


Sharpe, Martha. “Margaret Atwood and Julia Kristeva: Space-Time, the Dissident Woman Artist, and the Pursuit of Female Solidarity in *Cat’s Eye*.” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 50 (Fall 1993): 174-89.


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**Current Atwood Checklist, 2009**

Ashley Thomson and Shannon Hengen

This year’s checklist of works by and about Margaret Atwood published in 2009 is, like its predecessors, comprehensive but not complete. In fact, citations from earlier years that were missed in past checklists appear in this one.

In Atwood bibliography, the year 2009 should be identified as the year Atwood embraced the Internet with fervor. True, in the past some of her shorter works have appeared online and in 2009 they did as well. But it was in 2009, as part of her attempts to promote *The Year of the Flood*, that she began a regular blog at [http://marg09.wordpress.com/](http://marg09.wordpress.com/), which continued well after the official tour was over. Further, she started tweeting at [http://twitter.com/MargaretAtwood](http://twitter.com/MargaretAtwood). In one post she said, “Eating sandwich prior to entering darkest Nowifiland. have fun rolling around in CRTC bar brawl while I’m gone. Ack! Who threw that beer?” These developments have posed new challenges for bibliographers who try to be attentive to the matters of significance in her life.

The year 2009, incidentally, was also when this journal embraced the Internet. As many subscribers may know, the journal and the Newsletter before it have been indexed for many years in Proquest’s *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*. In 2009, the full text of the journal, including this Checklist, was also made available to users.

As always, there are a number of people to thank starting with Desmond Maley, librarian at Laurentian University, and Leila Wallenius, University Librarian. And thanks to Lina Y. Beaulieu, Dorothy Robb and Diane Tessier of the library’s interlibrary loan section. Our thanks as well to Judy Senécal, Humanities Reference Librarian at Carleton University, who facilitated access to Carleton’s library. Finally, thanks to the ever-patient Ted Sheckels, editor of this journal.

Finally, we would appreciate that any corrections to this year’s list or contributions to the 2010 list be sent to athomson@laurentian.ca or shengen@laurentian.ca
Atwood's Works

"5 Countries, 35 Cities = 1 Crazy Book Tour; Life on the Road Is Not What You Expect, Says Margaret Atwood. As She Promotes The Year of the Flood, Bookshops and Signings Are Out, T-Shirts, Hymns and Ringtones Are in." The Times (London) 22 August 2009. Section: Saturday Review features. 8. Atwood describes preparations for her upcoming Year of the Floor Tour which ends in Sudbury, Ontario. Excerpt: "After eight UK events, a side trip to the Netherlands, five Canadian events, six US ones (not to mention Germany, which will have its own page on the website), the events will close on November 19, in Sudbury, Ontario. This is a town dear to my heart, for several reasons. First, I remember it as a northern child, in the 1940s, when—because of over-logging, forest fires, and the mining industry—it was barren as the Moon, and was one of the places where the Moon-bound astronauts did their training. Soot blew everywhere, it was silent except for the wind, and all the rain was acid. But after a 40-year regeneration programme undertaken largely by volunteers who painstakingly stuffed earth, lime and seedlings into cracks between scorched rocks, Sudbury has forests again, birds in the trees and fish in the streams. It is a symbol of hope; if Sudbury can do it, so can many places. Second, they're doing an experiment to grow blueberries on the roof, which I think is a fine idea, despite the fact that they are usually fertilised by bloodsucking blackflies. And third, they celebrate my birthday every year, like Robbie Burns's, even though I'm not dead. Well, nobody's perfect, and they'll just have to put up with my undead state while it lasts. Meanwhile, I have Happy Birthday sung to me in three languages—French, English, and Cree. Neither the tunes nor the exact sentiments of these renditions are the same, but everyone feels there's something positive going on. Here are three groups that historically were not always the best of friends, to put it mildly, but they've gathered around a sort of festive symbolic maypole—that would be me—in a spirit of co-operation and moderate merrymaking; and that, in a somewhat gloomy world, is cheering. Sudbury will be a fitting place for the grand finale."


Dutch translation of Alias Grace by Gerda Baardman.
Italian translation of Alias Grace by Margherita Giacobino.

"Am I Right Not to Go to Dubai?" The Guardian 21 February 2009. Section: Guardian Review Pages: 5. Atwood reacts to her embarrassment when she cancelled live participation in Dubai’s first-ever literary festival—based on incorrect information. (809 w.)

Catalan translation of Anna’s Pet (1980) by Martí Rovira. This is a children’s book which Atwood co-authored with Joyce Backhouse.


German translation of Alias Grace by Brigitte Walitzek.


Spanish translation of Murder in the Dark by Ma. Antonia Menini.

Catalan translation of The Blind Assassin by Mercè López Arnabat and Albert Subirats.

Bie Ming Ge Lei Si. Nan jing: Nan jing ta xue chu ban she, 2009.
Chinese translation of Alias Grace by Mei jiang hai.


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“Dennis Revisited.” *i.e., Dennis Lee.


“On Being a ‘Woman Writer’: Paradoxes and Dilemmas.”


“Équité? Quelle équité? Comment partager équitablement les ressources de la planète? Et si on l’inspirait des singes? propose avec humour l’écrivaine Margaret Atwood dans son tout dernier essai, aux Éditions du Boréal. (Extrait de *Comptes et légendes: La dette et la face cachée de la richesse.*)


Headline: ‘We’re using up the Earth’; It’s back to the post-apocalyptic future in Margaret Atwood’s new novel *The Year of the Flood,* back to the eco-religious sect God’s Gardeners and the Corporations (which are still in control of everything). The novel begins in the Year 25, after a catastrophe has obliterated most human life. Here, an exclusive excerpt, starting with one of the sect’s hymns.” (1004 w.). This was not made available online for copyright reasons.


From *Alias Grace,* the 1996 winner.


From *The Year of the Flood.* (1062 w.)


From *The Year of the Flood.* (288 w.)


Includes “The City Planners” and “A Meal.”


French translation of *Moral Disorder* by Michèle Albaret-Maatz. (In English, “The Labrador Fiasco” is one of the chapters in this book; in the French edition, it has become the title.)


Excerpt: “I used to be treated with a certain wariness—Margaret Atwood, an intellectual heavyweight ... Booker prize winner ... scary in interviews ... Canada’s high priestess of fiction. People long to stick a label on you. But now the label’s changed. My hair’s gone white and suddenly everyone thinks I’m cute. It struck me the other day when I started twitting on my website. Everyone seemed to think it was extraordinary that I could master a computer. People wrote in saying: ‘Oh, how adorable! Isn’t it cute when an old person starts to twitter!’ ... The tour for my latest novel, *The Year of the Flood,* which started in Britain last week, has been described as the greenest book tour ever. Each event has been a stage
show, with actors and musicians, but we’ve used different performers in each town to avoid anyone having to leave unnecessary carbon footprints. Our programmes are printed on paper approved by the Forest Stewardship Council and our stage props are made from reusable Sainsbury’s bags. We serve tap water at our receptions, we research our hotels to ensure they are environmentally friendly and I’m travelling with my own supply of organic shade-grown coffee. I won’t touch coffee that’s been grown in the sun. It destroys the songbirds... I’ve also gone vegetarian for the duration of the tour, although I am allowed non-avian and non-mammalian bioforms once a week and I still eat eggs. I feel quite good on it. My wardrobe isn’t much to boast about, though. I’ve tried to pack only black clothes, on the basis that you don’t need to wash them so often....I try to travel light. My husband [the novelist Graeme Gibson] has come with me and he’s the only comfort I need. He carries all the baggage and he remembers the hotel key and what time the train’s leaving. He also writes. People sometimes ask me how that works, as though they expect that it doesn’t work well. In fact, it does. When we are at home in Toronto, he does all the cooking and makes all the decisions on what we eat. I do all the laundry. I don’t know if I am a feminist. You would have to define the term. Do I think all men should be pushed off a cliff? No. Do I think women can’t do maths? No. Am I willing to put the sheets into the washing machine? Yes I am...” (728 w.)


Chinese translation of Surfacing by Jiang li zhu.


Hebrew translation of The Blind Assassin.


Reprinted from Good Bones and Simple Murders, ©1983.

With study questions.


Reprinted from Moral Disorder and Other Stories, ©2006.

Dutch translation of The Year of the Flood by Lidwien Biekmann.

Dutch translation of The Handmaid’s Tale by Gerrit de Blaauw.

First published 1989.


Tribute to the poet, playwright, children’s writer, English professor, and literary critic who died 11 June 2008.

29
Chinese translation of The Edible Women by Liu kai fang.


10 sound discs (11 hrs., 15 min.)

Chinese translation of The Blind Assassin by Yong'an Liang.


1 sound disc.

Moral Disorder and Other Stories [Sound recording]. Read by Penelope Freeman. Toronto: CNIB, 2008.
1 sound disc (7 hrs., 21 min.)

253 pp. German translation of Moral Disorder by Malte Friedrich.

7 CDs. Spoken German version of Moral Disorder.

The Italian translation of this poem, "Mattino nella casa bruciata" appears on p. 119, 121.


370 pp. French translation of Wilderness Tips by François Dupuygneret-Desrousilles.

Some reflections on Alice Munro on the occasion of her winning the Booker International award for her entire body of work. (3,532 w.)


"Our Romance With Debt Will Cost Us." CNN.com 24 October 2009: 7:41 a.m.
Excerpt: "Unless we value fairness, reciprocity, and honest dealing, and the concept of balances—for debt and credit depend on them—and unless we are able to trust our systems, we would not be able to have debt and credit—no one would lend, because there would be no expectation of ever getting paid back. What caused the massive financial mess we are in comes back ultimately to these concepts. The rules were too loose, fairness and honest dealing were violated, the balance was upset. We must now restore trust so people will take their pennies out of the sock under the mattress they are now inclined to store them..." The complete text is available at http://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/10/24/atwood_debt/index.html?eref=rss_latest. (1 September 2010).

Paperback ed.

264 pp. German translation of Payback by Bettina Abarbanell.

1 sound disc. "Distribution is restricted to RFB&D members who have a documented print disability such as a visual impairment, learning disability or other physical disability."
In celebration of the Toronto Public Library's Keep Toronto Reading Month in April 2009, Atwood created an original story about Toronto's Library to support the Toronto Public Library Foundation's April in-branch fundraising campaign. Beginning on April 1, patrons at all 99 branches were invited to donate a toonie or more to "adopt" a word from Atwood's story. For every minimum donation of $2 made, a word from the story was revealed, with the donor's name added to it. Word by word, the story was gradually told through everyone's contributions. The text of the story is: "There was once a mouse named Persiflage who wanted to improve her reading skills. The only reading she could get her paws on was in old newspapers, but few of these had anything to offer to mice. 'I'm going to the Toronto Public Library,' she announced to the other mice. 'They have a trillion books in there, and computers too, and also they have librarians to help you with your specialized interests.' The other mice laughed at her. 'You're dumber than a sack of hammers!' said her cousin Rhomboid. 'Mice don't read words—mice eat words! Or else they make nests out of them. Anyway, you won't be allowed in the Library.' 'But it says anyone in Toronto can go there,' said Persiflage. 'And I'm in Toronto. So I'm anyone.' 'Yeah, but you're a mouse,' said Rhomboid. 'They only want people. They'll take one look at you and scream. Then they'll call the exterminator.' But Persiflage was determined. 'I'll get in somehow,' she said. 'If I can only speak with the Chief Librarian, she'll recognize my sincerity and give me a library card. And then, just think what I'll be able to read!' Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck. To a Mouse, by Robbie Burns. The Mousetrap, by Agatha Christie—I like a good horror story once in a while. 'You're dumber than a box of hair,' said Rhomboid. Persiflage tried to walk into the Library in the ordinary way, as so many people were doing. But these people had shoes and boots on, and she narrowly avoided being trampled underfoot. Then she hitched a ride in a student's backpack, but he tossed in some hard books, and she risked being crushed. Next she posed as an ornament on a girl's knitted hat. 'Where'd you get that cool stuffed mouse?' said the girl's friends. They reached for Persiflage, and she ran for it. There were screams, just as Rhomboid had predicted. 'Rats!' said Persiflage despondently. Rhomboid was right. I'll never get into that Library. I'll just have to keep reading old newspapers,' 'Told you,' said Rhomboid. One day, Persiflage was in the park reading the big words in The Globe and Mail. The Chief Librarian happened to be there too, eating a sandwich on her lunch break. 'I do believe that mouse is reading,' she said to herself out loud. 'Yes, I am,' chirped Persiflage. 'But I'd read better and more if I could only use that Library. Why should I be excluded because of a few piffing species differences?' 'You're right,' said the Chief Librarian. 'Anyone who loves reading and knowledge should have access to the Library. But we do have rules—no gnawing the bindings, and no chewing the computer wires.' 'Okay,' said Persiflage. 'Much as I long to devour books, I won't really devour them.' And that is a true story about Toronto, where—thanks to the Toronto Public Library, the most-used public library system in the world—even the mice can read." See http://www.tplfoundation.ca/html/tolf/uploads/ckf/file/Persiflageposter.pdf (1 September 2010).

French translation of The Door by Louise Desjardins.


The article focuses on acquiring wisdom in maturity. Included is a mention of her visit to the Arctic regions with Dr. Joe MacInnis, the man behind "Wisdom Keepers" where she met the Inuit Elders.

Original short story of a crime set in Edinburgh, one of ten in an anthology published in support of the OneCity Trust.

Short story. (2895 w.) Taken from Crimespotting: An Edinburgh Crime Collection.

265 pp. Spanish translation of The Door by Marla Pilar Sornacarrera Iñigo.


Spanish translation of Surfacing by Gabriela Bustelo.
564 pp. Also published by Bloomsbury.

*The Robber Bride* [Sound recording]. Read by Barbara Caruso. Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2009. 18 sound discs (21 hrs., 30 min.) (The 1994 version was formatted using audiocassette tapes.)


An excerpt from the book set on Toronto Island.


*The Tent* [Sound recording]. Read by Barbara Byers. Toronto: CNIB, 2008. 1 sound disc (2 hrs., 40 min.). For use of disabled persons only.


*This is a Photograph of Me; Girl and Horse, 1928.* Oakville (ON): Rubicon, 2009. 48 pp. Poems formatted for juveniles. "Art work by Alan Cook."


**Year of the Flood.** Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2009.

434 pp. Also published by London: Bloomsbury; New York: Talese; New York: Random House (Large print ed. 595 pp.) "Adam One, the kindly leader of the God's Gardeners—a religion devoted to the melding of science and religion, the preservation of all species, the tending of the Earth, and the cultivation of bees and organic crops on flat rooftops—has long predicted the Waterless Flood. Now it has occurred, obliterating most human life. Two women have avoided it: the young trapeze-dancer, Ren, locked into the high-end sex club, Scales and Tails; and former SecretBurgers meat-slinger turned Gardener, Toby, barricaded into the luxurious AnooYoo Spa, where many of the treatments are edible. Have others survived? Ren's bioartist friend Amanda, or the MaddAddam eco-fighters? Ren's one-time teenage lover, Jimmy? Or the murderous Painballers, survivors of the mutual-elimination Painball prison? Not to mention the CorpseCorps, the shadowy and corrupt policing force of the ruling powers....

Meanwhile, in the natural world, gene-spliced life forms are proliferating: the lion/lamb blends, the Mo'hair sheep with human hair, the pigs with human brain tissue. As Adam One and his intrepid hemp-clad band make their way through a ruined world, singing their devotional hymns and faithful to their creed and to their Saints—Saint Francis Assisi, Saint Rachel Carson, and Saint Al Gore among them—what odds for Ren and Toby, and for the human race?" (Publisher). Also available as an electronic book. For more information: http://www.contentreserve.com/TitileInfo.asp?ID=4B9A36AB-1554-4463-BC5B-A5501A8619A86&Format=410 (1 September 2010).

**Year of the Flood.** [Sound recording]. Read by Bernadette Dunne, Katie MacNichol, and Mark Bramhall. New
Adaptations of Atwood's Works

1 videodisc: ca. 104 min. The film, the Handmaid's Tale, dubbed into German.

1 sound disc (ca. 34 min.). Lyric from The Year of the Flood. Music by Orvile Stoeber. Contents: The garden (2:55) -- When Adam first (2:9) -- Oh let me not be proud (2:9) -- My body is my earthly ark (1:55) -- Oh sing we now the holy weeds (2:31) -- We praise the tiny perfect moles (1:29) -- Oh Lord you know our foolishness (2:20) -- God gave unto the animals (2:9) -- The peach or plum (2:32) -- Today we praise our St. Dian (2:32) -- The watershred that rends his prey (2:10) -- When God shall his bright wings unfold (2:1) -- The last mile (3:36) -- The earth forgives (3:37)


ASCIOTI, Nicholas Anthony. Credo [Streaming audio]. Hong Kong: Naxos Digital Services, 2009. Includes "Four Settings of Margaret Atwood": "No. 1. I Can't Tell You My Name.--Hotel.--I Look Up.--Invasions."


Quotations

"[Quote]." The Advertiser (AT) 14 November 2009: Section: Opinion: 9. Among opinions quoted is one by Atwood: "An eye for an eye can only lead to blindness."

"[Quote]." Globe and Mail 7 February 2009: Section: Weekend Review: R1. In an article commenting on publishers' reputations for not doing enough to promote their authors' books, James Adams quotes Atwood during a recent interview: "The term 'relentless self promoter' used to be an insult in publishing circles. Now it will be a necessity."


