

FEMALE DEPRESSION IN THE STONE ANGEL AND STONE DIARIES

Graven Lives of Hagar and Daisy:
Representations of Female Depression in Laurence's The Stone Angel
and Shields's Stone Diaries

By

CAROL MEGAN DAVIES B. A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

Master of Arts (1998)

McMaster University

(English)

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Graven Lives of Hagar and Daisy: Images of Feminine Depression in Laurence's The
Stone Angel and Shield's Stone Diaries

AUTHOR: Carol Megan Davies, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor R. Hyman

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 96

Abstract

Canadian women's writing illustrates a pathology that, while not of nationalist origins, is gender-specific. Female characters in works such as the eerily similar Stone Diaries by Carol Shields, and The Stone Angel, by Margaret Laurence, suffer in fact, from feminine depression, an often debilitating condition which women today experience in epidemic proportions.

Current research into women's depression focuses on Self-in-Relation theory. This theory departs from traditional theories of developmental psychology deriving from the work of Freud and his followers, theories which were developed by, for and about men and subsequently adapted to accommodate women. Self-in-Relation researchers reject the Freudian focus upon separation and autonomy, particularly from the mother, as developmental goals. They favour a model which proposes that a woman's identity and subsequent state of mental health depends upon the dynamics that occur within all significant relationships. Self-in-Relation theory, unlike object-relations theories which highlights feminine "otherness," emphasizes growth and continued existence within relationship. It identifies patriarchy and its devaluing of emotions and feminine economic skills as catalysts to depression in women. Self-in-Relation researchers suspect that depression in women, is, in fact, a normal reaction to abnormal social conditions. Depression, according to this view, is part of the feminine experience.

Theories of depression, based on the Self-in-Relation model, describe its four elements as follows: loss, not of an object/lover, but of relational potential; inhibition of action and assertiveness; inhibition of anger and aggression; and low self-esteem. The first three elements contribute to the fourth which then increases the likelihood of further loss. Depression in women

involves an ongoing cycle.

Hagar Shipley in The Stone Angel suffers from dysthymia, a long-term, low-grade form of depression. Rather than being a Hecate-like figure as she is often described, Hagar is a victim of relational and, therefore, social circumstance. Her motherlessness contributes to her depression only in that it deprives her of a positive relational context and commits her to a growth-stifling relationship with a puritanical, domineering father whose influence she internalizes. Hagar exhibits the four elements of depression in her relationship first with her father, then with her husband and her sons. Hagar's capacity for caring, which is really a feminine strength, becomes a liability when both she and others deny its value. Only after meeting Murray Fernley Lees, who acts as a narrative therapist, is Hagar able to experience the kinds of relationships with others that can alleviate her depression. Although she is not really "cured," the novel's life-affirming ending suggests that, had she lived longer, she might have been.

Like Hagar, Shields' Daisy Goodwill Flett suffers from depression. Hers, however, is characterized by one major and two lesser episodes. The narrative style of the novel reflects Daisy's mental state which is one characterized by chronic disconnection from others, a disconnection which Daisy, attributing to her loss of her mother, describes as "orphanhood." Daisy's plunge into depression following the end of her self-fulfilling career as a gardening columnist speaks to the "separation of home and workplace," a condition which contributes to feminine depression. (The remainder of her life evinces the Self-in-Relation theorists' contention that depression is part of the experience of being a woman in patriarchy.)

Despite Hagar and Daisy's similar conditions, events at the end of Hagar's life suggest that she meets with more success than Daisy in dealing with her depression. An examination of their fathers' spiritual influences upon them suggests an explanation for this difference. Hagar's

unfortunate relationship with a hard, unbending father arguably provides her with a strategy for making sense of her life. Her Calvinist heritage figures in both the cause and the “cure” for her depression. Daisy’s chronic disconnection and the influence of an eccentric, self-centred father leaves her, on the other hand, virtually defenceless.

Despite their differences, Hagar and Daisy’s life stories exemplify a condition common to women in our patriarchal society. Depression is the result of women’s attempts to survive, not in the wilderness of which Atwood’s 1972 book of criticism, Survival, speaks, but in a society which is in many ways, a wilderness for women. Just as *Self-in-Relation* is a work in progress, so too should be the study of feminine depression which is prevalent in Canadian women’s literature.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Roger Hyman for supervising this thesis, Harriet Hyman for her hospitality, and my husband Ron MacDonald and our two daughters, Morgan and Evan for their support and many sacrifices during the past six years.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother, Jane Davies, whose lifelong desire to learn has been my inspiration, and whose struggle with depression ended with her premature death. (September 8 1939 - August 29, 1996).

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Descriptive Note	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	vi
Table of Contents	vii
 Introduction	 1
 Chapter I: The Devouring of Women: Self-in-Relation Theory and Feminine Depression	 9
 Chapter II: Hagar Shipley and Dysthymia	 24
 Chapter III: Daisy Goodwill and Major Depression	 55
 Conclusion	 90
 Bibliography	 97

INTRODUCTION

In the widely criticized 1972 book, Survival, Margaret Atwood attempts to explain what it is that makes Canadian writing Canadian. She sees Canadian literature as ironic, pessimistic, even going so far as to say that Serious Canadian writers -- both men and women -- are morbid, suffering from the same "neurosis" (Survival 35). Atwood's unpopular generalizations do, however, lead the way for a discussion of "neurosis" in Canadian women's writing. Canadian writing by and about women often expresses a distinct ethos characterized by the victimization and unhappiness of women. Nowhere is this more evident than in Margaret Laurence's Stone Angel and Carol Shields's Stone Diaries. These novels suggest, in fact, that Canadian literature by and about women reflects pathology rather than unhappiness. In fact, if heroines are not distinctly disturbed, like the "T" in Surfacing, they suffer a great deal from bouts of depression or dysthymia, the increasingly prevalent long-term, low grade depression.¹

While some Canadian literature by and about men also reflect a certain depressive mental state, more often than in women's writing, such fiction reflects conflicts that are responses to external, more public, political issues. Such issues are no less personally distressing. Yet their effects differ in both tone and content from those involving women. For example, Robert Ross, in Findley's The Wars, experiences psychological stress, first as a result of events pertaining to his relationship with his mother, then as a result of events relating to the war. His mental disturbances

1. "According to a recent Los Angeles Times article, women today suffer from depression '... at rates ten times higher than their grandmothers . . . , and it is now estimated that nearly one in three women ages 18 to 24 is significantly depressed'" (Spaulding 1).

result from quest-like challenges he faces and they do not lead to depression. Rather, the effect of all the awful things that happen to him is to lead him to an heroic action, a response to his awareness of the universal insanity disguised as reality.

Ross' externalization of his frustrations into retaliatory actions is characteristic of what Carolyn Heilbrun calls the male-quest. As Atwood says in Survival:

our stories are likely to be tales not of those who made it but of those who make it back, from the awful experience -- the North, the snowstorm, the sinking ship -- that killed everyone else. The survivor has not triumph or victory but the fact of his survival; he has little after his ordeal that he did not have before, except gratitude for having escaped with his life (33).

Ross can be considered a survivor even though he does not live to return. He survives a great deal of hardship and undertakes an arguably heroic, though traitorous, action before dying. The Canadian hero, according to Atwood, does not earn the precious elixir; the Canadian quest is idiosyncratic.

Heilbrun says the female hero, in general, lives a completely different story. She calls it the " 'romance' plot, the traditional plot of getting married and having kids, and so on, as opposed to what you call the 'quest' plot" (Heilbrun 31). There is no potential elixir. Regeneration is merely a function of the female body. But even if women, like men, do undergo an heroic journey, they too are merely survivors. Daisy and Hagar's journey through life bears resemblance to both Heilbrun's and Atwood's proposed models. Theirs are stories of lives that do not focus on traditional forms of achievement. Yet both, arguably, achieve a modicum of self-awareness, even though such awareness comes to be of little benefit. Though, like Ross, they die in the end, they are simply survivors of a sort, after all.

One might argue that Hagar's life journey echoes the masculine quest narrative; the novel is redolent with the Jungian archetypes so often associated with the archetypal quest narrative. In

fact, Hagar even plunges into a dark, underworld-like location wherein she undergoes a kind of revelatory transformation. However, Heilbrun's approach might suggest that Hagar's is a pseudo-quest, a journey that is only a thin echo of the man's. The real plot involves her relationship with her father, her brothers, her husband and her sons. It is not until the end that she develops relationships, save for those of her childhood, with women. Ironically, it is at this point that she develops what one might arguably term a redemptive, or positive state of mind. Hagar's relationships with women are all she really has left in the end, and they are, ironically, in this heterosexual "romance," the only people with whom there is a suggestion of happy relations.

Daisy's story also involves relations with others -- again, mostly men -- rather than a story of action and achievement. Daisy's adoption by Clarentine Flett leads to Daisy's marriage to Barker Flett, motherhood, a career late in life and romance with her editor. In the body of the novel, the career, an undertaking that most closely parallels a quest-trial, takes up very little narrative space. That is not to say its effect upon the protagonist is not profound; it is simply not the great adventure, nor the golden reward of the goal-oriented male narrative. It is, rather, part of the more feminine process-narrative form.

The plots of these two novels both depend upon process and relationship. A psychological critique of the novels would correctly look to a model that involves development and dynamics rather than the overcoming associated with the traditional psychological models put forward by Freud and his followers, models for which the masculine quest narrative serves as echo and support. The male-centred model hinges upon the importance of a man's achieving independence from his mother. The male-quest narrative reflects this in the hero's achievement of autonomy. Though seeking independence is relationality of a sort, it is one which prescribes independence *and* separation from another. Autonomy is its goal.

Feminist thinkers increasingly have questioned the ideal of autonomy. Not only does women's experience involve connection with others, but separation from others might, in fact, be linked closely with the roots of pathology in both men and women. Jean Miller Baker suggests that Freud's theories, while inapplicable to women, are nonetheless valuable in that their existence alone suggests that western society, for whom those theories were formed, suffers from a collective pathology. Furthermore, that pathology has something to do with relationality. But these theories essentially outline the way things are without suggesting how they might be. According to Miller, that is because "humanity has been held to a limited and distorted view of itself -- from its interpretation of the most intimate of personal emotions to its grandest vision of human possibilities -- precisely by virtue of its subordination of women" (Miller, Toward 1).

Jean Baker Miller, M.D. is the author of Towards a New Psychology of Women (1976). Currently, she is editor of "Psychoanalysis for Women," Director of Education at the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine. She is part of a group that rather than simply "[modifying] existing theories such as Freudian, Jungian, object relations and others," "[proposes] that the close study of women's experience leads to the creation of new values, categories and terms." She says "that these necessitate assumptions different from those which underlie prior theories, e.g., Belenky et al. (1986); Gilligan (1982, 1987); Jordan (1986, 1987); Miller (1976, 1986) and Surrey (1984, 1987)" (Miller, *Connections* 1).

Miller's work, which deals with the "centrality of the sense of connection in women's lives" is relevant to an analysis of both The Stone Angel and Stone Diaries. She claims that "psychological troubles -- or what are called "pathologies" -- follow from the disconnections and violations that women experience" (Miller, *Connections* 1). Certainly both Hagar and Daisy

experience serious disconnection from others throughout their lives. Violations, which also occur, are less obvious but result from constraints put upon them by society and the inequality between men and women as represented in these novels.

Violations and disconnections are the products of gender relationships within a society characterized by domination and subordination of women. There is ample evidence of such a society in both Laurence's and Shields's novels. That is not to say that either author is consciously writing a feminist-social critique. However, when one looks closely at the pervasively dark tone which results from the pathology in the protagonists, such a critique seems clearly embedded in the novel.

The depressed mental states of the "Stone" heroines not only colours their entire lives but is responsible for the nature of each novel's ending. Yet they are very different stories in many critical ways. The Stone Angel, for example, is written in a very traditional, masculine way. As we have seen, it does not feature a quest-like plot in the traditional sense. However, the episode in the cannery seems to emulate the archetypal quest. Meanwhile, the linearity of narrative and archetypal imagery pays homage to the male literary tradition. Furthermore, Hagar exhibits traits that one might call masculine; she frowns upon the effeminate and the apparently weak. She absorbs her father's hard-nosed approach to life replete with its Protestant work ethic and shades of Darwinism. Though Laurence's work is feminist, her heroine and her writing style are like "one of the boys'."

On the other hand, Stone Diaries is a complete departure from "the tradition." It comprises multiple narrative voices and points of view. The "plot" is full of digressions which seem to have little to do with the main character whose life-story is the true plot. Yet in contrast to the non-conventionality of the plot structure, Daisy is a traditional housewife. She accepts her fate

on the surface, retaliating only in subversive, yet seemingly unconscious ways. Very much the model wife and mother, she conforms to societal expectations, but to an extreme. For, as Shields asserts, Daisy is a woman very much aware of, and affected by, social stricture (Shields Interview). In fact, the circular, sometimes patchwork-like narrative technique which seems to incorporate various points of view and voices, is actually Daisy's imagining how others see her. The reader is told very little of Daisy's feelings, desires, longings because Daisy is a selective reporter of her life. What she says cannot always be trusted. For this reason, the silences, the gaps are just as important, if not more so, than the actual words. She does not articulate her desires because she cannot, whether because she is afraid to admit to them, or because she does not recognize them herself. Whatever the reason, failing to get what she needs is a violation of her rights as a human being, a violation that causes disconnection, and leads to depression.

Though Daisy is intensely aware of social stricture, she inhabits a story which does not seem to be. Narrative technique and the focus on the ordinary in life challenge many readers' expectations. In fact, despite this being a novel about a woman's life, one very much coloured by her gender role, it is also one in which there is little differentiation between masculine and feminine. Daisy and her mental state may be at the heart of the story: however, Daisy recognizes that men can suffer too. One senses the influence of Susanna Moodie, the subject of Shields's own M.A. thesis, who Shields claims frequently illustrates "the opposition and interaction of male and female roles" (Shields, *Major* 9).

Despite their many differences, one cannot ignore, and must examine, the eerie parallels between these two stories, particularly in relation to the mental health of the protagonists. Among other things, they share an autobiographical style. Hagar tells her story in a direct, first person

narrative. Daisy's is more complex. Both, however, exemplify what, according to Morny Joy, Ricoeur calls "narrative identity":

... the narrative form of *identity* [is] the primary means of both depicting and evaluating (in the sense of interpretation) the notion of a *self* (Joy 291).

In fact, the narrative structure of each novel reflects the nature of self-awareness experienced by the protagonists. Since self-awareness impinges on mental health, the narrative forms and structures of each novel then, reflect the depressive mental states of Hagar and Daisy.

Mental illness makes many uncomfortable even though mental health awareness is probably today at its historically highest. Perhaps one reason for this is the common misunderstanding that depression is something one should be able to "snap out of" (Ministry of Health 14). Depressives can be viewed as weak. Furthermore, the problems faced by the individual depressive who can still function in daily matters may not seem to warrant the same concern given to larger social issues. As much as postmodernist thinkers require one to critique the sanity of humanity, the mental health of the individual who is the micro component of society, often remains, outside of literary discussion. The pervasive nature of the disorder, however, as represented by Canadian women writers in particular, demands a closer look.

Both Laurence and Shields portray women whose circumstances lead them into the dark world of depression. They are not the only women writers to deal with this subject, nor is Canadian literature alone in depicting feminine depression. Unlike the world of African-American writers, for example, who deal also with feminine experience within oppression, our writers tend not to focus to as great an extent on social issues such as race, economics and class.

Hagar and Daisy are white, middle-class women. They are also both Canadian, though Daisy Goodwill spends her adolescent and early adult years in the U.S. Both authors are also

Canadian, Laurence by birth, and Shields by virtue of her long-time residence of this country. One is tempted to accept Atwood's explanation that

... the tone of Canadian Literature as a whole is, of course, the dark background: a reader must face the fact that Canadian literature is undeniably sombre and negative, and that this to a large extent is both a reflection and a chosen definition of the national sensibility (Atwood 245).

However, it is not clear that this darkness, or depression is, in fact, a Canadian phenomenon. Chris Amirault says that "the experience of mental illness may be quintessentially American." Given the close relationship between Canada and the United States, it is reasonable to infer that the phenomenon is North American. Still, as this study suggests, there is a difference between an overarching national sense of depression and the particularly disturbing, pervasive and unacknowledged portrayal of women suffering from depression. In fact, as a study of Stone Diaries and The Stone Angel shows, matters of survival, and the "violent duality" that characterizes the Canadian, perhaps, North American experience, indeed might play a part, but do not explain all. Daisy and Hagar, however, do.

Chapter One

The Devouring of Women:

Self-in-Relation Theory and Feminine Depression

Since the stories of women in literature as in life differ from those of men, it is reasonable to suggest that the anxieties they face differ also. In fact, this assumption is at the heart of Self-in-Relation theory which convincingly argues for the sociocultural causes of female depression. In a discussion of Stone Diaries and The Stone Angel, it is essential to examine the female nature of the so-called Canadian anxiety, its causes and its significance to Canadian women's writing.

The Canadian anxiety, which Atwood sees as the result of environmental and colonial hardship in works by writers of both genders, exemplifies depression which Miller characterizes as "feeling blocked, unable to do or get what one wants" (Miller 191). According to the American Psychiatric Association, depression comes in different forms. For example, Hagar Shipley suffers from dysthymia, or long-term, low-grade depression which is characterized by irritability and depressed mood, poor appetite or overeating, insomnia or hypersomnia, low energy or fatigue, low self-esteem, poor concentration or difficulty making decisions, feelings of hopelessness. Daisy Goodwill, on the other hand, while possibly also dysthymic, suffers more obviously a single, major depressive episode characterized by the same symptoms as dysthymia (American 128, 136).

However, depression in female characters is generally not addressed directly. Instead, for example, critics identify manifestations of the Triple Goddess archetype. The Canadian landscape

and characters such as Hagar Shipley, according to Atwood, for instance, evoke both the nurturing and frightening nature of the Triple Goddess. The Triple Goddess comprises aspects of the feminine: the maiden, the mother and the hag. These correspond to mythical figures such as Diana/Venus/Persephone, Demeter and Hecate. The Triple Goddess is the multigenerational Muse, Nature who is both Woman and Monster. She is emblematic of both birth and death (Atwood 35, 200). Most importantly, however, the archetype might very well be that aspect of the feminine personality suffering from depression that finds expression only in threatening, alienating ways.² For example, irritable Hagar is the “Ice Woman” (*Survival* 195), Hecate, who, manifest also as a Medusa figure, is often described as emasculating. According to Spaulding, our medical institutions pathologize anger in women, labelling it “castrating” (Spaulding 4). Feminine anger, which is seen as maladaptive is feared by a society which seeks to suppress it. Women, recognizing that it is viewed as unfeminine, suppress this emotion so as to maintain social acceptance. They lack the opportunity to learn ways in which to express anger appropriately leading to unhealthy suppression or alienating expression. Anger expressed and unexpressed, as we will see shortly, is associated with feminine depression.

The Triple Goddess also comprises a Demeter/Persephone component which, while associated like Hecate with death and an underworld, exemplifies sadness and loss. Demeter never fully recovers from Hades’ rape, that is, the kidnapping, of her daughter, Persephone. Persephone

2. Though reference to increased rates in depression relate to the past century or so, depression, like the Triple Goddess, is not new. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the goddess is not unique to modern Western culture while Self-in-Relation theory works on the assumption that feminine depression is a product of modern Western civilization. Nevertheless, the Triple Goddess is characterized by emotions that also characterize the depressive. Therefore, Contemporary references to her could well be informed by her resemblance to a sufferer of depression.

straddles the land of the living and the dead, living alternately with her husband and her mother, torn between marital obligation and filial devotion, between societal expectations informed by gender and the nurturing relationship with her mother. The perpetual sadness associated with separation of Demeter and Persephone parallels that of the motherless Daisy Goodwill.³ The anger, sadness, separation and sense of loss which characterize the Triple Goddess archetype are also very much a part of the female depressive.⁴ Furthermore, aspects of depression characterize non-depressive feminine experience. The Triple Goddess who ostensibly represents the feminine, therefore, could also metaphorically represent feminine mental illness. One might argue that critics conceptualize feminine depression, a dominant feature of women's experience that fails to excite interest in literary discussion, within the folds of the mythological female trinity. Bringing the Triple Goddess into literary discussions regarding women's literature might, in fact, be a means of managing or structuring feminine depression. Dividing the goddess into fragments also separates the powerful but societally devalued emotions of sadness and anger, thereby rendering the image of the depressed woman less potent and fearsome.

