

# THE SUBJUGATION OF WOMEN THROUGH LEXICAL INNOVATION IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*<sup>1</sup>

## LA SUBYUGACIÓN DE LA MUJER A TRAVÉS DE LA INNOVACIÓN LÉXICA EN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*, DE MARGARET ATWOOD

Paula LÓPEZ RÚA

**Author / Autora:**

Paula López Rúa  
Universidad de Santiago de Compostela  
Santiago de Compostela, Spain  
[paula.lopez@usc.es](mailto:paula.lopez@usc.es)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5140-9365>

**Submitted / Recibido:** 07/10/2020

**Accepted / Aceptado:** 05/04/2021

**To cite this article / Para citar este artículo:**

López Rúa, P. (2021). The Subjugation of Women through Lexical Innovation in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. *Feminismo/s*, 38, 23-51. Women, Sexual Identity and Language [Monographic dossier]. I. Balteiro (Coord.). <https://doi.org/10.14198/fem.2021.38.02>

**Licence / Licencia:**

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International.



© Paula López Rúa

**Abstract**

Given the importance of novel formations in science and speculative fiction, the aim of this paper is to analyse a selection of morphosemantic and semantic neologisms that occur in the feminist dystopia *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), namely those items more closely connected with women's lives. These items are gathered, classified and discussed by resorting to the tools provided by Morphology, Lexical Semantics, Onomastics and Women's Studies. Therefore, the paper explores how new names for people (*Econowives*, *Offred*), activities (*Particucition*), artifacts (*Birthmobile*) and places (the *Colonies*) play a part in the linguistic task of female subjugation. It shows how in a fictional republic where gender roles and religious totalitarianism are taken to extremes, the forms and meanings of words are manipulated to enhance power relations and gender inequality, impose an orthodox frame of mind

1. Research funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities and ERDF Funds (PGC2018-093622-B-100). This grant is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

(comply with the system), and avoid uncomfortable truths. Neologisms provide a sense of authenticity in the narrative and show how language evolves to satisfy various needs, not only pragmatic, but also social, ideological and euphemistic.

**Keywords:** Gender roles; Morphology; Neologism; Neoseme; Subjugation

## Resumen

Dada la importancia de las formaciones novedosas en la ciencia ficción y en la ficción especulativa, el objetivo de este trabajo es analizar una selección de neologismos morfosemánticos y semánticos que aparecen en la distopía feminista *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), centrando el interés en aquellos elementos más estrechamente relacionados con la vida de las mujeres. Estos elementos se recopilan, clasifican y analizan recurriendo a las herramientas proporcionadas por la Morfología, la Semántica léxica, la Onomástica y los Estudios de la Mujer. Por lo tanto, el artículo explora cómo los nuevos nombres para individuos (*Econowives*, *Offred*), actividades (*Participation*), artefactos (*Birthmobile*) y lugares (the *Colonies*) desempeñan un papel en la tarea lingüística de la subyugación femenina. Se muestra cómo en una república ficticia donde los roles de género y el totalitarismo religioso se llevan al extremo, las formas y significados de las palabras se manipulan para favorecer las relaciones de poder y la desigualdad de género, imponer un estado de ánimo ortodoxo (acatar el sistema) y evitar verdades incómodas. Los neologismos aportan un aire de autenticidad a la narrativa y muestran cómo la lengua evoluciona para satisfacer variadas necesidades, no sólo pragmáticas, sino también sociales, ideológicas y eufemísticas.

**Palabras clave:** morfología; neologismo; neosema; roles de género; subyugación.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Neology is an outstanding feature of narrative fiction, particularly in texts that belong to science or speculative fiction and portray worlds which are mimetic to the reader's world. In these texts, we are likely to find «new characters, new places, new machines, new social groups, new processes, and a host of new objects» (Stockwell, 2014, p. 117), all with new names. Given the importance of novel formations in these fictional genres, the aim of this paper is to analyse the neologisms that occur in the literary work *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) –from here onwards, *HT*– by resorting to the tools provided by Morphology, Lexical Semantics, Onomastics and Women's Studies.

Often interpreted as a feminist dystopia, Margaret Atwood's novel is set in the early XXI<sup>st</sup> century. A military elite of Christian fundamentalists, alarmed by the loss of traditional American values and by a fertility crisis caused by environmental pollution, overthrows the US government and creates the theocratic republic of Gilead. Fertile unmarried women are forced into sexual slavery to bear children for the ruling class, whereas most of the other women work as domestic servants, indoctrinators and prostitutes, or are condemned to toil and die at toxic wastelands called the *Colonies*.

As will be shown in the sections that follow, in a fictional republic where gender roles and religious totalitarianism are taken to extremes, the forms and meanings of words are manipulated to enhance power relations and gender inequality, impose an orthodox frame of mind (comply with the system) and suppress dangerous thoughts. Language is therefore used to restrain the mind (Mansurov, 2019). Words are coined or new meanings developed to keep control over citizens' thoughts and actions and to preserve a convenient status quo which keeps the military elite in power.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. *The Handmaid's Tale* and feminist dystopian narrative

A dystopia, or negative utopia, is «a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporary reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived» (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). Dystopian works «draw attention to issues in the society that might escalate and that people do not pay enough attention to» (Bratanović, 2020, p. 349). As pointed out by Moylan (2000, p. xi), dystopia emerges as a literary form in the 1900s, its roots lying in Menippean satire, realism and anti-utopian nineteenth-century novels. One outstanding feature of dystopian literature is its critical quality: it develops «an abstract yet critical account» of a «new social spacetime» (Moylan, 2000, p. 111), and it is indeed a powerful vehicle for denouncing existing social or political conditions by taking them to extremes. This is also true in the case of feminist dystopias like *HT*, as stated by Cavalcanti (2000): «In the feminist dystopias, the critique of the present is manifested in the stylization and exaggeration of «what we have now»»(p. 153). In line with

this exaggeration intended to denounce, in *HT* the reader witnesses how a totalitarian theocracy is imposed on a frightened, confused, and submissive population. The religion of a merciless God of the Old Testament permeates all spheres of life through language, and biblical connotations are present in names of people, places, events, and even in conversational exchanges. It is «the use of religion as a front for tyranny» that Atwood herself denounces in the introduction to the 2017 edition of the novel (Atwood, 2017, p. xviii).

*HT* is often described as an instance of feminist dystopian narrative (Bratanović, 2020; Dillon, 2020; Falk Jones, 1991; Muñoz-González, 2019; Nelson, 2012; Vevaina, 2006) which presents «an effective warning against absolutist or despotic systems» (Thompson, 2012, p. 25). The novel displays standard dystopian features – «lack of freedom, relentless surveillance, imposed routine» (Thompson, 2012, p. 25), and depicts «a futuristic space in which women's social roles have been thoroughly dominated and severely limited by a patriarchal order» (Cavalcanti, 2000, p. 166). In the fictional republic of Gilead, women are subject to «institutionalized humiliation, objectification and ownership» (Cavalcanti, 2000, p. 166). As noted by Merriman (2012), *HT* emphasizes «persistent forms of female victimization: sexual exploitation, isolation and compelled ignorance» which go hand in hand with «economic and politic powerlessness» (p. 43). This paper explores how language (and neology in particular) contributes to this dystopian picture of female subjugation.

