Chapter V

Life Before Man

Life Before Man is in many ways different from Margaret Atwood's works discussed earlier. Apparently the novel focuses on the life of three characters namely Elizabeth, Nate and Lesje and their day-to-day problems. At one level, it is a novel of social realism in which modern urban society is depicted. One critic calls it a "somber novel of social realism" and adds that "this familiar tale of urban infidelity is Atwood's examination of the moral torpor of her generation in the late seventies."\(^1\) Another critic opines that these lives "mirror the monotony and emptiness surrounding them," and argues that "the novel represents a new stage in Atwood's development: it is her first attempt at social and domestic realism unmediated by satire, comedy or symbolism."\(^2\) However, Atwood's aim, it becomes apparent, is to crystallize precisely the bleak and dreary aspects of modern living. She clarifies her stance when she remarks: "Serious writers these days don't write uplifting books because what they see around them is not uplifting" and avers, "but for me the novel is a social vehicle. It reflects society."\(^3\) Although postmodern critic, Linda Hutchoeon does not find Life Before Man a "straightforward realist novel,"\(^4\) one has to take into account Atwood's observations who categorically says that
her novel "stays very firmly within the boundaries of realism." Critics are disappointed in it, however, because "it did not have the things in it that they were looking for," admits the author, and that is "why many people have missed its social and political content." Hence both in the form she employs and the content she expresses, Atwood attempts to highlight the sterility of the modern urban world. Nevertheless, the story does not stop with the presentation of social problems. It goes deeper and probes the psyche of three characters affected by their social and familial problems.

What transpires from the critics' views is that the characters go through the motions of everyday life and stick to their civilized routines. They resemble automations or fossils when they show "boring sameness." But these critics fail to take into consideration the fact that these characters have their emotional needs, fears and difficulties. With the help of Horneyan tenets, we can understand their separate points of view though all the three are occupied with identical problems of everyday life. Once we understand their value system, we would also comprehend the discrepancy between their outward behaviour and the world of their subjective feelings, and how they cope with problems of life and death within the given milieu which is ordinary, routine and protean.
Elizabeth is a product of a home which does not have congenial atmosphere. Her father was mostly absent who finally disappeared. Whenever he was at home he did nothing but played practical jokes on her mother and made her cry. Such a man who appears to his daughter a "turd" is incapable of giving her the economic and emotional security. Elizabeth recalls: "She wasn’t angry with her father. She’d always suspected he couldn’t be depended on. She was angry with her mother for not having known it" (LBM, p. 152). This shows that her maternal connections also fill her with anger and shame and seem to reinforce her sense of low self-concept. Auntie Muriel’s version is that her mother deserted her family out of "innate depravity" and ran off with the son of her father’s lawyer. Elizabeth’s mother was no good, therefore, Elizabeth feels that she herself was probably no good. Thus, the role model fails to generate self-esteem in her. Moreover, her environment has nobody who could give her sympathy, affection, or take an interest in her needs.

Elizabeth’s aunt is important in her life in a negative manner. She acts not only as a source of humiliation and deprivation but also to some extent as a model and reinforcer of certain tendencies. One scholar even points that "Elizabeth’s blackout at her [Auntie Muriel’s] grave seems . . . a subsequent rebirth of the
woman." It symbolically indicates that Muriel is reborn in Elizabeth. Paul Goetsch, attesting Hutcheon's contention says, "like Muriel in her life time, Elizabeth is going to raise two children 'single alone.' . . ." However, my purpose is not to go into the correctness of their contention but simply to point out that Auntie Muriel influenced Elizabeth. Atwood also confirms this when she tells Alan Twigg "She had a bad childhood and she got locked into a struggle with her aunt" (Conversation, p. 125).

Observing Auntie Muriel's influence on Elizabeth, Nate remarks "the aunt had been important in Elizabeth's life. In his opinion the importance of something to some-one had nothing to do with the positive qualities but only with its impact, its force, and the aunt had been a force" (LBM, p. 338). In case of Joan Delacourt in Lady Oracle, her aunt provided her freedom from the stifling atmosphere of her home and also economic security by leaving her money to carve out her own life and ultimately to accept the lived reality. On the contrary, Muriel did not provide freedom to Elizabeth. Instead, Elizabeth experiences a cramped in feeling, as if Aunt Muriel owns her. She pays her bills and "therefore, she owned her." This generated in her the feelings of insecurity. The self-righteousness of her aunt proves a destructive force in her healthy development. In
the history of the arrogant-vindictive person, writes Horney, we usually find that the child has been forced to stifle his softer fellings and to undergo "a hardening process in order to survive" (NHG, p. 202). Elizabeth also suppresses the softer parts of her nature which leave her vulnerable or which interfere with her compensatory strategies. The fact that "Elizabeth had not wept or crawled," (LBM, p. 152) shows how her emotional development had been impaired.

In terms of the Maslowian hierarchy, Elizabeth is frustrated in her needs for safety, love and belonging and self-esteem and is, therefore, arrested at an early stage of psychological development. It is evident in these remarks "when she's with Auntie Muriel she is still part child. Part prisoner, part orphan, part cripple, part insane; Auntie Muriel the implacable wardress" (LBM, pp. 136-37). Childhood was not a period of fun for Elizabeth. In Elizabeth's own words "It's a revel, one of the many from which she once felt and still feels excluded." She recalls "they weren't allowed to dress up and shout in the streets like the others. They had to go to bed early and lie in the darkness, listening to the distant laughter" (LBM, pp. 38-39). These words remind us of Anita Desai's Bim in Clear Light of the Day, for whom childhood had not been a happy period. She tells Tara that she would not
like to return to her childhood. Traumatic experiences of childhood lead to various psychological problems. Charles Dicken's Esther in *Bleak House*, Charlotte Bronte's Jane in *Jane Eyre* always fly from decision and create problems for themselves just because their uncertain childhood did not let them develop the ability to decide. But the difference lies in their growth: Esther, Bim and Jane are self-effacing and withdrawn, whereas Elizabeth becomes aggressive. This shows the impact of culture. Esther and Jane belong to the 19th century England when morals for girls were strict, Bim is an Indian who is supposed to live within cultural mores of the society. Not so for Elizabeth; she is a 20th century Canadian woman and she knows how to survive in a consumer society with its victim-victor syndrome. She develops a strong survival instinct and a "backbone of rhinoceros." She herself admits "I have a very strong survival instinct. If you try to push me overboard, I'll take at least one of you down with me" (*LBM*, p. 175). And the omniscient narrator corroborates it, "If anyone pushed her she pushed back twice as hard" (*LBM*, p. 166). This survival strategy is at the root of her conviction that she is invincible.

