Chapter – I: Introduction

The feminist perspective, implying a woman centered theory, provides strategies for change in women's development. Feminist perspective is to understand women's oppression in terms of race, gender, class and sexual preference and how to change it. As such the feminist principle is an "uncompromising pledge" and an antidote to all types of exploitation and oppression of women. Perspective is a pattern of thought, of emotion, perception, expectation and motivation, in other words, it tells us, "how to think, feel, perceive, expect and act."

While discussing feminism, one is confronted with parallel or comparative models from different cultures. There are so many of them: the English feminism, the Canadian feminism, the African feminism, the Australian feminism, the New Zealand feminism. One has to listen to Patricia Grace to realize how effective New Zealand feminism is. Outside the orbit of literature written in English, there is French feminism which is very pronounced. Feminism as a precisely defined concept relating to sociological and literary studies is a phenomenon of recent development. The discussion of feminism in literary context,
particularly in the context of recent fiction in English, should provide an endeavor of a highly innovative nature representing a significant departure from the traditional mode of critical evaluation. We should consider feminism as a fictional strategy forged by writers in accordance with the pressures and challenges to which they have been subject, for projecting a feminist view of life and its problems. Criticism so far has been unable to take note of this strategy because of the age-old dominance of the male view in the world of letters. Naturally, therefore, we have not been able to see things as these feminist writers would want us to see them. As a critical tool, feminism should aim at providing us an altogether new awareness of the women's role in the modern complex world.

Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, and Margaret Atwood and a host of other women writers have registered a great measure of success as feminist writers and are acclaimed as "major" contemporary women novelists. The women's movement has provided many of these novelists with the courage and motivation to break out of traditional patriarchal forms to depict how women have been abused, exploited and oppressed. Thus, women writing in Canada are committed to bring about remarkable changes in the lives of Canadian women and society thereby "improving women's life chances, and have the
sense that women can contribute to the building of a major peaceful caring world. In other words, women writers have aimed at restructuring social and economic relations in the light of gender equality in Canadian society. They stress in their writing the need for revision and a resistance to open confrontation with the power politics of gender. In the Indian context, the study aims at "empowerment of women" in the decades to come.

Chapter - II: Margaret Atwood's Novel of the 60s

Margaret Atwood's novels show that Atwood as a Canadian woman writer is not limited by the regional or geographical boundaries. Her country is the whole world. "Think Globally, Act Locally" is the message of Atwood's novels. She envisions and proposes a world where all women enjoy human rights and lead a stable peaceful and healthy life. So, she suggests an alternative picture of reality. *The Edible Woman* is a very highly complex piece of realistic fiction. It seeks to subvert the patriarchal system of marriage. It portrays oppressive modes of marriage with more barriers to woman's individuality and autonomy. In this way, it questions and challenges cultural assumptions about woman's identity. In other words, the edible woman is an assertion of woman's individuality and autonomy in marriage. The other important issues with which the novel is concerned are the
problems confronted by working women; restrictions on marriage, pregnancy and the denial of important positions in offices and other establishments to women.

Marian begins to eat the cake ending her withdrawal from food as soon as Peter leaves the place. She also offers the remainder of the cake to Dilincan who comes there on his own. His authority too vanishes as he proceeds to eat it. By creating the cake, she would like to symbolize her feelings, the treatment given to her by both Peter and Duncan. Thus, symbolically, the cake-woman represents woman as an object for male consumption. It also reveals over-richness and over-decoration in the system of marriage. Marian offers Peter the cake as a substitute for herself when he comes to demand an explanation for her disappearance from the cocktail party. The cake which Marian finally baked and ate is symbolic evidence of her development, and of her ultimate refusal to be a victim, the packaged product of a male-dominated corporate society. Marian poses a challenge that she cannot be manipulated by people like Peter and Duncan. She affirms a sense of pride and proclaims at the end that a cake is edible but a woman is not. As a woman, Marian definitely has changed from the meek, docile traditional woman to the bold, conscious and rebellious feminist. She has become active as an agent, a subject, a consumer
rather than remain a consumable object of exchange traded on the marriage market. Marian, the bride to-be, is a representative of modern youth rebelling against the system of marriage and its oppression. Marian has resigned her job, challenging the male authority, hierarchy, competition, double standard of morality and discrimination, the ruling elements which victimized her.

