

WRITING THE FEMALE BODY IN THREE CANADIAN WOMEN'S NOVELS

WRITING THE FEMALE BODY  
IN  
THREE CANADIAN WOMEN'S NOVELS

By  
KELLY LINDA ENS, 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

(c) Copyright by Kelly Linda Ens

MASTER OF ARTS (1989)  
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Writing the Female Body in Three Canadian  
Women's Novels

AUTHOR: Kelly Linda Ens, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. L. M. York

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 68

## ABSTRACT

The emphasis which French feminism has placed on the forces in the female body and woman's bodily experience has generated much curiosity as well as controversy in North America. American feminists have tended, until recently, to employ a style of reasoning which follows the Anglo-American empirical, inductive, anti-speculative tradition. It has only been within the last few years that their suspicions of theories and theorizing have been laid to rest. American feminists are becoming increasingly open to theory, to philosophical, psychoanalytic, and Marxist critiques of a patriarchal way of seeing the world.

It would seem only natural, then, to apply French feminist theory and its interest in the female body to a developing pattern in Canadian fiction. Many Canadian women novelists, particularly Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood and Marian Engel, have been writing novels about women and their responses to their female bodies. In The Stone Angel, Margaret Laurence presents the experience of a woman in an ageing body. Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival describes the experience of a woman who feels imprisoned by her pregnant body and Margaret Atwood's Bodily Harm deals with the response of a woman to her diseased body. Ultimately, the female protagonists of these novels all feel betrayed and trapped and must struggle to reconcile the conflict between body and spirit. French feminist theory offers certain psychoanalytic perspectives on the circumstances of the protagonist's past and present which add insight and understanding to each woman's conflict and her struggle for resolution.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Dr. Lorraine York for all the valuable input, assistance, and advice given patiently and generously during the development of this thesis. I would also like to thank Ken Moyle for his support and his willingness to accept my obsession with Canadian women novelists whose first names start with "M".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ..... 1

Chapter 1  
Hagar Shipley and the Feminine Principle  
in Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel ..... 8

Chapter 2  
The Phallic Mother and Minn in  
Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival ..... 24

Chapter 3  
Rennie and l'Écriture féminine in  
Margaret Atwood's Bodily Harm ..... 44

Conclusion ..... 61

Works Cited ..... 65

Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, editors of New French Feminisms, observe that women concerned with the "woman question" in France use the words "feminism" and "feminist" less often than do their American<sup>1</sup> counterparts. They attribute this phenomenon to two things: 1) the aggressive ridicule to which "feminists" in France have been subjected; and 2) "the desire to break with a bourgeois past -- with the inadequacies and fixed categories of humanistic thought, including feminism" (Marks and de Courtivron x). This reluctance to use the term "feminism" raises an interesting problem. Is there a definition of feminism that can be embraced by North American as well as French women? Marks and de Courtivron define feminism as "an awareness of women's oppression-repression that initiates both analyses of the dimension of this oppression-repression, and strategies for liberation" (Marks and de Courtivron x). In order to evaluate the potential suitability of this definition as a cross-cultural one, it is perhaps necessary to examine the differences between the American and the

---

<sup>1</sup>Since this thesis will be examining Canadian writers, the distinction between the two bodies of feminist thought has been made by referring to French feminism and American/North American feminism. However, British women share the same concerns, goals, and methodologies as do American women and thus the differentiation from French feminists is commonly made by using the term "Anglo-American" feminists.

French outlook.

In France, as in North America, feminists share a "concern with blatant acts of oppression against women and with the institutionalization of sexism" (Marks and de Courtivron x). However, when trying to make a distinction between French and American feminism there is very often a temptation to suggest that all American feminists are activists and that all French feminists are theoreticians. This, of course, is a grossly oversimplified attempt to distinguish the two but it is also a useful starting point for our examination.

As Elaine Marks has put it, American feminists emphasize the oppression of woman as an issue of sexual identity, while French feminists investigate the repression of woman as difference and alterity in the signifying practices of the West. To quote Marks, "[North American feminists] raise consciousness by speaking to and working with each other; [French feminists] explore the unconscious by writing" (Marks 842). In other words, we, as North Americans, use words like "autonomy" and "power" while the French use words like "phallogocentrism"<sup>2</sup> and

---

<sup>2</sup>A neologism coined by combining "phallogocentrism" and "logocentrism." Logocentrism refers to the dominance of the word (logos) in certain forms of reasoning and conceptualizations of the world (Kuhn 37).



"jouissance."<sup>3</sup>

In acknowledging that there is a difference between the French and American feminist stances, one can almost expect wariness and skepticism from each side toward the other. Many American feminists tend to reject the French feminists' theoretical writing "as a hopelessly abstract 'male' activity" (Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics 70). Toril Moi suggests that one of the reasons for the relatively limited influence of French theory on American feminists is the "heavy" intellectual profile of French feminism:

French feminism...rais[es] the question of sexual difference. It has typically done so, however, through the lens of French psychoanalytical or philosophical theory. For this reason French feminist debate on this issue [of the primacy of theory over politics], as perceived from abroad, has often been cast as almost impossibly difficult, elitist and abstract, far removed from what has often been called the 'experience of ordinary women.' (Moi, French Feminist Thought 4)

Though rarely wilfully obscure, French feminism is steeped in European philosophy (particularly Marx, Nietzsche and Heidegger), as well as Derridean deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and it makes little effort to accommodate the reader who lacks the "correct" intellectual background. As Toril Moi points out: "That the exasperated reader

---

<sup>3</sup>From the French verb "jouir"--a word signifying pleasure (usually sexual pleasure) which can also be translated as "bliss" or "ecstasy."

sometimes feels alienated by such uncompromising intellectualism is hardly surprising" (Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics 96).

The French feminists, on the other hand, often reject American feminism as hopelessly bound up in the very categories of phenomenology it is trying to discredit. Domna Stanton explains that French women regard the pragmatic empiricism of American feminist criticism as fundamentally doomed:

[French women] claim that [North American] critical enterprise aims for equality within the Logos, for an equal share of existing symbolic systems, and thus that it essentially reconfirms the dominant phallogocentric order. (78)

The voice of the French feminists asks whether American women will ever be able to "locate repression in the realm of speech acts and in the essence of binary thinking that underlies the very discourse promoting women's liberation" (Stanton 78).

These differences have been summarized in an excellent passage from Toril Moi's French Feminist Thought: A Reader (1987):

Where we [as North Americans] were empirical, they [as French Europeans] were theoretical; where we believed in the authority of experience, they questioned not only the category of experience, but even that of the 'experiencer'--the female subject herself. If we were looking for homogeneous female tradition in art or history, they insisted that female

writing could only ever be visible in the gaps, contradictions or margins of patriarchal discourse. And when we were looking for women writers, they sought feminine writing. (5)

The Marks-de Courtivron distinction between French and American feminist theory which opened this chapter, accurately describes the state of certain women's consciousness in North America as well as in France. However, in an effort to be cross-cultural, this basic definition fails to acknowledge that although the fundamental goals of both French and American feminists are the same, the methods and philosophies adopted by each group in order to meet these goals are quite diverse.

Only in recent years have French and American feminists put aside their criticisms of each other's work in an effort to learn and benefit from new ideas and ways of thinking. The most dramatic result of this cross-cultural exchange has been a laying to rest of the traditional American suspicion of theories and theorizing. American feminists are becoming increasingly open to theory, to philosophical, psychoanalytic, and Marxist critiques of a patriarchal way of seeing the world.

It is peculiar, if not unorthodox, that a work examining Canadian women novelists should not do so through the lens of American feminist theory. However, the emphasis which French feminism has placed on the forces in the female body and woman's bodily experience has generated much

curiosity as well as controversy in North America, and has opened the door to a new and exciting means of recognizing and analyzing American women writers. It would seem only natural, then, to apply French feminist theory and its interest in the female body to a developing pattern in Canadian fiction. Many Canadian women novelists, particularly Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood and Marian Engel, have been writing novels about women and their responses to their female bodies. For these, and many other women novelists, the decision to place woman's body and the experience of that body at the centre of their fiction suggests that the female body is a powerful touchstone for understanding female experience. Their work reflects a growing concern with reconstructing reality--and fiction--as women experience them. In The Stone Angel, Margaret Laurence writes of the experience of a woman in an ageing body. Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival describes the experience of a woman who feels imprisoned by her pregnant body and Margaret Atwood's Bodily Harm deals with the response of a woman to her diseased body. Ultimately, the female protagonists of these novels all feel betrayed and trapped and must struggle to reconcile the conflict between body and spirit. French feminist theory offers certain psychoanalytic perspectives (greatly influenced by the work of Jacques Lacan) which add insight and understanding to each woman's conflict and her struggle for resolution.

