1.1.1. Introduction of Margaret Atwood:

Margaret Atwood, a poet, novelist, literary critic, short-story writer and author of children’s books, is a prominent figure in the contemporary Canadian literature. She is a writer of worldwide reputation. Internationally acclaimed as a poet, novelist and short-story writer, she has emerged as a major figure in Canadian letters. Using such devices as irony, symbolism and self-conscious narrations, she explores the relationship between humanity and nature, dark side of the human behavior and power as it pertains to gender and politics. Popular with both literary scholars and the reading public, Atwood has helped to define and identify the goals of contemporary Canadian literature and has earned a distinguished reputation among feminist writers for her exploration of women’s issues.

Atwood who is a writer for more than forty years now, has enthralled a steadily growing international audience with her remarkable creative productivity. She is internationally known, read, translated and critiqued; contemporary Canadian critic, founding editor of Canadian Literature says:
No other writer in Canada of Margaret Atwood’s generation has so wide a command of the resources of literature, so telling a restraint in their use as Margaret Atwood.¹

The London Review of Books has also acclaimed her as the most distinguished novelist current writing in English. She is a multi-faceted genius in Canadian literature.

1.1.2. Atwood’s work:


Short-story — Margaret Atwood’s short-story collection, Dancing Girls (1977) attracted more positive notice, winning the City of Toronto Book Award, the Canadian Booksellers Association Award and the Periodical Distributors of Canada Short Fiction Award. Her another collection Bluebeard’s Egg (1983) explores the question of women’s marginal


**Novels** — It will be appropriate to consider Atwood’s novels one after another briefly in chronological manner. Her literary career as a novelist begins with her maiden novel, *The Edible Woman* (1969). It is an early feminist treatise, a both funny and terrifying story about a young woman, who works for a consumer company. It is a novelist’s imaginative
response, cast as comic social satire in vividly metaphorical language. This is sociology translated into the private idiom of one fictive female character, where her social destiny takes the form of eating disorder. Written in 1965 and published in 1969, it represents an imaginative response to a current social malaise.

*Surfacing* (1972) is Atwood’s most remarkable novelistic achievement in which the technology nature conflict is cast in political terms. It serves Atwood’s strong nationalist as well as feminist ideologies. It expresses the politics of gender and describes man’s imposition on woman in matters of profession, marriage and motherhood which cripples her intellectually, emotionally and morally. It shows a woman’s struggle to free herself. When protagonist’s consciousness reaches its climax, she makes ready the ground for revolt against exploitation and oppression. At end she emerges as a brave new woman who is capable of establishing her identity.

Her third novel, *Lady Oracle* (1976) is a gothic romance. It won the 1977 City of Toronto Book Award and a Canadian Booksellers Award. It is the portrait of the writer as a woman and a survivor in male dominated culture. It represents a challenge to patriarchal culture. The protagonist, Joan Foster is the ultimate escape artist who faces the obstacles in patriarchal society. The novel shows how the identity and individuality of a woman writer is destroyed by the invisible authority of male writers and her writing is gendered and classed on the basis of sex. It proclaims that both men and women are equal as they have the same human capabilities. The novel is a feminist writer’s frontal attack on the dominant pattern of gender relations in contemporary society.
*Life Before Man* (1979), the fourth novel, is Atwood’s most domestic novel with its triangular plot. It has brought international recognition for Atwood. She examines the politics of power in interpersonal relationships between wife and husband in it. It deals with the collapse of the institution of modern marriage. It also throws light on the women’s recognition of the power of the mother figure and the depth of her pain in the institution of marriage.

Atwood’s fifth novel, *Bodily Harm* (1981) focuses on the contrast between affluent thinking and the brutal reality of power and sexual politics. It depicts the process of self-discovery against the cruelty. Sexual politics is often disguised as ‘love’ is one more form of power politics. It focuses on sexual power politics. It is concerned with issues such as body image, female sexuality, male-female relationships and male brutality in a patriarchal society. It shows that in society bodily harm is everywhere. But a woman should reject her submissive role and be ready to speak out the truth about the exploiter.

