

# The Fall of Women under the Masculine World and the Rise of Women through the Awakening of Feminist Instinct in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood

Thinley Wangmo  
Masters of Arts in English  
Lovely Professional University, Punjab  
Registration Number: IJCRT-188172  
Punjab, India

## Abstract

Men are considered to be masculine while females are taken to be feminine. Femininity is considered to be the collection of qualities or nature of the female sex. Masculinity is considered to be the qualities of male sex. Society and culture instill in both men and women the stereotypical ideas of masculinity as superior and femininity as inferior which leads to injustice and oppression of women. The suppression of women by men is dominant everywhere in the world. The oppressive weight of men's obsession with staunch masculine characteristics prevalent in the society lead to the suffocation and fall of women throwing them in the deep abyss of hopelessness.

The source of Feminism springs out from women's quest to achieve equality and justice between the sexes. This research paper endeavors to employ the feminist approach to present the fall of women under the siege of masculine world asserting their domination over women keeping them caged and voiceless. The study also examines the rise of women by breaking the shackles of masculine world through the awakening of feminist instinct in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood. It attempts to reveal repercussion of the glorification of masculine world while demeaning feminine world and presents how women rise through their feminist awakening.

**Index Terms:** Suppression, alienation, patriarchy, exploitation, masculinity, femininity

## Introduction

Margaret Atwood, a highly acclaimed Canadian poet, novelist, critic, an activist and environmental activist was born in Ottawa, Canada in the year 1939. She also, published many books of poetry and short stories. She published poems and articles in the college literary journal while studying at Victoria College in the University of Toronto. She taught at various universities. Atwood has won many awards and numerous honorary degrees. She has won the Arthur C. Clarke Award and Prince of Asturias Award for Literature. She has been shortlisted for Orange Prize for Fiction. In the year 1987, she was named Humanist of the year by the American Humanist Association. She is also known to be a prominent feminist writer who famously remarked saying that men are afraid that women will laugh at them while women are afraid that men will kill them. Atwood depicts female characters suppressed by patriarchy ideology in her novels.

Atwood's work flourished in more than forty languages. The *Edible Woman* (1969) was Margaret Atwood's first novel and *Surfacing* was her second novel published in the year 1972. In her novel *The Edible Woman*, Atwood explores themes like gender stereotypes, loss of identity and alienation. The book talks about women being compelled to take a more feminine role and the life of domesticity controlled by men. In her famous book *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) she mentions about the oppression of women in a society which is dominated

by patriarchal society. She presents deprivation of women's rights and how women struggle to attain freedom and individuality. Her other works include *Lady Oracle* (1976), *Life Before Man* (1979), *Bodily Harm* (1981), *Cat's Eye* (1988), *The Robber Bride* (1993), *Alias Grace* (1996), *The Blind Assassin* (2000) and her most recent creation includes *The Heart Goes Last* written in 2015 and *Hag-Seed* in 2016.

Atwood in her novel *Surfacing* depicts female characters suppressed by patriarchy ideology which brings the fall of women. In *Surfacing* the nameless narrator who is the leading protagonist is not named. She returns to her village Quebec in search of her missing father with her boyfriend Joe, her friend Anna and David who are a married couple. The narrator pays a visit to her father's friend named Paul to inquire about her father but he seemed to have no clue about him. The nameless narrator in search of her missing father with her friends finds herself delving deep inside herself and awakening her lost self in the course of the novel culminating to her eventual rise to her true identity.

Margaret Atwood explores the suppression and plight of women due to the value attached to terms like masculinity and femininity which takes its insidious root in the society. She depicts the endless suffering and the struggle of women. She presents how women have been devoid of voice and have been pushed to appear as an inferior object under the assertion of masculine world. In her novel *Surfacing* she presents her leading nameless female protagonist falling into the cruelty of suppression yet breaking the rigid shackles of masculine world through the awakening of her feminist instinct rising amidst the male suppression depicting her true fierce feminist personality.