The devaluing of feminine characteristics by patriarchy which is responsible for the tripart nature of the goddess also accounts for a general lack of interest in depression. Depression is,

3. While Jung's deployment of Demeter and the Kore (Persephone figure) emphasizes the theme of immortality and the sense of a completion of self in mother/daughter relationships, the myth involving Persephone's separation from Demeter, in fact, resounds with unallayed sadness. That this sadness is the result of repeated losses of relational potential, that is, Persephone's annual departure from her mother's side, evokes the depressive's experience of repeated disconnections from others. For a discussion on Demeter and her perpetual sadness, see Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* pp. 50-54.

4. One might argue that these emotions characterize all women. In fact, Kaplan addresses this. See Davies 18 and Kaplan p. 4.

after all, largely a woman's affliction. Alexandra Kaplan, in "The 'Self-in-Relation': Implications for Depression in Women" writes:

even beyond the more severe syndrome of depression, depression as a mood or a symptom seems to be a spectre that haunts women, a mode of experience with which all women seem able to identify (Kaplan 1).

In fact, Kaplan notes that the personality type most often associated with the depressive personality is one comprising characteristics most often attributed to women:

The necessity to please others and to act in accordance with their expectations. . . makes her unable really to get in touch with herself. She does not listen to her own wishes; she does not know what it means to be herself, when she experiences feelings of unhappiness, futility, and unfulfillment, she. . . tends to believe that she is to be blamed for them. (Kaplan 4)

This describes "one aspect of the modal experience of being a woman in society" (Kaplan 4). The fact that depression is largely a woman's ailment may be the reason it is largely ignored.

Another reason for the lack of discussion concerning depression is that it is largely misunderstood by the general public. Because feminine depression results from an ongoing cycle of elements each of which contributes to the next, as we shall see shortly, one's depression may seem one's own doing. For example, Hagar is conditioned by her puritan upbringing to unrelentingly observe propriety, which is in effect a "cancelling out of self" (Spaulding 6).

Hagar's actions alienate those with whom she might form constructive relationships that encourage her to change her way of viewing the world. Her loneliness and irritability seem her own doing.⁵ It is difficult for many to sympathize with one who seems to bring her problems upon

5. If an internal directive to care is view as an "obligation" or "moral absolute," then the behaviour is apt to result in confusion, self-alienation and ultimately depression. Furthermore, Hagar's sense of propriety is not unlike the "damaging aspect of the female ideal of self-sacrifice" which involves the "silencing of self [that] is based on the belief that it is selfish to act on one's own needs" . This is a "cancelling out of self" (Spaulding 6).

herself. Yet depression is a form of oppression, rather than a self-induced state. It enslaves, even coopts the sufferer. As Miller says:

. . . psychological troubles are the worst kind of slavery--one becomes enlisted in creating one's own enslavement--one uses so much of one's own energies to create one's own defeat. (Miller, Toward 194)⁶

In some ways, depression and the colonial mentality are alike. The colonized that acquiesces to the colonizer in effect is seen as "creat[ing] one's own defeat." The woman who "gives in" to depression seems to do the same.

Depression is a woman's ailment that largely fails to interest and elicit sympathy. It is also increasingly, though disproportionately, prevalent among women, suggesting that "something is happening to women in our culture that is causing them to be depressed."⁷ What is perhaps most telling is "the frequency of depression in women [which] suggests that depression may not be an 'illness' superimposed on an alien or indifferent personality structure, but rather may be a distortion--an exaggeration of the normative state of being female in Western society" (Kaplan 2). There is the sense that depression is a normal reaction to an abnormal social climate, a reaction found more often in women than in men.

Because of depression's prevalence in women, and the work of various feminist theorists such as Gilligan, researchers of feminine depression increasingly recognize that traditional models

6. Miller refers to psychological troubles with social, rather than biological origins.

7. "Women today suffer from depression ' . . . at rates ten times higher than their grandmothers..., and it is now estimated that nearly one in three women ages 18 to 24 is significantly depressed' (McLellan, December 10, 1992). Moreover, current research indicates that married women have a higher incidence of depression than single women (Formanek & Gurian, 1987), and that employed women suffer from less depression than women who are solely housewives (Mirowsky & Ross, 1989)" (Spaulding 1).

Though Daisy and Hagar correspond to the grandmothers of women today, the depression which characterizes them is consistent with the findings of researchers like Spaulding and Miller.

of developmental psychology, which were constructed for, by and about men, do not work for women at all.⁸ In response to the women's movement, women have been seeking and developing theories of their own. However, theirs is not simply an effort at collective self-assertion. Many studies by women show that women and men develop differently, and this indicates a need for different theories. For example, until recently, women were always seen in terms of "what they are missing when measured against the male paradigm" (Kaplan 1). Psychological theories reflected this; Freud's concept of "penis envy",⁹ Kohlberg¹⁰ and Piaget's¹¹ work on morality are examples.

Freudian approaches to psychology tend to emphasize social causes of depression in a way that suggests women's "affiliative needs" or "relationship orientation," that is, "feminine" characteristics, are to blame. Research now shows that it is not the nature of relationships in which women find themselves but what happens in those relationships that is at the heart of depressive illness (Spaulding 1). Rather than viewing women's mental states of health in terms of object-relations theory which stresses "otherness," difference, and, therefore, implies marginality, it should be seen in terms more closely relating to the concept of living systems theory in which:

it is understood that the causative factors contributing to disorders in a given system may arise from system precursors at any level (i.e., the cell, organism, individuals, family, group, society, etc.). Thus, an individual's culture, values and institutions can all impact his or her mental state. (Spaulding 1)

8. The dominant theoretical model of developmental psychology will herein for simplicity's sake be referred to as Freudian or psychoanalytic.

9. See Gilligan 6-7.

10. Ibid 18.

11. Ibid 10.

From living systems theory derives the theory of the Self-in-Relation, which looks to traditional theories of psychological development only in its emphasis on relationality and on the social causes of pathology. Traditional theories emphasize separation, independence and autonomy as “aspects of the ideal developmental goal” (Spaulding 1). On the other hand,

Self-in-Relation Theory emphasizes women’s orientation,[that is], a more contextual, relationship-oriented point of view. It proposes that “women’s core self-structure,” or their primary motivational thrust, concerns growth within relationship, or what we call the ‘Self-in-Relation.’¹² (Spaulding 2)

Self-in-Relation theory focuses on “more than the ‘relation’ indicated in interpersonal or object-relations theories such as those of Sullivan (1953) or Fairbairn (1962)” (Kaplan 3). In contrast to these theories, Self-in-Relation theory emphasizes the two-way interaction wherein one “participates in the development of others,” so that “both parties feel enhanced and empowered through their empathic connection with the other” (Kaplan 3). Through the process of “taking an active role in the process of facilitating and enhancing connectedness with others,” women develop “a differentiated self, one that comes about through “participation in and attention to the relational process” (Kaplan 3):

Thus, the growth of the differentiated self is commensurate with the growth of one’s relational capacities and relational network, from the earliest parent-child dyad to an increasingly complex, multifaced web of being with others which can ebb and flow in response to social conditions (Kaplan 3).

According to Self-in-Relation theorists, depression stems from “the inability to sustain a connection while developing and asserting a separate sense of self” (Spaulding 3). Women’s ability to “feel empowered by their relational capacities is highly dependent on the extent of

12. Kaplan, 1984, p. 3

societal and individual valuing of these strengths.” (Kaplan 3). Our society denigrates relational qualities, which restricts women

to less than the full use of their resources, too often limiting their actions--at home or in the workforce. . . . When women are severely constricted in the full development of their relational capacities, and when women are strongly discouraged or punished for self-expression, the conditions are set up which can lead to depression (Kaplan 3).

Spaulding cites various sociocultural factors which limit women from fully utilizing their resources, the first being the separation of home and workplace (Spaulding 7). Before industrialization, women and men shared domestic and economic responsibilities. The advent of the factory removed economic activity and skills previously accomplished by and valued in women from the home.¹³ With the loss of these skills and knowledge, the female world “lost meaning and importance” and became relegated to the caretaking of men and children (Spaulding 2). According to Chodorow, this period in history marks the inception of the ideology of the “moral mother,” who is a “nurturant model and guide” to husband and children (Chodorow 5).

Another sociocultural factor that contributes to depression in women involves the perpetuating notions of “ideal femininity” equated with self-sacrifice. Women tend to judge themselves by a model of goodness. When caring seems an obligation or moral absolute, women, who cannot be selfless all the time, fall short of societal expectations. Furthermore, women tend to try to maintain harmony by silencing themselves despite disagreements with those to whom they wish to enhance closeness within relationships (Spaulding 6).

13. “Although mothers had neither land nor money to bequeath to their daughters, they passed down a vast body of knowledge and skill (Chodorow, 1978). These skills included the production and preservation of food and clothing and other household necessities, nursing of the young, old and sick, midwifery, attendance at deaths, and child rearing.” (Spaulding 2).

Spaulding further argues that the objectification of women causes them to feel a sense of badness. Sexual objectification invokes the assumption that one's sexual impulses and desires do "not exist independently. They are to be brought into existence only by and for others- controlled, defined and used (Miller, Toward 55). Religion, as we will see in Hagar's case, contributes to the plight of women for whom objectification, in the form of stereotyping, restricts them to identification with either a Madonna or a whore (Spaulding 7).

Suppression of anger in women and devaluing expressions of sadness are the two remaining sociocultural factors Spaulding identifies as contributors to feminine depression. As we have seen in the discussion on critical references to the Triple Goddess, these factors weigh heavily in the cases of Daisy and Hagar. Hagar epitomizes the menacing, violent, unsmiling Hecate, while Daisy recalls the perpetual sadness of the Demeter/Persephone duo. Though the Goddess represents more than simply these devalued feminine emotions, emotions are a large, and, one might argue, defining part of the archetype, as they are of Daisy and Hagar.

While a discussion of Stone Diaries and The Stone Angel necessitates references to the social origins of depression, one must establish the presence of depression. To do so, one must first recognize the key elements of depression for both men and women: (1) an experience of loss; (2) inhibition of anger and aggression; (3) inhibition of action and assertiveness; and (4) low self-esteem (Kaplan 3).

For Self-in-Relation theorists, the sense of loss experienced is not that of an "object" as in Freudian-inspired theories, nor simply the loss of a state of well-being as suggested by Kurash and Schaul (1987) (Spaulding 2). Instead, depression is described as "inhibition of action from loss of a relational context" that is largely a "consequence of disconnections in their day-to-day experiences with the people important to them" (Spaulding 2). This is a loss of the "opportunity to

participate more fully in relationships, with authenticity and a sense of empowerment,” a form of loss, we will find, experienced by both Hagar and Daisy .

The state of felt loss experienced by the depressed woman who does not have her relational needs met is the result of her society’s devaluing of relational qualities. This occurs often “when connection is interpreted as ‘dependency’ on the one hand or ‘smothering’ on the other hand” (Kaplan 5). Women then doubt the value of themselves as well as their endeavours. A woman suffering from “disconnection” subsequently loses “confirmation of [her] core self-structure” (Kaplan 5). For women who become depressed, “this pattern is exacerbated.”

The second and third elements involve the inhibition of emotional expression. With disconnection comes the feeling that one is “less able to take action (expression of experience within a relationship, that is action within the relationship)” (Miller, *Connections* 6). Social injunction compels women to succumb to inhibition. Women suffering from relational disconnection do so for fear of further disconnection from the only relationships available to them. To do so is to act inauthentically, to act in ways that do not fulfill one’s needs, which, in turn, further contributes to confusion and self-alienation.

The result of the first three elements of depression is the failure to find “confirmation of [a woman’s] core self-structure” which leads to low-self esteem wherein one feels “a diminished sense of [one’s] own worth,” a “confusing sense of disconnection and isolation,” and a sense of desperate loneliness for which one feels to blame (Miller, *Connections* 6). Out of the sense of sadness and fear comes a sense of badness (Miller, *Connections* 6). In response, a woman who cannot change the relationships available to her will “attempt to change the person possible to change, herself” (Miller, *Connections* 6). She redefines “those parts of experience she has

determined are not allowed” through the suppression of inappropriate feelings such as anger. This creative redefinition essentially means that

a large part of what [a woman] does and says does not arise from her experience within relationships. Her actions come from what she believes she must be in order to be allowed into connection with others. Thus, much of what she actually does in the world, often very worthy action, does not connect fully with her own experience. [Her] actions emerge out of inner constructions of what she believes she must do and be. To the extent that these thoughts, feelings and actions are not originating from her perception and desires, nor connecting with her experience, they cannot build her image of herself as worthy. Moreover, they cannot alter the inner increasingly walled-off portion of herself which consists of all the “bad” feelings and thoughts (Miller, *Connections* 6).

She rewrites herself to conform to a “master narrative.”

Not only does a woman act in ways that do not fulfill her own needs, she is unaware that this is what she is doing. Furthermore, to connect in the only relationships available, a woman might keep more and more of herself out of her relationships, meaning that she will not be “relating fully in the ways which lead to growth” (Miller, *Connections* 7). This continuous construction of self brings her farther and farther away from the benefits of “interchange within connections -- precisely the source of clarity and knowledge needed for the development of an increasingly accurate image of self and others” (Miller, *Connections* 7). In other words, each element of depression contributes to the next, and the combination condemns the sufferer to a self-destructive downward spiral.

According to Miller, “so-called psychopathology develops when relational disconnections occur repeatedly over time without a change in course [and]. . . there is a likelihood that they will occur whenever one or more persons have the power to determine the nature of a relationship with others” (Miller, *Connections* 8). Thus, feminine depression results from the inequalities in power

found within relationships involving subordination and domination, that is, gender relationships in patriarchal society.

From this perspective, depression in women seems an event, or state originating and experienced in adulthood. That is not to say that Self-in-Relation theorists discount childhood experience as a contributing factor. After all, gender is constructed and social injunctions are learned in childhood, both of which influence behaviour thereby contributing to relational dynamics throughout life. Yet Self-in-Relationists emphasize the cyclical nature of a woman's self-development replete with its contextual "ebb and flow," a view that contrasts the traditional theories involving a more linear succession of developmental stages starting at birth. A woman's mental wellness, which directly relates to her sense of self, is not necessarily a constant. Furthermore, Miller says that children experience a similar though more complex cycle when mutually empathic relationality is thwarted. However, unlike Freudians, she and other Self-in-Relationists do not point to childhood as the incubator for neuroses. It is simply one more period in a woman's life during which relationality and depression can occur. The focus of Miller's work at the Stone Center is on adult women. For an understanding of child psychology in terms of work that led to the development of Self-in-Relation theory, David Stern's work is enlightening.

Stern's work departs from traditional approaches in his insistence that children, rather than being motivated to separate and individuate, instead develop in relation to their care-givers. He suggests that between the ages of three and five, children have developed all their senses of self, all of which continuously and simultaneously evolve through adolescence and adulthood (Emmanuel 6). It is during this childhood "domain" that children develop their narrative self which is the "laboratory for self-identity and it is this sense of self through which the other senses of self are expressed within the therapeutic process" (Emmanuel 6).

Surrey's subsequent Self-in-Relation theory builds on Stern's concept that the narration of self expresses development within relationships. Surrey's work, however, focuses on the girl's connection to her mother. In contrast to the tendency of traditional theories to problematize and negate the mother-daughter relationship, Surrey concentrates on its "growth-promoting" aspects (Emmanuel 6).

According to Surrey, the child's interest in and attention to the mother's world is particularly and regularly reinforced in girls to a much greater degree than in boys. Girls are much more interested in the feeling states of their mothers, and mothers use language of feeling and affect with their daughters much more frequently than they do with their sons. (Emmanuel 6)

While emphasis for boys tends to be on emotional separation and the emphasis on autonomy and difference, girls come to expect that their sense of self grows as a result of the ability to express relation to another (Emmanuel 6). According to Emmanuel, Surrey also suggests that the mutual mother-daughter attentiveness to each other's feeling states and interest in emotional sharing may form the "origin of the capacity for empathy and the beginning practice of relational development," a major component of which is the linguistic expression of emotion, of relational experience.

Surrey's explanation for gender differences with respect to attitudes towards relationality clearly points to societal influences rather than biological origins. Most importantly, however, she carries Stern's concept of self-narration forward into the new and still evolving Self-in-Relation theory being used and studied in therapeutic settings at the Stone Center. Clearly, narrative identity, relationality and an ever-evolving self are current and relevant ideas in psychology as well as literature.

In examining the process involved in a woman's becoming depressed which leads to a redefinition, or rewriting, of herself it becomes clear that relationality, mutability and narrative feature in her experience. In rewriting herself, a woman edges farther away from knowing herself. Miller asserts that

depression, in general, seems to relate to feeling blocked, unable to do or get what one wants. The question is: what is it that one really wants? . . . It may seem that a person has what she wants. It often turns out, however, that instead, she has what she has been led to believe she should want . . . How then to discover what one is really after? (Miller, Towards 90).

Feminist therapists dealing with depressed women recognize the need to help women "discover what one is really after" which is directly linked to one's sense of self. Increasingly, therapists turn to the narrative identity as a means of helping women recognize the often evanescent, even intangible parts of themselves.¹⁴

Self-knowledge is the goal of the narrative-self, of the autobiography. Just as feminine identity is always in flux, so then ideally should the narrative identity which is the interpretation of self be constantly open to revision. This revision, according to Joy, takes the shape of an ongoing cycle of understanding and explanation which she calls an "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Joy 292). Explanation involves critique. Understanding involves assimilation of the "critically appraised material." Joy adds, however, that in addition to critiquing, one must construct then begin the hermeneutic cycle again. Thus, knowing "becomes a complex and progressive process." Therapists recognizing the link between feminine identity and narrative increasingly turn to narrative therapy which involves a form of guided autobiography offering alternatives,

14. A woman's self often seems buried under the many prescribed roles she plays. It is not a final state of identity, but something comprising many facets which alternately come into focus and retreat in relation to others.

possibilities from which the depressed woman can select to rewrite her identity-story. Not knowing oneself leads to depression. Knowing oneself through alternative interpretations enables a woman to break the cycle of depression.¹⁵

Both Hagar and Daisy's stories are essentially autobiographies of fictional characters in which the narrative process becomes the laboratory for the self. Their characters express what they know, critique and construct, with different results. Joy quotes Linda Alcoff who says:

the *identity* of a woman is the product of her own interpretation and reconstruction of her history, as mediated through the cultural discursive context to which she has access" (Joy 287).

"We learn," as, according to Joy, Ricoeur says "to become the *narrator of our own story* without completely becoming the author of our life" (Joy 297). Never is this more true than in the cases of Hagar and Daisy, two Canadian heroines whose narratives tell the story of lives deeply affected by forms of depression with sociocultural origins. Their very different stories and outcomes nonetheless reveal the same disturbing possibility. The Canadian anxiety of which Atwood writes may be feminine and not Canadian at all.

15. A distinction needs to be made between the coauthored identity-story that conforms to a "master narrative" and one which offers alternatives. Using other people as resources for restorying can free the depressed person or exacerbate her problems. Difficulties in distinguishing between the two would hinder her recovery. For a discussion on co-authoring and the ethics of "Storytelling and Storylistening", see Kenyon and Randall's Restorying Our Lives.

Chapter Two

Hagar Shipley and Dysthymia

In The Stone Angel, rather than “celebrat[ing] life while lamenting the limitations placed upon it by personality” (Moss 157), Margaret Laurence laments the limitations placed upon personality by life. Many critics blame Hagar’s “neurosis”-- more accurately described as dysthymia, or long-term, low-grade depression-- for its effects upon people whose lives she touched.¹⁶ More often than not, she is seen as a Hecate-figure.¹⁷ Few see Hagar as a “victim.” Most analyses of Hagar’s character point to the effect of Hagar’s motherlessness, or the constrictive Protestant environment in which she grows up. These do play a role in the formation of Hagar’s personality, but in ways not traditionally recognized. While Laurence draws attention

16. Alice Bell notes in “Hagar Shipley’s Rage for Life: Narrative Technique in The Stone Angel” (New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996) that “Reviewers, critics, and those who write blurbs for paperback editions have often labeled Hagar as destructive. For example, the cover of the 1978 edition reads: ‘She keeps from everyone her bitter secret: that any man she loves, she destroys.’ On the cover of the new Canadian Library 1968 edition she is accused of destroying her son John. In the Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1975] 1976), Clara Thomas writes: ‘Hagar lived in battle, pitted against everyone who came close to her and, tragically, she betrayed them all--her father, her brothers, her husband, and her sons. Even for John...her love was blind and ultimately destructive’ (69).” (Bell 62).

