

GLOBAL ISSUE: Control over women's body

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## TEXTS CHOSEN

LITERARY WORK: The Handmaid's Tale

NON-LITERARY WORK: Lila Rose's speech to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

## NOTES

### Introduction:

- 1) first text is Lila Rose's speech and second text an extract from The Handmaid's Tale (chapter 12)
- 2) The global issue explored is the ~~control~~ control over women's body and how language can shape one's opinion <sup>Grand</sup> on the issue

### Lila Rose:

- 3) repetition + emphasis of emotional language /  
↓ <sup>passionate</sup> / creates a strong relation  
tone → <sup>authoritative</sup> ↓  
body language      juxtaposition  
→ "global crisis"  
→ "victims"  
→ "turns women against their children"  
stat ← "27 million girls killed"
- 4) challenges current feminist ideals using feminist language  
↓ 4 persuades the public  
authentic advancement as women = until now it was not real empowerment  
solutions that need to be built up = there is a crisis / problem in the  
motherhood / fertility = threats      current ~~problem~~ advancement
- 5) society's ideology vs moral code of women → emphasis on morality  
↓  
"my body is a gift, my body is something I treasure"  
↓ repetition = reinforce the concept  
"use it or abuse it" → paradox = highlight abuse (morality)

### The Handmaid's Tale:

- 6) stream of consciousness → follow her thoughts = deep understanding of her feelings  
↓ short  
↓ sentences = gives rhythm  
\* rhetorical question = reflection
- 7) <sup>detailed</sup> description of her clothes → sign of oppression vs. nakedness → sign of freedom  
(someone's control over her body)
- 8) \* rhetorical question = reflection about nakedness → before = freedom  
↓ now = shameful (change)  
body = cage → "I don't want to look at something that determines me so completely"

### Conclusion:

- 9) women are still fighting to maintain the control over their body and the debate <sup>on</sup> how to do so is still in place and controversial.
- 10) Lila Rose is a <sup>pro-life</sup> activist (Live Action) that stand for anti-abortion laws and dedicated her life to her cause.  
The Handmaid's Tale is a novel that deals with feminism, oppression of women's freedoms and religious fundamentalism.

**Lila Rose speaks at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on: "Protecting Femininity and Human Dignity in Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Policies Today."**

The global crisis that we face has many victims. The first victim of this global crisis that turns women against their children, which sees motherhood as something antithetical to women's advancement is that there are 27 million girls killed every single year globally.

I want to share just a few thoughts about these barriers have come into place, which are stopping our authentic advancement as women and then respond with what I think is the ultimate solutions, there are many solutions that need to be built out. This whole week should be discussions about how we can actually advance women, not not sell them short and view their motherhood, view their fertility as threats.

...and to live out an ideology that is based on us that somehow sexual promiscuity, sexual experimentation is a good thing, when that violates the moral code of many women who say 'No my body is a gift, my body is something that I treasure and I'm not going to use it or abuse it whit whomever and I'm going to have moral choices that guides how I choose to be intimate'...

## CHAPTER TWELVE

The bathroom is beside the bedroom. It's papered in small blue flowers, forget-me-nots, with curtains to match. There's a blue bathmat, a blue fake-fur cover on the toilet seat; all this bathroom lacks from the time before is a doll whose skirt conceals the extra roll of toilet paper. Except that the mirror over the sink has been taken out and replaced by an oblong of tin, and the door has no lock, and there are no razors, of course. There were incidents in bathrooms at first; there were cuttings, drownings. Before they got all the bugs ironed out. Cora sits on a chair outside in the hall, to see that no one else goes in. In a bathroom, in a bathtub, you are vulnerable, said Aunt Lydia. She didn't say to what.

The bath is a requirement, but it is also a luxury. Merely to lift off the heavy white wings and the veil, merely to feel my own hair again, with my hands, is a luxury. My hair is long now, untrimmed. Hair must be long but covered. Aunt Lydia said: Saint Paul said it's either that or a close shave. She laughed, that held-back neighing of hers, as if she'd told a joke.

Cora has run the bath. It steams like a bowl of soup. I take off the rest of the clothes, the overdress, the white shift and petticoat, the red stockings, the loose cotton pantaloons. Pantyhose gives you crotch rot, Moira used to say. Aunt Lydia would never have used an expression like *crotch rot*. *Unhygienic* was hers. She wanted everything to be very hygienic.

My nakedness is strange to me already. My body seems outdated. Did I really wear bathing suits, at the beach? I did, without thought, among men, without caring that my legs, my arms, my thighs and back were on display, could be seen. *Shameful, immodest*. I avoid looking down at my body, not so much because it's shameful or immodest but because I don't



want to see it. I don't want to look at something that determines me so completely.

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I step into the water, lie down, let it hold me. The water is soft as hands. I close my eyes, and she's there with me, suddenly, without warning, it must be the smell of the soap. I put my face against the soft hair at the back of her neck and breathe her in, baby powder and child's washed flesh and shampoo, with an undertone, the faint scent of urine. This is the age she is when I'm in the bath. She comes back to me at different ages. This is how I know she's not really a ghost. If she were a ghost she would be the same age always.

One day, when she was eleven months old, just before she began to walk, a woman stole her out of a supermarket cart. It was a Saturday, which was when Luke and I did the week's shopping, because both of us had jobs. She was sitting in the little baby seats they had then, in supermarket carts, with holes for the legs. She was happy enough, and I'd turned my back, the cat-food section I think it was; Luke was over at the side of the store, out of sight, at the meat counter. He liked to choose what kind of meat we were going to eat during the week. He said men needed more meat than women did, and that it wasn't a superstition and he wasn't being a jerk, studies had been done. There are some differences, he said. He was fond of saying that, as if I was trying to prove there weren't. But mostly he said it when my mother was there. He liked to tease her.

I heard her start to cry. I turned around and she was disappearing down the aisle, in the arms of a woman I'd never seen before. I screamed, and the woman was stopped. She must have been about thirty-five. She was crying and saying it was her baby, the Lord had given it to her, he'd sent her a sign. I felt sorry for her. The store manager apologized and they held her until the police came.

She's just crazy, Luke said.

I thought it was an isolated incident, at the time.

She fades, I can't keep her here with me, she's gone now. Maybe I do think of her as a ghost, the ghost of a dead girl, a