

# Annual Atwood Bibliography 2017

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This year's bibliography, like its predecessors, is comprehensive but not complete. References that we have uncovered—almost always theses and dissertations—that were not available even through interlibrary loan, have not been included. On the other hand, citations from past years that were missed in earlier bibliographies appear in this one so long as they are accessible.

Those who would like to examine earlier bibliographies may now access them full-text, starting in 2007, in [Laurentian University's Institutional Repository](#).

The current bibliography has been embargoed until the next edition is available. Of course, members of the Society may access all available versions of the *Bibliography* on the Society's website since all issues of the *Margaret Atwood Studies Journal* appear there.

Users will also note a significant number of links to the full-text of items are referenced, and all were active when tested on 1 August 2018. That said—and particularly in the case of Atwood's commentary and opinion pieces—the bibliography also reproduces much (if not all) of what is available online, since what is accessible now may not be obtainable in the future. Since 2016, there has also been a change in editing practice—instead of copying and pasting authors' abstracts, we have modified some to ensure greater clarity.

There are several people to thank, starting with Teresa Gibert and Dunja M. Mohr, both of whom sent a citation and an abstract, and with Desmond Maley, librarian at Laurentian University, who assisted in compiling and editing. Thanks as well to Laurentian's interlibrary loan crew, headed by Lina Beaulieu and including Marlene Bonin, Aline Kraus, and Rachelle Larcher. Finally, thanks to the ever-patient Karma Waltonen, editor of this journal. As always, we would appreciate that any corrections to this year's edition or contributions to the 2018 edition be sent to [athomson@laurentian.ca](mailto:athomson@laurentian.ca) or [shganz@grenfell.mun.ca](mailto:shganz@grenfell.mun.ca).

## Atwood's Works

*Alias Grace*. London: Virago, 2017. Also published London: Bloomsbury; New York: Random House; Toronto: Emblem. First published in 1996.

*Alias Grace. Roman*. Translated by Brigitte Walitzek. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1996.

*Alias Grace*. Narrated by Sarah Gadon. [Sydney]: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2017. Audiobook. 13 audio discs (CD) (15 hr., 58 min.). Sound version of 1996 title.

*Alias Grace*. Translated by Gerda Baardman. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2017. Dutch translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1998.

*Alias Grace*. Translated by Inger Gjelsvik. Oslo: Aschehoug, 2017. Norwegian translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1997.

*Alias Grace*. Translated by María Antonia Menini. Barcelona: Ediciones Salamandra, 2017. Spanish translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1998.

- Alias Grace*. Translated by Marit Lise Bøgh. Copenhagen: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2017. Danish translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1997.
- L'Altra Grace: Romanzo [Alias Grace]*. Translated by Margherita Giacobino. Milan: Ponte alle Grazie, 2017. Italian translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1997.
- Angel Catbird—to Castle Catula*. [Vol. 2]. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books, 2017. “On a dark night, young genetic engineer Strig Feleedus is accidentally mutated by his own experiment and merges with the DNA of a cat and an owl. What follows is a humorous, action-driven, pulp-inspired superhero adventure—with a lot of cat puns” (Publisher).
- Angel Catbird—the Catbird Roars*. [Vol. 3]. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books, 2017. “It’s all-out war in the madcap culmination of Angel Catbird’s superhero saga. The evil Rat army is aiming for world domination, and only a ragtag gang of half-cats stands in their way” (Publisher).
- “Appreciation.” *Charles Pachter: Canada’s Artist*. By Leonard Wise. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2017. 13-18. First published as a foreword to Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov’s monograph *Charles Pachter* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992).
- Arriba en el árbol [Up in the Tree]*. Translated by Miguel Azaola. Barcelona: Ekaré, 2017. Spanish translation of *Up in the Tree* first published in 2009.
- The Burgess Shale: The Canadian Writing Landscape of the 1960s*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2017. The 2016 CLC Kreisel lecture. “Margaret Atwood considers the Canadian literary landscape of the 1960s to be like the Burgess Shale, a geological formation that contains the fossils of many weird and strange early life forms, different from but not unrelated to contemporary writerly ones. The Burgess Shale is not all about writerly pursuits, though. Atwood also gives readers some insight into the fashions and foibles of the times. Her recollections and anecdotes offer a wry and often humorous look at the early days of the institutions taken for granted today—from writers’ unions and grant programs to book tours and festivals” (Publisher).
- “C. 2025: Gilead: Margaret Atwood Peers Through the Peepholes.” *Lapham’s Quarterly* 9.1 (Winter 2016): 135. Excerpt: A shape, red with white wings around the face, a shape like mine, a nondescript woman in red carrying a basket, comes along the brick sidewalk toward me. She reaches me and we peer at each other’s faces, looking down the white tunnels of cloth that enclose us. She is the right one. “Blessed be the fruit,” she says to me, the accepted greeting among us. “May the Lord open,” I answer, the accepted response. We turn and walk together past the large houses, toward the central part of town. We aren’t allowed to go there except in twos. This is supposed to be for our protection, though the notion is absurd: we are well protected already. The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers. If either of us slips through the net because of something that happens on one of our daily walks, the other will be accountable. This woman has been my partner for two weeks. I don’t know what happened to the one before. On a certain day she simply wasn’t there anymore, and this one was there in her place. It isn’t the sort of thing you ask questions about, because the answers are not usually answers you want to know. Anyway there wouldn’t be an answer. This one is a little plumper than I am. Her eyes are brown. Her name is Ofglen, and that’s about all I know about her. She walks demurely, head down, red-gloved hands clasped in front, with short little steps like a trained pig’s, on its hind legs. During these walks she has never said anything that was not strictly orthodox, but then, neither have I. She may be a real believer, a Handmaid in more than name. I can’t take the risk.
- C’est le coeur qui lâche en dernier: Roman [The Heart Goes Last]*. Translated by Michèle Albaret-Maatsch. Paris: Robert Laffont, 2017. First French translation of *The Heart Goes Last*.

*Cadi Tohumu: Shakespeare Yeniden [Hag Seed]*. Translated by Canan Silay. Istanbul: Dogan Kitap, 2017. First Turkish translation of *Hag Seed*.

*Captive: Roman [Alias Grace]*. Translated by Michèle Albaret-Maatsch. Paris: Robert Laffont, 2017. French translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1999.

*Damazliq Qizin Ähvalati*. Translated by Zaur Sättarli. [Baki]: Alatoran, 2016. First Azerbaijani translation of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

*Das Herz Kommt Zulezt: Roman [The Heart Goes Last]*. Translated by Monika Baark. Munich: Berlin Verlag, 2017. First German translation of *The Heart Goes Last*.

*Das Jahr der Flut: Roman [The Year of the Flood]*. Translated by Monika Schmalz. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *The Year of the Flood* first published in 2009.

*Das Zelt: Geschichten [The Tent]*. Translated by Friedrich Malt. Munich: Pieper, 2017. German translation of *The Tent* first published in 2006.

“Dear Grandkids.” *United Church Observer* 80.9 (April 2017): 34. Reprinted under the heading, “Keep Hope Alive,” in *Reader's Digest* 191.1145 (December 2017): 63-64.

Excerpt: For you, in the future, What can I tell you about “the future,” dear imagined great-grand-children? There is no “the future” as such. There are many possible futures, and I don't know which future you will be alive in. Nobody knows; all we can do is make some informed guesses. But we can safely say that, barring a comet striking the earth, the conditions you'll be facing in “the future” will result from the decisions your ancestors have made in the past the past that is my own present tense. Let's hope you—and the human race—will be alive in this “future” we must pretend to believe in. Let's hope, therefore, that the decision makers of the early 21st century made at least some of the right decisions: that they avoided acidifying and poisoning the oceans, thus allowing the marine algae to continue to manufacture the oxygen we need to breathe. And that they took steps to remove the plastic particles that are now so numerous in the water that they are affecting marine life and human health.

Let's hope they deployed new sources of energy that did not result in a carbon-saturated atmosphere that drove our planet's temperature past the point of no return.

Let's hope they made it through the era of droughts and floods of the early 21st century that decreased the world's food supply and increased forced labour, sex trafficking and mass migrations as people competed for resources and took advantage of social chaos. Let's hope also that decision-makers recognized the connection between environmental degradation and poverty and that they acknowledged Indigenous peoples around the world as traditional keepers of the land and assisted them in their ongoing efforts to protect vulnerable ecosystems.

Let's hope that, worldwide all peoples will have finally recognized women and girls as full human beings with great potential to contribute to economic development.

That's a lot of hope. What are the chances of even one of these hopes being realized? Higher today than they were even 10 years ago, I'd say. But the challenges are also more severe. At this moment, we human beings are truly walking along the razor's edge. Suppose that all my hopes are realized and that by the time you read this the human species will be within reach of a stable and prosperous future. What then?

No matter how different your technological and material culture is from today's, you will still be pondering the questions human beings seem always to have pondered: What is my

purpose? Why am I on the planet? What are my responsibilities to my fellow human beings? Science can tell you what you are in material terms. It can analyze your DNA and your biochemistry. But it can't make ethical decisions for you. You must make those for yourself.

My final hope is that you'll be living at a time when such questions can still be meaningfully asked. That you'll no longer be living in an era of fake news and "truthiness" but in one in which facts and evidence are accepted. And I hope you'll have among you enough brave and principled people to keep your society from succumbing either to totalitarian or mob rule. Perhaps you will be one of these brave and principled people, in which case I wish you strength, luck and steadfast friends.

Dear imagined future great-grand-children: soon you will no longer be thought experiments but real people. Live well and prosper.

*Deklina Zgodba [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Miriam Drev and Sanda Sukarov. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2017. Slovenian translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 1990.

*Der Blinde Mörder: Roman [The Blind Assassin]*. Translated by Brigitte Walitzek. München: Piper, 2017. German translation of *The Blind Assassin* first published in 2000.

*Der Report der Magd: Roman [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Helga Pfetsch. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 1987.

*Der Salzgarten [Bluebeard's Egg]*. Translated by Charlotte Franke. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *Bluebeard's Egg* first published in 1994.

*Die Geschichte von Zeb: Roman [MaddAddam]*. Translated by Monika Schmalz. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *MaddAddam* first published in 2014.

Discursos del acto de investidura como doctora honoris causa de la profesora Margaret Atwood = Honorary Doctorate Acceptance Speech by Professor Margaret Atwood. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2017. 27.57 mins. Delivered 3 March 2017 at the Cantoblanco campus of the University. Atwood's speech, delivered in English, is available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QouTdyKlF7o>.

*El cuento de la criada [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Elsa Mateo and Enrique de Hériz. Barcelona: Salamandra, 2017. Spanish translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 1987.

*Faire Surface [Surfacing]*. Translated by Marie-France Girod. Paris: Robert Laffont, 2017. Reprint of the French translation of *Surfacing* first published in 1978.

*Feng Dian Ya Dang [MaddAddam]*. Translated by Yi Zhao and Xiaofei Chen. Shanghai: Shang hai yi wen chu ban she, 2016. First Chinese translation of *MaddAddam*.

"Foreword." *A Secret Sisterhood: The Literary Friendships of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf*. By Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. ix-xii.

*Grace i Grace [Alias Grace]*. Translated by Aldona Mozdzyńska. Warsaw: Prószyński Media, 2017. Polish translation of *Alias Grace* first published in 1998.

*Gute Knochen [Good Bones]*. Translated by Brigitte Walitzek. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *Good Bones* first published in 1995.

*Hag-Seed: The Tempest Retold*. London: Vintage, 2017. Paper version. Also published New York: Hogarth Shakespeare; Toronto: Vintage, and Leicester: Thorpe (large print ed.).

*Hag-Seed: The Tempest Retold*. Narrated by R.H. Thompson. New York: Books on Tape, 2016. Audiobook. 7 audio discs (approximately 8 hr.).

*The Handmaid's Tale*. London: Vintage, 2017. Also published Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; New York: Anchor; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart; Waterville, Maine: Thorndike Press (large print ed.). First published 1985.

*The Handmaid's Tale*. Narrated by Clare Danes. [Grand Haven, Michigan]: Brilliance Audio, 2017. Audiobook. Compact disc 9 audio discs (11 hr.).

“Handmaids Rising.” *New York Times* 19 March 2017 Section: Book Review: 1. The following article also serves as the Introduction to the 2017 paper ed. of *The Handmaid's Tale*, published in Toronto by McClelland & Stewart, pp. xi-xviii.

Excerpt: In the spring of 1984 I began to write a novel that was not initially called *The Handmaid's Tale*. I wrote in longhand, mostly on yellow legal notepads, then transcribed my almost illegible scrawlings using a huge German-keyboard manual typewriter I'd rented. The keyboard was German because I was living in West Berlin, which was still encircled by the Berlin Wall: The Soviet empire was still strongly in place, and was not to crumble for another five years. Every Sunday the East German Air Force made sonic booms to remind us of how close they were. During my visits to several countries behind the Iron Curtain—Czechoslovakia, East Germany—I experienced the wariness, the feeling of being spied on, the silences, the changes of subject, the oblique ways in which people might convey information, and these had an influence on what I was writing. So did the repurposed buildings. “This used to belong to . . . but then they disappeared.” I heard such stories many times.

Having been born in 1939 and come to consciousness during World War II, I knew that established orders could vanish overnight. Change could also be as fast as lightning. “It can't happen here” could not be depended on: Anything could happen anywhere, given the circumstances.

By 1984, I'd been avoiding my novel for a year or two. It seemed to me a risky venture. I'd read extensively in science fiction, speculative fiction, utopias and dystopias ever since my high school years in the 1950s, but I'd never written such a book. Was I up to it? The form was strewn with pitfalls, among them a tendency to sermonize, a veering into allegory and a lack of plausibility. If I was to create an imaginary garden I wanted the toads in it to be real. One of my rules was that I would not put any events into the book that had not already happened in what James Joyce called the “nightmare” of history, nor any technology not already available. No imaginary gizmos, no imaginary laws, no imaginary atrocities. God is in the details, they say. So is the Devil.

Back in 1984, the main premise seemed—even to me—fairly outrageous. Would I be able to persuade readers that the United States had suffered a coup that had transformed an erstwhile liberal democracy into a literal-minded theocratic dictatorship? In the book, the Constitution and Congress are no longer: The Republic of Gilead is built on a foundation of the 17th-century Puritan roots that have always lain beneath the modern-day America we thought we knew.

The immediate location of the book is Cambridge, Mass., home of Harvard University, now a leading liberal educational institution but once a Puritan theological seminary. The Secret Service of Gilead is located in the Widener Library, where I had spent many hours in the stacks, researching my New England ancestors as well as the Salem witchcraft trials. Would

some people be affronted by the use of the Harvard wall as a display area for the bodies of the executed? (They were.)

In the novel the population is shrinking due to a toxic environment, and the ability to have viable babies is at a premium. (In today's real world, studies are now showing a sharp fertility decline in Chinese men.) Under totalitarianisms—or indeed in any sharply hierarchical society—the ruling class monopolizes valuable things, so the elite of the regime arrange to have fertile females assigned to them as Handmaids. The biblical precedent is the story of Jacob and his two wives, Rachel and Leah, and their two handmaids. One man, four women, 12 sons—but the handmaids could not claim the sons. They belonged to the respective wives.

And so the tale unfolds.

When I first began *The Handmaid's Tale* it was called “Offred,” the name of its central character. This name is composed of a man's first name, “Fred,” and a prefix denoting “belonging to,” so it is like “de” in French or “von” in German, or like the suffix “son” in English last names like Williamson. Within this name is concealed another possibility: “offered,” denoting a religious offering or a victim offered for sacrifice.

Why do we never learn the real name of the central character, I have often been asked. Because, I reply, so many people throughout history have had their names changed, or have simply disappeared from view. Some have deduced that Offred's real name is June, since, of all the names whispered among the Handmaids in the gymnasium/dormitory, “June” is the only one that never appears again. That was not my original thought but it fits, so readers are welcome to it if they wish.

At some time during the writing, the novel's name changed to *The Handmaid's Tale*, partly in honor of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, but partly also in reference to fairy tales and folk tales: The story told by the central character partakes—for later or remote listeners—of the unbelievable, the fantastic, as do the stories told by those who have survived earth-shattering events.

Over the years, *The Handmaid's Tale* has taken many forms. It has been translated into 40 or more languages. It was made into a film in 1990. It has been an opera, and it has also been a ballet. It is being turned into a graphic novel. And in April 2017 it will become an MGM/Hulu television series.

In this series I have a small cameo. The scene is the one in which the newly conscripted Handmaids are being brainwashed in a sort of Red Guard re-education facility known as the Red Center. They must learn to renounce their previous identities, to know their place and their duties, to understand that they have no real rights but will be protected up to a point if they conform, and to think so poorly of themselves that they will accept their assigned fate and not rebel or run away.

The Handmaids sit in a circle, with the Taser-equipped Aunts forcing them to join in what is now called (but was not, in 1984) the “slut-shaming” of one of their number, Jeanine, who is being made to recount how she was gang-raped as a teenager. Her fault, she led them on—that is the chant of the other Handmaids.

Although it was “only a television show” and these were actresses who would be giggling at coffee break, and I myself was “just pretending,” I found this scene horribly upsetting. It was way too much like way too much history. Yes, women will gang up on other women. Yes, they will accuse others to keep themselves off the hook: We see that very publicly in the age of social

media, which enables group swarmings. Yes, they will gladly take positions of power over other women, even—and, possibly, especially—in systems in which women as a whole have scant power: All power is relative, and in tough times any amount is seen as better than none. Some of the controlling Aunts are true believers, and think they are doing the Handmaids a favor: At least they haven't been sent to clean up toxic waste, and at least in this brave new world they won't get raped, not as such, not by strangers. Some of the Aunts are sadists. Some are opportunists. And they are adept at taking some of the stated aims of 1984 feminism—like the anti-porn campaign and greater safety from sexual assault—and turning them to their own advantage. As I say: real life.

Which brings me to three questions I am often asked.

First, is *The Handmaid's Tale* a “feminist” novel? If you mean an ideological tract in which all women are angels and/or so victimized they are incapable of moral choice, no. If you mean a novel in which women are human beings—with all the variety of character and behavior that implies—and are also interesting and important, and what happens to them is crucial to the theme, structure and plot of the book, then yes. In that sense, many books are “feminist.” Why interesting and important? Because women are interesting and important in real life. They are not an afterthought of nature, they are not secondary players in human destiny, and every society has always known that. Without women capable of giving birth, human populations would die out. That is why the mass rape and murder of women, girls and children has long been a feature of genocidal wars, and of other campaigns meant to subdue and exploit a population. Kill their babies and replace their babies with yours, as cats do; make women have babies they can't afford to raise, or babies you will then remove from them for your own purposes, steal babies—it's been a widespread, age-old motif. The control of women and babies has been a feature of every repressive regime on the planet. Napoleon and his “cannon fodder,” slavery and its ever-renewed human merchandise—they both fit in here. Of those promoting enforced childbirth, it should be asked: Cui bono? Who profits by it? Sometimes this sector, sometimes that. Never no one.

The second question that comes up frequently: Is *The Handmaid's Tale* antireligion? Again, it depends what you may mean by that. True, a group of authoritarian men seize control and attempt to restore an extreme version of the patriarchy, in which women (like 19th-century American slaves) are forbidden to read. Further, they can't control money or have jobs outside the home, unlike some women in the *Bible*. The regime uses biblical symbols, as any authoritarian regime taking over America doubtless would: They wouldn't be Communists or Muslims. The modesty costumes worn by the women of Gilead are derived from Western religious iconography—the Wives wear the blue of purity, from the Virgin Mary; the Handmaids wear red, from the blood of parturition, but also from Mary Magdalene. Also, red is easier to see if you happen to be fleeing. The wives of men lower in the social scale are called Econowives, and wear stripes. I must confess that the face-hiding bonnets came not only from mid-Victorian costume and from nuns, but from the Old Dutch Cleanser package of the 1940s, which showed a woman with her face hidden, and which frightened me as a child. Many totalitarianisms have used clothing, both forbidden and enforced, to identify and control people—think of yellow stars and Roman purple—and many have ruled behind a religious front. It makes the creation of heretics that much easier. In the book, the dominant “religion” is moving to seize doctrinal control, and religious denominations familiar to us are being annihilated. Just as the Bolsheviks destroyed the Mensheviks in order to eliminate political competition and Red Guard factions fought to the death against one another, the Catholics and the Baptists are being targeted and eliminated. The Quakers have gone underground, and are running an escape route to Canada, as—I suspect—they would. Offred herself has a private version of the Lord's Prayer and refuses to believe that this regime has been mandated by a just and merciful God. In the real world today, some religious groups are leading movements for

the protection of vulnerable groups, including women. So the book is not “antireligion.” It is against the use of religion as a front for tyranny; which is a different thing altogether.

Is *The Handmaid’s Tale* a prediction? That is the third question I’m asked—increasingly, as forces within American society seize power and enact decrees that embody what they were saying they wanted to do, even back in 1984, when I was writing the novel. No, it isn’t a prediction, because predicting the future isn’t really possible: There are too many variables and unforeseen possibilities. Let’s say it’s an antiprediction: If this future can be described in detail, maybe it won’t happen. But such wishful thinking cannot be depended on either.

So many different strands fed into *The Handmaid’s Tale*—group executions, sumptuary laws, book burnings, the Lebensborn program of the SS and the child-stealing of the Argentine generals, the history of slavery, the history of American polygamy . . . the list is long.

But there’s a literary form I haven’t mentioned yet: the literature of witness. Offred records her story as best she can; then she hides it, trusting that it may be discovered later, by someone who is free to understand it and share it. This is an act of hope: Every recorded story implies a future reader. Robinson Crusoe keeps a journal. So did Samuel Pepys, in which he chronicled the Great Fire of London. So did many who lived during the Black Death, although their accounts often stop abruptly. So did Roméo Dallaire, who chronicled both the Rwandan genocide and the world’s indifference to it. So did Anne Frank, hidden in her secret annex. There are two reading audiences for Offred’s account: the one at the end of the book, at an academic conference in the future, who are free to read but who are not always as empathetic as one might wish; and the individual reader of the book at any given time. That is the “real” reader, the Dear Reader for whom every writer writes. And many Dear Readers will become writers in their turn. That is how we writers all started: by reading. We heard the voice of a book speaking to us.

In the wake of the recent American election, fears and anxieties proliferate. Basic civil liberties are seen as endangered, along with many of the rights for women won over the past decades, and indeed the past centuries. In this divisive climate, in which hate for many groups seems on the rise and scorn for democratic institutions is being expressed by extremists of all stripes, it is a certainty that someone, somewhere—many, I would guess—are writing down what is happening as they themselves are experiencing it. Or they will remember, and record later, if they can. Will their messages be suppressed and hidden? Will they be found, centuries later, in an old house, behind a wall?

Let us hope it doesn’t come to that. I trust it will not.

Correction: March 26, 2017, Sunday

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction: An essay last Sunday about Margaret Atwood’s Novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* misspelled the surname of the Canadian general who was the commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda at the time of the 1994 genocide in that country who later wrote a book about the episode. He is Roméo Dallaire, not Daillaire.

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/books/review/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-age-of-trump.html>.

“Happy Endings.” *40 Short Stories*. Edited by Beverly Lawn. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2017. 282-285. First published in *Good Bones and Simple Murders*, 1983.

*Het verhaal van de dienstmaagd* [*The Handmaid’s Tale*]. Translated by Gerrit De Blaauw. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2017. Dutch translation of *the Handmaid’s Tale* first published in

1987.

*Hjertet gir seg ikke* [*The Heart Goes Last*]. Translated by Inger Gjelsvik. Oslo: Aschehoug, 2016. First Norwegian translation of *The Heart Goes Last*.

*Hong Shui Zhi Nian* [*The Year of the Flood*]. Translated by Xiaofei Chen. Shanghai: Shang hai yi wen chu ban she, 2016. First Chinese translation of *The Year of the Flood*.

*I kardia petheni teleftea* [*The Heart Goes Last*]. Translated by Effie Tsironi. Metaforfossi: Greece Psychogios Publications, 2016. First Greek translation of *The Heart Goes Last*.

*Il racconto dell'ancella* [*The Handmaid's Tale*]. Translated by Camillo Pennati. Milan: Ponte alle Grazie, 2017. Italian translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 1988.

"Introduction: Don't Be Alarmed." *Imaginarium 4: The Best Canadian Speculative Writing*. Edited by Sandra Kasturi and Jerome Stueart. Toronto: ChiZine Publications, 2016. 13-16. The book itself is a reprint anthology collecting speculative short fiction and poetry (science fiction, fantasy, horror, magic realism, etc.) that represents the best work published by Canadian writers in 2014.

"It's Not Climate Change--It's Everything Change." *Energy Humanities: An Anthology*. Edited by Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2017. 139-150. First published on 27 July 2015 in *Matter*: <https://medium.com/matter/it-s-not-climate-change-it-s-everything-change-8fd9aa671804>.

"It's Not Easy Being Half-Divine." *That Dammed Beaver: Canadian Humour, Laughs and Gaffs*. Edited by Bruce Meyer. Holstein (Ontario): Exile Editions, 2017. 231-233. Short story. First published in *The Tent* (2006).

"Just My Type." *The Walrus* December 2017: 74. How Atwood learned to type on her parents' portable Remington.

Excerpt: My childhood household had a typewriter. It was a portable Remington from the 1930s with its own black carrying case and round black letter keys with white rims around them. My mother had typed my father's PhD thesis on it: she'd taught herself to type in order to do so. It was a scientific thesis, so there were umlaut and accent-mark keys, to accommodate citations in other languages. This typewriter became a fetish object for me soon after I decided—at age sixteen—that I would become a writer. Unfortunately, I had taken a wrong turn earlier in high school, before the writing light bulb had flashed on. I had a choice of Extra Options—for girls: Home Economics, Art, and Secretarial Science—and I'd chosen Home Economics. This was an entirely practical decision: of the five careers proposed for females—nurse, schoolteacher, airline stewardess, secretary, and home economist—the home economists got paid the most. I didn't want to do any of these, but Garage Mechanic—which had showed up on my aptitude-and-inclination test—did not seem to be on offer. Also, I was afraid of the Secretarial Science class, in which the girls smoked in the washroom, plucked their eyebrows into intimidating arches, and wore their boyfriends' leather jackets and identification bracelets on their ankles. So by the age of sixteen, I could set in a zipper and whip up a mean Floating Island, but I could not type.

And there I was, a budding writer. I was buying copies of Writers' Digest, which told me I needed two typed copies of my stories with my name on every page and a stamped, self-addressed envelope in order to submit my deathless works to each magazine I wished to bombard with my genius.

Crisis! What to do?

I set about learning to type. It was hunt and peck, with intervals of trying to pick up touch typing, via a chart and no peeking at the keys. Those intervals never lasted long: I got blisters, and also there were—already!—too many things I needed to type. The little white vial with the little Wite-Out brush became my friend. My typescripts were messy but legible. It was in this way that I sent out all my early manuscripts, with my name at the top—“M. E. Atwood,” because I didn’t want anyone to know I was a girl—and, endearingly, “First Serial Rights Only.” As if.

Over the years—and once I really was publishing things—I graduated: first to my own manual portable, a somewhat flimsy affair, and then, in 1967—glory be!—to an electric portable. Then the pinnacle: a Selectric with backspace correcting and different typefaces available in a bouncing ball that you could pop on and off.

That was my favourite, although it was too heavy to be carried onto a plane. I became a renter of typewriters in foreign countries, which is why I began typing *The Handmaid’s Tale* on a huge German-keyboard rental in West Berlin in 1984.

But all that noisy, inaccurate typewriting was soon to end. Along came the personal computer, and for a few years after 1989, I spent hours with a hairpin trying to pry stuck floppy disks out of my first Mac. My manual typewriters were stored in closets, with the fond regret bestowed on old prom photos and shells plucked from forgotten beaches.

Now, however, all things analogue are coming back. Rumour has it that the Kremlin has returned to typewriters: a typed page can’t be leaked on the internet, or not as easily. I’ve been eyeing my old electric typewriters. Can they possibly still work? Shall I try?

Just the other day, I received a typed letter in the mail. The typer was quite proud of himself, as if he’d just climbed Kilimanjaro. Will typewriters make the sort of comeback now being experienced by vinyl records and Polaroid cameras? Who can tell?

Available from: <https://thewalrus.ca/how-margaret-atwood-learned-to-type/>.

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*Maddaddam* [*MaddAddam*]. Translated by Tomasz Wilusz. Warsaw: Prószyński Media, 2017. First Polish translation of *MaddAddam*.

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“Margaret Atwood: Plastics are Poisoning Us. We Need Change, Now: In a New Series Marking the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, the Novelist Calls for a Revolt Against Petrochemical Polymers.” *The Guardian* 2 June 2017. Online. (793 w.).

Excerpt: Ah, the Reformation. And then, inevitably, the Counter-Reformation. We remember them, sort of, especially after reading *Dissolution*, CJ Sansom’s detective thriller about the shutting down of and, not incidentally, the looting of rich but decadent English monasteries under Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell. Or after watching the bloodflow and interfrying of both Catholics and Protestants in various TV series set during various Tudor regimes, most recently *Wolf Hall*. Printing the *Bible* in the vernacular could get you executed. So could attempting to blow up parliament in aid of a Catholic restoration, like *Guy Fawkes*, which has given us a legacy of those creepy masks sported by members of the online group Anonymous. Then there was Oliver Cromwell, who broke a lot of priceless stained-glass windows in the name of a reformed religion and made himself so unpopular with monarchists that his corpse was dug up and beheaded. Then there were the New England Puritans. Yes, their churches were free of plaster saints and the Virgin Mary had been demoted from the queen of heaven to a nice girl who had a baby, but how much fun were the Salem witchcraft trials? (Don’t answer that: some people had quite a lot of fun.)

But now I have been asked the following question: if given the chance, what institution would I myself reform? To which I reply: what institutions do we have that are both in need of reformation and powerful enough to be worth the trouble? And the risk, as once you start reforming, heads may roll. Many candidates spring to mind: international banks, the oil business, big pharma, and so on.

But of them I know little.

So I would choose to reform plastics. Are plastics an institution? Not in the sense of having a pope, or even a small cabal of leaders. But they are surely the modern equivalent of a universal religion. We worship them, whether we admit it or not. Their centre is whatever you happen to be doing, their circumference is everywhere; they’re as essential to our modern lives as the air we breathe, and they’re killing us. They must be stopped. No, no, put down the torches and pitchforks! Let me explain!

Once upon a time, not so long ago within my own lifetime, or just before its inception there was hardly any plastic. There was only Bakelite, used to make decorative dessert-fork handles and chunky art deco jewellery. Cheap toys were made of tin. Garbage was rolled up in newspaper and tied with string, because there were no plastic bin-bags. There were no exercise balls. Rubber gloves were made of rubber. But then came the marvellous multiplastic world of the 1950s that has been with us ever since. Look around your life: your trash-disposal stratagems, your bottled water containers, your hummus tubs and snap-top salad boxes, your computer keyboard keys, your grocery bags, just for a few obvious examples. Where would you be without plastic? What could take its place?

But all this plastic or most of it eventually ends up in the water supply, including the drinking water and the oceans. Eight million tonnes of plastic waste is added to the oceans every year. Because of oestrogen-imitating chemicals leaching from discarded plastics, the fertility of male

sperm is plunging, and frogs are developing intersex traits. Worse, microplastic particles are seriously affecting fish fry and phytoplankton. That's bad news for us, because phytoplankton are the basic building block of oceanic life. Dead oceans mean dead people either through famine, or, if the marine algae that make 60-80% of the oxygen we breathe are also extinguished, through oxygen deficiency.

Thus the absolute need for the Plastics Reformation. What should be done? First, organic and biodegradable substitutes must be found to perform the chores now done by plastics. Moulded and baked fungus, textiles made of milkweed, silicone food storage bags? All exist. Second, we need to invent methods to filter plastics out of seawater, collect them before they ever hit the ocean. Third, we then need to break them down into their component parts, rendering them harmless.

The colourful Mr. Trash Wheel, a solar-powered collector in operation in Baltimore, might be a start. The Ocean Cleanup organisation is already working on other plastic-filtering approaches. More recently, plastic-digesting waxworms have been discovered whose enzymes could in theory be synthesised. We may yet save ourselves from being plasticised to death. If so, would there be a counter-reformation? Will protesters march with signs reading Plastics for Ever and Bring Back Plastic Hula Hoops? Maybe. But once the Plastics Reformation gets going, these Luddites will be no match for Mr. Trash Wheel and the Waxworms. Memorable. Catchy. It sounds like a band. And, very soon, coming to a neighbourhood near you. Let's hope.

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jun/03/plastics-poisoning-500th-anniversary-reformation-petrochemical-polymers>.

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*Oryx und Crake*. Narrated by Uve Teschner. Erlangen: Ronin Hörverlag, 2017. German audiobook. 2 CDs.

*Oryx Und Crake: Roman* [*Oryx and Crake*]. Translated by Barbara Lüdemann. Munich: Piper Verlag, 2017. German translation of *Oryx and Crake* first published in 2003.

“Oursonette; Fiction: The Story of Canada.” *Globe and Mail* 1 July 2017 Section: Film: R11. (2230 w.). A new short story.

Excerpt: Paper was fluttering down from the sky. Typed pages, blanks, tickertape, hole puncher confetti, streamers—it was like a blizzard! Where did it come from? Who had been saving it all up over the past five years?

And to think of the trouble we had getting enough paper for Oursonette, Al thought bitterly. We had to grovel, we had to deal, we had to steal, we practically sold our souls. And for what?

Sourpuss, he told himself. It's the end of the war. You should be happy. Everyone else is.

At least he'd got the day off: around eleven, Canadian Pacific had called it quits. As soon as he stepped out the door he'd found himself shouldering his way through a surging mass of grinning, singing humanity. Women and men were still pouring onto Yonge Street from office buildings and side streets: dozens, hundreds, multiplying by the second. The noise was deafening: drums, bugles, bagpipes, tin horns, rattling New Year's Eve noisemakers, anything that could be whacked or blown. Hit tunes blared from Victory Loan loudspeakers. Somewhere in the distance—was that a hymn? Abide with Me: doleful enough for him. He wasn't in the mood for Glenn Miller.

The sky was blue, the sun was shining. That did nothing to cheer him up. Overhead, a couple of RCAF Mosquitoes were showing off, wing-dipping and buzzing the Lancaster bomber that was dumping more paper into the air. Flags everywhere: the Canadian Red Ensign, the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes, the Hammer and Sickle, the Chinese flag; the French one, the Polish one, others he was vague about. Faces on posters: the King and Queen, serene; Churchill scowling; FDR grinning widely, even though he was dead; Uncle Joe with his tiger smile. Some Chinese guy. A group of dancers, hand in hand; couples locked in embrace. A barbershop quartet in uniform, mangling *The White Cliffs of Dover*. He might have been among them if his feet weren't so flat and his lungs had been better, though recently they'd been accepting men scrawnier than him.

Well, he'd done his bit anyway: Oursonette was good for morale, especially in the beginning when things had been going so badly. Oursonette brought a smile amid the gloom. She stiffened the resolve. Several letter-writers had told him that.

“Look out where you're going,” said a voice. He was jostled roughly aside, but then he was grabbed and kissed. His face came away wet: tears, not his. Some girl weeping with joy. He rubbed his mouth: who knew who else she'd been kissing?

Now there was an uproarious old geezer with a bottle, no tie or hat, his fly undone, offering him a drink. He turned down, because it could be home brew, and “blind drunk” meant something.

A streetcar moved past him at the speed of a slug, a bunch of teenagers clinging to the front, waving at him, stretching out their hands. “Hop on!” they yelled. He’d never done such a thing at their age, and it was too late now. He was twenty-one, old enough to know better.

“Hey Four-eyes, how about a smooch?” A CWAC, in uniform, hair mussed, lipstick like raspberries mashed around her mouth. She ought to know better, too, though the women who joined the CWAC were definitely loose, or so it was said.

Not all of them though: Oursonette was CWAC, and she was a heroine. No man could get near her because she had to save her powers for fighting Nazi spies. She’d been so pure, so brave. What would become of her now? Would she be scrapped for parts, like a ruined tank? It was so unfair.

He picked his way along King Street West, going against the flow. His feet hurt, as they frequently did. Finally, he reached the Pickering Hotel. It was the hangout for the inky boys; you could usually find some of them in there, stoking themselves up before hitting the drawing board again. If you were fulltime the pace could be blistering.

The place was half-empty—everyone was out celebrating, he supposed—but Gloria and Mike were at their regular table. They used the place as their impromptu office. Gloria was drinking a cup of the burnt toast crumbs and charred grain that the Pickering liked to term coffee. Mike was finishing off a beer and a hamburger, mustard smearing his chin. Al never touched those hamburgers, not since Mike told him that the meat was ground-up pig snouts. Then he said it was a joke, but Al wasn’t so sure about that. Mike didn’t care much what he put into his mouth.

“Hi, boy genius, how’s tricks?” Mike said. Al wished he would chew and swallow before talking.

“Join us, Al,” said Gloria.

“Why are you eating that?” Al slid into the booth. He’d have to order something—the Pickering frowned on free sitting. He’d opt for the orange Jell-O, even though Mike said it was made out of horse’s hooves.

“Because he’s hungry,” said Gloria in her husky voice. She blew out smoke from under her wavy blonde Veronica Lake sideflop, extruding her lips into a red O. “He’s always hungry. He’s a growing boy.” She smiled at Mike as if he was a two-year-old and had done a cute thing just by eating, which was how she always smiled at him.

That annoyed Al—what was so special about Mike except that he knew how to draw? Other than that, he was quite stupid: Gloria was the brains behind Canoodle Features. She picked the artists, she okayed the ideas, she supervised the printing, the distribution, the ads. She kept the books. She’d inherited the business, which had printed signs, posters, and streetcar ads before the war, so she’d already known the basics.

“I’m getting back in shape,” said Mike. “As a carnivore. Now that the war’s over we’re going to see a lot of meat. An explosion of meat! It’ll be like someone dropped this enormous meat bomb!”

“I can hardly wait,” said Gloria. “No more meat tokens! Roast lamb, that’s my favourite.”

“We’re sunk,” Al said.

“What?” Mike said. “What d’you mean, sunk? We just won the dad-ratted war!” He’d been told by Gloria not to swear around her, not real swearing, so most of the time he didn’t.

“Who do you mean by ‘we’?” said Gloria to Al. She was no dumb bunny, except in the matter of Mike.

“Mike means the allies. I mean us,” said Al. “All of us. You and Mike. Canoodle Features. The rest of them, too: Bell and Wow, Johnny Canuck, Nelvana, the works. And Oursonette.”

“But Oursonette’s doing great!” said Mike. “The fan club—it doubled since the last issue! And the numbers are great too! Right, Gloria?”

“Twenty thousand copies,” said Gloria. “Maybe twenty-five, I’ll know in a week. Not as good as Bell’s numbers, but we’re climbing.” She paused, gave Al a level look. “Or we were climbing, until now.”

The last episode of Oursonette had indeed been a triumph: she’d parachuted behind enemy lines in her nifty fur-trimmed outfit with the short skirt that showed a lot of leg—“Show more leg,” Gloria had said—and her fur-topped boots. Then, after an interlude when she’d been captured, tied up, and almost brutally tortured, she’d called on her two bear allies, broken free of her bonds with their aid, changed into her white bear form, and subdued a whole nest full of enemy agents.

She wasn’t allowed to actually kill them—that would have been too unfeminine, said Gloria—but she’d tied them up in bundles, using telegraph wire, and she and her two bear allies had carted them through the lines, dodging machine-gun bullets and artillery fire—dubba dubba dubba, ack-ack-ack! After another narrow escape, she’d met up with the Brits and Canucks under the command of Field Marshall Montgomery, drawn by Al from a newspaper photo. She’d then switched back into her human form.

“Got a little present for you, boys,” she’d said. She was charmingly offhand about her own heroic exploits.

“Oursonette! How can we thank you?” they’d said, as they usually did.

“No need,” Oursonette had said. “We’re winning! That’s thanks enough. Au revoir!” Oursonette often said “Au revoir!” Her name was more or less French, which was good because Al was partial to the Van Doos, especially since Ortona. “Au revoir” was the only French thing Oursonette ever said, but you got the idea.

There was a closeup of her heart-shaped face, her roguish, long-lashed wink. Then she’d changed back into her bear form and headed into the woods with her two bear allies.

When he’d first pitched Oursonette to Gloria, she’d been unsure. “A bear?” she’d said. “I dunno, Al. Could it maybe be a tiger? Or a lynx?”

“What’s wrong with a bear?”

“It’s not ... face it, Al, a bear’s not sexy. Bears are more cuddly, like teddy bears. Or else they’re ferocious.”

Al had been hurt. “You don’t get it,” he’d said. “The bear’s a tribute to Uncle Joe. Russia—the

U.S.S.R—they're helping us win the war, right?"

"So?" "It's a symbol. Like, a mascot. The Russian Bear. Except I made it white, so it's more, I dunno. More pure."

"You're very sweet, Al," Gloria had said. "You need a girl friend." She's paused, blown out more smoke, stared up at the ceiling, as she did when pondering. "Okay, give it a whirl. If it works, I'll take you off *Bessie the Bullet Gal*. But do it fast, we need to keep pushing if we want to gain on Bell."

But that had been a long time ago: three years at least. Now, in the Pickering dining lounge, Gloria was frowning while she lit another cigarette. She offered him the pack even though she knew he was quitting on account of his lungs. "I'm thinking like you," she said. "A year ago, I thought I'd be offering you a full-time slot. Get you out of the mail room at C.P. But now..."

"What're you both talking about?" said Mike. "Want some pie? I'm having some. Lemon chiffon!"

"It's not real lemons," said Al.

"War's over, honey," Gloria said. "That embargo on American comics is gonna come off. I give it six months, a year maximum. All-colour Americans—they'll be back. Captain Marvel, Batman, Wonder Woman, the whole shooting match. Mickey Mouse, you name it. Then this place will be flooded. Black and whites like ours will be finished. Oh, Al, and that Russian bear—I don't see that being so popular, coming up. How're they going to divide things? The Yanks, the Russies. It's not gonna be so lovey-dovey soon, trust me."

Mike said, "Cripes. I need another beer."

"It's okay, sweetie, we've got a fallback," Gloria said to him. "We'll slide back into the posters and ads. The factories are gonna be making all kinds of new things. Vacuum cleaners, toasters, cars—trust me, they're gonna be big! You heard of televisions? In a few years, just watch! Then they'll need to sell it, all of it, and that means ads. You'll have lots to draw!"

Fine for Mike, but what about me? Al thought. He didn't want to draw cars. They lacked purpose. He'd been just a kid when the war started, so it was all he could really remember. The waste paper collections, the balls of tinfoil they'd been urged to save, the ration books, the radio broadcasts from the front, the newsreels, the airplane cards; the smells, the sounds, the textures: would it all simply vanish, as if those efforts counted for nothing? He had a vision of people—millions of people, intent on a single goal, marching forward together, but suddenly faltering, coming to a standstill, then wandering away in different directions as if they had amnesia. What would everyone do? He couldn't imagine.

And his Oursonette. She wasn't a real woman, a real bear-woman, true, but he would miss her a lot. They'd been through so much together. The U-boat attack, the tank battle, the advance through Holland when she'd brought food to the starving, the time when she'd rescued those French resistance fighters; the Maquis, up in the mountains. The people she'd guided through the Alps, into the safety of Switzerland. That had been a suitable job for a bear. He'd learned so much geography from her, he'd been with her every step of the way. Together they'd renounced their so-called normal life to dedicate themselves to the cause.

*Au revoir*, he whispered to her silently; but she was already fading. Lost, lost. He felt like crying. Would he find someone else to draw? Maybe not. Maybe his life was already over.

“Buck up, Al,” Mike said to him. “You’re young and reckless! You’ve got a whole new future ahead of you! Have a beer!”

“Can you draw washing machines?” Gloria said. “Boxes of soap flakes? Cute housewives in aprons hanging out the sheets, pitching woo to their laundry? Sexy little kiss mouths?”

“Yeah, I guess so,” Al said listlessly.

“Good,” said Gloria. “Cause trust me: it’s gonna be big!”

**Author’s Note:** I remember the VE Day celebrations, just barely, though we were in Sault Ste Marie, not Toronto. I read a lot of comics on the late 1940s, during their postwar surge. And my old friend Alan Walker wrote the introduction to *The Great Canadian Comic Books*, about the early ’40s black-and-whites. Also available from:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-150/fiction-story-of-canada-margaret-atwood-oursonette/article35479584/>.

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“Sandrof Award Winner Margaret Atwood: ‘What You Do as Critics is Sorely Needed.’” *Critical Mass: The Blog of the National Book Critics Circle Board of Directors* 20 March 2017. Online. URL: <http://bookcritics.org/blog/archive/margaret-atwood>. Atwood’s remarks upon winning the NBCC’s Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award for 2016. The prize recognized Atwood for

her many short stories, poems, children's books, works of nonfiction and 16 novels.

Excerpt: I am deeply honoured to have been given the National Book Critics Circle Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award. You have placed me among some very august names indeed, and I am somewhat in awe.

I would also like to say how important it is that you—as book critics—are doing what you do. I'm an author of fiction and poetry, true, but I have also put in some time as a book critic, and I have to say it's about the hardest thing I've ever done as a writer. A review of another author's work carries a heavy responsibility, because you can't—unfortunately—just make stuff up. Fiction's task is to be plausible, but criticism's task is to be accurate in fact, generous in appraisal, and considered in judgment. A real book is at stake, with a real person attached at the other end—most of the time—and every author knows how much work and anxiety have gone into a book—any book.

Being Canadian—and therefore much given to the puncturing of balloons—I have sometimes had to tie my hands to the chair to avoid silly puns and bad-taste jokes at the author's expense. It can be a struggle for me, and I haven't always won it. Added to which, book criticism is a thankless task. Authors are sensitive beings; therefore, all positive adjectives applied to them will be forgotten, yet anything even faintly smacking of imperfection in their work will rankle until the end of time. “Accomplished?” one writer raged at me. “Don't you know that “accomplished” is an insult?” (I didn't know.)

Then there was that period in the early seventies—thus, early second-wave feminism—when I was given nothing but books by women to review. Why was this? Fear on the part of men that they would be reprimanded for not getting it right? Or the showing-off upon one of the second sex works by others of this group that were considered not weighty enough? Who can tell?

But time passed, and I was allowed to review men once more. It helps if they're dead—they can't get back at you—but I've reviewed some living ones, too. Why do I attempt such a painful task? For the same reason I give blood: we must all do our part, because if nobody contributes to this worthy enterprise, then there won't be any just when it is most needed. Blood, or book reviews. Or both, in the same package.

And right now, what you do as critics is sorely needed. Never has American democracy felt so challenged. Never have there been so many attempts—from so many sides of the political spectrum—to shout down the voices of others, to obfuscate and confuse, to twist and manipulate, and to vilify reliable and trusted publications. A dictatorship aims for three things in order to consolidate its power: first, to erase the independent judiciary and its law enforcement agencies; second, to control the army, which ought to be defending the people, and make it instead an arm of the dictatorship; and third, to shut down independent media outlets and thus mute all opinions but its own.

As independent critics, you are part of the barrier standing between authoritarian control and a pluralistic and open democracy. That barrier is always fragile, but at some times more than at others. Keep at your craft and sometimes sullen art, to misquote Dylan Thomas, Persist, despite the hazards. Readers everywhere will be grateful to you. Well, not everywhere—because there are still places on this planet where to be caught reading you—or even me—would incur a severe penalty. I hope there will soon be fewer such places. (Though don't hold your breath.)

But I will cherish this Lifetime Achievement award from you—though, like all sublunar blessings, it is a mixed one. Why do I only get one lifetime? Where did the lifetime go?

Video of ceremony available at: <http://bookcritics.org/blog/archive/video-nbcc-2016-awards-ceremony>.

*Seme di strega: una riscrittura della Tempesta [Hag-Seed]*. Translated by Laura Pignatti. Milan: Rizzoli, 2017. First Italian translation of *Hag-Seed*.

*La servante écarlate [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Sylviane Rué. Paris: Laffont, 2017. French translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 1987.

*Shi nü de gu shi [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Xiaowei Chen. Tai bei shi: Tian pei wen hua chu ban, 2017. Chinese translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 2001.

*Slepoj Ubijtsa [The Blind Assassin]*. Translated by V. Bernatskaja. Moscow: Eksmo, 2017. Russian translation of *The Blind Assassin* first published in 2003.

“Solstice Poem, iv.” *How Did This Happen: Poems for the Not So Young Anymore*. Edited by Mary D. Esselman and Elizabeth Ash Vélez. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2017. 202-203. First published in *Selected Poems II: Poems Selected and New 1976-1986*, 1986.

*Süda vaikib viimasena: Romaan [The Heart Goes Last]*. Translated by Lauri Saaber. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 2016. First Estonian translation of *The Heart Goes Last*.

*A szolgálólány meséje [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Eniko Mohácsi. Budapest: Jelenkor, 2017. Hungarian translation of *the Handmaid's Tale* first published in 2006.

*Tento [The Tent]*. Translated by Keiko Nakajima and Akiko Ikemura. Tokyo: Eikosha, 2017. First Japanese translation of *The Tent*.

*Tiao Wu Nü Lang [Dancing Girls]*. Translated by Siwen Qian. Shanghai: Shang hai yi wen chu ban she, 2016. First Chinese translation of *Dancing Girls*.

*Tipps für die Wildnis [Wilderness Tips]*. Translated by Charlotte Franke. Munich: Piper Verlag. German translation of *Wilderness Tips* first published in 2001.

*Tjenerinnens beretning [The Handmaid's Tale]*. Translated by Merete Alfsen. Oslo: Aschehoug, 2017. Norwegian translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first published in 1987.

*To paidi tes trikymias [Hag-Seed]*. Translated by Triseugene Papaioannou. Athens: Metaichmio, 2017. First Greek translation of *Hag-Seed*.

*A Trio of Tolerable Tales*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2017. “In *Rude Ramsay and the Roaring Radishes*, Ramsay runs away from his revolting relatives and makes a new friend with more refined tastes. The second tale, *Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda*, features Bob, who was raised by dogs, and Dorinda, who does housework for relatives who don't like her. It is only when they become friends that they realize they can change their lives for the better. And finally, to get her parents back, Wenda and her woodchuck companion have to outsmart Widow Wallop in *Wandering Wenda* and *Widow Wallops Wunderground Washery*. Grades 4-7” (Publisher).

*Le tueur aveugle [The Blind Assassin]*. Translated by Michèle Albaret. Paris: Éditions 10/18, 2017. French translation of *The Blind Assassin* first published in 2002.

“Un mundo de cuentos.” *Letras Libres* December 2017: 22-26. In Spanish. “Traducción del inglés de Victoria Alonso Blanco. Este texto, cortesía de Salamandra, forma parte del discurso de

aceptación del Premio de la Paz de los Libreros Alemanes 2017.” Available from:  
<http://www.lettraslibres.com/mexico/revista/un-mundo-cuentos>.

*Ved'Mino Otrode: Pereskaz "Buri" Ul'Iama Shekspira [Hag-Seed]*. Translated by Tat'Iana Pokidaeva. Moscow: Eksmo, 2017. First Russian translation of *Hag-Seed*.

“What Art Under Trump: In a Time of Crisis and Panic, Artists and Writers Can Help Remind Us That We Are More Than Just Voters and Statistics.” *The Nation* 18 January 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Of what use is art? It's a question often asked in societies where money is the prime measure of worth, usually by people who do not understand art and therefore dislike it and the artists who make it. Now, however, the question is being posed by artists themselves.

For American writers and other artists, there's a distinct chill in the air. Strongmen have a well-earned reputation for suppression and for demanding fawning tributes: “Suck up or shut up” has been their rule. During the Cold War, many writers, filmmakers, and playwrights received visits from the FBI on suspicion of “un-American activities.” Will that history be repeated? Will self-censorship set in? Could we be entering an age of samizdat in the United States, with manuscripts circulating secretly because publishing them would mean inviting reprisal? That sounds extreme but considering America's own history—and the wave of authoritarian governments sweeping the globe—it's not out of the question.

In the face of such uncertainties and fears, the creative communities of the United States are nervously urging one another not to surrender without a fight: Don't give up! Write your book! Make your art!

But what to write or make? Fifty years from now, what will be said about the art and writing of this era? The Great Depression was immortalized by John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, which described in detail what the Dust Bowl years felt like to those living through them at the lowest level of American society. Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* provided an apt metaphor for McCarthyism, with its witch hunts and mass accusations. Klaus Mann's 1936 novel *Mephisto*, about the rise of a famous actor, showed absolute power corrupting an artist absolutely—a fitting story during the reign of Hitler. What sorts of novels, poems, films, television series, video games, paintings, music, or graphic novels will adequately reflect America's next decade?

We don't have any idea yet. We can't: Nothing is predictable except unpredictability. It's probably fair to say, however, that Donald Trump's interest in the arts, gauged on a scale from one to 100, is somewhere between zero and negative 10—lower than any president in the last 50 years. Some of those presidents didn't give a hoot about the arts, but at least they found it politic to pretend. Trump won't. In fact, he may not even notice they're there.

This might, in fact, work to our advantage. Stalin and Hitler took an interest in the arts and considered themselves experts and arbiters, which was very bad news for the writers and artists whose styles displeased the authorities. These got packed off to the gulag or condemned as degenerate. Hopefully, most creative people will find themselves flying under the radar, so insignificant as to escape detection.

The United States has no gulags. It prefers to express displeasure through behind-the-scenes blackballing: The screenwriter's phone doesn't ring, as it didn't for the Hollywood Ten; the musician's songs go unplayed, as Buffy Sainte-Marie's were during the Vietnam War, because of her song “Universal Soldier”; the writer's book fails to find a publisher, as was the case, for many years, with Marilyn French's *From Eve to Dawn: A History of Women in the World*. A change in the overall cultural climate may well be expected, with rewards of various kinds flowing to those willing to ride along in the wake of the incumbent powerboat, and quiet

punishments meted out to those who refuse. Those reprisals may take the form of noxious POTUS tweets—like the recent one in which Trump kicked his *Celebrity Apprentice* successor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, right in the ratings—or vulgar public denunciations, like his dismissal of Meryl Streep after her Golden Globes speech implicitly criticized Trump as a bully.

And what will happen to freedom of speech, that hallmark of American democracy? Will the very idea become a euphemism for hate speech and Internet bullying, a hammer to whack “political correctness”? That has already begun. If it intensifies, will those defending the concept of free speech then be attacked from the left as collaborators with fascists?

\* \* \*

Surely we can look to the artists to uphold our better values! Don't they represent the most noble features of the human spirit? Not necessarily. Creative people come in many makes and models. Some are merely paid entertainers, opportunists out to make a million bucks. Some have more sinister agendas. There's nothing inherently sacred about films and pictures and writers and books. *Mein Kampf* was a book.

Plenty of creative people in the past have rolled over for the powerful. In fact, they're especially subject to authoritarian pressures because, as isolated individuals, they're very easy to pick off. No armed militia of painters protects them; no underground mafia of screenwriters will put a horse's head in your bed if you cross them. Those under attack may be defended verbally by other artists, but such defense counts for little if a ruthless establishment is bent on their destruction. The pen is mightier than the sword, but only in retrospect: At the time of combat, those with the swords generally win. But this is America; it has a long and honorable history of resistance. And its multivoiced and multifaceted variety will itself be some defense.

There will, of course, be protest movements, and artists and writers will be urged to join them. It will be their moral duty—or so they will be told—to lend their voices to the cause. (Artists are always being lectured on their moral duty, a fate other professionals—dentists, for example—generally avoid.) But it's tricky telling creative people what to create or demanding that their art serve a high-minded agenda crafted by others. Those among them who follow such hortatory instructions are likely to produce mere propaganda or two-dimensional allegory—tedious sermonizing either way. The art galleries of the mediocre are wallpapered with good intentions.

What then? What sort of genuine artistic response might be possible? Maybe social satire. Perhaps someone will attempt the equivalent of Jonathan Swift's “A Modest Proposal,” which suggested the consumption of babies as an economic solution to Irish poverty. But satire, alas, tends to fall flat when reality exceeds even the wildest exaggerations of the imagination—as it is increasingly doing today.

Science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction have often been used to register protest in times of political pressure. They have told the truth, but told it slant, as Yevgeny Zamyatin did in his 1924 novel *We*, which anticipated the Soviet repressions to come. Many American writers took to science fiction in the McCarthy years because it allowed them to criticize their society without being too easily spotted by the powers intent on quashing criticism.

Some will produce “witness art,” like those artists who have responded to great catastrophes: wars, earthquakes, genocides. Surely the journal-keepers are already at work, inscribing events and their responses to them, like those who kept accounts of the Black Death until they themselves succumbed to it; or like Anne Frank, writing her diary from her attic hiding place; or like Samuel Pepys, who wrote down what happened during the Great Fire of London. Works of simple witnessing can be intensely powerful, like Nawal El Sadaawi's *Memoirs from the*

*Women's Prison*, about her time behind bars in Anwar Sadat's Egypt, or Yan Lianke's *Four Books*, which chronicles the famines and mass deaths in China during the Great Leap Forward. American artists and writers have seldom been shy about exploring the fissures and cracks in their own country. Let's hope that if democracy implodes and free speech is suppressed, someone will record the process as it unfolds.

\* \* \*

In the short run, perhaps all we can expect from artists is only what we have always expected. As once-solid certainties crumble, it may be enough to cultivate your own artistic garden—to do what you can as well as you can for as long as you can do it; to create alternate worlds that offer both temporary escapes and moments of insight; to open windows in the given world that allow us to see outside it.

With the Trump era upon us, it's the artists and writers who can remind us, in times of crisis or panic, that each one of us is more than just a vote, a statistic. Lives may be deformed by politics—and many certainly have been—but we are not, finally, the sum of our politicians. Throughout history, it has been hope for artistic work that expresses, for this time and place, as powerfully and eloquently as possible, what it is to be human.

Available from: <https://www.thenation.com/article/what-art-under-trump>.

“What Does It Mean to Be a Canadian?” *The World Needs More Canada*. Ed. Heather Reisman. [Toronto]: Indigo Press, 2017. 10-11. In a book containing short pieces celebrating Canada, Atwood wrote:

I have just come back from the United States, where Canada is having an unaccustomed moment in the spotlight. Once, Canada was that great blank space on the map above the 49th parallel where cold weather came from. Now it is seen as a beacon of light in a darkening world—a place where you might escape to if things get too negative south of the border: still welcoming, still kindly, still pluralistic, still committed to fairness. It has not always been so welcoming and kind and pluralistic and committed to fairness. We need to remember that, and to hold our country to the standards it likes to believe it believes in—but nonetheless, at the moment it shines, at least by comparison. ‘As Canadian as possible under the circumstances’ used to be a joke. Now it's hope. Yes Canada: to be as Canadian as possible. Under the circumstances. And good luck.

## **Adaptations of Atwood's Works**

“The Handmaid's Tale” [Film]. Los Angeles: Shout! Factory, 2017. DVD video 1 videodisc (approximately 109 min.) sound, color. Re-release of 1990 film.

“The Handmaid's Tale: Season One.” Los Angeles: Metro-Goldwyn Mayer, 2017. Videodisc 3 videodiscs (525 min.).

## **Quotations**

“[Quote].” *Courier Mail* (Australia) 22 July 2016. Section: News: 19.

In her article, “On the Right Track,” which reflects on Patti Miller's book on how to write books, Susan Johnson begins with an Atwood anecdote: Perhaps you've heard the story about world-famous Canadian author Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale*) chatting to a brain surgeon at a party? When she told him she wrote books—he'd never heard of her—his immediate response was that he'd often thought of writing a book himself. “What a

coincidence,” she said. “I’ve often thought of doing a spot of brain -surgery!” Atwood tells this story at literary festivals to impress on her audience how many people want to write a book, and how easy they believe the task to be. She’s lost count of the number of people who’ve told her over the years they have a book in them.

“[Quote].” *The Dance Enthusiast* 12 June 2007. Online.

An article titled “A Postcard from Famed Martha Graham Dancer Stuart Hodes on Choreographing for Naomi Haas Goldberg’s Dances for a Variable Population” starts with an Atwood quote: “America is about the Frontier,” said Margaret Atwood, author of *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Available from: <https://www.dance-enthusiast.com/features/postcards/view/Postcard-Martha-Graham-Stuart-Hodes-Choreographing-Naomi-Haas-Goldberg-Dances-for-a-Variable-Population>.

“[Quote].” *Examiner Newspaper* 17 May 2017. Section: Opinion: 14.

In her article, “Male Rejection No Laughing Matter,” Emma Elsworthy includes one of Atwood’s best-known quotes: “Men are afraid that women will laugh at them. Women are afraid that men will kill them.”

“[Quote].” *Globe and Mail* 10 August 2017. Section: Glove Investor: B7.

In his opinion piece, “Considering What Was Once Unimaginable” Mark Grant writes: North Korea has now engaged him [Trump], and the United States, in a worrisome battle of words that keeps escalating by the day. I have faith in the rational behaviour of Donald Trump, but when a sovereign country, North Korea, actually threatens Guam with a “ring of fire” then miscalculations become an ever-increasing threat. As author Margaret Atwood said: “War is what happens when language fails.”

“[Quote].” *The Guardian* 31 August 2017. Online.

In her piece, “Lost to Translation: How English Readers Miss Out on Foreign Women Writers; Only a Third of Books Translated into English Last Year Were by Female Writers. As Women in Translation Month Wraps Up, We Investigate Why—And If Things are Changing,” Sian Cain observes that “Books by women are seen as domestic and unpolitical. As Margaret Atwood said in 1971: ‘When a man writes about things like doing the dishes, it’s realism; when a woman does it it’s an unfortunate genetic limitation.’”

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/aug/31/lost-to-translation-how-english-readers-miss-out-on-foreign-women-writers>.

“[Quote].” *Investors Business Daily* 23 April 2017: 1.

The article, “Quotes of the Week” kicks off with one from Atwood on Attitude: Optimism means better than reality; pessimism means worse than reality. I’m a realist.

“[Quote].” *Irish Times* 8 July 2017. Section: Weekend: 2.

In her article, “Ed Sheeran Has Quit Twitter. Maybe We Should All Do the Same,” Jennifer O’Connell writes: In the beginning [when she first started using Twitter], I went along with Margaret Atwood’s memorable description of it in 2010 as “like having fairies in the bottom of your garden.” I was, by turns, beguiled, provoked, intrigued and inspired by it. It was where I

went to banter, spar, discover and engage....”

“[Quote].” *Irish Times* 12 October 2017 Section: Opinion: 14.

In her article, “Why I Have Joined the Ranks of the ‘Dissident Feminists’; Feminism Used to Be Great but It Has Been Hijacked by Radicals and Lost its Way,” Larissa Nolan quotes Atwood: Margaret Atwood, whose 1985 novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* has been adopted as the radical feminist’s bible, dissociated herself somewhat from the movement when asked if she was a feminist. “Tell me what you mean by that word and then we can talk. Do we mean all men should be pushed off a cliff? Do we mean women are always right? Give me a break. I’m sorry, but no.”

“[Quote].” *New Scientist* 236.3147 (11 October 2017): 20-21.

In his report, “Show time!” on New Scientist Live, attended by Atwood, Rowan Hooper quotes the author: Margaret Atwood shared her thoughts on science and fiction, and came out with this gem on stage: “I’m here,” she said, “because I read *New Scientist*.” New Scientist Live is a festival consisting of 140 talks, six stages and hundreds of exhibitors showcasing everything from giant insects to next-generation robots.

“[Quote].” *Peterborough Examiner* 3 June 2017. Section: Opinion: A4.

In his article, “My Commencement Address to the Graduating Class of 2017,” Bill Templeman quotes Atwood: Each year at this time the rich and famous are called upon to bestow a little wisdom to the new flock of graduates who are about to be ejected, utterly unprepared, into the trench warfare of life. As Margaret Atwood said in a commencement address she gave years ago: “Even in the best of times, it (graduating) is more or less like being pushed over a cliff, and these are not the best of times.”

“[Quote].” *Rensselaer Polytechnic* (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) 20 September 2017. Section: Editorial Notebooks: 1.

In his editorial, “First Amendment Should Not Protect Bigotry,” Nathan Dorer starts off with an Atwood quote: In her book *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Margaret Atwood describes freedom as a duality: “freedom to and freedom from.” ...

“[Quote].” *Saanich News* 2 December 2017. Online.

In her article, “Cultivated: On Stepping Out of the Rhythm of the Year,” Christin Geall (a writing instructor at the University of Victoria), observes that “gardening, my love, feels like a chore.” For solace, I have long returned Margaret Atwood’s poem, ‘Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer.’ It is about the wilderness and the Canadian mind but it speaks to growers in the thick of it too:

He stood, a point  
on a sheet of green paper  
proclaiming himself the centre,  
with no walls, no borders  
anywhere; the sky no height  
above him, totally un-  
enclosed  
and shouted:  
Let me out!  
Recently I got out.

Available from: <https://www.saanichnews.com/community/cultivated-on-stepping-out-of-the-rhythm-of-the-year>.

“[Quote].” *The Sunday Times* (London) 17 December 2017. Section: News: 27.

In his article, “We Croak App’s Death Reminders Help You to Live a Little’ Matthew Moore describes a new app, We Croak, which sends out five reminders a day that our time on earth is finite and short, each one accompanied by an inspiring quotation about human annihilation, such as Herman Melville’s: “Death is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried.” Of course, Atwood is also quoted: “Sooner or later, I hate to break it to you, you’re gonna die, so how do you fill in the space between here and there? It’s yours. Seize your space.” Margaret Atwood.

Available from: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/we-croak-apps-death-reminders-help-you-to-live-a-little-wfhl86dh5>.

“[Quote].” *Syracuse Journal of International Law & Commerce* 45.1 (Fall 2017): 12.

In his article, “The ICJ’s Marshall Islands (Mis) Judgments on Nuclear Disarmament,” Alberto Alvarez-Jimenez quotes from *Cat’s Eye*: “Anyway, we’ll probably blow ourselves sky-high before the end of the century, given the atom bomb and the way things are going. The future belongs to the insects.”

“[Quote].” *Times & Transcript* (New Brunswick) 21 March 2017. Page: A9.

In her article, “Learning from Water, which Flows around Obstacles,” Louise Gilbert references Atwood: In *The Penelopiad*, Canadian author Margaret Atwood reminds us that water does not resist life or change. “Water flows. When you plunge your hand in it, all you feel is a caress. Water is not a solid wall; it will not stop you. But water always goes where it wants to go and nothing in the end can stand against it.” Then she advises us to remember that we are half water.

“[Quote].” *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 29 October 2017. Section: Comment: A11.

In his article, “Plastic Pollution: A Growing Problem on Our Coasts,” Peter Dietsch quotes Atwood: As Margaret Atwood has succinctly commented in regard to the plague of plastic: “Dead oceans mean dead people.”

“[Quote].” *Toronto Star* 12 May 2017. Section: Life: E9.

In her article titled “Margaret Atwood’s Ongoing Act of Hope; As Bleak Current Events Catch Up to Her Work, People Want to Know Where She’s Hiding Her Crystal Ball,” Judith Timson uses the broadcast of “The Handmaid’s Tale” to reflect on Atwood’s overall significance, including on her own life. Excerpt: Atwood has written so much I’ve abstained from whole phases of her work and still consider her one of the most seminal literary influences of my life. There are lines from her poetry that reside in my head: “Don’t ask for the true story; why do you need it? It’s not what I set out with, or what I carry. What I’m sailing with, a knife, blue fire, luck, a few good words that still work and the tide.”

“[Quote].” *Town & Country* August 2017. Section: Style Spy: 36.

In her article “Brim Keeper,” (about hats) Whitney Robinson quotes Atwood, who he claims once said: “I myself have 12 hats, and each one represents a different personality.”

“[Quote].” *University News* (Saint Louis University) 5 October 2017. Section: News: 1.

In the article, “Response to Atwood Reception” referencing Atwood’s remarks upon winning the St. Louis Literary Reward, the writer noted: It is up to us as residents of St. Louis to show those in power that we will not continue to accept the budding police state here. I think the most important thing we can gather from Atwood’s speech is the following quote: “America, please don’t go there. Please honor your own pledge to the flag—liberty and justice for all. All means all. Justice doesn’t mean merely the administration of laws. The Nuremberg laws were laws. The fugitive slave act was a set of laws. But just and fair laws administered without discrimination. Please don’t settle for less. Live up to your own propaganda.”

“[Quote].” *Washington Post* 23 July 2017. Section: A: 01.

In her article, “She Thought She Was Irish—Until a DNA Test Opened a 100-Year-Old Mystery,” Libby Copeland references Atwood: The dystopian novelist Margaret Atwood is fond of saying that all new technologies have a good side, a bad side, and a “stupid side you hadn’t considered.”

Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/lifestyle/she-thought-she-was-irish-until-a-dna-test-opened-a-100-year-old-mystery/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.07054fe4c3e9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/lifestyle/she-thought-she-was-irish-until-a-dna-test-opened-a-100-year-old-mystery/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.07054fe4c3e9).

“[Quotes].” *Artsfile* 20 May 2017: Online. In Peter Robb’s article, “Restorying Canada: Margaret Atwood, Leah Kostamo on the Yin and Yang of Utopia and Dystopia,” which includes a report of Atwood’s remarks at the Restorying Canada Conference on The Future of Religion in Canada held at the University of Ottawa, Robb includes a number of memorable Atwood quotes.

Excerpt: A lifetime of study and thought means Atwood ranges across many topics when she is talking. And what she says is always thought-provoking and often funny. So here are some comments that caught this reporter’s ear.

**On grammar and religion:** “Once you have a language with a pluperfect and a future perfect (tense), sooner or later, if you hang out with four-year-olds a lot, they are going to say ‘Where did I come from? Where did people come from?’ And then they are going to ask, ‘What will happen to me when I die, or Where did Grandpa go?’ ... Ultimately there will have to be an answer because I don’t know isn’t satisfactory. It’s either going to be a religious origin story or ‘Hey we’ve almost found the missing link’. You can’t help it once you have those tenses.”

**Religion as inspiration for writing:** “Religions are noteworthy for the enormous number of stories they contain.”

**On language:** “You cannot tell a story without your listener putting some kind of moral interpretation on it. So Goldilocks finds an empty cottage. In it there are three chairs and there are three bowls of porridge. Goldilocks goes into the cottage and she sits on the first chair and it’s too hard. She sits on the second chair and it’s too soft. And she sits on the third one and it’s just right. And then she addresses herself to the bowls of porridge; one is too hot, one is too cold and one is just right and she eats it all up. And then the three bears come home. And Goldilocks runs away. What’s the moral? People come up with different things: Don’t eat other people’s porridge. Where are the parents? What was she doing in the woods alone? These are remarkably civilized bears. You will put a spin on it one way or the other. You can’t help it because that’s what people do.

**On fundamentalist Christianity:** “One thing that has happened over the past 77 years,

which is the number I have been on this planet, is that the centre of Christianity abdicated. I think a lot of people left the church who were the stable centre and that created space for more extreme people to come in and create a power base for themselves.”

**On the alt-right and racism:** “The alt-right in the U.S. has conflated religion with a number of things that didn’t belong there. (For example), there is no scriptural basis in the *Bible* that supports the idea that white people are superior to black people. It’s not there. ... In this country residential schools, a lot of them run by churches, were used to indoctrinate the idea that this culture here was superior to that culture there.”

**On utopias:** “I’m suspicious of utopias because I have studied them so much. They do tend to contain, ‘Let’s get rid of those people.’ I’m more of a hold the line and repair the cracks in the dam kind of person.”

**On the environment:** “There are problems we need to address pretty quickly and that’s why I spend so much time on conservation and thinking about solutions to obvious problems. If we kill the oceans, (for example), that’s it for us, because the green algae in the oceans makes 60 to 80 per cent of the oxygen we breathe. Plants would be fine, but we are not plants.”

**On possessions:** “I’m not interested in having stuff, I’m more interested in doing stuff.”

**On atheism:** “Atheism is a dogma too.”

Available from: <http://artsfile.ca/atwood/>.

“[Quotes].” *The Jambar: Youngstown State University* 26 April 2017. Section: News: 1. In her report of Atwood’s remarks during the Skeggs Lecture, Elizabeth Lehman highlighted the “Top 5 Quotes”:

- “If we were already inside *The Handmaid’s Tale* you wouldn’t be sitting here, I wouldn’t be standing here and we would not be talking about this book because it would be forbidden. And the female part of the audience would be forbidden even to read, but we aren’t there yet.”
- “Who would have anticipated all this? Not myself at the time I was writing it. My expectations were modest. I thought of it as a book that might annoy some people, should they read it, should they read.”
- “The details of *The Handmaid’s Tale* don’t come from very far away and long ago. There are possibilities within every society including ours. *The Handmaid’s Tale* poses the question: If America were a dictatorship, what kind of dictatorship would it be? Religion used as a control and propaganda would surely be a major component.”
- “What’s my next hope for this book? The same hope it’s always been: I hope that *The Handmaid’s Tale* will remain between its covers, that it will not become a reality any more than it already is.”
- “The humanities have been under funding threat recently because they’re thought not to deliver things of value, financial value, stuff that investors can make money out of. We want, apparently, genetically engineered babies in bottles and artificial intelligence and sex robots; we’re making them anyway and spending a lot of money doing so. But we aren’t so keen on fictions about those things, or the mysteries of them.”

## Interviews

“I’m Margaret Atwood, Author of *The Handmaid’s Tale*.” *Reddit*, 8 Mar. 2017. Online. Lengthy interview with fans.

See:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/5y91f5/im\\_margaret\\_atwood\\_author\\_of\\_the\\_handmaids\\_tale/](https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/5y91f5/im_margaret_atwood_author_of_the_handmaids_tale/).

A report on her *Reddit* interview appeared the next day in the *Washington Post*:

GUARINO, Ben. "Novelist Margaret Atwood Would Defeat a Herd of Duck-Sized Horses with Her Umbrella." *Washington Post* 9 March 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Novelist Margaret Atwood, the Booker Prize-winning scribe behind such works of fiction as *Oryx and Crake* and *The Blind Assassin* took to Internet bulletin board *Reddit* on Wednesday to answer a few questions from fans. They wanted to know: *Would Atwood fight a single duck the size of a horse, one fan asked, or would she prefer to battle 100 duck-sized horses?* Over the years, *Reddit*ors have posed that question to various luminaries, politicians and comedians. Atwood was game. She wrote:

**Hmm. Good question. Are the ducks dead ducks, or are they alive? Are they Zombie Ducks? Is the horse a Pale Horse? Maybe not enough information here. I think I'd pick the hundred duck-sized horses. Easy to stampede, no? ("Scram, ducks!" Opens and closes an umbrella very fast. That's worked for me in the past, against those weeny ducks.)**

The session was part of Atwood's promotion for the adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* on the streaming service Hulu. In the book's bleak future, an extreme Christian movement strips women of their rights.

Several *Reddit*ors asked her about the novel and its reception. When *The Handmaid's Tale* was published, in 1985, Atwood said, many people dismissed the possibility that such a thing could come to pass. Fewer do today, she noted. ("The Handmaid's Tale' is Not an Instruction Manual," read one woman's protest sign at the Women's March in January.)

The horse-duck question is something of a *Reddit* custom. It's a riff on the sort of parlor game in which people pose tricky or inane dilemmas, along the lines of the *New York Times Magazine* asking its readers if they would kill an infant Hitler. The question's exact origins are unclear, but before the horse-duck conundrum caught hold in the online forum, it existed as a letter to the editor published at the British newspaper *Metro*. It has inspired a *New Yorker* cartoon and an inquiry into duck and horse densities at *Wired*. One consideration players should make is that the horse-sized duck would be too weighty to fly, as *Wired* pointed out.

Atwood's answer seemed to satisfy her fans.... A few famous people, perhaps stumped, have ducked the query entirely—most notably former president Barack Obama in his 2012 *Reddit* ask-me-anything session.

The query was not forgotten among some of his staffers, as *BuzzFeed* reported in January 2013. Most of the Obama officials were convinced the horses were the correct decision, *BuzzFeed* reported. Most—but not all.

"Ducks are not exactly teeny-tiny—so 100 duck-sized horses (as opposed to duckling-sized horses), while smaller than a miniature pony, are still probably clocking in somewhere around ten pounds each," one Obama official said, according to *BuzzFeed*. "That's a lot to kick/throw/battle." The staffer continued: "Also, lacking a weapon of some kind, how exactly do you defeat it? Wrestling it to the ground seems unlikely. Can you break its legs? Snap a wing? Yet, it's just one opponent—you can focus all your energy, attention, and strength on

outsmarting it. Maybe it tires easily. Hard to know.” Perhaps, after all, Obama would have taken on the duck.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) felt that the choice was clear. “Obviously the answer is 100 duck-sized horses,” he told Reddit users in January 2016. (Paul, then campaigning for president, poked fun at Obama for not answering the question. “I hear the current president didn’t answer this vital question. We should expect more out of the next president.”)

Others have made the case for fighting the giant bird. In 2012, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof chose the duck, believing he could tame it with cracked corn and then fly around on the bird’s back. Unfortunately, as noted above, a mallard of unusual size would remain grounded. Comedian Bill Murray, too, picked the big duck. “I would act like I was trying to ride it,” he said in October 2015, “and then I would strangle it from behind.”

Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/09/novelist-margaret-atwood-would-defeat-a-herd-of-duck-sized-horses-with-her-umbrella/?utm\\_term=.7e577dcb4dob](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/09/novelist-margaret-atwood-would-defeat-a-herd-of-duck-sized-horses-with-her-umbrella/?utm_term=.7e577dcb4dob).

“Margaret Atwood.” *200 Women: Who Will Change the Way You See the World*. Edited by Geoff Blackwell and Ruth Hobday. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2017. 266-269. Includes two recent full colour photos of Atwood (pp. 267-268). The book itself includes a standard set of questions asked of every interviewee: What really matters to you? What brings you happiness? What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery? What would you change if you could? What single word do you most identify with? In answering the last question Atwood said: **And**. It means there is always something more.

“Margaret’s Moment: Age Is an Advantage, Says Atwood.” *CBC News* 29 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: It’s all coming together at once for Margaret Atwood. Two of her books are making their television debuts this week “The Handmaid’s Tale” on Bravo and Hulu and “Wandering Wenda,” a show based on her alliterative children’s books, starts Saturday on CBC. Another show based on an Atwood novel, *Alias Grace*, is under production and coming to the public broadcaster later this year. The third volume of her graphic novel series *Angel Catbird* is due out this summer and MGM has snapped up the television rights for her 2015 book *The Heart Goes Last*. She’s even got cameos in “Alias Grace” and “The Handmaid’s Tale,” where she slaps star Elisabeth Moss in the face.

It’s a career’s worth of accomplishments, all happening now at age 77. But the Canadian author said that’s mere coincidence. “Things aligned in a way that had nothing to do with me planning them,” she told CBC News. “It is not the life of a typical novelist, except the occasional typical novelist will have something like this occur.” And she’s not shy about how old she is: she credits her age with what drives her to try out so many different things. “I didn’t grow up in a world where people were telling you not to do these things, because they wouldn’t imagine that you would do them anyway,” she said. “When I said, ‘I’m going to be a writer,’ nobody said, ‘You can’t be a writer because you’re a girl.’ They just said, ‘You want to be what?’ And they would have said that to any gender of person. It was just an unknown thing to be.” ...

Even though Atwood has long been a household name, interest in her books is surging. All of the Toronto Public Library system’s copies are out at the moment. Chris Szego, who manages Bakka Phoenix, said she’s seen a spike in sales of Atwood’s books. “Her reach is so wide,” she said. “She has always been herself. We talk a lot in Canadian literature circles about the search for authenticity and she always has been.” There’s not much sign of slowing down for Atwood as she nears her 80s. “I’m getting at this point in my life [where I’m] ‘remarkably spry for her age.’ So I’d rather have that than ‘remarkably decrepit for her age,’” she said. “I am the age I

am and that gives you a certain advantage too, because I remember a lot of things.”

Available from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/margaret-atwood-moment-1.4088740>.

AHEARN, Victoria. “Grace Under Pressure; Margaret Atwood Says Prominence in the Trump Era Is a Mixed Blessing.” *Calgary Herald* 15 September 2017. Section: Movies: B4.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood isn’t celebrating the idea that the election of U.S. President Donald Trump has added a new level of resonance to her work. The Canadian literary star is at the Toronto International Film Festival promoting the new CBC/Netflix miniseries “Alias Grace,” an adaptation of her 1996 novel about a poor Irish immigrant convicted of killing her employers in 1843. The show comes on the heels of another series inspired by an Atwood book, the dystopian saga “The Handmaid’s Tale,” about a totalitarian theocracy that makes women property of the state and forces some to bear children for infertile couples....

Both series examine the treatment of women and immigrants in society, with “The Handmaid’s Tale” having a particularly chilling effect amid the U.S. battle over rights to birth control and abortion. “If I had the choice of wallowing in comparative obscurity and not having this government in power, or the present moment, I think I can honestly say at my age I would take the first—because this development is not good for the world,” Atwood, 77, said Wednesday in an interview. “It’s not good for the world to have a weak United States.”

Oscar-nominated Canadian actress-filmmaker Sarah Polley wrote and produced “Alias Grace,” which is based on the true story of Grace Marks (played by Sarah Gadon), who was freed after 30 years in jail. Atwood noted the adaptations of both *Alias Grace* and *The Handmaid’s Tale* were in the works before the U.S. election. “Sarah has been working on “Alias Grace” for what, six years, and thinking about it for 20,” she said. “They were halfway through shooting “Handmaid’s Tale,” so it was not something that they did because of the election of Donald Trump. “However, they woke up on Nov. 9 and realized they were in a different frame. “People saw it differently and they saw it with much more belief than they would have seen it otherwise.”

Polley said she loved “The Handmaid’s Tale” and is excited her series is coming out in the same year. “A lot of people are already aware of Margaret’s work, but even more are now and also aware of how beautifully it can be adapted to the screen,” she said. “So that’s fantastic for us in terms of already having that momentum.” But more importantly, I think the way the shows speak to each other is really interesting.

The issues Grace faced are still relevant today, Atwood and Polley both noted. “Let’s not pretend that none of this is still going on, particularly people who are illegally here or sex-trafficked, all that kind of thing,” Atwood said. “But also people who find themselves in domestic situations in which they are, shall we say, not treated with the utmost respect.” “Especially immigrant women who are domestics and there is a lack of power and rights there that I think we take for granted in this society still,” Polley said. “I think this is, in my lifetime, the scariest moment in terms of realizing that these things aren’t givens.”

---. “‘Must Be the Astrology’: Margaret Atwood on Her Work Having ‘a Moment.’” *Hamilton Spectator* 11 April 2017. Section: GO: G3.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood is going through a career renaissance that has her baffled. “Very weird. It’s what we call ‘a moment,’” said the 77-year-old Ottawa native, who has written more than 40 books of fiction, poetry, and critical essays. “It must be the astrology. I can’t account for it. I think a lot of things just converged and I don’t know why it all happened in one year.”

The internationally acclaimed Toronto author, known as the Queen of CanLit, has been the talk of the international TV world lately with several upcoming adaptations of her work. There's "Wandering Wenda," which is based on her alliteration-filled children's series and premieres April 29 on CBC. "The Handmaid's Tale," adapted from her 1985 Governor General's Award-winning dystopian novel, debuts April 26 on the streaming service Hulu in the U.S., and April 30 on Bravo in Canada. The entire first season will also launch on Bell Media's streaming service CraveTV this spring. Her 1996 Scotiabank Giller Prize-winning historical tale *Alias Grace* is also due in miniseries form this fall on CBC in Canada and Netflix elsewhere. Plus, MGM Television has acquired the rights to adapt her 2015 novel *The Heart Goes Last*. "There's yet another one yet to come, which has not been announced, so I can't tell you about that," Atwood said in a recent phone interview. "A lot of the stars have aligned."

While Atwood didn't create all of these screen projects, she has been involved, either as a consultant or as an executive producer. On "Alias Grace," Oscar-nominated writer and producer Sarah Polley said she checked in with Atwood every step of the way and had her on set for a cameo role. Sarah Gadon stars as Grace Marks, a young Irish immigrant and maid convicted of murder in Upper Canada in 1843. She was exonerated after about 30 years behind bars. Atwood said she also spent "a good deal of time" discussing the concepts for the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* with creator Bruce Miller. The story is set in a male-dominated, totalitarian society ruled by a fundamentalist regime that treats women as property of the state. Elisabeth Moss of "Mad Men" fame stars as Offred, who is torn from her daughter and enslaved by her male owner. The cast also includes Samira Wiley, Alexis Bledel, Joseph Fiennes and Max Minghella. Atwood said she's watched several episodes already. When told the trailers have induced chills amongst some viewers, she said: "It's extremely strong. Just you wait. You're going to get even more chills."

*The Handmaid's Tale*—both the series and book—is grabbing much attention these days, with some saying the story seems eerily prescient in the Trump era. "I didn't put anything into the book that hadn't already happened then," countered Atwood, noting the book was written in 1984 and published a year later.

Atwood, who recently received a lifetime achievement award from the National Book Critics Circle, is no stranger to the screen world: there was a 1990 film adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* and a 1981 reimagining of her novel *Surfacing*. Early in her career she also wrote screenplays, including one for her first novel, 1969's *The Edible Woman*, which never got made. "I also wrote them here and there throughout the '70s as a screenwriter, and some of those got done and some of them didn't get done, but it was one of the things I did," she said. "I don't think I'd do it now because it's a lot of work."

Atwood offers one possible explanation for all this new interest around her books. "The appearance of the streamed episodic television series has really expanded the possibilities for a lot of novelists," she said. "It's created a whole other way of telling stories, in filmic form."

Asked if she binge-watches series, Atwood said she does, but with boxed DVD sets. "What we just finished was an English series called "Foyle's War," set in (the Second World War). It's very good," she said. She added with her signature wry wit: "People of our generation like it because we recognize all the outfits. We were there."

Available from: <https://www.thespec.com/whatson-story/7234430-margaret-atwood-on-her-work-having-a-moment->

---. TV Take on *Handmaid's Tale* Impresses Atwood." *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia)

28 April 2017. Section: Arts: C13. (453 w.).

Excerpt: A TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* has received rave reviews ahead of Sunday's Canadian premiere on Bravo, including from the novel's author, Margaret Atwood. "I'm very impressed with what they've been doing, really impressed," said the celebrated Toronto novelist and poet, who wrote the 1985 Governor General's Award-winning dystopian story that inspired the series.

The 10-part, Toronto-shot drama (which premiered on Hulu in the United States on Wednesday) is set in a male-dominated, totalitarian society ruled by a fundamentalist regime that treats women as property of the state. Elisabeth Moss, of "Mad Men" fame, stars as Offred, who is torn from her daughter, enslaved in the commander's household, and forced to become a "handmaid" sexual servant and have babies. The theocracy takes such measures—in what was formerly part of the U.S.—amid environmental disasters and rising sterility. "She's very good," Atwood said of Moss. "She has a very expressive face, but she's also a producer of [the series]."

The cast also includes Samira Wiley of "Orange Is the New Black," Alexis Bledel of "Gilmore Girls," Joseph Fiennes of "Shakespeare in Love" and Max Minghella of "The Social Network." "The cast is wonderful and particularly of interest is that a lot of them are cast counter-type, like it's not the kind of role they usually play," Atwood said. "So that's going to be a surprise to some people, too...."

Bruce Miller created, produced and wrote the series. Atwood makes a brief cameo and was a consulting producer. "I spent a good deal of time talking to Bruce Miller and discussed his concepts," Atwood said. "And then, as well as meeting him in person, emailing about various questions that might come up and looking at the scripts and making some notes. I met them all when they came into town, including the designer. It's just excellent, what I've seen so far."

AHERN, Monica. "Atwood's Alliterations Inspire Animated Series." *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 27 April 2017. Section: GO!: C4. (456 w.).

