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## **The Revival of *The Handmaid's Tale*: Empowering Women's Rights in the Twenty-First Century**

By Bassmah B. AlTaher<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

Feminists fought for the sake of justice and equality, paving the way for so many women to believe in their inner strength and ability to create change, but with the turn of the twenty-first century, many women who are victims of rape and sexual harassment still prefer to remain silent. The only possible way to move on and heal is to seek one's truth, yet the voices of the victims are overlooked in the face of extreme oppressive patriarchal societies. The entertainment industry and social media are two powerful tools women can use to make their voices heard, and celebrities have taken the podium to address the horrifying terrors women face locally and internationally. Unfortunately, the rise in the number of women who believe that beauty and wealth is all what a woman should strive for nowadays, entrapping them once again in an era where Feminists like Betty Friedan and Jo Freeman feared once in the beginning of the second wave movement. Change is a must, and with hashtags like *Time's Up* and *Me Too*, generating movements in social media and influencing the world, *The Handmaid's Tale* has been revived, adapted, and expanded on t.v., with a gnawing sense of reality and injustice no woman of any cultural background can ignore. This paper explores the theories and ideas of second wave feminism in relation to twenty-first century women and analyzes the powerful impact *The Handmaid's Tale* revival has had on shaking the silence of women who have been silent for so long.

*Keywords:* Second Wave Feminism, Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, Women's Rights, Truth, Voices, #MeToo, #Time'sUp

### **Introduction**

In the early years of the 1960s, second wave feminism began, lasting till the late 1980s. Various changes and events occurred throughout this period, such as the Vietnam War that awoke an individual's voice to oppose political injustices; there were also the Persian Gulf War, the struggle in former Yugoslavia, and the U.S.S.R.'s dissolution. All of these events called for feminists around the world to speak up to the never-ending inequality they had faced in the background of such circumstances. Thus, the question arose as to why inequality had continued despite the success of first wave feminism. Women were able to vote, get an education, work, and find independence. Yet, matters were not as they were envisioned by their ancestors; some women are still facing oppression throughout this period due to the survival of strict gender roles that were cut out for them by certain patriarchal societies that still believe in the submissiveness of a woman,

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enslaving them into a pattern of obedient housewives (often while engaging in work outside the home) and as good daughters. Many women resisted, attempting to change their circumstances, some succeeded, while some died trying, such as honor crimes in conservative societies. Culture has played a central part in engraving what gender is in the minds of young children. Saudi Arabia is a great example of one of the most gender oppressive countries; its patriarchy has taught women to hold propriety, the rationale for their existence depending on serving the men in their lives. Yet with the rise of the internet and the spread of social media, women are fighting for their rights to be treated as equal.

Prior to first wave feminism in the USA, the media portrayed white women as obedient, silent, and obsessed with pleasing the husband and doing house chores on time. With the burden of this stereotype, African American women faced harsher forms of patriarchal oppression due to the color of their skin. They were forced to accept the only job available, being a domestic helper. The pressure women faced at the time forced them into roles that catered to the patriarchal image of what a woman should be. Later on, women were grouped by society into one mold, where a woman's individuality is seen as taboo. This mold women were forced into that had no form of justice, is what Betty Freidan (1921 – 2006) attacks in her *Feminine Mystique*. It is an illusion for women to believe that a woman's greatest achievement is to follow a system dictated by patriarchal society, that a woman perceives herself as a perfect housewife by staying at home and behaving all proper and prim. Many women were influenced by this "mystique", and the highest aim in life was simply to accept the stereotype of being in the kitchen and be the woman who took care of her children and followed her husband without reasoning or questioning. Women believed in pushing their men forward into the realm of success, while forgetting themselves in the process; moreover, they began to encourage other women to join their charade of glam and happiness as it was heavily depicted in magazines and advertisements:

They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights – the independence and the opportunities that the old-fashioned feminists fought for (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.198).