"[Quote]." Globe and Mail 31 October 2009: Section: National News: A1. In an article entitled "Apathy, Anxiety and Acceptance; As Canadians Weigh the Benefits of Getting Vaccinated against H1N1, a Great Debate Is Taking Place Across the Country. The Globe Asked some Notable Canadians Whether They Are Getting the Shot: No Undecided Yes," Atwood fell into the undecided column: "I was told (by a talk-show host in New York) that as I am over 65, I may have some immunity, as my parents had the 1919 flu." This prompted Brian Beer to write in from Stratford, ON with the following: "I want to thank The Globe and Mail for highlighting a serious but oft-overlooked problem in Canada's health-care system: the acute lack of talk show hosts able to provide important health-care information (Apathy, Anxiety And Acceptance - Front Page, Oct. 31). The problem is so bad that
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Margaret Atwood is forced to go to New York to get medical advice. The government must take action on this issue immediately. "Personally, I've had a fever and breathing problems all week, but Jon Stewart won't return my e-mails. If only George Stroumboulopoulos could help me here at home." See Globe and Mail 2 November 2009: Section: Letter to the Editor: A18.

In an article entitled "The Decade You Missed / The Other 2000s / Ten Years that Shook, Rattled, Rolled and Helped Repair the World; At the Turn of the Century, People Didn't Just Worry Their Computers Would Break. They Imagined Nations Dissolving and 'Tribes' Ruling in 'The Coming Anarchy.' Instead, Stability Grew and Major Blows were Struck against Hunger, Ignorance and Want. Believe It or Not, Argues Doug Saunders, All the Tumult Was Worth It," Saunders quotes Atwood: "The most positive and far-reaching event would be Bill McKibben's huge round-the-world 350 climate change event [a global, grassroots campaign to address the issue], the largest of its kind ever mounted. In the history of our species on the planet, the first decade of the 21st century may well be the one in which people finally woke up to their perilous situation in a swiftly deteriorating biosphere and elected to change course."

"[Quote]" Grit 127.3 (May-June 2009): 86.
Set on a scenic backdrop, the page has this Atwood quote: "Even with the best of maps and instruments, we can never fully chart our journeys."

"[Quote]" Instructor 118.4 (January-February 2009): 8b.
A short item containing inspiring quotes "to teach" references Atwood's "A word after a word after a word is power."

Asked what will make the world better, Atwood among several others is quoted as saying: "Shutting down the rise in the atmosphere's carbon dioxide is a must. It will prove to be a huge and costly task. Conservation and non-fossil fuel energy alone won't be enough. In addition CO2 capture and storage will have to play a big role. Key to this will be the ability to capture CO2 directly from the atmosphere."

In a profile of Alice Munro, Hephzibah Anderson quotes Atwood: "Pushing the sexual boundaries is distinctly thrilling for many a Munro woman; but in order to trespass you have to know exactly where the fence is and Munro's universe is crisscrossed with meticulously defined borders. Hands, chairs, glances—all are part of an intricate inner map strewn with barbed wire and booby traps and secret paths through the shrubbery."

In a review of Scottish Writers Talking 4, David Robinson begins the review with an Atwood quote: "'Being interviewed,' Margaret Atwood once observed, 'is like ballroom dancing: Some interviewers know exactly what they're doing, so it's an effortless waltz; some don't, so it's an embarrassed shuffle. Then there's the third kind, the most dangerous of all—you're gliding round the room, then the music stops and they quite coolly and deliberately kick you in the shins.'"

In an article discussing how books get categorized, Ann McDonald quotes Atwood on the difference between speculative and science fiction: "'The science-fiction label belongs on books with things in them that we can't yet do, and speculative fiction means a work that employs the means already to hand, such as DNA identification and credit cards, and that takes place on Planet Earth.'" The original appeared in an article in The Guardian. Available from Lexis-Nexis.

In giving advice to those going through a divorce, Judith Ancer quotes Atwood's remark that divorce is like an amputation: "You survive it, but there's less of you." Available from Lexis-Nexis.

In an article describing a couple of recent rich American book deals (including one by Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, "Hero of the Hudson," who pocketed over one million dollars for a book of inspirational poetry), Erica Wagner quotes Atwood: "As Margaret Atwood writes in her terrific book Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth: 'When I was young and simple, I thought the 19th-century novel was driven by love; but now, in my more complicated years, I see that it's also driven by money, which indeed holds a more central place in it than love does, no matter how much the virtues of love may be waved idealistically aloft.' She notes, of Madame Bovary: 'Emma isn't really punished for sex but for shopaholism.'"

In an imaginary advice column in which Kelly Jane Torrance invents questions to be answered with quotes from real authors, she imagines Victoria Beckham writing: "It looks like my gorgeous husband and
I will be living apart again. He’s set to join the Milan soccer club permanently, while I plan to stay in Los Angeles so our children don’t have to switch schools. I’m a little nervous about this. When he played for Madrid and I stayed in London, I had to hear stories about flirtations at nightclubs through the tabloids. I’m trying to look on the bright side, though. Don’t you think being apart will bring an added spark to our relationship every time we finally do reunite?” The answer comes from Atwood's *The Blind Assassin:* “Dear Victoria, Farewells can be shattering, but returns are surely worse. Solid flesh can never live up to the bright shadow cast by its absence.”

**Interviews**

“Atwood’s New Novel Backed by U.K. Road Show.” CBC Arts 4 September 2009: 2:01 p.m.

Excerpt: “We’re doing eight in the U.K., each of them in a different way,” Atwood told CBC News. “Each one of them, it’s local cast, local singing group, local direction, local design. I will not know until I get there what they’re going to do. It’s a total surprise for me each time.” Atwood said part of the idea is to reduce the impact on the environment by using local players and resources. In Manchester a group of lesbian and gay singers interpreted her work like a kind of ‘funky church choir,’ the *London Telegraph* said in its coverage of her tour. In London’s St. James’s Church, the players came down the aisle carrying glowing blue orbs, followed by Atwood. Los Angeles-based composer Orville Stoeber has set the book’s 14 sets of lyrics to music and they are being interpreted differently in each city. “This is what happens with books, because each reader reads a book differently, so of course each city is going to present a book differently,” Atwood said. Available from Lexis-Nexis.


Krasny, a professor of English at San Francisco State University, is also the host of KQED-FM radio’s Forum and has interviewed many authors over his career, Atwood included. The section on Atwood in this book summarizes the highlights of several interviews.

“Memories, They Have a Few.” *Toronto Star* 13 February 2009: Section: Entertainment: E03.

Caught at the Book Lover’s Ball, Atwood was asked to share her experiences with libraries: “My first library card, when I was 10 or 11, was for the Deer Park Branch on St. Clair Ave. I read all of the coloured Andrew Lang books of fairy using that library card. I would get them out with my little card. I would take them home. I would read them. I would bring them back. I would take the streetcar back and forth. It was when kids were still allowed to roam around by themselves. Later, I also did a lot of research on *Alias Grace* at the Toronto Reference Library. They had all of the newspapers from the early 1800s, which had the account of the murder.”


Includes controversial comments which others later interpreted as Atwood claiming not to be a feminist. Excerpt: “Atwood came to prominence in the 1969 with her first novel, The Edible Woman, written while she was living in Edmonton, Alberta. Early reviewers classified it as a feminist tract, even though she was cut off from the American feminist movement in New York at the time. Her allegiance to that particular brand of political feminism remains as distant now as it was then. [Atwood:] ‘The Edible Woman’ came out just at that time when the movement was rolling out. Those who had heard of it reviewed the book as feminist... but my novel was not informed by it.” Her definition of feminism appears to focus on more humanistic concerns, and her idea of women as ‘equal but different’ has chimed more with the French feminist philosophers of the 1970s who celebrate difference. “It’s not picking up socks that’s the issue. Who is the ‘we’ that we are talking about [in feminism]? Is we talking about the children who are involved in sex trafficking, or the women in Bangladesh? Are we talking about the Eastern European women who are promised a place in the West and end up as sex slaves? Feminism is a big term. If we are asking ‘Are women human beings?’ we don’t need to vote on that. But where do we go from there? Are women better than men? No. Are they different? Yes. How are they different? We’re still trying to figure that out.” Reprinted without attribution in *Canberra Times* 8 September 2009: Section: A: 4. (1844 w.) and with attribution *Sunday Independent (ZA)* 13 September 2009: Section: Dispatches: 17. (1274 w.)
Atwood among one of several authors interviewed. Excerpt: "Put your left hand on the table. Put your right hand in the air. If you stay that way long enough, you'll get a plot," Margaret Atwood says when asked where her ideas come from. When questioned about whether she's ever used that approach, she adds, 'No, I don't have to.' Ms. Atwood, who has written 13 novels, as well as poetry, short stories and nonfiction works, rarely gets writer's block. When ideas hit her, she scribbles phrases and notes on napkins, restaurant menus, in the margins of newspapers. She starts with a rough notion of how the story will develop, 'which usually turns out to be wrong,' she says. She moves back and forth between writing longhand and on the computer. When a narrative arc starts to take shape, she prints out chapters and arranges them in piles on the floor, and plays with the order by moving piles around. Twice, she's abandoned books after a couple hundred pages, one in the late 1960s and another in the early 1980s. She was able to salvage a single sentence from one book, and carved two short stories out of the other, including one titled 'The Whirlpool Rapids.' During a career that has spanned more than 40 years, Ms. Atwood has gone from cutting and pasting passages with scissors and tape to the communication of the electronic age. Lately, she's been blogging and using Twitter while on tour promoting her recent novel, The Year of the Flood." Available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142405274870374004574513463106012106.html?KEYWORDS=margaret-atwood (1 September 2010).

Section: Weekend Review: R1.
Excerpt: "Atwood seems indignant at the suggestion that the future she imagines is uniformly horrible. 'It's bad news for some, but good news for others,' she insists, pointing out that the 'birds are doing better' in her future. 'It could be much worse,' she adds. 'It could be a nuclear book in which everything is grey and burnt.' As an example of non-horrific details in her imagined future, the author offers 'Chickie-Nobs,' future fast food derived from birds grown without heads. 'The chickens wouldn't suffer,' she notes. 'If you grew them in battery farms they wouldn't be suffering because they wouldn't have heads.' Then there is the 'Mo'hair,' a brightly coloured wig grown with the wearer's own genetic material. 'I'd like to be able to order up some bright hair,' she declares. 'People are fooling with the toy box, and you might get something quite good out of it,' she says. But most of the future she imagines is bad, bad, bad...." (1945 w.)

BROWN, Jeffrey. "[Interview with MAJ]." NewsHour With Jim Lehrer 21 September 2009: 6:00 p.m.

"Our mistake is to think the money—and not the stuff that you translate it into—is real. The real wealth is what you eat, what you drink, what you breathe and where you live. We call it ‘quality of life.’"

Excerpt: "Sitting in a deck chair in Green Park, central London, Margaret Atwood explains that writing a selection of hymns—including one praising the ‘tiny perfect moles that garden underground’—for her latest novel, was perfectly natural. ‘They would have hymns,’ she says, simply. The ‘they’ Atwood refers to are the God's Gardeners—a sect with an ideology that attempts to fuse science with Judeo-Christianity and who believe that animals have souls. Atwood has written 14 hymns interspersed throughout the novel setting out the religion's creed. These have now been set to music and will be used at the book's launch. The God's Gardeners are the focus of the novel—and the book's working title, which probably would have stuck, Atwood says, had it not been objected to for having 'too much God in it'. The Gardeners first appeared in Atwood's Oryx and Crake (2003), set at a time of environmental dystopia...."

Eckler who bid $7,000 at a charity auction a couple of years back looks for her name in The Year of the Flood. Excerpt: "When I send Atwood an email telling her I'm loving it, she writes back, 'Well that's very nice to hear... could NOT that be because you're in it!' All Atwood had told me before I got the book to read was that I 'don't die,' which is 'always a good thing'. When the book arrives, I quickly skim, looking for my name. I find it on page 30. Rebecca Eckler is working for a cruel, malicious manager at a chain called SecretBurgers ('the secret of SecretBurgers was that no one knew what sort of animal protein was actually in them,' Atwood writes). One of my character's first quotes is, 'Praise the Lord and spit. I'm too black and ugly for him ...' There you have it. Rebecca Eckler is no longer skinny, neurotic and Jewish. Two pages later I read the line, 'Worse, Rebecca had gone away, no one knew exactly where. Off with
sion religious group, said the street rumor. 'Well, I thought, that was the quickest $7,000 I had ever spent. Two pages' worth. Was this what Atwood meant by me not dying? I just disappear? But when I meet Atwood for coffee, she seems to have a lot to say about the character named after me. (Always read the book before you interview an author!) Five days after meeting Atwood, I actually read the book and see that my name is peppered throughout the almost 400 pages. I feel something like a shock of electricity every time I see it. There's my name! (I've made turnip pie?) There's my name! (I helped kill someone?) There's my name! (Did I really just say, 'Once he's stuck his pole in some hole, he thinks it's his?') So how did the famous author find out she'd have to use the name Rebecca Eckler in her book? She received an email, after the auction, telling her that I won. I ask what her reaction was. 'Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha,' she says. She describes my character: 'Rebecca gives good quotes. She doesn't tell too much. She's discreet. Unlike you, she doesn't tell people everything.' (I tell her that I really don't tell people even half of everything.) I shouldn't be surprised to learn the character names in Atwood books 'are not just accidents.' She has books of names, and depending on when the book takes place, studies books with the names of flowers and plants, jewels, and saints for inspiration. Luckily, for Atwood, Rebecca is a Biblical name, and fitting for this book. Eckler? Well, I felt bad about that. 'It's a fine name,' she says. I ask Atwood about her first name. Growing up, she was Peggy. It was her father who wanted to name her after her mother, Margaret. 'He was romantic. He adored my mother,' she says. Later, she says she tried to go by M. E. Atwood (her middle name is Eleanor) to be taken seriously as a writer. 'But then Margaret thought it was too pretentious,' she laughs. Few people, aside from me, I think, will care that my name is in an Atwood novel. Except for those who may hope to one day bid on a character themselves. 'I think this may be the last time I do it,' Atwood says.

HOR-CHUNG LAU, Joyce. "From Atwood, A Dose of Reality: The Prolific Writer of Nightmarish Trames Comments on Our Crises." International Herald Tribune 9 April 2009: Section: Feature: 13. Interview conducted at the Hong Kong Literary Festival touching such books as Payback and the upcoming Year of the Flood. The interview begins: "Chatting with Margaret Atwood is a trip. Over coffee one morning here, the conversation jumped from publicists trying to keep her interviews on schedule ('Oh, poo on them') to women's fashion ('Structured skirts. Can't wear them. I'm too short') to the flood of new writers ('It's like everyone's blogging about how they brushed their teeth this morning.') Ms. Atwood is known for her quirky dark humor. But she's also fearless in jumping, feet first, into serious issues like global debt, the environment, gay rights and censorship...."

KELLOG, Carolyn. "Margaret Atwood on Green Rabbits, Writing Sex and Twitter." Los Angeles Times 9 October 2009: 8:14 a.m. Excerpt: "JC: Is it really you Twittering? MA: Yes, it's really me. Absolutely, it's really me. But there were two false mes when I went on... my Twitter pals did something, and they disappeared. JC: Has the internet created a different level of engagement with readers than previous book tours? MA: It puts you in the position of a journalist, in a way. You become the journalist of yourself. Which is really weird. But you also become the journalist of your own tour. For the blog, I've been taking pictures of the events we've been doing.... Sometimes they come out, and sometimes they don't." Available at: http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/jacketcopy/2009/10/margaret-atwood.html (1 September 2010).

LEE, Patricia. "Back to the Scary Future and the Best-Seller List." New York Times 22 September 2009: Section: C: 1. Interview in connection with The Year of the Flood. Excerpt: "I find myself scaring myself silly," Ms. Atwood confessed during a recent interview in New York. She flew in from her home in Toronto to have lunch at a Midtown vegetarian restaurant before becoming immersed in a book tour with stops in Canada, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and the United States. What is scary, Ms. Atwood said, is that her futuristic tales—she calls them speculative fiction—showcase scenarios that spring from current realities: the creep of corporations into many aspects of society, environmental decay, high-tech reproduction, the widening cleavage between haves and have-nots.... The author of more than 35 books of fiction, poetry, children's literature and nonfiction, whose numerous awards make her literary royalty, Ms. Atwood is receiving mostly good reviews for The Year of the Flood. Fear of failure is not one of the scary things keeping her up at night." (992 w.)

MCDONALD, Alyssa. "Bugged by the Future." Weekend Australian 26 September 2009: Section: Review: 20. Excerpt: "Atwood has said part of the reason for writing this novel was that "people kept asking me what happened two minutes after Oryx and Crake ended. The end of The Year of the Flood doesn't feel any more conclusive. Asked if she's finished with the world of Oryx and Crake, Atwood simply says: 'I kind of think I'm not.' It's probably the briefest answer she gives during our conversation. When pressed, she won't say whether she thinks she'll return to it immediately or what she may do with it next. 'I think it's bad luck to talk about your own future as if you will do something,' she says with a slight smile. 'Because there..."
are too many variables. You know that joke? ‘You wanna make God laugh? Then tell him your plans.’"
(1599 w.)

McDOWELL, Adam. "The Planet Smasher; Margaret Atwood Once Again Creates an Apocalyptic World." 

Excerpt: "Atwood is said to be contemplating a return to the steaming, ruined world of her last two novels. However, McClelland & Stewart has been hesitant to formally tie the existing ones together or promise a third. So, are *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* part of a trilogy? ‘Not yet. You can’t ever predict the future,’ she says dryly. ‘I might not live that long. Or I might set out to do it and find out that it’s so awful that I can’t publish it. These things might happen’" (1259 w.)


