

**Sacrifice and Rejuvenation in *THE TESTAMENTS* and  
*gently falls the bakula***

**By**

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**Master's Degree in English**

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**DECLARATION**

## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Sacrifice and Rejuvenation in *THE TESTAMENTS and gently falls the bakula*** submitted to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A)** is a dissertation carried out by me **MUTHU PTRAVEENA M.** during the period from **JANUARY 2023 – MAY 2023** under the guidance of **Dr. S. Devashanthi** Assistant professor and Hod(i/c), Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in the University or any other University or other similar Institution of Higher Learning.

**Signature of the Candidate**

**CERTIFICATE**

## **CERTIFICATE**

This to certify that the dissertation entitled **Sacrifice and Rejuvenation in *THE TESTAMENTS and gently falls the bakula*** submitted to in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A)** is a dissertation carried out by **MUTHU PRAVEENA M.** during the period from **JANUARY 2023 – MAY 2023** in Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore under my guidance of **Dr. S. Devashanthi** Assistant professor and Hod(i/c), Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, and Fellowship, or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institution of Higher Learning.

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## ABSTRACT

The research paper examines the self-centered perspective of the male counterpart as the cause to revert and the impetus to transform Shrimathi, the protagonist, into an ambitious lady. Indian women have a long history of blindly accepting the family structure and displaying a rebellious attitude. However, times changed slowly, and people began to strive for self-sufficiency and independence. The rejected women in the modern world become revolutionary women. Rejections often cause many psychological wounds. The result of rejection leads to anger, destroys confidence and self-esteem, and destabilizes our natural feeling of belonging, and Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula* manifests this.

The images of dystopian food illustrate the characters, which reflect the limitations, constant control, and abuse of human rights in the Republic of Gilead. It explores how Atwood employs the literary form of testimony to create fragments of individual lives in a dystopia brought closer to us through food metaphors and metaphors of cooking. Lydia performs two gender roles: publicly, that of the aunt, and in private, she is a woman who aims to restore Gileadean women's freedom. The aunt performs her gender role consciously, whereas she performs her second gender role significantly more unconsciously. Atwood vividly demonstrates the rejection of women for their gender and their quest to overcome this rejection through the character of Aunt Lydia.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

# Chapter I

## Introduction

Literature is a term used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. Etymologically, the term derived from Latin *Literatura* /literature “learning, writing grammar”, originally “Writing formed with letters”, from *litera* / *littera* “letter”. Literature broadly is a collection of any written work, but it is also used more narrowly for writings specifically, considered to be an art form especially prose fiction, drama, and poetry. In recent centuries, the definition has expanded to include oral literature, much of which has been transcribed.

Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment, and can also have a social, psychological, spiritual, or political role. Literature, as an art form, can also include works in various non-fiction genres, such as biography, diaries, memoir, letters, and essay. Literature is classified according to whether it is poetry, prose, or drama, and such works are categorized according to historical periods, or their adherence to certain aesthetic features, or genre. E.M.Forster says “What is wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse.

Indian English Literature (IEL) also referred to as Indian Writing in English (IWE) is the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early history began with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutta followed by Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao contributed to the growth and

popularity of Indian English fiction in the 1930s. It is also associated, in some cases, with the works of members of the Indian diaspora who subsequently compose works in English. It is frequently referred to as Indo-Anglian literature. Although some Indo-Anglian works may be classified under the genre of postcolonial literature, the repertoire of Indian English literature encompasses a wide variety of themes and ideologies from the late eighteenth century to the present day, and thereby eludes easy categorization.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894) wrote *Rajmohan's wife* and published it in 1864; it is the first Indian novel written in English. *Bianca*, or *The Young Spanish Maiden* (1878) by Toru Dutt was the first novel written by an Indian Woman. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao became the trios of Indian Writing in English. Indian English literature has attained independent status in the realm of world literature.

After independence William Walsh comments on the trios as: "It is these three writers who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established its assumptions; they sketched its main themes, freed the first models of its characters, and elaborated its particular logic. Each of them used an easy, natural idiom that was unaffected by the opacity of a British inheritance. Their language has been freed of the foggy taste of Britain and transferred to a wholly new set of brutal heat and brilliant light"

Indian Writing in English deals with a wide range of themes. It reflects Indian culture, tradition, social values, and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living elsewhere. Vikas Swarup says "Indian writers have appropriated English as an Indian language and that gives a certain freshness to the way we write"

The term novel is a truncation of the Italian word novella (from the plural of Latin Novellus, A late variant of Novus, meaning “new”). According to Margaret Doody, the novel has “a continuous and comprehensive history of about two thousand years”. The novel, is an invented prose narrative of considerable length and it deals with complexity of human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting. The novel is a genre of fiction, and fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word, representations of human life that instructor divert or both.

The novelist’s conscious day-to-day preoccupation is the setting down of incident, the delineation of personality, the regulation of exposition, climax, and denouement. Fiction is any innovative work, primarily any story work, depicting people, occasions, or places that are non-existent, or in manners that are fanciful. Fictitious depictions are subsequently conflicting with history, truth, or believability. In a customary thin sense, "fiction" alludes to composed stories in composition - frequently alluding explicitly to books, novellas, and brief tales. All the more extensively, nonetheless, fiction envelops fanciful stories communicated in any medium, including works as well as live dramatic exhibitions, films, TV programs, radio shows, comics, pretending games, and computer games.

Narrating has existed in every single human culture, and each culture integrates various components of truth and fiction into narrating. Early fiction was firmly connected with history and fantasy. Greek artists like Homer, Hesiod, and Aesop created fictitious stories that were told first through oral narrating and afterward recorded as a hard copy. Exposition fiction was created in Old Greece, impacted by the narrating customs of Asia and Egypt.

The construction of the cutting edge novel was created by Miguel de Cervantes with *Wear Quixote* in the mid seventeenth 100 years. The novel turned into an essential vehicle of fiction in the eighteenth and nineteenth hundreds of years. They were frequently connected with Edification thoughts like experimentation and skepticism. Authenticity created as a scholarly style right now. New types of broad communications created in the late-nineteenth and mid twentieth hundreds of years, including well known fiction magazines and early film. Intelligent fiction was created in the late-twentieth hundred years through computer games.

Non-fiction is any document or media content that attempts, in good faith, to convey information only about the real world, rather than being grounded in imagination. Non-fiction typically aims to present topics objectively based on historical, scientific, and empirical information. However, some non-fiction ranges into more subjective territory, including sincerely held opinions on real-world topics. Based on the author's intention or the purpose of the content, the main genres of non-fiction are instructional, explanatory, discussion-based, report-based (non-chronological), opinion-based (persuasive) and relating (chronological recounting) non-fiction

Non-fiction is a fundamental approach to narrative, and often refers specifically to prose writing in contrast to narrative fiction, which is largely populated by imaginary characters and events (although some remain ambiguous regarding their basis in reality). Non-fiction writers manifest the reasons and consequences of events, they can compare, contrast, classify, categorize and summarize information, arrange the facts in a logical or chronological order, infer and reach conclusions about facts, etc. They can use graphic, structural and printed appearance features such as pictures, graphs or charts, diagrams, flowcharts, summaries, glossaries, sidebars, timelines,

table of contents, headings, subheadings, bolded or italicised words, footnotes, maps, indices, labels, captions, etc. to help readers find information. While specific claims in a non-fiction work is that they sometime though prove inaccurate, the sincere author aims to be truthful at the time of composition. A non-fiction account is an exercise in accurately representing a topic, and remains distinct from any implied endorsement

*The Testaments* is a 2019 novel by Margaret Atwood. It is the sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). The novel is set 15 years after the events of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Genre of the novel "*THE TESTAMENT*" Science fiction, Dystopian fiction. Science fiction (sometimes shortened to sf or sci-fi) is a genre of speculative fiction, which typically deals with imaginative and futuristic concepts such as advanced science and technology, space exploration, time travel, parallel universes, and extra terrestrial life. Science fiction can trace its roots to ancient mythology. It is related to fantasy, horror, and superhero fiction and contains many subgenres. Its exact definition has long been disputed among authors, critics, scholars, and readers.

Science fiction, in literature, film, television, and other media, has become popular and influential over much of the world. It has been called the "literature of ideas", and often explores the potential consequences of scientific, social, and technological innovations. It sometimes serves as an outlet to facilitate future scientific and technological innovations. Besides providing entertainment, it can also criticize present-day society and explore alternatives. It is also often said to inspire a "sense of wonder" Science fiction (sometimes shortened to sf or sci-fi) is a genre of speculative fiction, which typically deals with imaginative and futuristic concepts such as advanced science and technology, space exploration, time travel, parallel universes, and extra terrestrial life.

Dystopian literature serves to “provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable”. Some dystopias claim to be utopias. Samuel Butler’s *If* can be seen as a dystopia because of the way sick people are punished as criminals while thieves are “cured” in hospitals, which the inhabitants of *Erewhon* see as natural and right, i.e., utopian (as mocked in Voltaire’s *Candide*). Dystopias usually extrapolate elements of contemporary society, and thus can be read as political warnings.

*Gently Falls the Bakula* by Sudha Murthy, is a realistic-fiction. Literary realism is a literary genre, that attempts to represent subject-matter truthfully, avoiding speculative fiction and supernatural elements. It originated with the realist art movement that in France and Russia. Literary realism attempts to represent familiar things as they are. Realist authors chose to depict everyday experiences as they are in real life.

Realism broadly defined as “the representation of reality”, realism in the arts is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions, as well as implausible, exotic and supernatural elements. Realism has been prevalent in the arts at many periods, and is in large part a matter of technique and training, and the avoidance of stylization. In the visual arts, illusionistic realism is the accurate depiction of lifeforms, perspective, and the details of light and colour. Realist works of art may emphasize the ugly or sordid, such as works of social realism, regionalism, or kitchen sink realism. There have been various realism movements in the arts, such as the opera style of verismo, literary realism, theatrical realism and Italian neorealist cinema.

The realism art movement in painting began in France in the 1850s, after the 1848 Revolution. The realist painters rejected Romanticism, which had come to

dominate French literature and art, with roots in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Realism as a movement in literature was a post-modern phenomenon. It aims to reproduce “objective reality”, and focused on showing everyday, quotidian activities and life, primarily among the middle or lower class society, without romantic idealization or dramatization. It may be regarded as the general attempt to depict subjects as they are considered to exist in third person objective reality, without embellishment or interpretation and “in accordance with secular, empirical rules.”

The approach inherently implies a belief that such reality is ontologically independent of man’s conceptual schemes, linguistic practices and beliefs, and thus can be known to the artist, who can in turn represent this ‘reality’ faithfully. As literary critic Ian Watt states in *The Rise of the Novel*, modern realism “begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through the senses” and as such “it has its origins in Descartes and Locke, and received its first full formulation by Thomas Reid in the middle of the eighteenth century.”

Margaret Eleanor Atwood (born November 18, 1939) is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist, and inventor. Since 1961, she has published eighteen books of poetry, eighteen novels, eleven books of non-fiction, nine collections of short fiction, eight children’s books, two graphic novels, and a number of small press editions of both poetry and fiction. Atwood has won numerous awards and honours for her writ’ng, including two Booker Prizes, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the Governor General’s Award, the Franz Kafka Prize, Princess of Asturias Awards, and the National Book of Critics and PEN Centre USA Lifetime Achievement Awards. A number of her works have been adapted for film and television.

Atwood's works encompass a variety of themes including gender and identity, religion and myth, the power of language, climate change, and "power politics". Many of her poems are inspired by myths and fairy tales which interested her from a very early age. Atwood is a founder of the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Writers' Trust of Canada. She is also a Senior Fellow of Massey College, Toronto. She is the inventor of the Long Pen device and associated technologies that facilitate remote robotic writing of documents. Atwood was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the second of three children of Carl Edmund Atwood, an entomologist, and Margaret Dorothy, a former dietitian and nutritionist from Woodville, Nova Scotia. As her father did research on forest entomology Atwood spent much of her childhood in the backwoods of northern Quebec and travelling back and forth between Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto.

She did not attend school full-time until she was 12 years old. She became a voracious reader of literature, Dell pocketbook mysteries, Grimms' Fairy Tales, Canadian animal stories, and comic books. She attended Leaside High School in Leaside, Toronto, and graduated in 1957. Atwood began writing plays and poems at the age of 6.

As a child, she also participated in the Brownie program of Girl Guides of Canada. Atwood has written about her experiences in Girl Guides in several of her publications. Atwood realized she wanted to write professionally when she was 16. In 1957, she began studying at Victoria College in the University of Toronto, where she published poems and articles in *Acta Victoriana*, the college literary journal, and participated in the sophomore theatrical tradition of *The Bob Comedy Revue*. Her professors included Jay Macpherson and Northrop Frye. She graduated in 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts in English (honours) and minors in philosophy and French.

In 1961, Atwood began graduate studies at Radcliffe College of Harvard University, with a Woodrow Wilson fellowship. She obtained a master's degree (MA) from Radcliffe in 1962 and pursued doctoral studies for two years, but did not finish her dissertation, *The English Metaphysical Romance*.

Atwood's work has been of interest to feminist literary critics, despite Atwood's unwillingness at times to apply the label 'feminist' to her works. Starting with the publication of her first novel, *The Edible Woman*, Atwood asserted, "I don't consider it feminism; I just consider it social realism." Despite her rejection of the label at times, critics have analysed the sexual politics, use of myth and fairy tale, and gendered relationships in her work through the lens of feminism. Before the 1985 publication of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood gave an interview to feminist theorist Elizabeth Meese in which she defined feminism as a "belief in the rights of women" and averred that "if practical, hard line, anti-male feminists took over and became the government, I would resist them."

In 2017, she clarified her discomfort with the label feminism by stating, "I always want to know what people mean by that word [feminism]. Some people mean it quite negatively, other people mean it very positively, some people mean it in a broad sense, other people mean it in a more specific sense. Therefore, in order to answer the question, you have to ask the person what they mean." Speaking to *The Guardian*, she said "For instance, some feminists have historically been against lipstick and letting transgender women into women's washrooms. Those are not positions I have agreed with", a position she repeated to *The Irish Times*. In an interview with Penguin Books, Atwood stated that the driving question throughout her writing of *The Handmaid's Tale* was "If you were going to shove women back into

the home and deprive them of all of these gains that they thought they had made, how would you do it?”, but related this question to totalitarianism, not feminism.

In January 2018, Atwood penned the op-ed “Am I a Bad Feminist?” for The Globe and Mail. The piece was in response to social media backlash related to Atwood’s signature on a 2016 petition calling for an independent investigation into the firing of Steven Galloway, a former University of British Columbia professor accused of sexual harassment and assault by a student. While feminist critics denounced Atwood for her support of Galloway, Atwood asserts that her signature was in support of due process in the legal system. She has been criticized for her comments surrounding the MeToo movement, particularly that it is a “symptom of a broken legal system”. Margaret Atwood is a Canadian writer best known for her prose fiction and for her feminist perspective. Role reversal and new beginnings are recurrent themes in her novels, all of them centred on women seeking their relationship to the world and the individuals around them.

In her early poetry collections, *Double Persephone* (1961), *The Circle Game* (1964, revised in 1966), and *The Animals in That Country* (1968), Atwood ponders human behaviour, celebrates the natural world, and condemns materialism. Role reversal and new beginnings the recurrent themes in her novels, all of them centred on women seeking their relationship to the world and the individuals around them. *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985; film 1990; opera 2000) is constructed around the written record of a woman’s experience in sexual slavery in a repressive Christian theocracy of the future. The Booker Prize-winning *The Blind Assassin* (2000) is an intricately constructed narrative centring on the memoir of an elderly Canadian woman, ostensibly written in order to dispel confusion about both her sister’s suicide and her own role in the posthumous publication of a novel supposedly written by her sister.

