Current Atwood Checklist, 2007
Ashley Thomson and Shannon Hengen

This year’s checklist of works by and about Margaret Atwood published in 2007 is, like its predecessors, comprehensive but not complete.

It is also the second update to the authors’ Margaret Atwood: A Reference Guide 1988-2005 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007). Users of this checklist will not want to be without that book which culminates the annual checklists of 16 earlier years. For space reasons, the new book eliminated the sections in the older checklists entitled “News” and “Reviews of Atwood Books.” These sections continue in the annual updates.

As always, there are a number of folks to thank. We are grateful to Lionel Bonin, the Director of the J.N. Desmarais Library, and to Lina Y. Beaulieu, Dorothy Robb and Diane Tessier of the Interlibrary loans section. Thanks as well to Ted Sheckels, editor of this journal. As always we would appreciate any corrections to this year’s list or contributions to the 2008 list, sent to athomson@laurentian.ca or shengen@laurentian.ca

Atwood’s Works


"Afterword” includes two poems, "Disembarking at Quebec” and “The Double Voice,” all originally published in The Journals of Susanne Moodie (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970).


Excerpt: Here’s what I came up with to explain why they did it: 1) Ignorance. The Harperites have no idea how much money the arts generate. 2) Willed ignorance. They’ve seen the figures, but have labelled them “junk economics” in the same way they once labelled global-warming statistics as “junk science.” 3) Hatred. The Harper Conservatives think artists are a bunch of whiners who don’t have real jobs, and that any money spent on the arts is a degenerate frill. 4) Frugality. There’s lots of arts around. We can get them cheaper from across the border than it costs to make them here, and if you’ve seen one art, you’ve seen them all. 5) Stupidity. They thought they were gassing a hornet’s nest, not poking it with a stick. 6) More hatred. They tried to slash local museums, until too many people screamed. They’ve cut the Canada Council top-up proposed by the Liberals down to a sixth of its size. They’ve stuck the knife into the National Literacy Program, perhaps on the theory that they won’t be able to set up a working dictatorship if too many people can read. And that’s just for starters. If these things can be done in a minority government, lo, I say unto you, what things shall be done in a majority?


Reprinted from Moral Disorder ©2006.


Paperback ed.


Atwood is quoted as saying, "The Paris Review is one of the few truly essential literary magazines of the twentieth-century—and now of the twenty-first.”


Paperback ed.

German translation of The Tent by Malte Friedrich.
German adaptation of Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda by Dusan Petricic and Malte Friedrich.


German translation of Surfacing by Reinhold Böhnke.


German translation of The Handmaid's Tale by Helga Pfetsch.


French translation of Oryx and Crake by Michèle Albaret-Maatsch.


German translation of Murder in the Dark by Anna Kamp.


German translation of The Penelopeiad by Malte Friedrich.


Spanish translation of Moral Disorder by Francisco Rodriguez de Lecea.


The first anthology of poetry in more than a decade features fifty richly varied poems that range in tone and subject matter, from the personal to the political, and from the lyric and ironic to meditative and prophetic, as they explore the writing of poetry itself, the passage of time, mortality, and more. Includes: i. Gasoline.—Europe on $5 a day.—Year of the Hen.—Resurrecting the Dolls' House.—Blackie in Antarctica.—Mourning for cats.—January.—Butterfly.—My mother dwindles . . .—Crickets.—i. The poet has come back . . .—Heart.—Your children cut their hands . . .—Sor Juana works in the garden.—Owl and Pussycat, some years later.—The poets hang on.—Poetry reading.—A poor woman learns to write.—The singer of owls.—i. Ten o'clock news.—The weather.—It's autumn.—Bear lament.—Ice palace.—Secrecy.—The last rational man.—White cotton T-shirt.—War photo.—War photo 2.—Nobody cares who wins.—The Valley of the Heretics.—Saint Joan of Arc on a postcard.—The hur child.—They give evidence.—iv. Enough of these discouragements.—Possible activities.—Questioning the dead.—The nature of Gothic.—The line: five variations.—Another visit to the Oracle.—v. Boat song.—Dutiful.—String tail.—Stealing the Hummingbird Cup.—One day you will reach . . .—Disturbed earth.—Reindeer moss on granite.—The Third Age visits the Arctic.—You heard the man you love.—At Brute Point.—The door.

The Door. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007. *Special Quarter bound boxed edition produced during the summer of 2007 at Anstey Book Binding in Toronto for PEN Canada. The book is printed on Domtar Feltweave, a Forest Stewardship Council Certified paper stock. The book is accompanied by a signed and numbered relief print handset by Margaret Atwood and editioned at Anstey on a Vandercook Universal III press. 150 copies of this signed edition have been produced, plus 25 proofs designated H.C. and lettered A to Z.*


Spanish translation of Dancing Girls and Other Stories by Victor Pozanco and Toni Hill.


This short excerpt from Cat's Eye frames chapter four of this book, "My Mother's First Love."
Specifically: "I began then to think of time as having a shape, something you could see, like a series of liquid transparencies, one laid on top of another. You don't look back along time, but down through it, like water. Sometimes this comes to the surface, sometimes that, sometimes nothing. Nothing goes away."

An excerpt from The Door titled "Year of the Hen."

An excerpt from "Significant Moments in the Life of My Mother," from Bluebeard's Egg in honor of Atwood's mother, who died the previous month, aged 97.

"[Excerpts]." City Journal (Manhattan) 17.3 (Summer 2007): 64-71.
From her poem "The Loneliness of the Military Historian" in an article by Victor David Hanson, "Why Study War?"

In her article "Radical Feminism and the Politics of Pregnancy and Birth," author Cheryl Lindsey Seelhoff begins and ends the piece by short extracts from Surfacing dealing with her topic.

French translation of Surfacing by Marie-France Girod.

In her foreword, Atwood notes that she had planned to contribute a chapter on her on father but couldn't get it ready in time; she does, however, include a poem "Butterfly" which was an insect important in her father's life.

"In the relatively early (1976) essay we present here, [Atwood] explores the ‘paradoxes and dilemmas’ confronted by women writers whose critics insist on inappropriately sexualizing their works, offering a brisk, businesslike analysis of the often prejudicial reviewing practices that have marginalized so many female-authors texts. " (Editors). Reprinted from Women in the Canadian Mosaic ©1976.

German translation of Good Bones by Brigitte Walitzek.

This short story is listed in the "Anger" section—and it includes a brief biography of Atwood (p. 104) as well as seven questions about the story followed by three others intended to generate further reflection (p. 121).

Reprinted from Good Bones and Simple Murders ©1983.


Included in Robert Pinsky's column which features two poems from The Door. This poem was also published in The Guardian 18 August 2007. See: http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/aug/18/poetry.margaretatwood (1 August 2008).

Italian translation of The Handmaid's Tale by Camillo Pennati.

"From questions and answers on the website of the LongPen, a device invented by Canadian author Margaret Atwood that allows an author to sign books from a remote location using a magnetic pen attached to a computer." (Magazine abstract).

Novel was originally published in 1932; Atwood’s introduction is ©2007.


[ Romanized characters]. Chinese translation of The Blind Assassin by Han Zhonghua yi.


How Atwood, who used to dislike Wagner, became a fan.


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"In this excerpt, the reader is reminded that storytelling and memory are crucial to moral survival when the law has abandoned its citizens, and that individuals must muster the courage and resilience to fight against oppression that is intended to break the human spirit." (Introduction).


Obituary of her mother. (653 w).


Swedish translation of Curious Pursuits by Birgitta Gaherton.


Large print edition.


Paperback ed.


6 compact discs (6 hrs., 41 mins.).


"Reproduced from 'Significant Moments in the Life of my Mother' by Margaret Atwood in Bluebeard's Egg Copyright O.W. Toad Limited 1983, 1986 and published by Vintage (Pounds 7.99, offer Pounds 7.59, inc p&p)."


Poem to be published in The Door.


Polish translation of The Tent by Justyna Gardzinska.


Bulgarian translation of The Penelopiad by Raïtsa Karieva.


(10 hrs., 30 mins. 15 sec.). Downloadable audio file.


Atwood discusses her upcoming appearance at the Cheltenham festival via the LongPen. In addition to helping authors, she notes, it has saved carbon emissions. (882 w).


Hungarian translation of The Penelopiad by Géher István.


Australian ed.


Large print ed.


First performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in association with Canada's National Arts Centre at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 27 July 2007.


Czech translation of The Penelopiad by Eva Klimentová.


Included in Robert Pinsky's column which features two poems from The Door.

Poetry Reading [Sound recording]. Santa Cruz: University of California, Santa Cruz, 2007.

1 sound disc (59 mins., 13 sec.). Archival conservation made by the university library from a reel-to-reel tape. Originally recorded 5 May 1978 at the University.


Finnish translation of Moral Disorder by Kristiina Drews.


Poem.


This book was first published in the original Swedish by Albert Bonniers Förlag in 2004 and that year won the August Prize, Sweden's most prestigious literary award. The Preface appears to be published here for the first time. Pastor Gregorius played a role in one of Atwood's favourite texts, Dr. Glas. In this novel, he is the central character.


Edited and annotated by Kathy Chung and Sherrill Grace, with an introduction by Sherrill Grace and illustrations by Kathy Chung.


"Review: A Sense of Wonder: In His Final Book Before He Died Earlier This Year, Ryszard Kapuscinski Hails His Inspiration and Travelling Companion Herodotus As a 'Vivacious, Fascinated, Unflagging Nomad'. There Is No More Fitting Description for Poland's Celebrated Foreign Correspondent Himself, says Margaret Atwood." The Guardian (London) 9 June 2007: 4-6, 9. (4449 w). Available: http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/politicsphilosophyandsociety/story/0,2098537,00.html#article_continue (1 August 2008).


Adaptations of Atwood's Works

Margaret Atwood & Tania León [Video recording]. Rochester, NY: Rochester Institute of Technology, 2007. 1 DVD (c 70 mins.).

A recording of the kick-off event for the 2007 Women in Music Festival featuring the Rochester
premiere of Atwood Songs, commissioned specifically for this occasion. This song cycle for soprano and piano is written by Cuban-American composer and the festival’s first composer-in-residence, Tania León, and set to the poetry of Margaret Atwood. León’s new work was co-commissioned by the Eastman School of Music’s Hanson Institute for American Music and Syracuse University. After the performance, both artists discuss their creative processes during a conversation facilitated by WXXI-FM host Julia Figueras. Included in the discussion are questions from the audience. The piece is then performed again, allowing the audience to experience the song with newly acquired knowledge of the artists’ perspectives.


1 score (35 pp.).
Adaptation of four Atwood poems: Night Poem.--Siren Song.--Variation on the Word Sleep.--Flying inside Your Own Body.

Adaptation of three Atwood poems: Against Still Life.--I was Reading a Scientific Article.--I am Sitting.

Quotations

"[Quote]" Courier Mail (Australia) 23 April 2007 Section: Today: 39.
Article by Liz Rowlinson entitled "From Woody Allen to Madonna, Everyone Has Something Clever to Say about Sex," includes Atwood quote: "Nobody dies from a lack of sex. It's lack of love we die from."

"[Quote]" Critical Quarterly 49.2 (Summer 2007): 57.
An article entitled "Authors Rally to Support Booker Prize Winning Author, Ian McEwan" quotes Atwood, among others, all of whose words originally appeared on the Random House website in 2006: "Plagiarism is lifting someone else's chunk of text or unique idea without acknowledgment. It is silly, not to mention injurious and incorrect, to claim that Ian McEwan did this. Even I knew about gentic violet, and I am not a nurse. All novelists research. We do it to avoid anachronisms and false information. I try to check all facts. If facts are generally available, their use is not plagiarism. Plagiarism is bad, but so is flea-hitching. Flea-hitching is when a small entity jumps on a large one for a free ride and some self inflating and parasitic bloodsucking. One can often get a profitable flea-hitch by wrongly accusing a famous writer of plagiarism. I offer this word to the language. It seems to be needed."

In a chapter discussing the "Elements of Short Fiction," Hoffman prefaces the section on characterization with an Atwood quote: "Show me a character without anxieties and I will show you a boring book."

An excerpt from Roy MacGregor’s new book, The Canadians, includes the comment that Canada is "A country so renowned for the tolerance it continually celebrates that writer Margaret Atwood once couldn't help remarking, 'In this country you can say what you like because no one will listen to you anyway.'"

Atwood quote in Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations (2007) is reproduced: "To live without mirrors is to live without the self."

In an obituary of writer Tillie Olsen, Elaine Woo quotes Atwood: "Among women writers in the United States, 'respect' is too pale a word: 'reverence' is more like it. This is presumably because women writers, even more than their male counterparts, recognize what a heroic feat it is to have held down a job, raised four children, and still somehow managed to become and to remain a writer.... The applause that greets her is not only for the quality of her artistic performance but... for the near miracle of her survival."