The story of Marian's self discovery is the frightening vision of struggle for sanity. Marian achieves her sanity. But she does not change her society. The proof of her sanity is that Marian has learned to live meaningfully. Atwood has presented everything to our inspection through the discriminating eyes of Marian, the champion of feminism.

Chapter III - Margaret Atwood's Novels of the 70s

Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing* decries man's imposition on woman in matters of profession, marriage and motherhood, which cripples her intellectually, emotionally and morally. The novel is the most powerful text expressing the politics of gender. The novel is a revolt of the nameless woman artist protagonist against the denial of woman's professional aspiration as well as motherhood. The novel questions and challenges woman's place in traditional discourse and suggest a rejection of such discourse. The protagonist refuses to return to the city and civilization along with Anna, David, and Joe, because they
threaten to devour her by making efforts to use her naked body as a random sample for their movie. She chooses to remain alone on the island home of her parents. However, this cannot be interpreted as an escape from reality. She is not a passive Solitary Weeper; she makes decisions, performs action, causes as well as endures events, and has perhaps even some ambition, some creative power. In her heroic quest for the realization of her identity, the protagonist achieves her enlightenment. She negates all human links and associations. She rejects the world of male logic, the odious elements of civilization and its values in clothing and its canned food.

In *Surfacing* the protagonist attains the affirmative and humanistic ideal by the end of her journey in the Northern Quebec Island. Her association with the people and nature in the Quebec Island raises her consciousness of victimization of women in particular and all the animate and inanimate objects in general. When her feminist consciousness reaches its climax, the protagonist makes ready the ground for revolt against exploitation and oppression of all beings. The protagonist decides to go back to the city to face life. She is determined not to withdraw from battlefield. She has ultimately found her true identity in her ‘rebel’ role. She refuses ‘to be a victim’ and assumes for herself a new role.
Surfacing emphasizes the women need to recognize their inner potential and empower themselves. It suggests that women artists can create the new myths necessary to depict the integrity of a female who is both courageous and womanly. It leaves the task to future mothers and daughters. In this novel, Atwood endorses the struggle for "freedom without anarchy, order without oppression," and proposes that all men and women would work together to free the world from exploitation and oppression.

Atwood's Lady Oracle shows how the identity and individuality of a women writer is destroyed by the invisible authority of male writers and her writing is gendered and classed on the basis of sex. Joan is aware that Arthur wants to turn her into a domestic servant to serve him for years. Further, Arthur also imposes restrictions that Joan should not wear long fashionable dresses in public because he feels that she may attract the exploiters. Joan gets bored and frustrated in her marital life with Arthur as he does not understand her ideals and aspirations. Life becomes difficult for Joan. Tears trickle down her face.

By drawing blood from the male, rendering him helpless and then reviving him, Joan turns the male into the ravished and rescued and herself into persecutor and protector. Like her father, who had been both a doctor and an assassin during the
war, she can give and take life. She need no longer fear her own femaleness, nor the males who forbid her an identity. Joan decides she will no longer write comic; she will write a novel about real people. The novel thus shows the characteristic comic movement from a lesser to greater awareness of worldly reality. Atwood's conclusion is too reassuring to be reassuring. We suspect that Joan is once again adopting a disguise to elude the realities of her psychic conflict, this time the militant female. It may be that the condition of women in modern world is not so grave anymore, and such “new Joans” can indeed create themselves. In today's more open environment, with more opportunities for personal achievement and independence, and hence less dependence on sexuality for survival, with more comradeship between the sexes, with medical advancement and better sex education, woman need not suffer the terrors and conflicts which the traditional Gothic novel psychologically dramatizes. The choices and possibilities are not as hard and fixed as a cameo; they are fluid, changeable, like the shifting images in a funhouse mirror.

The autobiography of Joan Foster, Atwood proclaims that both men and women are equal as they have the same human capabilities and therefore gender-based injustices should be fought against in the society. Lady Oracle exhorts that women
should no longer barter reality for a pseudo security promised by male. It also reveals that they no longer wish to be scapegoats in the mazes, thickets, and brambles of life. It encourages women to be bold enough to face life head on. It makes clear that they must no longer hold to the wife-mother role as it has been interpreted in the past. It exhorts them to exercise their autonomy and be free to pursue interesting and challenging careers. It also urges men to share the nurturing role. The novel is a feminist writer's frontal attack on "the dominant pattern of gender relations in contemporary society."