Aggressiveness, invincibility and the habit of seeing herself as a survivor of all odds, make her a narcissist. She believes that in any contest "she would win" (*LBM*,...
These neurotic traits help her gain mastery in life. Narcissism is one of the subdivision of the expansive solution. According to Horney, a narcissist believes that "he should be able to master the adversities of fate, the difficulties of the situation, the intricacies of intellectual problems, the resistance of other people, conflicts in himself" (NHG, p. 192). Elizabeth's basic solution is that of mastery of life. It chiefly entails her determination, conscious or unconscious, to overcome every obstacle in or outside herself. Her feeling of mastery lies in her firm belief that there is nothing she cannot do. There are no lines in her life, "these lines don't exist." She asserts further "she'll stop at nothing" (LBM, p. 168). For such a person, getting her way is not a difficult task. Moreover, in order to get what she wants she makes it a point to be charming and civilized particularly when new people come into her orbit.

She idealizes herself as a superior being, a "supermom" as Martha--a woman love of Nate calls her. Elizabeth feels she is capable of fighting her way in life without being morbid like Nate or destructive like Chris. She knows "she will win, there's no way she can help winning. She'll win and she hopes it will make her feel better" (LBM, p. 305). She secretly embarks upon a search for glory in order to get the satisfaction of experiencing
herself as her grandiose self. When she marries Nate against the advice of her aunt she shows her strength to embark on her journey alone, despite her aunt. Her exuberance and vivacity following this action of independence strike a contrast to her sister and Nate. This gives her not only a vindictive triumph but also reinforces the sense of her uniqueness and independence. She exudes self-confidence: "She has backbone. She has money in the bank, not enough but some. She does not have to depend, she is not dependant. She is self-supporting" (LBM, p. 157). This gives her a semblance of a positive attitude. As she experiences herself as a superior being she tends to be expansive in her striving and belief about what she can achieve. She tends to be more or less openly arrogant, ambitious, demanding.

Karen Horney does not employ the term 'Narcissism' to mean an ego-centric love of oneself. In Freudian literature, it means every kind of self-inflation, ego-centricity, anxious concern with one's welfare and withdrawal from others. But to Horney, narcissism stands for a broad concept when one is "in love with one's idealised image" (NHG, p. 194). It is one of the several solutions of conflict between expansive and self-effacing drives. In her expansive solution Elizabeth also identifies herself with her glorified self. Like Peer
Grant, she seems to say "I exist only as a superior being." She does not say it openly as Hagar does in Margaret Laurence's novel *The Stone Angel*, "there is no one like me in the world." On the contrary, Elizabeth's behaviour and inner thinking substantiate what she thinks of herself. In *The Stone Angel*, while exploring the implication of the grandiose self, Laurence highlights the fact that pride in one's unique and false self-esteem deprives one of the gratifying relationship with one's fellow beings. In the long run, Hagar's pride leads her only to an emotional wilderness.

Coming back to *Life Before Man*, we find that in the beginning of the novel, Elizabeth's pride and self-esteem force her to condemn others. "Lesje is a clown," a curatorial assistant, and Martha a "garbage mouth." Thus, she displays her superiority in her relationship with others, in her behaviour, strivings and attitude towards life in general. In her social life especially in party games (*Life Boat*), she makes Lesje feel deficient and look small and uncultivated. Lesje, like Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility* or Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*, hides her humiliation and leaves the room quickly. At another occasion Elizabeth asks Martha, "why not be friendly? . . . We might as well behave like reasonable adults" (*LBM*, p. 116). One scholar observes that in this display of
manners "she is ironically enough successor to her Aunt Muriel." The puritanical spinster Muriel represents the ethical code of a bygone age, she [Elizabeth] "comes to stand for the 'enlightened' manners of the age of sexual liberation." These strivings display her expansive drives and it becomes clear that she seeks sense of worth through recognition and mastery.

To gain mastery over life she can be generous, with a scintillating display of feelings, with flattery, with favours and help in anticipation of admiration or in return for devotion received. Other characters in the novel who come in contact with her assess her according to their interaction. Martha calls Elizabeth "condescending and remote," to Lesje she is "goddammed discreet," while to Nate she is "very civilized" (LBM, p. 279). This condescending behaviour makes her worthy of notice of people which is reflected in these remarks: "There was always that unvoiced accusation, directed at her as if who she was, the way she spoke" (LBM, p. 61). Indeed, it satisfies her pride system to be the centre of attraction because it guarantees her uniqueness. It is her neurotic demand that she entertains Nate's women friends and endows them with glowing tributes. She praises Nate to them as a "sensational father" and remarks "you couldn't ask for a better one. The girls adore him" (LBM, p. 164). When it
comes to showing discreet behaviour she does not hesitate to appreciate Lesje. She calls her a "congenial person."

True to the attributes of a narcissist, she can be quite tolerant and does not expect others to be perfect. She adopts these measures to get the confirmation of her superior image in the form of admiration and devotion. That she succeeds in her efforts is substantiated by Lesje's remarks, that Elizabeth is a "queen out of a Shakespearean play" (LBM, p. 67), a woman with a "competent maternal manners." To Marianne, she is "haute wasp" (LBM, p. 106). Nate at the beginning of their love affair adores Elizabeth as "Madonna in a shrine" and "a second Florence Nightingale" (LBM, p. 50), very "understanding" and non interfering. "She never tried to interfere with anything" (LBM, p. 30). These remarks show that she gets blind obedience from Nate and his friends. Hence Elizabeth maintains her superior image. She gets these reinforcements from others to counterbalance her intrinsic demands with her grandiose self.

