

MISOGYNY IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *SURFACING*

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Abstract

The aimed of this study is to show misogyny exposed by male character in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. Margaret Atwood unveils patriarchal practice in a seemingly perfect marriage. *Surfacing* tells the story of the wife who lives under the pressure of her husband. Using feminist literary approach, this novel is scrutinized by applying close reading method. The source of data for this study is *Surfacing* the novel, book reviews, and articles written by and about author of the book. This is a textual study, in collecting the data, the researchers applied the data gathered in the form of words, phrase and sentence. Some steps are taken in collecting the data, the first step is reading and understanding the theme, character, and the backdrop of the story. The next step is Identifying the words, quotations, and dialogs relating to the theme. The data are analyzed descriptively. Based on the analysis, misogyny exposed in this novel is embedded in a culture and internalized the customs. The inferior position of woman is a result of male domination in all aspects of life. It is concluded that woman is oppressed economically, traditionally and ideologically. Patriarchal ideology exposed in this novel shows that wife/woman is like goods that which can be treated according to the wishes of the husband/owner.

Keywords: misogyny, patriarchal ideology

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1970s is the era in which the women's rights movement made significant strides and took a prominent role within society (Bergeron, Ryan.cnn.com). This movement emerged due to various forms of discrimination and unfair treatment received by women. Women were depicted as a human being in an oppressed position. In society so far women were seen as the second "The Second Sex" where the main role of women is in the household environment (domestic sphere), while the main role of men is outside the home (public sphere) as the main breadwinner. This is a form of patriarchal culture (Mulia and Farida, 2005: 31). Women then try to fight for their rights as human beings.

Starting from very small things, namely discrimination in the environment to various other problems such as political rights, economic problems and other issues. The women's movement aims to release from oppression, where women have moved forward and are more focused on improving women's social position in marriage and family.

On the one hand, men still believed that women or wives had the task of looking after children and staying at home, doing housework and serving their husbands. a wife had to obey what her husband orders. They were afraid that the more women worked outside the home, the fewer jobs were available to men. The role of women as domestic keepers was being left for them. The

fear turned into hatred towards women. Misogyny is hatred of women or prejudice against women. It is a form of sexism that keeps women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the societal roles of patriarchy. Misogyny enforces patriarchy by punishing women who deviate from patriarchy (Manne Kate, 2018: 84). Patriarchal ideology is one of the bases for women's oppression because it creates and strengthens the limitation of women's space between private and public. The private sector leads to the household area, which is considered the main starting area for men's power over women. While the public occupies areas such as employment and the state. The relationship between women and men is hierarchical, that is, men are in a dominant position while women are subordinate. Men determine, women are determined. (Nuraini Juliastuti, 2000: 4)

One of a literary work capturing the spirit of the Seventies is *Surfacing*. Published in 1972 Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* tells the story of a woman and a wife who live in the 70s. *Surfacing* is a story about a couple living in the era of the 70s who seems to have a perfect marriage. The wife serves her husband with all her heart, dresses beautifully to respect her husband, while the husband also always praises his wife's beauty and loyalty. The perfect marriage life is actually a stressful marriage because the husband always orders his wife to do what he wants. On the other side the wife always obeys what her husband says. David always told Anna to wear makeup so that she always looked beautiful. David and Anna have misogynistic relationship. One scene that was quite severe was when he told Anna to take off all her clothes and dance in front of the camera. David has no respect for women. He likes to

patronize the wife. He is only concerned with his own desire. He likes to bully and control his wife, making negative comments about Anna's weight and intelligence. Anna always chose to obey David and never fought him. The husband's harsh treatment and always orders his wife is caused by the patriarchal ideology that he believes in.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Patriarchal ideology causes women to always be in the area of domesticity. Patriarchy according to Kamla Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan (1991: 25-26) is the power of the father or patriarch. It relates to the social system in which the father controls all members of his family, all property and economic resources, and makes all important decisions. In line with this social system, there is a belief or ideology that men have a higher position than women; that women must be controlled by men, and are part of men's property. Moral and legal norms are also double standards which give more rights to men than women, in addition to being based on patriarchy. Husbands domination over wives, inferiority of women, and stereotypic differences between men and women. In this case, men get a more dominant position and role that do not see women as creatures who have decisions toward themselves (Mills, 2009: 82). Because of his dominant position, man objectifies and controls women.

