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Abstract

Christian Nationalism: Trump's America or Gilead?

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* opens with the overthrow of the United States by Gilead, a government that weaponized fear. The people of Gilead enacted mass book burnings, murdered protestors, subverted women's rights, and placed men at the head of the country and household. By examining *The Handmaid's Tale* through the lens of a dystopian novel situated within American history, I argue that Donald Trump's political career mirrored Gilead by promising would-be Christian nationals that he would reestablish traditional patriarchal values.

In *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*, Kristin Kobes Du Mez describes the rise of Donald Trump as appearing in a moment when Evangelical Christians felt increasingly persecuted. They feared that the United States was no longer abiding by traditional patriarchal values and saw Trump as a savior figurehead who promised to correct that. Trump's directed comments to evangelicals such as, "Every day I wake up determined to deliver a better life for the people all across this nation that have been neglected, ignored, and abandoned," and "I'm with you, I will fight for you, and I will win for you," coerced this group into following him. Trump weaponized this fear in order to rally a silent minority of evangelicals, nationalise them, and turn them into loyal supporters. This led to the demonization of liberal and feminist women, the appointment of conservative Supreme Court justices despite a popular vote of disagreement, and the January 6th insurrection of the Capitol. By studying the connection between *The Handmaid's Tale* and Donald Trump's presidential

career we are able to understand how political figureheads use religion to gain control over marginalized groups of people, such as Evangelical Christians.

Scholars such as Matthew Beaumont, Raffaella Baccolini, and Carter Hanson argue that dystopian novels are a result of historical pressure. In *Memory and Utopian Agency in Utopian/dystopian Literature: Memory of the Future*, scholar Carter Hanson remarks on this saying, “But, of course, utopian and dystopian fictions are always grounded in, and responsive to, the historical moments in which they are written.” Dystopian fictions encourage us to see our political moment and to take the challenge that Atwood gives us: a theocracy with a controlled patriarchy isn’t our worst nightmare, but it is a picture of what we could become. In studying Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* as a dystopian novel situated within American history, I am positioning the *The Handmaid’s Tale* to be seen as a prediction of what the United States could turn into under Donald Trump’s control, as well as a guide in combating weaponized Christian nationalism.

Christian Nationalism: Trump's America or Gilead?

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a dystopian picture of the United States. Situated within Donald Trump's political career, the novel can be seen as a depiction of what the United States could become. Protests, subverting women's rights, and patriarchal control are center to both the novel and Trump's presidency. By examining *The Handmaid's Tale* through the lens of a dystopian novel situated within American history, I argue that Donald Trump's political career mirrored Gilead by promising would-be Christian nationals that he would reestablish traditional patriarchal values.

Evangelicalism was founded on traditional patriarchal values. In the 1950s it was, "a potent mix of patriarchal "gender traditionalism," militarism, and Christian nationalism coalesced to form the basis of... evangelical identity" (Kobes Du Mez 25). These values taught that men were in charge, and women were to submit to them. By doing so, men were fulfilling their ultimate role: to create and maintain control, in every sense. The ideal evangelical masculinity was, "a place where [white] men brought order to savagery, where men served as armed protectors and providers, where violence achieved a greater good" (Kobes Du Mez 33). This cultivated a rougher tougher form of masculinity that would continue to grow and strengthen as the United States did.

In the face of rising feminism, a resurgence of these values appeared in the 1970s.

"Evangelicals... clung fiercely to the belief that America was a Christian nation, that the military was a force for good, and that the strength of the nation depended on a properly ordered, patriarchal home... The evangelical political resurgence of the 1970s coalesced around a potent mix of "family values" politics, but family values were always intertwined with ideas about sex, power, race, and nation" (Du Mez 25).

It was in this identity that political figureheads found a home. One of the first to market these values was President Teddy Roosevelt. He took the fear that was beginning to grow amongst the religious and used it for political gain.

“By fashioning a violent, fantasized masculinity, and then injecting that sensibility into national politics, Roosevelt offered ordinary men the sense that they were participating in a larger cause. Roosevelt’s hypermasculinity appealed to men anxious about their own status, and the nation’s. For many, these anxieties would become inseparable” (Kobes Du Mez 34).

Roosevelt was one of the first political figureheads to use fear as a weapon in means of curating a patriarchal theocracy. This tactic would not be forgotten and would be adopted again in a few decades.

