

**STRUGGLES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AGAINST THE  
FUNDAMENTALIST REGIME IN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* NOVEL (1985):  
A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfilment of Requirement for Bachelor Degree in  
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**APPROVAL**

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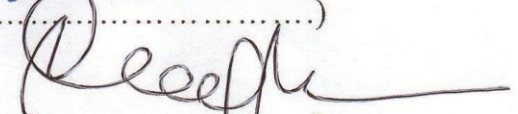
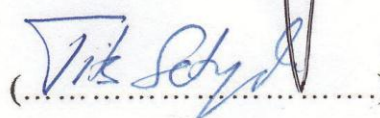
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## **STRUGGLES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AGAINST THE FUNDAMENTALIST REGIME IN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* NOVEL (1985): A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini berfokus pada perjuangan untuk kesetaraan gender terhadap rezim fundamentalis yang terdapat pada novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) karya Margaret Atwood. Teori yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah perspektif Feminisme dan Marxisme. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan indikator-indikator dalam perjuangan untuk kesetaraan gender, bagaimana perjuangan untuk kesetaraan gender yang tergambar pada novel, dan alasan si penulis sendiri dalam menentukan isu kesetaraan gender yang terdapat pada novel. Dalam menyelesaikan penelitiannya, penulis menggunakan dua sumber data yaitu sumber data primer dan sekunder. Data primernya adalah novel *The Handmaid's Tale* karya Margaret Atwood dan data sekundernya adalah artikel jurnal, artikel publikasi, dan beberapa situs internet yang dibutuhkan sebagai informasi tambahan dalam penelitian ini. Terdapat tiga hasil penelitian: 1) ditemukan enam indikator yang mempengaruhi perjuangan untuk kesetaraan gender ini yaitu; memecah hirarki, menentang penindasan, memperoleh kembali kebebasan demokrasi dan pendidikan, menarik kembali hak berserikat, menentang pelanggaran hak individual, dan menentang orientasi kaum homoseksual. 2) terdapat bagaimana pengarang novel menyampaikan isu dalam novel ini yaitu melalui gambaran karakter, kejadian, latar tempat, dan gaya bahasa. 3) pengarang mengangkat topik kesetaraan gender berdasarkan refleksinya terhadap hak-hak wanita dan sejarah pelanggaran hak wanita di Amerika Serikat pada tahun 1980-an.

**Kata kunci:** kesetaraan gender, Feminisme, Marxisme, Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

### **Abstract**

This research emphasizes the struggles for gender equality against the fundamentalist regime in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) by Margaret Atwood. The theory used in this study is the perspective of Feminism and Marxism. This study aims to find indicators in the struggles for gender equality, how the struggles for gender equality are depicted in the novel, and the reason for the author in determining the issues of gender equality needed in the novel. In completing her research, the author uses two data sources namely primary and secondary data sources. The primary data is Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* novel and the secondary data is journal articles, publication articles, and several internet sites that are needed as additional information in this study. There are three results of the study: 1) found six indicators that influenced the struggle for gender equality; breaking the hierarchy, opposing subjugation, obtaining freedom of speech and education, revoking the union rights, opposing individual rights violation, and opposing homosexual orientation. 2) in composing her novel, the author conveyed some issues through the descriptions of characters, events, place settings, and language styles. 3) the author addresses the

topic of gender equality based on his reflection on women's rights and the history of women's rights violation in the United States in the 1980s.

**Keywords:** gender equality, Feminism, Marxism, Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the writers who address the gender equality issue is Margaret Atwood. *The Handmaid's Tale* published in 1985 was a speculative fiction set in the U.S. Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. The Handmaids are assigned to generate offspring from their Commander as the downscale of birth rate. The Wives of the Commanders are infertile so The Handmaids must be a national resource for their state. Women in Gilead are oppressed, no longer allowed to read, write, having job and control money. They took women from their family, their jobs and their freedom in order to stabilize the population in Gilead. Men have the biggest power in this fundamentalist government while women's identities are taken, especially the Handmaids. Gilead was a religious regime by using some biblical authority to run their rules. If there is someone who dares to oppose and violate the rules, they will be punished such murdering and kill their bodies on the buildings of the city. It sounds radical, but the conservatives believed that Lord Jesus will forgive for the sake of His scripture. To analyse the study, the researcher found several previous studies that have been conducted related to the issue, theory, and the novel itself. Gulick (1991), Feuer (1997), Zivic (2014), and Williamson (2016) examined a dystopian society. The researchers explored that women's bodies as a symbol of dystopian social satire and the conservatives manipulated and utilized people to work for the totalitarian regime. They used a qualitative method and relied on Plato's perspective in understanding women. Noer (2016) and Cuesta (2018) analysed the patriarchy system. The researchers found a patriarchal environment in the novel in which men exist instead of women. In studying this, the researchers used a descriptive qualitative method. Cooper (1995), Kouhestani (2012), Rahmawati (2013), and Nyberg (2018) conducted to examine oppression against women. They found that women become the witness of sexual violence of what the extremists did, they won't be trusted and discarded.