He blames women for his problems and has strong ideas about gender roles. These are all signs that a man is misogynist. Misogynist is a man who is violent, blatantly degrading, or cruel towards women. This man reeks of hostility towards women (Mann, Jenn. InStyle.com)

3. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

A research method can be interpreted as a way of working to understand the object that is the target of research. Because literary works are aesthetic facts that have their own characteristics, the methods used to approach them are also different. The method in literary studies has its own scientific measure which is determined by its characteristics as a system (Chamamah, 2003:19). The research on *Surface* relates to reading the text from a woman's point of view. A text research like this is called research with a women's perspective and is based on women's problems. The research is qualitative which emphasizes the subjective experience of the researchers as women to understand women's problems that appear in the text being analyzed (Handayani and Sugiarti, 2002:77-78,85). Thus, the most appropriate theory used in this research is feminist theory. The application of this theory has important benefits related to women's efforts to gain authority over themselves through a literary perspective. Some steps are taken in collecting the data, the first step is reading and understanding the theme, character, and the backdrop of the story. The next step is Identifying the words, quotations, and dialogs relating to the theme. In this study, the writer conducted an interpretive reading of *Surfacing* then proceed with accumulating data in the form of texts related to the feminist perspective. Finally, the writer analyses the data texts based on feminist theory and approach.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Surfacing is a novel by Canadian author Margaret Atwood published in 1972. The story is told an unnamed protagonist narrator returning to her

hometown in Canada to look for her missing father. She takes her boyfriend, Joe, and a married couple named David and Anna. They live in the narrator's childhood house that called a family cabin. During her stay, she recalls her feeling in the past while trying to find a clue of her father disappearance. The past slowly drives her into wildness. Apart from searching for her father, this is also a story about the narrator's self-healing due to her broken marriage and a story about dysfunctional marital relationship between Anna and David.

At first, she admired David and Anna's harmonious marriage. David and Anna's marriage seems perfect. David always shows his affection towards Anna, on the other side Anna always dresses up beautifully for David, besides that Anna is also a loyal wife to David as well as preparing his daily needs. "They've been married nine years, Anna told me, they must have got married about the same time I did; but she's older than I am. They must have some special method, formula, some knowledge I missed out on; or maybe he was the wrong person". (Atwood, 1972: 24). The narrator thinks that Anna and David might have a special method allowing them to keep their marriage up to 9 years compare to her broken marriage. This means that they may be married at the same time as when she was married, even though Anna is older than her. The narrator also thinks that her ex-husband might not be the right person that made her previous marriage unsuccessful. But the more the narrator hangs out with the husband and wife the more she knows how David treats Anna. What kind of marital relationship are they currently in. David and Anna's marital relationship reflects the stereotypes that exist in psychoanalytic feminism, oppression which asserts that men have a strong psychological need

to subjugate women. Anna, the wife, lives under the pressure of her husband. Anna seeks equality and stand up for her rights within the relationship. However, she finds herself with a partner that seems not to respect her. She has a misogynistic relationship with her husband.

4.1. David as a misogynist

According to Rachel Pace in her book Exponent misogyny is hatred or prejudice against women. A Misogynist will keep women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the societal roles of patriarchy (2019). There are three ways to spot a misogynist

4.2. He treats his partner like his maid

Some studies show that couple with a fair division of labor or equality in marriage are more affected when these expectations are not met than couple who still have traditional values. David's actions toward his wife reflect that he sees women in black and white terms. David always acts like he is a white boss and he treat Anna like she is his black servant. He always wants Anna to do whatever he wants "Somebody break me out a beer." Anna brings him one and he pets her on the rear and says "That's what I like, service." (Atwood, 1972: 21). After serving her husband "She takes out cans for herself and us and we sit on the benches and drink it. (Atwood, 1972: 21). While David "unfolded himself along the sofa.", Anna acting like his black servant sit on the bench. She does not join David, she sits separately. As his black servant, when David asks to be brought a beer, Anna immediately rushed to get it for her husband. Anna went to fetch it for her spouse as soon as she heard this. When David handed Anna the beer, he patted her on the back

and said, "That's what I like, service." Anna seems to have become used to it at this time, and she responds instinctively when David asks for something. David's treatment of his wife is impolite and sounded as if he is treating a slave. He is a patriarchal husband who always wants to gain authority over his wife, Anna. On the other hand, Anna appears unconcerned with her husband's treatment, as she immediately took her own drink and drank it. Another event that shows Anna is treated like his servant when he accuses Anna of never agreeing to what he did

"I like it here," David says. No sound from the others. "Let's stay on for a while, a week, it'd be great."

