

PATTERNS OF (AF)FILIAION IN RECENT CANADIAN BILDUNGSROMANE

PATTERNS OF (AF)FILIAMION  
IN  
RECENT CANADIAN BILDUNGSROMANE

By  
LEE PAUL EASTON, 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

February 1986

Master of Arts (1986)  
(English)

McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Patterns of (Af)filiation in Recent Canadian  
Bildungsromane

AUTHOR: Lee Paul Easton, B. A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor L. Hutcheon

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 109

## Abstract

Recently much critical work has been done on the female Bildungsroman although, with some exceptions, relatively little has been done on the Canadian Bildungsroman, male or female. This study gathers twelve Canadian Bildungsromane, six by men, six by women, published since 1972. Using the the concepts of filiation and affiliation as theorized by Edward Said, it postulates that a "gender gap" does exist and can best be explained in these terms.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help and guidance of Dr. Linda Hutcheon, whose work in the field originally brought me to this topic. Her constant willingness to help and availability for advice, regardless of circumstances, always left me in awe. Also, I must thank Rosanne Giulietti for things too numerous to list.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
I. Theory of the <u>Bildungsroman</u> Genre.....	6
II. Patterns of (Af)filiation.....	28
III. Options: Mentors and Mothers.....	61
IV. Consequences of (Af)filiation.....	84
A Brief Conclusion.....	99
Bibliography.....	104

## Introduction

If there is a distinctly 'female' voice--if there is a distinctly 'male' voice--surely this is symptomatic of inferior art. (Joyce Carol Oates, "Is there a Female Voice?" 10)

We write about, not simply from, our bodies. (Catherine R. Stimpson, "Ad/d Feminam" 174)

The 1970s saw an ever-increasing awareness of women, not only of their changing roles, but also of their specific problems and challenges. More importantly, with the rise of feminism, many women have increasingly acquired a higher profile in modern western (or at least, North American) society. Perhaps the recent attention given to "women's issues," especially in the political sphere, best underscores this dramatic rise of interest in women in our culture.

Concurrent with the rise of feminism was the ascendancy of post-structuralism in literary theory. The goals of these two critical perspectives were closely linked (Eagleton 149). Through the use of post-structuralist theories, feminists were able to enunciate more clearly the specificity of female experience--especially through the critique of, and elaboration on, Freudian and Lacanian

psychoanalytic models. But, even now, as the epigrams suggest, critical differences still exist. Is there a unique female voice? In what ways do female experiences vary from male experiences, especially now, as women enter society? In short, is there a gender gap?

Given the close interconnection of literature and critical discourse in recent years, it is no coincidence that these concerns have directly, or indirectly, been addressed by novelists in the 1970s and early 1980s. Indeed, since women have been increasingly taking on new social roles, it is not surprising that the Bildungsroman, a form consistently concerned with the interaction of the individual and society, might become the vehicle for dealing with these issues. Recent years also have seen much work done on the female Bildungsroman, although (with the exception of Lady Oracle, and to a lesser extent, The Diviners and Lives of Girls and Women) little work has been done on the Canadian Bildungsroman, male or female.<sup>1</sup> And, since only feminist critics consider gender a legitimate factor in generic studies, even less has been done comparing gender variants.<sup>2</sup>

In order to alleviate this imbalance, however imperceptibly, this study assembles twelve Canadian Bildungsromane, six by men, six by women, published since 1972. It postulates that gender gap indeed exists and may

be best explored through concepts of filiation and affiliation as theorized by Edward Said. Gender gap can be seen in the male's acceptance of society's (phallogentric) filiative structures (and strictures), on one hand, and on the other, in the female's rejection of her filiative roots, the systems that nourish them, and her replacing of them with affiliative connections that permit her to enter society as an equal and (relatively) free being.

The corpus itself is drawn from recent Canadian fiction. The six male novels include: Clark Blaise's Lunar Attractions, W.O. Mitchell's How I Spent My Summer Holidays, Gentle Sinners by W.D. Valgardson, Armin Wiebe's The Salvation of Yasch Siemens, Alex Driving South by Keith Maillard, and finally David Adams Richards' The Coming of Winter. (although this last one is explored in less detail). The female novels are: Lives of Girls and Women by Alice Munro, Caterina Edwards' The Lion's Mouth, Shirley Faessler's Everything in the Window, Lady Oracle by Margaret Atwood, Sylvia Fraser's Pandora, and finally, Shelterbelt by Mary Anne Seitz. The tone ranges from the comedy of Atwood's Lady Oracle to the tragedy of Faessler's Everything in the Window in the works of female novelists. Among the works of male authors, a similar range is evident.

Divided into four chapters, the study begins by examining the various theories of both male and female

Bildungsromane, as well as some of the difficulties each poses. The next chapter investigates the (af)filiative patterns manifested in the corpus assembled here while the third chapter examines the mentor/mother in the respective variants, centring especially on their roles in promoting (af)filiation. Finally, the concluding chapter examines some of the repercussions of the choices to (af)filiate, not only in the case of a particular protagonist, but in a broader context.

## Notes to Introduction

<sup>1</sup> I am, of course, aware that texts themselves have no gender! Still, the terms "male texts" and "female texts", although odd, represent a convenient shorthand for referring to texts by male/female authors, and will be utilized throughout this study.

<sup>2</sup> For an extensive recent survey of the Canadian Bildungsroman, see Turner. Turner's thesis, however, is both diachronic and more concerned with the individual's relationship to the community than ~~with~~ any gender gap. It also focuses on Bildungsromane written between 1900-1971, rather than from 1972 onwards, as does this short overview.

## I

### Theories of the Bildungsroman Genre

Defining precisely what constitutes a Bildungsroman raises as many questions as it answers. After consulting the critics, one is tempted to concur with Buckley's assessment that the term, as applied in English literature, is, at best, awkward (viii). Still, these problems notwithstanding, Abrams' A Glossary of Literary Terms seems to capture the broadest consensus on what constitutes a Bildungsroman. A German term, Bildungsroman denotes "novel of formation" or apprenticeship which centres around:

the development of the protagonist's mind and character as he [sic] passes from childhood through varied experiences--and usually through a spiritual crisis--into maturity and the recognition of his identity and role in the world. (Abrams 121)

Usual examples of the genre include Goethe's The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister, Dickens' David Copperfield and Great Expectations, and Maugham's Of Human Bondage.

The closeness of Abrams' definition to that of another German genre, the Entwicklungsroman (novel of



development), underscores the term's awkwardness. In German generic studies, Entwicklungsroman denotes a broader genre which gives a character's overall growth "structural primacy" (Swales 14). In these recent Canadian novels, however, this differentiation is more difficult to make--especially in the women's novels. Here, despite a real concern for the individual's relationship to society, the character's general growth is also a central concern. Still, without resorting to hairsplitting definitions, perhaps the best course of action might be to recognize that, in the English (Canadian) form, the Bildungsroman seems to function similarly to the German Entwicklungsroman (Turner 2058). This term, however, is really an "umbrella" word best applicable to the German tradition (Hirsch, "The Novel" 299). It also tends to lack what Swales calls the Bildungsroman's "cultural and philosophical resonances" (Swales 14).

Nor should the Bildungsroman be confused with another German genre, the Erziehungsroman (novel of education). Although novels like Shelterbelt, Pandora, or Lives of Girls and Women might seem to be novels of education, the distinctions critics have drawn are useful in differentiating between the two genres. Unlike the Bildungsroman, the Erziehungsroman is explicitly (and narrowly) pedagogical insofar as it concerns the acquisition

of a set of values, of lessons to be learned (Swales 14). The very term, Erziehungsroman, "insinuates that the young man [sic] being educated progresses under the influence of a preceptor, a school, or some force artificially instituted for the purpose of obtaining specific results" (Jost 137).

From this perspective, none of the novels assembled here for discussion are examples of the Erziehungsroman in the strictest sense. School does play an important role in the protagonists' lives, but it is not solely the educational lessons that matter, a point Pandora and Shelterbelt illustrate aptly. In Pandora, for example, the Laura Secord schoolyard is a "true, rather than symbolic, representation of adult female society" (158) where Pandora learns the broader cultural values of being female. Outside, as well as inside the classroom, Pandora discovers that, in female society, "popularity is power" (155). Likewise, Francie's educational experiences in Shelterbelt are important, but no more so than her experiences of isolation derived from being the only girl in a rural, ethnic, prairie, farm family. For these protagonists, growth entails more general and diffuse processes than solely educational ones; it entails learning a series of values by which to live (Swales 14). As one critic observes, Bildungsroman heroes (and perhaps heroines) do not follow prescribed studies like the protagonists of the

Erziehungsroman (Jost 137). Instead, they pursue goals that they themselves often only vaguely perceive, in a broader social milieu than school alone (Jost 137).

A more significant differentiation needs to <sup>be</sup> made with respect to the Künstlerroman. In discussing the two genres, Abrams defines the Künstlerroman as a sub-genre of the Bildungsroman that presents the growth of a novelist or other artist as he [sic] matures, recognizes his artistic destiny, and masters his craft (121). Certainly, by this definition, several novels under discussion here can be considered examples of the Künstlerroman: the protagonists of Lady Oracle, Lives of Girls and Women, Lunar Attractions, and perhaps, of Pandora all discover artistic destinies at their tales' conclusions. But, as one critic argues, "[t]he Künstlerroman represents a particular type of Bildungsroman by virtue of the personality and profession of the hero [sic], not because of the structure of the plot" (Jost 277). Distinctions are further blurred by the English Bildungsroman's tendency to become a Künstlerroman, wherein the hero becomes a writer, poet or artisan (Buckley 13). And, as Jost cogently observes, "each Bildungsroman [sic] presents a sort of Lebenskünstler, an artist at living" (277). In discussing these novels, then, the term Bildungsroman will function in its broadest sense, focussing on the character's formation as an individual in society,

rather than as an artist, recognizing that all Künstlerromane are not necessarily Bildungsromane (Jost 277).<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most striking aspect of all these generic definitions lies not in the nuances of genre, but in the chauvinism of the definitions. Despite the gradual expansion of the generic model to accommodate historical and cultural factors, gender seems to remain outside the model's parametres (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 5). Little consideration has been given to the protagonists' sex, despite the fact that such a variable alters "every aspect of a particular Bildungsroman [sic]: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its representation of social pressures" (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 5). To rectify this situation, feminist critics have sought out specifically female forms of development which may be present in female Bildungsromane. In order to better grasp the complexities involved in such an endeavour, a short overview of the theory of the genre is essential. An up-to-date review of the genre's form, in both male and female variants, will assist in identifying patterns from which to examine the works assembled here.

Bildungsroman, as a term, was first coined by Karl Morgenstern as early as 1803, although it was Wilhelm Dilthey's classic definition which popularized its usage.

(Indeed, Morgenstern's work has only been rediscovered in recent times.) According to Dilthey, in Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung, the Bildungsroman is a novel wherein:

[a] regulated development within the life of the individual is observed, each of its stages has its own intrinsic value and is at the same time the basis for higher stage. The dissonances and the conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony. (qtd. in Swales 3)

The prototype of this form, according to Dilthey (and conventionally accepted as such at present), is Goethe's The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister.<sup>2</sup> Although by no means the first Bildungsroman, Goethe's novel gave the genre its comprehensive sweep and made it a "peculiarly German contribution" (Howe 24-5).

As is the case in other forms of literature, the Bildungsroman's appearance is inseparable from the discourses that surrounded it. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe was rife with social revolution, and any attempt to fully understand the genre must recall this fact (Jost 148). In Germany, especially, the genre's emergence may be seen as linked to the late eighteenth-century Humanitätsideal as well as to an expression of the emergent German bourgeoisie's deepest aspirations (Swales 148). In fact, the German Bildungsroman defined, through literary expression, a new ideal in

education (Jost 148).<sup>3</sup>

The recent rise of the Bildungsroman in women's writing might be similarly linked to the social upheavals wrought by feminism. Just as the emergence of the German Bürger from religious constraints played a part in the development of the form in Germany, so the emergence of women from the constraints of social and cultural convention has made the Bildungsroman form popular in the 1970s and 1980s:

Not until very recently have there been novels that show women successfully developing, learning, growing in the world at large. It is not surprising that such works should appear in the 1970s as women have left their "place" to enter a "man's world." (Ferguson 229)

Despite these trends, however, the Bildungsroman has remained, until recently, primarily a German genre, for reasons that are mostly extra-literary (Hirsch, "The Novel" 293). In an attempt to broaden the form into a European genre, critics have identified two variants: the German and the Anglo-French (Hirsch, "The Novel" 294). Several major differences separate the two. Compared to the Anglo-French Bildungsroman, the German variant is less concerned with the social pressures that confront the protagonist than with the epistemological and ontological forces with which he must contend (Swales 35). The Germanic form, in other words,

concentrates on the "limitations set to any and every existence within the sphere of outward, practical being (however beneficently organized that sphere may be)" (Swales 35). Still, despite a certain skepticism in the German form, the underlying belief exists that growth can be a positive process, that some form of learning is possible (Hirsch, "The Novel" 305). The Anglo-French Bildungsroman evolved in another direction. Introduced into England through Carlyle's translation of Wilhelm Meister, in 1824, the English Bildungsroman moved away from the epistemological and ontological concerns of its German cousin to concentrate on the individual's efforts to make a practical accommodation between society's demands and his [sic] own desires for freedom (Swales 34). Consequently, in the English form, the standard plot has become one where the (male) protagonist grows up on a farm or in a provincial town which is both socially and intellectually constraining (Buckley 17). The father (if present) is particularly hostile to his son's ambitions and thus, at an early age, the protagonist leaves for the city, where his real education begins. After various incidents, the protagonist makes his peace with the real world, leaves his adolescence behind, and may even return to his home town to show his success (Buckley 17-18). The hero's success also brings about his re-integration into society. Ironically, the

accommodation which allows his success suggests that development in this variant is essentially a negative, diminishing process (Hirsch, "The Novel" 305). Indeed, Hirsch goes so far as to suggest that the Anglo-French variants "represent the defeat of the individual" (Hirsch, "The Novel" 310).