However, a narcissist as she is, she is sure of herself and disdainful of others. She enjoys making a fool of them. "She'd known what she was doing. To be loved, to be hated, to be the centre" (LBM, p. 182). She is not bothered about others, "she knows what she looks like and she doesn't indulge in fantasies of looking any other way."
She doesn’t need her own reflection or the reflections of other people’s ideas of her or of themselves" (LBM, p. 59). The manner of her gait also reflects her narcissism. She was "that dark point around which other colors swirl. She keeps her eyes straight, her shoulders level, her steps even. She marches" (LBM, p. 59). It will be correct to say that she marches on the path of self-glory and becomes her proud self. In her own words "I’m a mother... and I take that seriously. I would never leave an image like that behind for my children. I’ve had that done to me and I didn’t like it" (LBM, pp. 107-108). She behaves in such a manner as long as these merely highlight an amiable and affable peculiarities of her and reinforce her grandiose self-image, but she must not be questioned seriously. When Martha attempts to probe her motives as to why she is generous instead of being envious of Nate’s friends, she drops her. Being a narcissist she feels rather that her needs or tasks are so important that they entitle her to every privilege. She does not question her rights and expects others to love her unconditionally, no matter how much she actually trespasses on their rights. This is seen in her interpersonal relationship with Chris and Nate.

We have not explained why so independent and spirited a person like Elizabeth falls a prey to her passions, particularly for a man in Chris’s position and what is that
overwhelming force which attracts Elizabeth to Chris. Between Chris and Nate, we see that Nate too offers adoration and escape from the dreary existence of Aunt Muriel's place, as Chris does. He loves her devotedly as she had always longed to be loved but he can never satisfy, as Chris can, her need to submit and her desires for protection, power and conquest. Her "demon lover" fascinates her, she submits and is drawn to him because to see such a creature subdued by love for one would be a lot worth having.

One of the reasons why Elizabeth's love for Chris is so precious is that through it she can satisfy her own expansive drives. She enjoys her power over him. Chris admits to Elizabeth having power over him, "she had that power and she'd let him see it and touch it. She let him see he was deficient. . . " (LBM, p. 182). She cannot resist Chris's profession of devotion. Chris has brought to her a fantasy that attracts Elizabeth strongly. Secondly, Elizabeth's narcissist self needs to be the centre of attention and attraction. Chris and even his suicide fulfils that need.

Elizabeth enjoys her power over Chris and then drops him as if he had not been anything but "only a vacation" dream. The simplistic explanation she gives for her action
is, "I treated him the way men treat women. A lot of men, a lot of women; but never me, not on your goddamned life. He couldn't take it" (LBM, p. 182). Feminist critics opine that Elizabeth's male-like treatment leads Chris in a reversal of roles to commit suicide and thus reiterate Chris as female and Elizabeth as male motif. To them, it appears that Atwood is examining the "power politics of intimate relations." But the truth is that for Atwood, patriarchal structures of power and domination do not necessarily have a gender specific reference or relevance. As Frank Davey quite appropriately observes, "Atwood's male versus female dichotomy... is a metaphor rather than a literal distinction between men and women." The "male" for Atwood becomes a metaphor for all dehumanizing and despotic attitudinal and behavioural patterns that can as well issue from a woman as from a man. In Life Before Man, therefore, it is not Nate the man but Elizabeth the woman in her overpowering desire for rule-bound and logocentric life, represents patriarchal power structures. According to these critics, in Atwood's value system, Elizabeth's belief in control and definition both for herself and others symbolize "male" attributes.

When interpreted from Horneyan tenets, they are not male attributes but the aggressive and expansive drives of the neurotic character. As already explained, because of
her "bad childhood" she has become an expansive person. She has repressed her need for love and she expresses to fulfil her other needs which have been distorted. She wants power. The healthy drive for self-esteem is replaced by the self-idealization and neurotic pride which generate the search for glory. The mastery of life to a narcissist like Elizabeth now lies in being independent. She wants to be in control of situation. In her relationship with Chris, she feels like the captive of love. She expresses the 'locked in' feelings thus:

Whenever I was with you I was in that room, even when we were outside, even when we were here. I'm in it now, only now you've locked the door, . . . you don't want me ever to get out. You always knew I wanted to get out (LBM, pp. 20-21).

Therefore, the predominant solution is to run away from such relationship. Nothing can bind the narcissist, not even the love of a completely compliant person like Chris. No one can have power over her, not even Chris. When she finds Chris leaning on her, she hates him because he represents the claims of affection which she has ruthlessly excluded from her life. Nate does not have that kind of power, but Chris is trying to have, therefore, she drops him. Atwood, interpreting the title of Life Before Man, says that "for Elizabeth, it means that her own life is given priority over any relationship with a man."
Eliza-Chris affair is significant for Chris. Chris is a compliant person with low self-esteem and depends on Elizabeth for a sense of identity. He does not have confidence to take charge of their life and its complicated affairs. He has the tendency to lean heavily on others especially on Elizabeth and expect her to solve all the psychic conflicts. Being a compliant person, it is natural for Chris to be drawn to an expansive person. He is drawn to Elizabeth not only because he needs to be protected by and to live vicariously through her who can master life aggressively but also because he can only love someone who can "knock his own pride out from under him" (NHG, p. 245). She not only feeds his pride but breaks it too. No one else could master him as does Elizabeth.

Chris compulsively needs her love and subsequently her power. He is able to see the human possibility of power that would be within his reach with the magical help of Elizabeth. Her inner life gives him fresh insight. He admits that she made him realise what he wants to achieve in life. "She had what he wanted, power over a certain part of the world" (LBM, p. 182). When she wriggles out of his life, Chris reacts with a feeling of helplessness and impotence. Lesje understands towards the end of the novel why Chris committed suicide and she remarks: "it was this anger and the other thing, much worse, the fear of being
nothing. People like Elizabeth could do that to you, blot you out" (LEB, p.340). It is clear now that in an attempt to save himself from the assault of self-hate and feelings of nothingness, he commits suicide. Probably, it is an indirect manifestation of his power over her, even though Elizabeth walks out of his life.

Chris's suicide devastates Elizabeth and brings about the breakdown of her predominant solution. This denotes by implication, the impossibility of being and living her grandiose self. It also involves the responsibility of coming to terms with death. As Atwood remarks, "I had had a romantic, adolescent notion of death earlier, but I hadn't really felt that solid moment when you realize your life is not going to go on forever, that people you know aren't going to be here forever, that we're going to die." With the suicide of Chris, Elizabeth reaches this solid moment, though, it frightens her to confront the reality. She dreads the truth that people are not going to be there for ever, they die. She is alone. As Maslow points out, truth carries with it responsibility and that is an anxiety producing state. The easiest way is to evade the consciousness of truth and to deny any feelings of guilt. Elizabeth reacts to Chris's suicide strongly. She hides her grief and denies any feelings of guilt. She oscillates between being responsible and not being guilty. She
concedes, "I’m not sure whether or not I do feel guilty. I feel angry from time to time; otherwise I feel devoid. I feel as though I’m leaking electricity. I know I’m not responsible and that there’s little I could have done and that he might have killed me or Nate or the children instead of himself" (LBM, p. 107).

