuse their dynamic freedom as guys did, they nonetheless get the severest regulations in their freedom.

Offred’s flashbacks display very definitely that the society “earlier than” isn't an area she desires to go back to. She has reached an attention she did not know longer own earlier than Gilead. Ironically, it took

any such drastic alternate as this for her to observe the issues of the beyond. In her essay, Neuman annihilates any declare that Atwood's description of the "time earlier than" might be any type of best freedom state: "Here a few readers of *The Handmaid's Tale* [...] have misinterpret the radical with the aid of using conflating Offred's choice to have the whole thing back, the manner it became" (865). Women had been now no longer loose from the oppression of fellows withinside the beyond either. It became a one-of-a-kind type of oppression, however oppression, nonetheless. Another justification the Handmaids are subjected to, which is quite important for the justification of having Handmaids, is the declining birthrates in the society "before".

Aunt Lydia [...] showing the birth rate per thousand, for years and years: a slippery slope, down past the zero line of replacement, and down and down. Of course, some women believed there would be no future, they thought the world would explode. That was the excuse they used, says Aunt Lydia. They said there was no sense in breeding. Aunt Lydia's nostrils narrow: such wickedness. They were lazy women, she says. They were sluts.(123)

Women withinside the society "before" had jobs and assets which many targeted on rather than children. This form of conduct couldn't be regularly occurring and step one the regime of Gilead took while in electricity became to dissolve girl's rights of assets and to hearthplace them from their jobs. All assets became to be transferred to a husband or near male relative. The critical precept that girls ought to be on top of things in their lives and our bodies had been changed with the precept that what's critical is reproduction. In her essay "Popular subculture and the reproductive politics: *Juno, Knocked Up* and the long-lasting legacy of *The Handmaid's Tale*", Heather Latimer addresses this issue.

Through Offred's narrative, readers are offered a picture of what the world might look like if a woman's only reproductive 'choice' is pregnancy or death. The novel, therefore, offers an ironic counter-narrative to the films, in that its futuristic setting satirizes the idea of reproductive 'freedom' by showing us a

world where every pregnancy is a wanted one, and where foetal personhood is not only taken-for-granted, but sanctified.(213)

The difficulty among the proper of the girl to manipulate her personal frame and the proper to existence for the fetus, is an essential difficulty in feminist theory. In Gilead, this difficulty has been determined and girls like Offred must neglect about some other country. “People’s identification is meant to coalesce with the coded standards and the predicated country with the aid of using which they may be defined. Handmaids are preproperated to simply consider themselves ‘as seeds’, as items with a procreative characteristic that must keep the arena from chance of sterility, as ‘two-legged wombs’ (Steals 457).

As a result, the kid is what's essential and the Handmaid is simplest a tool. Women must not assume that they determine over their personal frame. It is now a country managed object. While Steals’ description of what they may be is correct, the discourse of Gilead disguises this truth. The Handmaids are preproperated to see themselves, now no longer as items, however as a part of a sisterhood, that's something the ‘Aunts’ try and indoctrinate. Comparing this to the society “before”, the resemblance is striking. The discourse right here disguises the values guys have approximately girls, with the aid of using claiming that lady equality exists officially.

Furthermore, that the values of Gilead discourse have affected the minds of Offred, and different girls is clean while one seems on the scene withinside the novel while multiple medical doctors were finished for acting abortions withinside the society “before”. “They have devoted atrocities and should be made into examples, for the rest. Though that is infrequently wanted. No girl in her proper mind, those days, might are trying to find to save you a delivery, must she be so fortunate as to conceive” (43). This assertion absolutely suggests how the discourse of the society “before” has misplaced its power. Then, amongst girls, abortion became now no longer something that could were visible as an “atrocitv”.

However, in Gilead, girl’s minds have modified and everyone “in her proper mind” now believes that generating youngsters is an essential a part of existence. Of route that is Offred’s role and might not consist

of all girls in Gilead. Nevertheless, it suggests that the discourse has had effect. While the ‘Aunts’ justify Gilead with the aid of using relating to the troubles with violence and delivery prices withinside the past, Offred’s Commander additionally has different thoughts of why alternate became necessary. In his and Offred’s personal encounters he attempts to justify matters to her and claims that “the trouble wasn’t simplest with the girls, he says.