Concerning the relationship between Atwood and science fiction, it must be noted that, although Atwood's work has been influenced by science-fiction conventions, such as the use of established linguistic tools for the coinage of neologisms (as will be shown in the section devoted to the description of morphosemantic and sematic neologisms), she is rather a writer of speculative fiction, or even social science fiction (Thompson, 2012, p. 19). The author herself dismisses the term 'science fiction' to refer to her work because of the lack of «technological gadgetry» (p. 19). In fact, as Thompson (2012, p. 24) accurately notes, both the world of Gilead and that of 2195 Nunavit (the place where the transcribed manuscript of *Offred's* memories is analysed in a symposium) are quite «unfuturistic» concerning technological development.

## 2.2. Morphosemantic framework

Porto (2007, p. 213) states that «nonce-formations and neosemes are characteristic of certain narrative genres, such as science fiction and fantasy» (by extension, they can also be found in other speculative fiction genres). In order to carry out the analysis purported in this paper, it is therefore important to start with a few terminological distinctions, i.e., what is understood by neologism, nonce form and neoseme, and also the difference between lexical productivity and creativity.

## 2.3. Neologisms, nonce forms and neosemes

Concerning neologisms and nonce formations, there is general agreement among linguists as to the difference between the terms, as well as to the fact that both types of coinages are linked by a process of progression or development that encompasses institutionalization, i.e. the integration of an item into the lexical stock of a language, which goes hand in hand with its listing in reference dictionaries (Bauer, 2001, pp. 38-40; Hohenhaus, 2007, p. 8; Mattiello, 2017, p. 25).

Neologisms are «words that represent an advanced state of ad-hoc formation in terms of higher frequency, tentative familiarity among the speakers of the language community and stronger context-independence» (Kerremans, 2015, p. 30). Also, they «seem to be coined to refer to new objects, events or ideas» (p. 30). By contrast, nonce formations are «context-dependent», «not coined for permanence», «not stored in the lexicon», «non-institutionalized», and «only with repeated occurrences in different contexts may we begin to consider them neologisms» (Munat, 2007, pp. 168, 171). Kerremans (2015) rightly qualifies his description of neologisms by adding that they are «form-meaning» pairings (lexical units) «that have been manifested in use and thus are no longer nonce-formations, but have not yet occurred frequently and are not widespread enough in a given period to have become part [...] of the lexicon of the speech community and the majority of its members» (pp. 31-32). In this way, she is accurately taking into account the fact that, when a neologism is fully institutionalized, it is technically no longer a neologism. Adopting a Saussurean perspective, Kerremans (2015, pp. 30-31) considers form-meaning pairings and describes as neologisms combinations

of a new form and a new meaning (*detweet*), a new form and an existing meaning (*snowicane*), and an old form and a new meaning (*subprime*), the last combination being «new to the speakers and therefore a neologism» (p. 31). This classification is actually based on Tournier's (1985) proposal of macromechanisms by means of which new words are coined in English (p. 51). As noted by Lipka (1992, p. 92), these processes comprise the coinage of «morpho-semantic», «morphological» and «semantic» neologisms.

Mattiello (2017) accurately notes that some coinages are borderline cases between «nonce formation and true neologisms» (p. 26), and she mentions ad-hoc formations occurring in poetic language as examples. Even though these items are attested «only once» and «not recorded in lexicographic works», they belong to the «literary heritage of a language», and they may even be «reused» by other authors using «poetic licence» (p. 26).

As regards neosemy, Munat (2007, pp. 170-171) describes neosemes as «new meanings attributed to already existing words», and Kerremans (2015, p. 30) talks about semantic changes (an existing form with a new meaning) as a type of neologisms. According to Stockwell (2014, pp. 119-122) in science fiction neosemy arises through broadening or narrowing an existing meaning, through metaphor, metonymy and recontextualization (i.e., cases in which the field of use of a word changes because of the features of the fictional world: for instance, applying 'pregnant' to both males and females). It would be possible, however, to subsume recontextualization under the general process of meaning broadening or narrowing. Along similar lines, Tournier (1985, p. 51) and Lipka (1992, pp. 93, 122, 127) agree that semantic neologisms can be coined by means of metaphor (semantic transfer based on similarity) and metonymy (semantic transfer based on contiguity). Lipka (1992, p. 122) represents metaphor by means of the following formula: X (tenor) is like Y (vehicle) with respect to Z (ground), and provides the example of 'a human elephant' where 'human' is X, 'elephant' is Y and Z is 'clumsiness' or 'a long memory'.

When decoding novel formations (neologisms, nonce forms or neosemes), the addressees (listeners or readers) may not grasp the exact meaning, but «they are familiar with the word-formation process by means of which the word has been assembled and can infer general semantic characteristics from this process» (Kerremans, 2015, p. 37). Besides, the speaker/writer will aid

the interpretation of the coinage in various ways, for example, «by assuring morphological transparency» (p. 45) or by resorting to «a supportive context» (p. 47). The process of context-dependent selection is also noted by Cruse (1986, pp. 68-69) and is of particular importance in the interpretation of neosemes.

In this study I will resort to the terms neologism and neoseme (semantic neologism) to talk about the new coinages occurring in the novel under analysis. It must be considered that, from the point of view of the reader, these new coinages could be regarded as nonce forms: they can only be interpreted in the light of the context of the novel and they do not occur outside that context, they are not stored in the lexicon and they are not institutionalized by their presence in reference works. However, they can also be regarded as borderline cases in the sense explained by Mattiello (2017, p. 26): they deserve attention because they belong to the literary heritage of a language and they can be used again by other authors. Lastly, if we consider the point of view of the characters and the world depicted in the novel, these items turn out to be actual neologisms: they are created to refer to new objects, events or ideas, they are frequently used, and the speech community is familiar with them. Concerning neosemes, and following Kerremans (2015), they will be regarded as a type of neologisms in which an already existing form is paired with a new meaning.

#### 2.4. *Lexical creativity and productivity*

Lastly, a few lines should be devoted to the difference between creativity and productivity concerning the lexicon. When analysing morphological productivity, Bauer (2001, pp. 64-66) suggests treating productivity and creativity as hyponyms of innovation, and distinguishing them by means of rule-governedness (a parameter which is often seen as central to the notion of productivity): thus productivity is rule-governed whereas creativity is non-productive, unpredictable and rule-changing (pp. 65-66). He eventually puts forward that both productivity and creativity could be regarded as prototypical categories along a cline, with «clear cases at either end» but «no valid way of drawing a clear distinction between what is creative and what is productive» (p. 71). In her discussion on lexical productivity and creativity,

Munat (2007, p. 165) draws on Bauer's work and concludes that creative coinages «change the rules» while productive coinages «exploit the rules». Keeping this distinction in mind, the morphological coinages analysed here are basically the result of productivity, since, as we will see, they are the rule-governed outcome of current word-formation devices.