Based on the previous studies, many researchers were studied on *The Handmaid's Tale* novel. They are mostly focused on the patriarchy system and oppressions in which men have held the highest power towards the rules of society. Then, as pessimistic found in the previous studies, this study aims to investigate the struggles for gender equality in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The author will outline the conflicts related to gender gap by using Marxist Feminism containing social construction as references.

The author found distinction and similarity between this study and the previous research. The distinction found in the previous study of Kouhestani (2012) that analysed the sexual oppression and religious extremism in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel. The previous researcher used sexual oppression as a material object and Foucault's theory to analyse the study, whereas this study analyse the struggles for gender equality by using Feminist theory. And the similarity with that previous study is the formal object used, i.e. *The Handmaid's Tale* novel by Margaret Atwood in 1985. Thus, the recent study was a continuation of the previous research.

Related to the gender equality issues, the Feminist perspective used to answer the problem statement. Feminism is a perspective of social ideologies aims to campaign the woman rights to fight gender disparity and people's stereotype about the inferiority of women besides men. Feminist established some aspects that change the current power relation between two genders by moving social, economic, and political determination to equalize the rights between men and women (Mandell & Johnson, 2017, p. 8-9). In discussing the social construction contained in the novel, the researcher used Marxist Feminism as perspective. Marx believed that the ideology in a society is firmed by capitalists, ruler or bourgeoisie interest. Socialist Feminists supposed that women have to deny the ideologies instead of serving male and the ruler (Donovan, 1985, p. 74). Moreover, Beauvoir argued that equality can't be realised before both genders enjoy the same rights in law. Rights must have full participation in general industry by all female gender (1953, p. 81). Therefore, the struggles for gender equality depicted by the main character became a tool for the novel's author to convey his ideas. The fundamentalism of the tale has effects on human rights includes gender equality, captivity, democracy, even the hierarchy for

the women. This study uses a Feminist perspective and focuses on Marxist Feminist analysis so that this study can be a significant difference compared to other studies.

## **2. METHOD**

In this study, the researcher examined it by a qualitative method. Qualitative learn the interpretation of the world naturally by learning, understanding, and interpreting things in it. This involves empirical in the material used (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). The main issue analysed in this novel is struggling for gender equality against the fundamentalist regime. The primary data was the novel *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and the secondary data is sourced from the previous literary works such as journal, article, internet links or other research projects that relevant as support. In collecting the data, the researcher used the narrative as an approach to collect the data. Data collection used as a sample to assess research points in each approaches (Creswell, 2007, p. 117-120). Several steps in collecting the data are determining the research questions, obtaining the data by reading the novel also its translation novel and marking the novel parts concerned with the research, obtaining the relevant ideas through reading some related book of theories, journals, thesis, any information from the internet, and the TV series, collecting the information obtained from supported books, analysing the parts with the approach of Feminism and Marxism theory, and collaborating interpreting the relevant data from both primary and secondary data sources. The techniques of analysing the data are by data reduction, data display, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10-11).

## **3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Finding**

3.1.1 The indicator of struggles for gender equality against the fundamentalist regime

3.1.1.1 Breaking the hierarchy

The author will discuss hierarchy in *The Handmaid's Tale* from the women's side. When the fundamentalist regimes come into power, the women's civil rights and their personal identity have been taken based on their level of importance. Women

have to wear different colours of uniforms to specify their roles. There are five classes of women in the Republic of Gilead;

#### 3.1.1.1.1 Wives

These women have a role as a companion for their husband, the commander. The infertile women who later nurture the babies born from the Handmaids. Their uniform is blue.

