New Perspective in Women and Nature: Dualism in Margaret Atwood’s Surfacing

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ABSTRACT: This article carries out a systematic study of Margaret Atwood’s second novel Surfacing in the outlook of Val Plumwood’s theories and pays attention to the ecological crisis and living situation of female, nature, and animal. Val Plumwood highlights the dualism involved in the specific opposition between Man/Woman, Culture/Nature, Subject/Object, Human/Nature and Human/Animal. Plumwood sets five features for dualism which defines women and nature in hierarchy. Therefore, such hierarchy reflects the major forms of oppression in Western culture. According to Plumwood contradictory, and dualistic worlds exist in the mastery society: the feminine and the masculine. Margaret Atwood depicted the image of women and nature in parallel with specific duties such as Mother Earth as well as Plumwood’s theories. She investigates woman, nature, and animal right that are in lower position in man’s society. They are closely related to each other. In male-dominated culture males take themselves as Master of the world and the soul of all creatures.

Key words: Hyper-separation; Incorporation of Relational Definition; Margaret Atwood; Minimization; Objectification; Stereotyping; Val Plumwood

INTRODUCTION

Ecological feminism demonstrates the world that is dominated by men over women and nature. Val Plumwood (1939-2008) zeniths woman and nature relations and identified a pattern of dualistic thinking permeated into culture that is implied in destructive attitudes toward women and nature. Margaret Eleanor Atwood as an intuitive writer in Surfacing paid particular attention to survival environment in modern technology and wrote novels regarding mostly consideration of women and nature in which her narrator transgresses the boundary between Culture/Nature, Women / Man, Human/Nature. The narrator of the story is recognized only as an object of the male gaze which has denigrated her to the degree of a commodity which is not self-referential at all. She seeks refuge in the island in the middle of wilderness where her search for her missing father comes to search for missing connections of her body with nature and throws herself completely into environment. This paper is focused on how Plumwood illuminates the relationship between women and nature and construction of dualism.

Eco-feminism: Overview, Val Plumwood, and Dualism

Some thinkers believe that Eco-feminism started by Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1790), Ellen Richards Air, Water, and Food from a Sanitary Standpoint (1900) and Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962), but in origin, it is rooted in ancient Greece. As time passed and periods emerged one after the position of women and nature changes by a white male European. Gradually the woman right advanced and woman issues developed in 1960 and 1970 and flourishing of Eco-criticism. At the same time numerous female literary figures and Ecocriticist writers emerged. In the course of 1970 decade, there are several examples of Grass Roots movements and activists (Chipko Movement, Green Belt Movement, Love Canal) around world which are transported activist Eco-feminism idea that women have presented themselves as agents of change for environment and development that brought Eco-feminism into wider attention and ground. The writing of Rachel Carson, Mary Daly, and Susan Griffin gives a new place to women writing in nature.

The growing currency within academy of the term Eco-feminism was consolidated by the appearance in 1974 Le Feminisme ou La Mort (Feminism or Death) by French feminist and activist, Françoise d’Eaubonne. For d’Eaubonne the term Eco-feminism was meant to depict how the human race could be saved by women
and how could instruct an ecological revolution, oppression of women that is in equal to the oppression and destruction of nature. Plumwood has significantly contributed to the development of the philosophical aspects of Eco-feminism. She draws on many aspects of women’s relations and oppression the condition in which women are related to nature and women appear as appendages to men and in which women are treated as lesser or are denied. She sees a strong parallel with the nature in human-centered frameworks, when “nature as a collaborative partner” (Plumwood, 2002) is similarly denied.

Eco-feminism as a literary theory deals with literature produced by feminist writers in Western countries. It is like woven tapestry in which some are congruous with other and others are opposing. Hence, “a basic assumption common to all Eco-feminist positions is the rejection of the assumed inferiority of women and nature and of the superiority of reason, humanity and culture” (Plumwood, 1992). Therefore, domination and subordination are very vital for Eco-feminism.