By the early twentieth century, evangelicalism saw another revitalization of patriarchal masculinity. This century caused evangelicals fear in the form of the first African-American president, Barack Obama. His administration would go on to make evangelicals feel as if their values were diminishing.

“Between demographic changes portending an end to “white Christian America,” the apparent erosion of loyalty among young evangelicals, and steady assaults on their conception of religious liberty, white evangelicals perceived clear and present dangers to their very existence. Or at least to their social and political power” (Kobes Du Mez 411-412).

The Obama administration was a turning point for evangelicals. They began to see themselves undergoing “feminization,” and losing their “religious freedoms” (Kobes Du Mez 31) They believed that they, the church and the country, were straying from traditional values. In 2015 a

political figurehead would enter the scene, creating the perfect environment to weaponize fear in order to gain control.

Kristin Kobes Du Mez is an American religious historian. In her book *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* Kobes Du Mez positions Trump as an unlikely evangelical figurehead who appears in a moment when Evangelical Christians felt increasingly persecuted (Kobes Du Mez 28). Trump, who is a self-proclaimed non-denominational Christian, gained the devout following of evangelicals, despite not being one (Jenkins and Mwaura 2020). Kobes Du Mez situates Trump within the evangelical history of aggressive masculinity values, beginning with his campaign.

On June 16, 2015 Donald Trump announced that he was running for president on the Republican ticket at a campaign rally in New York City saying, "We are going to make our country great again. I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created" (Santucci and Stracqualursi 2016). Trump began his candidacy by appealing to Christians, specifically to evangelicals who felt increasingly persecuted. Throughout his campaign, Trump would go on to subtly appeal to evangelicals. At the 2016 Republican National Convention he did this by saying things such as, "Every day I wake up determined to deliver a better life for the people all across this nation that have been neglected, ignored, and abandoned," and "I'm with you, I will fight for you, and I will win for you" (White 2016). These overt undertones were revitalizing the aggressive masculinity that the church had been promoting for decades.

"Why Trump, many wondered, including many evangelicals themselves. For decades, the Religious Right had been kindling fear in the hearts of American Christians... But in truth, evangelical leaders had been perfecting this pitch for nearly fifty years. Evangelicals were looking for a protector, an aggressive, heroic, manly man, someone

who wasn't restrained by political correctness or feminine virtues, someone who would break the rules for the right cause. Try as they might—and they did try—no other candidate could measure up to Donald Trump when it came to flaunting an aggressive, militant masculinity. He became, in the words of his religious biographers, “the ultimate fighting champion for evangelicals” (Kobes Du Mez 418-419).

Trump was beginning to rally Christian nationals by appealing to the religious who felt they had lost control.

Winning the 2016 presidential election meant that Trump now had the power of the presidency, with an army of Christian nationals behind him. At his inauguration he spoke directly to them saying, “We’ve done great with the evangelicals... We’re going to protect Christianity, and I can say that. I don’t have to be politically correct” (Kobes Du Mez 4220). Trump promised them that he would restore order, that he would restore traditional patriarchal values. His first move to enact this was to subvert women’s rights.

The day after Trump’s inauguration over 500,000 women protested by participating in the Women’s March in Washington D.C. They were joined by women all across the country rallying in “Boston, Hartford, New York, Seattle, Denver, Miami, Los Angeles, and dozens of other cities... with organizers listing more than 670 planned events nationwide and in another 70 cities around the world” (Blair 2017). These women wore the infamous “pussy hats,” a response to Trump’s Hollywood Access tape. On this tape he was recorded saying, “I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it, you can do anything... grab them by the pussy” (Filipovic 2017). These women held signs saying, ‘Women are no joke,’ ‘I can’t believe we still have to protest this shit,’ and ‘I’m a nasty woman’ (Blair 2018). The last sign in reference to the 2016 final presidential debate where Donald Trump called Hillary Clinton a nasty woman (Diaz 2016).

The immediate protest of women across the nation was a response to the threat that Trump posed, and promised, to take away their freedom and agency; freedom and agency that they had fought decades for.

