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### **Nation, Genre, and the Poetics of Nowhere: Atwood's Utopian Fictions**

Margaret Atwood's novelistic focus has shifted from a realism set in recognizably Canadian places (*Surfacing*, *The Robber Bride*) to speculative dystopian fictions set in a near – future of postnational upheaval (the Maddaddam trilogy, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments*). The Maddaddam trilogy depicts the world order of competing nation states crumbling into a unified global order organized by a giant corporation that wipes out the human race, replacing it with genetically programmed humanoids. Its success is facilitated by nation – states consuming themselves to death; if a sense of Canada remains, it lurks as an absent presence as a nation – state dependent on resource extraction and consumption, thus complicit in a political – economic order that leads to mass extinction. Echoing her spatio – topical shift, Atwood's literary fame has grown from national to global dimensions, aligning her with other intersections of literary celebrity, world literature, and science/speculative fiction in the works of Kazuo Ishiguro, Philip K. Dick, and William Gibson, and in SF/fantasy film, *manga* and *anime* such as *Akira*, *Dragon Slayer*, *Fullmetal Alchemist* and *Evangelion*. Atwood's near – future dystopias thus join a global literary rumination on global warming, genetic manipulation, and neoliberal capitalism. But they also provoke questions about dystopian science fiction as an index of national obsolescence, as well as literary fame and accessibility. Does scientific speculation rather than the social realism of the nation redeem literary fiction? Do Atwood et al. register a neoliberal suspicion of art, while at the same time critiquing neoliberalism? Atwood's style has always been elliptical; her tone ironic, even sarcastic; and while her prose could never be called lyrical or 'beautiful' it is immensely readable and accessible. Thus in her form and content she joins a globalized literature of big ideas pitched towards an Anglo – influenced progressive readership.