Excerpt: When Margaret Atwood's daughter was young, the acclaimed author would tell her an alliterative story filled with "P" words while getting the tangles out of her long, curly hair. "You could just make it up as you went along," Atwood recalled in a recent interview. "So it was different every time until I wrote it down."

Atwood eventually published that story, *Princess Prunella and the Purple Peanut*, as well as three other alliterative books for children. On Saturday, the CBC will premiere "Wandering Wenda," an animation series inspired by those books.

The show follows the globetrotting adventures of red-headed Wenda and her two best friends, Wesley Woodchuck and a bookish boy named Wu. Each episode runs about eight minutes long and features wordplay with one letter of the alphabet. Alliteration allows parents to teach their kids "without being overly didactic," said Atwood. "Kids think it's funny and when the parents read the books, they often get mixed up and kids think that's funny too," said the Toronto-based novelist and poet, who appears in the opening and closing credit sequences.

"The Bs and Ds are particularly difficult for kids with dyslexia, and the Rs are particularly difficult with some people from other countries who are learning English. So in fact the R book has been used as a teaching aide in language classes for that reason," she added. "The P letter is just funny, kids think it's funny for obvious reasons. W is quite a difficult letter for kids to write because it can make so many different sounds like what, where, why, when."

Atwood—whose 1985 Governor General’s Award-winning dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* has been adapted into a TV series debuting Sunday on Bravo—has been telling stories to children since she was a teen. That’s when she and her high school friend had a business putting on puppet shows for children’s birthday parties. They even made their own puppets and the stage. “We were such a deal, we did everything—we greeted the little children at the door, we supervised the unwrapping of the presents, we dried the tears of the jealous children who weren’t getting those presents, we passed around the sandwiches, we supervised the cake and then we put on the puppet show,” said Atwood, 77, noting she still has the puppets. “The mothers thought we were wonderful because they didn’t have to do it. They were out in the kitchen drinking the martinis. They had to make the sandwiches and supply the food and we just turned up and we did it all.” Atwood and her friend adlibbed their puppet shows based on the stories of “Little Red Riding Hood,” “The Three Little Pigs” and “Hansel and Gretel.” The tales had no more than four characters onstage at a time, which was perfect for their four hands.

Available from: <http://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/television/small-screen-atwood-s-alliterations-inspire-animated-series-1.17121997>.

BANCROFT, Colette. “Welcome to Her World.” *Tampa Bay Times* 23 April 2017. Section: Latitudes: 3. (1060 w.).

Excerpt: “I’d rather be wrong,” Margaret Atwood says. “I’d much rather be wrong about a lot of things.” Atwood is talking about the renewed timeliness of her 1985 novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*. The book is back in the news, on bestseller lists and about to debut as a television series on Hulu. The day before the interview, a group of women dressed in the red robe and white bonnet of the novel’s title character staged a sit-in protest in the Texas Legislature, where a bill was being considered that would ban some methods for second-trimester abortions. “They looked exactly like the women in the movie,” Atwood says. “The best thing was all those security guards with guns surrounding them: ‘Look out! They might stand up!...’”

Atwood spoke about *The Handmaid’s Tale* by phone a few days after a trip to New York from her home in Toronto to accept the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Book Critics Circle....

*The Handmaid’s Tale* has never been out of print, and it’s a standard on high school and college reading lists, “probably because it’s so screamingly teachable,” the author says. It has been published in so many editions and languages and formats (including plays, a movie, an opera and a ballet) that Atwood says she “can’t begin to estimate” how many copies it has sold. In the last five months, its sales have taken off. Atwood’s publisher printed 100,000 new copies to meet a demand that started to rise after the election of Donald Trump. For several weeks in January and February, *The Handmaid’s Tale* and George Orwell’s *1984* traded the No. 1 bestseller spot back and forth. At the Women’s March in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 21, demonstrators carried signs like “The Handmaid’s Tale is NOT an Instruction Manual!” (Atwood herself attended the Women’s March in Toronto.) Politics aren’t the only thing driving the sales surge, Atwood says. “It’s probably because of the trailer (for the TV series) during the Super Bowl. It was guerilla marketing. People were saying, ‘What did I just see?’”

She calls the 10-episode Hulu series “quite an inspired reading” of her book. “I’ve been very lucky with the team they assembled.” The series deal didn’t involve her directly because the film rights were sold years ago. She is an executive producer, but, she says, “You know what that means. I’ve talked extensively to the showrunners, and they’re very nice, but I had no control.” She praises the “very, very good acting,” “brilliant casting” and the series’ production

values. “The costumes are really gorgeous, and so comfortable,” she says. “It makes you go, wait a minute. Beautiful clothes—that’s how they get you.” Atwood herself has a cameo in the series, as one of the Aunts who train and monitor the Handmaids, fertile young women who are forced to bear the children of powerful men in a society where most women cannot have healthy babies. “There aren’t very many roles for women of my age” in the world of the novel, Atwood says wryly.

BETTS, Hannah. “Margaret Atwood: ‘Handmaid’s Tale? They Said It Couldn’t Happen. It Already Has’; Margaret Atwood Is Thrilled That Her Novel Is Inspiring a New Generation of Activists.” *The Times* (London) 15 July 2017. Section: News: 36-37. (1466 w.).

Excerpt: How has a book [*The Handmaid’s Tale*] written more than 30 years ago so utterly captured the collective imagination? “I put nothing in that people had not done at some time, in some place,” [Atwood] tells me in her dry drawl. Atwood’s novel tells the story of Gilead, a patriarchal theocracy in which an American government becomes violently oppressive, taking away women’s rights and forcing them to work as “handmaids,” or sex slaves for infertile couples. The women are raped by state leaders to bear them offspring. Her sources ranged from Puritan witch-hunts to the SS’s Lebensborn programme, from the *Bible* to tales of Soviet Union dissidents. She was living in West Berlin and travelling behind the Iron Curtain as she wrote, having also visited Afghanistan in the late 1970s, where she wore a chador. “The shocking thing originally was that I took all of these things and put them into a place where everybody was always saying, ‘This would never happen here,’” Atwood says. “Various people in Europe didn’t really believe it, because they looked to America to be the open democracy that it was promoting itself as being. So it is very shocking, not only to people watching the show, but to people here and there in the world, that America is going in this direction. However, every country always has a sort of shadow country in waiting, and America has had its as well. And that was evident in 1985—for me, anyway. “That’s the point of writing such books: you long for it to lose its relevance....”

“It was complete coincidence that the series appeared just after the election of Mr. Trump,” Atwood explains. “We started shooting in September 2016 and finished in February. And, when they first started, nobody except a very few [would have predicted his win].” Was it a surprise to find her fiction transported from a Taliban to a Trumpian frame of reference? “Well, not yet. Nobody’s actually done away with Congress yet.” But there are parallels? “Believe me, they have been pointed out to me!” The similarities between Gilead’s founding fathers and Isis’s armed patriarchs is striking. Yet Atwood refuses to single any group out. “That’s letting us off the hook. You know, ‘It’s them’, whereas the stuff that I drew from was us. So Muslims too, sure, but not only. You don’t have to go very far back in our civilisation to find women without property rights, women without voting rights. Why should Muslims be alone on the planet in not doing this—in not doing similar things, because western civilisations have done it to them? Men have been stealing women for 5,000 years. Look at Argentina under the generals, look at Hitler, look at the Soviet Union in its early phase and where there was one city in which sex was declared a common good and women had to have sex with anybody who wanted it. Just remember, nobody’s off the hook—except maybe the Quakers.” When American women began staging protests dressed in the Handmaid’s uniform, Atwood was “really quite surprised, and also I thought, ‘How brilliant of them’, because it’s very immediately understandable, credible. There was a shot of them sitting there very modestly, surrounded by men with guns, and I thought, ‘This could be right out of the show’.”

The updates introduced by Bruce Miller, producer of the TV series, reflecting social changes regarding race, sexuality and beyond, have also contributed to its immediacy. FGM, for example, wasn’t in the book. “Well, it should have been. But . . . [most] people didn’t know about it and I would have been accused of being way, way, way over the top. ‘How could you

make up such a bad, evil thing?’ Although it was a practice in the West to cure women of vicious sexual practices.”

Also available (upon registration) from: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/handmaid-s-tale-they-said-it-couldn-t-happen-it-already-has-pn0sq97qx>.

BROWN, Jeffrey. “How Margaret Atwood Dreamed Up the Costumes in ‘The Handmaid’s Tale.’” *PBS NewsHour* 25 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: When Margaret Atwood first published *The Handmaid’s Tale* in 1985 which imagines a near-future totalitarian theocracy in America in which women were subjugated through assigned roles to men she also imagined, in vivid detail, the costumes that her female characters would wear. The so-called “Wives” would be in blue. The “Aunts” in brown. The “Marthas” in green. And the “Handmaids” at the center of her story, whose job is to bear children for the Wives, in a deep red-colored dress, like a nun’s habit, and white bonnets, called “wings,” around their heads.

Now, those costumes and the speculative fiction novel are being brought to life through a TV adaptation premiering this week on Hulu which many have said bears striking parallels to the present. Last week, Atwood and the actress Elisabeth Moss, who plays the novel’s main character, the Handmaid Offred, sat down with NewsHour correspondent Jeffrey Brown and shared more about the meaning behind the costumes.

The deep red color, Atwood said, came from various places. For one, “German prisoners of war held in Canada [in WWII] were given red outfits because they show up so well against the snow,” she said. (In “The Handmaid’s Tale,” some Handmaids try and fail to escape Gilead, the hierarchical regime under which they live.) Red was also the color of “medieval, early renaissance painting,” Atwood said, and the color worn by Mary Magdalene who is often remembered, many would say mistakenly, as a fallen woman. “On the other hand, red is the cross and red is blood,” Atwood said. The cross, because the Handmaids’ lives are circumscribed by a Puritanesque theocracy, and blood, for the childbirth the women are forced to endure for the male ruling class.

Moss, who wore a red skirt and a T-shirt that said “Je suis une suffragette” (“I am a suffragette”) to the interview, said that for the TV adaptation, the colors “were so specifically generated. You would have no idea the different interpretations of the color red that one can come up with,” she said. “Not only the color that it should be for the show but the color that it would photograph as.” Costume designer Ane Crabtree kept working and working at the color, Moss said, until they came up with the perfect blood red.

Blood red is the shade Atwood originally envisioned, as her narrator, Offred, describes in the book early on: “Everything except the wings around my face is red: the color of blood, which defines us.” As for the Handmaids’ white “wings,” which the narrator says in the book are “designed to keep us from seeing,” Atwood wrote in an introduction to the book’s new edition that she was inspired by the 1940s Old Dutch Cleanser packages, which show a woman in a face-obscuring bonnet; she remembers they scared her as a child. The color white, she told *NewsHour*, while considered lucky in some cultures, is not seen that way in others; “widows in India wear white and that’s considered really quite unlucky,” she said. In the TV adaptation, the bonnets are also white, and act as blinders for the women.

In general, the costumes and colors were intended to reflect the hierarchy the women live in symbolism of dress that is not without historical precedent. “For a very long time, before people were literate, there were rules about who could wear what,” Atwood said. “By looking at a person you could see whether they were an aristocrat or what function in society they

fulfilled.”

Available from: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/how-margaret-atwood-dreamed-up-the-costumes-in-the-handmaids-tale-premiere-hulu>.

CARATAS, Nicole. “Atwood Discusses Her Work, the Value of the Humanities.” *The Observer* (University of Notre Dame) 26 October 2017. Section: News: 1. Interview in connection with the Christian Culture Lecture at Saint Mary’s College (Notre Dame University).

Excerpt: For author Margaret Atwood, known for novels such as *The Handmaid’s Tale*, stories and story telling are a quintessential part of the human experience. Wednesday, she explained the value of a liberal arts education in the present day. “It’s something that the human race has always done,” she said. “They’ve not always done algebra.... The most distinguishing feature of us as human beings is that we are story tellers and we’re enabled to be story tellers because we have evolved grammars with past tenses and future tenses....”

In an interview, Atwood discussed the importance of a liberal arts education and the study of the humanities. “Story-telling is one of our primary means of communication and the humanities are about stories,” she said. “That is why it is important and why we should understand stories, understand how they work, and also be able to tell fake news from real news.... We should at least be aware. Words are powerful, stories are powerful.”

*The Handmaid’s Tale* has most recently been adapted into a Hulu series, but it has also adapted as a ballet, a play, an opera and will soon be a graphic novel, she said. “Some books escape from their covers,” she said. “This is one of them.... It happens when that character or that story resonates with people in a way that something just in a book does not particularly.”

Atwood said she approves of the Hulu show, despite certain creative liberties that were taken. She served as a consultant on the show, but the team that worked on it was dedicated to updating it to the modern day while still keeping the message and spirit of the novel. “The show runner and head writer, Bruce Miller, was determined ... to be faithful to the premises of the book, and he remained faithful to them,” she said. “Also, luckily, they brought on a team—which included Elizabeth Moss as an executive producer—and a lot of women involved in it. “It’s not just a show for them, it’s not just another show. It’s a pivotal important thing in their life, so they gave it their all—you can tell.”

Since the 2016 election, fans of Atwood have noted similarities between political beliefs in America and the fictional world of Gilead in her novel. However, Atwood said she could not have predicted this election when she published the novel in 1986, and the Hulu adaption was written before the election. “It’s a bizarre coincidence,” she said. “The election did not change any of that. It put a different frame around it, so people saw it differently. If the election had not been that way, they would have said, ‘Phew, this isn’t happening,’ but instead they’re saying, ‘Gosh some of this is happening’ so that is a different frame.”

Atwood said people are noticing these similarities because they read literature through the lens of the experiences they have. “We read stories differently according to the time we’re in,” she said. “Some people become heroes who weren’t before, and other people become villains that weren’t before. So where we are has a lot to do with how we see not only history, but also fictions [and] plays.”

Atwood’s novel focuses on the oppression of women in a dystopian world. She said women’s education and empowerment is important not just because it helps women, but because it can positively affect society as a whole. “There’s always pushback when someone wants to change the status quo because the people who have power in the status quo are afraid they’re going to

lose some of it,” she said. “As soon as you give women the power to create little businesses and the education to be able to do it, not only does the economy go up, but their status within that economy also goes up.” Atwood said students—especially women at institutions like Saint Mary’s—are well equipped to enter the workforce because companies look for liberal arts majors nowadays. She said a liberal arts education comes with enhanced lateral thinking, better communication skills, and an understanding of stories, which have been proven to help people learn better. “In your life, equipping you for life, it does help to know what Shakespeare play you’re in at the moment.”

CAVENDISH, Camilla. “The Magazine Interview: Margaret Atwood, Author of *The Handmaid’s Tale*.” *Sunday Times* 29 October 2017 Section: Magazine: 6,7,9,10.

Excerpt: “Shall I give you my disapproving look?” asks Margaret Atwood, bestselling novelist, human-rights campaigner, author of the futuristic *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which became prime Sunday-night viewing on television last year. *The Handmaid’s Tale* is chock-full of disapproval, mostly by Puritan men of women who dare to think for themselves. And so, too, is “*Alias Grace*,” which screens on Netflix this Friday, about a woman accused of murder. Atwood has a cameo in the series, based on her 1996 book of the same name. “I play the Disapproving Woman,” she says, swirling her shawl coquettishly. She narrows her blue eyes at me and frowns though the effect is somewhat undermined by her mouth twitching in amusement. Is it a speaking part? She chuckles gleefully. “Well, I hiss.”

Atwood is surprisingly jolly for someone who writes gripping tales of oppression, torture and environmental catastrophe and even anorexia (although she says she did not know about the disease when she wrote *The Edible Woman*, her first novel, about a woman who stops eating). When she finds out that I studied at Harvard, she whispers conspiratorially: “Did you notice that I put the Secret Service of Gilead (the baddies in *The Handmaid’s Tale*) into the Widener Library?” Widener is the Harvard equivalent of the Bodleian Library in Oxford: Atwood went there to research the Salem witch trials. It’s a pretty solemn place, and Atwood’s aquiline face lights up with childish mischief at having pulled off this coup.

A birdlike figure with a mass of tight grey curls, who speaks in a torrent and growls at the waiter for more coffee, Atwood seems totally incongruous in the sleepy oasis of the Royal Overseas League in Green Park, London, where we meet. Yet it turns out this is where she always stays when in the capital; has done, in fact, for 30 years. I never thought of you as being fond of Empire, I say. “I’m Canadian,” she responds earnestly. “I’m a colonial. The Queen is our head. If she wasn’t, we’d have to have a president like the US, and look what’s happening with that.”

The ascent of Donald Trump, coinciding with the adaptation of *The Handmaid’s Tale* for TV, has catapulted Atwood from very significant to properly famous. Her story of sexual slavery in a future America ruled by the Christian right, where pollution has left most women barren and the others are forced into reproduction, has struck a chord. Women dressed as handmaids, wearing red dresses and white bonnets, have sat silently in state capitals across America to protest against Trump’s cuts to abortion clinics. Others, outraged by the president’s sexist remarks, have marched with banners reading “Make Atwood fiction again.” While Atwood has been careful not to call herself a feminist she is very precise about the terms she uses and prefers to talk about human rights she is clearly pleased with the impact, if sometimes a little surprised.

Unlike *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which depicts a dystopian future, *Alias Grace* is a historical whodunit. It is based on the writer’s meticulous research about a woman accused of murder in 1840s Canada. But both books are about the oppression of women, and both TV series feature women wearing modesty bonnets those big, stiff affairs, like lampshades, that were worn at the

height of Victorian prudishness. “I think you’ve become the Bonnet Queen,” I tell her. She laughs, pleased. “Have you seen the Vera Wang fashion shoot in *Vogue*?” she asks, picking up her phone to show me. “It’s ‘an homage’” she drawls the word sardonically in a French accent, raising her eyebrows “to *Handmaid’s Tale*.” She starts flipping through the slideshow, peering at the dresses. “These are works of art. Aesthetically attractive in a creepy, totalitarian way.” How does that make you feel? “Weird,” she says immediately. “But these days, everything makes me feel weird. Weird is the way I feel.”

Does she feel weird about having 1.6m followers on Twitter at the age of 77? “1.75,” she fires back, looking at me sharply from under her brows. Then, softening: “A lot of them are robots. You know they are robots when they send you a message saying, ‘I miss your great big dick’ then you know that they don’t know who you are. But they seem to have realised I’m not ever going to click on that.”

She never set out to be on social media. “I got into it by mistake, like so many things in life.” She started blogging in 2009 to promote a musical version of *Year of the Flood*, her second novel about survivors of a biological catastrophe (the first was *Oryx and Crake*, with its unforgettable marooned protagonist, Snowman). “They said, ‘You will need a Twitter feed.’ I said, ‘Will I?’ I had to kick off two people who weren’t me, who were already pretending to be me. The only way you can stop people pretending to be you is to do it yourself.”

As a veteran blogger in the era of fake news, does she think social media is a force for good? “No. It’s a human tool. And like all other human tools, it has a good, a bad or a stupid side you didn’t anticipate. The internet, when it started, was these idealistic scientists who wanted to share their research. Did they think it would be deluged with spam and porn? No. They didn’t anticipate that. Nobody anticipated with Twitter that it would be used to warp elections.”

She knows my next appointment is appearing on a TV politics show, and she asks if I get nasty comments on Twitter. I say that I do, and it seems to hurt more than the letters we journalists all used to get 10 years ago. “Often these things get going with pieces of information that aren’t true,” she says. “This mob witch-burning takes place.”

What should we do about it? “Am I God?” she asks, wide-eyed, mocking. “You can’t say it’s necessarily the fault of technology. You might say that it’s an overenthusiasm about the good parts of human nature and an underestimation of the bad parts. ‘This will be so wonderful’” she claps her hands “‘everybody will be able to express themselves.’ ‘Uh-oh, they’re expressing themselves. Stop expressing yourself, now!’ It is a big debate. You have to be pretty careful about how they want things shut down. You can be shut down; you will be the next to be shut down.”

Many of Atwood’s best-known works deal with the slippery nature of truth: how institutions and societies can warp the truth, and how we humans are not always honest with ourselves. *Alias Grace* is the story of a supposed murderess whose own reticence, in the face of a society high on moral outrage, scuppered all attempts to discover whether she was innocent or guilty....

I say to Atwood that *Alias Grace* is one of the most perplexing books I’ve ever read, a whodunit that is unresolved. “If everybody had known that she had done it, it wouldn’t have been of interest,” Atwood says. “It would just be another true crime. You used to get those things at British railway stations, which I quite adored. I don’t know whether they have them any more, true crimes. They were [stories of] crimes people had got caught doing, so they were usually quite stupid. They left all these clues lying around. You know, they put Granny in the freezer wrapped up in baggies; someone was bound to find her.” She goes on to virtually collapse in

gales of laughter telling me some of the other stories.

Does she think Grace did it? “I don’t know,” she says. “I’ve looked at all of it in minute detail. Of course, it is like everything else, crimes that involve a man and a woman, it usually goes this way: that the man dunnit and the woman is either the demonic instigator of everything or innocent, terrified and threatened with death, a victimised person. She was barely 16.”

For years, Grace claimed not to have been able to remember what happened. But Atwood introduces a fictional psychiatrist, the handsome Dr. Simon Jordan, played by Edward Holcroft, whose visits to Grace in prison begin to unlock her past. The tension between the two characters is compelling and the programmes are shot with long, lingering close-ups, which lets you focus on their emotions. Sarah Gadon puts in a powerful performance as Grace, an Irish immigrant who is at times naive, at other times shrewd. “Murderess is a strong word to have attached to you. Murderer is merely brutal,” Grace says at the start of the first episode. “I’d rather be a murderess than a murderer, if those are the only choices.”

These and other elliptical utterances make *Grace Marks* a puzzle. Atwood emphasises this with the theme of quilting. Marks was a good seamstress and there are many scenes that involve women quietly sewing. Atwood becomes incredibly animated talking about Victorian quilt patterns, explaining that the culture of young girls revolved around them. She watched quilting as a child, because her paternal grandparents lived on a farm in rural Nova Scotia, “which didn’t get electricity until the early Sixties.” All the spare bits of material were made into quilts or rugs. “You didn’t throw out anything,” she says approvingly.

Atwood clearly admires Marks’s intelligence, and dignity, during a life that was largely one of poverty and humiliation. After the book was published, researchers found the Leavings Letter, a questionnaire about prison life filled in by those being released. “There were about 32 questions, like, ‘How was the food?’ and ‘Did you learn any skill that would be assistance to you?’ And Grace answered ‘Dubious,’” Atwood says. “Then came the killer question and I thought, ‘This is it, she’s going to tell.’ It was: ‘To what do you attribute your incarceration in this institution?’ Her answer was a masterpiece of evasion. She said, ‘Having been employed in the same household as a villain.’ And there was her signature, very contained, not giving anything away. And that is what we know.”

What does she want people to take away from *Alias Grace*? “I never have such wants. Readers are individual. As for what is the moral of this story that isn’t how fiction works.” Really? *The Handmaid’s Tale* is surely a morality play. “But there isn’t just one moral of the story. I have seen that book discussed in online forums as a how-to book.” I feel slightly cheated by not knowing how to respond to *Alias Grace*, not knowing whose side to be on. “This was a notorious story at the time. People used Grace as a screen upon which they projected their feelings about women, about Irish people and the serving class.”

Class, Atwood believes, is a vital undercurrent in modern America that helped Trump to power. “The way class works in America is that a middle-class, reasonably affluent black person will look down upon a white-trash person.” But that’s been true for decades. “Yes. But the white-trash people have now self-identified and they are kind of tired of being those people, they are tired of being a ‘basket of deplorables,’ which was a very stupid thing for Ms. Clinton to have said.” Atwood lays a sardonic emphasis on the “Mizz.” Then she says something that seems to me to go to the heart of much of her writing: “I don’t think you can ever really understand these things unless you’re willing to admit that some people have a point of view that makes sense to them, considering how they feel they have been treated.”

What does she think is Trump’s appeal? “He acts as if he sees them,” she says. “He doesn’t

care, about them or anybody else. He was quite willing to sign a healthcare law that would have excluded those very people. But he acts as if he sees them.” Do Trump’s fading poll ratings give her any hope? She disputes my description. “They hover,” she says, gesturing for me to turn my notebook around so she can draw a graph of the polls with my pen. “They hover between approval of 40 and 34,” she says, drawing furiously. “Disapproval between 61 and 55.” But this kind of rating is almost unprecedented this early in a presidency it’s surely significant. “That is what they say, they’ve never seen anything like it before, but they’ve never seen anything like this stuff anyway,” she says, seriously. “So, consider the options. They impeach Trump, he goes away, then you get Mike Pence, a more efficient totalitarian,” she chuckles drily.

Did she ever think about going into politics herself? She looks stunned. “I would be a terrible politician. Let me count the ways. I’ve always been from Mars.” I suppose, I say, you’d hate to compromise. “Oh, I don’t mind compromise,” she says, surprisingly. “I’m a Canadian. That’s what we do. There’s a joke about a bunch of people on the road to heaven. There’s a fork in the road with one way marked ‘To heaven’ and the other marked ‘To panel discussion on heaven’. All the Canadians,” she grins, “choose the panel discussion.”

It’s a good joke, though I find it hard to imagine Margaret Atwood compromising. But perhaps age is softening her. “I’m really old,” she keeps protesting. “I know you think I’m not, but I am.” She admits she has had problems sleeping lately, after knee trouble brought on by what she ruefully calls “a baby and staircase-related episode.” But she is just as energetic at the end of our interview as at the beginning. She is off to the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford to do “a dog-and-pony show no, I shouldn’t say that it’s only the dog”. And, with a dry laugh, she bounces out.

Available (after registration) from: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-magazine-interview-margaret-atwood-author-of-the-handmaids-tale-g8tjd5720>.

CAVNA, Michael. “A Dream of Flying Cats.” *Washington Post* 17 February 2017. Section: SUNDAY ARTS: E12.

Excerpt: In one specific way, Donald Trump has been good for Margaret Atwood. Since he became president, the political shift has sent *The Handmaid’s Tale*, her dystopian novel about an authoritarian American society, rocketing back up the bestseller charts. But the Booker Prize-winning author says she’d rather talk about something that fills her with joy and the buoyancy of childhood optimism. Atwood, you see, was raised as a voracious reader of comics—a form she still adores. And so with her graphic-novel series *Angel Catbird*—Volume 2 arrives Tuesday—she continues to fulfill a dream at age 77, more than three decades after her *Handmaid’s Tale* painted a world of women subjugated within a Constitution-suspending dictatorship. She is experiencing, she says, one of her “unlived lives.” Atwood laughs at how this apparent career pivot might be perceived. She imagines that some fans would have her fulfill the stereotype of a “nice literary old lady,” resting in her rocking chair, “dignified and iconic.” But the *Angel Catbird* series, illustrated by Johnnie Christmas, realizes the creative vision of an author who has little patience for resting on her laurels.

From her earliest years in the 1940s and ’50s, as her family traveled between Quebec and other Canadian points, Atwood not only passionately read newspaper and magazine comics, from “Batman” to “Blondie” to “Rip Kirby”; she also drew them herself. “That’s what we did in Canada,” she says. “We were living in the woods.” Her older brother’s plotted-out drawings “were more about warfare,” she says, while her characters—including rabbit superheroes—“were playing around.” Atwood notes that some of the characters in her novels have been artists, including the narrators in *Surfacing* (1972) and *Cat’s Eye* (1988). Yet beyond Atwood’s deep appreciation for visual creators, there is a theme here that stretches from *The*

*Handmaid's Tale* (which debuts as a Hulu TV series in April) through to *Angel Catbird*: It is the fascination with, and inexorable drive toward, whatever is denied.

By age 6, young Margaret was drawing cartoons that featured flying cats often affixed to balloons—fun, furry symbols of buoyant hope rising above deprivation. “I drew so many balloons because we didn’t have any,” says Atwood, recalling the rubber shortage during the war. “It was a very magic idea—that you could go up in a balloon,” continues Atwood, citing a film that was born the same year she was: 1939’s “The Wizard of Oz.”

Atwood’s budding imagination was also fueled by a second absence: Despite her wishes, her home lacked cats. “I wasn’t allowed to have one because we were up in the Canadian forests a lot,” she writes in the introduction to the first volume of *Angel Catbird*, which was published last year. “How would the cat travel? Once there, wouldn’t it run away and be eaten by mink? Very likely.” Atwood’s resolution? She populated her pages with flying dream cats.

So, decades later, when Atwood met with Toronto-based project adviser Hope Nicholson, she pitched her graphic-novel visions involving flying felines. And once she spoke with Dark Horse editor Daniel Chabon, she knew her dream cats would become a publishing reality rendered by more talented comics hands than hers. “I got lucky enough to get Johnnie [Christmas],” she says, as well as colorist Tamra Bonvillain. (Atwood had created the political comic strip “Kanadian Kultchur Komix” in the 1970s, allowing her to reach what she calls the ceiling on her limited, “lumpy” artistic talent.)

Atwood’s new graphic-novel stories brim with joy. She nods to mid-century action-adventure comics tropes even as she tweaks them. In classic superhero fashion, *Angel Catbird* involves a scientist: mild-mannered genetic engineer Strig Feleedus, who becomes a mutant because of an experiment gone wrong. His avian/feline hybrid body lands him squarely in a dark world of other animal mutants, complete with a real minx of a love interest. Underpinning all of this, Atwood says, is her passion for bird conservation and feline causes. Her graphic novels are dotted with facts about nature, as well as links to sites for more information. Still, like the true student of cartoons that she is, Atwood knows what she must deliver to her fellow fans of the art form: “This comic has to stand on its own—it can’t be too preachy.” It is the only way to elevate when drifting back to her tales of flying balloon dream cats. *Angel Catbird* may have nine lives. Through him, Margaret Atwood aims to discover just one un-lived one.

Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/look-up-in-the-sky-margaret-atwoods-angel-catbird-returns/2017/02/13/5b514c74-ee2f-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.bb3ecbb1ead9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/look-up-in-the-sky-margaret-atwoods-angel-catbird-returns/2017/02/13/5b514c74-ee2f-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.bb3ecbb1ead9).

COWDREY, Katherine. “Atwood Calls for Free Speech Martyrs to Be Honoured.” *Index on Censorship* 19 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood has said she would like to see those who have been killed in the fight to protect free speech honoured, either through a statue or a wall in London’s Hyde Park. Speaking with *Index on Censorship* magazine for its summer issue, published today (20th June), Atwood proposed the idea to commemorate “a list of martyrs who have been killed for free speech,” saying “these people give their all and then somebody kills them and then we all forget about them.” Candidates worthy of commemoration, according to Atwood, include William Tyndale, whose translation of the *Bible* was the first ever to be printed in English and who subsequently was executed for it in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The list of martyrs could go as far back as Socrates, Atwood said, who was sentenced to death over issues of freedom of speech in 399 BC. Asked where the statue or wall could be installed, Atwood suggested, “a nice green space near Hyde Park Corner would be a really good place actually.”

*Index on Censorship's* editor Rachael Jolley commented: "People who fight for freedom of speech often go unacknowledged and also put their own lives at risk. Margaret Atwood's suggestion of a wall commemorating free speech heroes throughout history is an excellent one, and one which could also bring attention to the fact that freedom of speech, assembly and expression are once again under attack..."

Atwood, who last year received the English PEN Pinter prize in recognition of her work defending writers' rights, said writers of fiction weren't always any better protected than journalists when it came to the freedom of speech. "There are threats that come from government, there are threats that come from the population at large and there are threats that come from political groups who are in opposition to the culture and the values of free speech," she said. Of the continued poignancy of *The Handmaid's Tale* (Vintage), which also features a crackdown on free speech in society, Atwood added: "I put nothing into it that people had not done at some point or that people weren't already doing. People in the United States at that time [1985] on the religious right were already talking about what they would like to do if they had the chance. And that's the reason why it's so relevant today—people have the chance and they're doing those things." The TV adaptation of the book has had a strong impact on book sales. The print title went straight to number one on Amazon after its first episode, aired on Channel 4 at the end of May, leading to a year-on-year uplift of 500%, according to Vintage, while last week, after three episodes, it rocketed to the number one spot in the weekly e-book rankings.

Beth Coates, editorial director for Vintage, said: "We've invoiced over 30,000 of our film tie-in edition in home and export, but we have also seen an increase across our classic, main and children's classic editions, and a particular surge of the e-book. It's the kind of publishing event that you simply cannot engineer, and that makes it all the more gratifying." Testament to the book's cultural influence in America today, silent protests against anti-abortion legislation took place in Ohio last week in the garb of handmaids, reported BBC news, a group who in Atwood's dystopian novel are forced to give birth. Atwood called it a "pretty clever" move. "Nobody can accuse them of causing a disturbance and they're very modestly dressed and they're silent and everybody knows as soon as they see them exactly what they mean," she said.

Available from: <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/atwood-calls-free-speech-martyrs-be-honoured-572226>.

DÍAZ, Junot. "Interviews and Essays: Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again." *Global Dystopias*. Junto Díaz. Cambridge MA: Boston Review, 2017. 148-154. An excerpt from this interview appears next.

---. "Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again." *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum* 29 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: **Junot Díaz:** First of all, as always, it's a tremendous honor to speak with you, and congratulations on everything. **Margaret Atwood:** Lovely to talk to you. **JD:** I'm going to get right in. "Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again" was a sign at the Women's March that resonated deeply with many people who feel that life under Trump is something of a dystopia for women. Do you feel that way? **MA:** Yes. We're in Canada. But as you know, I lived in the States for some years, and have a lot of friends there. It's not only Trump. The general climate, in some parts of the United States, is certainly heading in a *Handmaid's Tale* direction. And that is why the recent sit-ins in state legislatures were so immediately understandable—a group of women in Handmaid costumes turned up, for instance, in Texas, while an all-male batch of lawmakers were passing laws on women's health issues. They just sat there, they didn't say anything, so they couldn't be ejected, and there was a very telling photograph of

them surrounded by men with guns, which could have been right out of the television show...

**JD:** I've not seen that. So, our current society is in many ways doing a better job re-enacting the book than it would have imagined. **MA:** Much more than it would have imagined. In 1985 it was only a possibility. In some places in the United States today, it's approaching reality. And as you know, I put nothing into the book that people had not done at some time, in some place. And in some countries in the world, these are pretty much the realities now.

**JD:** I read *The Handmaid's Tale* when it was first published, and despite the rapid rise of the religious right and its effort to roll back reproductive rights in that decade, the world in the book still felt distant. Are you struck by how readers who are coming to the book now, or people who are rereading it how different the experience has been for them? **MA:** It is quite different now. There were national differences at the time of publication. In England it was viewed as a jolly good yarn, but they didn't think of Gilead as something that was going to happen to them, because they did their religious warfare in the seventeenth century and had lived through a lot of other bad stuff that they thought they had gotten over—although, in recent days, apparently not. In Canada, it was the usual worried Canadian question—"Could it happen here?"—though I didn't have to explain to Canadians why my characters were escaping to Canada, because we have escaped to quite a lot in history. But in the United States, particularly on the West Coast, they said somebody spray painted on the Venice Beach seawall—"The Handmaid's Tale is already here." That was in 1985. Some people mistakenly thought that the book was somehow anti-Christian. That's not the case that is being made. Some Christians would resist such a regime and do in the book. Others would be eliminated by the regime, because they would be the competition. And others would use religion as an excuse for what they're doing—which has certainly happened a lot in history too, with all sorts of religions.

**JD:** When I recall the novel's reception in the eighties, there was a lot of turmoil around that question—about whether the novel was too hard on fundamentalist Christians. And yet, now, of course, that criticism has fallen away, and it seems to me that what was most frightening about the novel is only now coming to the foreground. Publicly, it seems that there's more space for folks to talk about the state-sanctioned rape that the novel portrays than there was in the mid-eighties. **MA:** Oh, for sure. Well, part of the exploration is—if you want to take the *Bible* literally, how literally do you want to take it? Which parts are you going to be "literal" about? The *Bible* is an amazingly compendious book, and people have been foregrounding parts of it and backgrounding other parts forever. But if you want to take the text literally—using polygamy and using Handmaids as surrogate mothers despite anything they might have to say about it—it's right there. Jacob and his two wives, Rachel and Leah, and their two handmaids—amongst the four women they have twelve sons, but the wives claim the Handmaids' babies, which is why I put that excerpt from Genesis at the front of the book, and why I called the training place for Handmaids the Rachel and Leah Center. It's very literal.

But the real question is, if the United States were going to have a totalitarianism, what kind of totalitarianism would it be? We've had all kinds in the world, including atheist ones. But if the U.S. were ever going to go down that path, what would be the device under which they would do it? It certainly would not be communism. **JD:** I think that's very true. And you've said this before in other contexts, the fact that Gilead exists at low levels in so many places. **MA:** No kidding. And sometimes at pretty high levels too. There are thirteen countries in the world in which homosexuality is punishable by death.

**JD:** Yes, another element in the novel, which I think, again, has taken on entirely different resonance than it did in the mid-eighties. I was going to say that, again, you have what we might call the "long view." Do these times we're living in feel particularly apocalyptic? In your life, what other dark periods do these times recall? **MA:** Well, since I was born in 1939, two months after the Second World War began, of course I was immersed in news about

totalitarianism as I was growing up—so Nazis, Mussolini, Joe Stalin, followed by Mao. And then we've had more than a couple since that time, such as Cambodia under Pol Pot, and Romania, where Ceausescu mandated four children per woman, whether the woman could afford those children or not, and you had to have a fertility test every month, and if you weren't pregnant, you had to say why. What was the result? A lot of orphanages, a lot of neglected children, and a lot of dead women. So if the United States wants to go in that direction, how are they going to prepare for the results? Is that what they want? Orphans, dead women, and so forth? **JD:** My god. I did not know that. **MA:** Then there's child-stealing. Again, I put nothing in the book that people have not done—there have been so many instances of that throughout history. Amongst them, Hitler stole twelve thousand blond Polish children, and placed them with German families, hoping they would turn into blond German children. And he had a "Lebensborn" program for SS families—unmarried women produced children for them. And of course, in Argentina, under the Generals—where they were dropping people out of planes—if you were pregnant, they didn't drop you out of a plane or otherwise kill you until you had the baby, and then they placed it with a high-ranking junta family. And the fallout now is that some of the children grew up and then found out the truth about their background.

**JD:** Just listening to that kind of tour of hell that you just gave, one thing that's really striking and comes back to the core alibi of the Gilead regime is the centrality of children. That, yes, we've got these enemies of the state who we're going to torture to death, but they do have these children who are a very valuable resource. **MA:** That's right. Gilead, of course, is arranged as a true totalitarianism, where the people at the top get the good stuff. Children are seen as the good stuff, due to their rarity.

**JD:** Well, I only have a couple more questions. In the novel, Gilead deals with its racial others with Nazi-ish precision. **MA:** They put them into closed "homelands." Like apartheid South Africa. **JD:** What's happening there is clearly less than savory. The TV adaptation mutes this. And my question would be—**MA:** They updated the time period of the "before" part of the show to "now." In 1985, it was much more plausible that you might be able carry out that kind of re-segregation. **JD:** To round up all the folks of color. **MA:** Yes. But the modern television version—which brought us Samira Wiley as Moira, for whom we are grateful—takes the view that there are, at the present time, many more—especially in cities, certain cities—there are many more interracial friendships and relationships than there would have been in 1985. Which is true. And Bruce Miller, the showrunner, said, in essence, who wants to watch a show that's all white people? Not to mention that Hulu has a general policy of diversity. We also both felt that in Gilead—the modern TV version—fertility would rank higher than racialization as a way of categorizing people—deciding who gets what treatment. **JD:** In some ways though, what's interesting about the homelands, or the Colonies—in the novel, it kind of creates—it's what happens with the women who are in some ways difficult, to use a euphemism. **MA:** They end up at the secret Gilead brothel, Jezebel's. **JD:** Yeah, or they get sent off to the camps. These homelands in the novel operate at the most nightmarish horizon of what could be happening, at least to the reader. **MA:** I would contend that it might be easier to escape from Jezebel's. So from the point of view of somebody writing the television script—Moira is at Jezebel's, but there's a chance she could get out. And she has gotten out once before.

**JD:** That is very very true. Finally—I was in Toronto recently, only a couple of weeks ago, and it was a very fascinating time to be in Toronto, I have to tell you. For a number of reasons: first of all, "The Handmaid's Tale" show, the explosion around the show, was coming into full view. And so it was interesting for me, I spent like four days in Toronto talking to a whole bunch of smart, bright young folks. Kind of the new face of Toronto in some ways. And it seems like currently Toronto—and we could say by extension Canada—has two global superstars: Margaret Atwood and Drake. **MA:** This has been wonderful. Because so unexpected! **JD:** So, have you met Drake? **MA:** I haven't met Drake, but I have of course met people who have met

Drake. But you have to realize how o-l-d I am. I'm not likely to go to the same parties. Or many parties at all, to be frank. **JD:** I understand. I just think that, Canada—I'll say this to the whole nation—you are missing a great opportunity to put these two folks together. Have you listened to his music? Do you have any opinions? **MA:** Wouldn't it be fun for him to have a cameo in season two of "The Handmaid's Tale?" **JD:** Well, there you have it. **MA:** There you have it. I'll drop that notion into the ear of Bruce Miller, the showrunner, and see what he can do with that, because of course the show is filmed in Toronto. Maybe Drake could help smuggle someone? **JD:** Yeah. And it is an extraordinary time. I've never seen young Canadians so thrilled to have these models. **MA:** And energized. Toronto is, according to the people who count, the most diverse city in the world. **JD:** What a lot of these young folks were saying to me was that one of the mainstream Canada things was to be kind of humble, not to dream too big. And I have to say, you have given a lot of young people—you and Drake—new horizons. And it is a wonderful thing to see. **MA:** Thank you. **JD:** And I hope we run into each other again at a writer's thing. **MA:** I hope so too, and you've given me a new idea. Drake in "The Handmaid's Tale!" **JD:** Pursue it, please! Take good care, Margaret.

Also available from: <http://bostonreview.net/literature-culture-margaret-atwood-junot-diaz-make-margaret-atwood-fiction-again>.

DINGFELDER, Sadie. "Page to Film; Atwood Chats About *The Handmaid's Tale* Adaptation." *Washington Post* 15 April 2017 Section: A & E: A15.

Excerpt: When Canadian author Margaret Atwood stepped onto the set of the Hulu adaptation of her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, she was given a strange task: to hit lead actress Elisabeth Moss from behind with her hand. "They said, 'We're going to film that again, but this time hit her harder. Give her a real bop on the head,'" Atwood recalls, to which she wailed, "But what if I hurt her?" In her cameo, Atwood is one of the women indoctrinating Moss' character, Offred, into being a handmaid—a woman forced into sexual servitude and made to bear children for infertile couples among society's upper echelons. In Atwood's 1985 dystopian novel and the Hulu series (which premieres April 26), parts of America have become Gilead, a theocracy where women are no longer allowed to work or own property. We spoke with Atwood, 77, about Hulu's series and how close the nightmare world of *The Handmaid's Tale* is to becoming reality.

**How does the Hulu series differ from the book?** It builds out some of the characters that sort of disappear from view in the book, because the narrator doesn't know what happens to them. Another difference is that, in the book, society is so segregated. They are shipping black people back to Africa, they are shipping Jews back to Israel. In both cases we suspect they are dumping them overboard. In the series, they made the decision to make it more like now, with more interracial couples and handmaids of all colors.

**Does the series look like what you imagined when you wrote the book?** They cast the commander and his wife younger than they are in the book, so I think that increases the possibility for jealousy, competition, sexual tension. In the book, the wife wouldn't be able to have children because of her age. But this one, she's young, so you can imagine how conflicted she is about having a handmaid.

**It also seemed like there's a lot more cursing in the show than in the book.** Oh, yeah, there's a lot more cursing. I think that's because there's a lot more cursing in real life than there was when I wrote the book. So instead of making it a period piece, they made it now. There's also a lot more devices, like cellphones, which didn't exist when I wrote the book in 1984.

**The fact that the show feels so contemporary makes it more terrifying, like it**

**could happen today.** Back when I wrote the book, things like Tiananmen Square and the [Arab Spring] hadn't happened, so we didn't think of police shooting into a crowd of protesters as a possibility. But now it has [happened], so we added it. My rule for the book was, I didn't put in anything that people hadn't already done. And I think the series is following that rule, not putting in anything that is just a made-up thing. It's all happened before.

**Is the U.S. on the road to becoming a place like Gilead?** Well, let's just say you're not on the road that leads away from it. I think in some states you're getting pretty close, but without the perks. By which I mean, in Gilead, if you're a handmaid and you're expected to produce babies for the state, at least you get three meals a day.

**Do you see any glimmers of hope?** The U.S. is an extremely varied and ornery country. I don't think they are going to ultimately lie down for a totalitarian dictatorship. But that's just me being hopeful. Meanwhile, make nice with the Quakers. They are going to run the underground railroad for women. They are probably already mapping it out.

**Is this series a self-contained thing, or might there be a second season?** I don't know whether I'm allowed to say. But why don't I say it anyway? I know they are already talking about a Season 2. That will take us into unknown territory, will it not?

**Are you thinking of writing more?** I don't know. At my age? What do you think? **Yeah, do it!** You're egging me on. Well, I'll certainly have to consult about Season 2.

Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2017/04/13/what-margaret-atwood-thinks-of-the-new-hulu-adaptation-of-the-handmaids-tale/?utm\\_term=.5a49f170b884](https://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2017/04/13/what-margaret-atwood-thinks-of-the-new-hulu-adaptation-of-the-handmaids-tale/?utm_term=.5a49f170b884).

DOCKTERMAN, Eliana. "The Handmaid's Tale, Retold." *Time* 189.15 (24 April 2017): 45-48. Joint interview with Elizabeth Moss.

Excerpt: **TIME:** Why this show now? **Elisabeth Moss:** I get asked a lot whether the show is in response to the election, but we were filming beforehand. **Margaret Atwood:** The control of women and babies has been a part of every repressive regime in history. This has been happening all along. I don't take it lightly when a politician says something like a pregnancy can't result from a rape because a woman's body knows it and rejects it. There's an undercurrent of this [type of thinking]. And then it rises to the surface sometimes. But *The Handmaid's Tale* is always relevant, just in different ways in different political contexts. Not that much has changed. **Moss:** When we first met, we were in a very loud restaurant, so I was sort of leaning over the table trying desperately to hear all of your answers. But you said that the kernel of the idea was how you would control women by shutting down their bank accounts. **Atwood:** Also it was, If America were going to do a totalitarian government, what kind of totalitarian government would it be? It wouldn't be communism. No surprises there. I thought it would have to be some sort of theocracy, like the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the U.S. I was always very interested in the Salem witch trials, another instance of controlling women. **Moss:** We touch on this more in the show than in the book, but even though things are bad for the handmaids, the government has improved some things. There are more babies being born, the air is cleaner. **Atwood:** A character in the book says, "Better never means better for everyone." **Moss:** You've said a lot, and I've repeated often, that everything that happened in *The Handmaid's Tale* has happened. **Atwood:** Somewhere at some time. I made nothing up. **Moss:** And now we're at a time when our climate is what it is in America and in the world. Do you still feel this could happen? **Atwood:** Even more so. When I first published the book, some people did the "it could never happen here" thing. "We're so far along with women's rights that we can't go back." I don't hear that much anymore. **Moss:** I know. One of the things when we first started talking about making the show was whether this was something that

could be plausible. I love it, but is this something the public is going to buy into? And then unfortunately, six months later, it became a hell of a lot more plausible.

**TIME:** There are some differences between the show and the book. Why did you add more non-white, no straight characters? **Atwood:** We're taking off from now rather than 1984, and there are more multiracial couples now. In the book I had them being so segregationist, they were just separating everybody and shipping them off the way the Nazis did. In the show, it's different. So just as we have cell phones in the plot now, we have to update other things. Although I was setting it in the future when I was writing it, I didn't know anything about the future. I wrote that thing on an old typewriter in Berlin. We didn't even have personal computers yet. **Moss:** We wanted the show to be very relatable. We wanted people to see themselves in it. If you're going to do that, you have to show all types of people. You have to reflect current society. A question I get asked a lot in interviews: Do you gravitate toward feminist roles? This is a question I struggle to answer, because I don't necessarily feel like they are feminist roles. I feel like they're interesting women. *The Handmaid's Tale* is considered one of the great feminist novels. I actually consider it a human novel about human rights, not just women's rights. **Atwood:** Well, women's rights are human rights unless you have decided that women aren't human. So those are your choices. If women are human, then women's rights are part of human rights. **Moss:** Exactly. **Atwood:** When we use that word, feminism, I always want to know: What do you mean by it? What are we talking about? If the person can describe what they mean by the word, then we can talk about whether I am one of those or not. **Moss:** I find myself getting slightly tripped up because I am a feminist, and I'm not ashamed of it. But that's not why I chose this role. I did it because it's a complex character. **Atwood:** If it were only a feminist book, you would think, in that case, all the women are over here on the low side, and all the men are over here on the high side. But it's more like the way human societies actually arrange themselves, which means some powerful people at the top. The women connected to those people have more power than the men connected to the bottom rank. **Moss:** The commanders' wives have more power than the male servants. **Atwood:** You betcha. And Queen Elizabeth I had more power than Joe the peasant.

**TIME:** Is it harder to get projects with multiple female leads made? **Moss:** I've found that to be an issue. I optioned a book with two women in it and was told multiple times it was "too female." I was like, Are you even allowed to say that? **Atwood:** It's not a problem in the world of writing because publishers have this lightbulb over their head that tells them that women read a lot of books. In fact, there was a funny thing that happened a few years ago in which they were girlifying the covers of fiction, including men's fiction. **Moss:** Really? **Atwood:** You really had to fight off the publishers to keep them from putting flowers on your book. **Moss:** What does Margaret Atwood read while she's relaxing? **Atwood:** I'm pretty omnivorous. Pop science—something where somebody else tells me the result with usually, I hope, lovely colored illustrations. Show me the pictures and tell me what you found out. Don't make me actually do the study and kill all those mice. Everything from there all the way through to sci-fi, spec-fic, regular novels, nonfiction, history, biography and graphic novels. A lot of history, as you might imagine.

**TIME:** Margaret, you're very active on Twitter. Elisabeth, you're not on Twitter at all. What do you make of the sometimes-toxic nature of social media, including slut-shaming? **Atwood:** I am on Twitter, but I'm too old to attract slut-shaming. I hate to break this to you, but I don't think anyone's interested in me. **Moss:** [Sarcastically] What a shame. That's too bad. I'm so sorry about that. **Atwood:** Right? There are pluses and minuses of getting older. The closer you come to being dead, such as myself, the less likely you are to attract such things. Young women with some power are particularly subject to it, because it's also a love-hate-love-hate thing. This is an attractive person whom I'm never going to have a date with, so I hate them. Don't you think? **Moss:** It's similar to a scene in the show: a woman reveals that she was the

victim of rape, and she's told, "You brought this upon yourself. You deserve this." You go out in a sexy dress on the red carpet, so now we're allowed to say whatever we want about you. But that's not O.K. **Atwood:** That's always been the case. If you go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was opera stars and female theater stars who attracted this kind of thing. It's not new. It just gets amplified.

**TIME:** Speaking of social media, Elisabeth, an image of your character Peggy from the end of "Mad Men" became a feminist meme. Do you think that will happen with "The Handmaid's Tale?" **Atwood:** Why did that become a meme for feminism? Because of smoking? **Moss:** [Laughing] No. It's her walking into her new job. She leaves this old place after a very long time. **Atwood:** It's a brave new world. You've come a long way, baby. Virginia Slims. **Moss:** Exactly. She's walking down the hall, and she's carrying a box of her things and wearing sunglasses, doesn't give a sh-t and has made this giant leap because it takes place in the '60s. I'm super-proud to have been part of a moment that people can gain any inspiration from or connect with women's rights. I can ask the same question of you: Does the fact that I have the *nolite te bastardes carborundorum* ("Don't let the bastards grind you down") line from the book on my necklace, or the fact that people get it tattooed, is that weird? **Atwood:** I'll tell you the weird thing about it: it was a joke in our Latin classes. So this thing from my childhood is permanently on people's bodies.

DOVERE, Isaac. "The Handmaid's Tale Crashes Up Against Trump." *Politico* 25 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: In "The Handmaid's Tale," which has been adapted into an original TV series for Hulu, Atwood writes about the Republic of Gilead, a Christian fundamentalist government that takes root in the United States after a presidential assassination and that begins by restricting the rights of women. The new government eventually seizes women's property and bars them from working and ultimately becomes a punitive, Puritan-inspired society in which women are either second-class citizens or slaves kept for breeding—a dystopian society inspired by the author's worst fears for the trajectory of the early 1980s. "I just took people at their word," she told me in a separate "Off Message" interview, evoking an era when the backlash against the feminist movement of the 1960s and '70s was in full swing. Now she's looking at an American president she compares to "a movie screen on which there is an ambiguous image," hopeful that nothing like her imagined world could come to pass, but worried about the endurance of the resistance, too.

"Give America credit. It's very ornery as a country. It's very diverse, and you have already seen that people are not just going to stay at home for all of these things," Atwood said. "The danger would be that people get burnt out and tired of watching the whirligig and trying to figure out what's going on, and they give up on it." But Atwood believes that society could tip into totalitarianism even more quickly than she imagined when writing her famous novel, which charts a total changeover occurring within the space of approximately five years. "More of the people interested in having those kinds of things happen are in power now," Atwood said. "The moment when you know that things have gone over the edge is the moment when the regime fires into the protest crowd. When these things pivot, they can do it very quickly. Like, really quickly," said Atwood. "Once the power is achieved, things can be pretty rapid."

Atwood and actress Elisabeth Moss, of "Mad Men" fame, who plays the embattled protagonist Offred, were in Washington last week as part of the promotion tour for the new Hulu series, sitting down at the Hay-Adams Hotel, a few blocks from the White House. Moss, wearing a "Je suis une suffragette" T-shirt, recalled looking out the window of her room at the White House the night before and being struck by the beauty of the building and the disconnect between that and her feelings about its current occupant, whom she called "infuriating."

Available from: <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/25/off-message-a-handmaids-tale->

[stephanie-schriock-237539](#).

DOWLING, Amber. "Margaret Atwood on How She's Able to See the Future, and Why Her Stories Keep Coming to TV." *IndieWire* 9 April 2017. Online. (1338 w.).

Excerpt: With the recent demand for long-form storytelling and new content, some of our most established writers have found themselves back in the spotlight, as award-winning Canadian author and national treasure Margaret Atwood knows all too well—to the point where she was recently called to expand upon one of her most famous works.

"We just did a special edition of *The Handmaid's Tale* for Audible. [The original book] concludes with the professor at the end section called Historical Notes, giving a paper. He ends his paper by saying, 'Are there any questions?'" Atwood explained to *IndieWire*. "So what we imagined was a question and answer section in which an actor plays the professor and different actors play the people asking the questions. And I play one of the people asking one of the questions. But the answers to the questions were written by me."

Her particular brand of "speculative fiction" has proved to be a hot commodity as of late, as networks and soon viewers seem to latch onto her particular dystopian method of storytelling. A number of her works are getting the TV treatment just this month, Hulu and MGM will premiere the Elisabeth Moss-led "The Handmaid's Tale" just as Canadian broadcaster CBC unrolls a 26-part children's series based on the author's *Wandering Wenda and Widow Wallop's Wunderground Washery*.

On the heels of those shows, and in advance of Netflix's "Alias Grace" and the upcoming "The Heart Goes Last," (which is also in development with MGM), it seems like viewers are paying particular attention as they draw parallels between Atwood's novels (particularly *The Handmaid's Tale*) and the current U.S. government, making us wonder whether she can actually tell the future. We caught up with the prolific—and maybe prophetic—author, who shared her insights into why her works are experiencing resurgence now, what inspires her these days, and how it all translates in today's political climate.

**Why do you suppose your works are in such hot demand right now?** The "Wandering Wenda" series, I think they were planning that for at least six years. It went through several stages and so it just happened to be finished at this time. But the other things, "Handmaid's Tale" and "Alias Grace," each one is a different story but they both depend on this relatively new platform of streamed, episodic television. And that has caused the work of a lot of people to be in demand because it's a way of treating a novel that doesn't involve a 90-minute film. You couldn't put "War and Peace" into 90 minutes. It just would not fit. But you could put it into a series. Streaming collecting the episodes so that people can watch them in sequence, that's become very popular and it's created a space for longer novels.

**Why is there a specific appetite for dystopian stories?** It's not only in television series and movies... (movies, movies!) but also in books. You see it quite a lot. There's a new subgenre called cli-fi for climate fiction. People are writing about that quite a bit. I think interest in dystopia comes in times when people are worried. And they're worried about the future. But it also comes from the fact that you can now make these worlds that you can build out. For instance, "Hunger Games." That's not climate fiction or anything else; it's an adventure series with certain premises, but you can make it long. "Game of Thrones," for instance. It's so long as a book series that George RR Martin hasn't even finished it yet. So what's going to happen when he does? Will it be different than what happens in the television series? Much speculation. And I for one will be quite annoyed if Mother of Dragons does not marry Jon Snow. But, since both the series and the author of the series have a habit of killing people off in great numbers, who can tell what will happen.

**Does seeing someone like Anna Paquin or Elisabeth Moss play your characters alter your vision of that character in your head?** It cannot help but do that. It cannot help but change the way you visualize them. But the other thing the television series is doing, which you'll see when you'll see it—while you know that characters that in the book just disappear because Offred (Moss) has no way of knowing what happened to them, in the television series you can follow them and see what is happening in their lives. The Ofglen (Alexis Bledel) figure simply disappears in the book and another Ofglen takes her place. In the series, we see what happened to that first one.

**In cases like that, does somebody like showrunner Bruce Miller run theories by you, or is it a surprise to you when you read it or see it?** Some of it is a surprise and some of it he has run past me. With these things just describing it doesn't really cover it, you really have to see what they've done and how they've done it. So, yes, we've talked over some of the things and some of the other things have been surprises. Not once I'd read the script, but we didn't talk them over before I got a chance to see what they were. Let me put it another way: if I described to my publishers what kind of books I might be writing they would probably throw up their hands and say, "Why are you doing that?"

**Would that still be the case today, given everything you've written?** Um... yes. I think so. I mean describing the plot of something doesn't cover it. You have to be there, inside the world.

**A lot of people seem to think you're a prophet.** I'm not a prophet. Honest, I'm not a prophet. If I were a prophet I would have cleaned up on the stock market years ago.

**But why do you think that is? Are people not paying attention or are they happy to be ignorant?** Because if you focus your interest on a certain area of life you aren't always looking for details and news stories that fit it. But if you're not focused on that a lot of things just pass you by. So now they're saying things about *Oryx and Crake* and *MaddAddam*, are all coming true. But that's based on things people were already working on when I was writing the books. It's just that I was looking for those things and other people weren't. So they were there. You can go to the clippings file of *The Handmaid's Tale* from 1984 and see what I was collecting then. It was there then. It's just that people didn't have the power to put it into practice... Yet.

**Are there any real-life events right now that are piquing your interest creatively?** Well you probably saw the handmaids sitting in the Texas legislature. That could have been right out of the television series. It was eerily familiar. I don't know. It's very hard to write things as they're happening unless you're a reporter. And even so people get things wrong at the time and hindsight is 20/20. You saw a lot of that in the analysis during the election. How could this have happened? Well here's how. But they weren't saying 'here's how' at the time. A lot of people just got this wrong.

**Are you surprised at any of the reactions from the right wing over the trailer for "The Handmaid's Tale?"** You mean, 'How can anybody write this garbage about Donald Trump?' [Laughs.] I guess they didn't check the time it was published. It was published in 1985, so actually no, but interesting you should think that. We did get a bit of that, not when the book came out but when the original film came out [in 1990]. People thinking that you're writing bad things about their political party or sect. But of course, the question is, why are they identifying with it?

Available from: <http://www.indiewire.com/2017/04/margaret-atwood-interview-handmaids-tale-alias-grace-wandering-wenda-1201803421/>.

DUNDAS, Deborah. "Margaret Atwood's Love of Feathered Friends; Author Believes We Should All Have a Passion for Birds, and Her Reasoning Is Complicated." *Toronto Star* 3 June 2017. Section: Entertainment: E6. (715 w.).

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood loves birds. In fact, she loves birds so much that, for each of the past 16 years, the famed Canadian author has hosted a fundraiser for the Pelee Island Bird Observatory. Springsong, as it's named, takes place traditionally on Mother's Day weekend, starting with a race where dozens of participants come to the island and vie to spot the most species. This year's winner observed 108 species in 24 hours. Awards are given out at an evening banquet—the 200 or so tickets sell out well in advance—and Atwood always invites an author to come and read for the audience. This year it was Newfoundland writer Michael Crummey. It's not all serious—the whole evening is homey and fun, with Atwood at the centre of it. She collects squeaky rubber chickens that are handed out to people throughout the room; they then join her up front to take part in a "chicken choir." Atwood leads the chorus during a spirited rendition of, what else, "Old Macdonald Had a Chicken."

"My relationship with birds goes back to year one because my dad was a biologist, so I just grew up with all of this," Atwood said the day after last month's Springsong, during an interview at the Pelee Island Book House Writers' Retreat. Her husband, Graham Gibson, she notes, "is a convert and you know converts are always all gung ho. So a lot of the bird stuff actually is his impetus." Gibson is the chair of the Pelee Island Bird Observatory—known as PIBO—and Atwood is also on the board. Pelee Island, the largest island in Lake Erie, is Canada's southernmost point. It's an important stop for migratory birds, which PIBO and other organizations in Canada and the U.S. track. "They can pool their data, so they can have a pretty good idea of which species are on the up and which ones are on the down," Atwood says. The organization also does a nest census to determine which birds are nesting on the island.

Her concern about birds and their conservation is clear to anyone who's seen the first two instalments of Atwood's graphic novel *Angel Catbird*—the third volume, *The Catbird Roars*, comes out in July. "I had cats from the age of 9 or 10 until our last one died," she said, "at which point we decided that we were getting too old for it because we would trip on it going down the stairs. It became a tripping hazard in our household." Still, "cats are the major killer of migratory songbirds in North America," she points out. "I wanted to create a positive conversation around cats and birds that didn't just completely annoy cat people."

She firmly believes people need to be interested in birds and conservation. "If they don't get interested in it, pretty soon the oceans and the soil, and soil is important, will be dead and we will cease to breathe. In a nutshell." She explains why with a scientific bent. "Once upon a time," she begins, bedding us in for a story, "1.9 billion years ago the atmosphere was methane. And with a methane atmosphere oxygen-breathing forms could not survive. And that situation was changed by blue-green algae. You can see the remnants of them in fossil forms called stromatolites. "So they created the oxygen atmosphere by splitting H<sub>2</sub>O into H(ydrogen) and O(xygen) . . . Other plants do it too, but there aren't enough of other plants to maintain the oxygen level apart from the marine algae. So we would be seriously disadvantaged if all the other plants died—but we would be dead if the marine algae died."

So what's that got to do with birds?

"Seabirds poo into the water and fertilize it," increasing the marine algae. She describes soil as a "carbon sink," preventing carbon from being released into the atmosphere and helping to aid the growth of plants. Inorganic farming "kills the soil," she says, along with the insects that birds usually eat. Additionally, "Birds, especially migratory birds, are like an early warning radar system. When things are going badly wrong with their habitats and environments and

their numbers are declining, that's a wake-up call ... Anybody interested in conservation is interested in systems. So anybody interested in conservation knows that everything's connected and if you influence one part of it . . . you may find that all sorts of other things are being affected." And that, in a nutshell, is why we should all care about birds.

EDWARDS, Caroline. "Interview with Margaret Atwood, New Scientist Live, 1 October 2017." 1 November 2017. Online. 51.42 min.

Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkOFv42dv44>.

ENRIGHT, Michael. "From Hannah Arendt to *The Handmaid's Tale*: Margaret Atwood and Lit Scholars Talk Dystopia in the Age of Trump." *Sunday Morning* (CBC) 5 May 2017: Online. Atwood interviewed along with Sally Perry and Roger Berkowitz, two American professors.

Excerpt: Since the election of Donald Trump, landmark books about totalitarianism and political dystopias have vaulted to the highest rungs of the bestseller lists, alongside the contemporary breed of dystopian fiction that has so gripped teenagers and millennials. The feeling is that Trump may not be completely unprecedented. He may have been prefigured in books that warned of the appeal of demagogues and their ability to lead the masses from democracy to tyranny. So people look to great fiction and non-fiction to understand how they got here, and perhaps find a roadmap to what lies ahead.

**What is a dystopian novel or work of art? Margaret Atwood:** Utopias and dystopias are joined at the hip, in that every dystopia contains a little utopia, and every utopia—when you start digging—contains a little dystopia. They're both blueprints of something we don't have yet but could have should we continue down this or that path. Anything human can happen to any society given the circumstances. So we're not immune.

**Margaret Atwood, you started writing *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1984 when you were living in Berlin. Was that a coincidence? Atwood:** It was a coincidence but a meaningful one. I was of an age to have read *1984* as a young teenager, as well as *Brave New World*, just about all of H.G. Wells, Ray Bradbury as he was coming out, and Hannah Arendt somewhat later when I was in college. When we launched the film in 1990, it was just as the wall was coming down. In East Berlin, they looked at it very intently and they said, "this was our life." They didn't mean the theocracy and the outfits. They meant "you didn't know who you can trust." And now that we've opened the Stasi files, we know how very true that was.

**You've said that this was not a predictive novel. It was an anti-predictive novel. What do you mean by that? Atwood:** You write these kinds of books in the hopes that they will not happen. I was looking at a lot of newspapers and magazines and clipping them at the time. And the Right was already talking then about what they would like to do, should they have the opportunity. And now they have.

**I've read that we read these novels in times of great change, of dislocation in the culture or in the economy. Why are we attracted to them? Is it because we are afraid of what we might become, or are we looking for some anchorage? Atwood:** It's like Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros*. We're afraid of other people turning into that. People of my generation ask ourselves, "what would I have done in the war?" We don't know the answer to that because we weren't actually in it. So you put yourself in that situation by reading a book like this. It's a way of testing your own potential decisions against the decisions of people caught up in that. What is a good way to act under these circumstances and also how might we avoid ever being in such a circumstance.

**How did Gilead come to be? Atwood:** The origin story is simply that every society has a

foundational mythos, if you like. And one of the ones of the United States is 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan theocracy, on top of which was erected an 18<sup>th</sup> century deist enlightenment structure which is right now standing between you and tyranny. So of course, they would have to get rid of that. As a Canadian, you'd remember the suspension of civil rights in the October Crisis, and the invocation of the *War Measures Act*. So you create a crisis and then you suspend civil rights. And then you have a military coup. That's happened in country after country after country on this planet. I put nothing into the book that somebody somewhere had not already done.

**Mike Pence is virulently anti-choice, and we know about Donald Trump's views of women. When people are gravitating toward *The Handmaid's Tale*, do they incorporate that in their own views?** Atwood: I would say that the people who are reading it and looking at it are the people who understand it. And the people who are not reading and looking at it are the people who do understand it but that's the way they want it to be. It all comes out of what people said they would like to do if they had the chance. Not the outfits maybe, but the rest of it: women should be back in the home, their purpose is childbearing and all the rest of it. That's been pretty clear for some time.

**But it's hard to take Donald Trump as a Puritan fanatic or a *Bible* literalist.** Atwood: He's not. And you then have to ask of the majority of white evangelical Christians, "why did you vote for this guy?" But because the answer to everything is in the *Bible*, the answer to that is in the *Bible* too: God provides imperfect vessels. They see him as somebody who's not their idea of a Christian, but who's going to do their stuff for them.

**Let me ask you point-blank. Do you think that the United States is becoming a theocracy?** Atwood: Not quite yet. The Constitution still stands and does provide for the separation of church and state. The reason they put that in in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is that they had seen centuries of religions fighting each other in Europe. They did not want a state religion. However, this just in: Donald Trump has apparently given Jerry Falwell Jr.—who was a big campaigner for him — a commission to go into institutions of higher education and weed out stuff like rules about sexual assault on campus and things like that. So there it is, right in front of you.

**How accurate or how good of a guide to the future is the literature of the past? Is there a risk that we're going to look for things to confirm the narrative we already read, rather than looking for what's going on in front of us?** Atwood: No, it's not a prophecy. There is no "the future." There are many many possible futures, and I think we read these kinds of books so that we can at least attempt to avoid them—not so that we will make them come true.

**Is there a sense then that we take these works of literature and weaponize them? In other words, use them in whatever our particular cause is to galvanize us to do something?** Atwood: That is already happening to *The Handmaid's Tale*. People keep sending me pictures of women dressed up as them sitting in legislatures and doing demonstrations outside them, particularly when it's a bunch of men deciding about reproductive rights. So that's already happening.

**How much faith do you have that the democratic culture in America now constituted will prevail?** Atwood: I have quite a lot of faith, because America is very diverse and has a long tradition of freedom of speech, speaking up, civic participation. I don't think people are just going to roll over for this. I think it would be a lot harder to actually control all America in the way that Hitler controlled all Germany. It's not homogeneous in the way that Germany was. So I have faith in individual Americans to push back, and I'm seeing a

lot of pushing back.

**Let me be parochial for a moment. Could it happen here in Canada? Atwood:**

People asked me that as soon as I published the book. It would be harder, because again Canada is so diverse. And I don't think Quebec would sit still for it, because they had a dose of that under Duplessis. That's my theory. I'm a screaming optimist as we all know.

Available from: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/may-7-2017-the-sunday-edition-with-michael-enright-1.4097864/from-hannah-arendt-to-the-handmaid-s-tale-margaret-atwood-and-lit-scholars-talk-dystopia-in-the-age-of-trump-1.4097872>.

FINN, Ed. "Margaret Atwood on Why *The Handmaid's Tale* Didn't Predict the Future." *Slate Magazine* 12 September 2017. Online.

Excerpt: **Ed Finn: Many people have remarked on the seeming prescience of *The Handmaid's Tale* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Did you predict the future in these books?** Margaret Atwood: The answer is no, I did not predict the future because you can't really predict the future. There isn't any "the future." There are many possible futures, but we don't know which one we're going to have. We can guess. We can speculate. But we cannot really predict.

**As someone who tells stories that frequently are set in a future, what kind of relationship do you see between the worlds you imagine and what we might call the nonfiction future, the changes we actually expect to see?** Well, all stories about the future are actually about the now. However, it's also true that you generally look ahead of you to see where you're going and that's what those kinds of books are like. They're like blueprints of the possible futures that help us to decide whether that is where we want to go. *1984* was actually about 1948 and looking down the road what might happen should England become like the Soviet Union of the now. So the *Handmaid's Tale* was about trends that were already there in the now event, and what might happen if those trends continued on in that way. Would we like that? Is that where we want to live?...

**Do you see a difference between the way people respond to the social dystopia of *The Handmaid's Tale* and how they respond to the *MaddAddam* trilogy with its depiction of science and technology?**

*MaddAddam* is a social dystopia, too, just as *The Handmaid's Tale* is also an environmental dystopia. And those things are very much joined at the hip. I'm reading a book right now about the deep distant past. I'm at the part where it's describing a climate change period that's having kicked off a lot of warfare and village burnings. And this is a long time ago. It's like 5000 B.C. So in general, when there's enough food, you get less war—not always, but in general. And when you have a climate change events, you get less food. So that's the connection. Social upheaval is frequently triggered by economic upheaval as in the French Revolution, as in the Great Depression. When things go wrong, of course, people want somebody else to blame.

**Do you think the relationship between science fiction and reality is changing? It seems like speculative fiction and science fiction are everywhere now, infiltrating all sorts of other genres.** Isn't it amazing? We wouldn't have said that in the year 2000 at all. I think you might have said it in the '30s when it was new in magazines. You might have said it, in the '50s when a lot of people were writing science fiction because it was a way of writing about McCarthyism without actually naming it. But in the '90s, after the Berlin Wall came down and the USSR collapsed, people were less interested in it because they thought everything was going to be fine. It's when people think that everything isn't fine that these

stories come out. There were huge numbers of utopias in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a lot of them took off from the state of urban squalor and poverty and such that the people were seeing in London.

**It's interesting that you pinpointed the '90s and the year 2000 because I agree with you that for a while there everybody in the West was sort of euphoric about the possibilities of a new era of peace and cooperation. *The End of History*.**

**Remember that?** Yes. Another prediction about the future that didn't work out. **So, having talked about the '30s and the two world wars, how would you characterize the current uptake in science fiction and speculative fiction?** Young people are worried about the future. The next question you may ask: Why are young people worried about the future? **Yeah** What's to worry about? Well, there's climate. And it's not just global warming. Probably the thing we should be most worried about is the death of the oceans, which is not due just to global warming. It would also be due to toxicity and the amount of plastic that's going into the ocean. And should the oceans die, of course, there goes the major planetary source of oxygen without which we cannot breathe. And young people are also worried about the fact that all of the global political chess pieces are in motion. We don't have a stable state of affairs. And when you don't have a stable state of affairs, it's very hard to plan your own future, because you don't know, for instance, if the currency that you are using in your country is suddenly devalued. There go your savings. So naturally they're worried. However, I like to give a little glimpses of hope. There's a new book called *Drawdown*. It's something like the most useful ideas for combating and reversing climate change. These are solutions that already exist. And people are already doing them.

**Do you feel a responsibility or a motivation to respond to that anxiety?** Well, I've kind of already responded to it. So having written *The Handmaid's Tale*, the *MaddAddam* trilogy, a not inconsiderable number of words, and more recently *The Heart Goes Last*, how much more response do you think it is in me to come up with at my age? Enough is enough.

My other adventure, and another response, is the *Angel Catbird* graphic novel trilogy, which is at heart a bird conservation project. Have you come across that? **I've seen it online. I haven't read it yet, but I'm quite excited to.** Oh Ed, I'm ashamed of you. **I'm sorry. At least, I didn't lie to you.** No, you didn't. You wouldn't have gotten away with it, anyway. *Angel Catbird* is in three volumes, which is a response to the fact that the four big enemies facing migratory birds are glass windows, habitat loss, toxicity, and cats. Conservationists have generally tiptoed around the cats because they didn't want the death threats and hate mail. How dare you say that my kitty-witty is killing 2 billion birds a year **Do not cross the cat lovers.** Oh, you don't, no, you don't want them to piss off. And anyway, it wouldn't do any good if you did. What you want them to do is, is treat their cats the same way you would treat a dog. So if you're going to have a pet and companion, you should take care of that entity better than cat lovers frequently do. And therefore, in the *Angel Catbird*, we have the kinds of facts that people really ought to know such as the chances of your cat being returned if it gets lost is 3 percent. And some cities hire people to go around at night and pick up all the dead cats that have been hit by cars because the sight is distressing. They're not smart about cars.

**Well, this makes me glad I'm a dog person. One thing that I've been thinking about a lot is the notion of time as a cultural construct, something that changes across different cultures. Do you think that our broader social relationship to the whole idea of the future has changed? Have politics or the rise of the internet changed it?** I think that, once upon a time, people didn't think about the future much at all. And just in the same way, they didn't much think about the distant past because they knew very little about it. If you're living in a stable society, the future is going to be much the same as the present.

Thinking about the future took off partly when people discovered deep time—just how old a lot of things were and that there are many, many different cultures that had preceded theirs and were no longer around. When people started digging things up, in other words—when archaeology got going. And people realized that civilizations had risen and fallen. Was theirs going to do that, too?

So some of the early sci-fi writers were pretty fixated on that. For instance, *The Time Machine* goes into the future and finds that very thing happening, so that scared people. And once you're talking about things changing, you're talking about stories, about worlds in which we do not yet live. So I think that's when that whole trend in literature got going. You don't find much about it earlier. You find people traveling to different places. There are a lot of stories like that in *Gulliver's Travels*. *Gulliver's Travels* are not time travels. Time traveling doesn't come in until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Even *Frankenstein* is not a time-travel book.

**One thing that I wonder about is whether the span of the future that we think about today is actually shrinking. We're no longer thinking 10 or 20 years ahead. We're not creating that many long-term projects. We're not doing things that last more than one election cycle. Do you think that's true?** No, I don't think it's true. And when you read *Drawdown*, you'll realize that it's not true because they're all thinking in terms of 2050. How long does it take for a project X to sequester Y amounts of carbon? That's what's on their minds. Of course, if we had started these kinds of projects in the 1970s, we wouldn't be in the fix that we are in today. Because we already would have dealt with this problem. So the later we leave it, the worse it is going to be and the harder it will be to clean up. But when you read *Drawdown*, you will see that help is on the way.

**At the Center for Science and the Imagination at Arizona State University, which I direct, we're almost finished with a comic book that takes on the same challenge called *Drawn Futures: Arizona 2045*, which is about what it will be like to live in Phoenix in the midst of climate change. (Disclosure: ASU is a partner with *Slate* and *New America in Future Tense*.)** That's long-term thinking. In other words, if we do these things, what will Arizona look like in 2045? **Yeah. And we're writing it for fifth- to eighth-grade students.** That's a good plan. Those are the people who will put it into practice.

**Do you think we need new kinds of stories to pose these questions to the young people who are going to be inheriting this planet?** I think we need new ways of deploying stories. But those ways already exist, and you just did one of them. So there's graphic novels. There're podcasts. There're audiobooks. There're interactive projects. There's a lot of different ways. But I think it's really about: Are we going to like the results of how we are living today? Will we like it? And that goes on and gets more magnified. Is that who we want to be? Is that how we want to live? And or, even worse, if we keep on going this way, will we live?

**So aside from *Drawdown* and *Angel Catbird*, both of which I'm going to order right after we finish talking, what else should we be reading or looking at these days to help us understand this whole notion of the future of the future?** I am loath to tell people what they ought to read and do because everybody is different. If their interests are in the human race not remaining viable on the planet, there have been some pretty good studies on gene splicing. So maybe they would want to be reading those.

**Why do you think people want to hear the story where everybody dies?** That story usually is about how almost everybody dies except the protagonist of the story. Because if everybody dies, there's just a lot of blank paper after that. So it's usually about what would you do if and how would you et cetera and so forth? And people like thinking about that because it's like planning. It's like if the worst comes to the worst, I would at least have some idea of

what to do. And if you really want those kinds of books, there's a group of books by a man called *Survivorman*. And they're very good practical guides. What to do if you're lost in the woods? What to do when the lights go out? All those kinds of things. What not to do? You can make really good foot insulators out of the stuffing from the upholstery in your car; that kind of thing.

**I'm going to hang on to that one. That's a good tip.** *Survivorman*. His name is Les Stroud, He's got a TV series too. How not to burn yourself up in the shelter you have built? **These sound like extremely useful tips. But aside from practical survivor guides, if you were to think about a kind of cultural or psychological survival strategy, what's the most important thing that young people need to survive to be resilient to adapt in the future that is coming?** To survive what? **Well, whatever happens.** No, you've got to be more specific. **Well, I guess, let's go with climate change.** OK. So it's going to depend where you live, isn't it? And it's going to depend how the weather patterns in your particular area are affecting what is going on in that area. So it's going to depend on are you in a place where it's going to rain a lot more? Or are you in a place where it's going to rain a lot less, just for instance? Look up from your phone for one instant and figure out where you yourself are actually living. What kind of a place are you living in? How are conditions likely to alter? What will you do if they do alter? And alter how? Hotter, colder, wetter, drier? What things can you eat? Does all the food that you'll eat come from somewhere else? And what will happen to you if the supply chain is interrupted, just for instance? Since World War II, because of cheap energy, food has been brought in from far, far away to people. And they've come to take that for granted. But suppose that condition alters. Then you're going to have to figure out what is it that you can eat that is more immediately available to you and does not include such menu items as your next-door neighbor. I was in Rome a long time ago and I found the famous sunken temple where a lot of cats hang out. So I went back to the landlady of the pensione where I was staying, and I said, "Why are there all those cats at the temple of whatever it was?" And she said, "During the war, there were far fewer." What did that mean? It meant that people were eating them. So after you've eaten Rover, what else are you going to eat?

**Well, I think that sounds like a pretty good place to wrap up this interview.** Isn't it dark? That's why you need to get *Drawdown*, which has much more cheering ideas. I like to follow sites and entities that are acting positively. On Twitter, you might look up Professor Trash Wheel, which is busily collecting plastics in Baltimore Harbor. It's a solar-powered wheel that looks a lot like a paddle-wheel steamer. And it picks up these floating plastics and keeps them from getting into the ocean. And there's another project called the Ocean Cleanup. And the X-Prize Science Fiction Advisory Council. They've instituted a panel of sci-fi writers, including me, to think about some of these concepts and come up with out-of-the-box ideas. Ask a sci-fi writer, they'll invent something. And then sooner or later, somebody might try to do it. So, yes, those are pretty positive.

**Those are great. I feel like we could all use a little more optimism these days.** It's absolutely true. If you tell people it's all doom and gloom, they're going to say, "Well, in that case I'm just going to party." But if you say there is something practical that you can do, nine out of 10 people will do it. The other thing is don't look to the billionaires for help because they already have their fallback position. They're going to buy a lot of oxygen makers and stick themselves in a cave somewhere with all modern conveniences. And that is their private solution. They probably each have one. But you are not one of those people. And in fact, most of us are not those people. So it's up to us if we really want them, if we're really that keen on the human race to act in such a way that there will be one. **Retreating to a hole is really not our best aspiration as a species.** Well, it's also very expensive. So you and I cannot afford to retreat to such a hole. And such holes are vulnerable, anyway, because if somebody finds your energy supply and cuts the line, which they might well out of resentment, that's it

for you. We've read those sci-fi books. We know what happens. **Well, this was fantastic. Thank you so much for taking the time.** You're so welcome. And I hope everything is going to be going well in Arizona in 2045. **Oh, well me too. We'll see about that.** Maybe you'll see about it. I'm not going to be around but possibly you will be. **Well, I'll write you a letter.** OK. You'll be very, very surprised if you get an answer.

Available from:

[http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future\\_tense/2017/09/margaret\\_atwood\\_on\\_the\\_handmaid\\_s\\_tale\\_prophecy\\_and\\_the\\_role\\_of\\_sci\\_fi.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2017/09/margaret_atwood_on_the_handmaid_s_tale_prophecy_and_the_role_of_sci_fi.html).

HALEEM, Aadel. "Margaret Atwood Talks Writing on Pelee Island While Meeting with Windsor-Essex Students." *CBC News* 11 May 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood credits Pelee Island as the site where she's written most of her books. The famed Canadian author talked about her passions for Pelee before meeting with students from Kennedy High School and École secondaire l'Essor at her annual fundraising dinner for the Pelee Island Bird Observatory. This is the sixth year Atwood has hosted this event, as Pelee Island is a place she holds dear to her heart. "I grew up in the Canadian north and my dad was a biologist, so I just grew up with it," Atwood told CBC, adding that she's had a home on Pelee Island since 1987. "I've done a lot of writing on it so a number of the books that I've written, I've written half of them or most of them on the island," she added. Atwood said she wrote much of Booker Prize-winning *The Blind Assassin* and her most recent book, *Hag-Seed*, while staying on Pelee....

Prior to the dinner, Atwood spoke to local high school students, joking they usually don't say much. "They're always a little alarmed to find out somebody that they studied in school was still alive." For the students, however, meeting the literary giant was a special moment. "It was amazing, she was so kind and down to earth," said Grade 12 student Cheyenne Dupuis. "We talked about how we started a Feminist Club and we talked about our Social Justice Forum that we held, and she was very amazed and thought it was very cool." 17-year-old Dakota Jabbour said it was a nerve-wracking experience meeting "someone with such a prestige to her writing." "She had some amazing insight on the current situation, especially in the States, and how great it was that we have such a strong presence for feminism at our school," Jabbour added. "She talked about her book, *The Handmaid's Tale* ... and how that relates to Trump and a lot of the misogyny that he kind of spews into his country and says to his people." L'Essor student Jacob Wilson also met Atwood, an experience he described as the "highlight" of his high school years. On Thursday, Atwood will host a reading and book signing at the University of Windsor. As for what she's working on next, Atwood said with a smile, "I never tell."

Available from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/pelee-island-margaret-atwood-1.4109596>.

HESSE, Monica. "'The Handmaid's Tale' Has Been Feared, Banned and Loved. Now It's Scaring the Bejeezus Out of Us Again.; Why Did a Book That Captures Women's Worst Nightmares Become Such a Phenomenon?" *Washington Post* 26 April 2017. Section: STYLE: C01. (1524 w.).

Excerpt: The true terror of the book isn't the acts people commit, but the mind-set—the brainwashed masses lulled into accepting the unthinkable as the ordinary—that allows people to commit them. And what does Margaret Atwood, the creator of this world, think of all of this? We met with her, recently, sitting on straight-backed chairs in the sort of generically opulent hotel suite that could have been one of the Commanders' parlors, but which today had been repurposed as an interview room. Next door, cast and crew of the series are in their own interview rooms; outside, a long line of journalists—all female, all appearing to be in their

30s—await their own time slots to ask Atwood the same questions she has patiently answered over and over in the course of three decades.

“Could it happen? How close are we?” says Atwood, 77, sharing what those questions typically are. “Especially, ‘How close are we?’ Especially that. When the book first came out in England, people said, ‘Jolly good yarn,’ because they’d already had their religious civil war. The Canadians, who are quite diverse, might not be able to gain the critical mass required to attain a monolithic theocracy. But Americans, it was either, ‘It can’t happen here, don’t be silly,’ or ‘How close are we?’” She doesn’t know the answer. She doesn’t know how close we are, as a society, or if we’re close at all. She doesn’t know what happens to Offred at the end of the novel. She doesn’t even know Offred’s real name.

Over decades, readers decided it was “June” based on contextual clues—June is the only character name, introduced in a roll call, who is not otherwise accounted for—but it was never Atwood’s original intent. “I created a vacuum and it was filled,” she says. “Not in an inappropriate way, but it wasn’t my idea.” She wrote the book on a typewriter in 1984, and it happened in fits and starts because she just kept worrying it was too weird to present to an editor. Then she showed a draft to a trusted friend and said, “I think I’m going to get a lot of hate mail,” and the friend said, “I think you’re going to be rich,” and both of them were right. And decades passed, and the book kept growing.

“Some books escape from the book itself, and this is one of them,” she says. “It’s been a film. It’s been an opera—a really good opera. It’s been a ballet. It’s being a graphic novel right now. It turns up as memes in elections. It’s about to be a television series. It’s recently been proposed to me that it should be a video game. Although I cannot begin to imagine what that would be like.” She wafts a hand. “It’s out of the box. I feel as though it’s no longer something I have control over. Not that you ever have control over the book.”

Our time is up. We were given only 20 minutes! We wanted to know so much more! But she has other people to see.

Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-handmaids-tale-has-been-feared-banned-and-loved-now-its-gotten-under-our-skin-again/2017/04/24/6aefc398-246e-11e7-b503-9d616bd5a305\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.c902004b7300](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-handmaids-tale-has-been-feared-banned-and-loved-now-its-gotten-under-our-skin-again/2017/04/24/6aefc398-246e-11e7-b503-9d616bd5a305_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c902004b7300).

HOWELLS, Coral Ann. “Margaret Atwood in Conversation with Coral Ann Howells.” London: The British Library, 2017. A video of the conversation was screened during the conference of the British Association for Canadian Studies (BACS) in April 2017. The video itself was recorded at Canada House in October 2016.

The video is available from: <https://vimeo.com/199141947>.

KNELMAN, Martin. “Margaret Atwood Brings Her Prescient Tales to the Small Screen.” *Globe and Mail* 18 January 2017; updated 24 March 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood has attended countless book-world events during her literary career, but last week she brought her star power to a fête for the film world—the annual gala of the Toronto Film Critics Association. The reason: Two of her most acclaimed novels, *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Alias Grace*, will soon appear as TV miniseries. Both will have their premieres this year after being filmed in Toronto. And each will include Atwood in a cameo role.

Atwood’s official job at the gala was to present the award for best first feature to director Robert Eggers, who won for “The Witch.” She was accompanied by writer Rebecca Mead, who

had flown to Toronto from New York to spend time with Atwood for a profile to be published in the *New Yorker* in April. Together, they had walked around the city, including a visit to the University of Toronto's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library to examine Atwood's manuscript for *The Handmaid's Tale*. "Rebecca has been accompanying me to things that were on my schedule anyway—so I brought her to the dinner," Atwood explained.