This general plot profile suggests another distinction between the two forms. The English Bildungsroman maintains a closer adherence to both conventional plot and the presentation of social reality, as well as maintaining a more stringent linear development through the protagonist's journey towards adulthood (Swales 34). The Germanic form is constantly skeptical of the possibility of linear progress (Swales 34). It also tends to look back onto an idealized childhood, free from adult responsibilities and pressures (Hirsch, "The Novel" 305). Finally, the English Bildungsroman is generally less concerned with 'human wholeness' than its German counterpart (Swales 164). The (male) Canadian Bildungsroman largely follows the British patterns outlined here, especially with respect to the protagonists' accommodation with society. Yet, like the German variant, these novels at the same time express some skepticism about the possibility of linear progress. And, in contrast to the British model, the Canadian protagonists undergo their initiatory experiences,



not in the city, but in a rural environment. With the possible exception of Lunar Attractions, the protagonists' formative experiences considered here are in isolated--if not rural--settings: rural Saskatchewan; Raysburg, West Virginia; Eddysville, Manitoba; Gutenthal, Manitoba; rural New Brunswick.

Cultural variations aside, several identifiable generic characteristics remain. Of these, the underlying tension between self and society is the most crucial:

In terms of its portrayal of the hero, the Bildungsroman [sic] operates with a tension between a concern for the sheer complexity of individual potentiality on the one hand and a recognition on the other that practical reality--marriage, family, career--is a necessary dimension of the hero's self-realization, albeit one that by definition implies a delimitation, indeed, a constriction, of the self. (Swales 28-29)

Another central characteristic involves the gradual process of growth brought on by the protagonists' various encounters with the unbending social order (Hirsch, "The Novel" 298). Characteristically, this growth is a story of apprenticeship and a quest for a 'meaningful' life, which projects as its ending the protagonist's accommodation to society, although the hero has a choice in accepting or rejecting the resolution (Hirsch, "The Novel" 297-8). This element of choice is a central component of the genre (Jost 149). It is the "degree of free play [granted] to antagonistic

forces--world and individual--that in the course of the confrontation merge into personality" (Jost 149). Interestingly, the protagonist's inevitable accommodation to society suggests that the genre functions on an implied teleology which is imperfectly fulfilled (Swales 11).<sup>4</sup> Finally, the form is both biographical and social, in the sense that for any particular protagonist, society serves as "a place of learning, a locus for experience" (Hirsch, "The Novel" 297). In noting particular characteristics of the Bildungsroman, critics also stress the nature of the genre's conclusion. Traditionally, there is a tendency to provide a happy ending (or at least one that does not suggest irrevocable disaster), as the hero begins a new quest for fulfilment within society (Jost 136).<sup>5</sup> In the male texts studied here, the endings do not imply disaster, but neither do they portend great happiness.

Contrary to the findings of some post-structuralist theories, the Bildungsroman form affirms the possibility both of an integrated, coherent self and of development of the subject. The "Introduction" to The Voyage In states the case succinctly. The Bildungsroman assumes

belief in a coherent self (although not necessarily an autonomous one); faith in the possibility of development (although change may be frustrated, may occur at different stages and rates and may be concealed in the narrative); insistence on a time span in which development occurs (although the span may exist only

in memory); and emphasis on social context. (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 14)

Some critical discussion has also focussed on the differences between the confessional (autobiographical) novel, the picaresque novel, and the Bildungsroman. For some critics, every Bildungsroman is merely a skillfully concealed autobiography (Jost 137). For others, the autobiographical element is both the genre's strength and weakness (Buckley 26). The main distinction--besides fictionalizing intent--between the autobiographer and autobiographical novelist appears to be age. The former is often an older man [sic] engaging in "fond retrospect," while the latter tends to be a younger man nearer in time to his initiation (Buckley 25). The picaresque novel, unlike either the Bildungsroman or the confessional novel, is often viewed as the novel of the social outcast, concerned with material objects and written in loosely-connected episodes (Hirsch, "The Novel" 299).<sup>6</sup> The confessional novel, by contrast, is the novel of the spiritual outsider: it has an inward focus, is often retrospective, and moves towards consciousness but not always chronologically (Hirsch, "The Novel" 299). In contrast, the Bildungsroman is chronological, utilizes a representative individual of a social group, and presents a series of connected events that progressively lead to a d  nouement (Hirsch, "The Novel"

299). The Bildungsroman, then, combines elements of both the confessional and picaresque novels and, through its unique dual focus, creates a special balance between the social and personal, the inward and outward self, in its exploration of the interaction of the two (Hirsch, "The Novel" 299 and Braendlin, "Secular Salvation" 18).

Several more characteristics of the Bildungsroman are relevant to the analysis which follows, since they reveal changes in the form. First, in the traditional Bildungsroman, the protagonist's actions are often projected against a philosophical or didactic background which leads to the evolution of a "moral character" (Jost 139). Critics have lately observed that the common moralizing tone of earlier novels has been abandoned as authors, particularly women authors, neither "humbly portray their erring ways as negative illustrations nor self-righteously portray themselves as exemplary" (Freiden 305). Second, the genre has become a popular forum in which to explore the destinies of social outsiders: women, minority groups, and artists have all employed the form to explore their integration into mainstream society (Hirsch, "The Novel" 297). This corpus supports such an observation: of the twelve protagonists here, only two--Hugh in How I Spent My Summer Holidays and Kevin Dulse in The Coming of Winter--are not either part of a recognizable minority group or female.<sup>7</sup>

It is precisely the genre's dual focus of self and society that has led Ellen Morgan to declare that:

the novel of apprenticeship is admirably suited to express the emergence of women from cultural conditioning into struggle with institutional forces, their progress toward the goal of full personhood, and the effort to restructure their lives and society according to their own vision of meaning and right living. (qtd. in Smith 131)

Despite this optimistic assertion, even the broadest definition of the Bildungsroman still presupposes a range of social options usually available solely to men (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 7). When Jost speaks of the protagonist's "confrontation with his milieu" (136), he implicitly means a male milieu. Likewise, when Buckley identifies his "typical Bildungsroman plot" (17), he inevitably describes human development in exclusively male terms.

In response to this situation, feminist critics have formulated paradigms of uniquely female development, such as that of the "Beautiful Soul." This paradigm postulates a female withdrawal from the male dominated secular world in order to develop inwardly. Predominantly evident in nineteenth-century literature, the "Beautiful Soul" discovers that any development of her inner qualities, such as love, memory, or sensitivity, must transpire outside of

society, "outside the most intimate love and family relationships" (Hirsch, "Beautiful Soul" 30). But, for women in novels like Wilhelm Meister, The Mill on the Floss, or The Awakening, inner development often becomes a "death warrant" (Hirsch, "Beautiful Soul" 33). Barred from artistic fulfilment by restrictive social roles, they are offered no way out of the inwardness into which they have fallen. Instead, the female protagonist becomes like Eurydice: "no voice with which to assimilate and tell her own discontinuous story" (Hirsch, "Beautiful Soul" 47).

By male standards, these heroines may even be perceived as failures, as not having reached their full (male) potential. Using the "Beautiful Soul" paradigm, however, Hirsch argues that, in fact, heroines like Maggie Tulliver and Edna Pontellier illustrate an alternate pattern of development. Rooted in childhood and the pre-Oedipal phase, this development prizes continuity, locates itself in the inner self, and, within a phallogentric society, inevitably culminates in death (Hirsch, "Beautiful Soul" 37). In this context, Maggie's and Edna's deaths are not failures, but, viewed in terms of the available social options, are "logical and artistically valid" consequences of their situations (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 9). The 'novel of awakening' offers a similar, yet different, paradigm for early female Bildungsromane. Also

characterized by inward growth, this pattern does not necessarily end in death, but in recognition of the limitations inherent in being a woman (Rosowski 49). She becomes viscerally aware of the "disparity between that self-knowledge and the nature of the world" (Rosowski 49).

More recently, criticism of the female Bildungsroman has been directed towards identifying positive alternatives to such pessimistic paradigms (Smith 127). Indeed, since the early 1970s such alternatives have begun to proliferate in the Bildungsroman genre. Now the prototypical female plot focuses on a sensitive heroine's attempt to find a new and authentic humanity, despite the frequent attempts to force her into stereotypical roles as she moves from childhood to full maturity (Smith 127). The new female heroine seeks a femininity which is both dynamic and existential, and which supersedes the conventional static and essential nature usually accorded women in the male Bildungsroman (Ellen Morgan qtd. in Braendlin, "New Directions" 160). Her quest, however, may be either spiritual or secular in form (Braendlin, "Secular Salvation" 18). As Lessing's Children of the Dark and Atwood's Surfacing exemplify, the spiritual quest entails a journey to discover the protagonist's relationship to either a deity or a cosmic power (18). The secular quest, as the novels in this study reveal, involves a search for "values

and identity in the socio-economic-political sphere"; there is no room in these battles for transcendent deities (Braendlin, "New Directions" 161). Francie Polanski's refusal to become a nun in Shelterbelt underscores the essence of the secular quest in these novels. Interestingly, the secularity of the new female Bildungsroman approximates the traditional male form developed from Wilhelm Meister. Women's relationship to nature also differs in the two types of quests. For those on spiritual quests, nature becomes a nunnery, a retreat necessary to female development. Here, woman comes to view herself as "co-extensive with the green world" (Pratt 484). For the secular protagonist, any healing restorative bond with nature is an impossibility: modern woman herself is "more a product of the freeway than of the field" (Braendlin, "Secular Salvation" 21).

In the specifically female Bildungsroman, the underlying myth of the secular quest, it has been argued, is that of Psyche as elaborated by Apuleius.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the protagonist's own initiative and persistence, she embarks upon a spiral search for identity, aided by a strong mother-figure, whose motivation and essential nature she eventually shares (Ferguson 231). Four elements are essential to the Psyche myth: a young girl who has difficulty differentiating between sex and love; the loss of



love when she essays emotional and intellectual growth; her discovery of self through experience in a world which, like Psyche's labours, symbolizes an encyclopedic knowledge; and finally, a need for a powerful mother figure, who provides either positive or negative impetus or guidance for the psychic journey (232). Ferguson argues that this myth seems to offer, through its emphasis on love and equality, a model of female development by which both sexes might "rejoin society and help cure ills" (232). Several of these elements seem interwoven into Seitz's Shelterbelt. Through various travails in the real world beyond the farm, Francie establishes herself as an independent person. Her mother, in particular, provides a strong negative impetus to her journey, while also providing the guidance which the myth suggests is typical.

Shelterbelt (like other novels) incorporates elements of the modern female Bildungsroman. In a counter-pattern to the traditional male one, this female protagonist sets out from her cloistered upbringing, like her Bildungsroman brother, but as she separates from her family, she moves farther away from her social structure (Frieden 306). Making mistakes along the way, many of which are not condonable, she sets herself firmly onto a path that severs her bonds with her culture, and accepts a life without role models. The conclusion becomes merely another

step in her growth (Freiden 306-7).

There are a few other significant aspects of the female Bildungsroman. The mentor figure of the male variant is supplanted by the mother whose tyranny may result in a conflict of generations (Braendlin, "New Directions" 166). The female protagonist is usually an exceptionally intelligent, determined, and perceptive woman, who is often asked to deny her natural talents and subordinate them to men or male-dominated culture (Smith 130). And, although the protagonist's entire life constitutes a spiritual crisis, the heroine often experiences "single crystal-clear moments of anger, pain, and awareness [which] precipitate acts of self-affirmation" (Smith 130). At the same time, these moments may include an acceptance of the protagonists' own guilt in arriving at their situation (Braendlin, "Secular Salvation" 20). Finally, the conclusions of these Bildungsromane are usually "realistically affirmative" (Smith 131), combining elements of "anxiety and indecision with jubilation and determination" (Braendlin, "Secular Salvation" 20).

Of course, different developmental patterns for women suggest that some formal generic revision might be necessary (and has, indeed, occurred). The protagonist's age is one such revision. The male protagonist is invariably an adolescent whose tale unfolds during this

turbulent time. While none of the female protagonists (except Joan Foster) are in their twenties or thirties, as Smith suggests is dominant (131), neither are these protagonists only adolescents; instead their ages vary from three to thirty. Indeed, the wide variance of ages and of time spans supports feminist psychoanalytic and critical assertions that female development is less direct and more conflicted than male development (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 12). Pandora's friend, Arlene, and Francie's friend, Rosy, while admittedly less significant than the sisters in Little Women, for instance, also exemplify the generic revision typical of the female Bildungsroman. Female protagonists often share their development with close friends, sisters, or even mothers, unlike the male protagonist who is the sole focus of his Bildung.<sup>9</sup> Another generic revision involves the conclusion. In contrast to the conclusions discussed so far, some women writers have adapted the form to include the protagonist's Bildung and even an epilogue, which shows the effects of her journey upon the protagonist in later life (Braendlin, "New Directions" 162).

Significant differences in form have clearly resulted from the gender differences of the protagonists. The following chapters will investigate the extent of these differences, beginning with the respective patterns of filiation and affiliation.

## Notes to Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> Jost argues that Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus is an example of a Künstlerroman that is not a Bildungsroman. See Struthers and Perrakis for an example of how the emphasis can vary in Canadian literature. Perrakis argues that Munro's Lives of Girls and Women is primarily a Bildungsroman concerning Del's growth as a woman, a growth capped by becoming an artist (62). Struthers stresses that Del is even more emphatically a young artist than a young woman, and hence feels that the novel should be seen as a Künstlerroman (38).

<sup>2</sup> See Sammons for a recent view questioning both the usefulness of the term, Bildungsroman, and Wilhelm Meister's inclusion in the genre.

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller account of the appearance of the Bildungsroman in Germany, see Swales 146-60 and Jost 148-49. The latter is particularly concise about the prevailing pedagogical concerns of the period.

<sup>4</sup> Swales believes it is wrong to identify the genre itself with this teleology, but in the male Bildungsromane gathered here the teleology seems almost endemic.

<sup>5</sup> Hegel had a slightly more cynical outlook on the Bildungsroman's conclusion: "[t]he conclusion of such an apprenticeship usually amounts to the hero getting the corners kicked off him....In the last analysis he usually gets his girl and some kind of job, marries and becomes a philistine like the others." (qtd. in Swales 21)

<sup>6</sup> Atwood's heroine in Lady Oracle is frequently seen as a female picaro. See Freibert.

<sup>7</sup> Even Hugh and Kevin arguably represent minorities within the Canadian context. Hugh is a rural prairie farm boy in an urbanizing country, while Kevin is a Maritimer, part of an always economically and socially marginalized group.

<sup>8</sup> The Psyche myth, as originally outlined, concerns Psyche, a mortal whose beauty rivals Aphrodite's. Angered by the praise that Psyche receives from men, Aphrodite sends her son, Eros, to punish her. Ironically, Eros himself falls in love with Psyche and fails to carry out his mother's will. They become lovers, although Psyche is not allowed to actually see him. Goaded on by her disbelieving sisters, Psyche attempts to see Eros but only succeeds in driving him away. The legend is usually utilized to suggest women's vanity and narcissism. Apuleius' version continues the story and shows Psyche performing a series of labours which ultimately lead her back to Eros, as a wiser, more aware, person. And, in the end, they receive Aphrodite's blessings on their union. See Ferguson 229-32 for a more extensive review of the Psyche myth.