Other novels by Atwood include the surreal *The Edible Woman* (1969); *Surfacing* (1972; film 1981), an exploration of the relationship between nature and culture that centres on a woman's return to her childhood home in the northern wilderness of Quebec; *Lady Oracle* (1976); *Cat's Eye* (1988); *The Robber Bride* (1993; television film 2007); and *Alias Grace* (1996), a fictionalized account of a real-life Canadian girl who was convicted of two murders in a sensationalist 1843 trial; a TV miniseries based on the latter work aired in 2017, written by Atwood and Sarah Polley. Atwood's 2005 novel, *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus*, was inspired by Homer's *Odyssey*.

*In Oryx and Crake* (2003), Atwood describes a plague-induced apocalypse in the near future through the observations and flashbacks of a protagonist who is possibly the event's sole survivor. Minor characters from that book retell the dystopian tale from their perspectives in *The Year of the Flood* (2009). *MaddAddam* (2013), which continues to pluck at the biblical, eschatological, and anticorporate threads running through the previous novels, brings the satirical trilogy to a denouement.

The novel *The Heart Goes Last* (2015), originally published as a serial e-book (2012–13), imagines a dystopian America in which a couple is compelled to join a community that functions like a prison. *Hag-Seed* (2016), a retelling of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, was written for the Hogarth Shakespeare series. In 2019 *The Testaments*, a sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*, was published to critical acclaim and was a cowinner (with Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*) of the Booker Prize.

Atwood also writes short stories, collected in such volumes as *Dancing Girls* (1977), *Bluebeard's Egg* (1983), *Wilderness Tips* (1991), *Moral Disorder* (2006),

*Stone Mattress* (2014), and *Old Babes in the Wood: Stories* (2023). In addition, she continues to write poetry. Her 16<sup>th</sup> collection, *Dearly*, was published in 2020.

Atwood's nonfiction includes *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* (2002), which grew out of a series of lectures she gave at the University of Cambridge;

*Payback* (2008; film 2012), an impassioned essay that treats debt—both personal and governmental—as a cultural issue rather than as a political or an economic one; In

*Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination* (2011), in which she illuminates her relationship to science fiction; and *Burning Questions: Essays and Occasional Pieces, 2004 to 2021* (2022), a collection of diverse writings as well as several speeches.

Atwood also penned the libretto for the opera *Pauline*, about Pauline Johnson, a Canadian poet-performer of Mohawk and English heritage; it premiered at the York Theatre in Vancouver in 2014.

In addition to writing, Atwood teaches English literature at several Canadian and American universities. She won the PEN Pinter Prize in 2016 for the spirit of political activism threading her life and works. *The Handmaid's Tale* is Atwood's best known work. A dystopian novel, it was first published by McClelland and Stewart in 1985. The novel explores themes of women in subjugation, and the various means by which they gain agency, against the backdrop of a totalitarian pseudo-Christian theocracy which has overthrown the United States government in the near future. Sumptuary laws (dress codes) play a key role in imposing social control within the new society. *The Handmaid's Tale* won the Governor General's Award for 1985, and the first Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1987. It was also nominated for the 1986 Nebula Award, the 1986 Booker Prize, and the 1987 Prometheus Award. It has been adapted numerous times for stage, screen and most recently television.

*The Handmaid's Tale* comprises a number of social critiques. Atwood sought to demonstrate that extremist views might result in fundamentalist totalitarianism. The novel presents a dystopian vision of life in the United States in the period projecting forward from the time of the writing (1985), covering the backlash against feminism. Immediately following the overthrow of the government, but before the new order had completely changed things, women begin to lose whatever freedoms they had previously enjoyed. Atwood pictures revivalism as counter-revolutionary, opposed to the revolutionary doctrine espoused by Offred's mother and Moira, which sought to break down gender categories. A Marxist reading of fascism explains it as the backlash of the right after a failed revolution. Atwood explores this Marxist reading and translates its analysis into the structure of a religious and gender revolution.

Atwood mocks those who talk of "traditional values" and suggest that women should return to being housewives. Serena Joy, formerly a television preacher with a high public profile, has been forced to give up her career and is clearly not content. The religious and social ideology she has spent her entire long career publicly promoting has, in the end, destroyed her own life and happiness.

However, Atwood also offers a critique of contemporary feminism. By working against pornography, feminists in the early 1980s opened themselves up to criticism that they favored censorship. Anti-pornography feminist activists such as Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon made alliances with the religious right, despite the warnings of sex-positive feminists. Atwood warns that the consequences of such an alliance may end up empowering feminists' worst enemies. She also suggests, through descriptions of the narrator's feminist mother burning books, that contemporary feminism was becoming overly rigid and adopting the same tactics as the religious right.

Iconic Canadian author Margaret Atwood is more than a beloved novelist, poet, and essayist. She's also a feminist, environmental activist, and innovator—in 2004, she invented a remote robotic writing device called the Long Pen. Atwood's works reflect her inventiveness and passions. Her writing deals with themes of feminism and gender identity, art and expression, animal rights, political activism, and environmentalism. Atwood examines these themes across many genres, including nonfiction, poetry, dystopian fiction, science fiction, and retellings of mythology.

Margaret Atwood has been incredibly prolific and influential since her first publication, of her poetry collection *Double Persephone*, released in 1961. In a career that has spanned more than 60 years, Atwood has published more than 60 works, including novels, short story collections, poetry, nonfiction, children's books, and graphic novels. In other words, there are plenty of Atwood's works to read and listen to.

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Nobel Prize-winning British novelist, screenwriter, and short story author whose works explore issues of identity, regret, and nostalgia. Like Atwood, Ishiguro's writing spans many genres, but one genre he often returns to is literary science fiction, as he did in his most recent novel, *Klara and the Sun*.

Octavia E. Butler's works are often compared to Margaret Atwood's and vice versa, bring as it as contemporary to a great extent on the influence on other where many have wondered each other. A Hugo and Nebula award-winning author, and a MacArthur Genius Grant recipient, Butler aimed to write science fiction stories that explore issues of race and class with strong women at their centre.

Naomi Alderman is a British novelist, who is also a feminist and women's right activist. Like Atwood, Alderman's activism has greatly influenced her work. In

2012, Naomi Alderman was actually selected as a protegee by Margaret Atwood under the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative program.

American novelist Madeline Miller kept her day job as a Latin and Greek teacher while she worked on her first novel, *The Song of Achilles*, which took 10 years to write. The amount of research and time Miller invested in her publishing debut certainly paid off: *The Song of Achilles* went on to win the Orange Prize for Fiction. Her second novel was released in 2018, and between the two novels, Miller has already developed quite a devoted following.

American author Paolo Bacigalupi is another Hugo and Nebula award-winning author of science fiction and fantasy who's worth checking out if you love Margaret Atwood. Like Atwood, Bacigalupi is an environmental activist, and his interest in environmentalism, like the effects of bioengineering and the depletion of fossil fuels, shows up in his novels.

Author Ling Ma was born in Sanming, China, and grew up in Utah, Nebraska, and Kansas. Her debut novel, the post-apocalyptic *Severance*, received the Kirkus Prize. While Ma's novel imagines a world much different than the worlds imagined in Atwood's apocalyptic and dystopian novels, both authors explore similarly politically charged themes. Additionally, Ling Ma's work examines feelings of otherness and a search for identity.

N.K. Jemisin is an American science fiction and fantasy author whose novels often confront themes of discrimination and oppression. With her *Broken Earth* trilogy, Jemisin became the first author ever to win the Hugo Award for Best Novel three years in a row. She was also a recipient of the MacArthur Genius Grant in 2020.

Natalie Haynes is an English writer and literary scholar who studied the classics at Cambridge University. She's also a journalist, a broadcaster, and a standup

comedian. And she brings all of these multifaceted sides of herself into her novels. Like Margaret Atwood, she's written in a variety of genres, including essays, nonfiction, children's stories, and of course, novels. Sophie Mackintosh is a British novelist and short story writer who was nominated for the 2018 Man Booker Prize for her debut novel, *The Water Cure*. Although a relatively new author, Mackintosh has already established a strong narrative voice.

Sudha Murthy is an Indian educator, author and philanthropist, who is chairperson of the Infosys Foundation. She is married to the co-founder of Infosys, N. R. Narayana Murthy. Murthy was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India, for social work by the Government of India in 2006. Later in 2023, she was awarded the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award in India. Sudha Murthy began her professional career in computer science and engineering. She is the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and a member of the public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation. She has founded several orphanages, participated in rural development efforts, supported the movement to provide all Karnataka government schools with computer and library facilities, and established Murthy Classical Library of India at Harvard University.

Sudha Murthy was born into a Kannada-speaking Deshastha Madhva Brahmin family on 19 August 1951 in Shiggaon, Haveri in Karnataka, India, the daughter of R. H. Kulkarni, a surgeon, and his wife Vimala Kulkarni, a school teacher. She was raised by her parents and maternal grandparents. These childhood experiences form the historical basis for her first notable work entitled *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read, Wise and Otherwise and Other Stories*. Murthy completed a B.Eng. in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the B.V.B. College of Engineering &

Technology (now known as KLE Technological University), and then a M.Eng. in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Science.

Murthy is best known for her philanthropy and her contribution to literature in Kannada and English. Dollar Bahu (lit. 'Dollar Daughter-in-Law'), a novel originally authored by her in Kannada and later translated into English as Dollar Bahu, was adapted as a televised dramatic series by Zee TV in 2001. Runa, a story by Sudha Murthy was adapted as a Marathi film, Pitruroon by director Nitish Bhardwaj. Sudha Murthy has also acted in the film as well as a Kannada film Prarthana.

Sudha Murthy was the first female engineer to be hired at India's largest auto manufacturer TATA Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO). She joined the company as a Development Engineer in Pune and then worked in Mumbai & Jamshedpur as well. She had written a postcard to the company's Chairman complaining of the "men only" gender bias at TELCO. As a result, she was granted a special interview and hired immediately. She later joined Walchand Group of Industries at Pune as Senior Systems Analyst.

In 1996, she started Infosys Foundation and to date has been the Trustee of Infosys Foundation and a Visiting Professor at the PG Centre of Bangalore University. She also taught at Christ University. Sudha Murthy has written and published many books which include novels, non-fiction, travelogues, technical books, and memoirs. Her books have been translated into all major Indian languages. She is also a columnist for English and Kannada newspapers.

Sudha Murthy who has made a prominent impact on Indian society. A writer, philanthropist and entrepreneur, Sudha Murthy is greatly revered for being a prolific writer, facilitating the education of poor children and being one of the brains behind Infosys, one of India's leading IT Company. Soberly dressed in traditional Indian

attire, Sudha Murthy's philanthropic work has garnered global recognition. From becoming the first female Engineer in India to heading a company like Infosys, her seriousness towards making a change in society is due to her educational journey which has played a significant role in her making.

Sudha Murthy has always been an advocate of women's rights and a pioneer in the development of education. Once she wrote to Tata Motors, also known as Telco about their men-only policy, and for that, she was called to an interview, and later became the first female engineer to be employed in India. Her position at Telco was important in redefining the company's job policies.

Sudha Murthy's education and her work in various domains have led her to win many awards. She has received numerous awards for her academic excellence. In the year 2019, IIT Kanpur awarded her Honorary Doctor of Science (DSc) degree. Her achievements include a list of literary works in many languages. Initially, she started to write in Kannada and later wrote in English as well. They're all about family, marriage, social problems, etc. She has received several awards and distinctions for her achievements, including the R.K. The Narayan Award for literature.

Sudha Murthy is also the chairperson and trustee of Infosys Foundation. With her master's in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, she started Infosys Foundation in 1996. She has built 2300 houses in flood-affected areas through the foundation. She also covers public hygiene, healthcare, education, art and culture and poverty alleviation. She has built 7000 libraries in schools and 16,000 toilets. According to Sudha Murthy, money always exchanges hands and helping the community greatly increases goodwill. Her strong involvement in social work for women's empowerment, education, public health, and public hygiene is a

testament to her high moral standards. Sudha Murthy says “A fire cannot be extinguished with another fire. It is only water that can make a difference.”

Sudha Murthy is an active social worker and Padma Shri Awardee. She writes in two languages: Kannada and English. Sudha started her career in the field of computer science and engineering. She is an active member of the Gate Foundation and the chairperson of a non-profit organization, Infosys Foundation in Karnataka. Credited for founding several orphanages, Sudha has also participated in various rural development efforts, to provide library and computer facilities in all Government schools of Karnataka. One of her many achievements includes establishing the ‘The Murthy Classical Library of India’ at Harvard University. She has written some mythological stories also which show how women in past have fought to overcome the cruelty in society.

Sudha Murthy is popular name when it comes to philanthropy. She is a creative writer who writes prolifically. An teacher, Computer Engineer, Social worker and a creative writer who has authored many books including novels, short stories, technical books and non-fiction books. Her themes range from common domestic aspects to high ideals, covering men, women, lifestyle, hospitality, school education, fantasy, mythological stories, act of philanthropy and kindness, social issues, variety of people from different parts of the country, technocrats, life experiences etc.

Sudha Murthy illustrates regarding various kinds of issues in her write-ups and her writings are not limited to the issues of women alone. Her writing demonstrates a marked change to feminine writing in the overall viewpoint. “It is a common practice in feminine writing to blame men for women’s sufferings, as if men and women were born rivals and marriage was a license to carry out a men’s women’s oppression agenda. Sudha Murthy is probably the first Indian writer in English to rationalize the

problem by blaming one woman and the man in the family for the misfortunes of another woman. All four of her novels display the complicated relationships between two women in one family.” Another theme Sudha Murthy explores is the diminishing impact of rising capitalism on close human relationships in Indian society.

Sudha Murthy sets the activity of her books in the towns what’s more, provincial inclinations that exist in huge urban communities. Juxtaposition of country existence with cosmopolitan life of the urban areas makes her work illustrative of in general Indian life. It likewise causes her to draw out the showdown between two ages.” “In spite of the fact that Maharastrian by birth, she has settled her business realm and humanitarian work essentially in Karnataka. Normally she is very much familiar with the individuals and their ways of life around there. Her characters have Kannada names like Akka, Appa, Avva and so forth. This doesn’t be that as it may imply that her books are territorial in extension and bid. We discover individuals with such qualities somewhere else in India. Her expertise to grow the canvas of her books is essential.”

Sudha Murthy has proved that the simple use of words can also express ideas and views efficiently. One does not always have to use sophisticated language or phrases to show the importance or talent of the literature. Sudha Murthy’s write-ups are so easily accessible to in terms of understanding that it becomes a point of attraction for any reader. The connectivity between the audience and the story generates quite easily. This works as a plus factor for any writer or narrator. These skills of Sudha Murthy are highly remarkable and show her dedication and efficiency in storytelling and expressing her ideas.

“The characterisation of Sudha Murthy lacks imagination. She struggles to dive deep into her character’s psychological crises. Young boys and girls get married

and start a relationship. The two do not have intimate outings. This is very odd.

Without wandering and dating it is impossible to expect modern boys and girls with high academic credentials and knowledge to get into marital relations.” Despite these shortcomings, her characterization art is clear and direct in keeping with the storytelling tradition in India. As a result, novels of Sudha Murthy and short stories cater to today’s Indian reader’s section only. She stands out as an excellent narrator because of her devotion to Indian culture and not because of copying the westerners. This goes on to prove that India has evolved but that the Indians have not.