Val Plumwood and other Eco-feminists attempt to reveal the connections between woman and nature into Empirical or experiential, epistemological, and conceptually or symbolically which are important to understanding the connections between feminism and the environment. According to Val Plumwood and other Eco-feminists environmental problems affect women in most parts of the world. Women as providers of food and fodder, water for families, as farmer and as careers are in direct connect with nature:

We can and should, I think, have great respect and reverence for trees and be grateful (…) we do them injustice when we treat them as less than they are, destroy them without compunction, see them as nothing more than potential lumber, woodchips or fuel for our needs, (a form of incorporation), fail to attend adequately to them, radically dissociate from them and deny their organization as intentional (and perhaps communicative) beings, or adopt the stance of ethical closure or dismissal. (Plumwood, 2002)

Epistemologically, women are most affected by environmental problems and have more knowledge about earth than men. Therefore, some Eco-feminists consider woman as expert who are close to nature and have innate features of caring, nonviolence, and Earth sensitivity. “[Women] have a profound knowledge of the plants, animals and ecological processes around them” (Dankelman and Davidson, 1989) because of physical structure her knowledge about Earth is perfect. Val Plumwood studies woman and nature conceptually or symbolically in dualistic structure, in which set of pairs are in opposition.

Val Plumwood in Feminism and the Mastery of Nature (1993) called dualism in Western thought and end it, such dualisms include Reason/Nature, Culture/Nature, Mind (head)/Body, Male/Female, Masculine/Feminine, Self/Other, Civilized/Primitive, city/countryside, Production/Reproduction, Subject/Object, Human/Animal, Active/Passive, Reason/Emotion, Master/Slave. Dualisms organized based on higher and lower values. Plumwood replaced patriarchy with mastery, in feminism and the Mastery of Nature, she offers several original definitions of dualism, for her dualism “is the process by which contrasting concepts (…) are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive” (Plumwood, 1993). She also defines dualism:

A process by which power forms identity, one which distorts both sides of what it splits apart the master and the slave, the colonizer and the colonized, the sadist and the masochist, the egoist and the self-abnegating altruist, the masculine and the feminine, human and nature. (Plumwood, 1993),

The first side of the list of dualism associated with men and to the human and the second traditionally associated with women. In this analysis, dualism supersedes dichotomy because it involves a hierarchical relation. Therefore, such hierarchy reflects the major forms of oppression in Western culture.

For Plumwood dualism is more than a relation of dichotomy, difference, and more than a simple hierarchical relationship. She mentioned five features for dualism, which allow for its separation of a superior, master class from colonized, subordinated Other. According to Plumwood, the first feature of dualism is the “denial” or “minimization” of the Other to the master. This denial is referred to backgrounding and minimizes the value of the Other and is represented in society’s devaluation of women to the resources and the family. According to Plumwood:

One of the most common forms of denial of women and nature is (…) backgrounding, their treatment as providing the background to a dominant. (…) this backgrounding of women and nature is deeply embedded in the rationality of the economic system and in the structures of contemporary society. (Plumwood, 1993).

In denial feature of dualism nature is represented as unimportant, as the background to human life. The second feature of this dualism is a “hyper-separation,” or “radical exclusion”. Those in the centre are represented as radically separated or hyper-separation from and superior to the Other that is discontinuity (master experiences no continuity or kinship with nature). Plumwood depicts hyper-separation in colonization:

The colonialist stresses those things which keep him separate, rather than emphasising that which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community. In those differences, the colonised is always degraded and the colonialist finds justification for rejecting his subjects. But perhaps the most important thing is that once the behavioural feature, or historical or geographical factor, which characterises the colonialist and contrasts him with the coloniser, has been isolated, this gap must be kept from being filled. The colonialist removes the factor from history, time and therefore possible evolution. (Plumwood, 1993).
Hyper-separation between the sphere of the human and that of nature leads humans to see themselves as outside nature.

The third feature of dualism is the “incorporation of relational definition”, that defined the Other in terms of the lack of some quality possessed by the master or, conversely, and to define the master as the norm while further defining the Other as abnormal. In this feature of dualism, the Other cannot be defined independently of the master; rather, the value of the Other is relative to and defined by the master, in Plumwood’s view:

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being (…) she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other. (Plumwood, 1993).

The fourth feature of dualism is “instrumentalism”, or “objectification”. In this case, the Other is recognized only as an object, resource, or means for the master’s ends rather than as a subject with ends of its own, then humanity can consequently impose its own ends upon nature. Plumwood argues:

It is apparent that those on the lower side of the dualisms are obliged to put aside their own interests for those of the master or centre, that they are conceived of as his instruments, a means to his ends. They are made part of a network of purposes which are defined in terms of or harnessed to the master’s purposes and needs. The lower side is also objectified, without ends of its own which demand consideration on their own account. Its ends are defined in terms of the master’s ends. (Plumwood, 1993).