<sup>9</sup> Like the term, Bildungsroman, Bildung implies the cultural and philosophical connotations that "development" lacks. While the terms are often used interchangeably (and here, too, from time to time), it is important to remember that the hero undergoes a process of acculturation; s/he does not simply "develop", in the usual physical and psychological sense.

## II

### Patterns of (Af)filiation

But the question brings forth consciousness of two where there had been repose in one; and such knowledge of course, like procreation, cannot be reversed. Thereafter, the questions multiply. Naturally or unnaturally, filiatively or affiliatively? That is the question. (Edward Said, The World 125)

One of the most striking differences between the male and female Bildungsroman form is in the development patterns each depicts. Through their respective plots, the two variants reflect both the different obstacles each protagonist encounters and the different psychologies involved. Indeed, the male protagonist's development might be described as a "filiative" process by which the hero discovers his patronymical identity and is subsequently integrated into the society and culture he once fled (Ferguson 228). By contrast, the female journey appears to be an "affiliative" one where the heroine rejects the constraints and conventions of her culture, choosing instead to move into a new, unexplored world.

Filiation, as employed here, might be seen as the

"natural" way of reproducing society, that is, biologically and from father to son (Said 20). Filiation is held together by "natural" bonds and familial forms of authority: love, obedience, respect, and especially instinctual conflict (Said 20). These bonds, particularly the first three, are crucial in dealing with culture, since these are the same ties which bind an individual to a given society. In other words, patriotism, nationalism, and conformity to legal and social conventions are filiation writ large and serve to bind people to their respective culture (Said 25). Said's discussion of T.S. Eliot illustrates the point succinctly. Disillusioned with his filiative roots of American protestant, romantic republicanism, Eliot opted for a "credo of royalism, classicism, and catholicism" (Said 18).

Affiliation, in contrast, is non-biological and, in that sense, "unnatural." Belonging exclusively to society and culture, affiliation is based on trans-personal forms: consensus, professional respect, class, and "guild consciousness" (Said 20). More important, affiliation is voluntary, acquired through deliberate willed action, or social and political conviction (Said 25), making it ostensibly available to both sexes. Said suggests that what he is describing is the "transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation to a kind of compensatory order

that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship, which I have been calling affiliation but which is also a new system" (19). This statement is particularly relevant to the protagonist in the female Bildungsroman, who finds filiation (patrilinear, at any rate) impossible. Like Eliot, she rejects her filiative culture in favor of larger affiliative or private systems which she has adopted or invented (Ian Watt qtd. in Said 19).<sup>1</sup>

Said's emphasis on the role of instinctual conflict in filiation meshes well with the characteristic struggle between the father and the male protagonist that underlies the male Bildungsroman. Certainly, the hero's rapprochement with society, outlined in the previous chapter, involves nothing if not learning respect for, and obedience to, the socio-cultural institutions of marriage, family, and profession. In short, male Bildung appears to be a form of filiation. The ramifications of this statement are evident in the nature of the instinctual conflict portrayed within the form, the protagonist's flight from society, and the role of the love interest.

Although the tension varies substantially from novel to novel, the father-son conflict seems to be an essential element in the male variant. In How I Spent My Summer



Holidays, for example, there is less an antagonism than a gap between Hugh and his father. Yet, as Hugh reveals, tensions between them existed early on. When Hugh was three, his father "confided...that he found Black Beauty to be a self-pitying whiner. I [Hugh] disagreed" (36). At the other extreme, Eric's hatred for his father in Gentle Sinners is so ubiquitous that it influences his every move. Even Yasch Siemens, whose "Futtachi" is absent from the text, maintains an ambivalence towards his father:

And I get mad again that Ha Ha fired me...and I start to think that it's all because my Futtachi never much land had [sic] and we never had much money and we lived on the wrong side of the double dike...and I felt like clawing out like Futtachi. (Salvation 96)

Buckley suggests that, in the British form of the Bildungsroman, either the father's absence or his outright hostility to the hero's aspirations plays a significant role in the hero's development (17). This statement holds true--with a variant--in Gentle Sinners, where Eric states that his parents (and father, in particular) had "stuffed me so full of themselves, I thought I was going to vomit" (138). Generally, however, it seems less the father's hostility (although definitely present) than his actual physical defects that aggravate the conflict. In each novel, the protagonist's desire for an ideal paternal figure is frustrated by the father's physical debilitation. Hugh's

father suffers from recurrent bouts of bronchitis which eventually lead to his death, while Kevin Dulse's father has had an intestinal operation which has sapped his vitality. Evan Carlyle's father suffers from a mysterious cancer-like disease, while Alex Warner's father is both old, "much older than Evan had expected" (Alex 208), and alcoholic. Only Eric's father is in perfect health, although his obsessive concern with self-improvement quickly becomes a cancer itself; gouty Sigfus is preferable to Mr. Smith. Finally, even Lou Greenwood, despite his good health and former athletic prowess, is far past his prime, or at least, is perceived as such by his son.

Perhaps the physical defects merely symbolize the moral and social malaise which afflicts these paternal figures. Lou Greenwood, for example, personifies the techniques of so-called borax salesmanship as well as infidelity. Eric's father, in Gentle Sinners, is a hypocrite who speciously makes "a careful distinction between the laws of God and the laws of man" (93) in order to justify his penchant for speeding. Hugh remembers his father as a "sardonic little man" (Holidays 35) who, like Evan Carlyle's father, is dominated by the mother; in both these households, the mother holds sway.<sup>2</sup> Yasch's "Futtachi" is also a negative example who deserts his family only to meet a grisly end at the hands of a Mexican

prostitute.

Unable to employ his father as a suitable role model, the protagonist spurns the father, looking elsewhere to fill the lack which the father's faults have created. This new figure subsequently becomes a substitute father or "mentor" who helps the Bildungsheld (the hero) on his quest for identity.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the hero also attaches himself to a peripheral group closely associated with the mentor. These actions suggest a rejection, not only of the father's values, but, by extension, of the society that spawned them. In a broad sense, given the dual focus of the genre, the hero's actions imply a rejection of the symbolic "law of the father," which dominates the novels.<sup>4</sup>

Although muted in most of the novels, the tension the law of the father creates in the genre is explicitly dramatized in Valgardson's Gentle Sinners. Arriving at Sigfus' bungalow to exercise his paternal rights, Mr. Smith demands his son's return, stating, "All we want is for him to show some appreciation for what he's got....[a]nd a little respect" (179). Backing Smith's demands for respect is the power of the state which, in the person of Mr. Pearls, can literally repossess the son at the father's will: "If his parents declare Bobby Smith a delinquent, he can be taken into custody and held until he's eighteen" (176). (Interestingly, "delinquent" denotes one who is

neglectful in duty or obligation.) Even the legal system is at the father's command: "'There is also,' Mr. Smith quickly added, 'a matter of theft. We're prepared to press charges'" (176). Significantly, when Eric threatens to kill him, Smith invokes the law of the father itself: "'Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may...'" his father started to recite" (177). That measure failing, Smith calls upon the ultimate authority of the father residing in God: "'Prayer will melt the hardest heart,' Mr. Smith declared" (178). Smith's hostility to Eric's affiliation to Sigfus finds analogous situations in other Bildungsromane. In Alex Driving South, for example, Evan does not have "much of a D.A. because his father won't let him" (61), while he hides the new leather coat that he "hasn't dared to wear out of the house" (61). Hugh's father also prevents any affiliation with King Motherwell by forbidding his son to associate with him.

This apparent hostility towards, and these attempts to prevent, enduring male affiliation are intriguing, especially since the mentor's role seems so benign. But, even benevolent affiliation apparently assails the preeminent position of the father (Said 118) and, since filiation can only occur if the actual father is believed to possess the phallus (Silverman 185), rivals such as the mentor must be either discredited or eliminated. Only

affiliations which protect filiative repetition which, in turn, preserves, transmits, and confirms (male) human presence (authority) will be socially or culturally validated (Said 118): marriage, religion, and professions are institutions inherently patriarchal and phallogentric. In short, affiliation seems too disruptive to filiation, and to the institutions dependent upon it for their authority, to exist unchecked. Consequently, only the alternatives described above will ultimately be available to the male protagonist.

Paradoxically, however, the instinctual conflict itself guarantees that affiliation must occur. Said observes: "With struggle, as between the generations of the fathers and of the sons, there is a difference generated, as well as repetition....[F]iliation from one point of view is recurrence, but from another...it is difference" (116). Said's observation is crucial in two ways. It suggests that the mentor not only provides the hero with an ideal paternal figure but also assists him in differentiating himself from the father. At the same time Said's statement adumbrates the protagonist's ultimate choice: filiation means becoming the father. Although filiation glosses over the differences it creates, traces of the process are evident in the protagonist. Hugh, for example, does not take over his father's paper. Evan flees Raysburg, while Alex refuses to

become a farmer like his father.

The importance of the patronymic cannot be underestimated, however: it is, after all, by this name that the protagonist is inscribed in the social order and subject to the law of the father. Two incidents effectively underscore the point. First, in Lunar Attractions, David Greenwood's discovery that his father's true name is "Boisvert" sends him reeling into madness. Without the name that had inscribed him in the symbolic order, David suddenly becomes "a maddened guilt- and hate-ridden monster" (68) whose parents are "spies, kidnappers and perhaps even aliens" (68). Freed from the constraints of the patronymic, David feels that he "would have turned in his [own] parents" (68). As the psychiatrist later explains, "A name's a pretty big thing when you come to think of it" (71). Secondly, in Gentle Sinners, when Bobby arrives at Sigfus', he underscores his rejection of his parents by accepting a new name, given by Sigfus. The symbolism is obvious.

Faced with the power of the patronymic and the instinctual conflict between the father and the son, the protagonist seeks to differentiate himself through taking refuge in a world beyond the father's domination. Unlike the British Bildungsroman, where this flight is characterized by a journey to the urbanized city (which functions as both liberator and corrupter) (Buckley 20), the

Canadian male remains within a rural environment. There, he affiliates himself with a sub-culture which exists on society's periphery. Therefore, before Eric can even begin his development, he must first retreat to rural Eddysville. Once there, he affiliates himself, not within the town, but with Sigfus, an outsider, living a long-since-past lifestyle on the outskirts of town. Palestra, in Blaise's Lunar Attractions, is also surprisingly isolated despite its metropolitan population: "It was strung out and cut up, condensed only in the 'stadt,' its ten block downtown core. Otherwise it was a collection of orbiting clusters of separate jealous identities" (81). In this context, Daley Ridge, like Raysburg in Alex Driving South, appears little more urban than Eddysville, or, for that matter, Gutenthal.

But rural hardly means bucolic (New 4). Behind these pastoral retreats lie as much corruption, madness, and greed as ever inhabited Dickens' London. In Hugh's town, inmates "rage or wander blindly, unattended except by other madmen; liquor sales and prostitution prosper among Solid Citizens as well as among the rest" (New 4). Like Hugh's world, David Greenwood's Daley Ridge is equally full of adulterous affairs, murders and extortion. Even Gutenthal, in The Salvation of Yasch Siemens, is as filled with prejudice and malice as Eddysville, where Larry runs about mad and the Tree brothers extort the townspeople.

The sub-cultures themselves vary substantially from text to text but they share one characteristic: they are far removed from the father's sphere of influence. Hugh, for example, writes about his father's world of politics and religion: "That was their world; by the summer of 1924, it was quite a separate world from ours, and during that summer I drew further from my father and much closer to King Motherwell" (Holidays 38). Unlike King, who has "always moved through our world" (39), Hugh's father seldom--if ever--enters this world. Evan also rejects his father's middle-class sphere of five-dollar allowances, proper haircuts, and clothing in favour of Alex's world of pool hustling, D.A.s and leather coats, a rejection that parallels Alex's own spurning of the Warner farm for the world of Frank Hospidarski. David Greenwood, in Lunar Attractions, finds himself affiliated with two groups: one, "a cluster (Irving and Duivylbuis were two of them) of serious students with either deficient, irrelevant, or rampant hormones" (132), and the other, the Junior Archeologists, a group "imprisoned...in passions, attitudes and above all faces and bodies that had resisted anything remotely suburban and 'adjusted'" (198). Finally, Yasch Siemens affiliates with Hova Jake and his followers, and, prior to that, with the outcast Emmanuel. (Yasch's ultimate affiliation is with the quintessential outsider, Oata



Needarp, which, as we shall discover, has interesting ramifications.)

On one hand, the activities of these groups challenge the filiative order outside of which they exist. Irving Melnick and Wesley Duivylbuis, assisted by David Greenwood, challenge (despite their eloquent denials) an educational system which values achievement in men's athletics above academic accomplishment. Hova Jake, with Yasch in tow, blatantly challenges the religious traditions of the Mennonite community through the staging of the brummtupp. Similarly, Alex Warner's late-night "runs" with Frank Hospidarski challenge one of the primary concepts of the filiative order--private property. Even Hugh challenges the order through his assistance of Wild Bill, the escaped lunatic.

Ironically, these same experiences prepare the hero for his final (predestined) choice. On one hand, the protagonist is exposed to the power that he might access within the order. On the other, he finds visible evidence of the power that will be mustered against him should he decide to remain outside of the filiative order. David, for example, is threatened with expulsion and with his test results being nullified. Hugh finds himself confronted with possible legal charges stemming from his involvement with Wild Bill, while Eric, as it was shown earlier, finds

himself confronted by the power of the filiative order in a most visible manner.

However, the brummtupp staged in The Salvation of Yasch Siemens epitomizes the irony of these challenges to the filiative order. Outrageous and seemingly subversive at the outset, the ritual progressively moves towards a holistic unity, culminating with Yasch feeling "all connected up with everything" (Salvation 30). More ironically, the various 'victims' of the brummtupp, all of whom had exercised a degree of individuality by staying away from church, return the next day. Far from being an act of subversion, then, the brummtupp is, in fact, an instrument of conformity, and one that initiates the participants into the society. Interestingly, it is Hova Jake's grandfather who has originated the idea, underscoring even further the ceremony's real purpose. Significantly, because the brummtupp results in acts of conformity, Yasch's entry into the community is disrupted. Serena's attendance at church, for example, disturbs Yasch and, rather than feeling as one within the filiative order, he feels that "everything was connected loose again" (Salvation 40).