Excerpt: "Margaret Atwood’s smiling face is extraordinarily close to mine. A fraction of a second later and it is further away, held at a different angle. I did not see it move. ‘I am talking to you remotely because we are social beings and we like to interact,’ she says. ‘We like to look at other human beings a lot. Magazines, newspapers, video conferencing, television... spying.’ We are conversing via a large screen, while an ocean apart; she is in Toronto where it is 6 a.m. The image on my screen is not continuous; rather, it is like a fast sequence of still photographs. Atwood, her eyes bright and humorous, appears very much at ease with the whizz-bang technology....Behind the novel is fierce environmental concern, as well as a subterfuge inquiry into what it is that makes us human; central to the story is a sect called God’s Gardeners who read the Bible as a profoundly green text (for instance, convincingly reinterpreting what Genesis says about man’s relationship with the animal kingdom). Then there is the world of science and the profit-seeking medical establishment. Usually in such scenarios—from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* onwards, in fact—we have been invited to consider that scientists will destroy the world with their meddling. For Atwood, though, it really isn’t that straightforward. ‘Science is finding stuff out about the material world,’ she says. ‘And technology is the tools that we make. The tools,’ she adds unexpectedly, ‘would be quite different if we were giant intelligent spiders. Making bigger and better domesticated webs, for instance. Making things that spiders like. In terms of things we make, we make these tools because we are the kind of beings that we are....I am sceptical about people. The nature of the tool can change how we live—for instance, I’m sitting here at 6 a.m. in Toronto talking to you over broadband. In earlier eras, I would have written something in cuneiform on wet clay and had it delivered to you on horseback. The tool is morally neutral. It’s not a case of ‘is science telling us the truth, or is technology bad?’ I’m more sceptical about human nature. Who is in charge of those tools? Who is putting those CCTV cameras up all over the UK? Whose hands are on the tools?’ One also senses in the structure of God’s Gardeners—the leader is called Adam One, and the women, if they are deemed suitable, are selected to become “Eve”—a satire on organised religion. But again, that is not the case. ‘Art and religion—and particularly narrative—are wired in,’ she says. ‘Evolved adaptations. So our ability to tell stories, our ability to picture things, all evolved during very, very many—extremely many—generations. It would have had an evolutionary edge. Invention is part of that package...We seem to be hard-wired to have a belief system of some kind,’ she adds. ‘Even atheism. I understand that in Britain recently, some people paid to put atheistic slogans on buses—someone paid! That’s religion! Once you’re paying money to put slogans on things, well it’s either a product you’re selling, a political party or religion. Very few people don’t have some belief system that includes something other than themselves. That just seems to be part of the tool kit that we have as human beings.’ Atwood herself was, she says, brought up to be a ‘strong agnostic’. Science runs strong in her family. Her father was an entomologist who made studies of bees....Some of the most beguiling passages in the new novel involve moments when characters feel themselves to be communicating, in some form, with bees. Of course, at the moment, there is much concern about why hives are dying off in such numbers. But for Atwood, bees have a greater symbolic meaning we have lost sight of. ‘The communion between humans and bees is an old belief, folklore, that predates the advent of sugar cane and sugar beet,’ she says. ‘Because before that, bees were the source of sweetness, with honey, and also the source of light, with wax.... They became symbolic, metamorphosed into mythology. They were studied by their keepers, studies were made of what made them happy. They were a source of fascination because they appeared to live in a society. My father did a lot of work on bees. And there is a lot of literature on the subject. The way that bees are treated now will not be making them happy. Herbicides. Pesticides.’"


Interview focussing on genesis of *The Year of the Flood*. (1056 w.)

Joint interview with Atwood and Graeme Gibson in advance of their appearance on 17 November at the Lencic Performing Arts Centre in Santa Fe. Smith spoke to Gibson from Toronto and Atwood from New York. Excerpt: "Pasatiempo: How long did it take you write The Year of the Flood?" Margaret Atwood: It took about three years. There was a hiatus there. I got walking pneumonia—I didn’t get it on purpose! First, you don’t realize you’ve got walking pneumonia. Then you do realize you’ve got walking pneumonia. Then you take an antibiotic to get rid of the walking pneumonia. Then you have to spend a month getting over the antibiotic you took."

STERLING, Bruce. "Margaret Atwood Making Her Case." Wired.com 29 November 2009: 6:47 a.m. Excerpt: "Wired.com: You come at science convincingly from the direction of fiction, and you’re pretty precise about your work, which you maintain is speculative fiction rather than sci-fi. Margaret Atwood: I like exact labeling. (Especially when she makes it up by herself.) Speculative fiction encompasses that which we could actually do. Sci-fi is that which we’re probably not going to see. We can do the lineage: Sci-fi descends from H.G. Wells’ War of the Worlds; speculative fiction descends from Jules Verne’s Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea. Out of Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea came Edward Bellamy’s Looking Backward, out of which came We by Yevgeny Zamyatin, then George Orwell’s 1984 and Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World. Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451 was speculative fiction, while The Martian Chronicles was not." Available at http://www.wired.com/beyond_the_beyond/2009/11/margaret-atwood-making-her-case (1 September 2010).

THILL, Scott. "Margaret Atwood, Speculative Fiction’s Apocalyptic Optimist." Wired.com 20 October 2009: 4:48 p.m. Excerpt: On a possible sequel to Year of the Flood: "You know the Map app for the iPhone? You load a grid, which starts coloring in where you are. Then you get the blue directional pin that allows you to move the map. Then you get more grid, which is then colored in for you. Year of the Flood’s sequel is the part of that grid that is not colored in. But I think it will have to do with Zeb, who breaks off from the pacifist Gardeners." On Science in the blood: "I grew up amongst the scientists. My nephew is a physicist and another is a materials engineer. My brother is a neuroscientist, so it’s not completely off the radar. Wired is my recreational reading from the world of what I didn’t become.... I’ve followed it for a while, and was part of Wired’s six-word story experiment." The complete interview is available at http://www.wired.com/underwire/2009/10/margaret-atwood-speculative-fictions-apocalyptic-optimist/ (1 September 2010).

WAGNER, Erica. "Margaret Atwood; the Conversation: Her Prophetic, Powerful Fiction, from The Handmaid’s Tale to Her New Book The Year of the Flood, Makes Her a Voice To Be Reckoned With. She Tells Erica Wagner Why We Must Act: Our Time to Save the Planet Is Running Out." The Times (London) 15 August 2009: Section: Features: 42, 43. Excerpts: "It's noon in London when we speak, but 7 a.m. in Toronto, where Atwood lives with her partner, the author Graeme Gibson. I am not surprised that she is up with the lark: I’m amazed she sleeps at all given how much there is for her to do. She leaves Canada—by ship, a much greener way to travel than to fly—for Britain next Thursday, and has been preparing the show (or, event, a term she prefers, and doubtless rightly so) which will bring her new novel, The Year of the Flood, to life, and will be touring round Britain and the Continent for the next three months, fundraising in the UK for the RSPB, the British partner of Birdlife International, of which Atwood is a joint honorary president of the Rare Bird Club. I won't say too much about those events, because you will be able to read Atwood herself on the subject in these pages next week.... The Year of the Flood is not a prequel, exactly, nor a sequel. An expansion on the events in Oryx and Crake, it is set just before and at the same time as the earlier novel. Atwood calls it a 'simultaneous', and it stands up perfectly well read on its own. It is, however, the first time that Atwood has returned to a book in this way. Why? 'Because a lot of people said, what happens next?' she says simply. 'They asked me what happens two minutes after the end of Oryx and Crake. So there's that factor—and since I didn't know, I thought it might be instructive to me to go back and see what might happen. What might happen in a world where business and government become intermingled, where fertility becomes the privilege of the wealthy, where pharmaceutical companies have greater and greater power. Sound familiar? That examination was one aspect of the novel's genesis; another was the death of her father and mother—her mother most recently—and the necessity to choose hymns for their funerals that would have been acceptable to them: both were scientists....She believes that religion—that is, the stories we tell ourselves about where we came from and where we are going—is hard-wired into us: that there is no escape, so long as we remain human beings. 'Where Professor Dawkins is off the track is that according to his very own theory, he ought to have an evolutionary theory for why there are religions—but he doesn't. Whereas Denis Dutton, who wrote a book called The Art Instinct: Beauty,
"Pleasure, and Human Evolution, says that religion is an evolved adaptation, like art, and we developed it during our extremely long stay in the Pleistocene, before we became agriculturalists...." Small talk: On herself as a reader: "I'm a pretty gullible person. That's why I'm a really good reader of murder mysteries: I'll accept every red herrings thrown my way. I'm not always thinking, "You can't fool me." Fool me, fool me! I don't want to know where the rabbit is before it comes out of the hat." On why she returns to the subject of women's oppression: "Show me a Utopian society that doesn't oppress women and I'll write about it. Sorry to say, male chimpanzees have been oppressing female chimpanzees all along, which is rather sad, but sometimes they get the better of them. But among the gelada monkeys of Ethiopia, it's the females who oppress the males." On the financial crisis: 'It certainly rattled everybody's cage, didn't it? And that cage-rattling isn't over yet. It's a very good example of what happens when the minders leave the children to play in the house alone. They get into the matches. People want to do the right thing, but... what worries them is the uncertainty about what the right thing is. That's why we're in such a tizzy right now. We don't know what the right thing is in regard to the financial system; we don't know what the right thing is in regard to Afghanistan; we don't know how green we should be or whether it matters—all these things really occupy people quite a lot. Or they make a conscious effort not to worry about it. "I'm not going to worry about it," they say—worrying about it. On where we're headed: "People keep asking me, "Are we evolving?" We may be in resistance to diseases and things like that—but the whole basket of stuff we like and don't like is pretty much the same. So why be surprised when we keep acting like us?"

WAGNER, Vit. "Flood and Fame and Fans With Flu; How a Touring Author Conserves Her Energy, Using Blogs and Tweets to Connect With Readers." Toronto Star 12 September 2009: Section: Entertainment: E01. Excerpt: "Since the introduction three years ago of the LongPen, a device that enables authors to sign books from anywhere, Atwood has used technology to cultivate a relationship with her reading public that might be characterized as providing the appearance of intimacy, but at a safe remove....It's not a matter of arrogance or aloofness. Atwood, who turns 70 in a little more than two months, is simply conserving her energy. The promotional tour, a six-country trek launched in the U.K. last month, is a case in point. Instead of a conventional lectern reading, Atwood and her accompanists, including director Alisa Palmer, have devised an elaborate program of dramatic readings from The Year of the Flood, as well as choral performances of the original hymns that punctuate the novel. The road show, continuing into November, resumes in Canada this month, including a Sept. 24 stop at Toronto's St. James Cathedral. 'If I had to go and give hour-long readings in each of these places, I wouldn't make it. My voice would not make it through,' says Atwood, who plays the role of the narrator in the performances. 'As it is, we're going to see whether I can get through this or not. It would be an astonishing feat for somebody half my age. The beauty is that a lot of people are helping. It's an unprecedented experience. And not repeatable. Not repeatable by me, at least.'...Atwood's frequently cited prescience remains remarkable....Now that we're facing a fall flu season complicated by fears of H1N1, she has returned to the subject of plague. 'I may be wrong, but it doesn't sound like the total biggie, unless it mutates,' Atwood predicts. 'A lot of people are getting a fairly mild form. Some people are saying it's going to be back in the fall and it's going to be worse. We'll see.' Not that she is taking any chances. Atwood is mindful that at a time when others might be choosing to restrict their movements for fear of catching a potentially lethal bug, she will be on the road communicating with her readership. It goes without saying that she is travelling prepared. 'I'm packing a lot of hand sanitizer,' she says." (1343 w.)

WARMAN, Janice. "Payback Time." Spectator Business February 2009: 42-43. Excerpt: "Atwood brushes away my suggestion of a talent for timing. 'I don't think I have any particular gift. I read newspapers and magazines in airports. I think it's more just being attuned to things that are showing signs of happening.' Are writers more in step with the world because of what they do? 'I can't generalise about writers because there are so many different kinds. Some of them are and some of them aren't. I'm just a naturally nosey person.'...It's easy to see why Atwood has been widely interviewed. 'It's been quite strange to find myself in the Wall Street Journal and talking on business shows. But what people say is that it's so refreshing to talk to someone who isn't an economist. After all, there is no such thing as the economy apart from human beings. It's not out there somewhere.'"

WIGOD, Rebecca. "Mankind's Blighted Future, Take Two; Female Characters Give Margaret Atwood's Second Recent Dystopian Novel a More Hopeful Air." Vancouver Sun 12 September 2009: D6. Excerpt: "Atwood had a good time composing 14 of the stirring songs, making them simple enough that ordinary people can sing them. (Sample stanza: 'The Holy Weeds are plentiful / And beautiful to see -- / For who can doubt God put them there, / So starved we'll never be?') The hymns were actually quite good to write' affirmed Atwood, who also has the God's Gardeners revering Saint Dian Fossey, Saint Jacques Cousteau and Saint Terry Fox, among others. Into her not-so-brave new world she injected
some of her own sense of rightness."

News

Excerpt: "Trust Margaret Atwood to coin a brand new word to describe her latest novel. Neither a sequel nor a prequel, *The Year of the Flood* weaves a narrative that is a bit of a back story, a concurrent tale and a denouement of sorts for her 2004 novel *Oryx and Crake*. ‘I call it a simultaneal,’ the internationally acclaimed wordsmith says of her 24th work of fiction."

Filmmaker Ron Mann to capture various events on Atwood’s *Year of the Flood Tour*. Excerpt: "‘There is a marvellous convergence of creative energies coming together around Margaret’s stage performance that I felt important to document,’ said Mann, whose past films include *Go Further* and *Tales of the Rat Fink*.

Excerpt: "On Sept. 27, Margaret Atwood will launch her new novel, *The Year of the Flood*, at Toronto’s The Word on the Street festival in Toronto. And in Vancouver. And Halifax. Atwood will use her patented LongPen technology to appear live in Toronto while chatting by video with admirers on either coast as she signs their books remotely, the festival announced yesterday. Though Toronto-based Atwood has used the technology to do remote book signings around the world, easing the rigorous travel demands of her book tours, September will mark the first time she has ever launched a book in more than one city at once."

Atwood one of eleven Canadian arts and entertainment figures who joined to profess their devotion to *The Walrus* magazine in a new public service announcement released on the web at http://www.walrusmagazine.com/weneedthewalrus/ (1 September 2010).

Atwood to appear in Santa Fe on 17 November to promote *The Year of the Flood*.

Roughly 1.5 million Canadians spent New Year’s Eve watching the final flight of the Royal Canadian Air Farce, according to numbers released by CBC-TV. The venerable political sketch show wrapped up its 16-season run with a special on Dec. 31. Guests included Margaret Atwood.

Atwood one of nearly 300 signing petition to free Bahari, held in Tehran’s Evin Prison without access to a lawyer.

Atwood among 31,000 Canadians who signed a petition calling on the federal government to honour a commitment made in 2004 to allow generic drug manufacturers to send a steady supply of affordable life-saving medicines to Africa.

Atwood to be interviewed on 12 March by Charles Foran on the topic of sustainable development and the need to take action. Her event to be followed by a wine and jazz reception as well as a book signing. On 13 March, she was scheduled to discuss debt in a lecture at Hong Kong University. On March 14, she would be at a tea party in which she read from her work and answered questions about her writing. On March 17, she would be at it again, this time in conversation with David Parker. She was accompanied on the trip by Graeme Gibson who also presented on his most recent book on birds.

"Margaret Atwood Stars at Canadian Tulip Festival." *Calgary Sun* 2 April 2009: Section: Travel: 38.
Atwood scheduled to discuss *Payback* at Ottawa’s Tulip Festival which ran from 1-18 May 2009.

"Mars Colony 'Will Make the World a Better Place.'" *Digital Journal*: 10 September 2009: 8:20 a.m.
When prominent thinkers were asked for their ideas about what would make the world a better place, Atwood suggested that our personal choices are "a powerful tool for change." If we were to "drink organic shade-grown coffee" and to "ban fishing by bottom trawl dragging," for example, it would help to halt the devastating impact our present choices are having on our planet. Available from Lexis-Nexis.

A note about birthdays celebrated on 18 November. Atwood now at the top of the list as in: "Margaret Atwood, novelist, 70; John Boulter, former Olympic runner, 69; Prof. Richard Bradley, archaeologist, 63; Carter Burwell, film composer, 54; Linda Evans, actor, 67; Bill Giles, meteorologist, 70; Damien Johnson, 41."
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footballer, 31; Anthony "Ant" McPartlin, TV presenter, 34; Peter Schmeichel, football pundit, 46; Chloe Sevigny, actor, 35; Kim Wilde, horticulturist, broadcaster and pop singer, 49; Owen Wilson, actor, 41.


Excerpt: "Lazy students revising for their exams are turning to the film adaptations of their set texts. Demand for movie versions of English Literature course books has risen by an average 44 per cent during the summer exam period, according to lovefilm.com. Adaptations of Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale starring Natasha Richardson, King Lear played by Sir Ian McKellen and Kenneth Branagh's Hamlet were the most rented titles; recording increases of 624 per cent, 271 per cent and 270 per cent respectively.