Laurence, Engel and Atwood, as women writing about women, challenge male-perceived notions of woman's reality, and the language and literature with which men have previously attempted to describe it.

Juliet Mitchell's Psychoanalysis and Feminism (1975) as well as the French feminist group "politique et psychoanalyse"<sup>1</sup> are only two examples of titles which link psychoanalytic theory and French feminist thought. Whether or not the encounter of feminism and psychoanalysis has been a successful one, however, seems to depend largely on which side of the Atlantic is voicing its opinion. In the prefatory comments to their New French Feminisms anthology (1980), Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron warn American readers that "it will be immediately evident...that the greatest discrepancy between French and American feminisms is in the realm of psychoanalytic and linguistic theory" (xiii). Most American feminists are familiar with the work of such psychoanalysts as Freud and Jung; however, recent psychoanalytic developments in France are the product of the study of Jacques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst whose work until very recently has been virtually unknown to American feminists. It is his theory that postulates a relation between language and sexual differentiation. According to the Lacanian model, the human subject "is not only a speaking subject with an Unconscious, but also a

---

<sup>1</sup>Originally known as "Psychoanalyse et Politique"--"Psych et Po"--the group changed its name, rejecting capitalization and rearranging the word order so that "politics" would precede "psychoanalysis".

masculine or feminine subject in relation to the Oedipus complex" (Kuhn 37). Sexual difference is seen as structured by the subject's relation to the phallus, "the signifier which stands in for the play of absence and presence that constitutes language" (Kuhn 37). Annette Kuhn, in her discussion of Lacan's variant of post-Freudian psychoanalysis, explains the importance of the phallus as the "privileged signifier"<sup>2</sup>:

Because the oedipal moment inaugurates sexual difference in relation to the phallus as signifier, men and women enter language differently, and Lacan's argument is that the female entry into language is organized by lack, or negativity. (37)

Because the male has a penis and the penis is more visible than female genitalia, the phallus becomes "more," in other words, better, superior. Jane Gallop observes that since women "lack" a phallus, "there is nothing to see, nothing that looks like a phallus...nothing to see becomes nothing of worth...hence there is no valid representation of woman, but only a lack" (58). French feminists such as Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous dare to question and criticize the attribution of a negative value to woman's relation to

---

<sup>2</sup>Lacanian psychoanalysis suggests that it is the role of the father as bearer of language and culture to represent and enforce language in order to initiate the child's separation from the desired mother. Separation from the mother comes after the child's discovery that the mother lacks a phallus--the "privileged signifier".

language and the privileged place accorded the phallus in psychoanalytic accounts of sexual difference and language.

According to Ann Rosalind Jones, French feminists studying Lacan's work and doing research on the construction of sexuality "all agree that sexuality is not an innate quality in women or in men; it is developed through the individual's encounters with the nuclear family" (367). So if the father's position (in the family) as possessor of the phallus imposes certain phallogocentric values then it would seem that "early gender identity comes into being in response to patriarchal structures" (Jones 367)--sexuality is the consequence of a child's interaction with family members, especially the father.

Ann Rosalind Jones, in her article "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'Écriture féminine," considers Lacan's argument that gender is established in accordance with the nuclear family and comes to this conclusion:

The child becomes male or female in response to the females and males encounter[ed] in [the] family and to the male and female images construct[ed] according to [his]/her experience--especially [the] loss of direct access to either parent. (367)

This statement is particularly interesting when applied to Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel. Hagar Shipley, the novel's protagonist and narrative voice, is an ailing and



elderly woman whose body has betrayed her young, proud, courageous spirit. In The Stone Angel, Hagar lapses into periods of recollection which, among other things, serve to acquaint the reader with the events of Hagar's past. In the earliest pages of the novel, Hagar recalls the stone angel which marks her mother's grave in the Manawaka cemetery. "Rampant with memory" (Laurence 5), Hagar reflects on a childhood which is bereft of almost all feminine influence. Hagar is, according to Stephanie Demetrakopoulos, devoid of the matriarchal wisdom that comes from a strong mother/daughter relationship during the female child's "formative" years (that is to say, the years of mother/daughter bonding before the daughter leaves to marry and begin her own family) (Demetrakopoulos 81). Through Hagar's reveries and meditations on the past in the early pages of the novel, the reader becomes immediately aware of the fact that Hagar lacks "strong, deep matrilineal roots which are crucial for an older woman who is trying to resolve and understand her life" (Demetrakopoulos 81). Hagar's mother died giving birth to Hagar, as the reader is immediately informed in the second line of The Stone Angel. Hagar, recalling her mother's grave marker, wonders about the stone angel placed "in memory of her who relinquished her feeble ghost as I gained my stubborn one" (Laurence 3). With no sisters or grandmother, Hagar grows up without a

positive feminine influence to guide and nurture her. The only female figure in Hagar's childhood is Dolly Stonehouse, a meek and homely woman hired as the family housekeeper. Aunt Dolly, whose "sallow skin" and "top incisors that protruded like a jack rabbit's [so that] she used to put one hand in front of her mouth when speaking" (Laurence 17), is hardly a positive feminine role model to which the young, proud Hagar would wish to aspire.

Hagar's father, on the other hand, is a strong, proud, confident man--the embodiment of patriarchal values--who favours his daughter and directs the majority of his paternal energies towards her, inadvertently encouraging her to subconsciously reject the positive aspects of the feminine principle (such as tenderness, gentleness, sensitivity and openness) in favour of the characteristically male-associated values. Hagar, having only her father from whom she must earn her love and approval, subconsciously represses her feminine attributes in an effort to please him. In adopting the masculine traits her father reveres, Hagar is seeking to fulfill her father's wish that she had been born a boy--a confidence she overhears him share with Aunt Dolly one night as she goes up to bed for the night:

"Smart as a whip, she is, that one. If only she'd been--"  
 And then he stopped, I suppose because he realized that in the dining-room his sons, such as they were, were listening.  
 (Laurence 14)

Although the sentence is never completed, Hagar indicates in this recollection that she understood what was never verbalized. Her comment, in which she refers to her brothers "such as they were," also reveals the extent to which she has internalized her father's disapproval of their feminine nature. Hagar's brothers' lives warn the young Hagar away from feminine attributes. Her brother Dan is sensitive, delicate and sickly. His fragility is both emotional and physical. He is shy and introverted and clings to the memory of their dead mother. When Dan lies dying of pneumonia, Hagar cannot bring herself to put on her mother's old plaid shawl and go to Dan, pretending to be their mother. She cannot will herself to do the one thing that would comfort and console the delirious Dan who is calling out for his mother:

But all I could think of was that meek woman I'd never seen, the woman Dan was said to resemble so much and from whom he'd inherited a frailty I could not help but detest, however much a part of me wanted to sympathize. To play at being her--it was beyond me. (Laurence 25)

Even at this early stage in her life, Hagar has hardened against her feminine instincts so that she cannot reach out

to help her brother. She equates his weakness and need with something that revolts her--the image she has of the mother she never knew. Hagar's only image of a mother is that of the cold, hard, sightless stone angel; she has never known a mother's warmth and tenderness.

Hagar's second brother, Matthew, also demonstrates traditionally feminine qualities. He is gentle, reflective and not at all fit to do the manual labour his father assigns to him in the Currie store after school. Matt, "skinny and bespectacled" (Laurence 19), once inspired Hagar to glance at herself in a mirror and wonder aloud why it was that "Dan and Matt had inherited [their mother's] daintiness while [she] was big-boned and husky as an ox" (Laurence 59). Their father's critical and proud harshness serves to drive Matt further into himself and to harden Hagar against the softness Matt embodies. Matt's life is not a long one, for he dies as a young man. Thus, Hagar is quick to associate death with weakness and learns that adopting masculine qualities is the only means for her survival.

In terms of Ann Rosalind Jones's argument, one could conclude that Hagar, because she is denied the opportunity to explore a bond of biological kinship with her mother, becomes "male" in thought and behaviour even though she is

biologically female. She becomes "male"<sup>3</sup> as a result of the male-dominated environment in which she grows up as well as the negativity surrounding female images and associations. And, of course, Hagar never bears any female children--a detail which serves to reinforce her isolation from matrilineal connections.