### 3. METHODOLOGY, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: MORPHOSEMANTIC AND SEMANTIC NEOLOGISMS IN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

Following Kerremans (2015) and Lipka (1992), the neologisms spotted in the novel under analysis will be classified as morphosemantic neologisms (new forms and new meanings) and semantic neologisms (or neosemes, i.e., new meanings for old forms). Concerning the former type, new words are coined by means of productive morphological devices (derivation, composition, and minor processes like clipping or blending; more details are provided in the subsections that follow):

- Derivation (prefixation): *Unwoman*.
- Composition with combining forms<sup>2</sup>, such as *Econowife* or *Birthmobile*. *Econowife* comes from 'econo(my)/econo(mical)' + 'wife', 'economy' meaning 'thrifty or efficient use of resources'; *Econowives* are economical wives who serve several functions, as will be seen later. The combining form *econo-* can be traced in items like *econometrics*, *econobox* (a small economical car), and *Econo-Heat* (a trademark for a panel heater). On its part, a *Birthmobile* ('birth' + '(auto)mobile') is a vehicle transporting *Handmaids* to birthings. The item follows the pattern of similar words containing the combining form '-mobile' (from Latin *mobilis* via French), such as *snowmobile*, *pimpmobile* ('a large, expensive and vulgar car'), and *bloodmobile* ('a vehicle for blood donation').

---

2. Combining forms are «allomorphs of full words which are used in neoclassical compounds» (Lehrer, 1996, p. 362), such as *geo-* in *geology*. They are usually of Greek or Latin origin. Neoclassical compounds are modern coinages made up of classical components, such as *hydrology* (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002, p. 1661).



- Clipping<sup>3</sup>: *Red Center* ('re-ed(ucation)' facility for *Handmaids*).
- Shortening and compounding. Here we find blends, such as *Particicution*, ('participation' + 'execution', an act of communal –or participative– execution performed by *Handmaids*), and different types of clipped compounds: clipped compounds of word + splinter<sup>4</sup>, such as *Prayvaganza* ('pray' + 'extravaganza', an elaborate display of communal prayer); and clipped compounds of combining form + splinter, like *Gyn Ed* ('ed(ucation) in womanhood', from Greek *gyne* 'woman', a debasing term for a subject where *Handmaids* learn their duties). As pointed out by López-Rúa (2019, p. 128), blends and clipped compounds are the result of «simultaneous shortening and compounding» with different degrees of abbreviation and phonic and graphic integration of their constituents». Therefore, in prototypical blends «the constituents overlap (*motel*: 'motor' + 'hotel')», whereas in prototypical clipped compounds (*sitcom*: 'situation' + 'comedy') «constituents are concatenated».

As for neosemes, old words get new meanings adjusted to the requirements of the new Gileadean society, for example, the names for the different categories of women, activities or places (e.g. *Wives*, *Salvaging*, *Milk and Honey*; see below for details).

The subsections that follow delve into the morphosemantic and semantic neologisms identified in the novel, which are analysed and discussed. It must be noted that the analysis of neologisms put forward in this paper is not fully comprehensive, since it is focused on those items more closely connected with women's lives in the fictional republic of Gilead. Therefore, as will be shown, the neologisms which were of interest for the present study were selected from the whole corpus of neologisms used in the novel,

---

3. Clipping is a shortening word-formation device which consists in «cutting off part of an existing word or phrase to leave a phonologically shorter sequence», as in *ad* from *advertisement* (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002, p. 1634).

4. Lehrer (1996, p. 361) defines splinters as «parts of words in blends which are intended to be recognised as belonging to a target word but which are not independent formatives».

and they are classified and interpreted in the light of Morphological Theory, Semantics and Feminist studies.

### 3.1. Women categories: from *Wives* to *Unwomen*

In its portrait of Gileadean society, the novel brings to light the topics of gender inequality and gender roles, which are also central issues in Feminist thought (de Beauvoir, 2005, pp. 15, 30, 207, etc.; Fowlkes, 1987, p. 4; Fuchs Epstein, 2014, p. 159; Kimmel, 2004, pp. 2-3; Ortner, 1974, pp. 69-70). Female ancestral subordination due to biological (Kimmel, 2004, p. 2), socio-economic (Fuchs Epstein, 2014, p. 157; Levine Frader, 2004, pp. 30-33; West and Zimmerman, 2014, p. 121), or cultural factors (Fuchs Epstein, 2014, p. 168; Moore, 1991, p. 37), and the confinement of women to the domestic sphere (Kimmel, 2004, pp. 120-121; Leacock, 1978; Martín-Casares, 2006, pp. 165-166) are recurrent topics in Feminist critical theory.

In *HT* we find a patriarchal society which survives as a form of social organization because, as Sau (2000, p. 137) notes, it is preserved by those who benefit from it (in this case, the ruling class), and it is a consequence of human biology. Patriarchy is sustained by a conception of different gender roles for males and females, which results in gender inequality (Kiss, 2020). Women in Gilead are forced into castes according to their usefulness for the regime. This division reflects nineteenth century cultural rules, which «segregated women's and men's spheres of work» (Fowlkes, 1987, p. 4). Female multiple roles were «likely to lead to either incompatible or excessive role expectations which result in physical and /or mental exhaustion» (p. 6). This belief is endorsed by Gileadean rulers, so multiple roles are avoided, and this is done for women's welfare and protection; in Aunt Lydia's words: «Why expect one woman to carry out all the functions necessary to the serene running of a household? It isn't reasonable or humane» (Atwood, 2017, p. 163).

However, in line with dystopian hyperbole, in *HT* gender role division is taken to extremes, with female roles further distributed into different categories of women. The only value that women have is thus the role they perform in a male-dominated society. On the one hand, we come across different types of useful women: *Wives* (social and ceremonial role), *Aunts* (educational role), *Handmaids* (reproductive role), *Marthas* (domestic role),

*Jezebels* (sexual role), and *Econowives* (multipurpose wives). On the other hand, there are *Unwomen* (valueless women who do not perform any useful role). Women are referred to by means of these generic names which deprive them of their individual identities. Individuals are therefore confined into roles, and this division is reinforced by the colours of their clothes: virginal and cold blue for *Wives*, soldierly khaki for *Aunts*, fecund (or captive) red for *Handmaids*, plain and efficient dull green for *Marthas*, and coloured stripes for multifunctional *Econowives*. It is also noteworthy that the names for the different castes of women are degrading when contrasted with the names for the different types of men, which carry connotations of military and religious power (*Commanders*, *Guardians of the Faith*, *Angels*).

Although in the novel there are males subordinate to other males (basically civilians), the most poignant subjugation is experienced by females as a group with respect to males. Female subordination is necessary to preserve the status quo: as Fuchs Epstein notes, «everywhere, women's subordination is basic to maintaining the social cohesion and stratification systems of ruling and governing groups –male groups– on national and local levels, in the family, and in all other major institutions» (2014, p. 159).

