

**A Critical Study of the Theme Contemporary Fascination
with Rural Life and the Temporariness of Human Lives in
Margaret Atwood's Poem This is a Photograph of Me**

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Who took this photograph?

Margaret Atwood explains an old photograph. this photograph is an old and blurred one; her position in the photograph is small and not even in the center of the photograph. She drowned into the water. This photograph was taken on the day after she drowned. if the poet is dead then who took this photograph? why this photograph should be taken?, why the photographer could not notice the presence of the poet? This research paper tries to find answers to these questions.

Nature and human beings

This poem *This of me is a photograph of me* opens with the line "It was taken some time ago."... this line explains the status of the photograph. She admits that this photo was taken some time ago. So it is an old one."... blurred lines and grey flecks" this is the evidence that this photograph is not a clear one. Photograph is a symbol of identity; it is a record of the past experience. The poet compares the old photo with the mother earth. Mother earth is a classic one. It is always fresh because of the nature. It is polluted and contaminated now. Nature is more powerful and always eternal. Whatever technologies human beings have that cannot be equal to the power of nature.

The second stanza the line starts with "... then, as you scan..." probably ordinary look cannot observe the presence of the poet in the photograph. When the viewer looks deeply into the photo then only she is visible. The poet uses the word scan. When someone scans the photo she could be identified. The line continues "... you see in the left-hand corner..." this sounds like marginalize a particular being. Because the poet explains all the naturalistic elements in the major part of the photograph, but she explains her presence is like a small creature neglected in the photo. Her small presence is compared with the human beings. Even the poet says "...that is like a branch: part of a tree..." again she compares her presence with a branch. The poet insists that human creature is also a part of nature. They are not powerful as nature.

Temporariness of human life

When human beings are compared with nature, nature is like a gigantic tree, human beings are a small branch of it. The poet uses two trees name. They are Balsam and Spruce. Balsam tree is a base for certain fragments and medical preparations. It has pink and purple flowers. They are cultivated for making

fragrance and medical products. Human beings are compared with branches of Balsam trees, which mean they are so helpful to others. Then she explains the objects in the photograph. There is a small frame house. Frame house is a symbol of temporariness of human creation. All the creation of human beings will expire. But nature is eternal like the hills in the photograph. Nature is an everlasting power and never ending force. The very next line she says, "... In the background there is a lake, and beyond that, some low hills." In Canada, there are 561 lakes approximately. She talks about the lakes and the hills of Canada which are seen in the photograph. So the reader could understand the environment of Canada. Then she explains the time when the photograph was taken. It was taken the day after the poet drowned. As it is said, photographs are the evidence of our past. This photograph was taken on the day after the poet drowned into the water which means nobody cared the life of the poet in or nobody watched it. She drowned. The poet's actual message is, we human beings are drowned into the modern world, and modern people think that they are so mighty. That is not real, Atwood says, "I am in the lake, in the center of the picture, just under the surface." "I" refers to the entire human beings; "lake" refers to the nature. So human beings are the center of our nature. According to the Holy Bible, the chapter Genesis says, "...so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Atwood's reminds this statement from her line "I am in the lake, in the center of the picture," So human beings are the central beings of the world, "just under the surface" means just under the care of the nature.

The next stanza explains the uncertainty of human life. Atwood says it is a difficult process to explain the importance of the existence of human beings; she uses the words "how large or small I am". Human can destroy the nature and also repair the nature. Finally she says when the viewers look long enough; they will be able to see her in the picture. So the point is, nature is a prominent force, it is a stable and constant power. Human beings are just like tourists, their participation is very small, and not at all a constant one. Human technologies are nothing in front of the nature, they just come and go but nature is here forever and ever. The poem *This is a photograph of me* is explaining the fickle existence of human life, just small and temporary. Nature is always a life giver; its power is unfathomic.

Conclusion

finally the answer for these questions are, Margaret Atwood itself has taken the photograph, everyday she is admired by the beauty of Canada, she is admired the by the power nature. When she drowns into the beauty of Canada she has taken this photograph. The line "The photograph was taken the day after I drowned..." explains the reason for that. In order to define the beauty and the power of nature Atwood has taken this snap. she wants to give this message to

the world that is her primary aim. When she lost herself into the beauty of the nature, she could not realize her presence. This is the beauty of this poem.

References

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