The predominant trouble became with the guys. There became not anything for them anymore [...] the intercourse became too easy; every person may want to simply purchase it. There became not anything to paintings for, not anything to combat for. We have the stats from that time. You recognize what they have been complaining approximately the maximum? Inability to feel” (221). Barbé Hammer explains that the Commander “evenly justifies the oppressive regime which he partially masterminded with the commentary that withinside the vintage society guys felt they have been not wanted with the aid of using girls; he thereby indicates that girl’s liberation compelled American guys to take this drastic action; ergo the existing regime is in the long run the girl’s ‘fault’“(3).

Subsequently, girls had won an excessive amount of influence in society. They have been not depending on guys withinside the equal manner they have been before. The “not anything for them” the Commander talks approximately is maximum probable one of the motives to the extended sexual violence towards girls withinside the society “before”. Since girls have been capable of determine themselves who to marry and to be with, a few guys might use pressure to catch up on the truth that they have been not in a role of manage of girls. Moreover, the shortage of ethical values, like prostitution, had made guys lose their “capacity to feel”. Sex had grown to be trivialized, which might suggest that sexual violence had grown to be much less severe because the seriousness of intercourse had subsided. Furthermore, the Commander also tries to justify Gilead from women’s perspectives.

We’ve given them more than we have taken away, said the Commander. Think of the trouble they had before [...] don’t you remember the terrible gap between the ones who could get a man easily and

the ones who couldn't? Some of them were desperate, they starved themselves thin and or pumped their breasts full of silicone, had their noses cut off. Think of the human misery. (231)

According to the Commander, the society "before" changed into an area of ruthless opposition which ladies couldn't handle. He claims that now it's miles higher since "this manner all of them get a man" (231). However, withinside the center of this dialogue in which he attempts to expose that they concept of the ladies, he slips into the concern of the shortage of kids, which the aunts used to justify Gilead. "Money changed into the best degree of well worth, for everyone, they were given no recognize as mothers. No surprise they had been giving up at the entire business (of creating kids). This manner they're protected, they could fulfil their organic destinies in peace. With complete help and encouragement" (231). The language of Gilead makes it sound like they're best doing what they do for the ladies' personalgood.

The Commander describes the society "before" as an area in which best cash mattered and those did not, and that during Gilead the well worth of ladies is appreciated. However, the citation above famous that what the regime is certainly involved approximately is the shortage of kids. In addition, he defines making kids as ladies' "organic destiny". Thus, he extra or much less says that ladies don't have any different reason in lifestyles than generating kids and looking after them.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

That Gilead would be any more humane than the society that the Commander describes as all about money is practically empty words. Women who cannot produce children are seen as ‘unwomen’ not worthy of the “full support” Gilead supposedly give women. This similarity between Gilead and capitalism is best described by Barbé Hammer:

“All human qualities are instrumentalized and reduced to quantitative values of exchange. In other words, the new rulers equate the value of something and someone solely with validity, usefulness, functionality, economic profit” (457).

Gilead is meant to be an area with Christian values, however messages withinside the bible is distorted to in shape the dreams of the regime. For instance, using Handmaids is questionably justified with a connection with a passage withinside the Old Testament, wherein Abraham impregnates his home servant together along with his wife’s blessing when you consider that she is not able to reproduce.

Despite the authentic discourse of Gilead, that is full of strict policies and regulations, no individual withinside the novel absolutely follows them or believes in them. I even have already stated Serena Joy, Ofglen and Moira, however additionally Offred’s Commander and the driver, Nick, lack overall conviction. Especially the Commander makes use of his function of energy to do matters that was once carried out withinside the society “before” however now’s forbidden. In his personal chambers, the Commander maintains magazines which he shall we Offred read. These aren't imagined existing.

When Offred asks him why he has the magazines, he answers: “Some of us, he said, hold an appreciation for the antique things” (166). His personal encounters with Offred aren't authorized either, or the preceding Handmaid that changed into assigned to the Commander’s family changed into arrested for the very identical encounters whilst Serena Joy discovered out approximately it. Gilead has its discourse

however all characters are stricken by the discourse of the society “before” and can't turn out to be totally devoted to the stern guidelines and regulations. It is sort of a recreation in which everybody performs their element in the “production” this is Gilead. Although no man or woman is absolutely committed to the “production” you can still by no means recognize who will display your loss of conviction to the authorities, therefore getting you arrested. Barbé Hammer describes this aspect of Gilead.