### 3.1.1. *Wives*

The neoseme *Wife* narrows the meaning of 'wife' and exclusively refers to a married woman from the Gileadean military elite. It must be noted that *Wives* are at the top of the female scale but still subordinate to *Commanders*. *Wives* are not at the same level as *Commanders* (their husbands); they are just another type of women, and, as such, they can also be *Salvaged*. The title of *Commander* is related to military authority, whereas the title of *Wife* refers to marriage, an instrument enhancing subordination, as in origin it is a contract or religious rite agreed upon by men to distribute women and ensure the property of children (Sau, 2000, pp. 190, 194).

*Wives'* power is confined to the domestic sphere. They keep household discipline, organize marriages and give away daughters: «It's mothers, not fathers, who give away daughters these days and help with the arrangement of the marriages. The marriages are of course arranged» (Atwood, 2017, p. 219). Their function is therefore mainly representative of the husband, social

and ceremonial. Dressed in blue, *Wives* are pure mothers who do not often conceive (although this may be due to infertile husbands). *Serena Joy* is the only *Wife* with a personal name (according to the researchers who analysed *Offred's* recordings, it might have been invented by the narrator). In literature, names can be figuratively interpreted using symbolic associations created by means of «irony, metonymy, metaphor and allegory» (Smith, 2016, p. 308). *Serena Joy* arouses ironic connotations, since the character is far from being relaxed and happy. She is actually tormented and sad because she is a failed woman who cannot bear children, so she has to witness the sexual encounters between her husband and her *Handmaid Offred*.

### 3.1.2. *Aunts*

*Aunt* is a neoseme with the narrowed meaning of a female figure acting as a sentinel and indoctrinator for *Handmaids*. As a symbol of her power position, *Aunts* keep personal names (Lydia, Helena, Sara, Elizabeth). They are «childless or infertile or older women who were not married» (Atwood, 2017, p. 308). The researchers believe that these women joined the *Aunts* because they truly supported the regime and wanted to enjoy power, or because in this way they would escape «shipment to the infamous Colonies» (Atwood, 2017, p. 308). *Aunts* keep the privilege of reading and writing, and they are in charge of the *Handmaids's* training and indoctrination, oversee births and preside over executions. As adult female relatives, aunts are feminine figures who can also assume an instructional role in the absence of the mother. Therefore, aunts can perform the traditional educational role transferred from mothers, who instruct daughters in their duties with a view to perpetuating patriarchal relationships (Sau, 2000, p. 146). In this case, the name is doubly appropriate: they are not called 'mothers' or 'grandmothers' because they cannot bear children.

While *Wives* exert moral superiority over *Handmaids* (they are the Commanders' legitimate partners), *Aunts* represent physical superiority (they can punish *Handmaids* and are equipped with cattle prods). Both exemplify women's subordination through other women, feminine subordination being more effective when females control other females: «At the level of gender relations, gender is about the power that men as a group have over women

as a group, and is it also about the power that some men have over other men (or that some women have over other women)» (Kimmel, 2004, p. 99).

### 3.1.3. *Handmaids*

A handmaid is a close female servant. The neoseme keeps and narrows the biblical meaning: a female servant (a factual slave) who serves her mistress by performing all types of duties, including acting as a concubine. In the novel, the term refers to a serf, i.e., an unfree person bound to her master, with an exclusively reproductive role. As used in the Bible, the term refers to female slaves. Both Leah and Rachel handed in their handmaids for Jacob to have children with them, which is the origin of the *Ceremony*, the procreation ritual that takes place in the novel.

*Handmaids* are valuable and scarce, and as true slaves they are branded so that they can be held in check: «the tattoo [...] a Braille he can read, a cattle-brand. It means ownership» (Atwood, 2017, p. 254). Their only role is to conceive, but not raise children. Therefore, they partially embody de Beauvoir's notion of «the servitude of maternity» (*la servitude de la maternité*): «todo el organismo de la hembra está adaptado a la servidumbre de la maternidad y controlado por ella» (de Beauvoir, 2005, p. 78). *Handmaids* are slaves to her ability to bear children.

### 3.1.4. *Marthas*

In the items *Martha*, *Jezebel* and *Rachel and Leah Centres* (see below) we come across examples of antonomasia (the use of a proper name to refer to a characteristic trait). As a neoseme, a *Martha* is a servant confined to domestic duties. In the Bible, Martha was the sister of Mary and Lazarus, and she is connected with household chores and hospitality: «Martha was continually busying herself with serving» (Luke 10: 40). *Martha* is thus a metaphorical extension of the biblical character: following Lipka's formula (1992, p. 122): a woman (X) is a *Martha* (Y) because of Z: 'concern for domestic duties and others' wellbeing', and 'obsequiousness', the defining features of Martha, the biblical character.

The *Marthas* in *Offred's* household have names (Cora and Rita) but they are only used in the account of her memories: «Cora comes in first, then Rita, wiping her hands on her apron» (Atwood, 2017, p. 81).

### 3.1.5. *Econowives*

The neologism *Econowife* is used to name working class women who must perform all the female roles at the same time: «the women of the poorer men. Econowives, they're called. These women are not divided into functions. They have to do everything; if they can» (Atwood, 2017, p. 24). These women are 'economical' from a male perspective because in this way you do not have to maintain one woman for each role, as happens in the *Commanders'* households. They can perform several roles (social, domestic, sexual and reproductive). The term is harshly demeaning because it turns women into objects which serve different uses.

### 3.1.6. *Jezebels*

*Jezebel's* is the name of the brothel where some women work as prostitutes, so it can be inferred that those women are unofficially labelled as *Jezebels*. They are confined to a sexual role. The name is a metaphorical extension of a biblical character who was an impious, greedy, vane and scheming woman. As such, she became the model of female wickedness: «For still the fornications of your mother, Jezebel, and her many poisons, are thriving» (2 Kings 9: 22). The name is nowadays used in small letters to refer to an impudent, deceitful, or morally unrestrained woman.

*Jezebels* are allowed to dress as in pre-Gilead times and wear makeup. In the Bible, Jezebel was also described as wearing makeup, perhaps in an attempt to seduce her murderer: «But Jezebel, hearing of his arrival, painted her eyes with cosmetics, and adorned her head» (2 Kings 9: 30).

### 3.1.7. *Unwomen*

If womanhood is defined as a set of roles, women who do not perform any are *Unwomen*. Bauer and Huddleston (2002, p. 1689) note that this prefix is rarely attached «directly» to nouns. They also state that forms with *non-* (the most productive negative prefix for nouns) «are emotively neutral» whereas

those with *un-* «may convey criticism and gradability» (p. 1689). In this case, *un-* conveys «an emotional sense of removal» (López-Rúa, 2019, p. 125). An *Unwoman* is therefore a person deprived of the quality of being a woman (her womanhood) because she is unfit to perform any of the assigned roles (as she is old, infertile, or non-complying).

### 3.1.8. Forgotten women: *daughters* and *widows*

There are two other groups of women who are mentioned in the novel but do not even receive a specific name: daughters and widows. Concerning 'mother', the term is deprived of meaning because in this fictional world being a mother comprises giving birth, which is the function of *Handmaids*, and child rearing and education, which corresponds to *Marthas* and *Wives*.