## Theoretical background of Feminism

Feminism, a theme in Atwood's novel, is explored through the perspective of the nameless female narrator, highlighting the ways how women are suppressed in their lives. Feminism is the movement which seeks women's right to achieve political, social, economic and individual liberation. Feminism is a fight for justice against sexist oppression, exploitation, oppression and seeking gender equality. It seeks meaningful lives through individual liberation and rightful privileges. It shows its staunch opposition against gender roles, stereotypes and unjust discrimination inflicted upon women. It emerged as the First Wave of Feminism, Second Wave of Feminism and Third Wave of Feminism. The prominent feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her feminist treatise, *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* which is a seminal text. Virginia Woolf is revered for her work *A Room of One's Own* and Simone de Beauvoir of *The Second Sex*. Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* revealed with vengeance the sufferings of women and psychological distress of housewives in America. In Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, she sought out women's right to their own body and the right to express their sexuality. Elaine Showalter, an American literary critic, feminist, and a specialist in Victorian literature is best known for her work *Toward a Feminist Poetics*. Elaine Showalter coined the term "Gynocriticism" which aimed to reveal how male literary tradition had suppressed women's image in literature. Male writers like John Stuart Mill wrote *The Subjection of Women* and Fredrich Engels wrote about inequalities faced by women in the male dominated society.

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* depicts madness of woman caught up in the frustration of repressed sexuality and anger for the societal imposition avenged towards women. Showalter also draws attention to sex differentiation which enforces the women writers to use male pseudonyms. Mary Anne Evans used the pen name George Eliot and the Bronte sisters wrote under the male pseudonyms Charlotte (Currer), Emily (Ellis) and Anne (Acton Bell).

Feminist literature portray their women characters as women with their own choice, decision, personal values and beliefs who determine their own identity. The Feminist element is pervasive in the novel *Surfacing*. The novel vividly condemns suppression of women through male domination and espouses woman character's accomplishments in out shadowing the masculine domination surfacing to her true self.

Feminism is examined in Margaret Atwood's novel by many researchers. A. Shanmugam through examining "*Perspective of Feminism in Surfacing by Margaret Atwood*" presents the main objective of the unnamed narrator. It is asserted that the narrator is mainly striving to find the values that are essential to her as a

woman, and as an individual, to become her natural self. Women and nature being the victim of an aggressive patriarchal is being explored.

Assia Mohdeb and Imane Hadj Henni in their review "*Women's Empowerment in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing: When Female Consciousness Reaches its Climax in Nature*" draw the interconnectedness between women and nature's experience under men's oppression. They reveal the theme of women's empowerment through nature. They mention the protagonist awareness of her position as a socialized figure and her burning desire to connect with her natural self. The division between men and women, nature and culture are emphasized.

Luciana Labatti Teixeira Serpa in "*An Inner Trip: Women and Nature in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing*" analyzes the relationship between woman and nature which leads to self-discovery. Landscape is used as a source to attain self-knowledge as the unnamed protagonist goes back in time and place to discover her inner self. In her endeavor to find her inner self she embraces nature, the landscape and the animals. In the process she delves deep into her past which is buried deep inside her repressed memories.

*Surfacing* has also been explored through Ecofeminism, women's empowerment, and as women and nature. A lot has been explored so this study endeavors to present the fall of women under the siege of masculine world over women and examines the rise of women through the awakening of feminist instinct in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood. It also attempts to reveal how woman surfaces despite all the heavy suppression weighing them down.

## Research Methodology:

"The Fall of Women under the Masculine World and the Rise of Women through the Awakening of Feminist Instinct in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood" was analyzed critically following the paradigm of qualitative research. The theory applied was feminist theory to analyze the novel.

Women had always been under the clutches of male's domination ever since the evolution of mankind. Men have dominated and ruled over women across the globe asserting their masculine attributes. The elements of battle between masculine and feminine world are also present in *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood. The presence of masculine domination in *Surfacing* is presented through the characters like Joe and David. The assertions of male dominance are revealed through their conducts. The very fact of the protagonist being unnamed in the novel *Surfacing* highlights the pervading message of male displaying their masculine domination. The leading character not being named draws the reader's attention of women being considered insignificant and subdued through the form of oppression.