When I visited her table, after dinner was served, the author happily gave me some details about the impending Atwood marathon on the small screen. And she described what it was like to do her cameo for *Alias Grace*, during a hot-weather spell last summer.

"I stewed like a prune in my layers of petticoats, chemise, corset, wool skirt, wool jacket, shawl and bonnet," she said. "I was supposed to look disapproving, and in all that heat I had no difficulty doing that."

But when I inquired about which characters she was playing in the two series, she became guarded. "I am not allowed to talk yet about what actually happens in the cameo roles," she said.... Another mystery she mentioned concerns the screen rights to *The Handmaid's Tale*, and whether Canadian viewers will get to see it.

The rights were bought by MGM Television and producer Daniel Wilson, who made the 10-part series in partnership with Hulu, a live-streaming company which operates only in the United States and Japan; production on "Handmaid" wraps in mid-February, with a U.S. launch date of April 26. For it to be shown on this side of the border, Hulu must sell the rights to a Canadian broadcaster or distributor.

There is no such problem in the case of *Alias Grace*, because the CBC teamed up with Netflix to green-light the six-part series, likely to be telecast in September....

For those Canadians who like to get their literary culture on TV, it would be an absurdity to be deprived of the chance to watch [*The Handmaid's Tale*]—produced in Canada and based on a key book by our most celebrated novelist—on our side of the border. "Never fear," Atwood told me. "It will appear in Canada." Hulu and MGM have assured her of that, she says. "That was as of last week. They will tell me as soon as it's finalized, but nobody likes to release such news until it is final."

Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/margaret-atwood-brings-her-prescient-tales-to-the-small-screen/article33658324>.

KOHLER, Jeremy. "Margaret Atwood Mesmerizes Every Generation with Prescient Writing." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Missouri) 17 September 2017. Section: A&E: C1. (1045 w.).

Excerpt: I tossed a few recent headlines at Margaret Atwood: "Genetically Engineering Pigs to Grow Organs for People" "Trump Administration Considers Privatizing War in Afghanistan" "Inside the Lab Where Scientists Are Editing DNA in Human Embryos" Pigs growing human organs ... armies run by private security companies ... scientists perfecting the next wave of humans.

"Yes, where have you heard it before?" she said, laughing. Of course, these have all been events in her dystopian trilogy *MaddAddam*, events that, in her omniscient fiction, helped bring about the end of civilization. And they are happening right now. So, are we doomed? The 77-year-old Canadian novelist, hailed by her fans as a visionary, insists she does not predict the future. "There isn't a future. There are multiple possible futures, and it's up to us, to a certain extent, which one we're going to get."

Atwood is coming to St. Louis on Tuesday, assuming we have that much time left. During a sold-out ceremony at the Sheldon Concert Hall & Art Galleries, she will receive the St. Louis Literary Award, given to authors for their body of work. She joins a list honored by the St. Louis University Library Associates that includes Salman Rushdie, E.L. Doctorow, Joyce Carol Oates and many other distinguished figures in literature. She arrives in St. Louis at the peak of her popularity, the rare artist who seems to have the attention of every generation at once. Few authors her age have embraced, let alone mastered, so many different storytelling platforms. She released rough early chapters of her 2015 novel *The Heart Goes Last* as a series of Kindle singles, Amazon's 99-cent pulp-fiction offerings. She collaborated on a 2016 graphic novel, *Angel Catbird*, about a geneticist who accidentally merges himself with the DNA of a cat and an owl. Atwood has published poetry, nonfiction, children's books and short stories. Two of her novels have been adapted for streaming video services, and MGM Television acquired the rights to adapt *The Heart Goes Last*. A TV deal for her masterwork *MaddAddam* trilogy may still be possible.

Talking by phone, she finished a reporter's poorly posed question: You don't see many authors who have been around for as long as you have branching out at this stage of their careers .... "Who are so O-L-D? We're talking about oldness? Well, I'm just continuing to do things that I've always done, and I've always been interested in comics and graphics because that's the age I grew up in. But I got a collaborator because I wasn't good enough to draw anatomically correct flying people. With wings. With capes, I can do, but wings are a challenge."

A TV version of her 1985 classic, *The Handmaid's Tale*, recently finished an acclaimed 10-episode run on Hulu, garnering 13 Emmy nominations, and will return for a second season.... Atwood is a consultant on the project, meaning "I get consulted, and I can say things. It does not mean they will do things that I say." But she said she emphatically supports the project. "So far so good—I think they are doing a brilliant job." The first season stayed mostly true to the end of the novel, but the second season will enter unwritten territory. In a 20-minute chat, she offered no spoilers. "They would never tell me anything again if I ratted them out," she said. "I can say the following: It's gripping. Very gripping."

The emergence of "The Handmaid's Tale" for TV was said to upset some supporters of President Donald Trump, who believed the timing of a story about male control over women's reproductive rights was a political statement. Atwood scoffs at this, noting she wrote the book 33 years ago. "They might more logically have thought it was targeting Mr. Pence, who is much more of that world," she said. But she recognized that women dressing as handmaids to protest in statehouses has become "a very graphic, easily understandable pop culture meme. And rather brilliant because they don't do anything. They just sit there. So you can't accuse them of having caused a disturbance."

Following "Handmaid's" small-screen success, an adaptation of her historical novel *Alias Grace* will stream on Netflix starting Nov. 3. The book concerns a woman who was imprisoned for 28 years for her part in the 1843 murders of her wealthy employer and his housekeeper in northern Canada.

HBO had been working on a series based on Atwood's epic dystopian trilogy *MaddAddam*, to be directed by Darren Aronofsky ("Black Swan," "Mother!"), but dropped the plan a year ago. Atwood was crushed to hear that news, but she said that Aronofsky still had an option to create the series. "Let us see what time brings," she said. She called it a "big project. It's got three books. It has a lot of characters in it, so it's an undertaking. But what you have seen in the last few years is these web streaming platforms have provided a lot more latitude for novels. "So, novels that you might not think would become filmed or televised have become so because

there's scope in a multiseried platform to develop complexity, and you're seeing a lot of things being made that would have been beyond the scope of a 90-minute film."

While she is enjoying the brighter spotlight—"I'm going to the Emmys!"—she said she wished headlines were not following the arc of her stories. "If I had a choice between these books not being current, plus literary oblivion, or their being current, plus increased attention to these books, I would choose the first," she said. "I would prefer that they not be current. Because the fact that they are current means there is a lot of unhappiness being caused." Of course, Atwood is not merely about dystopias and speculative fiction. Her most recent novel, 2016's *Hag-Seed*, concerned the production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in a men's prison. She said she would be making an announcement about *Hag-Seed* during her visit to St. Louis—hinting strongly that her next platform might be a stage inside a Missouri prison.

LAWLER, Kelly. "The Handmaid's Tale' on Hulu Can't Escape Politics; Writer of 1985 Novel Hopes Show Inspires Viewers to 'Wake Up.'" *Dayton Daily News* (Ohio) 26 April 2017. Section: News: 27.

Excerpt: When the first trailer for Hulu's adaptation of the feminist dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (streams Wednesdays) hit the Internet, viewers on both sides of the aisle cried "Trump." Some You-Tube comments said it was "terrifying how prescient (it) is," while others criticized it as "anti-Trump" propaganda. A stone's throw away from the White House at the Hay-Adams Hotel, author Margaret Atwood and series star Elisabeth Moss are quick to remind viewers that both the book and the show were conceived before Trump was elected.

"I think we were on maybe Episode 6 when the election happened," says Moss, 34.... Had the election gone a different way, Moss and Atwood might have fielded different questions. But like many other recent TV and movie projects, "Handmaid's" has taken on a more pointed meaning in the Trump era. The seemingly newfound relevance, Atwood says, stems from the fact the totalitarian theocracy she created for the novel is grounded in history. "I put nothing into (the book) that has not been done in history at some time, in some place," the 77-year-old author says. "I didn't intend it to be prescient, I intended it to be a (warning)." She adds that whenever a "weird law" is enacted that's reminiscent of the novel, fans flock to her on social media in a panic....

Atwood hopes the show inspires viewers to "wake up" and "pay attention, and maybe vote next time." Moss already has had her awakening. "My close relationship with the book, and with what the book stands for and what the book says, has definitely made me personally more vocal in what I believe in and more active when I can be," she says. "Which I think is true of a lot of women right now. So thank you," she says to Atwood. "For what it's worth," Atwood jokes, "I ruined your life." "I was happy before," Moss laughs. "I was asleep, but I was happy."

Also available from: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/tv/2017/04/25/the-handmaids-tale-hulu-elisabeth-moss-margaret-atwood-samira-wiley-trump/100712404/>.

MAYER, Petra. "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* Soars to Top of Amazon Bestseller List." *NPR: All Things Considered* 7 February 2017. Online. Atwood interviewed along with Russell Perreault (The head of publicity for Anchor Books, which currently publishes *The Handmaid's Tale*). (472 w.).

Excerpt: ROBERT SIEGEL, HOST. At this point, it's probably safe to call it a trend. Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, is the latest work of classic dystopian fiction to hit the Amazon Bestseller lists since the presidential election. It joins George Orwell's 1984 and Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*." NPR's Petra Mayer reports.

PETRA MAYER: You might have seen protesters at the women's marches last month holding signs saying things like *The Handmaid's Tale* is not an instruction manual and, make Margaret Atwood fiction again. *The Handmaid's Tale* depicts an America collapsed into a theocratic dystopia called Gilead. It's a place where women are brutally oppressed. They're forbidden to read and forced to bear children for the ruling class. For many readers, that story is suddenly relevant. For Atwood herself, that's a bit of a surprise.

**MARGARET ATWOOD: Who knew? Let's just put it that way. When I wrote it, who knew?**

MAYER: *The Handmaid's Tale* is on top of the Amazon Bestseller lists. That's partly because Hulu has adapted it for TV. The show will debut in April, and viewers got their first glimpse of Gilead this past weekend during the Super Bowl.

(SOUNDBITE OF TV SHOW, "THE HANDMAID'S TALE")

UNIDENTIFIED ACTRESS: (As character) You girls will serve the leaders and their barren wives.

**ATWOOD: At this moment in U.S. history, quite a few people are worried that it's going that way.**

MAYER: According to publicist Russell Perreault, *The Handmaid's Tale* has been selling strongly for months.

RUSSELL PERREAULT: In the last year, we've gone up 60 percent. And since the election, it's been 200 percent increase in sales. Just this year alone, 2017, we've printed 125,000 copies of the book and since last November, 150,000 copies.

MAYER: And if you're wondering, that's a lot of books. Perreault says a lot of those copies are being bought by people who've read the book before.

PERREAULT: Now they're all reading it again, looking from a different view.

MAYER: Atwood says, back when she wrote the book 30 years ago, she got three distinct reactions.

**ATWOOD: The English said, jolly good yarn. They obviously we weren't too worried about it (laughter). The Canadians, in their nervous way, said, could it happen here? And the Americans said, how long have we got?**

MAYER: But it's not just nervous Americans on the left who are working out their worries on Amazon. As I was writing this story, *The Handmaid's Tale* was sitting at number one. *1984* was number two, and *Dangerous*, the upcoming book by alt-right provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos, was at number three. Petra Mayer, NPR News.

Available from: <https://www.npr.org/2017/02/07/513957906/margaret-atwoods-the-handmaids-tale-soars-to-top-of-amazon-bestseller-list>.

McNAMARA, Mary. "Author Reveals Origins of *Handmaid's Tale*." *Los Angeles Times* 7 May 2016. Section: Islander: D2. (917 w.).

Excerpt: Hulu's adaptation of ... *The Handmaid's Tale* has everyone seeing red. Literally.

Women dressed like the narrator of the classic, yet still disturbingly relevant, dystopian novel have been showing up everywhere, from Comic-Con to the National Mall. They made an appearance at the Los Angeles Times Book Festival, as did Atwood herself. Before speaking to a packed-to-the-rafters audience, she gave the Times a quick Facebook Live interview about her possible clairvoyance, the power of technology and whether *The Handmaid's Tale* is a feminist book.

**Question: Have you seen the handmaids?** Answer: I just saw the handmaids; they were in proper formation. They very modestly did not speak to us. But if you go up and ask them for a card, they will give you a card that says: "Don't let the bastards grind you down" in Latin. And they will explain to you what it means in English. They're doing their job. **Q: The handmaids have been appearing all over. On top of being a splendid marketing tool for the show on Hulu, what is it like to see these creatures from your imagination, not just embodied, but such a central part of a larger political conversation right now?** A: It's very weird. But we have to give some credit to the designer of the outfits, which are now very iconic. I've seen various iterations of this outfit over the years and she's done a wonderful job. Her name is Ane Crabtree. It is quite strange [the first images of the handmaids] came to me on Twitter. Someone took a video and sent it to me, I wasn't expecting that. The [handmaids] who turned up at the Texas legislature were not from Hulu. They popped up in the form of signs during the huge [women's] march in January.

**Q: This book was written in 1985, but it's seen as so prescient. How does it feel to have written something that seems like it's coming true?** A: Of course, you write such things in the hopes that they will therefore not come true. On the plus side, a lot of the people are reading the book. On the negative side, for reasons that you would not necessarily wish. It's ambivalent. I think that the television series has given a huge boost to that as well. Putting the trailer ad right in the middle of the Super Bowl, another unexpected move. I would call that guerrilla marketing.

**Q: There was a little kerfuffle at the Tribeca Film Festival about whether it's a feminist reading. And you call it an alternative future. It's not sci-fi?** A: It's not sci-fi in a galaxy far, far away and in another time. It's SF on this planet here, now, shortly. More like 1984 and less like "Star Wars." **Q: Do you consider it a feminist book?** A: If you ... make a mash-up of actual reality, which is partly what that book is, you're going to end up with something that inevitably people will say: "This is feminist." Because you cannot avoid that. Just as if you do a mash-up of reality from the point of view of African Americans in this country, you're going to end up with something that will say: "This is Black Lives Matter." It's not that people necessarily have started out from that premise. But if you're looking at reality, that will be the result because that is reality. I didn't put anything into the book that has not happened sometime, somewhere. Or wasn't happening then and isn't happening now. So you can call that feminist, if you like. I didn't start from ideology, I started from what I was collecting and seeing. But of course, I must have been instigated, must I not? That's No. 1.

No. 2. I always want to know what people mean by that word. Some people mean it quite negatively, other people mean it very positively, some people mean it in a broad sense, other people mean it in a more specific sense. Therefore, in order to answer the question, you have to ask the person what they mean.

**Q: You're an early adapter of Twitter and digital technology. Do you think this is something that helps people organize? Something that would help prevent the circumstances of *Handmaid's Tale*?** A: In early stages, it would help people organize, as it has done. But unfortunately, it also helps dictatorial regimes identify where you are and who you are. There's a sketch on the "Onion," some years ago that said: "The CIA has just invented this wonderful new thing to identify everybody in the country and it's called Facebook." That

was a joke, but.... In a democracy, when you're still allowed to have protest marches without being shot and arrested, I think, yes, it's a very good drawing-together and news-disseminating tool. But as you can see, it can also be used to disseminate news for purposes that you might not necessarily endorse. It's a tool, but who is using that tool, and what are they using it for? In this regime, in Gilead No. 1, those women do not have cellphones. And No. 2, if they did, they would probably take out the SIM cards and grind them to powder because they don't want people knowing where they are.

**Q: Is there anything you want to say to your readers?** A: Keep the faith. Whatever that may be. Don't get too depressed yet, because I have a belief in America being very diverse and ornery, and containing a lot of people who are not going to roll over very easily for a totalitarian dictatorship. That is what I think. It has been a bit of a shock to the very young, who don't remember things like this in the past. They think this is the very, very worst thing that has ever happened. But trust me, it isn't. Your mission is to keep this from not being any worse than it is.

Also available from: <http://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/books/author-reveals-origins-on-handmaid-s-tale-1.18650489>.

MEAD, Rebecca. "Margaret Atwood, the Prophet of Dystopia." *New Yorker* 93.9 (17 April 2017): 38FF. Profile.

Excerpt: When Margaret Atwood was in her twenties, an aunt shared with her a family legend about a possible seventeenth-century forebear: Mary Webster, whose neighbors, in the Puritan town of Hadley, Massachusetts, had accused her of witchcraft. "The townspeople didn't like her, so they strung her up," Atwood said recently. "But it was before the age of drop hanging, and she didn't die. She dangled there all night, and in the morning, when they came to cut the body down, she was still alive." Webster became known as Half-Hanged Mary. The maiden name of Atwood's grandmother was Webster, and the family tree can be traced back to John Webster, the fifth governor of Connecticut. "On Monday, my grandmother would say Mary was her ancestor, and on Wednesday she would say she wasn't," Atwood said. "So take your pick."

Atwood made the artist's pick: she chose the story. She once wrote a vivid narrative poem in the voice of Half-Hanged Mary—in Atwood's telling, a sardonic, independent-minded crone who was targeted by neighbors "for having blue eyes and a sunburned skin . . . a weedy farm in my own name, / and a sure-fire cure for warts." Webster's grim endurance at the end of the rope ("Most will have only one death. / I will have two.") grants her a perverse kind of freedom. She can now say anything: "The words boil out of me, / coil after coil of sinuous possibility. / The cosmos unravels from my mouth, / all fullness, all vacancy." In 1986, Atwood made Webster one of two dedicatees of her best-known novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, a dystopian vision of the near future, in which the United States has become a fundamentalist theocracy, and the few women whose fertility has not been compromised by environmental pollution are forced into childbearing. The other dedicatee of *The Handmaid's Tale* was Perry Miller, the scholar of American intellectual history; Atwood studied under him at Harvard, in the early sixties, extending her knowledge of Puritanism well beyond fireside tales.

Having embraced the heritage of Half-Hanged Mary—and having, at seventy-seven, reached an age at which sardonic independent-mindedness is permissible, and even expected—Atwood is winningly game to play the role of the wise elder who might have a spell up her sleeve. In January, I visited her in her home town of Toronto, and within a few hours of our meeting, while having coffee at a crowded café, she performed what friends know as a familiar party trick. After explaining that she had picked up the precepts of medieval palmistry decades ago, from an art-historian neighbor whose specialty was Hieronymus Bosch, Atwood spent several disconcerting minutes poring over my hands. First, she noted my heart line and the line of my

intellect, and what their relative positions revealed about my capacity for getting things done. She wiggled my thumbs, a test for stubbornness. She examined my life line—"You're looking quite healthy at the moment," she said, to my relief—then told me to shake my hands out and let them fall into a resting position, facing upward. She regarded them thoughtfully. "Well, the Virgin Mary you're not," she said, dryly. "But you knew that."

Atwood has long been Canada's most famous writer, and current events have polished the oracular sheen of her reputation. With the election of an American President whose campaign trafficked openly in the deprecation of women—and who, on his first working day in office, signed an executive order withdrawing federal funds from overseas women's-health organizations that offer abortion services—the novel that Atwood dedicated to Mary Webster has reappeared on best-seller lists. *The Handmaid's Tale* is also about to be serialized on television, in an adaptation, starring Elisabeth Moss, that will stream on Hulu. The timing could not be more fortuitous, though many people may wish that it were less so. In a photograph taken the day after the Inauguration, at the Women's March on Washington, a protester held a sign bearing a slogan that spoke to the moment: "Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again."

If the election of Donald Trump were fiction, Atwood maintains, it would be too implausible to satisfy readers. "There are too many wild cards—you want me to believe that the F.B.I. stood up and said this, and that the guy over at WikiLeaks did that?" she said. "Fiction has to be something that people would actually believe. If you had published it last June, everybody would have said, 'That is never going to happen.'" Atwood is a buoyant doomsayer. Like a skilled doctor, she takes evident satisfaction in providing an accurate diagnosis, even when the cultural prognosis is bleak. She attended the Toronto iteration of the Women's March, wearing a wide-brimmed floppy hat the color of Pepto-Bismol: not so much a pussy hat as the chapeau of a lioness. Among the signs she saw that day, her favorite was one held by a woman close to her own age; it said, "I can't believe I'm still holding this fucking sign." Atwood remarked, "After sixty years, why are we doing this again? But, as you know, in any area of life, it's push and pushback. We have had the pushback, and now we are going to have the push again."

Unlike many writers, Atwood does not require a particular desk, arranged in a particular way, before she can work. "There's a good and a bad side to that," she told me. "If I did have those things, then I would be able to put myself in that fetishistic situation, and the writing would flow into me, because of the magical objects. But I don't have those, so that doesn't happen." The good side is that she can write anywhere, and does so, prolifically. She is equally uninhibited about genre. Atwood's bibliography runs to about sixty books—novels, poetry, short-story collections, works of criticism, children's books, and, most recently, a comic-book series about a part-feline, part-avian, part-human superhero called *Angel Catbird*. She is offhanded about her versatility. "I always wrote more than one type of thing," she said. "Nobody told me not to." On one occasion, over tea, she showed me her left hand: it had writing on it. "When all else fails, you do have a surface you can write on," she said.

Atwood travels frequently, and has often spent months at a time living in foreign countries, sometimes under conditions that a less flexible artist might find impossibly distracting. She started writing *The Handmaid's Tale* on a clunky rented typewriter while on a fellowship in West Berlin, in 1984. (Orwell was on her mind.) She spent a winter in the remote English village of Blakeney, in Norfolk, where her only means of calling North America was a telephone kiosk that was usually used for storing potatoes, and where the stone-floored cottage in which she wrote was so cold that she developed chilblains on her toes. When her daughter, Jess, who was born in 1976, was eighteen months old, Atwood and her partner, the novelist Graeme Gibson, made a round-the-world trip. After winding through Europe, they visited Afghanistan—a keen student of military history, Atwood wanted to see the terrain where the

British had been defeated—as well as India and Singapore. They proceeded to Australia, for the Adelaide Literary Festival, then returned to Canada, via Fiji and Hawaii. They made do with carry-on luggage the whole way.

Home is a mansion in the Annex neighborhood of Toronto, near the university. She and Gibson have lived there for more than thirty years, and a basement office serves as the headquarters of Atwood's company, O. W. Toad, Ltd. (The whimsical name is an anagram of "Atwood," but sometimes there are postal inquiries as to the existence of a Mr. Toad.) Atwood does not drive, and, for exercise as well as for efficiency, she likes to walk around her neighborhood; she often encounters en route some friend of a half-century's standing, and they will stop and discuss the past and future surgeries of loved ones—the inevitable discourse of the septuagenarian. Sometimes she drags a heavy shopping cart, loaded with books, for donation to the local library.

Atwood is enormously well read, and is an evangelist for books she admires, especially by young writers. When I was visiting, she pressed into my hands *Stay with Me*, a novel by the twenty-nine-year-old Nigerian writer Ayobami Adebayo. Sarah Polley, the Canadian film director and writer, who is a friend of Atwood's, told me, "Usually, after seeing her, I come home with a full notebook, half in her handwriting and half in mine, of every movie and book I had heard of while talking to her—a full course load." Polley recently wrote the script for a six-part Netflix adaptation of Atwood's 1996 novel, *Alias Grace*, which is based on a true-life murder mystery in nineteenth-century rural Canada. The book earned Atwood her third of five Booker Prize nominations.

Atwood is warmly recognized in Toronto, whether she is on the street, in a restaurant, or in the subway. (She once slipped me one of her senior-citizen tickets, with a sly arch of the eyebrow.) Traffic cops nod to her in crosswalks, and every encounter I had with her was interrupted by a supplicant autograph hunter or selfie seeker. She never declined. "In the age of social media, you cannot say no, because you'll get 'Mean Margaret Atwood was rude to me in a restaurant,'" she told me one lunchtime, after graciously signing yet another young woman's notebook. (Atwood speaks in a low, ironical monotone but adopts a querulous squeak when impersonating imagined detractors.) She would look striking even if she were not familiar. She owns an array of brightly colored winter coats—jewel red, imperial purple—with faux-fur-trimmed hoods that frame her face, as do her abundant curls of silver hair. She has high cheekbones and an aquiline nose, the kind of features that age has a hard time withering. Her skin is clear and translucent, of the sort that writers of popular Victorian fiction associated with good moral character.

One morning, I accompanied her to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, at the University of Toronto, where she has donated her archive: four hundred and seventy-four boxes' worth of papers, so far. She had requested in advance to see materials related to *The Handmaid's Tale*, and a small study room had been reserved for our use. Boxes had been rolled in on a cart, and one of them contained Atwood's handwritten draft. On an early page, she describes the plain contours of the room in which Offred, the novel's narrator, lives—"A chair, a table, a lamp"—though Atwood had not yet refined the detail that, in the published version, gives the opening paragraph of the second chapter a menacing power: "There must have been a chandelier, once. They've removed anything you could tie a rope to." Another box was labelled "*Handmaid's Tale: Background*," and Atwood pried the box open to reveal files containing sheaves of newspaper clippings from the mid-eighties.

"Clip-clippety-clip, out of the newspaper I clipped things," she said, as we looked through the cuttings. There were stories of abortion and contraception being outlawed in Romania, and reports from Canada lamenting its falling birth rate, and articles from the U.S. about

Republican attempts to withhold federal funding from clinics that provided abortion services. There were reports about the threat to privacy posed by debit cards, which were a novelty at the time, and accounts of U.S. congressional hearings devoted to the regulation of toxic industrial emissions, in the wake of the deadly gas leak in Bhopal, India. An Associated Press item reported on a Catholic congregation in New Jersey being taken over by a fundamentalist sect in which wives were called “handmaidens”—a word that Atwood had underlined.

In writing *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood was scrupulous about including nothing that did not have a historical antecedent or a modern point of comparison. (She prefers that her future-fantasy books be labelled “speculative fiction” rather than “science fiction.” “Not because I don't like Martians . . . they just don't fall within my skill set,” she wrote in the introduction to *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*, an essay collection that she published in 2011.) The ritualized procreation in the novel—effectively, state-sanctioned rape—is extrapolated from the *Bible*. “Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her,” Atwood recited. “Obviously, they stuck the two together and out came the baby, and it was given to Rachel. No kidding. It is right there in the text.” In Atwood's book, the Handmaids are cultivated, like livestock. “I'm taken to the doctor's once a month, for tests: urine, hormones, cancer smear, blood test,” Offred recounts. “The same as before, except that now it's obligatory.” Only after completing several chapters does the reader queasily realize that Offred's innocuous-sounding name is a designation of ownership: the Commander in whose household the narrator serves is named Fred. A decade ago, the book was banned from high schools in Judson, Texas, on the ground that it was anti-Christian and excessively explicit about sex. In an open letter to the school district, Atwood pointed out that the *Bible* has a good deal more to say about sex than her book does, and defended her fiction's essential truthfulness, speculative or not. “If you see a person heading toward a huge hole in the ground, is it not a friendly act to warn him?” she wrote.

With the novel, she intended not just to pose the essential question of dystopian fiction—“Could it happen here?”—but also to suggest ways that it had already happened, here or elsewhere. While living in West Berlin, Atwood visited Poland, where martial law had only recently been lifted; many dissidents were still in jail. She already knew members of the Polish resistance from the Second World War, who had gone into exile in Canada. “I remember one person saying a very telling thing: ‘Pray you will never have occasion to be a hero,’” she said. Atwood's long-time literary agent, Phoebe Larmore, told me of seeing Atwood during the writing of *The Handmaid's Tale*. “I had been quite ill that year, and Margaret came and sat on my sofa, and I think she looked worse than I did,” Larmore recalled. “I asked her what was happening. She said, ‘It's the new novel. It scares me. But I have to write it.’”

*The Handmaid's Tale* became a best-seller, despite some snifty reviews, like one in the *Times*, by Mary McCarthy, who wrote, “Even when I try, in the light of these palely lurid pages, to take the Moral Majority seriously, no shiver of recognition ensues.” It has since sold so many millions of copies that Atwood considers them uncountable. Her friend the novelist Valerie Martin was the first to read the finished manuscript; they were both teaching in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. “There is kind of a disagreement about what I said,” Martin told me. “She says that I said, ‘There is something in it.’ But what I think I said is: ‘You are going to be rich.’” The book quickly became canonical. Atwood's daughter was nine when it was published; by the time she was in high school, it was required reading for graduation.

Despite the novel's current air of timeliness, the contours of the dystopian future that Atwood imagined in the eighties do not map closely onto the present moment—although recent news images of asylum seekers fleeing across the U.S. border into Canada have a chilling resonance with the opening moments of the television series, which shows Moss, not yet enlisted as a Handmaid, attempting to escape from the U.S. to its northern neighbor, where democracy

prevails. Still, the U.S. in 2017 does not show immediate signs of becoming Gilead, Atwood's imagined theocratic American republic. President Trump is not an adherent of traditional family values; he is a serial divorcer. He is not known to be a man of religious faith; his Sundays are spent on the golf course.

What does feel familiar in *The Handmaid's Tale* is the blunt misogyny of the society that Atwood portrays, and which Trump's vocal repudiation of "political correctness" has loosed into common parlance today. Trump's vilification of Hillary Clinton, Atwood believes, is more explicable when seen through the lens of the Puritan witch-hunts. "You can find Web sites that say Hillary was actually a Satanist with demonic powers," she said. "It is so seventeenth-century that you can hardly believe it. It's right out of the subconscious—just lying there, waiting to be applied to people." The legacy of witch-hunting, and the sense of shame that it engendered, Atwood suggests, is an enduring American blight. "Only one of the judges ever apologized for the witch trials, and only one of the accusers ever apologized," she said. Whenever tyranny is exercised, Atwood warns, it is wise to ask, "Cui bono?" Who profits by it? Even when those who survived the accusations levelled against them were later exonerated, only meagre reparations were made. "One of the keys to America is that your neighbor may be a Communist, a serial killer, or in league with satanic forces," Atwood said. "You really don't trust your fellow-citizens very much."

Now, Atwood argues, women have been put on notice that hard-won rights may be only provisional. "It's the return to patriarchy," she said, as she paged through the clippings. "Look at his Cabinet!" she said of Trump. "Look at the kind of laws that people have put through in the states. Absolutely they want to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and they will have to deal with the consequences if they do. You're going to have a lot more orphanages, aren't you? A lot more dead women, a lot more illegal abortions, a lot more families with children in them left without a mother. They want it 'back to the way it was.' Well, that is part of the way it was."

Atwood was born in Ottawa, but she spent formative stretches of her early years in the wilderness—first in northern Quebec, and then north of Lake Superior. Her father, Carl Atwood, was an entomologist, and, until Atwood was almost out of elementary school, the family passed all but the coldest months in virtually complete isolation at insect-research stations; at one point, they lived in a log cabin that her father had helped construct.

Her mother, also named Margaret—among her intimates, the novelist goes by Peggy—was a dietitian. In the months in the woods, she secured workbooks from school for Atwood and her brother, Harold, who is three years her senior. "The faster you could do them, the sooner you could go out and play, so I became very rapid and superficial in my execution of those sorts of things," Atwood said. In inclement weather, the children amused themselves by making comic books and by reading. A favorite book was *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, which Atwood's parents bought, by mail order, in 1945. "I don't remember finding any of them frightening," she wrote later. "By and large, bad things happened only to bad people, which was reassuring; though children have a bloodthirsty sense of justice, they don't learn mercy until later."

Her father had grown up poor, in rural Nova Scotia. Her mother, whose family was also from Nova Scotia, grew up in slightly better circumstances: Atwood's maternal grandfather was a country doctor, and an aunt had been the first woman to get a master's degree in history from the University of Toronto. Atwood's parents were resilient and curious and devoted to the outdoors, and the Atwood children were encouraged to be the same. They sledged across a still frozen lake at the start of the season, and canoed across it during the summer months. In Atwood's second novel, *Surfacing*, a psychological thriller threaded with twisted family relations that was published in 1972, she depicted the landscape of her youth with unsentimental, sensual precision: "The water was covered with lily pads, the globular yellow

lilies with their thick center snouts pushing up from among them.... When the paddles hit bottom on the way across, gas bubbles from decomposing vegetation rose and burst with a stench of rotten eggs or farts.” When Atwood was about ten, her father built a vacation cabin on an unoccupied island in the lake. The family still retreats there in the summer.

In 1948, Margaret’s father received an appointment at the University of Toronto. (Three years later, another daughter, Ruth, was born.) Margaret, having been raised as her brother’s peer by an unshrinking mother, was unschooled in the conventions of little-girl society. “In the woods, you wore pants not because it was butch but because if you didn’t wear pants and tuck the tops into your socks you would get blackflies up your legs,” she said. “They make little holes in you, into which they inject an anticoagulant. You don’t feel them when they are doing it, and then you take your clothes off and find out you are covered with blood.” In *Cat’s Eye* (1988), Atwood drew on the experience of being transferred from a navigable wilderness to the more treacherous civilization of prepubescent girls. The book’s narrator, Elaine, explains that she has a classmate who “tells me her hair is honey-blond, that her haircut is called a pageboy, that she has to go to the hairdresser’s every two months to get it done. I haven’t known there are such things as pageboys and hairdressers.”

Atwood started writing in earnest in high school. Her parents, who lived through the Depression, were encouraging but practical. She told me, “My mother said, caustically, ‘If you are going to be a writer, you had better learn to spell.’ I said, airily, ‘Others will do that for me.’ And they do.” She followed her brother to the University of Toronto. (A neurophysiologist, Harold Atwood is a professor emeritus in the department of physiology.) Atwood enrolled in the philosophy department, but after discovering that logical positivism was its mainstay, rather than ethics and aesthetics, she switched to literature.

The university’s literature curriculum was unapologetically British: she started with *Beowulf* and took it from there. Canadian literature had yet to be considered worthy of study. A decade later, in 1972, Atwood made a contribution to its establishment as a proper field, with her lucid survey *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. In that book, which made her a household name in Canada, she persuasively posited that, whereas the controlling idea of English literature is the island, and the pervasive symbol of American literature is the frontier, the dominant theme in Canadian literature is survival: “Our stories are likely to be tales not of those who made it but of those who made it back from the awful experience—the North, the snowstorm, the sinking ship—that killed everyone else.”

As an undergraduate, she audited Northrop Frye’s celebrated course on the *Bible* and literature. Frye helped her secure a fellowship at Harvard, where, in the sixties, she began to write a doctoral thesis on what she called the “English Metaphysical Romance”—the gothic fantasy novels of the nineteenth century. She never finished it. Atwood had embarked on an academic career not for the love of teaching or scholarship but because making a living as a writer seemed an implausible aspiration. “It was thought presumptuous—this is way before the age of creative-writing programs, and writers, to be serious, ought to be dead,” she recalled.

Atwood started her career as a poet. Her first professionally published collection, *The Circle Game*, won the Governor General’s Award in 1966, and has never been out of print. The poems, which take the ring-around-the-rosy children’s game as a starting point for an exploration of male-female relationships, show Atwood’s early aptitude for the unflinching, visceral metaphor. A lover examines the speaker’s face “indifferently / yet with the same taut curiosity / with which you might regard / a suddenly discovered part / of your own body: / a wart perhaps.” Atwood’s first novel, *The Edible Woman*, which was written in 1964 and published five years later, is a contemporary satire in which a young woman, having just become engaged—her husband-to-be is clearly the wrong guy—finds herself unable to eat.

Some reviewers hailed Atwood's work as a voice of the burgeoning feminist movement. (A reviewer in *Time* said that the novel had "the kick of a perfume bottle converted into a Molotov cocktail.") She resisted the identification. "I was not in New York, where all of that kicked off, in 1969," she said. "I was in Edmonton, Alberta, where there was no feminist movement, and would not be for quite some time." Atwood was then married to Jim Polk, who had been a classmate at Harvard, and whose teaching job had taken them to the Canadian Northwest. (They divorced in 1973.) "I had people interviewing me who would say, 'How do you get the housework done?' I would say, 'Look under the sofa, then we can talk.'"

In the sometimes divisive years of second-wave feminism, Atwood reserved the right to remain nonaligned. "I didn't want to become a megaphone for any one particular set of beliefs," she said. "Having gone through that initial phase of feminism when you weren't supposed to wear frocks and lipstick—I never had any use for that. You should be able to wear them without people saying you are a traitor to your sex." In a 1976 essay, "On Being a 'Woman Writer': Paradoxes and Dilemmas," Atwood described the mixed feelings experienced by women writers old enough to have forged a writing life before representatives of the women's movement came along to claim them. "It's not finally all that comforting to have a phalanx of women ... come breezing up now to tell them they were right all along," she wrote. "It's like being judged innocent after you've been hanged: the satisfaction, if any, is grim."

Given that her works are a mainstay of women's-studies curricula, and that she is clearly committed to women's rights, Atwood's resistance to a straightforward association with feminism can come as a surprise. But this wariness reflects her bent toward precision, and a scientific sensibility that was ingrained from childhood: Atwood wants the terms defined before she will state her position. Her feminism assumes women's rights to be human rights and is born of having been raised with a presumption of absolute equality between the sexes. "My problem was not that people wanted me to wear frilly pink dresses—it was that I wanted to wear frilly pink dresses, and my mother, being as she was, didn't see any reason for that," she said. Atwood's early years in the forest endowed her with a sense of self-determination, and with a critical distance on codes of femininity—an ability to see those codes as cultural practices worthy of investigation, not as necessary conditions to be accepted unthinkingly. This capacity for quizzical scrutiny underlies much of her fiction: not accepting the world as it is permits Atwood to imagine the world as it might be.

Atwood and Gibson, who met in Toronto publishing circles, spent the seventies living on a farm outside the city. The countryside was cheap, and it provided a congenial environment for Gibson's two teen-age sons; it also provides the setting for what Atwood acknowledges as some of her most autobiographical writing, in the short-story collection *Moral Disorder* (2006). The title story details the less picturesque aspects of country life. "Susan the cow went away in a truck one day and came back frozen and dismembered," Atwood writes. "It was like a magic trick—a woman sawed in half on the stage in plain view of all, to reappear fully restored to wholeness, walking down the aisle; except that Susan's transformation had gone the other way."

Atwood resists critics' attempts to find parallels between her life story and her fiction, and has no desire to write a memoir. "I am interested in reading other people's, if they have had fascinating or gruesome lives, but I don't think my life has been that fascinating or gruesome," she said. "The parts of writers' lives that are interesting are usually the part before they become a well-known writer." In the mid-eighties, shortly before she started to write *The Handmaid's Tale* but was already Canada's most celebrated novelist, a documentary filmmaker named Michael Rubbo spent several days with Atwood and her family at their island retreat in northern Quebec. Rubbo sought to locate the source of Atwood's inspiration and to uncover

the origins of her often gloomy themes, but most of his film is devoted to showing the ways that Atwood politely declined to conform to her inquisitor's thesis. "I use settings, but that is not to be confused with using real people, and things that have actually happened to those real people," she tells the filmmaker, while his camera lingers on her hands: she is slicing through the blood-red stalks of rhubarb plants with a chef's knife and casually discarding the poisonous leaves.

At one point, the Atwoods are given control of the camera, and conduct a strange pantomime in which Atwood sits with a brown paper bag over her head while other family members offer sentence-long characterizations of her. "That woman is my daughter, and she's incognito," Atwood's mother says, in the most illuminating of the remarks. Atwood, after removing the bag, says, "Michael Rubbo's whole problem is that he thinks of me as mysterious and a problem to be solved .... He's trying to find out why some of my work is sombre in tone, shall we say, and he's trying for some simple explanation of that in me or in my life, rather than in the society that I am portraying." At another moment, she suggests that her novels should be thought of as being in the tradition of the Victorian realist or social novel and should be read in the light of objective facts, rather than subjective experience.

Some of her most perceptive readers have taken this approach. The novelist Francine Prose, reviewing *Alias Grace*, noted that "Atwood has always had much in common with those writers of the last century who were engaged less by the subtle minutiae of human interaction than by the chance to use fiction as a means of exploring and dramatizing ideas." At its best, Atwood's fiction summons an intricate social world, whether it be a disquieting vision of the future, as in *The Handmaid's Tale*, or a vividly rendered past, as in *Alias Grace* or *The Blind Assassin*—a genre-bending tour de force set partly in small-town Canada in the nineteen-twenties, for which Atwood won the Booker Prize, in 2000.

Like her Victorian forebears, Atwood does not shy away from the idea that the novel is a place to explore questions of morality. In an e-mail, she wrote to me, "You can't use language and avoid moral dimensions, since words are so weighted (lilies that fester vs. weeds, etc.) and all characters have to live somewhere, even if they are rabbits, as in *Watership Down*, and they have to live at some time ... and they have to make choices." The challenge, she noted, is avoiding moralism: "How do you 'engage' without preaching too much and reducing the characters to mere allegories? A perennial problem. But when the large social issues are very large indeed (*Doctor Zhivago*), the characters will act within-and be acted upon by-everything that surrounds them."

At the same time, Atwood's best fiction is sustained by a specificity of detail—a capacity for noticing—that might be expected from one whose scientist father introduced her to a microscope at a young age. One morning, while we were walking in her neighborhood, Atwood bumped into an old friend, Adrienne Clarkson, a college contemporary who went on to have a distinguished career as a broadcaster, and, for six years, as the Governor General of Canada. "We are going to crawl into our eighties together," Clarkson said, inviting us to her home for tea. The women reminisced about studying with Northrop Frye. "He is the person who talked me into going to grad school instead of moving to Paris, and living in a garret and drinking absinthe," Atwood said. "But, Adrienne, you did move to Paris." "You came to visit," Clarkson said. "And you were painting your fingernails a beautiful shade of red," Atwood continued. "How frivolous of you to remember that," Clarkson said, fondly. "How novelistic of me to remember it," Atwood said.

Not long ago, a history society at the University of Toronto, which was compiling a video archive of notable alumni, asked to interview Atwood about her college days. On a chilly afternoon in January, she found her way to an upper room in the university's Gothic Revival

student center. Four eager undergraduates, all women, were there to film and quiz her. Atwood sat by a leaded-glass window against a gray sky, and amiably answered questions about what it was like being a young woman on campus in the fifties. “Whatever things are like when you are young, they seem normal, because you have nothing to compare them to,” she said. “For instance, I would not ever have worn jeans to high school. It would not have been permitted except on football days. They wanted us to wear jeans on football day, so we could sit on the hill and not have anyone looking up our skirts. It takes a while to figure this out, but now I realize that must have been the reason.”

In those days, Atwood said, there was no fear of rape on campus, as there seemed to be today. “I am not saying that it didn’t happen, but you would never hear of it,” she said. “And I would suspect that the chances of that happening were quite low, because what everybody was afraid of then was getting pregnant. The boys were afraid of getting pregnant, too, because you could end up married at an early age that way, and people didn’t particularly want that. But there was no Pill.” One young interviewer, wide-eyed, said, “It is very interesting to consider the importance of the Pill, not just for women but in changing society. I hadn’t really considered it.”

Atwood continued talking about changing mores—the supplanting of the panty girdle by nylon tights, and the consequent innovation of the miniskirt. But when one of the students fumbled with the camera, in an effort to renew its memory card, Atwood took the opportunity to turn the tables.

“I was astonished to see that the Polaroid camera has come back—why? What do you do with a Polaroid picture?” she asked. The students, delighted, offered a chorus of explanations: such images combined the instant gratification of the selfie with the pleasure of a physical object that could be pinned on a wall. Atwood went on to seek their views on other surprisingly resurgent technologies—vinyl records, even cassette players—and then shifted to something more up-to-date. “Do you know an exercise app called *Zombies, Run!*?” she asked. “Is that, like, where you go for a run and zombies chase you?” one student asked. Yes, Atwood said: the app, a kind of interactive podcast, plays an apocalyptic story line in a listener’s ears as she jogs, thus making a workout more entertaining, if you like that sort of thing. “I’m in one of the episodes,” Atwood announced. She has a cameo as herself: her voice is supposedly being transmitted over a crackling phone line from Toronto.

Finally, the students’ camera was working. Atwood faced it again, and said, brightly, “So, let’s see. What else do you want to know?” Her openness to younger people is, in part, a consequence of the passage of time: there are many more younger people around than older ones, so she’d better be open to them, if she’s going to be open to anybody. But it is also temperamental. *Zombies, Run!* was co-created by Naomi Alderman, a British novelist in her early forties, who is also a video-game designer. She and Atwood became friends after Atwood chose to be her mentor, through a program sponsored by Rolex. “She was intrigued that I might know about something she doesn’t know about yet, and I might be able to tell her about it,” Alderman said. “I don’t think she judges anything in advance as being beneath her, or beyond her, or outside her realm of interest.” Alderman has accompanied Atwood and Gibson on several bird-watching vacations, including one earlier this year in the rain forests of Panama. “We stayed in tents,” Alderman told me. “And the first night I was going back to my tent and my headlamp caught these blue shining glints on the jungle floor, and every single one of these glints was a pair of spider’s eyes staring at me. When I told Margaret, she was very disappointed—she really wanted to see the spiders.”

Atwood’s embrace of technological innovation is sometimes more theoretical than practical: she has yet to master streaming video, so she still watches DVDs. Occasionally, her fascination

with technological processes, combined with an incomprehension of them, can have productive results. A dozen or so years ago, when videoconferencing technology was still a novelty, Atwood wondered whether it might be possible to develop a means of conducting book signings remotely. “I thought of the writing flying through the air, and materializing somewhere else,” she said. Her flight of fancy, combined with some technical and marketing know-how assembled by Matthew Gibson, her stepson, resulted in the LongPen, a robotic device that enables a writer—or anyone—to sign a paper remotely in a manner that replicates the speed and pressure of the original autograph, and is indistinguishable from it. (Gibson has since created an e-signature company, Syngrafi, and it sells the LongPen, which is marketed less to weary authors than to financial and legal companies.)

Atwood was an early adopter of Twitter, signing up in 2009; she now has about a million and a half followers, though she is aware that some of that number must be bots. “I do sometimes get ‘I miss your dick’—they don’t read the fine print,” she said. She appreciates followers who have a specialized interest in the sciences; they help her keep abreast of recent developments that might be of interest for a future writing project, or resonate with a past one. She engages, often cheerily, with her followers and others, sometimes on topics that another writer might avoid. “Only ‘race’ is the human race, sez me. (And says science.)” she wrote in response to one user’s speculation that she was Jewish. “But no, I wouldn’t have ended up in a Hitler death camp for that reason.”

For years, Atwood has argued that Twitter in particular and the Internet in general have been good for literacy. “People have to actually be able to read and write to use the Internet, so it’s a great literacy driver, if kids are given the tools and the incentive to learn the skills that allow them to access it,” she said, while being interviewed at a digital-media conference in 2011. She has been a champion of Wattpad, a story-sharing site founded in Toronto a decade ago. In her view, it not only provides a place for North American teen-agers to publish their own zombie tales; it also offers cell-phone-equipped readers in the developing world with an entry point into fiction, even if they have no access to libraries, schools, or books. Her 2015 novel, *The Heart Goes Last*, which takes the premise of for-profit prisons to monstrous, comic ends, was excerpted on Wattpad. Atwood has also published a collection of poems, “Thriller Suite,” serially, on Wattpad; the book has been viewed more than three hundred and eighty thousand times since then, presumably reaching many readers who had never bought a volume of poetry.

She believes that early fears, among some observers, that the advent of the Web would mean the end of books were misplaced. “I think we know now that, neurologically, there are reasons why that isn’t going to happen,” Atwood said. “Installments on a phone—those, the brain can handle. *War and Peace*, maybe not. Though *War and Peace* was first published in installments, by the way.” She is fond of saying that, with all technology, there is a good side, a bad side, and a stupid side that you weren’t expecting. “Look at an axe—you can cut a tree down with it, and you can murder your neighbor with it,” she said. “And the stupid side you hadn’t considered is that you can accidentally cut your foot off with it.”

A few years ago, Atwood became the first author to participate in a conceptual art project, the Future Library, which was conceived by a Scottish artist named Katie Paterson. In the course of a hundred years, a hundred writers will contribute a manuscript to the project. The manuscripts will remain unread except for their titles—Atwood’s is “Scribbler Moon”—until 2114, when they will be printed on paper made from a thousand pine trees that have been planted in the Nordmarka, a forest not far from where the library will be maintained, in Oslo, Norway.

“Being the kind of child who buried things in the back yard in jars, hoping that someone else

would dig them up sometime, I of course liked this project,” she told me. Atwood has a keen interest in conservation: she uses her Twitter feed to highlight ecological issues ranging from the decimation of the bee population to ocean pollution. The optimism inherent in the Future Library—the belief that there will be readers, and a world for them to inhabit—seems at odds with some of the darker scenarios in Atwood’s fiction, and I suggested as much to her.

“This is not a question of expect,” she said. “It is a question of hope. It is a question of faith rather than knowledge. You wouldn’t do it unless you thought there was a chance.” Humans, she said, “have hope built in,” adding, “If our ancestors had not had that component, they would not have bothered getting up in the morning. You are always going to have hope that today there will be a giraffe, where yesterday there wasn’t one.” At the same time, Atwood loves to entertain notions of how degraded our future might become, and what effect that might have on the human race. She speculates that, if our atmosphere becomes too carbon-heavy, with a dwindling in the oxygen supply, one of the first things that will happen is that we will become a lot less intelligent.

But a novelist necessarily imagines the fate of individuals; the human condition is what the novel was made for exploring. “We just actually can’t bear the idea of nothing,” Atwood said. “I think that is partly to do with grammar. You say, ‘I will be dead,’ but there is still an ‘I.’ There is still a subject.” Her novels, she went on, are not without hope, either. *The Handmaid’s Tale* has a coda, in the form of an address given, in 2195, by a keynote speaker at an academic conference, the Twelfth Symposium on Gileadean Studies. Civilization has survived, even to the point of sustaining groaningly bad academic puns. (Women fleeing Gilead, a professor notes, cross the border via “The Underground Frailroad.”) “I have never done everybody in,” Atwood said. “I have never polished them all off so that there’s nobody left alive, now, have I? No.”

In the early aughts, she began an ambitious cycle of novels exploring a different kind of dystopian future. The *MaddAddam* Trilogy—*Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam*—was published between 2003 and 2013. The books depict a North American landscape that is ravaged by ecological disaster and inhabited by a genetically modified race of quasi-humans, the Crakers. As usual, Atwood researched her subject voraciously, and this time she was further enabled by the Internet. The trilogy crackles with a gleeful inventiveness that is sometimes tonally at odds with its apocalyptic content: the Crakers’ skin cells have been modified to repel ultraviolet rays and mosquitoes, for example, and the capacity for sexual jealousy has been edited out of their genome.

One evening in Toronto, Atwood invited me to her home, where we sat in its spacious kitchen on tall stools at a counter, overlooking her wintry, barren-looking garden. Graeme Gibson poured three glasses of whiskey while Atwood sorted through Christmas cards, dispensing with the chore as efficiently as if she were slicing rhubarb. I remarked on an aspect of *Oryx and Crake* that had moved me. The protagonist, Snowman, apparently left alone in the world, strives to remember unusual words he once knew. Atwood writes, “Valance. Norn. Serendipity. Pibroch. Lubricious. When they’ve gone out of his head, these words, they’ll be gone, everywhere, forever. As if they had never been.” Reading this passage in recent months led me to think about the catastrophic devaluation of intellection that seems to have occurred in American society: the willful repudiation of rigorous thinking, and objective facts, that helped propel Trump to victory. I remarked to Atwood that it felt like a prescient metaphor.

“It feels like real life,” Atwood replied, quickly. “I am sure every generation feels that way, as they see younger people coming up who don’t know what they are talking about.” She asked if I knew Edith Wharton’s short story “After Holbein”: “This old gentleman in New York society goes off to visit this hostess of his youth, and they sit at this enormous table, and everything is

as wonderful as he remembers it, and there are bouquets of flowers, and this delicious food, and they have this wonderful conversation and she looks as beautiful as ever. And you see it all from the point of view of the servants, and it's two old people sitting at a table eating gruel, and the flowers are all bunches of newspaper."

News comes often to Atwood of friends who have died or are ailing. Gibson has been given a diagnosis of early dementia, and they are both supporters of the Canadian dying-with-dignity movement. "The story of Wharton's that really terrifies me is 'The Pelican,'" she went on, recalling a tale in which a well-born widow takes to giving public lectures to support her young son, and then continues to give them for decades, even after the son is a grown man. "People are very sympathetic, but the lecture itself is like watching someone unreeling from her mouth a very long spool of blank paper," Atwood said. "That's the metaphor that frightens me—that I am going to be up in public, unravelling from my mouth a long spool of blank paper."

In March, Atwood came to New York City, for the annual National Book Critics Circle award ceremony, where she was being given a lifetime-achievement award. (Atwood recently remarked, on an Ask Me Anything thread on Reddit, that she is at the "Gold Watch and Goodbye" phase of her career.) The ceremony was held at the New School, and the collective mood of the assembled editors, critics, and writers—a concentration of New York's liberal intelligentsia in its purest form—was celebratory, as such events always are, but also agitated and galvanized. That morning, President Trump had issued his first federal budget plan, and he had proposed eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as ending funding for public broadcasting, and closing agencies devoted to social welfare and environmental oversight. The crowd felt like bruised defenders of a civilization that they hadn't realized was susceptible to attack.

Trump's agenda was criticized by many of the award recipients. Michelle Dean, a young Canadian writer who won the association's annual prize for excellence in reviewing, declared, "The struggle we presently find ourselves in is not a mistake, and not a fluke.... It crept into our lives while we were napping. Power sometimes works that way, but I still wish we hadn't missed it." Lately, Dean added, she'd been rereading *The Handmaid's Tale* for the first time since high school: "There are so few books like that being published right now. The application of literary intelligence to this question of power—it's kind of out of style. And many writers just seem more interested in exploring the self."

Two days before Trump's Inauguration, Atwood had published an essay in *The Nation*, in which she questioned the generalities sometimes made by left-leaning intellectuals about the role of the artist in public life. "Artists are always being lectured on their moral duty, a fate other professionals—dentists, for example—generally avoid," she observed. "There's nothing inherently sacred about films and pictures and writers and books. *Mein Kampf* was a book." In fact, she said, writers and other artists are particularly prone to capitulating to authoritarian pressure; the isolation inherent in the craft makes them psychologically vulnerable. "The pen is mightier than the sword, but only in retrospect," she wrote. "At the time of combat, those with the swords generally win."

At the New School, when Atwood, wearing a long black dress with a patterned black shawl draped around her shoulders, was summoned to the stage, she took a cheekier tack than she had taken in the *Nation* essay. "I'm very, very, very happy to be here, because they let me across the border," she said, her voice low and deliberate. Atwood characterized literary criticism as a thankless task. "Authors are sensitive beings," she observed, to titters of amusement. "You, therefore, know that all positive adjectives applied to them will be forgotten, yet anything even faintly smacking of imperfection in their work will rankle until the end of time." An author whom she had reviewed once berated her use of the adjective "accomplished,"

she recalled. “Don’t you know that “accomplished” is an insult?” she deadpanned. “I didn’t know.”

Then her remarks took an exhortatory turn. “Why do I do such a painful task?” she said. “For the same reason I give blood. We must all do our part, because if nobody contributes to this worthy enterprise then there won’t be any, just when it’s most needed.” Now is one of those times, she warned: “Never has American democracy felt so challenged.” The necessary conditions for dictatorship, Atwood noted, include the shutting down of independent media, which mutes the expression of contrary or subversive opinions; writers form part of the fragile barrier standing between authoritarian control and open democracy. “There are still places on this planet where to be caught reading you, or even me, would incur a severe penalty,” Atwood said. “I hope there will soon be fewer such places.” Her voice dropped to a stage whisper: “I am not holding my breath.”

In the meantime, she thanked the book critics, though even her gratitude carried a note of subversion. “I will cherish this lifetime-achievement award from you, though, like all sublunar blessings, it is a mixed one,” she said. “Why do I only get one lifetime? Where did this lifetime go?”

Available from: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/margaret-atwood-the-prophet-of-dystopia>.

MUNROE, Grant. “The Lovebirds: On Secluded Pelee Island, The Literary Duo Has Spent Decades Protecting Their Feathered Friends.” *The Walrus* September 2017: 62-63.

Excerpt: Step outside. Behind the cars and construction, the lawnmowers and dogs, you’ll likely hear the chirps, coos, warbles, whistles, peeps, cries, and trills of birdsong. It’s music so common that we often register it only in its extremes: the concrete silence of empty industrial parks, the green symphony of northern woodlands. Mostly, birds are just there, peeping, tweeting, then darting off. But to a surprisingly large group of North Americans—almost forty-eight million, by one count—they’ve become objects of particular affection. Among the most famous of this tribe are Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson, a mated pair of authors. In May, at the height of spring migration, I met the couple, whose shared love of birdwatching and conservation spans the better part of their forty-six-year partnership, at a café on Ontario’s Pelee Island—the southernmost populated point in Canada, situated in the western basin of Lake Erie. The seventy-seven-year-old Atwood, face shaded under a wide-brimmed hat, shared a sandwich with Gibson, who wore a fiddler’s cap and brown cardigan. They were on the island for the sixteenth annual Springsong Weekend—a fundraiser partly founded by Atwood and Gibson in 2002 to support the heritage centre on Pelee (rhymes with peewee)—and to birdwatch with the friends they host there for visits each spring....

Available from: <https://thewalrus.ca/how-margaret-atwood-and-graeme-gibson-built-a-bird-sanctuary/>.

NANCLARES, Silvia. “Cuando la distopía se hizo presente: Entrevista con Margaret Atwood.” *Minerva: Revista del Círculo de Bellas Artes* 28 (2017): 5-8. In Spanish.

Available from: <http://www.circulobellasartes.com/revistaminerva/articulo.php?id=701>.

NATHOO, Zulekha. “The Handmaid’s Tale Has Renewed Resonance and a New Audience.” *CBC News* 26 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood’s classic dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* “the one that’s required reading in most Canadian schools and that has been banned in some American ones”

has given birth to its first television series, set to air in Canada April 30 on Bravo. "I see it as something that was more of a potential back in 1985," Atwood told CBC News in Los Angeles Tuesday, referring to the year the book was published. "More of a potential has now become more of an actual. The heartening thing is that a lot of people have become much more active than they were even during the [U.S.] election."

Atwood, along with "Mad Men's" Elisabeth Moss, "Gilmore Girls" Alexis Bledel and other stars of the series gathered in Hollywood on Tuesday for the L.A. premiere of the series that premiers in the U.S. Wednesday on Hulu. Atwood was a consultant producer for the series, "which basically means I have conversations with people and then they do what they were going to do anyway," she joked. "But luckily I approved of what they were going to do anyway so we didn't have any fights."

The revered author, 77, also makes a cameo appearance. Her character dishes out a vicious slap to Offred, played by Moss. "We shot that several times because they said: 'You need to do it harder,'" said Atwood. "I gave her a little tap in the beginning and then they said: 'Come on!' I didn't want to give my leading lady a concussion."

The series was filmed in Toronto, which was meant to resemble a setting based on Cambridge, Mass., outside Boston. Still, Canada plays a notable role in the story heading north becomes the plan for those trying to flee persecution. "Canada has been escaped to many times," said Atwood. "So let us hope we can keep Canada as a place you can escape to."

Available from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/handmaids-tale-premiere-1.4085488>.

STEINFELD, Jemimah. "Novel Lines: An Interview with Margaret Atwood on Current Threats to Free Speech and Why Scientists Need Defending." *Index on Censorship* 46.2 (2017): 73-75. A conversation about fake news, silencing scientists and handmaids in Texas.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood has a wish. She would like to see a list of martyrs who have been killed for free speech and for those martyrs to somehow be commemorated, either through a statue or a wall. "These people give their all and then somebody kills them and then we all forget about them," Atwood told *Index* over the phone from her office in Toronto. Who would be on Atwood's list? Potentially William Tyndale, a writer and translator of the *Bible*, who was executed in the 15th century. "Go back a bit; go back in history. You could go back to Socrates," she said. It's hardly a surprise that Atwood would want some form of commemoration for persecuted writers; the Booker winner is an ardent supporter of free speech. Atwood, who is a long-standing patron of *Index on Censorship*, received the English PEN Pinter prize in recognition of her work defending writers' rights in 2016...

TOLAN, Fiona. "I Could Say That, Too': An Interview with Margaret Atwood." *Contemporary Women's Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 452-464.

Excerpt: This interview with Margaret Atwood was conducted via email in September 2016, and thus fell squarely between the Brexit vote (The United Kingdom European membership referendum of 23 June 2016) and, in the United States, Donald Trump's electoral victory over Hillary Clinton (8 November 2016).... In the interview ..., in a typically Atwoodian manner, the author denies any particular creative interest in old age, conceding only: "Human beings are interesting to me as a writer. Some human beings are older than others." Nevertheless, aging narrators and, specifically, aging women writers, have become increasingly visible in her more recent works, and these fictional figures of the woman author provide a telling counterpoint to Atwood in the sixth decade.

VINEYARD, Jennifer. "Why Those Red Robes?" *New York Times* 15 June 2017. Section C: 1. (1880 w.).

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood's rule for herself when writing *The Handmaid's Tale* was that everything had to be based on some real-world antecedent. And she was able to combine disparate historical events in plausible—and horrific—ways. Hulu's TV adaptation of her novel does the same; even when the show expands the world established in the novel and adds scenes that weren't in the original material, they "could have been, because they have precedents," Atwood said in a phone interview. Ahead of the Season 1 finale on Wednesday, Atwood explained the historical basis of the book and the show's most disconcerting elements.

### **Episode 1: Color-Coordinated Clothing**

The women of Gilead all wear clothing and colors prescribed by their status in this society: red for handmaids, blue for wives, green for Marthas, brown for aunts. "Organizing people according to what they're wearing—who should wear what and when, who has to cover up what—is a very, very, very, very old human vocation," Atwood said. It dates back to the first known legal code, the Code of Hammurabi, one part of which stated that "only aristocratic ladies were allowed to wear veils," she added. "If you were caught wearing a veil, and if you were in fact a slave, the penalty was execution," Atwood continued. "It meant that you were pretending to be someone that you were not." The handmaid's garb comes from a variety of sources (mid-Victorian bonnets and veils, nun wimples). Atwood's trip to Afghanistan in 1978—where she wore a chador—was also an influence. "They weren't imposing it on everybody, at that point," she said. "They did later." All of these codes of attire—including the Third Reich's yellow stars for Jews and pink triangles for gays—were ways of "identifying people, controlling people," she said. "It's easy to see at once who this person is." The handmaid's assigned color, red, was used by Canada for its prisoners of war, Atwood added, "who had the privilege to wear because it shows up so very well in the snow." The red is also borrowed from Christian iconography of the late-medieval, early Renaissance period, she said, in which "the Virgin Mary would inevitably wear blue or blue-green, and Mary Magdalene would inevitably wear red."

### **Episode 1: Mob Justice**

Gilead likes its ceremonies, and it has one to punish political enemies or disruptive elements that also acts as a release for the otherwise tightly controlled handmaids. The women stand in a circle and collectively participate in an execution, in some cases by tearing the accused apart with their bare hands. In the novel, it is called a "participation," a portmanteau of the words participation and execution. "When the mob takes over, no one person is responsible," Atwood said. And this kind of frenzied murder party has a very old precedent, she added, citing "the Dionysian revels of ancient Greece," in which [the] aenads tore apart sacrificial victims for the god Dionysus. The mob will sometimes demand justice. "During the French Revolution, Princesse de Lamballe was torn apart and had her head put on a pike, which was paraded under the window of Marie Antoinette," Atwood said. "And in Émile Zola's novel *Germinial*, which is based on real-life 19<sup>th</sup> century coal-mining enterprises, the guy who runs the company store is exacting sex from the wives and daughters of the coal miners in order to sell them goods because they didn't have any money. So when the women get the chance, they tear him apart, and put not his head but his genitalia on a pike, and parade it around."

### **Episode 2: Forced Childbearing**

We get an early peek at how ends justify means in Gilead when Janine gives birth and can't accept the reality that she will not get to keep the child. "There are a lot of utopias and dystopias based on economics, but this is one that goes to the absolute root, which is how many people are you going to have?" Atwood said. "And how are you going to get them? In some cultures, you don't have to make special laws about it. But in other cultures, you have to

bring in oppression to get the results that you want.” Tyrants and dictators like Adolf Hitler and Nicolae Ceausescu have often dictated the terms of fertility and criminalized those who did not comply. “It’s no accident that Napoleon banned abortion,” Atwood said. “He said exactly why he wanted offspring—for cannon fodder. Lovely!” An added wrinkle, of course, is that the handmaids aren’t just being forced to give birth, they’re being forced to be surrogates, and the children they bear are then forcibly taken from them and placed with high-ranking officials. After a military junta took power in Argentina in 1976, as many as 500 young children and newborns were “disappeared,” only to be adopted by military and police couples. Hundreds of thousands of children of Indigenous populations in Canada and Australia were separated from their families. “It must have been public in that it wasn’t a secret, but it also wasn’t known at the time,” Atwood said. “Nobody registered that this was happening. And it was probably presented like, ‘Oh, we’re giving these children a wonderful opportunity. We’re sending them to school.’ You see how that could sound?”

#### **Episode 4: Declaring Women Barren**

It’s not initially questioned in the show why women would be used to solve the fertility woes of the period—until Offred visits a doctor who offers to help her out. Turns out, the Republic of Gilead has never considered the other half of the equation: men. “There’s some confusion about this, because here you have Aunt Lydia saying it’s the wives who are barren,” Atwood said. “And for centuries and centuries, that’s what people thought. They thought it was the woman’s fault.” King Henry VIII kept changing wives (and the state religion), Atwood noted, adding: “That’s why Anne Boleyn knew she was doomed when she had that miscarriage. The idea was that the child was fully formed inside the seed of the man, and his seed was simply planted in the woman, the way you’d plant a seed in a field.” A book titled *Eve’s Seed: Biology, the Sexes, and the Course of History* by Robert S. McElvaine is illuminating on this front, she said. “You said a piece of land was barren, you said a woman was barren. You said a piece of land was fertile, you said a woman was fertile.” In the show, the doctor knows otherwise. As does Serena Joy when she decides that Offred should use Nick. “That’s one of the things Anne Boleyn was accused of—having sex with her brother in order to produce a child,” Atwood said.

#### **Episode 5: Why Ofglen Does What She Does**

Ofglen has very few options once the resistance can no longer make use of her, and she opts for a last, desperate act of resistance, taking out a few guards with a stolen vehicle. It’s a departure from the book, but Atwood said she approved. “Do you remember the Buddhist monk who set himself on fire?” she asked. “José Martí, during the war with the Spanish, went into battle knowing he wouldn’t come out,” she continued, referring to the Cuban revolutionary who died in the Cuban War of Independence. “I think people do these things because otherwise they’ve been totally defeated. They know it’s not going to work in the present moment, but down the line, they are an example to others.”

#### **Episode 6: The Mexican Ambassador**

“The Hulu team made their Offred more active than my Offred,” Atwood said. “Partly because it’s a television series, and partly because it’s an American television series.” Offred would never have been able to stand up for herself or ask for help from a foreign emissary in the novel. The Mexican trade delegation visit doesn’t happen in the book. There is a scene in the novel in which Offred encounters some Japanese tourists, who she assumes are trade delegates, but she can’t honestly answer their pointed question, “Are you happy?” In the show, however, Offred speaks up to Ambassador Castillo when she has the opportunity—and she finds a way to get a note out to the outside world.

Atwood said ambassadors of neutral countries have often acted as conduits. In World War II, an Italian journalist named Curzio Malaparte reported from the Eastern Front, and he found a way to get out the news of what the Germans were really up to. “He was keeping these papers

sewn into his coat and in the soles of his shoes and he smuggled them out through the diplomats of neutral countries,” Atwood said. “You have to trust people a lot to do that!”

### **Episode 8: The Black Market Club**

Offred reunites with Moira at Jezebel’s, a brothel where powerful men go to conduct business and indulge in illicit sex and other escapades. It’s also a thriving black market for commoners and, more to the point, the Mayday resistance. Atwood said she was rereading a book by Norman Lewis, *Naples ’44*, which describes the black market that was tolerated by the Allies in Naples, Italy, during World War II “because they were helping to run it!” “All of this stuff is so old,” she continued, “black markets, special clubs with items you can’t get elsewhere, information exchanged through subterranean conduits.” In the Audible special edition of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, listeners learn that there is actually a chain of Jezebel brothels, some with golf courses. “Because of course women could no longer play golf,” Atwood said. “This has actually been a complaint of female politicians, that all these special deals and secret conversations and understandings are reached at golf clubs, and if you don’t play golf, you’re just out of it.”

### **Episode 9: The Mayday Resistance**

Atwood did a huge amount of research on the resistance movements in various countries during World War II. One of her old friends, now deceased, was a member of the French Resistance, and he parachuted behind enemy lines to help funnel downed British airmen out of France. “His job was to interview them, to make sure they were really British, not Germans pretending to be British in order to reveal the underground lines of communication,” she said. “So they would ask about where they came from, football scores and such, and if you figured out that they were really German, they were shot. Just like that.” She also met members of the Polish and Dutch resistance movements. “The people I met, of course, were the people who made it through,” she said. “Many others did not.” As evidence, she cited the members of the White Rose, who were caught distributing anti-Nazi papers and executed, and the female British spies who sometimes doubled as assassins. Using female agents, Atwood said, has been a tactic employed by resistance movements and Islamic extremists, and the handmaids’ outfits make them especially well suited for keeping secrets. “Just look at all the places where you could hide things!” she said, laughing. “Big sleeves! Tuck it in your stocking. Nobody’s going to look.”

Also available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/14/watching/the-handmaids-tale-tv-finale-margaret-atwood.html>.

WAPPLER, Margaret. “Fantasia with Dark Undertones; Margaret Atwood Talks About Her Graphic Novel Series *Angel Catbird* and Raises Hopes of a ‘Handmaid’ Sequel.” *Times-Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 18 March 2017. Section: Arts: C1.

Excerpt: We recently talked about her graphic novel series *Angel Catbird*, which debuted in 2016 to sparkling acclaim. Volume 2 arrived on Valentine’s Day, and Volume 3 comes out in July.

Since she’s cranking out sequels, it’s too tempting to ask: Is she thinking of a follow-up to *The Handmaid’s Tale*? “To tell you the truth, yes. But I don’t know whether that will happen or not. I’ve certainly been thinking about it,” she says, declining to reveal more. The political climate, Atwood wryly notes, “changes day by day—you never know what wondrous surprise will be sprung on you.”

For today, though, she has set herself a far more enjoyable task: To figure out what kind of sound *Angel Catbird*, the hybrid cat-owl-human at the centre of her graphic novels, would

make for an upcoming audiobook that will be performed like a '40s radio play. "Would he make a whoo-meow or a meow-who?" she asks, trying out each with her soft voice before breaking into raspy laughter.

For all her reputation as a serious author of dystopian drama, Atwood is quick to laugh. She also occasionally imitates a know-it-all elderly type in a high voice so jarring that I thought another person had broken into our phone line. The voice—"excuse me, dear, I'm old enough to remember all this"—mostly comes out when we're talking about political history.

At 77, Atwood has witnessed many iterations, and they have always banged around in her imagination. When she was a little girl, Atwood drew cat-people holding balloons, which she'd only seen in books. Those same dream animals and their forbidden worlds show up in *Angel Catbird*. Illustrated by artist Johnnie Christmas and colourist Tamra Bonvillain, *Angel Catbird* is a fantasia firmly rooted in Atwood's playful side, though not without its bleak undertones. Volume 2 follows the same cast of shape-shifting characters, including Strig Feleedus, a genetic engineer hybridized with his pet cat and a preying owl in a chemical spill-cum-car accident. He's battling his villainous lab boss, a rat-human hell-bent on wiping out all other species, especially the cat-humans whom Angel Catbird aligns with, mostly to spend time with fellow scientist Cate Leone. Not all of Cate's friends welcome him with open paws—put off by his owlish tendencies, some call him a freak. In our era of transphobia and white nationalism, Angel Catbird is a clever metaphor for people's discomfort with those who don't fit into the accepted binaries. You haven't seen identity struggles until you've seen a man with talons, cat eyes and a set of humongous wings convince himself not to eat a fellow bird for supper.

Atwood didn't purposely write characters who could be read as transgender or biracial, but she sees them as being part of a long legacy of transformation. "People in comics have always been pretty malleable," she said. "We're in the land of saints and gods here, and the saints and gods, particularly the gods, have always been notorious shapeshifters."

She brings up Captain Marvel, who transforms from little boy Billy Batson with the call of Shazam, derived from the mythical figures Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles and Mercury. Comics may seem like a 20<sup>th</sup> century invention, but "stories beget other stories," says Atwood. "Mine is an homage to the comics of the late '40s—but where did that style come from itself? The roots of these stories go very deep."

Though Atwood acknowledges that recent graphic novels such as *Maus* and *Persepolis* made it "safe" for novelists to "act out their sacred fantasies," Atwood's interest in comics isn't a passing fancy. She's as fluent in Wonder Woman's original mission (fighting Nazis) and the Comics Code Authority, a self-regulating body established by comic-book publishers in 1954, as any fairy tale from Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen, to name two wells she's drawn from in her fiction.

She doesn't, however, let the weight of history keep her away from a tasty cat or rat pun, of which there are many in *Angel Catbird*. The rat-army is called the Murines (rats are part of the superfamily Muroidea), there's a Queen Neferkitti, and Atwood's particularly proud of the vampiric Count Catula, an undead cat with bat and human attributes and several cat-wives.

In one of its wonderfully campy scenes, Atheen-owl (half owl, half woman) and Cate get into a fight over Angel Catbird's affections. Both women proudly own up to being "catty" in a moment that asks why we don't let women claim their full range of behaviour. "If you're going to pretend that [women are] some angelic species at heart, then you are exempting them from being human. You're setting the bar impossibly high; everyone has to behave well all the time. In what world do men have to behave well all the time?"

Speaking of men behaving badly, Atwood has threaded environmental and animal welfare messages throughout *Angel Catbird* to counteract what she sees as a frightening disregard for our planetary well-being. Clean water and algae-rich oceans, for instance, “ought to be commonly shared concerns that cross party lines. There’s something really wrong if you think not poisoning kids is a liberal concern.”

As she was in the era of writing *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Atwood is also concerned about reproductive rights, though she thinks the battle is more complex than environmentalism. “Whenever you have the choice between two things [forced childbirth or abortion rights], neither of which are good, it’s always going to be difficult.” Forced childbirth, as required in Gilead, “has never worked out well,” Atwood says, citing Romania’s former Decree 770 which forbade abortion for nearly all women.

Also available from: <http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-ca-jc-margaret-atwood-20170309-story.html>.

WATSON, Emma. “Emma Watson Interviews Margaret Atwood About *The Handmaid’s Tale*.” *Entertainment Weekly* 14 July 2017. Online. (3653 w.).

Excerpt: Many celebrities have book clubs, but none share the clout of Emma Watson’s “Our Shared Shelf,” which has picked up nearly 200,000 members since it launched on Goodreads in 2016. As Watson wrote when she made *The Handmaid’s Tale* her May/June selection, “It is a book that has never stopped fascinating readers because it articulates so vividly what it feels like for a woman to lose power over her own body.” Thanks to the recent Hulu series, Atwood’s 1985 dystopian novel has again soared to the top of the best-seller lists. Watson called up Atwood to discuss.

**Watson: You were living in West Berlin when you wrote *The Handmaid’s Tale* in 1984; it was before the wall came down. Was being in a divided city a big influence on the novel or had you been thinking about it before you arrived in Berlin? I’d love to know how the novel came about.** Atwood: I had been thinking about it before I’d arrived, and at that time—when I was in West Berlin—I also visited Czechoslovakia and East Germany and Poland. They weren’t revelations, because being as old as I am I knew about life behind the Iron Curtain, but it was very interesting to be right inside, to sense the atmosphere. East Germany was the most repressed, Czechoslovakia the second, and Poland was relatively wide open, which explains why Poland was where the Cold War wall first cracked. So it was very interesting to be there, but it wasn’t the primary inspiration.

**Watson: What was the inspiration, if you don’t mind me asking?** Atwood: There were three inspirations. First, what right wing people were already saying in 1980. They were saying the kinds of things they’re now doing, but at that time they didn’t have the power to do them. I believe that people who say those kinds of things will do those things if and when they get power: They’re not just funning around. So that was one of the inspirations. If you’re going to make women go back into the home, how are you going to do that? If America were to become a totalitarian state, what would that state look like? What would its aims be? What sort of excuse would it use for its atrocities? Because they all have an excuse of some kind. It would not be Communism in the United States; it would have undoubtedly been some sort of religious ideology which it now is. By the way, that’s not an “anti religion” statement. Recently, someone said, “Religion doesn’t radicalize people, people radicalize religion.” So you can use any religion as an excuse for being repressive, and you can use any religion as an excuse for resisting repression; it works both ways, as it does in the book. So that was one set of inspirations.

The second inspiration was historical. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century foundation of America was not, “Let’s have a democracy.” It was “Let’s have a theocracy,” which was what they established in the New England states, such as Massachusetts. Harvard—in and around which the novel is set—began as a theological seminary in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the Puritans excluded anybody who didn’t believe in their theology. The third inspiration was simply my reading of speculative fiction and sci-fi, especially that of the ‘30s, ‘40s, and ‘50s, and my desire to give the form a try. Most of the ones I’d read had been written by men and had male protagonists, and I wanted to flip that and see what such a thing would look like if it were told from the point of view of a female narrator. It’s not that those earlier books didn’t have women in them, and not that women didn’t play important parts; it’s that they were not the narrators.

**Watson: Yes, yes. So having written this book when you did and having realised that this might happen one day, did the election results and the new health bill in the US hit you hard? Was it a very depressing moment for you?** Atwood: I’m not easily depressed by these sorts of things. It’s happened before. If you were born in the ‘90s, you were born into a world where quite a few rights for various groups had been established, at least in the West, and you thought that was normal. But if you’re older than that and you were born into a world in which this was not the case, you saw the fights that went into those rights being established, and you also saw how quickly—in the case, for instance, of Hitler—that you could take a democratically minded fairly open society and turn it on its head. So, it has happened before, but it’s also un-happened before, if you see what I mean. History is not a straight line. Also, America is not Germany; America is very diverse; it has a number of different states in it. I don’t think America is rolling over in acquiesce to all of this, as you’ve probably seen from reading the news. You’ve probably seen that women dressed as Handmaids have been turning up in state legislatures and just sitting there. You can’t kick them out because they’re not making a disturbance, but everybody knows what they mean.

**Watson: Thank you for answering my question so thoroughly. It’s amazing how *The Handmaid’s Tale* has been read and discussed since its publication. It’s never faded from view. What is it about it, do you think, that makes it so endlessly interesting to new generations of readers, beyond the fact that it speaks to a specific political moment?** Atwood: There were a couple of rules I had for writing it, and one of them was that I would put nothing into it that had not been done at some time or in some place. All of the details have precedents in real life. Some of them are mentioned in the afterword, set at a historical conference that takes place several hundred years after the end of Gilead. The television series is following the same rule, they’ve added in some stuff, such as female genital mutilation, but they’re keeping to the rule that nothing goes in that doesn’t have a precedent in reality. So that’s one reason: People know that I wasn’t just making up horrors to be entertaining.

I also tried to be faithful, not to some abstract ideology, but to how people actually behave when they’re under a lot of pressure. There’s a great deal of literature on that. I was just reading a piece on male child soldiers kidnapped by Boko Haram basically they either had to kill people the way they told them to, or they would be killed. When that’s the choice, a lot of people will do things they would never otherwise have done, in order to stay alive.

Another thing is, if offered a position of power within a relatively powerless position, some people will take that. People say, “Why do you have Aunt Lydia?” “Why do you have the female aunt being so controlling to women?” And I say because they would be! That’s how such a power structure would operate, that’s how they’ve operated in the past: You give somebody a bit more power over the others, and they will take it. So it’s not a case of all women being angelic. We know that’s not true. Women are human beings, a mixed lot. I tried to be true to human nature.

So the book isn't a violation of human nature, and it's not a just an invention. It's based on stuff that people have really done and therefore could do again. Then there's no gadgets in it, there's no technology in it that we don't already have. In the mid 1980s we didn't have some of the stuff in the television series—believe it or not, there were no cellphones then and there was no internet. But there were credit cards, so they could already track you and control you through your credit cards.

**Watson: That's really freaky for me. I've just done a film called "The Circle" which is about how easy it is and would be to control huge groups of people with the amount of data that's been collected.** Atwood: Dave Eggers' book? **Watson: Yes, exactly.** Atwood: I reviewed it for the *New York Review of Books*. **Watson: I'll have to read it that's amazing. Well, I read the book and became kind of obsessed with it.** Atwood: My review will explain the cover to you. [laughs] My theory is that it's a manhole cover.

**Watson: Speaking of translating books into films, *The Handmaid's Tale* has been adapted a number of times before, do you have a favorite adaption?** Atwood: Well, this [Hulu] television series is very good. **Watson: Yes, it's insanely good.** Atwood: The opera was also good. **Watson: There was an opera?** Atwood: Yes, it debuted in 2000. **Watson: Do you like seeing your work adapted, or do you find it hard?** Atwood: Well, I used to write film and television scripts in the '70s. My first one, it never got made, but it was very interesting to do. So I understand there's a process, and I understand that there are things you can do with words that you can't do with pictures and things you can do with pictures and music and acting that you can't do with words. A film is a group effort; any film or television series is. Working on it is like summer camp for grown ups—if the weather is nice and you like the people, it's a joy, but if the weather is horrible and you don't like the people it's hell, and your parents won't come and take you home. I've had both experiences, as anyone who has worked on such things for any length of time probably has, and I also know that you can have the best script and the best actors and the best everything, and it could still be a stinker. **Watson: This is the gamble we all take!** Atwood: Yeah, making a film is not predictable. It's a chemistry thing, and you can have a project that you don't really set much store by, with a small budget and actors nobody has ever heard of, and it becomes a cult classic like "Night of the Living Dead" (the first one). So I know it's a gamble, but anything in the arts is a gamble, and there's a lot of luck involved—good or bad.

**Watson: Just coming back to a question, based on something you said in your earlier answer: We live in a patriarchy, we live in a particular power structure. Do you think it's possible for all women to be harmonious with each other? I'm interested in whether it's harder because of the shape of the power structure and our place within it.** Atwood: Of course; there are hard things. But we're human beings! It's possible for men to be harmonious with one another even though they're often very competitive. But women too are human beings, that's my foundational belief—so they're not exempt from the emotions that human beings have. Love, hate, jealousy, competitiveness, cooperation, loyalty, betrayal—the whole package.

And we don't live in just "a" patriarchy, we live in a number of different kinds of patriarchies. You can pinpoint the moment in which women started to be treated markedly worse than men (advent of wheat and agriculture). Let me put it to you this way: Amongst the Inuit things are somewhat more equal because each half contributes to not just the welfare but the existence of the other. So men do the hunting by and large, but in order to do the hunting they have to wear waterproof clothing that is expertly made by women. If you make faulty clothing the man will get wet and then he will freeze to death. And your kayak is viewed as a piece of clothing that's fitted to you so if you roll your kayak the water will not get in and you'll right yourself. Making the clothing is a very laborious process, and it's an expert skill and highly valued; so in

societies in which women do something that is highly valued, of course their place is going to be more equal. We know this through micro financing—I don't know whether you follow that story, but in countries like Bangladesh, microfinancers give small loans to women to allow them to start up small businesses, and as soon as they start bringing in money to the family their status and situation improves. Microfinancing businesses will not lend money to men, they only lend to women, because they say the women have an interest in helping their families whereas the men might spend it on just showing off. So all of that is to be taken into consideration; but none of it means that women are exempt from bad individual behavior towards one another. **Watson: Definitely not! Misogyny has no gender.** Atwood: Yes. And it has nothing to do with whether women should have voting rights. If voting rights were determined on all men behaving well, they wouldn't have any. Rights as citizens are quite apart from individual behavior.

**Watson: Are you bored of the “Are you a feminist” question? You must have been asked that a lot whilst talking about the new TV show.** Atwood: I'm not bored with it, but we have to realize it's become one of those general terms that can mean a whole bunch of different things, so I usually say, “Tell me what you mean by that word and then we can talk.” If people can't tell me what they mean, then they don't really have an idea in their heads of what they're talking about. So do we mean equal legal rights? Do we mean women are better than men? Do we mean all men should be pushed off a cliff? What do we mean? Because that word has meant all of those different things. **Watson: I agree. I think there's still a huge amount of confusion and misconception around the word, so it can become tricky territory.** Atwood: It's like Christians. Do we mean the Pope? Do we mean Mormons? What are we talking about here? Because they're quite different. **Watson: Of course.** Atwood: So, if we mean, should women as citizens have equal rights, I'm all for it and a number of advances have been made in my lifetime regarding property rights and divorce and custody of children and all of those things. But do we mean, are women always right? Give me a break! I'm sorry, but no! Theresa May is a woman, for heaven's sakes!

**Watson: As well as being a writer, you're also a campaigner for various different causes, including environmental ones.** Atwood: It's true! But I'm not a professional one; it's not my job. I don't get paid for it. **Watson: No, no, but I was wondering if you could talk about a couple of the causes that you campaign for and what you've learned about campaigning over the years as you've been doing.** Atwood: Okay, so I often get asked to be a spokesperson for a very simple reason, and that reason is that I don't have a job. So I can't be fired. A lot of people would like to say those things, but they have jobs and they may have families, and they would put themselves in jeopardy if they said some of the kinds of things that I do. So that's why artists and writers are so often picked. They can't be fired. They can be vilified; people can call them names...but they can't actually be dismissed. So I do get asked to do a lot of things and the ones that I do, as people know, are pretty much environmental ones, women's rights ones—and that would expand to include gay rights when that was an issue, and other gender related issues—and things related to the arts, which includes the things that PEN does, like defending writers who have been jailed for what they've written or exiled or banned. **Watson: Have you ever experienced burnout as a campaigner?** Atwood: I think I have experienced overload, but if you mean burnout ——like I give up—then no. I think people who experience burnout are people who think this is the worst it has ever been and it will never get any better, and that what they're doing isn't make any difference. The hardest thing to campaign for is—but it's getting easier—the environmental issues, because people initially didn't see any direct connection to themselves. **Watson: And now they are.** Atwood: They are more. They get it that if there's poisons in the water and no one's paying attention to that, their unborn child may suffer an injury, and so forth.

**Watson: You are also very supportive of other writers.** Atwood: Well, I can't be

supportive of all other writers! [laughs] **Watson: Are there particular upcoming writers that you admire or anyone that you particularly love at the moment?** Atwood: Yes, but I can't pick favorites, otherwise the others would get upset. **Watson: That's very diplomatic. I understand.** Atwood: But from time to time I might tweet a book, and I've certainly judged more than enough literary contests, and I've done a mentoring thing. But I am getting kind of old for it, to tell you the truth. **Watson: Noooooo!** Atwood [laughs]: Yesssssss!

**Watson: Many of your novels are speculative fictions that imagine a future scenario for possible society...** Atwood: One that's possible, yes. **Watson: Do you, as a novelist, see that as part of your role?** Atwood: Novelists have a primary role, which is to write their novel the best way they can, just as actors have a primary role, to do the best acting job they can. So if you weren't first and foremost, dare I use the word an artist, no one would be paying any attention to you anyway. If you weren't good at what you do, none of your other things would actually matter that much. So your first responsibility is to your primary vocation. Society is full of people who will tell artists what their role should be because they want you to be their megaphone, but your primary role, your primary responsibility is to your vocation. In my case, writing. If I give up trying to be a good writer, then what the heck am I doing? Should novels have "a message"? Everything you write is of your own time. You can't help that. Walter Scott wrote a medieval romance called *Ivanhoe*, which is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel because that's when he lived. Tennyson's long poem about King Arthur was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century poem with all of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century values that he had. They're not medieval values. Whether you like it or not or acknowledge it or not, as a writer you are in fact channeling things about your time and the values of your time, negative or positive. You can be conscious of it or unconscious of it, but it will happen anyway.

