

# From Atwood to Trump

## Female Bodies in the Age of Political Reproduction

ALICE BALESTRINO

*Sapienza Università di Roma*

### *Abstract*

*Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1986) is a dystopia set in a not-so-distant future in a US where a theocratic dictatorship has siezed power through a coup d'état. This fictional society bears an uncanny resemblance to contemporary political, social, and bioethical preoccupations in President Trump's America. The broad scope of this contribution is to explore the subjugated condition of women in Gilead, in the light of the political construction and official manipulation of female bodies performed by this undemocratic system – an objectification that seems to take to the extremes the entrenched mindset of Trump's «locker-room talk», the culmination of his sexist jargon. By dwelling on some aggressive and male-chauvinist statements that typify the president's discourse about women, this article seeks to draw a connection between facts and fiction in order to read the former through the lens of the latter as exemplification (although extreme) of what a formerly democratic and liberal society may look like, should some misogynist statements pronounced by President Trump be actualized.*

**Keywords:** Donald Trump; political rhetoric; feminism; dystopia; The Handmaid's Tale; performative speech.