An article on divorce in Malaysia involving one of the spouses who had converted to Islam began with Atwood's well-known quotation: "A divorce is like an amputation; you survive, but there's less of you." Same quote appears in article by Daisy Goodwin, "Children of the Divorce Olympics"

"[Quote]." *News & Record* (Greensboro, NC) 7 June 2007 Section: Classifieds: GT34.

"An eye for an eye only leads to more blindness."


Atwood on gardening: "Gardening is not a rational act. What matters is the immersion of the hands in the earth, that ancient ceremony of which the Pope kissing the tarmac is merely a pallid vestigial remnant. In the spring, at the end of the day you should smell like dirt." From "Uneartthing Suite."


In an article on snow, Bruce Ward quotes Atwood: "Canadians are fond of a good disaster, especially if it has ice, water, or snow in it... You thought the national flag was about a leaf, didn't you? Look harder. It's where someone got axed in the snow."


Article entitled "Quote Unquote" quotes Atwood: "If the national mental illness of the United States is megalomania, that of Canada is paranoid schizophrenia."


In a short article, Hugo Ruffkin reported that "Margaret Atwood told the Edinburgh Book Festival that she wrote her first novel, *Starring an Ant*, aged seven. 'It taught me about character. The egg stage, larva stage and pupa stage did not contain a lot of dramatic conflict. As an ant, the narrative really got going.'"

"[Quote]." *Toronto Star* 17 August 2007 Section: Entertainment: E07.

Atwood among those quoted about impact of Richard Bradshaw, recently deceased head of the Canadian Opera Company: "A devastating loss for his many friends, the musical world, and for Canada."


"War is what happens when language fails."

"[Quote]." *Women's Health* 4.2 (March 2007): 10.

In a short article, "What They Said about Sex," Kristina Johnson quotes Atwood: "Nobody dies from lack of sex. It's lack of love we die from." Also quoted are five other experts including Tallulah Bankhead who once remarked: "I'll come and make love to you at 5 o'clock. If I'm late, start without me."

**Interviews**


Conducted in June 1978 at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, where Atwood received the St. Lawrence Award for Fiction for her first collection of stories, *Dancing Girls*. The "interview" is really Atwood answering questions posed by [anonymous] writers and writers-to-be. Excellent new material about creative process, her teaching style, etc.


Atwood interviewed along with Iain M. Banks in BBC Two's three-part series on the history of British science fiction. She appeared in the second film, subtitled "Trouble in Paradise" and her comments focused on how British sci-fi has portrayed the future. The whole series is available as a webcast in several locations including: [http://www.veoh.com/browse/videos.html](http://www.veoh.com/browse/videos.html) (1 August 2007).


Available from Lexis-Nexis. Anchor Scott Simon interviews Atwood, among others, about the play. (1076 w).


Interview largely about the LongPen at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, a visit which was combined with two other trips. Excerpt: "Instead of taking three flights I'm taking a one-way flight and coming back on a boat." Of course this is not a pleasure cruise: 68-year-old Atwood and her husband, the author Graeme Gibson, are honorary presidents of BirdLife International. The return to Toronto will be via the Arctic Circle, with a group of rare bird enthusiasts and their
binoculars.

Excerpt: A Grand Prix in the hand, as they say, is worth two in the bush. On the day following the
stunning announcement that three Canadian authors (Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro and Michael
Ondaatje) had made the 15-name short list for this year's $136,000 Man Booker International
literary award, Atwood insisted that this news in no way eclipsed the honour of being chosen as
the 2007 recipient of the $10,000 Blue Metropolis International Literary Grand Prix: "That's the
one I've actually got," she said, flatly placing the matter in ironic perspective, as only Atwood can
do. While she's delighted to be selected, for the second time, as a contender for the Man Booker
International, this time in the company of two fellow Canadians, "I don't think any of us is actually
going to get this thing," she said. "I think there are people more senior than we on the list. But of
course you can always be surprised....It's not a question of 'best-known' or who has written the
most books. Nothing like that." Nor is it exactly a lifetime achievement award: "The Booker
Internationals shy away from calling it a lifetime achievement award because some people are
still having their lifetime," she said. Having been nominated five times for the regular Man Booker
award given annually for an individual book (and winning it on the fourth round, for The Blind
Assassin), Atwood is already steeling herself for the headlines: "Every time I got nominated for
the other Booker, when I didn't win it, I would come back to headlines that said 'Atwood Fails to
Win Booker,'" she said. "It should have said 'Judges Fail to Award Booker to Atwood.' It wasn't
anything I did." Why did such a demographically-challenged country as Canada rate three out of
15 nominees? "Possibly because all three of us started from nothing," she ventured. "And when
you start from nothing you work your buns off. We started from nothing with the odds against us.
Because when we started there wasn't any consciousness that there was a Canadian literature."
And, at the Blue Metropolis festival this week, in addition to receiving the Grand Prix, Atwood was
sharing her fascination with birds, along with her partner, Graeme Gibson, author of The Bedside
Book of Birds. Gibson and Atwood are veteran birders who head an organization that aims to
save the Grenada Dove (www.grenadadovecampaign.com). "My story is that we're the William
and Mary of Orange of Birds," she said. "But Mary never actually did anything. Most of the active
stuff that you will see is initiated by him." After Montreal, Atwood will be taking her LongPen to the
Green Living Show in Toronto (www.greenlivingshow.ca). "Books are just a small segment of
what it's going to be doing," she said. "Everybody who now has to get on a plane and fly
somewhere to sign something won't have to do that any more." Environmentalists like Robert F.
Kennedy, Jr. will put in virtual appearances at the Green Living Show via LongPen. All in the
name of saving carbon emissions by staying home. Which is something that Atwood seldom does
these days.

FORTNEY, Valerie. "Fundraiser Offers Shot at Literary Immortality." Calgary Herald 18 October 2007:
B9.
Atwood interviewed about her participation in fund-raising project for The Walrus, a Canadian
magazine, whereby a successful bidder got to be a character in a forthcoming novel. Excerpt:
The idea for the novel, so to speak, auction came from Shelley Ambrose of The Walrus. "I pulled
it out of my brain," says the Calgary-raised publisher, whose parents still live here [i.e. in Calgary].
"I called Margaret first, then found out she'd actually done this before." Turns out that Amanda
Payne, a character in the 2003 Atwood novel Oryx and Crake, came from a successful bid at a
London auction. "That was a great name," says Atwood in her typically dry conversational style. "I
made her an artist that creates vulture sculptures out of dead cows...." The winner of the auction
items (Atwood's starts at $5,000) must sign a waiver giving up all say on how their name is used.
In other words, you could find yourself portraying "a no-neck bouncer or a pole dancer, a person
of dubious moral character," says Atwood, who plans to include the winning name in her latest,
still-in-the-works novel. The concept goes against the usual writerly instincts. "I look up names in
the phone book to make sure the person doesn't actually exist," she says of her book's
characters, a practice that's not without the occasional glitch. "I thought I made up the name
Zenia for Robber Bride, then I later found out it was already invented." For The Walrus, she's
happy to make an exception. "I agreed to this because The Walrus is a very unusual, high-quality
magazine that Canada needs," she says of the four-year-old publication. "You have to be a
special kind of person to want this," says Atwood, who adds she hopes she ends up with an
interesting name for the upcoming book. "But for some, it's more interesting than having a star
named after you."

FOSTER, Karen. "Top-Selling Author Atwood: Sometimes Caustic, Never Without Cause."
Japan Times (Tokyo) 8 March 2007: Section: State and Regional News: sp. Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Business News. Available from Lexis-Nexis. Excerpt: She enjoys immense popularity in Japan. Twelve of her books have been translated into Japanese and more are on the way. But internationally-acclaimed Canadian author Margaret Atwood wasn’t in Japan recently to promote a new book. She was here to look at birds. The 2000 Booker Prize winner is joint honorary president of BirdLife International’s Rare Bird Club, a job she shares with her partner, writer Graeme Gibson. Their stop in Tokyo in late February was sandwiched between a Rare Bird Club trip to Hokkaido, where Atwood was impressed by the sight of red-crested cranes dancing in the snow, and a visit to Okinawa. She and Gibson came at the invitation of Princess Takamado, the honorary president of BirdLife International. “I’m much more involved with the environment these days,” she said. “That’s something that’s going to kill us all if it goes the wrong way.” And she’s definitely more than a bit tired of talking on the subject of “women.” “Boy, I get bored of people asking me why I write about women,” Atwood said. “I write about women because it’s easy to write about women. I don’t have to do as much research,” the writer said, adding that when she did write from the point of view of a man in Oryx and Crake, she again was asked why. “It is not a very interesting question, because everybody writes about women,” Atwood said. “Unless they are writing about Moby Dick, they write about women.” Also exasperating are questions on the “the situation of women.” “When people ask me what do you think of the situation of women, I ask them, ‘Which women? What class? What country are we talking about? How old?’” she said. “There is no ‘situation of women.’ It varies from place to place, from class.”

FREEMAN, John. “Author Ensures Her Words Will Be Read.” St. Petersburg Times 29 January 2007: 1E. Excerpt: Since she made her debut in the ‘60s, the Canadian writer and author of The Handmaid’s Tale has published in more forms than it seems humanly possible – poetry, short stories, children’s literature, thrillers, a romance, criticism, even science fiction. “I’ve never written a Western,” says the 67-year-old writer, sitting in a hotel suite in New York recently, where she traveled to interview the historian Thomas Cahill in front of a public library audience. “I think I’m this way because I never went to creative writing school, and nobody told me not to. Nobody said, ‘You have to specialize,’ or ‘For heaven’s sake, control yourself.’” And so she hasn’t. Atwood’s novels and stories, like the recent interlocking collection Moral Disorder, often concern a woman’s struggle to wrest free from identity, or the identity others perceive her to possess. “You are your story to a great extent,” Atwood explains. “But other people’s versions of you are going to differ from one another, and they’re all going to be different from your version of yourself.” Example: a clam. Atwood found this out early as a youngster, and then she found out the hard way as a literary figure by examining something one of her two biographers wrote about her. “It had a story about me at Harvard. That I kept a clam on my desk, and when asked why I liked it, I had remarked, ‘It was very loyal.’” Atwood gives a weary sigh. “First of all, you can’t keep a clam in a jar on your desk for more than about 24 hours or it will die. Second, I never had a clam in a jar on my desk. Third, the story was some permutation of a real story about my sister-in-law, not me. She had a pet hermit crab, of which she had remarked, ‘It is very loyal.’ But it came to a sad end, because they put it in an aquarium on top of a TV set and it got too hot.” Now, thanks to her invention, readers far from Toronto will know what Atwood really has on her desk. It’s a small, oddly shaped pen. As for what she’s writing with her real pen, that will remain a mystery. Is she tempted to write a Western? “I never talk about my temptations,” she says.

GRIMLEY, Terry. “Culture: Margaret Atwood Makes a Drama Out of a Crisis Assignment.” Birmingham Post 25 July 2007 Section: Features: 13. Phone interview from Toronto focusing on The Penelopiad. Excerpt: “Once a thing is done it looks as though I had the idea for a long time, and sometimes I have, but other times I haven’t. This is one of the haven’t’s. I was trying to work on a Canadian myth and was on the point of quitting, but was discouraged by my British agent while she was out climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. She said: ‘When I come back we will have a little talk...’ I should probably not accept any things of that kind. You say you’re going to do it and you never have any idea... but when people say ‘Margaret, we are waiting for you’, it does concentrate your mind one way or the other. It was one of those things I should never have agreed to do, but anyway it all came about, and then it became a theatre piece.”

Atwood says it was tricky to find a theatrical model for the kind of show The Penelopiad might be. “It’s not a George Bernard Shaw kind of piece or an Ibsen or Chekhov, or even a Look Back in
Anger kind, or even a Samuel Beckett kind. Nor a musical Guys and Dolls kind or even a West Side Story kind. The nearest we could come to was a kind of cabaret in which you could mix speech with music. In the back of that was the idea of a Greek chorus. So the maids come on and say 'I feel a foreboding, this doesn't look good,' and they also play all the other characters. The structure is pretty much there in the book, and you don't have to explain 'then what happened' because we kind of know already. But what you couldn't say was 'let's have a happy ending where Odysseus never comes home.' You can't have Helen of Troy killed because she wasn't, and you can't have the servants not being slain because they were." An advantage of having Penelope writing from the Underworld is that she has kept up to date with modern developments, so that her account of ancient history comes with passing references to such contemporary phenomena as the internet or shopping-as-religion. This all-knowing ability of the dead is just the point, says Atwood. "It's what people thought about the Underworld, why you went to them to consult," she says. "Saul goes to see Samuel in the Underworld and says 'How am I going to do in the battle?' And Samuel says 'Not good'. 'They get information, and sometimes they get good news. For example the hero in Richard III. That's what the dead can do for you. They have access to information that other people don't.'" 