That Hagar has hardened herself against the feminine principle and has rejected any maternal instincts is evident in the way she behaves towards her husband, Bram, and her sons, Marvin and John. Hagar marries Bram, a poor farmer whom she ultimately rejects as socially beneath her. She marries him not because she loves him but because he represents, in her eyes, all things masculine and because he mocks the sophisticated, cultured grooming Hagar had received from the young ladies' academy in Toronto. Because she has internalized such strong masculine traits, Hagar seeks a mate who is even more 'masculine' than she herself is. In her eyes, Bram is strong, rugged, coarse, assertive and stubborn--an embodiment of the masculine ideal she had been taught as a child. As an adult, Hagar has rejected her feminine nature, Demetrakopoulos argues, "yet cannot act out her masculine, aggressive side because of cultural taboos,

---

<sup>3</sup>Stephanie Demetrakopoulos similarly suggests that Hagar denies the feminine and identifies herself only with the masculine despite her biological nature.

and so seeks a male delegate to act for her" (81). Obviously, Bram is Hagar's chosen delegate. It is, ironically, Hagar's misjudgment of Bram that ultimately results in the demise of their marriage because, as Evelyn J. Hinz points out in her article "The Religious Roots of the Feminine Identity Issue," Bram embodies a more feminine quality than Hagar herself:

Although [Bram's] "feminine" association with the earth strikes a sympathetic cord in Hagar, it is also his lack of masculine assertiveness that is responsible for the failure in their relationship. This recognition comes to [Bram] in his last delirious moments when he muses: "That Hagar -- I should of licked the living daylights out of her, maybe, and she'd have seen I could. What d'you think? Think I should of?" Hagar's response in turn is "I could not speak for the salt that filled my throat and for anger" (173) -- not anger at her husband for such a male chauvinist statement, but anger over the realization of how different things might have been if Bram had been a stronger mate. (Hinz 84)

Bram's close association with nature indicates a strong affiliation with the feminine principle which, in turn, affects his capacity to function in the role of "male delegate."

As a mother, Hagar is mercilessly demanding. There are many moments in the novel when Hagar reflects on the years when her two sons were young. In one such reverie, Hagar recalls Marvin standing mutely before her after

announcing that he has completed his chores. The only thing he is able to do to earn his mother's love and attention is to work hard:

"I've finished my chores," he'd say. He was never much of a conversationalist, even as a child.

"I can see you've finished. I've got eyes. Get along out now, Marvin, for heaven's sake, before I trip over you. Go and see if your father needs any help." (Laurence 127)

Marvin's longing for his mother's praise and recognition continues throughout his life. However, instead of responding to Marvin, Hagar focuses on her other son, John, not because of any maternal devotion she feels towards him but because of the expectations she has that he will do great things and bring pride and prestige back to her-- pride that she had known as Hagar Currie but had sacrificed to become Hagar Shipley. Hagar cannot reach out as a wife to her husband or as a mother to her sons. Her nurturing ability, having never been realized through a mother/daughter bonding relationship, is buried deep within her and is inaccessible to her as a result of her rejection of the feminine principle.

Stephanie Demetrakopoulos states that older people demonstrate a tendency to diverge from a traditional path of personality development: "Since even cross-cultural studies reflect this finding, a strong argument can be made for

instinctive unfolding in the older person of traits traditionally assigned to the opposite sex" (49). This urge, which Demetrakopoulos claims appears to surface in both older men and women, could be called "the archetype of wholeness." That is, the psyche corrects its one-sidedness as it moves through the later stages of life; it is, for most of one's life, either predominantly male or female, as opposed to being balanced between male and female. This occurrence "seems to be an innate and autonomous internal process which is exciting and reassuring; the personality unfolds and completes itself."<sup>4</sup> Each sex is said to embrace the traits usually ascribed to its opposite, thus completing a growth process whose reward is a sense of wholeness.

This theory can be useful in examining the transformation Hagar undergoes during the last third of the novel. It is important to acknowledge, however, that Hagar's transformation is not the traditional one described in Demetrakopoulos's theory of the "completing personality" in the elderly. Hagar, as a woman, challenges the theory in that she does not need to embrace any masculine traits in order to achieve wholeness. On the contrary, Hagar must reach back, deep into the essence of her being, in order to

---

<sup>4</sup>Demetrakopoulos's findings are based on two years spent studying gerontology in an effort to examine and understand the changes that take place during the last stages of women's lives.



retrieve the feminine principle which is innate, but which she repressed as a child. Hagar needs to reconcile her past in order to regain what has been lost to her for almost all the years of her life.

Throughout the novel, Hagar is depicted as having a strong sensual nature. Hagar, even as a woman in her nineties bound by the chains of age and illness, still displays a love of colour, clothes, food and sensations:

Hagar has retained her love of possessions and sensations into her nineties, of the look and the feel of them, the texture and colour of a silk dress, the taste of roast beef gravy or the smell of lilacs... (Thomas, "Pilgrims' Progress" 64)

However, this positive sign that Hagar has not totally and irreparably divorced herself from the feminine principle is only a starting point from which she must begin her transformation.

Hagar's acceptance of the feminine catalyzes and consolidates her final transformation. Late in the novel, this acceptance is symbolized by her visit to the cemetery. Hagar, Marvin, and Doris stop at the grave of Hagar's mother. Hagar's attention is drawn by a young caretaker to "the Currie-Shipley stone. The two families was connected by marriage" (Laurence 306). Hagar suddenly realizes that both families, her's and Bram's, are founding Manawaka families and that later generations do not see one as

superior to the other, as her father did; the elderly Hagar sees this as proper and true: "The both of them. Both the same. Nothing to pick and choose between them now. That was as it should be" (Laurence 306). As Demetrakopoulos argues, Hagar gives up "the either/or patriarchal patterns of thought for the both/and, more matriarchal way of thinking" (50).

Before Hagar is able to realize fully the reunion with her feminine principle, she escapes from the home she shares with Marvin and Doris to an old cannery by the sea. Here she meets Murray Lees, a man who seems to be a mirror image of Hagar. He, too, like Hagar, has been stubbornly carrying on patrilineal rigidity and pride; like Hagar, he is a grieving parent whose child is an indirect victim of his negative masculine traits. Murray offers Hagar a cigarette and some cheap red wine and the two of them pass the time remembering the children they've each lost. In the presence of this stranger, Hagar lets go of her pride and shares with Murray the pain she has never been able to confront. She recalls the night that her son, John, died and tells Murray of the moment in the hospital when she was stopped by a nurse who put her arm around Hagar and, in an effort to console her, told Hagar to let herself cry because it was "the best thing" (Laurence 242). Hagar shoved the nurse's arm away and promised herself that she would not

"cry in front of strangers, whatever it cost [her]" (Laurence 242). In revealing this memory to Murray, Hagar finds herself grieving, finally, for the first time, for the son she lost so many years before. Not allowing herself to mourn the death of the son she had loved and not confronting the grief she felt at his death cause her many years of pain and anguish. However, the tears she sheds in confessing her pain to Murray cleanse her and ready her for her much-needed union with the feminine principle.

Hagar's escape to the cannery is a brief one and she soon finds herself in the hospital. Her transformation barely begun, Hagar learns to feel a sense of sisterhood with the other elderly women in her hospital room, even though she initially lashes out at them, referring to them as "unanimous old ewes" (Laurence 264). When Hagar first arrives at the hospital, she behaves rudely and spares no effort in expressing her dislike for the people around her, but by the time Marvin moves her into a semi-private room on another ward (which she had demanded upon her arrival at the hospital), she regrets her complaints. In her new room she demonstrates motherly kindness and care in a relationship with her roommate, Sandra, who is sixteen years old and very anxious about having her appendix removed. Hagar is reassuring and does her best to comfort the girl.

Hagar's personal growth, however, seems most

apparent in her sudden awareness of a "matrilineal alliance" (Demetrakopoulos 51) with her daughter-in-law, Doris. Doris is startled, speechless when Hagar pulls from her finger her family ring and gives it to Doris so that she may give it to Tina, Hagar's granddaughter. Hagar even feels badly that she hadn't given the ring to Doris earlier: "I should've given it to you, I suppose, years ago. I could never bear to part with it. Stupid. Too bad you never had it. I don't want it now. Send it to Tina" (Laurence 279). In accepting the feminine principle, Hagar is able to let go of the one thing that had represented the bond she never had with her own mother--her mother's sapphire ring. Doris is the last figure seen with Hagar at the end of the novel. Standing at Hagar's bedside, she hands Hagar a cup of water. Demetrakopoulos sees water as representing "feminine relatedness" (84) and so in taking the cup of water from Doris, Hagar can be seen admitting her need for feminine understanding and accepting Doris's offer of help and comfort. Hagar's strengths help her to forge a transformation out of an often bitter past and this transformation permits her to embrace the feminine principle, complete her growth into wholeness, and gain the matriarchal wisdom which enlightens her during the last days of her life.