Rosalie Murphy Brown in “Self-Alienation of the Elderly in Margaret Laurence’s Fiction” (New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996) focuses on the destructive effects of Hagar’s poor parenting on Marvin.

Paul Comeau, in “Hagar in Hell: Margaret Laurence’s Fallen Angel” (CL 128 Spring 1991) writes: “Within the context of the Manawaka Cycle, The Stone Angel represents Margaret Laurence’s vision of Hell, with Hagar Shipley manifesting the characteristics of the most notorious fallen angel” (Comeau 11).

17. See footnote 4, page 11 above.

to the role society plays in the mental health of women, she does not implicitly blame the mother or point to childhood as the incubator for neurosis. Instead her portrayal of Hagar, like Shields' portrayal of Daisy, expresses the feminist view of self-definition as relational. As Hagar's story illustrates, and Daisy's will too as we shall soon see, depression stems from relational disconnection, the root cause of which is the violation of a woman's status as a valued being in patriarchal society. Furthermore, it demonstrates the cyclic relationship of the four elements of depression as described by Self-in-Relation researchers, and does so within a narrative which is a therapeutic "restorying" of Hagar's life.

The first part of Hagar's story is a life-review told in smoothly connected vignettes that alternate and merge past and present. Each episode deals with dyads or triads involving Hagar. It is in such relationships that one finds evidence of Hagar's chronic depression. She exhibits such symptoms as irritability, indecisiveness and feelings of hopelessness. Moreover, her depression feeds itself by alienating others, thus maintaining the disconnection that initiates it. According to Self-in-Relation theorists, depression in women stems from "the inability to sustain a connection while developing and asserting a separate sense of self"¹⁸ (Spaulding 3). The first widely recognized element involved in depression is loss. Loss leads to the "inhibition of anger and aggression, inhibition of action and assertiveness, and low self-esteem" (Kaplan 3). In turn, these contribute to further feelings of loss and the cycle repeats. Loss, for women, and for Hagar, involves, not the object-loss identified by Freudian psychology and its descendants but, "the loss of opportunity to participate more fully in relationships, with authenticity and a sense of empowerment" (Spaulding 2).

18. Spaulding refers to the work of Gilligan, 1977.

Hagar's first loss comes out of the death in childbirth of her mother, a loss we will see again in the case of Daisy Goodwill. It is not the loss of a model of femininity and so-called mirror of the feminine self. Nor is Hagar's motherlessness, in itself, a major cause of her psychological troubles. Certainly, she has not had the mutual mother-daughter attentiveness to each other's feeling states and interest in emotional sharing that Surrey says forms the "origin of the capacity for empathy and the beginning practice of relational development" (Emmanuel 6). Yet in contrast to traditional views on psychodynamics, Self-in-Relation theorists posit that all significant relationships, or lack thereof, potentially affect a woman's mental disposition. Therefore, Hagar's lack of a mother affects her in three important ways: she does not have the growth-promoting relationship one can have with a mother, she lacks experience in relational development and relationships with others, particularly with her father, gain importance as a result.

The motherless void, which we will also see affecting Daisy, remains unfilled in Hagar's life. Auntie Doll, the potentially surrogate mother-housekeeper who cares for Hagar's family in the absence of her mother, fails to nurture Hagar. She "made no secret of the fact that Dan was her favorite," effectively pushing Hagar outside the reach of her maternal arms (17). This, and Mr. Shipley's obvious preference for the stoic, unflinching daughter over sons whose effeminacy recalls their poor dead mother, accounts for the chasm between the boys and Hagar. They are pitted against each other and cannot enter into mutually empathic relationships.

Without either an empathic mother-figure or sibling in her life, Hagar's relationship with her father becomes an even more prominent force in her development. Her father is a stern disciplinarian who exhibits no affection for any of his children. For example, Dan's fall through the ice elicits only angry reprobation, not paternal concern. While one might argue that Mr.

Currie's actions suggest the classic puritan displacement of feeling into anger, it may be that he is simply unable to express emotion after always having had to suppress it. His smothering attempt to hug Hagar after physically punishing her for drawing attention to insects in his store's produce reinforces this possibility: "he looked so bewildered, as though he wanted to explain but didn't know the explanation himself" (10). Yet Hagar's assertion that her father is lying when he claims that to punish her "hurts [him] as much as it does [her]" paints him as hard and unfeeling. Whether well-intentioned or not, his actions paint him as uncaring. Dan's accident and Hagar's betrayal in the store merely emphasize Currie's concern for appearances which outweighs his concern for people. Dan's death drives this point home in a way which hints at the dichotomy of feeling versus behaviour, which will eventually characterize Hagar. So too does his response to the death of Lottie's mother, a woman with whom he met secretly once in the graveyard:

Poor lass," he said. "She couldn't have had much of a life."
Then, as though recalling himself, and to whom he spoke, "Her sort isn't much loss to the town, I'm bound to say."
Then an inexplicably startled look came over his face. "Consumption? That's contagious, isn't it? Well, the Lord works in wondrous ways His will to perform" (19).

Appearing to be more concerned for his own health and reputation than the welfare of his children and friends, Mr. Currie fails to give one confidence in the benefit of his influence on Hagar.

Jason Currie's concern for appearances relates directly to the environment which shaped him. It is a society steeped in Calvinism, as Clara Thomas explains in All My Sisters. Calvinism "was particularly compatible with the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism" (291). Out of this legacy develops Currie, a shopkeeper with an "unremitting drive for success, his pride in it and its link to his religion" (292). Thomas suggests that this pride, which she says Hagar inherits, contributes to the destruction of human relationships within the novel. It is not simply that Hagar

has inherited destructive pride from her father. However, pride plays a role in reinforcing barriers between people. For Hagar, though, it is a symptom of an even greater problem. Hagar's pride is unlike her father's. It is, in fact, a symptom of her fear of expressing emotion, her inhibition of anger, aggression, action and assertiveness. It also evinces her capacity for caring in its alignment with manners.¹⁹

The Manawaka ethos of pride is also inherently patriarchal. As such, it contributes to the greatest loss of all for Hagar, the loss of opportunity to experience equal status with men. One might argue that The Stone Angel is a liberal humanist critique of Manawaka society, one which examines more than simply feminist issues. However, one cannot miss the critical focus on the plight of Chinese immigrant wives who were sacrificed to the waves by smugglers hoping to avoid legal confrontation, nor of Lottie's mother's unmarried shame. Hagar's life has been shaped by the same forces and attitudes that allowed the Chinese women to drown, and Lottie's mother to die unmissed. Women are male ciphers. Moreover, Hagar is not merely a product of circumstance in the tradition of the survivor. Hagar is, instead, the subordinate product of patriarchy. Her impression of her mother, and, subsequently, of all women as weak derives not merely from her own experience but from internalized societal influences, her training as both a woman and an honorary member of the men's club. As Jean Baker Miller says, managing "weakness is valued by the dominant culture . . . It is a major task of growing up as a man" (Miller, Toward 23). When punishment fails to "draw water" from Hagar's eyes, her father says, 'you take after me. You've got backbone, I'll give you that" (10). However, clearly she can never truly be as "good" as a

19. According to the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, the word, manners, derives from the Middle English word meaning morals, which involves the humane, respectful treatment of others (1688).

man despite the fact, as her father says, “smart as a whip, she is, that one. If only she’d been--”

(14). Hagar as a girl and a woman, is destined to be a disappointment to her father and a liability to herself.

Patriarchal subjugation of women contributes to the pivotal decision by Hagar’s father not to let her leave home to become a teacher. This comes after her return from two years away at a patriarchally-approved finishing school. Upon her return, Hagar “wished he’d find some fault, tell me I’d been extravagant, not nod and nod as though I were a thing and his.” She recognizes her object-status. As if to emphasize it, her admiring father says “you’re a credit to me.” He approves of her “finishing” because it creates a hostess for his household. He does not allow her to “take a one-room school” because, as he says, “no daughter of mine is going out there alone” (43-44). Ostensibly, he is trying to protect her from men with “terrible thoughts”, implying his awareness of the systemic violation of women’s right to equality and respect. In fact, he is asserting his proprietary power over her, power of which she is afraid:

My father put his hands around the newel post and gripped it as though it were a throat. How I feared his hands, and him, but I’d as lief have died as let him know” (44).

This is not the first time he has acted violently towards her. His punishment of her for embarrassing him in front of a customer is particularly horrific:

He struck, and struck, and then all at once he threw the ruler down and put his arms around me. He held me so tightly I almost smothered against the thick moth-ball-smelling roughness of his clothes I felt caged and panicky and wanted to push him away but didn’t dare (10).

Her fear is equally apparent when her father takes and holds her hand in his: “his own hand tightened painfully and for the merest instant the bones in my fingers hurt” (44). Hagar’s jerking withdrawal of her hand followed by her unfulfilled urge to pursue him, to “say it was a passing

thing and not meant” illustrates her felt-responsibility and acquiescence to domination by her father. She has, at this point, become a peace-keeper. Much later, however, she claims not to care to keep the peace. Having never openly criticized her father, this claim is a rebellion against paternal expectations. Peace-keeping need not be nor should ever have been her responsibility alone.

Hagar’s father’s violent assertion of power over her illustrates the non-nurturing nature of this uneven power-relationship, one which cannot contribute to Hagar’s mental health. Not only does she learn that love is dangerous, but she is unable to achieve, let alone maintain, a mutually empathic relationship while “developing and asserting a separate sense of self” (Spaulding 3). She cannot leave home to teach and still maintain a relationship with her father. Hagar does not suffer her oppression without resistance, however. She may not have gone out teaching and “[may have done] all [her father] expected of [her] (45),” yet she rebelled by snubbing the young men he brought home for her to meet. Her only defense against her father’s behaviour is subversive. Once more, she suffers from depression-causing “inhibition of anger and aggression,” as Miller calls it. Instead of openly expressing her displeasure, risking further disapproval, and possibly a rift in their relationship, she rebels quietly and therefore, in terms of her mental health, self-destructively.

Hagar’s refusal to cry in front of her father corresponds to the second element of depression, “inhibition of action and assertiveness.” She fails to express her feelings or to take action in her relationship to her father. Ironically, she feels as if she is in control when, in fact, she merely preserves their disconnection. She can only control emotional response which effectively changes who she is in relation to her father. This denies her emotional identity. Instead of standing up to her father, she complies with his requirement for strength and for the rejection of femininity. Hagar internalizes her father’s aversion to the effeminate epitomized by her fragile

brother, Dan, who was one of Currie's sons, "such as they were" (14). Her father wishes she had been a boy. Wishing to please him, to maintain a sense of self-value, she strives to avoid appearing as inferior to a man, as weak, and therefore, "bad." Her efforts, however, to maintain connection serve to alienate her from those with whom she wishes to connect. Furthermore, Hagar's pride in refraining from crying suggests her father has previously discouraged shows of emotion. Without having discovered the need for tears, for emotional release, she will continue to comply with the paternal requirement of emotionlessness. This sets up a pattern which, unless interrupted by the opportunity for successful emotional self-expression would likely continue, as it does, throughout her life.

In her relationship with her father, Hagar experiences loss of the potential for participation in a growth-promoting relationship. This leads to inhibition of anger and aggression which results in her subversive retaliation against his authority, and the inhibition of action and assertiveness, that is, the expression of her experience within the relationship. Though Hagar does not report feelings of low self-esteem at this point, her actions suggest these too are part of her experience. For example, her agreement to remain with her father indicates that she perceives her own desires to be inconsequential. Furthermore, when Jason Currie leaves all his money to the town and none to her, Hagar says:

I never minded for myself. It was on the boy's account I cared. Not so much for Marvin, for he was a Shipley through and through. John was the one who should have gone to college (64).

One hears the echo of Hagar's youthful conviction that Matt, instead of her, should "have been the one to go east [to school]," which brings her to tears in the train as she leaves home (42). She exhibits the socialized feminine tendency to put others before herself.²⁰ This, paired with her

20. Miller says that men and women are both innately caring but that boys are socialized to value accomplishment rather than positive relational behaviour. Women then find value in the

inability to communicate her feelings and her need to assert a separate sense of self while maintaining a relationship with him wreaks havoc on her self-esteem. It causes her to select the inappropriate Bram Shipley for a mate.

Unable to have her emotional needs met within her family, Hagar responds to Bram's sexuality, ignoring the less-savory characteristics that will eventually contribute to her disconnection from him. Yet it is not only her selection of the "virile but negligent farmer" that suggests low self-esteem. As they danced the first time, she reports that

. . . he pulled me to him and pressed his outheld groin against my thigh. Not by accident. There was no mistaking it. No one had ever dared in this way before. Outraged I pushed at his shoulders, and he grinned. I, mortified beyond words, couldn't look at him except dartingly. But when he asked me for another dance, I danced with him (47).

Intrigued by his bravado, she also, nonetheless, devalues herself by setting aside her expectations, and by implying approval of his inappropriate sexual advance. She is trapped in his arms and deliberately embarrassed. One might argue that by responding favourably to Bram's overtures, she is escaping the powerful Presbyterian proscription against sexual expression in a way that is potentially healthy. However, dancing with him a second time implies approval of Bram's proprietary gesture. She has only known uneven power relationships. Therefore, it seems natural to find herself once more in a relationship to a man asserting power over her.

The low self-esteem resulting from her relationship with her father leads to the next loss of relational potential in her marriage to Bram. However, Bram's power, or "banner" over her, is in fact, more democratic than oppressive. It is a gift to be shared, one that encourages her own sexual liberation. In this way, Hagar's marital relationship does not resemble her relationship with

object of their care and a sense of self-value in the action of caring. See Miller.

her father. In fact, it is the ultimate rebellion. Bram's sexuality has the potential to free Hagar from socially- and paternally-prescribed sexual repression. Having only experienced emotion-stultifying relationships, a relationship with the passionate Bram promises a venue for the self-expression that Hagar so badly needs. However, even from the beginning, this relationship which has potential to be mutually empathic, is not. Upon their arrival in the Shipley house, Bram presents Hagar with a "cut-glass decanter with a silver top" (51). Her lack of interest in this wedding gift puzzles and even seems to anger her husband. Hagar then balks at Bram's suggestion that they consummate their marriage downstairs in the daylight. One might argue that her rejection of the gift and of Bram's sexual advances reflects the puritan bias against booze and pleasures of the flesh held by her father. As much as she rebels against her father, she has internalized his ideology and is more like him than she realizes. However, since Hagar has not reported any other gestures of love in her life, except her father's suffocating hug, one wonders whether she recognizes Bram's gift for what it is. Her sense of propriety blinds her to Bram's sexual needs and the possibility of her own conjugal pleasure. Meanwhile, Bram's insensitivity to her discomfort does nothing to facilitate a mutually nurturing partnership. They are badly mismatched, having come together as a result of Hagar's depression.

Despite his assertion of sexuality and power in their first meeting, Bram, more than anyone, sees Hagar as an equal. He is the only person who calls her by her name, a gesture that affirms her identity in the patriarchy he represents. Yet never does he hold his masculine privilege over her to the degree that her father did. In fact, Hagar's gender and Bram's lack of conformity to puritan standards relegate them both to a peripheral position within society. Bram acknowledges Hagar as an equal. Hagar, however, soon comes to see Bram as, if not inferior, at least greatly flawed. Hagar holds her own refinement, a manifestation of her puritan manners, pride, and

“strength”, over Bram’s earthiness. In response to Bram’s erotic suggestion that first day, she says: “It seems to me that Lottie Dreiser was right about you. . . although I certainly hate to say it” (51). Bram does not care and reminds Hagar that she is his wife, an echo of Currie’s proprietary “no daughter of mine.” Yet Bram’s statement, unlike that of his father-in-law, reinforces relationality rather than simply any patriarchal domination of Hagar. He and Hagar share a common lowly social status; hers depends on gender and his on economic and social class. Unfortunately, instead of asserting her need to follow propriety, Hagar verbally attacks him. She is following the pattern begun in childhood of disguising emotion behind pride, behind a hurtful act she confuses with strength, a pattern learned from her father. This desire to exude strength, so as not to appear womanly and therefore “bad,” compels her to keep her sexual responses to Bram a secret, to succumb to the inhibition of action within the relationship (81). In fact, keeping her “pride intact, like some maidenhead” is her way of connecting “in the only relationship available.” It is her manners, after all, that first attract Bram to her. Refined women do not enjoy sex. For them, love is “as delicate as lavender sachets, not like the things [Bram] did sprawled on the high white bedstead that rattled like a train” (80). Pride, once more, masks Hagar’s emotions, denying her feminine sexuality and evincing her masculinization. Her intact “pride” exemplifies the strength not available to “bad” women.

Unfortunately, pride causes Hagar to “keep more and more of herself out” of her relationship with Bram. As a result, she does not “relat[e] fully in the ways which lead to growth” (Miller, *Connections* 7). Thus, her “actions emerge out of inner constructions of what she believes she must do and be” (Miller, *Connections* 6). She cannot achieve self worth this way, nor knowledge of what she wants. This is at the heart of her unhappy marriage to Bram. For example, had she bought something from the catalogue, the foundation garment she feels would have

preserved her figure, Hagar may well have felt more nurtured and thus more self-confident. Instead, she plays the prescribed role of the financially dependent wife, puts her needs last and allows Bram to invest the little money they have in one of his “schemes” (56).

While Hagar’s compulsion for propriety causes conflict with the important people in her life, it is, nonetheless, a requirement for her “happiness.” Unfortunately, the requirement for propriety remains unexamined. Hagar has internalized her father’s ideals and cannot differentiate between what she has been led to believe she should have and what she really wants. Hagar seems to bow unquestioningly to social pressure in a way Bram despises. One might argue that this is an unconscious reflex conditioned by her Calvinist father. Her failure to recruit Bram might reflect the fact that she has become her father in many ways. Having adopted his values, she now attempts to impose them upon Bram:

“This here! That there! Don’t you know anything?”
So that’s what’s eating you, eh?” he said. “Well listen here, Hagar, let’s get one thing straight. I talk the way I talk, and I ain’t likely to change now. If it’s not good enough, that’s too damn bad.”
“You don’t even try,” I said.
I don’t care to,” he said. “I don’t give a Christly curse how I talk, so get that through your head. It don’t matter to me what your friends or your old man think.” (71).

His rebellion might be seen as defense against the forces of colonization for which the erasure of “tribal” language, that is, of the colonized group, becomes a powerful tool. Hagar chastises him for his uncultured, “inferior” language, leaving him defensive and unhappy, but not compliant. Out of his unhappiness comes, as Hagar suggests, his excessive and self-destructive drinking. Even without language erasure, Hagar’s attempts disempower Bram who virtually degenerates into alcoholism.

While the dynamics of colonialism seem to inform the Shipley marriage, so too do gender relationships. Bram's resistance to Hagar's attempts to improve his manners is also the resistance of a man and husband to the expressed desires of a woman, his wife. Her failure to recognize and articulate her own -- perhaps compulsive -- need for propriety, an effect of having been raised by a rigid and puritanical father, also reflects the tendency of women to put others before themselves. Because of this, Hagar leaves Bram uninformed and he remains uncooperative. Bram's refusal to compromise, to accede to her desire that he clean up his language, however pathological or simply unfair that desire is, connotes disrespect for her. He claims that he does not objectify her with the generic term, "Mother." Yet frequently he tells her to "quit yapping, Hagar--what makes me want to puke is a nagging woman," a response which cruelly stereotypes her (79).

All Hagar's attempts to refine Bram fail, one might argue, deservedly. She is attempting to impose her values on someone who wants to maintain his own. Bram refuses even to use the handkerchiefs Hagar has given him so often for Christmas, a gesture of rebellion against what might be called Hagar's fascism, but also an act that is plainly disrespectful of a wife to whom he was first attracted because of her refined demeanor. The increasingly unhappy Hagar, still too suppliant to the puritan example by which she was raised, knows no other way to deal with her marital situation. In a fashion characteristic of the depressed woman, since she cannot change the relationship, she retreats, changing herself by becoming virtually invisible to the population of Manawaka. She ceases taking trips into town after Bram embarrasses her in front of her childhood friend, Charlotte Tuppen (70, 71). This is the only way she can remain in her marriage and in Manawaka.

