

VOICES AND ECHOES OF WOMEN IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S NOVEL "THE BLIND ASSASSIN"

S.Malathi

*M.Phil Scholar, Department of English,
Sri Sarada College for Women, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India*

Abstract

The novel *The Blind assassin* is the dark master piece of Margaret Atwood. The novel is about the chase family and the story of two sister's sufferings Iris and Laura. The story is about the tragic deaths. It is narrated through the central character, old iris chase griffen. Laura in her life time, she wrote the story of her own memories with the title "The Blind Assassin". After the death of Laura, Iris found it and she includes her own life sufferings and later this is developed by iris and published by her sister's name Laura. This paper is mainly focused on women's voices and echoes of women's feelings seeks how the female character Iris, when faced with extreme harassment and subordination appropriates her voice to fight back against the oppressive forces that are instrumental in her construction and making. She personifies the bruises and injuries of her body to unfold all those factors which are responsible for women's making, conditioning and becoming as marginalized, mute and passive object in the society. It is brought to the fore that how women by identifying their potential and using their subdued powerful identity may punish and overthrow patriarchal hegemony.

Keywords: bruises, hegemony.

Introduction

Margaret Atwood's tenth novel "*The Blind Assassin*" published in 2000. In this novel, the tales are nested perfectly in a Russian doll style. The expert craftsmanship that Atwood possesses in the blind assassin is amazing. She nails the tales elegantly. She is considered as "a jewel in Canadian writing". The optimism in the 1920's, the fear and hunger of the depression, the enthusiasm and political unrest into the late 1940's. During this period, the feminist movements has provided by many novelist with the courage and motivation to break out of traditional patriarchal forms to depict how women have been abused, exploited and oppressed. Canadian feminist attempt to focus on the "new women"- self aware, independent, seeking to evolve an identity of her own. Their novels concern towards the discovery of the self and women's encounter with the world. They are concerned with exploration and survival and tent to project the image of women who is confident, intelligent and assertive.

Thus the aim of women writing in Canada is to bring about remarkable changes in the lives of Canadian women and society. They want gender equality in Canadian society. They are improving women's self-chances and have the sense that women can contribute to the building of a major peaceful caring world.

The Blind Assassin portrays the social scene in all its variety, color and complexity. The values relating to love, sex and marriage which are part of the cultural implications of a society are vividly depicted in the novel. The novel gives glimpses of both the rural and urban scenes of Canada. The themes of freedom, isolation, separation, and survival dominate in the novel. The quest

for spiritual survival is also found. The characters struggle to overcome alienation and they aspire to achieve personal and social integration. There are images of alienation, which are portrayed through tourists and immigrants. Spiritual, mental and psychological alienation have become powerful themes in the lives of Laura, Liliana and Iris. A gallery of vivid and realistic portrayal of human struggle is presented. Benjamin Chase's struggle to establish the button factory and his economic struggle are discussed with all its complexities. Adelia's struggle to instill the upper class culture is discussed in detail. She takes steps to hold parties and invites top leaders in the society. Norval Chase neglects his personal loss and meets all the needs of the people in the society by offering jobs. Liliana struggles silently and dies due to abortion. Iris is burdened during her childhood and experiences suppression in her marital life. Her disintegrated self and loss of self identity forbid her to achieve fulfillment in life. Laura suffers from delusion and struggles to get human support but fails in her endeavour. Aimee is tossed between Iris and Winifred and hence experiences isolation. After Aimee's death, Sabrina struggles to get basic necessities and begs for food. In Canadian culture, men and women have varied experience of nature.

Adelia experiences a golden life in lawns. She designs Avilion to face the two rivers, the Louveteau and the Jogues. In later part of her life she moves from nature to culture. It is found that she believes in culture, which gave her more authority. The smoldering leaf refers to Liliana's unborn baby. Iris enjoys the silvery colour of the moon light and she derives consolation and comfort.