Hagar's connection with the feminine, the

matrilineal, is crucial to her final stages of individuation and transformation. Although her rejection of the feminine principle throughout her life has been resolute, she connects finally with older women who share with her the trials of ageing, with her young hospital roommate, her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter. Hagar survives a long and difficult sojourn in the loneliest of patriarchal domains--domains which are both internalized within her and externalised in the family in which she grew up. In her last days she finds the strength and courage to forge new wisdom. The journey is not an easy one and Hagar must endure many hardships but she triumphs in the end.

Buffeted by the winds of her time and culture, she grows crooked; not all the young under her branches survive, but she does grow -- somewhat gnarled, sometimes yielding bitter fruit, but with enormous and indefatigable strength. (Demetrakopoulos 87)

Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray are French feminists who share the conviction that woman's desire has been repressed--a desire which they refer to as "la mère qui jouit,"<sup>1</sup> "la jouissance féminine,"<sup>2</sup> or, less specifically, "féminité." This similarity aside, Kristeva and Irigaray find themselves belonging to completely opposing movements of French feminist thought. On one side, Kristeva joins those who "fear marginality and increasing powerlessness for women and who are suspicious of the notion of a women's language" (Marks 838). On the other side, Irigaray belongs to a group which

insists on the difference between the libidinal economy of men (as it has developed in our culture) and the libidinal economy of women (as it has been repressed in our culture), and [who] postulate, on the basis of this essential difference, a necessary difference in language. (Marks 840)

It is perhaps because of their fundamentally opposing views that Jane Gallop chooses to evaluate both Kristeva's and Irigaray's arguments in her chapter on the phallic mother in The Daughter's Seduction (1982). The

---

<sup>1</sup>According to Kristeva, the figure of the mother who knows sexual pleasure is the most severely repressed "feminine" figure in western culture.

<sup>2</sup>The expression "jouissance féminine" stresses the difference between male and female libidinal economies. For a definition of "jouissance," see footnote #3 of the introduction.

phallic mother (also referred to as the pre-Oedipal mother), present in the work of both Freud and Lacan, is the mother, "apparently omnipotent and omniscient, until the 'discovery [by the child] of [the mother's] castration'" (Gallop 22).

Irigaray's text "Et l'une ne bouge pas sans l'autre" (1979)<sup>3</sup>, is a work that she addresses to "ma mère" (my Mother). Written as a daughter's direct-discourse monologue, the article's beginning immediately reveals the speaker's resentment towards the mother for her paralytic hold on the daughter--a paralysis that is caused by an "obligation to reproduce--the daughter's obligation to reproduce the mother, the mother's story...[when to] 'reproduce' is the mother's domain" (Gallop 113).

The speaker in "Et l'une ne bouge pas sans l'autre" pleads with her mother for separateness: "Keep yourself/me outside, too. Don't engulf yourself or me in what flows from you into me. I would like both of us to be present. So that the one doesn't disappear in the other, or the other in the one" (Irigaray 61). Presenting a pre-Oedipal relationship between daughter and mother in which she

---

<sup>3</sup>Jane Gallop refers to this sixteen-page text as a "little book" since it has been published on its own by Editions de Minuit. However, since its translated appearance in *Signs* in 1981 (translated by Hélène Vivienne Wenzel with the title "And the One Doesn't Stir without the Other"), it has been referred to by most critics as an article rather than a book.

describes her earliest intimate relationship with her mother in terms of an infant's sensations, the narrator/protagonist complains of being filled up, "stuffed by the mother's zealous nurturing" (Wenzel 58). Glut and the accompanying "paralysis" become the dominant sensations in the first section of the article:

Hardly do I glimpse you and walk toward you, when you metamorphose into a baby nurse. Again you want to fill my mouth, my belly, to make yourself into a plenitude for mouth and belly...to reduce us to consuming and being consumed, is that your only need? (Irigaray 62)

Finally, these sensations cause her to "abandon her mother in anger and to follow her father, who then leaves her empty of himself but socialized into acceptance of the roles assigned her" (Wenzel 58):

...if you turn your face from me, giving yourself to me only in an already inanimate form, abandoning me to competent men to undo my/your paralysis, I'll turn to my father. I'll leave you...For someone who doesn't prepare anything for me to eat. (Irigaray 62)

Despite the claim of a lack of solid differentiation between mother and daughter, Jane Gallop points out that in Irigaray's text "the mother is always the 'you', and the daughter always the 'me.'" The distinction of second and first person pronouns gives the daughter whatever fragile separateness she has. As long as she speaks there is a



distinction" (114-5). Perhaps, then, the narrator of "Et l'une ne bouge pas sans l'autre" is fighting back against the Lacanian assumption that the silent interlocutor, the second participant who never assumes the first person "I," is the "subject presumed to know, the object of transference, the phallic Mother, in command of the mysterious processes of life, death, meaning and identity" (Gallop 115). The speaker is fighting to give voice to the silenced daughter of the mother-daughter relationship, fighting to escape the paralysis of her minority position, trying to find power and strength in undoing the Freudian and Lacanian Oedipal myths.<sup>4</sup>

But how beneficial is it for Irigaray to cling to the rigid, arbitrary distinctions of daughter and mother, "me" and "you"? Gallop suggests that Julia Kristeva's work, Des chinoises, answers this question provocatively. According to Gallop's interpretation of Des chinoises, "woman needs language, the paternal, symbolic order, to protect herself from the lack of distinction from the mother" (115). When Irigaray speaks (considering the

---

<sup>4</sup>Freud and Lacan postulate the theory that the young female child's discovery that the Mother lacks a penis causes her to renounce her mother and attach herself to her father. Irigaray here suggests that it is, in fact, the daughter's survival instinct which compels her to escape the paralyzing hold of the mother in favour of a father who does not threaten her.

symbolic order of language), a first and a second person can be distinguished, and, according to Kristeva (and Gallop), the breakdown of these differences is potentially fatal. Kristeva writes,

A woman has nothing to laugh about when the symbolic order collapses. She can take pleasure in it if, by identifying with the mother, the vaginal body, she imagines she is the sublime, repressed forces which return through the fissures of the order. But she can just as easily die from this upheaval...if she has been deprived of a successful maternal identification and has found in the symbolic paternal order her one superficial, belated and easily severed link with life. (150)

Irigaray cannot, however, accept the identification with the mother in order to allow the distinction between the speaker and the interlocutor to break down. For her, it would mean risking death by forfeiting "the comforting belief in the omnipotent Mother who guards and can ensure the daughter's life" (Gallop 115).

Kristeva, whose first-person pronoun belongs to the mother in Des chinoises, believes that although she has spoken from the mother's place, it is a place to be denounced as empty.<sup>5</sup> The mother is no more master of the mysterious process of life than is the child inside her. No

---

<sup>5</sup> In another of her works, Polylogue (1977), Kristeva talks about pregnancy and the life inside her--"the unmasterable other." In her opinion, neither the mother nor the child controls the experience of pregnancy.

one has the right, the authority, to signify the experience, to intend its meaning or represent it. But Kristeva speaks from this vacant place none the less. Irigaray's refusal to speak from that place, her resentment of it, "leaves the mother phallic, that is, leaves the mother her supposed omniscience and omnipotence" (Gallop 117). Kristeva's determination to speak from that place which she herself proclaims no one has the right to speak from, "combined with her constant, lucid analysis of that place and the necessity of such a presumption [to speak from it], works to dephallicize the Mother" (Gallop 117).

Kristeva and Irigaray, do, however, seem to agree on one thing--the power attributed the phallic mother and the danger such a power poses. According to Kristeva, the feminist utopia, "the idyllic space of women together" (Gallop 118) is supposed to exclude the phallus. The assumption that the phallus is male dictates that the exclusion of men is all that is needed to create a "non-phallic" space. However, as Gallop points out, "the threat represented by the mother to this feminine idyll might be understood through the notion that Mother, though female, is none the less phallic" (118). Because she poses a threat, not only men, but the phallic mother must be banned if a non-phallic utopia is to be maintained.