Concerning daughters, they are not a category, so the noun (in contrast with all the others) does not occur in capitals, probably because they do not seem to have a useful role in Gileadean society. Sau (2000, p. 147) explains that for centuries daughters were thought to be born because of a biological flaw during gestation (the daughter born in the novel, baby Angela, is actually an *Unbaby*). Daughters are not appreciated in traditional societies: along history, having daughters has been regarded as a defect of mothers (Sau, 2000, p. 147). Daughters in the novel participate in group weddings celebrated at women's *Prayvaganzas*. The role of daughters is basically to become *Wives* (but it is not really expected of them to have children if they cannot; that role can be performed by *Handmaids*). In any case, it must be considered that the text was a transcription made from tapes after the events took place, so capitalization was a decision of the researchers who transcribed the contents of the tapes. In the light of the events depicted, they seem to consider that in Gileadean society daughters were not important.

Similarly, widows do not perform any necessary roles either. All women, from *Wives* to *Jezebels*, are subordinate to men and perform useful functions for men (providing heirs, cleaning and feeding, social representation, sexual pleasure, indoctrination). Widows are no longer subordinate to a man, so they are not useful; consequently, they are not a specific category. *Offred* briefly mentions them only once: «Sometimes there is a woman all in black,

a widow. There used to be more of them, but they seem to be diminishing» (Atwood, 2017, p. 24)

Daughters and widows illustrate Ainiála's claim that «people give names to referents they consider worth naming» (2016, p. 371). In *HT*, the group in power (the one that possesses discourse and makes decisions on naming) does not regard these categories of women as «worth naming» because they are not valuable to the regime. Therefore, their names do not deserve a capital letter.

### 3.2. New realities: activities, artifacts, people and places

Important events, activities and characters in *Handmaids'* lives have new denominations using morphological and semantic neologisms. Although *Handmaids* are not the only women in the narration, the choice of the point of view makes *Offred's* experiences exclusive. The reader participates in her routines, her isolation, her fears, and places, activities and people directly relate to *Handmaids* because she is one of them. For instance, the *Wall* is a place in the city open to everyone, but it is part of *Offred's* routine because she goes past it when shopping with her partner. It is not any wall, but the *Wall* where people are executed, and it reminds them of the price for betraying the regime. The names that follow are a persistent reminder of *Handmaids'* roles and duties; they oppress them, pervade their lives, and intend to condition their actions and impose a complying frame of mind. In sum, they intend to manipulate and control people while hiding uncomfortable or inconvenient meanings. In the blend *Participation*, for example, the unpleasant connotations of 'execution' are conveniently hidden by clipping the word and fusing it with 'participation', so as to deviate the focus to communion and unity.

Regarding events and activities, *Testifying* and *Salvaging* are neosemes with religious connotations and narrowed meanings. Testifying is a public account of a religious conversion or experience. In *HT*, *Testifying* is a public act of exposure received with censure instead of understanding and forgiveness: *Handmaids* share misdeeds like illicit sexual activities, rapes or abortions from former lives, while *Aunts* lead the other women in a chant condemning the speaker. As for *Salvaging*, the verb salvage means 'save or rescue'. *Salvagers* (the suffix *-er* conveys the meaning 'one that is a suitable



object of a specified action', i.e., the one who is *salvaged*) are criminals who are euphemistically saved from a sinful life (their sins being abortion, adultery, murder, etc.) in this act of public execution. Women's *Prayvaganzas* are often mass weddings for the *Wives'* daughters. *Handmaids* are forced to attend these services which perpetuate their slavery (as daughters are future *Wives* and *Handmaids'* mistresses). Lastly, the *Ceremony* pompously narrows the meaning of ceremony to refer to the monthly ritual of procreation, and it is also a euphemism for a rape.

As regards artifacts, the *Birthmobile* is a special red or blue vehicle which carry *Handmaids* and *Wives* to birthings: its red colour may be a reminder of *Handmaids'* reproductive role. Turning to places, the neoseme *Colonies* keeps connotations of 'slavery' and 'subordination', since slaves were taken from Africa to work in the American colonies. In a somehow euphemistic way, the new term refers to radioactive and heavily polluted areas where *Unwomen* are sent to work and die. *Red Centres* are «re-education» facilities where women are instructed to become *Handmaids*: re-education euphemistically refers to the disciplinary process that *Handmaids* go through to accept their new role in Gilead, and red refers to the colour of their uniform.

Finally, in a society under close surveillance to track down traitors, *Handmaids* are particularly afraid of the *Eyes*, or the secret police. The hidden meaning of the term is 'spies for the regime'. Their metaphorical denomination refers to their ubiquity and once again carries religious connotations (the omnipresent eye of God).

### 3.3. Proper names

In the new republic of Gilead there are also other naming and renaming needs for current realities. There are new facilities that must be named (*Rachel and Leah Centres*) and businesses and people that must be renamed (shops and individuals). This is done by means of nominal expressions with unique referents and spelling with initial capitals, which are often coined by resorting to metaphorical extension while carrying religious connotations.

English grammars tend to define proper nouns along similar lines: they name specific people, places, countries, and so on; they have unique referents and are usually written with initial capital letters (Greenbaum, 1996, p. 97;

Quirk et al., 1985, p. 288). Proper nouns can combine with descriptive words («descriptors») to form composite names (*Dallas Road*) (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 288). Ordinary common nouns can also turn into names if they have a unique referent and are written with initial capitals (*The Guardian*). It can therefore be concluded that a proper noun is a word subcategory (*Mary*) whereas a proper name is a function (the reference to a unique entity) which can be performed by a proper noun, a proper noun plus other words (*Oxford Street*), a common noun (*Time*, the news magazine), or a common noun plus other words (*The Supreme Court*), as we will see in the examples analysed. This view is supported by Zabeeh (1968, p. 51): in his philosophical study on names, he states that «any expression and not only a noun may be used as a PN» (proper name).

Researchers in Onomastics describe a proper name as «a nominal expression that denotes a unique entity [...] to make it psychosocially salient» (Van Langedonck & Van de Velde, 2016, p. 18). However, Nyström (2016) also suggests that it is possible for certain personal names to have «open connections to the living lexicon» and therefore «retain something of the meaning we see in the corresponding words» (p. 42). These connections are particularly present in literature, where we often come across names that keep links to the original lexical meaning of the words, carry connotative meanings or perform additional functions. For instance, as we will see in *HT*, names of shops carry biblical connotations of abundance and function as subtle reminders of the *Handmaids'* reproductive role.

According to literary Onomastics, names can provide useful keys for interpreting literature, since name associations (iconic, symbolic and indexical) can be manipulated for artistic ends. Names can be analysed in the light of different critical approaches, and some interpretations may even go «beyond the intentions of an author» (Smith, 2016, p. 306). However, they are valid if they can convincingly explain the «thematic relevance» of semiotic associations and contribute to the thematic unity of the work of art (Smith, 2016, pp. 306-309). Therefore, it is possible (as suggested in this paper) to carry out an analysis of names under the perspective of feminist criticism.