During his time in office Trump appointed 54 Conservative judges to the U.S. appeals courts and 3 Conservative judges to the U.S. Supreme Court (Tremblay, Caitlin, et al 2021). These appointees tilted balances in the 2nd, 11th, and 34th U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal to a conservative majority (Tremblay et al 2021). This is significant because appellate judges and Supreme Court judges are appointed for life. This means that until a position opens up, which is not often, these courts are now conservative leaning until further notice. The problem is furthered when it was revealed that many of these picks have close ties to the Federalist Society (Tremblay et al 2021). The Federalist Society believes in reading the constitution as the founders intended. Women's freedom and agency was not an intention that the founders held or included. Therefore, by being connected to the Federalist Society these judges are intending to read and interpret laws that do not consider women. As a result, they are inherently rejecting women's freedom and agency. Out of Trump's appointees, only 19% were women (Tremblay et al 2021). These male conservative dominated leaning judges were a signifier of the way their decisions would go.

Throughout his campaign, Trump made a promise to his would-be evangelical nationals that he would appoint judges who would overturn *Roe V. Wade*. When questioned during a 2016 presidential debate if he wanted that case ruling overturned Trump said, "That will happen, automatically in my opinion" (Mangan 2016). This statement further the fear amongst women and strengthened support amongst would-be nationals. This was only furthered with the nomination of his Supreme Court judges Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett. Gorsuch's appointment kept the Supreme Court at a 5-4 conservative liberal split. Brett

Kavanaugh's nomination created a conservative tilt, and Amy Coney Barrett's ended it with a 6-3 majority. Mike Davis, who worked on Gorsuch and Kavanaugh confirmations and president of the Article III project, explained the conservative tip of the Supreme Court saying, "With the appointment of Justice Barrett as his third Supreme Court pick, President Trump will transform the 5-4 John Roberts court to the 6-3 Clarence Thomas court" (Kumar 2020). Trump was securing a loyal following of evangelicals who were giving him more conservative officials. "The more raucous the campaign grew, the more emboldened Trump became. And the more evangelicals seemed to fall in behind him" (Kobes Du Mez 2020). This meant that *Roe V. Wade*, and other fundamental cases for women, were officially on the table. All of the conservative judges, and now conservative majority in the Supreme Court, would be used by Trump to enact laws that would take away women's freedom and agency.

Two months after Trump was inaugurated, with the help of his conservative lawmakers and judges, he overturned an Obama-era rule that protected the Public Health Service Act's amendment titled Population Research and Voluntary Family Planning Programs, more commonly known as Title X (Kiene 2017). This blocked funding to health care providers that perform abortions with nongovernment funds. Title X is, "the only federal domestic program focused solely on providing people with critical reproductive health services related to family planning and contraception, including physical exams, prescriptions, laboratory exams, contraceptive supplies, and referrals when medically needed" (Gillette-Pierce and Taylor 2017). The act cares for over 4 million women a year, and for most, it is their only access to critical healthcare services (Gillette-Pierce and Taylor 2017). Alongside revoking Title X, two months later Trump signed into law the American Health Care Act (AHCA) (Mangan and Pramuk 2017). This gutted medicare coverage for low-income women, defunded Planned Parenthood, restricted

private insurance coverage of abortions, and endangered women's economic security (Taylor 2017). Taking away women's healthcare was only the beginning.

The quickest way to subvert an individual's right is to remove their protections. Shortly after Trump came for women's healthcare he began revoking women protection laws. He cut 25 Violence Against Women grant programs. These programs "distribute funds to organizations committed to ending sexual assault, domestic abuse and dating violence" (Solis 2017). Without anyone knowing, Trump also quietly changed the definition of domestic violence. Trump's Justice Department changed the Obama-era definition that included critical components of domestic abuse—a pattern of deliberate behavior, the dynamics of power and control, and behaviors that encompass physical or sexual violence as well as forms of emotional, economic, or psychological abuse. However, in the Trump Justice Department, *only* harms that constitute a felony or misdemeanor crime may be called domestic violence" (Nanasi 2019). This means that any woman who has a partner that cuts off her access to family and money, monitors her every move, etc. is no longer protected. Trump effectively cut off protections that millions of women desperately need, all with a stroke of his pen and a conservative Justice Department to do it.