In this manner, an allegedly profoundly Christian society ironically transforms every citizen into a sinner in so far as each person must become a liar and a hypocrite to exist within the system. This is, of course, the supreme irony of Atwood's fictional future world; this is a theocracy where not one person is devout and where such notions as faith and morality simply have no meaning. (3)

As a result, in case you stay in Gilead, you cannot screen your loss of conviction due to the fact you may get seriously punished, however considering all characters reputedly have doubts, all of them become “liars and hypocrites”. The Commander is, in Gileadean terms, possibly the largest sinner of all. He keeps, as formerly mentioned, forbidden texts, he meets together along with his Handmaids privately and he's taking Offred to an underground membership in which he and different Commander's drink and use the prostitutes that paintings there. This membership and the ladies who paintings there offer a drastically ironic photograph of the Gilead that says to be constructed on a few shapes of better values and advanced morality. The Commander describes to Offred what kind of women work there.

‘Well, some of them are real pros. Working girls’ –he laughs- ‘from the time before. They couldn't be assimilated; anyway, most of them prefer it here’. ‘And the others?’ ‘The others’, he says. ‘Well, we have quite a collection. That one there, the one in green, she's a sociologist. Or was. That one was a lawyer, that one was in business, an executive position; some sort of fastfood chain or maybe it was hotels. (249)

This club, or brothel in case you will, represents the final paradox to the Gilead discourse, a global some distance from the Red Centre wherein the ‘Aunts’ suggest ethical values. Here, girls are subjected to the equal sort of sexual violence so not unusual place withinside the society “before”. Ironically, the

Commander offers Offred a lesson in how prostitution led to that “intercourse changed into too easy, anybody ought to simply purchase it” and that it made men “not able to feel”. Yet he nevertheless visits those types of locations and suggests no regret in doing so, justifying it via way of means of claiming that “maximum of them decide on it here”.

Consequently, the Commander is inevitably insulting the Gilead he participated in growing via way of means of claiming that those girls decide on an existence in a brothel to an existence withinside the “real” Gilead. Furthermore, the girls who paintings withinside the brothel used to achieve success profession girls. Now they're simply sexual gadgets to be had for the forbidden pleasures of the elite who're speculated to uphold the values of the state.

Nick, on the alternative hand, is an extra hard individual to analyze. He works as a driving force for the Commander; however, he does now no longer act like he's a servant. He does now no longer appear to have the equal worry Offred has. She eventually suspects that he's an “Eye”. However, Nick will become Offred’s lover whom she will become completely obsessed with. Offred’s appears to make amends for the reality that she is in any other case continuously passive, however in Nick she unearths a that means with existence.

Eventually it's far he who rescues her from being arrested whilst Serena Joy unearths out approximately the connection among Offred and the Commander. Nick is maximum likely additionally worried withinside the resistance, however on the equal time he's an “Eye”. Furthermore, he is likewise worried in assisting the Commander together along with his questionable living. Again, no individual in Gilead is what she or he appears at the surface, now no longer even the “Eyes”, who're thought to uphold regulation and order, are devoted to the values of Gilead.

The discourse of Gilead most effective exists as manner of keeping strength withinside the fingers of men. As I even have showed, The Commander, who's maximum likely to be devoted to its values, is the worst culprit of them all. He attempts to justify Gilead to Offred, however on the equal time he visits

prostitutes and makes use of his powers to make Offred his mistress. Subsequently, he additionally cheats on his wife. The ambiguity about who is really running Gilead is noticed by Barbé Hammer.

We see no rulers in Atwood's fictional world, but everyone in it from Commander Fred to his domestic ser-vants, from the doctor who inspects Offred to Offred herself is caught up in a network of surveillance and counter-surveillance. The novel constantly emphasizes the omnipresence of the scrutinizing gaze; the word "eye" is everywhere; the secret police are called "eyes," and the farewell greeting "under his eye" refers to the divine gaze but also testifies to the fact that everyone is indeed under the eye of someone else. (8)

There aren't any leaders who've absolute energy, however all ought to, formally, alter to the Gilead discourse and law. However, there may be no person who simply lives with the aid of using the values of the reputable discourse of Gilead. There are completely individuals who brush aside those values and use their energy for non-public satisfaction. Gilead is for this reason not anything else however an area wherein ladies are suppressed for the motive that guys need energy and need to avoid ladies from getting it.