*The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), the sixth novel, received the Governor General’s Award, the Los Angeles Times Prize and short-listed for the Booker Prize. Since its publication it has become Atwood’s most popular novel. It has been translated into more than thirty languages, made into a film by German director Volker Schlondorff and into an opera by Danish composer Poul Ruders. It is a novel of portraying a time where women are prized only for their reproductive gift. While giving a shocking treatment of the theme of sex, procreation and love, this novel takes on the characters of grim and prophetic vision of a future world where male chauvinism will be destroyed the finest chords of wifehood, motherhood and womanhood.
Atwood’s seventh novel, *Cat’s Eye* (1988) focuses on the issues of women through art and artist for the first time in history. It deals with the interaction between adulthood and childhood. It exposes male prejudices against women’s creativity and talent and shows how art can be used as a weapon against tyranny in all its manifestations. It is like an oasis in a desert for those whose creativity is prevented from blooming. The novel is the story of Elaine Risley, a controversial painter who returns to Toronto, the city of her youth for a retrospective of her art that contains her own life from her school days to her present career as a painter. Her paintings advocate human rights of women and equal healthy relationships between men and women.

*The Robber Bride* (1993), eighth novel, a masterpiece of Atwood surely confirms her standing as one of the most inventive enthralling and accomplished authors writing in English. It examined Toronto lifestyle and women’s friendships; it shows how one sex dominates and is a strategy for exercising power in society. It is the tale of greed, violence, viciousness and lust for power and the war of sexes. It demands for the equality of both sexes and hopes for the world free from sexual exploitation and oppression.

*Alias Grace* (1996), Atwood’s ninth novel, was nominated for the Booker Prize and short-listed for the Governor General’s Award. It examines crucial issues like the idea of a unified subject, the nature of truth and relations of power. It is different from Atwood’s earlier writing as for the first time the multiple selves are seen to exist within the protagonist herself and not as people in external reality. In it her approaches to politics and literature are global and multifaceted and that she is enthusiastically involved in bringing about positive change.
*The Blind Assassin* (2000), tenth novel, earned Atwood the Booker Prize in 2000 and created a world of astonishing vision and unforgotten impact. It is a meta-fictional fairy tale which introduces a novel-within-a novel. It is an extraordinary and compelling story of two sisters and their secrets with completely historical colour. There the three stories are all separate yet slowly come together in a skilful way. It is also a snapshot of the first half of the 20th century with two world wars, the depression and the social realities of the time.

Atwood’s eleventh novel, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) is a vision of mankind’s uncompromisingly black future. It is a novel with dystopian elements that often categorized as science fiction like *The Handmaid’s Tale*. This novel does not depend on imagining new scientific or technological discoveries. It merely extrapolates on the basis of technologies that are available today and carries current social and economic developments. It was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2003.

Her twelfth novel, *The Year of the Flood* (Sept. 2009) is a continuation of, not exactly a sequel to *Oryx and Crake*. Both are speculative fiction about a dystopian future. Several characters from the earlier novel appear. In it the global pandemic has killed almost all of humanity except two characters — Toby and Ren. A series of flashbacks tells how they survived the pandemic.

Atwood is also the editor of the *Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English* and co-editor of the *Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English*. She has not, however, written a biography or an autobiography. Her output as novelist, poet, critic and essayist has been prodigious, often as the rate of more than one book per year.
1.1.3. Review of literature:

Atwood’ recognition as a versatile writer becomes clear when one goes through several critical works based on her fiction and non-fiction. Sherill E. Grace in her book *Violent Duality* (1980) has not discussed Atwood’s work as a specific critical category but she argues that Atwood’s work is a ‘violent duality.’


*Margaret Atwood: Language, Text and System* (1983) edited by Sherill E. Grace and Lorraine Weir is one of these critical books. In this essay collection the authors examine Atwood’s system from variety of critical perspectives, which considered together, demonstrate the overall consistence of Margaret Atwood’s work.

Babara Hill Rigney’s *Margaret Atwood* (1987) covers Atwood’s work from the 1960s and it draws out her recurring themes of Canadian identity and the wilderness, the representation of women and female bodies and history and its narration.


*Margaret Atwood: Vision and Forms* (1988) edited and published by Kathryn Van Spanckeren and Jan Garden Castro is a study of Atwood’s novels, poetry and non-fictional prose. It discusses feminism in Atwood’s work including the gothic element and cultural politics.

*Margaret Atwood’s Fairy-Tale Sexual Politics* (1993) authored by Sharon Rose Wilson is a feminist structural analysis of Margaret Atwood’s novels. Wilson describes the motifs found in Atwood’s works.
Particularly she catalogues, analyses and interprets the fairy tale parallels in her fiction.

