‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ – Critical Quotes

1. LINDA W. WAGNER-MARTIN ABOUT THE GILEADEAN SOCIETY:

"The novel is a prediction of the horrors of cultures so **frightened by normal sexuality** that it codified and prescribed all such procreation, and created hierarchies of life and death around it. It is a brutal **horrifying culture**."

2. CORAL HOWELL ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONAL THEMES IN THE HANDMAID'S TALE:

“**Atwood’s feminist concerns are plain** here but so too are her concern for basic human rights.”

3. “MARGARET ATWOOD’S THE HANDMAID’S TALE AND THE DYSTOPIAN TRADITION” BY AMIN MALAK:

"One of the novel's successful aspects concerns the skilful portrayal of a state that in theory claims to be founded on Christian principles. Yet in practice miserably lacks spirituality and benevolence. **The state in Gilead prescribes a pattern of life, based on** frugality, conformity, **censorship**, corruption, **fear** and terror, in short, the usual terms of existence enforced by totalitarian states, instance of which can be found in such dystopian works as Zamyatin's We, Huxley's Brave New World and 1984."

4. "ECOFEMINIST VISION: A STUDY OF MARGARET ATWOOD'S SURFACING AND THE HANDMAID'S TALE" BY K. RESHMI:

"In the Gileadean patriarchy, **a woman is denied the right to possess or to have control over her own body.** Her body is segmented and her value is determined on the basis of her reproductive capability."

5. "ORALITY AND LITERACY AS GENDER-SUPPORTING STRUCTURES IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE HANDMAID'S TALE" BY MARIO KLARER ABOUT READING AND WRITING IN GILEAD:

"Women from all classes of society ... are excluded from any kind of written discourse. These measures aim at giving the male leadership all the advantages of a highly developed text processing culture and of **using these advantages purposefully against the women**."

6. COOMI S. VEVAINA ABOUT SEXISM AND RACISM IN GILEAD:

"The republic of Gilead justifies its **sexist policies** with the socio-biological theory of natural polygamy and legitimises its racist and sexist policies as having a biblical precedent."

7. JESSIE GIVNER ABOUT ANONYMITY IN GILEAD:

"Indeed, the desire of the Gilead regime to remove name is as strong as the desire to remove faces. Just as the rules of **Gilead try to eliminate mirrors**, the reflection of faces, so they attempt to erase names."

8. CAROL BERAN ABOUT OFFRED:

"Offred's **power is in language**."

9. CAVALCANTI ABOUT THE BIBLICAL REFERENCES AND FOUNDATIONS IN GILEAD:

"The monthly rape 'Ceremony'… synthesises **the institutionalised humiliation, objectification, and ownership of women** in Gilead."

10. "FROM IRONY TO AFFILIATION IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE HANDMAID'S TALE" BY JENNIFER A. WAGNER-LAWLOR:

"Offred is politically complacent before the takeover."

11. "RECONSTRUCTING MARGARET ATWOOD'S PROTAGONISTS" BY PATRICIA GOLDBLATT:

"The work women do, conspires to maintain the subjection of their own kind."

12. "STUDY OF FEMALE LEISURE SPACES IN DYSTOPIAN NOVELS" BY MARGARET DANIELS AND HEATHER BOWEN:

"Strictly controlled access to leisure reinforces the Handmaid's enslavement… **Every step, every mouthful of food**, every move **is observed**, reported, circumvented or **approved**."

13. ERIKA GOTTLIEB ABOUT FREE WILL IN GILEAD:

"Since the dystopian regime denies its subjects' free will, the central character cannot be made responsible for his or her ultimate failure or defeat in the repressive system that overpowers individuals."