Excerpt: On his tour through Edmonton this week, Vincent Lam expressed a great debt of gratitude to [Margaret Atwood] for helping nurse his fiction debut, Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures, into publication. The book went on to win last year's Giller Prize, Canada's richest literary award, and has turned the soft-spoken emergency room physician into a bestselling author and one of Canada's hot young literary talents. The two met while on an Arctic cruise in 2002. Once Lam got over the shock of finding Atwood's name on the ship's manifest, they struck up an acquaintance. He told her he was working on a collection of short stories and wondered if she'd take a look. She agreed but asked if he wanted platitudes back or an honest response. He told her he wanted the truth. A little while later, the verdict arrived in an e-mail. "Congratulations," Atwood told him. "You can write." And it didn't stop there. Atwood shopped the book around to publishers on Lam's behalf. He didn't then have an agent. She even introduced the book at the Giller ceremony last November. It's enough to make you wonder if maybe we all should go down to the sea with Margaret. "I don't do this much," the 67-year-old Atwood said, with pointed emphasis, after confirming the basic sequence of events over the phone from Toronto. "And no, don't send your manuscript. Don't do it." With typical dry humour, Atwood downplays her role in Lam's surprising success. "I didn't fix the jury, I'm not his mother and I didn't actually write the book."


On the LongPen. Atwood notes that British author Kate Mosse used the LongPen for its first transatlantic book signing last fall. At the Green Living Show in Toronto in April, George Monbiot signed some books from Wales and David Suzuki did the same from Vancouver. To date more than 30 authors have used the LongPen to sign books for fans all over the globe. Excerpt: But intimacy, Margaret. What about the lost intimacy between author and fan? "It actually increases the intimacy. The only part that you don't get is the part that's only of appeal to a certain segment of authors and musicians. You don't get to be a babe magnet after hours," Atwood replied. But what if I want to look Richard Ford in the eye? "Let's pretend you live in Podunk, Ohio, where Richard Ford is never, ever going to go. This is your chance. Not only that, you can have a private conversation with Richard Ford which is going to be somewhat longer than the one you'd have in the big, long lineup at the bookstore." Perhaps more to the point, Atwood notes the device will contribute to carbon-neutral book tours, as authors are spared all that exhaustive, stinky air travel the next time they have a new title to promote. She cites her friend Alice Munro as an example, an aging literary icon who no longer has any desire to hit the road for some crazy 30-city marketing campaign. As it turns out, [Norman] Mailer is in the same boat. Declaring himself a member of the Triple-A club—age, asthma and arthritis—the 84-year-old curmudgeon, a guy who once stabbed his wife at a Manhattan cocktail party, has announced he'll fulfill his appearance engagement at the Edinburgh Book Fair in August while never actually leaving his home in Provincetown, New York [i.e. Massachusetts]. He'll do so by getting cozy with Atwood's LongPen. I told Atwood there is something about her device that makes me think of RoboCop, Dutch director Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi classic from 1987. Specifically that scene where a new high-tech law enforcement droid is being put through its paces for a boardroom of executives and the demonstration goes horribly awry. ("Drop your weapon! You have 15 seconds to comply.") What if
something similar occurred with the LongPen, I wondered? A huge metallic stylus, swinging wildly on spindly robot arms ...? "That's not Verhoeven," Atwood protested. "That's Kafka." Maybe so. But I'm still bringing a helmet along to those particular author events.

HEMMING, Sarah. "Don't Let Her be Misunderstood as Margaret Atwood’s Retelling of ‘The Odyssey’ Hits the Stage. She Tells Sarah Hemming Why Penelope Gets a Chance to Set the Record Straight." Financial Times 21 July 2007: 17.
Excerpt: It’s not surprising that Atwood should choose the story of one of classical antiquity’s many misunderstood women: her previous works have often allowed female characters to set the record straight. The surprise is that she should plump for Penelope, the virtuous doormat who waited patiently for Odysseus as he spent 20 years fighting in Troy, rattling around the Mediterranean, bedding goddesses and brawling with giants, while his wife devoted herself to weaving and weeping. But, says Atwood, the image of Penelope may have been watered down through the ages. "The Renaissance was very fond of painting her as the model of a good wife. If you delve more deeply, however, it’s interesting." She points out that such a passive individual could never have kept control of Ithaca, fended off the suitors and managed Odysseus’s return so successfully. "All the men of military age went off to the war, so she had to use cunning and guile to run things. Then the suitors turned up: between 108 and 120 of them, depending on which chapter of The Odyssey you’re reading. She had to deal with them. First she did it with the shroud dodge. Then—what a coincidence—just when Odysseus turned up, disguised as a beggar, she thought of this test whereby she’d get them to shoot his bow. She is just as cunning as Odysseus is. She, too, is wily, crafty, a deviser of tricks and a liar." Along with The Odyssey, Atwood studied other, pre-Homeric pieces of mythic material about Penelope: "In some she slept with one of the suitors and in others she slept with all of them. So the faithful Penelope we have today was not always like that." This Penelope is a very Atwood heroine. Acerbic, astute, observant, she addresses us from the afterlife—a pleasant but dull place with "a certain amount of vapid dancing"—where she can at last speak her mind. She unburdens her feelings about the vain Helen of Troy (who still flaunts herself around Hades), about her prickly mother-in-law and rebellious teenage son. She’s clever, funny and pragmatic. Her account brims with down-to-earth, domestic detail and shrewdly questions the romantic version of Odysseus’s exploits. Did he fight with a giant Cyclops or, in fact, with a one-eyed tavern-keeper? Was he sojourning with the goddess Circe or with an expensive madam? The gods, Atwood observes, come in handy.
"Polytheism allows you a lot more plot."


Atwood (among others) interviewed in 2005 about French-Canadian author, Marie-Claire Blais.


An interview in which Atwood was trying to promote The Door. Excerpt: "I'm a pretty cheerful person by nature," Margaret Atwood says, during our hour's talk at a copper-and-marble bar close to the University of Toronto near her home. "What everybody's asking me right now is, 'Is there hope?' They used to ask me other questions like, 'What do you think about men?' They're not interested anymore. Is there hope? I say, 'Sure.' She laughs. "What I say to them in reality is: If you're worried about making a difference in life, pick something you can actually handle, something small enough for you to deal with. Don't try to take on the whole world, because you'll just get very discouraged and you'll never get out of bed in the morning. . . . [On a related topic, she noted that] the problem with women is that they're taught they have to be ultra competent about everything. You can find the rejection of that in a poem called "Dutiful" and "String Tail." Both appear in Atwood's new collection of poetry, The Door. "You can teach people to be responsible and pull their weight without telling them they're responsible for the entire world! You get over that feeling of total responsibility at a certain age. Life will get better. You'll be able to say about some things, I don't give a shit about this...." I gather that many journalists view Atwood as a fearsome interview. She is said not to suffer fools—and why should she?—and even in 2007, it is seen as a failing for her not to drip the "soft pink melting jelly" of goodwill, as she puts it in "String Tail," onto journalists who haven't done their research. She's a woman, after all. How dare she be . . . herself? There are some who have made a career of hating her for her self-assurance

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and what appears to be some secret source of amusement that propels her through life. All I can say is, I emerged from our conversation feeling cheered and almost cosseted. She advised me on how to talk to my mother, how not to annoy my stepdaughters, to check my thyroid, stimulate my scalp, get exercise and take up acupuncture. She also therapeutically massaged my earlobes until I howled in pain, "Stop, Ms. Atwood, you’re hurting me!" which quieted the room considerably. She generously snickered at people I told her I disliked, and when I told her about a recent, convulsing family problem, she took my side with great brio. There was room in her capacious heart for those not present. She gave me a list of book recommendations because she is purely passionate about reading, fiercely praising school libraries and parents who buy shed loads of books so that children become engrossed in reading, which will help them in later life. She is nothing if not saintly. So there.

Extrait: Lorsqu’on lui demande si The Penelopiad est une version féministe de L’Odyssee, Margaret Atwood répond: «Ce mot "féministe", ça veut dire quoi exactement? Pour certaines personnes, le seul fait d’être une femme et d’écrire, c’est un acte féministe.... En fait, je pense qu’il y a autant de féminismes qu’il y a de femmes. Bien sûr, The Penelopiad expose un point de vue féminin, mais est-ce que ça en fait une œuvre féministe? Je ne sais pas.... Peut-être que le fait de donner une voix à une femme qui n’en avait pas, c’est du féminisme... peut-être.» Dans cette œuvre qui fut d’abord un roman avant qu’elle ne l’adapte elle-même pour le théâtre, Margaret Atwood donne la parole à Pénélope, l’épouse du héros de L’Odyssee. Mais il ne s’agit pas vraiment de la Pénélope décrite par Homère, l’épouse modèle qui attend patiemment son couraillieux de mari: «Ma Pénélope n’est pas la Pénélope souffrante, pleurante, loyale, etc., décrite par Homère. En faisant ma recherche, j’ai trouvé des sources mythologiques où Pénélope est décrite d’une manière très différente.... Certains avancent même qu’elle aurait couché avec ses 120 prétendants! Je pense que, pour diriger le royaume d’Ithaque comme elle l’a fait durant 20 ans, sans aucune préparation, Pénélope devait être une femme très intelligente et très déterminée.».... Quant à Moral Disorder (McClelland & Stewart, septembre 2006), c’est une série de nouvelles, arrangées de manière à former une histoire continue. Selon Margaret Atwood, c’est son œuvre la plus autobiographique à ce jour: «En fait, c’est ma vie si je n’étais pas moi.... Comme l’héroïne de ces histoires n’est pas un écrivain, ce n’est pas vraiment moi. De plus, j’ai fait quelques petits changements: par exemple, dans trois des histoires, l’héroïne vit sur une ferme alors que dans la vraie vie, je ne vis pas sur une ferme.... Mais pour le reste, c’est réellement basé sur ma vie, ou plutôt sur la vie que j’aurais pu avoir si je n’étais pas devenue écrivain.... C’est comme un album de photos dont chacune raconte un moment important dans la vie de cette femme: l’arrivée d’une nouvelle petite sœur, l’adolescence, le mariage, etc.» Moral Disorder n’est pas le premier roman de Margaret Atwood à saveur autobiographique. Surfacing, son second roman, publié en 1972, est aussi très intimement lié à sa vie réelle. Traduit en français et publié par Grassat au milieu des années 1970, Faire surface fait l’objet d’une nouvelle traduction et sera réédité cet automne chez Robert Laffont. Dans ce thriller psychologique, Margaret Atwood revisite le nord du Québec, une région intimement liée à ses souvenirs d’enfance: «J’ai vécu une grande partie de mon enfance dans le nord de l’Ontario et en Abitibi. Encore aujourd’hui, j’y reviens chaque été parce qu’on a gardé cette petite cabane de bois rond, au nord du Témiscaminque, dont je parle dans le livre. Le paysage que je décris dans le livre est bien réel, c’est un paysage qui me parle beaucoup, parce qu’il est associé à toutes les étapes de ma vie, de ma petite enfance à aujourd’hui. D’ailleurs, il figure dans plusieurs de mes poèmes, avec ses lacs et ses forêts de conifères et de feuillus.» Margaret Atwood est aussi poète, avec une douzaine de recueils à son actif, dont le plus récent vient tout juste d’être publié (The Door, Houghton Mifflin, septembre 2007). Comment le roman et la poésie cohabitent-ils dans son imaginaire? «À mon avis, le roman et la poésie mettent en cause deux parties du cerveau très distinctes. Pour écrire un roman, on utilise la même partie du cerveau que pour converser ou pour raconter des histoires; pour la poésie, c’est la partie du cerveau qui est associée à la musique ou aux mathématiques. De plus, les deux naissent dans des circonstances tout à fait différentes. Pour écrire un roman, il faut bien sûr un peu d’inspiration, mais ensuite, il faut travailler et travailler encore, souvent durant plusieurs années. Pour la poésie, il faut créer un espace vide et attendre.... C’est un concept presque bouddhiste! On ne peut pas forcer un poème à arriver.... Le poème arrive ou pas! C’est un peu comme si on utilisait une main pour écrire de la prose et l’autre pour écrire de la poésie. Donc, je suis ambidextre! Je dirais même.
que j’ai deux personnalités, et que ma personnalité poétique est beaucoup plus sinistre que ma personnalité romanesque." Elle explique [aussi] que ses romans futuristes (tels que The Handmaid’s Tale, The Blind Assassin et Oryx and Crake) tirent directement leur origine des œuvres de H. G. Wells, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley et d’autres écrivains de l’après-guerre qui ont marqué son enfance: «J’ai grandi durant l’âge d’or de la science-fiction et je me suis nourrie de ces histoires. Au bout du compte, j’ai gardé une véritable fascination pour les histoires qui se déroulent sur notre planète, dans un futur possible. Pour moi, c’est un moyen d’interroger la société en prenant des idées et en les amplifiant, pour montrer les conséquences possibles de nos actes. Mes romans sont comme des mises en garde: «Regardez messesdamés et messieurs, voici ce qui pourrait arriver, voici ce vers quoi nous nous dirigeons».