She is a passionate creative writer whose books get translated into 18 languages from Penguin Publishers. She is a popular writer of popular literature whose mother tongue is Kannada but she started writing in English almost at the age of 50. She continues writing and her target is to reach every household, children, men and women on plenty of variety of subjects. One of her popular story ‘The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk’ is one such story Written by Sudha Murthy. Which is heart breaking, eye opener, enlightening, highly humanistic story which unravels many issues related to poverty, hunger, poor people’s life style, village life, economical condition of the have-nots, familial concern mother’s predicament, challenges of hospitality culture amidst poverty, societal issues in a very poignant way which makes us introspect our own role in correcting the social imbalances in the society and challenges arising out of it.

Anita Desai is a well-known and celebrated figure in the Indian literary world, having been shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *In Custody* (1984), which was transformed into an award-winning film in 1993, and *The Village by the Sea* (1982), for which she received the Guardian Children’s Fiction Prize, are among her most well-known novels. *Fasting, Feasting* (on the

differences in living in India and America), and *Cry, the Peacock* are a few others (a woman haunted by a prediction made in her childhood). *Games'at twilight*, is a terrific place to start for someone new to her work.

K.R. Meera is a well-known Malayalam author. Many of her novels have been translated into English, including *Yellow is the Colour of Longing*, *Hangwoman* (on capital punishment and the narrative of a woman forced to carry on a family legacy), *The Gospel of Yudas* (on love and treachery in the post-Naxalite era), and *The Poison of Love* (story of a woman with a philandering husband). Her most acclaimed novel, *Araachar* (translated as *Hangwoman*), won multiple honours, including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (2013), Odakkuzhal Award (2013), Vayalar Award (2014), Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award (2015), and a spot on the 2016 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature shortlist.

Kamala Surayya, known as Kamala Das or Madhavikutty, is a well-known Malayalam and English poet. In 1984, she was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Her writings are personal, and she does not shy away from controversial issues like female sexual awakening, much to the chagrin of the conservative society of the time. Her semi-autobiographical book, *My Story*, is a well-known work that sparked much debate upon its publication.

Meena Kandasamy is a Tamil Nadu-based Indian poet, fiction writer, translator, and activist. Feminism and opposition to the caste system are common topics in her work. She is most recognised for her poetry. She has also translated into English the writings of Periyar E. V. Ramasamy, Thirumavalavan, and Tamil Eelam authors Kasi Anandan, Cheran, and VIS Jayapalan. Her debut novel is *Gypsy Goddess*.

Arundhati Roy's debut novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997), not only won the Booker Prize, but also became the best-selling book by a non-expatriate Indian author. Roy is one of the most popular writers in contemporary India, noted for her strong political opinions and comments. She has also published several essay collections, including *War Talk* (2003) and *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* (2006). (2014). Roy's first novel is a must-read for every literature enthusiast. It will almost feel as though Roy has disguised poetry as prose because the characters are so well-crafted and the wording is so magnificent. It might be read as a social commentary on the caste-based inequality that exists in India, or as a touching love story. In any way, this is going to be one of the most memorable books you've ever read.

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian-born American author. Her stories have an Indian flavour to them and convey the nostalgia of immigrants. Her debut novel, *The Namesake*, was warmly received, and her most recent work, *The Lowland*, was included in the Man Booker longlist in 2013. The short story collections, *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth* are two of the particular favourites of all.

Indira Goswami is a writer from Assam. She is also noted for her role as a mediator between the government and militant groups and for bringing about societal change through her novels. *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*, *Pages Stained With Blood*, and *The Man from Chinnamasta* are among her writings that have been translated into English from her native Assamese. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Jnanpith Award in 1983. (2001).

Namita Gokhale is the author of fourteen novels and nonfiction works. Her debut novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, was recognised for its explicit sexual humour and was a parody on Bombay's elite. Her most recent novel, *Things to Leave Behind*, was published in 2016.

Indira Goswami is a writer from Assam. She is also noted for her role as a mediator between the government and militant groups and for bringing about societal change through her novels. *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*, *Pages Stained With Blood*, and *The Man from Chinnamasta* are among her writings that have been translated into English from her native Assamese. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Jnanpith Award in 1983. (2001).

Three unique first-person testimonials, each of which corresponds to one of the novel's three narrators, are combined together in *The Testaments*. Aunt Lydia, the first narrator, writes her narrative in a book known as "The Ardua Hall Holograph." The spoken accounts of Agnes and Daisy, the other two narrators, are included in the book as transcripts of witness testimony. Each of the three narrators describes her involvement in a plot to overthrow the Republic of Gilead's patriarchal and theocratic government. In "The Ardua Hall Holograph," Aunt Lydia describes how she became powerful within Gilead. Aunt Lydia had a successful career as a judge before the coup that toppled the American government. She describes how she was detained at a stadium after being arrested and how she witnessed the execution of other working women while she was there. Aunt Lydia noticed as the days went by that women were taking the place of males as the executioners.

One evening, men came to get Aunt Lydia and led her to Commander Judd. She was questioned about her willingness to help the government. She resisted, so he sent her to solitary confinement for a few days. After that, she consented to help. Aunt Lydia made the decision to do whatever it took to survive and overthrow Gilead from inside, even though she knew that she would have to take part in the execution of other women. She became one of the Founders of the Aunts, along with Elizabeth, Helena, and Vidala.

The laws that ruled all women in Gilead were created and implemented by the Founders. The other Founders were rapidly subjugated by Aunt Lydia, who wanted to pit the three against one another. Since Gilead's foundation, Aunt Lydia has built a massive network of monitoring technology to gather proof of other people's transgressions. While working on her memoir, Aunt Lydia is aggressively investigating the whereabouts of "Baby Nicole," a kid who was infamously smuggled by her Handmaid mother out of Gilead and into Canada years previously. Agents of the Mayday anti-Gilead rebel group continue to keep Baby Nicole's whereabouts a secret. Two additional narratives in the book are told by two young women, one from Canada and the other from Gilead. These women become complicit in Aunt Lydia's scheme to overthrow Gilead.

Agnes Jemima was raised in a wealthy Gilead family. When her mother, Tabitha, passed away, her joyful upbringing came to an abrupt end, and her emotionally distant father wed a ruthless widow named Paula. Since a young age, Agnes had concerns about how women were treated in Gilead. She saw the horrific Handmaid of her family die after childbirth, which reinforced her worst suspicions. When Agnes turned thirteen, Paula tried to arrange for her to get married to Commander Judd. Agnes considered taking a similar path after thinking about how Becka, one of her school classmates, tried suicide in order to end her own marriage. However, Aunt Lydia once paid her a visit and advised her to seek refuge among the aunts in order to avoid marriage. Paula was successfully avoided by Agnes, who afterwards pledged as a Supplicant. Agnes was reunited with Becka, who had also pledged, once she had safely arrived at Ardua Hall.

Agnes was trained to read and write, two things that were off-limits to all women except Aunts. She discovered that much of Gilead's official ideology went

against the Bible during this time. She also obtained from an unnamed source folders holding top-secret details about corruption among Gilead's elite. Agnes became desperate for more access to the power after realising that the aunts derived it from these secrets.

Daisy, the third narrator, was born and raised in Canada's Toronto. Melanie and Neil, her parents, had a used clothing shop. Daisy once disobeyed her parents' wishes and went to a demonstration against human rights abuses in Gilead. She managed to flee when the demonstration grew violent with the aid of Ada, a mystery middle-aged woman who was her mother's friend. Daisy's parents were alarmed when they saw her on the evening news on television. When Daisy arrived at Ardua Hall and Aunt Lydia put her in Agnes' flat, the lives of the three women came together.

Aunt Lydia eventually identified herself to Daisy as the source and implanted a tiny piece of information—referred to as a “microdot”—containing a wealth of data regarding corruption in Gilead into Daisy's arm. She also exposed their sibling status to Agnes and Daisy. Both of the young women, along with Becka, were recruited by Aunt Lydia to participate in a scheme to aid Daisy in escaping with her trove of top-secret documents under the pretence that she wished to transform Gilead's morally depraved core.

Agnes and Daisy managed to flee to Canada despite numerous difficulties. The explosive documents immediately went viral in Canadian media and sparked Gilead's demise. Professor Pieixoto, a historian, discusses the written and oral testimonies that make up the remainder of the book in the novel's concluding portion, which is set thousands of years in the future in the year 2197.

The author of *Gently Falling the Bakula* is Sudha Murty. The two major protagonists Shrikant and Shrimati are neighbours in the unimportant village of Hubli when the story opens. They both are shown as cut throat competitors in schools and later their story turned into a teenage romance. Even though Shrimati and Shrikant's families were neighbours, there was a history of animosity between them. However, as the bakula blossoms on the bakula tree that towers over Shrikant and Shrimati's bedroom continued to bloom, so did their love.

After finishing high school, Shrimati chose to attend a local college to study history and literature, while Shrikant was accepted to IIT Bombay. Their love story developed into a series of letters they wrote to one another. Even though Shrikant and Shrimati's families were in competition, they both got married. Shrikant was offered a position in Bombay, and Professor Collins offered Shrimati the chance to study history in the United States. While Shrimati had to turn down the opportunity to study overseas so that she could go to Bombay with Shrikant, Shrikant accepted his job offer there. This clearly illustrates patriarchy and how it has endured throughout time. Shrimati only gave up her love of history when she got wed to Shrikant.

Shrikant, who has now made his way into business, was so dissatisfied with his advancement that he began to take Shrimati for granted. Shrimati was suffering from Gangakka's (Shrikant's mother) mistreatment and was miserable and alone in the busy city of Bombay. Because of his corporate career, Shrikant was always worn out and had little time to maintain his marriage. Shrimati had no idea that her quiet, lovely, and humble life in Hubli would transform into isolation and gloomy days in Bombay. Additionally, as the days went by, Shrikant's fondness for Shrimati would erode, and clashes and disputes would start to occur between them.

Shrimati resolved to take care of her first passion, History, because her second love, Shrikant, was waning because she was tired of her miserable life in Bombay. She got in touch with Professor Collins, who had suggested she study history at an Asian university in the United States. Professor Collins eventually offered the same offer to Shrimati, but this time she was determined to follow her ambitions, be who she is, and do what she wants to do. In the traditional ending, Shrimati leaves India and Shrikant is powerless to do anything to stop her. The title of the Book, *Gently falls the Bakula*, refers to the way in which the Bakula flower, which represented the love between Shrimati and Shrikant, had fallen. In the book, a marriage fails because of a lack of time, communication, and self-pride. Shrimati's decision to go after her aspirations at the very end is a reminder of how crucial.

Indian English literature has to travel a long distance to reach its splendour and stateliness since life is always in a state of flux. The status of women worldwide has been drastically shifting recently, parallel to this trip. Indian women have a long history of exhibiting a rebellious attitude but also blindly obeying the family structure. Slowly, though, the times changed, and individuals started to want independence and self-sufficiency. The current research looks at how her better half's egocentric viewpoint makes her revert to being an ambitious and soulful woman.

The version of Aunt Lydia that Margaret Atwood centres on in her most recent book, *The Testaments* (2019), is examined in this paper for its various gender performances. In *The Testaments*, Lydia assumes two roles: in public, that of the aunt, and in private, that of a woman fighting to reestablish the independence of Gileadean women. The Aunt's gender is expressed deliberately, whereas the second gender is expressed much more subconsciously.

## **Chapter II**

### **Reconstruction of Womanhood**

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The phrase "post-feminism" refers to the social belief that most or all of the objectives of the feminist movement have already been accomplished, rendering obsolete any subsequent iterations and growths of the movement. The term "postfeminist" is frequently used by feminist critics to refer adversely to the increasing acceptance of behaviours and viewpoints that both the present and earlier generations of feminists have judged sexist or repressive.

Recognising the significance of men's roles in the domestic and familial world is one of the notable aspects of post feminism. Postfeminist authors frequently focus on the status of males and the function they play in a family composition. Postfeminist writers show a shift from the traditional notion of controlling males to domesticated men. A fresh viewpoint on how important father is to a child's social, emotional, intellectual, and emotional growth.

The unique significance that a male as a father brings to the stability of the family and the home is highlighted in postfeminist works. Fathering and fatherhood are valued on par with a mother's involvement in raising a kid. The historical feminist movement despised such a fundamental feature. An advanced sort of menfolk is portrayed by postfeminist writers as playing a supportive role, gladly taking on household duties, caring for children, and creating the ideal home. This chapter discusses new characterizations of this nature, various viewpoints on widowhood, and a revised perspective on women's sexuality.

*Gently Falls the Bakula* depicts the cultural difference among Hubli and Bombay throughout. Hubli is a rural village full with legends and superstitions, while

Bombay is an industrial city where people's interactions are evaluated on the basis of their ability to make or lose money. Srikanth and Srimathi are the principal characters. To understand the impacts of industrialization it has been analysed by the novelist through a mental journey through them. The setting of the first half of the book is set in the village of Hubli in northern Karnataka, and the second half is set in Mumbai, the country's financial hub.

The Hubli clan is so dogmatic in its views that they are unable to see beyond them. Smartha, a devotee of Shiva, is unable to wed a Vaishnava, a devotee of Vishnu. It is clear that the society is patriarchal. No matter who they women are perpetually in the background, tamed, and subordinate in this day and age, where the male head of the household makes all choices. The author compares them to frayed Banarasi sarees. They find it hard to comprehend a woman calling her husband by his first name. When Srimati addresses Srikanth, who is the same age as Shri, just after their wedding, they feel it is improper. There is no compelling reason for Gangakka and Rindakka, the mothers of Srikanth and Srimati, to argue.

The book claims that Rindakka doesn't require an explanation because she disapproves of everything. Rindakka, who frequently calls others names, Kamala, the family's sole provider, is a prime example of the dominance of the mother-in-law. Being an intelligent woman and a devout daughter-in-law, Kamala chose not to respond. Kamala led a peaceful but successful life because she considered her existence as her destiny. She raised her daughter Srimati in this manner, and despite her mother-in-law's severe treatment of her, Srimati doesn't raise a fuss over her. Srimati as well believes it is her duty to pay back her mother-in-law's debt. The article has numerous examples that show how common superstitions are in rural areas. The author also portrays the lives of women from affluent families. During the party,

Srimati interacts with the wives of other businessmen's husbands. They converse and show interest in jewellery and apparel.

Srimati is also invited to the jewellery show featuring diamonds. Srimati had little interest in jewellery or other luxuries. She is a lady who is straightforward. She is warned by her spouses not to become the perfect housewife. They state their conviction that when males travel for business, women ought to be free to live independently. Srimati is unable to adopt their values because her mother reared her as a straightforward individual. Sudha Murthy illustrates numerous characters' materialistic mindsets throughout the story. There is no substantive conversation taking place among the female attendees. It's for the benefit of the business. Srimati's discussion with Dolly Lynes demonstrates both her love of history and her developing discontent.

She loves history and can't trust Dolly's claim that American culture is amazing. She vehemently disagrees with the Idea. Due to his focus on his work, Srikanth finds it difficult to tolerate Srimati's attitude. They argue as a result of this, and Srimati gets angry. She was shocked by his comments about the value of Indian culture. All through the story, we could see Srimati's value declining. Her transitions from being a first-rank holder to being a businessman's wife. On the other side, Srikanth improved from finishing in second to becoming the most prosperous businessperson. The narrative does a lovely job of capturing the problems that middle-class rural women face as a result of industrialization.