*Life Before Man*, Atwood's most realistic novel continues her concern with how humans can break through predetermined, negative patterns. The issue is not the Gothic quest for love so much as it is the search for identity as process of healing. Many forms of pain, death, divorce, abandonment, discrimination, madness threaten the novel's female characters, particularly Elizabeth, posing the central question of how people can change for the better, when they are psychologically burdened by the past, in *Life Before Man*. This novel also discusses women's recognition of power of the mother figure, and the depth of her pain in the institution of marriage. The women in the novel are torn between the past and the future, between the mother's frustrations and her extravagant hopes for the daughters. The
novel refers to the uncertainty of women posed between past and future, between mothers and daughters, frustration and hope.

Elizabeth, a special projects administrator at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, marries Nate, an unemployed law graduate, with the hope of getting safety and shelter for her life. But she soon discovers that it is Nate, who is emotionally weak and dependent, who requires security. Elizabeth and Nate are very mechanical and they do not know what 'love' means between them. They have never lived together as a real wife and husband. Yet two children are born out of their wedlock. Lesje is forced by her witch-like grandmother to seek refuge in the unreal world of fantasies. Lesje's dinosaur fantasies exemplify the monstrous nature of man-woman relationship based on ethics. Lesje has loved William, an environmental engineer. Their love affair ends as William does not want to have a child by her. Therefore, she has 'seedy' or 'even tack' affair with Nate.

Elizabeth becomes involved with Chris, who works in her office. Chris demands her to give up her job, and leave her home and her two children. He wants her to cross the limits and live with him. She refuses to live on his mercy as a dependent woman. The novel ends when/while Nate and Lesje are moving toward one another, accepting the forward movement of time and a new connection.
Margaret Atwood's Bodily Harm (1981) is best-known post-feminist novel. In the early eighties the heat of the feminist fervour was subdued with the knowledge that women were no longer inferior or docile. But the novel shows that the legal, economic, political and social conditions of women are still bleak and that they are still where they were a century ago. Rennie writes the travelogue with a sense of commitment to expose the wickedness of men on the one hand and the brutality of the state on the other. She is the child of an irresponsible man who has abandoned his family for a mistress in Toronto.

Rennie comes in contact with Jack who works as a designer of appearances for a packaging company. She seems to be over-confident that she can stand upto any critical situation without any harm either to her body or her psyche. Later on, she realizes that his interest in her is limited to the gratification of his carnal desires. Rennie gets involved in love with Paul because of his impressive manners and ideals. She feels that Paul is a good substitute to Jack, her first lover, who turns out to be an exploiter and seducer. So, she is involved in bouts of sex with him for brief spell. She feels a sense of urgency to run away from all her meaningless and loveless involvement with all men.
Rennie’s association with Jocasta, a feminist activist, raises her consciousness of herself and helps her understand better the villainous attitude and victimizing nature of male world towards women. Rennie interviews Frank, an artist, who depicts pornography as an art form. The article on pornography takes Rennie to visit the Toronto policeman’s pornography museum along with Jocasta. She is horrified by the sight of nude film clips of women meant for display and exhibition at the museum, naked forms of women in different postures of brutality are displayed. Rennie discovers different victims in the Caribbean island. Rennie visits women prisoners in the Caribbean prison along with Dr. Minnow, who is known for his rebellion against the tyranny of government.

In her travelogue, Rennie includes the tales which Lora narrates in prison. Lora’s tales of woe and brutality completely shatter Rennie’s over-confidence in women’s liberation. Rennie asserts that “bodily harm” is everywhere, both inside and outside of the prison, both in civilized and uncivilized countries, and both in political and personal fields. Thus, there are no fixed hard boundaries to “bodily harm”. So, Rennie also looks forward to a day of better and healthier relationships between men and women.

The Handmaid’s Tale is Atwood’s most popular novel which is perhaps surprising given it bleak futuristic scenario. A great
deal of critical attention has been paid to it as dystopian science fiction and as a novel of feminist protest. Certainly, Atwood's abiding social and political concerns are evident in her scrutiny of structures of oppression within public and private life as well as her concerns with environment, and her nationalist engagement with Canadian American relations. Yet the novel exceeds definitions of political correctness and has provoked much unease in its critique of the second wave North American feminism.

In addition to the Handmaids, the Republic of Gilead offers its own state-sponsored brand of sex prostitutes called the Jezebels whose sole function is to entertain foreign delegations. The Aunts, the policewoman of Gilead, who are clad in paramilitary Khaki train in Handmaids. Thus, women are completely controlled by men and are arranged in a hierarchy of valve in Gilad. Therefore, Offred's *The Handmaid's Tale* "future culture in which such feminist dreams have been replaced by fundamentalist patriarchy that divides women into rigid categories based on function."