Beyond this, the retreat also permits the character to explore the sexuality generally denied him in the father's world. Freed from the inhibiting fear of castration, in both a Freudian and Lacanian sense, the male

protagonist is able to play out and resolve his Oedipal conflicts, the resolution of which subsequently assist him in making his "accommodation" with society.<sup>5</sup> In fact, this encounter is crucial, for, as Maurice Beebe prosaically states, the protagonist "must go to Woman in order to create--just as a man can only father children through women--and his...power is dependent upon the Sacred Fount [represented by Woman]" (20). Little wonder one feminist critic observed that the pages of the male Bildungsroman are "littered with the bodies of women" (Pratt 483).

In the genre's British form, sexual education usually involves at least two encounters, one debasing and the other uplifting (Buckley 17). In the Canadian variant, the pattern is more one of a single encounter in which the hero loses his virginity: Evan, Eric, Yasch, David, and, to some extent, Hugh, all have their first sexual encounters in these pages.<sup>6</sup> More significant, however, are the associations common to the love interest. The love interest often appears to be a forbidden woman, the pursuit of whom is linked to danger. Melissa, in Gentle Sinners, epitomizes this pattern, although she is not alone. Elaine, in Alex Driving South, with her penchant for racing cars and hopping trains, is also associated with danger. Even Oata Needarp is connected with the danger of social ostracization. Laurel Zywotsko, whose "brother" pimps for her, also shares this

characteristic association.

Sex itself is closely connected to death. Bella's mangled body is discovered immediately following Hugh's discovery of female sexuality. Eric faces Larry's murderous attempts on his life, as well as those of the Tree brothers, in order to save Melissa and discovers his own sexuality immediately afterwards. Yasch consummates his relationship with Oata shortly after her father's death, while Kevin Dulse arranges to be married hard upon the heels of his friend's death. In an obvious linkage, David has his first sexual encounter with Laurel shortly before she is murdered.

But these encounters are central to the protagonist's growth since they allow him to overcome his fears of castration. By having asserted his masculinity and ascertained his potency vis-à-vis women, he is able to assure himself that he can replace the father. Having accomplished this, he is able to accept castration on a symbolic level and is ready to enter into the phallogentric, symbolic order.

Two forces, therefore, seem to converge to encourage the protagonist to complete the process of filiation. First: the overcoming of the castration fears on a Freudian level, which facilitates acceptance of the name of the father. Second: the failure of the mentor to fulfil the

hero's expectations and the latter's realization that he must become the phallus himself.<sup>7</sup>

The completion of filiation is underscored by the texts themselves when the protagonist accepts his patronymic. For instance, at the very moment he "stop[s] being a boy" (Holidays 173), Hugh thinks, "I want my father" (171). Upon his return, Evan sees himself in his father's eyes, suggesting an identification with his father that obviously did not exist in his youth. Yasch reflections upon his father summarize the characteristic moment best:

I grabbed Futtachi's hand and he squeezed mine and...the hand seemed so strong and big like may be I could crawl all the way into it and for sure no devil or satan [sic]...would be able to hurt me and I held onto Dad's hand all the way home to that little house by the tracks. And I wasn't scared one little bit. (Salvation 156).

Wiebe's The Salvation of Yasch Siemens raises several interesting questions. Throughout the text, Wiebe uses elements of the Bildungsroman, although not always in accordance with the generic models. Indeed, only the first quarter of the novel, containing Yasch's adventures at age sixteen, conform to the male model. From that point on, the form expands and changes. Undoubtedly, some of these changes are attributable to the parodic tone of the book,

but several other factors are at work.

But what of the female protagonist? Already castrated (in Freudian terms), she has no instinctual conflict which might offer her growth similar to the male's. Although some critics have postulated a tyranny of the mother in lieu of the father over the daughter (Braendlin, "New Directions" 161), or matrilinear filiation (Frappier-Mazur 350), other feminist psychoanalysts have shifted their focus from the Oedipal crisis to the pre-Oedipal phase, emphasizing the role of relationships rather than of anatomy in sexual differentiation (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 10). These analysts contend that, rather than define themselves by contrast to the mother's body as males do, women define themselves relationally, as continuous with them.

The ramifications of this shift are manifold. Women, states Nancy Chodorow, see themselves as "more connected to the world," while men see themselves as separate and autonomous (qtd. in Abel, Hirsch and Langland 10). Women's sense of self is "very much organized around being able to make and then maintain affiliations and relationships" (Jean Baker Miller qtd. in Abel, Hirsch and Langland 10). In short, a female "I" is defined by community and empathy rather than by achievement and autonomy (Abel, Hirsch and Langland 10). At the same time, however, women's growth

patterns are more conflicted and less direct than male patterns. By having identified with the mother, and by seeing themselves as continuous with her, women are often torn between the desire for separation and the desire to merge, unlike men, whose entrance into the symbolic order depends upon their ability to effect a separation from the mother.<sup>8</sup>

In light of these new theories, perhaps affiliation, with its emphasis on trans-personal forms (community based on similarity and empathy), is not such a surprising thematic development in the female Bildungsroman. In one sense, women have always been encouraged to affiliate through the institution of marriage. As Fraser observes in Pandora, girls learn early to define themselves, not as individuals, but "as group members" (158). And, as Fraser also makes clear, these affiliations are exclusive: they decide who is going to play the game, but not what the game is. Men do that. Indeed, activities in the Laura Secord schoolyard underscore the control that males exert over female affiliation. Female groups are either "irrelevant" or "subservient to the male group" (Pandora 158).

Not surprisingly, there is likely to be a revolt against these strictures. Certainly, the pattern of breaking filiative ties with family, home, class and traditional beliefs conforms to the pattern of the female

Bildungsroman in Germany, where the protagonist leaves her cloistered environment and eventually severs her filiative bonds with family in order to open new opportunities for growth (Frieden 306). Similarly, the Canadian variant also works within a frame of gradually widening family and social relationships (Perrakis 61), culminating with the protagonist's departure from her filiative culture. Indeed, the freedom that the affiliative forms offer is a compelling reason to reject the restrictive filiative (patriarchal) culture. As Bianca asserts, "I can, with the others, imagine this land fully" (Lion's Mouth 178).

But there are other compelling factors in the heroine's movement away from filiation towards affiliation, factors which an investigation of the heroine's familial and social milieu will clarify. The perceived violence and danger of the father certainly appear to be one consistent factor in the heroines' motivation: fathers appear too dangerous to be effective role models. Pandora, for example, imagines that her father "smells of blood and anger" (Pandora 11). Francie also, rightly, fears the anger of her father, who is never above the odd beating. Glicksman, in Everything in the Window, is undeniably a violent man, while even Del's father, in Lives of Girls and Women, remains associated with killing foxes. Finally, while little is known of Bianca's father, Jack and



Marco each bear the characteristic roughness and violence of the father. Consequently, although closeness may be desired, to become close is potentially destructive.

These qualities undoubtedly serve to underline the seeming omnipotence of the paternal figure. Unlike the "lacking" father in the male form, here the father appears to be extremely powerful and seldom has any qualms about using that power to obstruct his daughter's growth. In Lady Oracle, for example, Joan Foster waits in vain for her father, who has "killed men and raised the dead" (77), to answer her questions about life: "I kept waiting for him to give me some advice, warn me, instruct me, but he never did any of these things" (77). Lyle Gothic constantly destroys Pandora's creations, a process which culminates in the destruction of Charlie-puss.

Rather than encourage filiation, the father's tyranny produces a desire to match his authority by inventing new areas where he has little or no power. Pandora plays at being God, while Joan undertakes writing to achieve the power of life and death that her father refuses to share with her. Bianca similarly seeks to exorcise, through writing, the hold Marco has over her. Even Del sees in writing the ability to be like the photographer, able to achieve power over others.

These efforts meet with varying degrees of success.

In Pandora's case, her attempt to play God ends in disaster. Joan discovers that her Costume Gothic characters can be destructive to herself, while Bianca tries to write about Marco, a paternal surrogate, three times without success. Even Francie finds that her attempt to fit into the farm by assisting (albeit reluctantly) with the harvest fails.

These experiences only emphasize the need to escape the filiative culture. Affiliation becomes the means of escaping the oppression of the father, the filiative culture, and creating a new space. In the end, this means that Joan must begin writing a new genre, while Pandora equates escape with a utopian "Another Sort of Life." Francie seeks her escape through pursuit of a career in education. And, for Bianca, this escape comes in the form of her adopted city and country as well as in fiction. As long as the female protagonists remain within the filiative culture, they will be bound to fail; affiliation offers an escape from this end.

In the male filiation process, the mother's role is relatively passive; she is needed only to the extent that her desire for the Phallus must be incorporated into the male protagonist. In the female Bildungsroman, the mother plays an equally--if not ultimately more--important role in the female's development. According to the Freudian model, for example, it is the mother's values which are assimilated

by the daughter at the end of the Oedipal crisis (Silverman 145). In these novels, this means assimilating values of helplessness and impotence, qualities often antithetical to the protagonists' native character and ambitions. To assimilate such values would entail denying their own strengths and desires in order to "fit" the predetermined mold. (Joan Foster attempts this course of action in marrying Arthur, and the impossibility of such action is apparent.) Hence, another crucial struggle that the heroine faces is the need to separate herself from the maternal (of the mother) and explore what is feminine.<sup>9</sup>

An exploration of the protagonist's social milieu reveals other factors which impel the heroine towards affiliation. Unlike the male protagonist, whose experience is one of inclusion and voluntary exile, the female protagonist's experience is one of involuntary exclusion. Unlike her male counterpart, she does not have the luxury of escaping the tyrannical patriarchal culture, only to gain acceptance on some fringe group. Already on society's margins by virtue of being women, these protagonists are even further marginalized. Joan Delacourt, for example, is excluded from Miss Flegg's Butterfly Frolic because her weight might reduce the dance to "something laughable and unseemly" (Lady 47), since Joan is "more like a giant caterpillar than a butterfly" (47).

Bianca suffers further, if similar, exclusion by being an immigrant:

I stood alone on the cold playground.  
The other girls skipped by the school.  
I edged toward them. Maybe I could slip  
in....But when I was standing silently  
beside them, their eyes shifted toward  
me. Their skipping song shifted  
smoothly from 'Spanish Dancers do the  
kicks' to 'We don't want no D.P.s'.  
(Lion's Mouth 78)

By virtue of her socio-economic position in Milltown, Pandora, although included in the elite of Laura Secord School, feels excluded at Ruth-Anne's birthday party, not to mention within her own family.

Nor, as Shelterbelt and Lives of Girls and Women suggest, is the rural experience any less exclusive. The situation is even more acute here. In Shelterbelt, for example, Francie is excluded from much of the farm's activities: although permitted to assist at the forge, she is banned from actually forging. Even birthing is off-limits to her: "The barn is no place for girls" (52), she is told by her father. Rather, her place is to do "girl things"--cooking, cleaning, milking and gardening. Francie subsequently concludes that the farm is no place for a woman, and vows: "When she was big and had children, she would have just girl babies. And she wouldn't have them on a farm" (64). Del's early life suggests that she feels equally excluded in Jubilee.

School tends to exacerbate and underscore the negative aspects of family and society. In Shelterbelt and Pandora, where school is an important focus, female teachers are invariably under the control of a male, reflecting the patriarchal control of the father in the home. Mrs. Kyranski, for example, is supervised by Mr. Wheeler, a man Francie associates with both the authority of the state and "a different world" (Shelterbelt 68). The teachers at Laura Secord school are also controlled by men, namely Colonel Percival Burns and Reverend Thwaite, who rigorously (if lopsidedly) enforce societal values. Miss McIntosh's "resignation" underlines the power these men wield. More to the point, all of these women serve as further examples of female subservience and impotence, reflecting the mother's similar situation in the family.

The schoolyard also exemplifies the social hierarchy that the female protagonist will be entering: "[t]he schoolyard is a true, rather than symbolic, representation of society" (Pandora 158). School encourages boys to become individuals and doers, while girls are either excluded or encouraged to become spectators (Pandora 158 and Shelterbelt 66). The structured "city-states" of the playground also encourage the heroine to accept her "subservient" role in society. Bianca's reaction to the exclusive power of the sorority and its prestige illustrates

the effect on the protagonist's life. Bianca decides that "If you can't join them, fight them" (Lion's Mouth 147). She consequently becomes the class rebel, much the way Pandora becomes a "maverick" in her class. Indeed, sororities function much like the groups in the Second playground, with their sharply-defined lines of by-stander, listener, and "bestfriend."

Again, these experiences prove to be antithetical to the heroine's personality. Pandora questions both the justice of Miss McIntosh's dismissal and the power of her group to exclude others. Joan's satiric presentation of her role of "confidante" both questions and undermines the basis of her exclusion. Similarly, in Shelterbelt, Francie questions the basis of her exclusion: "What does it matter what she was?" (52). Indeed, these experiences make wider affiliations outside the familial model the only possible alternative for these characters.

In most instances, affiliation begins with "higher" education. Del, Francie, Bianca, and Pandora all enter university (or, in Francie's case, Normal School). Although Joan declines to enter university, her reasons for not doing so are significant. To her, university offers only "four more years of acute concealed misery with the horrors of sororities, engagements, football games and spring weddings"

(Lady 95). In other words, university represents little more than an extension of her culture where affiliations take only their male-sanctioned filiative forms: sororities-cum-harems, and mating rituals culminating in marriage. She chooses a complete break by leaving for England. (Bianca's experiences, in The Lion's Mouth, as we have seen, underscore Joan's objections to sororities in particular.)

These, however, are only the first major breaks in a series of many. Francie's reluctant departure for the convent heralds the first break with her rural Ukrainian culture, one that becomes almost total after Rosie's death. Bianca, too, ultimately breaks her connections to Venice and Marco, while Del eventually severs her connections with Jubilee. Taking the place of these filiative relationships are affiliative ones. Bianca joins a commune and various writing groups before finally affiliating herself with Edmonton and Canada. Francie finds herself pursuing a career in education. Even Joan, who is returning to Toronto, plans to effect significant changes in her relationships at the end of the novel.

The protagonist is not alone in her quest. One of the crucial methods by which the heroine develops is by "comparing and contrasting, imitating and rejecting the various examples of feminine behaviour [around her]"

(Perrakis 62). A central character in this process is a mentor-like figure, usually an aunt. This woman provides a model which, unlike the mother, demonstrates the possibility of success outside of the patriarchal family. Aunt Lou, Fern, and Aunt Rosie, all serve as role models for the female protagonists in this capacity. However, these same figures also demonstrate, by their respective fates, the consequences and impossibility of remaining within the filiative culture.

