

Margaret Atwood's "Alias Grace" - A Crime Novel?

Frank Lorenz

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Seminar paper from the year 2001 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,7 (A-), http://www.uni-jena.de/ (Institute for Anglistics/American Studies), course: Aspects of the 'Crime Novel' in Canada and Austalia, 7 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: With her recent novel Alias Grace Margaret Atwood has turned to the field of historical writing. In her novel which is set in 19th century Canada the female protagonist Grace Marks is a convicted murderess who is accused of having killed her master Thomas Kinnear and his mistress, another servant of the house, Nancy Montgomery. At the time Grace was sentenced to death and it was only her claimed madness that saved her from the gallows. When Simon Jordan decides he wants to study Grace's case and cure her from her amnesia, Grace tells him her life story and also the event of the crime is again being brought up, though Grace cannot remember the crime scene itself or having committed the crime. Even though a murder has been committed as one can expect in a crime novel and we can only but assume that Grace has had some part in it, the crime is not the focus of the novel, but rather Grace's story and what we as readers make of it. The novel goes to explore Grace's life, her story telling and therewith her personality. It is left to the reader to decide whether or not he believes Grace story and accepts her as being innocent. In what way this quest for the truth goes with the notion of a crime novel, shall be investigated in this paper.



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