In the Republic of Gilead, women are completely controlled by men and arranged in a hierarchy of functions. In addition to the Handmaids, that is, 'reproductive prostitutes', the Republic Gilead offers its own state sponsored brand of "sex prostitutes" called the Jezebels whose sole function is to entertain foreign
delegations. The wives of "Commanders of the Faith", who are called social secretaries and functionaries, aid their husbands during the insemination, known as the "ceremony". They are in the charge of household discipline and are clad in blue robes resembling those of the virgin.

Offred in *The Handmaid's Tale* poses a challenge to traditional values. It is also recognition to the victimized women that the structures that cause and perpetuate women's oppression are arbitrary. Therefore, any kind of oppression is subject to change. In this way, Offred tells us in her cautionary tale something we need to know about the human capacity for survival which is a "canonization of feminism." "The satire in the *The Handmaid's Tale* directs its criticism toward all of us, feminists and non-feminists, women and men. It warns us of the imperceptible technology of power, of the subtle domination of women by men, and of our unconscious imprisoning of each other and ourselves by ourselves."

*Cat's Eye* is Atwood's attempt to expose male prejudices against women's creativity and talent and shows how art can be used as a weapon against tyranny in all its manifestations. Thus, the novel is like an oasis in a desert for those whose creativity is prevented from blooming. Elaine Risely, the protagonist in this masterpiece, is a middle-aged painter who returns to Toronto,
once her home, for a Retrospective show of her paintings. The retrospective show becomes the novel's central metaphor since what the novel depicts is Elaine's retrospection of her own life from her school days, adolescence and her involvement in the avant-garde art scene, to her present career as a painter.

Elaine is raised by parents who are unconventional. She is influenced by her father who is, first entomologist, and then a university professor of Zoology. Occasionally, she has watched his students draw insects. She judges them better or worse depending on the colours. She is fascinated by colours. Her interest in minute details later gives her a penetrating vision into things. She learns about insect infestations and acquires an interest in cross section drawings. Thus, she develops microscopic vision. Elaine realizes the true personality of Mr. Josef Hrbik in victimization of Susie, her fellow art student, who commits suicide because of her illicit pregnancy. With her marriage and childbirth, Elaine's dream of establishing a balanced and healthy relationship with a fellow painter turns sour. She participates in the Women Artists' Conference on "anger" toward men. She realizes how the status of women painters is degraded by the male artists as second rate in spite of the intrinsic merit of their work. She is amazed by the rage of women artists at the seminar.
Her painting, "Life Drawing" is a tableau that brings out the abuse of women by male painters. It criticizes the ideology of Josef and Jon, the male painters, particularly the former who is Elaine's "Life Drawing" teacher and the latter her first husband. The Cat's Eye vision of Elaine turns its focus on new issues of women and examines them and turns them over and over in the light of truth. Elaine, who is herself an alien, a newcomer, sees through an alien's eye the unknown world. Metaphorically speaking, the cat's eyes are not eyes of cats but the eyes of Elaine, a woman painter, who is unnoticed in her native city of Toronto. Elaine is endowed with a vision to see through the cat's eye the victimization of women. The cat's eye vision guides Elaine towards the creation of surrealistic paintings which are luminous. Thus, the art has an air of soothing, retrieving, and transforming existing gender relationships. It offers a new perspective on life.

Chapter - V: Margaret Atwood's Novels of the 90s

Margaret Atwood's The Robber Bride elucidates how sex is a strategy for exercising power in society. The Robber Bride, thus, is a feminist thought-provoking novel. It is the most intricate and subversive of all Atwood's novels. The novel tells us how female sexuality is as transgressive as the male sexuality in transforming the existing gender relations, in other words, it questions and
challenges radical feminist thinking about gender relation in the 20th century that is the contemporary society. What Atwood envisages here is that both patriarchy and matriarchy are two extreme standpoints. Hence, the novel drives home the message that heterosexual relations ought to be voluntary, egalitarian or equalitarian, just and holistic but should not be exploitative, alienating or oppressive.