Humanistic psychology has an impact on the growth of Self Determination Theory. Humanistic psychology considers an individuals entire psyche as well as personal accomplishment when assessing self-efficacy and self-actualization. Whether or not a person achieves their self-actualization and self-efficacy goals may have an

effect on their motivation. The significance of the relationship between internal and external incentives as a kind of attainment motivation According to self-determination theory, a goal exists. Effort, agency, and dedication are examples of persistently good traits in human nature that the theory refers to as intrinsic development tendencies.

This theory is founded on the concept that these traits are innate in people. Self-determination now refers to the ability or act of making one's own decisions and taking control of one's own life, which has a deeper emotional and social connotation. According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), man is born with an innate urge to investigate, assimilate, and rule his environment, which is how he develops a truly high sense of self. According to Self -determination theory, true, real self-esteem is stable and secure when people are at their most alive and vibrant when all of their 'needs' are met.

The Self Determination Theory has a lot to say about setting and achieving goals. The theory holds that in addition to the method of achieving our goals being important, the substance of our goals, or what we strive for, is also crucial for satisfying our needs. Exactly how much a significant predictor of wellbeing outcomes is goal-setting behaviour that is independent or self-directed as opposed to restricted. when individuals are free to pursue our goals rather than adhering to a strict, external control system, they are happier and more successful. Even when pursuing extrinsic incentives like wealth or fame, they feel more satisfied and authentic when we do so on our own terms, for our own reasons, and using our resources. Added research on the self-determination theory and its objectives. The relationship between autonomy and success was maintained, as was the idea that success is more likely when our goals are intrinsic and created to satisfy our basic needs. They are more likely to

succeed when sympathetic and encouraging people are around us rather than controlling or directive ones.

Self-awareness, decision-making, goal-setting, goal achievement, communication, and relationship-build, the capacity to both rejoice and learn from both achievements and failures. Reflection on experiences is common. It has been discovered to provide a number of positive consequences, such as a higher likelihood of landing a lucrative career and independent living in the community. Self Determination Theory's main goal is to create analytical tools for reading and comprehending a wide range of Self Enhancement practises and forms, both historical and contemporary.

In Indian books, the female is not shown as a subservient auxiliary to her male counterparts in society. Numerous female writers have surfaced, adding to the development of Indian fiction by introducing fresh themes with an emphasis on problems affecting women. One is Sudha Murty. Among the most significant Indian women novelists writing in English today. In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Shrimati, the protagonist, comes from a middle-class family that values intellect, education, and sympathy. In this piece, Sudha Murty depicts Shrimati, the persistent woman who is the centre of the story, succumbing to her husband's tenacity, and how the muffled voice has escaped its own and entered the stage to convey its anxiety.

A pretty young woman named Shrimati and a charming and attractive young man named Shrikant fall in love and get married. They moved from Hubli, a small town in the state of Karnataka, to Mumbai. Shrikant quickly moves up the corporate ladder as a highly skilled IT specialist. He acts hostilely at work and becomes the best in his field, while Shrimati, who has a master's in history, gives up her academic goals to become his unwavering shadow and quietly fulfil her duties as a corporate leader's

wife. When Shrimati looks back and realises her sacrifices and struggles went unnoticed, her life becomes dull and meaningless.

Shrimati enters Shrikant's home as an unexpected daughter-in-law. Despite Shrimati's best efforts to win over Shrikant's parents, Gangakka teases her and claims that as Shrimati has come from a low-income family, the family is in trouble. Sangakkara could not face the thought of marrying her rival's daughter. Shrimati is depressed as a result of Gangakka's continual teasing. As soon as Shrimati promises to help her, She is dismissed by Gangakka, who says, "You just got married; you don't know our customs," as she enters the kitchen. Therefore, don't even consider cooking.

Enormous achievement is usually the consequence of huge sacrifice, and it is never the product of selfishness, according to Napoleon Hill. The question is on who's sacrifice the accomplishments were made on. Shrimati defers her field research and works in some kind of a tiny import-export company out of love for Shrikant and to return the loan to her mother-in-law took out before their wedding for Shrikant's studies. She sends her whole salary, including savings, to her mother-in-law every month, oblivious to the ruse hatched by her mom and siblings. She bears her husband's burden as if it were her own, as it is customary in India. When Shrikant inquire about repaying his loan, she responds, when you are hers, your lending is mine as well. It is delivered in a box. I can't say that I solely desire my hubby. His triumphs and setbacks are likewise acceptable to me.

When the chance to go to Delhi presents itself, Shrimati is eager to sign up for her Ph.D. in history. Shrikant actively pushes his transfer and claims he could forfeit his advancement if he accepts the relocation, so Shrimati gives up her love and travels to Delhi with him. She rejects Shrikant's idea that she stays by herself and continue her education in Bombay while he makes monthly visits as a devoted wife. She

assures Shrikant that neither option is viable. Because you declined this offer, I don't want you to lose out on a promotion, and I don't want to be held responsible alone. We'll stay in Delhi for a whole year before I start school there the following year. Anyway, I can visit a lot of historical places in north India.

Shrikant climbs the ladder of business success in a short period because of his hard effort and strong performance. As a General Manager, Shrikant develops into a meticulous, motivated, determined, and tireless worker. Success, he claims, is never an accident; it must be planned for. But he doesn't realize that his constant victories are due to his wife's failures. Shrikant and Shrimati's lives have been drastically altered as a result of their new status. When Shrimati expresses her dissatisfaction with her inability to have children, Shrikant urges her to put her "energy to good use."

Shrikant's desire to have children surprised Shrimati. Sangakkara now makes fun of her for her infertility rather than her wealth. Shrimati recalls the words made by her mother-in-law's sister regarding their inability to procreate. Despite the fact that both of them are capable of having children, Shrikant neglects his duties as a spouse to his family because of his domineering personality. She longs for this. They had discussed Siddhartha Gautama, Vikramaditya, and Ashoka in great detail before they got married. Wouldn't they all be born into their family? Is there nobody with Shrikant's intelligence who can succeed her? Many of the children she had fantasised about would remain merely in her imagination.

As Mother Teresa once said, "Love starts by having to take care of the closest ones the one at home." Shrimati handles all housekeeping duties as well as acting as hostess for Shrikant's guests. Despite being ill, Shrimati manages the household duties and welcomes guests on behalf of Shrikant. She is a torchbearer who clears her husband's path of all obstacles. Despite the fact that she contributed to his success,

Shrikant treated her like a given. Her sacrifices, compromises, and cooperation become pointless as she realises when Shrikant just cares about his business. When she realised this, she felt as though the work she had been doing had been done against her will and that she had not been enjoying it.

Shrimati gently but surely realises that the free flow of ideas and aspirations, as well as their love and affection, have all diminished with time. She stops being interested in things that used to fascinate her. Shrimati was inclined to say, "I am quite upset at meeting people like you and wasting my time." guests. With a fake smile, she said, "I am glad to meet you."

Events at the party and Shrikant's indignant remarks directed at her that invoke traditional values exacerbate Shrimati's fury. She felt terrible embarrassment after hearing Shrikant's statement, and for the first time she understood that he had violated her independence. When she tries to teach him about history, he ignores her and says, "Your lectures are plenty, Shrimati. Don't even mention your pointless topic. Your world and the business world are very different. History cannot be consumed. Acting like a historian at such events is inappropriate".

After all, what does Indian history have to boast about? The best presents one can give to loved ones are time, attention, affection, and worry. When the aforementioned qualities are not acquired or developed, marriage loses all meaning. Shrimati's feelings were torn apart by S. Shrikant's critical remarks, which "chopped the sensitive tree of their friendship." She starts to wonder if Hubli can ever return to its glory day. When she mentioned moving to Hubli, her husband laughed at the idea. The elderly Shrimati is, he goes on, asking that she be rational, "always lovely because we can't get it back." Childhood appears to be wonderful when you're young. Youth becomes romantic as you age. Anything we lose will always be worthwhile.

Think about predicting and adjusting to a world that is continuously changing. Avoid dwelling on the past.

When Shrimati learns Shrikant spends his entire salary on himself and his goals, she feels like a weary traveller in a deserted area longing for an oasis. She feels more like a planet than a star, sparkling with light that is reflected off its surface. Shrimati's agony is as intense as the as she becomes aware of how their interests, preferences, and worldviews differ. She decides to pick history as her future instead of Shrikant.

The four walls of a house make it up. In contrast, a home is a location where there is love, affection, and a committed relationship. The best thing to do was to depart when anything wasn't present because otherwise it was just a house. Shrimati says it thus way: Shri, I loved history and I loved you. There was a moment, for sure. when I cherished you above all else. However, when you sacrificed your higher ideals in the name of profit, I was left all alone and in possession of nothing but history. You were clear about your goals. I now have a clear idea of my goals and how to get there. A prolonged period of sacrifice has the power to turn someone's heart to stone.

*The Testaments* shows food as sacrifice and offering. Women leave food items at the statue of Aunt Lydia, associating her with divine powers: God has given up blood sacrifice, but Gilead has not: it sacrifices women's bodies for babies. "Blood was polluting, especially when it came out of girls, but God once liked having it spilled on his altars. Though he had given that up in favour of fruits, vegetables, silent sufferings, and good deeds. Votaries have taken to leaving offerings at my feet: eggs for fertility, oranges to suggest the fullness of pregnancy, croissants to reference to the moon" (Atwood 2019, 4).

The image of a sacrifice is brought up by the woman's bleeding body on the table: Gilead sacrifices the Handmaids in order to give life. Another connection exists between a woman's body and food; during pregnancy and nursing, women generate 'food' in addition to cooking it. The remains of to be devoured, the Handmaids are shattered and degraded. To bring Gilead life and children, their bodies are sacrificed. In *The Testaments*, an extreme example is presented when Ofkyle is sacrificed for the Commander's unborn child. Because the doctor is called too late, she dies while giving birth and bleeds to death without receiving medical attention. Agnes has deep empathy. A typically Atwoodian tableau contrasts the Handmaid's gutted body with the Marthas' leftover party fare, which includes cake and white-bread sandwiches with the crusts removed. Agnes is unable to eat due to her grief for Ofkyle's passing, realisation of her potential destiny, and disgust over Gileadean misogyny. The Marthas don't appear to be bothered by Gilead's decision to save the infant rather than the Handmaid.

Scenes of women assisting one another and forging solid alliances to defend one another can be seen in *The Testaments*. Even though she seems committed to the government, Aunt Lydia arranges the most significant demonstration of women's unity. proof of Gilead's corruption and violations of human rights being stolen. She also guards young girls from Commander Judd, a violent, Bluebeard-like person who has poisoned a string of young wives in order to obtain new, presumably younger wives. Commander Judd is a paedophile and murderer. Aunt Lydia arranges for the young woman to attend a retreat at the Calm and Balm Clinic after learning that he intends to kill his most recent wife with rat poison.

Gilead rigorously regulates medical care, and a woman must have her husband's consent before receiving any treatment. Aunt Lydia helps the two girls flee

Gilead for Canada while transporting proof of the corrupt regime, saving the young bride. Testimonies highlight the link between power and consumption while also demonstrating that women can reclaim their right to eat, prepare their own meals, and indulge in ice cream and coffee. The Gileadean stories illustrate how the state oppresses and contaminates women. By Atwood's witnesses gain the knowledge and skills necessary to oppose the dismal, unsatisfactory, and disgusting laws and constraints that govern their lives while also exposing how consumption is tied to such power politics. An essential first step is to recognise the governmental ideology of fake utopia.

*The Testaments* is a collection of testimonials, including transcripts of Agnes's testimony, which reads almost like diary entries, Aunt Lydia's confessions, and Daisy's witness account. Through these testimonies, we see not just the ideological framework and power structures at play, not just the history of Gilead but also the daily activities of its inhabitants, including their meals. The characters in Atwood's dystopian novel Gilead have little control over their lives and, subsequently, over their meals: they are unable to pick what to eat, purchase it themselves, prepare it however they choose, or set the portion sizes. In addition to the robes and uniforms worn by the populace, Gilead's uniform food is bland and unimaginative, symbolising the city's homogeneity. Additionally, Atwood demonstrates that the regime is figuratively eats its own people and depicts cannibalism to reveal the Gilead power structure via three witness accounts.

*The Handmaids'* diet of white meat and eggs highlights their fragile position as privileged slaves and reproduction devices. In Gilead, particularly in the case of Handmaids, bodies are only used for reproduction. The Handmaid's body being dissected and reduced to its reproductive and edible components. Red meat

consumption by the Commanders is a sign of strength and masculinity. However, the fact that even the Commanders rarely eat meat serves as a reminder to readers of the regime's control and restrictions over even the highest ranking officials. Even the wives of the commanders cannot freely. They are not allowed to pick the food they eat; rather, the Handmaids must purchase it for them, and the Marthas in their kitchen must prepare it. Gilead divides up their portions, mealtimes, and food. Readers can learn about Gilead's control over related parts of food shopping, store lines, shortages, cooking, and eating through the testimonies. As a result, Atwood's fictional testimony portray a dystopia where everyone is subject to systemic control eating unchosen food that is scant and of poor quality.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, women act like rivals to one another, and the Marthas use their influence to vent their anger by forcing the Handmaids to consume burnt or undercooked food. Although there are occasional moments of rebellion against the icy politics of Gilead, kindness is rarely displayed. With her ambiguous depictions of food, Atwood subverts the ideology of the dystopian state and ironizes it. However, the kitchen loses its significance as a personal space in Gilead. Every square inch of the country is under state control. In Atwood's dystopian books, positive feelings like empathy, compassion, and support can be expressed through food. Despite Gilead's prohibition against Marthas and other people, Rita, who works in them When she notices Offred in her cosy red robe and in the kitchen on a sweltering day, she lets her get an ice cube. The ice cube is a small act of defiance against Gilead's rigorous dress code and ideology as well as a good gesture. Thus, the kitchen and eating give the characters a chance to display their humanity and interpersonal relationships.

This is shown once more when the Marthas enable Agnes to assist with food preparation or offer assistance to a sick wife or pregnant housemaid. The Marthas started fawning over Agnes, offering her larger meals, and setting flowers in little vases on her breakfast plates. In contrast to *The Testaments*, where women's relationships are aided by their sisterhood and friendships, suspicion and fear hinder women from forming close bonds in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Sharing meals among women is a way for them to express empathy. Gilead manages female bonding but is powerless to stop it.

Everything in Gilead is political, even food, intimate thoughts, and bodies. Due to shortages, food in the dystopian world is limited and scarce. You have no clue what joy Aunt Lydia permits when eggs are coloured baby pink and baby blue for Easter. Our diet is repetitive even if it's merely a change in colour, a little variation is always nice. The Aunts consume a limited, monotonous diet of eggs, sandwiches, and unspecified soups. Disgusting is their food when Daisy joins the Pearl Girls and visits Ardua Hall. The Gilead girls are accustomed to it and have been brainwashed so thoroughly that they repeat commands like "Be thankful for what you have" and "It's disrespectful not to finish." Her testimony gives us a taste of bitter Gilead.

Gilead residents, particularly women and girls, are sometimes shown as food to demonstrate how their commanders or husbands consume them. Agnes has been identified as a pastry. Atwood emphasises the inferior status of women in the hierarchy by using analogies involving cooking and eating. As in the case of Aunt Lydia, who is enticed by upscale foods like fruit and salmon, the regime manipulates people through discipline regimes of deprivation and luxury. Even a little kid like Agnes uses baking metaphors to feel in control. Girls are not the only ones who are

portrayed as foods, even adults with authority, such as aunts, are included. Gilead is a failing utopia for all, as evidenced by images of dismembered bodies and faces.