**Watson: Yes, yes, very true. You have your own perspective, and you think for yourself. I'm really interested in how you came to be this person that believed in her own perspective and opinion.** Atwood: You mean not easily frightened? **Watson: Yes! That's exactly what I mean.** Atwood [laughs]: Okay, so Emma, I grew up in the woods. It gives you a different viewpoint; I was improperly socialized. I think if I'd grown up in a small town or if I'd been sent to a girls' boarding school when I was four, as some of my acquaintances were, things would be somewhat different. But as it is I am frightened of three things—thunderstorms, forest fires and bears.... I was once told by someone who was teaching me to drive ...that he could not continue with it because I didn't have enough fear. [Laughs] **Watson: [laughs]: That's amazing! That is fantastic.** Atwood: Well, it's not. It's foolhardy, actually. I should probably be more fearful because not having enough fear can certainly get you in trouble. **Watson: Yes, I've found that too.** Atwood: Well, Emma, how do you account for yourself then? [laughs] You didn't grow up in the woods. **Watson: I didn't grow up in the woods, but sometimes I do get myself in sticky situations, by being a little braver than I quite know how to be, but the reverse is that you spend time fearing fear itself which I don't find particularly instructive or helpful either.** Atwood: So we should try for pragmatic realism, I suppose. **Watson: Yes, yes, that's the goal, that's the dream: pragmatic realism.** Atwood [laughs]: Well, good luck with it! **Watson: Yes, best of luck! [laughs] Thank you so, so much for doing this, and for writing this book, and for continuing to write everything you write. You know, there have been moments where I've read something that you've written, and it's made all the difference.** Atwood: That's really wonderful to hear. **Watson: So thank you so much for doing what you do and being Margaret Atwood. You're just awesome.** Atwood: And thank you for being Emma! I think you're inspiring a lot of young people. **Watson: I, well, I hope so. Life has handed me an extraordinary set of opportunities, and I'm just trying to be worthy of them.** Atwood: And you are. And that's a good thing to see. **Watson: Thank you, thank you. This was wonderful, this**

**was absolutely wonderful, I was told I had 30 minutes of your time, and I've taken up 34, so I hope I'll be forgiven.** Atwood: You are immediately forgiven. [both laugh].

Available from: <http://ew.com/books/2017/07/14/emma-watson-interviews-margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale>.

YENTOB, Alan. "Imagine... Margaret Atwood—You Have Been Warned." *BBC One* 28 August 2017. Online.

"For decades, Margaret Atwood has been universally acclaimed as Canada's greatest living writer. Fearlessly outspoken in life and in her work, Atwood has always been an unrelenting provocateur. Now at the age of 77, her star shines brighter and bolder than ever with an explosive television adaptation of her best-known work *The Handmaid's Tale*, which was first published in 1985. It is a dystopian work of speculative fiction set in the future, which has drawn comparison with aspects of Donald Trump's leadership, in particular the charges of misogyny which have inflamed anti-Trump campaigners across America. Alan Yentob meets Margaret Atwood in Toronto and discovers how a childhood spent between the Canadian wilderness and the city helped shape her vision of herself and the world, set alight her imagination and set her forth on a path to literary success" (BBC).

Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XznR5sUVzUA>.

## News

"Artists Keen to Protect Culture in NAFTA Talks." *The Gazette* (Montreal) 28 September 2017. Section: City: A4.

Excerpt: A hundred artisans from the cultural community, including writer Margaret Atwood, director Dominic Champagne and filmmaker Philippe Falardeau, have sent an open letter to the Canadian government, urging it to protect culture under NAFTA, and even to add digital provisions to the agreement.

"Atwood Adds German Prize to Global Accolades." *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 15 June 2017. Section: GO!: C8.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood has been awarded the German book trade's Peace Prize. The German Publishers and Booksellers Association said it picked the Canadian author for her "keen political intuition and a deeply perceptive ability to detect dangerous ... tendencies." The honour includes a \$37,000 prize. And it comes as the 77-year-old novelist is riding a wave of newfound fame amid renewed interest in her 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. The dystopian novel about a totalitarian society is now an acclaimed TV series.

"Atwood and Tremain Lead Contenders on Fiction Prize Longlist." *Belfast Telegraph* 8 March 2017. Section: UK: 1.

The two authors were in the running for Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction 2017. The award—formerly known as the Orange Prize for Fiction—celebrates the best novel published in English by a female author over the course of the previous year. Atwood and Tremain were on the first longlist of 16 writers released on 8 March 2017, coinciding with International Women's Day. Atwood's 16<sup>th</sup> novel *Hag-Seed* and Tremain's 14<sup>th</sup> book *The Gustav Sonata* made the list alongside the eventual winner, Naomi Alderman's *The Power*. At the ceremony, Alderman won a cheque for £30,000 and the bronze "Bessie" statuette.

“Atwood Praises ‘Powerful’ Grace.” *The Gazette* (Montreal) 14 September 2017. Section: YOU: C4.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood says the upcoming TV adaptation of her acclaimed historical novel *Alias Grace* is “very powerful” and gave her “real nightmares.” Atwood was joined at a news conference by screenwriter Sarah Polley, who says the six-part series arrives at “an interesting moment for women.” Sarah Gadon stars as Grace Marks, a young Irish immigrant and maid convicted of murder in Upper Canada in 1843. She was exonerated after about 30 years behind bars. “Alias Grace” begins airing Sept. 25 on CBC and will stream internationally on Netflix.

“Atwood’s *Alias Grace* Heads to TV.” *Calgary Herald* (Alberta) 19 May 2017. Section: News: C12.

Excerpt: Sarah Polley’s adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s novel *Alias Grace* will debut on CBC-TV on Sept. 25. The show, which will also stream outside of Canada on Netflix in the fall, is inspired by the true story of Grace Marks, a young Irish immigrant and maid who was convicted of murder in Upper Canada in 1843 but exonerated decades later. Polley wrote and produced the project, based on Atwood’s 1996 Scotiabank Giller Prize-winning historical tale. Mary Harron directs the cast, which includes Sarah Gadon in the title role. Other cast members include Anna Paquin, Paul Gross and Kerr Logan. It’s yet another major small screen adaptation of Atwood’s work this year, after the recent premieres of “The Handmaid’s Tale” on Bravo and Hulu, and “Wandering Wenda” on CBC-TV.

“Atwood’s Name on Impact List.” *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 13 December 2017. Section: Arts: C10.

Excerpt: Author Margaret Atwood has made *USA Today*’s list of 10 people who “made the biggest impact in entertainment this year.” The publication called the acclaimed Toronto writer an “author of a movement” for her 1985 dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which spawned this year’s hit TV adaptation. The eight-time Emmy Award-winning drama, about a society that treats women as property of the state, “became one of the most celebrated and important TV series of 2017,” *USA Today* said. ... *USA Today* also noted this year’s second TV adaptation of an Atwood work, “Alias Grace,” which screened on CBC-TV and Netflix. The newspaper called it a “captivating, mystic examination of gendered violence” that “was as powerful as ‘Handmaid’s.’”

“Author Margaret Atwood to Join Adventure Canada Expedition This Summer.” *Travel Agent Central* 31 May 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Adventure Canada, provider of small-ship and land-based expeditions, announced that Canadian author Margaret Atwood will be joining this year’s Heart of the Arctic expedition. Traveling from the capital of Nunavut, south into Quebec’s Nunavik region, and across the Davis Strait to the coast of Greenland, Atwood and guests will cross the Arctic Circle just after the summer solstice. The July 18 sailing will be Atwood’s fourteenth expedition with Adventure Canada, having first traveled with the company in 2001. Atwood, whose novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* is enjoying a resurgence due to the recently released TV adaptation on Hulu, is the author of more than 40 books of fiction, poetry and critical essays. As a special guest aboard the expedition this summer, Atwood will offer some special readings and enjoy time exploring the Arctic with her family. In a written release, Atwood said, “There’s nothing quite like Adventure Canada. Really nothing. That must be why their expeditions attract so many multi-trippers: the experience they offer is profound, but also entertaining.” Joining Atwood on the Heart of the Arctic are a number of other special guests, including filmmaker and musician, Les Stroud (of *Survivorman*), artist Rob Saley, archaeologist Lisa Rankin, and culturalist and filmmaker Myna Ishulutak.

Available from: <https://www.travelagentcentral.com/cruises/author-margaret-atwood-to->

[join-adventure-canada-expedition-summer](#).

“Can a Margaret Atwood-Backed Newspaper Start-up Find Success in Toronto’s West End?” *CBC News* 30 May 2017. Online. (580 w.).

Excerpt: It’s dark times for Canada’s local journalism industry. In January last year, the *Nanaimo Daily News* shut down after 141 years of publishing. That same month, the *Guelph Mercury* axed its print edition and all 26 staff lost their jobs. Other newsrooms across the country have cut staff, merged, or folded entirely. Now, in 2017, can a Toronto newspaper start-up rise from the industry’s ashes? That’s the hope for the *West End Phoenix*, a monthly broadsheet launching in October that’s backed by the likes of Margaret Atwood, Serena Ryder, Jeff Lemire and Yann Martel.

Available from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/west-end-phoenix-1.4138624>. See also: <https://www.westendphoenix.com/about-us>, which notes Atwood is on the advisory council.

“Celebrities Laud Whale Rescuer as Hero on Twitter.” *Telegraph-Journal* (New Brunswick) 13 July 2017: 1.

Excerpt: Celebrities took to Twitter to praise Joe Howlett, the volunteer whale rescuer and veteran fisherman who was killed on Monday while successfully freeing an endangered right whale in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On Wednesday morning, renowned Canadian author Margaret Atwood tweeted a link to coverage of the story by *The Guardian*, the British newspaper, adding the hashtag #heroic. Within minutes, comedian Sarah Silverman retweeted Atwood, suggesting Howlett’s actions qualify him for sainthood under the fourth pathway announced by Pope Francis on Tuesday: one who freely accepted a certain and premature death for the good of others. “He is [literally] a Saint,” Silverman tweeted.

“CSAs to Honour Author, Anchor.” *Edmonton Journal* (Alberta) 31 October 2017. Section: YOU: C4.

Excerpt: Acclaimed Toronto author Margaret Atwood and former CBC News anchor Peter Mansbridge will be honoured at next year’s Canadian Screen Awards. The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television says they will be among nine recipients of a special award at the March 11 show in Toronto. Atwood, whose books have inspired the recent series “*The Handmaid’s Tale*” and “*Alias Grace*,” will get the board of directors’ tribute for “her commitments to the growth of the Canadian media industry.”

“The Globe’s Canadian Artists of the Year: The Runners-Up; 2017 Was a Remarkable Year for Canadian Culture Across Mediums. To Celebrate, Globe Arts Writers and Editors Offer Their Arguments in Favour of the Figures Who Mattered Most.” *Globe and Mail* 23 December 2017. Section: Film: R3. Simon Houpt’s contribution:

In his review of Sarah Polley’s sly, smart TV adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* this fall, *New York Times* TV critic James Poniewozik quipped that, if the author “didn’t already exist, 2017 would have had to invent her.” How about this Mobius striptease, then: Atwood invented 2017. Or, at least, a version of it, in her 1985 dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which depicted a United States that had become a wartime theocratic dictatorship in which the few remaining fertile women were enslaved as breeders. Three decades later, Western culture has finally caught up to (collapsed into?) Atwood’s grim, Eastern-bloc-inspired imaginings, as the TV adaptation of *Handmaid*, shimmering with rage and ironic humour, spawned an army of meme-ready red cloaked handmaidens marching in the streets of our benighted southern neighbour. (It also rocketed Atwood’s novel back onto the bestseller charts.) During a “Handmaid” premiere event at the University of Toronto in April, someone asked Atwood a

question and then tried to interrupt with a follow-up question. Atwood cut her off: “Yeah, I’ve got more to say,” she purred mordantly. We’re listening.

“Gloriavale Inspires Nightmare TV.” *Southland Times* (New Zealand) 16 May 2017. Section: News: 16.

Excerpt: Costume designer Ane Crabtree says she looked to New Zealand’s Gloriavale community for inspiration when designing clothes for hit TV show “The Handmaid’s Tale.” According to an extensive interview with the designer on feminist pop-culture site Jezebel, Crabtree researched religious “cults” when designing costumes for the “handmaids” that were both striking and functional. “I wanted there to be glimpses of reality in the clothing,” she said. “There’s this very interesting New Zealand cult—they probably call it a religious group—the Gloriavale Christian Community. They have a very old-world culture, much like Gilead [the new name of a fictionalised United States after a religious coup], where women are baking bread and children are dressed quite close to the women of the group.”

“Handmaid’s Tale’ Wins Critic Awards.” *Toronto Star*. 7 August 2017. Section: Entertainment: E2.

Excerpt: “The Handmaid’s Tale,” Hulu’s adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s dystopian novel, won two top Television Critics Association awards, ... at the group’s annual ceremony Saturday ... Program of the Year and Outstanding Achievement in Drama.

“International Women’s Day: Behind Every Great Woman—There’s a Woman.” *Bracebridge Examiner* 8 March 2017. Section: Community: 1.

In honour of International Women’s Day, eight high-achieving Canadian females were asked the same question: Is there a woman in your life you’d like to thank, someone who helped you along the way. Atwood’s response arrived by an email in which she nominated her mother, Margaret Dorothy. Excerpt: “She was intrepid enough to take her two small children, later three, into the woods where travel was by boat ... and there were also no communication devices,” writes Atwood in an email. “Self-sufficiency was encouraged, whining was forbidden, edged tools could be played with. Risk management was instilled early. Her love of life was impressive, and she was a wicked storyteller.”

“It Was Interesting to See It Come to Life’: Kingston Historian Reflects on Filming of ‘Alias Grace’ Miniseries.” *Kingston Heritage* 26 October 2017 Section: News: 1.

Excerpt: If you have been watching the “Alias Grace” miniseries currently airing on CBC, you may have noticed some familiar buildings. The series, based on the novel by Margaret Atwood, was filmed in Kingston in November 2016—and Dave St. Onge, curator of Canada’s Penitentiary Museum, was there to watch it all unfold. “I was curious to see how they would carry it out,” he told the *Heritage*. “I was actually a part of the research for the book when it was written, so it was interesting to see it come to life now.” St. Onge, has worked at the museum since 1984, and in the ’90s, Atwood’s sister approached him about an idea Margaret had for a novel. “Margaret had found an idea in a book that was published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Susanna Moodie and there was a chapter on Grace Marks in there,” he explained.

Grace Marks, the central character of Atwood’s novel, was convicted of murder in 1843, but escaped the death penalty. Instead, she served time at Kingston Penitentiary and Atwood explores her time there in the novel. “I helped with the surviving records from Kingston Penitentiary, and there are a lot of records missing, but anything we found made it into the book,” he said. “There is some fictionalization to flush it out, but that is the story we know of her.” *Alias Grace* was published in 1996, and St. Onge received an acknowledgement from the author for his work—something that still impresses him to this day. “It was a nice surprise to be mentioned and she has kept in touch over the years, too,” he said. “I have helped a few

books, but none with that type of notoriety.”

St. Onge was excited to revisit the project with the filming of the miniseries and he was impressed with how they worked to be historically accurate throughout. “It was remarkable to see them come in with all the dirt and they transformed the street out here. It was amazing to see them undo all of it, too,” he said. “As a historian, it was really interesting to see, and the horses and wagons going by, too.”

But, he does point out that the book and miniseries did take liberties with a couple of things. “This house is featured in the book and in the show, although this house wasn’t actually built when Marks was here,” he said, referencing Cedarhedge, which was built as the warden’s residence and is now home to the museum. “It was built when she was released and she would have seen it being constructed.”... St. Onge admits he has been watching to see how the final version turned out. “In early scenes in the first episode, there are some CGI shots that show Kingston Pen as it would have appeared in the 1840s and ‘50s,” he said “The bell tower wasn’t there and the dome wasn’t constructed until 1859 or 1860. For me, it was a bit of time travel and it was interesting to see.”

“Lessons at the Library.” *Toronto Star* 5 May 2017 Section: Editorial: A2. Atwood comes to the defense of the Toronto Public Library.

Excerpt: On Wednesday, the *Star* reported that the Ontario government was cutting a \$700,000 annual grant to the Toronto Public Library for operating a “virtual reference library.” The city librarian warned the cut would have a serious impact on the library system. Not at all, responded Culture Minister Eleanor McMahon. The library’s “base funding” wouldn’t be touched. The cut was just for a service that’s being used by fewer and fewer people; the money would be going to other areas. Twenty-four hours, a press release and a tweet later, all had changed. New Democrat MPP Cheri DiNovo quickly dug up figures showing that use of the “virtual library” was actually going up, not down. And Margaret Atwood, a doughty defender of libraries, tweeted about the effect on the “hugely beloved public institution.” Apparently that’s all it took for the minister to pull a 180 and announce that the grant wouldn’t be cancelled after all.

“Margaret Atwood: 50<sup>th</sup> Recipient of St. Louis Literary Award.” *University News* (Saint Louis University) 21 September 2017. Section: News: 1.

Excerpt: On Tuesday, Sept. 19, author and poet Margaret Atwood joined the ranks of many literary giants who have received the St. Louis Literary Award.... As a writer, Atwood has never shied away from heavy-hitting topics within her works. In her *MaddAddam* trilogy, she tackled issues such as genetic engineering, ethics in science, climate change and corporate greed. In *The Edible Woman*, the main character struggles with alienation and a loss of her identity. And most famously, in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Atwood addresses power dynamics and women who have been subjugated by the society they live in.

In her acceptance speech, Atwood specifically spoke about the recent protests in the St. Louis area and the current issues with the police. While some visiting performers such as U2 and Ed Sheeran canceled shows due to the protest, Atwood altered her acceptance speech in order to directly address the issues many are having with the police. “Every country has police. They are supposed to serve, protect, arrest potential but not proven criminals, and turn them over to the justice system for trial. That’s a hard job with a lot of pressure,” Atwood said. “But a country in which the police act as judge, jury and executioner is a police state.”

In her speech, Atwood cautioned that the change from democracy to a police state is not a swift change, but something that happens in steps due to the actions of the police and the society

accepting those actions. Countries do not become police states overnight. They get there by steps.” Atwood noted. “One step after another is tolerated and accepted, so then that the bridge between democracy and the police state will be crossed, and then that bridge will be burned.” Atwood also urged listeners to pay attention to issues involving police brutality and discrimination, saying “Please honor your own pledge to the flag—liberty and justice for all. All means all. Justice means not merely the administration of laws—the Nuremberg Laws were laws, the *Fugitive Slave Act* was a set of laws, but just and fair laws upheld and administered without discrimination. Please don’t settle for less.” Atwood frequently covers the issues of police militarization and civil disobedience within her works, especially within *The Handmaid’s Tale*. In her speech, Atwood also stressed that she does not write dystopian novels, and that her novels should be looked at as potential futures and many have plausible explanations.

In her acceptance speech, Atwood also defined what art meant to her. “Who is art for? What is art for?” Atwood said. “Learning, teaching, expressing ourselves, entertaining, enacting truth, celebrating, or even denouncing and cursing. There’s no general answer.” Atwood also discussed the roles of art in society and the role that people like to give her in art, saying “There are acceptable gender roles in the arts as in other facets of life, and there are some fairly strange ones available to women. By available, I mean that people feel free to project them onto you without feeling they are doing violence to the limits of your gender.”

“More Than 240 Authors Around the World Stand with Greenpeace for Free Speech.” *GreenPeace Canada* 31 May 2017. Online.

More than 100 authors from around the world including Atwood signed a pledge with Greenpeace to support free speech and stand up for forests. “The endings of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, 1984 and *Brave New World* are written. Ours is not. This is a chance to stand up for freedom of speech, the freedom to advocate for change, and the freedom to question authority, and to strengthen their protection under law. As a society, we need a positive outcome to this story,” said Margaret Atwood. Authors signing the pledge committed to defend “freedom of speech as a pillar of democratic and peaceful societies, the right of individuals to organize and protest without intimidation, [and] those who peacefully protect the world’s forests.”

Available from: <https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/issues/protect-nature/417/more-than-240-authors-around-the-world-stand-with-greenpeace-for-free-speech/>

“Margaret Atwood and Elisabeth Moss Reunite, Have Words in Toronto.” *CBC News* 13 September 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood spoke of the power of the spoken word at Toronto’s Union Station on a busy Wednesday morning, as she and her friend, actress Elisabeth Moss, in a promotional event for the Canadian launch of Audible. The audio giant, owned by Amazon, is now producing and offering a string of audiobooks of Canadian novels, and it’s hoping to attract new customers by playing off the buzz surrounding Atwood’s 1985 novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* and the subsequent TV series, which nabbed 13 nominations at the upcoming Emmy Awards. To that end, Audible CEO Don Katz, along with Atwood and Moss, took over a section of Union Station, and passersby paused to hear Moss, who plays main character Offred in the television series, read out a passage from the dystopian novel. “I slice the top off the egg with a spoon, and eat the contents,” Moss ended her recitation from the book’s 19<sup>th</sup> chapter, as the assembled crowd broke out into loud applause. “It’s not bad, Margaret,” she said to Atwood with a laugh.

...

Atwood praised the audiobook as a popular option for today’s busy world, while noting it is essentially the past coming full circle. “You can think of Audible possibly as the return of radio

or possibly as the return of the voice, which never really went away,” the author said. Moss was pleased to have the opportunity to read one of the many “delicious” passages from the iconic book. “To read it in front of Margaret Atwood is an incredibly weird, surreal experience,” the 35-year-old confessed. “I was like, is that okay? Did I do all right?”

The event was also another step in Moss’ gradual return to Toronto, ahead of filming set to resume next week on “The Handmaid’s Tale’s” much-anticipated second season. “It feels very safe,” Moss told CBC News about how it feels to shoot the series in Canada. “We feel loved and protected. Margaret is such a beloved figure here,” Moss told CBC News. “I feel really lucky that we ended up in Toronto.” As for the second season, Moss warns fans to expect the unexpected. In fact, she says even Atwood was surprised when she saw the script for the first episode of the new season. “She said ‘I didn’t see that coming,’” the actress said. “That’s the greatest endorsement you can get from the author, who has clearly thought about what would happen next and if she hasn’t thought of it, we’re in the right place.” “But she loves it, so it’s good,” Moss added.

Available from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/margaret-atwood-elizabeth-moss-tiff-1.4288333>.

*Margaret Atwood: Ansprachen aus Anlass der Verleihung = Conferment Speeches*. Frankfurt am Main: Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, 2017. “The speeches given on the occasion of the award of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade to Margaret Atwood on October 15, 2017 in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main. Text in German and English in parallel columns.

“Margaret Atwood Hails ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ Protesters.” *Agence France Presse—English* 2 October 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Writer Margaret Atwood on Monday celebrated the use of her literary characters as a protest symbol in the United States, with her novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* reaching new audiences through a hit TV show. More than three decades since her dystopian novel was first published, the red capes worn by fictional women forced to produce babies for elite couples have become “an immediately recognisable visual symbol” according to Atwood. “I’m very pleased that people are able to use it in this way and that it’s had the impact that it has had,” the 77-year-old told an audience at London cultural hub the Southbank Centre.

While the success of the book version of *The Handmaid’s Tale* has endured since it was published in 1985, it has reached new audiences through an award-winning television drama series and the unpredictable political scene under US President Donald Trump. Those who have donned the striking clothing of Atwood’s characters include a group of women who in June stood outside the US Capitol in Washington to protest the US Senate Republicans’ healthcare bill.

“You have, practically, a scene from the show where a bunch of male legislators were making decisions about women with no women involved (in) making those decisions. So it’s a good protest thing,” said the prolific Canadian writer. While activists have brought the fictional figures into modern-day politics, Atwood said “The Handmaid’s Tale” drama series was not changed despite filming taking place during the election of Trump last year. “(Programme makers) woke up on November 9 and said, ‘We are now in a different show.’ Even though nothing in the show itself had changed, it was going to be framed differently,” she said. ...

“The Handmaid’s Tale” pre-empted the Taliban’s misogynist regime in Afghanistan, although Atwood has insisted she is simply skilled at recognising recurrent themes in history. “I don’t

believe that you can really predict the future, and nor do I believe that is only one inevitable 'the future.' There's a number of possible futures, how you act now can influence what future we end up getting," she told the audience in London.

Available from: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2017/10/03/margaret-atwood-hails-the-handmaids-tale-protesters.html>.

"Margaret Atwood Honoured with German Literary Prize in Frankfurt." *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* 15 October 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Canadian author and activist Margaret Atwood, known for the best-selling novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, was honoured Sunday with the Frankfurt Book Fair's acclaimed Peace Prize of the German Book Trade for her body of work. Atwood attended the award ceremony, which was held in Frankfurt's Church of St Paul on the final day of the book fair. She is the 10<sup>th</sup> woman to receive the award, which has been given out since 1950 and carries a monetary prize of 25,000 euros (c. 30,000 [US] dollars).

The 77-year-old novelist and poet was honoured for the "humanity, pursuit of justice and tolerance" contained within her works of fiction and non-fiction. "Stories are powerful," Atwood said in her acceptance speech. "They can change the way people think and feel—for better or for worse."

Heinrich Riethmueller, chair of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association, called Atwood a "champion of peace and freedom" who has opened our eyes to "how gloomy a world can look if we do not fulfill our obligations for a peaceful coexistence."

Available from: <http://www.dpa-international.com/topic/margaret-atwood-honoured-german-literary-prize-frankfurt-171015-99-458389>.

"Margaret Atwood to Address Campus." *The Observer* (University of Notre Dame) 5 September 2017. Section: News: 1.

Excerpt: Bestselling author Margaret Atwood will deliver this year's Christian Culture Lecture—an annual speaking event at the College that explores various dimensions of the humanities—in O'Laughlin Auditorium on Oct. 25 at 7:30 p.m., according to a College press release. Tickets can be retrieved from the O'Laughlin Box Office beginning today. The Chair of the department of humanistic studies—which coordinates the annual lecture—Laura Williamson Ambrose, said in the release Atwood has wisdom to impart on the Saint Mary's community. "The campus is abuzz with excitement over Margaret Atwood's visit," she said in the release. "Her novels and other works have been mainstays in our classrooms for decades, and it is thrilling to have an opportunity to hear from her in person."

"Margaret Atwood to Attend Toronto Wildlife Centre's Fundraising Gala." *North York Mirror* 24 October 2017. Section: Community: 1.

Excerpt: The Toronto Wildlife Centre is hosting its Wild Ball fundraising gala on Thursday, Nov. 2 in support of the rescue, medical care and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned animals. The event for the North York-based wildlife centre will be held ... with the goal of raising \$200,000. The gala's special guest will be award-winning author Margaret Atwood. "I am thrilled to be a part of the fundraising efforts of Toronto Wildlife Centre, the only hospital in the Greater Toronto Area that is caring for sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals," Atwood said in a release. "The success of Wild Ball is crucial to Toronto Wildlife Centre's continuing efforts to save the lives of our fellow 'earthborn companions and fellow mortals,' to quote Robert Burns."

“MGM Television’s ‘The Handmaid’s’ Tale to Receive Program of the Year Honours at the Banff World Media Festival’s Rockie Awards, June 13.” *Canada Newswire* 1 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: The organizers of the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Banff World Media Festival (BANFF) are thrilled to announce MGM Television’s “The Handmaid’s Tale” will be honoured as the 2017 Program of The Year presented by Bell Media at its prestigious Rockie Awards. The 38<sup>th</sup> annual BANFF World Media Festival will take place June 11-14, 2017 at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel in Banff, Canada.

Available from: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/mgm-televisions-the-handmaids-tale-to-receive-program-of-the-year-honours-at-the-banff-world-media-festivals-rockie-awards-june-13-625778223.html>.

“Naomi Alderman, Author; One Minute With.” *The Independent* 28 July 2017. Section: Features: 43.

In an interview with Naomi Alderman, the winner of the Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction for her book, *The Power*, Alderman was asked who her favourite author was and why she admired him/her. Excerpt: I’m reminded of that Wendy Cope poem which ends “you certainly are my favourite poet. And I like your poems too.” So I shall say that the author who has shown me the greatest kindness in the world has been Margaret Atwood. We were paired in a mentoring programme in 2012 and have remained friends since. I have been to the Arctic with her, and Cuba, and the Panamanian jungle; she has introduced me to the peaceful total lack of interest in human concerns shown by the natural world, a very comforting thing. And she believed in *The Power* when I still thought it might be a terrible idea.

“Samira Wiley Talks ‘Handmaid’s Tale.’” *Sunday Telegram* (Massachusetts) 7 May 2017. Section: Entertainment: 7.

Excerpt: Wiley’s casting represents one of the major updates to Margaret Atwood’s classic novel, which unfolded in a racist dystopia. In a recent interview with *The Washington Post*, Wiley discussed taking on the role, meeting Atwood and why she thinks “The Handmaid’s Tale” will resonate in our current political climate. “I haven’t felt as excited about a project that I’ve been in, in a very long time,” Wiley said.

**Q: What attracted you to the role of Moira? How did you feel about Margaret Atwood’s book before you got the part?** A: I’m always attracted to very strong characters and, in terms of scripts, something I believe needs to be said. That’s how I felt after I read the script. I actually wasn’t familiar with Margaret Atwood before the audition and I hadn’t read *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which honestly, I count as a happy accident. A lot of people have so many preconceived notions about the book—people read it in high school and college—and I didn’t have that. So I was able to come to the script and the characters fresh, which I feel like was probably a benefit to me. I immediately read the book after I got the role and fell in love with Margaret, and also have fallen in love with Margaret in real life. She’s an amazing woman.

**Q: What was your interaction like with Atwood on set?** A: The very first time I met her—it was really before we had started filming. [The cast spent] a week getting to know each other. There was a day where we all knew we were going to have dinner with her. I got there and I sat down at a long table, sat down in my seat and realized, not too much later, when Margaret walked in, that the only seat available was literally right across from me. So I was a little freaked out. She’s really seen as royalty in Canada [where “The Handmaid’s Tale” was filmed] so everyone knows who she is. I got up when I saw Elisabeth Moss come into the restaurant and told her that I saved her a wonderful seat [laughs]. And then I sat at a different seat. That was my first interaction with Margaret—or rather, lack thereof. She is so warm and she’s very active in social media, actually. She’ll tweet at me and comment on my Instagram

pictures. We have a very warm relationship right now. But going into it, I was definitely pretty intimidated.

**Q: Do you feel, as many do, that “The Handmaid’s Tale” has a particular resonance in our current political climate?**

**A:** We started filming before the election happened. I believe we knew then that this was something that needed to be said. We all were very, very surprised when we came back [after the election] and realized, “Oh gosh, this is going to resonate even more.” Being a lot of different minorities—meaning I’m a black, gay woman—I was a little scared. But again, I’m really interested in scripts that have something to say and are relevant to the time that we live in. I feel that is our job as artists really, to be able to reflect the time and the climate that we’re living in. Regardless of it being a little scary, I do feel very privileged to be able to be part of a project that will resonate so much.

**Q: Do you feel like there is something empowering about the producers choosing to cast a black woman as Moira?**

**A:** It’s a reflection of where we are—even in terms of giving actors a chance to be able to play a lot of different roles. I took my cue from the director, the creator, the writers, that this was something that they wanted to do. I think when you take on a role there has to be trust there. And I felt like this was the choice that they were making and I trusted that. Even just for actors, getting different roles. I do feel like it was a smart decision on their part, and an interesting one, to push people to think about things in a different way. And to get me a job [laughs]....

“Spinning a Novella into a Dance with a Feminist Message.” *The Mercury* (South Africa) 10 March 2017. Section: Entertainment: 5.

Excerpt: Penelope, inspired by *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, who is known for her unapologetic take on women’s issues, will be staged at The Theatre at St Anne’s College from March 20 to 23. The work is directed by St Anne’s theatre director Lynn Chemaly and choreographed by Bonwa Mbontsi. I asked Chemaly what in *The Penelopiad* inspired the creation of the dance work. “I believe Margaret Atwood to be one of the greatest writers of our time, and a champion of documenting women’s experience. When I read *The Penelopiad* two years ago, there were excerpts I could just see being interpreted through contemporary dance. It is a combination of the way Atwood writes, with clear visual imagery and linguistic beauty combined with stark truth and injected with dry humour.”

Available from: <http://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/the-mercury/20170310/282604557645507>.

“Standing with Planned Parenthood: Members of Creative Community Announce 7-Inches for Planned Parenthood.” *Planned Parenthood News Release* 11 April 2017. Online.

Atwood is one of the members of the creative community who participated in *7-inches for Planned Parenthood*, a curated series of 7-inch vinyl records and digital downloads to benefit Planned Parenthood. The project comprises contributions from acclaimed creative minds who stand with Planned Parenthood and its patients.

Excerpt: Lawmakers with extreme views are working hard to shut down Planned Parenthood. If they succeed, millions of Americans will lose access to basic health services, including STD testing and treatment, birth control, and life-saving cancer screenings. *7-inches for Planned Parenthood* is a response to this threat. This curated series of 7-inch vinyl records is being made by a group of people who believe that access to health care is a public good that should be fiercely protected. Do we know there’s a joke in the name? We do. We hope the title evokes the rich history of 7-inch vinyl records as a medium for protest music and resistance.

Available from: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/standing-with-planned-parenthood-members-of-creative-community-announce-7-inches-for-planned-parenthood>.

On the site on which the box set could be ordered for \$100, <https://7inchesforplannedparenthood.com/>, Atwood is quoted as saying: Canadians have a universal health care system. I hope Americans will have one eventually. Meanwhile Planned Parenthood helps equalize the glaring inequalities that exist in U.S. health care. For the rich, nothing but the best. For the less rich, next to nothing.

“Study on Agricultural Possibilities for Pickering Airport Lands Takes Flight.” *Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser* 13 January 2017. Section: News: 1. Atwood helps bankroll study.

Excerpt: With a vision of seeing the federal lands in north Pickering being used for agricultural purposes instead of runways and planes, Land Over Landings announced the launch of a study to learn about the potential for farming, agribusiness and tourism for the area. ... LOL is partnering with registered charity Green Durham Association for the Agricultural/Rural Growth Economics Study of the Remaining Federal Lands, which is being conducted by Econometric Research Ltd. and agri-food economist Dr John Groenewegen, of JRG Consulting Inc. Now, they’re halfway to their fundraising goal of \$85,000, which they need to collect in order for the study to be completed by the end of the year. The many supporters for the study include Canadian author Margaret Atwood, the David Suzuki Foundation and political support inside and beyond Pickering’s borders.

“Today’s Birthdays.” *Telegraph Herald* (Dubuque, IA) 17 November 2017. Section: A: 2.

Excerpt: Actress Brenda Vaccaro is 78. Author-poet Margaret Atwood is 78. Actress Linda Evans is 75. Actress Susan Sullivan is 75. Country singer Jacky Ward is 71. Actor Jameson Parker is 70. Actress-singer Andrea Marcovicci is 69. Rock musician Herman Rarebell is 68. Singer Graham Parker is 67. Actor Delroy Lindo is 65. Comedian Kevin Nealon is 64. Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Warren Moon is 61. Actor Oscar Nunez is 59. Actress Elizabeth Perkins is 57. Singer Kim Wilde is 57. Rock musician Kirk Hammett (Metallica) is 55. Rock singer Tim DeLaughter is 52. Actor Romany Malco is 49. Actor Owen Wilson is 49. [Ed. note: Atwood was born on 18 November, not 17 November].

“Writer Margaret Atwood and Olympic Gold Medalist Penny Oleksiak to Be Honoured at the 5<sup>th</sup> Daughters for Life Gala in Toronto.” *Canada Newswire* 10 October 2017. Online.

Excerpt: On November 17th, The Daughters for Life Foundation (DFL) will honour two outstanding Canadian women at its annual DFL Gala Dinner in Toronto. The Lifetime Achievement Luminary Award will go to writer and cultural icon Margaret Atwood for her portrayals of strong female characters in her novels. Penny Oleksiak, the youngest Canadian to ever receive a Gold Medal at the Olympics, will receive the Trailblazer Luminary Award for her role in inspiring other female athletes around the world. ... The Daughters for Life Gala Dinner is dedicated to celebrating and honouring individuals that have made a significant impact on the international community. All proceeds from the event go to helping ambitious young women from the Middle East achieve their dreams of becoming global leaders through scholarships at top educational institutions in Canada and the US.

Available from: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/writer-margaret-atwood-and-olympic-gold-medalist-penny-oleksiak-to-be-honoured-at-the-5th-daughters-for-life-gala-in-toronto-650267953.html>.

“XPrize Taps Writers, Filmmakers, Creatives for Science Fiction Advisory Council.” *XPrize* 1 June

2017. Online.

Excerpt: XPRIZE, the global leader in incentivized prize competitions, in partnership with ANA, Japan's 5-star airline, today announced the creation of a Science Fiction Advisory Council, with a mission to accelerate positive change in the world by bringing together those who can imagine a bold vision of the future with those who can innovate to get us there. The roster of 64 advisors includes bestselling novelists (Margaret Atwood, Neil Gaiman, Veronica Roth, Andy Weir, A.M. Homes, Daniel H. Wilson, Ernest Cline, Hugh Howey), award-winning science fiction writers (Gregory Benford, Nancy Kress, Cory Doctorow, Kelly Link, Mike Resnick, Charles Stross), visionary filmmakers (Darren Aronofsky, Don Hertzfeldt), producers (Gale Anne Hurd, J. Michael Straczynski), and screenwriters (Akiva Goldsman, David Goyer), among others. ... The advisors will assist XPRIZE in the creation of digital "futures" roadmaps across a variety of domains: Planet & Environment; Energy & Resources; Shelter & Infrastructure; Health & Wellbeing; Civil Society; Learning & Human Potential; and Space & New Frontiers. These roadmaps will be dynamic, interactive narratives that describe a vision for the future in each of these domains and identify the ideal catalysts, drivers and mechanisms—including potential XPRIZE competitions—to overcome grand challenges and achieve a preferred future state.

Available from: <https://www.xprize.org/press-release/xprize-taps-leading-writers-filmmakers-creatives-science-fiction-advisory-council>.

ADALIAN, Josef. "How 'The Handmaid's Tale' Changed the Game for Hulu." *Vulture* 15 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Given its current status as one of the foundational networks of the Peak TV era, it's easy to forget that prior to the premiere of "The Shield" in 2002, FX was a sleepy little cable backwater known primarily for reruns of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "The X-Files." Likewise, before "Mad Men's" arrival ten years ago next month, AMC was thought of as the poor man's version of Turner Classic Movies, while Netflix was just a fancy way to watch old movies and TV shows until "House of Cards" heralded the arrival of must-binge TV. A single successful series does not necessarily a network (or streaming service) make, but TV history has shown time and again that the right kind of hit can absolutely be transformative. Now comes Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale," the Elisabeth Moss-led dystopian drama destined to be remembered as one of the best series of 2017. As the show wraps its first season this week, the streaming stalwart seems to have found its paradigm-shifting success. Its challenge: making sure "Handmaid's" early blessings resonate well beyond Emmy nominations and critics' year-end lists.

Available from: <http://www.vulture.com/2017/09/hulu-the-handmaids-tale-how-it-changed-the-game.html>.

ALLEN, Charlotte. "'Handmaid's Tale' and Today's Liberals." *Waterloo Region Record* 10 May 2017. Section: Editorial: A7.

Excerpt: I've lost count of the articles I've read about Hulu's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel "The Handmaid's Tale" that used the word "timely." Timely, that is, in the sense of the presidency of Donald Trump. ... At first, I scoffed. There couldn't be any more unlikely a theocrat than Trump, what with his misquotes from the *Bible* and speculation that he hasn't been in a church more than twice since the inauguration. But then I realized that the liberal paranoiacs were right. Except not in the way they think. Instead of seeing Atwood's fictional Gilead as a near-future militant fundamentalist Christian elite dystopia, we should see it as the mostly secularist elite dystopia we live in right now....

Also available from: <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-allen-handmaids-tale-20170502-story.html>.

ALTER, Alexandra. "Uneasy About the Future, Readers Turn to Dystopian Classics." *New York Times* 27 January 2017. Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk: 1.

Excerpt: A boost in sales for books like George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984* seems to reflect an organic response from readers wary of President Trump's rhetoric. Last weekend, as hundreds of thousands of women gathered in Washington to protest the inauguration of President Trump, the novelist Margaret Atwood began getting a string of notifications on Twitter and Facebook. People were sending her images of protesters with signs that referenced her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. "Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again!" one sign read. "The Handmaid's Tale is NOT an Instruction Manual!" read another. "There were a honking huge number of them," Ms. Atwood said.

*The Handmaid's Tale*, which takes place in near-future New England as a totalitarian regime has taken power and stripped women of their civil rights, was published 32 years ago. But in recent months, Ms. Atwood has been hearing from anxious readers who see eerie parallels between the novel's oppressive society and the current Republican administration's policy goals of curtailing reproductive rights. In 2016, sales of the book, which is in its 52<sup>nd</sup> printing, were up 30 percent over the previous year. Ms. Atwood's publisher has reprinted 100,000 copies in the last three months to meet a spike in demand after the election.

*The Handmaid's Tale* is among several classic dystopian novels that seem to be resonating with readers at a moment of heightened anxiety about the state of American democracy. Sales have also risen drastically for George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984*, which shot to the top of Amazon's best-seller list this week....

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/business/media/dystopian-classics-1984-animal-farm-the-handmaids-tale.html>.

ANDREWS, Travis M. "A Relevant Tale; Margaret Atwood's Dystopian Novel Is the Latest to Top Trump-Era Charts." *The Gazette* (Montreal) 8 February 2017. Section: YOU: C4.

Excerpt: Move over, 1984. There's a new dystopian novel topping the charts. Canadian author Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* has just become the bestselling book on Amazon.com. ... The reason for the immediate spike in the book's popularity is likely its upcoming television adaptation, which will air on Hulu and stars Jordana Blake, Elisabeth Moss and Joseph Fiennes. A trailer for the upcoming series was shown during Sunday's Super Bowl.

Dystopian fiction has seen a recent uptick since the election of President Donald Trump. Many have argued, though, that Atwood's novel is one of the more important in our new political climate. As Alex Hern wrote in *The Guardian*: "Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel is set in a near-future New England following the collapse of America into the authoritarian, theocratic state of Gilead. It was ground-breaking for its treatment of gender, depicting a state in which the advances of feminism have been comprehensively destroyed. Women are considered inferior to men, and their every behaviour is tightly controlled by the state. In particular, their role in reproduction is bound to a strict caste system: abortion is illegal, and fertile women are required to bear children for higher-status women."

Some find this to be a fitting cautionary tale in a new administration that many claim doesn't respect women's rights, so much so that more than one million people gathered in Washington the day after Trump's inauguration to show support for a variety of women's issues. When

speaking of the #Repealthe19th hashtag that trended on Facebook, Atwood told *The Guardian*, “The 19th Amendment is what gave women the vote. So there are Trump supporters who want to take the vote away from women. *The Handmaid’s Tale*, unfolding in front of your very eyes.”

ATKINSON, Nathalie. “The Substance of Style: Creative Control; For the Costumes in the TV Adaptation of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, History Provided More Than Enough Inspiration.” *Globe and Mail* 22 April 2017. Section: Style: L3. Interview with series costume designer, Ane Crabtree.

Excerpt: In her research for the series, Crabtree touched a little on Hitler’s tactics. “He utilized a strong woman—Leni Riefenstahl—to get his visual politics across. Bizarrely, and painfully, he was so good at it,” she says, begrudgingly admitting that, like China and North Korea, he was a true artist of propaganda. An identically dressed sea of people become a graphic mass, human individuality abstracted to blocks of uniform colour. Similarly, in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, clothing does not express personality but strips it away. The household servants, known as Marthas, don green sackdresses with aprons, the Aunts, responsible for training and indoctrination, wear brown, while the high-ranking Wives of the republic leaders sport the blue of moral purity and Christian iconography. The Handmaids wear loose crimson dresses and cloaks that embody the paradox of that colour: Having any sexuality even in highly controlled conditions makes them scarlet women, but it is also the red of Communism, of anger, passion and defiance. The costume department hewed closely to Atwood’s precise and descriptive source material, down to the white winged headdress that obscures a handmaid’s face and subjugates her gaze, but the research and photo reference that lined the walls of Crabtree’s temporary Toronto office (the series was shot in Toronto and nearby Cambridge, Ont.) and costume fitting room take inspiration from details that run the gamut, from Japanese pearl divers and utilitarian work wear in turn-of-the-century utopian communities to contemporary religious sects and mystical groups in the United States and abroad. Who gets pockets and why (Handmaids don’t, nor any other private space that could conceal contraband or a weapon), for example, plays with the sexist and politically charged history of pockets in women’s clothing. ...

Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/fashion-and-beauty/creative-control-clothing-in-the-handmaids-tale-draws-on-the-past/article34729810/>.

BAMIGBOYE, Baz. “Margaret Atwood.” *Scottish Daily Mail* 29 September 2017. Section: Features: 48.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood, the novelist with a rockstar following, who will give the keynote speech at the Flipside Festival at Snape Maltings in Suffolk next Friday. Atwood has been writing for half a century, but the phenomenal critical (and ratings) success of the television version of her 1985 dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* has made her more celebrated than ever. (She was at the Emmys when the drama took top honours.) I hope festival audience members get to ask her about Sarah Polley’s six-part Netflix TV adaptation of her 1996 murder mystery *Alias Grace*. If that takes off, Atwood will be speaking at stadiums next. [Ed. note: Atwood’s speech went unreported].

BIANCO, Robert. “*Handmaid* Reborn as Hulu Series.” *Dayton Daily News* (Ohio) 9 January 2017. Section: Z: 7.

Excerpt: Having already been made as a feature film in 1990, Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* will now be told again as a Hulu series. Coming April 26, this latest version of Atwood’s 1985 classic novel stars “Mad Men’s” Elisabeth Moss, leading a cast that includes Alexis Bledel, Joseph Fiennes, Samira Wiley and Yvonne Strahovski. Set in a dystopian future United States that treats women as breeding property of the state, *The Handmaid’s Tale*

centers on Offred (Moss), one of the few remaining fertile women, who battles to survive and find the daughter that was stolen from her.

Moss says she had read the book, but her memories of it were hazy enough that the scripts, when they came, were able to surprise her. “I was still incredibly taken and interested in the story. ... I selfishly said yes, because I couldn’t stand the idea of anyone else doing it,” she told television critics Saturday. The character is, obviously, a big step away from Peggy in “Mad Men,” but that’s not why she wanted to play her. Moss says she doesn’t worry about being “typed” and doesn’t pick roles to break or follow them. “I do whatever is the best writing.”

If *Handmaid* is a leap for Moss, it’s an even bigger one for Bledel, who is known to most people for her sweet performances in “Gilmore Girls” and “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants.” “For me this role is an incredible opportunity to delve a bit deeper. ... It’s an incredibly rich role for me to get to play, and I just can’t believe I get to do it.” ...

In essence, says Wiley, *Handmaid* is a tale about women fighting for the right to control their own bodies, a fight and a theme that are all the more relevant today. And that, she says, is one good reason to bring the story to life once again. “I feel like it is our responsibility as artists to reflect the time we’re living in.”

BLAKE, Meredith. “A Housemaid’s Tale; Star Embraces Ambiguity of ‘Alias Grace.’” *Los Angeles Times* 2 November 2017. Section: Calendar: 1. Profile of Sarah Gadon, who plays Grace in “Alias Grace.”

Excerpt: Beginning Friday on Netflix, she can be seen as the enigmatic title character in “Alias Grace,” adapted from the novel by Margaret Atwood. The six-part limited series is led by a team of impressive women, including director Mary Harron (“American Psycho”) and writer-producer Sarah Polley (“Away From Her”). Atwood was also involved as a supervising producer. At the center of it all is Gadon, who gives a mesmerizing performance as Grace Marks, a housemaid and Irish immigrant fending off near-constant abuse in Colonial-era Canada. First seen contemplating her own reflection in the mirror, Grace is a mystery to everyone around her—including, possibly, herself.

CARRUTHERS, Fiona. “Wizard of Spells Cast by Books; Breakfast with The AFR.” *Australian Financial Review* 20 May 2017. Section: Weekend Fin: 46. Profile of Nigel Newton, the founder of Atwood’s British publisher, Bloomsbury.

COHEN, Clare. “Margaret Atwood’s Life Lessons—Everything I Learnt from Her Talk.” *The Telegraph* (England) 3 October 2017. Section: Women. Online.

Excerpt: “I’m sorry to have been so right, but I’m not a prophet,” said Margaret Atwood. The Canadian novelist was speaking at London’s South Bank Centre last night, about her dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*—set in near-future America run by a totalitarian regime where women’s rights have been eradicated and most are little more than walking wombs. Shortly after its publication, someone spray painted on a wall in Venice Beach, Los Angeles: ‘*The Handmaid’s Tale* is already here.’ That was in 1985.

Today, after an Emmy award-winning TV adaptation of the book, starring Elisabeth Moss, it seems more relevant than ever before. Little wonder, many have hailed Atwood, now 77, as something of a sage. That was certainly the mood as she took to the stage at the South Bank Centre—I can’t remember seeing an author get a standing ovation. The writer, who has published almost 60 works, held the audience rapt for 90 minutes. Here are some of her insights...

### **1. *The Handmaid's Tale* can be funny**

Atwood regaled the crowd with some of the more unusual 'homages' to the *Handmaid's Tale*, including Scottish tributes, cupcakes, the Handsoap's Tale and They Finally Made a Handmaid's Tale for Men—the story of Manfred, a man just trying to survive in a world under the harsh rule of the feminazi.' "People are sending me knitted chickens in handmaid outfits, and dog and cat pictures," she said. "I'm not sure they should be crammed into little red frocks and bonnets. "There's no limit."

### **2. Everything in the book has happened**

"I made it historical because then no one could say it was the product of my dark, twisted imagination," said Atwood. Everything in *The Handmaid's Tale* has taken place in the past, at some point. "Then no one could say 'it couldn't happen here'," she added. Atwood also said that some elements of the TV adaptation wouldn't have worked in 1985: "If I'd put FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] in the book, nobody would have known what it was. Everyone would have thought I'd made it up."

### **3. The bonnets have a life of their own**

Asked about the number of women, particularly in the US, wearing red cloaks and white bonnets to protest against potential curbs to women's reproductive rights, Atwood explained why it worked: "No one can send you away, as you're not making a disturbance. But it's an immediately recognisable symbol. Everybody knows what you mean. It's escaped from the book and now has this life of its own."

### **4. Writing takes optimism**

"You have to be an optimist to write," Atwood told us. "You have to assume you'll finish your book. You have to assume it will be reasonably good. You have to assume a publisher will undertake to publish it. That people will pick it up, and like and understand it. "That's a huge amount of optimism just to get out of bed in the morning. You have to get up, get dressed and write at your book. And sometimes that takes more than two cups of coffee."

### **5. What we can we do now?**

When asked what we can do now to instigate change, Atwood advised: "You can envisage the world you want to live in and act accordingly. Or perhaps I should say vote accordingly." In other words, be the change you want to see.

Available from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/handmaids-tale-margaret-atwoods-life-lessons-everything-learnt/>.

D'AMATO, Luisa. "With Its Sharp Warning, 'The Handmaid's Tale' Hits Us Close to Home." *Waterloo Region Record* 11 May 2017. Section: Local: B1.

Excerpt: Author Margaret Atwood set her terrifying novel "The Handmaid's Tale" in Cambridge, Mass. But it's in Cambridge, Ont., where key parts of the Bravo TV series, based on that book, are set. And that makes the story a little more meaningful for those of us who have walked those streets, gazed at that river, met friends in that café. ... The main character, played by "Mad Men" actress Elisabeth Moss, dashes desperately across the Main Street Bridge into Queen's Square in Galt. She hides in an empty café. She huddles against furniture as bullets smash windows and bits of glass fly at her. You can't help but feel a shock of recognition. It's happening right here.... With its classic heritage architecture and picturesque river, Cambridge is transformed easily into the dreamlike world of Gilead, with its tidy lawns, gracious facades, absence of people and an "air of being asleep," as Atwood's book describes it. If that's not the most flattering description of a city, Cambridge Mayor Doug Craig and its director of economic development, James Goodram, aren't concerned. Both are thrilled about the city's growing

presence as a film set.

Available from: <https://www.therecord.com/opinion-story/7308526-d-amato-with-its-sharp-warning-the-handmaid-s-tale-hits-us-close-to-home>.

DEAHL, Rachel. "PW Notables of the Year: Margaret Atwood." *Publisher's Weekly* 264.49 (1 December 2017): 33.

Excerpt: It's hard to imagine a septuagenarian Canadian author inspiring squeals of excitement in scores of teenage girls. If you attended this year's BookCon, though, you would have seen just that when Margaret Atwood took the stage. There to discuss the Hulu adaptation of her 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood was one of the big headliners at the show. It was a fitting reception for someone who has, this year, become a cultural icon. ... The love the book got from Hulu—its 10-episode series adaptation, made available by the streaming service earlier this year, picked up eight Emmy Awards—certainly helped drive the book's renewed popularity. According to NPD Bookscan, *The Handmaid's Tale* has sold more than 500,000 copies in paperback in 2017 to date. But something else happened, as the novel became a symbol for groups fighting against the positions being taken by the White House. Lines from the novel appeared on signs carried by participants in the Women's March on Washington, D.C. Protesters stormed the Texas Senate in March dressed as Atwood's fictional handmaids. To capitalize on all of this attention, publisher Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (which licenses the paperback rights to Anchor Books) released a new hardcover edition of *The Handmaid's Tale* earlier this year that has sold about 35,000 copies; the e-book edition has sold more than 736,000 copies year to date. Ken Carpenter at HMH's Mariner Books imprint said the new edition reflects the fact that the book has gone from bestseller to something more. It has tapped into the zeitgeist and, as he rightly summed it up, "become a sort of cornerstone of the resistance."

DONADIO, Rachel. "In Open Letter, 65 Writers and Artists Urge Trump to Reconsider Visa Ban." *New York Times* 21 February 2017. Online.

Sixty-five writers and artists, Atwood among them, joined with the advocacy organization PEN America to send an open letter to President Trump, criticizing his executive order banning citizens from seven majority-Muslim countries from entering the United States and urging against further measures that would impair "freedom of movement and the global exchange of arts and ideas."

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/books/22pen-america-letter-to-donald-trump-visa-ban.html>. The text of the letter is included in the article.

DOUTHAT, Ross. "'The Handmaid's Tale,' and Ours; Op-Ed Columnist." *New York Times* 24 May 2017. Online. How a 1980s dystopia does and doesn't illuminate the present.

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/24/opinion/handmaids-tale-and-ours.html>.

DUFFY, Andrew. "Freedom and Terry Fox Get Canadians Glowing." *Ottawa Citizen* 3 January 2017. Section: City: A7.

Excerpt: The online survey, by Ottawa based Abacus Data, found that strong, shared values were the greatest wellspring of Canadian pride.... Terry Fox topped the list of people who make Canadians proud. Half of those surveyed said the Marathon of Hope runner, who died in 1981 at the age of 22 after his heroic effort to raise money for cancer research, made them "really proud" of Canada. Others who made Canadians flush with pride included Wayne Gretzky (29

per cent), Celine Dion (29), David Suzuki (28), Sidney Crosby (25), Leonard Cohen (24) and Gordie Howe (24). Interestingly, Justin Bieber (one per cent) finished dead last on the list of 36 people who were presented as potential sources of pride, behind such figures as Conrad Black (five), Drake (seven), Ryan Reynolds (seven), Stompin' Tom Connors (nine), Milos Raonic (12) and Margaret Atwood (14).

DUNDAS, Deborah. "Word Gets Out About Windsor; A Growing Literary Scene Is Drawing Writers, Readers to Canada's Deep South." *Toronto Star* 3 June 2017. Section: Entertainment: E1. About a writers' retreat on Pelee Island.

Excerpt: The retreat is the brainchild of Dawn Marie Kresan—a well-known figure in the area's book community, both as poet and writer, and as the founder of poetry publisher Palimpsest Press. Kresan had long wanted to launch a retreat on Pelee Island and, when she saw Atwood tweet about the quiet Lake Erie destination—Canada's southernmost point—on an impulse, she took to Twitter herself. "I tweeted something to the effect of '@MargaretAtwood wouldn't it be awesome if you did a writers' retreat on Pelee Island?' She tweeted me back to say I should contact her, so I did," Kresan recounts. Atwood, an avid birdwatcher who has a place on Pelee, threw her support behind the project, offering to conduct the second retreat. The sold-out, seven-day session ended last weekend. "Dawn had the idea to do a retreat on Pelee Island, which is a wonderful idea because there's no movie theatre and your Wi-Fi reception is iffy so you are probably going to spend more time writing," Atwood said in an interview at the idyllic setting.

ELBER, Lynn. "Terrific Tale; Canadian-Shot Series Based on Atwood Novel Lands Emmy Night's Biggest Prize." *Edmonton Journal* (Alberta) 18 September 2017. Section: YOU: C1.

Excerpt: The Canadian-made dystopian series "The Handmaid's Tale" was crowned best TV drama on Sunday at the Emmy Awards, also winning best drama writing and directing and earning Elizabeth Moss a best actress statuette and Ann Dowd a best drama supporting actress award. The Bravo series is based on Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, and the celebrated Ottawa-born author received a standing ovation when she joined the cast and producers onstage as they accepted the Emmy.

ERGMAN, Randi. "ALIAS SARAH; The Multi-Faceted Sarah Gadon Tells Randi Bergman How She Tackled a Uniquely Complex Role in the Latest Margaret Atwood Screen Adaptation." *Globe and Mail* 8 September 2017. Section: Globe Style Adviser: 32. Profile of actress portraying Grace Marks in the Netflix version of *Alias Grace*.

Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/sarah-gadon-tackles-a-uniquely-complex-role-in-margaret-atwoods-aliasgrace/article36136771>.

FITZPATRICK, Michelle. "Margaret Atwood Says Trump Era 'Feels Like 1930s'." *Yahoo News* 14 October 2017: Online.

Excerpt: Award-winning novelist Margaret Atwood on Saturday said Donald Trump's America reminded her of Europe in the 1930s and warned that the world was "at a moment of change and disruption." "I think it's a moment of turmoil everywhere," the 77-year-old author said at the Frankfurt book fair. "This feels like the 1930s," she told a press conference, referring to the rise of populist leaders and fascism that ultimately led to World War II. "And what's surprising to many people in Europe is that this is also happening in the United States" which was long seen as "a beacon of democracy," Atwood added.

George Orwell's 1984 and her own 1985 book *The Handmaid's Tale*, about a totalitarian regime where fertile women live in sexual servitude, were resonating right now because those

worlds no longer seemed so far-fetched. “People suddenly feel that it’s a possible reality for them,” said Atwood.... “The Handmaid’s Tale” is now a major television show, and the story’s trademark red cloaks and white bonnets have been donned as symbols of protest at US demonstrations against threats to women’s healthcare under Trump. “There’s a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction and resistance, but no leading figure has appeared yet,” Atwood said. The US Republican party is “in disarray,” she said, while the Democrats had yet to formulate a response. “One wonders what the Democrats are going to come up with because so far... ‘hello, where are you?’” she said.

Asked what she would say to Trump, Atwood jokingly replied: “Could you get that Twitter account away from him, please? But she also praised the power of social media in giving a voice to the voiceless, as highlighted in the sexual assault scandal surrounding Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. “He had nothing to do with our show,” she said, before adding that the exploitation of young women by powerful men has been going on “for really quite a long time.” But the recent downfalls of some of these men showed that things were changing. “I think there have been a number of cases involving large powerful men with lawyers in which, partly due to social media, it has become possible for people to speak about it publicly in a way they would not have been able to do once upon a time.” “It all comes down to the question: who is a person? The only reasonable answer to that has to be: everyone is a person,” she said. “(And) they should not be treated the way Harvey Weinstein was treating people.”

Atwood was in Frankfurt to receive the German book trade’s annual “Peace Prize” for her prescient body of work, due to be awarded on Sunday. Regularly tipped for the Nobel Prize for Literature, Atwood was asked whether she was disappointed when the accolade went to British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro last week. “I am very used to not winning the Nobel prize. So it’s really not a concern for me,” she quipped.

Available from: <https://au.news.yahoo.com/margaret-atwood-says-trump-era-feels-like-1930s-37469292.html>.

FRASER, Emma. “‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ Costume Designer on the Series’ Wardrobe Influences.” *New York Observer* 26 May 2017. Online. An interview with “The Handmaid’s Tale” costume designer, Ane Crabtree.

Excerpt: When everyone is wearing the same thing there are still ways to show character individuality, as well as address the seasonal shifts through costume tweaks; Crabtree explains “But then as the weather got colder I said to Bruce Miller—the show’s creator—that the most interesting thing and the most logical way to make the handmaids slightly different is to use different character, very subtle character differences in their layers.” So Offred has a red scarf, while others are more buttoned up. One scene we discussed is from last week’s episode “A Woman’s Place” as they scrubbed blood off the walls. Crabtree confirms it was as chilly as it looked “That location, in particular, was brutally cold because of where it is in Toronto, it is almost like a wind tunnel.”

Available from: <http://observer.com/2017/05/handmaids-tale-costume-designer-interview>.

FUSTICH, Katie. “Must-Read TV! Copies of 1985 Novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* Fly Off Shelves Thanks to Upcoming TV Series—With More Than 456 People Currently on the New York Public Library’s Waitlist.” *Daily Mail.Com* 11 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Ahead of the premiere [of “The Handmaid’s Tale” on Hulu] in just a few weeks, Atwood’s novel is being met with renewed interest. The novel has risen to the number two position on the Amazon best-seller list, and the number seven position on the *New York Times* Paperback Trade Fiction best-seller list. Even libraries are struggling to keep up with the

demand: The New York Public Library currently has 456 outstanding holds for 71 copies of the novel. The *Huffington Post* reports that the New York Public Library added 32 copies of the novel to their shelves in March—which evidently wasn't enough to satisfy eager readers.

Things are similar at the Los Angeles Public Library, where 143 copies of the system's 189 copies are currently checked out. Though the forthcoming miniseries has certainly garnered its fair share of buzz, some feel there may be more to the novel's rise in popularity than interest in the onscreen version. Namely, readers are drawing parallels between the content of the dystopian novel and the current political climate.

The content of the novel has even been brought to life by a group of female activists, who just last month wore *Handmaid's Tale*-style robes to protest an anti-abortion bill being debated in the Texas Senate.

Atwood herself has been outspoken about the connections between her work and today's political situation. In a recent interview with the BBC, Atwood notes a 'return to 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan values' in the United States, that places women 'pretty low on the hierarchy.' On her Twitter account, Atwood frequently re-tweets news about women's rights, climate change, and articles with an anti-Donald Trump spin. While some may be seeking a copy of *The Handmaid's Tale* simply for entertainment, it would seem that the author's message about its connection to our modern society is loud and clear.

Available from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-4402288/The-Handmaid-s-Tale-best-seller-ahead-miniseries.html>.

GARBER, Megan. "“The Handmaid's Tale” Treats Guilt as an Epidemic.” *Atlantic Online* 1 May 2017. Online. Reflection on the significance of the Salvaging Ceremony portrayed in the second episode of the Hulu series.

Excerpt: At the end of the first episode of “The Handmaid's Tale,” the excellent show now streaming on Hulu, the handmaids of Gilead gather in a grove for a ceremony that goes by an ominous name: the Salvaging. The women file together, in twos, in their red robes, to a series of red pillows that have been laid out in neat lines on the ground. They kneel. From a stage that has been set for the occasion, Aunt Lydia, the woman who is by turns their captor and their mentor, informs them of the reason for the gathering. She summons a prisoner to the stage. The man, Aunt Lydia says, raped a handmaid. The girl had been pregnant. The baby was lost. “This disgusting creature has given us no choice,” she says, glowering at the convict. “Am I correct, girls?” ... In Margaret Atwood's book, the Salvaging ceremony in which the “rapist” is executed finds Ofglen, not Offred, playing a central role in the beating. Ofglen dispatches him brutally, and speedily. She later explains why. The man was part of the rebellion, Ofglen says, and she wanted to pay him the only mercy she could: to give him as quick a death as possible. The TV show, tellingly, changed that. Here, in this version of *The Handmaid's Tale*, it is Offred, quaking with rage and presented with a human on whom she might release it, who deals the first blow. Here, it is Offred who helps to take this man's life, and her reason is violent and selfish. And that is what, in this version of things, makes the ceremony imagined by the Sons of Gilead complete. Through the Salvaging, Offred gains a measure of catharsis. But she also gains a measure of guilt.

Available from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/05/the-handmaids-tale-treats-guilt-too-as-an-epidemic/524583>.

GLAVIN, Terry. “Boyden's Aboriginal Identity.” *National Post* 5 January 2017. Section: Issues & Ideas: A7. The dispute about whether author Joseph Boyden was Indigenous, as he claimed,

was triggered by an Atwood tweet on 24 November 2016.

Excerpt: Just a few days earlier, Atwood and Boyden were among dozens of prominent Canadian literati who signed a letter protesting what they considered the unfair treatment of Steven Galloway, UBC's creative-writing department chair who had been fired in the wake of "serious allegations" of misconduct. Atwood announced that Galloway was Indigenous and had been adopted. Boyden had "confirmed" it. As if that should matter to anything. As if Boyden was somehow entitled to bestow aboriginal identity on someone. The social-media response from aboriginal people was furious.... [Robert] Jago ... went to work online, setting out all the several and apparently contradictory claims Boyden has made about his identity. Almost simultaneously, APTN's Jorge Barrera published his own investigations into Boyden's claims, which likewise found that they didn't add up at all....

GRIFFIN, Susan. "I Found What It Means to Be a Feminist; ... Star of the "Handmaid's Tale" Elisabeth Moss Talks ... About Feminism and the Show's Brutal Subject Matter." *South Wales Echo* 24 June 2017. Section: Lifestyle: 21.

Excerpt: The cast of "The Handmaid's Tale" made headlines at the Tribeca Film Festival in April when they didn't refer to the story as a feminist piece of work. "I will only speak for myself because it's a tricky area and I don't want to get other people in trouble but I don't think I quite said the right thing. Clearly," says Elisabeth Moss, 34, who plays the lead in the small screen adaptation of Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel. "If there was anything I said that led anyone to believe I'm not a feminist or "The Handmaid's Tale" is not a feminist work then obviously I didn't say the right thing. For me, it's just it's not only a feminist work," she clarifies. "There are many groups that are punished and much maligned in the show. Is it first and foremost feminist? Absolutely, it's called "The Handmaid's Tale." It's not called "The Abortion Doctor's Tale." It's not called "The Gay Man's Tale," but it's also about other things, which is what I was trying to say." But, as she points out: "I'm not a politician, I'm not trained to talk about this s\*\*t. I'm a 34-year-old woman who is an actress who has ideas and opinions and I do my best to talk about them. "It was an interesting learning experience and wake-up call. I didn't know anyone gave a s\*\*t what I said."

The show ... has received rave reviews on both sides of the Atlantic and a second series has already been commissioned. It's set in Gilead, a totalitarian society in what was formerly the United States of America. "Due to environmental changes and disasters, fertility has dropped exponentially in women," explains Elisabeth. "Only one in five babies are surviving so this new regime has developed a way of procreating in hopes of continuing the race." All fertile women are captured and sent to the Red Centre where the Handmaids are 'trained' before being placed with an infertile couple. "The husband has sex with the handmaid in the hopes that they can get her pregnant. Then when she does get pregnant, they take the baby and she moves on," explains Elisabeth, who plays June, otherwise known as Offred, a handmaid who's placed with Commander Fred Waterford (Joseph Fiennes) and his wife Serena Joy (Yvonne Strahovski). "We pick up about three years in and she's not doing too well," she continues. "Her husband has [been] taken away from her and her daughter's been stolen. She has had a lot of the fight and soul beaten out of her, both physically and emotionally."

The subject matter might be dark, and some of the scenes shocking, but there is hope too and "even humour at times," remarks Elisabeth, who played Peggy Olsen, a secretary-turned-leading copywriter, in the Sixties-set "Mad Men." "Margaret has this amazing, intelligent dark sense of humour that is rampant in the book and capturing that tone and her voice, which becomes Offred's voice, was so important to us," she says. "We didn't want it to feel like you have dark for dark's sake, nobody wants to watch that. I don't want to watch that, let alone be in it."

Elisabeth was in Australia, filming the first series of BBC Two's "Top Of The Lake," in which she plays Detective Robin Griffin, when she first spoke to Bruce Miller, the show's creator and writer. "We got on the phone and we just kind of gabbed for like an hour and a half, like girlfriends," recalls the actress who "grew up in an artistic background in LA." "I knew the first two scripts were good before I signed on but it was important that I could have a conversation with the person that I would be working with day in and day out. I wanted to work with someone who I could laugh with and who would listen to me. Those are things that are important to me when signing on to a project."

Her characters in "Mad Men," "Top Of The Lake" and "The Handmaid's Tale" are all subject to extreme sexism, but while women's rights "have always been close to my heart", Elisabeth stresses it was not something she set out to explore on screen. "I got the part on "Mad Men," it was a job, so it's not like I made a conscious choice, but then through that process and through playing that character, I found my feminism and I found what it means to be a feminist and I got to explore it and it became more and more important to me as I went on," she notes. "So when I came to something like "The Handmaid's Tale," it hit so close to home and felt very personal to me. At the same time, I'm also trying to tell human stories and women that are flawed and often that are not heroes and women that can be vulnerable and weak. Just like any of us I want to see myself reflected back from the screen. That is what interests me."

Elisabeth has experienced sexism in her own life. "My one big thing is women don't make as much as men. I'm 100% positive I've been a victim of that," she reveals.

GUEST, Katy. "Atwood, Ishiguro and McEwan Come Clean About Jane Austen; Margaret Atwood, Kazuo Ishiguro and Ian McEwan Have Created Revealing Handwritten Homages About the Novelist for a Charity Auction." *The Guardian* 23 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: An auction of handwritten homages by famous writers, to raise funds for the Royal Society of Literature, is about to reveal just what modern novelists think of Jane Austen. *Pride and Prejudice* "set a bad example" to the 12-year-old Margaret Atwood, she has scribbled, by exposing the young girl to "a hero who was unpleasant to the heroine, but later turned out to be not only admirable and devotedly in love with her, but royally rich ... Were underage readers of this book, such as myself, doomed to a series of initially hopeful liaisons in which unpleasant men turned out to be simply unpleasant?" Atwood adds: "I especially liked the scene in which Elizabeth Bennett [sic] stands down Lady de Bourgh. I longed to do the same to my gym teacher, but occasion never offered."

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jun/23/atwood-ishiguro-mcewan-jane-austen-charity-auction>.

HAMID, Shadi. "Don't Overinterpret 'The Handmaid's Tale.'" *The Atlantic*. 24 May 2017. Online.

Excerpt: As someone who likes to build up my capacity to imagine the worst, I've been finding "The Handmaid's Tale," the new television series adapted from Margaret Atwood's 1985 dystopian novel, harrowing to watch. The show is an investigation into religious totalitarianism and patriarchy, and perhaps more interestingly a meditation on collaboration and complicity. I've been struggling with it because it seems, at times, so plausible, but also so far-fetched. In creating the fictional Gilead—a theocratic regime that comes to power in the United States after falling birthrates and terrorist attacks lead to mass panic, then a culture of enforced sexual servitude—Atwood was issuing a warning. That the television series has come out in the era of Donald Trump has apparently helped make it a sensation. "What if it happened here in America?" viewers and critics are asking. Yet, something like Gilead couldn't happen here, in part because it hasn't happened anywhere. Saudi Arabia, for example, might

be an authoritarian theocracy—state law requires citizens to be Muslim and prohibits non-Muslim public worship—but it is not totalitarian. Various competing religious movements and networks operate, if unofficially, in the country, and complex tribal patronage systems provide routes for citizens to accrue resources from the state, as well as some degree of accountability....

What makes Gilead, or for that matter any authoritarian theocracy, so terrifying isn't just, or even primarily, the religious absolutism. It's that religious laws, once promulgated, cannot be undone through the political process, because there is no political process. There are no elections and there are no opposition parties. There are no voters. Citizens have no recourse except to stay silent or to resist. In other words, Christian evangelicals—or for that matter conservative Jews and conservative Muslims—who oppose abortion, gay marriage, or refuse to dine with women or men other than their spouses are not any less American. What would make them less American or un-American is if they believed, as a matter of faith, that democracy should be done away with and that there was only one truth that could be expressed by the state. Then the rest of us would have, quite literally, no choice. It is the closing of the avenues of possibility—and therefore of hope—that makes dictatorship, and not just the religious kind, so terrifying.

Available from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/handmaids-tale-religion-theocracy/526248>.

HANNAH, Jim. “Quilts of Hospice’ Will Be Exhibited at Wright State’s Fourth Annual Quilt Show.” *Wright State University Newsroom* 17 January 2007. Online.

Excerpt: Forty-seven quilts that were created for patients’ rooms at Hospice of Dayton will highlight the fourth annual “Quilt Show: Celebrating Quilt Stories” at Wright State University.

The quilts, made by the Miami Valley Quilters Guild and no longer on display at hospice, will be the centerpiece of the three-day show... [And] In a tip of the hat to literature, the show will feature a lecture about the novel *Alias Grace*, by Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, about the 1843 murders of Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery in Upper Canada. Quilting was used throughout that book to tell the story.

The lecture, titled “Women’s History as Patchwork,” will be presented Jan. 19, from 11 a.m. to 12:20 p.m., by Hope Jennings, director of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. [Ed. note: The text of this lecture, or any comments about it, are not available publicly].

Available from: <https://webapp2.wright.edu/web1/newsroom/2017/01/17/quilts-of-hospice-will-be-exhibited-at-wright-states-fourth-annual-quilt-show>.

HARRINGTON, Patrice. “Irish Teen Who Became a Killer...; ... or Did She? Grace Marks Left Ireland in Search of a Better Life but at the Age of Just 16 She Was Jailed for the Brutal Murder of Her Employer and His Lover. Now Her Fascinating Story Is the Subject of a Netflix Drama.” *Irish Daily Mail* 29 July 2017. Section: News: 28, 53.

The real story which was fictionalized by Atwood in *Alias Grace*.

HAUSER, Christine. “A Handmaid’s Tale of Protest.” *New York Times* 30 June 2017. Section: National Desk. Online.

Excerpt: Silent, heads bowed, the activists in crimson robes and white bonnets have been appearing at demonstrations against gender discrimination and the infringement of reproductive and civil rights. The outfits are inspired by the characters in *The Handmaid’s*

*Tale*, by Margaret Atwood. The 1985 novel, which was made into a series on Hulu this year, tells the story of a religious coup that gives rise to a theocracy called Gilead, where women are stripped of rights and forced to bear children for the society's elite. Some have drawn comparisons between the show and the current political climate. In *Vanity Fair*, one critic explored whether it was an allegory for the Trump era. In *The New Yorker*, a reviewer discussed its "grotesque timeliness"; another at the same publication said that already "we live in the reproductive dystopia" the show presents.

As symbols of a repressive patriarchy, the crimson robes and caps—handmade, repurposed or ordered online—have become an emblem of women's solidarity and collaboration on rights issues, similar to the pink knitted hats worn during the Women's March after President Trump's inauguration. Here are examples of some recent protests:

### **Washington, D.C.**

Supporters of Planned Parenthood protested the health care bill in Washington on Tuesday. Budget analysts estimated the bill could take away access to health care in some areas from about 15 percent of women because of provisions to defund Planned Parenthood. (The bill faced opposition by some Republican senators, and a vote on the legislation was delayed.) One of the protesters, Elena Lipsiea, traveled from Albany by a bus provided by Planned Parenthood. She was one of about 30 women in red robes and paper bonnets who were told by the organization to stay silent with their heads bowed—a posture meant to convey oppression. "All of the handmaids are subjected to listen to government officials, and they don't have any kind of autonomy," she said. "So for us as protesters it was a direct way to show how we are being silenced, and the government is not listening to us, and our rights are under attack and voices are not being heard." Ms. Lipsiea said the silent protest attracted attention. "We weren't verbally interactive, and it pushed people to ask and speak to Planned Parenthood volunteers who were around us and not in costumes," she said.

### **Columbus, Ohio**

In Ohio on June 13, women in "Handmaid's Tale" costumes attended a hearing at the Statehouse in Columbus to protest a bill that would ban the dilation and evacuation procedure, the most common abortion method in the state. The Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice said its group sat in "silent solidarity against yet another proposed restriction on women's reproductive health care." "Sitting silently during this hearing really spoke volumes about how women are being disregarded in a conversation being shaped by men legislating women's bodies," Elaina Ramsey, the executive director of the coalition, said. "We were not challenged or asked to leave the hearing," she said. "But in a way it was very jarring sitting there as a participant. I definitely felt invisible. They just continued on with the proceedings."

### **Concord, New Hampshire**

In New Hampshire on May 17, protesters appeared outside the Legislative Office Building in Concord to call for the expulsion of State Representative Robert Fisher, a Republican, after news reports of his involvement in the Reddit forum called "The Red Pill," which is known for its misogynistic content. Mr. Fisher later resigned after a committee voted to recommend the House take no action against him, *The Union Leader* reported.

### **Austin, Texas**

NARAL Pro-Choice has organized protests at the state capital in Texas against restrictive abortion laws. Heather Busby, the group's executive director, said that her organization started

using the outfits in March, when the State Senate was debating an abortion bill. “Initially we rented red cloaks from a local shop and rush ordered white bonnets off the internet,” she said. “Now we have teams of seamstresses making the cloaks.” The cloaks are an effective protest prop, she said, adding: “It is very eye-catching. People are always turning and looking, and a lot of folks get it and how that relates to what is being done on the policy side in Texas.”

This month, activists also dressed up in the costumes to protest a fund-raiser in Houston for Senator Ted Cruz, a Republican. (Separately, a group of them wearing the outfits went to see the “Wonder Woman” movie, she said.)

### **Other protests**

A group of Missouri women in robes and bonnets marched through Missouri’s State Capitol last month as lawmakers debated a budget provision that they said would infringe on women’s reproductive rights, *The Kansas City Star* reported. On June 3, a woman in a costume participated in a “March for Truth” rally in Washington demanding an investigation into the role of Russia in the 2016 presidential election. On June 20, the League of Women Voters demonstrated in Albany to push for improved reproductive health and contraceptive care acts.

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/30/us/handmaids-protests-abortion.html>.

HAWES, Rebecca. “The Handmaid’s Tale, Sexbots and Jellyfish Bracelets: 6 Eerily Accurate Margaret Atwood Predictions.” *The Telegraph* 25 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Hulu’s “The Handmaid’s Tale,” an adaptation of the 1985 Margaret Atwood novel of the same name, will be shown in the UK on Channel 4 later this month. Since the series debuted in the US in April, fans have been drawing grim comparisons between the dystopian future it depicts and recent political events. From the rise of various types of oppressive religious extremism, to the triumph of US President Donald Trump and the concurrent backlash against feminism in the West, to the ever more bizarre advances in technology heralded each day in the news, the world seems to have taken a worryingly “Atwoodian” turn.

But while these parallels may make the new Hulu series feel pleasingly timely, they perhaps aren’t all that surprising. Atwood prefers to describe her futuristic novels not as science fiction, but as speculative fiction: in them, she draws inspiration from history and current affairs, and pushes already-existing ideas and concepts to their disturbing conclusions. It’s not so much about predicting the future, as it is about creating a distorted—and imaginatively rich—reflection of today’s society. Nonetheless, through doing this the author has often managed to be strikingly prescient in her writing. Here are 10 times she’s blurred the line between “oh...that’s so weird” and “oh...that’s so us.”

#### **1. Headless chickens**

In Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy and, separately, in her 2015 novel *The Heart Goes Last*, the horrors of factory farming and the drive for effective meat production are taken to their logical extreme.... It’s impossible not to think of in vitro meat: the first lab-grown beef was unveiled in 2013, and earlier this year scientists announced that they had managed to grow chicken and duck meat from stem cells. There are plans to have the products on supermarket shelves within the next four years.

#### **2. Artificial sexual attraction**

In *The Heart Goes Last*, a horrible new operation allows human beings to sexually “imprint” upon another person. In effect, it’s a form of sexual slavery: a subject can be reprogrammed to

only have eyes for one chosen individual, who must be the first person they see after waking up from the surgery, and will then be filled with a rampant, burning desire for their new partner/owner.... But, while we're not-yet-creating sex slaves via surgical procedures, the idea of altering brain chemistry to increase lust has gained traction in recent years....

### **3. Possilibots and child sex robots**

The sex robots or "possilibots" of *The Heart Goes Last*, which include creepy custom-built models designed to look exactly like specific real people, aren't quite here yet—but advances in technology, not to mention films and TV shows such as "Westworld" and "Ex Machina," have sparked increased discussion about robot sex in recent years.

### **4. The rise of the Christian right in America and the feared crackdown on abortion rights**

*The Handmaid's Tale* takes place in an authoritarian America that is run by the extreme religious right, following a violent coup. In the book, women are reduced to second-class citizens, and fears about declining fertility have led to an outright ban on abortion.... In modern day America, of course, things evidently aren't quite so dire. But recent political events have led to fears that the illiberal Christian right is enjoying something of a resurgence.

### **5. Jellyfish bracelets**

In *The Year of the Flood* (book two in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, published in 2009)?, Atwood introduces the reader to "jellyfish bracelets".... While the concept might sound both implausible and cruel, in recent years there have been claims that "aquarium keychains" containing live fish and tiny turtles are being sold in China to tourists.

### **6. Watching live executions and assisted suicides**

In *Oryx and Crake*, the novel's characters watch assisted suicides online via nitee-nite.com, catch up on executions in Asia on websites such as hedsoff.com, and watch "real-time coverage" of the death penalty being exacted in America.... In 2011, a claim that an assisted suicide was being broadcast live on the website BattleCam later turned out to be a hoax by the site's founder. But that same year the BBC did film and broadcast part of the suicide of terminally ill hotelier Peter Smedley, who had opted to die in a Swiss Dignitas clinic, as part of a moving documentary presented by Sir Terry Pratchett.

Available from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/o/handmaids-tale-margaret-atwood-creations-mirror-world-live-now>.

HILL, Libby. "3 Women Helped Create Misogynist World of *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Times & Transcript* (New Brunswick) (6 May 2017): C15.

Excerpt: Men may rule the fictional dystopian world of Gilead, the suffocating and misogynist setting of Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale," but women were instrumental to the team that breathed life into that world. Three women in particular proved foundational in translating Margaret Atwood's prose for the screen, creating a world of subjugation meant to torture their own kind. Reed Morano, director of the first three episodes, was responsible for setting the visual tone and establishing the style for the episodes to follow. Production designer Julie Berghoff labored over the bricks and mortar (and wallpaper and accoutrements) that brought Gilead to life. Costume designer Ane Crabtree crafted striking, yet utilitarian fashion that created instantaneously recognizable social divisions. These women's contributions were heartening to those fans who were concerned when Bruce Miller was announced as the creator, writer and executive producer. To put it bluntly, some were distressed by the fact that Miller is a man.

Also available from: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/showtracker/la-et-st-handmaids-tale-on-the-set-20170502-story.html>.

HOUP, Simon. "Totalitarian Living; Margaret Atwood Says People in Strictly Controlled Societies Will Betray One Another, Regardless of Sex." *Globe and Mail* 29 April 2017. Section: Film: R7. Report on the Toronto screening of "The Handmaid's Tale" with MA in the audience.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood will not do as you please. True, she appeared, as expected, the other evening at the University of Toronto's Innis Town Hall for an invitational screening of the new TV adaptation of her 1985 novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*. The event, put together by Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, an activist and former politician, was a fundraiser for LEAF, the Women's Legal and Education Action Fund. Some of Atwood's oldest friends and colleagues were there, along with representatives of Ryerson University's Office of Sexual Violence Support and Education and U of T's Women & Gender Studies Institute. For an hour, the audience of about 200 sat riveted and rapt, in horror and fascination as the first episode of the 10-part series unspooled on the big screen. They held their breath in the opening moments as the protagonist, played by Elisabeth Moss, is captured by the authorities and delivered to her fate as a breeder in a dystopian society.

And they chuckled knowingly—there was even a smattering of applause—as the book's iconic author, in an eye-blink cameo, smacked Moss across the face in an early scene. As the lights came up, Atwood, 77, made her way gingerly to the front. She wore an outfit of casual all-black, offset with a red scarf and a pair of what looked like sparkly house slippers. Somebody asked how she felt seeing her 32-year-old novel, which had been adapted into a 1990 film by the German director Volker Schlöndorff, re-emerge into popular culture: Back on the bestseller lists thanks to the election of Donald Trump and now an acclaimed TV series.

"Summing it up? One word: Weird," Atwood replied in her usual droll delivery. She explained that she had not initiated the series; in fact, the television rights had been sold off in a package with the film rights decades ago, and it had taken the TV producers about a year to track down which corporate entity owned them. "So, I wasn't asked whether they could do this show; I was informed that they were doing this show. And then I had the choice as to whether I wanted to be a consultant. To which, of course, I said yes. But if you know the film business, you know what that means. It means that you can have lots of conversations, but you have no control over what they actually do." Still, she appeared giddy at the results.

She mentioned Bruce Miller, the series' creator, who told *The New York Times* recently that he'd wanted to adapt the book ever since he read it as an undergraduate at Brown University. "Poor Bruce. Of course, the producers were originally looking for a female writer. He made a very strong pitch. He introduces himself by saying, 'I'm Bruce Miller, I'm the chief writer, I'm the show runner and I've got one penis too many.'" There was laughter.

"He made up for that by hiring a bunch of women in the writing room. Except he says he can't get them to agree on things. 'So—from a woman's point of view, do you think this?' -- [he would ask]." "Yes.' 'No.' 'Yes.' 'No.'—and then they have a fight." "That's instructive for him," Atwood said. "Why should they not have different opinions? Men do."

One woman said she was struck by the theme of women betraying each other. "It's not just about women," Atwood explained. "It's about people. It's about a totalitarianism." She paused for a second or two, and the questioner began speaking again: "I guess we assume women would be on the side of ..." but Atwood cut her off. "Yeah, I've got more to say," she said. "So, in a totalitarianism—who's been in one here?" A few people raised their hands. Atwood explained that, in early 1990, when the original film adaptation came out, she and the filmmakers held

two screenings, one in West Germany and the other in East Germany. The Berlin Wall was in the midst of being dismantled, she recalled. “And the reaction of the audiences was very different. In West Germany, they’re talking about aesthetics and directing and, you know, colour choices and biographies and things like that.” In East Germany, “they watched it very, very intently. And they said, ‘This was our life.’ They meant the feeling that you couldn’t trust anyone. There were a lot of people reporting on a lot of people. Not because they were women and not because they were men, but because that’s what happens in totalitarianisms. So, starting from the premise that women are human beings—a radical position of mine—there’s no particular reason, within that group called human beings, that women are necessarily going to behave more angelically than people have behaved in history.” She added: “Why should we expect all women to behave well? Why should the bar be higher for them? I support the right of Lady Macbeth to exist.”

A young woman in the back asked why the story is set in the United States. “Because that’s where it would be,” Atwood replied, to laughter. Someone else asked about the role of religion in a fascist state. “Okay, so, for me, a religion is anything that can create heretics. How about that? You know, Maoism? Lots of heretics. It’s an ideological absolutism. And we can’t pin that on every religion nor every believer in a religion.” She went on: “People do make the mistake of saying, ‘Well, of course it’s all based on Muslim religions, isn’t it?’ And I say, ‘Oh no it’s not.’ All you need to do is turn back the clock to about 1850. ... One of my friends just sent me a list of reasons that you could get put into a women’s insane asylum between, I think, 1867 and 1888,” she said. “I think I’m going to put that up because it’s just fascinating. It included novel reading.”

ITALIE, Hillel. “Audiobook Expands *Handmaid’s Tale*.” *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 29 March 2017. Section: Arts: C8.