Quand elle veut se réconforter, Margaret Atwood replonge dans son passé pour s’en inspirer: «Le passé est plus réconfortant, parce qu’on sait comment ça se termine.... Le futur est inquiétant parce qu’on ne sait pas comment tout cela va finir…. Le futur est ouvert mais le passé est fermé, et ce qui est fermé est plus réconfortant.» Dans son prochain roman, Margaret Atwood nous entraînera-t-elle vers le futur ou vers le passé? Elle ne veut pas le dire: «En ce moment, je suis en train de terminer un roman, mais je n’en dirai pas un mot avant sa publication, qui devrait se faire à l’automne 2008.»


Extrait: Au téléphone, la voix est un peu faible. Margaret Atwood souffre d’une pneumonie. Et elle doit partir sous peu pour Londres. La semaine prochaine, elle recevra à Montréal le prestigieux prix littéraire Metropolis bleu, qui honore un écrivain pour l’ensemble de son œuvre. Elle annonce que, lors de son passage ici, elle parlera des coups de sabre que le gouvernement Harper effectue dans le milieu culturel. Ces jours-ci, la dame préfère manifestement parler de politique que des drames intérieurs qui inspirent ses œuvres. «Je crois que ce gouvernement déteste les artistes, et je ne peux pas vraiment dire pourquoi», dit celle qui a signé cet hiver deux textes dans le Globe and Mail, sur la désaffection du gouvernement du Canada à l’égard des arts. Est-ce par ignorance tout court ou par ignorance volontaire, par haine, par avarice, par idiotie? demande-t-elle. «Le gouvernement du Canada a coupé jusqu’au dernier sou consacré à la promotion canadienne des arts à l’étranger», écrit-elle. Tout récemment, le Canada était à l’honneur au festival America, littératures et cultures d’Amérique du Nord, qui se tenait à Vincennes, près de Paris. Or, même avec 26 écrivains canadiens présents, l’ambassade n’a même pas eu assez d’argent pour organiser une réception!


After Atwood was awarded the Grand Prix of the Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival, she commented that she was also thrilled to be up for consideration for the Man Booker International, one of the richest and most prestigious prizes in English literature which is awarded for an author’s entire body of work. Excerpt: “You’re being honoured for a body of work, that’s probably better than saying lifetime achievement. Lifetime achievement implies that you’ve got one foot in the grave. A lot of people on the list are still in full flight.” [Atwood said]. Atwood is certainly far from finished adding to her body of work. She has a new book of poetry, The Door, due out in September and is well into her next novel. She has also been hard at work on the script for a musical theatrical production of her novel, The Penelopiad, a retelling of Homer’s The Odyssey through the eyes of Penelope. The book launch of The Penelopiad in London included a staged reading with actors, which evolved into the musical. “I was Penelope,” she said of that first, brief play. “One of them played Helen of Troy with sunglasses and one of them played Penelope’s mother . . . and she came out of the pulpit wearing a blue raincoat. That was lots of fun.” . . . One of the country’s most successful writers, the feisty literary star didn’t pass up the opportunity Tuesday to criticize the current Conservative government for its cuts to the arts. Atwood said the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper is out to “squash the arts into the dust,” cutting funding for foreign promotions of Canadian work as well as funding for homegrown events. “It means that if you were the me of today and you were starting out, you’re not going to get any help from them,” she said. Harper himself is writing a book about hockey but Atwood said he may find it hard to find an audience. “He’s going to have trouble promoting his book in foreign countries because he himself cut the budget for that,” she said with a chuckle. "Anyway, why is he writing? He has another job."

Atwood interviewed at the Guardian Book Club. Some excerpts: “As a writer, do you ever become overwhelmed by potentially depressing material?” one reader asked. “Before I get my coffee, every day.” ... A fan of her earlier novel *Cat’s Eye* asked about the gap between the “realism” of such work and her later incursions into science fiction. But Atwood saw a natural connection. *Cat’s Eye* was interested in the world of children, and sci-fi had much in common with this. She appeared alarmingly well versed in some of the online fantasy games that most appeal to boys and, to the bafflement of the rest of us, shared her knowledge of electronic sword and sorcery with an expert in the audience. For complete podcast see: http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/audio/2007/apr/20/books1175 (1 August 2008).


Excerpt: Margaret Atwood is about to join the long list of famous novelists who have turned playwright—a list that she’s the first to admit does not make encouraging reading. “They had this idea that beautiful actors would speak their wonderful lines and everybody would swoon,” says Atwood in her Canadian drawl, on the line from her home in Toronto. George Eliot? “Awful.” Charles Dickens? “A dabbler.” Henry James? “Well, yes.” Tennyson’s verse dramas? “Frankly pretty dreadful. Apparently it’s because they’d never worked in theatre.” ... *Can she succeed where Dickens and Eliot did not?* “Well,” she qualifies, “it’s not technically my first. I did put on a home economics opera in 1956. It was about nylons—Orion, actually.” ... *And the question of the dubious legacy of the novelist-turned-playwright?* “Maybe what I’ll learn is that I oughtn’t to ever do this again. Perhaps all those novelists-turned-playwrights of the past were trying to warn me off. We’ll just have to wait and see.”

Atwood interviewed about the LongPen essentially “two tin cans and a string.” Excerpt: For Atwood, the LongPen democratizes the book tour and eliminates stressful travel for authors. It saves money, allows more fans to meet authors and reduces the environmental harm caused by air travel (she reckons the LongPen has already saved the planet over 30 metric tonnes of carbon emissions). She does not accept that her device will help reclusive authors to avoid their public. “They’ll continue to avoid it anyway if they really are reclusive,” she said. “But if they simply hate to travel—and yes, anxiety attacks are real—they will happily meet the public via the LongPen.” Witness Dean Koontz, who used the LongPen in California for the London Book Fair. “But the idea that writers averse to travel are lazy or standoffish annoys me. How about ‘old and frail’—I’m getting to that one myself—or ‘physically handicapped,’ or ‘just had pneumonia,’ or ‘single mother of triplets? There are a lot of people who cannot travel. Why shouldn’t they, too, be allowed to come to the Cinderella ball?” She said that she still enjoyed meeting her readers in the flesh. “It would be great to meet readers in countries where I’ll never go, either because I’m too old or the publishers can’t afford to bring me there. With the LongPen, it would be easy and cheap, once the device was installed.” At the Edinburgh International Book Festival, the LongPen is the focus of two major events. Atwood will talk to [Alice] Munro in Canada via video, after which Munro will sign books, while Andrew O’Hagan will interview [Norman] Mailer at his home in Provincetown, Massachusetts, after which Mailer will also use the LongPen.

RENZETTI, Elizabeth. “This Time, No Dead Rats: Margaret Atwood Reveals to Elizabeth Renzetti that Collaborating on a Script Can Involve some Extremely Unusual Experiences: Stark Naked Men Running into the Room, and an Impulse to Perform Your Bird Impressions or Put a Chair on Your Head.” *Globe and Mail* 5 May 2007 Section: Review: 1.
On bringing *The Penelopeiad* to stage.

Transcript available from Lexis-Nexis. Interview about *Moral Disorder*. Some excerpts:
CHARLIE ROSE: *Is it autobiographical?* MARGARET ATWOOD: We’re going back to what it is instead. It’s not this. On the other hand, it is not—all the stories are connected—and they have characters in common and you see them at different parts of their lives. So there’s one central character that goes all the way through, and you see that person as a child and as an adolescent.
and as a 20-year-old person, and a middle-aged person, and finally a more than middle-aged person. Is it autobiographical? Some of it is. That's really my high school English teacher. CHARLIE ROSE: Yes, but is Neil's life your life? MARGARET ATWOOD: No, because Neil is not a writer like me. In fact, she's not a writer at all. I would say she's more of a cautious person than I am, quite a lot less reckless, and not very entrepreneurial in any way. So she's a more timid version, if you like. CHARLIE ROSE: Is it easier to write short stories than novels? MARGARET ATWOOD: No. No, it's not. Why is that? Because with a novel, it's actually going along, you know you have a plot. You know, you know you've got your plot going along. With the short story, the plot is within each story. While the stories may be connected, the thing is much more condensed. So, in fact, I would say, it's more—I don't know, what is easy, what is hard? Is a long-distance race harder than a sprint? CHARLIE ROSE: The Booker Prize does what for you? MARGARET ATWOOD: Well, first of all, it put an end to all the speculation about whether or not I would ever win it. CHARLIE ROSE: That's true. It also may have done something to you, in terms of once I've done it, I feel like I've reached a certain point. MARGARET ATWOOD: Yes, I think it had that effect. And it being Canada, of course, every time I didn't win it, the times I had been nominated previously, because there had been three other times, they would put a story in that said "Atwood fails to win Booker." CHARLIE ROSE: Yes, exactly. MARGARET ATWOOD: As if, you know, anything to do with it. OK, so when it finally—when I finally did win it, it was something of a relief, because I knew I wasn't going to have to do that again. I wouldn't have to do Atwood fails to win Booker again. CHARLIE ROSE: You also think that writers need to know when to stop writing. MARGARET ATWOOD: It is a fear of mine, yes. I read the later poems of Tennyson, which were not very good. So I said to... CHARLIE ROSE: Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote bad poems in his later life? MARGARET ATWOOD: I'm sorry to tell you that he wrote some pretty awful poems in his later life. He didn't know when to draw the line. He wrote a couple good ones in his later life, so there is hope. But most of them aren't really very good. However, some people can just keep going. Look at Picasso. So I said to my agent, if I get to that point, you know, if things are really slipping, you have to tell me. CHARLIE ROSE: Do you think you would listen if he said that? MARGARET ATWOOD: It's a she. CHARLIE ROSE: She said that? MARGARET ATWOOD: She said, I won't be able to tell you, because I'll be that way myself. So who is going to be the person in your life that says, "Alfred? That's enough." Who's going to tell me that? CHARLIE ROSE: Well, the time is not yet. Moral Disorder and Other Stories, Margaret Atwood. Thank you very much.


SMITH, Kay. "Margaret Atwood." Times Educational Supplement 4758 (10 December 2007) Special Section: 12-13. Atwood discusses her school years and favorite teachers. Atwood attended Leaside High School in Toronto, where she learned English with Miss Bessie Billings. She describes Billings as popular with students with the potential to be sarcastic at times, but with a sense of humour. She explains that Billings encouraged her to attend Victoria College at Toronto University.

News

"Achebe Wins Man Booker Prize." Sunday Independent (South Africa) 17 June 2007 Section: Dispatches: 18. Nigerian author Chinua Achebe awarded £60,000 prize presented for a body of fiction every two years, beating out Atwood. The judges were Nadine Gordimer, Colm Toibin and Elaine Showalter. Achebe's first novel, Things Fall Apart, was published in 1958.

"Another Chapter of the E-Book." Irish Times 19 May 2007 Section: Weekend: 16. Atwood not a fan of the e-book. Talking about this on the BBC Radio 4's "Start the Week" recently, she noted: "You can't take your computer in the bath tub.... And it's very uncomfortable to have your computer in bed with you." Plus she pointed out, the human brain prefers reading words on paper. The definition is better. No pixels, no retina-scorching light.
Notes that Atwood given special Edinburgh International Book Festival Enlightenment Award in recognition of her position as one of the greatest living writers.

In Montreal to receive the Grand Prix of the Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival, Atwood commented that the federal government was out to “Squash the arts into the dust,” noting that the Montreal festival itself lost $150,000 in funding in 2007.

An obituary of Jane Rule who, along with partner Helen Sontloff, operated an unofficial welcome-wagon service for newcomers to Vancouver includes the following: “They were the first people I met,” said Margaret Atwood, who arrived at UBC as a sessional lecturer in 1964. “They helped me rent an apartment, they lent me a card table - I wrote The Edible Woman on it - they lent me plates, they invited me to parties. They were just terrific and they were like that with tons of people.”

Atwood’s Blind Assassin, Cat’s Eye and The Handmaid’s Tale on a list of “favourite 100 books" published since 1982 compiled from votes of 5000 employees of Waterstone’s, Britain’s biggest specialist book chain.

Margaret Atwood, writer, 68; Linda Evans, actress, 65; Baroness (Margaret) Jay, former leader of the House of Lords, 68; Ant McPartlin, television presenter, 32; Peter Schmeichel, former footballer, 44; Kim Wilde, singer, 47; Owen Wilson, actor, 39.