Everything in the Window inverts the affiliative patterns discussed so far in the female texts, and moves from affiliation to filiation. At the outset of the novel, Sophie is affiliated, not only with the Zangwill Literary, Social and Athletic Club, but also is employed by the YW-YMHA. In addition, she eventually joins the Young Communist League. Although it must be noted that these affiliations are inspired solely by a desire to meet men, they are significant. They represent the few moments in the novel in which Sophie is independent and free of guilt. Indeed, her flirtation with affiliation--especially Marxism--represents a significant movement away from her ethno- and phallogentric culture. The Young Communists, for example, boast Ukrainians, a Czech, and a Finn (all gentiles) among their members. Moreover, the very philosophy of Marxism is an affiliative one that emphasizes



class-consciousness over other--filiative--bonds. Interestingly, as the "Internationale" is sung, "Sophie's heart lifted. She felt an easing of tension, and onrush of goodwill towards every last one of them, including Fagey Shiffron " (19). This moment of happiness stands in stark contrast to Sophie's final solitude, "miserably huddled in the corner of [a] cab, unable to stop her tears" (327), as she returns to the family at the novel's conclusion.

Sophie's earlier marriage to a goy capped her affiliative movement. By marrying Billy, Sophie moved completely out of the filiative culture, retaining only limited contact. Sophie herself viewed her marriage as an escape from "that miserable house" (32), and visualized an archetypal connubial bliss at its end. And, indeed, when the break was made, a brief happiness ensued:

Sophie, spurred on by her husband's example, took herself in hand. At Mrs. Todd's the bed was made as soon as they were out of it. She mopped and dusted and cleaned and pulled open her drawers a dozen times a day for the pleasure of seeing things clean and tidily stacked. She got in the habit of taking a bath every day. It felt good to be clean: she wondered why she had been resisting it so long. (78)

But Sophie's ultimate movement toward affiliation is hampered by her culture and her family constellation. Unlike the other protagonists, Sophie belongs to an insular, almost xenophobic, culture that has long traditions of

patriarchal control. Sophie, although excluded to some degree, has not undergone the same rigorous processes of exclusion that the other protagonists have. Indeed, the very thought of herself "cut off from the world brought fresh tears to her eyes" (81), although other characters have been "cut off" all along. Sophie's desire to remain within the culture has its roots in her family's make-up. Mr. Glicksman is the powerful, violent patriarch who dominates his household. Sophie recalls with horror: "He gave me a belting when I was sixteen, Billy, for coming home late from a party" (42). But, unlike the other female protagonists, Sophie abandons her attempts to overcome her father's dominance by affiliation.

Instead, guilt-ridden over her father's second marriage to Cheyele, Sophie returns home and repeatedly acquiesces to her father's demands. Sophie has always felt that "the only reason he [Glicksman] married again was to make a home for his children" (106). More importantly, Cheyele is no match for Glicksman. "Markedly inferior to his first wife" (109), she is often described by her husband as a woman "incapable of understanding what was bothering him because she had the soul of a peasant" (44). Glicksman plays carefully on Sophie's guilt while framing his appeal for her to return home shortly after her successful break. In fact, the entire plea is made in terms of the mother.

Sophie sees through her father's ploy, but, when confronted with his anger, she quickly recants, and conforms to his wishes.

This is a pattern evident throughout the text. Whenever Sophie confronts her father, she consistently retreats before his anger:

"Even this dump is a palace by comparison."

Glicksman looked up from his paper. Slowly he pushed his glasses to his forehead and fixed his daughter with a stony look.

"Is that what you call my house, a dump?"

"It's just an expression, Pa. I didn't mean it." (240)

Even in her dreams, Sophie concedes to her father's violence. Sophie's thwarted relationship with her father is symbolized by her dream: "'Don't hit me, Pa,' she beseeched him, at the same time kissing the hand that held the belt" (240).

The implications of Faessler's novel are clear. Sophie's attempts to placate her father's rage end in her own debasement and eventual destruction. Ironically, her numerous affairs end up undermining the very basis upon which the filiative culture is founded--marriage. Equally important, Sophie's inability to affiliate successfully results<sup>S</sup> not only in her destruction, but in that of those who surround her, too. Billy's suicide speaks volumes about the consequences of Sophie's failure.

The process of affiliation appears imperative for the protagonist of the female Bildungsroman. Only in this way can she evade the confines in which her patriarchal culture attempts to place her. Affiliation offers the opportunity to join a larger world where gender is less important than skill. Significantly, these novels end at the beginning of a new quest: to define what constitutes women's newfound freedom (and femininity). Indeed, whereas the male protagonist has a prescribed number of choices before him, the female protagonist does not. Thus, filiation leads to repetition, whilst affiliation creates new forms.

## Notes to Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> Not that affiliation can be totally divorced from filiation. Affiliation also results from men's attempts to filiate (Said 118). But, since affiliation assails the dominance of the father, it suggests that only male-dominated affiliations, which protect the Lacanian symbolic order, will be allowed.

<sup>2</sup> An interesting point which might merit further investigation is that in both Evan's and Hugh's case filiation is delayed, suggesting that, perhaps, the mother impedes proper filiation. In Robertson Davies' Fifth Business, the mother also is dominant and filiation is delayed as well.

<sup>3</sup> In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the instinctual conflict and quest for identity might be analyzed in terms of the protagonist's quest for the Phallus. (The Phallus is a Lacanian term denoting both the privileges of the patriarchal society and the accumulated losses and lacks of a subject. For further details, see Note 4 below and p.75 as well as Silverman 180-88). Since the father's lack(s) send the protagonist to the mentor, the movement might be said to remain a filiative one in the sense that the mentor is a substitute father.

<sup>4</sup> In Lacanian psychoanalysis, there are three registers: the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic. The symbolic order is the one which one enters through language and accepting the patronymic or name of the father (nom du père). The name of the father stands for the privileges of the father in society and acceptance of it constitutes a symbolic castration.

<sup>5</sup> There is, of course, an Oedipal pattern which underlies these stories, most evident in the quest to save the woman--the mother--from a threatening male (the father). Although I will use the Oedipal pattern, it will not be developed in any great detail. Such a project is beyond the scope of this paper, although it does deserve further study.

<sup>6</sup> Alex Warner is actually closer to the British pattern. He leaves the rural farm for urban Raysburg, where

he has his first sexual encounter with a prostitute. His "exalting" affair with Elaine is never consummated.

<sup>7</sup> This has not been discussed here, but will be elaborated on in the next chapter. It does, however, seem significant enough to mention here as a factor in the protagonist's decision to filiate, or accept the name of the father. For a more in-depth discussion, see the next chapter.

<sup>8</sup> See Frappier-Mazur 351. In her analysis of La Comtesse de Rudolfstadt, Frappier-Mazur postulates: "What is at stake for the girl is her feminine identity which she might jeopardize by performing too radical a cleavage [between the maternal and feminine]. Thus the conflictual relation to the maternal will persist into adulthood with more intensity for the woman than the man--danger and necessity of separation, the danger and necessity of the maternal." See the next chapter for discussion of some of this model's ramifications.

<sup>9</sup> These novels usually conclude with the protagonist's separation from the maternal. While they may offer insights into what may constitute this new femininity, they do not offer definite statements. Femininity will be but a part of their explorations in an affiliative world.

### III

#### Options: Mentors and Mothers

My first thought was "Why did it have to be me? Alone." Then "I want my dad." (Holidays 171).

Pandora wants to take her mother's hand, to cling to it possibly, and therein lies her dilemma: She [sic] is afraid she will stick to it, glued at the end, like Adel-Ada. She is afraid she will never get to know Another Sort [of Life]...Or maybe her mother will take her hand away. (Pandora 253).

The roles of the mentor and of the mother in the respective patterns of filiation and affiliation merit further consideration. In the male form, the role of the mentor involves his failure to possess the Phallus,<sup>1</sup> thereby insuring the preservation of filiation. This can be compared to the pivotal role of the mother in the female Bildungsroman. Here the heroine separates herself from the maternal and determines to establish a unique feminine identity, independent of the maternal. This separation is in marked contrast to the male's acceptance of the patronymic at the conclusion of his development.

As the previous chapter suggests, the instinctual conflict for the male is set in motion upon the protagonist's organization of his desires around the mother:

that is, he takes the mother's desire for the Phallus for himself (Silverman 190). Again, as we have seen, the actual father is found wanting, not only in moral and social terms (although these inevitably play a significant role), but in actual physical terms as well. The hero rejects the father and subsequently determines to search elsewhere for a suitable father-figure. It is at this critical juncture that the mentor plays his unique role in the protagonist's development.

The mentor is undoubtedly an idealized father-figure, incorporating the masculine traits that the debilitated father lacks. The mentor is consequently believed to possess the phallus and the protagonist draws closer to him. King Motherwell exemplifies the larger-than-life, almost mythic, status the mentor attains in these novels:

No one could beat him at snooker or billiards or fluke or pea pool or the golf game they played a lot. No one could beat him at anything, in his pool hall, in the trenches in France, where he won all his medals, or on the ice at the Arena rink, where he played goal for the Trojans. (Holidays 19)

Unlike Hugh's father, King is a powerful swimmer, with a corresponding ideal physique. The phallic serpent tattoo that spreads across King's chest is a striking symbolic representation of how the mentor is perceived to possess the phallus. Alex attains a similar legendary status in Evan's



recollections of Raysburg in Alex Driving South: "That's where Alex belonged... 'The Old Friend', a piece of legend, the central figure in his stock of down-home stories to be trotted out at dinner parties with Dana urging him on" (4). Not surprisingly, Alex, with his "lean, high cheekbones, narrow hips, thin wrists with black hair on them and veins like wire" (60), exudes the masculinity that Evan's father lacks.

The mentor figure in Lunar Attractions presents a curious problem, since both Irving Melnick and Wesley Duivylbuis are important players in David's growth. Irving involves David in his various challenges to authority, heightens David's awareness of politics by prescribing reading material, and appears more visible in David's life than does Wesley. On the other hand, Wesley is physically idealized, despite his earlier acne problem, eventually becoming "a kind of eugenic breakthrough: a balanced mind in a healthy body, a noble outlook and a humble disposition" (207). It is Wesley with whom David originally identifies as well: "And yet, I insisted to myself that I was like Wesley Duivylbuis" (111). David himself states that, if Wesley "was an inspiring figure, Irving Melnick was frightening" (112). Finally, David's discovery of Wesley's secret contributes to David's awareness and eventual incorporation into society more decisively than do Irving's

influences.

Gentle Sinners also adds a twist to the mentor's presentation. Unlike other mentors, Sigfus does not entirely embody the masculine ideal; he is both aged and suffers from gout. Still, Eric's father's obsession with attaining physical perfection becomes a distinctly negative characteristic. In this light, Sigfus clearly represents Eric's desire for a gentler, more compassionate father than the one he actually possesses. Sigfus' sterling integrity also stands in stark contrast to Mr. Smith's hypocrisy. In short, despite appearances, Sigfus does seem to fit the broad lines of the generic model.

Beyond embodying the masculine ideal, the mentor's central function is as a mediator, representing (and literally re-presenting) the societal values which encourage the male protagonist to identify with the male "I" of autonomy and achievement. For example, King instructs Hugh on the necessity of independence and individualism:

My commandment! My own! There has been too much thou-shalt-notting going on all through the centuries....Kingsley Spurgeon Motherwell's commandment is: 'Thou shalt not-shalt not.' I shalt not--that's all right--but no more of this 'Thou shalt not'. (Holidays 27)

Mitchell's How I Spent My Summer Holidays underlines the extent of this process. In a symbolic gesture, King allows Hugh to drive his car, controlling both the wheel and

the accelerator. Alex Driving South extends this metaphor even further. Driving symbolizes a man who controls his own life, and when Evan asks to accompany Alex on his last run, Alex explicitly states that Evan is accepting responsibility for his own life. Alex enunciates the terms clearly: "Man, if you decide to come, you're risking your neck, that's all" (226). The same lesson is replayed thirteen years later, this time concluding with Evan successfully taking control of his own life by walking back to Raysburg with Alex.

Other examples illustrate the way the mentor helps mediate the protagonist into accepting his role in (phallocentric) society. Sigfus instructs Eric about his ancestors, instilling not only a sense of continuity, but also of difference. Moreover, by demonstrating successful filiation, Sigfus suggests both Eric's obligation and need to follow his forebears' path: "You've got to know who you are. You don't know, you're like a tree somebody planted after cutting off the roots" (Gentle Sinners 157). In other words, outside the filiative order, there is no meaning, no connection. King's vehement insistence that "It's your cave. It's your decision" (Holidays 78) also initiates Hugh and Peter into the values of society. By the linking of ownership and independent decision-making, possession and power become implicitly connected. Sigfus's

insistence on Eric's working makes a similar connection between independence and money, both of which result from achievement.

Beyond the protagonist's idealizations, however, the mentor remains a compromised figure. Inscribed within the symbolic order despite his existence on society's fringe, the mentor nonetheless is equally subject to the law of the father. And, since the phallus and father are ideal terms anyway, the mentor is bound to fail the hero's expectations; no single person can ever meet the demands of the phallus (Silverman 184). Sigfus's actions in Gentle Sinners illustrate the mentor's untenable position. Pleased to live a solitary life on the edge of Eddysville and subvert the occasional fishing law to suit his own ends, Sigfus bows to Smith's demands to return Eric home. In so doing, he acknowledges the privileges of the phallus embodied in the father and its institutional support in the state. Eric intuitively grasps Sigfus' position: "You're on their side...you're no better than the rest" (181).

But Sigfus is not alone. Alex is also compromised, a position underscored by his own unfolding Bildung: he is developing as well. But, it is Alex's refusal to sleep with Elaine that truly reveals his precarious situation. Like Sigfus, Alex is willing enough to challenge the filiative order, but he still acknowledges the most basic form of

propriatorship--another man's woman. Wesley, too, turns out to be compromised. Although idealized by David as the epitome of filiative perfection, Wesley is also subject to sexuality, anger, and madness. Even King Motherwell, despite having rejected his own patronymic, enjoins Hugh to "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Holidays 199), dispelling any lingering doubts that Hugh might have entertained about his decision to filiate.