Hagar hides not only to maintain a relationship with Bram but because she judges herself alongside her husband, a man who is not respected in Manawaka. Suffering from low and further

declining self-esteem, thanks to the lack of positive relationships in her life, she becomes impotent to change her circumstances. Hagar's shabbiness is a manifestation of "learned helplessness."²¹

In an effort to add to the family's meagre finances, Hagar has had to resort to selling eggs in town, a humiliating task which brings her, dressed in worn and ill-fitting clothing, face to face with her affluent former childhood playmate, Lottie. Later, when she views herself in a restroom mirror, she "[stands] for a long time, looking, wondering how a person could change so much and never see it. So gradually it happens" (133). She has not noticed because self-care has been relegated behind the needs of others. Hagar's subsequent decision to purchase some decent clothes, however, is less to buttress her lagging self-esteem than it is for the sake of her son, John.

Embarrassed by his mother's appearance in front of Lottie, who happens to be the mother of a girl with whom he flirts, John echoes his father's irritation with Hagar, insisting: "Can't you just shut up?" (133). Just as she has changed herself in order to remain both in her marriage to Bram and in Manawaka, she now chooses to improve her appearance, not for her own benefit, but to maintain her relationship with John. Her clothes-shopping indirectly leads to her departure from Bram, though not because an improvement in appearance has raised her self esteem, enabling her to suspend "inhibition of action and assertiveness," as Miller calls it. Hagar continues to act for the sake of others, leaving Bram because of John. Depression has foiled the confirmation of her "core-self structure." Without this confirmation, she does not value herself. She will continue to change so as to remain in the only relationships available to her.

21. "Learned helplessness" is a term coined by Seligman to describe a condition in animals and humans thought to characterize depression. In subjects who suffered inescapable events such as electric shock or "catastrophe--rejection, bankruptcy, physical disease, the death of a loved one", there was a subsequent "generalized sense of impotence: a belief that there is nothing one can do to shape one's destiny, that one is a passive victim with no control over events, that one is helpless" (Gleitman 685).

Hagar's need for propriety, or her sensitivity to social stricture, is a result of both her conditioning by patriarchy and the human need to care for others (Miller 26). Alice Bell asserts that the effect of other people's opinions on Hagar shows she is "a sensitive, caring individual, mindful of the feelings of others and aware of the effects of her own sharp tongue" (Bell 53). She notes Hagar's "dissembling" for Marvin's sake, her repenting her churlishness with Doris. While Bell's argument is difficult to accept in view of Hagar's insensitive treatment of others, one recognizes glimmers of Hagar's compassion for others at intervals throughout the novel. For example, Hagar's disapproval of Bram's surly behaviour towards Charlotte is not simply a consequence of her own embarrassment. Years after the incident, Hagar says, "it was so clear to me then who was in the wrong. Now I'm no longer certain. [Charlotte] baited [Bram], after all. But he didn't need to say it that way, did he?" (70). In fact, she comes to realize that Bram was not all to blame for their marital problems. Yet the fact remains that her initial irritation comes out of her concern for Charlotte's feelings. Alienated from her family for choosing to marry Bram, Hagar stayed with Charlotte and her mother the night before her wedding. The only people to give her support, they threw a reception for her afterwards. Hagar recognizes their generosity and would not wish to hurt them. Her sensitivity to opinion, then, does indeed "give evidence that she is a person with tender feelings" (54). Women are compelled to care about others, including strangers to whom one must still act courteously. Out of this more than out of her proud Presbyterian background comes Hagar's sensitivity to social stricture.

Hagar's caring hurts those she cares about. Her sensitivity to opinion, an aspect of caring, compels her to act in ways unsympathetic to others. She cannot bear to be seen in tears after a fall and unfairly blames Doris' failure to remove an offending rug from her room (33). Later, she impulsively hands Doris her mother's sapphire ring as a gift for her granddaughter, Tina.

Doris gasps. "Are you--are you really sure you want to, Mother?"
Something in her eyes saddens me, makes me want to turn away.

"Of course I'm sure. What use is it to me? I should've given it to you, I suppose, years ago. I could never bear to part with it. Stupid. Too bad you never had it. I don't want it now. Send it to Tina."

"Mother--." Marvin has a very loud voice sometimes. "Are you sure?"

Speechlessly I nod. Why all the fuss? In another moment I'll take the wretched thing back, to shut them up. Doris pops it in her purse, as if she's been thinking the same thing (279).

Hagar feels tenderness towards Doris, yet resents acknowledgment of her gesture to Tina for fear of having displayed weakness. Hagar perceives her capacity for caring, which might have contributed to mutually empathic relationships, as a nuisance. Tender feelings "weaken [her]," especially when she is sympathized with (258). In one respect, caring and weakness are inextricably linked. Yet caring what others think is linked to pride and its association, for Hagar, with strength. Caring, thus, is linked to both weakness and strength. The ambiguous nature of caring is evident also in Hagar's association of sensitivity to social opinion in others with weakness of character. She fails to recognize it in herself. Early on she says she has cared too long, having finally realized that caring about others opinions can be unproductive. However, she continues to associate her own sensitivity to social opinion with the pride she equates with strength. Bell says Hagar "repeatedly notes her weaknesses and failings but . . . does not speak about her finer qualities" (52). In fact, Hagar cannot distinguish her empathic strengths, that is, her tendency towards positive forms of caring, from her weaknesses. Herein lies her inability to know herself, to recognize her need to care and be cared for so she can assert herself, to be active within relationships that mutually promote self-development. This failure of self-knowledge comes of her indoctrination by patriarchy which compels the devalued woman to interpret her strength as weakness (Miller, Toward 39).

Just as she does not recognize her own empathic strengths, so she fails to see them in her son Marvin. The “weakness” Hagar associates with caring is the characteristic she dislikes in him. Marvin does not have the spirit she loved in John. “He was a serious and plodding little boy” (112). Chores finished, he would hang around the kitchen. Hagar’s treatment of him, shooing him outdoors, for example, suggests she is not aware of his sensitivity, his need to connect with her, or, perhaps, threatened by suggestions of her own relational need, she chooses to reject it. Yet when Marvin leaves to join the war, Hagar’s feelings for her son are evident: “I wanted all at once to hold him tightly, plead with him, against all reason and reality, not to go. But I did not want to embarrass both of us, nor have him think I’d taken leave of my senses” (129). Ironically, it is her concern for Marvin which disallows her expression of that concern. In suppressing her feelings, however, not only is she denying her empathic nature, but she makes further denial necessary also. Upon Marvin’s return, Hagar says, “I wanted to ask him, then, where he had walked in those days, and what he had been forced to look upon. I wanted to tell him I’d sit quietly and listen. But I couldn’t very well, not at that late date” (181-2). Being a woman, for Hagar, means feeling badly for having feelings which are not simply devalued but despised. Hagar’s desire to comply with society’s requirement to suppress strong emotions compounds her disconnection from Marvin.

Clearly, the disjunction between Hagar’s capacity for caring and her fear of acting in a caring manner keep her from relating to others in productive ways. Furthermore, Bram is not the only Shipley who resents Hagar’s sensitivity to opinion. John’s uneasiness in leaving Manwaka, and his eventual decision to return and stay after Bram’s death indicate that Manwaka is where he wants to be despite his mother’s attempts to “save” him from his Shipley heritage. His resentment towards her is clear in his symbolic denial of the Currie legacy. He trades the Currie pin to a Metis Tonnere boy for a knife, never brings his friends home to meet his mother, and pretends that he is

the son of Hagar's employer, the owner of the house. John finally tells her, because she has failed to see, that he is more Shipley than Currie: "you always bet on the wrong horse. Marvin was your boy, but you never saw that, did you?" (237). Hagar lacks not only understanding of her own, Bram's, and Marvin's relational needs, but those of John also. The only form of caring that Hagar freely exhibits is utilitarian. She attempts to provide what she has been led to believe others need.. Her instinctive ability to assess not only what she but others really need and want, evades her.²²

Hagar's concern for appearances makes an unfortunate impression on her son, John. Not only does he present himself falsely to his mother, but to his friends as well. His "deceit" suggests the same kind of rebellion against Hagar as Bram's, that is, the rebellion by the colonized against the forces of colonization. While one might argue it is a necessary defense against the fascist nature of Hagar's actions, it mimics Bram's disregard for Hagar's wishes. Furthermore, as Bram's ambassador, John's disrespect for Hagar's feelings connotes the devaluing of feminine concern for others. However, in John's actions, one recognizes an inversion of the usual patriarchal sense of male superiority. The Currie legacy which promotes masculine ideals, essentially emasculates John. He cannot deal openly with his mother, who in this context, is her father's emissary. The reversal of gender "roles," in Hagar's assumption of her father's authoritarianism and John's relegation to Hagar's former position of powerlessness, indicates that there are no positions of power, that all become victims of a patriarchal system. As if to emphasize this, John seems destined to copy his mother's tendency towards acting inauthentically, a tendency which may prevent him from contributing to and benefitting from positive relationships with others. The

22. See page 22 above, regarding Miller's view on a woman's failure to differentiate her needs and desires from those she has been led to accept.

forces behind Currie's treatment of Hagar not only cause her dysthymia, but infects subsequent generations.

Hagar's misguided caring is the catalyst for John's tragic death, an event that leads to the deepening of Hagar's depression. Ironically, John is the one who recognizes the dichotomous nature of Hagar's "dangerous" emotion. In response to Arlene's revelation that she would have his baby out of wedlock because she cares about him, John says: "I know . . . That's the old tune of women. Everything's because they care. I guess it's so, but my God, it's persistent" (207).

Hagar's misinterpretation of what others need not only prevents her from reaching out to Marvin and embarrassing him, but also prompts Hagar to interfere in John's romance with Arlene. Her later request for forgiveness of Murray Ferney Lees, whom she mistakes for the long dead John, reveals her long-denied awareness that her meddling in John's affairs contributed to his and Arlene's tragic deaths. She feels, in fact, as if she has killed him herself. What Hagar fails to realize is that she is motivated by her capacity for caring. She has internalized the social definition of feminine goodness and consequently, feels as if she is "bad." Furthermore, Hagar, influenced by society's devaluation of relational qualities, adopts an angle of narration that causes her behavior towards John to be seen as smothering.²³ This recalls her father's hug that literally smothers her. However, she is far too hard on herself. While Hagar's vocal disapproval of Arlene's presence in the Shipley house might have compelled John and Arlene to meet elsewhere, John's spirited nature contributes to his own death. He chose to drink. He chose to play "chicken" on the railway bridge. But, Hagar, socialized as she was, assumes more blame than she should.

23. Caring is often seen as smothering which contributes to a woman's low self-esteem. See page 18 above.

Her learned sense of feminine “badness” goes hand in hand with her tendency to put others first.

One sees her distorted sense of self-blame in her realization that:

[e]very good joy I might have held, in my man or any child of mine or even the plain light of morning, of walking the earth, all were forced to a standstill by some brake of proper appearances--of, proper to whom? When did I ever speak the heart's truth? (292)

While acknowledging she has not been honest about her feelings, she unfairly assumes total responsibility for all relational failure. She forgets, or maybe, having never related successfully to anyone, has never known that it takes two (or more) people to have a relationship.

Lack of knowledge about the real needs of others and one's self does more than alienate those about whom the depressed woman cares. It also paralyzes her with indecision and inaction. Yet she can take significant action if for the benefit of someone else. When packing with twelve-year-old John to leave Bram and Manawaka, Hagar tells her son: “It's for you,” I cried, “For your sake. Don't you know that?” (140). She cannot act to help herself, but can if it means helping her son, John. With John, she is able to express feelings as she is not able to do with anyone else. This is a relationship with an inverse of the usual power differential to which she is accustomed. Hagar, in the position of power over young John, is not afraid to reveal that she cares for him, as she had been with her father, Bram and Marvin. Furthermore, as Bell says, John is the only one with whom Hagar pleads openly for communication (Bell 60). This is the only time in her life to date she has felt the safety required for the confiding of a sense of relationship to another person. One might argue that her sense of safety, rather than expressing progression towards a more healthy way of relating to others, reflects her domination over a subordinate. While Hagar's entreaties to John suggest the possibilities for emotional expression that are open to Hagar, John's lack of participation in this exchange, and later, in any attempts she makes towards strengthening their

connection, ensures that Hagar's efforts will be in vain. Though Hagar, in place of her father, is now the oppressor, she has not adopted all of Jason Currie's colonizing tactics. Her feminine tendency towards caring is still evident, though it seems to have mutated and hardened under the Currie influence. For the role of a mother, symbolic of relational nurturance, to undergo such a transformation speaks to the magnitude of the crime upon humanity committed by the forces that shape Hagar's personality.

John's death is revealed at the nexus of two intertwined narratives, one of the present and one of the past. Hagar's narrative to this point relates only non-growth promoting relationships in her life. Regarding the period between John's death and Hagar's living with Marvin and Doris, there is a narrative void -- an important echo of which we will see in Stone Diaries -- during which Hagar's life seems to be devoid of significant relationships. The lack of narrative concerning the silent years also speaks to the bleakness with which they must have been filled. These years follow the double loss of John in which Hagar's sense of self-blame for her part in John's death relates to societal perceptions of maternal "smothering." Had she not cared so much for John, he would not have died. Smothering is "bad," a smotherer, valueless. Hagar internalizes this sense of valuelessness and, one surmises, spends these years in constant "disconnection" from others, which preserves the lack of "confirmation of [her] core self-structure" (Kaplan 5). Hagar's self-esteem is at its lowest point. As a sufferer of dysthymia, a condition both caused by and further contributing to disconnection, Hagar must have had little relief that comes from growth-promoting human relationships during this time. Marvin and Doris, then, become all the more important figures in her life. They are her only human connections since Bram and John. Yet it is during her time with them, particularly that covered by the narrative present, that her dysthymia is most apparent. She suffers chronic irritability and other ailments common to both depression and old

age, such as fatigue and a sense of emptiness. Ironically, this is the first time she has truly been cared for by others. One wonders why, when in the company of caring people, her depression does not dissipate. Is it now simply a matter of old age?

There are three reasons for Hagar's continuing depression under the care of Doris and Marvin. Her own low-self esteem does not improve as she becomes more and more dependent upon her son and his wife. Her history of non-growth promoting relationships has taken a heavy toll, imparting a sense of failure that further compounds her low-self esteem. Foremost, however, is Hagar's irritability, the symptom of her condition that, more than anything, acts to keep people at a distance. As Miller says, "psychological troubles are the worst kind of slavery--one becomes enlisted in creating one's own enslavement--one uses so much of one's own energies to create one's own defeat" (Miller, Toward 94). Hagar expresses this as well as the depressive's exaggerated sense of self-blame when she says:

pride was my wilderness, and the demon that led me there was fear. I was alone, never anything else, and never free, for I carried my chains within me, and they spread out from me and shackled all I touched (292).

Doris and Marvin, too, are enslaved by Hagar's psychological troubles because they cannot penetrate the wall of irritability and inhibition. They are unable to discern her feelings and act in accordance with her wishes. Doris and Marvin are not without blame, however. They exhibit insensitivity in their exchanging of puzzled and frustrated looks which Hagar sees. They fail to prepare her sufficiently for the news of the nursing home. Hagar cannot help them to understand what, in fact, she wants either. Still unable to assert her own needs, she chooses not to express her change of heart when Marvin delivers the news that she can move from the noisy ward room to a semi-private room. Marvin's frustration highlights the central problem faced by the depressed woman: "If you'd just say for sure what you want Mother--" (280). Throughout her life, she has

put her own human need for emotional expression and self-confirmation behind what she thinks are those of others. Without the appropriate relational experience, she fails to perceive accurately the needs of others. Furthermore, her lack of practice in self-assertion prevents her from differentiating what she thinks she wants from what she really wants.²⁴ Therefore, as much as Doris and Marvin have the right intentions, the dynamics between Hagar and these two do not allow for a mutually empathic relationship.

Hagar's revelation of her part in John's death, an admission to culpability in the most potent loss she has suffered, comes out of the first mutually empathic relationship she ever has. Ironically, it is with a stranger. Her encounter with Murray Ferney Lees, which some suggest takes on archetypal transformative qualities, is one that has a profound effect upon Hagar's mood disorder. She and Lees share a dwelling, food and drink, and, most importantly, exchange self-explicating stories. Aspects of their encounter suggest a secular version of the Catholic confession, transubstantiation and the granting of absolution. Indeed, Laurence's own spirituality becomes more prominent as she ages (King 353). However, Lees' lay ministrations to Hagar, and Hagar's later reaction to Troy and his song, a pivotal moment of spiritual understanding in which there is no mention of God, suggest a more humanist than religiously spiritual theme is at work. Therefore, while recognizing the religious parallels, it is appropriate to consider the encounter in psychological, rather than traditional religious terms.

As Kenyon and Randall note in Restorying our Lives: Personal Growth Through Autobiographical Reflection, many therapists recognize the value of telling one's life-story. Though Hagar's narrative begins long before meeting Lees, he is the first she reports that listens to

24. See page 22 above.

what she has to say. Her connection with this man who is the first truly sympathetic character allows significant restorying of Hagar's life-narrative to occur. After Hagar tells Lees about John's death, he says:

"Gee, that's too bad."

I can't think who it is [speaking], and then I recall--a man was here, and we talked, and I drank his wine. But I didn't mean to tell him this.

"It's okay," he says. "It's quite okay. Do you good to tell it."

As though it were worms, to be purged. But no matter. His voice is friendly. I'm glad he's here. I'm not sorry I've talked to him, not sorry at all, and that's remarkable. (245).

Her words imply the importance of self-narrative in the presence of a sympathetic ear, something that we will find Daisy Goodwill seeks. It is not until developing this relationship with Lees, one in which they benefit from each other's willingness to listen, that Hagar is finally able to recognize and acknowledge her feelings of anger over John's death. Until now, she has been afraid to really talk to anyone about her feelings, her life. Lees offers her the opportunity to overcome her long-held fear of emotion, to express her sense of loss in its magnitude for the first time. She overcomes her "inhibition of anger and aggression" when she tells Lees of her outrage over the senselessness of John's death. Lees' response that her anger "doesn't do you any good" reflects "society's viewing [of] anger as a 'destructive' quality" which prevents men and women from "discriminating between destructive and constructive anger" (Spaulding 3). In fact, Hagar is likely revealing a major factor contributing to her chronic irritability, a state which, though symptomatic of depression, might also reflect simply the long-held suppression of emotion relating to John's death. Lees recognizes that something more than simply an acknowledgment of feelings is now in order. Expressing anger does not change things. But it leads the way to change.

Hagar's overcoming her inhibition of anger and aggression is an act of courage. She is acting authentically in this relationship with Lees. In return, he responds to her investment with compassion and understanding. Lees is, in effect, a therapist intervening in her story to illuminate possibility and eliminate her "master-narrative" (Kenyon 2). When she mistakes him for her son John, taking back words which she feels contributed to John's death, he forgives her. She reports that "the night my son died I was transformed to stone and never wept at all" (243). She had had only one thought: "I'd had so many things to say to him, so many things to put to rights. He hadn't waited to hear." Unable to express her experience of and within her relationship to John she becomes the "stone angel." It is not until her conversation with Lees that she is finally able to overcome her inhibition of action and assertiveness. The following morning, she asks herself:

Why do I feel bereaved, as though I'd lost someone only recently? It weights so heavily upon me, this unknown loss. The dead's flame is blown out and evermore shall be so. No mercy in heaven" (249).

The process unleashed by Hagar's expression of emotion leads to her acceptance of intense emotion for the first time. Acknowledgment points in part to acceptance of her feminine capacity for caring. While she is still depressed, the possibility for an improvement in mood is now possible. Had Hagar lived far beyond her meeting with Lees, she may have eased out of dysthymia. She has done what therapists prescribe. She has: sought out growth-promoting relationships, and recognized and acknowledged loss, casting off her inhibition of anger, aggression, action and assertiveness. She has actively participated and expressed her experience of relationship to the man she thinks is her son, John. She has done so by relating, reviewing and rewriting her story, thus, revealing her narrative identity to an active listener. After a lifetime filled with depression-inducing relationships, she has turned an important corner.