Elizabeth displays outward poise and self-discipline after Chris’s suicide though she suffers horrible tumult within:

Yes I know I’ve suffered an unusual shock. I’m quite aware of that, I can feel the waves. I realise it was an act directed ostensibly at me though not really at me. (LBM, p. 107)

It disturbs her to think "that Chris’s death was not something he did to himself; . . . On the contrary as something he did to her; . . . He’s not feeling the effects of it, whereas she still is" (LBM, p. 151).

A healthy person would have expressed her grief openly and sought human sympathy from others. As a neurotic, Elizabeth is unable to do so. If she were to allow such feelings she would be flooded with self-contempt, she would violate the taboos of her expansive pride system and her compliant side would pass a very negative judgement on her aggressive behaviour. The hatred that she feels for
compliant persons is in part a defense against and in part an externalisation of the self-hate which is generated by any emergence of the repressed yearnings. These self doubts and oscillations result in tension and anxiety. She feels lost, left out of events and is torn by conflicting shoulds. As she has come out as an impoverished person from childhood and her only way to solve her conflicts is to show that she cares for none and none can hurt her. Otherwise the realization of unfulfilled shoulds elicits feelings of guilt and unworthiness. It is indispensable for her to use all available means to deny her failures to herself.

There are many occasions in the novel when she resorts to denial. When Chris’s mother accuses Elizabeth of killing Chris, she resents this accusation. "No, she’s said, more than once. It was malice, pride, it was his own damn fault. It wasn’t me" (LBM, p. 181). This was her way of solving conflict: "Elizabeth doesn’t care. She’s practiced not caring" (LBM, p. 325). Under this hard exterior she is a feeling creature. Two contradictory emotions toss her: feeling powerful as well as threatened. Sometimes she feels the centre and feels that she has power. "Everything was fine as long as she was willing to pretend she was a cage, Nate a mouse, her heart pure cheese. He is, she knows, a hopeless sentimentalist."
Earthmother, Nate her mole snouting in darkness while she rocked him" (LBM, p. 183). She also feels threatened, in case Nate were to move out. Therefore, there is something to be defended, something is to be done to persuade him to stay in.

She makes frantic efforts to fight the void in case Nate moves out. Her desperation is visible in her running to Lesje's apartment. She feels "They've locked her out. They're ignoring her, giggling in the bedroom while she stands down here in the night, discarded, invisible" (LMB., p. 291). This is indicative of her sufferings and conflict. She is filled with self-contempt "anger, fury, denial." She is annoyed with herself for having allowed herself to be led to this ignomious, this vacant street. So preoccupied she is with Nate that she creates a web of fantasy around her.

In her fantasies, she visualizes old age with Nate. This shows, she needs love and companionship. She "wanted him to wind his arms around her, string on bone but warm bone, press her, comfort and rock her. She wanted to say: Can anything be saved? Meaning this wreck" (LBM, p. 110). She longs for his touch. "If Nate were with her, at least there would be something moving. . . I want to be moved. Move me" (LBM, pp. 109-10). But she also wants to
eliminate all traces of self-effacing trends, all traces of self-doubt and self-contempt. As a refuge from her own nature and from the conflicts and imperfections of the human conditions she again (after the suicide of Chris) takes up her search for glory and is ready to pay a heavy price for it.

Relationship with Nate after his moving out is instrumental in giving a renewed vision to Elizabeth. Elizabeth re-orient herself. Her real self, eclipsed so far by her grandiose self, tries to emerge. It is presented symbolically. So far she has experienced herself as a grandiose person who is confident and in control of things. She sets rule which Nate follows. "It is the rule that when Elizabeth cooks, Nate does the dishes. One of the many rules, subrules, codicils, addenda, errata. Living with Elizabeth involves a maze of such legalities, no easier to understand because some of them are unspoken" (LBM, p.184). She is not only in control of her life, Nate's life but also the love lives of Nate. She permits him little diversions. She admits, "if she doesn't want a particular bone, any one else is welcome to it" (LBM, p. 234). In fact, she supervises him as Martha says, "You wanted to supervise us. Like some kind of play ground organiser. Make sure it didn't go too far" (LBM, p. 165).
Any normal woman in her circumstances would have agreed to end this marriage which is marked by lack of communication and where "inter-personal fusion\(^{15}\) is missing. The importance of communications in human relationship is recognized by all authors. Here I refer to an interview with Michel Fabre in which Margaret Laurence clearly states that to save human relationship from disintegration, people have to work hard at emotional communication. She says "I do not think that too many people actually do reach their potential in that way. I think that communications are difficult but we must keep on trying" (Michel Fabre, p. 68). "Between human individuals much of our deepest communication is at a non-verbal level but at the same time... we can exchange emotions without words but we cannot exchange views. People can make love, people can hold and comfort their children, but in terms of exchanging our views of life and our responses to it we have to use words."\(^{16}\) Elizabeth does not work at these communications. She does not worry about Nate's relationship with Lesje, but she minds his breaking away from her rules.

Though she does not love Nate any longer, she sticks to the marriage. R. D. Laing observes, some people are more disturbed by giving up a habitual game than by the loss of the partner. Elizabeth holds on to this marriage
because her pride system and glorified image cannot tolerate breaking away from Nate. This would be her defeat. "She refuses to be deserted against her will. She refuses to be pathetic" (LBM, p. 236). If at all, she agrees to break away from Nate, it has to be her decision. She would set the rules of Nate’s freedom. This is in keeping with her neurotic pride and value system. She will have to tell him to go. "If she can’t save anything else from the wreckage she will save face. They’ll have a civilized discussion and they will both agree they are doing the best thing for the children. She will then be able to repeat this conversation to her friends, communicating her joy at this solution to all their problems, radiating quiet confidence and control" (LBM, p. 235). This would have restored her self-esteem and salvaged her neurotic pride.

With Nate’s moving out without her consent, she is exposed to the failure of her expansive solution. The reality of the situation frightens her. She feels that she is manipulated and Nate has made a fool of her. Horney points out that a narcissist is extremely proud of fooling every body and in his arrogance and contempt for others, believes that he actually succeeds in this. Conversely, he is most afraid of being fooled himself. Elizabeth, similarly, feels profound humiliation when she discovers that Nate has actually moved out. She resents "being taken
a fool. Any ninny could have told he was packing; why did he bother to deny it? As for his moronic performance with the midnight fried liver and Harry Belafonte records, a two year old could see through it" (LBM, p. 235). She couldn’t see through it and feels shattered by it that Nate could do it to her. "It’s like being beaten at an intricate and subtle game of chess by the world tiddlywinks champion" (LBM, p. 236). She feels lonely and devastated.