*Margaret Atwood, the Shape Shifter* (1998) edited by Coomi S. Vevaina and Coral Ann Howells, regards Atwood as a writer. It is a collection of various essays on Atwood’s fiction, short stories and poetry. The various articles show that there are hundreds of possibilities for changing shape in Atwood’s writing and her fictive world is one of continual metamorphosis.

1.1.4. Problem to be investigated:

Starting her career as a novelist with *The Edible Woman* (1969), Margaret Atwood is not only a very prolific writer but also one of the serious novelists of the present period that Canada has produced. There is an enormous amount of academic criticism on her work produced not only in North America but also in Britain and increasingly in Europe, Australia and India. Being the greatest Canadian English novelist, Atwood’s work has attracted much attention and generated considerable literary criticism on her art and craft as a novelist. She is still writing and critical estimate of her work is still pouring in. However, it is not an exaggeration to claim that the time has come to make a scholarly study of her novels at doctoral level.

There is a large and flourishing academic community of Atwood’s students and there are a large number of suspicious reviewers and readers who find the elaborate, in some ways intensely artificial world of her novels difficult to take. She is accused of being feminist. There is debate about the probability or improbability of Atwood’s plots, centering largely on her characters’ sexual behaviour. Some scholars attack her work and see in her a failure of true novelist. Their criticism of her work gives some useful perspective to judge the work. The aim of the present
inquiry is to study the art of Atwood’s writing as the true novelist and see how it has been depicted in her novels.

1.1.5. Aims and objective of present study:

A heap of critical works on Margaret Atwood shows that many of them reveal similar narrative and feminist concerns with reference of her some selected novels and not all. Probably there is no particular full-length study available in which all her novels are studied through the angle of their title, story, plot-construction, narration, characters, themes, imagery, symbolism and view of life. It seems that there is also no full length book on Atwood’s all novels. The present work is going to attempt to study all her novels from the point of their titles, stories, structures, characterization, themes, imagery symbolism and expressed view of life and see how she is one of the greatest novelists with her art of writing of the present time. To depict all her novels through the meaning of titles, different narrative genres, universal characterization, strong thematic concerns, familiar images, powerful symbols and various expressed views of life is the objective of this critical study.

1.1.6. A critical study:

The study is the process of gaining knowledge of a subject from books. And a study that fond of judging merit is called a critical study. It aims at building up a comprehensive study to select and co-ordinate critical material and to present it in an easily intelligible form. It also tries to incorporate some of the latest criticism available. It is designed to meet the needs of students at the honours, the post-graduate and research level. It is also designed to meet the examination requirements of advanced students at universities. The author of critical study takes great pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness of those whose work has been quoted
and whose names have been included in the select bibliography at the end.

A critical study of novels tries to discuss the various aspects of the novel briefly but lucidly to help the needy to get a clear understanding of the novel. All aspects of the novel – title, story, plot-structure, narration, characters, theme, imagery, symbolism and view of life – have been dealt with and the different approaches to it have been provided in it. It contains the critical study of the personality of a novelist and the particular literary work. At the end it hails the supremacy of the novelist by comparing with other novelists.

The critical study of novels of the great novelists in present period explores the novelists as the best story-teller with their heart-breaking narration. The titles of their novels are meaningful, indicative and metaphorical. They handle the conventions of different narrative forms. They produce fictional characters not only as live human beings but also as the universal characters. They project the feministic, social, political, environmental, global and so on themes. The slipperiness of words, familiar images and powerful symbols are the features of their writing to express revolutionary, optimistic, pessimistic, realistic and suggestive view of life through the mouth piece of protagonists in modern structured novels.

1.1.7. Methodology:

Critical analysis is the central agenda of this present proposed research work. It has been tried to signify properly arrangement of the study of title, story, narration, plot-structure, characterization, theme, imagery, symbolism and view of life in Atwood’s all novels with analytical and interpretative approach with the help of her primary and
secondary sources. Except that it is a judicious blend of various approaches depending on the purpose and need from time to time. After selecting problem this investigation attempts to reach its conclusion with collected and evaluated data. Involving original novels it is centered on a problem and rested upon an attitude of unity.