Sailing and sinking of pods refer to the life struggle of Iris and Laura. Iris gazes at the lawn which symbolizes freedom from struggles. Whenever she sees parents and children walking together on the lawn, she is reminded of isolation from her parents. It is found that various seasons represent different situations of the major characters. Autumn season represents the death of the brothers of Norval Chase. Winter season refers to the fall of icicles. It represents deterioration of values and decline of social status of the Chase family. During summer season, Iris gets plums from the neighbour's house and she learns the social value of generosity through the plum tree. It is found that the funeral flowers, chrysanthemums help Iris to recollect the death of her mother. She relates meaninglessness of life to the waves. Chest nut tree is a symbol of trap for Iris and crocuses refer to the fleeting fortunes.

The novel is the fictional autobiography of Canadian women whose life span over country. It is a self-reflective memoir of iris chase's life in port Ticonderogo, Canada. The characters with in iris memoir are superb recalling her life over the past seventy years is a long, tedious process, but characters make this novel an unforgettable piece of literature. The main characters are Iris Chase and Laura chase and their parents; father Norval Chase, Mother. She named only as our mother who sacrifices herself for others. Two sisters are brought up by their nurse maid Rennie. Her grandfather Benjamin, who built the button factory in the early 1870, and Grandmother Adelia who was 'married'.

Iris father was the eldest of three brothers. Two young brothers' edger and Percival were killed in the war. Norval is a serious gentleman. He never shows his emotions for his daughters. Iris mother was a religious woman. She died of miscarriage and remains helpless victim throughout her life. Miss violet Graham is the tutor of chase sisters. She is forty years old. Women with a wardrobe faded cardigans that hinted at an earlier, more prosperous existence. The two sisters called her Miss Violence. In the place of miss violence, their father appoints a man, Mr.Erskine, who had once taught at the boy's school in England. He changed the whole system of their study and is a hair puller, and ear twister. He tries to exploit Laura. So, Norval expelled him from his house.

In their teenage life, Iris and Laura meet Alex Thomas in the button factory picnic. He is an orphan by a Presbyterian minister and his wife. He is a European immigrant and a labour organizer. Both Laura and Iris were fall in love with him. That so, Alex is secretly sheltered by

Laura and Iris. They supplied him food and drink. Mornings and evenings were the times of our visits. At the age of nineteen, Iris father sells her daughter to Richard in marriage. He is the owner of a successful firm called Royal Classic Knitwear. His enemies referred to it derisively as royal classic shareware, because Mr.Griffen was not only father's chief competitor, he was also an adversary of sorts. Iris marries Richard because of her father's hope that she can in this way save the now-failing button factory.

Richard is very selfish kind of man, as he didn't tell iris about her father's death because he doesn't want any disturbance during their Honeymoon trip, actually it was his business trip. Iris feels no emotional attachment with him. Their honeymoon trip is just a business for Richard. After their returning, Laura informed the death news of her father. She just shocked. Laura is the younger glamorous, strange sister, the artist and empathy a temple girl with no illusions about god's mercy. She is a girl who will never fit into the world's regulations and structures. She is spiritual, curious, uncompromising. She is not a woman with the organizational power or love of self advertisement to write an autobiography or a novel-but she is both heroic soul and sacrificed female. Other who claims they don't understand her always uses her. Iris had a daughter named Aimee she died of drugs and she was self-neglected, alienated from her mother.

Richard takes advantage of long distance and develops sympathy for himself by giving gifts to Aimee. Throughout her life she is hoping that her real mother is somehow Laura. After Richard committed suicide. Before that he compels Laura to have sexual relationship with her. Laura first rejects him. Later she accepted. Richard uses her for his lust. And when iris tells Laura about Alex's death, she kills herself by driving off a bridge. Even iris her own sister uses her by posting her story under Laura's name with the title of the story "*The Blind Assassin*". Now, Iris is a woman near the end of her life, reflecting on the path she's taken to old age. After finishing her novel, Iris also died due to an old age.

Conclusion

A survey from Atwood's novel, *The Blind Assassin*, shows that she is in the new dimension of time by being a rebel against the general current of the patriarchal society and in exploring her true potential, with the struggle to fulfill her urges and needs. Her feminist vision is neither male-centered nor female-centered but it offers a fresh perspective on women problems. Thus the novel dealt with the female protagonist's awakening from a personal,

sexual and national alienation to an integrated sense of identity.

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