#### 3.1.1.1.2 Aunts

The military women who supervise, monitor, and train the handmaids in the Red Centre. Their uniform is brown.

#### 3.1.1.1.3 Marthas

A Martha has to serve all the nutritional needs of the commander's house. Cooking and preparing food are the daily tasks of a Martha. Their uniform is a dark green dress with a veil.

#### 3.1.1.1.4 Handmaids

Fertile women, assigned to bear children. Live in slavery in the Republic of Gilead. There will be a ceremony of their fertile periods. After the baby was born, they have to hand over their children to Commander's family. Their uniform is a red dress with a white hat hood.

#### 3.1.1.1.5 Econowives

Econowives were the wife of the poorer in Gilead. Econowives were the wife of the poorer in Gilead. They got mistreatment from the upper class. The Econowives live such envious with the Handmaids because they also unable to have a child. Their uniform was a stripped skimpy dress.

#### 3.1.1.1.6 Unwomen

If the Handmaids can't be pregnant after most of the time in trying for a baby with the Commanders, they have to choose; being a prostitute in Jezebel to jolly a night club or the extremists will send them to the Colonies, a place full of cutthroat poison.

### 3.1.1.2 Opposing Subjugation

#### 3.1.1.2.1 Against identity

In Gilead, the Handmaids are no longer to use their birth names. Offred is not her real name. In the past, when she lived freely before the theocratic rules come, her

name was June. Offred indicates the name of her commander. In this case, Fred Waterford was. The word 'Offred' is structurally originated from 'of' and 'Fred', it means Offred as the property of Fred.

#### 3.1.1.2.2 Against sexual harassment

##### 3.1.1.2.2.1 Handmaid and Commander

The Handmaids must have sex with the Commander for generating descent, it becomes the main thing to be discussed in sexual harassment. It seems a complex meaning between sex and rape. Sex is when two persons agreed, while rape is a compulsion.

##### 3.1.1.2.2.2 Offred and Doctor

Another sexual harassment happened when the doctor examined Offred's pregnancy. The doctor said that nothing happened with Offred's womb. She is healthy. The doctor claimed that the fertility problem was the Commander. He offered himself to impregnate Offred as manipulation if she is pregnant by the Commander but Offred refused it.

##### 3.1.1.2.3 Against victim blaming

Gilead has an assumption, if the Handmaid fails to get pregnant, it means that she is not healthy or has a problem in her uterus. Whereas we look in the medical world, fertility is not only affected by the owner of the uterus but may cause by the testicles' owner. But saying "Men are not sterile or fertile" is forbidden in Gilead. There are only two points; fertile women and infertile women. Janine, Offred's friend in Red Centre was raped by a stranger and had an abortion. Janine was being forced to acknowledge that this accident was her fault.

#### 3.1.1.3 Obtaining Freedom of Speech and Education

##### 3.1.1.3.1 Supporting democracy

Since the authoritarian rules existed in Gilead, the voice has been taken from everyone, except the Commanders. This indicates that women's voices are no longer heard. Men hold rights that they are freely express their opinion.

##### 3.1.1.3.2 Against illiteracy

All literary works were destroyed, no more fairness because women are prohibited in reading and writing. Serena Joy in the past was a famous person who wrote books,

sing, and often doing a speech in public. But now everything has changed. Since she works for Gilead, she doesn't make a speech anymore.

#### 3.1.1.3.3 Against religious scriptural

The religious extremists in Gilead also monopolized the language and control the women's conversation by using some biblical references like; "Praise be", "Under His Eye", "Blessed day", "Blessed be the fruit", "May the Lord open". Those expressions usually become greetings utterance every time people in Gilead were talking.

#### 3.1.1.4 Revoking the Union Rights

In Gilead, people's rights are already taken away especially women. The guardians on every street corner monitor each person's movements, especially women. Women are forbidden to walk by themselves. They must walk side by side and forbidden to speak loudly. All street signs and public navigations were removed, educational and historical buildings were destroyed and guarding the railway station platform.

#### 3.1.1.5 Opposing the Individual Right

##### 3.1.1.5.1 Love and marriage

Love is an emotion comes from strong attraction, generally lies in two mutual individuals. But when they lost, people may feel disappearance.

##### 3.1.1.5.1.1 June and Luke

June, the past of Offred was an independent woman who has a husband named Luke and a daughter named Hannah. But when the Gilead government came into power, they were separated by force. June and Hannah were kidnapped as part of Gilead and Luke escaped to Canada. June was lonely. Almost every time she yearned for his old family. She wants a body that loves him and loves him.