Irigaray insists that the phallic mother is

dangerous because she is less obviously phallic. According to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the phallus can only play its role when hidden or veiled. For Irigaray, this means that the phallic mother possesses a power even stronger than that of Lacan's "Primitive Father" figure.<sup>6</sup>

In Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival, the protagonist, Minn Williams Burge, has three young children and is seven months pregnant with a fourth. Her journalist husband away on assignment, Minn feels frustrated, angry, and bewildered at being alone in her "most vulnerable hour" (Engel 33). Settled on the floor, wondering how she is going to get up again, Minn does not feel the power of the phallic mother as described by Kristeva and Irigaray. In fact, she feels quite powerless. Her emotions unstable, her body feeling "not quite [her] own now" (Engel 1) (Kristeva would agree that indeed her body is no longer her own), Minn struggles for self-control and the strength to survive a "pregnancy in combination with isolation, pregnancy with a child who was not as welcome as the others had been, a pregnancy not socially acceptable in the days of anti-population crusades..." (Engel 12).

---

<sup>6</sup>Ann Rosalind Jones describes this figure in the following manner: "'I am the unified, self-controlled center of the universe,' man (white, European, and ruling class) has claimed. 'The rest of the world, which I define as the Other, has meaning only in relation to me, as man/father, possessor of the phallus'" (362).

The only power Minn knows anything about is power at a cost:

...in her world she held absolute power: that had to be paid for. "Take it," she said, "take my power." Because the power was paid for every second in indecision; she knew that whatever she did to them or for them was forming them, and that their own natures were forming themselves in opposition to that power, and that the energy generated in the process was enough to destroy them all, and she fought against it. (Engel 13)

In a recollection of her youth, Minn recalls the one and only moment of her life that she felt the ecstasy of being strong, dominant, in control--powerful. Minn recalls a tickling match that started one night in her girlfriend's bedroom during a slumber party. Turning her girlfriend on her back, Minn remembers discovering

that if I ran my fingers lightly over her, practicing Hanon exercises, I could make her shudder deliciously. Tickling down her summer pyjamas, avoiding the blossoming and embarrassing pubis, while she shuddered and said, "Don't" weakly, finally rushed into the bathroom and cried. I had never felt such power over anyone. (Engel 59)

The last time Minn can remember feeling this same sense of power is with Honeyman, a movie director who was once her lover in Paris. With Honeyman, Minn describes the feeling as the same, "but in reverse" (Engel 59). During her affair with Honeyman, Minn is at the mercy of her desire for him. At first, she tries to deny her longing for fear that some

day "he will own [her] absolutely" (Engel 59). When her fear of being possessed is no longer able to restrain her passion, she submits to it and to Honeyman. With this submission, Minn realizes (in retrospect), comes the beginning of the loss of her identity. The affair is a tumultuous one, complicated by the lack of a firm, fixed definition of their relationship. Minn's recollections indicate that the nature of that relationship was constantly shifting: they were lovers; they were mentor and protégée; they were father and daughter--and it seemed to Minn that she was never in control of which role she was to play. Minn was not allowed to be in control. In order to be with Honeyman she had to be the body with the "forty-inch bust" (Engel 81) who knew her place and how to stay there. Her roles in his films were never speaking roles. Like a child, she was to be seen and not heard. She was nothing more than a body on the screen, an object, "tied to a tree and still smiling...falling over every rock in Albania...pursued again and again over the sharp wicked hummocks of the southern summer" (Engel 79). Honeyman had been drawn not to Minn's personality but to her physicality, her sensuality, "her big shoulders, and [her] greed" (Engel 22). Minn admits to herself that "Honeyman had loved her for her greed" (Engel 104) and, throughout the novel, Minn's moments of meditation on her past with Honeyman often feature her and Honeyman

feasting, gorging, indulging to excess in order to satisfy their voracious appetites with exotic, decadent foods of the world. The images of gluttony invoked by Engel recall Irigaray's description in "Et l'une ne bouge pas sans l'autre" of the daughter's sensation of being filled up, stuffed by her mother's zealous nurturing. Minn, too, is paralyzed--but it is not her mother who stuffs her until she is immobile; it is her father in the form of Honeyman. And it would seem that Honeyman (as the mother-figure) did indeed treat Minn as a daughter-figure in his ability to have a "paralytic" hold on Minn. It is not only a remarkable thirty-five year age difference that reinforces this father-daughter comparison but also Minn's admission that "[Honeyman] was kind to her, fatherly" (Engel 128) and that he referred to her as "kid...his girl he took to small, secret, delicious places to eat, his secret girl" (Engel 127). Ultimately, Honeyman marries Guinèvre, a woman who "was not as young as she looked; she had money, she had class; she left her husband for him. She was in his circle. She had a villa for him to retire to" (Engel 20). In short, Honeyman married a woman whom he respected and adored because she was a woman and not a child to be indulged.

Minn's difficulty in accepting the loss of Honeyman can also be seen as the manifestation of her fear of being alone and herself once again. Honeyman's impact on her

life, his hold on her, was so intense that Minn, admittedly, felt "alternately shattered by his absence or obsessed by his presence" (Engel 127). Overwhelmed by Honeyman, Minn is left feeling abandoned, empty, helpless in the wake of her post-Honeyman existence. According to Irigaray's "Et l'une ne bouge pas sans l'autre," Honeyman, as a father figure, is free to move on with his life because he has fulfilled his "duty" to Minn. He has introduced her to exotic cuisine, fine wine, art, parts of the world she would never have known--in effect, he has cultured her and this is exactly what Minn had sought in leaving Canada (particularly her home town of Godwin) and her domineering mother. As Irigaray suggests in her article, the daughter (Minn) abandons her mother (Gertrude) in order to follow her father (Honeyman), only to have her father leave her "empty of himself but socialized." In marrying Guinèvre, Honeyman leaves Minn empty of himself, but only after he has carried out his responsibilities and has "socialized" her. Honeyman's role of father is not a surprising one since Minn's biological father, Weeping Willie, made very few appearances in her childhood, and left her solely in the care of Gertrude, with no father to turn to for escape. Minn's "escape" to Europe and her discovery of Honeyman there, begin the process which will ultimately leave Minn empty. Consequently, Honeyman becomes a figure of binary



opposition. His identity remains unfixed as he shifts between the roles of both mother and father.

It is not until Minn recalls wanting to hit Honeyman one day when he called her "a stupid damn broad" (Engel 22) that she realizes the lengths to which she has gone to remain a part of Honeyman's life. Despite the shame and embarrassment of his insult, Minn was unable to strike out at him in retaliation. She was powerless, trapped, a prisoner of her own weakness (an inability to defend her dignity) and fear (afraid that fighting back would jeopardize her relationship). In succumbing to her feelings of desire and adoration for Honeyman, Minn must sacrifice her independence, her individuality. It is only when she becomes "dissatisfied with being a tenth of a grain of his life, and knowing he was the whole of hers" (Engel 127), that Minn decides to summon whatever personal strength and self respect she has left in order to fight Honeyman "for equality" (20). However, in exerting her will, thus refusing to go on sacrificing pride and autonomy for a minimal role in the life of a "film maker not extraordinaire" (Thomas, "Introduction to The Honeyman Festival" ii), Minn tampers with the scales (so weighted in Honeyman's favour) and is forced to face the reality that Honeyman no longer wants her. This reality devastates her, and the resulting insecurity at having to face the world on

her own again leaves her feeling alone and vulnerable. She is freed from the prison that was Honeyman's hold on her only to find that she is still a prisoner--the prisoner of a life which seems alien to her because for so long her identity had been pushed aside to accommodate her relationship with Honeyman. Ultimately, irony has the last laugh when Minn's efforts to find personal as well as sexual liberation in Europe end with her having to return to her homeland in order to seek freedom from a different kind of bondage.

In Margaret Atwood's Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature, she describes the Rapunzel Syndrome as a pattern "for 'realistic' novels about 'normal' women" (209). According to Atwood, there are four elements which must be present in a novel in order for the Rapunzel Syndrome to occur: 1) Rapunzel, the protagonist; 2) the character imprisoning the protagonist, usually a mother or husband, sometimes a father; 3) the tower in which Rapunzel is imprisoned--"the attitudes of society symbolized usually by her house and children which society says she must not abandon" (Atwood, Survival 209); and 4) the Rescuer, who is not much help to Rapunzel because he is only able to offer momentary escape. The Honeyman Festival satisfies all of Atwood's criteria: Minn becomes Rapunzel, her husband Norman is her jailor by virtue of his absence; the tower is

both her huge, ageing, Victorian house as well as her three pre-school aged children; and her Rescuer is a remembered, dead film director.

