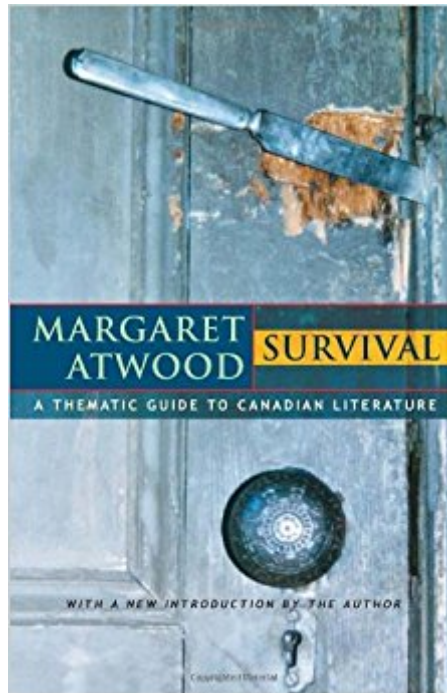




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Survival: A Thematic Guide To Canadian Literature



Synopsis

When first published in 1972, *Survival* was considered the most startling book ever written about Canadian literature. Since then, it has continued to be read and taught, and it continues to shape the way Canadians look at themselves. Distinguished, provocative, and written in effervescent, compulsively readable prose, *Survival* is simultaneously a book of criticism, a manifesto, and a collection of personal and subversive remarks. Margaret Atwood begins by asking: "What have been the central preoccupations of our poetry and fiction?" Her answer is "survival and victims." Atwood applies this thesis in twelve brilliant, witty, and impassioned chapters; from Moodie to MacLennan to Blais, from Pratt to Purdy to Gibson, she lights up familiar books in wholly new perspectives.

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Customer Reviews

Atwood's *Survival* was a seminal book for me back in the 1970's. Her theory that there are national themes in literature is very useful for studying cultures generally. The rap on the book is that she has not done a thorough, scholarly job of research and tends to favour references to books written by her friends or published by her publisher. I think this is unfair. She is a working writer, not an academic, and she herself notes the book's scholarly limitations. The real fun is in taking the book's theses and running with them yourself. Atwood sees the essential Canadian literary theme as the survival in the title: the survival of winter, imposed on us as Canadians by our geography and climate. A very thought-provoking book.

This book was published in 1972. I find it odd there there is only one review (preceeding my comment). Surely, the audience for whom it was intended might have something to say about the book.

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