Loneliness forces her to live through the traumatic experiences of her life again--the death of her mother, a drinker by fire, the suicide of her sister Caroline in the bathtub of an asylum, the strict puritanic education and finally her aunt’s death. Taking a bath she toys with the idea of committing suicide but she decides against it. "I know I have to keep on living and I have no intention of doing otherwise" (LBM, p. 107). She counters her dilemma by finding within her an ability to survive, not to go on living but to change and to move into new areas of life. Though she makes a regressive choice after Nate’s moving and goes with William and goes with the salesman, she saves herself from harm. She struggles to survive and commits herself to life. She sees the stark reality that life is a routine, it has to be lived, you cannot escape it. Gradually she learns to accept both her past and future as she says "I am an adult and I do not think I am merely the
sum of my past. I can make choices and I suffer the consequences, though they aren’t always the ones I foresaw" (LBM, p. 108). Such elevating thoughts help her in seeing life in its proper perspective.

Auntie Muriel’s revelation in the hospital alters Elizabeth’s perception. She used to see her Aunt as a tyrannical figure. "She has always hated her and she always will hate her, she will not forgive her. This is an old vow, an axiom," (LBM, p. 327). But, her newly gained perception helps her to accept Auntie Muriel as "her own burning mother" (LBM, p. 328). She ritualistically "takes Auntie Muriel’s blinded hands... soothing them with her thumbs as in illness she has soothed the hands of her children" (LBM, p. 328) and forgets all about her vow and herself. It will not be out of place here to compare these feelings of Elizabeth to that of Hagar’s feelings of compassion in The Stone Angel. Hagar does not die as a pessimist and alienated individual. From her experience of complete isolation, at last, Hagar experiences one epiphanic moment of life. She sheds all her ideas of self when she meets the insurance salesman Murray Lees, they cry together over the children they have lost. Hagar’s feelings are awakened, she is able to feel compassion and to do two good acts at the age of ninety. First, she lies to her son Marvin telling him that he is a better son to her than
John and secondly, she fetches the bedpan for Sandra Nong. This experience enables her to perceive an affirmative vision of life. She asked the priest to sing to Lord with joyful voice. "He sang for me and it did me good" says Hagar.

Her altered perception also did good to Elizabeth. Atwood admits that this human support which Elizabeth gives to her aunt is something positive and sees in this possibility of Elizabeth's change. She thinks she will come out of herself:

> When she is finally able, not exactly to forgive her aunt, but at least to go through the motions of giving human support, that's positive. Even though she doesn't feel compassion, she acts it out anyway. After that happens, there's a chance she will be able to get outside herself... By the end of the book there's a possibility of change. I never make Prince charming endings because I don't believe in them. But I do believe that people can change. May be not completely but some. 

Elizabeth's creator is right. Elizabeth relates herself to people in their sufferings. She sees the actuality of life and struggles and commits herself to life. She accepts the dissolution of her marriage, loses her husband to a younger woman and faces the problem of age. She accepts Nate's independence only when the burden of the past seems to be lifted from her after the burial of Muriel. She frees Nate and feels relieved that "war is over, discussed." In
freeing Nate, she also experiences her own "freedom from that set of rules" against which she was measured always by him and "his pious nun faced mother," "she will be free of that . . . but she thinks she can live that" (LBM, p. 238). She experiences freedom; freedom without sense of responsibility is incomplete, a pure licence. She feels responsible for her children, she will raise them "single" and "alone." Now in actual sense of the term she has survived, she has survived Chris's death and Nate's moving out. In order to attain that freedom, she has tossed between the pressures of neurotic needs and her affirmative will to live with children alone. Her journey to and from indicates her self-doubts. Now with Nate's moving out and Muriel's death, Elizabeth grapples with her authentic self. Between Lesje's outbursts and Nate's withdrawal, Elizabeth stands as an emerging self.

(ii)

Lesje is a young paleontologist who is caught in the web of what Martin Buber calls "self-contradictions." She is not aware of alienation caused by the desire of self to recoil or escape from the contingencies of life. She oscillates between contradictory forces: withdrawal and involvement, detachment and attachment, the need to withdraw in order to preserve one's wholeness and sanity and the need to be involved in the painful process of life.
She takes recourse to fantasizing as an alternative to her conflicts. It is important to compare her to Joan Foster in *Lady Oracle*. Both are fantasizers but for Joan, it would mean "there was no fantasy and therefore no escape" ([LO], p. 270). Lesje has a similar regressive need to escape from the boring and threatening present to a prehistoric world of her own making. She dreams of a better life "before man" among the dinosaurs of the mesozoic period. Her "restful fantasy" of mesozoic world is the imaginative violation of "official version of paleontological reality." It is safe compared to life outside especially for the "insecure and tentative Lesje." To cope with the outside world, she lacks Elizabeth's "socialized power and control" and turns to this cataloguing work and her science inspired fantasies to create a work she can control. One scholar remarks that Lesje turns to (learned but childlike) fantasy world, "both to compensate for and to offer escape from life . . . [This] world that is left behind at the end of the novel as life and creativity-in the form of her unborn child-assert themselves."¹⁸ Margaret Atwood also makes it clear that fantasy provides Lesje a means to escape the dreary present.

Psychologists agree that daydreams and fantasies are important for human psyche; they represent wishfulfilment and stand for symbolic satisfaction. It was Fraud who
first pointed out links in motivation between creative imagination and daydreams. In Lesje’s life, the relevance of fantasy is also from a different angle. She escapes temporarily from the despair of abject life. It soothes her; she "finds it restful," "it stops that small noise in her mind, the worrying of something trapped behind the woodwork" (LBM, p. 241). These remarks do give the semblance of peace but when seen from Horneyan angle, she is making a move to withdraw from life and its complications. She runs to the world of dinosaurs and fantasizes if they come to life? Dinosaurs "aren’t a religion for her only a preserve." They serve as a haven, a refuge for her. She admits that "All she wants is a miracle, because anything else is hopeless" (LBM, p. 314). Some of Atwood’s heroines run from their dual or fragmented identity while others like Elaine in *Cat’s Eye* and Joan Foster in *Lady Oracle* run from their multiple identities. Lesje runs to this mesozoic world because of loss of her identity.