In fact, Minn, as Rapunzel, is trapped in so many ways that there seems no conceivable way that she will ever escape. She is trapped physically in a pregnant body which she hardly recognizes as her own, in a crumbling house in Toronto and, momentarily, "physically trapped in the group" (Engel 97) of guests in her living room. She is spiritually trapped in her memories of a more glorious past with Honeyman in Europe and in the values of her ancestors. Atwood offers only one solution--"Rapunzel is in fact stuck in the tower, and the best thing she can do is learn how to cope with it" (Atwood, Survival 209), a task which, for Minn (whose situation seems unbearable), is easier said than done. Atwood makes it clear that the Rapunzel Syndrome is not just a Canadian pattern but she does suggest that there are certain elements characteristic of Canadian Rapunzel figures. Among these characteristics is a "difficulty in communicating, or even acknowledging their fears and hatreds; they walk around with mouths like clenched fists" (Atwood, Survival 209). Minn's pent-up anger and frustration seem to the reader to be constantly on the verge of exploding, but Minn, until late in the novel, determinedly keeps her feelings shut away.

Atwood also points out that "in Canada Rapunzel and the tower are the same. These heroines have internalized the values of their culture to such an extent that they have become their own prisons" (Atwood, Survival 209). The real struggle, then, for Minn, is not to escape her home and family but to break free from the struggle of

the Diana, capable of freedom, and of the "good" Venus, capable of love both maternal and sexual, to find a way out of the rigid Hecate stereotype in which she finds herself shut like a moth in a chrysalis. (Atwood, Survival 210)<sup>7</sup>

However, according to Kristeva, the "good" Venus, the mother capable of maternal as well as sexual love, is encouraged by western culture in order to nurture woman's feelings of maternal love while repressing her sexual instincts. In Minn's case, then, the reason for her imprisonment is her sexual desire, something not considered in Atwood's theory. She is imprisoned in the tower by her children's reinforcement of her role as "Mother" as opposed to that of "Woman." Her role as "Woman" is normally reinforced by her husband who sees her as a sexual being (ie. as his wife); however, her husband (the object of her desire/longing) has

---

<sup>7</sup>In The White Goddess, Robert Graves divides Woman into three mythological identities: 1) Diana, the young Maiden figure; 2) Venus, the goddess of love, sex and fertility; and 3) Hecate, the Crone figure, sinister and rigid. See pages 199-201 in Atwood's Survival for a more detailed analysis of Graves' categories.

been taken away as if there were a guarantee that once the object of desire is removed, the desire will dissipate. Engel proves that this theory is nothing more than a myth perpetuated by ignorance. In Minn's case, Norman's absence does not cause her sexual excitation to disappear. On the contrary, his absence simply forces her to compensate for the lack of a sexual outlet, which she does by recalling her past with Honeyman. But, as Atwood points out, Honeyman, as Minn's Rescuer, only offers temporary satisfaction. So, Minn must struggle to shed the Hecate stereotype but she must also fight to preserve (despite society's disapproval) the sexual nature of her Venus stereotype. In The Honeyman Festival, Minn's sole attempt to express her passionate nature, and to free herself from her internal prison/struggle is her instinctive attack on a policeman: "she lay on him, fought him, pounded his back with her fists in a flash of thunder, rammed her fists in his kidneys, banged her head on his back and sank her teeth through the serge of his jacket...[until] she had spent her fury on [Police Constable] Ronnie Taunton's kidneys" (Engel 152). This incident may not be much, but it strikes the reader as triumphant because it is startling when measured against the grim, discouraging and harried circumstances of Minn's present situation. The very fact that she unleashes her fury on an archetypal representative of male authority

indicates that Minn, if only for a moment, realizes that she must fight for her own survival if she is to endure her life and its despairs.

In his comments on The Honeyman Festival, John Moss seems to take delight in Minn's misery and, I would suggest, even revels in the belief that Minn got exactly what she deserved. Moss claims that Minn had "scintillating alternatives...along the way" (75) which she ignored, implying that she has no one to blame but herself for her plight. He goes on to say that "Minn Burge, the protagonist is so mired in shitty diapers and squalling urban domesticity on the one hand and exotic memories of a tinsel-glamour past on the other that the resolution of her split consciousness is inevitably both over-blown and anti-climactic" (Moss 74). Since Moss never makes it clear what "resolution" he is discussing, the reader can only assume that he is referring to Minn's attack on the policeman. If this is indeed the case, then it is clear that Moss's condemnation of Minn and her plight is based on an ignorance of the politics of the female body in Engel's text. Moreover, Moss, in his male chauvinism, has never known what it is like to be alone and pregnant, deathly tired, bloated, draggy and discouraged. If Moss understood these feelings, then perhaps he could better understand the reason for Minn's attack on the police officer and its significance to

the novel as a whole.

Sympathy for Minn (despite Moss's callous lack thereof) is further generated upon the discovery that Minn, on her way to Godwin to visit her mother, has not yet told Gertrude of her pregnancy and is quite anxious about doing so. Minn makes it clear that there is no intimacy, no friendship between her and her mother so her visits to see Gertrude and Alice are obligatory, not social, ones: "They never invited her home. They expected her to turn up periodically, and she did" (Engel 92). The lack of a strong mother-daughter bond, as Irigaray discusses in the second part of her article "Et l'une ne bouge pas sans l'autre," heightens the daughter's feelings of emptiness as "she despairs over the nullity of her mother's personhood (as well as her own, by extension)--a personhood destined to become nil when her daughter leaves" (Wenzel 58). Irigaray suggests in this section that all women--mothers, daughters--"are swallowed up in the sole function of 'maternage', mothering" (Wenzel 58). Varied emotions such as anger, pain, confusion and bewilderment are experienced, according to Irigaray, in all mother-daughter relationships. These feelings are provoked by the "fusion in which mothers and daughters are forced to lose their separate identities" (Wenzel 58).

It is more than apparent in The Honeyman Festival

that Minn is struggling to escape the oppressive space she shares with her mother. Gertrude, one gathers from Minn's comments, is a corseted, rigid, strong-willed matron whose unbending convictions "and jaw locked in constant disapproval" (Engel 92) torment and intimidate her daughter. Gertrude and Minn's mother-daughter conflict is aggravated by Minn's fear, on the one hand, that she is like her mother, despite her efforts not to be, and her fear, on the other hand, that her determination not to be like her mother is hurting her children:

Did she so much love Gertrude that she made her house again? Was she like her, staunch, starched, domineering, hiding all the hurt? It has to be done, it shall be done: and firm feet approaching. Were the children wild because she refused to be Gertrude? (Engel 124)

Minn herself acknowledges the strain between her and Gertrude, yet cannot fully explain why she persists with her visits to Godwin, hard as they are on her:

If she stayed longer than a day she still came back in little pieces, and Norman would ask her why she did it to herself; she could not answer him logically, there was the one factor of having your children's reality verified by your mother's acknowledgement, [and] in her own case a kind of negative blessing in the failure to lay on hands. (Engel 92)

Much of Minn's loneliness and motivation for reflecting on her past with Honeyman is a sense of sexual



frustration. Norman's absence leaves her devoid not only of moral support and someone other than infants and messed up teenagers to communicate with, but of sexual contact. Julia Kristeva's belief that the mother who knows/desires sexual pleasure is taboo (see first footnote of this chapter) is reinforced in The Honeyman Festival. No one expects Minn, as a pregnant mother, to have sexual needs. She cannot vent her sexual frustration with Gertrude because of the lack of intimacy and closeness between them as well as the unwritten rule that "there was to be no talk of her personal life" (Engel 105) during her visits to Godwin.

The ending of The Honeyman Festival does little to provide a satisfactory resolution to Minn's predicament. Norman has not come back and Minn is still pregnant by the end of the last page. Whether or not Minn will go on, tired, frustrated and alone is a question answered unsatisfactorily with another question in the last line of the novel. It would seem that Minn is still trapped, which is probably exactly how Marian Engel intended to leave her-- as the embodiment of the dilemma of a generation of women who "were caught between two worlds and their only defence was their wit and their enormous capacity for survival" (Thomas, "Introduction to The Honeyman Festival" ii).

Linguistic and psychoanalytic theory have played crucial roles in shaping the writings of French feminists. According to Elaine Marks, the intent and the effect of this theoretical merging have been "to break with the traditional academic discourse on books, to bring the reader and the text together in a passionate embrace which obliges the reader to grasp the materiality of the text" (835). The process by which the reader comes to understand how meanings are produced and organized in language "leads to the undermining of the bourgeois order, shattering its complacent belief in transparent texts that reflect the uniqueness of the writer as conscious subject" (Marks 835). Linguistic and psychoanalytic theory have made important contributions to the subversion of this bourgeois order by offering two important elements: language and the unconscious, "not as separate entities, but language as a passageway, and the only one, to the unconscious, to that which has been repressed and which would, if allowed to rise, disrupt the established order" (Marks 835). That which has been repressed is woman's desire, her female sexual pleasure, her "jouissance."

