The present work attempts to delineate Margaret Atwood’s fiction in the light of *quest of identity* and *quest of survival*. Margaret Atwood holds a prominent place among Canadian writers. Through her writing she has set a new trend in Canadian literature. As a feminist writer Margaret Atwood’s aim is to explore woman’s inner psyche, their conflict, search for identity, identity of selfhood, identity of womanhood, national identity, cultural identity and religious identity.

Margaret Atwood was born in 1939 in Ottawa and grew up in northern Ontario and Quebec bush, and Toronto. She received her undergraduate degree from Victoria college at the University of Toronto and Master’s degree from Radcliff college. Margaret Atwood has received a lot of numerous awards and several honorary degrees. She is the author of more than twenty five volumes of poetry, fiction and nonfiction and is perhaps best known for her novels, which includes, *The Edible woman*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *The Robber Bride*, *Alias Grace*.

Her best novel, *The Blind Assassin*, which won the prestigious Booker Prize, was published in the fall of 2000. Acclaimed for her talent for portraying both personal and worldly problems of Universal concern, Ms. Atwood’s work has been published in more than thirty languages, including Farsi, Japanese, Turkish, Spanish, Korean.

Canadian poet, novelist and critic, noted for her feminism and
sylphological themes. Atwood’s work has been regarded as a barometer of feminist thought. Her protagonist are often a kind of 'every woman' characters or weaker number of society. Atwood’s works have achieved both wide popular readership and much critical attention. Criticism has tended to focus on her political and social view as they are represented in her works, most notably her feminism, of which has spoken frequently in interviews. Because her works often Portray physical and psychological violence in relationships between men and women, some commentators have labeled Atwood as a pessimistic and dismissed her as little more than an ideologue, but other critics have hailed her as a visionary interpreter of contemporary feminist thought.

Atwood’s fiction is often symbolic. She has moved easily between satire and fantasy, and enlarged the boundaries of traditional realism. In an attempt to reestablish their self in satisfying homes, these women purpose a path, as have women throughout history, to marriage. They search for a male figure, imagining a refuge caught up in the romantic stereotypes that assign and perpetual gender roles.

Canada’s ethnic, racial and religious diversity is rapidly increasing. According to the Census 2011, more than 200 ethnic origins are represented in Canada. About 13.5 percent of the population is a member of a visible minority group and that proportion is expected to reach 20 percent by 2016. Immigration now accounts for more than 50 percent of Canada's population’s growth with immigrant coming mainly from Asia and Middle East. It is projected that, after 2025, Canada's population
growth will be based solely on immigration. Canadian culture is a product of Canada's history and geography. Most of Canada's territory was inhabited and developed later than other European colonies in the America, with the result that theme and symbols of pioneers, trappers, and traders were important in the early development of Canadian culture. The British conquest of Canada in 1759 brought a large Francophone population under British rule, creating a need for compromise and accommodation, while the migration of united empire loyalist from the thirteen colonies brought in strong British and American influence. Today, Canada has a diverse makeup of nationalities and cultures and constitution protection for polices that promote multiculturalism rather than a single national myth. Cultural protectionism in Canada has since the mid 20th century, taken the form of consciousness interventionist attempts on the part of various Canadian governments to promote Canadian cultural production and limit the effect of foreign, largely American, culture on the domestic audience. Sharing a large border and a common language with the United States, Canada faces a difficult position in regard to American culture, be it American culture, and be it direct attempt at the Canadian marker or the general diffusion of American culture. When we discuss ‘Culture’ of a nation, it includes each and every aspects, which influenced to this like renew, arts, literature, symbols, sport, music, politics, economic, and geographical portrait. In the realm of cultural policy, and particularly areas in which Canada's interests are centered, no significant progress is evident. This, of course, does not mean the total absence of
moves to address persuaded of the meaning government ownership, regulation, and subsidy in the cultural field has for Canadians, US officials did finally agree that 'Cultural industries' should not be brought within the largely free market terms of the pact. Thus, making a gesture toward a vital Canadian concern, they contributed mightily to the successful outcome of the talk.

In the early decades of the new century, the impulse toward cultural creativity quickened substantially. Driven in part by the continuing growth in Canadian society's complexity by 1921 the balance between the country's rural and urban population was almost even, with a concomitant growth of audiences, proliferation of galleries and museums, and development of musical groups and in part by the new burst of nationalism stimulated by pride in Canada's accomplishments "during world War I" this materially strengthened thrust in the direction of painting, literature, musical endeavour, and theatre produced a body of work that, in both quality and quantity, was superior to anything that had gone before.

