

# PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S SURFACING

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**Submission date:** 28-Jul-2021 09:14AM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1624885951

**File name:** Turnitin\_Manuscript\_-\_Farida\_Fauziah\_E.\_161170002.docx (29.38K)

**Word count:** 3108

**Character count:** 15149

## PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *SURFACING*

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**ABSTRACT:** This study discusses about David's patriarchal ideology in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. This study aims to find out and analyse David's patriarchal actions to his wife, Anna. This study uses a qualitative design by reading a novel *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood that is used as data to provide perception into the problem and derive meaning from existing quotations. This research uses feminist criticism approach. This theory looks at how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal, male-dominated, and aim to expose misogyny in writing about women, which can take explicit and implicit forms. The data of this research was the novel *Surfacing* that is written by Margaret Atwood. This novel consists of 27 chapters and 203 pages. The study found that David is a husband who has a patriarchal ideology who wants to take authority over his wife, Anna. David always felt superior to Anna, this makes him always treat his wife terribly.

**Keywords:** patriarchal ideology, feminist literary criticism, male-dominated

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>9</sup> Patriarchal ideology is the operation of ideology that legitimates and constructs relations of domination of women by men. By definition, patriarchy is sexist, as it encourages the stereotype that women are naturally inferior to men. This belief in women's inherent inferiority is a type of biological essentialism, which is based on biological differences between the sexes that are regarded part of our unchanging identity as male and female. (Lois, 1998:87). Feminist explanations of violence against women have emphasized a patriarchal system of "social relations among males which creates and maintains the domination of women" (Anderson, 1988:8). Regarding the development and maintenance of patriarchy, there are different feminist views. They agree that

patriarchy is a system of social organization and the ideology that accompanies it perpetuates male violence against women. Scientific assessments of the relationship between patriarchal thinking and wife abuse have reached one of two conclusions. Some believe that the assailant's husband accepts the patriarchal concept of the family and maintains the traditional gender belief system (Pagelow, 1984). On the other hand, others believe that it is difficult to draw general conclusions because of the limited research. Obviously, the extent to which the patriarchal ideology of husband or wife can predict partner violence is still a controversial issue. Indeed, inconsistencies in the results of the wife-assault study led by Hotaling and Sugarman (1986) to advise that future reviewers evaluate the study literature using meta-analytical methodologies.

*Surfacing* is a novel by Margaret Atwood that tells the story of an unnamed protagonist who searches for his missing father with her boyfriend, Joe, and her two married friends, Anna and David. This novel is very suitable to be analysed using a feminist perspective. One of the reasons is because the novel's author of *Surfacing*, Margaret Atwood is known as a writer who has many novels about feminism.

Feminists play an important role in today's life, the results of this research will be useful to society. Men have the inner psychological needs to conquer and dominate women, which is also the basis for feminists to change their outlook on life more effectively. For researchers, the survey will reveal many key areas in feminist literary criticism. Thus, it will be revealed about the role of a wife with gender inequality that showed in Margaret Atwood's Novel *Surfacing* with Feminism criticism approach.

This research will focus on analysing David's roles as a husband in Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing*, using feminist criticism methods. This research is conducted using qualitative research, which is based entirely on stories in novels and other sources such as journals and articles.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design by reading a novel *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood that is used as data. Qualitative research design is probably the most suitable research

design for this research. This study intends to find out and analyse David's patriarchal actions to his wife, Anna, in Margaret Atwood's Novel *Surfacing* with Feminist criticism approach. This qualitative research can also be called a qualitative method because of the data collected in the form of qualitative data.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

*Surfacing* can also be interpreted as something that can be seen. What is on the surface is what can only be seen, but what is underneath is not always the same. It may look fine, but in reality, it is not. A husband who looks ideal is not necessarily the case, he could also be a husband who has patriarchal ideology. This is as seen in the marriage relationship of David and Anna.

When David saw the Bottle Villa, he seemed happy with the villa because of its nice shape and it also quite unique. It looks that David treats Anna very romantically when he is feeling happy. It seems that they are used to doing it, it is very normal for a husband and wife to show how they love each other. This quotation makes an opinion that David is the ideal type of husband who really loves and treats his wife very well.

It is clear that even the narrator thought that Anna and David might have a special method or knowledge that would allow them to keep their marriage up to 9 years. 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 thought she might have skipped the special method and made her previous marriage unsuccessful. Even she also thought that her ex-husband might not be the right person. But it also gives the narrator hope that maybe one day she can have a successful marriage.

### **Division of Labor**

There is some research that shows that couples with a fair division of labor or equality in marriage are more affected when these expectations are not met than couples who still have traditional values. It can be seen through the character of David. David's actions towards his wife reflect that he has a patriarchal ideology. David always acts like he is a boss and he treat Anna like she is his servant. He always wants Anna to do whatever he wants as portrayed in the quotation below:

David is asking to be brought a beer. Hearing this, 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 responded instinctively when David asked for something. David's treatment of his wife was impolite and sounded as if he was treating a slave. He is a patriarchal husband who always wants to gain authority over his wife, Anna. on the other hand, appeared unconcerned with her husband's treatment, as she immediately took her own drink and drank it.