With women's freedom and agency being taken away, Trump was establishing a traditional patriarchy. Women being subverted paved the way for a patriarchy. "White Evangelical (male) voters made up a much greater share of Trump's voters (34%)" ("An Examination of the 2016 Electorate, Based on Validated Voters" 2020). Aggressive religious male voters make up the majority of Trump's supporters, and that traditional patriarchal image is what was seen on January 6th, 2021. Trump had been rallying his evangelical national supporters for weeks against the government. He had lost his second term to Joe Biden and was calling Biden's win fraud.

The morning of January 6th Congress was meeting for the Electoral College vote in a joint session. Trump was holding a rally nearby where he commanded his hundreds of supporters. “You have to walk down, and I’ll be with you. We’re going to walk down to the Capitol... you’ll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong” (Leatherby et al 2021). This immediately prompted chaos. Hundreds of angry Trump supporters stormed the Capitol where they breached the barriers and landed on the steps. It was at this breach that Capitol police began to arrive in riot gear. Fights were breaking out, and Trump’s supporters officially broke into the Capitol through the windows. Two minutes before they were able to reach the Senate chamber, the Senate was called into an immediate recess where they were quickly evacuated, alongside the House. One Capitol officer distracted the protesters and purposefully led them in the wrong direction while the other offices attempted to lock and secure the chambers. Three hours passed before the Senate and House were confirmed secure. Three hours of Trump supporters defacing, stealing, and rioting in the People's House. Three hours of incited Christian national violence, all at the hands of Donald Trump.

Margaret Atwood’s 1985 acclaimed dystopian novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* follows the artifactual transcripts of a woman who lived during the time of Gilead. Set in a futuristic New England, a Christian fundamentalist theocratic regime named Gilead has overthrown the United States of America. This overthrow was a result of a fertility crisis. The novel is narrated by Offred, formally known as June, a handmaid. These women are assigned to Gilead’s founders, the Commanders, to bear their offspring in order to repopulate. Offred flows between periods of the present and reflective pass as the foundation of Gilead is revealed and the horrors of its country is experienced.

Gilead used a slow process of nationalising religious groups before they overthrew the United States. This was done through mass book burnings, murdering protestors, and weaponizing fear. The first acts seen in the United States, by those that would become Gilead, was mass book burnings. As a young girl Offred [June] is on a walk with her mother when she first notices mass book burnings. “There were some women burning books... There were some men, too, among the women, and the books were magazines. They must have poured gasoline, because the flames shot high, and then they began dumping the magazines, from boxes, not too many at a time. Some of them were chanting; onlookers gathered. Their faces were happy, ecstatic almost” (Atwood 38). While this act nationalised radicals, it also caused protests. Offred [June] describes these protests saying,

“There were marches, of course, a lot of women and some men. But they were smaller than you might have thought. I guess people were scared. And when it was known that the police, or the army, or whoever they were, would open fire almost as soon as any of the marches even started, the marches stopped. A few things were blown up, post offices, subway stations. But you couldn't even be sure who was doing it. It could have been the army, to justify the computer searches and the other ones, the door-to-doors... nobody wanted to be reported, for disloyalty” (Atwood 180).

Gilead was setting up a coup d'état. They were nationalising the religious, getting them to carry out tasks for them, and stopping anyone who tried to oppose them. These acts took every facet of fear and weaponized them: the fear of the religious, that the United States had strayed too far from faith, to the fear of the citizens, that their country was being overthrown and there was nothing they could do about it. Gilead weaponized the one emotion that every person was experiencing and exploited it for power and control.

The largest way Gilead assumed control was over subverting women's rights. This was modeled after the notion in the Bible that women were not to have authority over men. Gilead interpreted this biblical teaching by creating laws that prevented women from having bank accounts, jobs, and autonomy. Gilead knew that in order to successfully trap and control women that they would have to blindside them.

Gilead severed women's independence suddenly, and at once. It started with cutting off their access to money. Offred's [June's] access to her bank accounts were denied for the first time when she went to pick up cigarettes. When Offred [June] remarks that she has money in account, the clerk tells her, "See? He said again, still with that smile, as if he knew some private joke he wasn't going to tell me" (Atwood 173-174). Offred [June] informs him that she'll call her bank from the office but when she does she just gets a recording. "The lines were overloaded, the recording said... The lines stayed overloaded all morning." (Atwood 176). In order to make sure women didn't go on the run, they also stopped their ability to work.

Later that same day Offred [June] goes into work. In the middle of the day her boss bursts through the door looking insane.