1.1.8. Chapter-wise plan:

It is in order to reflect continuities; this work has adopted a chapter arrangement which is strictly chronological. The first introductory chapter of this study, in its two sections after giving the definition of critical study and selecting problem for investigation, sets out to discuss Atwood’s works. The first section contains the definition, significance and need of critical study, an introduction of Margaret Atwood, her works, a brief account of every novel, review of literature, need of present research work with its aims and objectives, methodology and chapter-wise plan. The second section discusses Margaret Atwood’s theory of fiction and the literary and philosophical influences on her literary career with brief reference to her biography. It points out the influences of those that have moulded her literary career.

Then in the following three chapters her work is analysed with a view to study her art as a novelist. The chapter II, III and IV provide a context for reading Atwood’s twelve novels as they explore key issues related to their introduction, title, story, plot-structure, narration, characterization, theme, imagery, symbolism and view of life of her every novel. This analysis is spread over the subsequent three chapters devoted respectively to her novels of early, middle and later phase.

The present research work has adopted a chronological arrangement of Atwood’s novels, with one chapter per four novels, for all
twelve of them, following their order of publication. In each chapter it offers a close reading which pays attention to thematic and narrative experiment, while also highlighting the specific interest of the novel under discussion. These individual chapters are set in a wider chronological pattern, marked out into the five decades of Atwood’s writing career, from her first novel published in the late 1960s to 2009. This provides a glance and a comprehensive overview of her achievement.


Chapter V, i.e. Conclusion is concerned with Atwood’s achievement, her comparison with five Canadian contemporary women novelists and her greatness with the use of her novel’s title, story, plot-structure, characters, theme, imagery, symbolism and view of life. It also focuses on how she belongs to the great traditions of English novelists. It also deals with the significance of the present research work, its pedagogical importance and the topic for further research work.
While doing this it refers to other related texts on Atwood’s working methods, a commentary on her fictional techniques and the multiple perspectives from which similar topics might be treated in different forms. Finally the study is rounded up with conclusion reached in the light of careful and scientific examination of the collected data both in the form of primary and secondary sources.

II

1.2.1. Biography of Margaret Atwood:

The biography of Atwood would be of little helpful in the critical study of her novels. Still it is to some extent true that almost many events in the fiction are bound to have an origin or explanation in the life of the creator. As Wellek and Warren have pointed out,

Biography can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry but we can, of course, defend it and justify it as a study of the man of genius, of his moral, intellectual and emotional development which has its own intrinsic interest; and, finally, we can think of biography as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process.²

The usual biographical facts in life of Margaret Atwood are well-known. She was born with the gifts that made her a great novelist. These may be stated quite simply.
Atwood, now in her seventy two, was born on the 18th of November, 1939 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada’s capital city. Her parents, Carl Edmund Atwood and Margaret Dorothy Killam, were originally from Nova Scotia. She was the second of three children to Carl Edmand and Margaret Dorothy Killam Atwood. Her brother, Harold, is two years older than Margaret. Her sister, Ruth, was born in 1951. She spent her early childhood moving around in the forests and small settlements of Northern Ontario and Quebec with her parents and her elder brother, for her father was a field entomologist. It was not until after the end of the Second World War that her family settled in Toronto, where her father became a university professor.

Atwood went to school there and then on to Victoria College, University of Toronto, where she took an Arts degree with honours in English. During that time she was busy writing and reviewing for her college magazine and designing programmes for the drama society. This visual dimension has remained an important feature of Atwood’s work, where vision is often elaborated to include insight and hallucination as well as merely seeing. In 1961, her graduation year, she had her first book of poems privately published, a collection called *Double Persephone*. But Atwood never felt at home in the city; she says she has always suffered from “culture shock” after her bush childhood. Her first experience of the United States came when she went on a graduate fellowship to Radcliffe College, Harvard, where she studied Victorian and American literature and began her Ph.D. thesis on ‘The English Metaphysical Romance.’ It was there that she had another culture shock when she realized that to the Americans Canada was invisible:
It’s not that the Americans I met had any odd or ‘upsetting’ attitudes toward Canada. They simply didn’t have any attitudes at all. They had a vague idea that such a place existed--- it was that blank area north of the map where the bad weather come from.4

Atwood’s was the common colonial experience of moving to a metropolitan culture where people know nothing and care nothing about one’s home place. Here might be located the roots of Atwood’s Canadian nationalism, which developed in the late 1960s and frequently defined itself against the United States, a position which she scrutinizes in her early 1970s work. Atwood moved back to Canada without finishing her doctorate and spent the next ten years, she describes them as her “Rooming House”5 teaching in university English departments across Canada, from Vancouver to Montreal and Toronto, making her first trip to Europe; getting married James Polk in 1967 for the first time, whom she met at Harvard in 1963 and writing her first novel. The 1970s was the period when her national and international reputation was made.