Gilead will occasionally eat conventional party fare like cake and whipped cream, though. A Gileadean Birth Day and Daisy's birthday in Canada both have cake and whipped cream as cuisine. However, ice cream is something you cannot find in Gilead. Aunt When Beatrice drives Daisy to Gilead, she questions why there isn't any ice cream there. Offred also remembers the ice cream from before the Gileadean era. She longs for the days when she had the flexibility to eat whatever she wanted, healthy or not. She could even buy luxuries for herself and her children, like ice cream, which she remembers not by name but by colour. Gilead, on the other hand, lacks colour; it is bleak and harsh. This could be Ice cream offers pleasure but also evokes strong emotions that could be subversive and out of control, which is why Gilead forbids it.

Alcohol is absolutely prohibited in repressive Gilead because of its potential for subversion. Lupton draws attention to alcohol consumption. Gilead's oppressive government grants its people brief, well-managed moments of freedom. The privileged members of Gileadean society, the Commanders and their Wives, are permitted to consume alcohol on exceptional occasions, particularly on a Birth Day. When Aunt Lydia visits Commander Judd, she's allowed to add a teaspoon of rum to her coffee. Aunt Lydia is a double spy who pretends to work for Gilead while actually plotting to overthrow it. She is reminded of pre-Gileadean days by this action, before coffee became into a pricey good that is getting harder to find. At their sporadic meetings with Commander Judd, even such senior women as Aunts Lydia, Vidala, Elizabeth, and Helena, the women who created laws, uniforms, names, and hymns, can only drink coffee.

According to Lupton, historically, "coffee was advertised as a stimulant that got people ready for the day; in this case, it gets people to reflect on how they have betrayed their previous education, ideals, and lives. The apex of this two-faced act is having coffee with Commander Judd. Additionally, coffee represents life outside of Gilead. Daisy and Agnes stop at a border store and purchase two cups of coffee on their way to freedom. However, coffee is a must the flavours of freedom. Atwood relates particular cuisines to liberation. Although Gilead claims that everyone has access to food and that no one is hungry, the people's hunger makes their food unsatisfying freedom. The girls' excruciating hunger pains while carrying evidence against Gilead to Canada serve as an example of this. When they arrive, they are given tea and sandwiches are described as "cheese, but it wasn't Gilead cheese, it was real cheese: goat cheese with chives" (Atwood 2019, 378).

This is their first taste of freedom. Gilead's cheese is artificial and revolting, much like Gilead itself is phoney, rotten, and corrupt. We learn from the testimonials that Gilead feeds its inhabitants poor food and even food substitutes as a result of food shortages. Thus, fake Gileadean cheese represents everything that is repulsive about the dystopian society of fake relationships, fake food, and fake everything else religion. Agnes throws out a mouthful of fake cheese sandwich because she is unable to process the information that her mother is a Handmaid. Shunammite was still chewing as he told me this tale. I kept an eye on her mouth, where my fate was coming from. Between her teeth was an orange cheese replacement. Zilla, on the other hand, gives her a hot biscuit with honey to assist her in accepting this reality. Our tastes and emotions are intertwined.

The issue arises when these two issues collide in the social realm, which is neither private nor public, and while individuals struggle for their freedom, violence

and force are monopolised by those individual regimes. Governments fail to preserve freedom as they ought to when politics intrudes on social issues. Politics is how governments control the lives of their citizens. In order to justify governmental meddling in social and private affairs, politics might adopt an idealistic guise. Therefore, politics has many facets and focuses on shaping society rather than securing it with ideas like hostility and sovereignty. The like the novel's prominent character Aunt Vidala, who represents this idea, comes to life. Aunt Vidala uses religion as a means of female correction and demonises lusty males. According to her, isolating and concealing women in a manner akin to the hijab is the greatest way to protect them. She sees them as a threat that must be averted. Women are devalued further to their reproductive values.

The social scene is fostered at school. Gilead's attempts to define the naturally uncontrolled region are clear, and it is neither private nor public. The political must establish a clear "we" and provide the necessary performatives, such as wearing particular clothing, in order to control a society clothes. Aunt Vidala demonstrates the need to politicise the social real in order to create performatives. Making women less than what they are is a crucial component of social regulation. In this situation, it is easier to reduce women to mere reproductive objects, giving politics greater room to assert itself. In reality, the political, which comprises the public matter, can intervene in the social and manage it when social resistance is suppressed. The Vidala Schools indoctrinate religious narratives to make women less active by normalising their lack of patriarchy in political decision-making. As has already established, religion encourages oppression because it is a self-evident truth. Inquiring about this could have severe implications for citizens.

It is safe to say that the mind-control process is one of the critical points in Vidala Schools. Aunt Vidala's authoritarian teachings target individuality and limit the girls' performances. In one of her lectures, she prohibits girls from learning and refers to The Story of Fall in which Eve eats the Apple of knowledge and causes disaster for Adam. In any case, the women's reproductive system is the primary target for regulating individuals. Aunt Vidala states

“Forbidden things are open to the imagination. That was why Eve ate the Apple of Knowledge, said Aunt Vidala: too much imagination. So, it was better not to know some things. Otherwise, your petals would get scattered” (Atwood 15).

Men hardly ever emerge in Gilead's social structure, unless they are commanders. As a result, the dictatorship heavily controls women's lives to maintain the superiority of the political over the social. As a result, societal regulation is biased because the main goal of this type of education is to produce masses of individuals with lower standards. The two quotations above make the underlying statement that the body should take precedence over mind and activism. The main reason Aunt Vidala wants to keep girls from asking or learning is to reduce their potential for acting or spontaneous behaviours. Gilead and Aunt Vidala, in particular, intend to mass produce and distance themselves from any ideology that promotes individuality. According to Arendt, when the social moves into the political sphere, persons or individuals start to take action. In this instance, the social no longer remains in the mixed domain of private and public issue but rather moves into the public, or political, sphere.

The goal is to instill indifference when the political rules the social and masses, which are constantly dangerous. The survival of totalitarian governments like

Gilead is ensured by indifference. The primary focus of the necessity for the body to adhere to social norms, refrain from interfering with politics, and take part in a revolution against Gilead is what regulate masses is all about. This includes both body and physical issues. Such food- or body-centered revolutions frequently fall short because physiological issues effectively seal the political doors to liberty. Agnes, the daughter of Commander Kyle, exhibits this metamorphosis and controlled personality.

Gilead's regimes established a framework of tools and tasks to control life. This system preserves a person's moral integrity, or their loyalty to the system. At the Vidala Schools, these tasks are in part assigned in school through religious ceremonies. During every prayer, In prayer, responsibilities of various societal sectors are addressed. The dominance of the female body in politics is the main topic of prayer in Gilead. Men are not really noticeable, except from as a ghostly presence with greater control. Another illustration is the naming of uniforms for each occupation, such as being an Aunt, Martha, or Handmaid. To give birth to the children of the commander, the Handmaids, however, use their bodies as labour. Arendt cites Aristotle, who held that physical labour degrades the body, is the meanest of the jobs, implying that childbirth is sexual servitude (Arendt 82). Rule of Gilead acknowledges the sacrifice that this slavery is. They use religious stories to constantly manipulate the body.

When Agnes talks to the Marthas, Zila and Vera, she believes that housekeeping is her responsibility. However, the Marthas disagree, believing that housekeeping is their duty, and Agnes will be referred to as the mistress of the household. Zilla and Vera demonstrate the political undertones in the home. Gilead has achieved success. Theological beliefs of the ruling regime have permeated society

and private life, regulating the private affairs of households. Gilead's religious regulations have expanded the categorising of chances to include members of the household as well as private life.

Because of the task they do and its bodily repercussions, The Handmaids and Marthas will still be slaves, whether Agnes is the mistress of the home or a citizen. The rationale for naming Wives as citizens, as well as the Because of how their tasks are portrayed in society, handmaids and Marthas are sometimes treated like slaves. Arendt claims that in city-states like Gilead, the citizen is the one whose actions are significant yet secretive and carried out in private (Arendt 85). On the other side, slaves perform the labor-intensive tasks and suffer bodily degeneration, like Marthas, or are compelled to have children and go shopping, like the Handmaids.

The governments will be able to create a massive, global housekeeping administration by obfuscating the distinction between public and private matters. Keeping up with this every political community's creation is controlled by administration, which is managed by the religious beliefs at the basis of the government, and is portrayed as a huge family. Thus, despite the fact that people appear to be apart and to come from different families, in Gilead everyone is a member of the same unifying family. Such activities enable Gilead's government transform from a city-state to a nation by creating the social, a space that is neither public nor private.

Despite the fact that Arendt spends most of her time talking about pre-modern societies, it is easy to see the connections between Gilead families and those she describes. Men are in charge of the family members in both kinds of households. The management of species and their survival is a responsibility placed on women that

God naturalises. Because of this, Gilead strongly supports marriage, childrearing, and obedience. Aunt Estee explains this and more softly normalises Aunt Vidala's goals. "we and your fathers and mothers will choose your husbands wisely for you when the time comes," Aunt Estée would say. "so you don't need to be afraid. Just learn your lessons and trust your elders to do what is best, and everything will unfold as it should. I will pray for it" (Atwood 10).

Agnes explains to the readers that although though Aunt Estee defends her and attempts to soften Aunt Vidala's strict and domineering behaviour, only Aunt Vidala's perspective is accepted. This situation could be explained by the interactions between the political, Act and speak. By fostering certain identities, the political, which determines the private sphere, prohibits women from acting on their own volition. Arendt argues that political meddling in domestic affairs manipulates the family to prevent women, or any target, from feeling spontaneous and heroic because if women act heroically, the socially constructed identities won't be maintained.

Regarding how to present the regime's desire identity to girls, there is not universal agreement. Aunt Estee tempers Aunt Vidala's account because she thinks it will scare girls away from marriage, resulting in more disloyal people and the regime's failure to advance with its goals method of controlling marriage. The girls' favourite instructor, Aunt Estee, "would say Aunt Vidala was overdoing it, and there was no point in scaring us half to death since to instill such an aversion might have a negative influence on the happiness of our future married lives"

Political hierarchies are widely accepted as a result of the excessive intrusion of the political into the private. In this instance, the regime controls all facets of private life, including regulating the spread of the system and normalising the very nature of rule, in place of fundamental civic equality. The family structure in Gilead

and the aunts rigorous supervision over family matters demonstrate the widespread acceptance of the regime's desired political hierarchies. The resistance is not centralised in the narrative, despite the fact that it does exist and has partially grown serious. This story of Agnes, who doubts the aunts influence on her marriage and sexuality, could be seen as a kind of resistance against social inequality. When Agnes' periods start, the strict control over one of a person's most private affairs becomes apparent. The political function transforms the female body into a location of political action as an institutionalised, regulating authority. Agnes looks into her female She does not completely commit herself to Gilead's religious understandings of the feminine body, however, as seen by her speech, unlike Shuanmitte.

The way society portrays the body to the person denotes political meddling in private affairs and its laws. The political is the area of acting and performance, as was previously mentioned. which means a person like Agnes has the opportunity to use the new identity in a performance as the female body develops and matures. Gilead strives to discourage women from entering the political sphere by treating the female body as a treasure that must be protected. The true public sphere ought to be a place where people may work together to build new realities. However, the political function is to influence public opinion so that only the regime's desired narrative can be dominant.

The Testaments depicts the function of judgement in various ways, one of which is demonstrated by Agnes' rejection of her classmates' opinions of her, which Gilead's story reproduces. Agnes describes having to deal with two different narratives: the official religion in Gilead, which manipulates personal information, and the superstitious religion that common people and schoolgirls propagate.

It's possible to conclude that the act of conflict, even in speech, demonstrates a split in Gilead's anticipated univocity of the notion of woman. The tale of Agnes demonstrates how narrative may create a character "who" is dynamic and sets their actions and voice in opposition to one another any effort at objectification or reification. The games, which are described in *The Testaments*, demonstrate how narrative can keep people from taking political action. These games demonstrate how human potential is reliant on memories and relationships with others, supporting Arendt's view of the significance of collective acts in the political sphere.

The character of Aunt Lydia merits more discussion as this chapter continues to explore the connection between politics and judgement. It may be assumed that the judgement could be connected to one's political and personal beliefs in order to connect this section to the one before it, perspective of the public's behaviour. In the final section, it became clear that the aunts use literature, songs, and games to stop people from evolving from their "what" to their "who." In other words, they struggle for their expectations of freedom while gaining their individuality. Consequently, Aunt Lydia appears to be fully cognizant of the public opinion and engaged in the political

This research paper has discovered some parallels to Aunt Lydia in Arendt's in-depth description of the Eichmann trial. Both, while fully aware of their conduct, assisted their regimes in carrying out their goals and oppressing the populace. Aunt Lydia talks about the Since Baby Nicole could direct and incite people's hatred towards Gilead's enemies and advance the narrative that the Handmaids are unreliable, Atwood views her as a valuable tool for social media manipulation. Even when Aunt Lydia considers such restraints, she does not accept them. She composes religious songs that should be sung aloud and by housewives to remind everyone of

the powerful presence. However, she secretly thinks that such a form of government is "banal and without the charm" (Atwood 34) because of religion and the fundamentalism of Gilead.

Aunt Lydia made the decision to join Gilead, stating that she was forced to take the lead. Eichmann was also completely aware of how his acts during the Holocaust assisted the Nazi dictatorship. However, Aunt Lydia's identity and awareness of good and evil are still present in her, which is the main distinction between her and Eichmann. Eichmann had completely lost his ability to imagine and, as a result, his ability to judge what he was doing.

On the other hand, Aunt Lydia recalls and imagines her past as well as potential futures in the event that Gilead's government were to alter. She believes that one day she will stand trial for her crimes in a fair court and could either be executed or imprisoned. An nasty character who damaged countless lives will be recalled. Unlike Eichmann, Aunt Lydia is fully aware of politics and how it relates to power. Restricting public space results in surplus power, which gives rise to political opportunities to enact new laws. In this instance, the political transforms into a common concern for the wellbeing of the people who make up a human community. The potential for revolution and regime upheaval is raised by this.

*The Testament* by Margaret Atwood demonstrates that it is not simple and easy to be the voice of authority in order to protect your own voice. In this scenario, the minorities, women, accept the opportunity and some self-autonomy to safeguard. Thus by supporting the system's change and subscribing to its disciplinary practises by creating new laws, people can distance themselves from the system and add another facet to their identity.

## **Chapter III**

### **Revaluation Through Rejection**

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### Revaluation through Rejection

Sudha Murthy an excellent Indian-English novelist explores the microcosmic issues that women face in her works. She offer a more comprehensive picture of the culture and the physical and psychological challenges that Indian women face on a daily basis. The married cult characters we are talking about struggle to find meaning in life despite the numerous sacrifices they make to have a loving family. She focuses her main argument on the idea that women should always have access to mental and physical freedom. Explore new battlefields. Women should engage in a variety of activities and make out time to learn more about themselves. Once they recognise who they are, it will be simple for them to remove the boundaries that the domineering other erected around them.

