



IMPACT OF NATURE IN MARGARET ATWOOD 'S THE BLIND ASSASSIN

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Abstract

Nature has the power to teach some lessons and console. It gives more experiences of joy and a sense of peace to all who admires their beauty and rest. It involves the interest of woman prominent lovers of Nature. There is a bond between the nature and human being by seeing the nature rest of peace comes in the mind. This article deals with the characters experience nature in Margaret Atwood's novel, The Blind Assassin.

The Blind Assassin is about two sisters, one of whom, Laura Chase dies in a car accident in 1945 under ambiguous circumstances. Iris Chase, wife of Richard Griffin, an industrialist lives alone in Port Ticonderoga during her old age. In her middle nineties, Iris's life oscillates between her uncertain present and the mysteries of her past (Vanitha 64). She recollects the past and the mysterious death of her sister Laura Chase in this novel.

As the novel opens, readers come to know about the death of Laura Chase in a car accident. The car fell into the ravine and it smashed "through the tree tops feathery in the new leaves and then rolled down" (3). Atwood reveals *nature and death* in the opening of the novel. Iris Chase, sister of Laura Chase is getting ready to identify her. Her mouth is numb and her face expresses extreme pain. She is furious with Laura and with the policeman for implying that she has done it. Iris says, "A hot wind was blowing around my head, the strands of my hair lifting and swirling in it, like ink spilled in water"(3). She describes death as hot wind. Here, nature pinpoints the guilty-conscious nature of Iris. She is afraid that the news of Laura's suicide can spread like ink spilled in water."Iris hates having to present the Laura chase creative writing prize, and takes pleasure in clearing the family plot of the flowers Laura's admires leaves in her grave" (Sage 24)

Laura takes a photograph which has been clicked during button factory picnic. She establishes her relationship with Alex Thomas and they are sitting under an apple tree. She holds her hand over the picture and she feels the heat coming up from it. It is like the "heat from a sun warmed stone at midnight" (7). The Celtic meaning of the apple tree deals with love, truth, peace, beauty, honesty, romance, fertility and remembrance. It is a symbol of purity and motherhood. Laura is honest in her love and the meetings of lovers are fruitful. Near the apples, the coarse grass is seen in the foreground. The grass is yellow because the weather has been dry. The context can be interpreted as the dry weather implies lack of love and care in the family. After Liliana's death, Laura has no one to take care of her. The external environment around Laura is dry and coarse. Even the place is filled with coarse grass. But apples are hanging there. Here the apples appear like the forbidden fruit. The love of Alex is expressed in terms of apples. The small green apples are watching her like eyes. Nature has been bestowed with human qualities

Laura has the habit of borrowing things from Iris without asking her. Iris always forgives her because she has no one except Laura. Iris says, "The two of us on our thorn-encircled island, waiting for rescue and on the mainland, everyone else" (53). To portray the isolation of Laura and Iris, Atwood penetrates into the imagery of an island. Many people are standing on the island. Relationship is described as a thorn-encircled island. Island symbolizes only isolation, bitterness and loneliness. Iris realizes her lack of self-identity and asserts that, "I am after all a local fixture, like a brick-strewn vacant lot where some important building used to stand" (54).

The summer heat has come in the town. It settles over the town like "cream soup" (60). Weather is described as malarial and cholera. The trees are like wilting umbrella and they offer shade to Iris Chase. She walks through Erie street turns into Mill Street and runs along the Louveteau River. Port Ticonderoga has two rivers, the Jogues and the Louveteau. The Louveteau's swift current is used for the electricity plants. The Jogues is deep and slow. Port Ticonderoga is the entire town rising out of the shallow prehistoric ocean, sprouting, like those brown, grainy films of flowers opening up that used to be shown in movie theatres. The town is compared to a flower with its mainland and rivers.

In the presence of the moon the flower gardens are silvery grey, as if all the colours have been sucked out of them. The moon is reflected in her lily pond and she is dipping her toes into its cold night (169). When Laura disturbs Iris's sleep, she enjoys nature during night. "It became autumn. Laura and I picked milkweed pods and opened them, to feel the scale-shaped seeds overlapping like the skin of dragon" (171). They pull the seeds and throw the pods into the river. They watch whether they capsize or get swept away. Pods refer to the life struggle of people. River water refers to the journey of life. These pods may



sail or sink. Just like the pod, Laura also sinks in her life. Laura has been seduced by Richard and then Laura admits in asylum name as “bella vista” which means beautiful view (524).

Due to the decrease in the familial relationship, Iris wants to be occupied. Finally, she decides to engage herself in gardening. “I had taken up gardening in earnest no, I was getting some results. Not everything died. I had plans for a perennial shade garden” (585). When Iris feels that all human relationships have died out she comes to the conclusion „not everything died”. She wants to find solace and comfort under nature. She has planned a perennial shade garden. Here, Margaret Atwood has used two major gardens, perennial garden and rock garden. Rock garden has been established under her sister-in-law, Winifred’s pressure. Now, Iris finds out her own self-identity. She wants to liberate herself from the clutches of cruel people. She understands that man expresses artificiality. Nature is always truthful. “And when the truth does, finally, push its ugly head through the smooth mosaic floor. There’s hell to pay.” (Whitaker 26) It represents sincerity and faithfulness. As an act of return to nature, she starts taking care of the perennial garden. When human relationship fails to give her shade, she can take rest under the shade of nature

Iris has got a different perception of nature. “The drops of rain will glitter on your face and clothes like sequins”(636). “A person like me inside it - an old woman, an older woman, living alone in a fossilized cottage, with hair like burning spider webs and a weedy garden full of God knows what”(636). "In a painting she'd be gathering wildflower though in real life she rarely did anything of the kind" (Parkin-Gounlas 688). Thus the novel indicates many naturalistic elements which are found scattered through out in the main as well as sub-plot of the novel.

Works Cited

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