It reveals how women's lives and thoughts are considered to be invalid and dictated by men. The notion of women being inconsequential and valueless which is indoctrinated through gender identity is made palpable. The idea of having no identity is also emphasized with Paul's wife being referred as Madame and not named. The nameless narrator mentions how all women were addressed as Madame and none of them had names showing extremity of women being considered so trivial revealing their fall. The nameless narrator recollects how her brother got under the table and slide his hands up and down the waitress's leg while she was bringing the food highlighting how men view women to be of sexual objects even in the eye of young boy under the conditioning of the society.

The narrator also recollects her school days when they were asked what they would prefer to be when they grow up. She mentions the response were mainly a lady and a mother. Atwood depicts how girl child is conditioned to limit herself to giving birth and childcare making her the easy victim of men domination. The protagonist when she goes to find her father on the island, Paul questions her asking whether her husband was with her. It is made obvious that a man should be handling the problem. Atwood draws attention to how men assert control on women in the guise of protecting them. The society is being conditioned into making women weak who need to be protected by the masculine men. The gender identity is made prominent when the narrator

feels it is never her job to cut the fish but her brother or her father's job. The roles of women created by society is highlighted. Simone de Beauvoir questions:

How, in the feminine condition, can a human being accomplish herself? What paths are open to her? Which ones lead to dead ends? How can she find independence within dependence? What circumstances limit women's freedom and can she overcome them? (*The Second Sex* 37).

Simone highlights the limitations which sabotages woman. She depicts how men imprison women within the four walls and keep her far flung from the world of opportunities to enslave her in their aggressive grip. The nameless narrator reveals how divorce is frowned upon by the society which is a tool used to chain women in the marriage. She remarks how divorce is not a part of the vocabulary in here. Divorce is considered to be like an amputation. The women being considered to be the mere object of sex and procreation is also emphasized. Margaret Atwood in *Surfacing* mentions the unnamed narrator stating:

But I couldn't have brought the child here, I never identified it as mine; I didn't name it before it was born even, the way you are supposed to. It was my husband's, he imposed it on me, and all the time it was growing in me I felt like an incubator... he wanted a replica of himself; after it was born I was no more use (38-39).

Joe is emphasized with stereotypical masculine attributes like not displaying his emotion. Joe fails to understand the narrator at an emotional level. He gets relieved when the narrator does not exhibit her emotion in her inability to find her father. She mentions that Joe prefers that she shows no emotion and reaction, no matter what has happened showing the heights of masculinity devoid of true human emotion. David makes decision in the group as he suggests that they stay an extra week at the cabin although the place belongs to the narrator without consulting her. His conversation in many ways shows him as being masculine and dominant. David is pushy in his relationship with Anna. He belittles and humiliates her. The nature of men being oppressor is being presented through his character trait. Anna in her midst of her initiation of conversation gets silenced by David and he controls what she is allowed to say. The exploitation of the weak by the powerful masculine hand through violence is indicated. The inequality of the sexes are prominently shown through David and Anna's relationship.

Anna is projected to be weak and submissive while David comes out to be domineering and overpowering. David does not seem to be considerate of Anna's feeling and regards her as an object to please him. Through Anna and David's relationship, Atwood reveals how women are defined to be a sexual objects. She emphasizes how women are defined only in terms of physicality and as a mere sexual gratification for men. She draws attention to how women are not considered to be an equal companion in marriage. Women are treated to be some kind of a subordinate being. He demands Anna to wear makeup every morning. Anna mentions that David doesn't like to see her without it. She gets terrified when she forgets to put on makeup. Atwood discloses through David's extreme insistence on Anna wearing makeup the unrealistic and cruel expectation which women are made to live up to by men. David insistence of Anna wearing makeup and enforcing her to fulfil his demand leads to her alienation from her wants and choice.

Woman's right to choose how she wants to appear like and what she wants to be is withheld by men in asserting their perspectives and imposing themselves on women. Through Anna's plight, Atwood sheds light on her feminist perspective. She voices out how a woman's identity is reduced to that of a beautiful doll. She presents how women should reject the unreasonable beauty myth favored by society and embrace inner positivity and strength. She discourages how women should transcend beyond seeing themselves as an objectified sexual beauty. She disseminate how the high expectation of female beauty is a destructive ways of social control enforced on women in the world ruled by men. The narrator mentions Anna's fear through their conversation:

God, she said, 'what am I going to do? I forgot my makeup, he will kill me.' I studied her: in the twilight her face was grey. 'Maybe he won't notice,' I said. 'He will notice, don't you worry. Not now maybe, it hasn't all rubbed off, but in the morning. He wants me to look like a young chick all the time, if I don't he gets mad (156).

