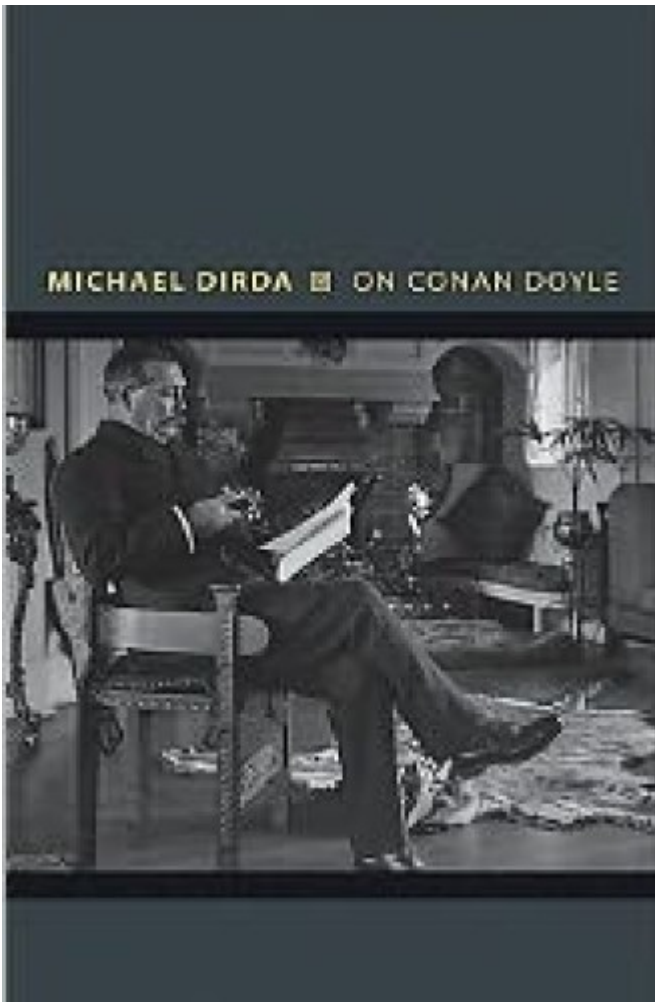


CC recommends: Creative nonfiction

selected by [John Wilson](#) in the [December 13, 2011](#) issue

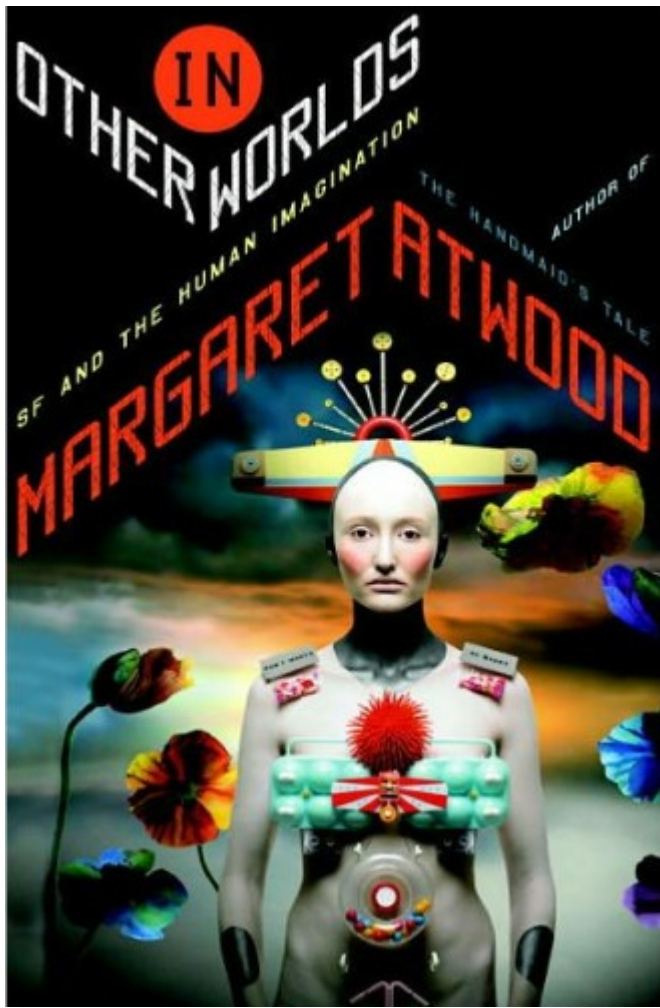
In Review



On Conan Doyle

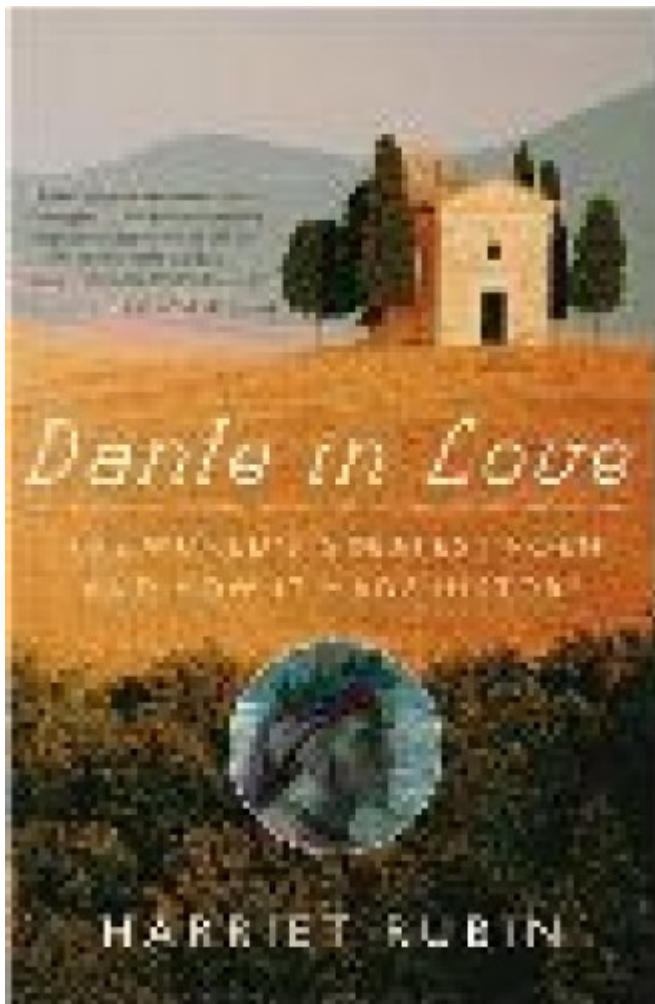
By Michael Dirda

Princeton University Press



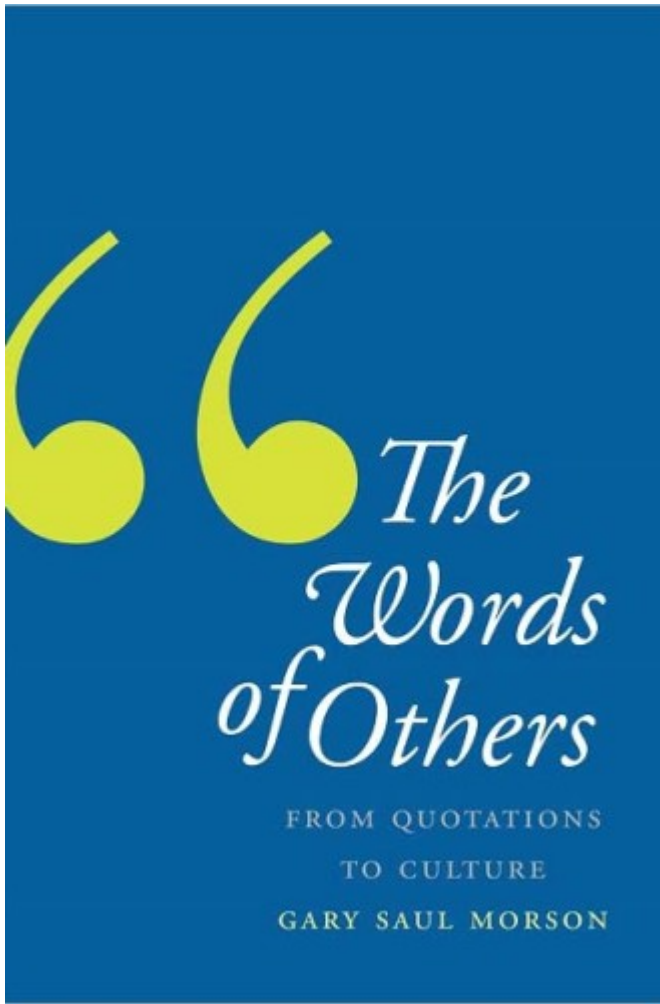
In Other Worlds

By Margaret Atwood
Nan A. Talese



Dante in Love: The World's Greatest Poem and How It Made History

Harriet Rubin
Simon & Schuster



The Words of Others

By Gary Saul Morson
Yale University Press



Iphigenia in Forest Hills

By Janet Malcolm
Yale University Press

On Conan Doyle: Or, The Whole Art of Storytelling, by Michael Dirda. There's always something happening on the Sherlock Holmes front, but this season offers a particularly rich conjunction of items. At the top of the list is Michael Dirda's book, which takes the Holmes canon as a point of a departure but deftly encompasses the full sweep of Doyle's life and work. And it's a beautifully made little book as well, a pleasure to hold in one's hands.

In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination, by Margaret Atwood. The novelist Margaret Atwood casts a cool eye on all things Christian. But this disarmingly personal book (which in the Kindle edition includes some of her childhood drawings) will have deep resonance for readers who don't share her skepticism. She shows

how science fiction expresses something essential about our peculiar species.

Dante in Love: The World's Greatest Poem and How It Made History, by A. N. Wilson. This is an odd book but beguiling nonetheless. Not a straight biography and not literary criticism, it gives us Dante as seen by a gifted biographer and novelist who has come back to faith after a very public turning away some years earlier. You may find yourself skimming the accounts of Florentine politics, but Wilson's wit never slumbers for long.

The Words of Others: From Quotations to Culture, by Gary Saul Morson. Like many other subjects, the nature of quotation seems pretty straightforward until you begin to think about it. Morson performs a small miracle of exposition. Your understanding of how we use (and misuse) the words of others will be permanently enriched, and Morson's bite-sized sections allow for reading episodically.

Iphigenia in Forest Hills: Anatomy of a Murder Trial, by Janet Malcolm. Malcolm will soon be 80, but she hasn't lost her vigor as a writer—or her ability to provoke. *Iphigenia*, like the 1959 film *Anatomy of a Murder*, inverts the classic trial narrative in which justice is clearly done and all the seeming contradictions in the evidence are resolved.