"Don't you have that seminar?" Anna says dubiously. "Man and his Electricity Environment, or something?"

"Electrifying. That's not till August."

"I don't think we should," Anna says.

"How come you never want us to do anything I want to do?" David says, and there's a pause. Then he says "What d'you think?" and Joe says "Okay by me." (Margaret, 1972: 46-47)

David still wants to stay there for a while. but Anna does not agree with him, she does not want to stay anymore. David always gets whatever he wants. When he does not get what he wants, he acts like a victim. On the other hand, he does not want to listen to Anna's advice that she does not want to stay any longer. Especially when Joe agrees with his plan, he acts as if Anna's opinion doesn't exist. In his marriage, David is a type of man who always wants to

dominate, if he wants it, he has to get it regardless of his wife's opinion. In a marriage, husband and wife should have the same right to have an opinion and they have to respect each other's opinions. In the novel *Surfacing*, David's patriarchal ideology is seen from his habit of making bad comments and mocking his wife. This treatment occurs because he feels that he has power over his wife, so he feels free.

4.3. He is controlling

Lois Tyson states that traditionally, men have been shown as rational, forceful, and protective while women are thought to be emotional, weak, and submissive (1998:85). This gender role has reaffirmed inequity, and it continues to exist now. In many cases, women in marriage are denied the same access to leadership and decision-making roles as males. Due to the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, many people today believe that such unfairness is a thing of the past. These laws, however, are regularly violated.

"God," she said, "what I'm going to do? I forgot my makeup, he'll kill me." I studied her: in the twilight her face was grey. "Maybe he won't notice," I said. "He'll 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." (Atwood, 1972: 87)

Anna is worried when she discovered she has forgotten to put on makeup. Anna considers herself as a David's doll who always fulfil her husband's expectations. By wearing makeup, Anna will be looked young and beautiful. David wants his wife to

look beautiful all the time. A woman would be no meaning if she is not physically beautiful. Girls are like dolls who always look young and never age. Women have no opinion about themselves. On the one hand, Anna is also afraid that she looks old. Anna feels it's impossible that David won't notice because the makeup hasn't entirely rubbed off, but he will notice in the morning, as the narrator tries to calm her. Anna was so terrified that she feared David would murder her for it.

Wearing makeup has a significant impact on a person's appearance, especially on women. Women can always be looking young by applying makeup. Concealers can be used to disguise dark eye bags, contouring can be used to make the face appear slimmer, and lipstick can be used to make the lips seem less pale. All of this, however, should come from personal desire, not coming from external forces, even from a husband.

Anna is there, still in her sleeveless nylon nightgown and bare feet, standing in front of the wavery yellowish mirror. There's a zippered case on the counter in front of her, she's putting on makeup. I realize I've never seen her without it before; shorn of the pink cheeks and heightened eyes her face is curiously battered, a worn doll's, her artificial face is the natural one. The backs of her arms have goose pimples. (Atwood, 1972: 27)

When Anna's without make up, the narrator sees that Anna is growing older. By seeing this, the narrator realizes that she has never seen Anna's real face without makeup. It seems that Anna is really trying to obey David who

wants her to always look young. Getting pressure like this looks very tough for her, especially since it's been 9 years of marriage.

"He'll get me for it," she said fatalistically. "He's got this little set of rules. If I break one of them I get punished, except 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." (Atwood 1972: 88)

When the narrator suggests getting her face dirty to cover up, Anna says that David will still notice. David has a rule. He always controls whether Anna obeys his order or not. When Anna breaks it, he will punish her for it. Anna also said that something from David was missing, maybe this was driving him crazy. She also said that her husband liked to make her cry because he cannot make himself cry. A husband should be willing to accept his wife as she is and not force her to always look young and beautiful. a wife can use makeup but with her own desire and without coercion from her husband. David's act of forcing his wife is an example of misogynistic relationship. The next event that shows David liked controlling his wife is when he asks Anna naked in from of the camera.

"It won't hurt you, we need a naked lady."
"What the hell for?" Anna was peevish now, her veiled head upturned; her eyes would be squinting.
"Random Samples," David said patiently, and I thought, They've used up everything,

there's nothing left here now for them to take pictures of except each other, next it will be me. "You'll go in beside the dead bird, it's your chance for stardom, you've always wanted fame..."