Minimization of Women and Nature in Surfacing

The most recognizable case involves the interactions, especially relationship among the narrator and male characters of novel and also among Anna and male characters. Everything the narrator sees is dualized into constructive and destructive: this is visible in her violent division between city and bushes, and Canada and USA. Everybody around her is either a victim or a hunter. David and Joe are representatives of male hegemony and culture. They minimize the narrator with domestic work and they do not help the narrator while she is cleaning, cooking, gathering logs for the fire, it is not the narrator’s duty to prepare food for them as women are doing work in home and she must do this act in nature “I boiled the water and made tea” (Atwood, 1972). David and Joe consider the narrator as powerless and themselves as powerful. However, they think their power help them to hyper-separated from nature. Also, the narrator is considered as a slave force to do such actions.

Very soon, the narrator wakes up as she remarks “I carry the food inside and start the breakfast. Joe and David are up, Joe is sitting on the wall bench, face still fuzzy with sleep, David examining his chin in the mirror”. They looked at her as the Other and backgrounded as housewife, as nurses and secretary as workmate. The narrator herself accepts such mastery and back-grounding, she suggests:

I cook the hamburgers and we eat and I wash the dishes in the chipped dishpan, Anna drying (…) I can make you hot water if you want to shave (…) I crouch down in front of the stove and open the firebox door to make the toast over the coals. (…) I finish the toast; the bacon is done too, I dish it out, pouring the fat afterwards into the fire, keeping my hand back from the spurt of flame. (Atwood, 1972).

Seemingly, the group led by David defines the narrator as Other. He imposes his mastery over women in order to minimize and radically exclude those that can be incorporated into the master’s needs and desires.

David’s tool for hunting is not only a fishing rod but also an axe to chop the trees, a camera, and most importantly, his male body. Moreover, David was “a great white hunter” and “have lunch with the Americans”. For the narrator, fishing has become a form of murder when it is not necessary for livelihood and reveals that “the fish is whole, I couldn’t any more, I had no right to. We didn’t need it, our proper food was tin cans. We were committing this act, violence, for sport or amusement or pleasure, recreation they call it” (Atwood, 1972).

When have Joe sex with the narrator to have baby, he views himself as productive and narrator’s as land reproductive which is minimize, objectify, and stereotyping. Joe is “human (…) one of the killers, the clay victims damaged and strewn behind him, and he hadn’t seen, he didn’t know about himself, his own capacity for death”. He is a man as the narrator describes him having small-secured eyes. The narrator's ex-husband uses all skill to seduce her. He gave a wedding ring and almost succeeds in creating the image of himself.
as her husband. When she is pregnant, he uses all tricks to abort the child. The narrator discovers that after marriage women's exploitation, oppression and victimization are sharpened.

When several men look at narrator with a steady gaze, she changes her direction from a shop, and then she experiences the sense of vulnerability and minimization. Therefore, the narrator's uncomfortable feeling towards men is obvious in her thought and says "I would like to back out the door, I don't want them staring at me from behind; but I force myself to walk slowly, frontwards" (Atwood, 1972). Masculine culture defines human identity in terms of masculinity, hence, women are defined negatively. The protagonist of Surfacing is determined to escape from such a culture and build a new positive definition.

Male's Hyper-separation of Women and Environment

When the narrator and her friends travel through natural environment, they come across a murdered heron hanging from a tree. The harsh scene of hunting heron exemplifies the belief in the opposition of culture and nature, human and animal, master and slave, subject and object. It shows hyper-separation of men with nature. Therefore, David wants to film it and says:

You can stand it for five minutes, it looks so great, you have to admit. They began to set up the camera; Anna and I waited, sitting on the packs. I saw a beetle on it, blueblack and oval; when the camera whirred it burrowed in under the feathers. Carrion beetle, death beetle. (Atwood, 1972).

David wants by use of camera control nature and hyper-separate himself from nature.

When Americans are rolling in the lake with their motorboat and polluted it, they throw cigarette in lake. The narrator, experientially, concerned about environmental problems rather than David and Joe. Atwood believes that there is a large gap between man and nature and hyper-separate of nature. In her novel the narrator as a heroine attached to landscape and she wants to be one with natural wilderness and be close environments. She and nature considered as Other. As the narrator and her friends walking straight through the forest:

David prods at the dead trunk with the machete, poking holes in the bark. Joe sits down on the ground: he's breathing hard, too much city, and the flies are getting to him, he scratches his neck and the backs of his hands. "I guess that's it," I say because I have to be the one to confess defeat, and Anna says "Thank god, they're eating me alive." (Atwood, 1972).

