

Professor Amy Bolaski

English 201

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“Issues-Based Paper Using Intrinsic and Extrinsic Analysis From a Marxist and
Feminist Perspective (Issue – forced surrogacy/reproduction)”

Introduction: [didn't write one – the purpose of this document is to demonstrate the use of intrinsic and extrinsic analysis via a theoretical lens to provide analytical structure/inclusion of various sources. Thus, the paper begins below with what would be a body paragraph.]

Comparing surrogacy to other forms of assistance in conceiving and raising children, writer Nayantara Mallya (volunteer for SuDatta, an association for adoptive parents) here highlights why surrogacy is an oppressive, unethical form of such assistance:

For one, getting help for childcare, education and the care of elders pays people for their skills and work. It's not an invasion of their bodies. Surrogacy is. To me, it compares (in terms of ethics) to paid live organ donation ... a person's body is being used to save someone else's life. Or commercial sex work ... a woman is paid to satisfy a man's desires Surrogacy is the wrong solution to

pleasing the patriarchal notions about the requirement for a
bloodline produced obediently by the wife and the superiority of
genetic ties.

While Mallya explicitly identifies modern (particularly outsourced) surrogacy as a form of patriarchal oppression, she also goes on to locate the practice in class-based oppression. **The forced surrogacy in Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale* is presented similarly: the practice is at the apex of the handmaids' psychological, sexual, physiological and physical oppression.** Atwood's darkly dystopian surrogacy forewarns of the very real dangers inherent in perhaps *any* exchange that trades on the pregnancy/birth of child –whether the surrogate is paid in the form of financial currency (as in Maliya's non-fictional critique) or the alleged honor and physical safety promised to the handmaids in Atwood's fictional account. In a modern world wherein we seemingly have more *choice* than ever in deciding whether/how/when to conceive a child, both Maliya and Atwood remind us **that such choice almost always belongs to those of privileged races, ethnic identities, social classes**, and geographical locations. For many, many others, choice is much less a part of the equation – often playing no part at all.

The aunts/enforcers go so far as to liken the handmaids' new existence to, literally, a form of freedom rather than a world of bodily coercion and force, proposing that the handmaids are lucky in that they no longer have to deal with catcalls or fear violence from strangers. **Aunt Lydia, seemingly having**

internalized the new but wildly perverse ideology of her country's fundamentalist leaders says brightly, “ [i]n the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from.” This defective but catchy truism is meant to help the handmaid understand and reconfigure the conditions of her freedom while maintaining the outrageous fiction that she possesses any form of freedom at all: they are free *from* sexual harassment, the threat of home invasion, touch to which they have not consented, forced and perhaps violent sexual contact. In exchange for such “protection” she has simply had to give up freedom “to” – to make decisions, to choose sexual partners, to choose whether to try to conceive or not, to have any agency whatsoever. **This anachronistic ideology is similar to the kind Mallya recognizes in the rhetoric that favors surrogacy:** “ . . . First we had BPO [business process outsourcing] then KPO [knowledge process outsourcing], and now **reproduction** process outsourcing. . . . A couple who cannot birth a child exploits a woman in a developing country, walks away with a baby in hand, and feels like they helped the surrogate mom get a better life.” The perceived mutually beneficial exchange, mirrored in Aunt Lydia’s version, is often the selling point. **However, “The professional surrogate mother also appears to be a winner, with all the money she's paid. But she's not. She's a victim” (Maliya).**