The protagonist of the story, "Shrimati," travels the same familiar path as a conventional Indian girl who was born and raised in a middle-class home and had the hopes of becoming. Despite leading an independent and free life, she chooses to become a successful corporate man's wife out of self-sacrifice or devotion to her love. She later realises that she has lost her identity and is leading a pointless existence as a result of her spouse's treatment of her. She chooses to start over rather than sever her bonds. She makes the decision to pursue her goal of pursuing higher education. Every person must occasionally struggle with the decision of whether to prioritise their personal lives over their jobs. This book provides all of its readers with a simple solution to this dilemma problem. Both should be balanced in order to live a happy future; neither should be abandoned. In this instance, Shrimati's spouse, Shrikant, sacrifices his personal life in the name of money.

Shrimati chose to sacrifice herself, it but never stopped her from pursuing her aspirations. In light of this, women have a selfless disposition that is Self-sacrificing of dreams for the happiness of others this is not a stereotypical trait of women but a choice made by strong independent women who should be respected for who she is and her actions and thoughts, rather than a trait that is frequently attributed to kind-hearted women.

She finally leaves the safety of love to deepen her understanding of the outside world and education after discovering that she has neither individuality or freedom. She tells her husband where she is going and lets him know that he is welcome to visit her whenever he wishes, just like all the other new-woman heroines do. The strong female protagonists in Mrs. Murty's books aspire to participate in society and their families just like their male counterparts. Shrikant and Shrimati originally shared a great deal of love and respect, but those feelings slowly diminished. Many modern critics have the right idea that modern literature serves as a window onto modern society. In the end of the story, Shrikant, who is overly ambitious, prioritises his work and business over everything else. Everything else becomes insignificant in comparison to his aspirational career in the company.

New-Women characters throughout history portrayed them as suppressed or as being less significant than the male counterparts "Shrimati". The novels in the series "Shrimati" start off by giving readers this kind of impression, but by the end, the characters are fighting against all odds to be self-respecting, independent, free, and happy people. Another crucial aspect of new-women literature is that the female characters will not have many people who agree with them. When "Shrimati" has the help of her husband. Only a history professor who served as her mentor and friend.

A smart young lady, "Shrimati" is the top student in her class. But unlike all the diligent students of her era, she chooses not to major in science. She felt that instead of blindly following tradition, one should study the subject they are most interested in. By using 'Shrikant' as her mouthpiece and posing the question, the author is imparting an essential idea to her readers.

‘Why do you want to take up arts when you are so good at science?’ ‘I am more inclined towards history and literature. Moreover, I have a principle of my own. We should do what we really like. For two things in life it is very important for us to make our own decisions. One is education. I believe we must study only that subject which we like.’ (p.26, Gentle Falls The Bakula)

Modern women characters are educated or, if not, will attempt to educate themselves. Because of education they 'free' themselves. It's also vital to remember that various people value education differently. For instance, 'Shrikant' is aware that he can earn a lot of money, respect, and place in life by majoring in science and working in business. But he ignores the fact that each subject and the knowledge one learns from it has a unique function to play in fostering the development of society in various ways.

Numerous psychological wounds are frequently created by rejection. Rejection causes rage, destabilises our core sense of belonging, and erodes self-confidence and self-esteem. The majority of people crave social interaction, thus rejection can be upsetting. Many couples experience social and psychological issues, and it is often the woman who must make many compromises and sacrifices in order to find solutions even though she is just as talented and educated as her male counterpart, her companion. She frequently has to quit her career and take on the responsibilities of the family instead of whining.

This book sensitively documents how marriages fall apart when ambition and self-interest take their toll. In its examination of contemporary values and work ethics, the story is amazingly still current to be aware. One must have moral outrage when they witness other people suffering as a result of exploitation, greed, or their own tragedies. This is what compassion. In order to maintain social harmony, these values must be continuously renewed. Woman is given a great standing and dignity by Manu, the first lawmaker in our Hindu religion. His statement "Yatranaryastupujyante, ramantetatradevata", which states that "God exists where women are respected," is evidence of this, yet relatively few women in our state actually put it into practise, most of them are repressed or relegated to second-class status; they lack freedom. Despite all odds, she became a revolutionary woman in her quest to rebuild her life.

Man's patriarchal mentality has always converted women into tools in his hands. Woman has always been the victim of oppression by man. The traditional Indian woman is an embodiment of tolerance and forgiving, and she suffers in silence. She embodies being docile, obedient, and passive, and as a result was lauded in Indian literature. Women were forced to suffer in silence as a result of societal ills that predominated in society. Many Indian women writers have depicted this gender disparity in their works, reflecting the world of the privileged man and the oppressed woman in which they have lived.

According to the patriarchal system, men are rational, aggressive, dominant, courageous, and have a propensity to govern and control. In contrast, women are expected to be gentle, submissive, selfless, quiet, reticent, emotional, and obedient to their husbands, family members, too. Even though women's economic and social circumstances may have modernised, they have yet to abandon all the customs of an

authoritarian and patriarchal past. A group of contemporary English writers with a strong sense of self emerge in India during the post-independence era. They are intelligent, confident, and persuasive. They are aware of what is meant by masculine dominance. By reiterating important issues in their writings, they create their own literature, making it a powerful medium to convey their ideas, feministic thoughts and beliefs.

The main character Shrimati marries her neighbour Shrikant after falling in love. Shrikant starts quickly moving up the corporate ladder after joining an information technology company. He puts in tireless effort and excels in his field, while Shrimati gives up. She abandons her academic goals and turns into his quiet accomplice, silently carrying out the responsibilities of a corporate leader's wife. She had a harsh rejection from her mother-in-law Gangakka just because she is her enemy's daughter, plain looking, poor, and only ten months younger than her son.

Next, Gangakka made it clear that the kitchen was her domain and that she did not want her to enter it when she attempted to assist her there. "You have just got married. You do not know our customs. So please don't bother about cooking".( p.70, *Gentle Falls the Bakula*). Additionally, she was not permitted to use the short form of her husband's first name. She and her husband moved to Bombay ten days after getting married, where they were living happily ever after. Despite the fact that Shrimati's mother-in-law was geographically far away, Gangakka had to find another way to annoy her. She insisted on more money, forcing Shrimati to work for a company in order to make money as she had no dowry. Since Shrimati was earning an income, Gangakka no longer made fun of Shrimati's lack of children. Shrimati recalled that her mother-in-law had called her a barren woman.

Shrimati understood that one cannot learn or acquire love and affection through money. The heart should be the source of the real affection. Whether a person is wealthy, intelligent, or attractive is irrelevant. Even if it was a pointless exercise in her instance, she remained optimistic that, Things would change eventually. Woman who do not aid other women have a particular place in hell. The in-laws' family causes similar neurotic and psychological problems is women's life worldwide.

In spite of her in-laws' family, Shrimati also received rejection from her better half. After some time, Shrikant was now recognised as a leading expert in his profession both in India and internationally. Over time, he needed a smart secretary at home in addition to the one he had in the office. His wife Shrimati took over as the incredibly effective personal secretary at home since she was trustworthy, capable of taking responsibilities, and most importantly, clever and obedient. She thought Shrikant was working hard and that it was her responsibility to support him. She had a void within herself as a result of her monotonous schedule and realised that she wasn't enjoying the task she was doing. She abruptly understood why she had never found enjoyment in life, attending events and making client arrangements. Shrikant turns a workaholic. One needed a supportive, bright, but obedient and ambitious wife in order to achieve that level of achievement. Typically, intelligent women are ambitious. Shrimati was unusual since she never puts any demands on her husband. But Shrikant was unable to comprehend how much her sacrifice and his own unwavering perseverance helped him succeed.

Shrimati compared herself to a weary traveller seeking an oasis in a desert. She struggled to accept Shrikant's lack of affection for her in her heart. Shrikant solely cared about himself and his goals. She served as his personal secretary while he was at home. There were timings, at least for his official secretary. But it was her full-time

job. The prevailing cause was that her fury was growing exponentially. Marriage is more than just a social compact between two people; it is a majestic union of the hearts, minds, and varied aspirations of two people.

Shrimathi once read his friend Ravi's letter from the United States in which he spoke of Shrimati, saying, When I think of shrimati , I continue to be amazed by her clear thinking and her wise decisions. "She knew what she liked and she did exactly that." (p.no.103). In the identical letter, he I also remember 'the other hand of yours,' who is responsible for your accomplishment,' she said. She has been modest, undemanding, and completely obedient to your demands and your accomplishments. She had given her all for Shrikant, but he had not recognised her sincerity and did not appreciate the sacrifices she had made for him. She now thought she lacked any ambition. She had given him everything.

Harish, a friend from Shrikant's IT company, considers another situation where Shrikant might have achieved success quickly. There was an easy solution. Shrimati was a unique example of a wife who never puts any demands on her husband. After assisting for so long, Shrimathi insisted him to spend some time with her. Shrikant, a workaholic, disagreed. You owe your wife an obligation, Shrimathi responded. I won't remain here if you don't fulfil it. The entire world claims you are smarter than me, he murmured as he forcibly freed himself. After giving it some thought, he gives her freedom to move with her desire. Such things were never mentioned to her by him. thus, she has to act, to make a choice. Indian past was still accessible to her today. All the details, times, and occurrences were still vivid in her mind. She ultimately made the decision to write Professor Collins a letter outlining her choice to pursue her Ph.D. in history in the US. Professor at the US responded to

her message. She thought life had given her a fresh start. Beauty, strength, wealth, health, and youth are not constants in life. Knowledge is the real wealth.

More valuable than money was that pleasure. She was moving abroad not to make money but to discover her unique identity. In order to give her female characters a challenge to overcome and give them the strength to carve out a place for themselves or establish their own space, Sudha Murty gives them problems. the capacity to respect, accept, and also incorporate their own traditions while being aware of their Indianness she identifies her protagonists as unique.

Shrikant believed that he had achieved all of his accomplishments on his own. He was now thinking of Shrimati. What contribution did she make to his success? She endured her loneliness in silence and continued to wish him progress. Actually, she deserved to play a significant part in his successes. But he never did recognised it. She came to this conclusion as a result of her mother-in-law's repeated, intentional insults and her husband's devotion to his job. There is no odd or even hour for success. Every second is valuable. In *Gently Falling the Bakula* by Sudha Murty, the author discusses the man-woman connection and how one partner's narrow-minded ambition can ruin a loving partnership.

In this predominantly male environment, no one would support Shrimati's decision, yet she made it nevertheless without giving it a second thought. She had taken action based on her convictions. A spouse should support his wife in leading her own life. He shouldn't try to force his opinions of her. If a husband neglects his wife because he is too busy, it could result in desertion. Therefore, the family ought to encourage her personal growth as well because it will lead to equality and prosperity.

Women in Gilead are classified according to their social roles, and some of them, known as Handmaids, are compelled to bear the children of Commanders,

senior Gilead officials. Lydia and other aunts are responsible for watching over the women of Gilead and making sure they carry out their assigned duties. Atwood continues to build the Gileadean universe and the characters who inhabit it in the sequel, detailing what occurs in the years following the events of the 1985 book. The relevance of the sequel assumes an even more frightening dimension now that *Roe vs Wade* has been overturned in the United States, reviving the issues that Atwood had raised in her 1985 novel.

In *The Testaments*, Lydia outlines her goals for enforcing Gilead's regulations among women and how she intends to ignite the overthrow of the Gileadean government. She explains how she makes use of her power, accumulated while she was in Gilead to sway events and remove impediments in her route to raise to be the most powerful woman in the Republic. She also gives a bit more background information on herself before Gilead gained power and before she was an aunt.

Three testimonials of women who all once resided in Gilead are interspersed throughout *The Testaments* in portions. These women assist Lydia in delivering information to the anti-Gilead group, including a young woman named Agnes and a teenager named Daisy, the start of a resistance movement in Canada and the fall of Gilead. Aunt Lydia is of course the third of these women. The Ardua Hall Holograph, a manuscript produced by Lydia during her dying months in Gilead, contains her testament.

The Aunts in Lydia's district all live, train, and work in Ardua Hall, where she is writing this document in her own study. The research is housed in the Hildegard Library, which is, At Ardua Hall, the building is ostensibly named for the illustrious mediaeval abbess Hildegard of Bingen. Since most literature is forbidden and a sizable portion of the population nearly all of the female population is not permitted to

read or write, this library is one of the few remaining places of its kind in Gilead. The Aunts are granted exclusive access to this library so that they can develop their reading and writing skills as well as their mental fortitude against the "sinful" concepts that literacy leaves them open to.

The following phrase appears particularly pertinent in a culture like Gilead: "gender is a required performance in the sense, that breaking social norms results in rejection, aggression, and/or punishment, in addition to the transgression pleasures those very rules provide. If Lydia deviates from the route set out for her by the Gileadean power system, she will indeed suffer violence and punishment. Indeed an identity "tenuously constituted in time," Lydia's Aunt gender role, as played out in Gilead and under the watchful eyes of the society around her, is one that has been "tenuously constituted in time."

The genders Lydia assumes in this book are done so both knowingly and unconsciously, some of them are done with the goal to deceive while others are just engrained in Lydia's memories and psyche. In other words, if the subject exhibits unconscious gender performances, not consciously connect their actions with a specific label, whether gendered or not. The aunts of Gilead are strict, loyal maids whose job it is to ensure that the ladies of Gilead uphold the standards that are required of them. This is Lydia's openly and purposefully manifested gender in *The Testaments*. She is an obstinate, Aunt who is cunning and gathers information on everyone around her and stores it until she can use it to her own benefit. In Gilead, women have naturally fewer gender identities to choose from, yet Lydia unquestionably performs her given gender with zeal and with noteworthy outcomes. Aunt Lydia is very aware of her position inside Gilead. She describes it in The Ardua Hall Holograph for the benefit of the reader. She says "The regime needs me. I control

the women's side of their enterprise with an iron fist in a leather glove in a woollen mitten, and I keep things orderly" (Atwood 2019, 62)

Lydia's use of a parallel to clarify her work as her aunt describes. The phrase "iron fist" describes how viciously she does her duties and how relentlessly she upholds Gilead's regulations. The "leather glove," which hides the robotic and terrifying "iron fist," is an apt metaphor for Lydia's hidden duties as Head Aunt of Gilead. Last but not least, the "woollen mitten" proves that Lydia needs to be subtle in order to be a successful agent for Gilead. The Aunt's more nefarious goals are concealed beneath the woollen mitten, which gives off the appearance of being warm, homely, and soothing.

Lydia frequently passes off her relentless efforts to ensure that women adhere to Gileadean principles as genuine concern for the welfare of the ladies. This allows her to mask the fact that the main focus of her employment is maintaining the women were repressed. This plan also aims to offer the women the assurance that the roles they are assigned in Gilead are predetermined by God and that they must be carried out for the benefit of humanity. The nature of Aunt Lydia's work is also founded in the fact that most of what she does is done in secret; she acquires information covertly and hides it from view. She also works behind the scenes to influence events so that they benefit her objectives. This Aunt gender is intentionally displayed. Additionally, it may be said that it is a required performance "In the sense that acting out of line with norms brings it ostracism, punishment, and violence" (Butler 2017, 958).

Here, Butler explains America in the 1990s and the West more broadly. But in a country like Gilead, where gender is carefully regulated and any departure from the expected behaviours and norms for any member of a given gender designation results in bodily pain or even death, this principle is much more relevant. Being a gender is

an instinctive yet deliberate act of perceiving a cultural reality packed with prohibitions, taboos, and prescriptions in Gilead more than in any other place.

The decision to live or wear one's body in a particular way, or to adopt a given type of body, indicates a world of established corporeal fashions. In comparison to many other places, Gilead has more stricter rules and taboos, because they are enacted into law and not merely as a cultural undercurrent that people are aware of and follow in conscious and unconscious ways, laws of the fictitious universe. Since the US government was overthrown, Lydia has purposefully altered her behaviour to avoid being exposed to Gilead's punishments.