This daydreaming is interpreted differently by different scholars. For Paul Goetsch, Lesje’s day dreams show human beings as clumsy as dinosaurs. They have "difficulties in communicating with each other and regulating their relations, and, like some types of dinosaurs, they have special problems in connection with
love and sexuality. In Lesje’s regressive fantasies, the dinosaurs sometime represent life before humans, but in other daydreams of the young woman they also stand for passion or for extinction.”19 From these daydreams it becomes clear that Lesje relates herself to dinosaurs. She finds it difficult to communicate with people, "she was much happier among concrete things" (LBM, p. 66). She is showing a pattern of alienation of severest kind leading to her neurosis. Withdrawal as an escape from the complexities of life is not a health-inducing device. It does not lead to self-communion but alienation from self. This alienation is working in her interpersonal relationship as well as on her psyche. The sterility of her relationship with William is reflected in their frequent conversation about the end of life. She speaks of the extinction of dinosaurs and William, an environment engineer, talks about the destruction of nature and mankind. She is alienated from real life. She can neither respond to nor understand love between man and woman:

Lesje isn’t sure what she means by in love. Once she thought she was in love with William, since it upset her that he did not ask her to marry him... At first she welcomed the relative simplicity, even the bareness, of their life together. They were both committed to their jobs, and they had, it seemed, easily met expectations and only minor areas of friction. But Nate has changed things, he has changed William. What
was once a wholesome absence of complications is now an embarrassing lack of complexity (LBM, p. 140).

Only an alienated person can make remarks about love like that. In the words of Erich Fromm, love is "an interpersonal fusion." For Lesje and William, it is avoiding responsibility "Each wanted the other to take the responsibly" (LBM, p. 23). William's absence does not disturb Lesje and she finds it difficult to dream of William. In her opinion, it is a "sign of maturity that his absences don't disturb her..." These are not signs of maturity as Lesje claims but signs of alienation. This live-in-relation with William is need-based and we can easily call it workable adjustment. It is not love as Lesje sometimes wants to believe, it is mutual admiration which has no commitment. "He admires her mind... He tells her she has beautiful hair. He gazes into her sloe eyes. He's proud of her as a trophy and as a testimony to his own wide-mindedness" (LBM, p. 26). She admires him, she likes his "optimism, his belief that every catastrophe is merely a problem looking for a brilliant solution, that gets to her" (LBM, p. 24). Their love comes to this: they admire each other and "they live together". Horneyan tenets say that a neurotic with withdrawal tendencies cannot go for a deeper relationship. Lesje's feelings for William show no depth. She herself admits that loss of William is a
breach of trust, not much for mourning. It simply hurts, "The loss of William, familiar William, does hurt after all. Not because of William himself, but because she trusted him simply, uncaring, unthinking. She trusted him like a sidewalk, she trusted him to be what he seemed to be, and she will never be able to do that with anyone again. It isn't the violence but the betrayal of this innocent surface that is so painful; though possibly there was no innocence, possibly she made it up" (LBM, p. 225). It is familiarity not intimacy that characterizes their relationship. The relationship with William is a matter of routine for her. "She realises now that her life with William . . . [is] daily routine. Routines hold you in place. Without them she floats weightless" (LBM, p. 242). Lesje recalls the times when her affair with William was simple-minded and joyously adolescent.

Loss of a friend or a lover would move any young girl of her age. But she has never felt a teenager when she was one herself. She narrates an incident of her high school days when the teacher asked them to read Romeo and Juliet thinking it would appeal to them because it was about teenagers. Lesje confesses that she "hadn't felt like a teenager" (LBM, p. 224), instead she filled the margins of the work with drawings of ferns. There are many other instances of this alienation. She recalls another
incident: in grade Five, she had been asked to write about "My Summer Holiday." She was supposed to write about something personal, something from her own life. Instead she wrote about rock-collection. That was something personal from her life. This impersonal attitude remains with her even as an adult. She has no "close friends" and after losing William, she is alone. But this loss and absence is not soul deep because as an alienated person, she is incapable of experiencing pain and loss.

Lesje's psychological alienation can be ascribed to her unfortunate home which leaves the child insecure and isolated. In this connection, it is relevant to mention the nurturing role of the mother. Lesje's mother could not provide proper nurturing to child Lesje. She was a working woman and before Lesje was old enough to go to school, she left her [Lesje] under the care of her two grandmothers (paternal and maternal), half the week with each. Her grandmother Etlin was Jewish while grandmother Symlski was Ukrainian. If the grandmothers were loving and had shown consistency and care, Lesje would have grown an healthy person. But they fought and showed anger on each other. If one would give Lesje decorated eggs to play, the other would smash them with her boots. As Lesje recalls they "fought over her as if she's been a dress at bargain." They "had focused their rage . . . on each other. As for
her, they’d both loved her, she supposes; and both had mourned over her as if she were in some way dead. It was her damaged gene pool. Impure, impure" (LBM, p. 69). This hostile environment threatened her and developed in her a sense of insecurity and filled her with anxiety. The result is that Lesje could not develop a distinctive identity.

In addition to the hostile environment at home, her multi-cultural and racial background also damaged her sense of identity. She does not feel either purely Jewish or Ukranian. When she was nine, one of her aunts explained to her, "Lesje isn’t really Jewish. She could be classified as truly Jewish only if it was mother" (LBM, p. 98). Lesje finds her Ukranian name intriguing, "though a little funny." As Joan’s borrowed name from silver screen problematized her sense of identity in Lady Oracle, Lesje’s Ukranian name created problems for her (Lesje). In either group, "she was an outsider looking in. She felt as excluded as if she’d been surrounded by a crowd of her own cousins. On both sides. Kiss me, I’m multicultural" (LBM, p. 101). At the beginning of the novel, she feels that because of her multi-cultural background, William and his family do not fully acknowledge her as an individual. Even in her relation with Nate, she feels she is dismembered who does not belong to any group. "There is already a group of
Mrs Schoennors: one is Nate’s mother, the other is mother of his children. Lesje isn’t the mother of anyone; officially she is nothing" (LBM, p. 310). She has no identity, "she is only a pattern," which will "dissolve" someday (LBM, pp. 191-192). This psychic condition of alienated Lesje reminds us of George Lamming’s description of the natives. George Lamming, the Carribbean writer in his work *The Pleasures of Exile* describes the West Indian or the Native as "exiled from his gods, exiled from his nature, exiled from his name." Lesje is also exiled. She has no moorings in this alien world.