Freidan was the one who have tackled this issue at best in her controversial book *Feminine Mystique* (1963). She analyzed it by calling it "The Problem that Has No Name;" the so-called Feminine standards, maturity, adjustment, and fulfillment seemed to agitate women, as marriage has become the sole purpose of their lives. Freidan did not only pinpoint the façade behind what a good woman of society should be but has also served the point of the second wave by making the personal political. If women do not stand up for themselves, they would only empower sexist structures in society. Structures that force women to refuse cancer medications in order to remain beautiful to please their husbands. If a woman wanted to pursue an education, her sole purpose would only be to find a husband, for marriage was the only sanction a woman could believe in. Being satisfied in one's marriage had become the norm in the sixties as she is taught how to think and feel, programming her consciousness in the image of an ideal American housewife. To be an American housewife was what every woman should dream of and aim at; to be beautiful and have a home and family and nothing more. Such claims by many women in that era have refuted everything their feminist ancestors had fought for, making the struggle for equality seem worthless, even pointless, because this ideal life of a feminine is all what she asks for.

In addition to Freidan's attack on the social stratum, Robin Lakoff (1942) argues how not only society shackles a woman in her appearance and status, but also in the way she speaks. Through a linguistic study on how women use speech in order to talk to men, it shows how it was quite different from the way men talk to women. Women use a polite form of speech, and this was taught to them ever since they were little girls. How to speak preceded all aspects of education, and when

the little girl...[learned] her lesson well, she...[was] not rewarded with unquestioned acceptance on the part of society; rather, the acquisition of this special style of speech...[would] later be an excuse for others... [used] to keep her in a demeaning position, to refuse to take her seriously as a human being (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.263).

Her critique is essential in the second wave, for it focuses on the very beginning of gender roles. Girls are taught how to be polite and eloquent and boys are never allowed to adopt a girl's way of speaking. Therefore, a girl is left with two forms of language, the so-called neutral language and "women's" language. Women's language is significant because it speaks volumes of truth as it breaks the silence. Lakoff's study pinpoints the essence of the problem that starts at a very young age when a girl is raised in her family, and how she deals with discrimination at school, making her feel inferior towards her male peers.

With Freidan and Lakoff's criticisms, one can understand why women could no longer stay silent in the second wave, as many women began to feel incomplete, and were not able to find a cure to what made them feel that way. Most women ended up going to therapy, visiting various physicians, and many have even gone to the extreme by taking antidepressants to shun away the thought that they were actually miserable in a life that they had no claim over; no power over their own voices. Those incidents generated a common problem among women who lived their lives in this social trend, a problem they could never name as Friedan describes.

This problem reemerges once again in the twenty-first century, as gender roles continue their way into structures that agree on honor crimes seen in conservative societies, on banning education to young women, and on hindering ambitious women from climbing the corporate ladder. Similar problems of the sixties and eighties occur once again today, making the voices of the second wave reemerge to remind women of every color and race that there is a problem and it can be named with the power of social media and the silver screen.

#### *The Handmaid's Tale:*

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) created a dystopian world, where women are swallowed into a similar vortex of the 1920s up to the 1960s era. Yet her world comes so shocking, it yearns to be more of a wakeup call to women who tend to be only feminine and accept only the patriarchal order as it determines their fates. In Gilead, the new country of the United States of America, transforms into theonomic dictatorship regime, where the military means are used to impose teachings of the old-testament and a patriarchal hierarchy which serves the political means of a dying society. fertility rates have dropped, and children's mortality rates have risen, and the only way to ensure humanity's survival is to strip away women's rights, claiming that women have lost their dependence on men and family. This act of teaching women their rightful place as wife and mother is justified by using God's law, making it easier to subdue fertile women as handmaids to superior officers of the regime.

Fertile women are constantly raped by the men of the households in the presence of the commanders' wives in hopes to get them pregnant. The handmaids are stripped from their identity and self-confidence, turning them into lifeless bodies of unheard voices lost under the oppression extremists. If a handmaid does not follow orders, she is threatened by being severely punished or even killed. The world Atwood created is not a distant future, her dystopia touches a sense of reality, knocking warning signs upon the doors of women who have given up the fight and fallen into the grips of other people deciding her own fate.