In Atwood's view Joe hyper-separate himself of nature. He cannot match himself with nature. He considers himself is superior to the Other.

Eco-feminism supports the female claim of victimization and argues that masculine society is aggressive and radical exclusion of nature. The narrator also accepts the link between the destruction of her own body by way of a threatened abortion, and the abusing of the natural environment around her:

We had lunch on a jagged island almost out in the wide part of the lake. After we landed we found that someone had built a fireplace already, on the shore ledge of bare granite; trash was strewn around it, orange peelings and tin cans and a rancid bulge of greasy paper, the tracks of humans. It was like dogs pissing on a fence, as if the endlessness, anonymous water and unclaimed land, compelled them to leave their signature, stake their territory, and garbage was the only thing they had to do it with. I picked up the pieces of clutter and piled them to one side, I would burn them afterwards. (Atwood, 1972).

Atwood portrays illogically devastated Mother Nature at the hands of masculine rational society and was uncomfortable with such domination. They claim hyper-separate of nature. The process of search for self is characterized by a struggle with a network of dualisms in which Canadian-ness, femininity, and nature has been defined exploited and hyper-separated. Nature is the source of affinity with identity; it is nature is the source of power.

Incorporation of Relational Definition of Women and Nature in the Culture

According to the narrator, marriage is nothing but a surrendering to patriarchal values and the distortion of the identity of women. Thus the narrator journeys into the nature and exposes such manipulation in nature; the narrator and nature for man's character are the same. The narrator says she was a fool to enter into the bond of marriage, because in the patriarchal society male define women. Therefore, women become Others, and they are viewed not as what they are but as projection of male needs and desires and also they are subordinate to male expectations. In reality, the narrator never got married. The narrator cannot forget the pain of abortion.

The image of pregnancy and abortion arouses very negative feelings in the narrator. She claims that after having the first child she did not want to have another, "it was too much to go through for nothing" (ibid). The narrator is violated in such culture by man, so she describes hospital in this way: "they shut you into a hospital, they shave the hair off you and tie your hands down and they don't let you see, they don't want you to understand, they want you to believe it's their power, not yours"(ibid). The narrator elaborates on the procedure done to her in the hospital and portrait the image she carries out in her, she wants to get rid of it:

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They stick needles into you so you won’t hear anything, you might as well be a dead pig, your legs are up in a metal frame, they bend over you, technicians, mechanics, butchers, students clumsy or sniggering practising on your body, they take the baby out with a fort like a pickle out of a pickle jar. (ibid)

The narrator discovers that her husband and hospital plan towards her body and her mother is like a butcher and hunter.

Margaret Atwood is emphasizing the fact that men exploit the bodies of women for their own needs. They have controlled the process of childbirth which nature has assigned only to women. The narrator refuses Joe’s marriage proposal. She describes bitter experience of marriage:

“Look,” I said, “I’ve been married before and it didn’t work out. I had a baby too.” My ace, voice patient.

“I don’t want to go through that again.” It was true, but the words were coming out of me like the mechanical words from a talking doll, the kind with the pull tape at the back; the whole speech was unwinding, everything in order, a spoool. I would always be able to say what I’d just finished saying: I’ve tried and failed, I’m inoculated, exempt, classified as wounded. It wasn’t that I didn’t suffer, I was conscientious about that, that’s what qualified me. But marriage was like playing Monopoly or doing crossword puzzles, either your mind worked that way, like Anna’s, or it didn’t; and I’d proved mine didn’t. A small neutral country. (Atwood, 1972).

Atwood depicts the control of patriarchal society over female body and its reproductive ability in marriage. Joe does not realize the need for marriage because Joe expects women to be absolutely passive, minimized, for man pleasure and also he thinks marriage is a woman’s destiny.

The relationship between the narrator and Joe offers an interesting insight into Male/Female binary. The narrator realizes that for Joe sexual domination is primary and he wants to dominate and control her. She perceives a killer and victimizer in him. Margaret Atwood’s Surfacing takes woman as a being powerless, manipulatable who are define in male perspective. Since power is centralized in the hands of man, they feel nothing wrong in destroying her dignity or creativity. According to men, a woman has no right to have a baby without her husband’s approval. When the pregnancy of the narrator concluded not in childbirth but in abortion she feels emptied, amputated and minimized. After the narrator abortion, the narrator comes to develop a deep sympathy for the flora and fauna of the Quebec Island. She finds that the beauty of nature is being destroyed by the Americans.