Smith (2016, p. 307) rightly notes that, in literature, names may acquire meaningful associations as the story progresses (in *HT* we can grasp the full meaning of *Offred* or *Serena Joy* as the narrative develops), and that

characters may even function without names: in *HT* proper female names are only used in *Offred's* memories and thoughts, and *Handmaids* lose their old personal names to acquire new denominations which identify them as their *Commanders'* possessions (*Offred*, *Ofglen*, etc.). This is the way in which the novel denounces the dangerous loss of female identity. According to Smith (2016), «symbolic associations stem from the fact that all names are also words that in turn come from other contexts in which they have, or have had, additional meaning [...] We may say that the interpretation of every reference is *coloured* by the lexical attributes in other contexts of the word used as a name» (p. 305). Therefore, in the Bible, the names of the characters Martha and Jezebel are associated with 'industrious housework' and 'obsequiousness' (Martha), and 'immorality' (Jezebel). These symbolic associations are metaphorically transferred to *Marthas* and *Jezebels*, two groups of women in Gileadean society.

### 3.3.1. Place names: *Gilead*, shops, and *Rachel and Leah Centres*

Gilead is nowadays a hilly region in Jordan. The name occurs several times in the Bible, and as a place it is first referred to in the Genesis. The mount of Gilead, or the heap of testimony, is the place where Jacob and his uncle Laban met. They agreed to a non-aggression pact and sealed their alliance by putting stones into a pile, which is an ancestral way to honour the gods among Semitic peoples. Gilead thus means «heap of testimony» and is a place to honour the gods which symbolizes peace and concord. Given the frequent references to Jacob's history in other names in the novel, the republic of *Gilead* most likely takes its name from this biblical place: it intends to refer to an enclave of harmony and agreement that honours the true faith. However, this is again a euphemistic term that hides a religious dictatorship in a totalitarian state. Besides, *Gilead* is a territory which is far from peaceful, since the republic is at war with the rebels and there is instability on the borders: «This is the heart of Gilead, where the war cannot intrude except on television. Where the edges are we aren't sure, they vary, according to the attacks and counterattacks» (Atwood, 2017, p. 23).

*Gilead* is also a country of violence, where disobedience and dissent are present and ruthlessly crushed in *Salvagings* and *Particutions*. The republic

lives in a permanent state of war and scarcity in much the same way as *Oceania* in 1984. This situation keeps citizens under control and makes them feel grateful and lucky for what they have. Such submissive attitudes are noticed in studies on social responses to scarcity in industrialized societies. These studies suggest that individuals «return to traditional practices and values and become more subordinate to those in authority» (Booth, 1984, p. 113).

Names of shops also carry religious connotations and contribute to wrapping people in a suffocating religious atmosphere. Since *Handmaids* are not allowed to read and write, shop signs are illustrated with pictures, but *Offred* can still read the signs. Although the novel is not totally explicit in this respect, it seems that at least *Aunts* and *Wives* can read and write, whereas *Handmaids* are explicitly forbidden, under the punishment of the loss of a hand. Nothing is said about the «lower-ranking women» (*Marthas* and *Econowives*), but it is possible that the prohibition extends to them as well, since there is no need for them to read and write any more. This ban on female literacy conforms to Moore's (1991, p. 130) remark that women's inferior educational level contributes to consolidate their lower status in society.

The food store *Milk and Honey* takes its name from the description of Israel as a land of milk and honey in the Exodus, and metaphorically stands for fertility and abundance. For *Handmaids*, the name is a reminder of their reproductive function, but it is also ironic and euphemistic in a time of scarcity and rationing. *All Flesh*, the butcher's shop, is also taken from the Bible: «Behold, I am the Lord God; I am above all flesh» (Jeremiah 32: 27); «Because I do not worship idols made with hands, but the living God [...] who holds power over all flesh» (Daniel 14: 5). The name carries biblical connotations of servitude. *Loaves and Fishes* is the fishmonger's. Once again, it conveys abundance, and refers to the miracle of the five loaves and two fish reported in John's Gospel. Lastly, *Daily Bread* is the bakery. It is part of the sentence «Give us this day our daily bread» from the Lord's Prayer, and also conveys servitude. These names make religion pervade daily life and contribute to building a dismal environment of obedience and subjugation.

*Rachel and Leah Re-education Centres* is another euphemistic term. Rachel and Leah were Jacob's wives, and both gave her handmaids to Jacob for him to have children with them. The Ceremony is inspired by Rachel's words

(Rachel was the first to hand over her handmaid because she could not bear children): «But she said: «I have a handmaid Bilhah. Go in to her, so that she may give birth upon my knees, and I may have sons by her»» (Genesis 30: 3). Rachel and Leah represent female servitude and remind *Handmaids* of their child-bearing function.

### 3.3.2. The loss of identity through personal names: *Offred*

The main character in the novel, whose voice we hear in a first-person account of her memories, remains unnamed until we reach Chapter fourteen: «My name isn't Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden» (Atwood, 2017, p. 84). She resents the loss of her real name and keeps it hidden like a treasure, waiting for the day when she can «dig it up» (Atwood, 2017, p. 84). *Offred's* real name is never directly revealed, and it was the author's intention to keep it hidden because personal names are not important: characters get their names changed or simply vanish, so personal identities do not really matter, as Atwood herself explains (Atwood, 2017, p. xv). She mentions the possibility that *Offred's* actual name might be June and does not rule out this interpretation, but she admits that «that was not my original thought» (Atwood, 2017, p. xv).

The *Handmaids'* names (built out of their *Commanders'* names) epitomize sexual subjugation and objectification: *Offred*, *Ofglen*, *Ofwayne*, *Ofcharles*, *Ofwarren*, etc.. It is worth noting that the naming method used by Gileadean name-givers is similar to the one used for Roman slaves in ancient Rome: it is commonly reported that, after being sold, slaves took their master's *praenomen* in the genitive case followed by the suffix *-por* (derived from *puer*: 'boy'), for example, *Marcipor* ('boy of Marcus') (Rodríguez, 2007, p. 393; Wedemann, 2003, p. 30; Zabeeh, 1968, p. 66). There is an obvious parallelism with *Offred* and the rest of names given to the *Handmaids* which reinforces the factual slavery imposed on them.

In the naming process, *Offred* and the rest of the *Handmaids* lose their individual identity. They only have a social identity, a name that expresses their position in the group (Aldrin, 2016, p. 397): they are the possession of somebody else (a *Commander*), and when they move in to another household their name changes, as explained by the researchers at the end of the novel:

«Such names were taken by these women upon their entry into a connection with the household of a specific Commander, and relinquished by them upon leaving it» (Atwood, 2017, pp. 305-306)

As regards the possible interpretations of the name, *Offred* can be split as 'of-Fred' but also as 'off-red', and in the latter case it is premonitory: in the end the protagonist seems to manage to run away and escape from «the red», i.e. her red clothes and her life as a *Handmaid*. There is still another interpretation of the name which is put forward by Atwood herself: it is based on the similar pronunciation of 'Offred' and 'offered', so that the name can carry connotations of «a religious offering or a victim offered for sacrifice» (Atwood, 2017, p. xv).

### 3.4. Formulaic expressions

Formulaic expressions are «semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices» (Sinclair, 1991, p. 110) and «must be understood holistically» (Filatkina, 2018, p. 20). In her study on formulaic patterns as a means of lexical expansion, Filatkina (2018) suggests that «in the lexicon of a given language, preconstructed conventionalised items seem to be as productive as free word combinations» (p. 16).