This theonomic world stems from the early days of the Old Testament, draped in Puritan form. Theonomy is a strict Christian belief in which God (Theo in Ancient Greek) is the divine ruler and His laws (nomy in Ancient Greek) is to be followed by the devout. This faith manifested itself into a governmental system applied to modern societies (Jones, p.70). However, the applicability of Theonomy on today's society is not always accepted by many scholars; William S. Barker (1934), an American Church historian believes that Theonomy "neglects many of the discontinuities between the Old Testament and our time" (p.11). If one looks closely at Theonomy, "there are two problems facing the church as an organization, its long-running traditions and a changing cultural environment" (Ray). According J. Melvin Ray in *Theonomy: Who's in Charge* (2017), God gives Adam an unshared authority, giving him complete control over what happens in the present and future. But with Adam's fall, authority shifted from man who has the absolute power and control to a "family autonomy."

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, developing countries have witnessed their fair share of political crises: the Arab Spring, ISIS, and the Rohingya crisis in Burma. These events share stories of women who were sexually harassed, raped, and slaughtered. Mona Eltahawy mentions in *The New York Times* how the "unending tide of accounts of sexual harassment and assault by powerful men that women are suddenly allowing themselves to share is a reminder of the ubiquity of sexual violence that women worldwide have long known too well — and that men in a few places are finally, albeit reluctantly, acknowledging" (2017).

Hence, some women in leading positions felt the need to stand up for the abused women around the world. Oprah Winfrey at the 2018 Golden Globes says upon receiving the Cecil B. de Mille Award, "speaking your truth is *the* most powerful tool...for too long women have not been heard or believed if they dared to speak their truth to the power of those men" (NBC). Being the first African American woman to receive such an award, she uses her strong position in the entertainment industry, and addresses the most important issue of all time, the media's silence of unheard women across the globe. Making your personal political is what empowers women and encourages them to speak up and defend themselves.

People may ask why violence against women as emerged as so important today, when it has long been a fact of life for women globally. Is it because of Trump's sexual harassment scandal, or is it because of the rise of stereotyped women on social media who are followed blindly by thousands of women? With the rise of Kim Kardashian's followers and her dazzling allure, some girls find themselves wanting a similar life of instant fame, and what is hype and cool is what is found in Instagram models, such as the Hadid sisters with their fashionable iconic looks that inspire women to believe that *fashion* is a must achievement. Music is not another form of influence, take Taylor Swift's music for example, who sings the stories of relationships and heartbreaks, making her popularity an undeniable power influence that echoes the necessity of love and relationships. With all of these aspects rising in today's media, women who fight for what they believe in, such as Greta Thunberg fighting for climate change, and Melala Yousafzai encouraging education for

women find themselves trapped in what Friedan feared the most, an entrapment of the “feminine mystique,” where women ignore the necessity of change.

One reads articles mentioning how ISIS “has sought to exclude Syrian women and girls from public life. Women have been killed, often by stoning, for unapproved contact with the opposite sex. ISIS regulations dictate what women must wear, with whom they may socialize, and where they may work. Distressing accounts were collected of forced marriages of girls as young as 13 to ISIS fighters” (Ohchr.org, 2020). These restrictions are the very same sexist structures happening once again to destroy ambition, free will, and individuality in a woman. Due to the increasing numbers of people ignoring the problem of flourishing sexist structures, the need to make a change and spread awareness, especially with the availability of modern tools women have today can add voice and strength to the voiceless and the wronged. Women still suffer unequal wages, the right to pass down her nationality to her children, like in Jordan, is still once of the sensitive, debatable topics. Child marriages are on the rise due to wars and genocides, women in Saudi Arabia have recently gained the right to drive, yet not the freedom to drive a car since this depends still on male relatives’ sanctions. To fight for women’s rights has become a challenge in many ways.

Looking back, feminists in the second wave movement rose with fury in seeing the suffering reappear once again in a different form, through psychological chains that led women to think that they were inferior, helpless, and stupid, and could do nothing about it. Friedan offered a strategy for this cure by looking at the problem itself and asking women to reclaim their voice that says, “I want something more than my husband and my children and my home” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.203). This fight for reclaiming women’s voices grew stronger with Jo Freeman’s (1945 –) essay “The Bitch Manifesto.” In this essay, she explains how a strong, powerful woman is called a Bitch, because she would not yield to feminine standards society expects of her, for she would not “serve, honor, and obey a man” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.215).