Objectification of Female Characters in Service of Males

The dualism Male/Female, Mater/Salve, Subject/Object, Self/Others becomes more evident in the relationship between Anna and David. He rapes Anna’s body by fully using his power and mastery, especially his male power over Anne as her husband. David and Anna’s relationship symbolizes the inequality of the sexes. David is overpowering and domineering, on the other side, Anna is weak and restricted. Anna thinks she must always paint her face in order to please David; Anna says:

In a low voice, “He doesn’t like to see me without it,” and then, contradicting herself, “He doesn’t know I wear it.” I glimpse the subterfuge this must involve, or is it devotion: does she have to sneak out of the bed before he’s awake every morning and into it at night with the lights out? Maybe David is telling generous lies; but she blends and mutes herself so well he may not notice. (Atwood, 1972)

When she forgets to wear make-up on their trip into the wilderness, she confesses to the narrator that David uses physical or psychological power on her. David by use of his mind control Anna’s body. As well Anna’s body is objectified by David. Also, Anna allows herself to be subordinate to his rules, accordingly she is minimized as Other in hand of her master David. Anna tells the narrator:

“God,” she said, “what’m I going to do? I forgot my makeup, he’ll kill me.”(…) “He’s got this little set of rules. If I break one of them I get punished, except that he keeps changing them so I’m never sure. He’s crazy, there’s something missing in him, you know what I mean? He likes to make me cry because he can’t do it himself. (ibid)

David also treats Anna as sex object instead of as an equal counterpart. The way narrator understands that women are sex object for men. He evidently has little respect for her. The narrator feels unhappy with David because he devalues women, the way an “American” devalues nature. She realizes that as she has been violated, the sacredness of Mother Earth has been violated and the ecological unity, which means the interdependences of all species, is disturbed.

In the viewpoint of the narrator all characters are American “If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them” (Atwood, 1972), David is an American who uses technology and instrumentalises and hyper-separates himself from nature, minimizes nature and denies it for human desire, Anna is an American because she accepts all the requests of men, Joe is an American because his American-ness is symbolically suggested by his profile and appearance, as the narrator states:

From the side he’s like the buffalo on the U.S. nickel, shaggy and blunt-snouted, with small clenched eyes and the defiant but insane look of a species once dominant, now threatened with extinction. That’s how he
thinks of himself too: deposed, unjustly. Secretly he would like them to set up a kind of park for him, like a bird sanctuary. Beautiful Joe. (Atwood, 1972).

The language of the Americans is the language of reason that objectifies woman and misuses their bodies.

In the novel animal hunting is portrayed as violent activity. Worms and frogs have no value of their own, just as instruments for satisfying human hunter for their need. The narrator says:

I can hear the tick tock of the frog hopping up and hitting its muzzle against the jar lid (...) I can hear the jays, crying and crying as if they’ve found an enemy or food. They are near the cabin, I walk towards them up the hill. I see them in the trees and swooping between the trees, the air forming itself into birds, they continue to call. (Ibid).

The number of tall, old trees strongly has been decreased because they were cut for the purpose of meeting human needs, this instrumentalism of nature:

I hoist a packsack (...) onto the land and towards the cabin (...) the house is built on a sand hill, part of a ridge left by the retreating glaciers; only a few inches of soil and a thin coating of trees hold it down. (...) On the lake side the sand is exposed (...) and the edge trees fall gradually (...) kingfisher nest in the cliff, burrowing into the sand, it speeds up the erosion. (Atwood, 1972).

Trees are cut by the military, by logging companies, and by companies that raise the lake level in order to create electricity from improved water power. Man by use of facility objectifies nature as the narrator states: rock blasted, trees bulldozed over, roots in the air, needles reddening – past the flat cliff where the election slogans are painted and painted over, some faded and defaced, others fresh yellow and white (...) the trees will never be allowed to grow that tall again, they’re killed as soon as they're valuable, big-trees are scarce as whales. (Atwood, 1972)

The narrator refers to forms of environmental degradation that non-human nature is conceived as an exploitable resource and objectifies in hand of man.