Excerpt: The original book ends with a section called “Historical Notes,” a 22<sup>nd</sup>-century academic symposium discussing the now-fallen Gilead and the ordeal of Offred, who had recorded her story on a set of cassette tapes. “Are there any questions?” is the final line. “The roots of *The Handmaid’s Tale* are in audio—Offred’s story was recorded, not written, and even the ‘Historical Notes’ are a voice—so I was excited to extend the story for Audible with additional material meant specifically to be heard,” Atwood said in a statement. “*The Handmaid’s Tale* ends with ‘Are there any questions?’ With this new special audio edition, I’ve added the questions and answers that I think the people at that symposium, occurring in 2195, might ask. It was an engrossing challenge for me to revisit that last scene of the book and address some questions that I know many readers and listeners have had, over the years, after finishing *The Handmaid’s Tale*.”

KAY, Barbara. “The Problem with ‘The Handmaid’s Tale.’” *National Post* 3 May 2017. Section: Issues & Ideas: A11. A critique of the premise behind the movie.

Excerpt: The current Hulu remake of Margaret Atwood’s 1985 novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, is getting rave reviews. But I passed on it. Handmaids projects a Christian theocracy—the Republic of Gilead—that has replaced American democracy, and consigned women to their most reductive biological roles as forced breeders in a mysteriously infertile society. I’m interested in artistic dystopias—the word always associated with “Handmaids”—but science fiction, the genre to which this story more correctly belongs, isn’t for me.

Here’s the thing about a dystopia: to offer readers or viewers something more than gimmick-based entertainment—philosophical residue that stays with them, so to speak—the plot should be grounded in some kind of reality, whether of historical fact, or of human psychology. George Orwell’s great dystopic novel, *1984*, for example, is an exaggeration of life in a totalitarian regime, but in its essence, it was spot on, because Orwell took his premises from observed

reality.

Where is the observed reality in Atwood's vision? Were the relations between men and women in 1985, or are they now, in such a precarious state that women have any reason whatsoever to entertain fear for the complete erosion of their legal personhood? Did evangelical Christians in 1985, or do they now, wield such influence in public life, and are America's constitutional checks and balances so fragile, that their takeover of the republic's levers of power is imaginable?

Available from: <http://nationalpost.com/opinion/barbara-kay-the-problem-with-handmaids-tale-is-that-its-not-a-believable-dystopia-its-sci-fi>.

KEAN, Danuka. "Salman Rushdie and Margaret Atwood Lead Campaign for Displaced Writers." *The Guardian* 31 May 2017. Online.

Excerpt: A global campaign hailed by Salman Rushdie as "a significant public stand against racism and xenophobia" has been launched, backed by more than 200 leading writers and artists, including Ai Weiwei, Margaret Atwood and Isabel Allende. The Make Space campaign by PEN International will focus over the next three years on writers displaced through persecution and censorship, with Rushdie calling the project "a concerted effort from the heart of the literary industry to make opportunities for writers representative and fair."

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/31/salman-rushdie-and-margaret-atwood-lead-campaign-for-displaced-writers-pen>.

KLING, Wendy. "Trump's Latest Assault on Women; Why Banning the CDC from Using Certain Words Has Major Political Ramifications." *Washington Post* 18 December 2017. Online.

Excerpt: President Trump's assault on women continues. On Dec. 15, *The Washington Post* broke the story that the Trump administration is prohibiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from using seven words and phrases in official documents "being prepared for next year's budget." The words include "fetus," "diversity" and "evidence-based." The uproar on social media began immediately. Teespring.com promises to deliver its \$19.99 "CDC's Banned Words" tote bag before Christmas with rush shipping. The banned words are printed crossword-style so that "I RESIST" appears vertically in red.

Feminist novelist Margaret Atwood, author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, called for her Twitter followers to "come up with substitute words for the seven forbiddens." Suggestions immediately flowed in by the dozens, some of the most striking for the word "fetus." One of the favorites: "tummyling." Others include "wombfiller," "non-viable pre-human cellular group," "parasitoid larva," "clump of cells," "protohumanoid" and "wannabebaby." But other Atwood followers, perhaps feeling a bit less playful, stressed the importance of embracing the forbidden words. "I refuse," wrote a literature instructor, who teaches her students that "words have power. Words mean things." And they do.

Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/12/18/trumps-latest-assault-on-women/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.ofd7dbda4659](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/12/18/trumps-latest-assault-on-women/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ofd7dbda4659).

KNELMAN, Martin. "How a Group of Toronto Artists Spearheaded a Yiddish Version of O Canada; In an Unprecedented Event, a Choir of 60 People Gathered to Sing a Yiddish Translation of Canada's National Anthem." *Globe and Mail* 8 June 2017. Online. Atwood (of course) was largely responsible for triggering the event.

Excerpt: According to [Charles] Pachter, who was part of the choir (along with his partner, Keith Lem), he received an e-mail from Atwood six months ago. “She asked me if I knew of anyone who could organize singing O Canada in Yiddish.” Atwood was following up on a request from Dan Bloom, a freelance writer living in Taiwan, who had received an e-mail from Craig S. Smith, a *New York Times* reporter, asking if he knew how many languages O Canada had been translated into. Pachter immediately thought of Nosek-Abelson, who had worked with him on some charity events. He knew she was fluent in Yiddish. “She really came through,” Pachter says. “She did it with a lot of heart.” “I’ve done a lot of translations in my life, and I always choose them carefully,” Nosek-Abelson told me after the performance. “There were so many wonderful Yiddish writers, but they have mostly been silenced by either the Holocaust or the decline in the use of Yiddish. There are challenges that happen with every song or poetry translation,” she says. “You want to get the words to fit the music like fingers in a glove.”

Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/how-a-group-of-toronto-artists-spearheaded-a-yiddish-version-of-o-canada/article35255157>.

KOBLIN, John. “How Hulu and ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ Revived 2 Careers.” *New York Times* 27 April 2017. Section C: 1.

Excerpt: Daniel Wilson and Fran Sears hadn’t worked together in years. But they still owned partial rights to a certain 1990 movie based on Margaret Atwood’s book. On Wednesday, one of the most anticipated television shows of the year, “The Handmaid’s Tale,” had its premiere on the streaming service Hulu. Reviews for the series have been rapturous, and it could provide Hulu with an elusive signature hit.

But none of this would have been possible without Danny and Fran. Until recently, the production company run by Daniel Wilson, 87, and his business partner, Fran Sears, 70, had more or less been dormant. Work had dried up, and Hollywood had stopped getting in touch many years ago.... But Mr. Wilson had something special stowed away: He controlled a big chunk of the TV and movie rights to the 1985 Margaret Atwood novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, which he had made into an otherwise forgettable 1990 feature. If Hulu wanted to bring the story to television, it would have to deal with Daniel Wilson Productions. So through a twist of fate, prescient deal-making and an intensely competitive television landscape—where studios seem to be willing to turn over any stone to find a hit—Danny and Fran are back in business.... Though Mr. Wilson and Ms. Sears were not in charge of making “The Handmaid’s Tale,” they found themselves, somewhat surprisingly, in the role of executive producers. They were given a front-row seat to script development, casting and the production process, and offered notes to the writers and executives overseeing the show.

It was in the late 1980s when, at the suggestion of his wife, Mr. Wilson read *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the dystopian novel that presents a grim future for women in the United States. Impressed, Mr. Wilson met with Ms. Atwood, secured the film rights to the book and shared them with the independent movie company Cinecom, which helped finance the film. The movie, which starred Robert Duvall and Natasha Richardson and was written by Harold Pinter (Ms. Atwood was not interested in screenwriting), was released in 1990 and was a dud at the box office. (“It wasn’t as good as perhaps it should have been,” Mr. Wilson said.)

About five years ago, with scripted TV booming in Hollywood, MGM decided to forge ahead with a plan to make *The Handmaid’s Tale* into a series. The studio assumed it controlled the rights. Then it found out otherwise. “We realized, ‘Wait a minute, no, no, no, it’s not all ours,’” said Steve Stark, the studio’s president for television development and production. “We have to call a Danny Wilson. Where’s he at? We didn’t know. We couldn’t find him.” ... It took a lengthy negotiation to get Mr. Wilson on board. “We decided to make him an executive

producer, we gave him a nice fee, and we figured it all out,” Mr. Stark said. Mr. Wilson did not disclose financial details, but the deal, if the show reaches a third season (which appears possible, considering the reviews), is expected to be worth \$1 million.

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/business/media/how-hulu-and-the-handmaids-tale-revived-2-careers.html>.

KOLKER, Jeanne. “Shakespeare According to Atwood.” *The Daily Cardinal: University of Wisconsin—Madison* 2 April 2017. Section: News: 1.

Excerpt: A renewed interest in Margaret Atwood’s dystopian 1985 classic *The Handmaid’s Tale* may have elevated her already prominent profile, but it’s her most recent book, *Hag-Seed*, that brings her to Madison this month. As part of a UW-Madison Center for the Humanities program, the 77-year-old Canadian author will speak to more than 1,000 high school students on April 3 about her retelling of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Her 2016 book, *Hag-Seed*, is part of the Hogarth Shakespeare initiative, in which contemporary authors like Jeanette Winterson, Gillian Flynn and Atwood craft novels inspired by the Bard’s plays. Emily Clark, the associate director for the Center for the Humanities, said that the release of Atwood’s book last year was “serendipitous” for the center’s Great World Texts program, which is aimed at getting high school students to engage with world literature across time and space. With *Hag-Seed*, Atwood “does both of those things,” Clark said.

LEDERMAN, Marsha. “‘I Apologize to Margaret Atwood:’ Kazuo Ishiguro on Winning the Nobel Prize for Literature; Awarding the 2017 Nobel Prize for Literature to Kazuo Ishiguro, Author of *Remains of the Day*, Marks a Return to More Mainstream Interpretation of Literature After the 2016 Prize Went to Singer-Songwriter Bob Dylan.” *Globe and Mail* 6 October 2017. Section: News: A4. Report of only Canadian interview with 2017 Nobel Prize winner.

Excerpt: Kazuo Ishiguro was not expecting to win the Nobel Prize for literature. He didn’t even know that it was being awarded Thursday—until he started hearing rumours, he calls them, through various channels that he might have won. If anything, he had thought the award might have gone to a Canadian this year. “I apologize to Margaret Atwood that it’s not her getting this prize. I genuinely thought she would win it very soon. I never for a moment thought I would. I always thought it would be Margaret Atwood very soon; and I still think that, I still hope that,” Ishiguro told *The Globe and Mail* Thursday, a few hours after learning he had won the Nobel.

MALEWITZ, Becky. “Atwood Delves into *The Handmaid’s Tale*.” *South Bend Tribune* (Indiana) 27 October 2017. Section: Entertainment: A2. Report on Atwood’s lecture at St. Mary’s College, “*The Handmaids Tale: The Sources*.”

Excerpt: Published in 1985, before cellphones, before the internet and a decade before most of today’s seniors at Saint Mary’s were born, the novel’s suddenly relevant again thanks to an Emmy Award-winning series that premiered in April on Hulu and the parallels between it and the current political climate that some people have found in its chronicle of a patriarchal society where women are subordinate to men. “This novel, which, by now, ought to have become quaint and archaic, has become more believable over time, not less,” Atwood said to a nearly filled 1,300-seat O’Laughlin Auditorium audience that clapped and cheered in agreement during the school’s 2017 Christian culture lecture.

The dystopian novel, set in the Republic of Gilead, tells the story of Offred, a handmaid in the near future where a totalitarian and theocratic regime has taken over. Because of low birth rates, handmaids are made to bear children for the wealthy. In the patriarchal society, women are not allowed to learn to read and write and are allowed to leave the house only for shopping trips. All handmaids wear a uniform red robe with a white hat. “The iconic red and white outfit

is now an internationally understandable meme, popping up in state legislatures and cosplay conventions alike and in such diverse locations at Texas, Scotland and Sweden,” Atwood said. “Sweden, you say?” she said to a chuckling crowd. “Yes, Sweden.”

With dry humor that had those in attendance laughing, Atwood explained her beliefs through the eyes of a Martian, a point of view that she said comes naturally to her because sometimes she feels as if she comes from another planet and finds the practices of humans to be odd. “Cards on the table, I am a straight agnostic, having grown up among a scientist and an inherently skeptical bunch of people,” she said. “Since science at its best is self-correcting and has always been correcting its previous conclusions and having been exposed early to the untrue weirdness proposed in the name of science, I do not hold science to be a religion.”

Atwood’s religious beliefs, reactions to *The Handmaid’s Tale* and her sources for the novel comprised the core of her lecture. Atwood began by answering the oft-asked question, “Is the book anti-Christian?” “No, my anxious brethren, that is not the point,” she said. “The religion of Gilead is another subset of vaguely Christian culture, but only because it is the answer to the following question: If America were to have a totalitarianism dictatorship, what form would that totalitarianism dictatorship take?” She said that the religion “would hark back to one of America’s foundation stones and would be Puritanical and suppressive of woman, and like all totalitarianisms, it would be intent on extricating all rivals, such as Catholics and Quakers, as the Puritans did, or tried to.” She said the comparison of Christianity to the religion in Gilead is superficial at best, because Christianity is about love, forgiveness and rebirth, whereas, in the book, religion is used as a “hammer to wallop people into submission....”

Atwood took questions from the audience to wrap up the lecture, which ended with a standing ovation. What would she do differently if she were to write *The Handmaid’s Tale* today? She pointed out that some up-dates have been made in the TV series, but she would have to work the internet and cellphones into the book. Do you focus on any themes, or do they just happen? “My books are not illustrated propaganda points,” she said. “I don’t start with the idea, like ‘War is hell’ or ‘Love is nice’ and then sort of color it in. I don’t think that is how books happen. It’s often how they are taught, but it’s not often how it is written.” The final question of the night, what was it like going to the Emmys? “That’s what you really wanted to know?” she said to a now-laughing audience. “I was very short,” she said in reference to the high-heels worn by others on the red carpet. “I was quite old, and my handbag developed a hashtag of [its] own: #ahandbagstale.”

MALKIN, Marc. “*The New York Times* Never Set Out to Take Down Harvey Weinstein and Bill O’Reilly.” *Hollywood Reporter* 28 October 2017. Section: News. Online.

Report of PEN Center USA’s Literary Awards Festival gala at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

Excerpt: The PEN evening certainly wasn’t all about the disgraced movie mogul and TV host. Planned Parenthood’s Cecile Richards was on hand to present Margaret Atwood with this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award. Like many of the night’s other presenters and winners, *The Handmaid’s Tale* author sounded the alarm about the Trump administration. “Responsible journalism is not only under stress but under attack, sometimes physical,” said Atwood. “Truth in reporting is being called into question at the highest level with the end view of confusing the public and obliterating the very ideals of truth and factuality.” Atwood did lighten the mood by reminiscing about the early days of PEN in her native Canada when fundraising for the organization included a talent show of sorts where she sang a duet with the late literary giant Robertson Davies. Their song? “Anything You Can Write, I Can Write Better.” As Atwood made her way off the stage, the gala’s host Nick Offerman cracked, “Hey, Margaret—I’ve been told I look pretty good in a bonnet.”

Available from: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/new-york-times-never-set-take-down-harvey-weinstein-bill-o-reilly-1052732>.

MARRIOTT, Hannah. "Margaret Atwood: The Unlikely Style Soothsayer of 2017; Thanks to Two Hit Adaptations of Her Books, the Writer Has Had a Big Impact on Fashion This Year." *The Guardian* 27 December 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Did you ever suspect that one of 2017's key fashion references would be "dispossessed 1842 Upper Canadian housemaid?" How about "enslaved walking womb in a dystopian future?" Perhaps not. But in an unsettling year the TV shows that had the biggest impact on our wardrobes centred on two such protagonists. In case you missed the references, I'm talking about "Alias Grace" and "The Handmaid's Tale." Both were based on books by Margaret Atwood and both featured women whose lives were ruled and ruined by the patriarchy. Both characters' clothes were symbols of their repression: their dresses covered them up; their bonnets restricted their view. ...

These dramas reflected more than the news agenda with eerie prescience. Not only was the "Handmaid's Tale" cloak the definitive Halloween costume of 2017 (and a garment worn in anti-Trump protests), but it was echoed—consciously or otherwise—in a number of looks on the high street and from designers. Was it a coincidence that red was the undisputed colour of the autumn/winter season? That "modest dressing" was the macro-trend of the year? At Uniqlo, a long red dress that could not have felt more Offred was one of the season's sellout items. In September, Preen showed a collection that was officially inspired by *The Scarlet Letter* but felt straight from the Republic of Gilead, comprising bright red-and-white dresses teamed with little bonnets. ...

"The Handmaid's Tale" is melancholy in its beauty. It has repeatedly been compared to a Vermeer painting, each scene a Milkmaid or a Woman in Blue Reading a Letter come to life. Its costume designer, Ane Crabtree, speaks as esoterically as any fashion week designer about her inspirations: the deep red of the handmaids and the teal of the commanders' wives were based on a photograph of a maple leaf against a blue sky; the moss green worn by the other housemaids was inspired by "an old mop."

"Alias Grace" is less painterly, but equally easy on the eye. The clothes are painstakingly thought-out and just as accidentally fashionable—all white-collared dresses in faded shades of blue, muted checks and no-nonsense centre partings that could easily be seen on models on the Céline catwalks. (Incidentally, Atwood has cameos in both series and looks pretty high fashion herself: her disapproving churchgoer in "Alias Grace" is very Alexander McQueen; her "The Handmaid's Tale" warden is chillingly Jil Sander.)

These outfits were not created to be aspirational. "Alias Grace's" costume designer, Simonetta Mariano, says that the fabrics were muted—"stained and faded and bleached by the sun"—because Grace lived an unspeakably hard life. Her modesty is vital, partly because "if you were a maid, you couldn't be more attractive than your bosses," she says. The onus was on maids to make themselves invisible; to keep their tempting bodies hidden from men's view. "It reminds me of what is happening again now," says Mariano. "You don't want to think that you have triggered anything; the only way the maids had to protect themselves was not to get in any trouble."

Thankfully, the modern urban adoption of a similar look—covered-up, rugged, rural and old-timey, almost to the point of conjuring up the couple with the pitchfork in Grant Wood's *American Gothic*—usually means something quite different. It is often chosen by the sort of consumer who cares about the image they project, but does not wish to show off their bodies, a

choice that is its own form of empowerment. Someone who dresses to accentuate their discerning taste levels, not their hip/waist ratio. Often, someone who shops Margaret Howell and Cos. As for the bonnets? Let's assume their use on the Preen catwalks was for dramatic effect and not the start of a trend. Because when bonnets come back, I suspect, we really will be stuffed.

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2017/dec/27/margaret-atwood-the-unlikely-style-soothsayer-of-2017>.

MARTINEZ, Alanna. "Public Art Installation Offers Thousands of Free Copies of *The Handmaid's Tale*." *New York Observer* 26 April 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Visitors to New York's High Line between April 26 and 30 will experience a small but unnerving taste of Margaret Atwood's eerily prescient fictional dystopia Gilead through a temporary art installation offering free copies of the author's book, *The Handmaid's Tale*. To celebrate Hulu's recently released adaptation of Atwood's 1985 Nebula and Booker Prize-nominated novel, artist's Paula Scher and Abbot Miller have created a large-scale installation inspired by *The Handmaid's Tale*. ... The artwork, titled *Nolite te bastardes carborundorum* ("Don't let the bastards grind you down") after one of the story's central credos, features 4,000 free copies of Atwood's novel for visitors to read and takeaway. People who choose to interact with the art by taking a copy of the book will reveal "messages of female empowerment and anti-authoritarian resistance ...inscribed within the sculpture."

Available from: <http://observer.com/2017/04/public-art-installation-offers-thousands-of-free-copies-of-the-handmaids-tale>.

MECHEFSKE, Lindy. "A Taste of Haida Gwaii." *Kingston Whig-Standard* 11 March 2017. Section: News: A8.

The story behind a recipe, "Beets Margaret Atwood" created by Canadian writer Susan Musgrave who lives on Haida Gwaii (formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands) who also runs the Copper Beech Guest House.

Excerpt: When I interviewed Musgrave, she told me a story about ordering Margaret Atwood's book, *The Edible Woman*, through the library system on Haida Gwaii, back in the '70s. There was no actual library then; books were sent from Victoria by mail. If the library didn't have the requested book, the librarians would substitute something similar. In place of *The Edible Woman*, they sent Musgrave a copy of *Vegetarian Casserole Cookery*.

Since then, Musgrave has gone on to host all manner of literary guests including Atwood and her husband, Graeme Gibson, for whom she prepared a beet dauphinoise—a dish of thinly sliced, layered beets, baked in cream and cheese. Atwood apparently liked the dish so much she asked for the recipe. Musgrave promptly named the dish "Beets Margaret Atwood" in the famous author's honour. Who could resist a dish with such a title? Perfect dinner party fare.

This is a slightly unusual dish. While baking, it takes on an almost hot pink hue. Don't be alarmed, keep cooking it and it will return to a much more normal beet red colour. I've adapted Musgrave's version because it took much longer to cook in my oven than her recommended 40-45 minutes. Her recipe also calls for double the ingredients given below, but in my experience that would feed about eight, so I've halved the original recipe. I also add the cheese and breadcrumbs topping closer to the end of the cooking time, or they become subsumed into the beet and cream mixture and disappear. Beets Margaret Atwood makes an excellent vegetarian dinner dish accompanied by a large green salad and a loaf of crusty bread but would also be perfect served alongside ham or roast pork.

BEETS MARGARET ATWOOD (ADAPTED FROM A TASTE OF HAIDA GWAI)

1 bunch of baby beets (about 1.5 lbs or 680 grams), scrubbed and peeled if necessary  
1 clove of garlic, finely minced 1 scallion, diced fine ¼ cup vegetarian (or chicken) stock 1 cup  
of heavy cream Salt and pepper to taste  
1 cup grated Gruyere or Emmental cheese  
¼ cup panko bread crumbs  
Daubs of butter

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Cut the prepared beets into very thin slices (about 1/8 inches or 3mm thick) using a sharp knife or mandoline. Layer the slices in a buttered gratin dish or 2-quart Pyrex dish. Press the beets down with the back of a spoon to compress slightly. In a heavy saucepan, bring the stock, heavy cream, garlic, salt and pepper to a simmer. Pour this mixture over the beets. The cream mixture should come to just below the top layer of beets. Place the gratin dish on a baking sheet. Bake for 40-45 minutes. Test for doneness. If the beets are tender to the fork, top the dish with the cheese, panko and several daubs of butter. If the beets are still not quite tender, return to the oven for another 10 minutes or so, and then add the cheese, panko and butter. Once the topping is added, bake for a further 10-15 minutes or until the cheese is melted and nicely browned.

MEDLEY, Mark. ““The Handmaid’s Tale” Show Renewed for Second Season.” *Globe and Mail* 4 May 2017. Section: News: A5.

Excerpt: Just a week after its premiere, the television adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s classic dystopian novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, has been renewed for a second season, it was announced on Wednesday. The news is both unsurprising and intriguing. The series has enjoyed rave reviews since premiering April 26, and Hulu, the streaming service which broadcasts the series in the United States, claims it is their most-watched series ever... Yet the 10-part first season encompasses the whole of Atwood’s 1985 novel, which is set in the near-future totalitarian theocracy of Gilead, where select women are forced to become “handmaids” to ruling families in the face of declining birth rates. This means that the second season—and any season after that—ventures into uncharted territory....

Atwood ... was pleased to hear the show was returning. “The reaction to the series so far has been off the charts in a positive direction,” wrote Atwood in an e-mail to *The Globe and Mail*. “Film/TV folks at the L.A. premiere said they had never seen anything like it. It is already off the charts for viewership as well, says Hulu. “The fact that a second season is already being planned speaks to their enthusiasm,” she added. “For me, it will be an interesting challenge, since I myself have never known what happened to Offred once she got into that van except that she (or her recorded tapes) made it into a foot locker that was found in the former Bangor, Maine.” Earlier in the morning, Toronto-based Atwood, who declined to answer whether she’d be writing or contributing ideas to the upcoming season, teased the question of what’s to come on Twitter. “People have been asking me for 30 odd years (and they have been odd) what happens to Offred after the end of the book,” she wrote. “Let’s find out!”

Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/handmaids-tale-second-season-will-be-interesting-challenge-says-atwood/article34884655>.

MILLER, Liz Shannon. “The Handmaid’s Tale’ Season 2 Will Tackle Race Issues as It Tells New Stories Beyond the Book.” *IndieWire* 13 December 2017. Online.

Excerpt: “The Handmaid’s Tale” showrunner Bruce Miller knows the show triggered

“thousands of discussions” in its inaugural run—and as production continues on Season 2, Miller said he and his team have been paying attention to those conversations. One major issue for the Emmy-winning Hulu series ... was that how to approach racial issues. While Margaret Atwood’s original novel took place in an all-white world (due to the ethnic purging orchestrated by the nightmare nation of Gilead), Miller and Atwood ended up making the decision to incorporate a diverse cast and focus on the treatment of women within this society. “There was discussion and praise and criticism for how we integrated or dealt with race in Gilead,” he said. “It brought up a lot of questions that just didn’t come up in the stories in Season 1, that we were able to put it in front of our heads and figure out ways to focus on in Season 2.”

Miller praised the fact that so many of these discussions have been so thoughtful and respectful “that it has been education, and you want to take that education moving forward into the second season. I’m in awe of our fans, and how meticulous and how thoughtful they are about the show.” He said that fan reaction—which he doesn’t necessarily consider to be criticism—has been a huge resource for Season 2. “It’s the way people respond to the show, and whether that was your intention or not, and whether you want to change that response,” he told *IndieWire* ... “I think we, like any other show, missed lots of opportunities. That’s the whole point of moving onto Season 2 and 3, you can keep trying to improve and expand the world and cover more ground and cover more things that you weren’t able to cover in Season 1 or didn’t know would be that interesting.” ...

That said, don’t expect major changes to other controversial elements, like the show’s love for bold music cues, such as the inclusion of Simple Minds’ “Don’t You Forget About Me” or Jefferson Airplane’s “White Rabbit.” “Some people *loved* it and some people really didn’t like it. So that doesn’t really help you move in a direction,” Miller said. “That’s the way the music is going to be in our shows where you’re going to love it or hate it and we can’t really worry about it....”

Miller confirmed that Atwood has been just as involved this season as she was last time, even though much of the original novel’s plot was covered by those first ten episodes. “I think she’s busier than me and you put together—I’m perusing her opinion more than she has time, sometimes. But I think we are very lucky that she is involved and thoughtful and really appreciates the show and excited by the new directions we’re taking things in and very careful about reminding us of things.”

In addition, Miller noted that “we don’t make very many changes from the book but when we do change something, she talks those through with me. She is a remarkable work colleague. She really is and she always makes time, even with her busy schedule, to read stuff and send her thoughts. “So she’s very involved and I hope all the way, will continue to be all the way through the future,” he said. “She’s really the mother of us all in this project.”

As Season 2 progresses deeper into the world of Gilead, the show is forging its own story beyond the events of the book, something that Miller said “doesn’t feel as scary as I imagined it would feel. I do feel like so much of the first season was about building the world—that world building is just what we’re continuing. “It’s very much a world built by Margaret, and we’ve been able to kind of take areas and little things that she’s mentioned and bring them to life. And that has been energizing and also it just makes you realize how well constructed her stories are. That the world, as we expand it, holds up incredibly well. What is their penal system like, what is going on in the ex-pat community? All those things that she mentions in the book and we’ve expanded on are on such strong footing because Margaret thought them through so precisely,” he said. “At the beginning you feel like you’re going off space, you realize very quickly that you’re tethered to Margaret. Happily tethered to Margaret.”

One of those new areas being visited in the second season is the much-feared Colonies: “They play a substantial role in Season 2. We just finished doing a quite long location shoot up there and it was incredible, the production design and the location we were able to find, building that terrible world,” Miller said. “It was raining, it was muddy and awful. Just like I imagine the real Colonies would be. And everybody had both good cheer and incredible professionalism all the way through. Which is a testament to the crew—even a spectacular crew sometimes gets grumpy, but ours is very un-grumpy. They definitely make a bad situation better, not worse.”

Available from: <http://www.indiewire.com/2017/12/handmaids-tale-season-2-race-golden-globes-1201906937>.

MOORE, Frazier. “Elisabeth Moss Shows Passion for Producing; ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ Gives Actress Chance to Expand.” *Packet & Times* (Orillia) 26 April 2017. Section: Entertainment: C3.

Excerpt: “The timing has been uncanny,” says Margaret Atwood, marveling at how her 1985 novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, has not only been given renewed life as a TV series but has also gained disturbing urgency. “Last November 7, they thought they were making a fantasy fiction series,” Atwood says. “On November 9, they thought maybe they were making a documentary....” The cast includes Joseph Fiennes, Alexis Bledel and Samira Wiley, and stars Elisabeth Moss as Offred, who, as one of the few remaining fertile women in the cruel dystopia of Gilead, is among the caste of women forced into sexual servitude in a desperate attempt to repopulate a ravaged world.... Needless to say, Offred is a career stretch for Moss, who remains best known as proto-feminist copywriter Peggy Olson on the advertising drama “Mad Men,” and who initially caught the audience’s eye as First Daughter Zoey Bartlet on “The West Wing.” Now 34, Moss further expanded her horizons during *The Handmaid’s Tale* shoot in Toronto: She took on the additional role of producer....”

Also available from:

<https://www.apnews.com/3d5c99a7c1e5495a914be570122bc23c/Elisabeth-Moss-returns-to-TV-in-Hulu%27s-%27Handmaid%27s-Tale%27>.

MYERS, Steven Lee. “China Won’t Let Nobel Laureate Seek Cancer Treatment Abroad.” *New York Times* 30 June 2017. Section: A: 10. Atwood among 50 writers who wrote Chinese government in protest that it has refused permission for Liu Xiaobo, a Nobel Peace laureate paroled from prison for cancer treatment, to go abroad for care.

Excerpt: Dozens of prominent writers appealed directly to China’s president, Xi Jinping, to grant Mr. Liu unrestricted medical care, including the opportunity to leave the country if he chooses. The appeal, organized by PEN America, also urged the authorities to free Mr. Liu’s wife, the poet Liu Xia, who has been under house arrest since 2010 even though she has never been charged with a crime. Ms. Liu has appealed for her husband to be allowed to seek treatment abroad. “We applaud your decision to grant him medical parole, and hope that it will be accompanied with due regard for the steps necessary to ensure that, however much time he may have, he is afforded the dignity and autonomy that every human being deserves,” read the letter.

NANJI, Sabrina. “Charity Celebrates Impact of Five ‘Everyday Political Citizens.’” *Toronto Star* 7 December 2017. Section: News: GT1.

Excerpt: A civic engagement “app queen,” the founder of a dance troupe that raises awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women and a teenage mental-health advocate who just met with the prime minister’s policy-makers are among the handful of Canadians being feted for their work as “everyday political citizens.” In Toronto on Thursday night, Samara

Canada, a national charity that promotes political engagement, will recognize five regular people who are making a difference in their communities. “The Everyday Political Citizen project recognizes how ordinary, unelected people can make a difference because they take the time to care—about a cause, about a community, about something bigger than themselves,” said Jane Hilderman, executive director at Samara Canada. For 2017—the fifth year the organization has run the cross-country contest—there was a four-way tie in the under-30 category, rounding out five winners in total. They were picked out of more than 200 nominees by a panel of celebrity judges including author Margaret Atwood, writer and activist Desmond Cole, CBC host Rick Mercer, television personality Ed the Sock and Senators Doug Black and Andre Pratte, among others.

NEARY, Lynn. “No Shortlist of Nominees for The Nobel Prize in Literature.” *NPR All Things Considered* 4 October 2017. Online.

Excerpt: ROBERT SIEGEL: The Nobel Prize in Literature will be announced tomorrow in Stockholm. And as usual, the British betting agency Ladbrokes is driving the speculation on who might win. No matter that Ladbrokes rarely gets it right. The Nobel committee is famous for its surprising choices. Last year’s winner was Bob Dylan. Still, some names get mentioned every year. NPR’s Lynn Neary looks at these year’s top contenders.

LYNN NEARY: It’s been quite a year for Margaret Atwood. A television adaptation of her novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* was a huge success, and the book, first published more than 30 years ago, is back near the top of best-seller lists. That may be why her chance of winning the Nobel this year looks pretty good. It’s also why fans like Karma Waltonen are on tenterhooks.

KARMA WALTONEN: I mean, this is something that all Atwood fans have waited for for a really long time. And even in years when other writers that we love win, it’s just so difficult when she doesn’t. LYNN NEARY: Waltonen teaches writing at UC Davis and edits the *Journal of Margaret Atwood Studies*. She says Atwood may be famous for *The Handmaid’s Tale*, but she is no one-book wonder.

KARMA WALTONEN: Everything she writes, even though she writes in a ton of different genres—in each of them, I think her signatures are that she always constructs the story in a really interesting way narratively and that she has what we keep seeing as this sort of prescience (laughter), you know? We read her books, and then later, we say, oh, wait, that just happened. (Laughter) She wrote about it, and then it came true. LYNN NEARY: Joining Margaret Atwood as a betting favorite this year is Japanese writer Haruki Murakami. But Tufts University Professor Hosea Hirata says Murakami has one thing that might be working against him—his popularity. HOSEA HIRATA: His books sell phenomenally. It’s like *Harry Potter*...

Available from: <https://www.npr.org/2017/10/04/555710436/no-shortlist-of-nominees-for-the-nobel-prize-in-literature>.

O’BRIEN, Jennifer. “A Beautiful Servant and the American Murder Riddle That Has Lasted the Ages.” *The Times* (London) 13 September 2017 Section: News: 3.

Excerpt: [“Alias Grace”] the forthcoming Netflix series, starring the Canadian actress Sarah Gadon as Marks, is based on Margaret Atwood’s novel inspired by the case, which is also entitled *Alias Grace*.... “The details were sensational,” Atwood said of the Marks case. “Marks was uncommonly pretty and also extremely young. Kinnear’s housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery, had previously given birth to an illegitimate child and was Thomas’s mistress. At her autopsy she was found to be pregnant. Grace and her fellow servant James McDermott had run away to the United States together and were assumed by the press to be lovers. The combination of sex, violence and the deplorable insubordination of the lower classes was most attractive to the journalists of the day.” McDermott admitted murdering his employer but

claimed that he had been under the spell of Marks. He said: "Grace Marks is wrong in stating she had no hand in the murder; she was the means from beginning to end."

Marks was described by Kenneth McKenzie, a lawyer, as having "a slight, graceful figure" with eyes "a bright blue, her hair auburn, and her face would be rather handsome were it not for the long curved chin, which gives, as it always does to most persons who have this facial defect, a cunning cruel expression." McDermott was convicted at a trial in 1843 and sentenced to be hanged. Marks was found guilty at a trial on the same day and was said to have fainted when she was given the same sentence. The judge recommended mercy to the jury and her sentence was commuted to a prison term. Marks was sent to an asylum and later transferred to Kingston penitentiary. The murder of Nancy Montgomery never went to trial.

Interest in Marks continued after the court case. Atwood said: "Comparisons have been made between the real Marks case and that of the Canadian killer Karla Homolka, who was convicted in 1995 for her role in the deaths of two teenagers, Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French, and the rape and murder of her sister, Tammy. Homolka and her husband, Paul Bernardo, were found guilty but she later claimed in court that he had abused her, and she had been an unwilling accomplice to the murders. She was given a reduced sentence, but recordings of the crimes later surfaced which suggested that she was a more active participant than she claimed. She was released in 2005 and has since remarried. In those days, you could visit prisons and insane asylums as a tourist attraction. If a visitor requested to see Grace Marks, she would be trotted out for them to look at."

While she was in prison, Marks claimed to have been experiencing a number of psychological problems including a multiple personality disorder. She said her body was possessed by the consciousness of other people. After nearly 30 years in jail, Marks was released at the age of 46 and she moved to upstate New York. There is no record of her life after that.

Netflix filmed the six-part mini-series in Canada and it will be released in November. It was written by Sarah Polley and directed by Mary Harron, who made "American Psycho." The series is based on Atwood's fictionalised story, during which Marks is treated for hysteria in prison. In the story the doctor is an "alienist," a psychiatrist who was used in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to determine a defendant's competency to stand trial. The doctor hopes to find Marks is hysterical and not a criminal. The first two episodes of "Alias Grace" previewed at the Toronto Film Festival.

ONSTAD, Katrina. "The Handmaid's Tale: A Newly Resonant Dystopia Comes to TV." *New York Times* 23 April 2017. Section AR. 1. Origins of the series.

Excerpt: It was still the Obama era when Hulu pursued the property two years ago, as part of a strategy to broaden its identity from a glorified video recorder to a producer of original programming. The showrunner Bruce Miller threw his hat in the ring when Ilene Chaiken, who had been developing the adaptation at MGM, departed for "Empire." A veteran writer-producer on shows including "E.R." and "Eureka," Mr. Miller had been obsessed with the novel since reading it as an undergraduate at Brown, even having his agent continually check to see if the film or TV rights were available. "Offred spoke to me," Mr. Miller said. "She's in this nightmarish situation but she keeps her funny cynicism and sarcasm. She finds really interesting ways to pull levers of power and express herself." But Mr. Miller wasn't a shoo-in for showrunner because producers were looking for a woman, he recalled. *The Handmaid's Tale* has been a seminal rite-of-passage novel for many young women for over three decades; a feminist sacred text. "It's sacred to me, too," Mr. Miller said. "But I don't feel like it's a male or female story; it's a survival story...."

“I was incredibly, and am still incredibly mindful, of the fact that I’m a boy,” Mr. Miller said. “You always try to find people who support your deficits.” To that end, when Mr. Miller finished writing the first two episodes, he sent them to Ms. Atwood; she approved. He made sure his writing staff was almost entirely female, and hired women to direct all but two of the 10 episodes.

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/20/arts/television/the-handmaids-tale-elisabeth-moss-samira-wiley-margaret-atwood-hulu.html>.

---. “A Tale Finally Told in TV’s Age of Atwood.” *New York Times* 29 October 2017. Section: Arts & Leisure: 1. How *Alias Grace* became a mini-series.

Excerpt: More than 20 years ago, a precocious teenage girl made a surprising request of the novelist Margaret Atwood. She had just read Ms. Atwood’s *Alias Grace* and found herself entranced by the true story of Grace Marks, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Irish immigrant and servant who became a celebrity “murderess” in Toronto. So she sent Ms. Atwood a letter seeking the movie rights. Ms. Atwood’s correspondent was Sarah Polley, then best known as a Canadian child star from the Disney Channel’s “Road to Avonlea” and years away from becoming a screenwriter and director of independent films like “Away From Her” and “Take This Waltz.”

Ms. Atwood declined. Obviously. “She was 17!” she said. “I didn’t think she had the wherewithal.” Now, at the age of 38, Ms. Polley is seeing her Hail Mary of a pitch come to fruition: She is the writer and a producer of the mini-series adaptation of the Booker Prize-shortlisted book, debuting on Netflix on Nov. 3....

Also available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/25/arts/television/alias-grace-margaret-atwood-sarah-polley.html>.

PERETZ, Evgenia. “The Lady and the Scamp.” *Vanity Fair* 59.5 (April 2017): 128-[148]. Profile of Nan Talese, Atwood’s U.S. editor.

POGGI, Jeanine. “Marketers of the Year; HULU.” *Advertising Age* 88 (4 December 2017): 24.

Excerpt: Hulu emerged from the shadow of Netflix and Amazon this year thanks to the dystopian drama “The Handmaid’s Tale.” The adaptation of the Margaret Atwood novel of the same name is the first Hulu original series to garner critical acclaim and become part of the cultural zeitgeist—with the help of some smart marketing and good timing.

With its first-ever Super Bowl ad, a creepy IRL stunt and bold print campaign, Hulu went all-in promoting the series set in a future universe where women have been enslaved and forced to become handmaids to help stem a population crisis. It didn’t hurt that the theme of women’s oppression, which underlies the series, has become a real-life bogeyman given the post-election threat of women’s rights being curtailed.

Hulu capitalized on that fact, embedding actresses dressed as handmaids on high-traffic city streets and at festivals like South by Southwest. Clad in red robes and white bonnets, the handmaids silently walked through crowds, turning heads and sparking social media conversations. The unsettling stunt was mimicked by other women, who dressed like handmaids at protests across the country and carried signs like “Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again,” playing off President Trump’s slogan.

Hulu’s print and outdoor campaigns gave off a similarly creepy vibe. The company released nine character posters the day after “Handmaid’s Tale” premiered in April with messages like “The future is a f---ing nightmare,” “This is not ordinary” and “Your body is no longer your

own.”

Hulu aptly ingrained itself and “The Handmaid’s Tale” into the women’s movement. It partnered with The Wing, a New York social club for women; created a capsule collection inspired by the series with fashion design collective Vaquera; and curated an art installation on the High Line in New York where hundreds of books containing messages of hope and resistance lined the nearly one-and-a-half-mile stretch. And in a true sign of resonance, “Handmaid’s Tale” was spoofed by “Saturday Night Live” and quoted in a speech given by Hillary Clinton.

It all culminated in September, with Hulu taking home eight Emmy Awards for the series, including the top prize for best drama—the first streaming service to win the honor. Hulu’s success this year extends beyond “Handmaid’s Tale.” In the last six months, it has also launched a live TV service, created a \$5 streaming bundle for students in conjunction with Spotify, and added thousands of new episodes of content from the likes of Fox and NBC Universal. All told, the company will spend \$2.5 billion on content in 2017. While Hulu doesn’t release ratings, the company says average daily sign-ups nearly doubled during the first few months after “The Handmaid’s Tale” debuted.

POWELL, Betsy. “Atwood Joins Annex Neighbours to Fight Condo; Writer Adds Voice to Chorus That Includes Galen Weston, Member of Eaton Family.” *Toronto Star* 29 August 2017. Section: News: A3.

Excerpt: Celebrated author Margaret Atwood, grocery store magnate Galen Weston, their spouses and others have joined forces to fight a proposed midrise condo development in their beloved Annex neighbourhood. City planning staff is recommending Toronto and East York Community Council agree to alter city planning rules so the proposal can proceed to council for approval. “Overall, given the site and context, planning staff find the height and massing ... to be acceptable,” says a staff report on next week’s community council agenda. Even if council approves the development, the battle could still play out at the Ontario Municipal Board, the provincial agency that has final say on all planning decisions in the province. The proposal calls for an existing two-storey commercial building at 321 Davenport Rd., south of Dupont St., to be demolished and replaced by an eight-storey building with 16 condo units and 30 parking spots in a two-level garage.

The proposed structure exceeds height and density rules so requires zoning bylaw amendments, typical of most condo building applications in Toronto.... several high-profile Annex residents, particularly those living in homes on Admiral Rd. with rear yards facing the Davenport property, are outraged by the proposal. They’ve sent emails, letters and a petition to city officials objecting to the “hulking presence.” “I join my neighbours in their concerns about setbacks that violate bylaws, and about privacy issues, and about the precedent such large violations of bylaws would set, not only for the neighbourhood but for the city,” Atwood wrote in a letter to local Councillor Joe Cressy, who sits on that community council.... Atwood included a link in her June 5 email to a newspaper story about a court case regarding shared trees. There are no trees on the proposed site. But the proposed development has an impact on six privately owned trees located on three neighbouring properties, the staff report says.

“Neighbours must get permission to alter or damage a shared tree. It is against the law to act otherwise,” Atwood wrote, urging councillors to postpone a vote on the proposal back in June, pending further study on a tree “alleged” to be unhealthy. Without a proper assessment, “the developers may find themselves being sued,” she wrote. “That would be unfortunate; as such cases can drag on for a long time.” (On Monday, she wrote in an email to the Star it would be premature to comment further but said any statement would have to come from all

neighbours.) Novelist Graeme Gibson, Atwood's husband, suggested the proposed plans "hover close to a brutal and arrogant assault on a community that has been here since the 19<sup>th</sup> century."

The next day saw a follow up by the same author:

"Atwood a-Twitter Over Condo; Author Ignites Tweetstorm After Voicing Opposition to Luxury Annex Dwelling." *Toronto Star* 30 August 2017. Section: Greater Toronto: GT3.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood declined to comment Monday when the *Star* emailed her asking about her opposition to a proposed eight-storey luxury condo building in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood. But after the story was posted on the *Star's* website, the literary icon went on the defensive on Twitter—in some cases sparring with critics who piled on and accused her of NIMBYism and ignoring Toronto's affordable housing crisis. Some of the exchanges got a little testy, such as when Shawn Micallef, an author/urbanist and *Toronto Star* columnist, tweeted that Atwood had "strengthened the anti-housing backbone in this city with this politically sledgehammer opposition to an 8 storey bldn." Atwood tweeted: "Now you're just being silly. Or, I dunno—are you working for the developer or something?" Micallef responded that he was "in nobody's pocket" and on Tuesday followed through on his promise to send her his latest book about Toronto.

A sample of some of Atwood's other tweets from Monday evening:

In response to a tweetstorm by *Globe and Mail* architecture critic Alex Bozickovic attempting to explain Toronto's population growth and zoning, Atwood tweeted: "To repeat: The neighbours don't want the building to go right to the lot line + kill their trees. And Y to 8 storeys that respect setbacks."

When some Twitter users suggested age was a factor in the neighbourhood objection to the development, she responded: "As for the 'old people' slur, yeah, some of them do hate change. So do some young people. I'd say it's individual."

As part of a larger conversation, many people replied to Atwood's tweets asking her to clarify her position, so she did. "Nobody is blocking the building. Many are trying to modify it. Have you seen the proposal?" "Maybe you should calculate the profit involved for the developer in destroying my neighbours' trees." "'House others' make it sound as if those housed are homeless. For a couple of million per unit, that's far from the truth."

Many complained that Atwood and her neighbours had fallen prey to NIMBYism. "Actually it's not my back yard. It's my neighbours' + their trees—some roots have already been cut. That's what I object to," Atwood responded. In response to a tweet that suggested the city must build up, not out to accommodate the next generation, Atwood tweeted: "But what are you suggesting I do? Right now? Jump off a bridge to create space? But some rich person would reno my house. You know it." "You want me to sell my house to a developer who'd put an apartment building on it? You think I bear some personal guilt for housing cycles?" Followed shortly by: "Never mind. Once I'm dead, market forces will take over, and I will doubtless be tortured in Hell for living in the wrong place." Atwood later offered an alternate solution: "Hmm, maybe it's time for me to move out of #toronto. I didn't like it much when I moved in. #CatsEye"

This story was followed by a full-throated defense of MA:

MALLICK, Heather. "Defending Atwood in Condo Divide." *Toronto Star* 2 September 2017. Section: News: A8.

Excerpt: Toronto is a homely city, whether by accident or design. Historic buildings are demolished. Cheap glass accretes, storey by storey, without detail, grace or interest. The cycle continues as ever, the infelicities of the 1960s replaced by the godawfuls of the 2010s, plus murals. The Twitter pile-on over Margaret Atwood defending her neighbours as they object to an oversized glass condo creature has missed that crucial point. The huge thing goes almost right up to the lot line like a blob on the move. This is what puzzles me about Toronto's smug urban campaigners. Esthetics go unmentioned.... The eight-storey condo planned for 321 Davenport Rd. looks like Ikea's Godmorgon—they're acrylic makeup drawer organizers—if you couldn't figure out the assembly instructions. It will easily be as plug-ugly as the box it replaces, but much bigger. Improving city life isn't simple. It's complex, it's negotiated. Yes, Davenport is an arterial road and midrise buildings will improve it, as they do in the deteriorating Beach neighbourhood and as highrise condos will on the ratty east Danforth. More people will come to the city instead of creating destructive suburban sprawl. That said, the Davenport condo is creepily close to its neighbours—mainly fairly understated brick homes—just behind it on Admiral Rd. and Bernard Ave. It will kill all privacy and will damage or kill trees.

Atwood isn't directly affected, but she's fed up and, as always, she dares to speak up. Admiral is not a glossy street. It has multiple-dwellings, some rooming houses, and a Salvation Army retreat for addiction treatment for women, Atwood told me, adding, "As for this particular condo in its present design being a fosterer of Affordable Housing or in The Public Interest, give me a break!" In Toronto city planning, trees are normally treated like the fingers of God himself. Even if your tree is unsightly, good luck trying to cut it down and replant. But in this case, to hell with trees. They're owned by people whose responses in June on the city's zoning amendment form have been ridiculed. Why? Because their owners have money, whether inherited or earned. ...

After enduring tribal Twitter attacks of dubious taste—for her age, for being successful—Atwood revealed that she had already been planning to move into a condo, or downsize. As the *New Yorker* has reported, her husband, Graeme Gibson, has early dementia. Atwood and Gibson have lived on Admiral for more than 30 years. They are rooted. It's too late to move. The tribalists were cruel. One editorial mocked Atwood's husband and advised her that if she didn't like it here, she could always "sell her valuable Annex home and move to the country." Ah, go back to the woods from whence ye came. Imagine saying this to Canada's most famous writer, a possible Nobel winner, a feminist heroine, a sustainer of the city. Imagine mocking Atwood for her age. Her novels are about Toronto. Few other good novelists bother with it. But that's what Toronto does to its tall poppies. You think you're so fancy? Get out.

The fact that Atwood didn't inherit Weston or Eaton wealth, that she earned every dollar, wins her no points in this city. "Hmm, maybe it's time for me to move out of Toronto," Atwood tweeted. "I didn't like it much when I moved in. #CatsEye" Her novel *Cat's Eye* was about bullying, Atwood is being bullied by Toronto's hypersensitive urban tribes, for being famous.

Alterra claims they're the greatest, just the best guys. "Success comes from understanding that the complex relationship between people and place should be the guiding force behind every decision," their website states. I suggest Alterra have a friendly chat with the neighbours. They are people. They have a relationship with their place, and with yours. Guide your force.

REILLY, Martha. "Margaret Atwood Considers Relevance of *The Handmaid's Tale*." *The Observer* (University of Notre Dame) 26 October 2017. Section: News: 1. Report of Atwood's Christian Culture Lecture at the College of St Mary's.

Excerpt: Interest in her work has endured over time and enforced the evergreen theme of

society's susceptibility to hierarchal regression, Atwood said. "*The Handmaid's Tale*, published in 1985-6—before there was an internet, before there were cell phones, before there were even lattes, or at least before lattes were deployed as the stealth weapon from Europe to the extent that they are now—this novel, which by now ought to have become quaint and archaic, has become more believable over time, not less," she said. "The iconic red and white outfit is now an internationally understandable meme popping up in state legislatures and cosplay conventions alike."

The inspiration for her work, she said, involves distinct life experiences, such as the exploration of various forms of worship she underwent as a young woman. "I was curious about religions and went about attending the services of as many religions as I could find in the Toronto of those days," she said. "Each one of them was good at something, but the things they were good at were not the same. ... My conclusion: No one group has got it all." Atwood said this openness to exploring the practices of multiple denominations ultimately contributed to her status as an agnostic.

"Should I, a quasi-Martian join one of them?" she said. "Most likely not. Not only would I be ... disruptive ... as I would ask too many questions, but ... I wouldn't want to belong to a church that would have me for a member." Observing the prominent role religion plays in the development and evolution of culture, she said, constitutes an inevitable and necessary task for writers. "Despite what I said about Martians and agnostics, I am, of course, deeply immersed in Christian culture, both through ... my upbringing ... and through the present day world of North America, in which religion has gotten into politics in a major way and cannot, therefore, be discounted," Atwood said.

A class she took during graduate school at Harvard University, she said, informed her of the Puritan theocracy of New England and accounts of the Salem Witch Trials, which she called "a rigged game, if ever there was one." "The man who taught this course was Perry Miller, who almost single-handedly brought the study of 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan New England into the academy," she said. "That was a very important thing to do since this theocracy is one of the foundation stones of the America we know today. That is why I dedicated *The Handmaid's Tale* to Perry Miller. He didn't live to see it, but he would have understood exactly what I meant."

Dilemmas and crises that have afflicted vulnerable populations around the world also compelled her to write *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood said. "The other sources are taken from human history, for my main goal for this book was that I would put nothing into it that had not been done by human beings at some time in some place," Atwood said. "There is nothing in the book that is beyond our capabilities." Atwood said the novel exemplifies or warns against the ways in which multiple belief systems could be diminished. "The regime is extinguishing any other religions, which is what totalitarian-isms do first," she said. "They get rid of the closest rivals, and then they finish off everybody else."

Current events and senseless violence not only influence her storytelling process but also cause her to ponder the effect individuals can have on the world, depending on their tendencies toward virtue or vice, she said. "The human imagination is a wonderful thing when its goals are positive and a terrible thing when applied to malignant ends," she said. "Weapons of mass destruction do not grow on trees. They exist because we invent them."

Atwood said if she were to rewrite *The Handmaid's Tale* today, she would incorporate some of the modern technological advancements that have taken place since its original composition. "I would do a number of material things differently because we're now living in a world that contains inventions that weren't there in [1985], so I'd have to update that," Atwood said. "I

would have my regime seize control of the internet, which is what totalitarianisms try to do. ... They would have to do something about cell phones and who was allowed to have them.”

The characters and events about which she writes, she said, often help develop the overarching message of her works. “My books are not illustrated propaganda points,” she said. “I don’t start with the idea, like war is hell or love is nice. I don’t think that’s how books happen, though it’s often how they are taught.” Atwood said she prefers to discover the didactic purpose or meaning of her writing as she integrates various perspectives and nuances her plot. “When I’m working with a book, I’m working with the text, the sentences, the characters, what happens next, all of those kinds of things,” Atwood said. “The shall-we-say teachable theme emerges out of that sooner or later, but I don’t necessarily know what it is at the beginning.”

RIDDLER, Kat. “Straight Off “The Handmaid’s Tale” Emmy High, Margaret Atwood Accepts STL Literary Award.” *The Current* (University of Missouri—St. Louis) 24 September 2017. Section: News: 1.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood came to St. Louis last Tuesday to accept the 2017 St. Louis Literary Award. Her visit came only two days after Hulu’s adaptation, “The Handmaid’s Tale” took home a stunning eight Emmy’s for its debut season. ...Taking the stage at Sheldon Concert Hall, Margaret Atwood took no time in responding to recent events in St. Louis. “But, a country in which police act as judge, as jury, and executioner, is a police state.” Totalitarianism has often been a theme in her dystopian novels. She begged Americans to “not go there.”

She also said she was honored to be in the city that was the birthplace of Josephine Baker. “She was one tough cookie, and I think she would make a terrific statue!” After a long bout of applause, she added, “So that’s your challenge, St. Louis.”

Most of the evening was filled with Atwood cracking jokes, including the story of how she won the Swedish Humor Award, but never actually received it because it was stolen. She also discussed all “the torsos” she saw at the Emmy’s due to her short stature. A Q&A discussion followed the speech with a St. Louis University professor, where audience members were able to submit questions to the author. Atwood spoke about what she referred to as the misnomer of calling her work “dystopian,” citing that the topics she broaches are things that could happen, and in many cases, they already have somewhere.

She discussed character development and the depth to many of her most iconic characters. She claimed to know everything there is about them. “Underwear! You have to know what kind of underwear your characters are wearing. Regardless of whether it comes up.” On her brief cameo [in “The Handmaid’s Tale”], she claimed, “No, I didn’t have a problem slapping Liz.” She referred to Elisabeth Moss, star of “The Handmaid’s Tale” who recently won an Emmy for her performance. According to Atwood, the leading lady kept turning around at first and saying, “slap me harder!” She did, however, feel uncomfortable on the scene she stated. The reality of seeing her dark creation come to life was “overwhelming.” ...

Atwood expressed delight over the news that her novel, *Hag-Seed*, would soon be adapted into a play and would debut at a prison in the St. Louis area. The novel follows a director teaching Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* at a local prison.

The St. Louis Literary Award was developed in 1967. Past recipients of the award include Joan Didion, Saul Bellow, and Tennessee Williams.

ROBB, Peter. “Restorying Canada: Margaret Atwood, Leah Kostamo on the Yin and Yang of Utopia and Dystopia.” *ArtsFile* 20 May 2017. Online.

Report of Atwood's remarks at "Restoring Canada: Reconsidering Religion and Public Memory," a three-day conference and public art event held at the University of Ottawa, which brought together artists, poets, novelists, and scholars in [May of] the year of Canada's sesquicentennial. Asking how religion—and the ways it is remembered—has shaped the formation of Canada as a colonial, multicultural nation, the participants will address both forces of exclusion and rituals of conviviality.

The following is an excerpt of a report on her presentation: Margaret Atwood still has the first copy of George Orwell's *1984* that she bought as a young teenager. The paperback had a slightly salacious cover with "lots of cleavage." No matter. She read it and remembered it and has that original copy still. In 1984, Atwood started a book that is assuming a similar kind of status. *The Handmaid's Tale*, which has been turned into a TV series, has drawn lots of attention to Atwood in this time of Trump.

She relayed the memory during a presentation for the Restoring Canada Conference on The Future of Religion in Canada called Utopia or Dystopia at Tabaret Hall. Atwood appeared with Leah Kostamo, a B.C.-based eco-Christian, who with her husband, has founded a branch of the A Rocha movement in her home province, a community that in many ways reminds one of God's Gardeners, the moral heroes of Atwood's science fiction trilogy *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*. Kostamo described what she and her comrades are trying to achieve as stewards of the land they occupy. That is to rebuild the environment, offering her community's example as a way to rebuild the natural world. "How do we live well so we can repair (the land) and become more sustainable," she says.

The 77-year-old Atwood was suffering from a cold Friday night but that didn't deter her at all. In fact, during her talk, she included a reading of a sermon from her *MaddAddam* trilogy and even sang a hymn that she included in the trilogy. She began by explaining how she met Kostamo.

"I wrote about a Christian-cum-naturist-cum-ecological group in the near future that lives on urban rooftops and cultivates gardens on them. And they also chose hope and tried to reconcile science and ecology with scripture. Sound familiar? Because I had written this group, I was invited to be on a TV show. And Leah and Markku (Kostamo) appeared miraculously from behind the woodwork and there they were, what I had written." Atwood's own deep understanding of Christianity comes from her earliest school days "when there were two school systems, a Roman Catholic one and a Protestant system. We had *Bible* readings and prayers all the time in school."

That grounding would prove very helpful when it came time to study English literature in depth." You can't study English literature, in its first five centuries, without knowing something of the history of Christianity. God's Gardeners came out of the fact that (in Christianity) there were several different divisions" in the understanding of the relationship of humans to the natural world. "One (involves) what you might call the Rapturists. God is going fry everybody but them. They will be up in the sky watching as the Earth is destroyed and God will make a new one just for them. I wouldn't count on that. The Dominionists ... think God gave man dominion (over the earth) which is equated with permission to do whatever you want. They think they can destroy any old thing and it doesn't matter because you've got dominion. The third is the Stewardship group. This group feels that yes they were entrusted with this (world), but their duty is ... to take care of the garden."

Despite these differing schools of thought, Atwood doesn't blame religion for all the world's ills. "Atheist regimes have done a good job of oppressing and murdering people too. It is true that Christianity has some dark moments. But I don't think you can put that down to a

religion. I think you can put that down to human beings.”

Atwood is well versed in utopian and dystopian literature, part of that deep study, and since that was the topic to hand on Friday night, she got down to business. “The 19<sup>th</sup> century was an age in which a lot of people wrote utopias, books that present a world that is better than the one the writer is living in. Some examples might be W.H. Hudson’s *A Crystal Age*, William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* and Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *A Coming Age*.” This latter book spawned a cult-like following of people that even included Adolf Hitler.

The First World War put an end to utopian literature, she said, and opened an era of dystopias. Atwood says every dystopia contains within a little utopia. And every utopia contains a little dystopia. In both there is usually a group of people identified as standing in the way of happiness.

Atwood has written two [sic] books that have religion in them. One is *The Handmaid’s Tale* and the other is the *MaddAddam Trilogy*. The religion in *MaddAddam* is benevolent but in the *Handmaid’s Tale* it is not benevolent. It is a totalitarian theocracy. Does that mean I am anti-religion? No. It means people have frequently used religion as a means of controlling societies and of getting rid of people who don’t agree with them. That is just historically true.”

Asked by the evening’s moderator, University of Ottawa professor Emma Anderson about *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Atwood described the influences that led her to the novel. “One was my study of 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan New England. I have a personal connection because some of my ancestors were creepy 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan New Englanders. One was even implicated in witchcraft. She’s in a book by Cotton Mather. That’s why *The Handmaid’s Tale* is dedicated to Mary Webster. My granny was a Webster.” Puritan intolerance of other religious beliefs has never gone away and it has periodic resurgences, she says. “We are seeing one of those moments right now.” She says her writing was also prompted by rise of the religious right in the early 1980s. And finally her interest in dystopias as a literary form also played a role in sparking *The Handmaid’s Tale*. “I had never written one to that point. I had read a lot of them. If you figure out how old I am, you will figure out that I was at a very impressionable age when *1984* was published (in June 1949). “I read it at about age 13. There were these cheesy editions in drugstores. People bought them because they looked like true romance literature. And then you would find yourself reading Hemingway or Faulkner. I still have that copy of *1984*. There is a lot of leering and cleavage on the cover. I was also reading Ray Bradbury and (Aldous) Huxley and H.G. Wells.”

When Atwood wrote *The Handmaid’s Tale* she says she considered what kind of totalitarian dictatorship could occur in the U.S. She settled on a theocracy after ruling out a Communist state and a liberal democracy that crushes freedom to protect itself. Today, she said, somewhat tongue in cheek, “I may be wrong. We will wait and see. ... Somebody should tell the American right (the novel) is not a blue print, but it kind of is.”

Available from: <http://artsfile.ca/atwood>.

RUTENBERG, Jim. “The Idiot Box, Jolted Awake by Politics.” *New York Times* 15 May 2017. Section: B: 1.

Excerpt: Based on the Margaret Atwood novel of the same name, “The Handmaid’s Tale” is about once-modern women forced into indentured servitude to bear children. The production team’s embrace of the political moment is extraordinary by historical television standards. Hulu happily accepted Planned Parenthood’s promoting the program’s premiere, which came a couple of weeks after Mr. Trump signed legislation to cut off federal funding to the group.

Planned Parenthood promoted the show's debut with a statement calling it "a terrifying cautionary tale about a future without reproductive rights" and including a plea from Ms. Moss as well. Hillary Clinton picked up the theme a week later at Planned Parenthood's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala, warning, "We didn't look up from our phones until it was too late."

SAINATO, Michael and Chelsea SKOJEC. "Dystopia Depicted in "The Handmaid's Tale" Already Exists in Saudi Arabia." *New York Observer* 2 May 2017. Online.

Excerpt: "The Handmaid's Tale," a Hulu original series based on Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, portrays a world overrun by misogyny. Offred, the main character, is subjected to a life of servitude under an authoritarian government dictated by religious fundamentalism. Women are stripped of any semblance of autonomy and are banned from owning their own property, credit cards and checking accounts. Offred's worth as a human being is reduced to her ability to breed, and she lives as a slave under the ownership of an aristocratic couple. In this society, women aren't allowed to drive, work or leave their homes without permission, and all handmaids are forced to abide by a strict regiment run by the guardian of the handmaids, Aunt Lydia. When Offred is allowed to leave the house, militarized guards loom everywhere as a constant reminder that there is no escape. Examples are made of those who break the rules; their bodies are hung in public at the end of a noose. Though the shock value of the story stems largely from contrasting Offred's past life as a middle-class college graduate to her life as a handmaid in a puritanical society, the elements that create this dystopian world exist in countries around the world, with Saudi Arabia as the closest example.

In Saudi Arabia, it's against the law to bear children out of wedlock, and clinics that aid undocumented women who have children out of wedlock are subject to strict penalties by the government....

Available from: <http://observer.com/2017/05/the-handmaids-tale-saudi-arabia-oppression-of-women>.

SANGHANI, Radhika. "The Handmaid's Tale": 7 Times Fact Was as Terrifying as Fiction." *The Telegraph* 29 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was first published in 1985. Its dystopian patriarchal world shocked readers who feared that one day, a similar situation could come to pass. In 2017 it has hit our television screens, and with the brilliant Elizabeth Moss playing the lead Offred, it feels scarily close to home. Three decades ago, it seemed unimaginable that women's rights could be so easily taken away from them—but this show has shown how fragile what many of us take for granted really is. And we don't have to look too far to see how for many women across the globe control over their lives and bodies is a daily reality.

Here, we list the seven areas where fact is as scary as fiction:

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

In "The Handmaid's Tale":

Ofglen—played by Alexis Bedel—is subjected to a forced clitoridectomy. It is punishment for "gender treachery," the term given to her illicit [relations] with another woman. While the other woman, a Martha from her household, is hung in front of her, Ofglen undergoes the surgical procedure to remove female pleasure during sex. "You can still have children, of course," she is told. "but things will be so much easier for you now. You cannot want what you cannot have."

In reality:

Female genital mutilation, where the labia and clitoris are cut or removed for non-medical

reasons, takes place across the world. More than 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut in 30 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It can cause severe health problems, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

### **Homosexuality**

In “THT”:

Gay people are punished by death. Their dead bodies are hung from walls with placards. In the book, they wear purple placards; in the television show they wear pink triangles—the symbol used in Nazi concentration camps for homosexual prisoners.

In reality:

Gay men in Chechnya are tortured and persecuted. It has been reported that more than 100 Chechen men suspected of being gay were rounded up this year with three killed. Germany’s Angela Merkel has called on Vladimir Putin to investigate these reports.

### **Guardianship**

In “THT”:

Women cannot do anything without a man’s permission. They have no control over their finances, they cannot travel, and they have no right to an education. They are controlled by men and need a male guardian to do everything—even withdraw money.

In reality:

Women in Saudi Arabia have been subjected to guardianship rules, where they must live under the supervision of a male guardian and cannot drive. In recent months, the King issues an order allowing women to benefit from education and healthcare without the consent of a male guardian. But women still need permission from a father, husband or son to travel and marry.

### **Systemised rape**

In “THT”:

Handmaids are used purely for their wombs. They are forced to have sex regularly with men just to procreate, and the scenes are ‘justified’ by a *Bible*-reading ceremony before the intercourse takes place.

In reality:

Yazidi women who have been enslaved by Islamic State fighters report that their capturers have used religious justification to rape them. They say that the Islamist kidnappers would pray before and after they raped them.

### **Anti-abortion laws**

In “THT”:

Abortion is a complete crime. Any doctor who ever conducted an abortion is hanged, and if a woman’s foetus dies, she is still forced to carry it. There are no exceptions for abortion—not even in medical emergencies.

In reality:

Abortion is illegal in many parts of the world, including Northern Ireland, where it is not permissible even in cases of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormalities. In the US, vice president Mike Pence tried to pass a law requiring a burial or cremation for all aborted or miscarried foetuses.

### **Head-to-toe clothing**

In “THT”:

Women in Gilead must wear a full head-to-toe red covering that hides their faces and restricts their view.

In reality:

In Afghanistan, the Taliban regime forced women to cover their faces by wearing the traditional burka because “the face of a woman is a source of corruption” for men. This happened from around 1996 to 2001, even though in previous decades, women have enjoyed the liberal life of the west, partaking in the fashion for miniskirts, and studying at university.

### **Losing freedoms**

In “THT”:

Women had the freedom to live equally to men. They lived much as we do now in the west, with women working, travelling and living independently. But those freedoms are gradually taken from them—beginning with emergency martial law which then decreed the freezing of their bank accounts—to not being allowed to work or own property, reducing women to the roles of wives, wombs or prostitutes.

In reality:

In Iran, women used to have freedoms akin to those in the west working as politicians and businesswoman, but after the 1979 revolution, things changed. Within a generation, women could suddenly be banned from working by their husbands, if they deem it “incompatible” with their interests or “dignity.” They must wear a headscarf and overcoat, or black cloak, if going outside, and can be banned from studying specific subjects at university, typically those concerning engineering and technology.

Available from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/handmaids-tale-7-times-fact-terrifying-fiction>.

SCHMIDT, Doug. “Popular Pelee Islander Jailed for Impaired Driving After Crash.” *Windsor Star* 17 January 2017. Section: City & Region: A3.

Excerpt: Glowing letters of support from members of the Pelee Island community, including the mayor and author Margaret Atwood, couldn’t prevent a “well-regarded” Islander from escaping jail for seriously injuring another man in a drunken crash. Superior Court Justice Gregory Verbeem told Jacques McCormick, 39, he has the support of family and “important members of the Pelee Island community” to help turn his life around. But the judge told McCormick, who has a criminal record for another impaired driving conviction, that he stands at “a definitive crossroads in his life” and needs to acknowledge he has a serious drinking problem.

At a sentencing hearing Monday, McCormick was given a seven month jail term, to be followed by a two-year probationary period, for slamming into a tree on Aug. 11, 2013, after his 1999 GMC left McCormick Road at a 90-degree bend. The passenger, a 46-yearold Kingsville man, was airlifted to London with serious but non-life-threatening injuries, while McCormick was airlifted to Leamington’s hospital.

During a five-day trial last May, McCormick argued unsuccessfully that he had been only impaired “to some degree” and that, after a visit to the Pelee Island Winery, it was his drunken passenger who “intentionally and unexpectedly grabbed the steering wheel.” The judge didn’t buy the explanation.

Verbeem was impressed with the long list of positive character references submitted to the court, including from “noted author” Atwood, Mayor Rick Masse and novelist Graeme Gibson, an Order of Canada member and founder of the Pelee Island Bird Observatory, who described McCormick as “a decent person who struggles.” The judge said the letters of support showed

that McCormick was clearly a “dependable and exemplary contractor, viewed favourably ... a positive contributing member of the Pelee Island community.”

SCHNELLER, Johanna. “Fame Game; The Future of Canadian Film Is ... Canadian Television.” *Globe and Mail* 10 March 2017. Section: Film: R1. Profile of Sarah Polley who brought *Alias Grace* from book to film.

Excerpt: Sarah Polley, the Oscar-nominated, Canadian writer/director/actress, spent 20 years thinking about how to adapt Margaret Atwood’s sprawling novel *Alias Grace* for the screen. She spent her own money to buy the rights when they came available. Then, she spent nearly two years writing, often in snatched hours during her children’s naps.

Somewhere in the middle, as she surveyed her 700-page feature draft, it hit her that perhaps the future of this Canadian film was ... television. She honed it to a six-hour limited series, which she finally believed captured the scope of the Giller Prize-winning, based-on-a-true story novel of an unreliable narrator recalling murders she may or may not have committed, covering 30 years, multiple locations and shifting points of view. And then Polley promised herself something: “I will not make this for less than \$30-million.”

No one likes to talk about money, but it’s vitally important [since] it’s obvious that money is a key to excellence.

So when the creative team behind “Alias Grace”—which will air this fall, first on the CBC, followed by Netflix—gathered on Wednesday for one of the academy’s several Members Lounge panels (daytime education/networking seminars, a new offering the academy hopes to make a permanent part of Screen Week), they were willing to talk dollars. And to acknowledge that the future of Canadian filmmaking lies in admitting that, sometimes, film isn’t the right medium—that, to succeed, you have to be story-specific and platform agnostic.

“No one had ever handed me six scripts before,” said Noreen Halpern, the chief executive of Halfire Entertainment and *Alias Grace*’s executive producer, about her first meeting with Polley. Immediately, Halpern responded to the “incredible piece of writing based on an incredible piece of writing.” She loved Polley’s characterization of it—that it had a People v. O.J. Simpson vibe, about a crime of a century that was also a jumping-off point for present-day social commentary, including immigration and class issues, sexism and sexual violence. She respected Polley’s choice for director: Mary Harron, who’d made *American Psycho* and *The Notorious Bettie Page*. And she took Polley’s assertion—“We’re not making this unless we get the right budget”—as a challenge.

Their first stop was the CBC. Sally Catto, the general manager of English-language programming, is a friend of Polley’s; she’d been keeping an eye on the project for years. “There couldn’t be anything more perfect for the CBC,” she said. “We’re focused on telling distinctly Canadian, iconic stories. Literary adaptations are something the public broadcaster should be doing. The writer, director, producer and star are all Canadian.” (Toronto-born actor Sarah Gadon plays Grace.)

“But Grace is also very contemporary,” Catto continued, “a woman who’s flawed, complicated. There’s something timeless and timely about her. It’s historical, yet progressive at the same time.” Said Polley: “I spent my childhood on the CBC [acting in “Road to Avonlea”], this bucolic vision of this time that never existed in this country. As nice as it was for families to watch, it was a bit of a lie. So to be back on the CBC in this brutally honest look at what it was like for women in period costumes, and people get spattered in blood, was extremely cathartic.”

Still, Polley knew the CBC couldn't afford to make *Alias Grace* without a partner. So she, Halpern and Harron went to Los Angeles. They spent two days refining their pitch and three days presenting it to eight potential buyers. Three wanted it, and Netflix won, partly because they said two key things: We want it to be your vision. But we won't do it until we talk to the CBC, to make sure we're all making the same story. "You can't do a co-pro unless both parties are invested in that," Halpern said. (Interestingly, as with the pitchers, the three Netflix pitches were all women, too.)

In the three short scenes that played during the panel, the sweep of the story and the ambition of the storytelling—the hell yes—we're-doing-this-right of it—were evident. The production brought a sailing ship over from Europe, and built its interiors on a Toronto sound stage, set on a gimbal so it could rock. They built a massive set for Grace's arrival in Toronto, for about 1.5 minutes of screen time. "That kind of thing happened over and over, because Sarah writes television as if it's a film," Halpern said. "But when you watch the footage, it makes a massive difference, because you feel the scope. It feels like real life."

"I was adamant about the budget because from the moment I wrote the scripts, I knew the first thing to go would be the boat," Polley said. "For me, one of the most pressing issues in this series is immigration, class. We look at refugees and immigrants now, and we forget the squalor, the horror of what people went through to get here. We see this story in Canadian immigration over and over again. There's always a stigma. So that was my line in the sand. The boat's not going, the immigration part cannot go. This is what we need to see right now."

Despite the best efforts of the academy to pump up Canadian television and cinema, the product won't improve, or become more popular, until we rethink—and talk about—the money. "I spent most of my career looking at financing first and then making the shows I made fit that," Halpern said. "You can't do that any more. You can't compromise. The bar is too high. "You have to look at the show and find the budget for that show," she goes on. "If you can't, don't bother making it." She advocates "less but better"—fewer shows, shorter orders.

And of course, more co-productions. ... "It has to be about the content," Catto said. "The question is no longer, 'Is this a feature, television or digital?' It's, 'What is the content and what length of time do we need to realize it?' We're transcending that barrier between platforms. "We're competing in a high-calibre, international marketplace," Catto summed up. "We need to make things that will both shine in this country, and carry our stories and talent outside." "Unless people don't like it," Polley said. Still Canadian, after all.

---. "Sarah Polley's Lifelong *Alias*; The Filmmaker Has Spent Years Trying to Adapt Margaret Atwood's Landmark Novel, *Alias Grace*. Now, As Johanna Schneller Reports, Her Once-Impossible Dream Is Set to Steal the Spotlight at TIFF." *Globe and Mail* 2 September 2017. Section: Film: R1. Backstory of how *Alias Grace* became filmed and ready for showing at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Excerpt: In a separate interview, I ask Atwood how she feels about Polley's 20-year interest. "Why do people ask that so often?" she replies, her exasperation audible. "It doesn't matter how it makes me feel. It's interesting in and of itself. If I were dead, it would still be interesting." Then she sighs, and answers the question: "Of course it's terribly flattering. Sarah's extremely experienced, so I knew I was going to get quality. That's why we preserved the rights for her [for many years]. She said she wouldn't make it unless she got the right budget [\$30-million]. And she meant it." ... Polley (through her agent) had tried to buy the rights to *Alias Grace* when she was 18. Atwood's agent deemed her insufficiently experienced. But when she eventually secured them, a decade later, her first call was to the author. They met

in a restaurant on Bloor Street in downtown Toronto, and talked for four hours. “To sit down with the creator of my favourite book, and ask her every question I ever wanted, was one of the most amazing experiences I ever had as an artist,” Polley says. Then, and every time they’ve met since, Polley comes away with a list of books and movies to read and see. Atwood grabs her notebook and writes the titles for her. “She’s educated me in a way I wouldn’t have had access to,” Polley says.

During her first pregnancy, on mandatory bed rest, she lay worrying that she wasn’t writing. But not only did Atwood not pressure her, she also sent flowers and was “unbelievably generous with her wisdom,” Polley says. “She’s tremendously insightful; she thinks deeply about the human condition. To have that wisdom pointed in your direction at the most important moments of your life is an amazing thing. She has X-ray vision into other people’s lives.” Atwood also urged Polley, “Let’s stop being the nice girl who’s easy to get along with. Let’s grow up and be tough and stand up for ourselves, stand up straight and use your voice,” Polley recalls. “She’s been constantly prodding me toward that.” At her most recent birthday party, Polley was talking about a conversation she was terrified to have, and Atwood hit her back—hard—and ordered, “Stand up, Sarah, straighten up!” She meant it literally, and emotionally.

Of course, Atwood has courted her share of controversy; this past week, for example, she enraged the Twitterverse by publicly complaining that a planned eight-storey condo would ruin her cozy neighbourhood. But in “Alias Grace” and “The Handmaid’s Tale,” which was also made into an acclaimed series this year, she’s proved disturbingly prescient about how easily societal gains can be snatched away. “I’m extra chilled by how timely both stories feel,” Atwood says. “This is not cause for shouting hooray. I’m appalled that I was freakishly right.”

Although the two series have brought Atwood a new generation of readers, looking to her for clarity, “If I had the choice—which I do not—I would choose better political conditions, and literary obscurity,” she says. “Can I provide any clarity? No! Anything I say in the morning will be contradicted by the events of the afternoon. There’s obviously a culture war going on. It’s been going on for a long time, but now it’s out in the open. Trump is not the only problem. He’s the lightning rod, but he did not create it.” The white underclass—another theme in *Alias Grace*—has been here since the beginning of colonization, Atwood goes on: “They were always looked down upon by white elites, and so it has remained. If you allow extreme economic inequality to develop, the underclass will feel resentful of just about everything. But it’s too dangerous to blame billionaires—they’ll squash you like a bug. It’s cheap and easy to blame other poor people who aren’t the same as you.”

Also available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/awards-and-festivals/tiff/miniseries-adaptation-of-margaret-atwoods-alice-in-brown-land/article36146013>.

SHARMAN, Jon. “Margaret Atwood Says Rise of Trump Has Made *The Handmaid’s Tale* Popular Again; Comments Follow a Series of Attempts by Politicians to Restrict Access to Abortions.” *The Independent* 12 February 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Atwood has said the return of the right to power in the United States has sent her classic dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* shooting back up the best-seller lists. She said concerns about women’s freedoms under President Donald Trump have contributed to a resurgence in popularity for the book, which describes a repressive and highly stratified American society in which women are forced into domestic servitude and made to bear the children of the ruling class.

It follows a series of moves by conservative politicians to restrict access to abortions, and the leak of a draft executive order that would have enshrined conservative Christian beliefs on the subject, as well as on marriage and gender, in policy. It reportedly went unsigned by Mr. Trump only after the intervention of his daughter, Ivanka, and her husband Jared Kushner.

Atwood told Reuters during an interview at Cuba's international book fair: "When it first came out it was viewed as being farfetched. However, when I wrote it I was making sure I wasn't putting anything into it that human beings had not already done somewhere at sometime. You are seeing a bubbling up of it now. It's back to 17<sup>th</sup> century puritan values of New England at that time in which women were pretty low on the hierarchy."

Sales were also likely boosted by trailers for the book's upcoming TV adaptation.

A bill was introduced in Oklahoma's legislature in February that would require women seeking an abortion to obtain the written permission of the man who would be the father. Republican representative Justin Humphrey introduced a bill that would require a pregnant woman to provide the identity of the father in writing to her abortion provider before undergoing the procedure. "No abortion shall be performed in this state without the written informed consent of the father of the foetus," the bill read.

Texas congressman Tony Tinderholt introduced a bill that sought to make it a criminal offence to have an abortion in his state at any stage, regardless of whether a woman had conceived following rape or incest. He said: "Right now, they don't make it important to be personally responsible because they know that they have a backup of 'Oh, I can just go get an abortion.'"

And in Arkansas, a pregnant woman's husband will have the power to stop her from having an abortion, even in cases of rape, under a new law. Most second trimester abortions will also be banned by the *Unborn Child Protection From Dismemberment Abortion Act*, which will make it possible for husbands to sue doctors who carry out abortions for civil damages, or get an injunction to block the termination....

In January Vice President Mike Pence attended the anti-abortion March For Life, for which Mr. Trump also tweeted his "full support." Mr. Pence told marchers: "This administration will work with Congress to end taxpayer funding of abortion and abortion providers." He added: "Life is winning again in America." In Atwood's 1985 novel, a totalitarian theocracy is in power and employs a secret police force to maintain its grip. Abortion is banned and women are categorised into legitimate and illegitimate groups. "Handmaids" –re-educated women who have broken a law—are forced to bear the children of "Commanders of the Faithful," the highest-ranking men. "Unwomen," who may be sterile, feminists, or politically incompatible with the regime, are made to work in agricultural colonies.

Available from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-puritan-values-donald-trump-republican-party-abortion-a7575796.html>.

SiHARIFI, Sima. "How Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* Resonates in Iran." *Globe and Mail* 28 April 2017. Section: Opinion: 8.

Excerpt: My sister and I lead radically different lives in countries as dissimilar as they get, she in Iran and I in Canada. After almost four decades of physical and emotional separation, a novel renewed our broken sisterly bonds. I came across Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* translated into Persian while doing research for my PhD. Ms. Atwood's book is a critique of religious-based dictatorship and its lethal effects on women. Yet, the autocratic Islamist government of Iran endorsed the novel's translation and publication. Why was the translation

of such a story allowed, and how was it translated? I began comparing the English and Persian versions and noticed language in Persian that overturned Ms. Atwood's intent.

I wondered what message female readers in Iran would receive from such a manipulated story. I decided to reach out to my estranged sister, who had lived all her life in Iran. To my pleasant surprise, she said she would love to engage in the project and had the same question: "I want to know if the story of a famous writer like Atwood's was altered by the translators to manipulate readers, or if what I read in Persian is accurate." We began our weekly chats about *The Handmaid's Tale* as read in two different languages, interpreted from the perspective of two Iranian-born sisters now living in dramatically different cultures.

I was imprisoned as a young adult living in Iran for protesting against the Islamist government of Ruhollah Khomeini's misogynistic policies. The age of marriage had been lowered to nine years for girls, or even less with the consent of paternal male guardians. The custody of children was unquestionably given to the husband, and the civil and penal codes had placed the value of women at half that of a man in legal matters such as inheritance, court testimony and blood money.

My younger sister unfortunately followed my footsteps and was also imprisoned for distributing pamphlets among her classmates protesting the regime's violence against girls. After being released, we took different paths: I fled the country, came to Canada, and learned about my rights to liberty and freedom. She remained in the land of our birth and married, her life as a housewife reduced to the four walls of her home. Yet, she did her best to cope with those women-unfriendly circumstances by quietly resisting the regime's ideological indoctrination, not unlike the female characters in *The Handmaid's Tale*. I used to have a warm, close relationship with my sister. But as the years went by, our physical separation degraded our personal relationship, nearly severing our emotional connection. Our revived weekly conversations highlighted what we had lost—and they began to bring us back together.

At one point, we focused on the passage about the protagonist's mother, who tells her daughter how female activists suffered but eventually succeeded in claiming their rights, benefiting the next generations of girls and women. We both knew that Iranians were actively discouraged from reading anything about women fighting for equal rights, and found that this section was deleted in the translation. Based on her lived experience, my sister insightfully concluded that whoever made these alterations did not want to put the idea in women's heads that they would be rewarded for activism. We both laughed at her perceptive sarcasm, and simultaneously were plunged back into our own turbulent pasts, captured and caged in solitary cells between 1983-84.

She said, her voice trembling, that "it was awfully painful to witness the daily execution of my cellmates as young as 13 years old whose only sin was attending peaceful rallies or spraying anti-revolutionary graffiti." She herself was a mere teenager at the time and I was terrified that the same fate could befall her. She reminded me that I had also lost most of my friends for demanding their human rights. A heavy silence hung in the air. "But we defeated the prison-keepers, didn't we?" she said with a defying upbeat tone.

In our next session, I asked why the word "veil" in English was translated as "burqa." While a veil just covers a woman's hair, a burqa is a full-body gown, cloaking a woman from her head to her feet. I thought of one possible reason: to sever the negative associations between veils, which are required attire for women while in public in Iran, and women's captivity. "The burqa," my sister added, "brings up in the Iranian reader the image of women from Saudi Arabia, the quintessential enemy of the Iranian regime." The unfavourable associations between Iran's obligatory veil and oppression against women is purposely muddled. The

English word veil becomes burqa in Persian and the reader's attention is diverted from Iran to Saudi Arabia, a shift intended to vilify the Saudis. Wearing a veil in public isn't the only rule women are expected to follow in Iran, of course. My sister, like all women, is supposed to know the proper colour of her veil, the height of her shoe's heels and how much makeup she's allowed to wear, without being given any clear instructions. These unwritten rules are stringently enforced wherever women attempt to exist in public, in schools, universities and workplaces. I have choices and free movement; she has to maneuver around constraining realities designed to handicap and reduce her to a constantly surveilled object.

At this point, we concluded that the translation of *The Handmaid's Tale* had two simultaneous goals. The regime hoped to rebrand itself as pro-feminist in the eyes of the international community by publishing the book, while reinforcing their anti-feminist stand to its citizens by eliminating all pro-feminist content in the translation. As we finished reading the story, she began to imagine, as I often do and Ms. Atwood herself acknowledged, that the fictional dystopia could become reality, even worse than that of the already restrictive Islamic Republic of Iran where my sister lives. And that frightens her deeply. It took us 99 days to delve into this fictional tale, one that resonated with our real stories, shared with each other for the first time in many years. Reading Ms. Atwood in Tehran and Vancouver slowly helped us restore the treasure of trust and closeness we took for granted during our troubled youth. And for that, we are grateful to *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-how-atwoods-the-handmaids-tale-resonates-in-iran>.

STERN, Carly. "A Powerful Statement: Pro-Choice Activists Dress Up in Red Habits from *The Handmaid's Tale* to Hold Protest in the Texas State Senate Against Bills That Could Limit Abortion Rights." *Daily Mail* 21 March 2017. Section: Femail. Online.

Excerpt: A group of pro-choice activists is using imagery from the dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* to protest potential laws in Texas that would restrict women's access to abortions. On Monday, protesters arrived at the State senate while discussion was being held about SB 25, a bill intending to eliminate wrongful birth suits. The women wore red habits and white bonnets, the very individuality-masking outfits worn by the handmaids in Margaret Atwood's 1985 book. To many women who have read *The Handmaid's Tale*, current events have made the fictional dystopian society of Gilead seem closer to reality than ever before....

Available from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-4336500/Protesters-dress-Handmaid-s-Tale-habits-Texas-Senate.html>.

SZKLARSKI, Cassandra. "Flies Remake Would Feature Girls; Atwood, Actors Weigh in on Gender-Flipped Version of Novel." *Times Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia) 20 September 2017. Section: Arts: C9.

Excerpt: A proposed film remake of "Lord of the Flies" that would feature girls instead of boys has piqued Margaret Atwood's interest. The Canadian author says the film would have to acknowledge the different ways girls and boys relate, but she suggested it wouldn't be hard to find themes that a modern-day audience could relate to. "You hear a lot about bullying in school—is it different? It's certainly amplified with smartphones and social media. But is it essentially different?" said Atwood, riding high from a critically acclaimed TV adaptation of her 1985 book *The Handmaid's Tale*, which just scored eight Emmy Awards.

The CanLit legend mused on the possibility of a gender swapped "Lord of the Flies" at the recent Toronto International Film Festival, where diversity issues loomed large amid an especially female-weighted slate. Word came last month that Warner Bros. plans to tackle a

new version of the iconic William Golding novel. The reboot would follow several gender-swapping overhauls in Hollywood, including the recent “Ghostbusters” remake.

