

Mysterious Element in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood

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Abstract

Margaret Atwood was born in Ottawa, Canada. She has done her master degree in Radcliffe College. In her childhood, she spends most of her life in wood; eventually she is interested in environmental issues. Her second novel is Surfacing, published in 1972. In the novel, she explores the theme of adventurous journey in the wood. The protagonist in the novel Surfacing is unnamed character who lives in illusion. Her past childhood affects her present life. The story begins in Quebec where the cultural difference existed. The narrator is mentally distributed by cultural difference, since she belongs to American culture; she is unable to cope with any other one. Quebec is occupied by majority of French people who resides in Canada. In Surfacing, the narrator experiences the secret of the life. She doesn't know how her father is mysteriously died. Especially in an unknown terrain every things seems to be mysterious. The novel takes the reading like fairy tale. The protagonist recollects the memories of the past which mirrored Atwood's character. The novel also reflects a psychological thriller, mystery and a landscape.

Keywords: Thrilling, Psychological, Victimize, Landscape and Self-identity.

The narrator who is an artist, she returns to the Northern Quebec, where she spent her childhood, again she visits Quebec to find her missing father in the island. She realized that her father's influence will follow throughout her life. Her father is a rationalistic and reasonable person. He is an interesting character who loves the nature than religion, just opposite to her mother who believes on faith and mystery on God. The narrator resembles her father in attitude. Later, at one point in her life, she regrets not be like father, it is better to take mother as a role model. She accepts that,

"I realized I didn't feel much of anything, I hadn't for a long time. Perhaps I'd been like that all my life, just as some babies are born deaf or without a sense of touch."

The narrator is struggled by the past memories; she seems to be neither positive character nor suppressed one. She shows uninterested to mingle with anyone in the remote island. Anna, the narrator's close friend, only person whom she knew before few months. Anna has got married with David. The narrator's group starts their searching process for her father, the narrator met her father's friend Paul, he says that there is no information about her father and it seems to be mysterious of his disappearance. Then the group met Evans who accepts to act as a guide for them.

The group starts their search with help of map, once her father used it for research in that island. She believes that her father's map will definitely guide her to find him. They got the clue from it and

plan to visit cave paintings. When they are in progress of journey, they happen to see a dead heron hanging from the tree. The narrator comes to know about darker side of the relationship between David and Anna. When they reach the spot, they highly disappointed because there is no painting. Next, they move to another place, the narrator finds American flag on the boat but the peoples are act like Canadian. They are responsible for killing heron. That's why the narrator doubted them as Americans. The trip is adventures to everyone.

The relationship between David and Anna is not amicable. David whenever he has got chance, he is ready to exploit Anna. David's nature is predicted by the narrator. She says that David being a womanizer, he is not at all concerns for Anna to lead a comfortable life. Surprisingly, Joe proposes the narrator at Blue berry picking trip. But the narrator rejects him and informs him that she has abandoned her husband and also aborted her child. This makes Joe upset. Yet, he loves the narrator deeply.

Paul introduced an American named Malstrom, the narrator hopes him that her father he will rescue her father. The narrator comes to know that the painting is under the lake, so she dives into the water, she finds something and gets terrified and quickly comes out of water. Joe is angry with the narrator for being disappear into the water. She is unable to react to him immediately, still, she is in shock. When she comes to realization, she says that it is her aborted baby lies under the water. Actually the baby she is pointing out is her brother because she has been close witness of her brother drowning in her childhood. She has an illusion on her marriage life and aborted child. Actually, the man is not her real husband, she has infatuation on him. That is why, she is not in position to accept Joe's proposal. The narrator is in disturbed mind state, she trusts the God to give her "the power". Joe tries on her many times but she shows disinterested on him. So, he attempts to rape her but she stopped him by saying that it will make her pregnant. After this, David tries to seduce the narrator because he wants to take revenge on Anna. He has suspect both Anna and Joe have affair with each other. When Anna comes to know about this, she is aggressive on the narrator instead on her husband. Anna's relation with her husband seems to be mysterious.

A police officer informs David about the death of the narrator's father. The narrator is shattered on hearing news of her father's death from David. She refuses to believe the news, in her mad state of mind, she is ready to accept the love from Joe; she says that she is ready to forgive him. She even visions her parents. The searching group has decided to return to home. But the narrator refuses to go with her friends. In her desperate condition, she damages David's film. Now, the narrator is alone in the island, she behaves vulnerably by destroying her own art, her own cabin and portrait of her death parents. She has forgotten everything and behaves like animal. She starts eating plant and lives in underground. As she is very close to the nature she abandons the human life. She sees her image on mirror and feels that she has been deviated from reality and decides not to be victimizing again.

Fortunately, the narrator is recovering from her sanity and realizes how she actually loves Joe and wants to have his child. At that moment, Paul returns with Joe to meet the narrator and she plans to reunite with Joe. She wants to change herself for shake of unborn child. She believes that the new pregnancy will erase the guilty feelings of the aborted child in past. Now, she can realize her own identity and become powerful woman. In the end of the novel, after so many struggles the narrator finally reconstructs herself. She is like a golden phoenix, a mythical bird. It is symbol for her who also reborn through water not fire.

Conclusion

Throughout the novel *Surfacing*, the author presents the suffering of woman in male dominated society and also searching for self-identity. The narrator come across many mysterious in her life

and finally prove herself. This is a psychological, thrilling and mystery novel. The protagonist exploits due gender difference and faces many problems in her life. She has forced to abort her child; the past memories trouble her present life. The narrator has undertaken self-journey, she lives between insanity and sanity to realize her and what she expects in life. The protagonist's journey brings tension in her life. It also reflects deception, anxiety and fore shading. Thus the novel concludes with ambiguity for future life of the narrator.

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