

Ursula Le Guin's criticism of her refusal to label her dystopias as 'science fictions', preferring instead 'speculative fictions'. Cleverly sidestepping their differences by focusing on the 'bendiness of terminology' (p. 7), she proposes an expansion of the SF genre to include 'Science Fiction, Speculative Fiction, Sword and Sorcery Fantasy, and Slipstream Fiction' (p. 8).

Atwood operates within these wider SF parameters, staging her own retrospective in three lectures delivered at Emory University in 2010, the most substantial section of the book. Mixing playfulness and wide-ranging scholarship, she is equally at ease reading comics, watching double-bill B sci-fi movies, or speculating on the origins of SF as she recalls her childhood enthusiasm for extraterrestrial flying rabbits and her own double identity as adolescent reader, plunging into Conan Doyle, Raymond Chandler or the Victorian classics with similar curiosity. Within these reminiscences Atwood's tone shifts between jokey and serious as she discusses the role of storytelling as 'part of the matrix of our shared humanity' (p. 41) together with the central influence of Northrop Frye and myth criticism on her thinking about SF. She even asserts, 'Every question that myths address SF has addressed also' (p. 55). Her fascination with history and anthropology, cultural analysis and literary tradition is evident throughout as she discusses the possible models for Superman, tricksters and double identities, linking these last to Jungian 'shadow' theory in a way that resembles *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth*. 'Dire Cartographies' deals with the tradition of utopias and dystopias and her own writing in this genre, now described as 'ustopias' ('because in my view, each contains a latent version of the other', p. 66). Commentary on her novels provides valuable information on her own writerly preoccupations, though most of this has appeared elsewhere.

The ten reviews reprinted here display not only Atwood's range of SF reading but also illustrate her continuing concerns: generic issues around utopias and dystopias in reviews of Marge Piercy, Ursula Le Guin, George Orwell and Aldous Huxley; gender issues in her review of the reprint of Rider Haggard's *She*, and most significantly for her recent novels, an emphasis on science as Overreacher in reviews of Bill McKibben's *Enough*, reaching back to Swift's Mad Scientists in *Gulliver's Travels*. Her five republished SF stories fit into the framework already set up here, though it is her final essay, 'Weird Tales Covers of the 1930s' which seems to sum up this collection. Its brilliant historical analysis of cultural trends, as it skirts and flirts across the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' art, is vintage Atwood – witty, eclectic and provocative.

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Caroline Rosenthal, *New York and Toronto Novels after Postmodernism: Explorations of the Urban* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 322 pp. Cased. £45. ISBN 978-1-57-113489-9.

This study offers a vital contribution to the burgeoning field of Canadian urban literary studies. Ostensibly comparing contemporary American and Canadian urban fiction, Rosenthal also addresses national traditions of urban literature and culture through a concise examination of the spatial narratives of America and Canada as affirmed and refracted in literature and literary criticism. Beginning by attempting to substantiate the lack of critical discussion around urban literary culture in Canada compared to America, Rosenthal convincingly invokes divergent historical notions of the pastoral in each nation to explain their subsequent urban traditions.

More provocatively, Rosenthal notes the similarities between New York and Toronto. Each city can be perceived as representative of the nation whilst also standing as a marked exception, as un-Canadian or un-American. To counterbalance a surfeit of critical discussions of New York literature, Rosenthal pays attention to recent investigations into Toronto literature, drawing on the work of Amy Lavender Harris. Rosenthal then gestures to the increasing visibility of Toronto literature, through anthologies and through the international profiles of authors such as Anne Michaels and Michael Ondaatje.

In individual chapters, Rosenthal addresses four novels: Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* (2005), Carol Shields's *Unless* (2002), Siri Hustvedt's *What I Loved* (2003) and Paule Marshall's *The Fisher King* (2000). This portion of the study bears out the book's major aim, to look 'at urban texts by women writers of diverse ethnicities who react in politically and aesthetically diverse ways to the city in the period after postmodernism' (p. 8). 'After postmodernism' seems to equate to the twenty-first century for this purpose. Rosenthal applies a framework derived from a thoughtful exploration of contemporary theory on space and place to each text, examining its portrayal of diasporic space and depictions of the *flâneuse*. As much as the focus on identity here enhances an understanding of what gender and ethnicity mean within the specific urban context, the broader concern is with international discussions of personal and collective identity. The vigour of these large single-text chapters is in allowing a greater understanding of how urban space resonates within each literary cityscape. Rosenthal's analysis of Carol Shields' depiction of Toronto is particularly successful in this respect, highlighting subtle generational shifts in attitudes towards the downtown and suburbia.

Given the intense focus on each text, the comparative nature of the study is perhaps less apparent. The conclusion draws some comparisons between the two urban environments as produced from distinct cultural contexts, and celebrates the power of 'place' in providing insight into everyday life. The texts are deemed characteristic of the 'post-postmodern' through their focus on realism, the quotidian and the body. In either respect, the strength of this study lies in tackling an area ripe for comparative work through a strong survey of the theoretical issues at stake. Rosenthal's work must be seen as both a forerunner to further studies of Canadian urban literature and an enjoinder to maintain a sense of the transnational importance of urban studies.

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Winfried Siemerling and Sarah Phillips Casteel (eds), *Canada and Its Americas: Transnational Navigations* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 304 pp. Cased. \$95. ISBN 978-0-7735-3657-9. Paper. \$32.95. ISBN 978-0-7735-3684-5.

Canada and Its Americas has set itself a twofold task: to interrogate the viability of hemispheric comparative approaches for the study of Canada, and to shift the dynamics within the field of inter-American studies which has hitherto been dominated by US-centred models of inquiry. Attentive to recent developments in inter-American studies, as well as the related fields of postcolonial and globalisation studies, the editors of the collection present a compelling argument in their introductory essay about the benefits to be gained from a transnational critical inquiry when carefully attuned to local specificities. For, as contributions by Cynthia Sugars and Herb Wyile warn in the opening section of the collection, many a Canadian scholar is suspicious of the subsumption of Canadian studies within a field that is

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