The emphasis is laid in the decoration of oneself. Decoration of oneself is said to be offering oneself as merchandise on display. In Anna's case it is imposed forcefully by her husband. David pushes her to take off her

clothes for the camera saying “Come on, take it off,’ it won’t hurt you, we need a naked lady’ in his light humour voice” (171). He proves himself to be very manipulative displaying his masculinity and almost bulldozing her to do as he pleases exhorting, “Now just take it off like a good girl or I’ll have to take it off for you” (173). He was very humiliating towards Anna literally pushing her to tears and forcefully making her pose for his random samples using his menacing tone. David ridicules Anna using masculine sexist language: ‘bottom,’ ‘ass’, ‘a pair of boobs’ reducing Anna to mere bodily organs. David completely disregards Anna and ridicules her over trivial things remarking “She is too dumb, she can’t figure out what I am saying to her, Jesus, she moves her lips when she watches T.V even. She doesn’t know anything, every time she opens her mouth she makes an ass of herself” (176).

In his eyes she is absolutely flawed and imperfect, different as a woman making her an object to be ridiculed and subject of his sarcasm. Atwood presents how men keep women ignorant to exert their power upon them and yet how men use women’s ignorance to belittle them lavishly at their whim. Atwood projects how women’s acceptance of abuse and taking it to be something natural keeps the oppression towards women alive worldwide.

Marriage is being depicted as a scary imprisonment in the novel where one awaits disaster to happen. Anna considers marriage to be as precarious as skiing, not being able to foresee in advance while the narrator describes it as throwing oneself off a cliff waiting for tragedy to strike. The protagonist and Anna imply marriage to be some turbulent death like sentence in which they drive into. When Joe proposes marriage to the narrator and when she refuses, he becomes hostile. The narrator thinks marriage to Joe is some kind of victory. The narrator states how for Joe marriage is a sexual act, putting a rope around her neck, and entrapping her to doorknobs.

Atwood condemns the acceptance of oppression by women just like the skin being attached to bone. Her objective is to urge women to break the imposed prison walls built by men. She expounds the enhancement of women by breaking free from their timidity and docility. The silence of Firdaus’s mother instills in her the patriarchal importance of submissiveness and timidity. A girl is conditioned to be passive, weak and submissive to be feminine. She describes her mother remaining in the shadow of her father. Her mother had taken on and adjusted her life to that of her husband’s as shown in her diary. In her diary she only entertains the record of the weather and the work done on that day only with no reflection and emotion. It was devoid of human emotion showing the truth of women being souls who burn themselves without illuminating themselves.

The narrator recollects her mother being painfully uncommunicative allowing her father to explain everything. But she sees through how her mother had the answer but remain wordless. It is insisted assertively by men how women’s place is at home as her emancipation was taken to be real threat by men. Her restriction to domestic labor which is a repetition producing nothing new causes the domination of male. Patriarchal oppression is represented where women are seen as being inferior and men as being superior. Anne’s nakedness projects the deep humiliating experience which she goes as she continues to submit herself to being treated with indignity by David. The narrator states:

I could hear Anna splashing and then stumbling below on the sand point; she was really crying now, her indrawn breaths rasping. The bushes rustled, she swore; then she appeared over the top of the hill, she must have climbed up by holding on to the leaning trees. Her pink face was dissolving, her skin was covered with sand and pine needles like a burned leech (174).

The narrator tells Joe about her failed marriage and her abortion. The pain and guilt of abortion is emphasized. Atwood throws into light how women go through psychological trauma while going through abortion and the psychological scares of the unnamed protagonist is highlighted. The oppressive nature of masculine world is presented through Atwood’s revelation that men not only exploit and control women but even exercise control over childbirth. The deep anguish and the narrator’s emotional trauma is depicted. She recollects her horrifying experience of abortion undergone. She expresses her deep mental trauma and anguish of being held up in a metal frame while the baby is taken “out with a fork like a pickle out of a pickle jar” (101). Atwood presents the quintessential revelation of how women’s lives are often directed by events and forces outside of their control. Her ex-lover’s lack of emotion and sensitiveness is depicted as she states that he wasn’t there with

her during the time of her abortion. She mentions that he came afterward to collect her. His callousness is seen when he insensitively remarks that it is over. He wasn't disturbed or guilty with the fact of making her go through the ordeal of abortion.

