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Aesthetizing Trauma: The Politics of Narration in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing

Barnashree Khasnobis

Lecturer, Presidency University, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560064

Abstract

The field of trauma literature has received critical attention from Freudian and Lacanian perspectives in works of theorists like Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartman. Understanding trauma in fictions, poetry, short stories and plays under the lens of socio-cultural framework has also remained under discussion. Comparative approach for in-depth understanding of trauma in works of literature has been carried out to explain the formation of cultural identities. This paper endeavours to present how experience of trauma becomes symbolic expression through a critical reading of Margaret Atwood's 'Surfacing'. Another aim of this paper is to analyze the author's approach in representing multiplicity of aesthetic emotions through the protagonist's voice of narration. The methodology is to focus on the theoretical premises on narrative structures given by Gerard Genette in 'Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method' and by Roland Barthes in 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' to comprehend the politics of narration in 'Surfacing'. A critical study of the narrative technique of 'Surfacing' would reveal how language in symbolic ways operates in representing surplus emotions which aesthetically empowers the novel. This paper seeks to elaborate that narration of trauma emotions can be achieved through metaphorical language.

Keywords:

Trauma Fiction, Trauma Emotions Narrative Structure, Symbolic Expression.

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