The hero's realization of the mentor's inadequacies results in a momentous disillusionment. David's discovery, in Lunar Attractions, that Wesley is under analysis and, in fact, is "capable of any kind of deceit" (221), comes as a "revelation of almost religious magnitude" (221). Recalling the "horror" of discovering Bella's body mangled by King, Hugh's words reflect the traumatic shift in his perceptions: "Using all the willpower I owned, I forced myself closer. Then I stopped. Then I stopped being a boy" (Holidays 173). In Alex Driving South, the two protagonists undergo similar experiences. Although unable to define his thoughts, Alex senses "a huge motion underneath him, all around him" (256). Evan's disillusionment is equally dramatic: his image of Alex as a sexual superman and rebel is crushed by Alex's revelations that he, in fact, never slept with Elaine. The ramifications of these discoveries yawn before Evan "as wide and impossible as the landscape outside the farmhouse" (244).

Confronted with yet another failure, two choices remain to the protagonist: reject the patronymic, refuse to enter the symbolic order and remain forever outside it, or assume the father's role himself through the acceptance of the name of the father and the responsibility for phallogentric society that it supports. Sigfus cogently summarizes the consequences that await the person who refuses the patronymic:

Threatening a social worker with a rifle. Attempted suicide. Do you know how that sounds? You run. Go ahead. They'll catch you and throw you in a nuthouse. They don't ever let you out of there. (Gentle Sinners 181)

King Motherwell aptly exemplifies these very consequences. Stating, "Him--I defy. And his Methodist God and your Holy Roller unforgiving God too, Leon." (Holidays 200), King rejects his patronymic in favor of the "Otherness" of demonic possession. King, not surprisingly, is eventually committed to an asylum where he commits suicide. Alex uses Frank Hospidarski to demonstrate a similar fate to Evan. Unwilling to make an accommodation to society, Frank is also punished with prison, and eventually destroyed.

On the other hand, although accepting the patronymic entails forfeiting individual freedom, filiation does open the privileges of phallogentric society to the male hero. Through a successful resolution of the instinctual

conflict, filiation opens the compensatory support of the educational, legal, medical, political, and economic systems (Silverman 184). Little wonder Eric speaks confidently of expanding his freedoms despite returning home (Gentle Sinners 210). The "freedoms" of society are merely baits to lure the protagonist to accept the "reality" of phallocentric culture. Alex's abrupt dismissal of his sense of freedom illustrates this concisely. Rather than try to recapture the undefinable sense of freedom he sensed while running, he decides to forget it and returns to the more palpable rewards of the Raysburg bars and the phallocentric culture they represent. Indeed, already mediated into these values by the mentor, acceptance is almost assured.

The Salvation of Yasch Siemens, however, offers a significant alteration to the mentor figure as it has been discussed so far. Hova Jake undeniably functions as a mentor during Yasch's adolescence. His idealized intelligence and maverick qualities fit the generic model outlined above. But, in subsequent sections of the novel, it is Oata who increasingly assumes the role of mentrix. Oata, for example, initiates Yasch into the niceties of society, even giving him his first suit. More significantly, Oata arranges another initiation, one that parallels the earlier one under Hova Jake's auspices. Unlike that earlier one, however, this initiation is not coerced. If Yasch refuses

to go, Oata will quietly arrange to see her mother. With Oata as mentor, Yasch's passage into the symbolic order more than passingly resembles the Psyche myth. For example, Yasch voluntarily assumes roles and tasks on the farm, not for their inherent identification as male or female roles, but in order to ease Oata's burden. His love for Oata also overcomes his desire for acceptance by his male group:

I go to her and take her arm and help her to Nobah Naze's car. It matters nothing if Hingst Heinrichs and Pug Peters and the rest of the ball team can see me....It matters nothing at all. (Salvation 83-84)

Yasch's movement away from his filiative roots accelerates upon marrying Oata. He withdraws from the baseball team because it become "something I didn't need no more" (168). He has little to do with curling as well, and feels that he has become "one of the still ones in the land" (168). Yasch's life, in short, bears a striking resemblance to the affiliative pattern of the female protagonist explored in earlier chapters.

Yasch's real test, however, comes in the form of accepting equality between Oata and himself. While Oata asserts her rights to equality and refuses to be delegated solely to "women's work," Yasch finds his "traditional" role usurped, especially when Oata leaves notes ordering him to wash the dishes (154). "Really bedutzed now" (155), Yasch digs into his memory and recalls a time when "Futtachi was



almost all the time cooking and washing dishes and I can't remember that he ever complained that he had to do women's work" (157). Having thus gained paternal authorization, Yasch sets about doing women's work. Significantly, immediately after having completed these tasks, his masculinity is confirmed, and his entrance into the symbolic order confirmed: Oata is pregnant.

Virginia Pritchett's role in Lunar Attractions, while similar, is by no means as important as Oata's. Rather, her role is more analogous to that of the photographer in Lives of Girls and Women, for she clarifies David's artistic mission. Through her, David finds the possibility of unifying his separate worlds, of demonstrating that "plane crashes and UFOs and car crashes and incidents of people going mad--they were all there to tell us that dinosaurs exist, and that our worlds, deny it or not, impinge" (Lunar 248). As for Del, writing becomes for David a means of solving problems encountered during development.

In contrast to the progress of the male protagonist, one of the central conflicts the female protagonist must confront is that with her mother, who is her "primary creator-mentor" (Braendlin, "New Directions" 167). As the preceding chapter outlined, the heroine's identification with the mother forms a bond which, as she strives to separate, brings conflict--both with her mother and within

herself. Yet, only by splitting that which is maternal from that which is feminine can the heroine develop a whole personality (Frappier-Mazur 350). Inevitably, such a splitting requires the heroine to reject the filiative culture which defines the feminine solely in terms of the maternal and to move into a broader affiliative world where she may discover what constitutes the feminine. In short, only in an affiliative world can the protagonist find "recognition of the female sex, of woman as subject and distinct from the mother" (Frappier-Mazur 340).

Psychoanalytically, the maternal may be defined as the mother, the initial object of desire, an important source of "objects" and pleasure as well as warmth and nourishment (Silverman 190). But, since "mother" is also a signifier of a cultural position (Silverman 182), the maternal might also be taken to encompass the values (both positive and negative) that the mother represents: nurturing, impotence, subservience and drudgery. For the most part, in the cultures within which the female protagonist finds herself inscribed, these values are synonymous with "female" and "femininity." In short, femininity is maternity.

Certainly, Adelaide Gothic and Mrs. Glicksman, in Pandora and Everything in the Window respectively, epitomize this conception of the maternal in their respective societies. Powerless before Lyle Gothic's rage, Adelaide

simply complies with her husband's demands, a pattern she passes on to Pandora: "'Do it!' urges Adelaide, giving the advice she has often taken. 'Just do as your father demands, and get it over with'" (Pandora 133). Adelaide's scattered attempts to exert authority are abruptly dismissed: "'I don't care what you think '" (132). Similarly, Cheyele Glicksman, in Faessler's Everything in the Window, suffers through her lot, putting "others' wants before her own,...[spending] hours alone in the house without thinking to feel neglected by her husband in whose shadow she existed" (191). Her life, like that of most mothers in these novels, is one of drudgery: "She rose early and went to bed late. She cooked, she cleaned, she washed, she ironed; in a house there was always something to do" (72).

The maternal also comes to signify entrapment. Fran Delacourt implicitly states that it was her pregnancy with Joan that forced her to marry Phillip, "to make the best of a bad job" (Lady 75). Mrs. Glicksman and Mrs. Polanski also symbolize the maternal's entrapment. Cheyele is literally a catalogue wife, while Mrs. Polanski follows the custom of her land and is married to a man of her father's choosing at age fourteen. The dreariness of household chores also becomes associated with the mother. With the possible exception of Ida Jordan, all the maternal figures are

engaged in domestic drudgery. Francie's mother in Shelterbelt is usually encountered "knead[ing] dough wearily in the speckled blue pan...invok[ing] God softly, telling him what hard work it was" (47). Francie observes that Mrs. Polanski could "measure her life by the pans of dough she had kneaded and baked for their sustenance" (162).

These associations combine to make the maternal appear as a monstrosity. Indeed, even the birth process often appears as an untenable option for the female protagonist. Francie, after fretting over her exclusion from the barn during births, is "horrificed" when she actually views one. She subsequently decides that "she wouldn't ask anymore to go inside of the barn where babies were being born" (Shelterbelt 53). Nor is birthing any more attractive in Pandora, described as it is as "flesh-heave, mountain-burst, joy-throe, pain-spasm, silt, seaweed, dinosaur dung, lost continents, blood, mucus and genetic hazard" (9). And, although her attitude changes upon Emma's birth, Sophie feels that babies are "gross." In The Lion's Mouth, birth is also viewed as a disaster. Francesco is chronically ill and Paola, with her "pale, pale face" (55), seems bordering on death.

It is these values that the protagonist is expected to internalize at the conclusion of the Oedipal crisis. According to a Freudian scheme, the female subject

internalizes the values of inferiority and powerlessness embodied by the mother (Silverman 145). Now, a "properly Oedipalized female," she awaits her perfect match, the "properly Oedipalized male" (Silverman 143). (Adel-Ada, Pandora's docile twin sisters, might well represent the epitome of the Freudian cycle.) Similarly, according to Lacanian schemes, when the girl takes the mother's desires for her own (especially the desire for the phallus), she enters the symbolic order, albeit structured negatively (Silverman 191),<sup>2</sup> accepting her "natural" role in society.

By rejecting the maternal, however, the protagonist rejects those desires which structure her negatively in society, or in her specific culture, at least. Instead, "unanchored by a mother" (Lion's Mouth 147), the heroine may "flit from group to group" (147), formulating her own conception of femininity. Such a momentous break will engender conflict with the mother; one assumes she, too, feels the effect of the pre-Oedipal bond. Conflict indeed arises and, although it pervades the texts, the conflict often focusses upon symbolic objects such as clothing. Mrs. Polanski angrily inquires of Francie, "'For what you need da brazeer? I don' wear none'" (Shelterbelt 162). Bianca's mother insists on dressing her in Venetian clothing despite her daughter's longing for "ski jackets, jeans, shiny plastic shoes like everyone else's" (Lion's Mouth 79). In

Pandora, little Pandora also squabbles with her mother over clothing, contrasting these battles to "the glowing tapestry of mother-daughter detail" which she weaves about Ruth-Anne and her mother: "Perfumed hankies, trembling eyelashes, crystal tears" (179).

But clothing is merely indicative of the contrasting value systems which are emerging. For the mother, the daughter's refusal constitutes rejection of the entire culture. Bianca's mother illustrates the point well: "'Do you want to be like one of these Canadians' she would ask rhetorically, which meant do you want to be without style, without manners, without sense" (Lion's Mouth 79). Similarly, Mrs. Polanski views Francie's clothing requests as "hinting you want what da oder girls is wearing" (Shelterbelt 162). Certainly, in Atwood's Lady Oracle, clothing becomes yet another weapon in the ongoing confrontation between Joan and her mother, who desperately (and literally) is attempting to fit her daughter into the societal mold.

Despite the betimes ferocious nature of this conflict, the mother curiously remains ambivalent about the protagonist's goals, attacking the daughter at some points and then supporting her at others. Mrs. Polanski illustrates this dichotomy particularly well. While she herself often angrily questions the value of Francie's

education, she is both proud and protective of her daughter's achievements in front of other women. Adelaide Gothic, too, becomes supportive of Pandora by the novel's conclusion: she places her inheritance in the bank to provide for Pandora's future education. Finally, even Fran Delacourt comes to support Joan's goals. She acts as a guide to Joan, assisting her in understanding herself as a multiplicity of people (Godard 21).

The mothers' ambivalence only mirrors the daughters' own divided loyalties. Certainly, there is always the seductive option of remaining within the culture, of not making the necessary cleavage between maternal and emerging feminine. Francie finds appealing the prospect of becoming "the mistress of a large farmhouse, the wife of a respected fellow like Charles" (Shelterbelt 198), and of emulating her mother. But, Joan Foster's vision of her mother underscores tension in the Bildungsroman heroine more clearly. Although she knows her mother is a "vortex, a dark vacuum" (Lady 329), Joan finds, "I long to console her. Together we would go down the corridor into the darkness" (329).

Nevertheless, the heroine sees the necessity of cleavage, of departing from the filiative culture. Francie realizes that "as long as she stayed home she would be just an ordinary girl" (Shelterbelt 191); she would "always be

just Francie, who couldn't amount to much on the farm" (200). Joan, too, recognizes that she must renounce her attempts to placate her mother: "she [Fran] needed her freedom also; she had been my reflection for too long" (Lady 330). Pandora's quandary summarizes the emotions which beset the female protagonist. Although she wants to take her mother's hand, she fears becoming "glued" to it, like her twin sisters, Adel-Ada. Remaining with her mother will deprive Pandora of "Another Sort of Life." Thus, although it is "difficult to keep from crying" (Pandora 253), she knows the split must be made.

By the various novels' conclusions, however, a precarious, conflictual separation between the maternal and the feminine is established. Although Joan stops trying to please her mother, she still worries that "I should have learned something from all of this, as my mother would have said" (Lady 345). Francie feels confident enough to contemplate moving to teach at a school closer to home, but with the caveat: "Closer to home, but not too close" (Shelterbelt 210). Bianca exorcises her dreams of Venice, but the frustration of being unable to touch either Marco or Venice underscores the conflictual nature of the separation of the feminine and the maternal. Indeed, the maternal conflict depicted in The Lion's Mouth merits closer examination. Unlike the conflicts outlined in Lady Oracle



or Shelterbelt, Bianca's conflict focusses upon both her mother and upon a symbolic maternal manifested in Venice.

"Bride of [her] dreams" (175), Venice is not only feminine but, with Bianca's stress on family and nurturing, it is also maternal. Imaged as a womb-like "enclosure, cocooning, the comfort of a secure place" (76), Venice becomes a maternal city, remembered for "that closeness, carefulness, the insulating blanket of protectiveness" (76) in which Bianca is nurtured personally and culturally. Indeed, with the exception of Marco, only mothers are associated with Venice. Consequently, Bianca's conflict unfolds on two levels, with her mother and with (maternal) Venice. Despite her separation from that city, Bianca still finds herself drawn to it, both in life and in fiction: "The labyrinthine calle of Venice are close, so very close, inevitably drawing me" (52). This conflict is arguably as crucial to Bianca's development as the one with her mother. Only through writing does she "exorcise my dream of Venice" (179), rid herself of the "ache of longing"(179) for fusion with the maternal. Like that of other protagonists, Bianca's ultimate separation is a tenuous one. She sees that the maternal (Venice) is the "recurring motif that I cannot escape and I cannot capture" (175), and realizes that "I begin again my life in this [separate] city, this [separate] land" (178). Now apart from the "old fantasies and old

blood" (178), Bianca optimistically feels that " I, [sic] could also shape these vast spaces, could also learn the habit of art" (179). And yet, as noted earlier, the conclusion underscores the remaining tensions. She writes wistfully to Marco: "I become you. I make the story, the book. Still. Still. I cannot write in Italian and you do not read English. I will never touch you at all" (180).