##### 3.1.1.5.1.2 Serena and Fred

Serena Joy as Commander Waterford's wife felt the same thing. Before the system in Gilead begun, she was the woman who proposed that idea. The idea whereas fertile women must be caught in order to become a resource for the state. Virtually, there are no women who want to be combined with some other girl. Serena Joy embedded in her own ideology. She felt the loss of the nature of the household.

#### 3.1.1.5.2 Genealogical bond

Gilead has separated many mothers and their children, three of them are June and her mom, June and her daughter, Janine and her baby.

##### 3.1.1.5.2.1 June and her Mom

When the catastrophe began, Offred or June has separated from her family. People said that her Mom was sent to the Colonies. June missed his mother as in the past she could not fulfill his mother's request

##### 3.1.1.5.2.2 June and her daughter

June also separated from her husband and her daughter, Hannah. She didn't know where are they. She wished Hannah still remember her. She wished to meet Luke and find their baby soon.

##### 3.1.1.5.2.3 Janine and her Baby

Janine or Ofwarren managed to maintain the womb until the day of birth arrived. But the law has been set by Gilead is, every baby born from a handmaid who was breastfed a few months, later will be handed over to their Commanders. This worst moment was felt by other Handmaids too.

#### 3.1.1.6 Opposing homosexual Orientation

In Gilead, people who caught in relationships with the same gender would be hanged as punishment whereas the fundamentalist regime was misogynists and heteronormative. They called homosexuals or bisexuals as gender treachery. This kind of biological limitation considered as a violation of individual rights.

#### 3.1.2 The depiction of struggles for gender equality against the fundamentalist regime

Several struggles of gender injustice have been discussed before. Necessarily, those four things lead the author to investigate the depiction of struggles for gender equality based on characters, events, settings, and styles used in this novel.

##### 3.1.2.1 Characters

There are two kinds of character categorized in this novel; superordinate characters and subordinate characters.

#### 3.1.2.1.1 Superordinate characters

*The Eyes* are the upper class of government people who were spies in Gilead or even his co-workers. *The Angels* are the men who stood in every side of the city and guiding the Handmaids whenever they go, provided by a machine gun in their hands. *The Commanders* are people who work in government, but also fertilize the Handmaids, they held the main role in increasing the offspring of Gilead. *The Guardians* are the Commander's assistant who lived in houses with Commander, the Wives, the Marthas, and the Handmaids. The women-superordinate characters are the Aunts and the Wives. *The Aunts* which patrols the Handmaids in Red Centre were intimidating and brainwashing them. Also, *the Wives* of the Commanders as infertile women are also entered in the superordinate characters category. They took the babies born from their mother, the Handmaids.

#### 3.1.2.1.2 Subordinate characters

People who include in subordinate characters are the women who oppressed by the capitalist system such as Unwomen, Econowives, Handmaids, and Marthas. *Unwomen* are infertile women. There are two choices of place for Unwomen; Colonies and Jezebel. *Econowives* are the wives of the poorer in Gilead. *Handmaids* are the main subordinate characters in this novel. They have to be a national resource for the state as infertility phenomenon happened in there. *Marthas* are assigned to serve the nutritional needs of the Commander's family. They cook and tidy the kitchen.

#### 3.1.2.2 Events

##### 3.1.2.2.1 Catastrophe

At the time before everything has changed, this fundamentalist regime shot the president and blocked the congressmen with a machine gun. As the reason of safety, they censored mass media and blocked several roads. The government also blocked the women's bank account and hired all women employees.

##### 3.1.2.2.2 Quarantine

The Red Center was a place where the Handmaids as fertile women have been trained and educated. The Aunts as the military women were patrolled them. The

Handmaids were brainwashed by the Aunts that they have no real rights but will be protected up to accept that they assigned their fate and not escape.

#### 3.1.2.2.3 Ceremony

The ceremony is a sexual act did by the Commander and the Handmaid in order to conceive children. The ceremonial ritual began with the reading of the Bible which in Genesis 30:1 by the Commander. It describes Rachel and Jacob who didn't bless to have children. Rachel said to Jacob, "Behold my maid Bilhah, go into her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her". This event is fully clothed sex. The Handmaids must lie down on the mattress where her head is on the Wives' lap. The Wives held down Handmaid's arm while the Commander stands face to them and fertilize Offred. This 'non-erotic' sex happens because of the downscale of the birth rate in the country.