Just as Doris and Marvin's caring cannot alleviate Hagar's depression, neither does Lees'. However, her relationship with Lees prepares Hagar for three others of great significance. In the hospital, Hagar is befriended by the diminutive Elva Jardine, who shows her the ropes, so to speak, coaching her to request a "hypo" for her pain. Her connection with Elva is the result of more than simply Elva's kindness, however. Not since Charlotte has a peer offered her help. They share common ground, having come from the same prairie region. Both have experience of farming. It is as if in some ways, Hagar has come "full circle" in her connecting with another woman her own age with similar experiences from the same place. One recalls Mr. Troy's assertion, to be echoed in Dr. Spears' advice to Clarentine Flett in Stone Diaries, that "a person needs contemporaries, to talk with and remember" (53). Mr. Troy's words are particularly prophetic considering the role his singing plays in Hagar's epiphanic realization that she "must always, always, have wanted . . . simply to rejoice" (292). Feeling joy is the opposite of feeling depressed. Hagar recognizes and acknowledges her depression and its alternative for the first time. This awareness signals Hagar's acquisition of critical knowledge about herself, knowledge of what she truly wants and not simply what she has been led to believe she wants. Thanks to her interaction with Elva, her "contemporary," during which they exchange first names, and thus recognize each other's personhood, Hagar's sense of self is finally confirmed. It had been such a long time since anyone had called Hagar by her name (273).

Elva, as Hagar's "contemporary," performs another therapeutic function. She and her husband, Tom, model for Hagar a mutually-empathic relationship, in essence, showing Hagar an alternative to the relational model that is hers. Hagar's history is so filled with disconnection that the mutual fondness of Doris and Marvin "[had seemed] unfamiliar to [her], hard to recognize or accept" (264). Tom and Elva's example allows Hagar to recognize the "mutual fondness" between

Marvin and herself. When Marvin calls her a “holy terror,” Hagar says: “listening, I feel like it is more than I could now reasonably have expected out of life, for he has spoken with such anger and such tenderness” (305). Moreover, Hagar acknowledges Elva’s kindness, which hitherto was a close associate of the ‘weakness’ of caring. This is a milestone in Hagar’s relational life. Their exchange of first names points to the success and significance of this relationship. Hagar realizes she is not alone, after all. This gives her the confidence to reach out to Mrs. Reilly and bid her to “sleep well, dear.” Where, before meeting Lees and undergoing “therapy,” Hagar’s relational experiences fed into each other in increasingly destructive ways, now, the opposite is true. Out of the mutually nurturing relationship with Elva, Hagar takes steps to involve herself in another.

Hagar has not undergone complete transformation despite the progress she has made. Yet fueled by the success of her connection with Elva and Mrs. Reilly, she reaches out to connect with Sandra Wong. In an attempt to assuage the young girl’s fear of her pending appendectomy, Hagar lies, telling her that she has undergone the same operation. “Well, you needn’t worry. . . . It’s just routine these days. You’ll be up before you know it” (287). Hagar is establishing common ground and thus actively seeking a connection with the girl. When her words of encouragement prove false, Sandra, experiencing great post-operative pain, says,

“you said it wouldn’t be bad.”

She sounds reproachful. First I’m full of regrets, thinking I’ve deceived her. Then I feel only annoyance.

“If that’s the worst you ever have, my girl, you’ll be lucky, I can tell you that” (298).

Hagar’s defensiveness is a lifelong reaction to disappointment within relationships. She cannot change overnight. But, instead of allowing permanent disconnection from the girl to occur, she repairs the rift; she later performs a symbolic act of kindness in delivering a bed pan to Sandra despite her own pain and fragility. When they both convulse with laughter at the nurse’s reaction

to Hagar's generous, but dangerous act, the mutually empathic connection is solid and, therefore, potentially growth-promoting. Hagar's actions differ from the selfless ones she has performed when unable to help herself. Now, in helping Sandra, she has, in fact, helped herself as well. Hagar senses this saying: "I wonder if I've done it for her or for myself. No matter. I'm here, and carrying what she needs" (301). "I'm here" emphasizes the priority of Hagar's self-awareness over her caring for others, though both being and caring are connected.

No longer is Hagar defined by her actions which, save for her journey to Shadow Point, have been primarily for the perceived benefit of others. Hagar, though, has still not cared openly for herself, though the potential is finally there for her to do so. However, the delivering of the bedpan foreshadows the final drink of water which Hagar stubbornly takes by herself, for herself. It is a gesture of self-nurturing as well as an acknowledgment of her strength, one that reconciles the antithetical aspects of caring that have characterized Hagar. This aspect of her "core-self structure" is both a conditioned response to feminine weakness and an inherent part of Hagar's character. Furthermore, it is a hindrance while it has been a help. Throughout her life, its benefits, which will be discussed shortly, are often, sadly, ignored.

Hagar's treatment of Sandra is significant in another critical way. Her "absurd formality" to the girl comes out of her

certainty that [Sandra] is the granddaughter of one of the small foot-bound women whom Mr. Oatley smuggled in, when Oriental wives were frowned upon, in the hazardous hold of his false-bottomed boats. Maybe I owe my house to her grandmother's passage money (287).

Thus, the transgenerational, transcultural passing of the bedpan is a gesture of retribution for all women and cultural minorities sacrificed to patriarchy, including Hagar herself. Its retributive effect extends to Bram and John who Hagar, as her father's protege, tried to "colonize,"

Moreover, Hagar's unsuccessful relational life has been predominantly with men, while her success, except for that with the seemingly genderless Lees -- a man who does not play a gendered role in relation to Hagar, at least -- has been with women. Self-in-Relation theorists recognize that women tend to be more relationship-oriented (Miller 39). Ideally, a "community" of women would promise a nurturing environment for all participants. Feminist therapists, that is, those dealing with women's depression and its social causes, do in fact encourage women to seek out other women for friendship in therapy for depression.

Through her connection with Lees, Elva and Sandra, Hagar's inhibitions dissipate and her self-esteem improves. Though often claiming to no longer care what people think, she still hesitates to show her vulnerability to anyone. No longer constrained by her inhibition of anger and aggression, Hagar admits to the doctor that she is in pain, and to Marvin that she is afraid. Finally, she is being authentic and self-caring. Out of her successful relational experiences Hagar is empowered to perform her last and greatest act of empathy. She tells Marvin he has been a better son than John who had always been her favourite. This gesture is possible because Hagar has overcome her inhibition of action and assertiveness. Essentially blessing Marvin, she finally reciprocates his compassion for her. While not cured of depression, she has made great progress.

The turning point for Hagar is her connection with Lees. Not only does their meeting denote the intersection of narrative past and present, but it divides her relational life into a past filled with non-growth promoting relationships and a present and future filled with relationships that are mutually empathic, that confirm her "core-self structure." Inspired by these later relationships, Hagar, the recovering depressive, once again takes charge, this time to help herself, by taking the water glass and refusing help. As Kenyon and Randall write in Restorying Our Lives: "Carolyn Heilbrun argues from her analysis of women's biographies and autobiographies

4

that ‘women have been deprived of the narratives, or the texts, plots, or examples, by which they might assume power over -- take control of -- their own lives’” (Kenyon 8). Only in old age when, ironically, her frail body makes her most dependent upon others, is Hagar no longer the subordinate female--the daughter, wife, lover, even mother in the sense of caregiver-- in patriarchal society. She need not conform to the patriarchal “master-narrative” which subjugates women. Alone despite the presence of Marvin and Doris, she has transcended gender relations, and reached a state of seeming genderlessness. One might even suggest she has resumed the role of child in her neediness and her location within a familial triad comprised of Marvin, Doris and herself. She is in some ways revisiting the childhood drama characterized by her powerlessness. This time she is empowered through her recent relational successes. While she cannot erase her history, she replays and essentially rewrites it with the help of others. Finally, she is able to tell, to create her story, and to analyze her life.

As Hagar’s story illustrates, depression stems from relational disconnection, the root cause of which is the violation of a woman’s status as a valued being in patriarchal society. Furthermore, for Hagar, as for many women, the dichotomous nature of caring is at the heart of her mood disorder. Hagar’s narrative is an attempt to make sense of, find meaning and new possibilities in her life-story. Depressed women subscribe to a preconceived narrative determined by a combination of societal influences and their own experiences. Therefore, they benefit from intervention in the form of a critical audience that can identify possibilities, find positive meaning in a woman’s narrative. For Hagar, both her chronic state of depression and her narrative efforts at understanding, critiquing and rewriting, or “restorying” her life relate directly to her self in

relation to others.²⁵ Though Hagar's experience of old age and the compulsion of her core self initiate the telling of her life-story, it would not have ended as it did without the participation of others. Rosalie Murphy Baum writes: "since it is the neurotic character--especially the grand dame of them all, Hagar--who holds the attention of readers, we cannot help being grateful for such neuroses, at least in fiction of not in life" (Baum 160). While there is something, perhaps, to be said for the aesthetics of mental illness, we should be most grateful for Laurence's understanding of human relational need. Furthermore, what is indeed remarkable is the compelling accuracy with which Laurence depicts Hagar's dysthymia, the recurring cycle of its elements, and the benefits of narrative therapy. This is not surprising however. Laurence's eye for detail could hardly fail to miss examples in life of what is, essentially, the feminine epidemic of depression.

25. Researchers increasingly see the feminine self as comprising multiple components, a core-self and one or more selves that change in relation to context. Moreover, feminine identity is "both a construct and an interpretation" (Joy 278). The nature of women's identity demands, therefore, a "hermeneutics of suspicion." The narrative form of identity, filled with insights constantly open to revision, becomes the primary means of "both depicting and evaluating (in the sense of interpretation) the notion of a *self*" (Joy 291).

Chapter 3

Daisy and Major Depression

The area in which Carol Shields's Stone Diaries bears the greatest resemblance to Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel is in its portrayal of feminine depression. Where the irascible Hagar Shipley suffers from dysthymia, however, Daisy Goodwill's ailment seems more sudden, severe and self-limiting. Furthermore, both protagonists inhabit stylistically very different narrative space. In fact, aspects of the Shields narrative reflect the psychic experience of its protagonist. Despite Stone Diaries and The Stone Angel's stylistic differences, however, Daisy's story, like Hagar's, illustrates what Self-in-Relation theorists claim characterizes feminine depression: the four elements of depression and their self-sustaining cyclical relationship all of which stem from "the inability to sustain a connection while developing and asserting a separate sense of self" (Spaulding 3).²⁶ Daisy's self-narrative, which describes her relational life and identity describe what some refer to as a 20th century epidemic of feminine depression.

A study of the representation of depression in this novel is really a study of Daisy's perception of her relations to members of her own as well as the opposite sex. It also requires at

26. The four elements of depression traditionally recognized and acknowledged in relation to depression in women are: an experience of loss; inhibition of anger and aggression; inhibition of action and assertiveness; and low self-esteem (Kaplan, 1984).

least a brief examination of narrative style, a vast topic in itself which need only be touched upon here. Though the narrative voice leads one to doubt a single point of view, Shields tells us that

As I wrote the novel I imagined all the "voices" as being filtered through Daisy's consciousness, what she THOUGHT people were saying about her. She was, in my mind, a woman who felt the full force of social stricture, who could never stop thinking, even as she is dying, what people might be thinking of her. And I think this is not a marginal or particularly neurotic feeling, but one shared by most women of her generation (Dec. 8 interview).

While this is not a study of Shields's narrative strategy, it will require, for the most part, the "suspension of [any] disbelief" arising from the narrative form. Furthermore, it helps to accept that all representations are as if the novel had been written strictly in the first-person through Daisy Goodwill Barker's eyes. Moreover, one must keep in mind that a first-person narration is a breeding ground for irony. A narrator's observations about others are often projections of his/her own characteristics, thoughts and ideas. In other words, other characters reflect aspects of the narrating self. Consider the words of Oscar Wilde who writes: "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth" (Metcalf 89). Furthermore, a self-narrative selects and deselects from biographical "fact." Identity, then, becomes an impression created by fragments of one's life-story. The following, then, assumes that all voices are Daisy's, expressing a relational narrative identity, while simultaneously recognizing a lack of factual reliability.

Daisy's narrative environment directly reflects aspects of her psychology. It therefore reflects aspects of her depression. These reflections occur throughout the entire novel, not simply during the narrative time dealing with Daisy's major depressive episode. For example, the

multiple voices, points of view, and the meandering forays into seemingly irrelevant mini-stories evoke the feminist idea that female identity comprises many selves in relation to others, involved in a constant ebb and flow (Joy 278, 301). While Shields claims that men and women move to “the same ticking clock,” whose experiences are, therefore, not very different, she acknowledges the feminine nature of such a narrative style. Women casually telling stories to each other tend “to deal in the episodic, to suppress what was smoothly linear, to set up digressions, little side stories which were not really digressions at all but integral parts of the story” (“*Arriving Late*” 248). Furthermore, Shields says she wanted a short story entitled “Scenes” “to become a container for what it was talking about--which was the randomness of a human life, its arbitrary and fractured experiences that nevertheless strain toward a kind of wholeness” (“*Arriving Late*” 249). She could very well be describing Stone Diaries, where the many voices and subsidiary stories contribute to an understanding of an “whole” Daisy, whole not in the sense of traditional theories of self-integration but of a collection of separate selves that are always in flux. The fractured, inconsistent narrative style evinces Daisy’s multiple selves in relation to others. Meanwhile, the multiple voices and points of view speak of Daisy as if she is not present— she does not actually enter her own story as a first-person narrator or narrative focus until page 74 -- suggesting not only the relational nature of the self but Daisy’s disconnection from others. Furthermore, between Daisy and others, indeed, the dearth of dialogue of any sort suggests Daisy’s isolation amidst caring people. Daisy’s virtual exclusion from the mixture of voices implies her invisibility within her own story.

Not only does Daisy exist primarily as reflected in the words and descriptions of others, but she exists in the presence of characters seemingly unrelated to herself such as the Jew named Abram Gozhdë Skutari, housekeeper Cora Mae, and in her own mother-in-law, Mrs. Hoad. The

first two join Daisy in inhabiting a place of inferior social status, of social marginality. They are the only characters that Daisy attributes sympathy for herself as a baby, and concern for her future. Daisy's inclusion of these characters who, like her, are subjugated by patriarchy, expresses her kinship to them. Daisy's ironic representation of her mother-in-law -- Mrs. Hoad extemporizes on the need for Daisy to cater selflessly to young Harold -- provides a glimmer of possibility that Daisy is aware of her subordinate sociopolitical position (102-3). Yet Daisy's ventriloquizing of her position within society, in conjunction with her absence from her own story, implies that she fails to recognize and acknowledge her position in the world, a failure that precludes self-knowledge which is a prerequisite for mental health. Thus, she is susceptible to depression, which involves the failure to achieve a separate sense of self while maintaining a relationship with another.

Daisy, in fact, seems to exist only in relation to others:

... other people were held erect by their ability to register and reflect the world--but not, for some reason, Daisy Goodwill.

She could only stare at this absence inside herself for a few minutes at a time. It was like looking at the sun (75).

This explains her tendency to view herself indirectly in relational mirrors. Looking directly at the void within herself, at that locus of loneliness and insignificance is too painful. She can only bear to look at it from a distance as her many references to living both inside and outside her story attest. By living outside her story--that is, the narrative that comprises her identity-- she avoids having to give herself over fully to emotional experience. This keeps her from being vulnerable to the pain of new losses. While her dual existence seems to suggest Daisy is both the author and reader of her own story, it paradoxically suggests she is, like Hagar, a victim of a master narrative outsider her control. Furthermore, her refusal to look directly at the sun is an effect of the social

conditioning that keeps Daisy in her feminine place. To look at the void would cause pain and bring on anger at the people and circumstances involved. These feelings would then beg expression for which she would be punished with further relational disconnection. Like Hagar, Daisy's socialization discourages such expression of emotion which not only might cause injury to others, but would be perceived as unfeminine. Women, as care-givers, are not to cause pain. Some would argue that Daisy's failure to fully acknowledge her own injury makes her, albeit unwittingly, complicit in her continued lack of self-confirmation. However, she suffers from "learned helplessness," which prevents her from recognizing her need and power to change her situation.²⁷

While Daisy's lack of self-knowledge compels her to seek her reflection in others, ironically, she does so without forming meaningful connections. For, example, Daisy has never known Abram Skutari, nor does she ever get to know Mrs. Hoad very well. In fact, Daisy, like her foremother, Hagar, is a woman for whom disconnection is the rule. Disconnection from others, particularly those of most importance, is a form of loss. As we have seen in Hagar's story, it is a loss of "opportunity to participate more fully in relationships, with authenticity and a sense of empowerment" (Spaulding 2). Suffering from disconnection, Daisy subsequently loses "confirmation of her core-self structure," despite its evidence reflected in other people. Repeated losses of self-confirmation through disconnection lead to depression. Indeed, Daisy's life is filled with such relational losses, beginning with the death in childbirth of her mother.

27. "Learned helplessness" is a term coined by Seligman to describe a condition in animals and humans thought to characterize depression. In subjects who suffered inescapable events such as electric shock or "catastrophe--rejection, bankruptcy, physical disease, the death of a loved one," there was a subsequent "generalized sense of impotence: a belief that there is nothing one can do to shape one's destiny, that one is a passive victim with no control over events, that one is helpless" (Gleitman 685).

A mother's death is the first loss of a "relational context" in Daisy's life just as it is in Hagar Shipley's. As in Hagar's case, the loss is of the potential for a mutually empathic relationship rather than of some Freudian developmental dynamic or Lacanian mirror. Daisy, like Hagar, lacks the relational laboratory symbolized by the mother. However, where Hagar's loss affects her mental health indirectly, in its creation of a link between femininity, passivity, and death, Daisy's loss directly affects her self-image, a critical part of her identity that impinges on her self-esteem. Daisy says of her dead mother:

It's this wing-beat of breath I reach out for. Even now I claim it absolutely. I insist upon its literal volume and vapors, for however hard I try I can be sure of nothing else in the world but this -- the fact of her final breath, the merest trace of it lingering in the room like snow or sunlight, burning, freezing against my sealed eyelids and saying; open, open (40)

All Daisy knows for certain is her mother's retreat from life coincides with her own entry into the world. This foreshadows her daughter, Alice's, epiphanic understanding that one is still alive when one dies, that death is, literally, a part of one's life. With her final breath, Mercy's death becomes part of Daisy's life. Mercy's death leads to Daisy's sadness and depression which is very much a death in life. If the "fact of [Mercy's] final breath" is all that Daisy can be certain of on the world, one senses both the magnitude of maternal loss and the resulting confusion and emptiness which fills Daisy's world. Indeed, her mother's loss shapes Daisy's life. One does not fully appreciate its effect until much later in her life when she ponders the "slender and insubstantial connection" to her mother. Lamenting the lack of tangible experiences relating to growing up with a mother, Daisy has what she calls one of her "gusts of grief": "The illness she suffers is orphanhood--she recognizes it in the same way you recognize a migraine coming on: here it comes again -- and again --and here she lies, stranded, genderless, ageless, alone" (189). Daisy links her depression with her "orphanhood which, while not excluding the effect of her father's absence,

comes upon her when her mother dies. Daisy's view of depression coming like a migraine in waves is reinforced by the recurrence of depressive episodes. However, depression does not just come and go but is a constant part of her life. Her self-introduction during an episode of childhood depression paints her as a depressive, implying that it is part of who she feels she is.

Furthermore, Daisy's failure to know anything but the fact of her mother's final breath suggests isolation, confusion, and the inability to know herself and what she truly wants. As Miller says: "it often turns out . . . that [depressed woman] has what she has been led to believe she should want. . . How then to discover what one is really after?" (Miller, Toward 90). Daisy's lack of self-knowledge is evident when on her wedding night, Daisy "wants to want something but doesn't know what she is allowed" (117). Miller refers to the effects of patriarchal indoctrination which are at the heart of feminine depression. The devaluing of women leads to a sense of "badness" which compels women to deny and eventually forget who and what they are. Their identity is evinced, in part, by what they want. Without confirmation of self, depression ensues. Therefore, without self-knowledge, it is difficult for a woman to escape depression-inducing circumstances because she cannot recognize an alternative.

While recuperating from first measles and then pneumonia,

[Daisy] must have slept a good deal--for how else could an active child have endured such a width of vacant time? -- and whenever she woke it was with a stiff body and a head weakened by nameless anxiety . . . a vacuum she sensed, suddenly, in the middle of her life. Something was missing, and it took weeks in that dim room, weeks of heavy blankets, and the image of that upside-down tree inside her chest to inform her of what it was. What she lacked was the kernel of authenticity, that precious interior ore that everyone around her seemed to possess (75).