ADAIR, Marcia. "Reinventing the Book Tour Again; Margaret Atwood's New Novel Is Being Debuted With a Travelling Show Staged by Local Talent." Toronto Star 5 September 2009: Section: Entertainment: E04. Republished report on the London launch of The year of the Flood. Excerpt: "On paper, it's an inspired idea: In place of the standard reading and autograph session, Atwood has created an hour-long masque, which employs locally sourced actors, musicians and directors to reduce the tour's carbon footprint. The tour also acts as a fundraiser for various environmental charities. In practice, it was a rather different story. Using local people meant that Atwood had to relinquish aesthetic control. Last night in London, at St. James's Anglican Church in Piccadilly, the aesthetic was a small-town Baptist church nativity play, circa 1974. Choir robes were replaced with gold lame headbands, and the earnest, guitar-strumming song leader, who swapped traditional hymns for country-music-inspired choruses, completed the portrait....Most disappointing, however, were the readings. Taken straight out of the book without any discernable alteration, the text was a bizarre mixture of first- and third-person narrative, with some actors acting just one part and others playing multiple minor characters. If you hadn't read the book before arriving—and that would be everyone who attended, since it isn't released in the U.K. until Monday—it was rather difficult to keep track of what was happening. Once again, it was a great idea that fell down on execution....Of course, not all books are suited to this format. According to Atwood, 'It's a unique sort of thing, so if you're wondering if I'll do this for each of my other books, the answer is no.'"


Atwood, one of 66 authors invited to the first Emirates Airline International Festival of Literature in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, turned down the invitation as a result of what she called a "censorship fracas."
The vice-president of International PEN came to her decision after festival organizers declined to let British journalist and author Geraldine Bedell launch her latest novel there. Bedell's book, The Gulf Between Us, published by Penguin Group (UK), reportedly contains "a minor character" who is both a sheik and gay with an English boyfriend. In a letter to Bedell published on the weekend, festival director Isobel Abulhoul also said the book's setting against the backdrop of the Iraq war "could be a minefield for us." Later, Atwood learned that the facts were not correct—that Bedell had not in fact had her book published yet—so it could hardly be launched in Dubai. While Atwood decided not to reverse her decision by appearing in person, she agreed to participate by video link on a panel discussion on literary censorship. See Martin Knelman's article, "Censorship Uproar Keeps Atwood Away," Toronto Star 20 February 2009: Section: News: A13. She also wrote an article on the issue published in The Guardian. See Atwood's Works, "Am I Right Not to Go to Dubai?"


About plans of the National Film Board of Canada to turn Atwood's Payback into a movie. Excerpt: "The project, for which Atwood will serve as consultant, marks the first collaboration between the 70-year-old film board and Canada's best-known author, who is also 70 this year. Jennifer Baichwal, whose credits include Manufactured Landscapes and Act of God, will be writing the script and directing, with filming slated for the fall. The budget for the documentary adaptation, expected to run 90 to 100 minutes and include animation sequences, is estimated at $800,000."

ADAMS, Tim. "Margaret Atwood on a Voyage to the World's End: The Observer Profile by Tim Adams: The Canadian Writer is Heading Here Aboard the Queen Mary 2 for What's Billed as the Greenest Book Tour Ever—with Songs Thrown In." The Observer 30 August 2009: Section: Observer 7 Days Pages: 35. Excerpt: "Margaret Atwood is currently at sea. She has set sail for the first leg of a book tour to promote her novel The Year of the Flood, an everyday tale of pestilence and pandemic, set in the near future (and required campfire reading for the eco-warriors in south-east London). Atwood's ark is Cunard's Queen Mary 2. You can track her progress across the Atlantic on a blog that charts the nautical adventure. The choice of transport is highly appropriate to her book, a dystopia which imagines a Darwinian cult surviving after an ecological disaster has destroyed nearly all humanity in a plague called the 'Waterless Flood.' It is not science fiction, she insists, but a realistic extrapolation of the present. She is giving nightly readings

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from it to the liner’s passengers, sharing top billing with Dr. Peter Dean, a forensic scientist and expert on the Jack the Ripper murders. You only hope the captive audience wasn’t expecting Elaine Paige. It will be, Atwood believes, the greenest world book tour ever—not an air mile in sight.” (1703 w.)

ASHENBURG, Katherine. “What Atwood Knows.” Toronto Life 43.2 (February 2009): 54-59. “Months before the market crumbled, Atwood wrote a best-seller about careless investments and crushing debt. This isn’t the first time she’s had prophetic visions. The strange truth behind Margaret Atwood’s reinvention as an economics guru.” (Publisher)


Atwood among 12 of those nominated for Giller Prize, including the eventual winner, Lynden MacIntyre, author of The Bishop’s Man. Earlier, Alice Munro, 78, declined the chance for a nomination because she wanted a younger person to win.


Atwood excluded as a finalist in the $25,000 Rogers Writers’ Trust Fiction Prize, given in honour of “the year’s best novel or short-story collection.”


Story about Atwood’s use of social media to promote her new book. Includes her reaction to its launch at the Edinburgh Book Festival. Excerpt: “First YOTF event brilliant actors & singers, rocked roof RSPB made £, yay!!” she Tweeted. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is one of a dozen non-profit groups she has nominated to benefit from the events. Others include Nature Canada and Sudbury’s Junction Creek Stewardship Committee.


The official launch of The Year of the Flood. Excerpt: “With typical eccentricity and aplomb, and in the surroundings of a magnificent Regency church, Margaret Atwood yesterday brought the Edinburgh International Book Festival, sponsored by The Times, to a rousing climax with a bravura performance that included a contribution from the pulpit by a former Bishop of Edinburgh —dressed in a leopard-skin robe—and musical accompaniment from a choir clad in sun hats…. To their evident delight, an audience of 200 was treated to the performance of environmentally friendly hymns, readings by the Canadian novelist from her vision of dystopia, and the sight and sound of Richard Holloway, the former bishop, playing a character called Adam One and preaching the love of all things green. The event, one of only a handful to be held ‘offsite’ in the festival’s history, had sold out within 40 minutes of tickets going on sale. ‘As in so many matters, Edinburgh and Scotland are again a first,’ said Atwood. ‘This evening is a hybrid, a book reading with music and some of the hymns that are fundamental to the book.’


Excerpt: "Margaret Atwood, already a pioneer of remote book signing, is showing her innovative spirit once again by offering a live and original theatre piece to boost excitement for her upcoming book tour. Atwood has written a one-hour, semi-dramatic performance based on her new novel, The Year of the Flood, to be staged in Ottawa, Toronto, Sudbury, Kingston, Calgary and Vancouver, as well as five international cities. As narrator, she will be backed by three local actors and an original score by Los Angeles composer Orville Stoeber, to be sung by local choirs. Canadian Alisa Palmer will direct the ensemble. Said Atwood of the idea: ‘It’s a chance to break free from the traditional structure of a book tour. I felt this particular novel deserved a more complex presentation.’ Atwood’s latest novel is set in the same post-apocalyptic future as her last, Oryx and Crake, and chronicles the onset of a pandemic and the small group that survives it.”


As part of its 50th birthday, York University sponsored a public symposium with public figures such as Atwood.


Atwood used as inspiration for the first style tip. Excerpt: “What do Margaret Atwood and Kate Moss have in common? They both understand that, as all readers of The Handmaid’s Tale will remember, ‘context is all’. True, Atwood did not necessarily intend her 1985 work of feminist fiction to be read for style tips, but the aspiring festival fashionplate would do well to bear her refrain in mind. I know it’s beyond tedious for fashion editors to bang on about Kate Moss, but she always, always tunes her outfit to the occasion. She will wear mink and diamonds and her hair in a sleek bun to a gala, but don denim and...”
wellies for Glastonbury. This is not about dressing up and then going casual: an equal amount of effort goes into each look."

CLEE, Nicholas. "Nicholas Clee Reads Between the Lines." The Times (of London) 31 October 2009: Section: Saturday Review: 12. Based on one of Atwood's tweets, Clee congratulates her for being named an honorary member, or "Vixen," of Harvard Lampoon, evidently joining some other distinguished names such as Paris Hilton.

DUGDALE, John. "Atwood Goes Green." The Guardian 22 August 2009: Section: Guardian Review Pages: 4. Excerpt: "Margaret Atwood ... seems determined to fit in as many 'firsts' as she can before her birthday arrives. The novelist recently began a blog (marg09.wordpress.com) and started twittering (twitter.com/MargaretAtwood). Next week sees both her debut as a writer of hymns—events promoting her new work, The Year of the Flood, will combine choral singing of six hymns from the novel with readings—and the start of a three-month, six-country odyssey which pioneers the green book tour. Money raised will go to environmental organisations such as the RSPB. Besides travelling to Europe by boat, she has kept the tour green by insisting that only 'shade-grown organic' coffee can be served and by using local choirs—so there will be no roaming troupe of performers. Beat that, Bono."

ECKLER, Rebecca. "Atwood Sees All." Maclean's 16 February 2009: Section: Society: 53. Excerpt: "There has been much written, in recent months, about Atwood's 'prophetic vision' and her ability to be eerily 'prescient.' That's because her book Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth was published just before the stock market free fall and mortgage meltdowns. (Before that was her timely theme of female suppression in The Handmaid's Tale, and Oryx and Crake, her dystopian novel that collided with the SARS outbreak.) Either Atwood was born under a lucky star or she really should be moonlighting from a shady storefront with a sign that says 'Palm Readings: $25.' All this explains why I was so interested in a recent fundraising event. Up for auction was a crystal decanter, which held five predictions for the future, written by none other than... Margaret Atwood. I immediately predicted I would be the highest bidder (by predicting I would not spend any money on shoes for the next three months). My prediction was right! I walked away with the decanter! ..." The story goes on to list Atwood's predictions.

ENGEL, Amoryn. "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?: The Dish on the Inaugural Artful Dish." National Post 29 August 2009: Section: Financial Post: FP18. Atwood one of six Canadian cultural stars attending one of six dinners held in swanky homes and prepared by top chefs whose purpose was to raise money for the Koffler Centre of the Arts. In total the diners raised $230,000.

EVERETT-GREEN, Robert. "Atwood Libretto Gets Sneak Peek Online." Globe and Mail 12 September 2009: Section: Weekend Review: R5. Excerpt: "A one-scene preview of an opera about Canadian poet Pauline Johnson, with text by Atwood and music by Christos Hatzis, appeared online last week. City Opera Vancouver's unstaged clip (at http://cityoperavancouver.com/pauline 1 September 2010) shows mezzo-soprano Judith Forst, tenor Sam Chung and pianist David Bootthroyd reading through an aria in which Johnson (Forst) tells her doctor about the hideous pain she is suffering during the week before her death from cancer in 1913. 'How are we today?' Chung sings, to which Forst gives the tart, Atwoodian reply: 'One of us is fine. If you mean me, I'm as you see.' Atwood began writing a libretto about Johnson in 1999 for the Canadian Opera Company, but abandoned it after consulting with composer Randolph Peters, who had been commissioned to write the music. 'It was too contemplative,' she said later, '... you couldn't make a whole opera out of it.' In 2008, however, City Opera Vancouver (COV), a new small company devoted to chamber pieces, said a Johnson opera would be forthcoming from Atwood after all, with a commissioned score by Hatzis. The company's one-scene teaser is like the sanctioned online 'leaks' pop labels now regularly use to promote their artists' works-in-progress, though COV is also hoping the exposure will generate funds for the first production. As of now, no date has been set for the premiere."

GATEHOUSE, Jonathon. "Sister Atwood's Travelling Salvation Show." Maclean's 12 October 2009: Section: Back Pages: 66. In depth overview of the tour to launch The Year of the Flood (1626 w.). Excerpt: "The script gets sent ahead, and Atwood arrives onstage, as much in the dark as the audience as to how it will all turn out. The choir in Ottawa, the Calixa Lavallée Ensemble, were precise and professional music school students. The next night in Kingston had a far looser vibe, with the accompanying guitar, accordion and stand-up bass placing the hymns somewhere between Jacques Brel and Lawrence Welk. In Edinburgh, a former bishop played Adam One, dressed in a leopard skin. In Bristol, the roles of the three narrators were played by two local booksellers and a customer who wandered into the shop and volunteered to give it a go. Manchester featured the local Lesbian and Gay Chorus. Toronto had Micah Barnes, formerly of the a
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been a mess ever since, Ms. Atwood said, pointing out that the Soviet Union collapsed largely because of its massive expenditure trying to subdue Afghanistan in the 1980s. Although she continues to question why we were there in the first place, she doesn’t feel we can just pack up our kit bags. ‘We have mucked with traditional cultures around the world and the results have not been happy, but is it happy to leave things the way they are?’ To cut and run after encouraging people to change their lives and demand more rights from a repressive regime would be ‘like the first war in Iraq, in which the U.S. promised to support people rising up against Saddam Hussein, and then they didn’t do it and the people were slaughtered.’”


Report on Atwood’s video appearance at the Emirates Airline International Festival of Literature in Dubai.

Excerpt: “The author, sitting in her Toronto office and wearing a fleece, spoke for almost an hour via satellite link about her career and took questions from a substantial audience. But dominating the first quarter of her appearance was, as the subject came to be called during the festival, the ‘elephant in the room’: her original decision not to patronise the event in any form because of perceived censorship in the emirate, particularly of English author Geraldine Bedell. ‘Given the information I had I did the right thing at the time,’ said Atwood. ‘Now I’ve done the right thing by being here as much as possible. …First I had an e-mail from Britain, then The Times reported [The Gulf Between Us] had been banned. As a vice-president of PEN, how could I support the festival? But apparently that wasn’t exactly the story,’ Atwood admitted. ‘No launch was cancelled. The author was one of a number proposed who ended up not being invited to the festival. That’s not the same as being banned. …We must be careful about language. People like me, we hear the word “ban” and we strap on armour and gallop into the fields thinking we’re going to fight. We rallied round a flag that wasn’t there.””


Atwood NOT on the short list of Bad Sex in Fiction Awards which “honour the most inept, gratuitous, embarrassing and downright creepy descriptions of houghmagandy in novels.” Founded by the late Auberon Waugh and organised by the Literary Review, the awards are described as “Britain’s most dreaded literary prize.” Its purpose, as set out 17 years ago, is to “draw attention to the crude, tasteless, often perfunctory use of redundant passages of sexual description in the modern novel, and to discourage it.” Jonathan Beckman, assistant editor of the Literary Review, commented that writers such as ‘Margaret Atwood say when they are writing sex scenes they do have in the back of their mind if they get it horribly wrong they will be on next year’s shortlist. So we may have a role in improving the quality of sex.”


Excerpt: “Margaret Atwood had a crowd of about 750 people waiting to hear her at the Paramount Theatre, and the only person who had reason to be less than delighted was her interviewer, Benjamin Moser. She made him work. Luckily, Moser was a witty and capable host, even as he served as foil and punching bag to the Canadian author. She joked, poked and even took a photo for her Twitter feed during her time on stage. Are Nobel short-listers supposed to be this funny? She described her latest novel, The Year of the Flood, as neither sequel nor prequel to Oryx and Crake but rather, occupying some of the same space and time, a ‘synchronous.’ ‘You may now use that word, which I just invented.’ Think of the chapters in a Victorian novel labelled “Meanwhile.” ‘You knew that sooner or later the people in the “Meanwhile” chapter were going to meet up in the other chapter, which they never failed to do. So it’s the “Meanwhile” book. Anticipating a question about grim endings in her post-Apocalyptic work, she was impossibly defensive: ‘I have to say, for those of you who are inevitably going to ask me, ’Well, are you a hopeful person, and isn’t this kind of dark—I do point out that it’s a lot cheerier than the end of Hamlet.’ And then there was the Twitter lesson, as she explained. ‘I had to plunge into the Twittering, and that was a whole other experience. I have a whole bunch of new best friends. They are very helpful. If you have a problem, you can put it up there and they will send you many answers. Some of which will be right.’…It’s nice to know that if this writing thing does not work out, Atwood has a bright future ahead doing stand-up.” Available from Lexis-Nexis.


Excerpt: “Venerable literary icon Margaret Atwood delighted more than 300 devotees who assembled at the Kitchener Public Library on Saturday morning to hear her read passages from her new novel The Year of the Flood. …Fans got more than they expected when Atwood ended the reading by serenading them with a hymn included in the novel. ‘Now here’s your treat,’ she said nervously. ‘I don’t know whether I’m up to this. But nobody is recording it . . . or are they?’ Without accompanying music or taking a much
of a breath, she began. 'We praise the tiny perfect moles that garden underground...'. Atwood sang, finishing 74 seconds later to resounding applause. Atwood’s appearance on Saturday launched the local segment of the Word on the Street national literary festival.'


Obituary of the actress who starred in the film adaptation of The Handmaid's Tale and who died in a skiing accident on 18 March 2009.


The complaint centred around The Handmaid's Tale which the parent of a Grade 12 student thought was overly sexual and anti-Christian. "A spokesperson for Atwood said the author has already said a lot on the topic and her opinions are widely available on the Internet." Eventually [of course] the panel established by the Toronto School Board ruled that the novel would remain as part of the senior curriculum. See article by Debra Black in Toronto Star 12 February 2009: Section: News: 02.


References a new website, www.spokenink.co.uk (1 September 2010) that offers fans a chance to download various literary works by countless authors, including Atwood. Her 1977 short story "Betty" is available on the site although it is not read by Atwood but by Barbara Barnes.


Satiric report of journalist covering the Giller Awards attended by Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and federal Liberal politician, Bob Rae. ('Stache= Mustache)


Article on imprisonment of Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo notes that Atwood, among others, has signed petitions for his release.