Faessler's Everything in the Window stresses the complexity (and fragility) of the mother's role in the female protagonist's development. In contrast to the mother in the other novels, Cheyele Glicksman neither is sympathetically presented nor is she the conventional "super-wife." Cheyele burns her meals, spreads dirt in lieu of cleaning, and is generally inept. Unlike the other mothers (including Adelaide Gothic), Cheyele is grateful to be a baleboosteh (housewife) at all and offers no traditional example for Sophie to reject. Indeed, Cheyele's ineptitude only complicates the situation. Rather than rejecting the maternal, Sophie finds herself embracing it, performing the very roles other heroines reject. The natural identification, already deepened by guilt, is further intensified by Sophie's need to compensate for her step-mother's inadequacies. Roles are further blurred both by her guilt over Cheyele's stillborn child, and by Sophie's own status as the maternal. Thus, where other protagonists

have rejected the maternal, Sophie's intense, if unwilling, identification with Mrs. Glicksman makes this course of action untenable. Sophie's inability to distinguish between the maternal and herself is evident upon her return from Mrs. Todd's. Sophie discovers herself slipping back into her step-mother's habits, despite a "day-by-day vigilance to keep herself up to the mark" (78). Sophie, like Cheyele, finds time to care for her husband and child, but find none for her own personal hygiene and needs: "'I've become a slob the way I used to be before you knew me,'" she says to Billy (85). Not surprisingly, Sophie cites Cheyele's habits (and their effects on her) as a motivation for moving into their own apartment: "'The things that eat at me in this house and you're not even aware of them. My mother peeing in the yard, Mrs. Oiffer laughing at her'" (85). Only away from her mother can Sophie find an identity independent of the maternal. Her final failure to do so, and its consequences, are painfully evident by the novel's conclusion.

Clearly, differences are apparent in the respective roles of the mentor and the mother. The male mentor works to encourage the hero's acceptance of phallogocentric values and facilitate filiation. Indeed, in one way or another, he underscores the decisiveness of the choice: filiate or face exile, or worse, madness. In contrast, by rejecting

the maternal mother-mentor (although retaining a link), the heroine frees herself from the restrictive confines of her filiative culture. Ironically, as Faessler's novel points out, female filiation may well be fatal, not only to the heroine, but to those whose lives she touches. But, as The Salvation of Yasch Siemens suggests, affiliation and acceptance of equality by both sexes can result in new forms being found.

## Notes to Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> As noted earlier, the Phallus is a Lacanian term denoting, on one hand, "those things which have been partitioned off from the subject during various stages of its constitution and which will never be restored to it, all of which might be summarized as 'fullness of being'" (Silverman 183). On the other hand, the Phallus also signifies the "cultural and positive values which define male subjectivity within patriarchal culture" (Silverman 183). For a detailed analysis of the relationship of the Phallus to Freud's "penis envy", see Silverman 184.

<sup>2</sup> Silverman's argument is detailed and complex. See Silverman 178-93 for an excellent analysis of the Lacanian model.

#### IV

##### Childhoods' End: Ramifications of (Af)filiation

Vico was aware that filiation from one point of view is recurrence. (Edward Said, The World 116)

So I begin again my life in this city, this land....I will, with the others, make this city, imagine it fully. The possibility exists....The energy can run free. (The Lion's Mouth 178)

The respective conclusions of these Bildungsromane reveal several ramifications of the protagonists' decision to either filiate or affiliate. These consequences are significant, since they lead to very different endings in each variant. More interestingly, these conclusions underscore the current trends within the Bildungsroman genre and raise important questions about its future. And, in a broad discursive sense, these conclusions suggest important questions about society and the individual's relationship to it--especially with respect to gender identity.

The conclusion of the male Bildungsroman seems happy enough, at first glance: the protagonist discovers his patronymic, accepts it, and gains entrance into the phallogentric symbolic order. In Gentle Sinners and Alex Driving South, the protagonists' acceptance of their

patronymical identity becomes a literal return to the filiative society which they had earlier forsaken: Eric returns to his parents' home, while Evan must return to Raysburg. Appropriately, the heroes' destination is the parental, paternal home. To a lesser extent, Hugh's return to his hometown, like Evan's, symbolizes his accommodation to the filiative culture, which he had deserted for the East. On a more symbolic level, David also makes his accommodation with society, realizing as he does that he "knew so suddenly everything, how the parts and the passions fitted" (Lunar 250). As is true for the other heroes, resolving the Oedipal conflict prepares David to enter the symbolic order.

And filiation does open the doors of society to these characters. David Greenwood prepares to enter university, where he expects to "find the girl of my dreams and marry her and live happily ever after, like the Andersons on 'Father Knows Best'" (Lunar 246). Both Hugh and Evan go on to become successes in their chosen fields of endeavour. Eric, too, is confident of obtaining new freedoms, new independence upon returning home. Kevin's marriage opens society's doors to him in a way they <sup>e</sup>ver had been before.

But, beneath these seemingly idyllic endings, lurks a less attractive situation. Despite the success each

protagonist achieves, it remains a success clouded with doubt. Hugh is uncertain of his haunting dreams' significance and is skeptical of any real growth. Alex finds himself on the brink of bankruptcy, while Evan yearns for any life other than the one which he presently leads. Perhaps part of the doubt stems from acceptance of the patronymic (and consequently from filiation). Filiation means accepting the rigours of society and, in particular, paternity itself. Yasch, Alex, Evan all become fathers, while Kevin Dulse, newly-married at his story's conclusion, will undoubtedly soon find the role upon him. And, although Hugh, Eric and David are not fathers (at their tales' conclusions), their accommodation to society and its patriarchal strictures equally entails acceptance of responsibility for the system, ensuring that they will be well-prepared for paternity when it arrives. In other words, by accepting the patronymic, the protagonist yields to a structuration which will govern his entire life. The son becomes the father and the cycle repeats: filiation is repetition (Said 116).

In Maillard's Alex Driving South, repetition and filiation become central motifs. Centred around Evan's original failure to filiate properly, the novel becomes a series of filiative repetitions which culminate with a re-enactment of a scene two decades old. Indeed, the dual



Bildungen, which unfold as Evan and Alex drive south, underscore the repetition that filiation breeds. Alex's hostility towards his father is mirrored in Evan's tense relationship with his own father. History repeats as Alex replays the same hostility towards his own son, Alex Jr., despite Evan's warnings against repeating past mistakes. Evan's experiences, in particular, aptly illustrate the repetition inherent in filiation. Driven by a desire to escape Raysburg's suffocating atmosphere, he denies his society's demands, refuses to marry Elaine, and leaves Raysburg to forge a life beyond the West Virginian town. Unlike the female protagonist, for whom this route is a means to success, Evan fails to establish a meaningful life outside his filiative culture. Without a patronymic to inscribe himself in the symbolic order, Evan drifts, finding satisfaction--meaning--nowhere. A failed marriage, an unrewarding job, and desperate hopes of promotion characterize Evan's life after Raysburg. Ironically, Evan comes to realize that what he actually desires is "a house with a mortgage, a couple of kids, and a wife to come home to with bleached hair, a peekaboo sweater, tight pants and chipped nail polish" (140)--in other words, his filiative culture. But only by repeating, re-enacting, his original initiation rite, and accepting his now inescapable paternal obligations does he manage to gain entrance into that

society. "You can't walk away from this one," Alex observes of Evan's predicament (210).

The apparent optimism of the male forms' conclusions is also sometimes overshadowed by a certain grimness. Although Eric speaks confidently of expanded freedoms, the "grey sky, grey light and softly falling rain" (Gentle Sinners 212-3) suggest a melancholy that undermines his optimism. Any freedom will be nebulous at best. W.H. New's remarks on How I Spent My Summer Holidays echo these sentiments: "There is no order to be gleaned from history, [Hugh] finds no comfort in accurate memory, no salvation in recognition; perhaps all Hugh can salvage from experience is enough understanding to feed the will to hope" (4). This statement might be extended to the other male Bildungsromane assembled here. Evan's learning of his paternity does little to comfort him. Indeed, the "enormity of it seemed as wide and impossible as the landscape outside the farmhouse" (Alex 224). The best he can do is accept it and make his way back to Raysburg. Nor is the ending of The Coming of Winter any more optimistic: winter approaches, Kevin's life appears set to unfold its grim path. Even Lunar Attractions is baroquely grim in its conclusions; David's new awareness, as always, borders on the surreal.

In one sense, these novels resemble the genre's Germanic form, skeptical of the possibility of linear

progress (Swales 34). At the novel's conclusion, for example, Hugh is as uncertain as ever of why King haunts him; he can only hope it is out of love. By concluding with Alex's last run, Maillard also suggests the impossibility of real growth: the end, whether in 1960 or 1973, is always a bar in West Virginia. And, one must surely doubt whether Eric demonstrates any more wisdom when returning home than when he rashly and impulsively left. Nor can one ever escape the pervasive sense of loss that permeates these novels' conclusions. Hugh laments the loss of King, while Evan becomes aware of a child he can never see. Eric, too, loses (or at least leaves, possibly forever) both Sigfus and Melissa. Kevin has lost his friend, a loss that permeates the text. Only David, in Lunar Attractions, and Yasch Siemens do not evince such a palpable sense of loss, but they are special cases. David finds in writing a way to unite his two worlds, while Yasch's development goes beyond the standard male pattern.

Perhaps these feelings of loss, skepticism, and darkness can be explained by the nature of filiation itself. In accepting the patronymic and assuming the Phallus himself, the male protagonist accepts the loss of all those objects which have been partitioned off and which will never be restored (Silverman 183). In order to gain full personhood, the protagonist sacrifices the "fullness of

being" associated with childhood and innocence. These feelings ultimately underscore the most disturbing aspect of filiation--the unwavering presence of death. Unlike the female variant, the male form seems to associate growth (or at least entrance into society) with death or even murder. Perhaps this link is not so surprising. Lacan, speaking about Freud, states that the latter was led "to link the appearance of the signifier of the Father, as author of the Law, with death, even to the murder of the Father--thus showing that, if this murder is the fruitful moment through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic Father is, in so far as he signifies this Law, the dead father" (199). In short, these deaths are the means by which the protagonists take on the patronymic and bind themselves to the filiative culture. Death, filiation, repetition--the cycle continues.

On the other hand, The Salvation of Yasch Siemens does offer an alternative to male filiation. Yasch undeniably has a mentor in Hova Jake, who initiates him (through the brummtupp) into Mennonite culture. But, Yasch goes beyond this once Oata becomes his mentrix. In fact, the second initiation rite (the testimonial) results, not in a feeling of "everything [being] connected loose again" (30), but in feelings of compassion, community and love: "Then it slowly seepers into my head what I'm still trying

to say, how it really was in my pants that day and I look at Forscha Freisen and I don't want to hammer any more nails, not even into myself" (148). Indeed, by "saving" Yasch, Oata completely inverts the typical pattern in these novels; rather than Yasch saving Oata (which Yasch believes he is doing when he marries Oata), Oata saves Yasch. Nor does Yasch's development cease there. Utilizing a convention similar to one in women's Bildungsromane (Braendlin, "Secular Salvation" 166), Salvation includes an "epilogue" illustrating the effects of Bildung upon the protagonist. This character is a completely different Yasch. Having attained a wholeness through his successful affiliation with Oata, he remains only peripherally involved with his filiative culture. Indeed, he agonizes over any attempt to become more involved with the community. There is something almost idyllic in Oata's and Yasch's existence on the farm in this final section. Yasch's experiences point to an alternative to the ceaseless repetition of filiation. Affiliation can also offer men a means to create new forms.

In sharp contrast to its more traditional male counterpart, the conclusion of the female Bildungsroman appears, as we have seen, to be generally "realistically affirmative" (Smith 131). Each protagonist, having made the break with her filiative culture, stands at the threshold of a new life, ready to deal with her new-found freedom, power,

and unlimited potential (Smith 131). Joan Foster, for example, prepares to return to Canada to face Arthur and reveal herself to him. Underlining the freshness of her new life, Joan contemplates a turn from her passive Costume Gothics to Science Fiction, a genre of vision, invention and activity (Freibert 31).<sup>1</sup> For Joan, as for the others, the old forms are played out; new forms are essential. Bianca echoes Joan's sentiments: "So I begin again my life in this city, this land. City: the place where the citizen is at home. I will, with the others, make this city, imagine it fully. The possibility exists....The energy can run free" (Lion's Mouth 178), unencumbered by "old fantasies and old blood" (178). Francie prepares to become a principal, while Pandora eagerly anticipates "Another Sort of Life." Only Sophie, "miserably huddled in the corner of [a] cab" (Everything 327), does not share in the unlimited potential that these conclusions describe. Having failed to make the necessary breaks, she herself is broken.

Still, these conclusions are tempered by a sense of realism. Francie, newly reminded by Rosie's death of life's fragility, tells Joe that, although she is returning to teaching, "I'll make up my mind each year as I go along" (Shelterbelt 218). Likewise, Joan's optimism is dampened by her sense that she "should have learned something from all of this, as my mother would have said" (Lady 345). Even

Bianca's enthusiasm is mingled with the frustration of being unable to tell Marco her story as she would like. Finally, Pandora's exhilaration is levelled somewhat by the sadness at leaving school.

Significantly, as the earlier chapters have argued, these heroines stand on the edge of a broader world of social affiliation, outside of the filiative culture into which they were born. Francie moves into the professional world of education, where, theoretically, she will be judged by her performance instead of gender. Joan and Del both choose the literary world where skill, not gender or appearance, should determine their standing. Of all the protagonists here, Bianca, in The Lion's Mouth, epitomizes the new affiliations of the female Bildungsroman heroine. Having renounced her filiative ties to Venice, Marco, and her family, she prepares to make a new life in Canada. The new affiliative order portrayed here is a world that "draws never in but out, to immensity, to limitlessness" (46). It is a world "yet unshaped by man's hand" (46), and is equally malleable for her as for Jack. On the other hand, Sophie rides a cab, not out of her culture, but back to her parents' home (and disaster).

It is tempting to suggest that these affiliations are ones that reproduce filiation themselves, that the heroine may have substituted one phallocentric culture for

another--albeit broader--one. Yet, the texts themselves lead to other conclusions. For example, although Joan returns to Arthur, the marriage will be substantially different than the one she left behind. Rather than being based on Joan's submissiveness, it will be based on truth and equality--or it will not exist at all. And, Francie returns to school, not as a subordinate, but as a sharer in the authority before which previous women had trembled. Given Francie's story, one can be certain that her use of authority will differ significantly from that of Mr. Wheeler or Colonel Burns! Indeed, her position serves as a role model for other women to follow, continuing the movement to affiliation.