The goal of this studies has been to reveal that language, "truth" and action, withinside the Foucauldian belief of discourse, are used to oppress ladies each in Gilead and withinside the society "before". It is obvious that once residing in a society like Gilead one ought to alter to the discourse of that society. It may be very tough now no longer to alter. The failure of doing this can maximum probable bring about alienation or maybe death, which is obvious whilst searching on the ladies of Gilead who attempted to riot in opposition to theregime.

Offred, on the opposite hand, does now no longer riot, however is suffering from the Gilead discourse. She in part adjusts to it, which makes her existence greater bearable. However, she is conscious that she does this and does now no longer need to do it, however she isn't always robust sufficient to resist. In addition, Offred contemplates the opportunity to simply give up absolutely to the "truth" of Gilead. By doing this she might suit in, however she cannot do this either, because she is likewise suffering from the "truth" of the discourse from the society "before", so she is aware of Gilead "truth" won't be correct. Surrender to the

“truth” is precisely what Offred did withinside the society “before”, so she is now reluctant to copy that mistake.

Gilead discourse is, formally, so powerful due to the fact no other “truths” than the reputable one is authorized to be voiced in public. If human beings aren't aware about any other “truth”, then it's miles tough to create a prepared and powerful resistance. Offred, for example, who are searching for this sort of resistance, can simply come into touch with the floor of it.

The trouble with discourse and with developing such an excessive society as Gilead is absolutely proven on these studies. No individual is dedicated to the values and the “truths”. The motive for this is, like in Offred’s case, that additionally they have lived withinside the society “before” and feature issues with letting that cross entirely. Consequently, the values of Gilead can simplest live to tell the tale if no person is aware about an opportunity discourse, and therefore there are such harsh punishments for offenders. The youngsters born in Gilead aren't preproperated to be suffering from any other “truth”.

The Gilead regime makes use of the poor elements of the society “before” to justify the scenario for ladies, especially for Handmaids like Offred. They try and justify that lady have misplaced their freedom and their proper to determine over their personal frame with the aid of using claiming that the situations for ladies have been worse before, with the sexual violence.

Indeed, any belief that the society “before” becoming a great area for ladies is refuted with the aid of using Offred’s flashbacks. This ends in the realization that each the discourse of Gilead and of the society “before” is one wherein the values bring about oppression of ladies. In Gilead, it's miles a country device of retaining ladies managed as, for example, Handmaids. In the society “before” the sexual assaults on ladies display that the “truth”, or the price device, implicated that attacking ladies become now no longer something overly serious. The photo of ladies, Aunt Lydia describes them as “sluts”, indicates the oppression withinside the shape of degrading ladies.

These values of the discourse of the society “before” having been the inspiration upon which the values of Gilead have been built. There not unusual place trait is the location of ladies. In Gilead, guys’

supposedly herbal violent aspect is identified as something unavoidable, and for this reason ladies' freedom ought to be restricted. In the society "before", ladies' same rights have been formally identified, however the underlying values of the discourse averted it from being the reality. As a result, ladies are involuntarily trapped in a form of trap twenty-.

To sum up, *The Handmaid's Tale* is, in fact, a as a substitute tragic tale wherein no female is a success. Offred's mom finally ends up withinside the colonies, Moira in a brothel, Serena Joy as a depressing housewife, and Ofglen finally ends up killing herself. Ironically, Offred, the individual who attempted the least to influence her scenario, is the maximum a success as she manages to get away and inform her tale. Offred reveals herself hiding in a secure residence somewhere, and the simplest societies she has ever lived in are each society wherein ladies have been in a single manner or every other oppressed, be it through sexual violence, language, expertise, or energy.

CITATION

CITATION

Atwood, Margaret. *Bodily Harm*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Great Britain: O.W Toad, 1986. Print.

Calvalcanti, Ildney. "Utopias of/f Language in Contemporary Feminist Literary Dystopias." *Utopian Studies* 11.2 (2000), pp. 152-181.

Cooke, Nathalie. *Margaret Atwood: A Critical Companion*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004.

Daniels, Margaret J. and Heather E. Bowen. "Feminist Implications of Anti-Leisure in Dystopian Fiction." *Journal of Leisure Research* 35.4 (2003), pp. 423-440.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton, 1963.