At an early age, Zenia is sexually abused by a Greek orthodox priest who is an agent of religious community. She is fatherless and her mother is a victim of 'commercial sex'. Sexual abuse and oppression reduce the suffering mother to a state of pennilessness. Being protectionless, the very survival becomes very difficult for them. These harrowing circumstances force them onto the streets where they are to earn their livelihood through the "best paid industry", that is, prostitution. What happened in the lives of Zenia, Tony, Charis and Roz and their mothers is "a chart of simultaneous events. The pathetic tales of their survival are footnotes to 'the battle of sexes'. The story of Zenia is refracted through the prism of the lives of Tony, Charis and Roz. Zenia's identity as *The Robber Bride* is established through the stories of Tony, Chris and Roz about her, which are all stories of seduction, betrayal and humiliation.
The Robber Bride shows that the other women are always against 'us' precisely because she represents that otherness which cannot be accommodated or acknowledged but which is also necessary for self-definition. Zenia represents what is unspeakable because it has been buried alive as she transgresses the boundaries between realism and fantasy, between what is acceptable and what is forbidden. Atwood as fiction-maker tricks her readers into confronting this challenge, for, like Zenia, she too is a magician who uses the same illusionist techniques. Zenia is a representative of power of female sexuality the transgressive element which continues to threaten feminist attempts to transform gender relationships and concepts of sexual power politics in the 1990s. The novel pleads for the attainment of a viable equilibrium between sexes. Therefore, The Robber Bride makes us "think more about how we think about gender relations in the post-feminist generation in the 1990s. The message of the novel is that all men and women should stop "pretending and dissembling, cajoling and manipulating" and thus transcend the battle of the sexes and join their hands to keep the world free from sexual exploitation and oppression.

Alias Grace is a historical novel set in the 1840s, which invokes past. The protagonist Grace Marks is a notorious female criminal who is also the narrator of the story. Atwood's novel Alias
Grace set in the mid-nineteenth century Canada, fictionalizes the "true story" of Grace Marks, an Irish immigrant who, at the age of sixteen, worked in the household of the gentleman Thomas Kinnear. Together with the stableman James McDermott, she was convicted of the murder of her employer and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery. McDermott was hanged, but Grace escaped death—thanks to her lawyer's brilliant defense. Her sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, but Grace was initially sent to a lunatic asylum in Toronto after several fits of hysteria or "madness". A central character in Atwood's novel, though not a historical figure is Dr., Simon Jordan, a New Engander and puritan "gentleman", who, as an expert on amnesia, tries to discover the truth about Grace during psychoanalytic sessions held in the governor's sewing room. Using a detective's methods, he attempts to figure out whether Grace actually committed the crime and whether she was insane at the time of the murder.

Simon is doomed to remain spiritually and emotionally hollow or barren. His hands are empty, for he is incapable of love and commitment. His fear of water represents his resistance for the dissolution of his familiar identity and of his fixed ideas. He is afraid of vision, of spiritual death rebirth. The inference that it is psychological trauma which lies at the root of Grace's lapses
of memory is reinforced by the image of Simon's final condition as a war veteran who is afflicted by combat neurosis, a form of hysteria which results in amnesia.

Atwood undercuts the realist code of the nineteenth century by interspersing conventions of realism with fantastic and poetic intertexts. She interrogates Simon Jordan's positivistic, monological perception of reality and his homogenizing discourse, which reduces a complex reality and denies the multiplicity of the subject. The narrative form establishes a dialogic relationship between a realistic, a fantastic, and a poetic literary discourse parallels the central theme in the novel, the dialogue between the self and the self as "other", or the unconscious, is excluded from the dominant cultural order and is situated outside discourse. Manifestations of the unconscious in the fantastic and visionary realm are unrecognized and unrecognizable within the frame of reference within which Simon Jordan operates, and within that adopted by the dominant culture. Atwood brings to light that which has been pushed into the margin of society, she wants to make the unseen visible, without, however, claiming to replace one type of truth by another.

Chapter VI - Margaret Atwood's Novels of the Recent Times

The Booker Prize winning sensation from the incomparable Margaret Atwood, The Blind Assassin combines Gothic drama,
romantic suspense, and a science fiction yarn in an entrancing novel of uncommon intricacy and grace.

As Iris Chase Griffen, the sole surviving descendant of once distinguished Toronto family, recalls the events of her life and the pivotal death of her sister Laura, we simultaneously read Laura's posthumously published novel. *The Blind Assassin*, is the novel within a novel, the tale of two lovers on the lam, there is yet another narrative; a science fiction fantasy, in which a blind assassin and a mute sacrificial virgin share a journey of their own. Brilliantly waving together such seemingly disparate elements, Atwood creates a world of astonishing vision and unforgettable impact.

