

**ContactZone**  
Peer-reviewed International E-Journal  
Call for Papers

**Margaret Atwood: Science fiction, Dystopia, Ustopia**  
edited by Oriana Palusci and Héliane Ventura

In her long literary career as a writer of fiction, poet and essayist Margaret Atwood has increasingly embedded science fiction elements and explored dystopian worlds in her works. Unlike Doris Lessing, another contemporary mainstream author who resorts to the genre of science fiction, Atwood does not privilege space opera, and in her later novels focuses her attention on man-made chemical mutations, genetic splices and the consequences of climate change. We can follow Atwood from the depiction of a gendered dystopia in 1985 (*The Handmaid's Tale*) and its sequel (*The Testaments*, 2019) to the science fiction incursion inside *The Blind Assassin* (2000) to her more overt representation of apocalyptic ecological landscapes in the Maddaddam trilogy (2008, 2009, 2013), while in the meantime publishing her reviews on science fiction writers (see *In Other Worlds. SF and the Human Imagination*, 2011). Her dialogue with Ursula Le Guin who spoke of “ambiguous utopia” leads her to the definition of ustopia, a term Atwood coins “by combining utopia and dystopia” (“Dire Cartographies: The Roads to Ustopia”). Atwood’s success in the realm of SF has increased also thanks to the adaptations of her works in different media (see Wells-Lassagne and McMahon eds, *Adapting Margaret Atwood*, 2021).

This special issue wants to further investigate the ways and processes of Atwood’s declination of the sphere of utopia, dystopia, SF in her fictional and prose works, as well as her relationship with other SF authors, taking also into consideration the adaptations of her fiction (film, TV series, theatre, graphic novel).

Possible areas of inquiry may include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- post-apocalyptic scenarios
- female dystopia
- gender and the body
- Adaptations
- hybrid animals
- “new” genetic variations
- gender and male dominion
- the female body as vehicle of reproduction
- the new language of an apocalyptic vision

- Atwood on SF writers
- Atwood and other SF writers (also Canadian)
- Cyborgs and biotechnological experiments
- Exo-transplants and hyper capitalism
- Bio-politics and post-humanism
- Translations
- Therapeutic story-telling and myth-making
- Anti-totalitarian novels and ecological activism

**Abstract submission:**

Please send a 300-word abstract and a 100-word bio-note to the following email:  
[aisff.starfiction@gmail.com](mailto:aisff.starfiction@gmail.com) and [heliane.ventura@univ-tlse2.fr](mailto:heliane.ventura@univ-tlse2.fr)

Language: English or Italian

**Important dates:**

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Notification of acceptance: **20 May 2023**

Submission of paper: **30 August 2023**

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