



Literary Responses to Bewilderment in Western Society

A Study of Margaret Atwood's Novels

By

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Textual Emendations

Page	Line	Amendment
Ack.1	4	<i>For their read</i> them
Ack.2	8	<i>For</i> Brissendon <i>read</i> Brissenden
		<i>For</i> Meyer <i>read</i> Mares
		<i>For</i> Russel <i>read</i> Russell
	9	<i>For</i> Shellick <i>read</i> Sellick
3	3	<i>For</i> HowFell <i>read</i> Howells
6	13	<i>For</i> crisis <i>read</i> crises
8	18	<i>For</i> causes <i>read</i> cause
16	5	<i>For</i> to <i>read</i> for
20	25	<i>For</i> Feminist approach <i>read</i> A feminist approach
25	27	<i>For</i> into <i>read</i> in
26	1	<i>For</i> remaining <i>read</i> which remains
	28	<i>For</i> being <i>read</i> is
27	28	<i>For</i> in the promise <i>read</i> on the promises
28	17	<i>Delete</i> representing
29	3	<i>For</i> By all means <i>read</i> In every respect
30	27	<i>For</i> self-boundary <i>read</i> self-boundaries
31	25	<i>For</i> at the expenses of <i>read</i> at the expense of
34	18	<i>For</i> at the expenses of <i>read</i> at the expense of
41	1	<i>For</i> no <i>read</i> not
	12	<i>For</i> to <i>read</i> of
	16	<i>For</i> on <i>read</i> in terms of
45	8	<i>Delete</i> the case of
53	18	<i>For</i> Late-capitalism <i>read</i> late-capitalism
54	3	<i>For</i> be carried <i>read</i> come about
	6	<i>For</i> against <i>read</i> in terms of
57	6	<i>For</i> indulgence of <i>read</i> but to indulge their
	13	<i>For</i> cloth colours <i>read</i> coloured clothing
59	2	<i>For</i> ceremonious <i>read</i> ritual
	3	<i>For</i> an act of political requirement for general Handmaids <i>read</i> an act where the Handmaids' attendance is politically required
	14	<i>For</i> pooled <i>read</i> arrested
	14	<i>For</i> Colony <i>read</i> colonies
	23	<i>For</i> in the margin <i>read</i> on the margin
60	19	<i>For</i> pooled <i>read</i> directed
	21	<i>For</i> an executive of certain state power <i>read</i> who holds a high executive position in the state
	27	<i>For</i> by its miniature <i>read</i> inn miniature
61	4	<i>For</i> gender confrontation <i>read</i> polarisation
	20	<i>Delete</i> her
63	19	<i>Delete</i> at
64	7-8	<i>For</i> adapt <i>read</i> to adapt

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference had been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for photocopying and loan.

SIGNED:

DATE: 23.4.93

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to apply Fredric Jameson's theoretic construct of the political unconscious in a discussion of Atwood's novels, particularly her characterisation in *The Edible Woman*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Cat's Eye*.

Jameson's concept of social reification, a central concept to his theoretical construction, refers to the process in which social structure entirely alienates human individuals and the modes of experiencing life for individuals. Jameson advocates a linkage of Marxism and psychoanalysis, since he considers individual subjects as alienated by the social system and governed by psychological laws at the same time. The core of Jameson's understanding of modern subjectivity is that social alienation is internalised and is shown through psychological disturbances. Society thus becomes the ultimate source of the individual's anxiety.

Atwood's characterisation interestingly reflects Jameson's stance. Her protagonists are characterised with the bewilderment, frustration and depression, which prevail in the contemporary West. Indeed they are the profoundly disturbed subjects as their inner world directly corresponds with social reification.