For Hagar, depression is manifest in her chronic irritability, for Daisy in perpetual sadness arising from the "vacuum," the "something missing" she senses. Once more, her lack of self-knowledge

comes into focus. Furthermore, when a woman does not have “an adequate relational context in which sadness can be experienced, expressed and validate, depressive reactions develop” (Spaulding 5). She is, therefore, “more prone to developing ‘more severe depressive reactions’” -- which is what happens to Daisy — “when confronted with loss or trauma later on in [her life]” (Spaulding 5). Daisy does not recognize her own sadness which, equated with women’s experience, is devalued by society. Her sense that there is something missing reflects her instinctive understanding that she is not experiencing the “realness” that comes with the expression and acknowledgment of emotions. Furthermore, unlike depression which is isolating, sadness can help one connect with others which leads to an increase in self-esteem. Yet the novel’s narrative style and structure evince Daisy’s chronic isolation. Furthermore, there is no evidence that she does connect with others as a result of her sadness. Daisy’s lack of self-esteem that correlates with unexpressed sadness is evident in her late and depressing entry into her own story:

Lying in her bed, she apprehended life going on around her In the solipsistic way of children, the girl was amazed that all this should continue without her . . . what she kept coming back to as she lay in her hot, darkened room: the knowledge that here, this place, was where she would continue to live all her life, where she had, in fact, always lived -- blinded, throttled, erased from the record of her own existence (76).

The realization that life would continue without her participation contributes to the sense of valuelessness experienced by a girl already plagued by an unconfirmed sense of self. Low self-esteem generally contributes to future relational losses. Daisy first marries Harold, the emotional parasite and then, incestuously, the “male god” of her childhood. Unexpressed sadness, or lack of opportunity to openly mourn her orphanhood leads to bouts of depression which become more and more serious for Daisy as life continues.

The loss of Daisy's mother leads both directly and indirectly to future relational losses but not before bringing about the potential connection with another mother-figure, Clarentine Flett. However, Daisy's childhood depression, despite Clarentine's care, and the lack of evidence of actual connection between Clarentine and Daisy, suggest this relationship is no more than a further loss of relational potential. Daisy does not express her feelings for Clarentine except in the reference to "beloved Aunt Clarentine's" death which, coming virtually "out of the blue," lacks the ring of truth. Daisy's imagination floats "[Clarentine] to heaven on a bed of pansies, and, at the same time, translate[s] her uncle's long brooding sexual stare, for that was what it was, into an attack of indigestion" (77). The word, "beloved," and Daisy's pansy fantasy are the only suggestions of the girl's fondness for her Aunt.

However, pansies, or rather, plants in general, come to signify Daisy's failure to find satisfying connections with people, as we will see shortly. Meanwhile, the juxtaposition of Daisy's expressions of fondness with her uncle's "sexual stare," which is discomfiting enough to require translation, evokes the lack of safety felt by the young girl. Such insecurity implies an environment devoid of the necessary nurturance for Daisy's mental well-being. No conversations or mutual activities between Daisy and her foster-mother are reported. Clarentine appears to be another mother lost to Daisy. Furthermore, one suspects that Daisy has synthesized her two mothers. Her reports of Clarentine's love for and attempts to connect with Mercy Goodwill point to this possibility. Daisy, as Clarentine, imagines small gifts which when "passing out of her hands into Mercy's seem momentarily ringed with light" (10). To Daisy, there is something magical about the connection between her two mothers. This does more than simply celebrate the feminine. It reinforces the link between or confusion of mothers in Daisy's mind. The silence

regarding Daisy's relationship with her guardian also reflects Daisy's lack of knowledge and experience of her own mother, Mercy, a loss which infects her relationship with Clarentine.

The confusion connoted by Daisy's knowing only the fact of her mother's final breath leads to her confusion of Mercy and Clarentine which, in turn, affects her self-perception. Consider Daisy's detailed reconstructions of her mothers' daily lives. They are filled with details she could not possibly know. In contrast, her own life is told mostly by others or in anecdotes about others. Furthermore, the little the reader does learn directly about Daisy bears strong resemblance to what he/she learns about Mercy and Clarentine. Given these similarities and that Daisy sees herself reflected in others, it is reasonable to conclude that many of Mercy and Clarentine's experiences are Daisy's own. If this is not literally true -- Daisy does not die in childbirth nor leave her husband -- it is in their general spirit.

Daisy's various names emphasize her identification with these women. She inherits her mother's married name and assumes Clarentine's married title when she marries Barker Flett. In fact, she refers to herself throughout most of the novel as Mrs. Flett instead of Daisy, suggesting not only her strong sense of propriety but her distorted sense of self-perception that fails to acknowledge the individual inside the title. Later, feeling the connection to her dead mother, Daisy experiences a sudden "flash of distortion -- the notion that Mrs. Flett has given birth to her mother, and not the other way around" (191). Some would argue this "flash of distortion" reinforces the Jungian concept that a mother is in her daughter and vice versa.²⁸ This notion clearly speaks to Mercy and Daisy's common social circumstances, and their patriarchal context which demands feminine subjugation and determines, to some extent, their "feminine" roles.

28. According to Carl Jung (see Aspects of the Feminine, p. 149), and reinforced by Cora Mae in the novel (257)

Daisy's experience of a flash of distortion also points, paradoxically, to her identification with and disconnection from the other Mrs. Flett and even Mrs. Hoad, the mother-in-law so intent on passing her maternal responsibilities on to her new daughter-in-law. While Daisy's most vivid portraits of Mercy, Clarentine and Mrs. Hoad reveal a great deal about herself, they exclude any references to her connections with this Triple Goddess triad. Not only does Daisy express a lack of connection to these mothers, but she simultaneously equates herself with each of them. They are archetypal projections of her depressive self.

The most notable similarities in experience between Daisy and her two mothers involve, not surprisingly in a woman's story, the prescribed feminine roles of marriage and motherhood. References to sexual relations with their respective spouses, share illuminating similarities. For example, Mercy's

... inability to feel love has poisoned her. . . She tries, she pretends pleasure, as women are encouraged to do, but her efforts are punished by a hunger that attacks her when she's alone, as she is on this hot July day She knows only that she stands apart from any coherent history, separated from the ordinary consolation of blood ties, and covered over and over again these last two years by Cuyler Goodwill's immense, unfathomable ardor. Niagara in all its force is what she's reminded of as he climbs on top of her each evening, a thundering let loose against the folded interior walls of her body

It's then she feels most profoundly buried, as though she, Mercy Goodwill, is not more than a beating of blood inside the vault of her flesh, her wide face, her thick doughy neck, her great loose breasts and solid boulder of a stomach (7).

Mercy, like Clarentine, and eventually, Daisy, respond to their husbands' ardor with mere willingness. They pretend pleasure for the sake of others, and in so doing, feel they have become "most profoundly buried,' or 'canceled out of self' " (Spaulding 6). Social conditioning leads to this tendency for women to put others' needs ahead of their own, thereby assigning themselves a lower priority which contributes to their low self-esteem. However, they hunger for a sense of

value. Daisy senses that there is something missing in her life. Furthermore, she exaggerates descriptions of her mother's size, drawing for the reader a picture of some elephantine woman, while the photo suggests Mercy is not grossly obese but simply overweight. Their shared female hunger is greater than would appear, with each one filling it surreptitiously with things considered to be inappropriate, self-indulgent and not feminine. Mercy fills her hunger with bread and sugar, Clarentine with lost hours of erotic mental paralysis before finally leaving her husband, and Daisy temporarily fills her emptiness with the writing of her gardening column inherited from her husband and finally taken from her and assigned to a man. Not only can none fill it from within marital relationships characterized by disconnection, but it cannot be appeased from within the constrained realm of the feminine.

Though Daisy gives little reason for the barriers to connection in Mercy's, and by extension, Clarentine's and Daisy's marriages, disconnection is signified by the image of Mercy's swollen fingers with the "wedding ring buried there in soft flesh,[that] is throbbing with poison." The image evokes an iron shackle digging into a slave's leg. Daisy claims that this poison which, in actuality, derives from the illness that ultimately takes her mother's life, comes of Mercy's inability to love. Despite this inability, Mercy responds to Cuyler's ardor with a "sighing acquiescence," as if she has no choice but to do so (33). The ring itself symbolizes marriage which becomes a poison to someone unable to love, a poison that ends her life in childbirth and propels Daisy into a life filled with a sense of loss. Implied is Daisy's perception of Mercy's culpability in her own death, a death which begins to seem a punishment, perhaps, for Mercy's not being able to love Cuyler.

The link between failure to love and punishment is evident also in Daisy's marriage to Harold. She marries him, not for love, but because it is time. After his death, she never speaks of

the event, as if she wants to hide her part in the tragedy. The sense that a lack of love is punishable re-emerges in Daisy's sole, uncertain and ambivalent reference to her love for Barker. She asks herself whether "what created and now sustains her love for Barker [is] the protection from rude surprise?" (192). Her lack of certitude regarding what characterizes her love for her husband implies that she is unsure that she loves him at all. Moreover, protection from "rude surprise," if in fact that is what her marriage is based upon, while it has brought security has not filled the vacuum, or removed Daisy's sense of nothingness. Daisy's sympathy for Magnus Flett's abandonment by Clarentine further suggests subtle condemnation for a wife's disloyalty in failing to love her husband. The blame for women's shared failure to love within their traditional marriages suggests the depressed woman's, and Daisy's, propensity for self-blame. Moreover, Daisy's sympathy, because it appears to be with men rather than women, supports the idea that women are the designated caregivers in our society. They are "bad" who fail to care the way they should.

Like Hagar, Daisy's capacity for caring contributes to her sensitivity to social stricture. Always sensitive to the opinions of others, Daisy would not risk portraying either of her own parents in a negative light. Nor would she want to openly suggest that she -- whom she admits to always portraying in the best light -- is to blame for her mother's death. She therefore has Mercy's acquiescence to Cuyler tempered by "Mercy's way of turning toward [her husband], offering herself -- first bashfully, then finding a freer ease of movement. She sighs as their bodies join -- this is true, he cannot deny it -- but he loves even her sigh, its exhaustion and surrender" (34). Daisy identifies with what she imagines is a sexually ambivalent mother. Daisy reads women's articles that prescribe ways to ensure the pleasure of one's husband without regard for a woman's pleasure. Despite Daisy's romanticizing of her mother's sexual experience, one cannot

ignore the implication that Mercy represents what Alice later calls in reference to her mother, a “slave in our society” (243). It is partly this slavery which creates both the poison and the hunger felt by all three versions of Daisy. Their roles as caregivers define them and by doing so, relegate them to a subservient position to the men in their lives.

Caring, is, as we have seen in Hagar’s story, undervalued in our society while it is simultaneously imposed upon and attributed to women. Clarentine, for example, epitomizes the career-mother, a woman for whom

. . . a woman’s life isn’t worth a plateful of cabbage if she hasn’t felt life stir under her heart. Taking a little one to nurse, watching him grow to manhood, that’s what love is. We say we love our husbands, we stand up in church saying as how we’ll love them forever and ever, till death do we part, but it’s our own blood and sinew we really love (9-10).

One hears echoes of Daisy’s preoccupation with blood ties. Yet for Clarentine, such ties are not enough to assuage her hunger, suggesting the same is true for Daisy. Clarentine’s “memory of her sons’ infancy has been washed clear by disappointment,” which illustrates the fleeting nature of a woman’s sense of value when defined by her capacity to give birth and to care for others (9). This is because, as valuable as it is to society to empower those who are cared for, the power women have is neither recognized nor valued in our society (Spaulding 3). One suspects Daisy, who never describes her love or sense of satisfaction in caring for her children, of feeling the same lack of fulfilment that Clarentine feels.

Daisy’s identification with Clarentine would not have occurred had not first Daisy’s mother died, and then, her father abandoned her. Loss, in this way, begets an even greater loss and relational disconnection for Daisy. Unlike the monumental loss of her mother, which directly affects her self-image, her father’s absence primarily becomes a loss of relational potential:

... he talked to fill the frightening silence and to hold back the uncertainty of the future, but chiefly he talked in order to claim back his child. He felt, rightly, that he owed her a complete accounting for his years of absence. Owed her the whole story, his life prised out of the fossil filed and brought up to the light. Every minute was owed, every flutter of sensation. There was so much. He would never be able to pay it all back (91).

Her words evince her inhibition of anger and aggression, an element of depression evolving from loss. Cuyler's reported sense of remorseful obligation illustrates Daisy's own sense of justice. His never being able to "pay it all back" resonates with Daisy's anger over what she has missed hidden behind feelings she must attribute to him. Daisy is, after all, sensitive to social stricture, to what is expected of a girl and woman in patriarchy. She must never express anger for fear of being seen as not feminine. More importantly, she will not risk seeming "bad" for failing to revere her father.

Though she likes the world the day he appears on her doorstep to take her away, as they travel south her attitude changes in a way reflected by the landscape. As Daisy and her father travel "south, and further south" -- plunging, it seems, further into Hell -- past increasingly unattractive sights, there is a subtle, but growing sense of threat: "the towns grew larger and dirtier. Electric wires slashed the bright air like razors" (88). Her father's nervous racing speech frightens her. Daisy claims that "it was against all this terror" of cohabitating with his daughter, a virtual stranger, "that he talked" (88). Just as she hides her anger behind her father's sense of remorse, Daisy attributes the terror to him when in fact it is her own. The word, "terror" evokes the intensity of emotion in the young girl. According to Spaulding, intense emotion is equated with women's experience and is therefore devalued and discouraged (4). Furthermore, projecting her own terror upon her father in this way is a total denial of Daisy's own emotions. It suggests her "inhibition of action and assertiveness" that disallows the expression of her relational experience within the relationship with her father (Miller, *Connections* 6). Ultimately, as we have

seen in the case of Hagar Shipley, this inhibition leads to low self-esteem and the cycle of depression continues.

Later, Daisy's inhibition of anger and aggression at her father creates subtle tension in her reaction to his "sonorous and empty speech" at her own college:

Doesn't he see the yawning faces before him, doesn't he hear the sighs of boredom, or observe her own scalding shame? Only look at him, waving his arms in the air. A bantam upstart, pompous, hollow. How does such spoilage occur? She knows the answer. Misconnection. Mishearing. (115)

The misconnection, clearly, relates to her felt disconnection from him. Though her youthful embarrassment at a fallible parent is not unusual, her frustration comes from her recognition of the emptiness of his speeches, an emptiness which parallels the void between them as well as that left by her missing "kernel of authenticity." Their "misconnection" is also further evident in Cuyler's idealism:

'And I say to you young women as you go out into the world, think of this miraculous freestone material as the substance of your lives. You are the stone carver. The tools of intelligence are in your hand. You can make of your lives one thing or the other. You can be sweetness or bitterness, lightness or darkness, a force of energy or indolence, a fighter or a laggard. You can fail tragically or soar brilliantly. The choice, young citizens of the world, is yours.' (116)

Daisy is distinctly unlike the stone carver. Though she projects her own terror upon her father, she does not identify with him as she does with her mothers. Furthermore, Cuyler's optimistic words offer false hope to Daisy and her female peers who live in a patriarchal world in which they are not the sculptors of their own lives. Daisy's "misconnection" from her father is both a personal and a political one.

Daisy's early years are spent without both her father's and mother's presence. She compensates for her mother's loss by imaginatively recreating and blending her with Clarentine, then confusing the two and absorbing, even identifying with the confused results. Daisy also

confuses her father with Barker Flett, Clarentine's son. Consider a photograph of Clarentine, Barker and Daisy: "colored into character by soft gray tones, the family at ease, the family in love with itself, no trace of disharmony" (60) It is Daisy, rather, that is in love with the idea of family. This and the physical replacement of her parents by Clarentine and Barker serve to reinforce the connecting of her fathers as well as her mothers. Cuyler and Barker often seem, in fact, the same person. Furthermore, some, Daisy believes, would call the origin of her relationship with Barker "incestuous." He is, after all, the "male god of her childhood" (191). Her descriptions of Barker's guilt might well reflect her own prepubescent yearnings. Moreover, Daisy's departure from the newly remarried Cuyler suggests she has been usurped by another "lover," Maria. Though she denies any competition for Cuyler's affections, her actions suggest otherwise. There is no indication that Cuyler sees Daisy as anything but a daughter. However, Daisy's experience of fathers and lovers is confused by their inverted roles. Barker and Cuyler seem as interchangeable paternal/lover figures. Though very different men in many ways, one cultured and academic, the other no stranger to physical labour and ecstatic experiences, nonetheless, they represent, to Daisy, security in a male package. For example, she loves Barker for his protection of her from rude surprise (192).

Though all marriage is patriarchal, the spectre of incest that haunts Daisy's relationship with both men serves to emphasize this idea. However, despite similarities between the two significant men in her life, Barker's paternal qualities do not leave much of an impression in Daisy's narrative. The photograph and Daisy's creation of letters between Barker and his father asking for money with which to help care for Daisy are the only suggestions of his paternal relationship to her. This in itself speaks to another relational loss for Daisy. She lacks connection, with her own parents, with Clarentine, and now also with another potential parent, Barker. Hinting

at the magnitude of this loss is Daisy's reaction to her father's arrival after Clarentine's death: "On that day she liked the world" (78). The presence of a father, it seems to Daisy then, before her disillusionment on the train ride south, can wipe away the emptiness inside her.

Barker makes more of an impression upon Daisy as a sexual, rather than paternal, being. Daisy's recognition of Barker's "sexual stare" at the time of Clarentine's death illustrates the incestuous flavour of her relationship to him in her mind. Daisy's perception of a father-figure as lover or even sexual predator points to a violation of her innocence and trust. She does not grow to adulthood in a secure, non-sexually threatening environment. It does not matter that Daisy might be attracted to the older man even as a young girl. That she senses only his sexual attraction to her with no evidence of any other experience of mutual growth-promoting relationality does nothing to alleviate her already deep sense of parental loss. Her inability to find safety in her relationship with Barker -- which ironically culminates with her finding safety later in her marriage to him -- contributes to her feeling as if she is owed something when, shortly after Clarentine's death, Cuyler takes her away.

His failure to act fatherly towards Daisy is only the first loss she experiences in her relationship with Barker. It contributes to her repressed anger towards her own father, and her ultimate escape into marriage with the infantile Harold Hoad. Daisy claims to marry Harold because "he is hungry for repression" and it is "time" to marry (117). Most importantly, however, she "feels her life taking on a shape, gathering itself around an urge to be summoned. She wants to want something but doesn't know what she is allowed. She would like to be prepared, to be strong" (117). Socialized to be at someone's service, like Hagar, she is unable to differentiate what she is led to believe she wants from what, in fact, she does want. Subsequently, she thinks she wants to help Harold. This lack of self-knowledge accounts for her feeling on her honeymoon,

when her husband has “flung open the window, then pushed back the shutters” to let the sun in that “the world is rolling over her, over and over.” Harold’s action recalls the moment during a childhood illness when Daisy is first aware of her insignificance, first recognizes that the world goes about its business without her participation (119). Now, too, the world, symbolized by clouds outside her window, is oblivious to her. However, it is also dangerous to Daisy, its disinterested steam roller-like movements threatening to flatten and erase her completely. She feels this threat while lying on her honeymoon bed, an image suggesting impending marital oppression and suffocating selflessness. In fact, When Harold opens the shutters and the sun shines into their room, “there he is, perched on the windowsill, balanced there, a big fleshy shadow blocking the sunlight” (119). Like a cloud that comes over the sun, he blocks the light and Daisy finally sees her marriage for what it is.

Marriage to Harold will mean that Daisy will never escape the feeling she first had during that childhood illness, orphaned, powerless and forgotten by the world. Mrs. Hoad charges her daughter-in-law with maternal responsibilities before she is ready for them. Harold’s “hunger for repression,” is, in fact, a need for a parent. His need will compete with Daisy’s own quest to cure her orphanhood. Harold’s refusal to refrain from decapitating flowers is a childish demand that Daisy take care of him. Clearly, he will fail, like the other men in Daisy’s life, to take care of her (119). Daisy will lose herself to his neediness and disappear.

Recalling Daisy’s inability to look directly at her own sun-like emptiness, Harold’s shadow also represents a further obstacle to self-knowledge. Daisy wants to sleep “where she will be safe” from this shadow -- safety is not something which she has experienced in her relationships with men so far -- but “something else is pulling at her, a force she will later think of, rather grandly, as the obligation of tragedy and its insistence on moving in a forward direction”

(119). This is a force governed by her core-self, the same force that propels Hagar forward and, unwittingly, towards increased self knowledge. With a sneeze that startles Harold who falls to his death, Daisy, in effect, rids herself of the obstacle to her own potential self-knowledge. Furthermore, her fortuitous escape from self-obliteration gives hope that she is not yet fully embraced by depression-invoked inhibition of action and assertiveness. Loss has led to inhibitions of affect and action, but not yet to the total decline of her self-esteem.