If the world is alien and hostile, the easiest course is to withdraw from it. Lesje adopts the strategies of withdrawal and compliance, alternately. She is caught up between conflicting ambitions of warring grandmothers and her parents. She remembers how her Ukranian grandmother had wanted her to be an airline stewardess while her Jewish grandmother had wanted her to be lawyer and also to marry, another lawyer if possible. "Her father wanted her to make the most of herself. Her mother wanted her to be happy" (LBM, p. 126). Every human being has a self which includes an awareness of being human, individual, capable of making choices that affects one’s life and that of others. The choice of Lesje is limited in this environment. To "stay out of the way" (LBM, p. 70) is her primary strategy to
solve her conflicts. There is no move, on her part, to participate in living, to strive for achievement, to socialise.

Her parents sensed her unsociability and realised that she was becoming too wrapped up in the world of her own. In order to make her "more sociable," they gave her dancing lessons but as the narrator puts it, it was "too late." She could not be sociable. For this, they blamed silently, of course, her grandmother Etlin. This delineates the psychic turmoil, fear and anxiety of Lesje who fails to relate to her world. Rollo May has an explanation for cases of such as these. Lesje has lost, what May terms "intentionality." Intentionality gives a person orientation or direction:

By intentionality, I mean the structure which gives meaning to experience. . . . Intentionality is at the heart of consciousness. I believe that it is also the key to the problem of wish and will . . . . It is the structure of meaning which makes it possible for us, subjects that we are, to see and understand the outside world, objective as it is. In intentionality, the dichotomy between subject and object is partially overcome.20

In case of Lesje, her false self sees herself as an independent person above all socialization and competition. She likes to imagine herself "watching through binoculars, blissful, uninvolved." This is the demand of her idealised
self. To save herself from self-berating, she quickly builds around her a citadel of self-glorifying virtues commensurate with her withdrawn self. She knows, "she's regressing." She is also aware that "she's been doing that a lot lately. This is a daydream left over from her childhood and early adolescence, shelved sometime ago in favor of other speculations. Men replaced dinosaurs, true, in her head as in geological time; but thinking about men has become too unrewarding. Anyway, that part of her life is settled for the time being" (LBM, p. 13). Nothing is settled though her idealised self wants to believe it.

In reality, she is experiencing a conflict between compliant and resigned drives. These tendencies pull her in opposite directions. She must keep a safe emotional distance yet she cannot help being drawn to Nate. Her attitude of resignation warns her that she must avoid any entanglement. These observations work on her unconscious, the wish to win Nate's love figures there. Consciously or unconsciously her efforts have been to get a positive response from her family. Insecure as she is, she is usually afraid of saying the wrong thing anyway and likes to play the role of the appeaser. "She's an appeaser and she knows it" (LBM, p. 65). As an ideal daughter, she devotes her efforts to appease her mother. "Lesje's mother. . . wants her to appear to be happy. Lesje's
happiness is her mother's justification. Lesje has known this forever and is well practiced at appearing, if not happy, at least stolidly content. . ." (LBM, p. 225). In Horneyan terminology, it is the trait of the self-effacing person. Persons belonging to this category place curbs "on all that is presumptuous, selfish and aggressive" (NHG, p. 219). Lesje also cripples her capacity to fight, to demand her rights, to be self-assertive. Her life pattern amply illustrates it. She is appeasing her mother, attending to William's needs and her self-denial goes so far that she does not like to speak about herself and wishes to become the woman Nate believes she is.

In doing so she is pushing her resigned tendencies to the background. One encounters withdrawn and uninvolved Lesje so often in the novel that one finds it hard to believe that Lesje is basically a self-effacing woman. But, if we read closely we realise that the need to become Nate's version indicates her unconscious longing to be loved. She wears around herself a fantasy world. She fantasies about him and also about her life. She expects some sudden and unaccountable change, as if "something momentous is about to take place. Her life is about to change: things will not be as they have been before" (LBM, p. 140). True to the traits of a compliant character she wants to become Nate's image and is sure that love can
change her life. For Nate, Lesje is another 'romance icon,' the unattainable, other-worldly "exotic." "Holding Lesje," Nate muses, "would be like holding some strange plant, smooth, thin, with sudden orange flowers. Exotics, the florists called them" (LBM, p. 76). Both are victims of each others' fantasy. He expects her to be serene, "a refuge; he expects her to be kind. He really thinks she is, underneath, . . . He ought to be able to tell by now that she isn't like this at all. Nevertheless she wants to be; she wants to be this beautiful phantom, this boneless wraith he’s conjured up. Sometimes she really does want it" (LBM, p. 310). He manages to convey to Lesje that he "respects her, admires her and desires her," and that he doesnot want just an affair with her. He wants to have a child by her. These remarks reinforce her self-image and raise her self-esteem. She feels the barometer of self-worth rising.

Loving Nate can be interpreted as an act of goodness Lesje is able to rationalize many of her guilt feelings and to bring her acts into mental accord with her self-effacing value system. She seizes upon Nate’s unhappiness and his need of her to justify her seeing him. On his part, he doesnot want her to "think she’s breaking up a marriage" (LBM, p. 141). These statements of Nate give her solid ground for rationalization. "She doesn’t feel like another
woman; she isn’t wheedling or devious, she doesn’t wear negligees or paint her toe-nails. William may think she’s exotic, but she’s not really; she’s straightforward, narrow and unadorned, a scientist; not a web-spinner, expert at the entrapment of husbands" (LBM, pp. 141-142). Such thoughts lift her up and she tells herself that she is not involved in some conventional triangle but is following an honourable affair.