"I'm sorry, he said, but it's the law. I really am sorry. For what? Somebody said. I have to let you go, he said. It's the law, I have to. I have to let you all go. He said this almost gently, as if we were wild animals... Please go, now. His voice was rising. I don't want any trouble. If there's trouble the books might be lost, things will get broken... He looked over his shoulder. They're outside, he said, in my office. If you don't go now they'll come in themselves. They gave me ten minutes. By now he sounded crazier than ever... But I could see out into the corridor, and there were two men standing here, in uniforms, with machine guns. This was too theatrical to be true, yet there they were: sudden

apparitions, like Martians. There was a dreamlike quality to them; they were too vivid, too at odds with their surroundings... What was it about this that made us feel we deserved it?" (Atwood 176-177).

Distressed at the loss of her money and job Offred [June] calls over her friend Moira. After explaining her situation Moira informs her that she is facing the same challenges. "They've frozen them, she said. Mine too. The collective's too. Any account with an F on it instead of an M. All they needed to do is push a few buttons. We're cut off," Offred [June] informs Moira that she has thousands of dollars in her account. Moira rebuttals saying, "Women can't hold property anymore, she said. It's the new law... Luke [June's husband] can use your Compuaccount for you, she said. They'll transfer your number to him, or that's what they say. Husband or male next of kin" (Atwood 178-179). Later in her life as a handmaid Offred reflects on Gilead taking away her right to work saying, "It's strange, now, to think about having a job. *Job*. It's a funny word... It's a job for a man... All those women having jobs: hard to imagine, now, but thousands of them had jobs, millions. It was considered the normal thing" (Atwood 173). By cutting off their access to money and work, Gilead successfully trapped women. Little did the women know that this was only the beginning.

Once Gilead had trapped women they started placing them into functions based on their religious affiliation and abilities. Commander's wives were those loyal to Gilead. Marthas were women who served as housemaid's and cooks. Handmaid's were women who were able to reproduce. There were the factionless, the Econowives. "These women are not divided into functions. They have to do everything; if they can" (Atwood 24). Lastly, there were the unwomen, those who were seen unfit to be in society. These groups of women were identified by their clothing. Commander's wives wore blue, Marthas wore green, Handmaid's wore red,

Econowives had to make their own clothing, and the Unwomen's clothing didn't matter. Placing women into categories based on their religious affiliation and abilities devalues them as a person. It takes humanity out of their existence and replaces it with ownership. That is then further emphasized by marking them with color. They no longer have the ability to express themselves. Offred reflects on the control of dress when she is faced with a group of Japanese tourists. They view Offred's outfit as blatant oppression while Offred, used to Gilead's control over her, finds their dress as inappropriate. "Ofglen stops beside me and I know that she too cannot take her eyes off these women. We are fascinated, but also repelled. They seem undressed. It has taken so little time to change our minds, about things like this. Then I think: I used to dress like that. That was freedom. *Westernized*, they used to call it" (Atwood 28). Under the new government's control women cannot choose what they do or even what they wear. By removing their autonomy, women officially became commodities owned and used by Gilead.

Becoming commodities of Gilead was for one purpose: to place men at the head of the country and household. From revoking women's right to their money, work, and clothing was done to force them into submission. The easiest way to exert power over another is to take away their autonomy. This prevents them from coming together in protest. Gilead did all of this. They stripped women of their very choices and murdered those who dared to stand against them. This effectively cut off their ability to band together in revolt, to maintain power.

The ultimate act that cemented men at the head of both household and country was the ceremony. The ceremony is the act of a Commander impregnating a handmaid. This completely removed the women's rights to their own bodies. The Commanders were effectively raping and impregnating the handmaid's against their will. In the essay "Jezebel's: Sex and Marriage in Early Christian Theology" author Kate McGrath gives the history of Christian theology around

submission explaining, “Early Christian writers argued that not only were women more morally corruptible and weaker in virtue, but this weakness was also very dangerous as they could harm male virtue as well. In their view, it is why God punished women with subordination to male authority and control” (McGrath 34). This belief is seen in Gilead through the commanders preaching before the ceremony. He describes the importance the handmaid’s ceremony act in connection to the redemption of Eve’s sin by saying,

“Let the women learn in silence with subjection.” Here he looks us over. “All,” he repeats. “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved by childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (Atwood 221).