#### 3.1.2.2.4 Birth Day

The law has been set by Gilead is, every baby born from a Handmaid must be submitted to the Commander's wife. It was described on the day when Ofwarren or Janine gave birth. Janine was crying. She was very heavy-hearted to let her baby moved into other hands that did not feel the pain of conceiving. Overall, almost there is no mother who just gave birth was forced to give her baby into another woman.

#### 3.1.2.2.5 Salvaging

Salvage means rescue. 'Salvaging' in the Republic of Gilead becomes the day of execution. This becomes a punishment for the dissenters against the regime. As known that in Christianity there is Salvation, which is like cleansing self from the sin, according to the history of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ The Salvaging may be handed down to men or women. This agenda was indicated by the bell ringing. People would be gathered in the yard or hall to witness the body hanging. It was dreadful to see. Some of them cried and upchucked. Moreover, when Offred and Ofglen walked out in the street, they found two bodies hanging. It must be the Salvaging.

#### 3.1.2.2.6 Secret relationship

Serena, the Commander's wife was planned a secret mission where Serena asked for help to Nick to impregnate Offred. Because she knew that her husband was infertile.

The loneliness and pressure felt by Offred did not turn off her heart and feelings. Offred and Nick were secretly in love. Sometimes, Offred felt that she was cheated on Luke. But however, Offred was longing for a figure to be loved.

### 3.1.2.3 Settings

This story was set in the Republic of Gilead. In fact, in Wikipedia.com, Gilead is the place in Jordan East referred to in the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament in the Christian Bible. Regarding the settings she applied in the novel, Atwood said that Gilead is built on a foundation of the 17<sup>th</sup> century within the modern-day of America. In *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), there are three places described inside. These places were brought the readers into good plots.

#### 3.1.2.3.1 Red Center

The Rachel and Leah Center or generally called Red Center was a dormitory built for training the Handmaids before they assigned to the houses of Commander. This place is managed by the Aunts who monitoring and patrolling the Handmaids every single time.

#### 3.1.2.3.2 Jezebel

Jezebel was a place of prostitution, the women who worked inside were rebelling women who have been faced with two choices; Jezebel or Colonies. In Jezebel, the women serve the upper-class men, includes Offred's friend, Moira that escaped from Red Center.

#### 3.1.2.3.3 Colonies

The Colonies is a place full of cutthroat poison. Over there, the Unwomen must clean up the radioactive waste to die. Gilead used this place as trash for the infertile women or punishment for the opposers.

### 3.1.2.4 Styles

There are several sentences like figurative language, diction, imagery, and symbol uttered by characters in this novel, which indicates the people in Gilead when doing some events.

#### 3.1.2.4.1 Sentence construction

The researcher found "*Give me children, or else I die.*" (p. 61). Also, figurative language, "*Men are sex machines*" (p. 143).

#### 3.1.2.4.2 Diction

##### 3.1.2.4.2.1 Special expression

The researcher found a special expression used to indicate the characters, such; *Econowife*, *Martha*, and *Unwoman*. The word "Econowife" derived from Econo-wife, the wives of the economist, means men who have the lowest economical life in Gilead. "Martha" in the dictionary means a character in the Bible as a figure loyal to Jesus. Marthas in Gilead are synonymous with their works in serving the Commander's family in the kitchen. "Unwoman" derived from Un-woman, a belief that woman is identical with fertility, which a word begins with *un* expressed 'not'. *Unwoman* in Gilead is a woman who can't bear children.

##### 3.1.2.4.2.2 Special terminology

There is some special terminology found by the researcher, such "*Fraternize*" (p. 11) and "*Mayday? From M'aidez.*" (p. 44)

##### 3.1.2.4.2.3 Borrowing

There is a borrowing sentence that very commonly mentioned in this novel. A hidden inscription found in a cupboard when Offred checked up entire her bedroom. Her body curled into the closet. It is written in the cupboard like Braille, *Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*. It was from Latin.