Freeman has agreed with Friedan, and also touches on the issue of the suppressed inner voice, and refers to it as the Bitch’s voice, the voice of a strong woman. The Bitch contrasts with a woman who is afraid, and continues to suffer from anxiety and depression in her role as a good housewife, and by perceiving the Bitch, she beholds “envy and challenges them to forsake the security of...[her] chains” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.215). Freeman calls this obedient woman the “true woman” who conforms to “a society that...[has] defined humanity as male, and female as something other than male” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.215). Friedan proves in her study that women do not want this, and they want to break loose from their chains, calling her the “woman” as Freeman refers to, or the unfeminine creature whom society labels as the Bitch.

Freeman categorized the Bitch into three traits: The personality, the physical, and the orientation, and these traits do not please society. She is “a threat to the social structures which...[enslave] women and the social values which...[justify] keeping them in their place” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.215). Freeman calls for these women to be brave and loud like a Bitch, because by further elaborating what a bitch is, one could understand how a woman could be her own true self by pleasing herself, fulfilling her dreams, and living her life the way she wants. “A Bitch has a mind of her own and wants to use it. She wants to rise high, be creative, assume responsibility. She knows she is capable and wants to use her capabilities” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.216). Women as such suffer the most when it comes to being accepted in society, because they were always shunned and detested. Even if a “true woman” or a “feminine” seeks to live a “shadow life” under a man’s wing, she is still verbally, emotionally, or physically abused for being passive.

With the revival of *The Handmaid's Tale* in 2017 on Hulu, season one has brought a dystopian reality to the women of today, making those who stay silent see the bitter truth of what might happen in a not so distant future. With the plot evolving into a second season in 2018, the plight of the handmaid Offred becomes the concern of hundreds, or thousands of women. *The Handmaid's Tale* "has landed in an atmosphere of radicalised action, with the #MeToo and #Time's Up movements demanding the end of widespread cultures of misogyny, sexual harassment and abuse" (Mulkerrins, 2018). The realistic world and the fictitious dictatorship of a regime has made the two main characters' struggle important.

Serena Joy, starring Yvonna Strahovski, is the strong and powerful commander's wife who verbally, and at times physically, abuses June Osborne, a captured handmaid, starring Elisabeth Moss. Serena endures the civil war, participates in her husband's regime, and allows her husband to rape the handmaid constantly under what Gilead calls God's laws all for the sake of having a baby. The handmaid is stripped from her identity, renaming her Offred, as if from the Commander Fred's house. The household and Gilead treat her like a slave, punish her for speaking her mind, and is forbidden from her freedom. Free will is no longer a prerogative for handmaids, and the baby she bears is not hers to be kept.

Serena, on the other hand, is driven by her selfish desire to be a mother, entrapping her in a circle of her own where she sees nothing, hears nothing, and speaks nothing. She is aware of all the harsh circumstances the other women are facing, the Marthas slave in the kitchen, and the Handmaids are forced to have sex with commanders, and Jezebels are fallen women who serve as prostitutes for the elite. Serena is capable of cruelty and is ruthless at times to Offred's attempts to rebel. The significance of Serena, particularly in the revival of *The Handmaid's Tale*, is that not only are men capable of harming minority women, but women themselves are able to hurt and continue the oppression of women. The Aunts who train the Handmaids are conscious of what they are doing, using methods of physical torture in order to punish Handmaids who defy them.

This series sounds the alarm to many women who are unaware of the crisis women face due to oppression. Many women chose to be passive out of fear and hesitation. To be passive has caused depression to many women, some are lucky enough to act feminine in order to be partially accepted, some have become aggressive because of hiding their pain behind all their tough and rough personalities. However, Freeman admires the strength of those who she calls Bitches, and their will to make their own way in society, like June who refuses to give up and give in to Gilead. Freeman calls for the aid of such strong women to help fragile women who "yearn" to be free from the shackles of femininity, and to guide them in finding the strength to stand on their own. Because strong women are able to do what true women could not by getting an education, having a professional career, and become great leaders. They have practically "changed the world we live in" (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p.218).