The sole purpose of having sexual intercourse for pleasure was considered a sin. For the handmaid’s, the ceremony’s purpose was for reproduction and the redemption of Eve’s sin. Therefore, the act was considered holy. Gilead’s theology on this reflected early Christian theologian Augustine. He claimed that after Adam and Eve sinned sex became tainted if done for lust. However, if done for reproduction it was considered blameless (McGrath 35). “The necessity of divorcing pleasure from sex is at the heart of the Handmaid Ceremony, as the ritual works to strip gratification from the act of intercourse” (McGrath 35). This can be seen in Offred’s reflection of the ceremony.

“What’s going on in this room, under Serena Joy’s silvery canopy, is not exciting. It has nothing to do with passion or love or romance or any of those other notions we used to titillate ourselves with. It has nothing to do with sexual desire, at least for me, and

certainly not for Serena. Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary; they would be a symptom of frivolity merely, like jazz garters or beauty spots: superfluous distractions for the light-minded. Outdated... This is not recreation, even for the Commander. This is serious business. The Commander, too, is doing his duty... Kissing is forbidden between us. This makes it bearable” (Atwood 94-95).

Gilead took a progressive United States, one full of feminists and women’s rights, and reverted. Through a series of laws Gilead effectively reversed all progress women had made towards their own freedom and autonomy. Women became commodities of men. Men now had control over women’s every decision and act. This reverted women’s rights and placed men at the head of the household and country.

Scholars such as Matthew Beaumont, Raffaella Baccolini, and Carter Hanson argue that dystopian novels are a result of historical pressure. In his book *Memory and Utopian Agency in Utopian/dystopian Literature: Memory of the Future* Hanson remarks on this saying, “But, of course, utopian and dystopian fictions are always grounded in, and responsive to, the historical moments in which they are written” (Hanson 3). These dystopian fictions encourage us to view political moments from a new perspective.

In *The Handmaid’s Tale* Margaret Atwood challenges us to view a potential United States as a theocracy controlled by a patriarchal society. How did Offred go from a woman with free agency to a Handmaid that is raped in the name of reproduction? How did a group of evangelicals break into the Capitol, steps away from senators, representatives, and the Vice President? Atwood is encouraging us to view *The Handmaid’s Tale* as a warning for what could become of the United States under a figurehead such as Donald Trump. A person who weaponizes fear in order to enact a patriarchal theocracy. Atwood’s novel should be seen as a

grave warning of what the United States could turn into under the right circumstances. This fear is not to be ignored.

At the end of his presidency, Trump's sources leaked that he is "very serious" about running for president in 2024 (Kumar 2020). There is no shortage of support for him either. Trump's nationals have not given up hope. As of January 2021, 53% of Republicans would support Trump running in 2024 (Din 2021). Even if Trump doesn't run in the 2024 election he has already implemented monumental lasting consequences on the country, and women, by placing conservatives in life long positions. Being afraid to challenge, and rechallenge, radicals creates the potential for the United States to become what Atwood predicted in Gilead, a patriarchal theocracy. By examining Atwood's dystopian novel situated within American history, *The Handmaid's Tale* can be seen as a prediction of what the United States could turn into under Donald Trump's control. It can also be viewed as a guide to combating weaponized Christian nationalism.

In Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* Gilead overthrew the United States as a result of weaponized fear within the religious. There were mass book burnings, killing of protestors, subverting women's rights, and men being placed at the head of the country and household. Donald Trump's political career has echoed these events. While Trump has not enacted mass book burnings, he has had political sway. Trump took a group of people, identified by Kobes Du Mez as Evangelical Christians who were feeling persecuted, and created Christian nationals out of them. Gilead murdered their protestors, Trump had thousands marching across the country the day after his inauguration. Gilead stripped women of their freedom and agency. Trump began to follow that path by revoking women's rights through their access to healthcare, protection, and judge seats. Gilead placed men at the head of the country and household. Trump

followed this example, placing men in the majority of judges seats and indirectly through the subversion of women's rights. This allowed men to take the position of power across the country and reinforce this ideal in his supporter's homes. Trump's America juxtaposed Gilead bares a mirrored image. By examining *The Handmaid's Tale* through the lens of a dystopian novel situated within American history, Donald Trump's political career mirrors Gilead by promising would-be Christian nationals that he would reestablish traditional patriarchal values.

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