It is this passionate concern, the question of the "repression of the feminine" in culture, that suggests why, rather than looking in the past for lost and neglected women

writers, as American feminists do, the most visible of the French women writers are looking for women in the unconscious, which is to say in their own language. The avant-garde French women writers are saying that, "until now, women have been absent--in silence, in madness--that difference has been repressed and that consequently there has only been one voice, a male voice which women writers of the past obligatorily imitated. The repression of the feminine (in women and in men) was total" (Marks 836).

The rejection of male language becomes the first step in making way for a new female discourse. However, there is much skepticism about the concept of another, "feminine," language. If it can exist, how is it to be expressed? In France, there are two very visible and divergent groups willing to answer these questions. On one side, there is a voice which says "no" to the notion of a women's language. On the other side (the larger and more vocal of the two groups), there is vehement insistence that "yes"--there is a necessary difference in language based on libidinal economies and that this difference constitutes the possibility of a writing that inscribes femininity.

The connection which Lacanian psychoanalysis makes between the feminine and masculine libido, the unconscious and language, is central to the work of Hélène Cixous, which focuses on the relationship between feminine libido and feminine writing. Cixous is convinced that women's

unconscious is totally different from men's, and that it is a woman's "psychosexual specificity that will empower women to overthrow masculinist ideologies and to create new female discourses" (Jones 365). Cixous, has thus become the major advocate and theorist of "l'écriture féminine," which aims to subvert phallogentric discourse. L'Écriture féminine has been translated as "feminine writing"--a term abhorrent to Cixous, since the terms "masculine" and "feminine" themselves "imprison us within a binary logic, within the classical vision of the sexual opposition between men and women" (Conley 129). She argues that masculine sexuality and masculine language seek to fix meaning through binary oppositions such as "Father/Mother, Head/heart, intelligible/sensitive, Logos/Pathos" (Cixous, "La jeune née" 90) which all rely on one primary binary opposition to give them meaning--male/female or penis/lack of penis; an opposition which reinforces and reproduces the patriarchal order. This hierarchization (a term coined by Cixous) of meaning serves to subordinate the feminine to the masculine order. Cixous, in order to escape the trap of fixed patriarchal binary opposition, has therefore chosen to speak of a "writing said to be feminine" (or masculine) or, more recently, of a "decipherable libidinal femininity which can be read and produced by a male or a female" (Conley 129)

L'Écriture féminine challenges the repression of the feminine by questioning the structures of patriarchal

language and thought--"its dualisms, its hierarchical orderings, and so on" (Kuhn 38). To these structures, the feminine is given the role of "other," "a riddle that is finally insoluble within the terms of a masculine (libidinal) economy" (Kuhn 38). For Cixous, female sexual pleasure ("jouissance") constitutes a potential disturbance to the patriarchal order, and a "woman-text"--a text that inscribes this "jouissance"--is a return of the repressed feminine that "dislocates the repressive structure of phallogocentrism" (Kuhn 38). Cixous's work aims to do this by placing the techniques being incorporated into this new and innovative method of female writing against the traditionally masculine-associated writing tendencies: "plurality against unity; multitudes of meaning against single, fixed meanings; diffuseness against instrumentality; openness against closure" (Kuhn 38). According to Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, "dislocating syntax, playing with the signifier, punning outrageously and constantly" (33) are also writing practices characteristic of the discourse that is going to disrupt the symbolic order and subvert the bourgeois language, the language of a patriarchal system.

Cixous, in the excerpt entitled "Sorties" (found in her 1975 work La jeune née), criticizes psychoanalysis for its "awesome thesis of a 'natural,' anatomical determination of sexual difference-opposition" (93). She chooses instead

to focus on the physical/sexual drives (rather than body parts--ie. male has a penis, female does not) when defining male-female difference: "it is at the level of sexual pleasure that the difference makes itself most clearly apparent in as far as a woman's libidinal economy is neither identifiable by a man nor referable to the masculine economy" (Cixous 95). In her manifesto for l'écriture féminine, "Le rire de la méduse" (1975), Cixous links woman's diffuse sexuality to women's writing:

She alone dares and wishes to know from within, where she, the outcast, has never ceased to hear the resonance of fore-language. She lets the other language speak--the language of 1,000 tongues which knows neither enclosure nor death. To life she refuses nothing. Her language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible. (260)

Cixous insists on the "primacy of multiple, specifically female libidinal impulses in women's unconscious and in the writing of the liberatory female discourses of the future" (Jones 366).

Ann Rosalind Jones clearly states the similarities in the work of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous: "What [they] do in common, then, is to oppose women's bodily experience...to the phallic-symbolic patterns embedded in Western thought" (366). Since Irigaray and Cixous support l'écriture féminine (Kristeva does not), they take this process one step further: if women are to

"discover and express who they are, to bring to the surface what masculine history has repressed in them, they must begin with their sexuality. And their sexuality begins with their bodies, with their genital and libidinal difference from men" (Jones 366).

Despite the criticism that suggests that *l'écriture féminine* is a problematic concept and the objection that it is "theoretically fuzzy and...fatal to constructive political action" (Jones 367), it cannot be denied that Cixous and Irigaray offer a powerful and convincing argument. For French women, it is a particularly exciting idea because it offers an alternative to that "ideologically suspect invention by men" (Jones 367) called humanism which French feminists have been able to deconstruct. Men are credited with the creation of this system of binary opposition that dominates meaning-- subject/object, identity/other, man/woman--because women have recognized the negative, passive roles that have been assigned to them in this hierarchy of meaning. However, with the immediacy of the female body, the female unconscious and "jouissance," there comes a sign of hope, or as Ann Rosalind Jones suggests, a promise of "a clarity of perception and a vitality that can bring down mountains of phallogentric delusion" (366). Finally, for those willing to see the female body as a direct source of female writing, a powerful alternative discourse is being offered--one that suggests

that "to write from the body is to re-create the world" (Jones 366).

As suggested earlier, H el ene Cixous, among others, has envisioned "writing in the feminine mode as a way of re-establishing a spontaneous relationship to the physical "jouissance" of the female body...in a truly non-oppressive and non-sexist society" (Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics 121). More than just a vehicle of liberation, writing is the very enactment of it (Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics 125):

To write. An act which will not only "realize" the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being, giving her access to her native strength; it will give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal; it will tear her away from the supererogated structure in which she has always occupied the place reserved, for the guilty...--tear her away by means of this research, this job of analysis and illumination, this emancipation of the marvelous text of her self that she must urgently learn to speak. (Cixous, "La rire de la m eduse" 250)

Many other writers have recognized language as the springboard for a new vision of human understanding and identity. It is not surprising, then, that an increasing number of contemporary works by women in Canada (and elsewhere) feature the woman as artist or the woman writer as the central character. This is particularly true of Margaret Atwood's work. The woman as writer turns up in Bodily Harm. Rennie Wilford, the protagonist, is a free-



lance journalist, a writer of innocuous "travel and fashion" articles (Atwood, Bodily Harm 295).

Lorna Irvine, opens her article "The Here and Now of Bodily Harm," with quotations from two French feminist theorists deeply committed to the concept of "l'écriture féminine." In doing so, Irvine makes evident her belief that this theory has relevance to Atwood's Bodily Harm. She describes this Atwood novel as "a radical statement about female sexuality, the political body, and the female text" (85). In her examination of Bodily Harm, Irvine uses words such as "terrifying" and "nightmarish" (85) to describe the novel's structure. She is referring to the novel's systematic confusion of plot development, characterization, and setting, the surrealism that makes ambiguous the temporal and spacial orientation of this story, and the plots and subplots that habitually intermingle. As Jerome H. Rosenberg points out, the complex narrative perspective also adds an element of horror for the reader who picks up Bodily Harm looking for some "light" reading:

...the tale is given in part by an omniscient narrator speaking directly to us in the third person, and in part by Rennie in a first-person narrative filtered to us through the implied presence of the omniscient narrator; both narrators speak sometimes in the past tense, for memories, sometimes in the present, for the events on the island. (131-2)

The very style in which Atwood chooses to write suggests her

awareness of the French feminist theory of "l'écriture féminine". Using innovative techniques and unorthodox methods, Atwood offers a reading experience which defies definition as "normal" or "traditional." What Irvine describes as the novel's "confusion" of characterization and plot development, the "surreal" and "ambiguous" use of time and space, its "refusal to clarify," the "italicized language fragments, seemingly disembodied" (85-86) recall Cixous's efforts to disrupt the symbolic order by positing "multitudes of meaning against single, fixed meanings; plurality against unity." As Irvine summarizes, "[Bodily Harm] is a heavily coded novel, yet a novel that painfully articulates the female body, that perhaps even liberates it" (86).

