



Margaret Atwood: Crime Fiction Writer: The Reworking of a Popular Genre

Jackie Shead

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Exploring how Margaret Atwood's fiction reimagines the figure of the detective and the nature of crime, Jackie Shead shows how the author radically reworks the crime fiction genre. Shead focuses on *Surfacing*, *Bodily Harm*, *Alias Grace*, *The Blind Assassin*, *Oryx and Crake* and selected short fiction, showing the ways in which Atwood's protagonists are confronted by their own collusion in hegemonic assumptions and thus are motivated to investigate and expose crimes of gender, class and colonialism. Shead begins with a discussion of how Atwood's treatment of crime fiction's generic elements, particularly those of the whodunit, clue puzzle and spy thriller, departs from convention. Through discussion of Atwood's metafictional strategies, Shead also examines Atwood's techniques for activating her readers as investigators who are offered an educative process parallel to that experienced by some of the author's protagonists. This book also marks a significant intervention in an ongoing debate among Atwood critics that pits the author's postmodernism against her ethical and humanistic concerns.

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