Excerpt: "One of Martin’s best friends is Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood, whose recent non-fiction book, Payback, also explored ideas of debt and obligation. Martin says they regularly discuss their work, which must explain why some passages in the two books echo each other. But although Martin and Atwood are friends, it is hard to think of two more contrasting personalities. Atwood clearly relishes the business of being a famous author; she is a natural stage-strutter, and in this sense is rather like one of Martin’s actor characters. (She is currently touring her new novel, The Year of the Flood, as a musical play.) Martin, by contrast, is a reserved figure who tells me she hates even having her photograph on her books because: ‘I don’t think it has anything to do with the performance.’ The downside of this is that she has remained somewhat anonymous; despite her successes, she is far from being a household name.”


Excerpt: "Adventures Canada’s 2009 Scotland Slowly holiday is an excellent opportunity to explore the historical northern isles. Participants travel aboard the 120-passenger cruise ship MV Andrea on an 11-day cruise departing from Glasgow on May 23 and ending in Edinburgh on June 2. An added bonus to passengers will be having Canadian writer Margaret Atwood aboard as a guest lecturer....Atwood, a keen birder and ardent conservationist, will be sharing her knowledge of birding as new sightings are enjoyed along the route.”


While the focus of the story is on Anthill and her admiration for Munro, the article notes in passing that Anthill was Atwood’s former editor. ‘I love Peggy,’ Anthill says of Atwood with whom she is scheduled to have dinner with this week. ‘She is a wonderful woman, wonderfully funny, and of course, is always very enjoyable company.” The three authors were in Toronto attending the 30th International Festival of Authors at Harbourfront Centre.


Michael Crummy’s Galore is nominated for a Governor-General’s Award, after not being nominated for the Scotiabank Giller Prize or the Rogers Writer’s Trust Fiction Prize; Atwood not nominated for GG—and and excluded as finalist in the other contests.

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One of the winners was Report on Business writer Gordon Pitts who secured the National Business Book Award for his fifth book, Stampede! The Rise of the West and Canada’s New Power Elite. In that book, Pitts explored the steady shift of Canada’s economic power base from manufacturing in Central Canada to the resource-dependent industries in the West. He beat out a number of notable Canadians among the finalists for the $20,000 prize, including Atwood (for Payback), as well as Peter C. Newman, Kenneth Whyte and Ted Rogers, who wrote with Robert Brehl.

Scholarly Resources

Includes full text with translations of "Persephone Departing," "This is a Photograph of Me," and "They are Hostile Nations."

"How does a Margaret Atwood novel stand up to translation into Japanese? Leaving to others detailed analyses of Atwood’s work, this is the primary question of the present paper. Three main elements combined to motivate this inquiry: 1) Atwood’s propensity to use humor to weave complex ideas into the novel... 2) an understanding of the difficulty of literary translation in general... and 3) an appreciation of the challenges of Japanese translation in particular, given Japanese cultural and linguistic preferences for indirectness as discussed by Sanae Tsuda. To answer the question above, the present author analyzed Yukiko Kounosu’s excellent Japanese translation of Atwood’s The Blind Assassin. Facilitating the analysis is a list of quotes collected from the original English version of the novel...." (Author)

Short profile discussing Atwood as a science fiction writer (The Handmaid’s Tale and Oryx and Crake).

Armstrong “argues that nonhuman animals, and stories about them, have always been closely bound up with the conceptual and material world of modernity. In the first half of the book, [he] examines the function of animals and animal representations in four classic narratives: Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver’s Travels, Frankenstein and Moby Dick. He then goes on to explore how these stories have been re-worked, in ways that reflect shifting social and environmental forces by later novelists, including ...Margaret Atwood.” (Publisher)

"For Canadians, North is a constant. It’s one of those ideas that’s reinterpreted generation after generation, and by region after region.... When the Americans send icebreakers through the Northwest Passage, why do Canadians get so stirred up about it? Not many people go there. It’s not as though it happens where they are physically. It happens in their minds. It’s a violation of their mental space. Margaret Atwood. In this comment from an 1987 interview Margaret Atwood offers her interpretation of a universal and perpetual Canadian concern: the North. Rather than focusing on Atwood’s arguably reductive equation of Canadian ‘mental space with the North,’ I consider this statement for its insight into Atwood’s own preoccupations with the Canadian wilderness and nation. An examination of this concern with the wilderness in Atwood’s critical and creative writing throughout the 1970s and 80s reveals the evolution of a symbiotic relationship wherein the wilderness aesthetic of Atwood’s public statements coincides with her emergence as a national celebrity....” (Author)

"Even though it could be deemed politically incorrect to make fun of gender matters, writers like Margaret Atwood, Caryl Churchill, and Helen Fielding have inserted humour into the feminist debate. By employing psychological, sociological, philosophical, and literary theories this essay develops working hypotheses about the relationship of feminism and humour. It also emphasizes the historical dimension; after having been the means of questioning the socio-cultural and political status quo, feminism now is itself the target..."
of critical questions. In the end, the essay shows that both laughing with and laughing about feminism can at the same time question and strengthen it, since laughter keeps it within the discourse, thus supporting and constantly reaffirming its relevance." (Author).

BAN, Celia. The Divine and the Body in Margaret Atwood: Surfacing: A Contemporary and Psychoanalytical Critical Approach. Saarbrücken (DE): VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009. 68 pp. "The writing concentrates on the mythological and the contemporary aspect of Margaret Atwood's novel Surfacing. According to the analysis of the novel the metamorphosis of the narrator into a beast is an answer to issues raised because of modern body politics and questions of faith in the novel. The inherent link between body and the divine is demonstrated when the narrator experiences a Shamanistic experience through her unusual experience of pregnancy. In the analysis of the relationship of the body and the divine mainly poststructuralist, psychoanalytic and feminist criticism was applied." (Publisher).


The poem was originally published in Interlunar ©1984.


BEAUCHAMP, Gorman. "The Politics of The Handmaid's Tale." Midwest Quarterly 51.1 (Autumn 2009): 11-25. "In Canada, they said, 'Could it happen here?' In England, they said, jolly good yarn.' In the United States, they said, 'How long have we got?"' Such were the reactions, according to an interview that Margaret Atwood gave to The New York Times, to her futuristic novel The Handmaid's Tale. The British response is the calmest, viewing the work, that is, purely as fantasy, like Alice in Wonderland or Lord of the Rings. Canadians feel, apparently, some modest degree of apprehension. But it is in America, where the tale is set, that reaction has been most intense, most alarmed. By now a canonical text (the self-important term that academics use for books that get taught a lot) in university courses, the source of a film and an opera, a work particularly revered by pessi-feminists. The Handmaid's Tale has been widely viewed as a serious commentary on the socio-political conditions of the day. I want to cast a critical eye on the putatively American way of responding to Atwood's tale..." (Author).

BECKER, Manuel Benjamin. Forms and Functions of Dystopia in Margaret Atwood's Novels The Handmaid's Tale and Oryx and Crake. Saarbrücken (DE): VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008. English. "Both novels provide a shockingly bleak and yet satirically funny outlook on futuristic societies. For the analysis of the novels as dystopian writing, first of all a definition is required of both dystopia and utopia. This leads to a consideration of the aspects of dystopian writing that structure the analysis of the novels. The central aspects of dystopian writing are social organisation, the interaction between dream/nightmare and reality, and finally the aspect of time. Four aspects of social organisations (communication, dress code, surveillance, science and technology) are analysed in order to show that the restriction of the individual through the social organisation plays a key role in Atwood's novels."

(Publisher).


"This paper devoted to Michèle Robert's The Wild Girl (1984) and The Book of Mrs. Noah (1987), as well as Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1985) explores how, in these novels reconfiguring female biblical figures, Roberts and Atwood have filled the gaps and silences of the Bible and created alternative religious and/or social discourses. The analysis will focus on the way their self-conscious female I-narrators challenge the monologism of the dominant male discourse, the notion of truth, the authority of language and of any narrative, at the risk of paradoxically ending up silencing themselves." (Author).


"In this thesis I look at the critical reception of five of Margaret Atwood's works. I consider reviews from
large American newspapers and magazines, and my aim is to see whether Atwood's gender influences the reception of her works. Is gender a critical category in the American press? My first chapter presents an earlier historical example, where I discuss the American reception of the Brontë sisters' novels. The criticism from the nineteenth century and the pseudonyms the sisters used show how the authors' gender was crucial for how their works were received. In chapter two I move on to the 1970s and the reception of Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Surfacing* (1972), and *Lady Oracle* (1976), and I consider how the women's movement affected the reviews of Atwood's novels. During the 1970s the stereotypes of which the Brontës were victims came under attack, and critics were simultaneously more aware of the stereotypes and more consciously preoccupied with them. The two last chapters concern Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *Moral Disorder* (2006). In these chapters I discuss whether Atwood's gender still affects the reception of her books, and also how Atwood's fame becomes important for the contemporary reception. I consider how Atwood has not simply been a victim of gendered criticism but has continuously engaged with this criticism. The thesis will show how the critics' situatedness and preconceptions are crucial for how they read a text, and also that an author's name is vital for the reception of a book. During the 1970s Margaret Atwood's name to a large extent meant 'woman writer,' while today the name 'Margaret Atwood' has a signification of its own, as she ranks among the most highly respected authors in the world. (Author). For more see http://www.duo.uio.no/sok/work.html?WORKID=84371


BROCK, Richard. "Envoicing Silent Objects: Art and Literature at the Site of the Canadian Landscape." *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* 13.2 (2008): 50-51. "Examines some of the ways in which art and literature converge upon the site of the Canadian landscape, generating an 'ekphrastic' conception of place which reminds everyone constantly that every framed, static view of a landscape represents a story house, a repository of narratives concerning all those peoples who have inhabited this place, interacted with it, or claimed it as their own. To this end, the author seeks first to explore some of the narratives consigned to this repository, and then to consider how they are accessed, opened up and reconfigured in one specific literary work: Margaret Atwood's complex short story, 'Death by Landscape,' from her 1991 collection *Wilderness Tips*. Two principles guide the author in his exploration. The first is the notion of 'counter-discourse,' a term used in postcolonial theory to describe an engagement with a colonialist text by a postcolonial writer. The second is the notion of 'ekphrasis,' a term that refers to the literary description of visual art objects. The notion of ekphrasis is necessary in this context because of the overwhelmingly linguistic focus of postcolonial theories of discourse and counter-discourse." (Journal).


CHAKRAVARTY, Radha. *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers: Rethinking Subjectivity*. New Delhi, India: Routledge, 2008. See especially Chapter 6, "Margaret Atwood: Between Two Worlds," 143-163. "Margaret Atwood's assertion of the necessary link between real and imagined worlds provides a key to the universe inhabited by her fictional characters. Although it has become fashionable to describe Atwood's work as postmodern, post-feminist and by implication anti-humanist, it is impossible to ignore the emancipatory impulse which animates her constructions of female subjectivity. Even the dystopian tendency discernible in much of her work may be read as the indirect articulation of a utopian desire to transform the existing world by implicit comparison with an imagined 'better one.'" (Author).

COOKE, Margaret. "The Place of Madness in American Culture and Discourse." PhD thesis. University of Nevada, Reno, 2009. 275 pp. "In this work, I interrogate the ways people with mental illness are identified, defined, and finally placed,
not only by the medical community or by psychiatry, but also in popular literature and film. I consider both
the literal and figurative placement of madness, and examine the ways representations of madness
influence where those with mental illness are welcome. My analysis is informed by the changing theories
and practices of treatment and the critical and diagnostic language employed within the mental health
services community in mid-late twentieth century America....In Chapter Four, I argue that Sylvia Plath’s
*The Bell Jar* (1963) and Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* (1996) expose the tendency by the popular
media, the general population, and the mental health services community to pathologize individuals while
ignoring the larger social issues involved. They elucidate the ways the actual physical placement of
madness affects one's social standing in society as well as the social forces that lead to diagnoses and
hospitalization." (Author). For more see *DAI-A 70.06* (December 2009).

University, 2009. 68 pp.

"In Canada in the 1970s, three novels written by women were published with remarkably similar themes. These
novels were *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), by Alice Munro; *Surfacing* (1972), by Margaret Atwood;
and *Bear* (1976), by Marian Engel. *Lives* is a semi-autobiographical Künstlerroman depicting the
physical, emotional, and artistic growth of a young woman in rural Ontario; *Surfacing* describes a
woman's journey to her childhood home in northern Quebec, during which she comes to terms with her
past and her lost father; and *Bear* is about a historian's sojourn on a remote island in northern Ontario,
during which she has an affair with a bear. This thesis will explore the ways in which the force of myth or
story provides the means for the protagonists in the novels to heal and become self-actualized. Although
each individual novel has received much critical attention, they have never been linked together and
illuminated under this thematic lens." (Author). For more see *MAI 47.05* (October 2009).

DARE, Jennifer K. "Throwing the Book at Him: Feminist Counter-Narratives to Evangelical Apocalyptic Theologies

"The once-marginalized Evangelical Christian voting bloc has risen to a position of national vocal and
voting power in the United States. The theology which informs this rise to power, particularly apocalyptic
Reconstructionist theology, insists on rewriting the Constitution of the United States in accord with a
specifically Evangelical social world view which reinforces patriarchy and marginalizes women. Using
political methods to achieve religious aims, adherents to this theology are interested in enforcing their
cultural patterns as national law. This theology was, and is, predicated upon the Christian fear of
abjection, a feminization of enemy ideology, and an enmity for feminist ideology. Prompted by the
passage of Roe v. Wade in 1973, and retransmitted via pop culture Christian apocalyptic fiction such as
the Left Behind series, this apocalyptic Christian theology has created, coded, and calcified a folk religion
of eschatology, as well as enforcing Reconstructionist social schema, in the United States. The majority
of the texts examined in this dissertation are examined in terms of a narrative, fictional, feminist response
to troubling social conditions extant in the United States from 1973 to 2003, conditions exacerbated by
the infiltration of Christian apocalyptic theology into the political arena. These feminist texts have
attempted to overwhelm the edifice of Christian apocalyptic theology with a multiplicity and complexity of
stories about the End of the World, telling stories about this End which carefully and knowingly contradict
the dominant narratives of Christian apocalypse. These feminist texts demonstrate through their imagined
societies different ways of relating to ourselves and to each other, and thus promulgate a cultural
authority which does not ostensibly trouble the dominance of 'legitimate' religious and cultural doctrines,
but acts subtly to influence, inform, and sometimes transform theologies and ideologies. The major works
examined include Jerry B. Jenkins's and Timothy LaHaye's *Left Behind*, Octavia Butler's *Parable of the
Talents*, Susie McKee Charnas's *Walk to the End of the World*, Shari S. Tepper's *The Gate To Women's
Country*, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*, Starhawk's *The Fifth
Sacred Thing*, and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time." (Author). For more see *DAI-A 70.09*
(March 2010).

India* 9.6 (June 2009): 9.

"A summary of her doctoral thesis prepared for the Department of English, Karunya University,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

Université Lumière (Lyon), 2008. 59 pp.

De MOLADE, Julie. "Building Bridges Between Brave New Worlds: A Study of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and

"Through a critical social dreaming, the literary dystopia imagines a nightmarish vision of contemporary
social and cultural problems, and it is such a literary dystopia that this dissertation examines. Margaret
Atwood’s dystopian novel *Oryx and Crake* (2003) forms the basis for the analytical investigation, as the dissertation seeks to understand the literary legacies in *Oryx and Crake*. Critics have already identified the use of prominent precursors and this dissertation takes up two of them, namely the two dystopian classics: Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels Book IV: A Voyage To The Country Of The Houyhnhnms* (1728) and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932). The dissertation studies how *Oryx and Crake* engages with the social dreaming of Swift and Huxley and what effect this ‘dystopian dialogue’ has. With intertextuality as the binding link in this dialogue, the analysis explores the form and content of *Oryx and Crake* and its intertextuality with the two examples of the dystopian tradition. The academic field of utopianism provides the theoretical background, as two concepts ‘critical dystopia’ and ‘estrangement’ constitute the etymological basis for the analytical choices. By establishing four analytical ‘bridge piers’ in the metaphorical bridge of the analysis, the dissertation clarifies the dialogue with these two novels of the past by investigating character, setting, social criticism and narratology. The dissertation concludes that *Oryx and Crake* engages with the social dreaming of *Brave New World* and *Gulliver’s Travels* (Book IV) as it takes up many of the same themes and social problems as the two older novels. The effect of this engagement establishes *Oryx and Crake* as an answering or continuing voice in the dystopian dialogue. Through non-scientific para-texts and its engagement with its historical heritage, *Oryx and Crake* expresses and perhaps also represses voices from past and present. As such, the novel articulates a general concern about the present state of the world, emphasising a radical transformation of human nature, biological engineering as well as environmental and social problems.” (Author).

DOBSON, Kit. *Transnational Canadas: Anglo-Canadian Literature and Globalization*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009. See especially Chapter 2, "Ambiguous Resistance in Margaret Atwood’s *Surfacing.*" 27-39; "...the critical reception of *Surfacing* has shifted over time and geographies; recently this novel has diminished in importance. Assessing how readings of *Surfacing* have changed helps to understand how the text has come to play a role in informing the CanLit of our global era..." (Author).