Frye, Northrop. "Varieties of Literary Utopias." *Utopias and Utopian Thought*. Ed. Frank E. Manuel. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. 1915. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.

Goldblatt, Patricia. "Reconstructing Margaret Atwood's Protagonists." *World Literature Today* 73.2 1999, pp. 275-82.

Hammer Barbé, Stephanie. "The World As It Will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in *The Handmaid's Tale*". *Modern Language Studies* 20:2. 1990. pp. 39-49. Web.

Hammer Barbé, Stephanie. "The World As It Will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in *The Handmaid's Tale*". *Modern Language Studies* 20:2. 1990. pp. 39-49. Web.

Hammer, Rhonda. *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. Print.

- Hammer, Stephanie Barber. "The World as It Will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in The Handmaid's Tale." *Modern Language Studies* 20.2. 1990. pp. 39-49.
- Harlan, Judith. *Feminism*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1998. Print.
- Hedges, Warren. "Taxonomy of Feminist Intellectual Traditions." Sep 1996.
- Ho wells, Carol Ann. Margaret Atwood. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. 1935. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996.
- Ingersoll, Earl G. ed. Margaret Atwood: Conversations. Princeton: Ontario Review Press, 1990.
- Ingersoll, Earl G. ed. *Waltzing Again: New and Selected Conversations with Margaret Atwood*. Princeton: Ontario Review Press, 2006.
- Jones, Christopher. "Women of the Future: Alternative Scenarios." *The Futurist*. 30.3, 1996. pp. 34-39.
- Keller, Evelyn Fox. "Feminism, Science, and Postmodernism." *Cultural Critique*. 13. 1989. pp. 15-23.
- Lady Oracle. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976.
- Latimer, Heather. "Popular Culture and Reproductive Politics – *Juno, Knocked up* and the Enduring legacy of *The Handmaid's Tale*". *Feminist Theory*, 10:2 2009. pp. 211-226. Web.
- Life Before Man. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.
- Linner, Brigitta. "What Does Equality Between the Sexes Imply?" *The Women's Movement: Social and Psychological Perspectives*. Ed. Helen Wortis and Clara Rabinowitz. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1972. pp. 52-64.
- Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty: The Subjection of Women*. 1869. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1898.

Neuman, Shirley. "'Just a Backlash': Margaret Atwood, Feminism, and 'The Handmaid's Tale'." *University of Toronto Quarterly*. 75.2. 2006. pp. 857-68.

Neuman, Shirley. "'Just a Backlash': Margaret Atwood, Feminism and *The Handmaid's Tale*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 75:3. 2006. pp. 857-869. Web.

Palumbo, Alice M. "On The Border: Margaret Atwood's Novels." *Margaret Atwood: Works & Impact*. Ed. Reingard M. Nischik. Rochester:Camden House, 2000.

Raschke, Debrah. "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: False Borders and Subtle Subversions." *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*. 6: 3-4. 1995. pp. 257-68.

Roberts, Adam. *The History of Science Fiction*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Rowe-Finkbeiner, Kristin. *The F- Word: Feminism in Teapordy*. Emeryville: Seal Press, 2004.

Rudy, Peter. *Introduction. We*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1959.

Staels, Hilde. "'Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: Resistance through Narrating'". *English Studies* 76:5. 1995. pp. 455-467. Web.

Stein, F Karen. "'Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: Scheherazade in Dystopia'". *University of Toronto Press* 61:2. 1991. pp. 269-280. Web.

Surfacing. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.

The Edible Woman. Boston: Little Brown, 1969.

The Handmaid's Tale. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.

Thomas, Deborah A. "'Don't Let the Bastards Grind You Down': Echoes of *Hard Times* in *Handmaid's Tale*". *Dickens Quarterly* 25:2 (2008): pp. 90-97.

Wagner-Lawlor, Jennifer A. "From Irony to Affiliation in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*".

Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction 45:1. 2003. pp. 83-96. Web.

Wagner-Lawlor, Jennifer. "From Irony to Affiliation in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Critique*.

45.1. 2003. pp.83-96.

Yamamoto, Tae. "How Can a Feminist Read *The Handmaid's Tale*? A Study of Offred's Narrative."

Margaret Atwood: The Open Eye. Ed. John Moss and Tobi Zozakewich. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2009.195-205.