Announcement that Atwood on short-list again for Man Booker. Excerpt: Three of the 15 finalists for the 2007 Man Booker International Prize are Canadian – Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro and Michael Ondaatje. Canada is tied with Britain for the highest national representation on the shortlist – more than the United States, for instance. While the judges “tried not to pay attention to nationality,” according to Elaine Showalter, chairwoman of the panel of judges, she acknowledged that “Canadians should take some pride” in the result. Indeed they should. The award is given to a living writer for an outstanding body of work of fiction, and includes books translated into English. At the start of the literary careers of Ms. Atwood, Ms. Munro and Mr. Ondaatje, with a few notable exceptions, there was no outstanding body of work of fiction in this country. It is a stretch -- but not much of one -- to say Canadian literature was an oxymoron. No longer. Prof. Showalter called those three authors “an extraordinary set of writers.” Canadians know that already, judging from book sales and the honours heaped upon them by this country. But it never hurts to have a reminder of that fact from the head of an eminent jury for one of the world’s more prestigious literary prizes. (Prof. Showalter, a professor of English at Princeton University, was joined by authors Nadine Gordimer of South Africa and Colin Toibin of Ireland in the judging.) Even the context of the announcement was Canadian. The prize rules stipulate that the judges meet and announce their shortlist at a venue outside the United Kingdom. They chose to conduct their adjudication in the upper library at Toronto’s Massey College, the former haunt of another icon of Canadian literature, the late Robertson Davies, and lovingly tended today by one more man of letters, current master John Fraser. It was the icing on an over-rich cake.

Canadian Don McKay wins Giffin poetry prize held in Toronto. Atwood among those present.

Among recent customers at [Toronto's] Ron White's footery: Adrienne Clarkson and Margaret Atwood, who augmented her collection of MBT's (Masai Barefoot Technology's) "fat burning" shoes espoused by such Hollywood heavies as Gwyneth Paltrow and the cast of Grey's Anatomy.

BC's public education broadcaster, The Knowledge Network, to feature "Paris Stories: The Writing of Mavis Gallant" which includes selected readings, in-depth interviews and archival footage, as well as contributions from writers such as Atwood, Russell Banks, and Robert Fulford reflecting on the craft of the short story writer. The production was created in 2006.

"*Oryx and Crake* will made a better opera than it would make a film," Atwood said. "It is super-real, not like daily life, and that suits opera very well. Opera is symbolic, film is literal. In opera you can have people singing out their inner thoughts, which is much harder to do on film."

"Novelist Atwood to Speak at Kenyon Event." *Columbus Dispatch* (OH) 9 November 2007: Section: Features-Life & Arts: 03D

Atwood to appear at Kenyon College's forthcoming first Literary Festival immediately after receiving the *Kenyon Review's* sixth annual Literary Achievement Award the previous Thursday in New York.

"Readers Write." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN) 12 November 2007 Section: News: 10A.

Readers react to the choice of *The Handmaid's Tale* as the common text at the University of St. Thomas.

"University of Toronto." *Forestry Chronicle* 83.3 (May-June 2007): 426-427.

The article presents information concerning forestry studies at the University of Toronto (UT) which celebrated its 100th anniversary and marked the occasion with a series of events, including a dinner on the date of the centennial that involved faculty and administrators from the school.

Excerpt: The centennial was also marked by a lecture series that began with environmentalist Margaret Atwood speaking about her childhood experiences with forests, literature and mythology about forests, and her work as an environmentalist.


Atwood to give a talk at the Green Living Show in Toronto's Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place.


Seven prominent Canadian women donated a total of $350,000 toward the production costs of the stage adaptation of *the Penelopiad*, Winnipeg's Gail Asper, Torontoonians Alice Burton, Kiki Delaney, Julia Foster and Leslie Gales, Zita Cobb from Ottawa and Gail O'Brien of Calgary.


At the 73rd International PEN Congress in Dakar, Senegal, Atwood, a former president of PEN Canada, was elected vice-president of "International PEN for services to literature."


Excerpt: Rankin, a very wealthy Scottish author, recently released *Exit Music*, the 18th and ostensibly last novel in his immensely popular series about the adventures (and prodigious alcohol consumption) of Edinburgh Police Detective Inspector John Rebus. Already a bestseller in Britain, *Exit Music* has just been released in Canada, to ecstatic critical notices. On Wednesday, its author pays a brief visit to Toronto where he and Margaret Atwood (Together! On-stage for the first time! One night only!) are the stars of a benefit on behalf of PEN Canada as part of the 28th-annual International Festival of Authors.


Excerpt: It's not the most efficient way to make a point, perhaps. But "efficient" has never been synonymous with "effective." Or so the Writers' Union of Canada believes as it gets set today to assemble a petition it plans to give—eventually—to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The union, founded in 1973, is currently holding its annual general meeting in Vancouver where Canada's most famous author, Margaret Atwood, will deliver the organization's Margaret Laurence Memorial Lecture tonight. But before she does, Atwood is going to be one of about 150 signatories to a petition urging Harper to reinstate the $12-million cut his government made last year to the "public diplomacy" budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Atwood is also providing the technology for the petition, namely her now-famous LongPen writing machine that allows the transmission, in real time via the Internet, of hand-written signatures from one location to another. In this case, the signatures are going to be "sent," starting around noon PT, via LongPen in Vancouver, to another famous Canadian writer, Yann Martel, who will be manning a receiving LongPen device more than 4,000 kilometres away, at BookExpo America in New York. Once all the signatures are received, Martel, winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize for fiction for *Life of Pi*, will give the petition to a courier who will then deliver it to the Prime Minister's Office.

Upon learning that Lessing won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Atwood called the judges’ decision “Excellent.”


De BEER, Lauren. “Airing Zimbabwe’s Voice.” *Business Day* (South Africa) 8 September 2007: Section: Arts, Culture & Entertainment: 3. Atwood among world authors who added their names to a world-wide appeal to radio stations and other media to broadcast readings of poems by Zimbabwean poets.

ECKLER, Rebecca. “I’m Going to Be in Atwood’s Book!” *Maclean’s* 10 December: Section: The Back Pages: 98. Eckler described how she participated in a fundraiser for the non-profit magazine, *The Walrus*. Part of it included a bidding war to appear in Atwood’s next book. After her $7,000 proved to be the winning bid, Eckler reflected on how her name might be used.


FURLOW, David A. “Salvaging a Reputation.” *Books in Canada* 33.3 (April 2007): 12-13. In a review of *Paths of Glory: The Life and Death of General James Wolfe* by Stephen Brumwell (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006), Furlow notes that “In The Robber Bride, Margaret Atwood mocked Benjamin West’s ‘lugubrious picture’ for showing Wolfe as ‘white as a codfish belly, with his eyes rolled piously upwards and many necrophiliac voyeurs in fancy dress grouped around him.’ Stephen Brumwell does not share Margaret Atwood’s view of General Wolfe. An independent historian, Ph.D. scholar, husband, and father born in England but now living in Amsterdam, he has mastered the intricacies of 18th-century warfare. He writes about Continental European politics with the same verve he displays in describing the adrenaline-powered bayonet charge Wolfe was leading just before his death....”

GARNER, Jack. “Finding the Music to Express Words.” *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* 21 March 2007: Section: Living: 1C. Atwood’s words and the music of composer Tania Leon were blended in a song cycle in which Leon sets five of Atwood’s poems to music. Excerpt: The five poems in this case are “Notes Towards a Poem That Can Never Be Written,” “Habitation,” “Memory,” “Eating Fire” and “Four Evasions”. The presentation of Atwood Songs marked both the 20th anniversary of the Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Rochester and the opening of the annual five-day Women in Music Festival at the University’s Eastman School of Music. Atwood was also in town to read from her work at an installment of the Plutzik Reading Series. Atwood said that handing off her poems to a composer “is like letting somebody else play with your toys.” If the collaborations are to succeed, “the works must spark something in the composer.” Performing the song cycle were pianist Sylvie Beaudette, an assistant professor at the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music, and soprano Eileen Strempel, an assistant professor at Syracuse University. Atwood said she was eager to hear the pieces for the first time. “They sent me the sheet music, but I can’t play or read music. I only can see that the melodies go up and down,” she added, laughing.

GERANSAR, Rose and Brian SEAMAN. “Science and Art Meet in Pure Poetry.” *Calgary Herald* 8 November 2007: A19. Margaret Atwood and Christian Bök on hand to present their views at the One Origin, One Race, One Earth Conference held in Calgary 15 to 17 November. The event also featured the Rosalind Franklin Art Exhibit, which displayed student art works inspired by genetic science.

GOVANI, Shinan. “Treading Culture’s Dangerous Waters.” *National Post* 18 April 2007: AL3. Story about book launch of Rebecca Eckler’s new book, *Wiped*, in which Eckler “was handed a present from none other than Margaret Atwood,” reports a spy. “She’d sent over a T-shirt and a candle for her kid, Rowan. The candle was shaped like a bear. Rebecca wasn’t so sure if the candle was meant for her or the baby. Not sure, she said, if she should be giving her three-year-old a candle!”

HOYLE, Ben. “How Internet Booksellers are Killing the Art of Browsing.” *The Times* (London) 23 April
Includes Atwood’s comment at the London Bookfair the previous week about the decline of bookstores in favor of online retailers. Excerpt: She said that the “serendipity” of discovering something in a bookshop has not been replicated online. “You are not going to get the same experience on the net. Amazon is trying, by saying, ‘If you like this book you might like this other book,’ but it’s often something quite offensive that they suggest.” Kazuo Ishiguro, another Booker Prize winner, agreed. He told The Times that shopping for books on the internet was helpful for his work “but it’s not fun.” Amazon’s recommendations were often amusingly useless, he added.
“One of the last books I bought was a study guide to one of my old books, The Remains of the Day. Now they keep recommending my own books to me.” Atwood also noted that the success of internet retailers meant that bookshops were missing out on the sales that they wouldn’t expect to make, but make because somebody sees this beautiful cover and they pick it up and read the front flap. They might look at the back flap and the picture of the author, then they might read the first two or three pages. If they are me, they might then open it in the middle. It all takes about five minutes.
Report on Atwood talk at The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival using the LongPen from her Toronto home. In addition to noting that Atwood thought a writing career was a gamble, Hoyle reports: Her own fiction has developed with age, she said. “If you are young you can imagine what it’s like to be old but you haven’t lived it. If you are older you have not only experienced what it’s like to be older but you can remember every stage in between.” She added that her books had become more structurally adventurous because she had used up most of the simpler narrative devices in her earlier works. “To stop yourself falling asleep you need to become more inventive. So The Blind Assassin covers pretty much the entire 20th century but it’s also able to draw on a lot of levels of experience which the 25-year-old me did not have access to,” Atwood said.

Article comments on use of Atwood’s invention, the LongPen by more than two dozen authors including the ailing Norman Mailer who signed copies of his final novel The Castle in the Forest from his vacation home in Massachusetts.

Story about Stephen Henighan (a professor of Spanish literature at the University of Guelph) who suggested the Scotiabank Giller Prize was rigged, especially after Atwood’s protégé Vincent Lam won the 2006 prize. For his original piece see http://www.geist.com/opinion/kingmakers (1 August 2008).

KERSTEN, Katherine. “Shock Therapy for Freshmen at St. Thomas Shockingly Trite.” Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN) 8 November 2007: Section: News: 1B.
Report that St. Thomas has chosen The Handmaid’s Tale as the book all freshmen English students must read and discuss. Author not impressed because she thinks book is passé.

Excerpt: The two writers have agreed to lead a campaign to save the national bird of Grenada—a dove now found only on the tiny Caribbean island. (Covering just 344 square kilometres, Grenada is a whisker larger than Thunder Bay, but has fewer people.) The flock has dwindled to fewer than 120, so the species is considered “highly endangered,” and most of the remaining birds live in a secluded area set aside as a sanctuary when the Grenada Dove was officially declared the national bird 10 years ago. But the island’s government suddenly lifted the ban on development, and the sanctuary is now the proposed site of a massive resort to be managed by the Toronto-based Four Seasons chain. As a result, the company, which Canadian entrepreneur Isadore Sharp has agreed to sell to investors led by Microsoft mogul Bill Gates and Saudi Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, is under siege, along with the project’s Barbados-based developer and Grenada’s cash-strapped government. A diverse group of international scientists, ornithologists and bird activists, along with Ms. Atwood and Mr. Gibson, author of The bedside Book of Birds, is rallying to the dove’s defence. “There is,” Ms. Atwood says, “a terrible irony in Grenada’s willingness to threaten the existence of its national bird simply to provide luxury sea views to
super-rich people from away."


Report of Giller Banquet held in Toronto’s Four Seasons Hotel. Because the chain was involved in a massive resort development project in Granada which threatened an endangered species, the Granada Dove, Atwood and hubby Graeme Gibson declined banquet food (tuna tartar and beef tenderloin), preferring their own dinner (home-made spinach and cucumber washed down with sake) which Gibson had brought in.