The men taking control of women, failing to relate to women, suppressing them and destroying them is crystallized in the novel. Her relationship with her former lover, her abortion and the sense of powerlessness epitomizes the deep anguish endured by the narrator. The narrator mentions feeling emptied and amputated; and says that she is having the ugly sensation of the seed of death being implanted deep within her.

The narrator's submissive nature and lack of strength in giving into abortion depicts the voiceless woman whose decision are already made by men according to their convenience. The cruel exploitation and the state of being abused is reflected. The nameless narrator recollects how her former lover discouraged her from becoming a great artist. Atwood highlights how men keep women financially and economically handicap, dependent on them to maintain their control and power over them. She also makes it explicit how it is only a man's privilege to become an artist. It is also indicated how men are not happy to see any woman reach higher successful realm even if the woman is his beloved. She also lays emphasis on how society's flawed belief demand that women remain intellectually handicap in comparison to men which leads to women being excluded from various avenue of opportunities. She in her true sensitive feminist ways expresses how tragically women's true genius goes unexplored and undiscovered lying deep within themselves in utter darkness. Marry Wollstonecraft in her best known work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* mentions:

Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience; but, as blind obedience is ever sought for by power, tyrants and sensualists...when they endeavor to keep women in the dark (24).

Woman's acceptance of men's domination which keeps them in the endless oppression is shown through Anna's meekness and through the immersion of herself deeply in the roles that men have crafted for her. Standing up for herself has never been endowed in her. She allows David to trample all over her. She was a puppet like character who had no hold on her life and completely oscillating according to David's whim. She has no sense of individuality. Anna incessantly complains to the narrator about David humiliating her but when he proposition the narrator, she forms an alliance with him. Woman failing to stand up for each other is emphasized. Anna also exhibit no regard for the narrator as she was copulating with Joe to get back at David. The nameless narrator mentions "men think they can do it with guns, woman with their bodies" (212).

Atwood throws light into how women fail each other which poses as a hurdle in their battle seeking self-identity and freedom from male domination. She recommends how women should seek alliance in each other rather than turning against each other to battle against men. She demands collaboration and unity within the women group in their common aspired goal of freedom and equality. Atwood depicts imagery of animal victim and woman victims sharing the same plight in the hands of men. David finds immense joy in holding his fish up by the tail and grinning, wanting to immortalize it with his camera. The brutal death of heron is a valid evidence of the way women are treated under the abusive male dominated society. The narrator presents the cruelty of men in describing the brutal death of the heron which is found smashed with a stone, hanging upside down with its wing spreading open. Atwood presents the violent acts of men which is taken by them very lightly for their sheer amusement and pleasure. The narrator mentions how David takes great delight in fishing and chilling killing of harmless creatures.

Atwood's feminist sensitivity is depicted through the emphatic binary drawn between the wounded protagonist and the ruined landscape. Nature and women being helplessness and powerlessness under the aggressive suppression and harassment of masculine world is projected. The nature's destruction is a metaphor of violation of women by men. *Surfacing* also in an assertive manner shows the protagonist's desire to find her identity and to free herself from the shadows of male domination. The title *surfacing* depicts the narrator emerging from the dark stifling shadows of men and shedding off the stereotypical image of woman crafted by the society which suffocates her. Diving into the lake under the surface of the water she undergoes an awakening moment and self-discovery.

The narrator transcends from victimized soul to a voyage of enlightening discovery breaking away from the grip of patriarchal society. The nameless narrator surfacing from the shadows of masculine world is revealed when she no longer tolerates to be the sexual object for men and embraces her sexuality. She initiates sexual act with Joe, where she feels empowered and she mentions:

He trembles and then I can feel my lost child surfacing within me, forgiving me, rising from the lake where it has been prisoned for so long, its eyes and teeth phosphorescent; the two halves clasp, interlocking like fingers, it buds, it sends out fronds (209).