**Stereotyping and Pattern of Domination of Women and Nature**

Atwood uses the technique of a trip from an urban location in Ontario to a seaside village in northern Quebec and her characters in this novel travel from the English-Canadian world, which is geographically, culturally and linguistically closer to America, to a French-Canadian area which can see the power of America over Canada in such land. The relationship between nature and Americans is relationship of exploitation and we see that the entire landscape has been mutilated, raped by Americans:

Further in, the trees they didn’t cut before the flood are marooned, broken and gray-white, tipped on their sides, their giant contorted roots bleached and skinless; on the sodden trunks are colonies of plants, feeding on disintegration; laurel, sundew the insect eater, its toe nail-sized leaves sticky with red hairs. Out of the leaf nests the flowers rise, pure white, flesh of gnats and midges petals now, metamorphosis. (Atwood, 1972).

By objectification and exploitation of Canada stereotypes natural environment and reduced to an “object” for man pleasure. In Surfacing, Americans are the malefactors; from the novel’s first page, a symbolic disease is spreading from the south, also the narrator demonstrates some of her anger towards Americans, complaining about and describing American as “viruses” which arise from the south and infect the Canadian:

It doesn’t matter what country they’re from, my head said, they’re still Americans, they’re still what’s in store for us, what we are turning into. They spread themselves like a virus, they get into the brain and take over the cells and the cells change from the inside and the ones that have the disease can’t tell the difference. (Atwood, 1972).

Surfacing represents an image of Canada as a colony exploited and oppressed by the United States. Americans by placing themselves the top of hierarchy and Canadian as lower stereotypes them. According to Atwood’s Surfacing, Canada belongs to the realm subservience, while America belongs to the realm of dominance.

Atwood presents another oppression towards women which in this case is giving birth to a child by narrator, and the narrator feels herself as a victim in relation to her ex-husband in which she played a totally feminine in the sense of being obedient and passionate. She manifested such a role in its real sense in her undoubted admiration for him and her acceptance of his control over her reproductive power, as if nothing was of her own and she was under his complete monitoring and observation. Hence, her ex-husband stereotypes femininity.

The abortion experience was painful for the narrator and this act of abortion had been masked in the narrator’s mind as the unpleasant experience of the birth of a child. She floats in her memories for the event and regrets:
I look around at the walls, the window; it's the same, it hasn't changed, but the shapes are inaccurate as though everything has warped slightly. I have to be more careful about my memories, I have to be sure they're my own and not the memories of other people telling me what I felt (...) I'll start inventing them and there will be no way of correcting it, the ones who could help are gone. I run quickly over my version of it, my life, checking it like an alibi; it fits, it's all there till the time I left. Then static, like a jumped track, for a moment I've lost it, wiped clean; my exact age even, I shut my eyes, what is it? To have the past but not the present, that means you're going senile. (Atwood, 1972).

She considers herself stereotypes of social conditions and victims by male objectification and relational definition. Therefore, as many other women, she has had to sacrifice her personal dreams and natural inclination to be a mother because she could not be supported by the father of her child. She feels paralyzed in this role and so does not actively fight her oppression, eventually, she feels victimized and marginalized as the Other.

**CONCLUSION**

Atwood tries to show that man must make a return to nature in order to reconnect with his roots. The narrator reveals the great rejection of the whole masculine system of values that is governing the whole culture. The narrator devalues the rationality with which masculinity is associated, on the other hand she knows that femininity is represented and devalued from patriarchy. In Surfacing narrator is determined to escape from such a culture that embarrass nature and build new positive definition. The narrator realized that she exists because of nature. However, she remembers that herself, mother, and nature are different things from culture because she thinks her mother is the most natural mother and her mother is part of this nature who she fed wild animal from her hand.

What the narrator becomes aware of is the connectedness of the way in which her body on the one hand, and the water, virgin forests and natural resources of her native countryside, on the other hand had been destroyed and polluted by rational men. The system of interconnected, hierarchical oppositions results in a situation in which nature, women and Canada all are innocent victims of an aggressive, patriarchal, Americanized culture and dualism. Atwood answer as Plumwood, is that all humankind is part of nature and should preserve it for continuing their life, if we fool ourselves into believing the human race is not part of nature then we will abuse nature and degrade each other. However, Atwood subverts this binary and murder while nature with feminine, flow and multiplicity and in order to salve such dualism linked culture with nature, human with nature.

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