ELLIOTT, Jane. "The Return of the Referent in Recent North American Fiction: Neo-liberalism and Narratives of Extreme Oppression." *Novel* 42.2 (Summer 2009): 349-354. "While... resistance to representing certain kinds of suffering seemed to have thoroughly permeated literary and critical circles by the end of the 1990s, I suggest that we are currently witnessing a widespread and dramatic breakdown of this cultural consensus in recent North American fiction. In Margaret Atwood’s 2003 novel *Oryx and Crake*, for instance, we are presented with an uncanny reversal of the disappearance of the sex slave from Pynchon’s *Vineland.*" (Author)


In French. “The novel by the Canadian writer Margaret Atwood *Oryx & Crake* (2003) proceeds with the reflection on the ‘posthuman’ started nearly a century ago by Karel Čapek in *R.U.R.* [i.e. *Rossum’s Universal Robots*, a science-fiction play in Czech.] The Crakers, an artificial posthuman species, live in prelapsarian happiness after the near-extinction of humanity, unaware of patience and of the curse that, according to their creator, it generates. Their inventor has thus accomplished an essential trend of the XXth century by inscribing in his creatures the modern harassment of the paternal function that psychoanalysis has well described. But the irony of the novel is to show that his creatures escape his power: they invent myths and rituals that will put an Other in their lives as a symbolic mark, the authority of which enables them to free themselves from their condition. In this way, *Oryx & Crake* opposes the humanities and their aims, knowledge and liberation, to technology and its fortunately fallible power of subjection." (Author). Translated from the original French.


GLOVER, Jane. "Human/Nature: Ecological Philosophy in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake."

dystopian effects makes this novel a particularly rewarding text through which to engage with current ecological philosophies, particularly those developed by Val Plumwood and other thinkers interested in how ecological thinking can suggest an ethic of respect for the Other. This paper analyses how Atwood constantly shifts our perceptions between that which appears utopian and that which seems dystopian in the novel’s setting. This allows for an examination of the fragile nature of an ecological ethic of care in the kind of post-modern world Atwood envisages. Furthermore, by calling into question the utopian dreams of the scientist Crake in the novel, Atwood engages with two significant areas in the ecocritical debate—instrumentalism and the opposition of ‘human culture’ with ‘nature’. This paper, therefore, argues that Oryx and Crake challenges us to re-evaluate our understanding of how, and if, it is possible to create an ecologically ethical society without becoming instrumentalist or destroying that which makes us human.”

(Greenwood, 2009)


“The Handmaid’s Tale can be seen as a commentary on the context in which it was written....Greenwood shows how the practical and philosophical choices available to women in the mid-1980s inform the novel.” (Publisher). Article intended for senior high school students.


“The depiction of the underground journey, being more suggestive of a continuous process of exploration than it is of a transition from one discrete state to another, tempers the uneasy separation that Margaret Atwood often attempts to envision between normal and creative consciousness. Atwood has referred to Northrop Frye’s connections between the unconscious mind and the creative imagination—that ‘there may be imaginative rewards not afforded by the waking consciousness.’ Knowledge gained in unseen realms may be a matter of moving through the darkness: continuously inhabiting both the past and the present at all times. By casting the poetic project as a voyage into a dark underworld—a voyage all people take in one form or another—the poems in _The Door_ develop a subtle yet important case for complicating normative understandings of the poet and the audience. In doing so, they problematize the assumption that there can be a clear distinction between the two.” (Author).


“This dissertation examines how contemporary authors portray domestic abuse and illustrates that literary depictions of domestic violence are responsive to a variety of cultural and historical forces. My contention is that between the late 1960s and the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a significant shift in terms of how society has viewed domestic violence and that this transformation can be seen by comparing literary representations of abuse from the 1960s to 1980s—a period characterized by denial of the problem—to representations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, a period which signals a shift to an imperfect recognition about the problem. The novels considered, *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Linden Hills*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *The Blind Assassin*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Love*, *Freaky Green Eyes*, and *Solstice*, all reflect, question, and ultimately contribute to the ways in which contemporary American society shapes attitudes about, and responds to, the myriad problems related to domestic abuse. They illustrate the fact that over the past four decades segments of American society have begun to recognize domestic abuse as a problem, but have failed to adequately address it. These novels demonstrate that American society’s reaction to domestic abuse in the years between the 1960s and 1980s can be most accurately characterized by denial of the problem. More contemporary representations of abuse—that is, literary portrayals of the late 20th and early 21st centuries—signal that attitudes have shifted to the point that most people recognize the problem exists and that something needs to be done about it, yet remain unwilling, unable, and/or unsure of how to adequately address this problem. The literary works I address show the range of offenses subsumed under the catch-all phrase domestic abuse. They also illuminate the perspectives of perpetrators, accomplices, victims, and witnesses alike. The combined effect is that these novels show how broader social ill not only trickle down to the home, but are also manifest within the home and family structure.” (Author). For more see DAI-A 70.11 (May 2010).

"Margaret Atwood's recent book The Penelopiad has been classified, perhaps too easily, as a 'novel.' Unlike Ian McEwan's book On Chesil Beach, which may well have lost out in the running for the 2007 Man Booker Prize because the judges were influenced by the chorus of reviewers and bloggers who argued loudly that it was not a novel at all, not even a 'short novel,' but a 'novella,' Atwood's book has generally escaped such criticism, even though it is about same length as McEwan's 'novella'... In a number of fascinating ways to be explored in what follows, Atwood appears less interested in writing a novel than offering a pastiche of literary forms or genres. Perhaps the most extensive literary form is the one most appropriate to her Greek material-classical tragedy itself, although the Chorus of her Maids offers its own array of pastiches..." (Author).


JACKSON, Lisa. "The Sunlit Zone: a Verse Novel and Essays." PhD thesis. La Trobe University, 2009. 234 pp. "The Sunlit Zone, is a verse novel about trauma and transformation. Set in Melbourne in 2040, the narrative moves between past and present in order to memorialise trauma and, in doing so, locate its redemption. Writing / the Wound consists of three essays, loosely linked, which explore the concerns of The Sunlit Zone in the light of theoretical critique. It aims to create a dialogue between essays and verse novel in order to examine the question: what is the relationship between trauma, transformation and writing? The first two essays critique novels that influenced The Sunlit Zone. The first, "Hybrid Bodies: Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake" explores the trauma of new technology, drawing on Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection in Powers of Horror." (Author).


KAPUSCINSKI, Kiley. "Dames of Distress: Female Violence and Revised Socio-Cultural Discourses in the Fiction of Margaret Atwood." PhD thesis. Queen's University, 2009. 267 pp. "This study examines the figure of the violent woman in Atwood's fiction as a productive starting point for the re-evaluation of various socio-cultural debates. Emerging from Atwood's conviction that art, in its various forms, is often involved in the re-writing of convention, I begin by re-defining traditional constructions of womanhood and violence in order to evince the reformative work and often unconventional forms of brutality employed by women in Atwood's novels, including Surfacing, The Blind Assassin, Lady Oracle, and Cat's Eye, and in her collections of short fiction, such as Dancing Girls, Bluebeard's Egg, The Penelopiad, and The Tent. Throughout, I demonstrate the ambivalence of violence as both destructive and generative, Canadian and un-Canadian, and Atwood's drawing on this destabilizing ambivalence in order to propose change within her broader social milieu. More precisely, the introductory chapter offers an overview of representations of female violence in Canadian fiction, and of the various responses to this figure as she appears in Atwood's fiction that point to the need for a critical vocabulary that addresses women's capacity to enact harm. The second chapter examines the various mythologies that define Canada and its people, and how the violent woman troubles these mythologies by inciting recognition of national identity as a narrative process open to re-evaluation. The third chapter moves away from this focus on national narratives to highlight the discourses that similarly shape our understanding of art, and those who participate in it. Here, the violent woman can be seen to engage in revisionary work by exposing the limits of the Red Shoes Syndrome that has in many ways come to define the fraught relationship between the female artist and her art. The final chapter examines Atwood's on-going fascination with various kinds of mythologies and her revisions of Classical and Biblical myths in order to highlight the veritable range of female violence and the possibility, and at times necessity, of responding to these behaviors in ways that circumnavigate traditionally masculine forms of justice ethics. In focusing on how Atwood's violent women engage these various socio-cultural discourses, this study concludes that traditionally marginal and nonliterary figures can perform central and necessary roles and that Atwood's fiction responds to, and in turn (re)creates, the social environment from which it emerges." (Author).

--- "Exis-Tensions: Surviving the 'Red Shoes' Syndrome in Margaret Atwood's Lady Oracle." University of 54
"As the earliest and most sustained of Atwood's attempts to examine the potentially deadly conflict between a woman's artistry and female identities, Lady Oracle has often been read as a text that must necessarily be considered alongside Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's influential film, 'The Red Shoes.' Yet absent from previous analyses is a discussion of how this conflict is perpetuated though the female artist tradition, and how Joan Delacourt's habitual overeating indicates her self-destruction, rather than her self-empowerment, in the face of conflict. Moreover, while Joan's obesity aligns with the self-harm anticipated by what Atwood terms 'the Red Shoes syndrome,' her projecting her creative talents onto alternate identities can be read as a dissociative survival strategy that, for a time, permits her to maintain her divided identity as a woman artist." (Author).


n.p. "This research began as an attempt to question to what extent a politics of solidarity and the evolution of a 'transnational feminism' which travels across borders can be established within Arab and Western literary novels. While this study, in spirit, takes its lead from the call for 'feminism without borders' within the writings of two contemporary women writers, the Canadian Margaret Atwood and the Lebanese Hanan Al-Shaykh, it responds to the notion of transnationalism and literary ambassadorship from the perspective of Arab-Western relations. This process raises key questions for the reading of women's writings across sensitive cultural divides: How can the literary contributions of Margaret Atwood and Hanan Al-Shaykh help in reshaping the form and content of a transnational and cultural interaction between the Arab World and the West? Do women writers articulate their concerns in the same manner across cultures? To what extent can literature cross borders and be fully engaged within diverse women's concerns? And what might hinder the circulation of a transnational literary interaction? These contemporary women writers have been studied in the belief that their novels are committed to a transnational feminist agenda. Both writers place their feminist concerns within a national framework that they constantly negotiate. However, this comparison to test the value of women's writings across borders has been challenged by a more complex study of factors that intervene along the way. The politics of reception, the processes of production, circulation, and consumption, and the writers' reading of texts, the writers' own shifting allegiances moving from nationalism to broader cultural, cosmopolitan and transnational frameworks, are all factors to be taken into account. These factors have a direct impact on the context through which the literary texts have to be studied. Hence, this study seeks to contribute to this task by showing how these writers are engaged in the process of adjusting, reconstructing and even transcending their cultural milieus." (Author). For more see http://eric.exeter.ac.uk/exeter/handle/10036/68634?mode=full&submit_simple=Show+full+Item+record (1 September 2010).


"Canadian writer Margaret Atwood has gained a world-wide reputation as a writer who gazes at the world with a wry and unrelenting eye. A prolific author, she has published works in the genres of poetry, short story, literary criticism and the novel. Two of her novels, The Handmaid's Tale, first published in 1985, and Oryx and Crake, first published in 2003, have gained reputations as examples of the dystopian speculative novel, examples of which include George Orwell's 1984 and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. In both her speculative novels, Atwood was careful to predict the future based on events that had already happened or inventions that had already been set in motion. Interestingly, Atwood describes a world in which books have disappeared as a means of communication and have become museum pieces. In The Handmaid's Tale, a book which was written before the advent of the Internet, books have been replaced by CD-ROMs. In the later novel Oryx and Crake, however, Atwood was able to speculate on the societial and political implications of the internet and the world of electronic publishing, and her conclusions are bleak as she describes a world in which scholarly research has been sacrificed for the sake of corporate profit and intelligence has triumphed over wisdom. In the end, the smashed and scattered computers which dot the landscape of Oryx and Crake and denote the end of human civilization caution us to think about the implications of our headlong rush towards technological paradise."


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"This dissertation analyses the motif of food, eating, and hunger in novels by the Canadian author Margaret Atwood. The primary material consists of ten novels: The Edible Woman (1969), Surfacing (1972), Lady Oracle (1976), Life Before Man (1979), Bodily Harm (1981), The Handmaid’s Tale (1985), Cat’s Eye (1988), The Robber Bride (1993), Alias Grace (1996) and The Blind Assassin (2000). The motif of food, eating, and hunger is most explicit in The Edible Woman and Lady Oracle. In other novels it is more implicit, an undercurrent. Food and eating do not only have tangible representation, but a symbolic, metaphorical level. Representation of food, eating, and hunger in fiction is intertwined with the issues of body, power, otherness, gender, class, ethnic orientation, religion and experience. This dissertation’s methodological basis lies in feminist literary criticism, and feminist psychoanalytic literary criticism. To be more specific, this work relies on feminist close reading and feminist readership theory, and feminist object-relations theory. Both of these approaches are needed in order to give an adequately multifaceted reading of Atwood’s rich and complex use of the motif of food, eating, and hunger. The motif is a way of portraying things, which might otherwise be silent, would lack words or would be too banal when put in words: such as depression, fear, pleasure and feeling of displacedness. It is often a tool for depicting the often-violent sexual difference. The motif appears in connection with the experience of power and powerlessness in relationships, as well as repressed, problematic or cherished memories. Atwood’s novels present a fictional world where the motif of food and eating is one way of portraying the characters’ situations, feelings and possibilities in life. Atwood’s novels are in dialogue with feminism and psychoanalytic thinking. Her protagonists are traumatised, divided selves, and this traumatisation is visible in the novels’ narratives and narration. They tell their story in bits and pieces, in a lingering style, which engages the reader. They see themselves as faulty and unreliable narrators, and often ponder and apologise for this. Readers, myself and others, can become implicated, emotionally engaged with textual others, e.g. narrators or characters. This dissertation explores implicated readers’ reactions to the novels’ endings.” (Author).

For a copy see https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/13348/9789513923931.pdf?sequence=1 (1 September 2010).


"This article takes the recent rash of unwanted pregnancy films, such as 2007’s ‘Juno’ and ‘Knocked Up,’ as an opportunity to revisit Margaret Atwood's influential 1985 novel, The Handmaid’s Tale. It argues that the novel deals with the same themes the films evoke during a pivotal time for reproductive politics, generally, and abortion politics, specifically. It argues that the novel offers several lessons and warnings on the nature of reproductive politics that are still relevant today. These lessons are connected to how and why these films are able to ‘make sense’ in naturalizing their heroines’ choice to keep an unwanted pregnancy.” (Author).


Excerpt: “White privilege is rarely manifested in intentional, positive acts. It is, in Peggy McIntosh’s terms, ‘invisible,’ ‘unearned,’ and ‘cashed in each day’ (‘White Privilege and Male Privilege’ in Critical White Studies: Looking behind the Mirror [Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1997]: 291). To be White is to be the norm,
universal. This norm functions automatically, and unless the universality of White experience is explicitly questioned or subverted, racial distortions may appear even against the conscious intent of an author. Such distortions appear throughout Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1986). Atwood attempts to offer an archetypal account of female exploitation, but the stand-in for this universal experience is Offred, a White, college-educated American. Offred would seem an unlikely victim, but at no point in the text does Atwood acknowledge that sexism in America has, generally, been modulated by forms of race and class oppression, nor does she acknowledge the parallels between her own story and the experience of Black slavery. Because these historically-specific oppressions are removed from their broader context, the Tale drifts from speculative fiction, which is anchored in reality, into conceptually suspect and politically hazardous fantasy....” (Author)


“The very impetus of this study—to examine the representations of craft in literature—defies the functional binaries so long attributed to art and craft. This study examines the literary formulations of textile crafts and their makers in Canadian works of fiction at the turn of the twenty-first century. Included are three Canadian novels published after 1990: Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* (1996), Austin Clarke’s *The Polished Hoe* (2002) and Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* (1995). Through close analysis of these patchwork novels, I suggest ways of reading quilts and other textile crafts as a recontextualization of the forms of the past (through the workings of displacement and parody) in Canadian literature....In Chapter Two, I posit the patchwork quilt in Atwood’s *Alias Grace* as a model for the processes of recollection and fragmentation involved in historiographic metafiction.” (Author) For more see DAI-A 70.12 (June 2010). Available at http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca:8881/R?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=32559 (1 September 2010).


“This project, through reading Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, Shusaku Endo’s *Deep River*, Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Cynthia Ozick’s *Puttermesser Papers*, studies the confluence of hetero-religiosity and the novel as a form of heterology from the critical perspective of heterogeneous space. More specifically, through research into the study of the historical/religious background of all four novels and textual analysis, I argue that they deviate from not only readily identifiable, well-established monotheistic religions, but also highly developed literary conventions and traditions of the West, and wrestle with intertwining power relations such as gender and ethnicity....” (Author). For more see DAI-A 70.08 (February 2010).


PARRY, Jovian. "Oryx and Crake and the New Nostalgia for Meat." *Society & Animals* 17.3 (June 2009): 241-256. "Recent years have seen the development of a new trend in gastronomic discourse toward acknowledging and even valorizing the role of animal slaughter in meat production. This development problematizes some of the ideas of influential theorists of meat such as Fiddes ... and Adams ... namely, that the animal in (post)modernity has been rendered invisible in the process of meat production and consumption, ... and that meat itself is a commodity with a declining reputation. This paper analyzes the role of nostalgia in this trend toward do-it-yourself (or at least witness-it-yourself) slaughter, and takes these developments in cultural tastes and feelings as a context within which to analyze the special significance of meat in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*. In identifying this burgeoning nostalgia for meat and contextualizing it within a risk-reflexive, consumer-driven, dystopian near-future society of the author’s own devising, *Oryx and Crake* foregrounds and illuminates these real-world developments in the..."
meanings of meat." (Author).