In the late 1970s Atwood began travelling extensively, reading and lecturing in Britain, Italy, Australia and Afghanistan. During this period, Atwood and James Polk were divorced in 1973 and she moved to Alliston, Ontario, with Graeme Gibson, whom she met in 1970. The same year, she was granted a D. Litt. by the Trent University. Their daughter, Eleanor Jess Atwood Gibson, was born in 1976. In 1980 Atwood moved with her family to Toronto, which has been their permanent home ever since. Her output as a novelist, poet, critic and essayist has been prodigious, a pattern that has continued up to the present day.
The stages of her rise to fame make an interesting chronicle. Her first novel, *The Edible Women* had been welcomed as the best first novel of 1969, like a sugar plum fairy on top of a Christmas cake. It was really with the publication of her second novel, *Surfacing* in 1972 that she made her first serious claim for critical attention. Her third novel, *Lady Oracle* (1976) marked the shift to Atwood’s decisive identification as a novelist. *Life Before Man* (1979) received enthusiastic reviews in the United States and in Britain, while in Canada Atwood was becoming a prominent figure in cultural politics. She was a founder member of the Writers’ Union of Canada, on the editorial board of the newly established Anansi Press in Toronto, and a member of Amnesty International. As she remarked, her involvement with political issues was “not separate from writing. When you begin to write, you deal with your immediate surroundings; as you grow, your immediate surroundings become larger. There’s no contradiction.” She has maintained an active engagement with political and human rights issues not only in Canada but on the international scene.

When *The Handmaid’s Tale* was published, it was shortlisted in Britain for the Booker Prize; in Canada it won Atwood her second Governor General’s Award; in the United States it won the Arthur C. Clarke Science Fiction Prize. All six of Atwood’s most recent novels have been nominees for the Booker Prize, and *The Blind Assassin* won the Booker in 2000. She is the most written-about Canadian writer ever. Thus Atwood has become a sort of eminent fixture not only in Canada but also internationally a public face.
1.2.2. Influences – literary and philosophical:

Although, as Atwood has said repeatedly, she had no reason in the late 1950s to believe that she would ever be able to make her living as a writer in Canada, she did in fact belong to a new generation who were “busy discovering the fact of our existence as Canadians, and she was also one of the first generation of students who were taught that there was a Canadian literary tradition in poetry if not in fiction.” As an undergraduate in Toronto she was taught by the late Professor Northrop Frye and the poet Jay Macpherson, whose influence as role model Atwood gratefully acknowledges: “to actually be able to look at someone and say, that person has published a book! You can’t imagine how important that was to a Canadian living at that time.”

It was in Macpherson’s private library that Atwood read her way through Canadian poetry, while she was also influenced by Frye’s myth-centered criticism and his efforts to translate European myths into a new Canadian cultural context. She began her writing career with advantages that not earlier generation of Canadians had possessed.

Given her background, it is not surprising that she would have begun by writing poetry, nor that her first critical work, Survival, should have been an attempt to map a parallel Canadian tradition in fiction. Since the 1970s Atwood has maintained her active engagement with Canadian literary and cultural politics, though she is now so well known internationally that readers tend to forget where she comes from. Atwood herself never forgets this, and her fictions are pervaded by Canadian cultural codes. At the same time the meanings of her novels cannot be restricted to a Canadian frame of reference, for stories are fabrications...
made out of language and they use narrative conventions which transcend self-conscious political ideologies:

I write for people who like to read books. They don’t have to be Canadian readers. They don’t have to be American readers. They don’t have to be Indian readers, although some of them are. I’m translated into fourteen languages by now, and I’m sure that some of the people reading those books don’t get all the references in them, because they’re not familiar with the setting. I don’t get all the references in William Faulkner either. That doesn’t mean I don’t enjoy the books, or can’t understand them. You can pick up a lot of things from context.  

The fact that Margaret Atwood, a versatile Canadian writer of today, did not want to be recognized as a Canadian writer in 1960 for the Canadian fiction of the early decades of the nineteenth century was not much popular. According to her,

One could hardly expect us to make a living at it, and anything resembling the American notion of literary success was out of the question. Canadian books were routinely not taught in schools and universities. I myself have never taken a course on Canadian literature.  