The question that arises in the context of the present discussion, however, is; How much of this multiculturalstic situation is reflected in the literature of Canada? The novels of Margaret Atwood do have, without doubt, a specific socio-cultural back ground in as much as they have well defined too that her novels reflects the Canadian social science in all its variety, colour and complexity.
The American presence continues to remain a threat to the Canadian identity and the imminent some believe - Americanization of Canada remains as frightening a possibility as ever as is evidenced for instance, by the controversy over the free trade in the mid-80s. The Canadians continue to feel insecure because of the proximity of the U.S. culture and feel compelled to resist on identification with the U.S. An important discussion on 'Amercia the Brazen' and the resentment is domineering gesture create abroad by Jame Walsh, Time 4 August 1997's focused on one of her most ironic and memorable image of Canadian American relations: "About the only position they have adopted towards us, country to country, has been the missionary position, and we were not on top. A guess that is why the national wisdom vis-à-vis. They have so often taken the form of lying still, keeping your mouth shut and pretending you like it"

The quest for identity is, of course, not a peculiar Canadian problem. It is a fate Canada shares with all post colonial or new nations. However, what distinguishes the Canadian predicament from that of the other countries is the continuation of identity - crisis over an inordinately long time span. For, although it is more than a century since Canada attained its sovereign status as a confederate country by the British North America Act of 1867, the quest for a distinctive national identity continues to remain an ongoing preoccupation in Canada. Until the 1867 confederation, Canada was a colony of the British Empire. The history of Canada, therefore, was the British Empire.
Canadian identity refers to the set of characteristics and symbols that many Canadians regard as expressing their unique place and role in the world. Identity as Canadian and this identity can be metaphoric as well as actual. As Margaret Atwood writes in *Night Poem*, "In this country of water. . . . your shadow is not your shadow but your reflection" (Two headed Poem, 106). To be Canadian, for Atwood, is a 'State of Mind'.

Currently, Canada is home to more than 100 ethnic groups who speak of different languages, irrespective of the fact that Canadian literatures written in two major languages, *English* and *French*. Canadian literature evolved directly from Victorian into post-modern, first Canadian literature remained Victorian during its colonial period which may also be called its modern literature. Secondly, when the country freed itself from its colonial identity.

Canadian literature to be dominated by natural or small town settings by images of the wilderness or rural life. Canada is both young and old. It is young as a nation, only slightly more than one hundred year old. When the four original provinces of lower Canada (Quebec), upper Canada (Ontario) Nova Scotia, and New Bruns wick united to form the dominion of Canada under the British North America Act of 1867, there southern neighbour, the United States, was already approaching the celebration of its essential. The tenth and last province, New found land, joined the dominion in 1949; the country as presently constituted is scarcely a quarter century old. At the same time Canada is old as a place of European settlement. Near the end of tenth century the Viking arrived
on Canada's Atlantic Coast, and about five centuries before Christopher Columbus discovered America. Canadian's history is the record of a colony paying allegiance to several mother countries to follow Canada's historical development is to trace its time as colony of France England and, finally most elusively, as an economic colony of the United States. Part of the history of Canada is an account of the slow realization of its own independence, an acceptance of its importance within an international framework, and most significant, a discarding of the colonial mentality which had characterized the country and its action for many years.

The issue of Canadian identity remains under scrutiny, perhaps more than the identity of the people of any other modern nation. Journalist Andrew Cohen wrote in 2007, "The Canadian identity, as it has come to be known, is as elusive as the Sasquatch and Ogopoge. It has animated - and frustrated - generation of statesmen, historian, writers, artists, philosophers, and the Nation Film Board..... Canada a resist's easy definition."