Atwood's novels have consistently undercut the illusion of retrieving the truth about reality or about the self. The experimental formal feature with which the author undercuts this illusion in *The Blind Assassin* is the intertwining in a speculative narrative of historical and literary intertexts, where by various forms of employment belonging to classic realism but also to ancient history, ancient myth, legend, popular romance, science fiction and journalism, are imposed on Iris Chase's experience as a means of interpreting the past. Atwood's technique of *mise en abyme*, or the embedding of stories within stories, each belonging to a different genre, with events, images and
characters' behavior being constantly mirrored, serves as a tool to question the relationship between historical fact and fiction and to call into doubt our ability to ever know reality and represent it truthfully.

In Atwood's novel *Oryx and Crake*, we follow the lives of the two friends; Jimmy, the "neurotypical" world person, and Crake, the brilliant but socially isolated scientist. They each move from college into their careers, experience the death of a parent under sinister circumstances, and finally become involved with the elusive and beautiful Oryx. A caricature from male fantasy rather than a fully realized East Asian Woman, Oryx embodies sexual and racial oppression. Her only formal education, the English lessons to given her by the old man who imprisons her in his San Francisco garage, Oryx has been schooled by the ambiguous compromises required for survival; sale by her mother to a willing buyer, participation in kiddie porn captive labor as an illegal alien, and sex work as student service. She has been a practical tutor for the denizens of a new scientific Eden and worldwide distributor of the paradoxical drug to end all drugs, the Blysspluss Pill. Oryx's experiences of physical brutality may seem far from the elegant intellectual puzzles that preoccupy the brilliant, Crick like Crake. But when Jimmy and Oryx come to work at the biotech corporation Rejooven Essence,
Crake uses Oryx to put in motion a chain of events that lead to a compromise even more profound than Oryx's, a scheme for survival based on eradicating humanity inherent flaws.

As we follow the parallel careers of Jimmy and Crake, we do well to consider how their different sorts of education prepare them for the world they shape as adults.

Greek mythology, with its macho heroes, revengeful gods, homoeroticism and submissive maidens, may not at first seem a good fit with Margaret Atwood, a writer whose fiction is driven by her subversive on the lot of women. But her latest work takes its inspiration from Homer's Odyssey, though, as one might expect from the author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood's is a female focused version. Instead of the Odyssey, we have *The Penelopiad*, a retelling of Odysseus' epic 20 year journey home to Ithaca, seen through the eyes of his abandoned wife, Penelope, and her 12 maids.

After some initial floundering, however, once she reaches the familiar ground of the Homeric material, Penelope gets back on track and relaxes into some really fine story telling. The growing tension between her calm and self-assured tone and the raucous comments and revelations by the Chorus leads to a mystery like ending where no questions have been clearly answered, but one fact emerges beyond any doubt, the maids
have been terribly wronged, and there is nothing in this world that can make that wrong right. Therefore one gives Margaret Atwood full credit for her mischievous but thoughtful reading of *The Odyssey*, and one is convinced that *The Penelopiad* will be much enjoyed by every classicist as well as by any true lover of Homer's epic.

**Chapter VII – Conclusion**

This concluding chapter attempts a sum-up of Atwood's feminist fictional writing from her first novel *The Edible Woman* to the last one *The Penelopiad*. There are the feminist issues which include her scrutiny of social myths of femininity, male and female fantasies about women; representations of women's bodies in art, fiction, popular culture and pornography, women's social and economic exploitation as well as women's relations with each other, not to mention their relations with men. Atwood's novels situated at the interface between language and what we choose to call reality, highlight nothing so much as the artifice of representation, where the real world is transformed and reinvented with the imaginative spaces of fiction. Yet within this seemingly infinite variety, there is a recognisably Atwoodian voice, witty, self-ironical, politically and morally engaged as her worldly text responding to what is actually going on in her own place and time, speaking her double vision of how things look
on the surface and what else is happening at the same time inside, underneath or elsewhere.

Atwood can be viewed as a feminist writer as she is concerned with the psychological and physical survival of women, and she sees this in terms not merely of individual survival of women, but a sisterhood. Marriage and interpersonal relationships whether gauged through feminist or socialist point of view, should be based on true love and be "marriage of true minds" as Shakespeare termed it. Gender discrimination for centuries has made women rebel against the prevailing norms but all women certainly believe in the noble principle of love, on which the entire humanity survives.