She believes that she is living her ideal image. She rationalizes that Nate’s family is "surely external to him; in himself he’s single, a free agent. And Elizabeth is therefore not the wife of Nate, she isn’t a wife at all instead she’s widow, Chris’s widow, if anyone’s" (LBM, p. 142). She lives under these pretences that Nate may be the father of her children he is not Elizabeth’s husband. Her argument is: "They haven’t lived together, he means slept together for several years, he isn’t sure how many. They’ve stayed in the same house together because of the children" (LBM, p. 141). Her self-esteem rises and falls with the attention and inattention she receives. Sometimes she feels very important because Nate loves her. Sometimes she feels exiled from his life. A vacuum forms around her heart, spreads; it is as if she does not exist. Nate’s absences irk her. "In the absence of Nate, who has offered, when she comes to think of it, nothing at all. A wide plain. A
risk" (LBM, p. 162). She is swayed by the feelings of being nothing, "cipher" "superfluous." Self-hate overpowers her. She feels that her relationship with Nate is a blunder, "she's blundered into something tangled and complex, tenuous, hopelessly snarled" (LBM, p. 240). She feels condemned in her relations to Nate's children. She bursts with a sense of wrongs and self-hate. "I want to feel I'm living with you," she said. Not with you and your wife and children" (LBM, p. 278). She cannot do anything to change this situation and self-contempt grips her.

Having sex in Elizabeth's bed gives a devastating blow to her ideal image. She feels she has wronged Elizabeth. Guilt sweeps her balance off. "This is horrible, this is a violation. She feels grubby; it's almost like an incest" (LBM, pp. 190-91). Till now she has been successful in warding off guilt which came by being another woman. Her self-image crumbles like a piece of cardboard. It hurts her to think that "she and Elizabeth are interchangeable. Or his feeling that Elizabeth's bed is still in some sense his also, he can do whatever he wants in it" (LBM, p. 191). These are the moments when she feels a "mean minded ogre." Hatred and loneliness which she had kept under check also surface with intensity and she feels lost and condemned, "isolated, single, childless and culpably young, she was made to stand in penance, watching a pantomime she could
not decipher" (LBM, p. 259). Lesje is not only helpless in
the face of her circumstances but also rendered weak and
unassuming by her self-effacing drives.

Lesje finds a release through an unhysterical change
in perspective when she temporarily identifies herself
with Chris and then throws away the contraceptive pills.
She gives up her passivity and decides to opt for life. "If
children were the key, if having them was the only way she
could stop being invisible, then she would goddamn will
have some herself" (LBM, p. 341). Her decision to stop
using the pills and bear Nate's child is symbolic of her
new found will to act and signals her altered self-
perspective and a new beginning. Lesje discovers her power
to act positively for herself and not to commit suicide
that would negate the fundamental strength of her nature.
Thus Lesje moves from passive acceptance to active
participation. Atwood views Lesje's pregnancy as "one of
those profoundly meaningful human activities which can be
very multifaceted and resonant. It can have a very positive
meaning for some people and a very negative meaning for
others" (Conversations, p. 142). She does not agree with
those who assert that pregnancy fulfils Lesje's femininity,
nor does she corroborate that it is anti-feminist to get
pregnant. She defines her feminism "as human equality and
freedom of choice."21 Stouck views in this decision an
offering of hope. He remarks: "This instinct to continue the species, to defy mortality, may have no rational basis... Yet the fact of survival and another generation is an offering of hope." There is definitely a hope in Lesje's life. She gives up the evasion offered by fantasy world and relates herself to life.

It will not be out of place here to compare Lesje's decision to have a child with that of the narrator's decision in *Heat and Dust* which, according to a critic is tension reducing. Discussing the narrator-protagonist's decision in *Heat and Dust*, the scholar observes that "in her decision to be a mother there lies the question of free choice which is existential in itself." Morag's decision to bear Jules' child in *The Diviners* also reflects her need for relatedness not only in loving Jules but also in bearing his child, Pique. Pique becomes the link with the past she has so long denied and becomes the "harbinger of death, continuer of life" (p. 239). Similarly, in case of Lesje, as Paul Goetsch comments "the guardian of past (p. 308) develops into the guardian of the future and joins the many mothers and mother figures of the novel." She relates to other mothers like Elizabeth; she visualises the future when they would turn "... grandmothers." She realises that the "tension between the two of them is a
difficulty for the children. They ought to stop" (LBM, p. 359). She does not see Elizabeth permanent like an icon but "shorter, worn, ordinary; mortal" (LBM, p. 359). This new way of viewing things makes her feel free. Becoming a mother gives her a fair measure of self-recognition. She regains her identity like Rachel Cameron does in Laurence's A Jest of God. Lesje also nourishes the notion that mere biological fact of having a child means that a woman has control of her life. This equips her to cope with the contingent reality.

Change of perception is felt in her attitudinal change towards her fantasy world. "The Mesozoic isn't real. It's only a word for a place you can't go to anymore because it isn't there" (LBM, p. 267). It has been her theoretical opinion that man is "a danger to the universe, a mischievous ape, spiteful, destructive, malevolent." Now she knows this is not true. She struggles to survive and commits herself to life. Even Virginia Woolf who did not like to have her own children admits that she can appear successful to herself only if she has children and she connects her failure to write well with having no children. Virginia Woolf gives her famous prescription for a woman writer in A Writer's Diary: "I don't like the physicalness of having children of one's own. . . . I can dramatise myself a parent, it is true. And perhaps I have killed the
feeling instinctively" yet in another entry, she anguishes "I want to appear a success even to myself, yet I don't... It's having no children . . . [that she is] failing to write well."²⁷ Lesje is a "success" to herself.

From the patriarchal perspective one would expect the single woman [like Lesje] to be a figure of derision and social ostracism but as Annis Pratt says, "In much of women's fiction she becomes a hero representing the possibility of growth and survival."²⁸ Lesje has become a hero in this sense; she has shown growth as well as survival. The word "Survival" is defined differently by Margaret Laurence. She defines it as the "ability to continue experiencing relationship with others, to continue reaching out and giving and returning love."²⁹ Lesje has moved to active participation in life, "she has learned more than she ever intended to, more than she wants" (LBM, p. 343). She has always evaded the reality of the lived present but now the acceptance of her decision and the responsibility that follows that decision changes her life.

Both Lesje and Elizabeth, by owning responsibility affirm life; in her next novel Bodily Harm, Atwood adopts a broader vision and lets Rennie Wilford reach affirmation by relating herself to her fellow human being. How Rennie, an
alienated character, struggles under conflicts and finally grapples with reality, will be explored in the next chapter.
Notes and References

5. Alan Twigg, p. 127.
16. Michel Fabre, "From The Stone Angel to The Diviners: An Interview with Margaret Laurence," in A Place to Stand on, p. 68.
17. Alan Twigg, Margaret Atwood: Conversations, p. 125.
21. Alan Twigg, Margaret Atwood: Conversations, p. 142.
22. David Stouck, Major Canadian Authors, p. 288.