Report of a grade 11 student on Atwood’s talk to an Edmonton audience on the topic of *Oryx and Crake*: How Much Time Have We Got? Excerpt: Immediately after I walked into Grant MacEwan’s sports centre, I found a table of Margaret Atwood everything. Who knew that such a small table could house so many faces of Margaret Atwood? Atwood T-shirts, mugs, bags.... As I waited in line, visions of Atwood passed by me on volunteers’ chests. I didn’t know if I should snicker or bask in the Atwood glory.... "I always love coming to Edmonton because it makes my hair really big," she said, followed by a mischievous grin. She spoke to the packed Grant Mac gym as if she was sitting down for tea with a few friends. The room suddenly became smaller, even though I was forced to watch a television screen from the other side of the gym. Margaret Atwood quickly responded to a variety of questions, some alluding to other novels, and some asking what happened after the book. She shared intimate family stories, which I’m sure her sister-in-law would not find as amusing as we did. Her talk was neither preachy nor patronizing; it felt like a discussion. Atwood’s talk, subtitled “How much time have we got?”, catered to any demographic. When asked if she had hope about our deteriorating environment, she said “Yes, I’m a bundle of hope.” That cleared up any criticism aimed at her book *Oryx and Crake*. I appreciated her realistic views dealing with climate change. She warned that time is rapidly growing short. As Atwood pleasantly bashed Harper’s actions, inactions rather, dealing with climate change, the crowd hooted and hollered. The government needs to acknowledge the dire need for change, Atwood said, warning the only way to maintain a constant lifestyle is to change. In order to retain our current environment, we must change the way we live; we cannot continue to apathetically destroy the world we live in. Atwood encouraged us to take charge and turn inaction into action. As she said, write to your MPs and make changes, from things like carpooling to energy efficient light bulbs.


Obituary of Richard Bradshaw, general director of the Canadian Opera Company includes comments from Atwood in an e-mail message from Scandinavia. "Richard Bradshaw was one of a kind. He was passionate about the work itself - whatever it might be - and set the highest standards for it. But he was playful and innovative as well, and a joy to work with. We saw the premiere of ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ in Denmark together—and I could just hear him thinking about how he would do it if he could get it to Toronto - which he did, triumphantly. His specialty was making silk purses out of the sow’s ears handed to him time and time again by our mingy politicians. Nobody could make two cents stretch as far as he could. ... The best tribute to him will be to try to match his commitment to excellence, and his grand vision of what we can be - as opposed to what we sometimes all too drearily are."


Obituary of Atwood’s mother.


Profile of Tassie Cameron (daughter of journalist Stevie Cameron) who wrote the screenplay for the TV version of *The Robber Bride*. Excerpt: According to Cameron "About two weeks before we started shooting, I got a call from the producer saying Margaret had read it and that she liked it...."
And it was a glorious moment. It was a bells-ringing, angel-singing kind of moment."


On Atwood's fame: Canadians in the Caribbean with whom Moss was diving did not know who she was.

Section: News: 3.
Atwood in Stratford along with Graeme Gibson for reading. Some comments to audience reported including her remark about the CBC.

The article relates how the The Penelopiad came to fruition as a play and discusses the people involved.

History of the transformation of the book into the play.

Notes that Atwood contributed $1,000 to the re-election campaign of Toronto Mayor, David Miller.

Entertainment: 58.

When singer Joni Mitchell was inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, Atwood was part of the program, reading a selection of her favourite Mitchell lyrics.

Atwood in running for Governor General's Literary Award (for The Door). When winners were announced on 27 November, she did not walk away with a prize.

Excerpt: The Distillery District received a massive influx of brainpower recently, as at least 220 of Toronto's intelligentsia descended on the Young Centre for the Performing Arts for the Wild and Wonderful Walrus Party, a fundraiser for the four-year-old magazine that ultimately took in $91,000. Against the exposed brick of the theatre's lobby, Walrus editor Ken Alexander chatted with Edward Burtnyski, a large print of one of the photographer's works, up for auction, displayed at their side. (Among the other items for bid was the right to appear as a character in Margaret Atwood's next novel. Suggested price: $5,000.)

Includes a variation on the story of how Atwood helped Martin's career. Excerpt: In the mid-'80s, Martin found herself spending a year at the University of Alabama ("I was filling in for somebody whose wife had married his best friend, and he wanted to leave town"). Atwood was there that year as well, with a daughter about the same age as Martin's. Daughters and mothers became friends. The Canadian poet and novelist was then finishing The Handmaid's Tale, her horrifying evocation of a misogynistic theocracy, which would make both literary and commercial waves when it was published in 1986. She gave the manuscript to Martin to be its first reader. "We have two versions of this story," Martin says. "She says that when I read it and she said, 'What do you think?' I said, 'I think there's something in it.'" But Martin remembers saying simply, "You're going to be rich." "That sounds like something she might say and I might forget," says Atwood, laughing, when asked to clear up this crucial discrepancy. More important, for Martin, was what happened after she gave Atwood her own manuscripts to read. Atwood marched into the office of her American editor—it was [Nan] Talese, who was then at Houghton Mifflin—carrying three of them, in boxes. "She said, 'This is a writer you should publish,'" Talese recalls.

Atwood speaking at The Times Edinburgh Book Festival about her hopes for the 2003 novel.

Atwood to read at that evening's fete celebrating the publisher's 40th anniversary.

Horror meister Stephen King makes his first appearance in Canada to receive a life-time achievement award from the Canadian Booksellers Association, making him the first non-Canadian so honoured. Atwood in attendance.

---. "IFOA: Uniting the Rock Stars of the Reading Circuit." Toronto Star 11 October 2007: Section:

46
Entertainment: E02.
Atwood to interview Scottish crime maestro Ian Rankin at Toronto’s International Festival of Authors.

The cast of National Ballet of Canada’s production of “The Nutcracker” to include “a pair of very special Cannon Dolls: author Margaret Atwood and Barenaked Ladies lead singer Steven Page.” The production at Toronto’s Four Seasons Centre would be broadcast live to 70 Cineplex-Odeon cinemas in Quebec, Ontario and the four western provinces.

Description of upcoming TV program on Bravo Network: “To want to meet a writer because you like their work is like wanting to meet a duck because you like pate,” says Graeme Gibson, Atwood’s husband. Yet the impulse is strong to discover the person behind the multidimensional oeuvre that not only dominates Canadian literature but also has had an impact worldwide. This portrait of the prolific writer brings the private Peggy closer, but still she feels somewhat out of reach, a witty, playful apparition, but an apparition nonetheless. There are readings in her distinctive voice; still photos that capture her nonchalant beauty; home movies showing her in that quintessential Canadian activity, canoeing; and insights from family and friends. Yet for all that, she remains an enigmatic figure. Alice Munro describes Atwood as “a lot of fun.” Historian Ramsay Cook talks of her “wonderful sense of humour,” but what he really likes is her argumentative nature. And, quite predictably, everyone comments on her rare writing gift. Yet there are a couple of revealing moments. Drawing on a childhood debate, Atwood says she always wanted the ingenuity of Batman, not the superhuman powers of Superman. Then there’s her reading of her poem “A Poor Woman Learns to Write.” It’s here she lets down her guard just a little. Her own emotion is palpable as she recites, “But we can guess. Look at her face.”


Scholarly Resources


APPLETON, Sarah. “Canadian Characters at King Arthur’s Court: Arthurian Legend and Margaret Atwood’s The Blind Assassin.” Margaret Atwood Studies 1.2 (December 2007): 3-10.


BIBEAU, Gilles. “Étrange familiarité du Windigo [i.e. Windigo’s Strange Familiarity].” Santé Mentale au Québec 32.2 (Automne 2007): 239-249. In French. “The Windigo belongs to the mythology of the Algonquian people, who represent this giant creature as a seductive woman whose heart is made of ice. It is also how the first European
explorers of the boreal forest represented the spirit of the North, which lured lost men in the white vastness, while at the same time leading them to madness. In the literature on transcultural psychiatry, the Windigo psychosis has classically been presented as a 'culture-bound syndrome' specific to the sub-Arctic populations of Canada. Among the symptoms of those affected is the conviction that they are possessed by the Windigo spirit, the fear that they are going to be devoured or transformed into a 'spirit of the cold' to wander forever in the lonely 'North,' and the compulsive desire to eat human flesh. All of these symptoms are evoked in the songs that aboriginal shamans have invented in honor of Windigo. The author examines how English-Canadian novelists (notably, Atwood) have made Windigo a symbol of Canadian identity. (Journal abstract).


"Many of the articles published on Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* since the late 1990s reveal a measure of discomfort with what appears to be the novel's incompatible aims, namely those of providing a postmodernist critique of history within the framework of nineteenth-century literary conventions. I argue that these two aims are reconcilable when the novel is understood as a trial novel that questions the construction of a teleological courtroom narrative deliberately based upon nineteenth-century novel-writing strategies and delivered in large part by a fictional Grace Marks, who acts throughout the novel as her own defense attorney." (Author).


Treatment of the wilderness in the *Journals of Susanna Moodie, Surfacing*, and *Wilderness Tips*.


See especially Chapter 5, "The Twentieth Century and Beyond: Postmodernism and Living with Change through Dialogism," pp. 141-167, and especially section on Atwood, pp. 160-166. This section focuses on *The Blind Assassin*.


While this book does not explicitly focus on Cronenberg's adaptation of an Atwood title, his "literary aesthetic is discussed via the process of adaptation, not just in relation to overt source material but also writers such as Vladimir Nabokov, Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood, Brett Easton Ellis and Clive Barker. The book examines how Cronenberg's literary influences function, particularly in terms of narrative structures, and suggests the nature of their importance for Cronenberg in his conception of the director as auteur. It also considers the current state of adaptation studies and the need to move beyond conventional psychological frameworks in film analysis more broadly and Cronenberg's work in particular." (Publisher).


"My dissertation examines how contemporary literary texts register the subjective experience of globalization in global cities. I delimit the scope of my interrogation of globalization to the global city for two reasons: First, the Social Sciences have established that the concept of the global city—meaning those cities whose economic functions have been almost uniformly transformed by globalization—is a prime site for the investigation of the city-dweller's subjective experience of globalization. Second, interrogating global urban consciousness throws into relief the relationship between literature and the conditions for its production in globalized city spaces. Through a combination of interpretation based on close reading, and explanation based on symptomatic reading, my project explains and analyzes what a subject's experience of the city can tell us about globalization's transformations of history, locality, and identity. Focusing on London, Tokyo, and Toronto, I read texts by such authors as Salman Rushdie, Haruki Murakami, and Margaret Atwood in order to explain how these texts register the global city as the material and conceptual condition for the possibility of rearticulating identity." (Author abstract). For more see DAI-A 68 08 (February 2008).


COATES, Donna. "Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye: Representations of War Brides in Canadian Fiction and Drama by Margaret Atwood, Mavis Gallant, Norah Harding, Margaret Hollingsworth, Joyce Marshall, Suzette Mayr, Aritha Van Herk, and Rachel Wyatt." *Back to


356 pp.
"The ghost figure in twentieth-century fictions perfectly embodies the inclusion and normalization of formerly monstrous others that results from the loss of referents, questioning of boundaries, and destabilization of the self in the postmodern era. In an era of gross commodification, with all foundational truths under constant scrutiny, we adjust our self-constructs, unable to impose labels and meanings with certainty and, as recent depictions of spectres illustrate, supposed others become more of a daily presence. With identification and interpretation possible only in context, the beholder's hesitation is a space that contains the ghost. Dubiety regarding phantoms is lessening because uncertainty about former adversaries is increasingly giving way to an understanding of multiplicity in supposed others. This thesis shows the ghost figure shifting from fearful other to nearly human...." (Author abstract). See especially "Chapter Five [which] analyzes Margaret Atwood's The Robber Bride and Michael Ondaatje's Anil's Ghost to show just how ubiquitous, elusive, and specular the ghost figure has become." For more see DAI-A 68.09 (March 2008).

"This paper extends the analytic tools developed within blending theory, to propose a new approach to the narrative as a cognitive construct. Specifically, the paper introduces the concept of narrative anchors, defined as textual devices prompting the emergence of narrative spaces. It is argued that a renewed interest in text analysis might provide a link between the local level stylistic choices and the global level construct known as 'the story.' Within this framework, stories can be seen as complex blends, emerging from subsequent levels of integration of narrative space." (Author abstract).

DICKINSON, Peter. Screening Gender, Framing Gender: Canadian Literature into Film. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

See especially Chapter 2: "Feminism, Fidelity, and the Female Gothic: The Uncanny Art of Adaptation in Kamouraska, Surfacing, and Le sourd dans la ville" pp. 49-76. There are also sporadic references to other Atwood titles throughout the text.