Although formulaic language is commonly described as being basically fixed, it is quite a multifarious phenomenon, as shown by Schmitt and Carter (2004, p. 3):

formulaic sequences can be long (*You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink*) or short (*Oh no!*), or anything in between. They are commonly used for different purposes [...] These sequences can be totally fixed (*Ladies and Gentlemen*) or have a number of 'slots' which can be filled with appropriate words or strings of words ([...] *made it plain that* [...]).

Schmitt (2006, p. 15) lists the following functions of formulaic language in language use: «discourse organization», «precise information transfer», «functional use» and «social interaction». The last two particularly apply to the formulaic expressions found in the novel. The functional use refers to «such (speech) acts as apologizing, making requests, giving directions, and complaining. These functions typically have conventionalized language attached to them» (p. 15). Concerning social interaction (or «phatic

communion»), Schmitt notes that sometimes «social solidarity» may be the purpose of a conversation. Therefore, «people rely on non-threatening phrases to keep the conversation flowing, including comments about the weather (*Cold isn't it*), agreeing with your interlocutor (*Oh, I see what you mean*), or providing backchannels and positive feedback to another speaker (*Did you really?*)» (Schmitt, 2006, p. 15).

In the novel we come across formulaic language used by the *Handmaids* to perform the speech acts of greeting (salutation and farewell) and to express social solidarity when agreeing with the interlocutor. The linguistic expressions are stable in form but acquire a new meaning as wholes. What we find in this case is a set of sentences or phrases taken from the Bible which are given a new meaning when used in greetings, farewells and other conversational exchanges. They help realize the speech act efficiently and perform the social function of agreement. However, their biblical connotations also contribute to creating an oppressive religious atmosphere, and, on the whole, these orthodox ready-made expressions are designed to exert control over the population and constraint subversive thought. The *Handmaids'* «amputated speech» (Atwood, 2017, p. 201) is a clichéd form of communication based on the Scriptures which is representative of women's overall subjugation under male hegemony.

*Praise be* is the beginning of the sentence 'Praise be to God' (an idiom that expresses happiness or relief). It is a stereotyped answer conveying approval and conformity: ««The war is going well, I hear,» she says. «Praise be,» I reply» (Atwood, 2017, p. 19).

*Under His Eye* is used as a farewell. It is an expression with religious flavour that reminds the speakers of constant control (we are observed, we are under the eye of God, God can see everything): ««Under His Eye,» she says. The right farewell. «Under His Eye,» I reply» (Atwood, 2017, p. 45).

*Blessed be the fruit* and *May the Lord Open* are the orthodox salutation and answer in greetings. Their religious connotations remind *Handmaids* of fertility and their role as child bearers: ««Blessed be the fruit,» she says to me, the accepted greeting among us. «May the Lord open,» I answer, the accepted response» (Atwood, 2017, p. 14). *Blessed be the fruit* can be related to part of a sentence that Elizabeth says to Virgin Mary: «Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb» (Luke 1: 43). A variation of

both the statement and the answer occurs in Deuteronomy: «The Lord will cause you be abundant in every good thing: in the fruit of your womb, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your land [...]. The Lord will open his excellent treasury, the heavens, so that it may distribute rain in due time» (Deuteronomy 28: 11-12).

As already mentioned, these prefabricated sentences reinforce control, suppress or constraint subversive thought, and prove the loyalty to the regime (if you say something different, you may be a traitor):

«Let that be a reminder to us,» says the new Ofglen finally. I say nothing at first, because I am trying to make out what she means. She could mean that this is a reminder to us of the unjustness and brutality of the regime. In that case I ought to say yes. Or she could mean the opposite, that we should remember to do what we are told and not get into trouble, because if we do we will be rightfully punished. If she means that, I should say *praise be*. Her voice was bland, toneless, no clues there.  
I take a chance. «Yes,» I say. (Atwood, 2017, p. 284)

#### 4. MOTIVATIONS FOR NEOLOGY: A SUMMARY

There are various reasons for coining previously non-existent words. As Kerremans (2015, p. 37) notes, novel formations can be coined because «the correct word does not automatically spring to mind» or because «existing words are not adequate to capture a particular concept or message». Coinages also arise due to «humorous, stylistic or creative reasons». However, in science-fiction (and other types of fiction) they commonly respond to pragmatic needs, since they «accurately name and refer to non-existing objects and ideas» (p. 37). As we have seen, in *HT* the reasons for neology go beyond the construction of a plausible fictional world; they are also euphemistic (neologisms exert subtle control and hide inconvenient connotations), social (they enhance power relations and gender inequality), and ideological (they impose a religious totalitarianism based on fundamentalist interpretations of the Scriptures).

#### 5. CONCLUSION

In *HT* women are invisible as individuals: they are men's possessions collectivized into castes. Except for the ruling elite (*Wives*) and collaborationist



*Aunts*, women have lost their right to education, and as a group they do not have rights over their bodies, or the right to have a job and be financially independent. Women are subordinate to men physically, socially and linguistically, since language is an instrument of the elite to foster the status quo. In line with other literary dystopias, *HT* shows language as «a means by which social control is communicated and maintained» (Cavalcanti, 2000, p. 166). Gender domination is linguistically reinforced on various levels. The social identity of the male military elite is enhanced by their ability to decide on the identities of others: they have the power to provide names for women (*Offred*) and for categories of people (*Wives*, *Eyes*, *Unwomen*); they also have the power to silence women by regulating their conversational exchanges and by denying most of them access to the written word.

As evinced in this paper, neologisms play a part in the linguistic task of female subjugation: they provide a sense of authenticity in the narrative and show how language evolves to satisfy further needs, not only pragmatic, but also social (keeping the status quo of a patriarchal society which produces gender inequality), ideological (enhancing religious oppression and compliance with the regime), and euphemistic (avoiding uncomfortable truths).

## 6. REFERENCES

- Ainiála, T. (2016). Names in society. In C. Hough (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of names and naming* (pp. 371-381). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199656431.013.27>
- Aldrin, E. (2016). Names and identity. In C. Hough (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of names and naming* (pp. 382-394). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199656431.013.24>
- Atwood, M. (2017). *The handmaid's tale*. Random House. (Original work published 1985).
- Bauer, L. (2001). *Morphological productivity*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486210>
- Bauer, L. & Huddleston, R. (2002). Lexical word-formation. In R. Huddleston, & G. K. Pullum (Eds.), *The Cambridge grammar of the English language* (pp. 1621-1721). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316423530.020>