Atwood and screenwriter Sarah Polley, who were at TIFF with their TV adaptation of Atwood’s book *Alias Grace*, found the idea intriguing. “It’s worth exploring, but I think people have to recognize that gangs of little girls and gangs of little boys do behave differently,” said Atwood, whose novel *Cat’s Eye* traced the cruelties of a gang of schoolgirls. “I was a camp counsellor with both. The little boys would form hierarchies based on the biggest, the strongest, the most accomplished at some things, which [was] baseball cards. And they would arrange themselves in that period and it would be pretty stable. Like, it wouldn’t change much. “Whereas the little girls of the same age, it was like the Byzantine court. You couldn’t tell why Miss Popularity was popular. She could be pulled down at any minute, for some reason it was not clear.”

TIERNEY, Kevin. “Atwood the Unlikely Darling of American TV; Adaptation of Bestselling Novelist’s Work for Screen Has Critics and Audiences Abuzz.” *Edmonton Journal* (Alberta) 27 November 2017. Section: YOU: E3.

Excerpt: If someone told me 10 years ago one of the biggest names in U.S. television in 2017 would be novelist Margaret Atwood, I might have reacted the way I did in 1999 when somebody told me the next big thing in food would come from Britain. Right. Well, as with Jamie Oliver and his pals, it’s time to take another think. Better still, go to YouTube and catch a glimpse of our national Peggy, flamboyant in red, at the 2017 Emmys after “The Handmaid’s Tale” won for best drama series, rushing to catch up with the show’s producers, directors and stars, all of whom awaited her arrival onstage not unlike minions at the palace. Atwood beamed under the spotlights, maybe just as surprised as many in the audience were.

It is rare non-British novels get a second chance on film or television. While the works of Dickens and the Bronte sisters continue to provide fodder for generations in England, few remakes do so well in the American market, “The Great Gatsby” being perhaps the shiniest exception, having been made twice, in 1974 and 2013. Atwood was ahead of the pack from the start. *The Handmaid’s Tale*, published in 1985, was an immediate hit, with award nominations and bestseller lists galore. It was made into a film in 1990, starring the late Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall and Aidan Quinn. The novel was adapted by Harold Pinter (pre-Nobel Prize but still, how’s that for pimping your prose?) and was directed by Oscar-winning German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff (“The Tin Drum”). It had its world premiere in competition at the Berlin Film Festival. The reviews were not kind. As Leonard Cohen sang about Jesus, the movie sank beneath our wisdom like a stone. Still, on that chilly morning in Berlin, when the cast and crew were introduced to the members of the international press, there was Margaret Atwood, taking her place onstage, as she well deserved to, along [with] the other star names.

To say the times were different then would be a colossal understatement. The Berlin Wall had stood not far from the cinema showing the film and had only come down the year before. Its remnants were a stunning reminder of the novel’s themes of female suppression inside a fundamentalist regime, a joyless portrait of a dystopian society that felt then, in 1990, like the kind of story that could only unfold in the future.

Welcome to the future. It’s 2017 and not only have audiences opened up to the television version, the storyline and characters have entered into popular culture in ways few serious novels ever do. How about a homemade “Handmaid’s Tale” costume to “smash the patriarchy this Halloween?” When you hear the phrases “praise be” and “under his eye” in conversations between hip young women, you know that’s Atwood speak.

A more likely reason for the recent success is the difference between adapting a novel into a film versus adapting a novel into a TV series. It's in the numbers. Telling a story in a movie that lasts two hours is not the same exercise as telling the same story in a 10-hour series. Another major factor might be the difference between Pinter's script, wherein his vision is imprinted on every scene, and the television version, where Bruce Miller, a working producer and TV writer with nothing in his CV to anticipate this kind of success, has let this be more about Atwood's original vision than his.

An abundance of riches? How else does one explain yet another Atwood novel, *Alias Grace*, becoming a miniseries also currently on television? A Canadian production on both the CBC and Netflix, "Alias Grace" has not garnered either the attention or the ratings of its creator's earlier novel. Perhaps it suffers from too much of a good thing—too much Atwood. But I wouldn't be surprised to see Atwood running to the stage at the Canadian Screen Awards in March when they announce best dramatic series.

TOBIN, Andrew. "WATCH: 'The Handmaid's Tale' at Large in Tel Aviv." *Jerusalem Post* 24 June 2018. Online.

Excerpt: What are the female slaves of an American Christian theocracy doing in Tel Aviv? Attracting a lot of attention, apparently. Six women dressed as handmaids from Hulu's hit "The Handmaid's Tale"—based on the novel of the same name by Margaret Atwood—silently wandered the streets of the city on Thursday to promote the show's new run on the Israeli cable TV station HOT.

Despite the 80-degree summer heat, the women wore the stifling crimson frocks and white bonnets made famous by the 10-episode series. They stopped at the beach, City Hall and the Habima Theater, among other local attractions, as passers-by gawked and snapped selfies.

"The Handmaid's Tale" takes place in a version of America where, following a major terrorist attack that obliterates the government, an extremist group seizes power and rules according to its interpretation of the New Testament. In the Republic of Gilead, as the new country is known, there is widespread infertility—but women who are able to reproduce are enslaved to bear children for the country's leaders.

In the novel, Jews are given a choice: convert or emigrate to Israel. More ominously: "You get hanged for being a noisy Jew who won't make the choice. Or for pretending to convert. That's been on the TV too: raids at night, secret hoards of Jewish things dragged out from under beds, torahs, talliths [sic], Magen Davids." There is no mention of Jews or Judaism in the television series, however.

HOT's publicity stunt drew comparisons in the Hebrew-language media to a protest by American pro-choice activists who, earlier this month, wore the handmaids costumes to the Ohio Statehouse to protest legislation that would ban an abortion procedure. "A lot of them emigrated, if you can believe the news," Atwood writes. "I saw a boatload of them, on the TV, leaning over the railings in their black coats and hats and their long beards, trying to look as Jewish as possible, in costumes fished up from the past, the women with shawls over their heads, smiling and waving, a little stiffly it's true, as if they were posing; and another shot, of the richer ones, lining up for the planes."

Available from: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Culture/WATCHThe-Handmaids-Tale-at-large-in-Tel-Aviv-497784>.

VANARENDONK, Kathryn. "How Does Netflix's 'Alias Grace' Compare to Margaret Atwood's Book?" *Slate Magazine* 9 November 2017. Online.

Excerpt: Netflix's new Margaret Atwood adaptation "Alias Grace" is remarkably faithful to Atwood's original novel. It's not just a representation of the novel's plot and characters, although it certainly does that. More impressive, as a TV series "Alias Grace" hews closely to the structure and tone of the book, which is no simple feat for a book as knotty and intricate as this one. The series is close enough to its source text that several passages come directly from Atwood's original language. More important, Sarah Polley's adaptation is remarkably effective at translating the form of Atwood's novel into a visual language. That form is vital to "Alias Grace," and it would've been so easy to lose in the adaptation. It's a massive novel, though-inevitably, some things have been trimmed in order to cut the 450-page tome into a six-part mini-series. It's also a stubbornly textual work of fiction. While Polley's series is amazingly good at re-creating much of Atwood's narrative world, some of the "Alias Grace" project gets stuck on the page and can't quite make it to the screen. Here are some of the ways Sarah Polley's "Alias Grace" draws from its source text, and a few of the things that got left behind.

### **The voice-over and the narrators**

Like Hulu's adaptation of Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale*, voice-over plays a crucial role in Polley's "Alias Grace." It's fundamental (and perhaps unavoidable) for both series because Atwood's novels are so intent on representing the gap between exteriors and interiors. One of the central questions of *Alias Grace* is that of Grace Marks's innocence or guilt, and Dr. Jordan's inability to figure it out. He can rely only on what he sees in Grace's face and what she's willing to tell him, and can only guess what's happening inside her head. Atwood's novel represents this conundrum by splitting into different narrators-some portions are narrated by Grace herself, while other parts of the story are told by a third-person narrator who gazes down on Dr. Jordan. For the series, Grace's voice-over allows us to understand the contradictions between what she says aloud to Dr. Jordan and the thoughts actually running through her head. The series can't quite re-create the distance between Atwood's first-person and third-person narrative voices though-while we're trained to feel a sharp difference between first-person and third-person narrators as readers, we're less familiar with thinking of the camera as a type of omniscient narrator. Still, the series is adept at capitalizing on the underlying effect: Grace, in her role as an unnerving, unknowable raconteur, weaves a story for Dr. Jordan while also doing the same for us. She speaks to the viewer directly and knows full well that she's entertaining us. Dr. Jordan, meanwhile, is only seen from a remove. Much though he'd like it, he has no control over the story being told.

### **Quilting**

The quilt is one of Atwood's dominant metaphors in *Alias Grace*. It's literally representative of the minute, obsessively neat needlework Grace spends her life doing, and the various quilting patterns all hold thematic weight within the story. The quilts are images from the Biblical story of Eve, or are meant to represent the home-the parallels to Grace's story are pretty obvious. But more broadly, Atwood's novel is constructed like a quilt. Grace's story is built out of pieces, each of them snippets from completely unrelated things, sewn together to create a new image. In the novel, those pieces are different narrative voices-we get Grace's point of view, the narrator who tells us about Dr. Jordan, letters the characters send to one another, snippets of newspapers, song lyrics, book excerpts, court records, and bits of other literature. In the Netflix series, the piecemeal, mosaic structure that's so important to Atwood's text becomes snippets of scenes, intercut with one another in startling ways. Dr. Jordan holds up an apple and we see a brief startling clip of an apple peel falling onto the floor, long before we know where that scene actually fits into the story. As Grace tells Dr. Jordan her life story leading up to the murders, brief shocking frames from the crime interrupt her story. We see some of those images many times over the course of the series. Like a quilt, there are patterns and familiar repeating shapes. Like a quilt, it's hard to grasp the whole image without stepping back and trying to put all the pieces into one coherent design.

### **The historical Grace Marks**

One thing Atwood makes clear that Polley does not: Grace Marks was a real woman, who was really convicted of murdering her employer Thomas Kinnear and his pregnant housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery. The historical facts of the case are an important part of Atwood's quilt, providing more pieces in the puzzle of Grace's guilt or innocence—fiction and fact are all sewn together. The Netflix series presents exactly the same facts and suppositions and fictionalizations as Atwood's novel, but the historical basis for it all remains hidden.

### **Dr. Jordan**

While there are few significant plot changes between the book and the series, Dr. Jordan has a much bigger role within Atwood's novel. We get more of his experience outside of Grace's narrative, more of his correspondence with other experts trying to understand her case, and generally more of his confusion and frustration with himself—he's drawn to Grace and repulsed by her and wants to protect her and doesn't know if he wants her to be innocent. It's not that the Dr. Jordan character on the screen is an inaccurate version of the novel's Dr. Jordan, it's just that Atwood's story gives him much more space to be a mess. The Atwood novel also spends much more time on his relationship with his landlady.

### **Mrs. Humphrey**

Ah yes, Dr. Jordan's landlady. As with Dr. Jordan, it's not that the series misrepresents or dramatically changes what we know about Mrs. Humphrey from Atwood's text. It's that we get much less of it. The short and unhappy relationship between the two in Polley's series is a much more drawn-out affair in the novel. Mrs. Humphrey is more directly, explicitly in pursuit of Dr. Jordan, and Dr. Jordan is even more willing to use her for his own needs. One of the series' biggest departures from the novel is Mrs. Humphrey's final fate. In the series, Dr. Jordan leaves and it's the last we hear of her. Atwood's novel has Dr. Jordan abandon her abruptly after Grace's hypnotism is performed, not just because Grace's case is so upsetting, but because Mrs. Humphrey learns her husband plans to come back. Atwood's novel makes her fate even more pathetic—the final portions of the novel are letters, many of them from Dr. Jordan's mother to Mrs. Humphrey, requesting she please stop writing to her son. ("To threaten to do yourself an injury, by jumping off a bridge ... might carry weight with an impressionable and tender-hearted young man, but it does not, with his more experienced mother," Mrs. Jordan writes.) The final letter in the series is from Grace to Dr. Jordan—it's a neater and more direct ending. Atwood's novel lets the end be sadder, and messier.

### **The end**

For the most part, Grace's ending in the novel resembles the one in the series. She ends up married to Jamie Walsh, running a farm with a cat named Tabby and a dog named Rex. Some passages of her description of her life with Walsh make it into the series' voice-over script nearly unchanged, especially as they relate to Jamie's morbid interest in Grace's past. Atwood includes one closing detail that Polley omits, however. As she sits considering her life, Grace tells the reader that even though she's 45 and imagined she'd be too old, she now thinks she might be pregnant. "Unless I am much mistaken, I am now three months gone," she says "...but then it might as easily be a tumour." It's one final instance of Atwood's repeating motif in *Alias Grace*: pregnancy and death woven together in the same thought. The Netflix series dispenses with this detail; instead, Polley concludes with an image of Grace and a quilt. At the end of the series, we see Grace, speaking to herself, to her alter egos, to Dr. Jordan, and to her viewers, about the fate that awaits them all. "And so," she says, looking at the quilt where she's patched all the pieces into one design, "we will all be together." It's also the last line in the book. Like Grace and her two dead companions, both *Alias Graces* end together.

Available from: <http://www.vulture.com/2017/11/netflix-alias-grace-margaret-atwood-book-comparison.html>.

VINEYARD, Jennifer. "‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ Showrunner Bruce Miller on the Season 1 Finale; Ask a Showrunner." *New York Times* 18 June 2017. Online.

Excerpt: In a phone interview, Mr. Miller answered questions about his methods of adapting Ms. Atwood’s book, about what new scene gave him the most pause and about Gilead’s connection to the current political climate.... These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

**How did you decide on the structure of the season and make sense of it to yourselves in the writers’ room? You jump around in time with flashbacks-within-flashbacks and multiple characters with the same name—two Ofglens, two Offreds.** We keep track in a very old-fashioned, pen-and-paper way. We have cards up on the wall of our timeline, and we move them around when we add or subtract things because our story doesn’t follow the book exactly. Our timeline tells us things we don’t quite know, such as what June was doing when the commander and his wife, Serena Joy, were having their flashbacks. A TV show is an excruciating level of minutia that you have to go down to in order to make it never bump for the audience, because otherwise, the scene in the finale where June goes to see her daughter doesn’t mean anything to you. **That scene where she goes to see her daughter is gut-wrenching.** Oh my God. Yeah, Lizzie hit it out of the park. I want a finale to be a good episode, not just a checklist to tie up loose ends. So I was following what happened in the book, Offred got pregnant, and after that, the show took on a life of its own. We laid out what would happen if Offred was pregnant, and what if Serena Joy was extra super mad at her? Serena would like to kill Offred but will do anything to protect her baby. **The “salvagings” act as book ends for Season 1, in a way. We see how Gilead dispenses with political prisoners in Episode 1, calling one a rapist and letting the Handmaids tear him apart. And then we see Offred refusing to participate, refusing to kill her fellow Handmaid. Her pregnancy changes the power dynamics.** It offers her a level of protection, which may or may not be at the front of her mind. That’s a huge tool that she can use. And how she’s going to use it over the next season is, for me, fascinating. As I was working through how to show what the world was, that was such a defining moment for me, the salvagings, how they recognized the animalistic engines of the handmaids and give them something like a chew toy to get that anxiety out on. I just thought it was so ironic that here we’ve spent an entire episode showing how these women are raped every month, and then they bring out this terrible person and they say, “Oh, he’s a rapist!” Well, you’re all rapists! What are you talking about? **Your ending of this season is the same ending as the book.** I thought it was a perfect season-ender for a TV show—the beautiful, dramatic moment of her getting in the van. It’s a frustrating end to a novel, but that’s part of the appeal. It makes you even more invested to know more. And a TV show can end one chapter and start another. Everybody says, “You got to the end of the book!” And I’m like, “No, there’s still a whole bunch of stuff we didn’t even touch.” I read the book a lot. I pick out clues here and there, not so much to alter it, but to say, “O.K., let’s logically extrapolate it.” And that’s where Margaret Atwood has come in so essentially to our conversation. It’s like when you meet the other lunatics who are inpatients at the same asylum you are—the only other people who care about it as much as you do and have gone so deep into thinking about one sentence of the book! **Was there anything you added that wasn’t in the original material, that folks were worried about?** What happens to Ofglen was probably the biggest point of contention and something that had never, as far as we could tell, been depicted on television in exactly that way. Female genital mutilation happens all the time, all over the world, and it is horrifying. The question was, would it be so disturbing that you’d turn off the TV? I had a lot of trepidation about doing it, but it seemed a logical progression to the story. Imagining cruelties for women, though, is not the business we’re in. As Margaret has said, everything in the book is something that’s happened in the world, or is happening now, and we’ve ascribed to that tenet very religiously. We’re not just making up things to be sadistic. **How many seasons do you see the show running?** Well, you know, honestly, when I started, I tried to game out in my head what would ten seasons be like? If you hit a home run,

you want energy to go around the bases, you want enough story to keep going, if you can hook the audience to care about these people enough that they're actually crying at the finale. **You're in the writers' room now for Season 2. What do you want to explore?** Aunt Lydia is one of my most fascinating characters. We would like to explore her back story, and what the lives of the aunts are like. The networks between the Marthas. What is the commander doing all day long, and what is his life like? What are his responsibilities? **And the Mayday resistance movement? Rita now has possession of the letters that Moira helped smuggle out for June.** The Mayday resistance is going to be a big part of Season 2. The part that I've been thinking about is that Mayday is not the handmaid rescue organization—it's the anti-Gilead organization. And the anti-Gilead organization is not necessarily a friend to June or a friend to handmaids. If I was going to try to hurt Gilead, the first thing I might do is kill all the handmaids. You're trying to weaken the state. We make the assumption that there are good guys and bad guys in this world, and that certainly is a bad assumption on our part, just like it's a bad assumption on our part in the real world. **Did you end up changing anything on the show, even on the smallest scale, because of the outcome of the election?** I had one character say something that was too close to "Make America Great Again." That was unintentional, so that I cut because it felt like it was a dig directly at one person's campaign for president. There were lots of things in the show that we wrote, shot, and then while I was editing, we saw them on the news. I saw pictures of refugees trying to cross the border into Canada. The women's march came months after we filmed our women's march protests. I don't think it's by chance. I think that the same forces that we had been digging into over the last couple of years to figure out what are the elements in the country today that could lead to Gilead, those are the same forces that won the election of Donald Trump. It's not just coincidence. It's all part of the same America we live in now.

Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/18/arts/television/the-handmaids-tale-finale-showrunner-interview.html>.

WONG, Tony. "Tackling Fundamentalism with Atwood Classic." *Toronto Star* 10 January 2017. Section: Entertainment: E3.

Interview with Peggy Moss about seeing Atwood as she prepared for the role of Offred in Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Excerpt: "It's incredible that it has such meaning today and it was written more than 30 years ago," Moss told the *Star* at the Television Critics Association press tour. Moss says she read Atwood's work years ago and has since reread it several times "till it was dog-eared" to get insight into her character. That included meeting with Atwood herself in Toronto, where the series by streaming service Hulu is shot.... "We talked a bit. I asked her a few questions as to what she was thinking when she wrote it," Moss said. "But the funny thing is, it's all there in the book. If we do a scene from the book, I always read it. It's so intimate the way she wrote it. My greatest reference and the closest I can get to Margaret Atwood is in that book." Atwood didn't give her any specific advice, Moss said. "That's what's so cool about her. She has given us total confidence and freedom. It's allowed us to believe in ourselves that we could do it."

WOOD, Gaby. "I Wasn't Sure I Wanted to Be a Mother'; Elisabeth Moss Tells Gaby Wood How Her Role in the TV Version of 'The Handmaid's Tale' Changed Her Forever." *The Daily Telegraph* (London) 17 June 2017. Section: Review: 4-5. Profile of Elisabeth Moss who played Offred in the Hulu version of "The Handmaid's Tale."

Also available from: <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph-review/20170617/281526521046050>.

YAKUMITHIS, Sophia. "Margaret Atwood Speaks in Sold-Out Writers Center Stage." *The Observer*

(Case Western Reserve University) 30 November 2017. Section: News: 1.

Excerpt: The William N. Skirball Writers Center Stage wrapped up its winter season with a discussion by *The Handmaid's Tale* author, political activist and literary critic Margaret Atwood. Before the sold-out event, Atwood met with students on campus to discuss her work, life and just about everything in between.

Atwood was raised in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in a small home in the woods with her scientist father, her mother and two siblings. She said that growing up, her family did not have electricity or running water, and that "...reading, writing, and drawing by candlelight were all we had." Inspired by her exploration of back-country, at the age of six, Atwood began writing plays and poems, most of which had dark themes. She cited the Brothers Grimm, Beatrix Potter and George Orwell as some of her earliest influences. "I read Orwell's *Animal Farm* when I was nine, and I think it scared my mother; she thought books like that would warp her children," she said. "She was right."

Indeed, the accuracy of her dystopian novels haunt the 78-year-old's readers today. *The Handmaid's Tale* is about a totalitarian society that honors "traditional values," where women's freedoms are completely restricted. English professor Thrity Umrigar, who introduced Atwood at the event, quoted *Cruel Beautiful World* author Caroline Leavitt, who said, "[Atwood] made me want to be scared of my own writing." In pursuit of her literary career, the novelist studied English, philosophy and French at the University of Toronto's Victoria College, and obtained higher education at Radcliffe College and Harvard University. Atwood's passion for learning and education led her to hold multiple teaching positions throughout her career. "I loved teaching both undergraduate students and graduate students [the same novel] at the same time because they always had such different interpretations of its themes," Atwood said. "When you read the same thing at different points in your life, you're a different person with different experiences. If you don't connect with something right when you read it, that doesn't mean you won't connect with it later in life."

The five-time Man Booker Prize for Fiction (Booker Prize) nominee is extremely well-read herself, with an affinity for just about every subject. She said that she enjoys reading about the places she visits and that the last thing she read was called *Haunted Tuscaloosa*, which she picked up while traveling. Atwood has included a great amount of traveling in her schedule after the widely successful release of "The Handmaid's Tale" on Hulu. Her recent agenda included attending the Emmys, where the on-screen adaptation of her novel won the award for Outstanding Drama Series. "I felt especially short that night," she joked, "and I saw a lot of fashion. Most of the women were wearing high heels and looked willowier than ever, but I had none of that. I was just short."

As for the future, Atwood hopes her work will continue to bring attention to social and political issues. She said, "You can't predict how people will respond to your work, but you can hope that if they don't connect with it now, they'll connect with it later."

Also available from: <http://observer.case.edu/margaret-atwood-speaks-in-sold-out-writers-center-stage>.

## Scholarly Works

### Books and Articles

AMARAL, Lara Luiza Oliveira. "*The Handmaid's Tale*, de Margaret Atwood: a metaficção historiográfica entre as linhas da ficção." *Revista Memento* 8.2 (julho-dezembro 2017): 1-21. In

Portuguese.

“In *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), Linda Hutcheon describes *historiographic metafiction*, as a new kind of subgenre. Hutcheon argues that this is a new way of understanding history. Hutcheon’s ideas about history allow for one possible reading of the novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), by Margaret Atwood. Atwood’s novel is divided into two parts: a narrative story and a short ‘scientific’ epilogue. Understanding Atwood’s novel as a dystopia can also contribute to a reading of the work as historiographic metafiction” (Author).

Available from: <http://periodicos.unincor.br/index.php/memento/article/view/4254>.

ARTIGAS, Héctor Leví Caballero. “Desmitificación en “Penélope y las doce criadas” de Margaret Atwood.” *Escritoras: Silencios y Contracanon*. Edited by María Burguillos Capel. Seville: Benilde, 2017. 139-170. In Spanish.

“Thousands of years after Homer’s *Odyssey*, Canadian writer Margaret Atwood publishes an alternative version to the Homeric myth. In this novel Penelope, the faithful spouse par excellence, takes the main role and offers us a completely different view of the myth. However, Odysseus’s spouse is not who we expected, something has changed; she is willing to tell the ‘truth’ about what happened thousands of years before. This work argues that Penelope of Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* is a 21<sup>st</sup>-century...” (Author).

Available from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/libro?codigo=705925>.

AUGUSCIK, Anna. *Prizing Debate: The Fourth Decade of the Booker Prize and the Contemporary Novel in the UK*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017.

“This book offers a study of the literary marketplace in the early 2000s. Focusing on the Man Booker Prize and its impact on a novel’s media attention, Anna Auguscik analyzes the mechanisms by which the prize recognizes books triggering debates, in addition to how it itself becomes the object of such debates. Based on case studies of six novels and their attention profiles (Aravind Adiga, Margaret Atwood, Sebastian Barry, Mark Haddon, DBC Pierre, and Zadie Smith), the book describes the Booker as a ‘problem-driven attention-generating mechanism’ whose influence can only be understood in relation to other participants in literary interaction” (Publisher). See especially Chapter 4.1 “Booker by Concession: Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin*,” pp. 123-142.

BAIG, Mirza Muhammad Zubair. “Sisterhood in Question: Rewriting a Life of Binaries in Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad*.” *Journal of Research (Humanities)* 53 (2017): 101-123.

“In Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* (2005), a feminist rewrite of Penelope’s character from Homer’s *Odyssey*, we find that a relationship among women as shown in the novella is dysfunctional and fractured. The subject position of a woman in the narrative has not been of great help to objectified women or to the disadvantage of women and their rights. The narrative voice of a woman has not addressed the patriarchal and ideological world constructed on the binaries among women. The women, even in Atwood’s writing, have been portrayed in the stereotypical fashion which disrupts sisterhood among female characters and exhibits differential power relations among them. Instead of writing back to the patriarchal canon, we read in the text about the Penelope-Helen rivalry, Penelope-Actoris mistress-slave relationship, Eurycleia-Anticleia tug of war and their displacing Penelope as Odysseus’s deputy in the house in his absence, and Penelope’s narrative and maids’ counter-narrative reflecting on how their uneven relationship capitalized on maids’ horrendous slavish sufferings” (Author).

Available from:

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315753465> Sisterhood in Question Rewriting a Life of Binaries in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*

BANERJEE, Prantik and Arpita MUKHERJEE. "Surviving Consumerism and Eating Disorders in Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman*." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 21.8 Version 5 (August 2016): 21-25.

"The purpose of my paper is to scrutinize closely the concept of social satire, revealing and thereby amending the society's blight in relation to the novel, *The Edible Woman* by the Canadian author Margaret Atwood" (Author).

Available from: [http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/pages/21\(8\)Version-5.html](http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/pages/21(8)Version-5.html).

BARZILAI, Shuli. "How Far Would You Go? Trajectories of Revenge in Margaret Atwood's Short Fiction." *Contemporary Women's Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 316-335.

"In many of Margaret Atwood's stories, neither love nor money makes the world or, rather, the plot go round. The prime interest and profit for her offended protagonists often derives from a satisfactorily accomplished revenge. The ancient law of talion, of an-eye-for-an-eye, presides over these stories. This paper explores the two main responses to injury and aggression that correspond to the chronological trajectory of Atwood's writings. In her early short fiction, retaliatory drives are typically directed inward. The (mainly female) victims tend to punish themselves rather than their aggressors. In the later fiction, by contrast, outer-directed reprisal becomes the reactive rule. As selected instances will show, Atwood's human and nonhuman avengers, including nature itself, increasingly find varied ways to strike back at offenders" (Author).

BIGMAN, Fran. "The Authority's Anti-Breeding Campaign': State-Imposed Infertility in British Reprodystopia." *The Palgrave Handbook of Infertility in History: Approaches, Contexts and Perspectives*. Edited by Gayle Davis and Tracey Loughran. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 587-607.

"The biologically infertile woman is a familiar figure in British popular culture. Recent dystopian speculative fiction by British women writers, however, provides intriguing examples of a different kind of involuntarily childless female character: the woman banned from reproducing by a totalitarian regime. This chapter argues that in two such novels, Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army* (2007) and Joanna Kavenna's *The Birth of Love* (2010), the oppressiveness of the state is captured by the deprivation of the right to mother not to father, or to parent. It then analyses the politics of transforming infertility into a symbol of state oppression by considering these novels in the context of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). Just as it reads *The Handmaid's Tale* as a call for reproductive choice in the 1980s, it reads Kavenna and Hall as protests against state-imposed infertility in a world in which in vitro fertilization (IVF) lotteries now actually exist" (Author).

BIRKENSTEIN, Jeff and Ericka MANTHEY. "Margaret Atwood and Women's Dystopic Fiction." *Social Justice and American Literature*. Edited by Robert C Hauhart and Jeff Birkenstein. Ipswich, MA: Salem Press, 2017. 231-248.

"Margaret Atwood was not born in the United States but in Ottawa, Canada, in 1939. This detail would seem—in a book entitled *Social Justice and American Literature*—to set her apart from the other authors, all of whom who are indeed from the part of America known as the United States. More important for our paper, however, is Atwood's status as a revolutionary thinker and writer, as an influencer of other generic writers, and as a source for significant social justice impact through her work, especially as it relates to the American project and

American writers.... In this essay, we will explore Atwood's most influential work, *The Handmaid's Tale*, in order to understand how it has informed a subsequent generation of women dystopic writers and our current cultural milieu. *Handmaid's* is about men seizing control of reproduction. This facet of the human experience is perhaps, the last aspect of patriarchy that men can't possess utterly. Nevertheless, they persist in trying, usually by attacking female autonomy. In Atwood's generic precursor, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), men also seek to direct female autonomy, yet the control is incomplete. In *Handmaid's*, as well as in other subsequent female-authored dystopian novels, the control of reproduction slouches onward to its various horrific ends" (Authors).

BLAIM, Artur. *Utopian Visions and Revisions: or the Uses of Ideal Worlds*. New York: Peter Lang, 2017.

"The book focuses on different uses of the concepts of utopia, dystopia, and anti-utopia. The author analyses literature, cinema, and rock music, as well as scientific and legal motifs in utopian fiction. He also considers the functions of Jewish characters in early modern utopias and looks at the utopian aspects of scientific claims of literary and cultural theories. Utopian models are also applied to the practice of literature (socialist realism) and current socio-political affairs. Among the texts and films discussed are *Utopia*, 'New Atlantis,' *Gulliver's Travels*, *Memoirs of Signor Gaudenzio di Lucca*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *A Minor Apocalypse*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Even Dwarfs Started Small*" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 9, "Gulliver's Fifth Voyage, or Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*," pp. 97-114.

BOWEN, Deborah C. "Ecological Endings and Eschatology: Margaret Atwood's Post-Apocalyptic Fiction." *Christianity and Literature* 66.4 (September 2017): 691-705.

"The link between narrative and eschatology lies in their both dealing with 'last things.' Ricoeur's dictum that 'the possible precedes the actual and clears the way for it' provides a powerful mandate for writers concerned with the danger of ecological endings. The endings of the novels in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy not only articulate contemporary ecological sensibilities, but also, and more surprisingly, provide space for a religious way forward. Atwood's recent connection to the Christian environmentalist group A Rocha presents a powerful instance of the possibilities for cooperation between agnostics and Christians in terms of hope for the planet" (Author).

BOYCE, Charlotte and Joan FITZPATRICK. *A History of Food in Literature: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present*. London and New York: Routledge, 2017.

"When novels, plays and poems refer to food, they are often doing much more than we might think. Recent critical thinking suggests that depictions of food in literary works can help to explain the complex relationship between the body, subjectivity and social structures. *A History of Food in Literature* provides a clear and comprehensive overview of significant episodes of food and its consumption in major canonical literary works from the medieval period to the twenty-first century. This volume contextualises these works with reference to pertinent historical and cultural materials such as cookery books, diaries and guides to good health, in order to engage with the critical debate on food and literature and how ideas of food have developed over the centuries. Organised chronologically and examining certain key writers from every period, including Chaucer, Shakespeare, Austen and Dickens, this book's enlightening critical analysis makes it relevant for anyone interested in the study of food and literature" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 6, Boyce's "You Are What You Eat? Food and the Politics of Identity (1899-2003)," pp 228-291, which focuses on *The Edible Woman*, pp. 265-268.

BRUEY, Emily. "Pay-Up Time': (Un)Balanced Accounts in Margaret Atwood's *Stone Mattress*." *Margaret Atwood Studies* 11 (2017): 17-28.

"Published six short years after the *Payback* lectures were broadcast, Atwood's 2014 collection of short stories, *Stone Mattress*, seems, in large part, a literary exploration of the concepts of honor debt and payback. One question driving Atwood's lectures [in *Payback*] is what happens when a debtor won't or can't pay his debts: 'what negative action [will the creditor] take in case of a failure to return what is owed' (*Payback* 163)? In her non-fiction work, Atwood turns to historical accounts, myth, religion, and literature for answers to this central question. In turn, each story in *Stone Mattress* seems a fictional playing-out of different ways in which to resolve an unpaid debt. And since the value of an honor debt is subjective, not fixed as it is in debts of the financial variety, Atwood's characters are likely to try out a variety of methods for initializing payback, whether it be murder (either of the debtor or the creditor), imprisonment, forgiveness, or scapegoating (that is, an outsourcing of debt, in which the debtor avoids payment for his sins by electing a substitute who pays for him) (67). What gives these stories dramatic edge is that their protagonists are often, to be candid, old, which means that they are running out of time to settle up. Every debt, financial or otherwise, has a due date, Atwood ominously reminds us. For those nearing the end of their lives, the desire for balanced accounts is particularly urgent, as human souls prepare for the 'final reckoning' when 'whatever is on one side of the balance is weighed against whatever is on the other side' (166)" (Author).

CALVIN, Ritch. *Feminist Science Fiction and Feminist Epistemology: Four Modes*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

"This book argues that feminist science fiction shares the same concerns as feminist epistemology challenges to the sex of the knower, the valuation of the abstract over the concrete, the dismissal of the physical, the focus on rationality and reason, the devaluation of embodied knowledge, and the containment of (some) bodies. Calvin argues that feminist science fiction asks questions of epistemology because those questions are central to making claims of subjectivity and identity. Calvin reveals how women, who have historically been marginal to the deliberations of philosophy and science, have made significant contributions to the reconsideration and reformulation of the epistemological models of the world and the individuals in it" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 3, "The Second Mode of FESF: Epistemology and Structural Element," in which *The Handmaid's Tale* is discussed, pp. 105-112.

CHRISTOU, Maria. *Eating Otherwise: The Philosophy of Food in Twentieth-Century Literature*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2017. 207 pp.

"This book explores the philosophical implications of the popular adage that 'you are what you eat' through twentieth-century literature. It investigates the connections between the alimentary and the ontological: between what or how one eats and what one is. Maria Christou's focus is on two influential modernist figures, Georges Bataille and Samuel Beckett; and two influential postmodernist figures, Paul Auster and Margaret Atwood. She aims to theorize the relationship between modernism and postmodernism from a specifically alimentary perspective. By examining the work of these major twentieth-century authors, this book focuses on strange or unusual acts of eating—'eating' otherwise—as a means to ways of 'being' otherwise. What can eating tell us about being, about who we are and about our being in the world? This powerful, innovative study takes literary food studies in a new direction" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 4, "Food in Margaret Atwood's Dystopias," pp. 120-146.

COLDICUTT, Russell. "Margaret Atwood's *The Journals of Susannah Moodie*: Palimpsestuous Transformations." *Truth and Beauty: Verse Biography in Canada, Australia and New*

*Zealand*. Edited by Anna Jackson, Helen Rickerby and Angelina Sbroma. Wellington (New Zealand): Victoria UP, 2016. 32-52.

“There is a tension in the genre of verse biography, between autobiographical and biographical impulses, that is better understood as constitution rather than representation. This tension, I argue manifests itself in Margaret Atwood’s verse biography, *The Journals of Susannah Moodie* through the use of masks, both as diegetic reifications and as the function of the collection as a textual mask” (Author).

COLĂCEL, Onoriu. “Edibles and Other Offerings to Readers: The Politics of Gender and Food in Narrative Fiction.” *Messages, Sages and Ages: The Bukovinian Journal of Cultural Studies* 3.2 (2016): 70-74.

“Although traditionally relegated to contextualizing devices, the unfolding of events makes a riddle out of cooking and eating for dramatic effect. Reporting on what might come across as domestic chores points to the topicality of food intake as well as to all the drama eating disorders entail. In the background of events, the ‘whodunit’ and the ‘kitchen sink drama’ come together into one unlikely story. The benefits of hindsight make it possible to argue that celebrated feminist novels of the past century, i.e. *The Edible Woman* provided later 21<sup>st</sup> century fiction, i.e. *Hunger Point*, with something more than narrative emphasis on binary gender relations. I find that the gender-roles debate, as recorded in Atwood’s work, gained enough cultural momentum to prove the ready availability of the image of the nurturing female throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. As far as feminist fictions are concerned, over/under-feeding is always somewhere in the background, if not what drives the plot forward. Commonly, distress among fictional characters, mostly women, is linked to body weight and dieting in ways that threaten to relegate, possibly once and for good, the notions of women and food to the realm of melodrama, as it is the case with *Hunger Point*” (Author).

Available from: <https://content.sciendo.com/view/journals/msas/3/2/article-p70.xml>.

CĂȚANĂ, Adela Livia. “Aspects of Social Organization in *MaddAddam* and *The Hunger Games*: Food and Shelter.” *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies* 8 (2016): 335-343.

“The purpose of this article is to offer a comparative analysis of the societies described by Margaret Atwood and Suzanne Collins in their recently published critical utopian trilogies *MaddAddam* and *The Hunger Games* focusing especially of two intriguing aspects: food and shelter. Both can be perceived as essential conditions of survival as well as social indicators being shaped by but also shaping peoples’ motivation, personality and status” (Author).

Available from: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=457543>.

---. “Exacerbated Capitalism and Glimpses of Failed Communism in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* and Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games*.” *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies* 8 (2016): 367-374.

“This article aims to compare the socio-economic systems described by Margaret Atwood and Suzanne Collins in their recently published critical utopian trilogies *MaddAddam* and *The Hunger Games* and reveal the ways in which these authors perceived and translated into literature past and present ideologies in order to sound a warning signal regarding the future of the Western society” (Author).

Available from: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=457546>.

DAVIES, Madeleine. “Self/Image: Reading the Visual in Atwood’s Fictive Autobiographies.”

*Contemporary Women's Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 373-390.

“Margaret Atwood’s extensive back catalogue includes a group of fictive autobiographies, each engaged in a self-reflexive consideration of the problems involved in writing a life story. These fictive meta-autobiographies consciously critique any act of self-representation within narrative in a radical challenge to phallogocentric models of life-writing and truth-telling. This group of texts (including *Cat’s Eye* [1988], *Lady Oracle* [1976], *The Handmaid’s Tale* [1985], and *The Blind Assassin* [2000], as well as some of Atwood’s poetry) also incorporates a dominant use of visual images, particularly photographs: each extending questions involving the ‘real,’ the ‘copy,’ origination, attribution, and authority. These questions open up new ways of considering how text and image conspire to defer certainty in the objective and subjective ‘real,’ as Atwood’s visual texts prove to be as duplicitous as the language through which they are narrated. This article connects with critical accounts of life-writing and with Susan Sontag’s reflections on photography in order to discuss the status of the visual image as an agent of representation within any autobiographical account” (Author).

DE MARQUES, Eduardo Marks. “Children of Oryx, Children of Crake, Children of Men: Redefining the Post/Transhuman in Margaret Atwood’s ‘Utopian’ *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *Aletria—Revista de estudos de literatura* 25.3 (2015): 133-146.

“One of the main pillars of posthuman and transhuman thought is the use of technology as a means to ameliorate human life by helping overcome the flaws and limitations of the biological body. The effect of such trends has been central to the development of contemporary, third-turn dystopian novels in English, published in the past thirty or so years. However, one important aspect of such narratives is also their list of transgressive characteristics, distancing them from their modern, second-turn counterparts. The following article aims to discuss how transgressive the ideas of dystopia and transhumanism that form Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy are, essentially discussing whatever lies at the core of the human condition” (Author).

Available from: <http://www.periodicos.letras.ufmg.br/index.php/aletria/article/view/9677>.

---. “Human After All? Neo-Transhumanism and the Post-Anthropocene Debate in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *REVELL-Revista de estudos literários da UEMS* 3.17 (2017): 178-190.

“Usually read as an example of contemporary dystopian (or speculative) fiction, Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy, is, also, a good example of the complex debates involving the tensions of posthuman/transhuman philosophies and those of the contemporary notion of the Anthropocene. The following article aims at discussing how Atwood’s post-apocalyptic novels can be, in fact, understood as an attempt to undermine and, also, problematise what the posthuman projects of technological capitalism intend and how it can be possible (if at all) to develop an understanding of a posthuman Anthropocene through the creation of the Crakers, bioengineered hominids created to repopulate the planet after the pandemic known as The Waterless Flood” (Author).

Available from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6181270>.

DEFALCO, Amelia. “*MaddAddam*, Biocapitalism, and Affective Things.” *Contemporary Women’s Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 432-451.

“This essay considers the ethical dimensions of Atwood’s recent speculative fiction, the *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003–14), alongside a framework that Nikolas Rose, Sunder Rajan, and others term as biocapitalism. The trilogy imagines the social, cultural, affective, and ecological implications of the convergence of capitalism and biotechnology. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy,

the fantasy of human independence and invulnerability central to neoliberalism and biocapitalism is depicted at its devastating endgame, in which the unbridled commodification of life has resulted in its near annihilation. Atwood's novels suggest that we ignore interdependence, affectivity, and responsibility to our peril, evoking a posthumanist perspective in the dramatization of a catastrophic anthropocentrism that regards organic matter—the world's flora and fauna, the human body's cellular data—as marketable, utilitarian objects" (Author).

DELL`ABATE-ÇELEBI, Barbara. *Penelope's Daughters*. Lincoln: DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska—Lincoln, 2016.

"This book offers a feminist perspective of the myth of Penelope in Annie Leclerc's *Toi, Pénélope*, Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* and Silvana La Spina's *Penelope*. At the origin of Western literature stands Queen Penelope—faithfully waiting for her husband to come home: keeping house, holding on to the throne, keeping the suitors at arm's length, preserving Odysseus' place and memory, deserted for the pursuit of war and adventures, and bringing up a son alone, but always keeping the marriage intact. Yet recently the character of Penelope, long the archetype of abandoned, faithful, submissive, passive wife, has been reinterpreted by feminist criticism and re-envisioned by three modern novels—in French, English, and Italian—to emerge as a central, strong, self-determining, and erotically liberated female icon. Her character 'is permeated with new and more complex representations of feminine diversity that, by subverting the roles attested by the canon, break with stereotypes and pursue autonomy.' Part one of this book covers 'Feminist Literary Criticism and the Theme of Penelope'; part two considers 'Penelope in Three (Feminist) Revisionist Novels'—by Annie Leclerc, Margaret Atwood and Silvana La Spina. These feminist revisions of myths of womanhood and rewritings of female archetypes from a feminist perspective broaden the definition of femininity to include new possibilities and more inclusive representations of female identity" (Author). See especially "Margaret Atwood: *The Penelopiad* (2005)," pp. 121-141.

Available from: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/zeabook/39>.

DERRY, Ken. "Blood on the Wall: Christianity, Colonialism, and Mimetic Conflict in Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*." *Religion and Literature* 48.3 (Autumn 2016): 91-112, 181-182.

"Many critics have pointed out that when Christianity appears in Margaret Atwood's work it is patriarchal, authoritarian, closed, institutional, and repressive. Others have indicated the ways in which much of Atwood's work endorses a perspective that could be considered implicitly or explicitly religious in other respects. This perspective most often involves a kind of personal 'spirituality,' one that is anti-patriarchal, nature-centered, and humanistic—and definitely not Christian. In contrast to this dominant critical understanding, a handful of scholars have noted that, even though Atwood appears to promote a total break with Christianity, her writing in fact at times favors this tradition in certain ways. *Cat's Eye* offers an important example of a text that embodies this complex regard for Christianity, and that also demonstrates Atwood's trademark use of mimesis. The novel's religious ambivalence in fact becomes apparent specifically through an examination of its mimetic tropes. This examination is undertaken using two different theoretical approaches—which themselves incorporate considerations of Christianity—provided by the work of Homi Bhabha and René Girard. Bhabha's model focuses on the relationship between colonialism and mimicry, while Girard's is concerned with mimetic conflict and sacrifice. Examining *Cat's Eye* through the respective lenses of these theories reveals that, although *Cat's Eye* offers a critique of Christianity that in many ways mirrors Bhabha's own, in the end the novel promotes a particular understanding—and affirmation—of the tradition that is fundamentally Girardian" (Author).

DOBROGOSZCZ, Tomasz. "The Planet Heals Itself: The Overkill of Homo Sapiens in Contemporary

Literature.” *European Management Journal* 35.6 (December 2017): 722-728.

“Both in the perception of the academia and in the eyes of the public, the overflow of human civilization on the Earth is considered potentially pernicious, not only for the planet but also for humanity itself. Literature has recently addressed the issue of threats posed by the overabundance and overindulgence of human population. Speculative dystopian fiction is perhaps the most appropriate genre to undertake the discussion of this topic. This paper analyses four selected contemporary dystopian novels by critically acclaimed writers, which develop the theme of the overflow of human civilization and examine the menaces that it causes on several levels. The works analysed are as follows: *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood (2003), *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell (2004), *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006) and *Stone Gods* by Jeanette Winterson (2007). Each of the novels presents some form of a post-apocalyptic framework and can therefore be located within the context of ‘overflow’ of human race, which destroys its natural habitat and undermines its own civilisational advances. As I argue, the eradication of the human race is part of the self-purification process undertaken by the planet. By using different literary devices, the four writers suggest that although history repeats itself in circles, human beings are incapable of learning from past mistakes. In the article, I refer to Lovelock’s metaphorical use of the concept of Gaia to discuss the ethical and political function of the dystopian literature” (Author).

DULTA, Pooja. “Dystopian Imagination: A Comparative Critique of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*.” *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies* 4.1 (January-March 2017): 424-427.

“The present paper seeks to analyse dystopian imagination in two twentieth century novels, projecting two different worlds that may become a reality in distant future if certain negative aspects of society are exploited beyond limit. Though dystopian fiction takes place in the future yet it discusses the present social conditions. It often purposely incorporates the contemporary social trends that are exaggerated to a point of warning to make clear their most negative qualities. Dystopian mode is therefore deeply rooted in contemporary issues, fears and aspirations. It cannot be dismissed merely as fanciful imagination rather it rightly forewarns society of the impending disasters if certain negative aspects of society are not nipped in time. Atwood presents dystopian vision to forewarn her readers about the consequences of religious conservatism, which may result in depriving women of their rights and freedom whereas Huxley’s future vision depicts the end of the traditional and normal way of life and emergence of everything that is new and strange in the modern world. He forewarns the consequences of excessive materialism, technological inventions, disregard of moral values, religion and spirituality and pleasure maniac society” (Author).

Available from: <http://www.ijelr.in/4.1.17.html>.

DYNKOWSKA, Julia. “Refocalization as a Strategy of Apocryphal Rewriting.” *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 59.1 (2016): 63-79. In English.

“The paper discusses refocalization as a strategy of rewriting in the literary apocrypha (D. Szajnert). Refocalization, that is based on G. Genette and H. Jenkins’s conclusions, refers to the shift from the perspective and narrative that dominates canonical works to the perspective and narrative predominant in the literary apocrypha of the canonical works. As the subject of research, I chose the apocrypha of the Homeric epics (M. Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* and Ch. Wolf’s *Cassandra*) in which patriarchal, omniscient narrative is replaced by perspective and narrative of women marginalized in the epic” (Author).

Available from: <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-3328a066-61fc-41f1-8aed-e62271fc1f88>.

FELDMAN-KOŁODZIEJUK, Ewelina. "Czekając Na Sabrine: Analiza Watków Macierzyńskich w Powieści Margaret Atwood 'Ślepy Zabójca' = "Waiting for Sabrina: Analysis of Maternal Threads in Margaret Atwood's Novel *Blind Assassin*." *Bibliotekarz Podlaski* 18.3 (2017): 323-337. In Polish.

Available from:

[http://www.ksiaznicapodlaska.pl/site/bibliotekarz/36/BP\\_36\\_www\\_18\\_Kolodziejuk.pdf](http://www.ksiaznicapodlaska.pl/site/bibliotekarz/36/BP_36_www_18_Kolodziejuk.pdf).

FISHER, Mark. *The Weird and the Eerie*. London: Repeater Books, 2016.

"What exactly are the Weird and the Eerie? In this new [book], Mark Fisher argues that some of the most haunting and anomalous fiction of the 20<sup>th</sup> century belongs to these two modes. The Weird and the Eerie are closely related but distinct modes, each possessing its own distinct properties. Both have often been associated with Horror, yet this emphasis overlooks the aching fascination that such texts can exercise. The Weird and the Eerie both fundamentally concern the outside and the unknown, which are not intrinsically horrifying, even if they are always unsettling. Perhaps a proper understanding of the human condition requires examination of liminal concepts such as the weird and the eerie" (Publisher). See especially "Inside Out: Outside in Margaret Atwood and Jonathan Glazer," pp. 98-109. The focus is on Atwood's *Surfacing* and Glazer's 2013 film, "Under the Skin."

GIANNOPOULOU, Zina. "Formal Experiments in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*." *Reading the Past Across Space and Time*. Edited by Brenda Deen Schildgen and Ralph Hexter. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 103-118.

"This essay examines two formal features of Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*: the use of the underworld as the novel's setting, and the use of time and character in the first and last chapters of the novel. It explores how Atwood competes with Homer by recording a multi-tonal female voice that antagonizes the male voice of the *Odyssey*, turning its products into falsifiable legends. The women's accounts in *The Penelopiad* are also targets of this rhetoric because they present different and at times mutually exclusive versions of events from the *Odyssey*. The novel's polemical stance has interesting epistemological ramifications as it portrays a kaleidoscope where men and women vie with one another for the possession of a partial and always unverifiable 'truth'" (Author).

GIBERT, Teresa. "Haunted by a Traumatic Past Age, Memory, and Narrative Identity in Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin*." *Traces of Aging: Old Age and Memory in Contemporary Narrative*. Edited by Marta Cerezo Moreno and Nieves Pascual Soler. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2016. 41-64.

"The relationship between memory and the narrative construction of personal identity constitutes a major thematic concern in many novels by Margaret Atwood, whose protagonists develop their sense of selfhood through a specific kind of storytelling mainly based on the twofold process of retrospection and recollection of their past experiences. Their strong will to narrate memory traces can be fruitfully explored within the conceptual framework of Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity. Iris Chase, the eighty-two-year-old protagonist and first-person narrator of *The Blind Assassin*, writes her memoir focusing on how such memory traces function differently according to each life stage, from infancy to old age, with emphasis on the latter. While reviewing her childhood, adolescence and adulthood, she shows how each of these phases was affected by distinctive ways of remembering the episodes which marked her evolving personality. Underscoring the high mobility of personal identity analyzed by Ricoeur, Iris enhances our awareness that her memoir is the work of her remembering self engaged in an imaginative reconstruction of her former remembered selves which, in spite of having been obliterated by the passage of time, are paradoxically accessible through the textual remnants to

be found in her narrative” (Author).

For more on the book see: <http://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-3439-6/traces-of-aging/?c=1006>.

GIBSON, Rebecca. “More Than Merely Human: How Science Fiction Pop-Culture Influences Our Desires for the Cybernetic.” *Sexuality & Culture* 20.1 (March 2017): 224-246.

“In this paper I will explore cybercultural thinking about inter-gender relations, seeking to understand certain mythologies about love and sex in the digital age. I will look at the burgeoning market for AI based companions and seek to understand what causes people to look outside of the company of flesh-and-blood humans. What sensations or emotional needs are fulfilled by choosing a cybercompanion over a human? Is this a gender motivated choice? In this age of computer-dominated interaction, where we are told that more people reach for a keyboard than a hand, I hope to understand what can be learned about the human condition and its ever-changing cultural mores. To understand these questions, I will examine pop-cultural themes in science-fiction, and then relate these themes to real-world developments in cyber-technology. These include cyborgs who are ‘real enough’ to pass for human, such as the Replicants in ‘Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?’; androids who are fully functional, but somewhat less than or other than human, such as Lieutenant Commander Data in ‘Star Trek: The Next Generation’; demonstrations of new technology using robot/android story lines, such as Sony Playstation’s ‘Kara’ by Quantic Dream project; and created, near-human races, such as Margaret Atwood’s ‘Crakers’ and David Mitchell’s ‘Fabricants.’ I will look at how human characters relate sexually and romantically to non-human characters, and then examine the phenomenon of medical cybernetic augmentation as a way of exploring when we are no longer merely human, but still ‘human enough” (Author).

GRETZKY, Madison. “After the Fall: Humanity Narrated in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *Margaret Atwood Studies* 11 (2017): 41-54.

“Existing scholarship on these novels has covered a wide variety of fields and topics .... However, no one has yet analyzed how the narratives the characters shape within the text, as well as how the narration styles Atwood chooses as author affect the ultimate message of the trilogy. I will be examining how Atwood uses and re-writes the post-apocalyptic framework to question the value and the very definition of humanity. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Atwood skewers the road to hell she sees us already traveling down, using the stage set by the apocalyptic Waterless Flood to reveal humanity’s saving graces. Through the salvage and elevation of storytelling, art, and narratives, humanity is redefined after the fall to create a new model of human life that makes space for even those who are not, genetically, human” (Author).

GÜVEN, Fikret. “Margaret Atwood’un *Surfacing* Romanında Feminist Ve Ekolojik Kaygılar = Feminist and Ecological Concern in Margaret Atwood’s Novel *Surfacing*.” *Social Sciences Studies Journal* 3.12 (2017): 1867-1871. In Turkish.

“In this paper, Margaret Atwood’s novel *Surfacing* (1972) is analyzed from an eco-feminist perspective. A term coined by the French writer Françoise d’Eaubonne, Eco-feminism refers to a philosophical and political movement that combines ecological and feminist concerns, and views both as stemming from the patriarchy. The nameless protagonist of *Surfacing* returns to the undeveloped island in northern Quebec, where she grew up, to search for her missing father. The protagonist realizes the gap between her natural self and her artificial construct only when in direct contact with nature. Her association with nature raises her consciousness regarding the subordination of women. Since the novel introduces issue pertaining to feminism and environmentalism, it constitutes a representative literary example of ecological

feminism. The language, events and characters in this novel reflect a world that oppresses and dominates both women and nature. This study analyzes the novel through the lens of feminism and eco-criticism” (Author).

Available (after signing in) from: <http://erciyes.academia.edu/FikretG%C3%BCven>.

HEMBROUGH, Tara. “From an Obscured Gaze to a Seeing Eye? Iris as Victim, Villain, and Avenger in the Role of Writer-As-Assassin in Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin*.” *Sage Open* 7.1 (2017): 1-12.

“In the postmodern period, first-person-limited, unreliable, female narrators may have a greater difficulty in ‘seeing’ and, thus, depicting their landscapes than previous eras’ storytellers. Iris (Chase) Griffen, narrator-protagonist of Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin*, spins a complicated, self-reflective text exploring her attempts at composing a world vision that consumes the novel’s larger part. Iris’s search for answers about her identity as well as that of other characters may leave readers in the lurch, waiting for their ‘story,’ in Ross Chambers’s terms, as an agreed-upon product. Nonetheless, having amassed assorted textual materials, Iris stockpiles the ammunition she needs to do her ‘job’ as a storyteller-assassin who creates and destroys, as characters suffer a fall. Assuming guises dependent on location, Iris enacts the conflicting roles of a victim, social product, villain, and blind assassin to assault her culture’s masculinist architectures that bar women’s points of views in opposition to what Henry James presents as the unending panoramas offered by his metaphorical *House of Fiction*. Iris’s struggle to construct her life story mirrors the difficulty many women face more broadly, in which they face competing, irreconcilable values. In the novel, Iris’s ability to play differing parts with equal aplomb compels readers to view her as a complex narrator, constructing and assassinating fellow characters to render her female descendants’ fates as open ended” (Author).

Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244016688933>.

HOWELLS, Coral Ann. “Major Authors: Robertson Davies, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje.” *The Novel in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Since 1950*. Edited by Coral Ann Howells, Paul Sharrad and Gerry Turcotte. New York: Oxford UP, 2017. 329-343.

“Today’s refocusing or defocusing of Canadian literature may be a reaction to our experience in sixties, the time of our Centenary, and the years that followed, a period of explosive patriotism, partly genuine, partly pumped-up boosterism, when we were persuaded to rush literary impulses into a unified statement of national identity. We had a railway, an airline, a flag, a modified anthem—why not a literature too.” (Carol Shields, ‘A View from the Edge,’ 1997).

“That wry profile of literary production in Canada since the 1960s frames this discussion of the three Canadian novelists best known internationally. Their careers, though overlapping chronologically, represent distinctive stages in Canada’s evolving cultural traditions and publishing practices since the 1950s. Notably, these writers are all Ontario-based and all published first in Toronto, which marks a significant shift from earlier Canadian patterns of novel publication in Britain or the States, and while the Toronto-centric model does not reflect the diversity of Canadian writing and widespread regional presses, it is indicative of Toronto’s dominant English-Canadian publishing industry. Robertson Davies’s novels signal the first transition from colonial to postcolonial identity in post-war Canada. An Oxford-educated Anglophile, he chose to return home just before the Second World War, and his three trilogies together with his incomplete fourth (published between the 1950s and the 1990s) offer a now outmoded Anglocentric view of Canadian cultural nationalism, while insisting on Canada’s affiliations with British and European high culture. Belonging to the generation after Davies,

Margaret Atwood in the 1970s provided the script for a Canadian cultural and literary identity separate from British and American in Shields's 'period of explosive patriotism.' Her national and international celebrity confirms her pre-eminence as Canada's most influential literary figure ever. Though her work extends across many genres, the focus here will be on her novel writing, with its continuous formal experimentation, its engagement with contemporary social, political and environmental issues and its shifts of emphasis over forty-five years...." (Author).

---. "True Trash: Genre Fiction Revisited in Margaret Atwood's *Stone Mattress*, *The Heart Goes Last*, and *Hag-Seed*." *Contemporary Women's Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 297-315.

Excerpt: Margaret Atwood, an enthusiast for popular fiction since childhood, has frequently described its appeal for her: "I find popular forms interesting because they are collective mythology—a wonderful compost that contains everything. It contains the cultural patterns of the society, and what novels are using are the themes of their culture. Every time...." Throughout her fifty-year writing career, Atwood's wonderfully inventive use of popular fictional forms has been a consistent feature of her work.... [Her] enthusiasm for popular forms continues undiminished in her recent fictions since the *MaddAddam* trilogy with *Stone Mattress* (2014), *The Heart Goes Last* (2015), and her retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in *Hag-Seed* (2016). Now ironically describing herself as 'an award-winning nice literary old lady' (*Angel Catbird* 2016, Introduction), Atwood has shifted the emphases in her storytelling, challenging realist conventions as she revisits an array of popular genres, constructing what we might describe as transgressive entertainments. While she references the idioms and new technologies of contemporary culture, she seeks as always to engage readers with her seriously held ethical values, which are embedded in the texts themselves. "Not real can tell us about real" (*Oryx and Crake* 118), and it this latest stage in the evolution of Atwood's narrative art that I investigate in this essay."

HUSSEIN, Ali Madhlum. "A Study of Woman's Sufferings in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Lutfiyya Al-Duliami's *Ladies of Zuhul (Saturn)*." *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 2.7 (July-August 2017): 81-89.

"As a dystopic satire, both Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Lutfiyya Al-Duliami's *The Ladies of Zuhul (Saturn)* portray the present evils in the hope of bringing about social and political change. The former's cautionary tale portrays the physical and psychological oppression of women for the sake of male genes in a state called Gilead. Gilead is a theocratic dictatorship based on Puritanical fundamentalism, rigidly orders every aspect of the daily life of all but those in the most privileged positions. *The Handmaid's Tale* is Atwood's creation of an imagined society in which women under a futuristic totalitarian regime are reduced to mere voiceless, childbearing vessels. Recounted by a female narrator, Offred, the story focuses on the handmaids. These women are selected by the state for their potential ability to bear children at a time when infertility is high and live births have reached dangerously low levels. Though the woman's biological function is privileged, she becomes marginalized as an individual—as the prime aim is to find healthy, fertile women who can produce children for those ruling class of men in position of power and influence.

"The latter is a female's epic portraying the sufferings of Hayyat Al-Babili who set down everything. The tale also depicts the other heroines' sufferings beginning with Hayyat's mother, Rawiyya, Fitnah, Manaar, Amaal, Zinah, Samia, Haalah, Shurouq, Luma, Helin, and ending with Briska Bernard, and other women who appear and disappear throughout this long heroic text such as Nahidah, Sahirah, and Siham. This novel clearly depicts the tragedies of the Iraqis in general, and women in particular. It is an epic revealing the roots of the ruin in man's life; meantime, it aims at collecting the splinter groups so as to rebuild man with love and to retrieve the situation of the writer's dream as a real Iraqi woman. Sayidat Zuhul is the story of all, all the history of those who are killers and victims, lovers, dreamers, and visionaries.

However, in *The Ladies of Zuhal*, the role of the men is not minor although the female race is dominating. Her miserable and catastrophic life is similar to her husband's, Hazim, who encountered castration from the Saddam's security guards" (Author).

Available from: <http://ijels.com/detail/a-study-of-woman-s-sufferings-in-margaret-atwood-s-the-handmaid-s-tale-and-lutfiyya-al-duliami-s-ladies-of-zuhal-saturn/>.

IACOB, Miruna. "Anorexie și anxietate în romanul Femeia comestibilă de Margaret Atwood." *Meridian Critic* 29.2 (2017): 93-101. In Romanian.

"The use of eating disorders and anorexia represent the main interests of this present paper as they will reveal some of the particularities of gender categories and their dynamics within the turbulent '60s. *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood centers on somatic metaphors which highlight important social issues such as gender inequality, the discrepancy between supply and demand as far as professional development is concerned and the struggle against the traditional patriarchal model within a capitalist society. Some of the chapters also present a short history of the body as a symbol through time and its relationship with a given cultural space" (Author).

Available from: <http://www.diacronia.ro/ro/indexing/details/A27721>.

IVANOVICI, Cristina. "Economies of Export: Translating Laurence, Atwood, and Munro in Eastern Europe (1960-1989)." *Beyond "Understanding Canada": Transnational Perspectives on Canadian Literature*. Edited by Melissa Tanti, Jeremy Haynes, Daniel Coleman and Lorraine York. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2017. 229-253.

"Drawing primarily upon archived correspondence between Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, and European publishers, literary agents, editors, and translators, which is held in manuscript collections in Canada but has not yet attracted significant scholarly attention, this chapter critiques a number of delayed and abandoned translation projects that discouraged a prompt cultural export of the three writers' fiction to Eastern Europe at what was a crucial moment for both the promotion of contemporary English-Canadian literature abroad and the development of Eastern European publishing industries between the 1960s and 1989. My examination of the material conditions that facilitated these cultural transfers, therefore, highlights that pre-1989 Eastern European translations of contemporary English-Canadian women's writings were not published according to commercially driven criteria, but either as a result of passing censors' assessment of the writers' alignment with state-imposed imperatives or of succeeding in subverting socialist party ideology, editorial control, and financial censorship. More broadly, an analysis of ideological interventions in a series of translation projects that were often represented as non-lucrative or culturally insignificant interrogates to what extent the writings of these contemporary English-Canadian women were perceived as translatable across several political and cultural borders and how they were affected by the dynamics of cultural exchanges, (mis)representations of Eastern European publishing industries and the value of cultural institutions" (Author).

JACOBSON-KONEFALL, Jessica. "It's Some Cannibal Thing': Canada and Brazil in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy." *Canada and Beyond: A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies* 6.1 (2017): 57-65.

"Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade's artistic and philosophical manifesto of Brazilian cannibalism best enables readers to grasp Canadian author Margaret Atwood's trilogy *MaddAddam*, in terms of its treatment of settler and Indigenous relationality in its satirical posthuman world. *MaddAddam* is a work of speculative fiction that satirically predicts possible outcomes of early 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberalism. A survival tale, the trilogy articulates its

angle of vision through motifs of literal and figurative cannibalism, highlighting settler and Indigenous relationality in the Americas. While situated in Canadian literary traditions, the work engages Brazilian anthropophagic (cannibalist) strategies to craft an ending that is ambivalent about settler futures” (Author).

Available from:

<http://www.uhu.es/publicaciones/ojs/index.php/CanadaBeyond/article/view/3080>.

JEON, Soyoung. “Resistant Writing and Body in Dystopian Novel: George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*.” *Journal of East-West Comparative Literature* 40 (2017): 223-246. In Korean.

“As critical dystopian novels, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell and *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood warn us of future dystopian society. Although both Oceania and Gilead are imagined communities, they resemble our modern society in many respects. Citizens in those totalitarian systems can not use their language and body in the ways they desire. Big Brother-style surveillance systems watch an individual’s every moves and regulates their emotion as well. But protagonists in these novels try to write their own story confidentially and have a genuine relation with others. To be a human, their body and sexuality function against social control and repression. And their desire for narrating stories and forbidden sexuality trigger desperate attempts to restore their lost past and identities through language and the body. Although appropriation of language and body is a means of totalitarian control of citizens, it could be a route to freedom and liberation from their dystopian reality. Even in dystopian novels, utopian impulses still exists and provoke in readers a determination to prevent nightmare futures and to cherish what must not be lost” (Author).

JONES, D. B. *The Documentary Art of Filmmaker Michael Rubbo*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017.

“Michael Rubbo’s ground-breaking work has had a deep and enduring impact on documentary filmmaking worldwide, though his name has remained relatively unknown. In *The Documentary Art of Michael Rubbo*, author D.B. Jones traces Rubbo’s filmmaking from his days as a film student at Stanford, through his twenty years at the National Film Board of Canada, where Rubbo developed his distinct documentary style. Jones then describes Rubbo’s post-NFB venture into feature film directing, followed by Rubbo’s return to his native Australia, first as an executive with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and later as a director of feature-length documentaries and maker of short, personal films for YouTube. Exploring locales from Montreal to Vietnam, topics as diverse as plastic surgery and French Marxism, and from interviewing Margaret Atwood to documenting a failed attempt to interview Fidel Castro, Rubbo’s wide-ranging work establishes his innovative, personal, lyric, and spontaneous documentary style. In *The Documentary Art of Michael Rubbo* D.B. Jones reveals not only the depth of meaning in Rubbo’s films, but also the depth of their influence on filmmaking itself” (Publisher). See especially Chapter 10, “Margaret Atwood: Once in August; Atwood and Family,” pp. 143-151. The “Margaret Atwood: Once in August” references a documentary Rubbo directed in 1984; the “Margaret Atwood: Atwood and Family,” references a shorter version, with some changes which came out in 1985.

JUNG, Seohyon. “Motherhood as Boundaries of Life in *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *The Fifth Child*.” *Margaret Atwood Studies* 11 (2017): 4-16.

“You don’t have a lot of time left,’ Offred’s doctor reminds her during her mandatory monthly physical examination (61). For the Handmaids in the post-apocalyptic society of Gilead, time means one thing: a chance to prove their fertility. Through dystopian depictions of a regime that holds absolute control over reproduction, Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985)

addresses the question of how women's time is imagined when women are reduced to 'two-legged wombs' (136). Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* (1988), in uniting its dismal imagination of motherhood with a woman's changing perception of self in intriguing ways, also presents motherhood as a critical frame that determines a woman's experience of time. The possibility of becoming a mother as well as the physical and affective experience of being a mother—more so than an allegedly universal category of age—dictate the protagonists' sense of time in these women writers' novels. Created in the context of 1980s second wave feminism, mother characters in these works demonstrate a radical reconceptualization of self and challenge the prevalent understanding of temporal progress via their experiences of motherhood... Passing of time as a concept or aging in a biological sense applies differently between genders in the two narratives I analyze, precisely due to the essentially patriarchal construction of the idea of motherhood. Through a comparative analysis of Atwood's and Lessing's novels, I argue that time functions as the key to the mechanism of social control over female fertility, and motherhood becomes the fundamental frame for a normative time that binds women" (Author).

KARMI, Sally. "Patriarchal Fathers, Submissive Daughters in the Fiction of Margaret Atwood and Hanan Al-Shaykh." *Fatherhood in Contemporary Discourse: Focus on Fathers*. Edited by Anna Pilinska. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. 120-131.

"Representations of patriarchal fathers and submissive daughters have been dominant concerns in the literary works of women writers. Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* (1988) and Hanan Al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra* (1986) speak to a patriarchal pattern that dominates the relationship existing between fathers and daughters. Though geopolitical spaces and cultures apart, both novels tend to explore the world of patriarchy through the eyes of young girls who grow up within a cultural paradigm of family relations and religious institution that mark their submission to patriarchy. It is probably justified to argue that when it comes to the position of women in the Arab world, patriarchy is more noticeable than that of its Western counterpart. However, this paper argues that patriarchy operates within a subtle ground that makes its existence also valid within a Western, Canadian culture. In both novels, fathers are represented through the eyes of their daughters, Elaine Risley and Zahra; two young girls who grew up with different views regarding their fathers. In spite of growing up in an unconventional family, Elaine learns about patriarchy and father's dominance not through her father as much as from her outer environment seeing the patriarchal power of her friend's father. Contrary to Elaine, Zahra has a typical patriarchal father: dominant and fearful" (Author).

KHAFAGA, Ayman F. "Linguistic Manipulation of Political Myth in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *International Journal of English Linguistics* 7.3 (2017): 189-200.

"This paper investigates the linguistic manipulation of political myth in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. More specifically, the paper discusses the myth of the good of the nation which is linguistically manipulated verbally and nonverbally throughout the novel. Atwood's novel is one of the distinguished dystopian narratives in the twentieth century. This type of fiction has always been a reflection of the irrationalities committed against people by those in power. This paper exposes the strategies of linguistic manipulation used by those in power to propagate for the good of the nation myth, which in turn strengthens their position, justifies their actions, and guarantees their continuation in power. In doing so, the paper uses Political Discourse Analysis as the approach for analyzing the selected data. Lexical choices, didactic indoctrination, religionization and dehumanization are among the strategies used in the analysis of data. The main objective of this paper is to elaborate the extent to which the good of the nation myth is used by some regimes to oppress and dominate the public into complete submission to their goals. It is also an attempt to provide the public with some sort of linguistic enlightenment so as to be aware of the use and abuse of language in shaping and/or

misshaping the public's attitudes. The conclusion drawn from this paper shows that politicians rhetorically manipulate myths to normalize their practices and legitimize their irrationalities" (Author).

Available from: <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijel/article/view/66792>.

KIM, Myung-Joo. "[Becoming Animals and Landscape in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*]." *Journal of English Language and Literature/Yonggo Yongmunhak* 62.4 (December 2016): 649-670. In Korean. No abstract available.

KIRSCH, Adam. *The Global Novel Writing the World in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2016.

"What will 21<sup>st</sup> century fiction look like? Acclaimed literary critic Adam Kirsch examines some of our most beloved writers, including Haruki Murakami, Elena Ferrante, Roberto Bolano, and Margaret Atwood, to better understand literature in the age of globalization. The global novel, he finds, is not so much a genre as a way of imagining the world, one that allows the novel to address both urgent contemporary concerns" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 5, "Fearful Futures Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Michel Houellebecq's *The Possibility of an Island*," pp. 76-89.

KUMAR, Santosh. "Touching the Tip of Iceberg in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood." *Notions* 8.3 (2017): 19-22.

"The novel *Surfacing* was published in 1972. A great feminist text, it became the object of literary acclaim. The story of the novel shows the flow of ideas of the unnamed protagonist. The novel depicts the ruinous state of Canadian nature. There is an explicit feminist message paired with Atwood's concern for economic oppression and exploitation of Canada by the United States of America. *Surfacing* shows how women are exploited after being psychologically conditioned. The narrator-protagonist has undergone experiences of discrimination and gender bias since her childhood. A middle-aged art professor exploits her sexually, and she must bear the pain of aborting her child. She has to bear the pain of her father's death; and as such, she becomes mad and behaves unusually, however, she re-emerges as a realized being ready to face the challenges of the world" (Author).

Available from: [http://kiet.asia/?page\\_id=2584](http://kiet.asia/?page_id=2584).

KUMAWAT, Vijayraj and Rashmi GAUR. "(II) Legitimacy of Knowledge and Exclusion: A Study of Margaret Atwood's Select Novels." *Journal of Exclusion Studies* 7.1 (2017): 51-63.

"This paper is a study of Canadian author Margaret Atwood's select fictional narratives reflecting how the 'scientific' knowledge tradition, in its practice, results in social exclusion of the individual subjects who do not conform to it. To explore the state of exclusion, it looks into how 'the postmodern condition' inherently brings with itself the idea of its own (il)legitimacy. This notion is explored on the basis of four considerations—Consensus, Speculativity, Doability and Narrativity—inherent in the discourses/disciplines. The postmodernist thinker Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) has been extensively referred to in understanding the (il)legitimacy of not only the scientific but also the non-scientific, but socially accepted forms of knowledge vis-à-vis Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996) and *The Blind Assassin* (2000)" (Authors).

KUŹNICKI, Sławomir. *Margaret Atwood's Dystopian Fiction: Fire Is Being Eaten*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2017.

“This volume details Margaret Atwood’s dystopian novels through the themes of the ambivalent ethics of science and technology, the position of women in the male-dominated world, and the ambiguous role played by religion and spirituality. The book’s unique and original approach places Atwood’s fiction within the contemporary world, with all the problems of our fast-changing reality. Furthermore, it provides an excellent reading of her dystopias in a broader, humanist context, with an emphasis on the social, cultural and political issues that have been important for both her, the writer, and us, the readers” (Publisher). Chapter titles include: Context Is All. –*The Handmaid’s Tale*, or the Republic of Men. –*Oryx and Crake*, or the Castle of Scientists. –*The Year of the Flood*, or the Kingdom of Gardeners. –*MaddAddam*, or the Community of Survivors and finally, –Negotiating with the Living.

---. “Women, Men and the Hope of Pregnancy/Motherhood in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam*.” *Revolution, Evolution and Endurance in Anglophone Literature and Culture*. Edited by Malgorzata Martynuska and Elzbieta Rokosz-Piejko. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2017. 119-129.

“This article investigates how the society of female and male survivors is supplemented in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* with the elements of motherhood and parenthood. As the author suggests, the trans-generic relations and their offspring give hope for the future” (Eds.).

LABUDOVA, Katarína. “Cooking and Eating Your Own Stories: (Metaphorical) Cannibalism in Margaret Atwood’s *The Robber Bride*.” *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 65.4 (2017): 413-427.

“*The Robber Bride* by Margaret Atwood exposes a dangerous protagonist, Zenia, who is metaphorically introduced through images of drinking blood and eating raw meat. Her victims, Tony, Charis, and Roz are associated with nurturing and nourishing foods: they eat together to comfort each other. Sarah Sceats’s, Fiona Tolan’s, and Jean Wyatt’s studies on feminism and female bonding in the novel have influenced this article, though it also questions the established opposition between the villainess Zenia and her victims: Zenia’s dark appetites are their own tastes for blood, revenge, and power. Zenia acts as a liberating and empowering ingredient. This article discusses the link between storytelling and cooking. I suggest that Zenia’s creative story-telling forces the women to acknowledge the darker dimension of their repressed fragments and past. Thus, they become independent and creative storytellers and cooks, just like Zenia” (Author).

---. “Margaret Atwood’s Ecological Essays: Moral and Environmental Anxieties.” *The Essay: Forms and Transformations*. Edited by Dorothea Flothow, Markus Oppolzer, and Sabine Coelsch-Foisner. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017. 253-264.

“This article attempts to trace Atwood’s genuine concern for environmental issues through the oeuvre of her essays, which show eclectic diversity in genre as well as in subject matter. From an eco-feminist stance, she moves to eco-critical position. Eco-feminism identifies environmental crisis as a specifically hierarchical problem with ideological origins in patriarchy and materialism. Accordingly, in *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature*, Atwood discusses the North as ‘a frigid and sparkling fin de siècle *femme fatale*.’ In her later essays, the writer complies with eco-criticism identifying anthropocentrism as the crucial conceptual problem with civilisation and its destructive relations with nature or the non-human. Peter Child and Roger Fowler argue that eco-criticism tries to re-integrate human kind into the web of natural eco-system ‘humankind without reference to the physical environment in which the species subsists, —as merely one element of a complex ecosystem.’ Margaret Atwood, voice of the Greenpeace campaign of 1995, seems to agree with this and Alan Marshall’s holistic approach ‘that integrates the various systems of a natural community’ with the hope of solving ecological and environmental crisis” (Author).

---. "Wise Children and The Blind Assassin: Fictional (Auto)Biographies." *Brno Studies in English* 42.2 (January 2016): 21-34.

"In *Wise Children* and *The Blind Assassin*, Carter and Atwood portray older women who narrate their (fictional) life-stories with the freedom and confidence of their age. They tell their versions, now free from the fear of the gaze of the audience and men. Through Dora in *Wise Children* and Iris in *The Blind Assassin*, Carter and Atwood draw attention to the relevance of (auto)biography for aging women and their need to find their voice and articulate their story, to be heard and to make sense of their lives. Carter and Atwood raise the issue of bodily changes and their effects on the sense of self. Elderly narrators, Dora and Iris, combat the official history that has previously marginalized and/or silenced them and their sisters, Nora and Laura. As narrators, they offer their own versions of truth, often transgressing the boundaries between fact and fantasy, and inviting readers to co-create their story. As I show, Dora and Iris avoid being caught in a single meaning. I suggest that Dora and Iris inscribe their elderly women's bodies and selves into their stories to produce the multilayered texts of their fictional autobiographies" (Author).

Available from: <https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/handle/11222.digilib/136094>.

LEE, Jason. *Sex Robots: The Future of Desire*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

"This book reveals that the way we perceive sex robots is how we perceive ourselves, overcoming the false human/non-human binary. From Greek myths, to the film 'Ex Machina,' to Japanese technology, non-human sexuality has been at the heart of culture. In *Sex Robots*, the history of this culture is explored. This text sheds new light on what the sex robot represents and signifies, examining its philosophical implications within the context of today's society. This volume will be of interest to scholars of technology, cultural studies, the social sciences and philosophy" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 1, "Robotic Evolution," pp. 1-17 which examines the myths, legends and history of robots, emphasising how the desire for robots has always been with us. We see where these desires for sex robots stemmed from, and what they mean in a global context. Starting with the Greeks, and moving up to the present day, the importance of Margaret Atwood's work, especially her novel *The Heart Goes Last* is stressed.

LEVAQUE, Carole. "Margaret Atwood and Assisted Reproduction: From Fantasy to Reality." *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 37.8 (2017): 525-529.

"This article raises the bewildering impact of artificial reproduction techniques (ART) for analysts, for the family, for the couple, and for their children. It explores a number of concerns, some of which include: the dissociation of sex from reproduction; the relative absence of the usual time limits that people have traditionally taken into consideration to conceive; questions about generation and age; the risk of perceiving oneself as omnipotent; the need to renovate the story of how one came to be; the impact of ART on the way the primal scene and the Oedipal complex are worked through when there is no longer only a triangle, but more people involved in procreation; the children's identity (Who are my real parents?) and the impact on the identity of the women involved in participating in the procreation such as the egg donor or surrogate. It also addresses the impact of ART on the analyst who must deal with situations for which he or she is not prepared either personally or professionally. It begins by exploring Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and its present-day relevance to ART. Atwood's vision was prescient. The similarity between the lives and experiences of her Handmaids and that of today's commercial surrogates in India is often striking. It also presents some ways in which literature and media are predicting the challenges that ART will bring in the future. It explores how what was fiction a few decades ago has become reality and how what we presently think of as fiction will perhaps be a reality in the not-so-distant future.

The second part of the article presents a clinical vignette in which a couple presents with infertility in the wife, whose infertility was the consequence of chemotherapy treatment she received as a young adult. She decided to look for a donor in a European country and succeeded at getting pregnant. However, though successful, the pregnancy proved to be extremely difficult. When a second pregnancy was desired, the same donor provided with her ova. To avoid the complications of the first pregnancies, the couple accepted the wife's sister's offer to carry the pregnancy. Their daughters are now two and four years old" (Author).

LI, Xin. "Study on Duality Creation of Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Man*." *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 92 (2017): 194-198.

"Duality is one of the important features of Margaret Atwood's overall creation. Her novel *Blind Killer* (also translated as *Blind Assassin*) makes the duality more complicated and pluralistic through the narrative structure of 'Chinese Boxing' which manifested as personal memory and public memory, false and true, history and fiction, three groups showing the unity of opposites. From the narrative structure to the analysis of feminism, this article analyzes the dual characteristics of the 'blind assassin' to show that Atwood's unique narrative structure reveals the hidden and lived experience of women" (Author).

Available from: <https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/icesms-16/25870692>.

LOBO, Phillip. "O: An Intervention into the Critical Discourse Around Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*." *Chiasma: A Site for Thought* 4.1 (2017): 40-73.

"Published in 2003, Margaret Atwood's novel, *Oryx and Crake* remains a trenchant and troubling depiction of an all-too possible future, married to an engineered apocalypse and the birth of a strange, posthuman Eden. Extrapolating political and cultural trends of the present, the waning influence of the disciplinary humanities, the predominance of commercialized biotechnology, the eclipse of national governments by global corporations, precipitous disparities in economic equality, cascading environmental destabilization due to unchecked development, and capitalism's speedy 'cashing in' on the very disasters it precipitates, the novel confronts some of the most pressing problems facing the world as it plunges into the 21st century" (Author).

Available from: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/chiasmaasiteforthought/vol4/iss1/10>.

MALATHY, P. "Quest for Self-Identity in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*." *HuSS: International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences* 4.2 (July-December 2017): 66-69.

"The paper focuses on *Surfacing*'s nameless narrator's interaction with nature. She returns to Quebec in search of her missing father. The emotional trauma she undergoes during and after her forced abortion leads to annihilation of her artistic leanings. She is anonymous because she is synonymous with the fragile and powerless women at large who are subjected to male exploitation and commodification. After living in the heart of nature, she realizes that nature is not biased. She discovers the roots of her identity in the wilderness, reintegrates with the society, and prepares to bear a child. In her quest for identity, she comes to terms with the dualities and incongruities in the patriarchal society she lives in through the struggle to reclaim her identity and roots. Thus, the protagonist's psychological journey to discover her roots and identity enables her to gain access into the world of pristine nature" (Author).

Available from: <http://www.i-scholar.in/index.php/hijrh/article/view/167541>.

MALEKOVA, Danica. "Eco-Morality Narratives in Atwood's Essays." *The Essay: Forms and Transformations*. Edited by Dorothea Flothow, Markus Oppolzer, and Sabine Coelsch-

Foisner. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017. 241-251.

“Throughout her essayistic endeavours, environmental issues have been a crucial part of Atwood’s writing alongside the questions of women and human rights. Her ecological concerns have developed from a close focus on Canadian wilderness to a more globalised perspective questioning mainstream Western values, notably the free-market economy predicated on the pursuit of material wealth. Atwood reveals the ‘dark side’ of growth economy speeded up by high technology, and, through her narratives, becomes an advocate of what is called ‘ecological consciousness’ as a goal that should serve our moral orientation.... By shifting attention to what becomes obscured by the conceptual idealisations that define neo-liberal thought, Atwood opens up insights that contribute to redefining the collective goals and therefore the values. The essays discussed in the ensuing analysis are a representative sample of Atwood’s environmental thought covering almost thirty years of development. The analysis aims at elucidating the conceptual metaphors underlying Atwood’s argumentation, and in particular how they interact with positive/ negative evaluations” (Author).

MARANTZ, Kate. “Making It (In)Visible: The Politics of Absence in Margaret Atwood’s *Bodily Harm*.” *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 41.2 (2016): 137-156.

“An essential part of Atwood’s literary and political project in *Bodily Harm* is her deliberate representation of absences: empty spaces, gaps in knowledge or comprehension, textual blankness or silences. As much as Rennie’s trip forces her and Atwood’s readers to carve out a space for ethical resistance in a ‘real’ experience beyond representation, *Bodily Harm* is a text that is also almost obsessively interested in what *can’t* be seen, expressed, or apprehended, what is not there when one tries to look, speak, feel, or understand” (Author).

MARGARET, J. Esther and K. RAVINDRAN. “Intrapsychic and Interpersonal Conflicts in Margaret Atwood’s *The Edible Woman*.” *Language in India* 17.4 (April 2017): 14-26.

“Margaret Atwood, one of the most prominent women writers of Canada has displayed remarkable insight into the working of a woman’s mind. In [*The Edible Woman*] she has skillfully depicted the inner urges and conflicts in a woman’s mind and her need for self-realization. She sensitively portrays the minute disturbances caused in the minds of her protagonists through various memories and experiences of life. These internal disturbances have a strong impact on their life causing a sense of insecurity and suffocation in their relationships” (Authors).

Available from: <http://www.languageinindia.com/april2017/estherediblewoman.html>.

MASSOURA, Kiriaki. “Space, Time, and the Female Body: Homer’s Penelope in Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* (2005).” *Contemporary Women’s Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 391-411.

Excerpt: The name Penelope has become synonymous with prudence and wifely faithfulness. In contrast to *The Iliad*, where the presence of a woman is a rather rare occurrence, *The Odyssey* is a poem of one man and many women who do not seem to play their traditional feminine roles in a patriarchal society and simply assist the hero in his adventures. The powerful sorceress Circe, for example, leads Odysseus to her bed, where they make love as equals. When Odysseus decides to leave Circe’s island, Aeaëa, for the island of Ithaca, she helps him to survive his mandatory visit to the underworld and never tries to hold him back with womanly tears or evil spells. The episodes that describe Odysseus’ arrival in Ithaca and reunion with Penelope indicate that Homer does not always follow the rules of his patriarchal society, which define women as either all-devouring demonic transgressors or all-nourishing earth mothers. Penelope is not only the docile wife but also a transgressor and a trickster who runs Odysseus’ estates for twenty years better than any man could and keeps the suitors at bay

until Odysseus returns. The question for a modern audience is whether Penelope was faithful or clever at hiding her faithlessness. Margaret Atwood teases out Homer's mythic complexities, especially in relation to Penelope, expanding and exploring them. When the epic confirms patriarchal notions of femininity, however, as in the case of the twelve hanged maids, Atwood encourages a rereading of the original text by rewriting it entirely.

MEENA, Kiran. "Ecofeminism in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*." *Motifs: An International Journal of English Studies* 3.2 (2017): 100-105.

"The aim of this article is to study ecofeminism in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*. Contemporary literature is breathing within a new menace of environmental pollution or ecological disaster. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a rise of globalisation and an increase in the power of private enterprise. In 2011, the world population was about 1.7 billion [sic] and it was 7.3 billion in 2015. By 2050, the world population will have crossed the number of 9.40 billion. In the past years, we have seen many environmental problems. Our environment is constantly changing. Ecofeminism is a new way of approaching nature, politics and spirituality" (Author).

MEYER, Bruce. *Portraits of Canadian Writers*. Erin (Ontario): Porcupine's Quill, 2016.

This book contains photographs of each writer, plus a reflection of his meeting with the author. See especially pp. 26-27 for Atwood's portrait (likely taken in 1977 when Meyer met her at Victoria College in Toronto).

MICELI, Barbara. "The *Handmaid's Tale* e *The Heart Goes Last* di Margaret Atwood. Due città distopiche a confronto." *América Crítica* 1.2 (dicember 2017): 33-48. In Italian.

"The essay deals with two Margaret Atwood's novels that depict two cities/societies with an apparent clockwork mechanism that makes them safe, clean, crimeless and disciplined. The novels, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and *The Heart Goes Last* (2015), are set in the fictional cities of Gilead and Consilience, situated in North America. Both societies share some similarities, and they apply the principles of the prison studied by Michel Foucault in his essay 'Discipline and Punish,' especially in the control over people's life and bodies to make them 'docile' and useful, the isolation from the outside world, and punishment (torture and even executions) to keep people subjugated. The apparent perfection of Gilead and Consilience hides a dystopia that, through this analysis, seems to be, according to the author, a possible future for our cities, and an extreme measure that raises doubts and thoughts on how such a management of society is worse than the current one" (Author)

Available from: <http://ojs.unica.it/index.php/cisap/article/view/3017>.

MIJOMANOVIĆ, Stevan. "Cannibalism, Fertility, and the Role of Food in Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman*." *AM Journal of Art and Media Studies* 10 (2016): 67-76.

