

THE (SELF)SACRIFICE MOTIF IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE BLIND ASSASSIN*

SUMMARY: The paper deals with the issue of forming and defining one's identity as one of the crucial themes of Margaret Atwood's novels. In her critical study *Survival* (1972), Atwood identifies four 'victim positions' as stages which her (usually female) protagonists go through on the road to personal development and growth. *The Blind Assassin* (2000) is a chronicle of the simultaneous rise and fall of a family and a town, as well as of the tumultuous events of the 20th century. All three narrative levels of the novel contain a strong motif of a willing (self) sacrifice for an ideology or a concept. Members of the Chase family have established the pattern of sacrificing their personal wishes for the sake of the family prosperity. The female protagonists, Iris and Laura Chase, follow the same pattern of (self)sacrifice for what they think is right. However, their sacrifice proves to be in vain, turning them into victims of circumstances and social norms.

KEY WORDS: Margaret Atwood, identity, (self)sacrifice, victim positions, identity, *The Blind Assassin*