- Booth, A. (1984). Responses to scarcity. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 25(1), 113-124. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1984.tb02242.x>  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1984.tb02242.x>
- Bratanović, E. (2020). Feminist dystopia in Margaret Atwood's *The handmaid's tale*. In B. Čubrović (Ed.), *Belgrade English language and literature studies: BELLS90 proceedings*, Vol. 2 (pp. 347-357). Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. <https://doi.org/10.18485/bells90.2020.2>
- Cavalcanti, I. (2000). Utopias of/f language in contemporary feminist literary dystopias. *Utopian Studies*, 11(2), 152-180.
- Cruse, D. A. (1986). *Lexical semantics*. Cambridge University Press.
- De Beauvoir, S. (2005). *El segundo sexo* (A. Martorell, Trans.). Cátedra. (Original work published 1949).
- Dillon, S. (2020). Who rules the world? Reimagining the contemporary feminist dystopia. In J. Cooke (Ed.), *The new feminist literary studies* (pp. 169-181). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108599504.013>
- Falk Jones, L. (1991). Breaking silences in feminist dystopias. *Utopian Studies*, 3, 7-11.
- Filatkina, N. (2018). Expanding the lexicon through formulaic patterns: The emergence of formulaicity in language history and modern language use. In S. Arndt-Lappe, A. Braun, C. Moulin, & E. Winter-Froemel (Eds.), *Expanding the lexicon: Linguistic innovation, morphological productivity, and ludicity* (pp. 15-42). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110501933-017>
- Fowlkes, M. R. (1987). Role combinations and role conflict. In F. J. Crosby (Ed.), *Spouse, parent, worker. On gender and multiple roles* (pp. 3-10). Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt211qw5z.4>
- Fuchs Epstein, C. (2014). Great divides: The cultural, cognitive and social bases of the global subordination of women. In M. Kimmel, & A. Aronson (Eds.), *The gendered society reader* (pp. 156-179). Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1999).
- Greenbaum, S. (1996). *The Oxford English grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- Hohenhaus, P. (2007). How to do (even more) things with nonce words (other than naming). In J. Munat (Ed.), *Lexical creativity, texts and contexts* (pp. 15-38). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sfsl.58.08hoh>
- Kerremans, D. (2015). *A web of new words. A corpus-based study of the conventionalization process of English neologisms*. Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-653-04788-2>

- Kimmel, M. S. (2004). *The gendered society*. Oxford University Press. (Original work published 2000).
- Kiss, B. (2020). Elimination of gender equality in Margaret Atwood's *The handmaid's tale*. *ELOPE (English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries)*, 17(1), 57-66. <https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.17.1.57-66>
- Leacock, E. (1978). Women's status in egalitarian society: implications for social evolution. *Current Anthropology*, 19 (2), 247-275. <https://doi.org/10.1086/202074>
- Lehrer, A. (1996). Identifying and interpreting blends: an experimental approach. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 7 (4), 359-390. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cogl.1996.7.4.359>
- Levine Frader, L. (2004). Gender and labor in world history. In T. A. Meade, & M. E. Wiesner-Hanks (Eds.), *A companion to gender history* (pp. 26-50). Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1111/b.9780631223931.2004.00005.x>
- Lipka, L. (1992). *An outline of English lexicology. Lexical structure, word semantics and word-formation*. Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- López-Rúa, P. (2019). VPS, goodthink, unwomen and demoxie: Morphological neologisms in four dystopian novels. *Miscelánea*, 59, 117-136.
- Mansurov, R. (2019). The Whorf hypothesis and language manipulation in dystopian literature. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 5(5), 481-486. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/42/71>
- Martín-Casares, A. (2006). *Antropología del género. Culturas, mitos y estereotipos sexuales*. Cátedra.
- Mattiello, E. (2017). *Analogy in word-formation: A study of English neologisms and occasionalisms*. De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110551419>
- Merriman, B. (2012). The handmaid's tale addresses sexism and ignores racism. In D. E. Nelson (Ed.), *Women's issues in Margaret Atwood's The handmaid's tale* (pp. 42-45). Greenhaven Press.
- Moore, H. L. (1991). *Antropología y feminismo* (J. García-Bonafé, Trans.). Cátedra.
- Moylan, T. (2000). *Scraps of the untainted sky: Science fiction, utopia, dystopia*. Routledge.
- Munat, J. (2007). Lexical creativity as a marker of style. In J. Munat (Ed.), *Lexical creativity, texts and contexts* (pp. 163-182). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sfsl.58.20mun>
- Muñoz-González, E. (2019). *El cuento de la criada, ¿una distopía actual? Filanderas*, *Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios Feministas*, 4, 77-83. [https://doi.org/10.26754/ojs\\_filanderas/fil.201944084](https://doi.org/10.26754/ojs_filanderas/fil.201944084)

- Nelson, D. E. (Ed.). (2012). *Women's issues in Margaret Atwood's The handmaid's tale*. Greenhaven Press.
- Nyström, S. (2016). Names and meaning. In C. Hough (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of names and naming* (pp. 39-66). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199656431.013.26>
- Ortner, S. (1974). Is female to male as nature is to culture? In M. Rosaldo, & L. Lamphere (Eds.), *Woman, culture and society* (pp. 67-88). Stanford University Press.
- Porto, M. D. (2007). Creative lexical categorisation in narrative fiction. In J. Munat (Ed.), *Lexical creativity, texts and contexts* (pp. 213-236). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sfsl.58.23por>
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.
- Rodríguez, J. P. (Ed.). (2007). *Slavery in the United States. A social, political and historical encyclopedia*, Vol. 1. ABC/CLIO.
- Sargent, L. T. (1994). The three faces of utopianism revisited. *Utopian Studies*, 5(1), 1-37.
- Sau, V. (2000). *Diccionario ideológico feminista I*. Icaria Editorial, S.A. (Original work published 1981).
- Schmitt, N. (2006). Formulaic language: fixed and varied. *ELIA*, 6, 13-39.
- Schmitt, N., & Carter, R. (2004). Formulaic sequences in action: An introduction. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *Formulaic sequences: Acquisition, processing, and use* (pp. 1-22). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/llt.9>
- Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford University Press.
- Smith, G. W. (2016). Theoretical foundations of literary onomastics. In C. Hough (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of names and naming* (pp. 295-309). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199656431.013.41>
- Stockwell, P. (2014). *The poetics of science fiction*. Routledge. (Original work published 2000). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315838878>
- The holy bible. Catholic public domain version original edition* (R. L. Conte Jr., Trans.). <http://soundbible.com/book/holy-bible-pdf-download.pdf>
- Thompson, L. B. (2012). The life of Margaret Atwood. In D. E. Nelson (Ed.), *Women's issues in Margaret Atwood's The handmaid's tale* (pp. 17-27). Greenhaven Press.
- Tournier, J. (1985). *Introduction descriptive à la lexicogénétique de l'anglais contemporain*. Champion-Slatkine.

- Van Langedonck, W., & Van de Velde, M. (2016). Names and grammar. In C. Hough (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of names and naming* (pp. 17-38). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199656431.013.21>
- Vevaina, C. S. (2006). Margaret Atwood and history. In C. A. Howells (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Margaret Atwood* (pp. 86-99). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521839661.007>
- Wedemann, T. (2003). *Greek and Roman slavery*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203358993>
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (2014). Doing gender. In M. Kimmel, & A. Aronson (Eds.), *The gendered society reader* (pp. 121-134). Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1999).
- Zabeeh, F. (1968). *What is in a name? An inquiry into the semantics and pragmatics of proper names*. Martinus Nijhoff.