"Today we live in a world full of various temptations and sensations leading us away from ourselves. We change our Self in order to comply with society and in the process, we become the Other. This paper explores how Margaret Atwood perceives the search for one's identity and the pressure of societal roles that lead to this loss of identity. The main character in the novel *The Edible Woman*, Marian, goes on a conflicting journey during which she rejects herself, muses about her environment and her role in it, and tries to grasp her essence, which has become elusive. Atwood uses food imagery to portray Marian's inner battles. In this paper we explore the implications that this food imagery has both on Marian and the contemporary reader. Atwood argues that this book is 'protofeminist,' yet from the prism of contemporaneity it can be read as feminist. However, the scope of this novel stretches to other concepts relevant

to the present day: obsession with ‘size zero’, following the latest trends, living in the fast lane, etc.; these concepts are depicted through metaphorical extensions such as cannibalism and fertility. Atwood masterfully sets the stage where she explores how these concepts influence an individual to the extent where one uses mimicry to fit the regulations of a capitalistic society, thus becoming almost the same but not quite ..., i.e. colonization of the Self leading to an unfulfilled Other” (Author).

Available from: <https://fmkjournals.fmk.edu.rs/index.php/AM/article/view/135>.

MOHR, Dunja M. “Anthropocene Fiction: Narrating the ‘Zero Hour’ in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *Écrire au-delà de la fin des temps?: Les littératures au Canada et au Québec = Writing Beyond The End Times? The Literatures of Canada and Quebec*. Edited by Ursula Mathis-Moser and Marie J Carrière. [Innsbruck]: Innsbruck UP, 2017. 25-45.

“This article explores how Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy narrates crisis, the ‘zero hour,’ and a potentially post-anthropocentric future, as the trilogy moves in a complex dialogue cum polylogue from the biotechnological creation of a global apocalypse, first to its immediate aftermath and a transition period, and then to a potentially utopian version of pioneering and a variety of species’s co-settling of the remains of the planet. I read the trilogy as part of the emerging subgenre of Anthropocene fiction, essentially a speculative literature grounded in sciences that shares some features with environmental and climate change novels and the utopian/dystopian tradition. The trilogy offers a twofold relational vision of ‘culture vs. nature’: the human induced change of and impact on nature on the planetary scale, the Anthropocene, and the transformation and commodification of lifeforms on the molecular level, the genetic manipulation of animals, humans, and posthumans. Atwood’s double-vision of the present’s crisis and the beyond of potential ‘natureculture’ futures suggests a heterophoric posthumanism that stresses the necessity to locate the posthuman in both the future and the present simultaneously. Atwood’s narration of our world in crisis emphasizes the link between survival, narration, and an understanding of nature as a network that includes humans” (Author).

---. “‘When Species Meet’: Posthuman Boundaries and Interspeciesism—Social Justice and Canadian Speculative Fiction.” *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* 37.1 (2017): 40-64.

“21<sup>st</sup> century literary studies engage in diverse ways with new methods and theoretical approaches, using new technologies and new ways of dealing with social criticism. Speculative literature offers a unique framework for engaging with current critical discourses, e.g. on science, globalism, biotechnological advances, animal rights, and ecology, all increasingly linked with the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s heightened interest in social justice and social debt. The article argues that speculative literature—extrapolating from contemporary socio-cultural problems and technological advances—contains a subversive transformative potential, as it accesses an imaginary other, immerses us into alternate modes of being, affects readers, and thus instigates a new emphatic, cognitive flexibility. Drawing on ‘schema criticism’ (Bracher, Moya) and its reshaping of cognitive structures, the paper then explores the intersections of social justice, posthumanism, critical animal studies, and new materialism and how recent Canadian speculative fiction negotiates a future of fuzzy (body) boundaries and imagines first steps towards a “multispecies justice” (Heise). The paper traces how such ‘entanglements’ of bioforms and a turn to planetary survival rewrite both the Canadian animal story and the Canadian ‘survival against nature’ topos and contribute to the characters’ (and implicitly the readers’) schema transformations. (Discussion of Atwood’s *MaddAddam* among a number of other texts.)” (Author). See especially the section, “Rewriting the Canadian Animal Story for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Multispecies Justice in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy,” pp. 54-62.

Available from:

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313870433> When Species Meet Beyond Posthuman Boundaries and Interspeciesism - Social Justice and Canadian Speculative Fiction.

MOORE, Bryan L. *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism*. [Cham, Switzerland]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

“This book is an analysis of literary texts that question, critique, or subvert anthropocentrism, the notion that the universe and everything in it exists for humans. Bryan Moore examines ancient Greek and Roman texts; medieval to twentieth-century European texts; eighteenth-century French philosophy; early to contemporary American texts and poetry; and science fiction to demonstrate a historical basis for the questioning of anthropocentrism and contemplation of responsible environmental stewardship in the twenty-first century and beyond” (Publisher). See especially Chapter 8, “Antianthropocentrism and Science Fiction Part II: After World War II and Into the Twenty-First Century,” pp. 213-239 which concludes with a focus on Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*.

MOUNT, Nick. *Arrival: The Story of CanLit*. Toronto: Anansi, 2017.

“In the mid-twentieth century, Canadian literature was transformed from a largely ignored trickle of books into an enormous cultural phenomenon that produced Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje, and Mordecai Richler, and so many others. In *Arrival*, ... Nick Mount answers the question: What caused the CanLit Boom?” (Publisher). References to Atwood appear throughout the text.

MOYANO, Thiago. “Um Rumor no Quarto ao Lado: subjetividade e pós-colonialismo em ‘Dancing Girls’ e ‘The Man from Mars’ de Margaret Atwood.” *Magma* 13 (2017): 67-79. In Portuguese.

“This work aims at establishing a discussion based on two short stories from *Dancing Girls and Other Stories* (1977): ‘The Man from Mars’ and ‘Dancing Girls.’ Taking into consideration the increasing relevance of studies concerned with this literary genre (the short story), as well as its complicity with Post-colonial and Gender Studies, this investigation shows how Atwood appropriates this structure in order to elaborate a criticism through the constitution of non-hegemonical subjectivities, which are inserted in an environment already demarcated by an awareness of the immigrant, phenomenon that leads them to a pattern of constant self-correction, reinforcing exactly what they allegedly try to avoid. Works by Julio Cortázar, Ricardo Piglia, Reingard Nischik, among others will be the theoretical apparatus of this paper” (Author).

Available from: <http://www.periodicos.usp.br/magma/article/view/97288>.

MUHUNTARAJAN, C. and Y. L. SOWNTHARYA. “Status of Woman in Margaret Atwood’s *The Edible Woman* and *Surfacing*.” *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 6.4 (2016): 584-591.

“The status of woman has always been a subject of change in society. For centuries, it has been a strenuous struggle for a woman to ensure her freedom in all aspects. Subordination and suppression of woman is common everywhere irrespective of the country and race. Further, woman has been marginalized and women writers are left invisible. Throughout the world, women writers, though forceful and rich in writing, are hardly recognized as writers. Margaret Atwood, in her novels, depicts the inner urge of women who strive to break all the barriers created by men and establish an identity of their own. This paper deals with select works of Margaret Atwood and her use of imagery and symbol to depict the status of women in a hostile society” (Authors).

MUÑOZ-VALDIVIESO, Sofía. "Shakespeare Our Contemporary in 2016: Margaret Atwood's Rewriting of *The Tempest* in *Hag-Seed*." *Sederi* 27 (2017): 105-129.

"Margaret Atwood's novel *Hag-Seed* (2016) is a retelling of *The Tempest* that transfers the actions from the magic island of the original play to present-day Canada: the avant-garde artistic director of a Shakespearean Festival is ousted from his job by his more world-savvy deputy, lives in isolation for twelve years and plots his revenge, which will involve a staging of *The Tempest* at the local prison where he has been teaching for some time as Mr. Duke. *Hag-Seed* is part of a larger project of fictional retellings of the Bard's plays conceived by Hogarth Press for the commemoration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, a moment when Shakespeare's cultural capital seems to be circulating more energetically than ever. The present article analyses *Hag-Seed* as a neo-Shakespearean novel that is original in the double sense of the term that Atwood's teacher Northrop Frye so frequently remarked: imaginative, innovative, and inventive but also true to its fountain and origins" (Author).

Available from: <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/SEDY/article/view/61981>.

NAMIQ, Sara Rasul. "The Hidden Truth Behind the Forms of Beauty in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *JUHD: Journal of University of Human Development* [Iraq] 3.3 (August 2017): 648-654.

"This paper theorizes the latest forms of the patriarchal control through analyzing Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The paper tries to assume that women in the post-modern age are no longer controlled through the traditional forms of control, but, they are controlled through the forms of beauty such as makeup, fashion, and plastic surgery. Instead of confining women at home, and oppressing them so as to control them, male-dominated societies nowadays are controlling women through beauty experts and their productions. Thus, women are no longer confined at home, and they are no longer oppressed, but, they are working side by side with their male counterparts, and making money just like them, but the problem is that they are spending their money on the forms of beauty. In this way, male societies give women a limited freedom as a key strategy for manipulation in the first step, and then, they try to keep them busy with the forms of beauty so as to make them remain under control. From the late nineteenth century to the post-modern age women have faced numerous challenges. They have been subdued and introverted by the male forms of power, but due to the Industrial Revolution, technological advancement, and the two world wars, females have been able to open their eyes and see the reality around them. Though, even till this day they are living for the purpose of men and are becoming a symbol for pleasure and an ornament of decoration through the different forms of beauty. So, what this paper tries to do is to discover the hidden truths behind the forms of beauty, and theorize these forms as the latest tools of patriarchal control in the post-modern age" (Author).

Available from: <http://juhd.uhd.edu.iq/journals/index.php/v03/n03/2017-08-20-29>.

NICHOLSON, Hope. *The Spectacular Sisterhood of Superwomen: Awesome Female Characters from Comic Book History*. Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2017.

See especially "Survivalwoman," pp. 119-121. Known as the embodiment of Canadian culture, "Survivalwoman" was created by Bart Gerrard (i.e. Atwood) and first appeared in *This Magazine*, January 1977.

NIKOLIĆ, Milena Z. "Život pre čoveka Margaret Etvud - mentalno putovanje Lašje Grin = Margaret Atwood's *Life Before Man*: Lesje Green's Mental Journey." *Nasledje Kragujevac* 13.34 (2016): 83-95. In Serbian.

“In this paper the author observes the relationship between the fiction and reality of Lesje Green, the main female protagonist of Margaret Atwood’s novel *Life Before Man* (1979) in the light of Lubomir Doležel’s theory of possible worlds that had first been presented in his earlier papers from the ’70s and ’80s and then unified in *Heterocosmics* (2008). The parallel existence between the fictional (imaginary) world of the heroine (prehistoric Lesjeland) and the actual world of the text (twentieth century Toronto) is examined. Namely, the heroine has a tendency to take mental journey that implies her transposition from one world to the other (the gesture of recentering), whereby her transworld identity is being established. The paper will identify and examine the numerous intrusions of the imaginary into the real world and vice versa, that is to say, it will determine the points at which the fictional and real entities are being interwoven. It will be shown that the intrusion of reality initiates the process of heroine’s liberation from fantasies” (Author).

Available from: <http://scindeks.ceon.rs/Article.aspx?artid=1820-17681634083N&lang=en>.

---. “The Mirror Motif in Margaret Atwood’s *Cat’s Eye*.” *Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies* 9 (2017): 107-122.

“This paper will try to show how the mirror motif is symbolically presented through the images of eyes and water (as symbols of reflection) in the life of the *Cat’s Eye*’s heroine Elaine Risley. The mirror motif reveals the psychological state of Elaine’s mind, initiates changes in her perspective and indicates that reality is only a reflection of what she can see at a given moment. The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the stages of painting as a creative act by establishing the internal and external factors that led our controversial painter and narrator to engage in the process of creation, as well as to indicate the significance of creative expression in resolving her complex relationship with Cordelia, the girl who marked her childhood. By identifying the elements of fiction and reality for the main character and indicating their interaction and interconnectedness, we will try to explore the symbolism of Elaine’s creative process and determine the extent to which fictional elements have contributed to both her art and perception of reality. Both ontological and psychological theories will be used as a framework for exploring the relation between Elaine’s possible liberation from fantasy, which is an indispensable resource for her fictional world, and the potential for identifying the real causes of her traumas and subtle misogyny” (Author).

Available from: <http://doi.fil.bg.ac.rs/volume.php?pt=journals&issue=bells-2017-9&i=7>.

NISCHIK, Reingard M. *Comparative North American Studies: Transnational Approaches to American and Canadian Literature and Culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

“This monograph shows Comparative North American Studies at work in selected case studies and textual analyses. The analytical chapters take various approaches to literary, non-fictional as well as visual texts as their prime objects of analysis within selected areas of Comparative North American Studies. These text—and genre-centered case studies represent an array of rewarding approaches within Comparative North American Studies: period-oriented, generic, thematic/border studies, thematic/imagological, and receptionist. The book includes comparative analyses of American and Canadian modernism and of the North American modernist short story, narratives of the Canada-US border, national images of the United States and Canada in literature, reviews of Margaret Atwood’s novels in North America, as well as an interview with Margaret Atwood on book reviewing in North America” (Author).

See especially Chapter 4, “On Imagology, Canadian-US Relations, and Popular Culture: National Images and Border Crossings in Margaret Atwood’s Works,” pp. 93-120; Chapter 5, “Reviewing Atwood in Canada and the United States: From (Inter)Nationalism to Transnationalism,” pp. 121-178 and Chapter 6, “The Writer, the Reader, and the Book”:

Margaret Atwood on Reviewing in Conversation with Reingard M. Nischik,” pp. 179-190.

---. *The English Short Story in Canada: From the Dawn of Modernism to the 2013 Nobel Prize*. Jefferson, NC.: McFarland, 2017.

“In 2013, the Nobel Prize for Literature was for the first time awarded to a short story writer, and to a Canadian, Alice Munro. The award focused international attention on a genre that had long been thriving in Canada, particularly since the 1960s. This book traces the development and highlights of the English-language Canadian short story from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present. The history as well as the theoretical approaches to the genre are covered, with in-depth examination of exemplary stories by prominent writers such as Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro” (Publisher).

See especially Chapter 7, “Gender and Genre: Margaret Atwood’s Short Stories and Short Fictions,” pp. 106-117 and Chapter 14, “Crossing Generic Borders: Margaret Atwood’s Short Prose Collection *The Tent*,” pp. 203-210.

---. “Margaret Atwood’s Reception in Canada and the United States: A Comparative Analysis of North American Reviews of *The Blind Assassin*.” *Contemporary Women’s Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 1-19.

“Based on a large corpus of reviews from Canada and the USA and considering my recent large-scale study of the reception of Margaret Atwood’s earlier novels in both North American countries, this article investigates how the reviewer’s nationality and that of the review’s target audience factor into the reception of a writer’s works. This is exemplarily documented in a case study of Atwood’s novel *The Blind Assassin* (2000), published at the end of her middle creative period. What do the reviews focus on and are there any striking differences attributable to the national and cultural context the review was written in and for? Was the evaluative response to the novel in the two North American countries similar or did it deviate significantly?” (Author).

NORTHOVER, Alan. “Strangers in Strange Worlds: Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *Journal of Literary Studies* 33.1 (2017): 121-137.

“Strangeness, based on the ambivalence of the uncanny, characterises both the pre-and post-apocalyptic worlds of Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy. Whereas Spiegel (2010) makes a convincing case for the neomedievalism of the corporation-dominated pre-apocalyptic world in *Oryx and Crake*, Atwood’s post-apocalyptic world can perhaps more aptly be described as Palaeolithic or Neolithic in the special sense of a return to the Stone Age. However, both these worlds are fictional constructs, set in the near future, allowing Atwood to critique trends in the contemporary world. Both worlds make disturbing and alienating reading, despite—or perhaps because of—the dark sense of humour that Atwood exhibits and the strange familiarity of her imagined worlds. Besides the more general concepts of the sinister and the eerie, Russian Formalism’s *defamiliarisation* and Freud’s *unheimlich* (uncanny) are employed to understand different aspects of the alienating effects that Atwood achieves. The animal gaze and the unmasking of the absent referent are also considered, particularly as experienced through Jimmy and Toby, Atwood’s main narrative focalisers” (Author).

OATES, Joyce Carol. *Soul at the White Heat Inspiration, Obsession, and the Writing Life*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016.

“A new collection of critical and personal essays on writing, obsession, and inspiration from National Book Award-winning and New York Times bestselling author Joyce Carol Oates” (Publisher). See especially “*In Other Worlds: Margaret Atwood*,” pp. 210-220, a book review

which originally appeared in the *New York Review of Books* 59.5 (22 March 2012): 39-41.

OBIDIČ, Andrejka. "Margaret Atwood's Postcolonial and Postmodern Feminist Novels with Psychological and Mythic Influences: The Archetypal Analysis of the Novel *Surfacing*." *Acta Neophilologica* 50: 1-2 (2017): 5-24.

"The paper analyzes Margaret Atwood's postcolonial and postmodern feminist novels from the psychological perspective of Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes and from the perspective of Robert Graves's mythological figures of the triple goddess presented in his work *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (1997). In this regard, the paper focuses on the mythic and psychological roles embodied and played by Atwood's victimized female protagonists who actively seek their identity and professional self-realization on their path towards personal evolution in the North American patriarchal society of the twentieth century. Thus, they are no longer passive as female characters of the nineteenth-century colonial novels which are centered on the male hero and his colonial adventures. In her postcolonial and postmodern feminist novels, Atwood further introduces elements of folk tales, fairy tales, legends, myths and revives different literary genres, such as a detective story, a crime and historical novel, a gothic romance, a comedy, science fiction, etc. Moreover, she often abuses the conventions of the existing genre and mixes several genres in the same narrative. For instance, her narrative *The Penelopiad* (2005) is a genre-hybrid novella in which she parodies the Grecian myth of the adventurer Odysseus and his faithful wife Penelope by subverting Homer's serious epic poem into a witty satire. In addition, the last part of the paper analyzes the author's cult novel *Surfacing* (1972 (1984)) according to Joseph Campbell's and Northrop Frye's archetypal/myth criticism and it demonstrates that Atwood revises the biblical myth of the hero's quest and the idealized world of medieval grail romances from the ironic perspective of the twentieth century, as is typical of postmodernism" (Author).

Available from: <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/ActaNeophilologica>.

OLIVEIRA, Luiz Manoel da Silva. "Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood e Margaret Laurence: Deslocamentos empoderantes da mulher e reconfiguração da escrita de autoria feminina canadense na década de 1970." *E-Scripta—Revista do curso de Letras da Uniabeu* 8.1 (January-April 2017): 26-48. In Portuguese.

"This article aims at showing how Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974), and Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* (1976) redirect writing by women in Canada throughout the 1970s and on, a period of radical changes both around the world and also in provincial and rural Canada, long fragmented on the linguistic, religious, identity, and cultural levels. The Second Wave of Feminism deeply influenced many Canadian women authors from the 1960s to the 1980s. In these three novels, each female writer / protagonist challenges crystalized patriarchal assumptions; approaches gender, sexual, and female identity questions very clearly; and implode the boundaries of 'public sphere/private sphere', thus highlighting the relevance of the protagonists' emotional, national, and transnational dislocations to promote their subjective empowerment, a process often framed by their resuming of the tracks of an existing female writing tradition, obliterated, usurped, and silenced by patriarchy, but which reappears showing contours of difference from the writing hegemony of men, which almost solely offered the models for representing women in fiction. The theoretical contributions of Virginia Woolf, Toril Moi, Coral Ann Howells, Elaine Showalter, Mary Eagleton, Sandra Almeida and Eva Hoffman will be used here, among others" (Author).

Available from: <http://revista.uniabeu.edu.br/index.php/RE/article/view/2806>.

PEREIRA, Alice. "Necropolítica, patriarcado e o valor da vida humana nas distopias. = Necropolitics,

Patriarchy and the Value of Human Life in Dystopias” *REVELL-Revista de Estudos Literários da UEMS* 3.17 (2017): 143-158. In Portuguese.

“In the dystopian narrative by Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and *The Children of Men* by P.D. James, there’s a complete disregard for the lives of those who transgress the draconian rules of those authoritarian and catastrophic contexts. In both works, there is the theme of infertility on a global scale. The imminent risk to humanity is precisely the moment that each life should be most valued due to the threat of extinction. However, it is at these moments that life is emptied of its intrinsic value and becomes a political resource. Each individual life is indispensable for the survival of everyone, and each person becomes a hostage of the elites, who want to assure their own power. Thus the lives of women lose their value more quickly, their bodies become passive instruments of the state. Considering Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics which states that politics is the work of death, and sovereignty is the right to kill, and from Bordeau’s position that the State ratifies and reinforces prescriptions and proscriptions from private patriarchy with those of a public patriarchy, we intend to analyse how life and death become mechanisms to legitimize necropolitics within the contexts of these dystopias” (Author).

Available from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6181277>.

PEROIKOU, Antonia. “Of Crakers and Men Imagining the Future and Rethinking the Past in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *Posthuman Gothic*. Edited by Anya Heise-von der Lippe. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017. 36-52.

“This chapter focuses on a Gothic posthumanist reading of Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy, consisting of *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*. With detailed analysis of the figures of the Crakers, a species of herbivorous human-like creatures with human and animal characteristics bioengineered by Glenn aka Crake, a posthuman Gothic reading focuses on the instances of horror and terror that arise from inexorable and uncanny amalgamations of human subjects and technological advancements, as well as the posthuman Gothic’s main source of fear—‘the uncertainty of what we will become and what will be left of us after the change’. The Crakers are precisely the monstrous figures that embody these fears and hopes for the future. Essentially, Atwood’s trilogy constantly questions the boundaries between utopia and dystopia and disrupts the rigidity of such classifications by oscillating among the following: there is first the technologically dystopian near future where humans abuse nature to the fullest with the creation of gene-spliced animals, the establishment and perfection of eugenics as a science and the extinction of most known species. Secondly, the novels present Crake’s vision of a utopian future where the Crakers would be the sole survivors of the pandemic, living in perfect harmony with each other, nature and even their human custodian Snowman or Jimmy. Finally, the novels introduce the post-apocalyptic present with its shifts in narrative perspective” (Author).

PHILIPPS, Dana. “Collapse, Resilience, Stability and Sustainability in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* Trilogy.” *Literature and Sustainability: Concept, Text and Culture*. Edited by Adeline Johns-Putra, John Parnham, and Louise Squire. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2017. 139-158.

“That all four of the terms [collapse, resilience, stability and sustainability] are marked, in varying degrees, by ambiguity underscores their structural importance to the narratives in which they are employed as tropes, owing to a phenomenon readily understood by literary and cultural critics, if perhaps too complacently accepted as routine and unexceptional. The phenomenon has to do with the uncertainty of literary form, especially when it comes to the novel, where it often seems that genre conventions are no sooner put in place than they are violated, vitiated and contravened; that novelistic form is ephemeral, never realised in

equipoise but always existing only a hair's breadth from formlessness; and that beginnings, middles and ends can never be as distinct as their idealisation suggests they should be. This unruliness, this kicking over of the traces of convention and this refusal of narrative to move forward along clear-cut lines, makes it possible to read Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy not as a work of science fiction or 'speculative fiction' (the latter is Atwood's preferred term) ..., but as a tripartite historical novel. I would argue that such a reading also makes available a better understanding of the roles that collapse, stability, resilience and sustainability play in shaping Atwood's environmental metanarrative, which is mostly implicit but is occasionally expressed in snippets of narration. Admittedly, reading the trilogy as a work of historical fiction will require some sleight of hand if it is going to work. It will have to negotiate, among other things, the awkward fact that Atwood's novels are set in a post-climate change future whose relationship to the present cannot be determined according to the usual measures of chronological succession: if the narrative is not time-stamped and its temporality is uncertain, then so too must be its very historicity...." (Author).

RAGHEB, Galila Ann. "A Victim Speaks Out: Margaret Atwood's 'Little Red Hen.'" *Recontextualizing Resistance*. Edited by Loubna Youssef and Emily Golson. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. 141-148.

"Margaret Atwood has noted that the writer's task, where necessary, is 'to arouse moral indignation with a view to reform-to expose, rebuke and correct' (1982, 183). In 'The Little Red Hen Tells All' (1992), Atwood's rewriting of the well-loved children's tale, 'The Little Red Hen,' the hen finally speaks out to adult readers in order to reveal the gender discrimination concealed within the canonical text that supported the capitalist ideology of its time. The original fable, of unknown European origin, instructs children in the rewards of individual labour and personal initiative. But Atwood's rendition does not stop there. Instead, Atwood's tale explores problems that have emerged from capitalist ideology as it has been put into practice, primarily focusing on practices of greed and gender discrimination. This essay examines the various techniques used in Atwood's flash fiction (a very short short story) to explore and skillfully subvert the original meaning of the narrative to reveal the fate of a hen who resists stereotyping and becomes both the victim and victor of her own tale" (Author).

RAO, Eleonora. "It Always Takes a Long Time/to Decipher Where You Are': Uncanny Spaces and Troubled Times in Margaret Atwood's Poetry." *Humanities* 6.3 (September 2017): 1-14.

"The focus is on Atwood's most recent poetry collections; *Morning in the Burned House* (1995) and *The Door* (2007), in addition to the prose poems volume *The Tent* (2006). They have in common, albeit with a different emphasis, a preoccupation with mortality and with the writing of poetry itself. They also share a special concern for space. This reading considers space and landscape to function as metonyms. Space here is far from being passive; instead it is constantly in the process of being constructed. The disorientation that the poetic personae experience in these texts follows a labyrinthine pattern where heterogeneity and multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality prevail. In this perspective, the identity of a place becomes open and provisional, including that of a place called home" (Author).

Available from: <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/6/3/63>.

RUDDICK, Nicholas. *Science Fiction Adapted to Film*. Canterbury: Gylphi, 2016.

"The focus of this study is the adaptation of sf literature to film. Its chief purpose is to explore how sf novels, novellas, and short stories worth reading have inspired films worth watching. The book concludes with a checklist of significant films adapted from sf works, and a list of primary and secondary texts that have been cited in the study" (Publisher). See especially Part 4, "Successful Adaptive Relationship: Ten Case Studies," and in particular Number 8,

“Feminist SF: Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) → “The Handmaid’s Tale” (Volker Schlöndorff, 1990), pp. 263-276.

RYLE, Martin. “Cli-Fi? Literature, Ecocriticism, History.” *Climate Change and the Humanities: Historical, Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Contemporary Environmental Crisis*. Edited by Alexander Elliott, James Cullis, and Vinita Damodaran. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 143-158.

“The recent period has seen publication of a good deal of ‘cli-fi’ speculative fiction about climate change. Teaching and discussion of this work raises the topic of global warming, and offers an opening for eco-criticism to address wider environmental questions. As a genre, however, cli-fi is limited. Its reliance on apocalyptic scenarios and its didactic tendency weaken it aesthetically. Its short historical perspective cannot address the long history of fossil-fuelled industrialism. Critical analysis of more complex novels by Margaret Atwood and Ian McEwan reveals some contradictory implications of recent literary engagement with climate change, while brief discussion of earlier fiction (by Austen, Hardy and Lawrence) shows how the novel as a genre is well placed to present and analyse the ambiguities of progress” (Author).

SARKUNAM. S. and Sheila ROYAPPA. “The Protagonists Break the Tyranny of Silence—A Comparative Study on Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence*.” *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* 5.7 (July 2017): 51-57.

“The comparative method of studying a piece of work involves great scope. In spite of the individual characteristics of a work when compared it takes a new garb and enlightens the readers. Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence* are the two novels taken for a comparative study. Both novels deal with the different barriers that enwrap woman. It is a record of the oppression of the protagonist’s individuality by curbing her liberty of thought, action and speech” (Authors).

Available using a Google search by title of the article.

SAĞIROĞLU, Rana. “A Compact Embodiment of Pluralities and Denial of Origins: Atwood’s *The Year of The Flood*.” *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1.3 (January-April 2016): 141-146.

“Margaret Atwood’s novel *The Year of the Flood* is a work of science fiction that uses postmodern technique and works as ecocriticism. The novel could be regarded as an ecocritical manifesto and a dystopic mirror of today’s degenerated world. Although Atwood does not want her works to be called science fiction, it is obvious that science fiction plays a role. However, Atwood is not unjust while claiming that her works are not science fiction because what she fictionalises is quite close to reality. Postmodernism embraces pluralities. Lastly, ecocriticism exposes how humanity has organized the world according to its own needs as if there were no living creatures apart from humanity. Therefore, *The Year of The Flood* is a work of science fiction, that is postmodern, and ecocriticism is not only a theme, but also a narrative techniques” (Author).

Available from: <http://journals.euser.org/index.php/ejms/article/view/1144>.

SCOTT, Alisha. “A Comparison of Dystopian Nightmares and Utopian Dreams: Two Paths in Science Fiction Literature That Both Lead to Humanity’s Loss of Empathy.” *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction* 1.3 (2017): 40-54.

“Science fiction has long dreamed of extravagant utopias and dreaded nightmarish dystopias.

Authors from the birth of the genre to more current times find the erosion of empathy to be the downfall of either extreme form of society. On the one hand, George Orwell's tyrannical climate of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and the punitive society found in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) may seem very different from the hedonistic faux-paradise of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and the fallen society of Margaret Atwood's utopia-turned-dystopia in *Oryx and Crake* (2004). However, whether a fictional world can go too far into utopian dreams through drug use, hyper-sexualization and the like, or whether it is all repressed into a dark authoritarian regime, members of each societal type undergo a loss of empathy which eventually becomes the downfall of civilization. It is notable as well that in both novels where science progresses rapidly without the check of ethics, such as H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), and in literature where androids or modified human beings become too advanced for mankind to keep in the confines of a lawful society, such as Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968), it is the lack of empathy that causes death, destruction, and/or social disconnection and psychopathy. Though the pleasurable aspects of utopian classics and the unpleasant facets of dystopian books appear at first to be polar opposites, they similarly portray collapsing societies that have lost their sense of empathy" (Author).

Available from: <https://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/article/view/329>.

SENTOV, Ana. "Motiv (samo)žrtvovanja u romanu Slepica Margaret Atwood = The (Self)Sacrifice Motif in Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin*." *Civitas (Novi Sad)* 6.2 (2016): 75-89. In Serbian.

"The paper deals with the issue of forming and defining one's identity as one of the crucial themes of Margaret Atwood's novels. In her critical study *Survival* (1972), Atwood identifies four 'victim positions' as stages which her (usually female) protagonists go through on the road to personal development and growth. *The Blind Assassin* (2000) is a chronicle of the simultaneous rise and fall of a family and a town, as well as of the tumultuous events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All three narrative levels of the novel contain a strong motif of a willing (self) sacrifice for an ideology or a concept. Members of the Chase family have established the pattern of sacrificing their personal wishes for the sake of the family prosperity. The female protagonists, Iris and Laura Chase, follow the same pattern of (self)sacrifice for what they think is right. However, their sacrifice proves to be in vain, turning them into victims of circumstances and social norms" (Author).

Available from: <http://scindeks.ceon.rs/article.aspx?artid=2217-49581602075S&lang=en>.

SMITH, Phillip. "Margaret Atwood's Tempests: Critiques of Shakespearean Essentialism in *Bodily Harm* and *Hag-Seed*." *Margaret Atwood Studies* 11 (2017): 29-40.

"In several of her works, Margaret Atwood expresses an interest in the ways in which the modern subject (be they reader, actor, audience member, or writer) makes use of Shakespeare. She is interested, specifically, in the process we undertake to shape our experiences to Shakespeare's works, and Shakespeare's works to our experiences. This is particularly evident in her novels *Hag-Seed* (2016) and *Bodily Harm* (1981), each of which seeks to challenge the myth of an essential or ahistorical Shakespeare. *Hag-Seed* describes a character who seeks to reinvent himself as Shakespeare's Prospero even at the cost of his own wellbeing, and in *Bodily Harm* we encounter a newly independent Caribbean Island, the visitors to and inhabitants of which have been indelibly shaped by British imperial culture and doomed to reproduce the political dynamics of *The Tempest*. In each case, Atwood shows that our relationship with Shakespeare is fraught—that sustaining the myth of Shakespeare as an author who transcends time and circumstances requires us to do violence to both ourselves and his works. (Author).

SNAITH, Helen. "Dystopia, Gerontology and the Writing of Margaret Atwood." *Feminist Review* 116.1 (July 2017): 118-132.

"Old age and visions of the future are inherently bound with one another, and the realms of dystopian fiction provide scope for a gerontological focus within contemporary literature. A theme that is now being revisited in speculative fiction, this paper aims to assess the role of the elderly within Margaret Atwood's dystopian tales, specifically looking at the role of gerontology in her collection of short stories *Stone Mattress: Nine Wicked Tales* (2014). I argue that Atwood utilises the dystopian narrative in order to address broader social issues that stem from immobility and declining virility. Focussing on Atwood's feminist politics and representations of the elderly woman in the dystopian narrative, this paper proposes that older women in Atwood's fiction seek to move beyond the asexual, immobile and matronly gerontological stereotype that is often portrayed in literature. Instead, the elderly, and in particular elder women, adapt to their environment, often becoming figures of their community. They are aware of sexual desires and look to move within and beyond societal constraints, utilising the realms of cyberspace in order to forge their own identity. The role of the elderly in a distinctly dystopian narrative allows for a new utopian strategy to be constructed" (Author).

Available from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41305-017-0068-5>.

SULLIVAN, Heather I. "The Dark Pastoral: Goethe and Atwood." *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* 20.1 (2016): 47-59.

"The Anthropocene challenges the humanities to find means of representing and analysing our fossil-fueled practices that have spread industrial particulates over the entire globe, changed the climate, and reshaped landscapes into a 'new nature.' In this essay, I propose the 'dark pastoral' as an analytical trope, examining two framing texts from the Anthropocene: Goethe's landmark 1797 pastoral German epic, *Hermann and Dorothea*, and Margaret Atwood's 2003 postapocalyptic novel *Oryx and Crake*, the first installment of her *MaddAddam* trilogy which ends with a surprisingly pastoral flourish. At the early phases of the Anthropocene (as it is defined by Paul Crutzen, at least), Goethe creates an epic pastoral whose materiality points darkly towards the impending modernity of capitalism. Atwood's, postapocalyptic versions of a damaged yet rejuvenating Earth directly dramatise the Anthropocene's destruction while ending with a 'new' pastoral that relies on an almost total obliteration of humanity: these are dark pastoral visions" (Author).

Available from: [https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/ml\\_faculty/62](https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/ml_faculty/62).

TATE, Andrew. *Apocalyptic Fiction*. London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

"Visions of post-apocalyptic worlds have proved to be irresistible for many 21<sup>st</sup>-century writers, from literary novelists to fantasy and young adult writers. Exploring a wide range of texts, from the works of Margaret Atwood, Cormac McCarthy and David Mitchell to young adult novels such as Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* series, this is the first critical introduction to contemporary apocalyptic fiction. Exploring the cultural and political contexts of these writings and their echoes in popular media, *Apocalyptic Fiction* also examines how contemporary apocalyptic texts looks back to earlier writings by the likes of Mary Shelley, H.G. Wells and J.G. Ballard. *Apocalyptic Fiction* includes an annotated guide to secondary readings, making this an essential guide for students of contemporary fiction at all levels" (Publisher). See especially Chapter 4, "In the Beginning, There Was Chaos': Atwood, Apocalypse, Art," pp. 61-81.

TIENGO, Adele. "Extreme Places as Sites of Ecological Exploration: Postmodern Wilderness in

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam*." *Textus* 29.1 (January-April 2016): 183-196.

"This article mainly focuses on Margaret Atwood's fictionalization of the Mackenzie Mountains in the "Bearlift" episode of *MaddAddam* (2013), the last novel in the *MaddAddam* trilogy. The Canadian mountain range between Yukon and the Northwest Territories provides a literary niche for the author to explore the Canadian North and its changing climatic conditions. Atwood also uses it as a symbolic field to undertake a postmodern exploration of the altered conditions of wild places as opposed to anthropic places. The literary imagination has often used extreme places on geographical maps as the setting for the human struggle against hostile nature that most often defeats the undaunted explorers. In recent years, technological progress has turned these places into the most tangible manifestation of anthropogenic ecological crisis. Climate change fiction (cli-fi), within the much broader and longer tradition of science fiction, has become a consistent branch of contemporary literature that deals with the threats posed by anthropogenic climate change and Atwood's trilogy certainly belongs to this current. The Bearlift episode provides an example of the complex implications of a changing environment within the broader theme of ecological discourses and in light of postmodernist theories" (Author).

TOLAN, Fiona. "Aging and Subjectivity in Margaret Atwood's Fiction." *Contemporary Women's Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 336-353.

Excerpt: Aging [for] Atwood, becomes a locus for reflection on overlapping inquiries into the nature of subjectivity, selfhood, memoir, and authorship, potentially providing a metafictional meditation on what it means to be a writer in the later stages of a long career writing about a long life. If old age is largely unimaginable to the not yet old, Atwood's fictions represent a self-reflexive and, I argue, essentially ethical attempt to inhabit a phenomenon most commonly seen from without" (Author).

TOUHY, Andy. *A-Z Great Modern Writers*. London: Cassell, 2017.

"Artist and graphic designer Andy Tuohy turns his hand to the world of literature, in this new instalment of the A-Z series. Rendered in his distinctive style, this new book features portraits of 52 key modern writers significant for their contribution to literature, with a whole host of names from across the world.... Each writer's entry will also have a summary of the essential things you need to know about them, why they are important in the field of literature, a list of their must-read books, and a surprising fact or two about them, as well as other images throughout such as of famous book covers and author photographs" (Publisher). See especially "Margaret Atwood," pp. 18-21.

TRIPATHY, Nirjharini. "Victim or Victor: Self Exploration of Woman in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*." *IJELLH (International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities)* 5.12 (December 2017): 1-7.

"Atwood ... is universally recognized as a prolific writer and a social activist. This paper analyzes Atwood's novel *Surfacing* and probes the issue of woman's self-exploration questioning the status of a woman in a male-oriented society. Woman is the victim of an unwritten system of behavior placed by patriarchal society. Despite being victimized the women of Atwood survive. They suffer but they conquer these manifold impediments and become victor at the end. *Surfacing* describes the ways ... a woman battles and achieves the means to inaugurate her individuality and own defined-definite voice. Atwood's women unravel their appearance not as victims eternally but rather as a strength that strives and survives. Atwood's women are ordinary women possessing the sentiment and sensation, instinct and inclination of all human beings. They live a normal life but have great strength that empowers them to transform their subjection and subservience into superiority and

supremacy. The unnamed woman protagonist in *Surfacing* encounters ultimate symmetry with nature and all her dissension and uncertainty concerning her own self are reconciled. She declines confinement in any disposition. Thus, in this metaphor for a journey, her identity surfaces out. She discovers her identity in the tranquility of the wilderness. Nature neither questions nor answers unlike human beings” (Author).

Available from: <http://www.ijellh.com/OJS/index.php/OJS/article/view/2661>.

TRIVELLINI, Samanta. “Myths of Violence and Female Storytelling in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Kate Atkinson’s *Human Croquet*.” *Annali di Ca’ Foscari: serie occidentale* 59 (September 2016): 341-359.

“Stories of violence and oppression from classical mythology and fairy tales are redeployed in two novels by Atwood (1985) and Atkinson (1997) as archetypal pre-texts that impact on plot and narrative process. Although they are very different in genre and theme, both novels present first-person female narrators who are trapped in a claustrophobic present and pose the question of the extent to which a story can be told from within the boundaries traced by myth, fairy tales and quasi-mythical literary texts. Clearly indebted to Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Handmaid’s Tale* depicts a dystopian world where women live segregated by a male regime. References to the tale of ‘Little Red Cap,’ classical myths and ceremonies are embedded in the text and reveal the story as a narrative that replicates the oppressive structure in which the female protagonist is imprisoned. On the other hand, Atkinson’s *Human Croquet* is a metafictional family saga where Ovidian imagery, fairy tales and Shakespearean texts shape throughout the hyperliterate narrator’s vision of the world, leaving her (and the reader) with a sense of inescapable and at times threatening déjà-vu. Besides the connections between myths of violence and plots, the essay will highlight the structuring principle of repetition, which in both works emerges as a form of epistemic violence that tragically questions or diminishes the narrative voice” (Author).

Available from: <http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/en/edizioni/riviste/annali-di-ca-foscari-serie-occidentale/2016/1/myths-of-violence-and-female-storytelling-in-marga>.

TUĞLU, Begüm. “From Culturazing [sic] Nature to Naturalizing Culture: The Differing Function of Animal Imagery in Defining Bodies from Homer’s *Odysseus* to Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad*.” *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research* 6.2 (January-April 2016): 15-20.

“Feminist authors have long been trying to alter the patriarchal structure of Western society through different techniques. One of these is the struggle to overcome centuries-long dominance of male authors who have created a masculine history, culture and literature. As recent works of women authors reveal, the strongest possibility of achieving an egalitarian society lies in rewriting the history of Western literature. Since the history of Western literature relies on dichotomies that are reminiscences of modernity, the solution to overcome the inequality between the two sexes seems to be to rewrite the primary sources that have influenced the cultural heritage of literature itself. The most dominant dichotomies that shape this literary heritage are represented through the bonds between the concepts of women/man and nature/culture. As one of the most influential epics that depict these dichotomies, Homer’s *Odysseus* [sic?] reveals how poetry strengthens the authority of the male voice. In order to define the ideal ‘man,’ Homer uses a wide scope of animal imagery while forming the identities of male characters. Margaret Atwood, on the other hand, is not contended [sic] with Homer’s poem in that it never narrates the story from the side of women. As a revisionist mythmaker, Atwood takes the famous story of Odysseus, yet this time presents it from the perspective of Penelope, simultaneously playing on the animal imagery. Within this frame, I intend to explore in this paper how the animal imagery in Homer’s most renowned *Odysseus* reinforces the

creation of masculine identities and how Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* defies this formation of identities with the aim of narrating the story from the unheard side, that of the women who are eminently present yet never heard" (Author).

Available from: <http://journals.euser.org/index.php/ejser/article/view/874>.

VADDE, Aarthi. "Amateur Creativity: Contemporary Literature and the Digital Publishing Scene." *New Literary History* 48.1 (Winter 2017): 27-51.

"This essay shows how digital publishing practices are changing the field of contemporary literature. It identifies an overlooked intersection between strategies of amateur creativity and professional literary production across print and digital mediums. Strategies of amateur creativity (a category coined by Lawrence Lessig) include self-publishing stories, novels, and poetry, participating in online writing communities, and using social media platforms to share work. Such online behavior fosters a global popular culture that is, I argue, reshaping traditional literary categories like authorship and canonicity as well as institutions like the publishing house. The essay brings scholarship on fandom, digital sharing economies, and media studies into conversation with literary studies to explain how internet cultures of amateurism alter definitional accounts of artistic works as both commodities and gifts. It further shows how changing conceptions of literary ownership and distribution inform a range of contemporary writers' experiments with the formal composition of their works, anonymous publishing, and promotion. Writers addressed include Margaret Atwood, Elena Ferrante, Wu Ming, Cory Doctorow, and Lauren Beukes" (Author). Includes discussion of Atwood's use of Wattpad.

Available from:

<https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/14231/Vadde%20AmCre%20Pub.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

WINSTEAD, Ashley. "Beyond Persuasion: Margaret Atwood's Speculative Politics." *Studies in the Novel* 49.2 (Summer 2017): 228-249.

"This essay argues for the similarities between Margaret Atwood's recent speculative fiction in *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth* (2008) and the 'speculative narratives' created by financial and political organizations—in particular, the scenario planning narratives written by major corporations, consulting firms, and government agencies. Using performativity theory to analyze corporate and government scenario plans in addition to Atwood's work, I argue that the authors of these narratives similarly imagine they can turn the hypothetical into the material through the commissive power of promising language. Situating Atwood's work in the context of modern forecasting and connecting it to long-standing questions about the novel's political efficacy, I argue that the fantasy of technology's and fiction's performative power over material reality is central to Atwood's politics" (Author).

WISKER, Gina. "Imagining Beyond Extinctathon: Indigenous Knowledge, Survival, Speculation—Margaret Atwood's and Ann Patchett's Eco-Gothic." *Contemporary Women's Writing* 11.3 (December 2017): 412-431.

Excerpt: In this essay, I link Atwood's work to that of Ann Patchett, specifically to her novel *State of Wonder*, which problematizes the involvement of nonindigenous with indigenous people and their tribal behaviors, beliefs, and the rich forest and jungle worlds where they live in balanced harmony. Atwood and Patchett bring gender and sustainability issues to the fore by their use of eco-Gothic, emphasizing the damage done to natural processes (including fertility) by exploitation and unnatural controls. Both authors highlight lessons to be learned

from indigenous values, behaviors, and wisdom, without underestimating the difficulties of translation, and the vulnerability of the peoples and their environments. Each shows the damage of their misuse or loss. This essay focuses in the main on the work of Atwood, particularly *Oryx and Crake*, with some reference to earlier work, including *The Handmaid's Tale*, and considers these alongside Patchett's *State of Wonder*. Their shared concerns with diversity, science, women's fertility, and survival comprise a kind of eco-Gothic. In Atwood's texts and Patchett's *State of Wonder*, the Gothic combines with an ecological, dystopian message, one influenced by the insights of indigenous knowledge, which both warns of the dangers of falling out of harmony with nature and offers positive behavioral ways forward.

WRIGHT, Kailin. "Dispublics: Popular Yet Political Spectatorship in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* and Erin Shields's *If We Were Birds*." *Theatre Journal* 69.2 (June 2017): 213-234.

"An onstage chorus of murdered women calls for action as they shout "And now we call / to you to you" in the final moments of Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad: The Play* (2007). Erin Shields's *If We Were Birds* (2008) similarly ends with a plea for revenge as "you" echoes violently throughout the theatre: "You you you you / you you you you / YOU YOU YOU YOU." These choruses of disenfranchised women address the audience and model strategies for how the offstage 'you' can strive for positive political change. Performed within one year of each other at mainstream theatres in Canada, Atwood's and Shields's plays offer feminist adaptations of Greek myths from the female characters' perspectives. These plays illuminate the central paradox of political adaptations: they inevitably reinscribe the very source material they seek to undermine. In this way, political adaptations like *The Penelopiad* and *If We Were Birds* simultaneously identify with and against source material, because they perform an extended retelling of a narrative while challenging its political significance. I argue that political adaptations perform what Michel Pêcheux and José Esteban Muñoz term disidentification by at once identifying with and against a dominant source narrative. Political adaptations address a specific 'you,' or audience member, who at once aligns with and against the canonical source narrative, thereby disidentifying with the sources' normative ideologies. In this way the spectators form a specific type of public—a dispublic—that can disidentify with and transform dominant narratives. A dispublic participates in normative culture, but challenges facets of its popular ideologies from within; the concept of a dispublic, as a result, applies to audiences beyond political adaptation and accounts for the increasingly political nature of popular performances today. The conclusions of *The Penelopiad* and *If We Were Birds* capture their ultimate political message: the plays confront the audience as a dispublic with potential to participate in real-world change. Using two feminist adaptations of Greek mythology and their audience demographics as case studies, this essay examines how mainstream theatre can engage a politically conscious audience, or dispublic, in order to transform the cultural imaginary" (Author).

YURTTAŞ, Hatice. "Reading *The Penelopiad* Through Irigaray: Rewriting Female Subjectivity." *Hacettepe Üniversitesi. Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi/Hacettepe University. Journal of Faculty of Letters* 34.1 (June 2017): 205-217. In English, with Turkish abstract.

"This article analyzes Margaret Atwood's 2005 novel *The Penelopiad* in the light of Luce Irigaray's argument for female subjectivity and re-interpretation of mythology as the site of the representation of patriarchal power turnover and suppression of matriarchal cultures. Giving subject positions to silent agents and using various genres, *The Penelopiad* brings together gender, genre and language in such a way that it results in a paradigm shift in conceptualizing subjectivity and sexuality in a similar vein to what Luce Irigaray calls for. Reconstructing the silent characters such as Penelope and her twelve maids whom Odysseus murders upon his return to Ithaca in *The Odyssey*, Atwood unfolds the traces of a previous socio-economic structure's existence and its suppression in the epic. Revealing history in myth and myth in history, she criticizes patriarchy for its exclusions and suppression of female traditions that

indicate a different construction of sexuality and subjectivity in prepatriarchal cultures. The novel destabilizes the foundations of the male subject, which occasions revisiting the controversial issue of female subjectivity that has produced an immense amount of literature since the 1990s with the rise of deconstructionist criticism. Atwood's text shows that women's claim to a subject position helps produce a different language and literature that allows for the exploration of suppression and representation" (Author).

Available from:

<http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/index.php/EFD/article/view/1131/>.

ZARRINJOEE, Bahman and Shirin KALANTARIAN. "Women's Oppressed and Disfigured Life in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 8.1 (February 2017): 66-71.

"The present study attempts to analyze Margaret Atwood's (1939-) *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) based on theories of feminist thinker, Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) and applies her theories presented in *The Second Sex* (1949) that leads to better understanding of sex and gender. Beauvoir's ideology focuses mainly on the cultural mechanisms of oppression which confine women under the title of Other to man's self. In her view woman cannot be a simple biological category, and she asserts that womanhood is imposed on woman by civilization. In her perspective, the fundamental social meaning of woman is Other. She believes that biology is the main source for woman's oppression within patriarchal society, and challenges the discourse through which women are defined based on their biology. She also believes that sexuality is another aspect of women's oppression and exploitation. In Beauvoir's view, prostitution and heterosexuality are exploitative of women. She rejects heteronormativity. This paper tries to show how Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale* discusses feminist issues such as loss of identity, subordination of woman in a male dominated society and women's exploitation in consumer society where woman's body is treated as an object, a tool and consumable item. Atwood focuses on problems such as gender inequality, and the pitfalls of the patriarchal system for women's oppression" (Author).

Available from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1127026>.

ŽIVKOVIĆ, Milan D. "Society in the English Literary Dystopia." *B. A. S.: British and American Studies* 23 (2017): 89-97.

"The paper deals with the nature of totalitarian societies in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Apart from the fundamental characteristics and values of these societies, as well as the particular views of both a male and a female writer on this subject, the paper analyzes the relationship between dystopian and real modern societies through various authors' observations" (Author).

Available from: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=593624> after registration.

## Theses

BARUA, Prarthana. "Literary Contributions of Ecofeminism: A Study of Margaret Atwood and Vandana Shiva." PhD diss. Gauhati University, 2016. 120 pp.

"Ecofeminism or ecological feminism is an amalgamation of feminism and ecology. Ecofeminism started in the 1970s as a political movement. Françoise d'Eaubonne used the term ecological feminism in 1974 in her book *Feminism or Death* and officially coined the term ecofeminism. Ecofeminists point out that the domination of women and the domination of nature are closely associated. Ecofeminists assert that patriarchy or androcentrism is the base

of the domination of both women and nature. The aim of ecofeminism is to liberate both women and nature from the clutches of patriarchy. Patriarchal domination over both women and nature is the outcome of the oppression of women and the destruction of nature. To challenge the exploitation of women and the destruction of nature, ecofeminists focussed on the abolition of patriarchal forms of domination from society. Hence, ecofeminism is a threat to patriarchal power and privileges. It focuses on holism, equality and interrelatedness of all life. It also insists on the preservation of the non-human natural world.

“The present study is the result of my questioning of the relevancy of ecology and feminism. It is a quest to provide a moderate analysis of the literary significance of the ecofeminism of Vandana Shiva and Margaret Atwood. The work also focuses on the dualized patriarchal structure of modern society and how its technological and scientific developments dominates and exploits women and nature. Hence ecofeminism epitomizes respect, love and compassion for all forms of life. Therefore, this intimate cooperation of ecology and feminism has touched many writers of different cultures. The goal of these ecocritics is to exhibit the rapport of nature and society in their works. Ecofeminism has heretofore proven that ecology is an intrinsic segment of most feminist activities. Thus, according to various ecofeminist theorists, feminism speaks loudly for women ... ecology speaks up for earth, and ecofeminism enunciates for both” (Author).

Available from: <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/handle/10603/176489>.

BREVIK, Marit Katrine. “The Mother, the Virgin, and the Witch—Nature and the Metaphysical Romance in Margaret Atwood’s Speculative Fiction.” MA thesis. NTNU—Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2017. 65 pp.

“This Master’s Dissertation aims to explore the inspirations and influences from Victorian Metaphysical Romance on Margaret Atwood, via her unfinished PhD. In this study of her work, the focus is specifically on her dystopian fiction with an aim to understand how Canadian wilderness. This work will also examine how previous generations of authors inform the relationship between the natural and the unnatural in Atwood’s fiction. Based on materials found in the Margaret Atwood Collection at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto as well as a selection of other sources, this dissertation will attempt to trace the ecocritical and conceptual ideologies evident in Margaret Atwood’s trilogy starting with *Oryx and Crake* and connect this back to the works of fiction she studied as part of her PhD research. The Master’s Dissertation will discuss what influenced and inspired Atwood to describe nature the way she does and how her view has evolved since she researched her PhD. To accomplish this, I have analysed a selection of her published work, articles and academic papers by other scholars as well as sought out unpublished material that supports my hypothesis” (Author).

Available from: <https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/handle/11250/2459244>.

DE VILLIERS, Stephanie. “Divinest Sense the Construction of Female Madness and the Negotiation of Female Agency in Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Margaret Atwood’s *Surfacing*.” MA thesis. University of Pretoria, 2017. 128 pp.

“The aim of this dissertation is to critically examine the representation of female madness in *The Bell Jar*, by Sylvia Plath; *Wide Sargasso Sea*, by Jean Rhys; and *Surfacing*, by Margaret Atwood, with a particular emphasis on the depiction of madness as a form of revolt against the oppression of women in patriarchal societies. I focus specifically on the textual construction of female insanity in three twentieth-century women’s texts and offer a reading of these depictions in relation to an influential contemporary example of Western psychological discourse, namely R.D. Laing’s *The Divided Self* (1960). Drawing on the work of Western

feminist scholars such as Elaine Showalter and Lillian Feder, I engage with the broader questions of the female malady and the social construction of madness in Western patriarchal contexts as a particularly ‘female’ dilemma. I pay attention not only to the various tropes, metaphors and images which are employed in the representation of madness, but also give attention to the explanations of madness that are offered in each text as well as the ways in which the various stories of madness are resolved. In the introduction, I offer an overview of the history of madness (and female madness in particular) and consider the importance of Laing and the antipsychiatry movement in challenging conventional definitions.

“In Chapter 1, I explore the depiction of madness in *The Bell Jar*, with the focus on the protagonist, Esther, whose madness, I argue, is represented as a conflict between female creativity and mid-twentieth century feminine ideals. In Chapter 2, I discuss *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a novel which gives a voice to the madwoman in the attic in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. I argue ... that the protagonist’s madness is not represented as hereditary but rather that a particular construction of madness—that of the stereotypical wild madwoman—is imposed upon her. In addition, I argue that her madness is presented as the result of being abandoned and cast as insane by her husband, whom she marries as part of an economic exchange. In Chapter 3, I explore the ways in which, in *Surfacing*, the unnamed narrator’s madness is attributed both to her abortion as well as to the realisation of her own complicity in the patriarchal oppression of women and nature. In all three novels, I suggest, female madness is represented sympathetically as a reaction to, and revolt against patriarchal oppression. In addition, I argue that each novel makes a contribution to an emancipatory feminist politics by suggesting several routes of transcendence or escape. In my concluding chapter, I draw on the previous discussion of the various ways in which madness is figured in the novels in order to show how, in contesting stereotypical views, the three authors must create new vocabularies and metaphors of madness, thus engaging with patriarchal language itself. In this way, they not only contest normative constructions of the female malady but also bend patriarchal language into new shapes” (Author).

Available from: <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/62672>.

DRAGO, Michael. “I Write, Therefore I Am: The Rise of Post-Postmodernism and the Author-Narrator.” MA thesis. State University of New York, 2017. 43 pp.

“Many contemporary novels which have garnered attention and praise from scholarly and general audiences alike have utilized a narrative device in which the text is presented as the creation of one or more of the novel’s primary characters. One might be inclined to assume that such a description describes any first-person narration, but there is a key difference in intent at the heart of the story being told; in a more traditional first-person narration, we are not always given a direct reason for why the story in question is being told or to whom it is being told. But the issue of intent is a key focus in the ‘author-narrator’ narrative device in a way that is not seen in any other type of narration; these characters, for one reason or another, are compelled to write out their stories, and there are any number of questions which we might be compelled to ask about the narrative as a result of this choice. What tangible reason do they have to be going through the effort of producing this text? Do they have a specific audience in mind? What do we learn about the fictional author through their efforts to shape the narrative? Can we be wholly convinced that they are presenting events as they genuinely occurred? And what is the end result of their efforts? A real-world author who utilizes this device doesn’t necessarily have to compose their novel with these questions in mind; it can occasionally be a matter-of-fact justification for presenting the story, and our understanding of the fictional author and his or her subsequent narrative may not be influenced all that much by the choice. But more often than not, the recent novels that utilized this device ranging from Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin* (2000) to Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* (2001), from Junot Diaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) to Ruth Ozeki’s *A Tale for the Time Being*

(2013), etc. have made its use an essential part of the story they are trying to tell and the themes that they are trying to touch upon” (Author).

Available from: <https://dspace.sunyconnect.suny.edu/handle/1951/69544>.

ETMAN, Colleen. “Feminist Shakespeares: Adapting Shakespeare for a Modern Audience in the Hogarth Shakespeare Project.” MA thesis. College of Charleston, South Carolina, 2017. 107 pp.

“The Hogarth Shakespeare Project presents a way to view Shakespeare’s plays through a different lens. These books allow for a feminist reading of Shakespeare, looking at some of Shakespeare’s ill-treated female characters to construct a new idea of female characterization. Three of the plays adapted, *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were adapted by female authors. By investigating how these plays are being adapted for a more contemporary audience, with modern conceptions of feminism and gender roles, we can gain insight as to how these concepts have changed since Shakespeare’s time. By looking at these modern adaptations, we can interrogate how modern audiences conceptualize and, potentially, idealize Shakespeare, as well as understanding the progression of treatment of women in contemporary culture since Shakespeare’s time. The novels addressed in this project are *The Gap of Time* by Jeannette Winterson, *Hag-Seed* by Margaret Atwood, and *Vinegar Girl* by Anne Tyler. The project concludes that, of the three, *Vinegar Girl* does the most effective job addressing the problematic aspects of its adapted play in a new way, distinguishing it from previous adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew*. This project also investigates the role that adaptation theory plays in addressing Shakespeare adaptations, particularly the Hogarth Shakespeare Project” (Author). See especially, Chapter 3, “Atwood’s *Tempest*,” pp. 43-68.

Available from: *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. Currently the text of the thesis is embargoed at the University itself. See: <http://repository.library.cofc.edu/handle/123456789/3493>.

EVANS, Benjamin Shane. “Beyond Transhumanism: The Dangers of Transhumanist Philosophies on Human and Nonhuman Beings.” MA thesis. Iowa State University, 2017. 77 pp.

“Each chapter that follows centers on literature showing the possible effects of Transhumanist philosophies if they are implemented. I focus on contemporary fiction that portrays Transhumanists—humans who believe in Transhumanism—as well as post-/transhumans characters. Limiting the scope of my thesis to contemporary literary works, I aim to explore the potential of new (specifically genetic) technologies and consider the power of speculative fiction as it impinges both who we are and who or what we might become. In Chapter 1, I analyze the ambiguities of language in the Transhuman Declaration (2009), a manifesto written by a group of Transhumanists called Humanity Plus (H+). In this chapter, I show how the language used invites radical, dangerous, and totalitarian ideologies to sprout in Transhumanism, and in turn examine Zoltan Istvan’s philosophical novel *The Transhumanist Wager* (2011), which shows a radical Transhumanist building a One World Order to ‘perfect’ the human species. The Transhuman Declaration is the only nonfiction text I analyze in this thesis, and I chose it because it was one of the first, and is certainly the most popular, statement from a collective of Transhumanist thinkers. It changed the movement from a purely academic one to a political one.

“In Chapter 2, I show Transhumanity’s effects on post-/transhuman beings created by the members of the movement, by analyzing Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and Paulo Bacigalupi’s *The Windup Girl* (2009) in order to show that Transhumanism may create marvels, but it will also create slaves. This chapter inspects the lives of Atwood’s genetically-manipulated Crakers and Bacigalupi’s Emiko, an engineered transhuman sex slave, and examines how post-/transhuman beings are deprived of agency in an anthropocentric world.

This chapter also focuses on the issue of the human as an ascendant being and how that view shapes the world we inhabit and will necessarily affect post-/transhuman beings physically and emotionally. In Chapter 3, I look at texts that grant Transhumanism's ultimate wish—immortality—and analyze how immortality, or the lack of death, affects human society through David Mitchell's *The Bone Clocks* (2014) and Jose Saramago's *Death with Interruptions* (2008). These novels argue that immortality is not the answer to humanity's deeply instantiated problems, and the absence of death will actually create more divisions in society, ultimately leading to violent conflict" (Author).

Available from: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/15300>.

GRIMBEEK, Marinette. "Margaret Atwood's Environmentalism: Apocalypse and Satire in the *MaddAddam* Trilogy." PhD diss. Karlstad University, 2017. 286 pp. In English.

"Margaret Atwood routinely eludes her readers, and the *MaddAddam* Trilogy is no exception. These three novels, *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013), are ostensibly written in the tradition of environmental apocalypse, yet they constantly undermine its conventions through satire. This study considers the trilogy as an environmental project, performed in the interplay between Atwood's literary stature, the ambiguous content of her work, and the irreverence with which she blurs distinctions between fact and fiction, art and commodity, and activism and aesthetics. Atwood's use of the *MaddAddam* Trilogy in her real-world environmental activism creates uncertainty about how seriously both her art and her activism should be taken. Her opinions on environmental matters are legitimised, but at the same time an urgent environmental 'message' is presented as entertainment. Atwood's message often appears circular: her art carries no message, but Margaret Atwood the writer does have an important message, which she gets to deliver precisely because of her art. Storytelling is a central theme in all three novels, and through both critiquing and relying on commercialism, the *MaddAddam* Trilogy demonstrates that there is no external position from which the imagination can perform environmentalist miracles. As such, Atwood's environmental project furthers a profoundly ecological understanding of the world" (Author).

Available from: <http://kau.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1089622&dswid=4004>.

HAUSER, Emily Susan Vlcek. "Since Sappho: Women in Classical Literature and Contemporary Women's Writing in English." PhD diss. Yale University, 2017. 328 pp.

"From the 1970s on, female authors have shown an increasing interest in recovering the stories of the women of classical antiquity. At the same time, classical scholars have turned their attention to the world of classical women, attempting to reconstruct their lives from a textual record from which women are often absent. This study reconsiders the currency of women in classical literature, and their subsequent reception in contemporary fiction, to shed new light on our understanding of the connection between women and fictional literature in Greek and Roman antiquity and the twenty-first century, and the deep, complex interrelationship between the two.

A re-construction of the relationship between women and mimetic fiction in classical texts from Homer to Virgil reveals that women in classical literature are intimately connected to narrative mechanisms of voice, plot, authorship and inspiration—but, most importantly of all, that they are agents of and conscious participants in their relationship to literature, connecting to their potential for creativity and inspiration even when they are most conscious of their objectification. At the same time, it is argued that contemporary female authors like Margaret Atwood and Ursula Le Guin rework the tales of the women of classical literature both to appropriate the cultural capital inherent in the notion of 'classical' literature and thus to

rewrite themselves back into the canon, and to meditate upon and explore the complexities of female authoriality and canonicity. Rather than positing a mono-directional reading of some kind of female tradition, therefore, this study is located at the intersection of tradition and reception, past and present, interpreting the discourse of female literariness in English as a continuum that is always in dialogue with itself and, specifically, with its classical past—thus suggesting a model for a paradigm shift towards a dialogical, mutually productive relationship between reception studies and traditional philology” (Author). See especially Chapter 2, “Plotting the *Odyssey*: Homer’s *Odyssey*, Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* and the Unravelling of Narrative,” pp. 102-157.

Available from *Proquest Dissertations & Theses*.

HIPÓLITO, Helena Patrícia Hetkowski. ““Once Upon a Time There Was a Girl...”: An Analysis of Bad Girls in Feminist Revisionary Fairytales.” MA thesis. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2017. 86 pp. In English.

“Women have for a long time been regarded as secondary characters in human history. They had to sacrifice their potential to fit in the patriarchal norms of good behavior to be socially accepted. The aim of this study is to analyze feminist revisionary fairy tales in search of portrayals of women who rebel against those norms, disobeying Patriarchal ideology, and offering alternative femininities. Because popular narratives such as myths and fairy tales take part in shaping one’s identity, it is important to look at them from a critical perspective; and revisionism highlights the importance of women’s re—telling of stories to re—think themselves and their positions, and re—define their identities. The works analyzed are: the short stories ‘The Bloody Chamber,’ ‘The Snow Child,’ ‘The Werewolf,’ ‘The Company of Wolves,’ and ‘Wolf—Alice,’ by Angela Carter; ‘Snow White,’ by the Merseyside Fairy Story Collective; ‘Bluebeard’s Egg,’ by Margaret Atwood; and the poem ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,’ by Anne Sexton” (Author).

Available from: <https://repositorio.ufsc.br/xmlui/handle/123456789/182075>.

JIA, Quan. “Envisioning Alternative Interiors: Space and Ecology in Margaret Atwood’s Short Stories and *Oryx and Crake*.” MP (Master of Philosophy) thesis. University of Hong Kong, 2012. 107 pp. In English.

“This thesis explores the ways Margaret Atwood represents, complicates, and seeks for alternative visions to the seemingly inescapable confinement in her four collections of short fiction published in different stages in her career and her 2003 dystopian novel *Oryx and Crake*. The recurrent formal pattern of the separation of the inside and the outside as well as the various ways offered to assuage the sense of constraint in the stories are read metaphorically as the author’s ways of dealing with confinement in general. The diversity of situations unfolded under the general condition of entrapment in the stories question the legitimacy of the crude division of duality, and the imaginative engagement with the predicament offers a variety of possibilities of negotiation within these frames. I also discuss Atwood’s disfiguring of a specific conceptual frame that traps the mind, the monolithic notion of ‘the human’ that naturalizes humans as against nature, in the particular literary situations in her short stories, such as how this notion becomes confining, how to countervail its negative influence, and whether we can discard it completely. The insistence on the importance of specificity and the power of imagination unsettles the mechanistic ways of thinking, hinders the absolute legitimation of the concept of ‘the human,’ and forces the reader to notice the particularity in different relationships humans have with animals and nature as well as resist the tendency of generalization and negation. The thesis further analyzes the author’s critical reflection on imagination, the essential faculty we rely on to counter the confining reality and make changes, as shown in *Oryx and Crake*. Showing the complex relationships between

imagination and reality, the author stresses their mutual influence and, more importantly, warns against the danger of crossing the boundary between the two. Further, building apparent connections between her dystopian society and the present world, the author reminds us to be cautious with our imaginative responses to the predicaments of the present society regarding science, capital, and humanity that she dramatized in her envisioned future” (Author).

Available (after registration) from: <http://hub.hku.hk/handle/10722/174545>.

JOVANOVIĆ, Evelina Saponjić. “The Cross-Cultural Roots of Contemporary Micronarratives: Journeys Across the Atlantic Rim = Las raíces multiculturales del microrrelato contemporáneo: Viajes a través del Atlántico.” PhD diss. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2017. 383 pp. In English.

“This ... dissertation examines the progressive surfacing of a new genre in the literary world: a micronarrative, and the growing tendency for an increased fragmentation of literary unity. I argue that short fiction is always the dichotomy of itself since it can always teleport anywhere/turn into anything owing to the stylistical resources that facilitate it becoming something else, as well as due to the interpretation of the reader. This is why, at the same time, I underline the role of a recipient as a key part, and stylistic resources such as double-entendre, metaphors, symbols, irony and sarcasm, that grease the wheels as far as creation of hints is concerned. The literary phenomenon of today is being displayed as an incessant game of chess in which the creator and the recipients move their pieces equivalently, contributing by equal shares. This type of narrative always incessantly creates itself, depending on who has been reading it, constantly generating new contextual meanings, and creating new forms.

“In order to demonstrate the incessant dismemberment of the totality of the literary form, six authors, three from Spanish-speaking and three from English-speaking countries have been analysed for traces of fragmentation in their works and seeds of microfiction. The Spanish-speaking writers are, as follows: Horacio Quiroga (Uruguay) and his *Los arrecifes del coral*, Julio Torri (Mexico) with aphoristic and humoristic brief approach in *Ensayos y Poemas de Fusilamientos* and *Prosas dispersas*, and Ramón Gómez de la Serna, father of la greguería. As for the English speaking authors, three female writers have been discussed, namely, Leonora Carrington (UK) and her surreal stories from *The Oval Lady*, specifically ‘The Debutante,’ Angela Carter (UK) with *The Bloody Chamber’s* ‘Snowchild’ and, ultimately, Margaret E. Atwood (Canada) with her short story prose collections and recently created Flash Fictions” (Author). See especially Section IX, “Margaret Atwood,” pp. 305-325.

Available from: <https://www.tdx.cat/handle/10803/522957>.

KAISANLAHTI, Sonja. ““The Lake Was Horrible, It Was Filled with Death, It Was Touching Me”: Subliimi Erämaagotiikka Margaret Atwoodin Romaanissa *Surfacing*.” MA thesis. University of Oulu, 2017. 86 pp. In Finnish.

“Tiivistelmä Pro-gradu tutkielmassani tarkastelen subliimin erämaagotiikan kerrontaa ja tematiikkaa Margaret Atwoodin (1939) romaanissa *Surfacing* (Yli Veden) (1972/1986). Tutkimukseni selvittää, millä tavoin kerronnassa kuvatut subliimin kauhun kokemukset ilmentävät kertojan sisäistä maailmaa ja millaisia merkityksiä erämaalle tässä kuvauksessa annetaan. Luennassani subliimi kauhu ilmenee erityisesti rajalla olon tematiikan kautta. Erämaan synnyttämät pelon ja kauhun tuntemukset liittyvät sekä luonnon ja kulttuurin välisen rajan, että ihmismielen rajojen tarkasteluihin. Tutkielmani teoreettisena pohjana toimivat etenkin Edmund Burken Immanuel Kantin ajatukset subliimin psykologisesta luonteesta sekä uudenlaiset käsitykset subliimista ihmismielen rajoja pohtivana tulkintojen tilana. Gotiikkaa tarkastelen teemoina ja kerronnallisina keinoina, ja sen teorioiden kautta

tutkin kauhun psykologisia ja yliluonnollisia piirteitä ja niiden yhteyttä subliimiin. Merkitykselliseksi nousee myös romaanin kerronnallinen ja temaattinen monimerkityksisyys, jota lähestyn narratologian teorioiden kautta. Tutkimuksessani on myös historiallinen näkökulma, jossa luen romaania osana kanadalaisen kirjallisuuden historiaa ja sen goottilaista perinnettä. Tässä tukeudun kanadalaisen kirjallisuuden tutkimukseen, jossa isossa osassa ovat Atwoodin omat huomiot kanadalaisen kirjallisuuden luontosuhteesta. Tutkielmassani osoitan, että Surfacingia voidaan tutkia osana subliimin ja gotiikan traditiota. Tutkimuksestani käy ilmi, että nämä kentät yhdistyvät romaanin kerronnassa ilman selkeää rajaa kertojan kokemuksellisessa yhteydessä luontoon. Tässä subliimi gotiikka merkitsee hämäräperäisyyden, pelon ja kauhun tuntemuksia, joissa vihjaillaan ihmiselle tuntemattomien voimin uhasta. Lisäksi osoitan, kuinka erämaahan kohdistuvasta subliimista kauhusta tulee kertojan psyykkisen tilan paljastaja. Tässä tulkinnassa erämaa näyttäytyy psyykkisenä muistojen tilana, jossa kertojan käsitykset itsestään ja omasta kulttuuristaan problematisoituvat. Romaanin kerronnan häilyminen toden ja epätoden sekä yliluonnollisen ja mielen tuotosten välillä herättää myös kysymyksen subliimin kokemuksen alkuperästä. Tutkimuksessani kertojan subliimin kauhun kokemuksille annetaan kaksi vaihtoehtoa. Joko niiden voidaan nähdä palautuvan takaisin kertojan mielen prosesseihin tai niiden alkuperä sijoitetaan johonkin luonnossa itsessään olevaan, yli-inhimilliseen todellisuuteen. Tässä osoitan, kuinka lukijan näkökulmasta romaanin yliluonnolliset tapahtumat voivat näyttäytyä kertojan hajoavan mielen kuvauksina, mutta kertojalle kokemuksissa on kyse todellisesta, spirituaalisesta yhteydestä luontoon. Kerronnan avoin loppu jättää kuitenkin pysyvän epävarmuuden tunnelman romaaniin, mikä ilmentää mielestäni hyvin subliimiin gotiikkaan kuuluvaa rajalla olon tematiikka. Kertoja joutuu hyväksymään ymmärryksensä rajallisuuden, jolloin subliimi luonto jää saavuttamattomaksi” (Author).

Available from: <http://jultika oulu.fi/Record/nbnfioulu-201706012311>.

RAYMOND, Maggie. “Postmodern Puzzles: Creating Versions of the Truth and Identity in Margaret Atwood’s *The Robber Bride*, *Alias Grace*, and *The Blind Assassin*.” MA thesis. University of Texas at Tyler, 2017. 64 pp.

“Although difficult to universally characterize Margaret Atwood as a feminist postmodern writer, three of Atwood’s novels (*The Robber Bride*, *Alias Grace*, and *The Blind Assassin*) use postmodern techniques to build a conversation with readers about how female identity is created by having readers co-create meaning, consider the influence of intertexts, and question discourses. By emphasizing the role of the reader and the construction of text through storytelling, the traditional roles of author and reader are questioned, and Atwood develops a conversation with readers over their respective roles in creating and interpreting text. In *The Robber Bride*, Tony, Charis, and Roz tell Zenia’s story through their respective memories, but the arbitrary nature of what they choose to remember and what they choose to share challenges the biased nature of who tells the story/history. Grace Marks, in *Alias Grace*, tells her own story alongside the historical documents and narratives about her and fictional excerpts, highlighting how what is considered fact may be based on an agenda or fictional structures. In *The Blind Assassin*, Iris Chase Griffen has the largest control of her story in comparison to the other storytellers under study by choosing the elements that corroborate her narrative agenda. However, in each novel, readers are never given a complete answer to the identities in question. Instead, Atwood develops a conversation with the reader through his or her interaction with these three novels that makes him or her consider the construction of identity and how female characters in particular are defined” (Author).

Available from: [https://scholarworks.utt Tyler.edu/english\\_grad/8](https://scholarworks.utt Tyler.edu/english_grad/8).

ROSCHMAN, Melodie. “Nonviolent Resistance Through Counter Narrative in Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Lai’s *Salt Fish Girl*.” MA thesis. McMaster University, 2016. 173 pp.

“This thesis examines how patriarchal dystopian societies attempt to control their citizenry through the homogenization of discourse and the employment of Foucauldian panopticons. In the context of these power structures, I argue that nonviolent storytelling and restorative memory are more effective in resisting oppression than violent, openly subversive forms of rebellion. In my discussion of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, I examine how Gilead’s manipulation of public discourse through religious hegemony and restrictions on literacy suppresses the efficacy of individually heroic acts by characters such as Ofglen and Moira. I assert that Offred’s playful deconstruction of language, defiant remembering of her past experiences, and insistence on bearing witness to Gilead’s atrocities without the promise of a listener allows her to successfully resist power and maintain a distinct self. In the analysis of *Salt Fish Girl* that follows, I study how the Big Six employ a series of cooperative hegemonies to promote neoliberal policies, dehumanize Othered bodies, and rob people in diaspora of cultural memory. Though protagonist Miranda fails in a conventional sense, I conclude that she succeeds due to her remixing of Western texts, hybridization of histories and values, and role in birthing a new, more hopeful future” (Author).

Available from: <https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/20795>.

SANTOS, Sara Catarina Melo dos. “(Un)Making the (Post)Human Biopolitics and the Corporatization of the Body in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*.” MA thesis. Universidade de Lisboa, 2016. 135 pp. In English.

“Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the first novel in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, depicts a post-apocalyptic landscape where humanity has gone all but extinct by the dissemination of a man-made virus, referred to in the narrative as the ‘flood.’ Following Snowman, the last human on Earth, as he attempts to survive in a biologically and ecologically hostile environment, the novel produces a fractured narrative that allows Atwood to critique current sociopolitical and economic structures, and traditional Western conceptions of subjectivity, while imagining a future without the human individual. This dissertation argues that Atwood’s narrative reproduces a network of corporately-mandated structures of biopolitical surveillance, discipline and control that integrate the subject within a combined setting of scientific and marketplace capitalism, which results in the commodification of the subject’s body. Corporate capitalist biopower perpetuates an anthropocentric, patriarchal tradition that positions the human, white, male subject at its center, in this way closing off subjectivity, political agency and, ultimately, the right to life, to nonhuman, non-white, non-male bodies, which are, as a result, reduced to the status of ‘disposable others’ (Braidotti 2013:28). This project further argues that Atwood provides us with alternative or liminal forms of subjectivity with the character of Oryx and the Craker-ruled post-apocalyptic imagining. These liminal subjects stand at the borders of corporate power, and can move between and across surveilled biopolitical boundaries, in this way disrupting seemingly well-defined, static binary formations. Finally, these alternative subjects open up a space for thinking about subjectivity as perhaps not entirely human, but instead authorizing the emergence of a posthuman or post-anthropocentric self” (Author).

Available from: [http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/29640/1/ulfl236832\\_tm.pdf](http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/29640/1/ulfl236832_tm.pdf).

SKELTON, Stella F. B. “The Afterlife of *Survival*: A Thematic Guide to Contemporary Canadian Short Fiction.” PhD diss. Sheffield Hallam University (United Kingdom), 2016. 218 pp.

“Margaret Atwood’s *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* was first published by House of Anansi Press in Toronto in 1972. In spite of the mixed reception, *Survival* became a key text in the study of Canadian literature. Although it is now taught as a historical curiosity, it is possible to trace the ideas in it, and their reconfigured functions, through contemporary Canadian short fiction. It is my contention that the ideas and themes which Atwood describes

have rooted themselves in the Canadian imaginary, and that they have taken on a truth value which was originally disputed. Thus it is relatively easy to trace the continuing life of, for example, 'Settlers and Explorers' (*Survival*, Chapter 5) in contemporary Canadian short fiction. This is a synchronic study, not merely tracing the appearances of Atwood's themes, but looking at how they are refigured in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, using stories published since 1972 to illustrate the argument.

"The potential impact of the research will be the re-evaluation of Atwood's forty-year old text, which, with Frye's *The Bush Garden* were the 'parents of CanLit...', and the exposure of the continuing arguments in literature in Canada about national identity, in the light of an increasingly multicultural population, and the growing neo-colonial awareness of the 'behemoth to the South'. It will also bring a neglected body of work to international attention, and most particularly to the UK. Although Atwood, Alice Munro, and to a lesser extent, Alistair MacLeod are known both inside Canada and abroad, Mark Anthony Jarman, Thomas Wharton, Hiromi Goto, Lisa Moore, Joseph Boyden, Lynn Coady, Patricia Young, Lauren B. Davis, Diane Schoemperlen, Matt Cohen, D. W. Wilson and Leon Rooke are known only to dedicated readers of the short form, and these are the writers I have chosen to focus on here" (Author).

Available from: <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/16548>.

SLAUGHTER, Nicholas Allen. "Instituting Violence: Spaces of Exception in Twentieth- and Twenty-First Century American Fiction." PhD diss. University of Maryland, College Park, 2017. 256 pp.

"Since the War on Terror's onset, American studies have popularized philosopher Giorgio Agamben's argument in the treatises *Homo Sacer* (1995) and *State of Exception* (2003) that modern governments have come to operate in a permanent state of emergency. Agamben terms this phenomenon a 'state of exception' in which law may be set aside at any time. Critics have productively applied this theory to post-9/11 U.S. government actions like surveillance programs, torture, and military interventions. Scholarship treats the Guantanamo detention center as the epitome of a localized, perpetual suspension of legal and ethical norms.

"Yet insufficient attention has been paid to other spaces of a similarly exceptional nature throughout American history. In 'Instituting Violence,' I examine twentieth- and twenty-first century fictional representations of institutionalized sites home to unregulated violence while also engaging in current critical conversations about political and economic violence. Preceding Agamben's political theory, much American literature depicts this exceptionalism across a wide array of sites. I explore four categories of spaces of exception represented across a range of genres, considering their interconnections and histories. In each text, a space that appears to operate as an exception to American legal and moral norms proves to reveal the normal but obscured relationships of power between the privileged and exploited. In addition to how these texts explore longer histories of such violent spaces, I consider how American writers self-reflexively examine the efficacy of their art for meaningfully engaging audiences in ethical discourses about history and justice" (Author). See especially Chapter 4, "Tastes Like Chicken: Disposable Bodies in Corporate Bioscience Spaces in *The Space Merchants* and *Oryx and Crake*," pp. 181-232.

Available from: <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/19854>.

SURRETT, Valerie Ann. "Biopolitical Cyborgs in Post-1980 North American Critical Dystopias." PhD diss. West Virginia University, 2017. 240 pp.

"Stories of babies born from transplanted uteruses, fetuses created from three biological parents, a booming global surrogacy market, and embryonic gene selection have all made

national headlines in the past two years. We live in an era of science fictional childbirths. Reproductive technologies that didn't exist a decade ago are now peddled to whomever can afford them, and science fiction has responded. Post-1980 speculative fiction confronts a potent convergence of various sociopolitical and reproductive trends, including the rise of neoliberal conservatism; the 'test tube baby' boom; polarized reproductive rights debates; and *Diamond v. Chakrabarty* (1980), the Supreme Court decision granting corporations the ability to patent genetically modified life forms.

"In North American dystopian fiction written after 1980, anxieties about technological reproduction manifest in metaphorical figures I term 'biopolitical cyborgs.' Evocative of Aldous Huxley's vision of a brave new world, biopolitical cyborgs are citizens whose hybrid features are designed to hinder political agency and personal autonomy. My project reads the biopolitical cyborg as a metaphor of the myriad ways life processes are governed in liberal democracies. I argue that these hybrid denizens of posthuman futures forecast the potential for powerful states and corporations to wield biomedical technologies in their favor, essentially creating citizens designed to comply with state agendas. However, the open and ambiguous endings characteristic of the critical-dystopian genre infuse these dystopian figures with utopian glimmers, opening possibilities for biopolitical cyborgs to learn to use their hybridity to work towards a posthuman ironic liberation.

"Each chapter of my dissertation explores one of four manifestations of this complex figure. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, a dire account of an authoritarian state gaining control of women's fertility, introduces the figure of Mother-soldiers. Mother-soldiers are female citizens who, locked in biopolitical wars, are transformed into soldiers and coerced to use their reproductive abilities in wars for the future of the nation. Soldier-cyborgs, such as the Community citizens in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, are genetically modified or artificially augmented humans. In essence, the state uses genetic modification to create perfect, subservient citizens. Bare-life-cyborgs, such as the New People of Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl*, are human/nonhuman hybrids whose transgenic DNA places them outside the protections of human rights laws. Bare-life-cyborgs forecast using the patenting of hybrid life forms to bypass constitutional protections, allowing corporations to legally create and sell a slave class within liberal democracies. Finally, I have termed future posthuman generations born to cyborgs as Lilith's-children. Exemplified by the human/alien hybrids in Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy, these novels feature a post-apocalyptic earth where only a modified human can survive. As posthumans, Lilith's-children have the potential to move beyond dualistic gender, race, and class hierarchies" (Author). See especially Chapter 2, "Mother-Soldiers in Margaret Atwood's 1985 *The Handmaid's Tale*," pp. 61-95.

Available from *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses*.

THAKUR, Abhinendrasingh Brajmohansingh. "A Critical Study of Women Empowerment in Margaret Atwood's Novels." PhD diss. Shri Jagdish Prasad Jhabarmal Tibrewala University, 2017. Each of the 6 chapters, plus references and bibliography are separately numbered .pdfs.

"The empowerment of women is essential for the betterment of the society. Margaret Atwood talks about the equality of men and women in the society. She is not in favor of domination of women in the society, but she is also against the domination of men. She argues that both men and women should be equal in society. Only then can we consider society as developed and educated. The society where women are suppressed and humiliated by male domination cannot be considered a good society. Atwood writes her novels in order to empower women" (Author).

Available from: <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/193974>.

VERBRUGGEN, Penny Ann. "An Investigation of Non-Cognitive Approaches to the Creative Writing Process." PhD diss. University of Toronto, 2017. 235 pp.

"Much research suggests that the writing process, as taught in public schools, focuses on essay writing and literacy skills development. Statistics published by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in Ontario suggest this focus on essay writing and literacy skills development is both warranted and effective; students consistently achieve or surpass provincial standards for literacy. However, much extant writing research reinforces this narrow view of writing, which is weighted in favour of outcomes-based skills development. Data collected from the Contextual Information (taken from the Student Questionnaire at the conclusion of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) reveal that students view writing as an assignment-driven, un-creative, and stressful activity.

"Research into the process of writers writing creatively within the public school system is limited. Therefore, this narrative inquiry explores the creative writing process of accomplished, professional Canadian creative writers, and includes my own creative process as a published writer of narrative fiction. This study contributes to composition process theory and pedagogy by considering the process of creative writing, using a holistic framework. Data are collected from the narratives of three accomplished Canadian writers: Margaret Atwood, Lawrence Hill, and Alice Munro, as well as from my own writing narrative. These writing narratives include (auto) biographies, interviews, podcasts, and workshop notes." (Author).

"See especially Chapter 4, "Margaret Atwood," pp. 51-82 which discusses Questions to Writers; Place; Routines of Time; Routines of Discipline; Preparations, including Pen and Paper, Desks, Typewriters, and Computers, Drink more water/Go to bed earlier; Ideas and Creating Empty Space; and Support and Passion. Each section and sub-section reflects specifics of Atwood's writing practice as she has discussed them in published interviews and essays devoted to the writing process.

Available from: <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/78631>.

VINCENT, Stéphanie. "Espaces de retour dynamiques spatiales, mémorielles et identitaires dans *Le premier jardin* d'Anne Hébert et *Surfacing* de Margaret Atwood." MA thesis. Université de Montréal, 2016. 93 pp. In French.

"This work examines the interrelationship between space, memory and identity in *Le premier jardin* by Anne Hébert and *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood. We seek to know how the concepts of space and place can provide a better understanding of the memory and identity dynamics involved in return narratives. Based on a common experience, that of returning to homeland, we will study how the characters' difficulties in recalling, situating, living or simply being are linked to their conflictual relationship to space. Even if they are tempted by oblivion, the return to the places of childhood imposes on the protagonists a sensuous memory. The return also shows how beings are linked to place, even shaped by it, and how they can however act on it. The desire to exist through a coherent identity is also one of dwelling and belonging to space. Finally, we will see how Alexis Nouss' concept of nonplace of makes it possible to rethink the space of return" (Author).

Available from: <https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/handle/1866/19087>.

## **Reviews of Atwood's Books**

*Angel Catbird to Castle Catula*. Milwaukie OR: Dark Horse Books, 2017.

*Library Journal* 142.2 (1 February 2017): 59. By Martha CORNOG. (234 w.). Excerpt: Atwood ... emerges from the dystopias of her stories to pen a ridiculously amusing superhero tale. Brilliant genetic engineer Strig Feleedus yearns to impress his new boss by working out that DNA supersplicer formula he wanted, but an accident with the compound turns Strig into a human/cat/owl hybrid. However, bossman Dr. Muroid is no pureblood either and is out to rule the world. (Hint: Muroidea is a taxonomic superfamily of rodents.) Fortunately, Strig finds allies and romance among other hybrid creatures while confronting lifestyle dilemmas: should he rescue that lost baby bird, or eat it? When Muroid destroys the half-cats' nightclub, Count Catula invites them to his castle, but alas, the mad half-rat cleverly intervenes. Throughout, sidebars intersperse chatty guidelines about cat and bird safety, while puns and literary allusions abound.... VERDICT This rollicking satire contains messages about finding your own tribe and will appeal to teens and adults of many social stripes. Note droll byplay about multispecies libidos.