#### 3.1.4.3 Imagery

The researcher found imagery in this novel, which depicts silence and tension, for example: "A balcony ran around the room, for the spectators, and I thought I could smell, faintly like an afterimage, the pungent scent of sweat, shot through with the sweet taint of chewing gum and perfume from the watching girls, felt-skirted as I knew from the pictures, later in mini-skirts, then pants, then in one earring, spiky green-streaked hair." (p. 3)

#### 3.1.4.4 Symbol

Symbolism in literary works is used by the authors to gain the abstract figuration in their writing. One of them is *Cambridge, Massachusetts*. In choosing Cambridge, the author link directly among Puritans and Gilead. Both of them are hardly deal with the deviation of sexual, political and religious.

### 3.1.3 The author's purpose in addressing the issue

#### 3.1.3.1 The author's reflection towards women's right in her novel

Atwood created such a socio-political paradigm in *The Handmaid's Tale* by composing futuristic society in which women do not have power and have no option to choose, and refused the opportunity to read and write, and ability to deliver their opinion. Her novels which titled *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Surfacing* (1972), *Lady Oracle* (1976) and *Bodily Harm* (1981) investigated on several gender-related issues that dispute of domestic life and reproductive rights besides *The Handmaid's Tale*. In youtube.com, in wpsu Penn State channel, Atwood was asked by Patty Satalia about her beliefs and religion related to Atwood's novel that contains biblical references, and what did she get from it. Atwood said that there are three big sources of motifs in Western Literature; Greek, Roman Liturgy, and mythology. She knew it because she had been educated and learned about the Bible in Canada. The school has two systems; Catholic and Protestant. She went to the Protestant and memorized lots of poems which related to the references of Western Literature.

The background of *The Handmaid's Tale's* story is not far away when American society was under Ronald Reagan's regime. Reagan is renowned for his conservative principle he launched in the U.S. Until when Reagan won the presidential seat on the anti-Feminist agenda in 1980, the activist of Feminist groups began worried. Unfortunately, his anti-Feminist thinking met with many obstacles and contradicted the advancement of women in America. Almost every aspect of this novel deals with social and political events when Atwood wrote this novel. When *The Handmaid's Tale* premiered in 1985, Atwood was interviewed and said that the book told some antecedents in the novel that existed in her real life. She also stated his criticism of the political power of Christian Conservatives and attacks on the rights of women reproduction. This phenomenon of violation of human rights becomes Atwood's main idea in completing his novel.

## 3.2 Discussion

After analysing the findings in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel, the researcher found that there is a relation between the issue and the author's reflection through gender

equality. Thus, the tale was inspired by the conflict of women's rights in American society in the 1980s. That phenomenon is closely similar to the tragedy in the U.S. under the government of Ronald Reagan. Based on a Feminist perspective, this novel contains many facts that showed women's role and women's rights in a patriarchal environment. Based on the Marxist perspective, the novel shows several oppressions in which men held the highest class instead of women. Therefore, women have to show their capability and prove their role in society. Equality can't be realised before both genders enjoy the same rights in law. Rights must have full participation in the general industry by all female gender (Beauvoir, 1953, p. 81).

There is also the distinction and similarity between this study and the previous research. The distinction found in the previous study of Kouhestani (2012) that analysed the sexual oppression and religious extremism in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel. The previous researcher used sexual oppression as a material object and Foucault's theory to analyse the study, whereas this study analyse the struggles for gender equality by using Feminist theory. And the similarity with that previous study is the formal object used, i.e. *The Handmaid's Tale* novel by Margaret Atwood in 1985. Thus, the recent study was a continuation of the previous research.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This part outlines the conclusion based on the analysis in the previous chapter. First, based on the struggles for gender equality against the fundamentalist regime, the researcher found six indicators, those are; breaking the hierarchy, opposing subjugation, obtaining freedom of speech and education, revoking the union rights, opposing the individual rights, and opposing homosexual orientation. Second, based on the depiction of struggles for gender equality against the fundamentalist regime, there are four elements, those are; characters, events, settings, and styles. The character elements divided into two categories, they are superordinate characters and subordinate characters. The superordinate characters are the oppressors of the subordinate characters. The events found in the novel are catastrophe, quarantine, Ceremony, Birth Day, Salvaging, and secret relationship. The several settings figured in the novel are Red Centre, Jezebel, and Colonies. The styles used in this novel are

some figurative language, special expression, special term, and borrowing diction, imagery, and symbol. Third, the author's purposes in addressing the issue are, based on the author's opinion towards women's rights and based on the historical background in American women society in the 1980s.

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