The narrator signals herself becoming ready for motherhood and becoming alive raising like phoenix and emerging from the ashes which had blurred her vision in the past. She rises awakening herself from the death like stupor which men imposed on her. The nameless narrator's rebel against the oppressive patriarchy is revealed through her destroying the camera which had captured naked pictures of Anna. The camera is depicted to be phallic symbol dominating the female body. The act of the nameless protagonist destroying it symbolizes her utter rejection of it. The narrator destroying the film coils and unwinding the film, standing full in the sun depicts her voicing out against all forms of men's exploitation against women. It is her way of fighting not only her oppression but Anna's and of all women. As she destroys the film she mentions "hundreds of tiny naked Annas no longer bottled and shelved" (215). Anna watches not knowing whether to inform or not anticipating condemnation from David as her being considered to be an abettor.

The narrator shows her rejection of society which deprives female identities and freedom. She is all for absolute freedom. The narrator declares that she is through pretending. The protagonist dives into the lake, and she confronts her traumatic past and frees herself from all her memories in which she had suppressed herself. She gains strength from nature and gets in touch with her adolescence, her pregnancy and her abortion surfacing through a process of self-discovery by confronting reality. She destroys and eliminates things from her past and becomes an animal. Atwood's objective of turning the narrator into an animal is to depict the colossal exploitation experienced by the narrator and to emphasize the universality of extreme suffering experienced by women across the world. The narrator's frustration and pent up emotion is found in her becoming an animal to reveal how she sees animal not as animal but as refined graceful creatures that are much better than human co-existing with nature and the world. The narrator sees herself as victim and surfaces to become a survivor capable of finding her personal voice. Her immersion with nature awakens her and raises her consciousness of being victimized. Narrator's greater understanding of her place in society is presented and she refuses to be victim and declares withdrawing from society is no longer an option as it leaves one with no alternative except death.

Although the nameless narrator was in search of her missing father, her innermost search lies in the quest of delving deep inside herself and awakening her lost self in the course of the novel. The empowering healing energy received in communion with nature leading to self-consciousness and finally getting rid of conventions imposed by society is indicated. The superiority of men and societal concept of women and nature as inferior object to be exploited is asserted. The construction of a stable human society and identity through the coexistence of men and women, culture and nature is emphasized.

The element of the unnamed protagonist's communion with nature leads to her profound awakening and recognition of her being victimized and her fervent fight for self-identity. She realizes that she has been violated just like the mother earth. Atwood gives the quintessential picture of how men exploit nature and women for their benefit. The nameless protagonist identifies her own destruction with the destruction of nature and its landscape which has so much to offer to the world. She realizes the deep connection between nature and herself and both being the victim of men's exploitation. The protagonist empowers herself through the healing process by embracing nature and rejecting all forms of limitation imposed on woman. The presence of nature raises her consciousness and her feminine consciousness reaches its climax, making her revolt against exploitation. In *Surfacing*, Atwood reveals the protagonist arduous journey from being a victim of patriarchal society, a victim of men to a strong confident person who attains her true self-identity.

Atwood also throws into light how it is only through one's deep realization and acceptance of mistakes that one can attain salvation and rise to one's true essence. She emphasizes how the narrator realizes that her complete withdrawal from society will result in her death which gives her the wisdom to join the society without

giving to the domination that suppressed her. Atwood shows the narrator breaking out of the stereotype image of a woman who had been reduced to be a pitiful object at the mercy of men. The narrator emerges to an individual who is powerfully capable of seeking right and equality. Atwood projects woman's experience from a female point of view. The unnamed narrator surfaces to be physically, mentally and spiritually rejuvenated shedding all limitations which had shackled her back numbing her senses of the joy of seeing the beauty of being a woman and the privilege of having life. She emerges to be an empowered woman at the end who is truly enriched with experience and undefeated by tribulation casted upon her. She surfaces to her self-discovery and self-embracement shattering the rigid walls enclosed around her by the society.