Daisy may not succumb to depression over Harold's death. Yet her story hints, albeit ambiguously, at characteristics of depression in the years afterwards. Nine years pass without record. This narrative void parallels the one in Hagar's story following John's death. Neither Hagar nor Daisy volunteer any personal information about these periods in their narrative lives. Recalling how deeply affected Hagar is by John's death, one might argue that Daisy suffers from similar emotions. However, Daisy's failure to tell her children she had been married before raises the suspicion that there is more than shock or embarrassment behind her silence (350). This silence, as we have already seen, may point to Daisy's sense of responsibility for not having loved Harold. It might also reflect the relief evoked by Daisy's casual reaction to Harold's fall, and the pride with which she seems to regard the force that pulled at her that day, prompting her to sneeze. Daisy's claim that despite her honeymoon tragedy, her life has been "quiet, agreeable and not all that different from the next person's" further seems to support the idea that she is relatively unaffected by Harold's death. Daisy's residual gaiety and her claim to not allow herself to be defined by this tragic marital episode, which come from the fact that she lives "outside her story as well as inside," does not seem to mask unacknowledged feelings.

However, one suspects the tendency of women to suppress anger and keep sadness to themselves is a response to the same cultural influences that teach Daisy to "announce pain and

dismiss it--all in the same breath, so that she's able to disappear, you might say, from her own life. She has a talent for self-obliteration" (124). Immediately after Harold's fall to death, Daisy could feel "herself already drifting toward the far end of this calamity" (125). The calmness implied by the word "drifting" and her claim to living both inside and outside her story suggest the repression of emotion or dissociation, the state of feeling removed from one's events and surroundings. Whether Daisy is relieved to be unmarried or she is denying her sorrow, she acts without authenticity, bowing to the inhibition of action required for expressing one's experience of relationality and of life events. Not only does she not reveal to the reader her feelings, but she keeps them from people with whom she has relationships. Hers is a disturbing coolness evocative of the calm before the storm.

The urge to be summoned to service that compels Daisy to marry Harold is partly responsible for her gravitation towards connection with men. She needs to care for others and it is her socially informed responsibility to do so. Furthermore, she longs for a parent but has only access to father-figures, a limitation that speaks to the residual patrilineality of western society. After Harold's death, she lives for nine years with her own father until the arrival of his new wife. Leaving Cuyler's home, she seeks the same situation elsewhere. In fact, she virtually flies into the arms of Barker, but not before the brushing of arms with a male stranger at Niagara Falls reminds her that she is not alone when in relation to a man. Her life is one characterized by movement from one paternal figure -- save for Harold -- to another. The sexual tension of which Daisy is aware in adolescence between herself and Barker evolves into sexual relations that continue to evoke incest. His postcoital directive for Daisy to "sleep tight, my dear" means "forgive me, forgive us" for this gravest of sins (192). He is, after all, both a father- and a lover-figure. Even Daisy's later sympathy and search for Magnus Flett derives from this same yearning for the

parent/child relationship she never has. As a woman in patriarchy, as well as a woman having grown up in an environment where mothers tend to die, while fathers survive, it is not surprising that Daisy seeks men before women. That is not to say her romance with femininity is not a powerful force in her life Daisy's desire to connect with her mother colours all her experiences. Yet except for her friendship with Fraidy and Beans which is mutually empathic, relationships with women, mothers in particular, correlate to depression. Men represent security if not relief from depression to Daisy, whose life has had so little security. Furthermore, men are the standard that women do not meet. They are, therefore, the preferred security-provider.

Despite connotations of incest, Daisy's life with Barker does not seem a unhappy one. He is not an ogre. She does not report any overtly disrespectful, belittling behaviour towards her. However, the narrative concerning her marriage and motherhood is curiously devoid of emotion. One wonders if her early losses, disappointments, and Harold's death have desensitized her completely. This is a distinct possibility, yet there is another explanation. Daisy refrains from showing an unseemly excess of emotion as required by societal expectations of a "good" woman. Furthermore, she is a good wife and mother. However,

being good -- what exactly does being good mean in the context of the Flett family? Alice and Warren have been good because they made their own beds this morning without reminding, and, in addition, Alice has helped her mother by dusting the front and back stairs, the little wood side parts not covered by carpet (158).

Being good means performing one's domestic responsibilities as required. When Daisy notices that no one has asked for a second helping, she signs, feeling suddenly exhausted:

"Tired?" her husband (Barker) asks quickly. "The heat," she says, fanning herself with the flat of her hand--as if that would do one bit of good--and he reminds her that the weather's due to ease off tomorrow, that's what the evening papers say, cool winds arriving from the west. "I might just as well wait till tomorrow evening to mow the lawn," he says.

She gives him a look which is impossible to read. Tenderness? Exasperation?
(162)

She has been good, and her efforts go unrecognized. That is not to say this is always the case. However, as this is one of the few episodes to describe their daily interactions, it is significant that her efforts do not bring about the desired results. Even fanning herself will not “do one bit of good” in announcing her need for recognition. The ambiguity of her facial expression suggested by the final two words makes one suspect that she and her husband habitually do not connect in conversation with each other. Consequently, she suffers the illness of orphanhood more acutely than she might have, causing at times

. . . the debris of her married life [to rain] down around her, the anniversaries, pregnancies, vacations, meals, illnesses, and recoveries crowding out the dramatic--some would say incestuous--origin of her relationship with her partner in marriage, the male god of her childhood. It seems to her that these years have calcified into a firm resolution: that she will never again be surprised. It has become, almost, an ambition. Isn't this what created and now sustains her love for Barker, the protection from rude surprise? . . . Hose plants, after all, thrive in a vacuum of geography and climate -- why shouldn't she? (192).

Marriage and motherhood do not bring her the recognition she needs to develop a separate sense of self. This speaks to the societal devaluation of women's care-giving capacity and with it, women's failure to feel a sense of self-confirmation and self-esteem. In fact, a woman's lack of employment away from the home is one of the four background factors involved in depression (Spaulding 5). The sense of security achieved in Daisy's relation to Barker might partly overcome the confusion and insecurity arising from her loss of a mother. Yet it fails to facilitate her development of a separate sense of self. Daisy's marriage to Barker then fails to be mutually empathic and growth-promoting.

The disconnection suffered throughout Daisy's marriage is far more subtle than Hagar Shipley's. However, the consequences are similar. Instead of a marriage that is mutually

nurturing, Daisy and Barker's is a degree warmer than one simply of tolerance, and lacks any growth promoting qualities for Daisy. In fact, Daisy's lack of interest in her house reflects, she feels, "some insufficiency in herself in its structural austerity" (194). This is because, like her dining room, she is "undernourished and unloved" in the sense of love that is mutually growth-promoting. In a fashion typical of women and of depressed women in particular, Daisy assumes blame for her lack of interest in her house. She feels herself to be an aberration, a woman not interested in the realm of the domestic. Furthermore, she sees Barker as blameless. She never questions his mysterious out-of-town meetings of which Fraidy is suspicious. Instead she simply claims she tries to show interest in his work, as women are encouraged to do.

Daisy's feeling of insufficiency reflects her low self-esteem. With low self-esteem, she cannot participate fully in mutually nurturing relationships. Relational disappointments prompts her to refrain from reaching out to others. This discourages the attempts of others to become involved with her. Subsequently, Daisy has no one with whom she can share her sadness. This leads to her withdrawal from friends like Fraidy, her rude rushing of cousin Beverly out the door and back to Saskatchewan. Ultimately, the ongoing cycle of depression eventually leads Daisy to replace people in her life with plants. Plants will not disappoint her. Her garden becomes

. . . you might almost say, her child, her dearest child, the most beautiful of her offspring, obedient but possessing the fullness of its spaces, its stubborn vegetable will. She may yearn to know the true state of the garden, but she wants even more to be part of its mysteries. She understands, perhaps, a quarter of its green secrets, no more. In turn, it perceives nothing of her, not her history, her name, her longings, nothing--which is why she is able to love it as purely as she does, why she has opened her arms to it, taking it as it comes, every leaf, every stem, every root and sign. (196)

In her garden, Daisy escapes blame, and the invasive eyes of others. She loves it “purely,” whereas she is uncertain of the composition of her love for Barker. It knows her core-self, not her relational self, which has so far failed to find success within relationships.

Ironically, the seeds, if you will, of Daisy’s love for gardening, which is a manifestation of relational failure, were planted by Barker. Not only is he a botanist, but his gift to Daisy on the occasion of her wedding to Harold was “a complete, hand-colored edition of Catherine Parr Traill’s *Wild Flowers of Canada*. He cannot imagine any finer or more fitting gift for a young woman about to begin her life” (113). The gift of such a book, like her father’s sonorous and uninspiring speech, speaks to the indoctrination of women by a phallogentric society. Significantly, she does not report any such direction for the women in her life. Clearly, Daisy equates this gift with the beginning of *her* life, one ironically, to have begun when she became someone’s wife which foreshadows the patrilineal nature of her genealogical search. Now, however, that marriage and motherhood have not been able to cure her illness of orphanhood, she begins to venture out into the solitary realm of cultivated nature.

Daisy’s withdrawal from human contact in favour of the safety of the garden suggests she is afraid to let anyone know her longings, her needs which have not yet been filled. To risk having to express implicitly forbidden powerful emotions now is to render herself vulnerable. Also, her need for self-affirmation, or “confirmation of her core-self structure” depends upon articulating one’s experience of relationship. The letter from Barker written shortly before his death poignantly outlines his and Daisy’s inability to fully express their marital experience:

. . . so our discussions have run over these many years, my pedagogical voice pressing heavily on all that was light and fanciful. I sigh, myself, setting these words down, mourning the waste of words that passed between us, and the thought of what we might have addressed had we been more forthright -- did you

ever feel this, my love, our marginal discourse and what it must have displaced? (198).

While this might be a letter written by the fictional Barker, it might also be Daisy's creation. Either way, it acknowledges their mutual inability to articulate relational experience. Barker's wondering if "the disparity of [their] ages made the word [love] seem foolish" suggests their shared sense of incestuous guilt. He hints that their relationship has violated her filial trust, rendering her voiceless, that is, unable to express, and like Mercy, unable to feel, love.

Barker is not the only person to whom Daisy is unable to express her feelings. Daisy's aversion to others knowing her longings prompts her to imagine what her friends and family have to say about her. Since in this novel the "truth" is somewhere between what is said and what is not, the opinions of others cannot be separated from Daisy's own projections. What is important, however, is the possibilities suggested by the words of others. For instance, Daisy attributes to Fraidy Hoyt comments about their respective lives that suggest women embracing different models of femininity lose any connection they may have had. This is likely because Daisy, rightly or wrongly, feels Fraidy's disapproval. Disunity among the colonized benefits those in power. Patriarchy orchestrates this fragmentation of the female minority to render it powerless. It does so through its reinforcement of approved feminine behaviour. Women, like Fraidy, then frown upon the unfeminine. Yet one senses that, in light of Daisy's later column-writing foray into the career world, she in fact envies Fraidy, that Daisy is the one who disapproves of her own life, suggesting that Fraidy represents alternatives that Daisy wishes to explore (184). In fact, she subtly critiques patriarchal expectations. Her disapproval comes of her inability to shed the feeling of something missing, of "some insufficiency in herself," resulting from her lack of self-confirmation. Not only did she not receive this confirmation from Barker, as his letter implies, but her withdrawal from

her friends suggests that, since her marriage, she has not found it in her relationships with others. Her marriage is, in some ways, a poison like her mother's. Yet Daisy's recognition of a positive alternative, that is, a career, sets her up for a greater plunge into depression when her column is taken away from her.

When Barker dies, Daisy disguises her silence on the matter behind letters from others. Daisy's failure to comment on her widowhood is more than simply a technique used by Shields to avoid melodrama. One recalls the narrative silence following Harold's death, an event that freed Daisy from the enslavement in a marriage that would have really been, for her, a state of premature motherhood. A similar silence after Barker's death causes one to suspect that Daisy's assumption of her husband's gardening column is less a tribute to him than a route to self-confirmation and freedom from societally prescribed feminine roles. Daisy's writing career, however, is questionable evidence of self-assertion. She slides into Barker's shoes, takes on a feminized version of his pen name, and takes over his work. However, her plunge into depression after the column is given to another journalist suggests the import with which she invests her work. The column for Daisy represents self-confirmation as Alice emphasizes when she says: "[my mother] was Mrs. G. Thumb, that well-known personage, and now, she's back to being Mrs. Flett again" (240). Furthermore, while Daisy's romance with her editor disintegrates at this time, it seems to be a secondary disappointment. Daisy does not suggest it is to blame. That is not to say it does not contribute to her depression. What finally propels Daisy into the pit of darkness, however, is not simply the loss of relational potential from one failed romance.

Major depression comes to Daisy out of the accumulation of losses throughout her life which translate into repeated chinks in the confirmation of her core-self structure and self-esteem. Daisy's thoughts on her depression, fittingly, come out of an accumulation of mostly female

voices that offer a kind of choral commentary. Labinia Anthony Greene Dukes says depression feels like a “thousand little disappointments raining down on top of each other. After awhile it gets to seem like a flood, and the first thing you know you’re drowning” (254). Fraidy Hoyt says: “I’ve come to believe that the forfeiting of [Daisy’s] “job” was only a trigger that released a terrible yearning she’s been suppressing all her life” (244). While each voice relates a valid reason for Daisy’s depression, they all point to relational disappointment culminating in the loss of a separate sense of self. Ironically, Cora Mae and Skoot Skutari, with the insight of the outsider, are the only ones to identify Daisy’s mother’s death as the origin of her psychological problems. However, their overly sentimentalized expressions of concern for the poor motherless girl hint at the same sort of melodramatic element that prompts the narrator to emphatically pile phrase upon phrase in the description of Daisy’s illness:

Her present sinking of spirit, the manic misrule of her heart and head, the foundering of her reason, the decline of her physical health -- all these stem from some mysterious suffering core which those around her can only register and weigh and speculate about. (230)

One senses the loss of her mother is not literally the origin of her troubles but symbolizes her general inability to find mutually empathic connection with others in order to fill the void. Daisy’s instincts tell her that orphanhood is the culprit. It is an orphanhood from humanity, not just from her genetic origins:

Joan recognizes her mother’s sense of drama, that Daisy is relishing all this, the pure and beautiful force of her hatred for Pinky Fulman, the ecstasy of being wronged. There’s a certain majesty in it. Nothing in her life has delivered her to such a pitch of intensity -- why wouldn’t she love it, this exquisite wounding, the salt of perfect pain? (253)

It is not surprising that Daisy’s depression is partly a performance. For, what she lacks is connection with others. And while depression is the result of her disconnection from others, it

functions to give Daisy an audience, a witness to her moments of courage and shame (339).

However, while depression, in this context, might seem a survival reflex, a means by which the self seeks regeneration through reconnection with others, it is as we have seen, the result of and further contributor to alienation from others.

Daisy's depression is deceptive; it seems to find witnesses to her life and it seems to involve the therapeutic relinquishment of inhibition of anger and aggression. "All those hours she once put into writing about flower borders and seedlings, she now funnels into her hatred for Pinky Fulman" (252). However, Daisy is a volcano erupting with all the pent-up anger that went unexpressed throughout her life. While she shakes off her inhibition of action and communicates her dissatisfaction to Jay and Mr. Fulman over the column's change in writers, their written responses suggest that her expression of anger was unsuccessful. Daisy's letters to Jay and Fulman and her visit to Fulman's office which were fueled by anger, as Joan's revelation suggests, failed to elicit sympathy. This may be because, as Spaulding says,

. . . indiscriminate anger is not a healthy way to avoid depression, and in fact, some forms of anger can actually maintain and aggravate depression. What is essential is that the depressed woman know why she is angry rather than finding reasons in 'trivial' concerns. When women have 'tantrums, complaints, or irritable outbursts', these behaviours simply confirm their sense of self as 'unworthy,' thereby increasing their tendency toward depression. (Spaulding 4)

Daisy is unable to identify for herself the origin of her anger which, more than simply involving the loss of the column to Pinky Fulman, and the end of her dalliance with Jay, concerns her constant sense of orphanhood, invisibility, and lack of power. Subsequently, Daisy's anger must seem a "tantrum, complaint, or irritable outburst." She appears to simply be taking "it [too] hard" and, like the difficult Hagar who resists Marvin and Doris' attempts to place her in a nursing home, was being "[in]sensible" (226). In a society fed by the British dictum to "keep a stiff upper

lip” (Spaulding 3), Daisy’s expressions of anger must be seen as weakness, as well as unfeminine. Furthermore, sensitive to social stricture, Daisy has always suppressed her anger, giving Barker, for instance, unreadable looks instead. Without having had the opportunity to practice appropriate anger-expressing techniques, Daisy’s anger could only have emerged in ways that would alienate those to whom she expresses it, leading to further losses of relational potential. Jay and Fulman react insensitively to her position preventing a resolution that would salvage Daisy’s already fragile sense of self. Daisy’s subsequent sense of unworthiness paired with this loss is the catalyst for her plunge into “a profound depression” (229).

This episode marks the first and only time Daisy actually expresses her anger. And even then, reader only hears of it indirectly, in Jay and Pinky’s allusions and Joan’s references to it. Like Hagar Shipley, Daisy feels “the persevering strictures of social discourse” as well as the feminine tendency to avoid being the cause of injury to others (314). Daisy is a woman who “missed the point, the point of it all, but was, nevertheless, almost unfailingly courteous to others” (354). Unable to express anger or aggression for most of her life, Daisy was instead, as her daughter says, evasive. Evasion “can be a form of aggression” (346) which denies the aggressor’s need to express him/herself. Though the anger Daisy reveals to Joan is a symptom of her depression, its expression is also necessary to one’s recovery. Once Daisy vents her feelings to Joan, she is soon able to see the end of her depression: “it’s going to happen. All this suffering will be washed away. Any day now” (263).

Though Daisy seems to suspend her various inhibitions spontaneously, she does not act in isolation. She first receives visits from members of the chorus, her witnesses, who provide support and a forum for her expression of anger and sadness. Her inhibitions lift, if only temporarily. Daisy’s depression lifts also as she comes closer to feeling a confirmed sense of self as a result of

her “connection” — an illusion like the connection between audience and performer -- with others. Daisy’s appetite for relational connection is only wetted. Fueled by her need for further self-confirmation and by her increasing, though still tentative, self-esteem, she embarks on a quest, evocative of the Christian search for the Father, to find her symbolic father and actual father-in-law, Magnus Flett. Not only does Magnus represent Cuyler and Barker, but, as grandniece Victoria suggests he also represents Daisy’s mother, Mercy (269). While her mother symbolizes the loss, in fact, of both parents, Mercy’s lack of history prevents Daisy from making any genealogical investigations. Mercy can never be known to Daisy and is, instead absorbed into Magnus, an absorption that erases her, and Daisy’s, matrilineal history.

There are strong parallels between Daisy’s journey to Orkney and the Christian pilgrimage, evocative of Hagar’s journey to Shadow Point. However, unlike Hagar, Daisy does not travel alone, but with her grand-niece, Victoria, who is like a younger version of herself. Victoria knows her great-aunt’s hand almost as well as her own (270). Both are now orphans. Victoria, to whose unmarried mother Daisy gave a home years earlier, now reciprocates by helping her great-aunt symbolically to go home and find the Flett and Goodwill patriarch. They travel to Orkney, into their ancestral past together, where Daisy experiences only her second reported moment of happiness -- a feeling of lightness, a gust of air blowing through her as she looks at a rock formation in Orkney -- since her father’s appearance at her door after Clarentine’s death (300). Daisy, like her father, experiences a moment of ecstatic communion in the presence of ‘the earth’s rough minerals [which] are the signature of the spiritual’ (63). Curiously, Daisy’s weightless moment of happiness recalls an earlier recognition that “everything she encounters feels lacking in weight,” then of her own feeling of numbness, then “the recognition that she belongs to no one” (280, 281). She is now weightless in relation to the environmental and spiritual

“hugeness around her” (300). Daisy’s journey, which is an active attempt to look directly at evidence of her own existence, evinces the relinquishment of self-denying inhibitions. As a result, Daisy experiences a positive sense of lightness in relation to a suddenly substantial world, a sense of lightness which no longer reflects her orphanhood, the origin of her emptiness.

