Abstract

This thesis is to discover the psychological depths of the characters in Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin* and to analyze them according to the Jungian conception of archetypes and the influence of archetypes upon the human psyche.

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One is an introduction, including the overview of the novel and its critical backgrounds. And Chapter Two introduces C.G. Jung’s conception of the collective unconscious and its relation with archetypes and follow with specific discussion of certain archetypes—the Warrior and the Martyr—mainly according to the theories of two neo-Jungian scholars, Marion Woodman and Carol S. Pearson. Since these two archetypes are often over-simplified to fit in gender stereotypes under the influence of patriarchal society, the energies and complexity of these archetypes are always neglected or repressed.

Chapter Three begins with an argument that Atwood’s characters are not stereotypical but rather archetypal, for they possess the contradictory energies within them that are correspondent with that of archetypes. On the one hand, I discuss how the characters in the memoir are symbolized in the science-fiction allegory, being reflected as the blind assassin and the sacrificial maiden; on the other hand, I make a connection between the symbols of the novel—the blind assassin and sacrificial maiden—and the mythological and fairy-tale allusions, and further, the archetypes behind them. In Chapter Four, I examine the psychic problems of the characters according to their relations with the archetypes—to examine how much they identify unconsciously with the archetypes and the extent of their inflation.

Finally, Chapter Five concludes with the archetypal explanation of the tragic life of the characters in the novel. Each of them is trapped in an overwhelming power of a certain archetype instead of having the ego balanced between these multiple archetypes, they turn themselves into mythical figures that are too rigid for humanity.