Atwood declares that the conflict between men and women will last as long as women and men do not recognize each other as peer. Atwood was very fierce and passionate in advancing the profoundness of unity within women in their endeavor to accomplish justice, equality and an impeccable freedom. Atwood does not recommend demeaning of men and asserting women's domination. She does not demand the privileges of women over men or men over women. She seeks balance and harmony between women and men to lead life of pure joy and fulfilment.

## Results and Discussion

Margaret Atwood serves as a voice to the voiceless and her writing embodies depth of feminist expression and she presents the deep suppression of women across the globe and their quest in rising themselves in everyday lives. Women are suppressed through the crude societal beliefs and distortion. The fabrication of the term masculinity and femininity breed evil detrimental effect on mankind. The confining life of women being submissive breeds negative vibe of self-alienation and self-destruction. The suppression of women by men is due to men idolizing his masculine traits who fail to understand and appreciate the women in their lives as they see them to be of inferior kind. They do not view women characters to be of equal companion but object of ridicule and sexual conduct who are seen as beautiful empty dolls. The fall of women under the oppressive weight of men's obsession with their staunch masculine superiority breeds disharmonious ambience for both men and women in the society leading to the suppression in the lives of women throwing them in the deep abyss of hopelessness. The men also becomes victim of their folly depriving themselves of the human emotion and true human connection in their rigid veneration of manhood. Atwood truly desires men to slacken their rigid hold on their superior dogma which is dehumanizing to the essence of humanity. She voices out how men need to relinquish their grip on the assertion of male superiority to give equality and freedom for the betterment of humanity.

Atwood in a very assertive manner expounds the need of women standing up for each other in claiming their position in the world. The strong advocacy of women spreading positive vibes, strength and the importance of building solid alliance between the same sexes is exhorted with great zeal to end the suppression of women across the universe. The spirit of collaboration in their struggle in freeing themselves from the clutches of male's domination is highly revered with passion. The women living under dark shadows of servile world of self-alienation robbed of their dreams and thoughts through their conditioned acceptance of male's domination are seen to be an easy highway to women's fall. Their acceptance of servitude, domination and economic dependence on men are found to be the cause of their downfall imposed on them making them easy victims of exploitation. The instilling and embedding in women the virtue of timidity and innocence keep them chained within the walls with low expectations leading to their ultimate endless plight. Women's easy submission to male domination leads to the down spiral of women as men are made to believe that women are weak target for exploitation. Atwood also vehemently presents how women are victimized with obsession of beauty myth in society. Empowerment of women through education and self-reflection is truly required to free women from their ignorance. Atwood highlights how people should not be helpless puppets shaped by social manipulation and flawed beliefs. One need to critically analyze and make sound judgments to give the basic right to every individual be it man or woman. They both deserve the right to live with dignity and equality. Atwood does not recommend demeaning of men and asserting women's domination. She does not demand the privileges of women over men



or men over women. She seeks balance and harmony between women and men to lead life of pure joy and fulfilment. Margaret Atwood is truly a phenomenal humanist who projects the need of the beauty of harmony and companionship between men and women in crafting a healthy conducive environment where marginalization, suppression, domination and bias gender mainstreaming give its ways to the essence of greater virtues like equality and liberty.

## References:

Atwood, Margaret. *Surfacing*. London: Virago Press, 2009.

Beauvoir, Simone De. *The Second Sex*. United States: Vintage, 1949.

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. London: Penguin, 1999.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. London: Penguin Book, 1963.

Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. Chicago: Illinois Press, 1970.

Mohdeb, Assia and Imane Hadji Henni. "Women's Empowerment in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*: When Female Consciousness Reaches its Climax in Nature." *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 3.1 (2013): 141-146. Web. 7 April. 2017.

Serpa, Luciana Labatti Teixeira. "An Inner Trip: Women and Nature in *Surfacing*." *EMTESE Belo Horizonte* 8 (2004): 139-145. Web. 7 May. 2017.

Shanmugam, A. "Perspective of Feminism in *Surfacing* by Margaret Eleanor Atwood." *International Journal of Research in Engineering* 2.5 (2017): 1-7. Web. 19 November 2017.

Showalter, Elaine. *Towards a Feminist Poetics: Women Writing and Writing about Women*. London: Macmillan, 1997. Web. 21 November 2017.

Wallstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. London: Penguin, 1792.