

Margaret Atwood's Fiction
A Study of Inner Conflict in Female Protagonists

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PREFACE

This book examines the psychological growth of the protagonists in the selected novels by using psychoanalytic social theory. It explores five novels of Margaret Atwood namely *The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing*, *Lady Oracle*, *Life Before Man* and *Bodily Harm*. Her novels deal with women's experience in a male-dominated culture and portray women snaffled in tyrannical conventional images from which some women fight to make a place for themselves. This may be put into effect through self-direction of thought, through self-definition and self-reconstruction of one's own history, through bonding with society and through a refusal to the role of subjugation. This study comprises of seven chapters and concentrates on the behavioural changes of the protagonists and their struggle to find the real meaning of the existence. The book begins with a brief history of Canadian Literature and gives an introduction to the intellectual atmosphere of Margaret Atwood's age. It throws light on the social, cultural and economical condition of Canadian women in male-dominated society and also exposes the ill-effects of colonialism and consumerism. Atwood's fiction gives a new dimension to the Canadian landscape and impersonates the changing character of Canada. Her protagonists are impelled by intra-psychic and inter personal conflicts and are haunted with some kind of fear which leads them either to hide their identity or to adopt double identity so as to elude reality. All of them are self-alienated but have an evolutionary constructive force which inspires them to strive for self-realisation. Sigmund Freud gave the feminists