Daisy’s meeting with Magnus delivers another epiphany during which she smells “that fragrance that means her life” and “feels young and strong again” (307). Like Hagar, whose meeting with Lees results in a secular form of absolution for a suffering soul, Daisy also experiences a parallel moment of catharsis. Yet Magnus barely acknowledges her presence. However, when he says her name, though “obediently, mechanically . . . something in it satisfied her” (306). Naming confirms identity, as we have also seen in Hagar’s case. Yet Magnus’ feeble echoing of Daisy’s name simply emphasizes her insubstantiality, her lack of presence in the world. Furthermore, while the journey appears to be one in which Daisy confirms her family connections and sense of history, one feels more acutely her disconnection with others. Victoria’s own agenda keeps her at the periphery of Daisy’s adventure. Daisy’s long-lost “father,” a figure who would traditionally offer nuggets of wisdom to a child, can only recite Jane Eyre, someone else’s fictional history. Like the somewhat mild epiphany in the Orkney sunlight, Daisy’s relation to Magnus and Victoria undercuts the success with which she seems to meet. Yet somehow, the superficial connection with members of her family and Magnus’ naming of her imbue Daisy with evanescent glimmers of happiness that raise her self-esteem. While clearly she has overcome the episode of major depression, one asks, however, if this is all she gets for her efforts.

Following Daisy’s visit to Orkney is a nine-year narrative silence. Previous silences have followed the deaths of both her husbands. While one can attribute the earlier narrative voids to periods of mourning, they also coincide with periods of implied content. They represent periods

of autonomy and creativity; after Harold's death, Daisy spends a great deal of time gardening, and after Barker's, she becomes a gardening columnist. One might argue that silence, that is, periods in which others do not report on Daisy's life, are periods in which Daisy does not question her value in relation to others. Such a period, implying an increased level of self-esteem, bridges the Orkney episode with her final days while in the company of the other "Flowers."

Daisy is one of a group of women, named after flowers, who "get along like a house afire, like Gangbusters," who are "fortunate in their mutual attachment and . . . recognize their luck" (318). One recalls Hagar's connection with women in the hospital shortly before her death, particularly with Elva to whom Hagar feels connected by their similar places of origin. The "Flower" sisterhood is particularly significant because it celebrates not simply the maiden names of its members, but their first names, which are the closest linguistic representation of the self. The "Flowers' " union thus mutually confirms each other's core-self structures. Even Mrs. Flett's maiden name, however, appearing accidentally on her hospital bracelet, links her with her mother and becomes an invigorating secret behind which lies "the small primal piece of herself" (322). Recognizing the meaning behind the secret, she says: "I'm still in here," as if she is surprised at this discovery (322). But when labeled by others as "a real lady," a "fighter," "a sweetheart, a pet" she reverts back to the self-obliterating label, Mrs. Flett. After leaving the hospital for the Canary Palms Convalescent Home, and relinquishing the bracelet which identified the real Daisy, she says, "I'm not myself here," suggesting that she has lost her self once again.

This is not the first time she understands the link between name and self. Note, for example, the embroidered Daisy, "a signature, sort of like" (350). Most important, however, is her recognition that, "though she knows she's been loved in her life, [she never did] hear the words 'I love you, Daisy' uttered aloud" (345). Her lost maiden name, which links her, ironically, more

with her lost mother than the father whence it comes, is connected to her submerged self. Having never experienced confirmation of her core-self through someone's expression of love is another loss for Daisy. Momentary acknowledgment of self by the other "Flowers" cannot overcome a lifetime of self-obliteration, but does provide a respite from it.

The "Flowers" group does more than celebrate individuality through names. Significantly, Daisy, who has previously reverted to gardening and a relationship with plants rather than repeatedly unfulfilling relationships with people, appears to be coming "full circle," even merging plants and people. The combination of cultivated plants and people in this way does not signify any spiritual connection for Daisy with the natural world. Earlier, it is the "stubborn vegetable will" of the garden that most appeals to Daisy, suggesting, in her nominal connection to it that she longs to be as free as her plants from stricture (196). Yet earlier, she turned to her garden for anonymity. Now, she wants to be known, to be witnessed living.

At the end of Daisy's life, pictures come to her as if in a movie. Despite threads of connection such as those between herself and Victoria:

The odd thing about the pictures that fly into Daisy Goodwill's head is that she is always alone. There are voices that reach her from a distance; there are shadows and suggestions -- but still she is alone. And we require, it seems, in our moments of courage or shame, at least one witness, but Mrs. Flett has not had that privilege. This is what breaks her heart, What she can't bear. Even now, eighty years old. (339)

Despite Daisy's lack of peace in the end, she has overcome a major depressive episode in her later years. However, she never overcomes the societally-conditioned traits of personality, nor does she escape the social circumstances which led to her depression to begin with. As various episodes in her life suggest, also, depression does not just suddenly grip her out of nowhere. She first reports moments of deep sadness and loneliness during the reference to a childhood illness.

After Harold's death, Daisy tells us that: "the real troubles in this world tend to settle on the misalignment between men and women--that's my opinion, my humble opinion, as I long ago learned to say" (121). While Daisy's troubles in part derive from her relationships with men, it is her overall membership within patriarchy that is the driving force behind her plunge into darkness. It is the force that fails to recognize the sadness that for Daisy begins with the loss of her mother and climaxes with the loss of opportunity for self-validation as Mrs. Green Thumb. What Daisy still needs most is "someone -- anyone -- to listen" (340). At the end of a life that has been characterized mostly by disconnection, she remains unheard. This is why, "Daisy Goodwill's final (unspoken) words" are "I am not at peace" (361).

Conclusion

As we have seen, Hagar and Daisy are very different characters in very different stories. Nonetheless, they both suffer from depression, a condition which can be described in terms of Self-in-Relation theory. Their stories share many similarities, not the least of which involves relational disconnections beginning with the loss of their mothers. Yet depression affects them differently and they react to it in different ways. These differences are more than the result of differences in character, personality, and opportunity. Before drawing any conclusions, one must consider the manner in which each protagonist deals with her depression.

Hagar seems to come closer to an acceptance of her life than does Daisy. Studies of aging find that often, older people “attain some degree of personal meaning and life acceptance,” an “increase in *existential understanding* in the later years of life,” and/or “an *awareness of finitude*, which involve[s] an acceptance of life coupled with a tranquility in facing death” (Kenyon 164). Hagar’s final moments resonate with her desire to live, that is, to take action for herself. Daisy’s final moment barely causes a ripple. In fact, her story continues even after her death. The merging of her life with death suggests that her depression, which is very much a living death, has never really gone away. Neither has Hagar’s, really. But Hagar refuses to let it consume her.

While it seems that neither Daisy nor Hagar truly experience self-limiting²⁹ depression, Hagar's handling of her situation suggests an overcoming of sorts is in effect. T. L Brink says that "a spiritual perspective on depression is consistent with research which has found that an intrinsic religious orientation is correlated with less depression or better coping with life's stressors" (391). Brink's work does not take into account gender differences, an important consideration, as we have seen, when dealing with female depression. However, the religious motifs in The Stone Angel, in particular, are undeniable. For example, Hagar's pilgrimage to Shadow Point culminates in the absolution extended to her by Lees, and redemption in the hospital when she finally offers Sandra Wong the bedpan/chalice. For Hagar to have performed these religious rituals suggests an underlying, or "intrinsic religious orientation" which, though suppressed most of her life, finally surfaces when she journeys to Shadow Point to seek its help.

Besides basic human differences in character exemplified by these two protagonists, there is something involving their religious orientation that sets them apart, that impinges upon the "success" with which they meet in emerging from their depression. Their religious orientation is different in critical ways. Daisy's is informed by her eccentric father's digressions from the dictates of formal religion and his personal approach to worship. Cuyler, who later undertakes a "long immersion in bible study" (56) accepts "ecstatic communion" (63). He has come to "believe [that stone, which is his artistic medium, is] the signature of the spiritual, and as such can be assembled and shaped into praise and affirmation" (63). On Daisy's pilgrimage to Orkney, she

29. Brink identifies three forms of relevance that governs, or stimulates human behaviour and therefore, affects one's mental health. Ultimate relevance deals with the spiritual dimensions of life. Utilitarian relevance deals with the technical dimension of life, that is, mastery over the environment, matters of survival, "*the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain.*" Ulterior relevance involves "vain and ineffectual attempts to react to fears or bolster sagging self-esteem" (386).

experiences an epiphanic moment in the presence of stone, a moment marked by her first ever report of happiness.

The spiritual quality of stone prompts Cuyler to build two monuments to his dead wife, Mercy. These are structures which digress from traditional forms: one a spiraling, mortarless tower engraved with an eclectic assortment of images; the other, a pyramid to cover a time-capsule filled with mementoes, including his first wife's wedding ring. Daisy's groundlessness, her floating, free-form relational identity and the amoeba-like shapelessness of her story, reflect her father's artistic digressions, his aversion to Protestant rigidity. They also reflect Cuyler's and Daisy's non-traditional relationship that, like his tower, was built without plan, nor binding agent, and is characterized, like the tower's unrelated images, by disconnection. Daisy's life has been filled with relationships, like her "incestuous" marriage, that defy the structural rules of society.

Further evidence of Daisy's religious orientation is scattered and inconsistent. Between pages 56 to 66 one finds fragments of biblical language and imagery that lead one to believe Daisy is not without religious experience. Furthermore, she describes her father's sense of spirituality using the vocabulary of the Christian church. Until Daisy's journey to Orkney, that is all the evidence there is, however of her adherence to Christianity. Later, Daisy's own aversion to organized religious practices, particularly those that remind her of her impending death, is evident in her reaction to Reverend Rick. He is a "room-to-room pedlar of guilt-wrapped wares" in whose presence is the "spectre of sin" (332). Daisy considers "her soul's compact essence [to be] embraced by those two words on her hospital bracelet: Daisy Goodwill" (321). Yet even in her rejection of all that the chaplain stands for, she uses the language of traditional Christian faith. These evident inconsistencies, and the reference to the self-affirming power of her name, reflect the influence of her unique father. They also reflect the experience of a childhood and youth

devoid of traditional sorts of familial, emotional, and spiritual structures. Religion plays a dual role in shaping Daisy's life: her inspired father models an idiosyncratic and perhaps potentially isolating -- for Daisy, at least -- seemingly formless kind of worship; it also informs the social environment, implying an underlying structure unavailable to Daisy. Daisy, who has had many tutors in her life, lacks any underlying sense of spiritual unity. Her life has been shaped, or rather, not been shaped, nor has she found any central belief structure. Since her depression has social origins that depend upon the patriarchal structure of society, a structured form of religion would naturally follow. Yet Daisy, whose life defies structure, has been seduced by the draw of self-worship or self-centredness.

Like Cuyler Goodwill, Jason Currie also provides a stone monument in honour of his dead wife. Unlike Cuyler, however, Currie embraces his Protestant religious orientation. He chooses a religious icon, a stone angel, to "mark [his wife's] dead bones and proclaim his dynasty, as he fancied, forever and a day" (3). His wife, once frail, now dead, barely warrants acknowledgment, in Currie's eyes. In contrast, his masculine legacy is indestructible and eternal. Furthermore, for Currie, the church is a place in which he can display evidence of grace in the form of economic success. Eight-year-old Hagar, taking his cue, hopes to display her new white gloves. Hagar's description of the church itself focuses upon the tangible, the material--the silver candlestick holders with her father's name on them, the cushioned family pews, the future stained-glass windows. Currie's Protestantism promotes an economic advancement linked, as we have seen, to the separation of home and workplace, and to the devaluing of women's skills³⁰ that is a factor in female depression. However, despite its drawbacks, Currie's ideology offers Hagar a

30. Spaulding 2.

structure which she can either embrace or reject, but one, at least, which offers a tangible framework from within, or without which she may operate.

Currie's religion may have been instrumental in creating the social conditions that caused Hagar's depression. However, in some ways, it is Hagar's own -- one might argue, more female -- adaptation of her father's faith which facilitates her recovery from depression. The late chapters contain scenes offering religious parallels which are adapted to feature female characters such as Elva and Sandra Wong, and a feminized version of the theme of agape, that is, of brotherly, even (secular) Christian love. In Hagar's recovery, as in that of other depressives, spirituality is not necessarily the key to mental health. It would be incorrect to suggest that all depressives need is a good dose of religion. Rather than spirituality, Hagar's taking of clearly defined action within a social environment, her rebellion against her father and, later, the performance of rituals having religious parallels, help Hagar survive in her highly-structured social environment. In this context, organized religion is essentially social, involving group worship, common beliefs and human interaction. It requires one to focus one's energy within a social context.

In contrast to Hagar, the isolated Daisy does no more than to continue "moving right along . . . [t]he way she's done all her life. Numbly, Without thinking," simply existing (281). We have seen how she lacks any witness, any co-author to offer her alternatives and possibilities. Even her relationship with the "Flowers" fails in this regard. As Hagar says of "the incommunicable years[:]" everything that happened and was spoken or not spoken. . . . Someone ought to know. This is what I think. *Someone really ought to know these things*" (296). Never having had a clear existential model to follow or reject, religious or otherwise, and no co-author,³¹

31. Although Daisy's story is told as if through other's eyes, the other voices are filtered through her own. She does not actually know what others think. This means that she does not have

Daisy is left with no options and no choice. Unlike the more focused Hagar who has at least had the dubious benefit of her father's example, Daisy's chronic dissociation keeps her in a loop from which she cannot escape.

Daisy and Hagar's cases of depression involve their relational disconnection from others which begins with the deaths of their mothers. However, as we have just seen, fathers prove to be critical factors in both their daughters' illnesses and their recoveries. Cuyler and Currie are critical elements in the setting of the socio-contextual stage upon which their daughters will live and perform. Only Currie's daughter, however, and the reader of Hagar's story, can identify the context. Place holds greater significance to Hagar than to Daisy. Manawaka, shaped by its Scots-Presbyterian ideology, has an impenetrable hold on Hagar. In contrast, Daisy's similar birthplace has little to do with her future, and the reader learns very little about the town, how it thinks and works. Furthermore, the only location with any significance to Daisy, besides her garden, is Orkney, the scene of Daisy's reconciliation with her paternal history, her acquiescence to patriarchy.

One might argue that the power of Hagar's and Daisy's fathers to influence is directly related to the fact that they are the only remaining parent. However, it is not simply coincidental that men figure in both the cause and the recovery of Hagar Shipley and Daisy Goodwill. For, depression, as the Self-in-Relation model asserts, and both Daisy's and Hagar's experiences illustrate, is a function of women's inferiority to men within patriarchy. Western society sees the devaluing of intense emotion and women's empathic qualities, the removal by industry of skills for which women felt valued, the objectification of women, all of which directly impinge upon

a co-author, only the monumental task of trying to make sense of her life in solitude.

women's mental health. Such conditions predispose women to depression. For women more so than men, our society, instead of the Canadian wilderness, poses the greatest challenge to survival.

Survival in contemporary western society for women means being susceptible to experiencing the elements of depression as described by Self-in-Relation researchers. They recognize that depression is not a one-time illness, but a constant threat that women face. Their experience parallels that of the colonized who is either coopted, or succumbs to "learned helplessness." And while the female depressive might appear to suffer from the Atwoodian Canadian "neurosis" -- one might even go so far as to say she has a love-fear relationship with social (rather than natural) forces which oppress her — men, and male characters, do not share her particular condition. Just as Self-in-Relation theory itself is a work in process, so too should be the further study of women's mental illness, particularly in Canadian women's literature where it is widely represented.

Works Cited and Consulted

- Abrams, M. H. A Glossary of Literary Terms Sixth Edition. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993.
- American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, Revised. Washington, D.C: The American Psychiatric Association, 1987.
- Atwood, Margaret. Survival. Toronto: Anansi, 1972.
- , The Journals of Susanna Moodie. Toronto: McFarlane Walter & Ross, 1970.
- Baum, Rosalie Murphy. "Self-alienation of the Elderly in Margaret Laurence's Fiction." New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence: Poetic Narrative, Multiculturalism, and Feminism. Ed. Greta M. K. McCormick Coger, 1996. 153-160.
- Bell, Alice. "Hagar Shipley's Rage for Life: Narrative Technique in The Stone Angel." New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence: Poetic Narrative, Multiculturalism, and Feminism. Ed. Greta M. K. McCormick Coger, 1996. 51-62.
- Bernardez, T. (1988). "Women and Anger- Cultural Prohibitions and the Feminine Ideal." Stone Center Work in Progress Series, Working Paper No. (31).
- Brink, T. L. "Depression and Spiritual Formation." Studies in Formative Spirituality. Nov.1993 14, 381-94.
- Brown, Leslie, ed. The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Chodorow, Nancy. The Reproduction of Mothering, Berkeley: California UP, 1978.
- Comeau, Paul. "Hagar in Hell: Margaret Laurence's Fallen Angel" (CL 128 Spring 1991).
- Duncan, Sandy. "Open Letter." Room of One's Own. Vancouver BC, Canada (ROO). 1989, 13:1-2, 77-81.
- Easingwood, Peter. "Semi-Autobiographical Fiction and Revisionary Realism in A Bird in the House." Narrative Strategies in Canadian Literature: Feminism and Postculturalism. eds. Coral Ann Howells, Lynette Hunter, and Armando E. Jannetta. Milton Keynes, eng.: Open UP, 1991. ix.

- Emmanuel, Donna. "A Developmental Model of Girls and Women." Progress: Family Systems Research and Therapy, Volume 1. Encino, CA: Phillips Graduate Institute, 1992. 25-39.
- Findley, Timothy. The Wars. Toronto: Penguin, 1986.
- Gleitman, Henry. Psychology. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981.
- Hamilton, Edith. Mythology. New York: Penguin, 1982.
- Heidrick, Sandra Julia. "Margaret Laurence and the Feminine Identity in the Canadian Context." Dissertation Abstracts International, Ann Arbor, MI. 1993 June, 53:12, 4328A DAI No.: DANN73009.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. "The World According to Women." Ideas CBC interview with Marilyn Powell, June 2 24-28 1991.
- Joy, Morny. "Feminism and the Self." Theory and Psychology Sage. Vol 3(3): 275-302.
- Jung, C. G. Aspects of the Feminine. R. F. C. Hull, tr. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982.
- Kaplan, Alexandra G. "'The Self-in-Relation': Implications for Depression in Women." Wellesley: Stone Centre, 1984.
- Kenyon, Gary M. and William L. Randall. Restorying our Lives: Personal Growth Through Autobiographical Reflection. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997.
- King, James. The Life of Margaret Laurence. Toronto: Knopf, 1997.
- Laurence, Margaret. The Stone Angel. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964.
- Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." Sister Outsider.
----- "Age, race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." Sister Outsider
- Miller, Jean Baker. Toward a New Psychology of Women. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.
----- "Connections, Disconnections and Violations." Wellesley: Stone Centre, 1988.
- Moss, John. A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981.
- Pathania, Usha. "Self-Concept and Interpersonal Interaction in the Fiction of Anita Desai and Margaret Laurence." The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Aligarh, India (AJES). 1993, Apr-Oct, 15:1-2, 73-86.

- Peterman, Michael A. "'All that happens, one must try to understand': The Kindredness of Tillie Olsen's Tell Me a Riddle and Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel." Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence. Ed. Colin Nicholson. Vancouver: UBC UP, 1990. 71-82.
- Neumann, Erich. The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970.
- Shields, Carol. Stone Diaries. Toronto: Vintage, 1993.
- , Susanna Moodie: Voice and Vision. Ottawa: Borealis. 1977.
- e-mail interview December 1997.
- , "Arriving Late, Starting Over." How Stories Mean. Erin: the Porcupine's Quill, 1993.
- , Major Themes in Prose Works of Susanna Moodie. M. A. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975.
- Spaulding, Janet Spaulding. "Sociocultural factors contributing to rates of depression in women based on a self-in-relation model." Progress: Systems Research and Therapy. 1995, vol 4, (pp. 59-72). Encino CA: Phillips Graduate Institute.
- Metcalf, John and J. R. (Tim) Struthers. How Stories Mean. Erin: the Porcupine's Quill, 1993.
- Taylor, Cynthia. "Coming to Terms with the Image of the Mother." New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence: Poetic Narrative, Multiculturalism, and Feminism. Ed. Greta M. K. McCormick Coger, 1996. 161-172.
- Thomas, Clara. All My Sisters. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1994.
- "Understanding Depression." Ontario Ministry of Health. Ontario: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1994.
- Wachtel, Eleanor. "Interview with Carol Shields." Room of One's Own. Vancouver BC, Canada. 1989, 13:1-2, 5-45.