This was why Freeman perceives the "Bitch as Beautiful," because this strong and isolated woman is the vivacity of true womanhood, a dream that many subordinate women dream to become one day. Serena, when she awoke is able to make the tables turn, to find a better solution rather than support the regime. Her husband as seen in many scenes is weak, fragile, and at times a coward hiding behind the regime, claiming to be powerful when he stems his power from his wife. *The Handmaid's Tale* comes as a reminder of how the world could be if women continue to remain silent and support their oppressors. The struggles women face today are similar to the decade between 1975 and 1985. Women resisted inequality, as feminists became more daring and open with their thoughts in their quest to free the minds of women, who thought of themselves

incomplete without men. That decade was called the Decade of Women, when they dominated political, social, and intellectual currents.

Various theories emerged during that decade as women began to delve deeper into the psyche. In all fields of life, whether it were education, politics, science, and medicine, patriarchy has dominated those fields with its superiority; moreover, another kind of domination appeared in biological form, which was the multi-billion dollar franchise known as the pleasures of sex. Luce Irigaray discuss this in a groundbreaking essay as she tackles the idea of “desire” and a woman’s sexual fulfillment. She believes that women have tried to break free from the grips of men in all fields to fulfill equality, but have failed in one aspect, which was sexual fulfillment.

According to Irigaray, women are overwhelmed by everything as they try to secure an education, a job, a family, making them forget how men devour her subconscious in the process, similar to how Fred consumes Serena’s way of thinking. Fred constantly uses the words of God as he goes back to the Old Testament to tame her wild behavior—and wild to him is rebellious, she who does not follow man’s right to rule and control. A woman then thinks that she could not fulfill her needs without having a man in her life, similar to what is happening with many young girls who believe in the happily ever after as shown on the Disney cartoons. For years, Disney has portrayed fragile princesses who are perceived as damsels in distress and in want of saving. This issue is what Freud discusses in his Penis Envy theory, that a woman lacks power, and it is only found in the male organ where she claims part of that power: “Women...[live their] own desire only as the expectation that she...[might] at last come to possess and equivalent of the male organ” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p. 317)

As with many feminist critiques of Freud, Irigaray rejects the idea of woman longing for a male organ in order to feel satisfied. A woman already has multiple powers, one which is found in her clitoris, and that little organ is what fully completes her. She is sexually aroused easily with a simple touch of her body, and God has created her as a complete human being with an organ to fulfill all of her desires. Women in the time of Greeks were aware of this important organ, and never have depended upon man until the appearance of Western Domination. “Woman’s desire would not be expected to speak the same language as man’s; women’s desire has doubtless been submerged by the logic that has dominated the West since the time of the Greeks.” (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p. 318) Along the way, women had forgotten their significance, allowing men to dictate what is good and beneficial for her and her body. This emotional gap is filled with a woman’s desire to have a baby in order to fulfill her needs, and usually a woman would long for a baby boy whose male organ bestows her with power. In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the commanders’ wives are obsessed with having a baby, the means of begetting a child does not matter, whether it be rape, kidnap, or murder, a child is precious in Gilead, and Aunts do whatever it takes to protect babies and children.

Yet this obsession with wanting babies among the elite ruling class is similar to what Irigaray argues about. These wives are upset for sacrificing their dreams and goals to sit at home and command a household barren of children. At some point, the wives are able to remember their significance, Serena in Season Two, Episodes Eight and Nine entitled “After” and “Women’s Works” show how she is able to take control of Fred’s work while he is in hospital. She even asks for June’s help as they both write and edit paperwork needed for Gilead’s governance. Serena goes to the extent of defying her husband who would not bring a Martha, the best pediatrician in Gilead, to a hospital to check on a dying baby. Serena secretly forges Fred’s signature, and brings the Martha to the hospital. June is seen with Janine who is the baby’s real mother but serves as a Handmaid. In a glimpse, this collaboration reminds one, how women can create a bond in similar



circumstances, almost as if they are as one team, proving what Irigaray has argued about. Women by nature are strong, biologically and intellectually, their desires, dreams, and wishes can be fulfilled without the aid of a male.

