

English 103 - the
respendent quetzal
by margaret atwood



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Essay: English 103 Topic: The Resplendent Quetzal by Margaret Atwood- the portrayal of North American tourists

in Mexico

The locale described in the story "The Resplendent Quetzal." By Margaret Atwood relates to the ancient Mayan ruins in Mexico. Now that place is "overrun with big-hatted American tourists and gold toothed Mexican guides." (Atwood, n. p.) The tourists do not fail to visit an ancient Mayan sacrificial well. The marriage relationship of Edward and Sarah is strained, and the Mayan ruins symbolize what remains of their marriage. In order to find a solution to their plight, both go on a vacation to Mexico with the hope that something tangible and fructifying will happen to their relationship. About the mental state of Sarah, Atwood writes, "At first Edward's obsessions had fascinated her...but now they merely made her tired...She herself, she thought, had once been of his obsessions" (1998, p. 154). They see a superficial world in Mexico, as compared to the painful world in which they live at present, for the obvious reason. Somehow they wish to transcend the unhappy reality of their marriage, and seek solace in the beauty of nature in Mexico. The superficial world of Mayan ruins now is plagued with the commercialization, and the westernization of the village from which they hail from are like the alternative beats of the same heart, but Sarah and Edward do not realize this fact. The author describes the situation at the site of Mayan ruins in Mexico thus. "The "authentic" Mexican diner where they ate had a radio shaped like Fred Flintstone playing American pop songs, a crèche with an eclectic collection of holy figurines and a TV playing a dubbed version of "The Cisco Kid". The Mayan site is swarming with foreign tourists with their generic guidebooks, straw hats and large "tasteless" handbags." <https://assignbuster.com/english-103-the-resplendent-quetzal-by-margaret-atwood/>

(Atwood, n. p.) Through the failed marriage theme Atwood tries to explore the important women issue, the difference in perception for the tragic loss Sarah and Edward suffer. Thus, the characterization of the tourists mentioned in the story is not about the normal tourists but the ones who arrive to find solutions to their inner turmoil and strained relationship. The symbolic object of Mayan ruins becomes the destination of the couple and they hope the vacation in Mexico will restore the lost cheer back to their lives. A story writer, howsoever intelligently he/she may try to sweep under the carpet, will not be able to hide some of the real life experiences.

Works Cited

Atwood, Margaret. *Dancing Girls*. Anchor; 1998

Atwood, Margaret. "The Resplendent Quetzal" n. d.- Omdix. com

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