Lydia admits to her readers that she was aware of what might have happened if she had not chosen to become an aunt. She explains that she was employed at the courthouse when the American government was overthrown. She and everyone else there, the Sons of Jacob, Gilead's military, seize her female co-workers and transport them to a stadium. The women discover that the Sons of Jacob had been given the mission of apprehending any professional women they might come across. The women are held hostage at the stadium for weeks while receiving scant food and drink and no access to sanitary facilities.

Additionally, they see some of the ladies being publicly executed at the stadium, albeit they are not aware of the reason at the moment. Lydia is eventually retrieved from the crowd. She is directed to meet Commander Judd, who is currently a Son of Jacob, at this time. Although Commander Judd has a significant role in *The Testaments* story, Lydia has never met him before. During their conversation, Commander Judd informs her that she has the chance to cooperate with Gilead.

Lydia responds to him indecisively and is then taken to a location known as the "Thank Tank". She is deprived of food and water while being held in this cold,

dark cell. She experiences daily beatings. After some time, Lydia is moved to a hotel where she receives regular baths and wholesome food to eat. She is stripped of her previous clothing and given something that is "not quite a cowl and [...] not quite made of brown sackcloth, but close" (Atwood 2019 150). This is an aunt initial attire her distinctive brown dress, which comes to represent the position just as red dresses stand for Handmaids. Lydia says, "I put it on," what else should I have done?" Atwood (2019, 150).

Lydia acknowledges that she voluntarily and actively decided to become an aunt of Gilead. She chose to "put on" the aunt gender and, to use the figurative language, to "wear" her body in a manner consistent with the norms and ideals of the gender that the Republic of Gilead has assigned to Lydia. The idea that gender performance is "compulsory" and that any disobedience of its limits leads in "punishment" through "violence" is best exemplified by Lydia's feelings that she has no choice but to obey the new regime and its authorities. At the time of her decision, Lydia has already seen the savagery of the new rule; she has seen women being executed for refusing to submit to the state, did. She was hungry, beaten, and subjected to psychological torture. Therefore, she has chosen this course of action out of necessity.

Lydia is aware of that alternative; she was aware of her options and made a conscious decision to adapt her thinking and behaviour in order to avoid the risk of the death. Since it is Lydia's own recommendation that a "separate female sphere" (Atwood 2019, 176) be constructed and run by Aunts, it may be argued that Lydia so fully embraces her new gender that she utilises her unique position as a former judge to negotiate with Commander Judd. In order to further her personal empowerment, Lydia creates a website that actively oppresses other women.

In Lydia's recounting of some of her experiences prior to the fall of the United States, a second gender position that existed in her former life in the United States is revealed. Because Lydia, this gender is more frequently accomplished subconsciously in adulthood gender of a more emancipated woman who speaks her feelings with some freedom and who is not under the control of a formal, governmental patriarchal power structure but rather by more subliminal, insidious social codes. Although Lydia does not necessarily intend to convey it as such, these accounts of Lydia's life before Gilead serve as a description of another of Lydia's gender performances.

It must be emphasised, however, that society was still regulated by gendered modes of being and was not utopic, even in a place that was substantially free, like the former United States. Simply put, it was far less overt. In the sense that gender was not imposed on people by legislation to the same degree or with the same harshness as it was in totalitarian Gilead, this society was oppressive towards women. Women would have been exposed to unconscious gender indoctrination in pre-Gileadean communities, which nevertheless may have been quite detrimental.

In the words of Berger, women had to maintain a high level of self-awareness in social settings like pre-Gileadean civilization in order to determine whether or not they conformed to social standards. The distinction is that in Gilead, this vigilance is institutionalised, whereas in pre-Gileadean life, it would have existed on a cultural level, unenforced by law, and so deeply ingrained in the psyche of the community that some female subjects might not have been aware that they were acting in such a manner.

Some people, on the other hand, might have been acutely aware of the consequences of not "surveying" oneself and following feminine norms. This is a good illustration of Lydia's earlier claim that, Women had the "freedom to" use their

own initiative before Gilead came into being, but they now have the "freedom from" things like public sexual harassment. The ritualised rape and other forms of oppression that women endure in Gilead are not mentioned by Lydia. Despite this, pre-Gileadean countries gave women much more freedom than Gilead does, such as the United States in Atwood's fictitious world.

The second gender performance by Lydia changes. Although it is not exactly how it was before to Gilead, it nevertheless serves as the basis for Lydia's covertly portrayed gender in her manuscript. Lydia's portrayals of various genders. It can be summed up as follows: the first gender role, that of the aunt, is carried out externally and deliberately; the second, that of the free-spirited, rebellious woman seeking for independence, is carried out internally and in a far more unconscious manner. She thus plays the aunt gender role for the sake of achieving the objectives of her second, inner gender. In other words, she effectively and convincingly fulfils the role of Aunt, rising up the ranks and learning more about Gilead's inner workings. Lydia is propelled through Gileadean life and towards her inner desire to overthrow Gilead by this gender performance, by embodying this gender, Lydia's desire to destroy Gilead becomes not just potentially plausible but eventually realised.

Inside Lydia's personal sanctuary at Ardua Hall, within Gilead itself, Lydia performs as a second gender. It is a reflection of the gender she previously portrayed. It still differs from the gender that was previously expressed, though in this case the performance is that of a woman who longs for both her own and other women's independence. Additionally, it is distinguished by Lydia acting on her ideas rather than just dreaming. These behaviours vary and may even be morally dubious. Lydia acts in what appears to be accordance with Gilead's principles in order to subsequently challenge them.

According to Atwood, Lydia's manuscript is concealed in "a hollow rectangle cut inside of Cardinal Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua: A Defence of One's Life*." This in and of itself is important. Cardinal John, who lived in the 19th century, Henry Newman was an English theologian, poet, and scholar. He, like Lydia, had to juggle competing sets of beliefs; he began his clerical career as an Anglican who decried Catholic doctrine and practise, but he later gave up Anglicanism and became a Catholic. This is similar to Lydia's own experiences in Gilead, where she is required to promote a worldview and set of values that seem to be in direct conflict with those she holds personally. In other words, like Cardinal Newman, she ends up becoming what she previously battled against.

Lydia's subconscious covert gender performance is characterised by a strong dislike of the Gileadean state and its authorities. Despite the fact that this performance is hidden from the general public, Lydia writes her manuscript, *The Ardua Hall Holograph*. It qualifies as a gender performance example because of the author's purpose to have it read and circulated. Lydia freely acknowledges her goal for the liberation of Gileadean women and the overthrow of the government both inside her sanctuary and in the pages of her manuscript, *The Ardua Hall Holograph*. She expresses concern that all of her efforts would be in vain and Gilead will endure for a millennium. Lydia not only wants to see the Republic destroyed, but she also wants to be the catalyst for it.

It is evident that Lydia still has optimism for women. In her investigation, she makes the claim that, *Ardua Hall*, she has filled her personal book shelves with titles like *Jane Eyre*, *Anna Karenina*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Paradise Lost* that feature strong female heroines (Atwood 2019, 35). Apart from *Paradise Lost*, many of these masterpieces are written by women. The performance of gender is incredibly complex. Lydia begs her anonymous reader's pardon and makes an argument for why

she should be granted pity and mercy for the heinous deeds she committed while incarcerated in the Republic's service.

Lydia demonstrates her dual identity as an oppressor and an oppressed person through The Ardua Hall Holograph. However, victims "testify, their stories are elaborated in detail, photos of their wounds are published, all in an effort to arouse moral anger" (Bergstrand and Jasper 2018, 232). It is debatable if Lydia is more of a perpetrator than a victim.

History lists the feminist waves in a diachrony of goals and ends, which are briefly discussed here. History is, in part, owed to a masculine appetite for order, linearity, and hierarchy. As a result of the belief that women have the same brains and interests as men, the first wave of social change (late 19th to early 20th centuries) concentrated on obtaining equal rights, particularly the right to vote. The second (late 1960s and beyond) evolved against a backdrop of intellectual activists who revolted after the post-war decades saw women reassigned to the conventional domestic roles of wives and mothers, both in literature and on the streets, politically.

The third wave, which began in the 1990s and continued well into the 2000s, accepted that equality had been achieved and that new reasons for existing needed to be discovered. Academic gender studies have a tendency to focus on postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism as these ideologies emphasised difference and tolerance and, predictably, presented post-feminism as a hallmark of the third wave. According to theories about the third wave, feminism has undergone a radical transformation in relation to the values that postmodernism questions, and in keeping with the postmodern, seeks to disrupt grand narratives or interrupt dominant, imperialistic views of gender and inequality rather than being connected to the idea of a time after feminism or the realisation of feminist goals.

Faludi's seminal 1992 article *Backlash*, in which she asserted that post-feminism was purposefully used to undermine feminism as an important political force by outdating its usefulness. Faludi continued to be sceptical of post-feminism, which, in her opinion, turned self-determination into a "commodified self-improvement of physical appearance, self-esteem, and the fool's errand of reclaiming one's youth" and public agency into publicity with the only result of having "gilded our shackles instead of breaking them," according to the preface she wrote for the 2006 edition of her book. This necessitates a retroactive intervention—a second-wave revivalist movement that would reclaim what its daughters had lost.

A significant portion of third-wave theory is based on the words of second-wave feminist mothers' daughters who disagree with their mothers' activity and concerns about the white, straight, middle-class woman. Alice Walker's daughter Rebecca Walker is the "third wave" term's creator. The older generation's perspective on motherhood is another "bone of contention" (Atwood 2010, 313), openly opposing the feminine mystique that Betty Friedan described in the 1960s as "a rush for the security of togetherness" in the "cosy walls of home" which had become "a pattern by which all women must live or deny their femininity" .

Now that the granddaughters are of age, they reflect back with resentment at the type of empowerment that their moms promoted at the price of their true freedom and with admiration at the battle of their grandmothers, which was abandoned because it had served its purpose. For a generation that views the world differently than their mothers and grandmothers, all of this has brought to the forefront women's objectification, sexual harassment, and abuse: "Generational specificity implies that waves emerge when a younger group of women come to politics, looking to shape a social movement that is more accommodating of, and tailored to their identity". The

fourth wave, which is already beginning to take hold, is both distinct from and similar to the second and third ones.

Feminisms in the real world, the world in which events that many modern authors claim "have already happened" in their books, the world that gets to be transformed into fiction by writers who weave works that combine writings from several cultures and engage in discourse for the benefit of the readers, who are free to draw whatever conclusions they like from the text.

Although the author is largely silent and muffled in the polyphony of voices belonging to individuals who access the world of the book, they are not completely dead. Novelists occasionally revolt and attempt to reclaim their universes. This typically occurs when they clarify the reasons for their actions. When authors write sequels or prequels, or when they find other ways to connect their present world outside the text to their earlier ones, they can give the text paratextual assessments or create alternate textualized worlds that nonetheless raise issues. One example is *The Testaments*, Margaret Atwood's most recent book and the sequel to her best-selling novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. It was written to reflect the circumstances of the late 2010s. One may draw a comparison between the development of feminism and the treatment of women in the first book and its sequel.

The fact that the terms were not yet in use at the time the novel was published, one might incorporate the numerous analepses in the earlier text into post-feminism and the third wave. *The Handmaid's Tale* has drawn attention to the underlying criticism of second-wave feminism, particularly in the relationship between Offred and her militantly feminist mother. Once the male dictatorship pushes them to act in their own interests, at the expense of their peers' wellbeing, horrific things that women can do to each other. *The Handmaid's Tale's* protagonist, a generation of women in

their thirties or just under, does not require their moms' activity, in contrast to third-wavers who exhibit a "kind of twisted Electra complex within which daughters are committed to killing off mothers" (Halberstam 2012, 2).

They already had all of the things for which their forefather fought careers, rights, sexual freedom, and freedom of speech making the battle superfluous up to that point. They lost everything, and it is too late to take action. Every ebb and flow of feminism appears to build on and challenge its immediate predecessor. All cultural movements, from the Enlightenment to postmodernism, share this characteristic. The fourth wave is a technologically enhanced second wave and a contestation of 1990s–2000s post-feminism rather than its continuation, even though the debate is still in its early stages and an outline of the politics of the fourth wave has not yet been established.

The Gileadean women's liberation movement in *The Testaments* as having a counterpart in the present or not too distant future marked by the emergence of this fourth wave that does not yet have its own literature or, more importantly, its own theory based on identification representations of the feminist waves in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Testaments*. The sexual and textual theories of the second wave, more specifically to women's empowerment through writing, as promoted by Hélène Cixous, among others, is an effort to contextualise.

In *The Testaments*, Atwood's politics veer off the beaten path and become more overtly feminist against the almost intolerably gruesome backdrop of women's subjugation in the early days of Gilead. His story subtly becomes her story. According to Cixous, women who have been deferred to the male order are now in charge and responsible for the machinery's operation. Some of the Gilead women develop the trait of bisexuality, which is the presence of two sexes inside oneself. They are

coerced into it in the most horrific ways possible, including malnutrition, isolation, poor hygiene, the requirement to watch and take part in public executions on both ends of a gun barrel, etc.

At an agreement of *The Testaments*, Atwood subtly inverts the antagonism by giving the aunts an overlapping of femininity and masculinity. When males are in charge, women take control. She is obedient, taking the authority of a masculine hierarchy that has grown overconfident in its ability to achieve women's subordination and has, as a result, begun to act carelessly or to revert to its sexual abusers' behaviours. The term empowered femininity is debatable, but in Aunt Lydia's case it also gives room for fear and unease with what it has become:

"I've become swollen with power, true, but also nebulous, shape-shifting. I am everywhere and nowhere: even in the minds of the commanders I cast an unsettling shadow. How can I regain myself? How to shrink back to my normal size, the size of the ordinary woman?" (Atwood 2019, p 32).

Normalcy and ordinariness in this context seem to be ironic descriptors of womanhood in the sense of women's inferior, subordinate status in regard to males, the character seems to recognise and desire. Weighed down by power. Literary examples of overly empowered women, one could point to Lady Macbeth's well-known request: "Unsex me here, And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full Of direst cruelty" (Macbeth I.5), which is arguably the most well-known "case" of emasculation in literary history. The Thirteenth and Twelfth Symposium on Gileadean Studies, which was part of a series of International Conferences, was similar to *The Handmaid's Tale* in that both are framed by 'Historical Notes' Conventions of Historical Associations (in 2019 and 2010).

The 'Notes' appear to serve the dual purposes of relativizing historical time by looking back at the future from someone else's present and providing architectural dimension to the embedded narratives. Additionally, they could be seen as being crucial to Atwood's obvious goal of highlighting the hazy line between reality and fiction and challenging the associated myths, which contend that the former is untrue and therefore more readily associated with femininity while the latter is truthless. She just penned the following in the introduction to *The Handmaid's Tale*: "If I were to design an imaginary garden, I wanted the toads in it to be genuine.

*The Testaments* presents Offred's perspective on her existence and the lives of her fellow handmaids in dystopian Gilead in fifteen alternating stories, whereas *The Handmaid's Tale* offers Offred a narrator's voice. Three narrative voices Lydia's, Agnes Jemima's, and Daisy/Nicole's all tied to *The Handmaid's Tale* and to Offred but focusing on events occurring fifteen years later combine to provide an unexpected joyful ending.