Like other writers of her time, Atwood also read Sartre, Beckett and British literature with Shakespeare, Eliot, Austen, Thomas Hardy, Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron. It was at Harvard that Atwood First began to think seriously about Canada. Therefore, she was not only influenced by Northrop Frye and Jay Macpherson but also by her predecessors like A.J.M. Smith, Dorothy Livesay and Al Purdy. The
poetry of Pratt, Margaret Avison, P. K. Page and Davidson attracted her and moulded her literary career. According to Rama Gupta:

The new feminism, a myth-centered poetry, Frye’s criticism and the growing nationalism of the early sixties all helped to shape Atwood’s literary inheritance: together they produced a particular sensibility, a mythic imagination reflected in her treatment of the male-female relationship and Canadian nature.¹¹

Her writing is grounded in a strong sense of her own cultural identity as white, English-speaking, Canadian and female; but she also challenges the limits of such categories, questioning stereotypes of nationality and gender, exposing cultural fictions and the artificial limits they impose on our understanding of ourselves and others as human being.

1.2.3. Atwood’s theory of novel:

As a writer, Margaret Atwood is aware of the dynamics between an artist and the society in which he operates. She writes:

Far from thinking of writers as totally isolated individuals, I see them as in escapable connected with their society. The nature of the connection will vary — the writer may unconsciously reflect the society, he may consciously examine it and project ways of changing it and the connection between writer and society…becomes the ‘subject’ of the writer.¹²

In every novel she takes up the conventions of a different narrative form — Gothic romance, fairy tale, spy thriller, science fiction or history — working within those conventions and reshaping them. Her writing insistently challenges the limits of traditional genres, yet this
experimentalism is balanced against a strong continuity of interests which are both aesthetic and social: “I do see the novel as a vehicle for looking society – an interface between language and what we choose to call reality, although even that is a very malleable substance.” Atwood has always believed in the social function of art and in the writer’s responsibility to her readers:

If you think of a book as an experience, as almost the equivalent of having the experience, you’re not going to put them through a lot of blood and more for nothing: at least I’m not.

As a novelist, she discovers the anomalies of Canadian civilization in which women are not allowed to make any strategy of grabbing the male space. Her novels represent and reflect an important development in the post-sixties Canadian writing. Discussing about the role of the writer in society Atwood remarks that the writer “tends to concentrate more on life, not as it ought to be, but as it is, as the writer feels it, experiences it. Writers are eye witnesses, I — witnesses.” Atwood takes an altogether new turn in the 1960s to write more as women than as patriots.

It is a triumph of Atwood’s art as a novelist that she weaves the rich experience of life with her rich artistic material and produces mimetic pictures. She believes that “fiction is one of the few forms left through which we may examine our society not in its particular but in its typical aspects.” Her narrative skill with its satiric or ironic content, its spontaneity and freshness indicates her rich creative faculty. Her characters are highly distinctive in their motivations, conflicts, manners and methods and lend depth to her art. She says:
What kind of world shall you describe for your readers? The one you can see around you, or the better one you can imagine? If only the latter, you’ll be unrealistic; if only the former, despairing. But it is by the better world we can imagine that we judge the world we have. If we cease to judge this world, we may find ourselves, very quickly, in one, which is infinitely worse.\(^{17}\)

Thus Margaret Atwood is clearly concerned with the power that shows physical, political, economical and social control over woman to fragment her and suggestion about global environment in black future. This my survey of Margaret Atwood’s life and literary career will lead me, in the chapters that follow, to the critical study of her novels.

Thus first introductory chapter tries to introduce the life and works of Margaret Atwood, review of literature, the problem to be investigated, aims and objective of the present research work, concept of a critical study, methodology used in this investigation and chapter-wise plan. It also studies the biography of Margaret Atwood in brief, literary and philosophical influences to mould her literary career and her theory of novel.

The forthcoming chapter deals with the critical study of Margaret Atwood’s first four novels entitled as 1) *The Edible Woman*, 2) *Surfacing*, 3) *Lady Oracle* and 4) *Life Before Man*, that belongs to the early phase. These novels will be studied to explain their titles, stories, plot-constructions, narration, setting, themes, imagery, symbolism and view of life.
Notes and References:


3. Conversations, p. 121.

4. Ibid., p. 78.


8. Conversations, p. 112.

9. Ibid., p. 144


17. Second Words: Selected Critical Prose, p. 333