

Two Gileads in Contemporary Fiction: Margaret Atwood and Marilynne Robinson

In light of the 2019 publication of *The Testaments* (Margaret Atwood's long-awaited sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*), the widespread popularity of the television adaptation of Atwood's fiction, and a forthcoming special issue of *Christianity & Literature* on the subject of literature and the Christian Right, the American Religion and Literature Society and the Marilynne Robinson Society will co-host a special session on the two Gileads of contemporary fiction: Margaret Atwood's theocratic dystopia and Marilynne Robinson's homage to religious life in the American Midwest.

Beyond sharing a name, Atwood and Robinson's respective Gileads feature many fruitful similarities that warrant further consideration by scholars of religion and North American literature. Each features women in unconventional relationships with older men bearing considerable religious authority; each contains extensive meditations on the impact of religion on American ideas about family and childhood; each devotes considerable attention to the way reading and writing, particularly as these practices are facilitated or restricted by religious contexts, shape the subject's perception of her everyday experience; and each invites its readers to consider the role that religious discourse, biblical hermeneutics, and the dynamics of faith play in contemporary public and political life.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words to Ray Horton, rhorton3@murraystate.edu. Be sure to include your name, institutional affiliation, email address, and any AV requests.