Reference to each of them is individually made in the passage that follows, beginning with "the definitive account of Aunt Lydia's life and times, suitably footnoted" (Atwood 2019, 403). It is challenging to even attempt to connect Aunt Lydia with feminism given the character's progression in *The Handmaid's Tale* and her attempts to conclusively enshrine history with her authoritative, therefore biased, position. She suspends her femininity and defers feminine solidarity until she feels she can truly upset the status quo and overthrow male dominance through feminine power, but the meaning that results from Derrida's linguistic ploy, namely deferral, may help to "excuse" her ruthless behaviour.

This power lies in language, in subversive wordplay with hidden meanings, as is the case with the Latin formula for graces that ends with *Per Ardua cum Estrus*,

"Through childbirth labour with the female reproductive cycle" (Atwood 2019, p. 289), which seems to have something to do with Gilead's desperate need to increase the birth rate. The phrase can also mean "going through" difficult times and adversity with a woman-specific frenzy, similar to the Victorian hysterics or the mythical Bacchantes, which takes on an extremely violent form in the particutions: men being literally ripped apart by handmaids or torn apart by a mob of frenzied women. The power of reading and writing, which has been taken away from all Gileadean women except for the aunts, is nonetheless more potent than this horrible act.

"Women's minds were too weak for reading. We would crumble, we would fall apart under the contradictions, we would not be able to hold firm"(Atwood 2019, P 303).

Accordingly, Lydia's role is to help women escape the oppressive patriarchal paradigm of the dictatorship and finally overturn men's dominance. In order to avoid the discourse that surrounds women, a woman must write about herself, write about other women, and bring other women to writing, from which they have been forcibly driven away. If the phallogocentric system governs society, then Atwood's decision to use the stereotypically feminine diary form may be seen as putting this notion of dismantling phallogocentric hierarchy into action. Aunt Lydia introduces women to writing by establishing an order of feminine power in its own right, one that would regain language and power, or the power of language, whichever comes first. Aunt Lydia writes herself in diaries addressed, metafictionally, to an unknown reader. She writes her-story, which becomes the history of the totalitarian Gilead itself.

Offred's journey compared to a story of losing her family, kid, rights, and freedom if one were to continue drawing parallels between the waves of feminism and the happenings in *The Handmaid's Tale*. All of the second wave's gains are followed by a sense of dignity and freedom. But in *The Testaments*, life carries on, albeit not

Offred's, as she only appears in the metafictional addition that mirrors the one in the original book. Agnes Jemima discovers that she has been adopted by the Commander's family, who nurtured her. Agnes Jemima, who will later in the novel join Aunt Lydia's rebellious army of women as Aunt Victoria, learns this information. She is far away and hazy. It's easy to correlate the memories of racing through the woods with Offred and Luke's memories of their failed attempt to flee Gilead.

According to Agnes Jemima's statement, the reader is told about Gilead's advancement or decline in the fifteen years that have gone since Offred's story's ambiguous conclusion. Atwood creates a theocracy that is more orderly and less violent, influenced by the Puritans but just as terrifying as the one in her first book. "The official line was that there were no corrupt Angels, and certainly no fleeing Handmaids; for why would one renounce God's kingdom to plunge into the flaming pit?" (Atwood 2019, 278).

Women are deprived of all rights save for the right to a limited education in religion and crafts at first, and 'premarital preparation' classes when they hit puberty at the age of thirteen. Obviously, they do spouses of husbands they are unable to select. They also 'happen' to pass away conveniently just when the Commanders seek a fresh, younger wife. Women are sexually assaulted by males in positions of authority; it is their word against theirs, and the victims are too afraid to report the abuse because those who did were punished rather than the perpetrators. Joining the aunts' ranks also opens the door to becoming a Pearl Girl and travelling to Canada to engage in political and religious activities of proclamation of Gilead. Atwood pictures these missionaries to resemble both the Puritan ladies of early seventeenth-century America and the pairs of Jehovah's Witnesses who can be seen handing out flyers all throughout, which is consistent with her numerous borrowings from reality. "Two of

them, in their silvery grey dresses with long skirts, their white collars, and their white hats." (Atwood 2019 p,261).

She gives these daughters the name of Hester Prynne's daughter (Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*), which is also compatible with her love for intertextuality. This path appears to be an escape from a type of womanhood that has been brought back to the times before the first wave, and ultimately proves to be such. Agnes Jemima and Aunt Victoria understand the inner workings of the women's resistance in Gilead through to the gift of reading. Eventually, she is reunited with her sister (the third narrator) and embarks on a mission to destroy Gilead from within with Aunt Lydia, a long agent of Mayday, an underground group that supports possible fugitives.

In the third story, which is set in Canada and has Daisy, a fifteen-year-old girl as its protagonist and narrator, Atwood has the chance to successfully experiment with the tone and vocabulary of young adult fiction. Daisy, who is also adopted, feels overprotected. Her displeasure with the Baby Nicole propaganda on both sides is her sole visible link to Gilead. The name Nicole, which Atwood keeps in her follow-up to make the lost kid a symbol for both sides, is given to the child that Offred gives birth to in the television series: She has been designated as a national victim by Gilead, who has established prayers for her restoration to the she is a symbol of freedom, a marker of Mayday's accomplishment in escaping the horrors of the theocracy so vilely constructed south of Canada, and the bosom of her country (but not mother), continually asking her extradition from the Canadian government.

Knowing that she is herself the baby in question, the adolescent expresses her dissatisfaction with the subject in a school essay by advocating for the baby's simple return to Gilead. She will discover this after the deaths of her adoptive parents, who

were resistance fighters, as a result of her exposure at a demonstration against Gilead.

*The Testaments* support the reliability of the writings of the three women, according to Pieixoto's keynote address at the Thirteenth Symposium on Gileadean Studies. The conceited, misogynistic Professor acknowledges in *The Testaments* that "women are usurping leadership positions to such a terrifying extent" (Atwood 2019, 408), continuing the plot development as it did in *The Handmaid's Tale*. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Professor mentions "the archaic vulgar signification of the word tail; [or...] the bone, as it were, of contention, in that phase of Gileadean society". Meet Pieixoto, a true alternate history storyteller who has spent her entire career telling them. In doing so, she essentially closes off Offred's story with a history of the oppressive malevolent kingdom. However, the feminist upsurge's undercurrents come together and pose a challenge to the metafictional frame's edges.

## **Chapter IV**

## **Conclusion**

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### Conclusion

Sudha Murty gave her female characters a challenge to overcome and give them the strength to carve out a place for themselves or establish their own space, Sudha Murty gives them problems. Her protagonists are distinguished by their capacity to accept their own cultures while remaining mindful of their Indianness. Shrikant believed that he had achieved all of his accomplishments on his own. He was now thinking of Shrimati. What contribution did she make to his success? She endured her loneliness in silence and continued to wish him progress. Actually, she deserved to play a significant part in his successes. But he never said anything about it.

Every second is valuable. In *Gently Falling the Bakula* by Sudha Murty, the author discusses the man-woman connection and how one partner's narrow-minded ambition can ruin a loving partnership. In this predominantly male environment, no one would support Shrimati's decision, yet she made it nevertheless without giving it a second thought. She had taken action based on her convictions. A spouse should support his wife in leading her own life. He can't impose his opinions on her. If a husband neglects his wife because he is too busy, it could result in desertion. Therefore, the family ought to encourage her personal growth as well because it will lead to equality and prosperity.

The author discusses two married woman characters that, in their own unique ways, differ from the New-woman figures of the preceding writers. The main female

protagonists in these stories do not cut all links with one another or with the world, nor do they harbour animosity towards people of the other gender. In the void they feel, they look for an identity and a purpose in life. Through this research, English literature students can see the 'New-New Women' characters developed by a modern author like Sudha Murty. By using the term "New-New Women," I am referring to the married new-women characters who attempt to balance modernity and tradition.

As Shrimati gains understanding, her perspective on wedding transforms. She rejects the idea of hopeless submission to her spouse and gives up on life due to her enormous aloofness and aggravation in life. She stops being alone as a result of her plan and longs for freedom and uniqueness that are not limited by familial ties. Shrikant, who has given in to power, ambition, position, and success, feels helpless without Shrimati. He realises that Shrimati has taken his spirit with her and that Bakula, his favourite flower, is no longer a part of him. Thus, Sudha Murthy depicts the characteristics of Shrimati and Shrikant, imitating the dynamism and temperament of the modern pair in the wake of the development of the IT businesses.

Many scholars have noticed the significance of gender in Atwood's books. However, there remains a gap in the analysis of Gilead's dictatorships using political theory. The reading of Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments* with a focus on Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt's theories of the political is the goal of this thesis. The majority of this research sticks to a non-Marxist methodology and emphasises oppressive actions by the government rather than social activities. The dichotomy between friend and enemy forms the foundation of Carl Schmitt's conception of politics.

This is one of the things this study wishes to emphasise when it examines Gilead. The Testaments demonstrate that the Gilead government employs these distinctions. The book demonstrates how totalitarian governments, like Gilead, make use of all available means to maintain friend-enemy connections. As a result, every facet of society, including ethics and morals, serves the interests of friendly and hostile interactions. The educational system is crucial because Vidala Schools specifically work to instill a fear of disobedience in kids. Additionally, Gilead's government clouds everyday activities like using a dishwasher with a cloud of death and war.

political decisions and regimes play in controlling the cultural dynamics and empowerment of women at times. It is crucial for governments like Gilead to maintain power and protect their sovereignty because they view women as enemies and have complete control over every area of their lives. Schmitt, therefore, emphatically emphasises the importance of maintaining friendly and hostile relations with regard to problems like borders, sovereignty, and security. The breakdown of friendly and hostile relationships could result in murder.

Gilead spreads violence and death across the nation in order to hold onto control. Beginning in the classroom with discussions of rebellious women being torn into pieces, it becomes considerably more mission Dead End and Mayday both take a more comprehensive approach to combat. Mayday demonstrates that there is resistance and that those who are oppressed by the friend-enemy framework also view their oppressor as an enemy and work to destroy it rather than to moderate or reform it. Perhaps Canada's avoidance of politics in its extreme manifestations can be regarded as a result of *The Testaments'* attempts to portray it as a liberal democracy

weaker than Gilead's tyranny. By doing this, Canada accepts Gilead as a rival rather than an enemy. As a result, they can coexist peacefully rather than starting a conflict.

However, as a result of being granted access to a strong military, Gilead is still able to exert pressure. However, Canada lends its assistance by taking in the Gilead refugees, which supports certain democratic activities in Gilead. This brings us to Hannah Arendt's notion of the political, which is challenging to understand due to its complexity. According to Arendt, politics is both a social force that regulates behaviour and a culture that governs how people interact with one another. It can evolve into a social compact that requires people to look out for one another. Her opposing viewpoints enabled this study to depart from Carl Schmitt's militarist perspective and go deeper into the significance of politics in one's private life, gender identity, and political acts.

The political has never been a calm or neutral area in the viewpoint of any of the theorists, despite the fact that Arendt's perspective on politics is very different from Schmitt's. In this instance, the Testaments show that maintaining totalitarian governments requires repressing people on the basis of their gender and imposing restrictions on their personal lives. The people are much more significant. The Testaments contains a wealth of useful examples. It is safe to say that totalitarian governments regulate people for political longevity rather than biological or workforce needs.

*The Testaments* serve as a reminder to readers that, contrary to initial appearances, gender inequality and the control of women's reproductive systems may not have moral or cultural roots. Instead, it is extremely political because the regimes are concerned with maintaining power. Because *The Testaments* intends to show

readers the true face of Gilead while also making some attempts to maintain its presence in global society through The Pearl Girls' propaganda, it makes fitting that the book does not discuss capitalism. Living in a totalitarian state like Gilead leads to isolation, and all of the people in The Testaments have very little contact with the outside world.

It does not, however, imply that the system is impervious to internal collapse. The study revealed Aunt Lydia to be a manifestation of the excess power in the many political creations. Aunt Lydia demonstrates how a totalitarian state can collapse within if its promises are broken. She thereby transcends speech and thought to take actual political action—paying the price with her life—by freeing the young aunts and girls. I attempted with this dissertation to deflect interest away from feminism and subject-focused ideologies.

Not because I disagree with feminism, but because emphasising the political and political theorists opens the door for the representation of governments in literature rather than underlying systems like capitalism or discourses like patriarchy. Paying attention to dishonest government is crucial now more than ever, in my opinion, because removing the primary barrier opens the door to discussing other aspects of women's lives, such as ecofeminism or queer issues. Atwood drew inspiration for Gilead (Guillemette) from Iran's 1979 revolution. The Testaments do contain a wide range of conditions relating to women. Studying institutions and their methods of controlling society matters because they encourage evil and cannot be regulated or bargained, as evidenced by the way the government controls gender and systematically oppresses them. In actuality, until they fall, evil is constrained by their capacity for political survival.

Believing that the mother is a crucial point of reference for the daughter's identity formation, stories about mothers and daughters are inexorably encoded in the intergenerational pattern of transmission (Boyd 1989). Despite the fact that the daughter's conception of womanhood is influenced by her own experiences and environmental factors, it is nonetheless typical of the mother's generation of women. Offred and her radical feminist mother serve as a good example of this clash between second-wave feminists and their postfeminist offspring in their story.

Fortunately, *The Testaments* restores faith in the potential of feminist movements because all of the main characters Offred, her kids, and, surprisingly, Aunt Lydia eventually become feminist subjectivities. The Handmaids' "red and white robes adopted as a symbol of female defiance from Ireland to Argentina, but most often in the US" have become a global landmark of this new wave, so reading *The Testaments* as an embrace of a third-wave message does not preclude influence from and echoes of an emerging fourth wave (Atwood 2019).

However, if we examine the wave narrative of feminism as a whole, the distinction between the two most recent feminism surges becomes less important. As Chamberlain notes, "Waves do not neatly end, with a coherent finishing point that inevitably leads to a renewed surge of activism years later" (2017, 30). The dichotomy between feminism and post-feminism, which has evolved and is now disguising itself as girlfriend culture, holds strong in a reading of *The Testaments*.

Therefore, the characters' food selections might reveal both their strengths and their weaknesses, in addition to their preferences and personalities. People nonetheless strive to maintain some control over their lives and deaths, even in a state that regulates every morsel its residents consume, as some women attempt suicide by

refusing to eat or by ingesting something inedible, such drain cleaner. This work has highlighted some of the significant ways food is used throughout *The Testaments* to anchor the disparate story-telling techniques and individual perspectives layered in the transcripts of witness testimony. Aunt Lydia, Agnes, and Daisy include their eating habits in their testimonies because they illustrate the dystopian and hostile atmosphere of Gilead.

The stories portray food shortages, rationing, and distribution issues under a repressive regime that would never acknowledge any food-related issues. The testimonials also include pictures of revolting and unappetizing food that serve as both real and figurative representations of the residents' desire for freedom and opposition to the oppressive authority. Eggs, chicken, white meat, and biscuits are examples of specific food images that Atwood uses to illustrate the gender hierarchy and dehumanising sexual policies of Gilead. *The Testaments* is a polyvocal, multi-generic, multi-perspectival novel that highlights the genre of witness writing.

The book cannot be a monological or mimetic representation of (fictional) painful occurrences in oppressive regimes due to the implied hybrid nature of testimony. Instead, it highlights the contradictions of telling trauma and challenges what appears to be established and authoritative, including gender norms, the Gileadean interpretation of religion, and the limits of what can and cannot be devoured. Atwood writes beyond genre and history by utilising the testimony genre.

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