The portrayal of women in search of an identity for their own selves as well as of their country's cultural identity is an important phenomenon in recent Canadian fiction. Atwood's vision of life centre around the psyche, the soul and the consciousness of man. The women as portrayed by Atwood sufferer from personal victimization which has its roots in the colonial pattern of destruction. The women feel inferior to men and suffix psychological tensions, which supports the view that women's lives constitutes an experience of colonialism. This is portrayed by women
writers who try to picture the individual's place in the male dominated society. Remaining in this colonised state they fell oppressed and find it difficult to communicate with others and feel others as strangers. The portrayal of women's place in the society, their search for identity and their struggle to come to terms with existence, the self and the land gives a new dimension to the Canadian landscape which portrays the changing character of their country. Novels like Atwood's *surfacing* 1972 and *Bodily Harm* 1981 portray, for instance, not only the lives of individuals but also the general outlook of life which reflects the lack of patriotism in the country. It is from the lives of particular persons that the general life of the society evolves and is again the general life which in its turn shapes individual lives. While introspection, self-analysis and an attempt to come to terms with one's self both through isolation and social interaction are featured, the novels also reflect the *regional realities* and *national consciousness*, a consciousness which includes awareness of *economic, political and linguistic and racial differences* which act as obstacles to *national unity*. Atwood like her contemporaries sought to record local experiences with a distinctive local voice which at the same time made for an assertion of the *regional national* and *cultural identity of nation*.

Atwood's protagonists educated and have a full knowledge of their life. All the protagonists tried hard to find out their identity. Atwood's novels suggest new possibilities of accuracy identity based on the experience of social life. She is able to describe intellectual concepts to connect with the personal and the social, the local and the cosmic identity
of human being in her novels. This has always been an important function of her fiction, to get the identity. Atwood and other Canadians of her generation went back to Canada to publish their own work:

"Instead of trying to publish in New York or London or Paris. We started thinking in terms of Canadian Publication for a Canadian Audience."

Quest of survival explored by Atwood in her works as a Canadian writer, deals with the issue of victimization and survival as condition of both the Canadian experience and female experience. Atwood's novels themes related to the survival such as the enforced alienation of women under patriarchal attempt to annihilate the selfhood of women, the gradual carving out of female space of women, through various strategies and women's quest for identity, self definition and autonomy. Structurally, Atwood is an innovator who experiments with various narrative forms.

Victim position in survival, she did it as an aid to the study of Canadian literature, where she found a superabundance of victims, as she herself has said that the positions are the same whether you are a victim, a victimized minority group or a victimized individual. In the position of victimization the fact of being a victim is acknowledge, the responsibility for it is transferred to something vast, nebulous and unchangeable like Biology or womanhood. Either the victim does this by herself or she accepts such an explanation and definition of herself as given by others. Her protagonists are not very heroic heroines in the beginning of their
adventures and sometimes not even at the conclusion. They are not to really reliable narrators; they may lie to the reader as they sometimes lie to themselves, or in some instances, they are even a bit mad. They are often fragmented, isolated, seeing poorly, and translating badly. All are, in varying degrees, failed artists like those metaphorically paralysed and amputated authors whom Atwood describes in *Survival*, cut off from tradition, *bereft* of audience and of social or political relevance. All of Atwood writer and artist protagonists share a curious ambivalence towards their craft. They often use their fictions for the evasion of reality rather than for combination, they create illusion rather than transform reality. Much like Atwood’s mirror images, so central to all her novels and poems, art can function, as it does for these heroines, as a way to lose the self in a vision of the self, to establish a conflict between the ‘I’ of the self and ‘she’ of one’s fiction, to become object rather than subject, to create polarities where none should exist. Atwood’s innocent and at least symbolically virginal heroine, she implies, must like Canada as a whole, *refute the illusion* of their own innocence, recognise their complicity in the destructive cycle of power and victimisation, and thus comfort their own reality.

Atwood’s method, how to approach is new. She thinks and then works on the subjects. Atwood believe in realism, the hard reality of life. Her love for past living in future makes her novels interesting. She judges fairly her characters and their consequences are true to the realities. She tries to cover the terrible gab between man and women. Her interest in
sexuality separates her from others. Her novels are creative woks and can serve as guideline to those who lost values and moral in their lives. She believes that women will have to come forward to change their social and national situations even if the final situation worked out in the novel of Margaret Atwood.

Margaret Atwood’s fictions not depressive or gloomy nor does she writes out of bitterness, on the contrary, she writes with full faith in mankind and with love and compassion for human failure in this imperfect world. By presenting the apparently disorderly lives of her protagonist, makes people aware of the modern man’s dilemma and drives home the need for universal love and individual identity of the person. Inspite of the discouraging reality of the surface story, Margaret Atwood constantly reaffirms her faith in human values and human’s ability to achieve their identity and quest of survival.
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