"This article explores, from a feminist perspective, a critically neglected work of Canadian fiction, drawing from the disciplines of narratology and literary linguistics in its argument. It initially considers some of the reasons why Joan Barfoot's Gaining Ground, published in 1978, has attracted scant academic attention, suggesting that it suffered from the feminist backlash prevalent in the late seventies in North America. In its depiction of a disassociated, perhaps even rebarbative female narrator, in a narrative described in one contemporary review as 'an expression of selfishness in women's liberation,' [sic] the novel incurred, and still incurs, antipathetic responses, which, the article, argues, have tended to deflect from its undoubted stylistic merits. [Duncan] maintains that Gaining Ground deserves much greater critical acclaim. The article identifies and analyzes the many instances of subversion in the narrative, demonstrating how narrative devices such as temporal dislocation, hypodiegesis, recurrent imagery, and lexical cohesion serve to characterize the narrator's journey as a courageous quest after self-actualization. The article concludes with the assertion that Barfoot's novel is best regarded as a feminist quest, much like Margaret Atwood's canonical novel, Surfacing." (Author abstract).


EDWARDS, Justin D. Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature. Edmonton, AB:

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"When dealing with Atwood's poetry, critics often use the following terms: poems about Canada or 'post-colonial'; 'female-empowered'; 'descent'; and 'metafictional.' Atwood's poetry can indeed be read on different staves simultaneously—the personal, social, cultural and universal layers. In order to achieve this polyphony, Atwood's poetry resorts to the staging of a wide range of personae. However, beyond this game of vocal plurality, the reader distinctly hears the voice of a persona-soloist who sings out her particular truth. This dissertation highlights the singularity of this voice which bears the mark of a rich experience and which is capable of cultivating two modes of functioning related to integration and independence. The critical tools which I resort to in order to show the originality of the Atwoodian voice are either philosophical tools focusing on vision, perception and reflection, or textual analysis tools which highlight the poetic quality of Atwood's work." (Author abstract). For a copy, search for this thesis at: http://www.sudoc.abes.fr/DB=21/SET=1/TTL=12/SHW?FRST=13 (1 August 2008).


"Among the many languages and cultures into which [Atwood's] works have been translated, Germany occupies a special position. In hardly any other country—the Anglophone world not excepted—is Atwood so admired and so popularly successful, hardly anywhere else so prominent on syllabi and curricula, so well represented in academic research. This chapter explores the reasons for Atwood's outstanding success in Germany, placing it in the context of Germany's fascination with Canadian literature in general and examining aspects of German and Canadian culture that help to explain the phenomenon. It also provides an analysis of two German translations of Atwood's novel Surfacing as a case in point for cultural processes at work in the translation of Canadian literature into German." (Author).


"Max Notes." Text by Malcolm Foster; illustrations by Karen Pica.


"The intent of this paper is to offer a psychological interpretation of Margaret Atwood's short story 'Death by Landscape' and to suggest that there are similarities between patients' narratives as told to their physicians and literary narratives. The means of understanding these narratives are similar. Literature, then, can be a source of experience and means of testing one's skills in understanding human motivation." (Author). Open access journal available at http://www.cfp.ca/cgi/content/full/53/8/1280?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT= &author1=fraser&fulltext=atwood&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=relevance&resourcetype=HWCIT (1 August 2008).


"This article challenges established understandings of Surfacing as a portrait of parallel female and national victimization by focusing on recent theorization of the inherently fraught relationship between the national and gendered identities. It addresses the conflicted relationship between national purpose and female autonomy." (Journal abstract).

Giffin, Michael. "Writing and Reading the Canons." Quadrant 51.6 (June 2007): 70-75.

"The article offers reflections on writing and reading the canons such as the construction of divinity in the canon, the construction of humanity in the secular canon, Margaret Atwood's novel Alias Grace and the resilience of the secular canon in the modern times. Sacred canons were written to represent classical metaphysics. Secular canons were written to interrogate classical metaphysics. Alias Grace simultaneously represents and interrogates classical metaphysics in a canonical way." (Adapted from author abstract).

GINFRAY, Denise. "Du conte à la nouvelle: l'espace dialogique dans «Bluebeard's Egg» de Margaret
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"Sir John Franklin's three expeditions to the high Arctic in 1819, 1825, and 1845 have become the stuff of Canadian legend, enshrined in history books, songs, short stories, novels, and websites. Franklin set out in 1845 to discover the Northwest Passage with the most advanced technology the British Empire could muster, and disappeared forever. Many rescue explorations found only scant evidence of the Expedition, and the mystery was finally solved only recently. This paper will explore four recent fictional works on Franklin's expeditions, Stan Rogers' song 'Northwest Passage,' Margaret Atwood's short story 'The Age of Lead,' Rudy Wiebe's A Discovery of Strangers, and John Wilson's North with Franklin: the Lost Journals of James Fitzjames, to see how Franklin's ghost has haunted the hopes and values of nineteenth-century, as well as modern, Canada." (Author abstract).

"In this article, I argue that Margaret Atwood critically revises myths and narrative plots so as to reveal and reconstruct their formative and marginalizing effect on women. Her novel, The Blind Assassin, depicts how literary texts can be used ideologically to dictate norms for proper femininity and what strategies women can employ to resist them. In her attempt to investigate and challenge the patriarchal traditions surrounding gender, Atwood is involved in a critical revision of canonical images pervasive in myths and fairy tales and of narrative conventions such as the romance and the quest plot. These traditional conventions are targets of critical reflection for women writers particularly because they produce powerful cultural images reinforcing unequal power relations and patriarchal gender roles. Revisiting these practices with the aim of debunking them reveals the constructive nature of myths and allows Atwood to invest them with new meanings by way of writing the other side of the story and giving voice to the muted other." (Author abstract).


"The Blind Assassin continues the exploration of the relationship between (often coded and multifaceted) narrative and victimhood/survival that Alias Grace and Atwood's earlier novels, like Lady Oracle and The Handmaid's Tale, have undertaken: namely, what sort of narratives do victims, and victims-turned-survivors, choose or manage to present, and for what purposes? to what extent do such narratives protect the tellers and/or improve their chances for safety and survival; and what is the relationship between the multiple identities and narratives they present and the issue of women's victimhood/survival?" (Author).


LAFLIN, Angela. "From a Distance It Looks Like Peace: Reading Beneath the Fascist Style of Gilead in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale." Studies in Canadian Literature 32.1 (Winter 2007): 82-
105.
"Throughout her work and particularly in her book The Handmaid's Tale (Fawcett Crest, 1985), Margaret Atwood highlights the danger of using visual culture to simplify complex ideologies and social relationships and suggests that individuals can resist visual manipulation by learning to 'read beneath' images. In The Handmaid's Tale, she ponders why people frequently cooperate with totalitarian regimes, and she draws on the history of the Third Reich to show that visual culture can help to foster a climate that suggests that resistance to the regime is futile. Atwood's emphasis on visual culture focuses on learning to see the ideology hidden within visual images that transport ideology into the ordinary activities of everyday life and aestheticize ideology, dressing it up as visually seductive and stirring. Indeed, in this book, she associates fascist style, which characterizes her Gilead, a totalitarian regime that has evolved from contemporary U.S. culture, with editing and crafting visual scenes to manipulate people and offer only a surface view of reality." (Journal abstract).


"Contemporary studies of literary narrative have placed considerable emphasis on categories of temporality and the discursive use of non-linearity as a predominant feature of narrative's unique characteristics. This thesis argues that discussion of narrative temporality is built upon an assumption that time, is, in fact, linear. I argue that time is frequently essentialized and universalized within contemporary literary criticism and suggest that temporality discourses are steeped in history and ideology, leaving time as one of the few metanarratives still largely unexamined within literary studies. Using an inter-disciplinary approach to examine the intersections of time and power, I read six novels of the past twenty-five years which take temporality as a central theme (Ian McEwan's The Child in Time; Margaret Atwood's Cat's Eye; Richard Powers's The Time of Our Singing; Audrey Niffenegger's The Time Traveler's Wife; Janet Frame's The Carpathians; and Jeanette Winterson's The PowerBook) by way of exploring the possible implications of this metanarrative. First, I argue that narratological terminology is far more embedded within assumptions of temporality than is often recognized. Secondly, I argue that temporality is implicated within structures of power and ideology, affecting what it is possible for us to 'imagine.' Finally, I extend my argument to the wider sphere of narrative's influence on concepts of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries, by way of highlighting the limitations of the linear world-view assumed by narrative theory." (Author abstract). For more see DAI-A 68.06 (December 2007).

"An apocalyptic vision of planetary self-destruction provided the context for many late twentieth-century narratives. Women writers from Quebec and English Canada, including Margaret Atwood, Madeleine Ouelllette-Michalska, Madeleine Gagnon, Betsy Warland, Marie-Claire Blais, and Nicole Brossard, redefined their relationship to time and narrative in order to tell a different, perhaps more hopeful, story. Using 'archaeology' as a trope and a methodology, Karen McPherson's 'critical excavations' of these women's writings pose questions about loss and mourning, survival and witnessing, devastation and writing, remembering and imagining." (Publisher abstract). In Atwood's case, Alias Grace, The Journals of Susanna Moodie and Surfacing are discussed.

"Discusses the continuing attractions of the novel in letters as a vehicle for the protest of the dispossessed, focusing on the novels of Samuel Richardson, Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, A.S. Byatt's Possession and Alice Walker's The Color Purple." (Author).

—. "The Pleasures and Dangers of Storytelling in Margaret Atwood’s The Robber Bride." Notes on Contemporary Literature 37.3 (May 2007): 8-10.


"Explores the relationship between body and text through Atwood’s use of post-modern strategies. The open-endedness and undecidability within the story may be unsettling and even confronting, but can also be liberating, opening up a space for new stories and new selves." (Journal abstract).


"This thesis examines the form and function of language in a range of modern and contemporary dystopian fictions. Using frameworks from stylistics, it isolates two distinct 'languages' of dystopia, and considers the ways in which these languages termed speculative language and reflective language contribute to dystopian narratives' acknowledged propensity to challenge, defamiliarise, and alter the perceptions or world-view of their readership. Chapter one defines more precisely the genre of dystopia, particularly in relation to notions of space and time, and emphasises the genre’s necessary participation in the socio-historical circumstances of its conception and production (which is shown to be the site of reflective language). Chapter two outlines the theoretical foundations of the study and supports its positioning at the interface between the study of language and the study of literature by drawing on theories from both disciplines to orient its subsequent analyses. The study appeals to the concept of linguistic relativity, or Whorfianism, which is re-figured as a process intrinsic to the reading of dystopian narratives, and combines this with the more literary critical-theory-based approach of cognitive estrangement. Chapters three, four, and five are devoted to case studies: chapter three discusses the non-Newspaper speculative language in George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, and chapter four begins with an analysis of reflective language in the same novel before looking at three other twentieth-century dystopian texts (Katherine Burdekin’s Swastika Night, L. P. Hartley’s Facial Justice, and Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale). Chapter five brings together speculative and reflective language in its consideration of Atwood’s Oryx and Crake." (Author abstract).


"With utopia’s heyday of the second half of the 19th century long gone with only a momentary flare up as feminist utopia in the 1970s, utopian literature seems to remain in limbo. Indeed, many critics have agreed upon a diminished belief in a potentially better world if not upon the disappearance of utopian literature and the impossibility of utopian thought altogether. Yet utopia is very much alive: it has reappeared in the disguise of novels, initially set as dystopias, predominantly in the contemporary feminist dystopias of the past twenty to thirty years. These ‘transgressive utopian dystopias’ resist neat categorizations of utopia/dystopia; rather, they present utopian strategies as integral part of the dystopian narrative. While the described dystopian societies are riven by manifold dualisms, the suggested utopian impulses aim at their transgression. These utopian strategies can be single glimpses of hope, as Margaret Atwood’s Oryx and Crake (2003) illustrates, or contain the very downfall or subversion of dystopia and the actual process of building utopia, as in Suzy McKee Charnas’s Holdfast tetralogy (1974-1999)." (Author abstract).


"Atwood within the context of other writers. "It was only after the successful publication of her earlier novels that Atwood’s short stories appeared." (Author)


Includes a summary of The Blind Assassin as well as ten discussion questions that might be used in a book club. See pp. 25-26.


Atwood, the short story writer, in context.

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OEDING, Brita and Luise von FLOTOW. "The 'Other Women': Canadian Women Writers Blazing a Trail into Germany." *Translating Canada: Charting the Institutions and Influences of Cultural Transfer: Canadian Writing in Germany.* Ed. Luise von Flotow and Reingard M. Nischik. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007. 79-92. "The translations and publications of Atwood's novels stood at the onset of, and helped to trigger, an avalanche of Canadian writing in German translation and a rising awareness of Canadian writing, which was financially supported and promoted by both Canadian and German institutions and agents and praised by a group of faithful reviewers." (Author).


PERRAKIS, Phyllis Stemberg, ed. *Adventures of the Spirit: The Older Woman in the Works of Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, and Other Contemporary Women Writers.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2007. Of the 11 essays in this book, three concern Atwood, and each is indexed in this Checklist.

