

Trump's America reads more like 'The Handmaid's Tale'

Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" is often quoted as a cautionary tale, a dystopian world that often seems and feels far too extreme to ever be reality. But under the policies of Donald Trump, the United States is creeping towards a reality with uncomfortably similar parallels—a society where women are systematically stripped of their rights, with the government in full control of their bodily autonomy and where marginalized communities are diminished under the guise of traditional values.

Trump's recent legislative actions—such as freezing federal grants and loans, empowering the ultra-religious right as well as pushing for extreme abortion bans—are not simply conservative policies. These are all part of a larger movement, one that aims to reshape America into a country that is not only concentrated in the hands of white wealthy men but leaves everyone else as **scapegoats** forced to suffer.

The Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in June of 2022 was a tipping point, it was the beginning of the end. This move signaled to women across the country that their reproductive rights were not only not valued but not guaranteed. With Trump taking credit for appointing the justices that made that ruling possible it is clear that his second term is guaranteed to include even more aggressive restrictions on birth control, healthcare access and abortion. Women, especially low-income women and women of color, would **bear the brunt** of these policies, forcing them into a system where their choices, autonomy and their very futures are controlled and dictated by white, male, conservative lawmakers.

Trump's reach has extended far beyond reproductive rights; his policies have targeted LGBTQ+ rights and protections for immigrants, all in the name of "making America great again." But America can not be "great" when it is becoming more and more synonymous with a dystopian novel. It can not be great when women must flee their states to seek access to medical care. It can not be great when queer people fear losing their legal protections and right to self. It can not be great when marginalized communities are being scapegoated for one party's political gain. America can not be great when it is only great for some.

Trump's version of America (...) extends to controlling and distorting the very foundation of our democracy. His administration has repeatedly and openly attacked journalists and the press, has sought to criminalize opposing opinions and has incited extremist groups who believe in ruling by religion. The current administration's policies are not simply about winning elections. These policies are about rewriting America's past, its present and its future. Where differing opinions are punished, history is erased and power is held by those who meet a narrow and exclusive definition of what it means to be American under Trump.

In "The Handmaid's Tale" the authoritarian regime, Gilead, didn't come to power overnight. It was a regime that built itself up piece by piece, law by law, and restriction by restriction until it was too late for anyone to fight back. America may not be Gilead yet, but ignoring these **jarring** similarities ensures it will be. The parallels between this administration and Atwood's Gilead are far too alarming to ignore. His direct and targeted assault on women's rights, LGBTQ+ protections, racial justice and our fundamental democratic principles and process represents a transparent agenda: one that aims to consolidate all of the power into the hands of a select few while simultaneously stripping away the rights of those who do not fit his idea of a "great America."

Margaret Atwood explained that "The Handmaid's Tale" was rooted in truth and historical accuracy; the events that took place in the book had already happened somewhere in the world. The question is no longer whether this administration will **strip away** more rights because the answer to that is clear. The question now is: how much damage will be done before this country realizes that we are no longer warning against a dystopia? We are living in one.

Mai Clifford, Opinions and Editorials Editor, February 19, thepacepress.org, 2025

scapegoats : been held / made responsible for something bad

bear the brunt of : suffer from

jarring : unpleasant

strip away : take off