The book by Lois Tyson explains what David did to his wife. Traditionally, men have been shown as rational, forceful, and protective. Women are thought to be emotional, weak, and submissive. (Lois, 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.

Anna was worried when she discovered she had forgotten to put on makeup. 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. The reason for all of this is that

David wants Anna to always stay young and beautiful. Anna tries to fulfil her husband's expectations by wearing makeup.

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 each woman's individual personal desire, not coming from external forces. Continuously wearing makeup is also bad for the skin's health. As a result, others do not have the authority to force its usage. And, most importantly, a person cannot always appear young because age will always increase, resulting in changes in facial structure.

The narrator sees Anna wearing makeup. 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.

When the narrator suggests getting her face dirty to cover up, Anna says that David will still notice. David has a rule, 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.

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 him 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," David added, implying that Anna would be a horrible example because she wasn't dressed.

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 patriarchal ideology.

### 17 Sexism

Sexism is preconception or discrimination based on gender. Everyone can be affected 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. In the novel, Anna is a victim of the sexism of her husband, David, as quoted in the quotations below:

It can be seen when Anna is sitting hugging her knees, David uses very bad and inappropriate language about her body when talking to Joe. Moreover, the topic of the conversation is very disrespectful to discuss with other people. This can also be considered harassment.

David still wants to stay there for a while, but Anna doesn't agree with him, she doesn't want to stay anymore. She tried to remind him of the seminar, but it doesn't work. Then David said "Why don't you ever want us to do whatever I want to do?", but actually he always gets whatever he wants. When he doesn't get what he wants, he acts like a victim. On the other hand, he didn't want to listen to Anna's advice that she didn't 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 wanted to dominate, if

he wanted it, he had 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.

### **Bargaining Power**

The relative power of the partners in a circumstance to affect each other is referred to as bargaining power in a marriage. Bargaining power can be a concern in the home. Different life outcomes in marriage are directly connected with women's bargaining power. Depending on the level of women's bargaining power, the relationship between women's bargaining power and marital instability can be positive or negative. In the novel, it can be seen that Anna does not have bargaining power as in the quotation below:

The narrator sees Anna wearing her makeup. she realized that she had never seen Anna's natural face without makeup. it was clear that Anna always did what her husband wanted, such as always looking beautiful and young. Anna did not want to refuse his desire, even though a wife has the right to look like what she wants and does not have to obey her husband's request.

Anna explains her reason for always obeying her husband. This was because David had a rule between them, and if Anna broke it, she would be punished. It was clear that Anna was very afraid of the punishment, this made her not have the courage to fight back. Moreover, David's punishment has sometimes crossed the line. Things like this are very unnatural if they happen in a marriage, marriage should be a mutually beneficial and happy relationship for both parties, both husband and wife.



David told Anna to take off her clothes and asked her to be recorded into a Random Sample. Anna looked annoyed, she was assuming that she wasn't bothering David and seemed to be telling him to leave her alone. But when David is still trying to get Anna to do it, she just pretends to ignore him by reading a book. Actually, she has an opportunity to go somewhere else, but David immediately blocked her way. Anna could have pushed him away, but she didn't. 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.

### **The Lost Identity of Woman because of Marriage**

Name is the identity of a person. Changing name also means changing identity. There are women who are able to maintain so that she only loses Part of it, but there are also those who cannot so that she loses all of his original identity after marriage. As happened to the character Anna in the novel, although the author does not write down the surnames of Anna and David, it is clear that Anna has lost a lot of identities since she married David. As in the quote below:

When the narrator notices Anna wearing makeup, she replies it doesn't matter if she doesn't put it on while she's inside. Anna went on to say that David did not like it when she didn't put on makeup. David doesn't even know that his wife is wearing makeup, all he knows is that he wants Anna to be beautiful and young all the time. Anna also said that her husband had never seen her face without makeup, so she thought that maybe David wouldn't recognize her real face. What Anna experienced is a beauty stereotype, where a woman must always wear makeup to look beautiful.

Especially when the narrator says “<sup>2</sup>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.” This means that Anna's artificial face that she got from makeup is her natural face. With this artificial face, Anna has lost her identity during her

9 years of marriage with David. Anna's behavior who always wore makeup, seemed as if she was willing to sacrifice herself to serve her husband's wishes. In her marriage to David, Anna not only played a wife, she even lost her own identity by using a "mask" to always look beautiful in front of her husband.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of research on patriarchal ideology in the novel written by Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*, get several conclusions. At first David was described as the ideal type of husband, but slowly all of that was broken by the reality. 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 labour in David and Anna's marriage that is not equal because they still use traditional values. In marriage, David always felt superior to Anna. This makes him always treat his wife terribly, for example when he considered Anna his slave, and ordered Anna to comply with all his requests even though it was beyond the Limits. The next is Anna's oppression because of David's sexist ideology. He never wanted to listen to his wife's opinion and always thought he was right. He also always gave bad comments about Anna and her body shape, and the worst thing was that David often had an affair with another woman in front of his own wife. All he did 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 refused 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. When people only know Anna's artificial face, where she has lost her own identity.

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