"This study examines sartorial statements and descriptions in texts by postmodern women writers Margaret Atwood, Alice Walker, and Maxine Hong Kingston. The texts are Atwood's novels Cat's Eye and The Robber Bride, Walker's novel The Color Purple and short story collection In Love and Trouble, Kingston's prose narratives The Woman Warrior and China Men, and her novel Tripmaster Monkey. The work defines the terms 'fashion,' 'dress,' 'non-fashion,' 'antifashion,' 'traditional garments,' and 'costume.' It situates its discussion at the intersection of mid-to-late twentieth-century American women's prose narratives, postmodernism, feminism, and fashion theory and history in order to determine the significance of and attitudes toward sartorial habits and the culture of clothing, including specific garments and hairstyles. By engaging in the close reading of sartorial passages and by historically contextualizing garments and outfits chosen by characters and described and commented upon by narrators, the study shows that while clothing and its significance are highly contested issues, such issues have recently enjoyed a surge in academic attention. Clothing's significance in construction of identities cannot be overstated. The texts strongly demonstrate the implications of sartorial habits as they relate to age, gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality, and the study addresses the gap in feminist literary research whereby matters of dress in my subject texts have not been remarked adequately and in some cases, not remarked at all. The research shows that Atwood's work is fascinated with the culture of clothing and yet conflict about the consequences of that culture for individuals..." (Author). Available at: http://dspace.lib.iup.edu:8080/dspace/bitstream/2009/203/1/Gabrielle+Raffuse+Corrected+12-14-09.pdf (1 September 2010).


"Aristotle's Poetics set forth the first working definition of narrative as an imitation of action directed toward a certain end. The Aristotelian plotline delineates only six stages of narrative, not unlike those of the male sexual response cycle: exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. Likewise, the male sexual response cycle follows these six phases: transition, excitement, plateau, climax (orgasm), refractory period and resolution. In fact, the male sexual response cycle can be superimposed on the Aristotelian plotline such that each phase achieves the same end. This masculinist narrative arc centers on three units—of plot, place and time: the action must be complete in and of itself, it must have a beginning, middle and an end, and it must be of a specific length—not too short, such that nothing is propelled forward, or too long, such that the plot cannot be committed to memory. Loose ends must be tied up before the novel's resolution. This totalizing structure measures all narratives according to a linear progression of cohesive beginnings, middles and ends...Margaret Atwood's The Blind Assassin (2000) defies easy narrative categorization. While many contemporary novels reverse the reader's expectation of an Aristotelian plotline, Atwood draws the reader into such a narrative only then to critique it from within its bounds." (Author).


"This dissertation examines five twentieth-century novels from former British colonies across the Americas and considers why these novels demonstrate a significant engagement with British Romantic poetry. Romantic Revisions' analyzes Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy, Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, Cormac McCarthy's Blood Meridian, F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, and Wilson Harris's Palace of the Peacock—works written by a diverse range of authors in very different geographical, historical, and social contexts. Nevertheless, these novels all return to Romantic poetry as they grapple with the legacy of British colonialism within their respective American frames of reference...." (Author). For more see DAI-A 69.04 (October 2008).

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How Schlöndorff and Pinter collaborated to bring The Handmaid’s Tale to the screen. “An edited version of an interview with Brigitte Gauthier and of the Key Note Conference, organized by PUL at the University Lyon (Jean Moulin), 22 March 2007. "Translated by Charles Hadley."


“Dealing with such issue as pain and women’s victimization in a society fascinated with the female body, the novels of Canadian Margaret Atwood and British Sarah Hall introduce us to characters that are trapped in patriarchal stereotypes of women’s bodies and roles. These writers successfully create female protagonists who challenge the pre-established patriarchal rules in order to construct stronger identities or more powerful bodies, and to find a voice (or a vision) of their own. For both novelists the organ of sight is the focal point. As the eyes represent the central focus of the face, they may connote a variety of meanings. They are the main conveyors of human emotions, and a gateway to one’s soul. They can establish contact with others or suggest the perception of the transcendental, a connection with divinity, The eye, however, may also allude to negative feelings such as envy (‘the evil eye’) or indicate the fragmentation or objectification of—in particular female—bodies. This paper deals with the various meanings of the eye in [Atwood’s and Hall’s novels].” (Author).


“Margaret Atwood’s collection of short stories published in 2006, Moral Disorder, provides a modern literary example of the frequently complicated relationship experienced between mothers and daughters. By archetypically analyzing the two major characters of these stories and their relationship to each other, it will be shown how the daughter Nell solves the difficulties many modern women face of finding a path which is more satisfying than that taken by their mothers. Detailed analysis of these two characters is provided using Greek goddess archetypes, as identified by various mythologists and goddess psychologists including Christine Downing, Jean Bolen, and Jennifer and Roger Woolge.” (Author). For more see MAI 48.4 (August 2010).


Includes discussion of “the outsider” in Oryx and Crake.


“This essay closely examines the narrative form of Margaret Atwood’s and Jeanette Winterson’s revisionary stories about the mythical figures Penelope and Atlas. Both novelists rely on the narrative tools of parody and burlesque travesty to challenge the genre conventions of high epic art. They parodically use mythologizing and de-mythologizing devices to achieve a semantic transformation of the classical myths and employ burlesque travesty to bring about their stylistic modification. The revision of the ancient mythical stories is underscored by the prominent use of the trickster transformation archetype. In both The Penelopeiad and Weight, the protagonists wish to liberate themselves from the limitations imposed on them by the traditional narratives. Atlas’s desire to break free from the boundaries of the ancient epic story world is explored alongside the desire of Winterson’s alter ego to free herself from the weight of her personal past and the burden of tyrannical (fictional) conventions.” (Author).


“This thesis explores the concepts of ‘voice’ and ‘influence’ through the case studies of two famous English-speaking Canadian women writers, Margaret Atwood and Carol Shields. The ‘voice’ is multiple,
ambiguous and influenced, but it is also apparently unique. How, therefore, is it constructed and where does it come from? I examine, work with and adapt Harold Bloom's paradigmatic study of influence to a feminist context, exploring the idea that a literary voice can be developed and influenced by Atwood and Shields. I discuss how these writers searched for an appropriate literary role model, exemplified by nineteenth-century English-Canadian writer Susanna Moodie, at the moment when Canadian nationalism and feminism coincided. Atwood and Shields are now canonical writers themselves and important in both the nationalist and women's tradition, but have they gone on to influence new Canadian women writers? I test the pleasures and the anxieties of Shields' influence with regard to her creative writing students and her own daughter, Anne Giardini, who has published her first novel. I compare Shields with Atwood, who has achieved a high level of fame, and examine what kind of influence each exerts. I discuss whether literary influence is politically different for women than men and whether there is any jealousy or power struggles between the sexes. Rivalry and competition between writers are not purely caused by the aesthetic issues that Bloom discusses, therefore I contextualise his concept of influence using literary celebrity studies to consider the economic basis of cultural production. This is in order to show that tensions are determined by market conditions, just as much as the new poet's desire to overthrow a literary precursor. Finally, I examine fan letters to Atwood and Shields as another important source of literary influence. I discuss how fans are constructed through a commercial relationship and how they can also provide an amateur literary voice. Atwood and Shields have helped to create a network of writers across the globe. I explore whether both authors can be role models who will inspire the next literary generation." (Author). Available at http://eric.exeter.ac.uk/exeter/handle/10036/69973 (1 September 2010).

Available (in English) from: http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/document.html?id=607

This analysis of Atwood’s multilayered novel focuses on the relation between public and private events and collective and individual memory, respectively; this leads to a discussion of the interrelatedness between past, present, and future time. This essay will identify two of the various blind assassins in the novel and elucidate how the concept of space-time as expressed in The Blind Assassin is related to the saying ‘only the blind are free.’” (Author).

"In this article we read Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake as a post 9/11 text. We consider how Atwood used the genre and devices of dystopic fiction in order to present a uniquely Canadian perspective on the American response to 9/11." (Authors).

"This book is an assessment of Atwood's belief about the condition of women, her portrayal of women and their status in Canadian patriarchal society. She has not overestimated the problems of women but holds a mirror to actual social status of women through her female characters who are true to life. She pleads for a healthy, harmonious and balanced man-woman relationship in which two sexes are viewed as complementary, not as a battle of sexes or a winning or losing game. The study of Atwood's novels creates an awareness that no gods from above but women themselves have to raise their inner self and make an effort to find their freedom. Through her female characters Margaret Atwood presents a different concept of feminism and challenges the unjust traditional role assigned to women. She proposes an image of woman as not just a 'two-legged womb' but a dynamic human, different from male but no less significant in any manner. The book also explores that Atwood's feminist vision is neither male-centered nor female-centered but it offers a fresh perspective on women's problems based on humanitarian ground. She fulfills the role of a torchbearer to society. The book analyses seven of Atwood's major novels that belong to the postmodern literary genre of 'feminist protest' and reveal an intense awareness of the relationship between bonding and bondage, i.e. between a woman's need for connection with others and her equally strong need for freedom." (Publisher)

See especially Atwood profile, 10-14.


See especially Chapter 8, "A Shocking Bad Book To Be Sure, Sir" The Gothic as Counter-Discursive Strategy in Margaret Atwood’s and Kate Grenville’s Fiction." [203]-231. "This chapter will examine the relationship between ideas of postcolonialism, women’s writing and the Gothic, through a discussion of a selection of Grenville’s and Atwood’s work. It will focus specifically on how the Gothic has been turned to as a way of escaping formal textual, and largely patriarchal, pressures and will attempt to evaluate the success of the counter-discursive exercise as carried out by these particular writers through the Gothic mode.” (Author).


"Disability, according to critic Rosemarie Garland Thomson, presents us with the idea of vulnerability and with the suggestion that our bodies, not ourselves, are in control. The fear of this vulnerability forms the basis for several of Margaret Atwood’s works. In my project I plan to focus on three of Atwood’s novels: Surfacing, Oryx and Crake, and The Handmaid’s Tale, and a collection of poetry and short stories to demonstrate that Atwood’s work depicts not only a fear of vulnerability but the desire existing within human nature to try to avoid such a fate. Expanding on the research that currently exists pertaining to Atwood’s treatment of the body, my thesis includes the ways in which her treatment of the body reflects upon illness, disability and recovery. The majority of critical research that discusses illness is in relation to her novel Edible Woman. Using this novel as a backdrop for Atwood’s discussion of suffering and coping with the sufferings of illness, I will expand the research to include emphasis on this area in several of her short stories, throughout her poetry and in three other main novels in which illness has not yet been discussed in the critical arena..." (Author). For more, see MAI 47.05 (October 2009).


"This study examines near-future settings in North American utopian and dystopian texts. While a number of literary texts make use of such near-future settings, a systematic study of their generic and narrative consequences is still necessary. The following parameters for analysis are of interest in near-future settings: the mutual influences of the genres of utopia, dystopia, and science fiction, of fact and fiction, of (North American) space and time, and of contemporary society and positive or negative counter-worlds. A crucial part of the analysis is also dedicated to the characters’ relationship to the past and how they are influenced by the changes. These parameters are examined in four novels of the 1980s. In Margaret Atwood’s novel The Handmaid’s Tale and Kim Stanley Robinson’s Orange county trilogy, Wild Shore, The Gold Coast, and Pacific Edge, concerns about the conservatism of the Reagan era, the cold war, and the increasing impact of technology and pollution are projected into the near future." (Author) For a copy see http://scidok.sub.uni-saarland.de/volltexte/2009/2190/ (1 September 2010).


Reflects on the phenomenon of child abduction and its treatment in three prominent works of 20th century fiction, Graham Swift’s Waterland, Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale, and Ian McEwan’s A Child in Time. Suggests that all substantial works of literature provide insight into areas that are sometimes seen as the preserve of other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology.


"Critics of Margaret Atwood’s novel The Handmaid’s Tale (1985) disagree on the question of protagonist Offred’s heroism in the context of Gilead’s oppressive social structure. Some view her narration as an act of resistance, while others focus on her lack of concrete action; as Hannah Arendt has argued, ignoring a

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totalitarian regime’s crimes constitutes complicity. Atwood herself has identified Offred as ‘an ordinary, more-or-less cowardly woman;’ thus, efforts to see this character as an active subversive contradict the author’s intent and the textual evidence. A reading of The Handmaid’s Tale in the context of dystopian literature, especially the works of Yevgeny Zamyatin and George Orwell, reveals that Gilead’s dystopian regime is not so much imposed from above as sought from below. Like many dystopian protagonists, Offred demonstrates a selfish desire for happiness over freedom, and her weakness functions as cautionary example.” (Journal).


“After describing the current crisis in historiography and defining utopianism, I look at theories of history from a utopian perspective. I do so by examining three central concepts (historical rupture, historical erasure, and historical fictionality) by means of three utopian texts—Edward Bellamy’s Looking Backward (1888), Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale (1985), and Richard Gooch’s America and the Americans in 1833-4 (1834, 1995). I then move on to look at the practice of history in terms of these concepts with the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-6 as my analytical and exemplary focus. I conclude by suggesting how utopianism offers for historiography a way out of the paradox of the ever-present.” (Author).


In Chinese. An ecofeminist approach to the Handmaid’s Tale.


“The paper examines the depiction of Penelope, the faithful wife in Homer’s Odyssey, in some modern novels from different parts of the world. A brief analysis of Ovid’s hint at a more complex woman in the Heroïdes is followed by discussion of the versions of Jean Giono, Inge Merkel, Penelope Lively, Margaret Atwood and Njabulo Ndebele’s The Cry of Winnie Mandela. Whereas the epic focuses on the eponymous hero, these works, which all draw on the Odyssey, move Penelope to the foreground and the adventure story becomes the backdrop for a different kind of adventure that is played out in the marital home. It is notable that the modern novels concentrate on the psychology of the woman and on the marriage relationship and make the epic couple a paradigm for marriage in the modern world.” (Author).

Reviews of Atwood’s Works


*Canadian Literature* 202 (Autumn 2008): 121-123. By Antje M. RAUWERDA. Reviewed along with two other books of poetry, Shattered Fanatics, by A. Mary Murphy, and The Pear Orchard, by Joanne Weber.

*University of Toronto Quarterly* 78 (Winter 2009): 25-75. By Malcolm WOODLAND. The article reviews several other books including Actualities, by Monica Kidd, and Wolf Tree, by Alison Calder.


*Hamilton Spectator* (ON) 17 February 2009: G10. By Tyler RUBINI. "With the novel Oryx and Crake, Margaret Atwood joins the same league as greats such as Aldous Huxley and Robert Heinlein, putting forth a blend of post-apocalypse and dystopia unparalleled in literature."


Daily Mail (London) 15 May 2009: 36. By Carla MCKAY. (180 w.) “This is not a book to give to the evil banker down the road, or to read for tips on how to manage your accounts, but to savour for its intellectual enlightenment.”

Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis 20.2 (July 2009): 370-372. By Diana PRINGLE. “Many of my clients come essentially for redemption or forgiveness of sins (omissions or commissions, done or planned) although they do not express it this way. They may say ‘Shall I leave my spouse, will it be fair to the children, what is owed to whom, how do I balance things?’ Or they may be in thrall to obsessive and self-destructive needs for revenge, unable to liberate themselves until the guilty have been punished or have admitted their guilt so that the psychic score can be settled. The book is a good read and I have found it provides some useful alternative ways of looking at recurring issues in therapy, that may in turn benefit my clients.”


Library Journal 134.1 (1 January 2009): 112. By Gilles RENAUD. “A profound and erudite study of debt in all its guises.”

New Internationalist 420 (March 2009): 31. By Richard SWIFT. “A timely, highly readable and entertaining journey through the literary and historical meanings of being both a creditor and a borrower.”


The Observer (UK) 24 May 2009: Section: Observer Review Pages: 25. By Lucy SCHORES. (113 w.) “Lively and spirited.”


Quadrant Magazine 53.5 (May 2009): 122-123. By Michael GIFFIN.


Sunday Independent (ZA) 8 March 2009: Section: Dispatches: 17. By Magdalena SZCZUREK. (815 w.)


The Advertiser (AT) 21 November 2009: Section: Magazine: 24. By Katherine ENGLAND. (662 w. although reviewed with Marina Endicott’s Good to a Fault).”

The Age (Melbourne, AT) 10 October 2009: Section: A2: 20. By Jennifer LEVASSEUR. (831 w.) Atwood’s “masterful new novel lightly prods the reader to feel a kind of superiority then snatches away that certainty.”

The Australian 7 October 2009: Section: Features: 18. By Jose BORGHINO. (2014 w. Although reviewed with Lorrie Moore’s A Gate at the Stairs).”

Chattanooga Times Free Press (TN) 27 September 2009: Section: Books: E8. By Adera CAUSEY. (751 w.) “This is by no means light reading.”

Booklist 105.21 (1 July 2009): 9. By Donna SEAMAN. “Atwood’s mischievous, suspenseful, and sagacious dystopian novel follows the trajectory of current environmental debacles to a shattering possible conclusion with passionate concern and arch humor.”


Canadian Living 34.10 (October 2009): 250. By ANON.

Chicago Sun Times 20 September 2009: Section: Books: D8. By Rayyan AL-SHAWAF. (729 w.) “Throughout her complicated and rather sensationalistic plunge into the nefarious uses of science and technology, Atwood unflinchingly holds aloft the sanctity of life—for all species—and the human quest for love as not only venerable qualities, but as the unexpectedly principal elements of her story.”
Christian Science Monitor 26 September 2009: Section: Books. 25. By Yvonne ZIPP. (1011 w.)