*London Free Press* 4 February 2017. Section: Books: C13. By Dan BROWN. (269 w.). Excerpt: There is a lot going on in *To Castle Catula*, the second of the Margaret Atwood-written Angel Catbird collections. And it's all very funny. You may recall how the title character, genetic researcher Strig Feleedus, turned into a half human/half-cat/half owl hybrid. Yes, that's three halves—just one of the many signs Atwood is going for all-out comedy in this slender volume. The story is a tribute to the kind of pulpy sci-fi/adventure tales the celebrated novelist loved as a girl. The villain is a mad scientist who commands an army of rats, the natural enemy of the cat/human hybrids who serve as the good guys.

The Catula of the title is a cat/vampire hybrid who offers sanctuary to our heroes. Atwood's dialogue is sheer camp. "We must rally our forces!" Catula exclaims at one point. "My excellent plan will now unfold!" the villain—who has a habit of verbalizing his secrets—tells his rat soldiers. Atwood hinted in the previous collection that manimals have kinky sex lives. Here, Feleedus is torn between the cat and owl parts of his identity, as represented by two female love interests. "Maybe I love them both!" he thinks to himself. But this wouldn't be an Atwood story without a political subtext, which comes in the form of a drone designed to hunt down Angel Catbird and his friends. It is called, naturally, the Drat. I would call it a metaphor, except it's not a metaphor—it's an imaginary drone that evokes the real drones employed in the war on terror by the American military.

*Hag-Seed: The Tempest Retold*. Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2016. Also published in the US and UK by Hogarth.

*Mail on Sunday* 2 October 2016: 32. By Hephzibah ANDERSON. (100 w.). Excerpt: Atwood's ingenious novelisation of *The Tempest* focuses on Prospero, here recast as actor and impresario Felix. After his scheming colleague Tony ousts him as artistic director of a Canadian theatre festival, Felix, who's also grieving for his lost daughter, takes a job teaching literature to prisoners. While Tony clammers on up the greasy pole, Felix plots his revenge, which pivots on a jailhouse production of—you guessed it—Shakespeare's tragi-comedy. Atwood exerts a sorceress's sway over its themes of art and treachery, resulting in a slyly inventive, intricately constructed homage with plenty of its own points to make.

*Michigan Daily: University of Michigan-Ann Arbor* 11 January 2017. Section: Arts: 1. By Sophia KAUFMAN. (515 w.). Excerpt: *Hag-Seed* is Margaret Atwood's latest masterpiece. It is not only a modern retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* but revolves around that play as well. At times, it's hard to believe that same person who orchestrated the somber drumbeat of *The Handmaid's Tale*, or the hypnotizing pulse of *Surfacing*, has penned the frenetic third person narration in this novel, but Atwood once again smoothly reveals a deftness of craft and the power that the art of storytelling has, no matter the vehicle or venue.

*Sunday Times* (London) 30 July 2017. Section: Culture: 40. By Peter KEMP. (205 w.). Excerpt: *Hag-Seed* is at once a winningly inventive (and often very funny) refashioning of *The Tempest*, a brilliant scrutiny of it, a celebration of the potency of theatre and a lively revisiting of themes that have always stirred Atwood's imagination.... Structured in five acts with a prologue and an epilogue, the novel mirrors the play's form and themes: revenge and reconciliation, imprisonment and release, cathartic conjurings of illusion. The novel illuminates the breadth and depths of the whole play, and the troupe's workshops on it fizz with perception as Atwood transmits the pleasurable buzz of exploring a literary masterpiece.

*Hag-Seed: The Tempest Retold*. Narrated by R.H. Thompson. New York: Books on Tape, 2016. Audiobook. 7 audio discs (approximately 8 hr.).

*Library Journal* 142.1 (1 January 2017): 54. By Terry HONG. (280 w.). Excerpt: Atwood ... brilliantly transforms the Bard's tale of lost power and exile into a multimedia production of backstage intrigue and creative revenge.... Narrator R.H. Thomson is perfectly cast, with his round Canadian vowels, infectious energy, and diverse vocal adaptations; he's even convincing as a beatbox rapper. VERDICT: For the inventive cursing alone (17<sup>th</sup>-century vintage only), this *Tempest* should find favor with most literary audiences, including YA readers; AP English students might be especially grateful. (The play's final rendering might be a bit over the top, but the narrative as a whole is so inventive, heartfelt, and swiftly rendered as to expunge any doubts.) Highly recommended.

*The Handmaid's Tale*. London: Vintage, 2017.

*The Snapper* (Millersville University) 15 September 2017. Section: Arts & Culture: 1. By Allison REMIS. (467 w.). Excerpt: Though Atwood's explanations in the novel may sometimes be confusing, the strong messages and humor fill the gap. [*The*] *Handmaid's Tale* is a great read, and should be added to everyone's reading list. The complex plot makes the book almost impossible to put down and it can be connected to our government today. It's one of those books that makes you think a little more, which is not a bad thing. So, go to Target, Barnes & Noble, or Amazon, and take time to enjoy Margaret Atwood's novel.

*The Handmaid's Tale*. Narrated by Clare Danes. [Grand Haven, Michigan]: Brilliance Audio, 2017. Audiobook. Compact disc 9 audio discs (11 hr.).

*Tampa Bay Times* 23 April 2017. Section: Latitudes: 3. By Stephanie HAYES. (355 w.). Excerpt: I commute and listen to many audiobooks on Amazon's Audible app. Most books are pretty digestible, but the complexity of written dialogue can trip up a single reader, causing all nature of vocal sins. Too forceful. Too cutesy. Too many clumsy, clunky caricatures. A lack of synergy with the material you can't really define. And then, there's the rare audiobook that achieves total tonal pow. I felt those vibes for *The Handmaid's Tale* audiobook, first released in 2012, given the Audie Award for fiction in 2013. Claire Danes is our narrator, Offred, the Handmaid imprisoned as an incubator in a misogynistic dystopia. There's no mistaking Danes' throaty, movie star voice, but you forget you're listening to the star of *Homeland*. Danes is a steady guide through Gilead, and Margaret Atwood's words. She delivers with distance and stony isolation, a tempered tone potentially roiling with rage. Maybe it was all that time leaning against lockers with a detached gaze on *My So-Called Life*, but Danes really connects with the dead-inside Offred. The emotion comes not in over-the-top acting, but in nervous quivers: "And after that there was the dirt road, and the woods. And we jumped out of the car and began to run." "It's so poetic," Danes said of Atwood's writing via Audible's YouTube channel. "I think the words are really served by being spoken out loud. It was just some phrases of hers that were exquisite. I would have to stop and go, how did she do that?"

*Oryx and Crake*. New York: Nan A. Talese, 2003.

*Dakota Student: University of North Dakota* 11 April 2017 Section: Features: 1. By Nick SALLEN. (559 w.). Excerpt: If you're interested in dystopian societies, post-apocalypse, science fiction, biology, mystery and crime novels, or stories of adventure, then *Oryx and Crake* might be the next book you want to read. ... I liked *Oryx and Crake* a lot so I'd give it four out of five stars. It wasn't a very long read and the action kept me glued to my seat after trudging through the first few chapters. The two timelines can be difficult to grasp at first, but it is easy by the end. As for the conclusion, I wish Atwood would've tied off the loose ends instead of leaving it up to the reader to think about what Snowman does after the cliff-hanger ending.

*A Trio of Tolerable Tales*. Toronto; Berkeley: Groundwood Books, 2017. Illustrated by Dušan Petricic.

*CM Canadian Review of Materials* 23.34 (12 May 2017): Online. By Teresa IAIZZO. (652 w.). Excerpt: *A Trio of Tolerable Tales* is a delightful collection of three children's books written by Margaret Atwood and illustrated by Dušan Petricic: *Rude Ramsay and the Roaring Radishes*, *Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda*, and *Wandering Wenda and Widow Wallop's Wunderground Washery*. Each story makes use of alliterative verse in order to amplify the absurdity and hilarity of each main character's plight.... In the end, I really enjoyed Atwood's fresh take on the children's genre. She took the quintessential hero's story, but flipped it on its head, focussing instead on the absurd, and oftentimes hilarious side of the journey. Her words were then perfectly matched with Dušan Petricic's illustrations which expertly captured the many quirks and eccentricities of Atwood's characters. His drawings have a way of capturing the hilarity of each situation without being ridiculous. Thus, although they are in black and white, they are so detailed and whimsical that they are without a doubt the perfect pairing to Atwood's writing style. I would highly recommend this book to children and adults alike. You are definitely in for a treat. Available from: <https://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol23/no34/atriofterabletales.html>.

*Horn Book Guide* 28.2 (Fall 2017): 68. By ANON. Excerpt: Three tales shaped almost entirely by alliteration—each previously published as a picture book and here combined in a chapter-book format—feature abandoned or orphaned children driven to creative extremes by their wacky circumstances. In each story, clever initiative and friendship are keys to success in worlds ruled by wordplay, the wacky extent of which will delight listeners (and frustrate readers-aloud).

*Kirkus Reviews* 85.5 (16 May 2017): 13. By ANON. (245 w.). Excerpt: Ramping up the humor and a tall-tale exuberance are: missing parents; disasters; villainous relatives and just plain bad adults; friendly rats and wolves and those resourceful dogs; plus, icky food combinations ("wormy whitefish, withered whortleberries"). All are nicely matched by Petricic's lively, cartoony, black-and-white illustrations. Rillah, Bob, and Wenda are depicted in the illustrations with pale skin, while Ramsay has slightly darker skin and Dorinda could have one black parent, and in an illustration of Wilkinson, Wu, and Wanapitai, one waif has Asian features, and another has dark hair. The exaggerated humor and outlandish situations call to mind Roald Dahl, but the hilarity in this alliterative tour de force is all its own. Fine exercise for stretching linguistic muscles; great fun for reading aloud. Available from: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/margaret-atwood/a-trio-of-tolerable-tales>.

*Publisher's Weekly* 264.11 (13 March 2017): Online. By ANON. (238 w.). Excerpt: Absurdist alliteration abounds in these three short stories (previously published individually as picture books) that are as imaginative as they are unusual. The title character in *Rude Ramsay and the Roaring Radishes* wants to escape his revolting relatives. In *Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda*, Bob is raised by dogs after his forgetful mother abandons him beside a beauty parlor. And in

*Wandering Wenda*, orphaned Wenda subsists on “wedges of wiener in the wastebin” until she’s kidnapped by the evil Widow Wallop. Despite dire circumstances, all three heroes manage to outwit their captors and otherwise improve their conditions with a little help from friends, a bit of courage, and some wildly preposterous events. Atwood’s young protagonists are beguiling, their foes outlandish and oafish, and their animal sidekicks endearing and kind. Petricic’s black-and-white sketches add extra touches of whimsy to each outing. Readers encountering these delightfully peculiar stories for the first time will be impressed by just how far Atwood runs with the alliteration, and despite what the title suggests, these tongue-twisting tales are far better than tolerable—they’re truly tickling. Ages 7-10.

*Resource Links* 22.4 (April 2017): 8. By Lara CHAUVIN. Excerpt: With the bombastic trio of stories along comes Dušan Petricic’s style of illustration, a perfect pairing to Atwood’s *Trio of Tolerable Tales*. The spectacularly, splendid, strange but sensational illustrations are superbly drawn side by side, seamlessly integrated with Atwood’s trio of alliterated short stories! We see agitation, action, ataraxia, dynamism and displacement, contentment and comfort, enjoyment and elation in all the characters that Petricic has poised perfectly in ink and watercolour, cross hatching with feathery swift soft strokes and swooping lines. In essence, Atwood’s brilliance with the English language is emanating, and as a respected author the alliteration concept can be very enticing especially introducing mid-readers, and even older kids, to many new words, as well as to how the language can be manipulated to create masterful imagery and rhyme. However, as entertaining and extravagant as it is, at times the alliteration can get a little bit excessive and exhausting, and perhaps a swifter plot would have enriched it even more! *A Trio of Tolerable Tales* is an alliterative adventure, an action packed appealing alternative to an attentive audience; not to be avoided!

## Reviews of Adaptations of Atwood’s Works

“Alias Grace.” 2017. Canadian-American television miniseries directed by Mary Harron and starring Sarah Gadon. It is based on the 1996 novel of the same name by Margaret Atwood and adapted by Sarah Polley. The series consists of six episodes. It premiered on CBC on 25 September 2017 and appeared on Netflix on 3 November 2017.

*Atlantic Online* 11 November 2017. Online. By Sophie GILBERT. (1265 w.). Excerpt: “Alias Grace” is discomfiting, compelling, deeply insightful television. It looks not to an alternate future, like “The Handmaid’s Tale” does, but to the past. And there, it finds sharp parallels with the current moment. “A girl of 15 or 16 is accounted a woman,” Grace explains to a teenage boy who’s courting her, in a moment that resonates uncomfortably with recent news. “A boy of the same age is still a boy.” She’s come to know all the various ways the world sees her. The thrill of this series is that she’s given the means to take control of the narrative. Available from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/11/alias-grace-is-true-crime-through-the-female-gaze/545525>.

*The Australian* 3 November 2017. Section: Television: 32. By Justin BURKE. (308 w.). Excerpt: If the exposition at the start seems a bit burdensome, pay attention; it all counts in the end. And Atwood paid perhaps the ultimate compliment to the results. “It gave me horrible nightmares; it’s very powerful,” she told Canada’s CBC News.

*CNN* 26 October 2017. Section: ShowBiz: Online. By Brian LOWRY, (394 w.). Excerpt: Sarah Gadon’s mesmerizing performance defines and elevates “Alias Grace,” a six-episode Netflix miniseries based on Margaret Atwood’s historical novel. Slow at first, the understated project gains momentum behind its central mystery, as well as Gadon’s star-making turn as the 19<sup>th</sup>-century heroine, which suggests her name should be much better known once people get through bingeing it.... Having bounced around for years as a possible feature, “Alias Grace”

proves better suited to this more expansive and leisurely adaptation, written and directed by actress Sarah Polley and Mary Harron, respectively, and impeccably adorned in the mud-spattered trappings of the times. (Gadon, a Canadian, previously appeared in the Hulu miniseries “11.22.63.”) Zachary Levi and director David Cronenberg are among those featured in the cast, but this is Gadon’s show from start to finish, as Grace details her experiences and indignities—inflicted through Victorian-era sexism and classism—with a kind of hypnotic, out-of-body calm, stoking suspicion as to what secrets she’s harboring. Also available from: [https://www.wral.com/-alias-grace-brings-hypnotic-margaret-atwood-novel-to-netflix/17085574/?comment\\_order=forward](https://www.wral.com/-alias-grace-brings-hypnotic-margaret-atwood-novel-to-netflix/17085574/?comment_order=forward).

*Daily Mirror* 19 November 2017. Section: Features: 31. By Sylvia POWNALL. (412 w.). Excerpt: It’s dark, disturbing and addictive. All six one-hour episodes of “Alias Grace” are available to stream on Netflix.

*The Dominion Post* (Wellington, New Zealand) 7 November 2017. Section: Features: 2. By James CROOT. (560 w.). Excerpt: Based on the critically-acclaimed Canadian author’s 1996 novel, “Alias Grace” ... is a six-part period drama inspired by the true story of Grace Marks, an Irish immigrant who was imprisoned in 1843 Canada for the murder of her employer Thomas Kinnear. Adapted by Sarah Polley (“Away with [sic] Her,” “Take This Waltz”) and directed by Mary Harron (“American Psycho,” “The Notorious Bettie Page”), it unites sumptuous production values, a terrific, eclectic cast (that includes veteran Canadian director David Cronenberg and Atwood herself) and a tantalising narrative to create binge-worthy viewing. The attention to detail is top-notch (it feels like a cross between the original “Anne of Green Gables” series and the critically acclaimed BBC dramas of the 1990s), while each episode begins with a key, narratively appropriate quote from a poet of the time—Emily Dickinson in episode one, Henry Longfellow in episode two.

*The Evening Standard* (London) 30 October 2017. Section: News: 24. By Ellen E. JONES. (118 w.). Excerpt: If any show ... can equal the impact of summer’s big TV hit, “The Handmaid’s Tale,” then this is surely it. “Alias Grace” is adapted from another Margaret Atwood novel, directed by feminist film icon Mary Harron and adapted for the screen by indie queen Sarah Polley. It’s based on the true story of Grace Marks (Sarah Gadon), an Irish-Canadian maid who was convicted of murder in 1843. But could such a woman really be responsible for such a crime? Or was she just another victim of the true (male) perpetrator? The one to watch: Gadon has a face that can switch from innocence to eerie knowing in an instant.

*Globe and Mail* 25 September 2017. Section: Life & Arts: L2. By John DOYLE. (896 w.). Excerpt: “Alias Grace” ... is tightly wound, stark and knowing about its central female protagonist. It is a very literary and at times elliptical adaptation, one that soars when it reaches into the elusive soul of Grace Marks (Sarah Gadon) and at times the six-part series hits you like a headache, it is so charged and sententious. It is sometimes gloriously exciting as Grace is revealed in oh-so-many twisted ways and, simultaneously, it suffers from the great curse of Canadian TV drama—it becomes visually inert when imaginative vigour and freshness of expression are called for. Also available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/alias-grace-an-ambitious-almost-brilliant-margaret-atwood-adaptation/article36353535>.

*The Guardian* 2 November 2017. Section: Television & Radio. Online. By Julia RAESIDE. (622 w.). Excerpt: Why you’ll love it: Those craving another story of female oppression from Atwood’s estimable pen will do well to watch this six-part period drama. Writer and producer Sarah Polley has wanted to adapt *Alias Grace* since she was 17 and has clearly poured herself into the project. Atwood herself also acts as consulting producer.... Polley’s dialogue often hits home when it comes to expressing Grace’s well-hidden fury at her lot. “You want to open up

my body and peer inside,” she says in voiceover, while fixing the doctor with her pale steel gaze. The idea of cutting open and invading a body surfaces often in the book and here, too. But the primness of the period setting often fights with the raw emotion underneath, the immediacy lost in the monotonous formality of speech. As so many of the words are Atwood’s, it’s hard to put this down to anything other than a mismatch with director Mary Harron. She fits the bill on paper but sometimes fails to extract the real guts of Grace’s harrowing tale. I can’t smell the blood and vomit, only the scented air of the floral gardens Grace dreams of one day inhabiting. Visually, it is missing the grit and soot of Victorian poverty, leaning towards the polite pastel of the conventional period mini series. ... A heady brew, despite its flaws. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/nov/02/alias-grace-review-margaret-atwoods-historical-tale-of-female-oppression-simmers-with-rage>.

*The Guardian* 3 November 2017. Section: Television & Radio. Online. By Zoe WILLIAMS. (1082 w.). Excerpt: “Alias Grace” arrives on the screen, via Netflix, at a time when fans are pining so ardently for more material from the author of *The Handmaid’s Tale* that they would probably watch a dramatisation of Atwood’s lecture on robotic pens (she invented one, an achievement so crowded out by her writing that we’ll park it under “curiosities”). The show is visually opulent—some critics, including our own, have noted that it’s not quite grimy enough for Victorian poverty—and moves like a panther, with performances so elegant and instinctive that you almost don’t notice how fast it’s going. It isn’t, however, Handmaid-lite, a coda for the chilling near-future world which will surely define dystopian TV for the decade.... TV’s new love of Atwood has its downsides, too, thanks to the built-in spoilers: you almost want to go back in time and unread them, so you can unspoil it for yourself. But anyone with a passing knowledge of Canadian criminology will know what happens to Grace Marks: it is transfixing nevertheless to watch it unfold. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2017/nov/03/alias-grace-an-astonishingly-timely-portrait-of-the-brutality-of-powerlessness>.

*The Guardian* 4 November 2017. Section: Television & Radio. Online. By Lucy MANGAN. (385 w.). Excerpt: This second Atwood adaptation of the year will inevitably be compared to the first, “The Handmaid’s Tale,” and will likely be found to lack its predecessor’s narrative drive. Perhaps it will be just that bit too “cerebral” to gather as much buzz. But it is quietly just as masterly—an astonishing feat of translation to the screen by writer Sarah Polley (who wrote to Atwood asking for the movie rights when she first read the book at 17) and director Mary Harron, and as powerful and subtle a performance from Sarah Gadon as Grace as you could wish. Blessed be this Atwoodian fruit too. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/nov/04/alias-grace-review-margaret-atwood-netflix>.

*The Heights* (Boston College) 5 November 2017. Section: Scene: 1. By Isabella DOW. (837 w.). Excerpt: From the author of *The Handmaid’s Tale* comes another harrowing story of the impact of a corrupt patriarchy on the wellbeing of women. Adapted from Margaret Atwood’s novel of the same name, the Netflix miniseries “Alias Grace” looks at the plight of women in Victorian era Canada and beyond, and presents their stunning lack of economic, social, and political freedom for the nightmare it surely was. Featuring standout performances and a rich portrayal of the visual and thematic aesthetics of nineteenth-century life, “Alias Grace” brings the true story upon which it’s based into compelling entertainment.

*Houstonian* (Sam Houston State University) 28 November 2017. Section: Culture: P1. By Lindsey JONES. (794 w.). Excerpt: Netflix’s latest period piece hacks to bits expectations of a tiresome period piece, locking its audience in an intriguing six hours of solitary confinement. “Alias Grace” leaves old and new fans of Margaret Atwood’s classic with an addictive, binge-worthy tale of psychological contemplation, screwing minds and expectations with a masterful elegance not replicated or respected by supposed mind-bending programs today. The

mastermind of “The Handmaid’s Tale” and writer-producer Sarah Polley and director Mary Harron together create a slice of unmatched ambiguity drenched in such psychological seduction that viewers will, without a doubt, willfully binge their mental states away for the show’s skillful direction of doubt and quotable conversations made by compelling characters—Sarah Gadon’s dazzling performance inarguably is one of best embodiments of mystery.

*The Independent* 13 December 2017. Online. By Roberta GARRETT. (1007 w.). Excerpt: Following the recent success of the television adaptation of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, a second Margaret Atwood novel, *Alias Grace*, has recently aired—this time courtesy of Netflix. It sets a new benchmark in female-led and orientated period drama. Unusually for costume dramas on television, “Alias Grace” presents an unvarnished picture of systematic male abuse of female servants that echoes the collective voice of the #metoo movement. Available from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/margaret-atwood-s-alias-grace-a-period-drama-for-the-metoo-movement-a8094706.html>.

*IndieWire* 4 November 2017. Online. By [Liz Shannon MILLER]. (897 w.). Excerpt: Brace yourself: You’re going to want to binge “Alias Grace.” The six-episode limited series—streaming now on Netflix following its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and subsequent broadcasting in Canada on the CBC—is downright hypnotic, rapturous, and engrossing. Watching evokes the sense of sinking into a great novel, which seems only fitting, given that it’s based on the 1996 book by Margaret Atwood, one of our greatest living novelists. But everything in the execution is owed to the detail-rich writing of Sarah Polley and direction of Mary Harron, who take this real-life tale of murder and give it rich depths, digging into the harm done to a human soul by a lifetime of oppression. Available from: <http://www.indiewire.com/2017/11/alias-grace-review-netflix-margaret-atwood-1201894191>.

*Irish Independent* 3 November 2017. Section: News: 39. By Ian O’DOHERTY. (82 w.). Excerpt: Netflix secured the rights to her 1996 novel *Alias Grace* and the expectations are high. It stars Sarah Gadon as Grace, who worked as a domestic servant in Ontario in the 1840s before being convicted of a double murder in a case that shocked Canada at the time. Told largely through flashbacks and interviews with a doctor following her arrest for killing her boss and his housekeeper, this is undeniably promising, but lacks the immediate, visceral, dystopian horror of “The Handmaid’s Tale....”

*Los Angeles Times* 2 November 2017. Section: Calendar: 1. By Lorraine ALLI. (652 w.). Excerpt: The bar is high for Netflix miniseries “Alias Grace,” adapted from a 1996 Atwood novel of historical fiction. It’s set in bleak Colonial-era Canada, centuries before the dystopian future suffered by the handmaids. The Canadian/American production, out Friday, stands on its own as a gripping if not as deeply disturbing miniseries. But it does complement “The Handmaid’s Tale”—and today’s headlines—as a sort of precursor to the ongoing story of women’s exploitation at the hands of more powerful men.... The miniseries ... packs considerable drama, emotion and misery into six episodes. It’s so heavy throughout the first installment, you might wish for at least one of the characters to open a parlor window and let in some air, but as the story progresses it becomes too engrossing to turn away.

*The National* 31 October 2017. Online. By Greg KENNEDY. (865 w.). Excerpt: The miniseries nicely ticks off a few boxes of what today’s viewers are most interested in: true crime, women’s rights and the immigrant experience.... Available from: <http://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/television/margaret-atwood-s-alias-grace-is-yet-another-must-see-netflix-show-1.671662>.

*New Statesman* 2 November 2017. Online. By Rachel COOKE. (234 w.). Excerpt: While I find

the new Netflix adaptation of Margaret Atwood's novel *Alias Grace* dreary and a bit embarrassing, when they saw it at the Toronto International Film Festival earlier this year, they swooned like ladies' maids who had spent too long pegging out the laundry in the midday sun. Let me put you right, my dears. The dreariness comes from the manner of its telling. Sarah Polley's adaptation is faithful to the book, which means that the story is told largely in flashback: easy to do in a novel; harder to pull off on screen. As for the embarrassment, it lies all about, like old snow. This is the cleanest, most shiny and wholesome 19<sup>th</sup> century you've ever seen: even the vomit-strewn hold of the ship on which the young Grace Marks sails to Canada from Ireland looks vaguely picturesque. Sarah Gadon puts in a fine performance as Marks, the former servant and murderess (or is she?) who, when we meet her, has been in prison for 15 years. But Edward Holcroft, who plays the head doctor to whom she is telling her life story (her supporters hope that his analysis will help secure her release), comes off like your average waxwork. Judging by the jaunty strings on its soundtrack, "Alias Grace" hopes to be puckish—and gently feminist, albeit in a rather trite and anachronistic way. But its beating heart is, alas, irredeemably soppy, all figgy pudding and fainting fits. Available from: <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/tv-radio/2017/11/living-dream-would-be-bizarre-experience-even-if-hillary-clinton-had-won>.

*New York Times* 14 March 2017. Online. By Margaret LYONS. (171 w.). Excerpt: "Alias Grace" is mesmerizing, and at just six episodes, it's the correct length for the amount of story it's trying to tell. Sarah Gadon stars as Grace Marks, the real woman who inspired the novel by Margaret Atwood from which this series is adapted. Marks is an Irish immigrant convicted of double murder in Canada in 1843, but the show is set in 1859, as Grace recounts her troubled life to a psychiatrist sent to help exonerate her. The show is told mostly in flashback, and Grace's eloquent, sometimes haunting monologues weave in and out of the action. For a show about a homicide, "Alias Grace" is not fixated on physical violence. Instead, it's more concerned with the day-in, day-out psychological violence against women, and in particular against poor women, who are denied recourse and autonomy and are forced to lie—sometimes to themselves. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/watching/blizzard-snow-day-streaming-netflix.html>.

*New York Times* 3 November 2017. Section: Arts/Cultural Desk: 1. By James PONIEWOZIK. (858 w.). Excerpt: "Alias Grace" is a story about storytelling—one character compares Grace with Scheherazade—which makes Ms. Gadon essential to its success. She is mesmerizing. She plays Grace convincingly as a timid child and a toughened inmate, and she brings both of them to Grace's wary testimony. The novel by Ms. Atwood (who has a bit part as "Disapproving Woman") is a challenge to adapt visually. It's as internal and retrospective as "Handmaid's" is propulsive, though both protagonists are slyly defiant. The screenwriter, Sarah Polley... turns it into a sinuous, layered script that is constantly aware of what is being said, to whom and why. Mary Harron ("I Shot Andy Warhol") directs the series dynamically. In an early sequence, Grace meditates on the curious phrase "celebrated murderess" over quick cuts of the crime—a body tumbling to the floor, a strip of cloth tightening around a throat. For all that, "Alias Grace" isn't overly brutal. It's an exquisitely woven fabric with blood staining the corners. Also available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/02/arts/television/alias-grace-review-netflix-margaret-atwood.html>.

*The Observer* (London) 5 November 2017. Section: Television & Radio. Online. By Euan FERGUSON. (1249 w.). Excerpt: Another month, another Margaret Atwood tale making it to the small screen and, if there's any justice, getting us all talking, all enthralled, once again. Atwood has hardly been unacknowledged in the book world—Kazuo Ishiguro recently said she, not he, should have taken this year's Nobel for literature—but it is surely splendid to see her work so richly and newly imagined. Her novel *Alias Grace* was written 21 years ago now, but could have been written yesterday or, in fact, tomorrow. A fictionalised tale of a real-life

slaying in 1840s Toronto might not seem at first glance to resonate with our own times, but there are huge themes explored here—suspicion of immigrants, abortion, even democracy itself, in the shape of class-war rebellion—that could not be more relevant. Atwood is a true visionary, as was shown in this year’s Emmy-magnet adaptation of her 1986 novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* but, crucially, if *Handmaid* showed what could happen to women in the future, “*Alias Grace*,” dramatized in six parts, shows what did happen to them in the past. Which might make it sound all rather solemnly worthy-preachy, for which my apologies. It’s not: it is utterly, splendidly watchable, and as much fun as anything about a jailed killer has any right to be. Also available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/nov/05/the-week-in-tv-alias-grace-blue-planet-ii-trust-me-im-a-doctor-bounty-hunters-man-down>.

*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* 3 November 2017. Section: Arts & Entertainment: C-1. By Rob OWEN. (232 w.). Excerpt: “*Alias Grace*” is more psychological drama than psychological thriller. It’s quieter and contemplative (and occasionally a bit dull) than it is propulsive. But viewers drawn to quiet, thoughtful character stories and a largely unknown story from women’s history may find “*Alias Grace*” engaging enough.

*Slate Magazine* 16 November 2017. Online. By Hillary KELLY. (1714 w.). Excerpt: The disturbingly resonant “*Handmaid’s Tale*” may have made the bigger splash, as Margaret Atwood adaptations go, but in “*Alias Grace*”, there’s an even more galvanizing heroine for our time. Of course, the system is rigged against us, Grace says, so don’t try to bring it down. Use it to our own ends. Also available from: <http://www.vulture.com/2017/11/alias-grace-in-praise-of-conniving-women.html>.

*South Burnett Times and Rural Weekly* (Queensland) 10 November 2017: 62. By Katherine MORRIS. (245 w.). Excerpt: It’s a wonderfully framed story that you can’t look away from. Although the misogyny in “*Alias Grace*” is expected of the time, it still shows how we’ve come in leaps and bounds in women’s rights in many ways, but are severely lacking in others. And in many ways the reminder of how little has changed in 200 years is deeply unsettling and rather depressing.

*Tampa Bay Times* 1 November 2017. Section: Playlist: 2. By Chelsea TATHAM. (487 w.). Excerpt: “*Alias Grace*” is a remarkably complex portrait of a young servant girl who eventually becomes a “celebrated murderess.” The series quickly becomes more of an attempt to understand Grace beyond her titles of maid and murderess. Sure, the crime she supposedly committed is a fascinating one, as is the thought of never truly knowing if she did it. But Grace reels you into her story through its ambiguity and breadcrumb teases. The series takes a shot at understanding her, but by the end you’ll likely be left with more questions than answers.

*The Telegraph* (U.K.) 4 November 2017. Section: Reviews: 11. By Ben LAWRENCE. (434 w.). Excerpt: Netflix’s “*Alias Grace*” is every bit the equal of “*The Handmaid’s Tale*....” Director Sarah Polley has managed to grasp Atwood’s challenging prose and create something that feels both obsessively faithful and cinematically ambitious. This production ... is literate film-making of the highest order. Polley has captured the novel’s essential strangeness and also applied rigour to the world of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century drudge. When you watch Sarah Gadon’s Grace knead dough, you see the perspiration on her brow, the rawness of her over-worked hands. Indeed, much rests on Gadon’s performance and she delivers to extraordinary effect—she’s watchful, enigmatic and smart at the same time, conveying oceans of meaning in the smallest of glances. “This is for you,” says Dr. Simon Jordan (Edward Holcroft), offering Grace an apple. “I am not a dog,” she replies without so much as a flicker of emotion. Equally good is Rebecca Liddiard as Grace’s friend Mary, flitting effortlessly between chumminess and revolutionary fervour (it’s set just after the 1837 Canadian Rebellions). As Dr. Jordan, Holcroft

has a harder job, having to spend much of the time reacting (or more accurately trying not to react) to Grace's ambiguous narrative, but he rises to the challenge of conveying Jordan's struggle between professional detachment and emotional fascination. Also available from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/on-demand/o/netflixs-alias-grace-every-bit-equal-handmaids-tale-review>.

*Time* 9 November 2017: Online. By Daniel D'ADDARIO. Excerpt: On Netflix's new miniseries "Alias Grace," we meet Grace (Sarah Gadon) humbled. It's been years since her 1843 conviction for murder; she's escaped death but not suspicion. A psychiatrist (Edward Holcroft) interrogates the former servant about her memories of the deaths of her former employer and his mistress, and Grace picks at her quilting as she answers. But as we see just how ably Grace can shift between ways of being—from naïf to knowing and back—whether to believe her story becomes a less compelling mystery than whether she herself believes it. Is the humility just a pose? (It's no surprise that the story is so novelistic; it's an adaptation of a book by Margaret Atwood.) Gadon sells every flickering transformation. She's aided by Mary Harron's able direction and a juicy script by Sarah Polley. Together, these women have made an Atwood adaptation that's even more rewarding than Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale." That show draws upon history to imagine how women's rights might regress in a dystopia. "Alias Grace" makes the case more explicitly, showing how dark the past really was by depicting a woman her era could barely contain. Available from: <http://time.com/5016740/alias-grace-margaret-atwood-adaptation>.

*Townsville Bulletin* (Australia) 9 November 2017. Section: Lifestyle: 16. By Chris SILVINI. (238 w.). Excerpt: While much of the six episodes can be a little talky, there's still a lot to enjoy. The interrogations can be quite thrilling as the layers are slowly peeled back; and the performances alone are enough to keep your eyes glued to the screen.

*Variety* 15 September 2017. Online. By Sonia SARAIYA. (1340 w.). Excerpt: It's hard to not compare Netflix's "Alias Grace" with that other streaming platform's adaptation of a Margaret Atwood novel, Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale." The Hulu series, starring Elisabeth Moss, debuted just this past April; "Alias Grace" premieres at the Toronto Film Festival Sept. 14 and then on Netflix Nov. 5. For fans of Margaret Atwood, being suddenly blessed with two weighty productions within six months of each other is a rare gift. Though there are obvious similarities between the two—it is almost funny, that both stories focus on one particular wide-eyed white woman wearing a demure cap—they are quite different interpretations of Atwood's prose. "The Handmaid's Tale," a drama, softens the brutality of the plot with exceptional, masterful visuals. "Alias Grace," a miniseries, is much less cinematically adventurous, but much more narratively complex. This is in part due to the vast difference between the two Atwood novels. "The Handmaid's Tale" presents a dystopia; "Alias Grace" is a piece of postmodern historical fiction—one that incorporates fragments of actual historical record with first-person narration and epistolary structure. The patchwork narrative is brilliantly deliberate, because throughout the book, Grace is piecing together quilts. It makes for a story that is a lot more challenging to bring to life than its staid setting in Victorian Canada might appear. For a book that is essentially un-adaptable, though, "Alias Grace" presents a remarkably faithful and dazzlingly complex portrait of servant girl Grace Marks (Sarah Gadon), a real-life "celebrated murderess" who was found guilty and imprisoned, at 16, for the killing of her master and mistress. The details of what exactly happened cannot easily be summarized, because questions remain to this day—about her intent, her involvement, and the story's primary concern, her character. "Alias Grace" is an attempt to understand her, but the viewer will likely find, by the end, that that attempt raises more questions than it answers.

*Washington Post* 3 November 2017. Section: Style: C03. By Hank STUEVER. (745 w.). Excerpt: "Alias Grace" is another recent adaptation of a Margaret Atwood novel (along with

Hulu's magnificent "The Handmaid's Tale"), and, as it happens, the series is produced and written by actress, director and Oscar-nominated screenwriter Sarah Polley.... It's hard not to think about that while noticing the measured, methodical way that "Alias Grace" takes its story beyond the "did she or didn't she?" ambiguity of the double murders and instead becomes a thoughtful and provocative exploration of gender as a stacked deck. Although it initially looks and moves like a PBS period drama, "Alias Grace" dares to suggest that Grace is the product of a culture that uses and disregards women—especially poor, working-class women. Expecting the series to behave strictly like a murder mystery probably isn't the best way to watch it.

*The Handmaid's Tale* [Film]. Los Angeles: Shout! Factory, 2017. DVD video 1 videodisc (approximately 109 min.) sound, color; 4 3/4 in.

*San Bernardino Sun* (California) 16 April 2017. Section: C: 38. By Rob LOWMAN. (199 w.). Excerpt: With Hulu about to launch a new series based on Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, a restored version of the 1990 movie version is getting released. It starred the late Natasha Richardson as a woman named Kate who loses her husband and daughter at the beginning of the story. Set in the future after an ecological disaster, Kate is then relegated to being a Handmaiden in Gilead, the renamed United States, which has become a male-controlled police state. All females wear color-coded dresses to symbolize their roles, and Handmaidens (in red) are valued most because they are the few fertile women left.

German director's Volker Schlöndorff's visually arresting adaptation has a number of admirable qualities—a tense screenplay by Harold Pinter and an unnerving score by Ryuichi Sakamoto. It also boasts a distinguished cast, including Robert Duvall and Faye Dunaway. But in order to bring Atwood's dark story to the screen, some compromises were made, least of which is the main character's name being changed to Kate from Offred [sic]. The main problem is the altered ending, which undercuts the story. The upcoming Hulu series will take a different approach, using the novel as a jumping-off point.

"The Handmaid's Tale: Season One." Los Angeles: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2017. All 10 episodes were released on Hulu on Wednesday, 26 April 2017. DVD video 3 videodiscs (approximately 525 minutes).

*The Age* (Melbourne, Australia) 29 June 2017. Section: Green Guide: 7. By Debi ENKER. (987 w.). Excerpt: The first season, on which Atwood worked as a consulting producer, features departures and developments from the novel. Some characters' trajectories are altered or expanded, back-stories are fleshed out and cliff hangers adeptly inserted. In a key change, Serena is younger, not afflicted by arthritis and with a hint of Claire Underwood evident in her cool, blonde, ramrod-straight wife. "I believe that they were initially going to go for an older woman, but they changed their minds, which is thrilling for me," says Strahovski. "It adds an amazing chemistry between Offred and Serena because you have these two women who are of the same age pitted against each other. One has power and one does not and I think that the idea of fertility (as an issue between them) is very fresh. It adds a lot of meat: there's jealousy and hopefulness and anger, all kinds of juicy things that we can play with together...." [The result is] a compelling tale in tune with its times as it examines the liberties sacrificed in periods ruled by fear and rocked by political upheaval, the fate of a poisoned planet, and a woman's struggle for survival.

*The Age* (Melbourne, Australia) 6 July 2017. Section: Green Guide: 10. By Melinda HOUSTON. (557 w.). Excerpt: The "present" is meticulously and disturbingly realised, with its creepy juxtaposition of olde worlde costumes and customs with imminently recognisable contemporary artefacts (like the grocery scanners at the local mini-mart). Upping the freak-out factor are the flashbacks to the "past" which is essentially identical to our present, a world in

which June went to college, got a job, watched TV shows on her iPad, and shrugged off everyday chauvinism as unimportant. Until it wasn't. What's most interesting, though—and thought-provoking—is the nuanced way this brave new world has been imagined. It's not just a story about women being oppressed by blokes. It's certainly not a story about the warm glow of sisterhood. Atwood was always much more interested in the way rigid hierarchies and totalitarian rule damage everyone, including those at the top. And in the way power corrupts, even when you're part of the underclass. As countless critics and scholars have discussed over the years, *The Handmaid's Tale* is inarguably a feminist tract. But it's also a sophisticated psychological and sociological study that reaches way beyond the gender wars. So while the broad strokes here are certainly very broad, the magic is in the detail. Moss is perfectly cast: sweet-faced, not given to outward display, but silently, stubbornly rebellious. The characterisation across the board is terrific. Not many folk here are likeable, but all are thoroughly human and three-dimensional. And while it all might sound oppressively nightmarish, both Atwood's original story and showrunner Bruce Miller's intelligent adaptation dust the whole thing with a lively sense of absurdity and (in one scene, literally) gallows humour—keeping us hypnotised and often dismayed but also, always, entertained.

*America* 216.11 (15 May 2017): 46-49. By Eloise BLONDIAU. Excerpt: A historical overemphasis on Mary's assumption, virginity and Immaculate Conception, to the eclipse of her other qualities, has led to impoverished popular images of her that, intended or not, too often reinforce patriarchal social structures. These incomplete images have also been used to create a rigid view of women, including Mary herself.... [This] narrowed perception of Mary does exist, however, and that image is conducive to neither faith nor feminism. If anyone doubted the damage a shallow, sanitized Marian ideal of womanhood could inflict--on women, on faith and on the church—Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" shows us. Also available from: <https://www.americamagazine.org/arts-culture/2017/04/28/reflecting-frightening-lessons-handmaids-tale>.

*Asia News Network* 7 May 2017. Online. By Zacharias SZUMER. (592 w.). Excerpt: Hulu's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* made its debut last week and it largely lives up to the hype. In this updated neo-puritan nightmare, an infertility plague caused by a series of ecological catastrophes has swept the US. In its wake, a Christian fundamentalist state, the Republic of Gilead, has seized power and the means of reproduction. ... Some of the characters have been changed for the series. Ofglen is now a lesbian who was previously married to a woman and Offred's "Commander" has been chillingly re-imagined as a dapper misogynist-bro who looks like he has come straight from a hipster-gentleman's barbershop. But perhaps the major change in the series is the inclusion of people of color, who in the book had all been deported to a "Children of Ham" gulag or killed. The series also has a much more rapid pace, with some scenes that Atwood left for later chapters moved to the first few episodes. The show's creators have also changed the language of the book a little, making some conversations and Offred's interior monologue sassier and more modern than they are in the original novel ("carpet muncher," mentions of Uber and Tinder). But the language largely remains faithful to the book's stilted mix of 17<sup>th</sup> century religious platitudes ("praise be", "under His eye") and the Gilead regime's version of Orwellian Newspeak ("gender traitor" instead of "gay"). Also available from: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2017/05/04/east-germany-meets-salem-in-hulus-the-handmaids-tale.html>.

*The Atlantic Online*. 25 April 2017. By Sophie GILBERT. (3137 w.). Excerpt: The 1990 movie of *The Handmaid's Tale* was received by (mostly male) critics who saw it as hysterical, criminally unerotic, and a symptom of the author's misandry. The Hulu adaptation, thus far, has been met with rapturous praise. Atwood's book was indeed prescient, but not because it predicted what a future American society might look like. Rather, it anticipated how much future readers and audiences might still, decades later, be able to learn from it. Available from:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/04/the-visceral-woman-centric-horror-of-the-handmaids-tale/523683>.

*The Australian* 6 July 2017. Section: Television: 15. By Jason BURKE. (323 w.). Excerpt: This dark and brilliant series is destined to be one of the best shows of the year. Don't miss it.

*Calgary Herald* 26 April 2017. Section: You: C4. By David BARBER. (732 w.). Excerpt: Like other great dystopian stories, "The Handmaid's Tale" works best partly because it's not so far from the truth of our own world. The mirror it holds up may distort, but still reflects the problems we may see (or ignore) around us.

*Canberra Times* (Australia) 1 July 2017. Section: Television: 22. By Michael IDATO. (522 w.). Excerpt: The series is properly stunning. In particular, its use of sound and light is breathtaking, as is its use of colour. You'd think all three were the everyday tools of television but here they are all wielded like deadly weapons.

*Capital Times* (Madison, Wisconsin) 19 April 2017. Section: Cap Times: 32. By Bob THOMAS. (606 w.). Excerpt: Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale" is one of the best new shows of 2017. And I'm not sure how much longer I can stand it.... Moss' performance is the glue that holds the series together and she is fantastic. To all outward appearances, Offred must be subservient and meek. But we also hear her internal monologue, the smart, angry, surprisingly funny voice of her true self that she must keep locked away to survive. Occasionally that rebellious self seeps out, in a secret smile or a clenched fist, and it feels like a triumph. But "The Handmaid's Tale" never lets us forget how dangerous a world this is for Offred and other women, how easily their lives can be ground down and thrown away.... It's a brilliant show, but it can wear you down with its suffocating hopelessness. I'll keep watching, nurtured by that small flame still in Offred's mind, hoping against hope that it can spread into a wildfire.

*Centralian Advocate* (Australia) 11 July 2017. Section: Lifestyle: 145. By Wenlei MA. (903 w.). Excerpt: Australians can finally watch the buzzy series the rest of the world has been obsessing over. So now you can understand what your mate in London, Los Angeles or Vancouver has been banging on about. Yes, it is that good. "The Handmaid's Tale" isn't just an "important" and prestigious series, it's also can't-tear-away TV. But you probably shouldn't binge the whole season in one sitting, unless you want to end up hating the world.... This adaptation is one of the best things you'll see on screen this year thanks to first-rate writing, outstanding performances and gorgeous cinematography.... What "The Handmaid's Tale" portrays is the kind of thing that is still perpetuated in theocratic Saudi Arabia, a trading and diplomatic partner of Australia and an ally to the US, or in parts of the Middle East controlled by Islamic State and the Taliban. While that's all serious and definite takeaways from "The Handmaid's Tale," don't let the social lessons overshadow what is an excellent piece of television. It's stunningly crafted with its bright and beautiful aesthetic only underscoring the darkness at play. Every frame is visual art and the attention to detail is laudable. There is appalling sexual and general violence in "The Handmaid's Tale," done in the name of some god, and the series doesn't sugar-coat anything. It is shocking. It is horrifying. And it's unmissable TV.

CNN.com 20 April 2017. Online. By Brian LOWRY. (416 w.). Excerpt: A generation after the book was published and became a movie, *The Handmaid's Tale* has been turned into a jolting TV series, representing a huge step up in class for Hulu. Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel has already been politicized but stands on its own as a best-yet project that enables the streaming service to rub elbows with the pay-tv elite.... Beyond Moss' terrific performance, the cast is topnotch, with Yvonne Strahovski ("Chuck") as the severe mistress of Offred's new home, "The Gilmore Girls' Alexis Bledel as her forced companion ("We go everywhere in twos") and Joseph Fiennes as the Commander, a privileged master of the universe who embodies the

privileged, male-dominated ruling oligarchy. Filled with striking imagery and a nagging sense of dread, the series also exhibits a disarming darkly comic streak, as Offred's looks and asides underscore the absurdity of her situation. Hulu lacks the distribution of several other premium platforms, but the positive reviews and chatter surrounding "The Handmaid's Tale" already qualify as what feels like a breakthrough for the service. While the timing might be a happy (or depending on one's political affiliations, unhappy) coincidence, this "Tale" of women forced to live "under his eye" is just the kind of fare destined to put Hulu on a lot more people's radar. Available from: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/25/entertainment/the-handmaids-tale-review/index.html>.

*Daily Mirror* (Ireland) 28 May 2017. Section: Features: 37. By Sylvia POWNALL. (448 w.). Excerpt: Politics aside, it's a damn good watch and probably the most thought-provoking TV drama you'll see this year.

*Deadline* 20 April 2017. Online. By Dominic PATTEN. (610 w.). Excerpt: If ever a television series could border on being too relevant, Hulu's gripping, chilling and brutal adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* ... would be the one—which is why ... it is not to be missed. From its opening scenes of an attempted escape to Canada from a punishingly patriarchal America reeling from a supposed massive terrorist attack and a new religious regime in power, the Elisabeth Moss-led small-screen version of Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel is not just felicitous but a certain Emmy contender. Available from: <http://deadline.com/2017/04/the-handmaids-tale-review-elisabeth-moss-margaret-atwood-hulu-video-1202072550>.

*Edmonton Journal* (Alberta) 28 April 2017. Section: Movies: C11. By ANON. (91 w.). Excerpt: "The Handmaid's Tale" is getting rave reviews ahead of Sunday's Canadian premiere on Bravo, including from author Margaret Atwood. "I'm very impressed with what they've been doing. Like, really impressed," said the novelist, who wrote the 1985 Governor General's Award-winning dystopian story that inspired the 10-part TV series. "The cast is wonderful and particularly of interest is that a lot of them are cast counter-type, like it's not the kind of role they usually play," Atwood said.

*The Foghorn* (University of San Francisco) 5 May 2017. Section: Scene: 1. By Zachary COLAO. (637 w.). Excerpt: Overall, "The Handmaid's Tale" provides an interesting, and sometimes eerie, glimpse into the current political scene in the United States as it mirrors life before and after the dramatic presidential election of 2016. The same passivity Offred displays feels similar to the ignorance of privileged Americans before the election, and like the theocratic takeover in "The Handmaid's Tale," the election served as a catalyst for those Americans to wake up and realize that passivity is no longer an option.

*Globe and Mail* 29 April 2017. Section: FILM: R1. By John DOYLE. (950 w.). Excerpt: There are cranks everywhere. One of the few sniffy, snippety reviews of "The Handmaid's Tale," which began streaming on Hulu in the United States recently, appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. The reviewer seemed to take issue with the 10-part series departing, in scope, from Margaret Atwood's original, dystopian novel. The hell with that. "The Handmaid's Tale" ... is not an ultra-faithful adaptation and is, in fact, the better for that. It is specifically adapted for television (by Bruce Miller) as we know it now—cable-length storytelling drama with psychological insight and sharp sociological perspective. The novel is expanded in scope, embellished and intensified to give the story the sort of depth and impact that the best of TV drama delivers. The core of the novel proved fertile ground for nuanced long-form storytelling teased out over hours and hours. Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/john-doyle-the-handmaids-tale-is-gorgeously-bleak-and-enormously-entertaining/article34825446>.

*Globe and Mail* 28 April 2017. Section: Entertainment: Online. By Marsha LEDERMAN. (1046 w.). Excerpt: “The Handmaid’s Tale” is brutally excellent; my binge-watch this week was so unsettling that when I dashed out of the house to collect my eight-year-old from a play date, I stopped for a moment under the cherry blossoms, marvelling at my freedom. Available from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/the-handmaids-tale-is-this-how-it-starts/article34844427>.

*The Guardian* 25 May 2017. Section: Television & Radio: 1. By Sian CAIN. (821 w.). Excerpt: While precedent says readers are not wrong to be sceptical of adaptations, it would be a disservice to write off the TV take on Atwood’s book: both are masterpieces, in their own ways. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/may/25/the-handmaids-tale-on-tv-too-disturbing-even-for-margaret-atwood>.

*The Guardian* 29 May 2017. Section: Television & Radio: 1 By Sam WOLLASTON. (709 w.). Excerpt: Moss, who has already been one of the best things about two great shows, “Mad Men” and “Top of the Lake,” is again utterly captivating. A brilliant performance—quiet, not giving anything away, because she can’t, and yet also saying so much, via inner voice but also with her face and her eyes. “The Handmaid’s Tale” looks extraordinary—stylised, choreographed almost, menacing. It sounds fabulous, too. An ominous, low note descends a semitone, lower still, dragging you down with it, into danger. Dogs bark in the distance. Some people are singing Onward Christian Soldiers. Even the flashbacks, so rarely totally successful, work here. Because they are back to pre-Gilead (possibly round about now?), it feels like a brief respite, being allowed up for air for a minute, before being pushed back down again with a boot on your head. And they act like warnings—to Offred, maybe to us, too—against normalisation. It wasn’t always like this, it’s not ordinary now: don’t let it become ordinary. It is a brilliant adaptation—some changes, but loyal in what it says and what it asks. Atwood clearly approves: not only was she a consulting producer, but she’s in it, a Red Centre cameo as a slapping Aunt. And it’s brilliant television; I doubt there will be anything better this year. Resonant now, yes, but it will go on being so, ringing in your ears, and your head.

*Idaho Argonaut* (University of Idaho) 21 June 2017. Section: Opinion: 1. By Hailey STEWART. (424 w.). Excerpt: “The Handmaid’s Tale” is often upsetting, but is nonetheless important to watch. It portrays the dangers of not fighting for one’s rights and how every loss, every restriction of one’s freedoms can quickly add up to gradually form a state of oppression.

*In These Times* 41.5 (May 2017): 38. By Jessie STITES. (873 w.). Excerpt: [Atwood] says she wrote the book as an antiprediction: “If this future can be described in detail, maybe it won’t happen.” The draw of that “maybe” will lead many to tune in to an eerily well-timed television adaptation coming to Hulu in late April. Like the book, the 10-part series is chilling, riveting, designed to sear itself into our brains. Tight shots place us claustrophobically in the world of the “handmaid,” June, who has been thrust into reproductive slavery, forced to bear a child for one of the coup’s commanders. As June, *Mad Men*’s Elisabeth Moss uses eloquent microexpressions to convey the fatigued adrenaline of captivity. Even rape is simultaneously terrifying and boring, as she stares at the ceiling and, in an internal monologue, riffs on the color blue.

*The Independent* 29 May 2017. Section: News: 37. By Jeff ROBSON. (578 w.). Excerpt: Atwood’s vision is a bleak one but it’s been superbly realised in a 10-part series by the US streaming network Hulu. Channel 4 has landed the UK rights and I think [it’s] got the “appointment TV” slot recently vacated by “Line of Duty” sewn up.

*Irish Independent* 20 May 2017. Section: News: 39. By Ian O’DOHERTY. (436 w.). Excerpt:

It's horrifying and brilliant but enough with the lazy Trump references, please—if you want a real life parallel, this owes far more to Isil in the Middle East than anything in the Mid West.

*Johns Hopkins News-Letter* (Johns Hopkins University) 4 May 2017. Section: Arts-Entertainment: 1. By Katherine LOGAN. (1130 w.). Excerpt: Without revealing any spoilers, I can tell you that “The Handmaid’s Tale” is disturbing. If you’re sleeping soundly at night with no worries for yourself or future generations of women, then brace yourself for a rude awakening. All of the acts women are subject to in both the show and Atwood’s original novel are things that have actually happened over the course of history. The narrative of “The Handmaid’s Tale” functions as a cautionary tale. If we get complacent, if we allow those with power to abuse it, especially in regards to the regulation of women’s rights, then we are allowing ourselves to continue down a treacherous path from which there’s no going back.

*New Republic* (1 May 2017): 58. By Sarah JONES. (1709 w.). Excerpt: The new “Handmaid’s Tale” sounds a warning to conservative women. Excerpt: Set in the very near future, Hulu’s new adaptation of *The Handmaid’s Tale* subtly updates Atwood’s dystopia. The execution of a gay woman in episode three seems inspired by a real Iranian execution. Played by Elisabeth Moss, Offred is more relatable than she’s ever been, with a motto (“I intend to survive”) destined for a thousand Etsy products. In the show, as in our moment, it is not just men, but crucially some women, too, who fervently wish for a society where women are no longer free or equal. Women known as Aunts initiate the Handmaids into their new roles; Wives terrorize Handmaids with little restraint. These women midwife Gilead into the world, though it’s not clear what they stand to gain from any of it. Available from: <https://newrepublic.com/article/141674/handmaids-tale-hulu-warning-conservative-women>.

*New Statesman* 14 May 2017. Online. By Caroline CRAMPTON. (903 w.). Excerpt: *The Handmaid’s Tale* forces us to consider the unthinkable consequences of misogyny on a national scale. Perhaps what begins as chants of “Lock her up!” at a political rally ends—as in Atwood’s narrative—with women losing the right to vote, to own property and to determine what happens to their own body. Beyond its political resonance, this small-screen adaptation of the novel is deserving of the rapturous reception it has received. The quasi-biblical aesthetics of Atwood’s dystopia—the long, conservative red outfits and white veils of the handmaids, the icy-blue dresses of the wives whom they serve and the drab, faded green worn by the infertile “Marthas”—are heightened by the saturated, deep colours and unusual filming angles. The chronology of Atwood’s novel has been altered to great effect, giving more detail about Gilead early on, so that the tenets of the new society are clear from the outset. There are more and longer flashbacks to Offred’s life before the regime change, allowing us to witness directly what is only implied in the novel: the slow slide from democracy to authoritarianism. Available from: <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/tv-radio/2017/05/handmaid-s-tale-dystopian-dread-new-golden-age-television>.

*New York Times* 25 April 2017. Section C:1. By James PONIEWOZIK. (1090 w.). Excerpt: A decade ago, Elisabeth Moss began co-starring in “Mad Men,” which among other things was about how women were objectified and subjugated—in the past, the 1960s, the bad old days. In Hulu’s spectacular “The Handmaid’s Tale,” Ms. Moss is Offred, a baby-making slave in the Republic of Gilead, which is what part of the United States (New England, roughly) has become after a fertility crisis and a theocratic coup. It’s set in a near future that looks like the 1600s. “Mad Men” may have resonated with today, but it gave viewers the comfortable vantage of history, the reassurance that we had come a long way, baby. “The Handmaid’s Tale” argues—with an assist from current events—that progress is neither automatic nor irreversible. “The Handmaid’s Tale,” based on the 1985 Margaret Atwood novel, is a cautionary tale, a story of resistance and a work of impeccable world-building. It is unflinching, vital and scary as hell. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/24/arts/television/review-the->

[handmaids-tale-creates-a-chilling-mans-world.html](http://handmaids-tale-creates-a-chilling-mans-world.html).

*New Yorker* 22 May 2017. Section: On Television: 78. By Emily NUSSBAUM. (1956 w.). Excerpt: When Hulu's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale" debuted, in April, nearly every review commented on its grotesque timeliness. It's true that, early on, the Trumpian parallels are hard to miss. It's a story about a government that exploits fear of Islamic terrorists to crush dissent, then blots out women's reproductive rights. It's about fake news, political trauma, the abnormal normalized. There's a scene that so directly evoked the Women's March that I had to hit Pause to collect myself. But, for many readers of my generation, *The Handmaid's Tale* is also a time machine back to the Reagan era, a mightily perverse period for sexual politics. ... A TV show that replicated the book's poetic compression, its formal strangeness, would be hard to pull off. But the Hulu adaptation doesn't try. Instead, it is heavy-handed in the best way, dramatizing Offred's claustrophobia through gorgeous tableaux of repression. It makes everything blunter and more explicit, almost pulpy at times; among other things, we learn Offred's true name, June, right away.... A television show, especially one that intends to run many seasons, can't bore. And so, inevitably, the stakes are raised. The characters of Serena Joy and the Commander are played by sexy actors, expanding the potential for love triangles. Offred gets a more overt goal: to find her family. A few episodes in, we leave Offred's perspective. There's an episode for Serena Joy, who, like Mellie on "Scandal" or Claire on "House of Cards," is softened by a backstory; then we visit Luke, a brave rebel up in Canada. Step by step, you feel the show mining Offred's story for something that's more aspirational, less psychological; less horror, more thriller. There are still many pungent scenes. But the icky, idiosyncratic force of ... early episodes dims slightly, as the show hints at a more conventional path: "Escape from Gilead." Maybe this move is inevitable; it might succeed. But there's something lost along the way—the special beauty of a bleak ending. On television, that's no longer impossible.

*Salt Lake Tribune* 9 May 2017. Section: Nation World: Online. By [Rabbi] Jeffrey SALKIN. (892 w.). Excerpt: If, over the next few days, you're looking for me, you can find me sitting in front of my TV, binge-watching "The Handmaid's Tale," which has just been released on Hulu. I cannot break away.... It doesn't take a graduate degree in political science to see "The Handmaid's Tale" as a warning about the dangers of religious fundamentalism and totalitarian government. Some see it as a prophetic outcry against the assault on women's health care and the removal of women's rights, especially at the hands of those who would do so in the name of religion—both in the United States and in Israel. Yes, "The Handmaid's Tale" is about fascism and misogyny. But it is about far more than that. "The Handmaid's Tale" is a dark midrash (or commentary) on the patriarchal tales of Genesis. I have been teaching Torah for almost four decades. I have edited and written several books on the *Bible* (consider my latest, the *JPS B'nai Mitzvah Torah Commentary*, which just came out). And, with all that, I am embarrassed that I had not seen—in a deep way—the utter dysfunction that lies beneath the surface of the patriarchal stories. ... Available from: <http://archive.slttrib.com/article.php?id=5271263&itype=CMSID>.

*Scottish Daily Mail* 12 June 2017. Section: Features: 59. By Christopher STEVENS. (190 w.). Excerpt: "The Handmaid's Tale" ... would be an unbelievably heavy-handed satire on Trump's America, if it weren't based on a novel by Canadian writer Margaret Atwood nominated for the Booker Prize more than 30 years ago. In this ten-part adaptation, Elisabeth Moss ... is a slave in a religious dictatorship, whose domestic duties include attempting to bear children for her lord and master, the 'Commander.' In the mornings she goes shopping, at night she is powerless to resist his wanton demands. But while her cruel slavemaster is slowly losing his heart to her, our brave little maid is flirting dangerously with the sexy chauffeur. It's like Barbara Cartland with a degree in English Lit. Moss's voiceover is often stilted and literary, and the costumes that are supposed to evoke Christian fundamentalism really do nothing but

add a layer of silliness: the handmaids wear red riding hood cloaks with crisp white headgear that looks like an Ikea lampshade. But every scene is beautiful, composed in palettes of pastel drenched in blurred light. There may never have been a prettier TV show. Schlock it certainly is, but it's gorgeous schlock.

*Scottish Mail on Sunday* 4 June 2017. Section: Features: 29. By Peter HITCHENS. (266 w.). Excerpt: CHANNEL 4 has won much modish praise for screening the laughable anti-Christian fantasy "The Handmaid's Tale," starring a gloriously sulky and smug Elisabeth Moss. This drama started life as a heavy-handed novel by a politically correct Canadian, Margaret Atwood. In her fable, fanatical evangelical Christians take over the USA, and turn it into a tyranny in which they enslave fertile women, raping them once a month in the presence of their wives. This has not actually happened at all since Ms. Atwood wrote her cult book 32 years ago, despite there being lots of evangelical Christians in the USA, and it seems pretty unlikely to take place. Perhaps this is because evangelical Christians aren't actually like this. In an embarrassing and lengthy scene in the first episode, the heroine is duly raped. Just in case any of us didn't get the message, the crime takes place to the background of church organ music, gradually swelling into the sound of a full choir singing Onward Christian Soldiers. In case any viewers still don't understand the point (Christians are bad!), the rapist reads chunks out of the *Bible* as he proceeds. As usual, I await a similar drama from Channel 4 or any other major TV station, in which Muslims, who have actually set up a state in which women are subjugated, forced to wear demeaning clothing and are enslaved sexually, are portrayed as critically as Christians always are by our new cultural elite. I repeat a warning I've given before. Those who seek to drive Christianity out of our society may be unpleasantly surprised when they find out what actually replaces it.

*Star News* (Wilmington, North Carolina). 22 April 2017. Section: Gatehouse Media: 34. By Ingram HUNTER. (1138 w.). Excerpt: The *Handmaid's Tale* is not easy to watch, its depiction of injustice enveloping and almost too familiar as the mighty exert their views on groups given little opportunity to speak out. But underscoring the tragedy is the justice forming among the brave in response. Like the visible lump in her throat, Offred is poised to rise up. Available from: <http://www.starnewsonline.com/news/20170420/hulus-compelling-the-handmaids-tale-is-vital-television>.

*Sunday Telegraph* (London) 28 May 2017. Section: News: 34. By Gerard O'DONOVAN. (168 w.). Excerpt: Hauntingly suspenseful and beautifully acted throughout, it preserves much of the complexity of Atwood's novel, though not its subtlety.

*Sunday Times* (South Africa) 1 October 2017. Section: Arts, Culture and Entertainment. By Tymon SMITH. (831 w.). Excerpt: Director Marano, who worked as a cinematographer on Beyoncé's "Lemonade" and Martin Scorsese's "Vinyl," directs the first three episodes with a deft eye for colour, costumes and production design to differentiate between the various hierarchies of Gilead and its construction as a world that's nostalgic for a time its creators and citizens never knew firsthand. When later in the series the perspective shifts from that of Offred to that of her husband Luke (O-T Fagbenle), it's a bit disjointed and hits some of the themes of refugees and the haven of Canada a little too much on the nose. When we return to Offred, however, the show succeeds in keeping us wondering what will happen to her and whether her search for Luke and her child will be successful. In its gripping and emotional finale, the show reaches the end of what is provided by Atwood's book and makes its intention to continue for further series evident, raising the question of whether it can maintain the relevance of the original material. If there is one lesson to be taken from this tale it's in the words of the leader of the re-education centre, Aunt Lydia (Ann Dowd), who tells her students, "This may not seem ordinary to you right now, but after a time it will." Available from: Lexis-Nexis.

*Tampa Bay Times* 23 April 2017. Section: Latitudes: 2. By Chelsea TATHAM. (674 w.). Excerpt: The series is a poignant adaptation of Atwood's story, deftly building upon the world the author created with freshness yet retaining many of the same scorching scenes and resilient characters.... "The Handmaid's Tale" does right by lifting scenes straight from the novel. Reading the ceremony scene where Offred is raped by the Commander as part of her duty to produce a child is excruciatingly uncomfortable. Watching it on screen, with a soft opera and Offred's blunt narration playing in the background, is even more chilling. Only Offred could break the tension of a scheduled rape in the name of God by saying in her head, "I wish he would just hurry the hell up." The series exceeds expectations by expanding on Atwood's dystopian not-too-distant future by adding subtle yet powerful details. All LGBTQ people are labeled "gender traitors" and are put to death, as are any doctors who performed abortions.... The concept of being treated like cattle runs rampant through the first three episodes. The Aunts—those who train the Handmaids—exert punishment with electric cattle prods, and each Handmaid is "tagged" with a metal clip on her ear, marking her as a member of the breeding herd. The icing on top of this red and white cake is the diversity of its emotions. One minute you'll want to cry in anguish and the next you'll want to scream in rage. Uneasy outings with Offred's walking companion Ofglen (Alexis Bledel), whose secrets are deep and dangerous, are often punctuated by absurd pop music and Offred thinking, "I don't need oranges, I need to scream." The world of "The Handmaid's Tale" is one of paranoia and piety. Hulu's newest series brings that fear of the future to life with a glimpse of a place that's not too far off.

*The Telegraph* (England) 29 May 2017. Section: Business: 26. By Jasper REES. (401 w.). Excerpt: Stick up a paw if you've not read *The Handmaid's Tale*. (I am typing with one hand here.) Margaret Atwood has hordes of devotees, but membership of her cult looks primed for expansion with this commanding new adaptation of a novel published in 1985. While bad books tend to prosper on screen, the good ones have to take their chances. It helps in this case that Atwood's dystopia has great visual heft.... Atwood purists may do a double take at the news that a second series has been commissioned for the streaming service Hulu, suggesting infidelity to the source. But hey, there's already been a ballet, an opera, several plays and a film scripted by Harold Pinter. The more the scarier.

*Telegraph-Journal* (New Brunswick) 22 April 2017. Section: C:1. By ANON. (1363 w.). Excerpt: Interpreting *The Handmaid's Tale* for those who haven't read it is a tricky business; the basic plot has a way of seeming ludicrous and even strident on any page except one written by Atwood. A 1990 film version starring Natasha Richardson (with a screenplay by Harold Pinter) was faithful to the book but failed to fully access the story's urgency and deep sense of paranoia. A decade later, a Danish composer turned it into an opera, various stagings of which were met with mixed reviews. This time, creator/showrunner Bruce Miller (whose credits include work on NBC's "E.R." and CW's sci-fi adventure "The 100") and his co-producers, writers and directors have found just the right way to bring the book to life. By expanding it into a series, there is more time to linger on the everyday horrors of June's life in dystopia.

*The Times* (London) 27 May 2017. Section: Saturday Review: 27. By James JACKSON. (160 w.). Excerpt: As a classy, chilling adaptation of Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, this series has been pronounced television's first great Trump allegory. The ultra-conservative setting of Gilead—a totalitarian dystopia of purges and subjugation—now invites parallels less to the Salem witch trials than to the political direction in which America has started to swing. As such, it's one of the most hyped dramas that Channel 4, who snapped it up from the US streaming service Hulu, has put out for some time. Elisabeth Moss's performance as Offred rather echoes her Peggy Olson in the early "Mad Men" episodes as she is placed in the patriarchal household of the Commander (Joseph Fiennes), where women are forced into

sexual servitude. Offred's private thoughts and flashbacks to her previous carefree life make explicit the feminist undertow. As humourlessly stylised as all that seems, the slow-fuse tension and thought-provoking resonances gradually draw you in.

*The Times* (London) 29 May 2017 Section: Features: 10. By Andrew BILLEN. (517 w.). Excerpt: It was a very efficient totalitarian state that Margaret Atwood imagined in her 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, now strikingly reimagined in this ten-part American import.

*The Times* (London) 3 June 2017. Section: Saturday Review: 28. By Joe CLAY. 28. (284 w.). Excerpt: Bruce Miller's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's dystopian feminist novel looks fantastic. It is beautifully filmed and artfully styled....

*Toronto Star* 29 April 2017. Section: News: A13. By Heather MALLICK. (815 w.). Excerpt: The TV production is admirably restrained. Instead of the gun gore of most cable TV productions, there are hints of horror: black vans prowling, a bandage over a gouged-out eye. People follow the rites of politeness with stock religious phrases. Gilead looks mundane with white curtains, grocery stores, houses and gardens, and therein lies the normalized horror. Suicide is a constant lure. What colour is death in Gilead? I suspect it is dusty, as pale as Offred's bed linens, and leaves no trace.

*Tufts Daily* (Tufts University) 1 May 2017. Section: Arts: 1. By Julie DOTEN. (683 w.). Excerpt: At the heart of the horror of "The Handmaid's Tale" is the verisimilitude of the entire story. The creators of the show, working from Atwood's source material, are highly successful at drawing their viewers in and making this dystopia seem like a near-future possibility rather than a distant implausibility. The story is told in a way that truly emphasizes how a dystopian and seemingly imaginary world is actually very close to reality. While the majority of the plot is told from Offred's perspective during the peak of Gilead's reign, flashbacks take place in a world that is almost exactly identical to the present-day United States—reminding us where this dystopia originated.

*Vogue* 207.4 (April 2017): 190. By John POWERS. (179 w.). Excerpt: Talk about capturing the Zeitgeist. In "The Handmaid's Tale," Hulu's darkly gripping adaptation of Margaret Atwood's controversial classic, America gets taken over by a totalitarian theocracy that forcibly imposes "traditional" gender roles. Elisabeth Moss plays Offred, a liberal-minded woman separated from her daughter and forced into sexual servitude in the house of the Commander (Joseph Fiennes), who wants her to bear the child his wife can't. Naturally she wants to rebel, but whom can she trust to help? Her unreadable fellow handmaid (Alexis Bledel)? The seemingly friendly chauffeur (Max Minghella)? Or what about her oldest friend (Samira Wiley)? "The Handmaid's Tale" plunges us into a claustrophobic reality that plays on current fears but also gives us a heroine who offers some hope. Showcasing Moss's knack for playing smart women surrounded by retrograde men, Offred learns to fight for freedom in a culture that makes "Mad Men's" skirt-chasing offices seem like a feminist paradise.

*Vulture* 17 May 2017. Online. By Angelica Jade BASTIÉN. (2328 w.) Excerpt: In the Hulu series, an adaptation of Margaret Atwood's seminal feminist novel, "The Handmaid's Tale" presents a world with a strict caste system, where each of its members are color-coded to denote their station. Lead character Offred (an excellent Elisabeth Moss), a Handmaid brutalized into forced surrogacy for the men in power, known as Commanders, is the anchor who situates us in this strange new world. But it's Aunt Lydia (Ann Dowd)—an "Aunt" whose role it is to keep Handmaids subservient—who crystallizes one of the show's most trenchant observations: the ways women, particularly white women, are complicit in patriarchal structures in order to hold onto what little power they're afforded. Available from: <http://www.vulture.com/2017/05/the-handmaids-tale-aunt-lydia-serena-joy-female->

[villains.html](#).

*Wall Street Journal* 20 April 2017. Online. By John ANDERSON. Excerpt: The problem with Hulu's "Handmaid" is that nothing is dreadful enough. One of Ms. Atwood's signature achievements was the creation of a heroine who was not so much an unreliable narrator as a thoroughly traumatized one: Offred ... provides almost the entire story through interior monologue, and even when she talks to herself she does so like a hostage. Offred may have entertained thoughts of resentment, or insurrection, or even violence, but they were muted, constrained in a manner to which she was not even conscious. Ms. Moss's Offred comments regularly on her condition with outraged, silent vulgarities, and seems appalled by rituals and outrages that had become routine in the book—although she and her cohort do sit casually by the infamous Wall as several enemies of the state are being hanged. But the original Offred was almost too terrorized to imagine defiance, much less exercise it. And such calibrated portraiture helped make the novel click. Of course, a truly faithful adaptation might be so oppressive as to be unwatchable. (Volker Schlöndorff's 1990 feature, starring Natasha Richardson, is unwatchable for other reasons.) But there's no danger of that: Only the first three episodes of 10 were available for review, but Hulu's "Tale" already strayed far from the course Ms. Atwood mapped out, sometimes for the good, and sometimes not.... Available from: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-handmaids-tale-review-an-american-dystopia-1492721723>.

*Washington Post* 19 April 2017. Online. By Hank STUEVER. (1386 w.). Excerpt: It must have been awfully tempting for the folks at Hulu to hurry up and release their magnificent and effectively haunting 10-episode version of "The Handmaid's Tale," based on Margaret Atwood's novel about an America that has become a fascist, fundamentalist Christian theocracy that strips away the rights of women. Back in January, say, when women across the country marched the streets in knitted pink hats to protest the arrival of the Trump administration and sales of George Orwell's *1984* saw an impressive jump, I thought Hulu might try to catch the wave and release the series ahead of its April 26 premiere. But the streaming network waited, and smartly so.... It's not enough to simply say that "The Handmaid's Tale," which went into production long before last year's election, has arrived at a vital moment; the novel, first published in 1985, has been relevant again and again to different generations of readers, both female and male. This series, which is worth every penny of a Hulu subscription, would be must-see TV in any context, including one with a woman as president. Our fractured culture needs it. Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/tv/the-handmaids-tale-isnt-just-timely-its-essential-viewing-for-our-fractured-culture/2017/04/19/e25b5bc6-208c-11e7-ad74-3a742a6e93a7\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.8490a564c065](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/tv/the-handmaids-tale-isnt-just-timely-its-essential-viewing-for-our-fractured-culture/2017/04/19/e25b5bc6-208c-11e7-ad74-3a742a6e93a7_story.html?utm_term=.8490a564c065).

*Washington Post* 16 June 2017. Online. By Bethonie BUTLER. (848 w.). Excerpt: One of the most noticeable differences between Hulu's critically acclaimed adaptation of "The Handmaid's Tale" and Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel is the presence of people of color in Gilead, the dystopian society that relegates women to servitude and subservience to men. The decision to feature a more diverse Gilead was a deliberate one. Executive producer Bruce Miller told Think Progress that one thing the producers considered, as they moved the story's timeline forward to present day from the mid-'80s setting of Atwood's novel, was the increasing diversity of both American society in general and the conservative evangelical movement in particular. Miller argues that seeing a society devoid of black and brown people would be very different than reading about it.... There could be something powerful in showcasing life in Gilead for people of color, but the show rarely, if ever, goes there. The first season's 10 episodes (all of which are available to stream) feature people of color, but fail to tell their stories from that point of view.... Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/06/16/the-handmaids-tale-proves-that-colorblind-casting-isnt-enough/?utm\\_term=.4dcc7282da06](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/06/16/the-handmaids-tale-proves-that-colorblind-casting-isnt-enough/?utm_term=.4dcc7282da06).

*Washington Square News* 24 April 2017. Section: Arts: 1. By Sophie BENNETT. (535 w.). Excerpt: Not only are the cinematography, editing and art direction ... incredibly well done, but the actors also give wonderful performances. Moss is a sight to see as the petrified but resilient Offred. Wiley—coming off her breakthrough role in “Orange Is the New Black”—has superb moments in the first episode as Moira, Offred’s college friend, and seems destined for a great success. Alexis Bledel, who hasn’t appeared in much since “Gilmore Girls,” makes a terrific comeback as Ofglen, another handmaid who is designated as Offred’s companion. The series is a sure success for Hulu, whose original content has been lacking in comparison to its rival Netflix. Considering America’s current sociopolitical climate—which has popularized dystopian novels—“The Handmaid’s Tale” offers a startling look at a United States that before this year may have only seemed like a wild fantasy. The series couldn’t have had a better time for release.

*Wellesley News* (Wellesley College) 5 May 2017. Section: News: 1. By Sarah WHITE. (754 w.). Excerpt: It’s the sort of story reviewers like to call “necessary” and “vital” and “important.” It inspires headlines like “Everyone should be watching this!” and “This should be mandatory viewing!” It’s also absolutely exhausting. While I was watching, I couldn’t help but wonder why I was doing so. Yes, it was brilliantly written, and yes, it was gorgeously performed, but there are many brilliant and gorgeous shows on television that do not make my stomach churn.... However, I do believe that stories like “The Handmaid’s Tale” have value. To me, their value lies not in their ability to warn us of threats, but in their capacity to inspire us to defy them.

*Wesleyan Argus*: Wesleyan University 1 May 2017. Section: Arts: 1. By Claire SHAFFER. (1062 w.). Excerpt: This is what the show does so well: depicting subjugated women while allowing them to tell their own stories. Even still, it’s remarkable that so few people involved in the creation of “The Handmaid’s Tale” want to use the word “feminist” to describe it. At a recent post-screening panel, the cast and crew staunchly avoided the term, instead repeatedly calling it “humanist.” Even Atwood herself has avoided calling it a feminist story, although she specifically cites her own issues with second-wave feminism as the cause of this. All of this puts “The Handmaid’s Tale” in the weird position as being a timely-and timeless-narrative that wants nothing more than to just be fiction. To be clear, the religious authoritarianism of Gilead bares little resemblance to the non-spiritual populism of Trump. But there’s no denying that fascism, fanaticism, and the control over women’s bodies have typically gone hand-in-hand, whether it be 1692, 1985, or 2017. To deny “The Handmaid’s Tale’s” depiction of that relationship wouldn’t just be denying its relationship to contemporary politics; it’d be erasing its roots in a long, bloodied history.

*The Penelopiad: The Play*. London: Faber & Faber, 2007.

1. Performed in the Eva Marie Saint Theatre at the Wolfe Center for the Arts at Bowling University 23-25 February 2017.

*The BG News: Bowling Green State University* 21 February 2017. Section: News: 1. By Meredith SIEGEL. (607 w.). Excerpt: Margaret Atwood is a well-known feminist author and she definitely shows it in her play, *The Penelopiad*, currently being performed by the University’s Theatre Department. In history, *The Odyssey* has been told and retold as a man’s story and within it there is a certain image of Penelope that is typically portrayed. Penelope is hailed as the “perfect, faithful wife” and as a standard woman. But early in director Sara Chamber’s version of the play, Penelope expresses her regret and urges the audience to not follow in her footsteps. Her story is an example of missed empowerment, because she could have taken control of her life and her kingdom, but she waited for her husband to return home.

The maids also tell their own feminist story. Women's bodies have been used for centuries for work and for male pleasure and *The Penelopiad* makes that clear. Penelope's 12 maids work in her favor but give themselves to the suitors to protect Penelope. They are condemned by Telemachus and killed by Odysseus himself, despite their loyalty to his wife and his kingdom. While Penelope's story is about her missed empowerment, the 12 maids who were born into slavery and used for their bodies were never given the chance for empowerment.

Penelope narrates her own story from the Ancient Greek afterlife, after she has died. She is joined by her husband, her son, and her cousin, the famous Helen of Troy. Most of her story is acted out by her 12 maids. They portray characters like her parents, Odysseus' parents, and her suitors, but also take on more abstract roles like Penelope's bed and Odysseus' boat. Penelope starts her story from her birth and continues on through her life as she marries Odysseus, has her son, waits 20 years for Odysseus to return from war while being constantly hounded by suitors and her eventual death. Every so often she is interrupted by her maids as they chant or sing to tell their own story, one of being born into slavery and used however their masters pleased.

The play stars Katya Dachik as Penelope, and while the show is traditionally cast with only women, two men portray Penelope's husband, Odysseus played by Jarod Mariani, and her son, Telemachus. Dachik's performance as Penelope is subtle but captivating. Much of the play is Penelope addressing the audience and describing her life, but the audience stays interested in her story. The audience wants to root for Penelope and to know how her story ends. Penelope stays relatively stoic for most of the play, but the end is definitely when Dachik is at her best.

The 12 maids also give a strong performance. Their chants and songs gave me goose bumps. As stated above, they portray most characters in this story and it is interesting to watch them change from bed post, to maid, to suitor as the plot moves along. There are only two men in this play, and their performances were not as captivating or interesting as the women in the show. That's okay, however, because the show isn't about them. The men don't dominate the show and they aren't supposed to.

The sets and costumes are simple but interesting and are sprinkled with Ancient Greek letters. The set only includes two sets of staircases and the maids all wear the same outfit. This makes it clear that they are one entity, used to tell the story of our impoverished and enslaved female ancestors who were used by men and ignored by history. The simplicity of the set and the costumes really gets across the point that Penelope is telling her story from the afterlife. *The Penelopiad* tells an ancient story in a fresh, new way with noteworthy performances, feminist themes and surprisingly good music.

2. Performed by the Goderich Little Theatre at the Huron County Gaol 7-9 July 2017.

*Clinton News Record* 5 July 2017. Section: News: A11. By Sheila PRITCHARD. (191 w.). Excerpt: "She's up to something, she is weaving histories, they are never right, she has to do them over, she is weaving her version"—Margaret Atwood *The Penelopiad*, a dramatic reinterpretation of the *Odyssey*, told from a woman's perspective, will be premiering at Huron Historic Gaol in Goderich on July 5. The play, based on the novel by bestselling Canadian author Margaret Atwood, is a stunning visual experience with set design and costume design by local artist Linda Weibe. The adapted theatre piece stars community thespians, and is directed by David Armour, with choreography by Helen Gianoulis and musicians directed by Shelly Johnson. Proceeds from the play will be shared by the Women's Shelter and Counselling Services of Huron, Goderich Little Theatre and Huron County Museum, and Huron Historic Gaol.

*Goderich Signal Star* 28 June 2017. Section: News: A16. By Kathleen SMITH. (501 w.). Review of dress rehearsal. Excerpt: Despite the dark tones in the play, those in attendance will see that it is, in some ways, also elegantly beautiful. There is also music and dance to accompany the play, where live musicians will play the harp, flute, violin and percussion.... Director David Armour explains the affect of theatre production of *The Penelopiad*: “There are places [in the play] where it is really funny, however, it is a very dramatic story as well. In some ways, kind of a challenging one; it takes us on in respect to some of our deeply-seated attitudes about women, in particular. At the same time, Margaret Atwood is not a polemical writer, and she doesn’t take just one side and just argue for that. Instead, she has criticism for everybody. It’s not so much criticism, but you end up confronting certain truths that are sometimes difficult. It’s a challenging piece in that way. It is lyrical, powerful, dramatic and funny, and it has gorgeous music....

*Goderich Signal Star* 12 July 2017. Section: News: A3. by [Kathleen SMITH]. (205 w.). Excerpt: The opening night of Goderich Little Theatre’s production of Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* last Wednesday night was a success. There were three other performances that spanned over the weekend, all evening performances, in the open air inside the Huron County Gaol. Directed by David Armour, the play saw strong performances from the entire cast, which was comprised of 13 women. *The Penelopiad* is a thought-provoking play that touches on the subjects of women, men, the double standards between the sexes and classes and violence within a patriarchal society. The characters all meet up again after death, in Hades, to discuss and confront society and their life choices. Despite the dark tones from the setting of Hades, the afterlife, of Penelope and her 12 handmaids, the play was full of life, music, romance and comedy.

## Reviews of Books on Atwood

BANERJEE, Suparna. *Science, Gender and History: The Fantastic in Mary Shelley and Margaret Atwood*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

*English Studies* (The Netherlands) 98.2 (2017): 219-221. By Erin WEBSTER-GARRETT. Excerpt: Sometimes what seems obvious isn’t obvious at all: such is the case of the relationship between Mary Shelley and Margaret Atwood as revealed in Suparna Banerjee’s rich monograph, the first full-length comparative analysis of the philosophical symmetries connecting Shelley and Atwood’s speculative fictions. Banerjee’s analysis will be most accessible for those familiar with feminist and postcolonial theoretical paradigms. Her study extends well-known analyses of *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*, Shelley’s most well-known texts, and applies them to Atwood’s equally iconic novels, *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*. In the process, she provides a solid and lucid introduction to postcolonial readings of eighteenth-century humanism in terms of the gendered hierarchies that she argues it imposes to separate Art, technology and coloniser from notions of Nature, history and the colonised.

*Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 27.1 (2016): 170-172, 187. By Catherine SIEMANN. Excerpt: In the conclusion to her monograph on Mary Shelley and Margaret Atwood, Suparna Banerjee sums up her work: “we have looked at Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*, and Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* from a feminist, postcolonial perspective and have explored the interfaces of (techno)science, gender and history(-making) in these four works of speculative/fantastic fiction.” This is a tall order, reflected in the book’s overly broad main title, and the fact that Banerjee succeeds in large part is an impressive achievement in and of itself.

*Journal of International Women’s Studies* 18.2 (2017): 286-288. By William TRINGALI. Excerpt: Ultimately, I commend Banerjee for exploring so much within these four books in a

concise and very readable manner. The overall arguments of give the reader much to consider in a holistic manner that encourages the reader to examine all the texts within it. I would recommend this book to scholars in the fields of science fiction studies and women's studies, along with students interested in examining the works of either Shelley or Atwood or both. Available from: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1948&context=jiws>.

*Science-Fiction Studies* 43.1 (2016): 153-154. By Justin COSNER. Excerpt: This is a rich and satisfying exploration of two powerhouse figures in science fiction and their best fictions. Anyone with an interest in these authors, these texts, or the topics that guide this study cannot help but find insight here. Like Victor Frankenstein, Banerjee has breathed new life into these novels and their critical conversation.

SHEAD, Jackie. *Margaret Atwood: Crime Fiction Writer: The Reworking of a Popular Genre*. Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT Ashgate Publishing, 2015.

*American, British and Canadian Studies Journal* 28.1 (2017): 149-152. By Charlotte BEYER. Excerpt: The influence of crime writing on literary fiction, and the blurring of boundaries between the genres, is becoming increasingly evident in contemporary popular writing today. Presenting an exciting new approach to this celebrated writer's fiction, [this book] presents a lucid and compelling critical analysis of Margaret Atwood's employment of crime fiction motifs and narrative elements. Available after registration from: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=530511>.

*British Journal of Canadian Studies* 30.1 (2017): 138. By Coral Ann HOWELLS. Excerpt: 'At the bottom of each Atwoodian plot lies a mystery, often in the shape of a corpse' (p. 14). Atwood's novels are littered with dead bodies—murder victims, suicides, accidental deaths, together with political assassinations, even a pandemic which destroys most of the world's population. In this detailed critical study of Atwood's crime writing, Shead analyses Atwood's narrative artifice and her reasons for revisiting this popular genre.... [Her] timely study is a fine example of the critic as sleuth, activating our awareness of the author's craft and her renewed interest in popular fiction.

*Modern Language Review* 112.2 (2017): 504-505. By Christiana GREGORIOU. Excerpt: In engaging closely with themes and story structure, Shead's is a valuable contribution to scholarship on crime fiction, and also on Atwood. She crucially draws out the importance of language too, a close analysis of which is needed for a fuller appreciation of the experience of reading such novels.