PETERMANN, Emily. "Re-Painting the Painting: Margaret Atwood and the Bildgedicht." *Margaret Atwood Studies* 1.2 (December 2007): 10-19. "This paper [focuses] on the poems 'Manet's Olympia' from the 1995 collection *Morning in the Burned House* and 'Quattrocentro' from the 1984 collection *Interlunar* as the most salient examples of 'poems on paintings' in Atwood's oeuvre. Atwood has also written a number of poems dealing with photography, such as 'This is a Photograph of Me,' 'At the Tourist Centre in Boston,' 'Daguerrotype Taken in Old Age,' 'Girl and Horse, 1928,' 'Projected Slide of an Unknown Soldier,' 'Woman Skating,' and 'Man in a Glacier.' Though photography [is] not discussed here in depth, reference will be made to these poems where they further illustrate some of the ekphrastic features and themes relevant for the works on painting." (Author).


PETRILLI, Monica. "Drowning in Rational Discourse: Strategies of Survival in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, Marilyynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, and Louise Erdrich's *Tracks.*" MA thesis. Villanova University, 2007. 106 pp. "A great deal of feminist scholarship identifies the Enlightenment as the critical moment that secured the exclusion of women from the dominant patriarchal discourse. Recognizing the limitations of simply adopting rationality, feminists often consider developing discourses that do not adhere to its standards. Explorations of such possibilities, however, often remain in the theoretical realm without a clear image of the trajectory women might follow. Though feminists provide a clear understanding of why a woman considers abandoning rationality, they often fail to discern how she might do so without succumbing to madness. In the ensuing paper, I will engage the Enlightenment debate between Rousseau and Wollstonecraft to demonstrate its lasting impact on the positions women occupy in relation to rationality. I will then investigate the ways in which women negotiate rationality both within and beyond the social structure through analysis of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, Marilyynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, and Louise Erdrich's *Tracks.*" (Author abstract). For more see MAI 46.03 (June 2008).


PRATT, Brooke. "The Inside-Out Journey of Atwood's Moodie: From Dream Vision to National Ghost." *Canadian Poetry* 61 (Fall-Winter 2007): 65-74. "The article offers information on Susanna Moodie, one of the characters in Timothy Findley's work titled 'Headhunter.' It states that Findley's construction of Moodie is based on the poems of Margaret Atwood's own 19th century texts and is a testament to the dominating force of Atwood's Moodie in contemporary Canadian culture." (Journal abstract).

concept of the mother enslaved by her offspring was first resisted in the 1970s by such feminists as Jesse Bernard as a dangerous myth. However, in battling the politics of motherhood, many feminists still returned to the supposition of a maternal essence as the site of resistance, naively assuming a stronghold in an already sociopolitically-inscribed body. The assumption remained that essentialism, when wielded by the oppressed, could be revolutionary. However, the fiction written by women during this time challenged the idea of maternal feminism as suicidal, as to essentialize a body, however voluntarily, inevitably results in the lack of a possessable body—the first premise of slavery. Discussing work by Alice Walker, Margaret Atwood [The Handmaid’s Tale], and Toni Morrison, the writer argues that the postmodern woman’s response would be the suggestion of the dystopic body, most evident in their creation of the unlivability of a maternal utopia.” (Journal abstract).


“The murderess in the twenty-first century is a figure of particular cultural fascination; she is the subject of innumerable books, websites, documentaries and award-winning movies. With female violence reportedly on the increase, a rethinking of beliefs about women’s natural propensity towards violent and aggressive behaviours is inevitable. Using the Victorian period as a central focus, this thesis explores the contradictory ideologies regarding women’s violence and also suggests an alternative approach to the relationship between gender and violence in the future. A study of violent women in representation reveals how Victorian attitudes towards violence and femininity persist today. On the one hand, women have traditionally been cast as the naturally non-aggressive victims of violence rather than its perpetrators; on the other hand, the destructive potential of womanhood has been a cause of anxiety since the earliest Western mythology. I suggest that it is a desire to resolve this contradiction that has resulted in the proliferation of violent women in representation over the last one and a half centuries. In particular, an analysis of mid-nineteenth-century popular fiction indicates that the stronger the ideal of the angelic woman was, the greater the anxiety produced by her demonic antithesis. Wilkie Collins’s Armadale and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Lady Audley’s Secret illustrate both the contradictory Victorian attitudes towards violent women and a need to reconcile the combination of good and bad femininity that the murderess represents. Revisiting the Victorian murderess in the late twentieth century provides a potential means for resolving this contradiction; specifically, it enables the violent woman to engage in a process of self-representation that was not available to her in the nineteenth century. Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace suggests that any insight into the murderess begins with listening to the previously silenced voice of the violent woman herself.” (Author abstract).

ROBERTS, Adam. The History of Science Fiction. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Atwood makes several appearances in the text, most notably on p. 316 in the chapter “Prose Science Fiction 1970s-1980s.” Author argues that in spite of Atwood’s claims to be writing “speculative fiction” she in fact is a writer of science fiction.

SABOL, Jonathan Daniel. “Memory, History, and Identity: The Trauma Narrative in Contemporary North American and British Fiction.” PhD thesis. Fordham University, 2007. 206 pp. “The dissertation investigates five contemporary British and North American novels that take traumatic amnesia as their theme. These novels depict characters whose memory loss follows individual or communal acts of violence, often horrific in their brutality. Murder, for example, figures prominently in four of the five novels, which include Toni Morrison’s Beloved (1987), Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace (1996), Tim O’Brien’s In the Lake of the Woods (1994), and Michael Ondaatje’s Anil’s Ghost (2000). The protagonists in these texts suffer violence, commit it against others, or frequently do both, so that they are positioned as both victim and perpetrator of acts they cannot fully recollect.” (Author abstract). For more see DAI-A 68.07 (January 2008).

SARDIN, Pascale. “Creation and Procreation in Margaret Atwood’s ‘Giving Birth’: a Narrative of Doubles.” Women’s Literary Creativity and the Female Body. Ed. Diane Long Hoeveler and

'Giving Birth' is the last piece in Atwood's first collection of stories, Dancing Girls (1977). Sardin views it as "a key to revealing how Atwood, as a woman and, incidentally a mother, may be willing to envisage female creativity."


In Japanese.


"This thesis aims to define the Atwoodian woman. The association of the feminist movement with Atwood's work seems essential and highly pertinent to such a project. We shall therefore determine the evolution of the author's version of feminism and its fields of experimentation, followed by this analysis of the reciprocal influence between feminist theory and the Canadian writer. We will consider the allusions and references to the women's movement in her work, both in terms of inspiration as well as a critique of the discourse. In addition to Atwood's interest in feminism, this study shall also be concerned with the relationship between her female protagonists and the cause. This paper will examine how the different facets of the feminist movement relative to real desires of women have led the author to use her characters as illustrations of 'ordinary women' whose daily lives are often neglected by the movement elite. The comments of several literary and feminist critics along with [various] sociologists and psychoanalysts shall contribute to the study of these ambiguous interactions, in order to develop a relevant definition of the Atwoodian woman." (Author abstract).

SHOENUT, Meredith L. "'I'll Rewrite History for You': The Blind Assassin - Margaret Atwood." Margaret Atwood Studies 1.1 (September 2007): 27-34.


"This study investigates the intertextual use of the fairy tale in postmodern fiction. I contend that the fairy tale, whether Grimm, Anderson or Perrault is an important intertext in many texts considered canonical postmodernist fiction, especially Midnight's Children, Waterland and Nights at the Circus. I demonstrate that the fairy tale is used in novels to raise concerns that Hutcheon and McHale characterize as postmodern: questions about reality and representation, how language affects the way humans perceive the world, and the necessity of storytelling. The study first addresses issues of intertextuality, examining re-tellings of 'Bluebeard' specifically. Drawing upon the theories of Genette and Bakhtin, chapter one defines eight elements of intertextuality. John Fowles's The Collector and A.S. Byatt's Babel Tower are closely examined here, as is Margaret Atwood's 'Bluebeard's Egg' and Kurt Vonnegut's Bluebeard." (Author abstract).


SUZUKI, Mihoko. "Rewing the Odyssey in the Twenty-First Century: Mary Zimmerman's Odyssey and Margaret Atwood's Penelopiad." College Literature 34.2 (Spring 2007): 262-278.

"This essay examines two contemporary rewritings of the Odyssey, [which] respond to the Odyssey's own representation of the creative process as feminine and reflect the reassessment of the epic by recent feminist criticism. Zimmerman telescopes the epic by focusing on female characters such as Penelope, Nausicaa, Circe, and Calypso, though she chooses not to emphasize the problematic Helen in her celebration of female creativity and agency. She updates the Odyssey by referring to the comic satire of contemporary feminist playwright Caryl Churchill. Atwood mounts a critique of the Odyssey from a perspective that foregrounds issues of class as well as gender, calling attention to the unjust fate of the executed maids and to Penelope's responsibility in their sacrifice to the interests of patriarchy and the ruling class. She presents this
challenge through the dramatic form of the Greek chorus, inflected by vaudeville and burlesque, re-envisioning the maids not merely as silent victims but as energetic satirists of the dominant order." (Journal abstract).

"Canoe Passages' examines the canoe as it is represented in US and Canadian literature, revealing how the canoe's physical properties and production history are embedded in key works of nineteenth and twentieth century North American literature. This dissertation considers the canoe not only as an object of consumption or as the product of technological change, but also as an object of feeling. Authors discussed include...Atwood." (Author abstract). For more see DAI A 68.09 (March 2008).


322 pp. Includes bibliographical references ([298]-313) and index.

"The article examines Margaret Atwood's The Robber Bride in terms of Gothic imagery and postfeminist politics. The novel depicts three characteristically second wave women whose lives are disrupted by Zenia, the embodiment of postfeminism. Zienia threatens the stability of the women and they respond to her with both loathing and desire, experiencing her as a vampire feeding on their lives. The Robber Bride connects the subversive power of Gothic to the multiple identities, transgressions and instabilities of postfeminism. Using a common second wave feminist psychoanalytic rereading of Gothic terror as fear of confinement, I suggest that Atwood's depiction of Zienia as a Gothic figure points to some concerns about second wave feminist politics. The location of Zienia as both Self and Other raises questions about postfeminism's situation as a reactionary backlash against feminism, and equally as a liberal politics that many late twentieth-century women were increasingly identifying with." (Author abstract).


A discussion of the relationship between biotechnology and Atwood's treatment of the end of the world as well as the novel's dystopic vision.


YUEN, Siu Fung. "Female Body, Subjectivity and Identity in Jasmine, The Handmaid's Tale and Nights at 58

Reviews of Atwood's Works

The Door. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007. America 197.4 (5 November 2007): 34-36. By Mary A. McCAY. Edmonton Journal 28 October 2007: E.10. By Robert WIERSEMA. (600 w). Excerpt: “While it’s always appropriate to measure a writer’s current work against their personal canon, it may be somewhat unfair in Atwood’s case. Her earlier poetry is such a towering achievement as to be virtually impossible to improve upon, or, perhaps, even to measure up to. The Door, as strong as it is in places, must unfortunately live in the shadow of such works as The Circle Game and The Journals of Susanna Moodie. Perhaps those readers new to Atwood-as-poet are the lucky ones: unweighted by the freight of her legacy, they’ll be able to read The Door free of expectation, better able to savour its strengths and gloss over its comparative weaknesses.”
Quill & Quire 73.7 (September 2007): 70, 79. By Zachariah WELLS.
Toronto Star 7 October 2007: Section: Books: ID06. ANON. (780 w).
Winnipeg Free Press 23 September 2007: D0. By Maurice MIERAU. Excerpt: “Perhaps because of her iconic status, Atwood’s poetry has begun to take some blows from various young hotshots. They say her work lacks music, that it’s linguistically flat. Literary reputations can be made by attacking established writers. But is there an element of truth here, or just a shift in poetic fashion? ....Atwood is sharp and still very funny.”
Common Review 5.3 (Winter 2007): 56. By Judith McCUE.
KONING. (220 w).
Kliatt 41.1 (January 2007): 44. By Nola THEISS. (239 w).
Library Journal 132.10 (1 June 2007): 164. By Beth FARRELL.

Reviews of Adaptations of Atwood's Works

The Penelopiad. National Arts Centre Production, Ottawa and Royal Shakespeare Company Coproduction.
American Theatre 24.6 (July-August 2007): 74-75. By Nicole ESTVANIJK. Also reviews "The Seagull" and "A Woman's Festival."
Birmingham Evening Mail 3 August 2007 Section: Features: 71. By Alison DAYANI. (271 w).
The Guardian (London) 4 August 2007 Section: Guardian Review Pages: 40. By Michael BILLINGTON. (312 w).
The Journal (Newcastle, UK) 8 September 2007: 44. By David WHETSTONE. (335 w).
Mail on Sunday 5 August 2007 Section: FB: 64. By Patrick MARMION. (248 w).
Northern Echo 7 September 2007: 23. By Sue HEATH. (236 w).
Times Colonist (Victoria, BC) 25 September 2007: D5. By Catherine LAWSON. (644 w).
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