"The Year of the Flood rejoin the world Atwood created in her 2003 novel, Oryx and Crake. But while characters from the first novel reappear—including both Crake and Jimmy the Snowman—this time the focus is on two women who escape the pandemic. You don’t have to have read Oryx and Crake to understand what’s going on. Although for those who have, the new novel carries events past the earlier book’s ambiguous ending. And, with its emphasis on female relationships over genetic machinations, I found it a more accessible read."

Courier Mail (AT) 3 October 2009: Section: ETC. 22. By Amanda HORSEWELL. (302 w.) “A strange but rewarding journey into a future that seems all too plausible."


Daily Telegraph 5 September 2009: Section: Books. 23. By Jane SHILLING. (670 w.) "As an artefact, her novel is a remarkable feat of the imagination, as well as a salutary warning. As a record of the best qualities of the human spirit, it is curiously untouched. One is sufficiently engaged to want to finish the book, but if it ended with everyone eaten alive by lobombs, one would hardly care."


Elle (Canada) 102 (December 2009): 82. By ANON.


Evening Standard (London) 3 September 2009: 34. By Francis SPUFFORD. (641 w.) “This is the only novel I can remember reading when you’re relieved when the world ends...."


Globe and Mail 12 September 2009: Section: Book Review. F8. By Gillian BEER. (985 w.) "This is a work of fearless imagination. Margaret Atwood never quails in the face of the future she has conjured. Or, rather, that we have conjured. For what distinguishes her imagined world is that it looks over the brink of our shared present and is marked by knowledge that we try to ignore. From the first page, we are in the grip of a storyteller who drives us on to fresh understanding and—amazingly—fresh enjoyment...."

The Guardian 29 August 2009: Guardian Review Pages: 5. By Ursula K. Le GUIN. (1403 w.) If Le Guin could assess the work as science fiction: "I could talk about her new book more fairly, more truly, if I could talk about it as what it is, using the lively vocabulary of modern science-fiction criticism, giving it the praise it deserves as a work of unusual cautionary imagination and satirical invention. As it is a work of 'speculative fiction', I must restrict myself to the vocabulary and expectations suitable to a realistic novel, even if forced by those limitations into a less favourable stance."

Herald Sun (AT) 3 October 2009: Section: Books. 23. By Blanche CLARK. (162 w.) “Unique.”

Houston Chronicle 20 September 2009: Section: Zest. 13. By Dwight SILVERMAN. (688 w.) “Have patience through the early pages, and you’ll enjoy the journey in the end.”


Kirkus Reviews 77:15 (1 August 2009): 24 By ANON. “Another stimulating dystopia from this always-provocative author, whose complex, deeply involving characters inhabit a bizarre yet frighteningly believable future.”


Library Journal 134:13 (1 August 2009): 62. By Leigh Anne VRABEL. “Another win for Atwood, this dystopian fantasy belongs in the hands of every highbrow sf aficionado and anyone else who claims to possess a social conscience.”

Lincoln Journal Star (NE) 20 December 2009: Section: The (402): D3. By Kandra HAHN. (529 w.) “This is a hefty work that demands commitment.”

Literary Review of Canada 17:8 (October 2009): 17. By Robert Charles WILSON. “Ultimately... If The Year of the Flood is not a great work of speculative fiction, it is a good one. It does what speculative fiction ought to do: it challenges us to reimagine the present day from a new angle and reminds us that the path we are treading may lead to some dark and
dangerous places. And if one sets aside considerations of genre, The Year of the Flood is above all else a Margaret Atwood novel, richly characterized and emotionally and intellectually rewarding—again, if not her best book, then at least a very good one.

London Free Press 12 September 2009: Section: Lifestyle: F1. By Nancy SCHIEFER. (845 w.) "Atwood paints a picture so grim, so altogether macabre it becomes, at times, a caricature of itself. Long-time Atwood fans will savour the widely-lauded writer's latest polemic, while readers new to Atwood may, without signposts, feel flummoxed. Those already sceptical of out-of-joint musings with a science fiction edge, will find the novel hard to countenance. In any case, Atwood's too-lengthy futuristic fantasy is tiresome, a rueful rehash of ground already covered by a talented writer who might search for another topic."

London Review of Books 31.17 (September 2009): 7-8. By Fredric JAMESON. (2450 w.) Available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n17/fredric-jameson/then-you-are-them (1 September 2010).


Montreal Gazette 12 September 2009: H8. By Omar MAJEEED. (810 w.) "A true page-turner, teetering between the cracking prose of depraved hellfire and angelic words of spiritual reflection. It would be a great way to pass time during the end of days."

Ms. 19.2 (Summer 2009): 43. By Nisi SHAWL.


New Review 27 September 2009: Section: Arts: 41. By Doug JOHNSTONE. (500 w.) "Atwood's tendency to Capitalise Everything to give it Significance is a terrible sci-fi cliché and becomes wearing after a while. [And] sadly, when we do edge towards the climax, Atwood resorts to absurd coincidence to move the plot along—survivors in a huge, wild landscape are always in the right place at the right time to meet each other. The author also feels the need to tie her plot into the storyline of Oryx and Crake more than seems necessary, to the detriment of this novel's effectiveness. All of which means that, while The Year of the Flood is jam-packed with interesting ideas, they are not enough to make it a successful novel."

New Scientist 19 September 2009: Section: Opinion: 50. By Liz ELSE. (177 w.) "This is a densely allusive novel: you'll have to be adept in literature, science and theology to mine its subtleties."

New Statesman 21 September 2009: 50. By Bonnie GREER. (764 w.) "For all its careful construction of character and its subtle plotting (much better than that of Oryx and Crake), The Year of the Flood is, like its predecessor, little more than a big, fat eco-pamphlet. There are not ideas here so much as messages: about the consumption of food and our overly carnivorous nature; about our callous and dangerous disregard for other species; and about the abuse of members of our own species by the powerful ones among us... This type of speculative fiction is now the principal way that writers in the overdeveloped world can present the looming catastrophe that we are responsible for creating. The Year of the Flood is much more than mere fiction. It is prophecy and, as such, is a kind of masterpiece."

New York Post 20 September 2009: 40. By Sara STEWART. (246 w.)

New York Review of Books 56.17 (5 November 2009): 10-13. By Diane JOHNSON. * Atwood has long had America in her sights, and who is to say she is wrong? Her fictional warnings since the 1970s—about our corporations, biotechnologies, greed, sexual mores, rising fundamentalist right-wing ideologies, loony lefties, and the pollution of the environment—have been confirmed with a regularity that ought to give pause. Oryx and Crake uses an epigraph from Swift: ‘my principal design was to inform you, and not to amuse you.’

New York Times 15 September 2009: Section: C Books of the Times: 1 By Michiko KAKUTANI. (880 w.) "A kind of companion piece to her lumpy 2003 novel, Oryx and Crake, this book takes us back to that post-apocalyptic future and it does so with a lot more energy, inventiveness and narrative panache. Like Oryx and the author's 1986 novel, The Handmaid's Tale, this is another dystopian fantasy that's meant to be a sort of cautionary tale about the wrongs and excesses of our own world—be it antifeminism, denial of global warming, or violence and materialism. But while those earlier books were hobbled
by didactic asides and a preachy, moralistic tone, Ms. Atwood has loosened up in this volume and given her imagination free rein. Having already mapped out the basic geography of her futuristic world in *Oryx*, she dispenses here with exposition and focuses on her two heroines' efforts to survive in the wake of the Waterless Flood....In recounting the stories of Ren and Toby, Ms. Atwood does a deft job of turning them into credible human beings—not simply cartoon heroines wandering through a special-effects-laden apocalyptic landscape in which killing droughts and hurricanes and new diseases have led many to predict a massive die-off of the human race....By focusing on her characters and their perilous journeys through a nightmare world, she has succeeded in writing a gripping and visceral book that showcases the pure storytelling talents she displayed with such verve in her 2000 novel, *The Blind Assassin*.

*New York Times Book Review* 20 September 2009: 1. By Jeanette WINTERSON. "Atwood is funny and clever, such a good writer and real thinker that there's hardly any point saying that not everything in the novel works. Why should it? A high level of creativity has to let in some chaos; just as nobody would want the world as engineered by Crake, nobody needs a factory-finished novel. The flaws in *The Year of the Flood* are part of the pleasure, as they are with human beings, that species so threatened by its own impending suicide and held up here for us to look at, mourn over, laugh at and hope for."

*New Yorker* 28 September 2009: Section: The Critics: 79. By ANON. (119 w.) *O, The Oprah Magazine* 1 October 2009: 147. By Pam HOUSTON. (263 w.) "In Hieronymus Bosch-like detail, Atwood renders this civilization and these two lives [Ren and Toby] within it with tenderness and insight, a healthy dread and a guarded humor."

*The Observer* (UK) 6 September 2009: Section: Observer Review Book Pages: 25. By Philip HENSHER. (896 w.) "There are any number of subjects that a novelist can take on—two people falling in love in Sussex, a race against time to foil a bomb plot, the entry into politics of a Victorian transvestite. But surely only a writer very confident of her powers decides to write a novel about the end of the world. Margaret Atwood clearly is that novelist and *The Year of the Flood* is, for the most part, the work of a marvellously confident and intricate imagination. When the brilliant performance starts to fall apart, as it does towards the end, we can only reflect that here is a subject that would defeat almost any novelist....The last chapters collapse into a truly ludicrous welter of coincidence, as the only people left alive turn out to know each other and happen to be in the same forest clearing at the same time."

*People* 72, 13 (28 September 2009): 72. By Michelle GREEN.

*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* 25 October 2009: Section: Arts & Entertainment: B5. By Geeta SHARMAN JENSEN. (625 w.) "Toby and Ren are the ones who loom, with well-rounded, fully articulated and imagined lives. They also save the day in the end, which, though exciting, devolves into a mesh of coincidences that you wish Atwood had avoided. Still, Atwood has given us another crackerjack of a novel. Mine this one for fun—and wisdom."

*Publishers Weekly* 20 July 2009: Section: Reviews: 119. By Marcel THEROUX. (518 w.) "This is a gutsy and expansive novel, rich with ideas and conceits, but overall it's more optimistic than *Oryx* and *Crake*. Its characters have a compassion and energy lacking in Jimmy, the wounded and floating Lothario at the previous novel's center. Each novel can be enjoyed independently of the other, but what's perhaps most impressive is the degree of connection between them. Together, they form halves of a single epic. Characters intersect. Plots overlap. Even the tiniest details tessellate into an intricate whole. In the final pages, we catch up with Jimmy once more, as he waits to encounter the strangers. This time around, Atwood commits herself to a dramatic and hopeful denouement that's in keeping with this novel's spirit of redemption."

*Quill & Quire* 75.6 (October 2009): 41. By James GRAINGER.

*Richmond Times Dispatch* (VA) 8 November 2009: Section: Books & Authors: H-01. By Zak H. SALIH. (474 w.) "A highly entertaining read."

*San Antonio Express-News* 20 September 2009: Section: Books: 11G. By Coleen GRISSOM. (847 w.) "This is a work that amuses, engages, informs, enlightens and remarkably, also challenges its readers to be better persons."

*The Scotsman* 29 August 2009: 10. By Tom ADAIR. (788 w.)

*The Spectator* 19 September 2009: 42. By James SCUDAMORE. (706 w.) "Atwood’s vision is
compelling and powerfully imagined, if undermined at times by the conflict between her urge to make knowing (and often funny) gags about the real world and her wish to render a plausibly hellish future. But then, this is a novel much preoccupied with the necessary combination of the apparently irreconcilable."

*Star Tribune* (Minneapolis) 27 September 2009: Section: Variety: 12E. By Ellen AKINS. (597 w.) "The Year of the Flood consistently does what one might expect of any work of Margaret Atwood: It entertains, spins out suspense and rewards its readers' basic impulse, all the while subtly and expertly maintaining its literary respectability."

*Straitstimes* (Singapore) 4 October 2009: Section: Lifestyle: n.p. By Akshita NANDA. (642 w.) Atwood is a "horrific genius." Available from Lexis-Nexis.


*Sunday Herald* 30 August 2009: Section: The Arts: 14. By Rosemary GORING. (841 w.) "With her familiar device of using women's voices to drive the story, Atwood explores her favourite themes: the female body and its abuse, women's friendships, the vulgarity of men and ecological prophecy. While they are passionately felt, none of these strands is handled with subtlety. In fact, using prosaic, at times clumsy language, Atwood hammers her themes so hard, the effect is numbing. Though her plot is dramatic, and her points important, *The Year of the Flood* is tough going, a dark message strung out over too many pages, with too little artistry to illuminate the journey."

*Sunday Mail* (Queensland, AT) 18 October 2009: Section: Event: 17. By ANON. (97 w.) "Atwood is a mischievous visionary, a joy to read."

*Sunday Tasmanian* 29 November 2009: Section: Sunday: 27. By Mike WARD. (652 w.) "For me, apart from being ideologically flawed, it was ponderous and obtuse, and unsubtly disparaging (or despairing) of any sort of healthy human sexuality. As a rallying cry on behalf of the planet by a renowned environmental activist, it really does nothing to hasten a time when humanity might finally take proper responsibility for its place and fate—god or no god."

*Sunday Times* 30 August 2009: Section: Culture: 47. By Robert MCFARLANE. (746 w.) "The novel's length is, in fact, its weakness. Atwood's future is immensely detailed; perhaps too detailed. It is lush with stories, jokes, asides, anecdotes and acronyms. Everything is lavishly described, even the violence, often to the point of morbid silliness. The predominant tone is Grand Guignol feathered with camp."

*Sydney Morning Herald* (AT) 10 October 2009: Section: Spectrum: 26. By Sara DOWSE. (864 w.) "Despite the excellent characterisation and Atwood's undeniable wit, after about 200 pages I did get tired, just when the plot began getting hyperactive. After swallowing more coincidence than even Dickens would have inflicted, something close to disbelief set in, or at least a lack of caring. Perhaps it was a joke that went on too long. But when you think of what Atwood predicts for us, we're going to need that deliciously mordant sense of humour."


*Toronto Star* 13 September 2009: Section: Books: IN06. By Geoff PEVERE. (834 w.) *USA Today* 1 October 2009: Section: Life: 6D. By Susan KELLY. (338 w.) "Atwood creates a totally believable futuristic world in which people, for the most part, are the beasts. Those who have retained their humanity are the outliers."

*Virginia-Pilot* (Norfolk VA) 18 October 2009: Section: Daily Break: E5. By Dwight SILVERMAN. (514 w.) "One is the author of sensitive, lyrically moving, almost poetic novels. The other is the dark visionary who examines the path society travels and worries, in epic form, where it will take the species. Sometimes the two join forces, and when they do, the result can be breathtaking. Atwood's most famous novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, is the best example of the schism rendered whole....I wish I could bestow similar superlatives on *The Year of the Flood*, because I know what Atwood is capable of. But this book was written by only half of the team—it's all apocalypse and decay brought on by technology gone wrong. There's not much poetry in the grim vision, and it could use a little."

*Wall Street Journal* 254.67 (18 September 2009): A21. By Melanie KIRKPATRICK. "The Year of the Flood is preachy and grim and often downright silly. Anyone who has read an Atwood novel won't be surprised to learn that this one is imbued with the anti-capitalist, anti-
religion and anti-male themes that characterize much of her fiction.”


“Canada’s greatest living novelist undoubtedly knows how to tell a gripping story...but here there’s a serious message too.”


“Strange, prismatic and often deeply affecting novel.”

Weekly Times (AT) 16 December 2009: Section: Living: 78. By Sarah HUDSON. (279 w.)

“While The Year of the Flood is at times uncomfortable—as much for its warnings on human folly as its descriptions of a world gone balmy—it is nonetheless a treat for Atwood fans. A highly imaginative, rich novel that brings a timely message.”


The Guardian 31 October 2009 Section: Guardian Review Pages: 8. By Sue ARNOLD. “That it’s funnier and less gruelling than The Handmaid’s Tale owes much to Lorelei King’s honey-coated reading and the enchantingly old-fashioned hymns from the God’s Gardeners’ Oral Hymn Book, sung by the equally honey-voiced Orville Stoeber. Now that’s something you could never get from the printed page.”

Reviews of Books on Atwood


Canadian Literature 203 (Winter 2009): 179-180. By Sarah GALLETTY. Reviewed with Barbara Meadowcroft’s Gwethalyn Graham: A Liberated Woman in a Conventional Age. “The decision to focus the collection solely on Atwood’s novels restricts its scope. Since the main aim of the volume is to provide a broad overview of ‘Her Works,’ the absence of any discussion of her poetry, short stories, or work in other media is disappointing. This collection seems well-suited for libraries in need of a staple collection of Atwood criticism, but for academic with serious interest in Atwood, many of these essays will already be familiar, which will limit the book’s appeal.”


University of Toronto Quarterly 77.1 (Winter 2008): 448-450. By Nathalie COOKE. “[This] book is exactly what its title suggests: a companion. Neither handmaiden, following far behind the writer and her critics with overly respectful steps, nor master, leading the way and forcing the writer and her works into pigeonholes and places they should not be. Rather, a companion—of sound and agile mind as well as of engaging demeanour, able to keep pace alongside and offer lively conversations and insights along the way....”

The Newsletter of the MARGARET ATWOOD SOCIETY

Greetings, Fellow Atwoodians!

Hope your new academic year has been pleasantly productive after a restful summer. This has been another good year for the Atwood community following the much-awaited publication of The Year of the Flood. We had a very productive MLA session on the new novel, followed by an issue of the Journal dedicated to the same. In March, (In)Habitation, a CD featuring Atwood’s poems set to music, sung by soprano Eileen Strempel, was released by Centaur Music (more information available on the Society

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