It is interesting how this dystopian world is necessary; science fiction and speculative fiction have always gone hand in hand in the period between 1985 and 1995. Feminists began to clarify matters for women in order to embrace their quest for equality. Donna Haraway (1944 –) in her article “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” tackles the need for a right vision and strategy women desperately need in order to steer towards the right direction. Haraway’s manifesto is a reaction to what she thinks are the trials of many feminists who have tried to return to nature. Feminists have gone to historical origins in order to explain gender oppression; however, Haraway simply opposes these findings by stating that such efforts would not sabotage the power of myths that have already “colonized” women throughout time. Take Gilead for example, the Theonomy enforced on its citizens is nothing but a desperate attempt to make women believe that the revival of a simple life is the answer to global crisis of toxic waste and the dwindling rates of fertility. What Atwood has created in her novel and brought to life on the silver screen by Bruce Miller as a series, brings about the feeling of necessary change. The toxic pollution destroys Mother Nature in the United States, making it an excuse for an oppressive regime to take over and create Gilead. Hence, when applying Haraway’s theory on Gilead, it is quite impossible to go back to nature. The Unwomen, also known as the prisoners, die in the colonies while cleaning up toxic waste. This represents how old ways can no longer be applied in the changing times of today.

Haraway’s cyborg is partially human and partially machine. It is symbolic of the post-modern human being, who is basically made up of various collective units that work together in unison. By achieving this vision, Haraway breaks away from the image of a Gilead woman, to be reimagined as a concept that rejects the geneses, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the Oedipal Complex:

The cyborg...[is] a creature in a post-gender world; it...[has] no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p. 385).

This is why *The Handmaid’s Tale* is as what director Reed Morano states “the resonance of the past and the present” (Brooks). Over a million girls are not receiving any type of education in Afghanistan alone, and oppressive regimes like the Taliban and ISIS tolls the warning bells in the ears of women of today. Women like Serena’s character can no longer take a step back, repeating what Morano says, “Because we’re so sheltered here, in America, typically. [...] We have this whole thing of “this can’t happen to me this happens to people over there” (Brooks).

Yet life over there is much closer than expected. For example, Warren Jeffs, whose story shook the safe walls of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ (LDS) and an entire nation. Under what he calls the guidance of God and the Prophet, Warren cut off members of the church from the outside world, and established what he calls a quorum of under-aged wives, bringing to the Church all kinds of unspeakable atrocities done to women who were raped and forced to marry without consent at a young age. Anyone who rejected his ways were punished (“Warren Jeffs,” 2019).

These global examples of past and present are harbored as the truth about the reality of women of today. Absolute knowledge of the truth is quite impossible to attain, yet speaking the truth is the new form of reality that can socially liberate oppressed women. Haraway's cyborg theory is a reminder of mankind's incapability to coexist with one another without oppressing the other. The differences of gender, history, race, and class have ultimately divided the sexes instead of uniting them. Women have ended up being alienated from one another in their search of becoming a dominating "feminine," or have lost their potential when seen struggling to bear a child in order to fill their emotional gap. Whether a woman decides to give up her goals and dreams and restricts herself to a place cut out for her by an oppressive patriarchal society, she unfortunately allows society a chance to deviate. And an attempt to unify the experiences between all women will be futile as well as destructive; therefore, the need of a cyborg is quite relevant according to Haraway, because it creates kinship among the women and sees through their differences. This cyborg is,

...a local possibility taking a global vengeance. Race, gender, and capital require a cyborg theory of wholes and parts. There...[is] no drive, in cyborgs to produce total theory, but there...[is] an intimate experience of boundaries, their construction and deconstruction (Kolmar and Bartkowski, p. 393).

The cyborg symbolizes women speaking their truth, and as simple as that may sound, it is a way to create a new consciousness that no longer is a part of the male dogma. Women can envision a new way of life, where there is no room for constant doubt or fear from their incompleteness and incompatibility with men in the twenty-first century. Because fear itself is numbing, which generates everlasting inequality Freeman and Irigaray have argued against. Freeman calls for women to embrace their inner voice, the strength and courage of a Bitch that lies within her grasp if she would only embrace it. Irigaray calms the fears of women who thought that they are still shackled physically to a man in order to achieve their desires, and Haraway creates a whole new world for women to live in and find peace and harmony that is far away from the patriarchal shackles of society. Atwood and Burner's, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a story that encourages women to voice their truths and breath power into women's rights, the rights that women of the second of wave movement have fought so hard to realize.

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