"Oh for Christ's sake," Anna said. She picked up her murder mystery again and pretended to read. (Atwood, 1972: 96)

Anna was told by David to drop her bikini. Even though he pretended to be joking, it wasn't anything to be taken lightly. It's not humorous that he tells his wife to be naked in front of the camera. The reason David says "we need a naked lady" is to utilize Anna's body to draw more attention to the film he's producing. Then he bribed her by telling her to stand next to the dead bird and telling her it was time to be famous, which Anna desired. "You'll get to go on Educational Television," (Atwood, 1972:96) David added that Anna would be a horrible example because she wasn't dressed.

Anna explains to the narrator that her reason for always obeying her husband. David had a rule between them, and if Anna broke it, she would be punished. It is clear that Anna is very afraid of the punishment, this makes her not have the courage to fight back. Moreover, David's punishment has sometimes crossed the line. The character of Anna is described as a wife who always obeys her husband and does not have the ability and desire to resist David's patriarchal actions. This made David feel that his actions were right and underestimated his wife even more. Things like this are very unnatural if in a marriage. Marriage should be a mutually beneficial and happy relationship for both husband and wife.

4.4. He is Sexist

Sexism is preconception or discrimination based on gender. Everyone can affect by sexism, especially women. Sexism is also associated with stereotypes and gender roles and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to the other (Pace,2019: 211). In this novel, Anna is a victim of sexism performed by her husband, David, as quoted in the quotations below:

"What the hell are you talking about?" he said, feigning hurt. But she sat hugging her knees, smoke breathing through her nostrils. I got up and started to collect the plates.... "It turns me on when she bends over," David said. "She's got a neat ass. I'm really into the whole ass thing. Joe, don't you think she's got a neat ass?" (Margaret, 1972: 62)

David uses the term "a neat ass" which means an ass that is round, soft, smooth, and large enough to have something to hold on to in bed, but not so large because it has cellulite. As a woman getting older, cellulite and wrinkle will appear. David uses very bad and inappropriate language about Anna body when he is talking to Joe. Moreover, the topic of the conversation is very disrespectful to discuss with other people. This can also be considered as a sexual harassment. As a misogynist David cannot forgive the flaws in women because he simply dislikes women. Those seen as imperfect are immediately labeled as evil or "sluts.". One of the sign that a man is misogynist is If he constantly talks about women being horrible, or he finds fault with all of his friends, this is

one of the signs of a misogynistic relationship.

4.5. Misogynistic Relationship

Though David is not physically abusive, but is disrespectful and often critical toward his wife. He is rarely loses his temper, but uses logic and flattery to discount woman's feelings and thoughts. He sees women in black and white terms. As his wife, he can make Anna do anything like a maid. David views women as inferior is likely to expect his wife to care for him. This means he expects his wife to cook, clean, and pick up after him. He views his wife as a servant since she does not have much value beyond doing whatever he asks. On the other side, Anna also feels subservient to David. She does everything for him. The misogynistic relationship between Anna and David can also be seen from the way David controls his wife. Since misogynistic man does not see women as having value, he thinks he can dictate things like how his partner dresses, who his partner speaks to, where his partner goes, and what does she do. He may even belittle or make degrading comments to his wife to exert control and get her to do what he wants her to do.

5. CONCLUSION

From the discussion above some points can be drawn. As a misogynist, David shows the readers how to treat a woman. David treats men and women differently. Treating men and women differently is one of the more significant signs of a misogynistic relationship, as it hints at an inherent assumption regarding one's superiority over the other. Instead of respecting his wife, he makes bad comments about his wife to his male friends. This is because he truly values the opinion of his friends,

whereas he sees his wife as being less important.

David is a husband who has a patriarchal ideology who wants to take authority over his wife, Anna. Surfacing means a depiction of the surface, that what is under the surface is not always the same as what it can be seen, as the married life of David and Anna. The division of labor in David and Anna's marriage that is not equal because they still use traditional values. In marriage, David always feels superior to Anna. This makes him always treat his wife terribly, He considers Anna his slave, and orders Anna to comply with all his requests even though it is beyond her limits. The next is Anna's oppression because of David's sexist ideology. He never listens to his wife's opinion and always thought he is right. He always gives bad comments about Anna and her body shape, and the worst thing is that David often have an affair with another woman in front of his own wife. All he does without thinking about Anna's feelings. The last is Anna's bargaining power. There are many scenes where she always gets bad treatment from her husband because of his patriarchal ideology, but she never really fights David. She often refuses what her husband request, but in the end, she always relented and did not want to stand for herself seriously. During her marriage to David, Anna has also lost her identity by always using makeup to look beautiful because it was her husband's wish. People only know Anna's artificial face, where she has lost her own identity.

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