Moreover, each protagonist rejects traditional male-sanctioned forms of affiliation: marriage, and religion. Although Francie is tempted by Charles' offer of marriage, she refuses it, favouring her professional career and independence over "never having to work again" (Shelterbelt 198). Earlier, Francie had also rejected religion as a possible affiliation: for her, religion was a dead-end. Bianca, in The Lion's Mouth, also rejects marriage. Although she "marries" Jack, she finds "I could not give myself up totally" (51) to Jack's desire for control. As Bianca states: "I could not be joined to him by words in an alien tongues [sic], tied by unknown gestures



and ritual cloths [sic]" (51). Marriage means being re-made and Bianca allows herself to be "changed not re-made" (51). Finally, having rejected university as too narrow, Joan ultimately rejects marriage as Arthur conceives it, deciding to change it or lose it altogether.

These decisions represent the most radical of challenges to the phallocentric, filiative order. In rejecting marriage, the female protagonist rejects the discourse of the family which is "absolutely central to the perpetuation of the present phallocentric symbolic order" (Silverman 182). By substituting the affiliative terms colleague, partner, and comrade for mother, sister, and daughter, she rejects terms which designate her as inferior. Sophie, in Everything in the Window, illustrates the point here. By placing "daughter" over "wife", or even "Sophie," she ends up destroyed.

Unlike their male counterparts, these protagonists are accepted--even demand to be accepted--as is. Francie ultimately receives the approbation that she so desperately seeks from her father, while learning that her brothers had valued her for herself all along: "And here we were, wanting you to play with us boys. But you wouldn't leave that doll alone. So we had to do something so that you would come back and play with us again" (Shelterbelt 217-18). Pandora also comes to be accepted by her family as

different. Stating that, "You don't seem very happy with the sort of life that we can provide" (Pandora 252), Adelaide tells Pandora that they will try to provide "Another Sort of Life" which is better suited to her. Joan also decides to be accepted for herself, leaving the choice of acceptance (or rejection) to Arthur. Only Sophie, lacking the will to reject her father's claims and assert her own rights, makes concessions to the patriarchal society and ends up ruined.

Interestingly, affiliation is invariably associated<sup>e</sup> with life and creativity, in particular, unlike filiation, which seems to be linked to death and repetition. No fewer than four of the female protagonists become writers. And Francie, although not a writer, becomes intensely involved with children--and one could argue that effective teaching requires much creativity. The fate of Sophie Glicksman exemplifies this pattern by its exception. While affiliated to the Zangwill Literary, Art and Social Club, Sophie is an editor and contributes poetry to the newsletter. Her affiliation to Billy James also results in creativity--although this is biological creativity and ultimately filiative. Yet, as Sophie moves closer to her family (that is, to her parents), she progressively loses all creativity, eventually even abdicating her responsibilities as mother. Becoming progressively passive,

she becomes a model for a male artist, an apt metaphor for her life. Finally, the best she can muster is a venomous comment to Solly Biderman, a violinist, telling him to chop off his hands (Everything 327).

In short, then, the effects of filiation and affiliation can also be observed in the respective conclusions of these Bildungsromane. The male conclusion, seemingly optimistic on the surface, belies the underlying sense of loss and skepticism that closer examination reveals. Indeed, the repetition that filiation breeds is most evident in the linking of death and the name of the father, the patronymic; the son must become the father to ensure that filiation continues. The female variant's conclusion, in stark relief, is lifted by a realistic sense of potential, of newness. Although tempered by reservations, the heroine looks forward to a new affiliative life in which she may discover for herself what constitutes her freedom.

## Notes to Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> Although science fiction can be seen <sup>as</sup> as escapist as Costume Gothics, science fiction is potentially more forward-looking, and does offer a potential forum to posit alternatives to the existing phallocentric order. In short, then, it is that fact that this genre offers the potential for growth that is of primary import, not so much whether it is, or is not, escapist. More importantly, Joan's own misgivings are evidence of the realistically affirmative endings that typify the female Bildungsroman.

### A Brief Conclusion

The most apparent conclusion that can be drawn from the foregoing study is the need to recognize the marked effect of gender in the Bildungsroman form. In order to deal justly with it, critics must be aware that gender significantly alters the patterns and materials presented to the reader. Generic models clearly reflect these differences. A more difficult, yet equally important, question concerns the implications of these differences for the genre itself. David Miles has argued that the German (male) Bildungsroman has two choices before it: either take the final step into a world of total breakdown, or become exclusively parodic (1990). But, he goes on to state, the latter option seems impossible since the appearance of Gunter Grass's The Tin Drum. Its central character's "purely phallic growth" (1990), he feels, deals the genre a blow that "touches the very heart of the Bildungsroman tradition and would seem to echo some sort of absolute end to the genre, even within the realm of parody" (1990). In one sense, the sheer variety and vitality of the male novels in this corpus militates against such a dire judgement. But

since filiation underlies these novels (and most other Bildungsromane in the male variant), and filiation means repetition, it is not surprising that such an impasse might develop in the male form. In a sense, Miles has recapped the male protagonist's dilemma in terms of the entire genre: filiate or step onto society's fringes--or beyond.

The female Bildungsroman, in contradistinction to its male counterpart, illustrates that, while the male form may have reached an impasse, the female form remains vibrant. The success of women writers in altering and employing the genre to their own ends strongly underlines how affiliation can "incessantly generate forms for itself" (George Simmel qtd. in Said 19). Affiliation, as these stories emphasize, creates new forms, produces new possibilities, and opens new avenues of exploration. Yet, in recognizing these possibilities, we must ascertain that the new does not simply recreate the old, that affiliation does not merely produce filiation. But, in the female novels, affiliation, by its very existence, cannot bring about filiation; these novels challenge, and even subvert, the phallocentric order of filiation. And, stemming from their success, other challenges by other protagonists are possible, continuing the movement to affiliative modes.

But male affiliation, similar to that of the female pattern, may rarely occur in the present male context. So

long as the paternal signifier continues to define the masculine, any male affiliations, outside of the traditional ones, will be based on phallocentric, patriarchal criteria: seniority, autonomy, achievement. For change to occur, the male protagonist must differentiate between what is masculine and what is paternal and realize that, as with the maternal and the feminine, they can be separated. Still, since the only authorized way to achieve full male personhood is through accepting the patronymic--by becoming a father--the possibility of such separation occurring any time soon seems unlikely. Even to attempt it, as these novels imply, can result in exile--or madness.

Nevertheless, as it has been suggested several times, The Salvation of Yasch Siemens offers an alternative to this bleak situation. In assuming tasks designated as "women's work," Yasch alters the definition of masculinity to incorporate Oata's insistence on independence and equality. Initiated by Oata, Yasch no longer needs the traditional phallocentric roles and systems--baseball teams, combine driving, land-owning--to define his identity. Instead, he utilizes his knowledge that his father, a protective, nurturing figure, was able to do "women's work" and retain his masculinity to build a new conception of the masculine. Although Oata shortly thereafter confirms Yasch's masculinity when she informs him of her pregnancy,

the placing is important. By showing that masculinity need not mean solely paternity (and the traditional roles associated with it), the novel suggests that such a definition is not iron-clad.

Indeed, this would appear to suggest a possible new phase in the male Bildungsroman. Rather than dealing solely with problems of filiation in a phallogentric world, the male protagonist might first find himself dealing with his own gender identity in <sup>a</sup> world where the roles are changing rapidly, and paternity (with the concomitant institution of marriage) no longer holds the place it once did. It is no coincidence, <sup>that</sup> <sup>^</sup> unlike every other woman in these male Bildungsromane (except Dana in Alex Driving South), Oata is a "liberated" woman. In short, the effects of (af)filiation might well lead the male Bildungsroman out of its current impasse.

With any topic as broad as this, elements are inevitably excluded, or mentioned only in passing. One such area that this study deliberately bypasses is the question of Canadian specificity: are there any characteristics which mark these novels as distinctly "Canadian"? Certainly, the patterns of (af)filiation are not unique; they are merely symptomatic of a larger shift in all literature, which parallels similar observations in other



disciplines, such as sociology (Said 20). Still, some elements might appear to be specifically Canadian: the rural town, the struggle between community and individual, and the horror of childhood. But, to state with any certainty that these constitute specifically Canadian attributes is beyond this paper's scope. Perhaps a comparative study of recent German, Canadian and Anglo-American novels would be a more appropriate means to deal with this matter.

Another issue which remains largely untouched is the extent, if any, of feminist influence on male writers. Although this study tentatively postulates feminist influences in Wiebe's The Salvation of Yasch Siemens, this explanation is only one of many possibilities. Any true sense of this issue could not be dealt with here. Finally, little attempt has been made to contextualize these novels beyond noting the influence of the 1970s' and early 1980s' rise of feminism. Any attempt to deal with such broad, complex issues in such limited space would be superficial at best. Nevertheless, such a study might yield interesting results. In short, this paper only briefly explores an area virtually untouched in Canadian literature.

## Bibliography

### Primary Texts

- Atwood, Margaret. Lady Oracle. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1976.
- Blaise, Clark. Lunar Attractions. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart-Bantam Limited, 1980.
- Edwards, Caterina. The Lion's Mouth. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982.
- Faessler, Shirley. Everything in the Window. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979.
- Fraser, Sylvia. Pandora. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972.
- Maillard, Keith. Alex Driving South. New York: The Dial Press, 1980.
- Mitchell, W.O. How I Spent My Summer Holidays. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1981.
- Munro, Alice. Lives of Girls and Women. New York: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1971.
- Richards, David Adam<sup>s</sup>. The Coming of Winter. [Ottawa]: Oberon Press, 1974.
- Sietz, Mary Anne. Shelterbelt. Saskatoon: Western Prairie Producer Books, 1980.

Valgardson, W.D. Gentle Sinners. [Ottawa]: Oberon Press, 1980.

Wiebe, Armin. The Salvation of Yasch Siemens. Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1984.

## Secondary Texts

Abel, Elizabeth, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, eds. The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development. Hanover, Mass. and London, England: pub. for Dartmouth College by University Press of New England, 1983.

---. Introduction. The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development. 3-19.

Abrams, M.A. A Glossary of Literary Terms, 4th edition. New York: Holt, Rhinehart & Wilson, 1981.

Auerbach, Nina. Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction. Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard UP, 1978.

Beebe, Maurice. Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts: The Artist as Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce. New York: New York UP, 1964.

Belsey, Catherine. Critical Practice. London: Methuen, 1980.

Braendlin, Bonnie Hoover. "Alther, Atwood, Ballantyne and Gray: Secular Salvation in the Contemporary Feminist Bildungsroman." Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies 4 I (1979):18-22.

---. "New Directions in the Contemporary Bildungsroman: Lisa Alther's Kinflicks." Todd 160-71.

Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1974.

Culler, Jonathan. On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982.

Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

Ferguson, Mary-Anne. "The Female Novel of Development and the Myth of Psyche." Abel, Hirsch and Langland 228-43.

Frappier-Mazur, Lucienne. "Desire, Writing, and Identity in the Romantic Mystical Novel: Notes for a Definition of the Feminine." Style 18 (1984):328-54.

Freibert, Lucy M. "The Artist as Picaro: The Revelation of Atwood's 'Lady Oracle'." Canadian Literature 92 (1982):23-33.

Freiden, Sandra. "Shadowing/Surfacing/Shedding: Contemporary German Writers in Search of a Female Bildungsroman." Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 304-16.

Gnarowski, Michael, ed. A Concise Bibliography of English-Canadian Literature, revised edition. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978.

Godard, Barbara. "My (m)Other, My Self: Strategies for Subversion in Atwood and Hébert." Essays on Canadian Writing 26 (1983): 13-44.

Hirsch, Marianne. "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between Great Expectations and Lost Illusions." Genre 12 (1979): 291-311.

---. "Spiritual Bildung: The Beautiful Soul as Paradigm." Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 23-48.

Howe, Susanne. Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen: Apprentices to Life. New York: Columbia UP, 1930.

Hoy, Helen. Modern English-Canadian Prose: A Guide to Sources. American Literature, English Literature and World Literature in English Information Guide Series 38. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1983.

Jost, François. "The 'Bildungsroman' in Germany, England, and France." Introduction to Comparative Literature. By Jost, ed. Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1974. pp. 134-50, ~~277~~n.

Lacan, Jacques. Ecrits: A Selection. Trans. by Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock Publications, 1977.

Lecker, Robert and Jack David. The Annotated Bibliography of Canada's Major Authors. 6 vols. Downsview: ECW Press, 1979- .

McMullen, Lorraine. "The Divided Self." Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal 5(2) (1980): 52-67.

Miles, David. "The Picaro's Journey to the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German Bildungsroman." PMLA 89 (1974): 980-92.

New, W. H. "Another Decade." Canadian Literature 92 (1982): 2-5.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Is There A Female Voice?: Joyce Carol Oates Replies." Todd 10-11.

Perrakis, Phyllis Sternberg. "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl: Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women." Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal 7(2) (1982): 61-7.

Pratt, Annis. "Women and Nature in Modern Fiction." Contemporary Literature 13 (1972): 460-90.

Rosowski, Susan J. "The Novel of Awakening." Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 49-68.

Said, Edward. The World, The Text and the Critic. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983.

Sammons, Jeffrey L. "The Mystery of the Missing

- Bildungsroman, or: What Happened to Wilhelm Meister's Legacy? Genre 14 (Summer 1981): 229-46.
- Silverman, Kaja. The Subject of Semiotics. New York: Oxford UP, 1983.
- Smith, Rebecca. "The Only Flying Turtle Under the Sun: The Bildungsroman in Contemporary Women's Fiction." Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal 2(2) part II (1977): 122-32.
- Stimpson, Catherine R. "Ad/d Feminam: Women, Literature and Society." Literature and Society (Selected papers from the English Institute, 1978) New Series, no. 3. Edited, with Preface, by Edward Said. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.
- Struthers, J.R. "Reality and Ordering: The Growth of a Young Artist in Lives of Girls and Women." Essays on Canadian Writing 3 (Fall 1975): 32-46.
- Swales, Martin. The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1978.
- Todd, Janet, ed. Women and Literature: Gender and Voice, Series 1. New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1980.
- Turner, Gordon Philip. "The Protagonist's Initiatory Experiences in the Canadian Bildungsroman: 1908-1971." DAI 40 (1979): 2057-8A. University of British Columbia.