

FEMALE SELF-ENSLAVEMENT IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE EDIBLE WOMAN*

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a young woman's rebellion against a modern, male-dominated world. Marian Mc Alpin, the protagonist of the novel, is shaped first by her parents' plans for her future, then by her fiancé, Peter. She fears that Peter's strong personality will obliterate her own fragile identity. The unconscious mind of Marian protests against the conventional female role that she is expected to enter by marrying Peter. As a matter of fact, Marian voluntarily gives up her position as a free and independent individual. She becomes symbolically an egg inside her shell and totally dependent on her future husband--an egg which is being eaten, an individual who is being consumed. While being consumed she is not able to consume, while being eaten she is not in the position to eat. She struggles to embrace normalcy, she is often being pursued by it, so that the searcher becomes the victim of her own hopes, which seems to be an appropriate description of the situation Marian finds herself in. Because she has no clear concept of herself or her future and desperately wants to fit in, she is accustomed to giving people what they want. It is this tendency to be submissive to the demands of others which eventually causes her to accept the conventions of society. She has internalized the values of her culture to such an extent that she has become her own prison.

Keywords: Inner conflict, Femininity, Rebellion, Fragile personality.