Rennie, like Minn of Engel's The Honeyman Festival, is trapped. She is imprisoned in a diseased body. She has recently undergone a partial mastectomy and is trying to cope with the trauma of the amputation as well as her anger and bitterness at having been betrayed by her body:

Nothing had prepared her for her own outrage, the feeling that she'd been betrayed by a close friend. She'd given her body swimming twice a week, forbidden it junk food and cigarette smoke, allowed it a normal amount of sexual release. She'd trusted it. Why then had it turned against her?"  
(Atwood, Bodily Harm 82)

Also, when Rennie becomes caught up, inadvertently, in the cancerous intrigues of a corrupt Caribbean island

government, CIA agents, and runners of contraband, she finds herself literally imprisoned--arrested and thrown in a cell in a poorly run Central American prison. Furthermore, Rennie (again, like Minn) is a captive of the values taught her by her "ancestors" (in Rennie's case, her mother and her grandmother). In a series of flashbacks, Rennie recalls her childhood in Griswold, a puritanical Ontario community, where she "grew up surrounded by old people" and "learned three things well: how to be quiet, what not to say, and how to look at things without touching them" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 54). This childhood repression of her natural instincts (speech and touch) leaves Rennie excluded, alienated, imprisoned from the outside because this repression has caused her to divorce herself from the rest of humanity and its imperfections.

The issue of repression is further emphasized in the novel's exploration of the nature of violence and victimization of women. The epigraph from John Berger's Ways of Seeing draws immediate attention to these themes: "A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you and for you. By contrast, a woman's presence...defines what can and cannot be done to her" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 7). A stranger breaks into Rennie's apartment and, as a reminder of his visit, leaves a coil of rope on her bed. Rennie's recently departed lover, Jake, gets sexually aroused by imagining intercourse with her as a pretended rape; Lora

describes having to stab her stepfather with a can opener to prevent his raping her and, while she is in jail with Rennie, is brutalized and left to die by male guards in the prison (to whom she has been offering her body in return for the food and favours that will allow herself and Rennie to survive). The Toronto police station's pornography "museum" which "displays women's bodies as maps of violence" (Irvine 87); men on the island who freely beat up their wives--all these incidents of violence against women (and there are many more to be found in this novel) give the novel an air of recurrence, of multiplicity rather than singularity (a Cixousian subversion of patriarchal systems).

Bodily Harm also self-consciously investigates the act of writing and, as Lorna Irvine points out, "even dramatizes the creative process" (89). Irvine argues that because Rennie is a writer,

the spatial and temporal ambiguity that permeates the novel evokes the actual space and time of the writing act. Small spaces and moments of time punctuate the novel like clockwork, suggesting the painful physical problems that accompany composition. (89)

Cixous would also suggest that the physical difficulty of writing results when movement from a state of unconscious excitation directly to a written female text is halted by the interference of phallogocentrism which insists that there is only one discourse--and its source is not the female body.

Irvine goes on to show that "at the beginning of the novel, masculine and feminine readers, and by extension writers, are contrasted" (89). Rennie, on one hand, has written for the "Relationships" column for the female-oriented Pandora magazine. On the other hand, as the novel begins, she is employed by Visor, a magazine directed primarily toward male readers. Rennie, admittedly, does not take herself or her writing seriously; depending on which readership she is writing for, Rennie offers different advice. This frivolous attitude is further demonstrated when Rennie offers to do a travel piece for Visor; "Nothing political, she said. I can do you a good Fun in the Sun, with the wine lists and the tennis courts" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 16). But, as Irvine makes clear, "[Rennie's] frivolity is, of course, misleading. Like every other stance in this novel, it is a defense" (89). It is not until the end of the novel that Rennie fully understands that writing is a powerful act and that she cannot go on renouncing "the power she and the words she writes hold over others" (Rosenberg 130).

The themes that emerge in Bodily Harm--victimization of women, entrapment, writing--play an important role in the novel and can be found in other Atwood novels as well as in the work of other writers. However, Irvine sets Bodily Harm apart from other Atwood novels because its themes do not serve the purpose traditionally expected of them--in Bodily

Harm they do not "unmask the truly radical statement at the novel's core" (Irvine 89).

In an effort to discover the novel's "hidden" meaning or message, Irvine suggests looking at the principal ambiguities of the novel--time and space. Of her two analyses, the examination of time proves more interesting when linked to Rennie's repeated references to the italicized letter "X" and the Judaeo-Christian tradition, said by feminists to be one of the most powerful patriarchal institutions in Western culture.

In Bodily Harm, time, commonly the most critical factor of any written work, disintegrates completely. Near the end of the novel, the narrator makes a statement in which the reader can perceive the voice of Atwood, the novelist, writing Bodily Harm: "There s the past the present the future: none of them will do" (282). The obvious lack of punctuation (with the exception of the colon) defies closure as does the ambiguous fantasy/dream ending of the novel. The narrative closure offered by Rennie's fantasy escape is questionable, for present, past and future continue to cross through each other in the last passage of the novel: "She will never be rescued. She has already been rescued. She is not exempt" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 301). Lorna Irvine points out that the concluding "this is what will happen" (293) which parallels the opening "this is how I got here" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 11) "insists

on temporal confusion right to the stopping of the novel by casting the narrative into the future tense" (90). Irvine goes on to suggest that time is marked by a "vertical rather than a horizontal movement" (91), and she quotes the first few lines of a verse from "Postcard," a poem from Atwood's collection True Stories, which reinforce this Atwood "trademark"<sup>1</sup>:

Time comes in waves here, a sickness, one  
day after the other rolling on;  
I move up, it's called  
awake, then down into the uneasy  
nights, but never  
forward. (18)

This vertical movement directly opposes the way in which the Judaeo-Christian tradition fosters male egocentricity and a linear (hence irreversible) concept of time. This intentional opposition is also reinforced by Rennie's repeated references to "Mr. X" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 41) or the "X factor" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 47)<sup>2</sup>, if one is willing to recognize the capitalized "X" as a crucifix, the universal symbol of the Christian tradition and the icon of Christ, fallen on its side, which suggests disrespect for this Christian symbol, and by extension, the Judaeo-Christian tradition and its rigid concept of time. Feminists often urge women to go back in time in order to

---

<sup>1</sup>This temporal ambiguity is also present in Atwood's earlier novel, Surfacing (1972).

<sup>2</sup>References to the italicized capitalized "X" can also be found on the following pages: 83, 159, 197.

expose the conventions of the Judaeo-Christian myth which perpetuate a version of reality in which woman is muted, silenced, unrepresented. Rewrite history in order to write "herstory." Because Rennie's references to "X" pierce the text from beginning to end and because the forward narrative movement of the novel is repeatedly halted by various recollected stories, it can be argued that Rennie/the narrator/Atwood is trying to go back to "the beginning" in order to write a novel that inscribes a new tradition of history in which women are visible and heard. One should also notice that the time span from Rennie's arrival in St. Antoine to the morning of her arrest coincides with "the six plus one days of the creation" (Hinz 99). This is particularly important in looking at the novel's ending where it can be argued that Rennie undergoes a transformation or "re-creation" which is not a traditional Judaeo-Christian "revelation."

Rennie's transformation fulfills Ann Rosalind Jones's promise of the "clarity of perception and a vitality" which come from a renewed, immediate sense of the female body. This clarity and vitality persuade Rennie, in her imaginary return to Canada, to tell her story and "bring down" the "phallogocentric delusion" of both the reality on the island and the reality of woman's bodily experience. It is at the end of the novel that Atwood shifts narrative perspective and projects Rennie's fantasy of being released



from jail into the future. In the first part of this imagined future, Rennie has escaped the terror of the island and is being interviewed by a Canadian official who apologizes for having been unable to secure her release earlier and explains that the situation was simply too unstable. In this exchange, he implies that it would be in Rennie's best interests not to write about her experiences on the island. To his relief, Rennie, in this dream interlude, agrees; and, in the distance, there appears the plane that will supposedly return her to Canada. After three brief segments--one a return to the prison cell and Lora, one a memory of Griswold and her grandmother, and the third back in the cell--Atwood ends the novel with a continuation of Rennie's imagined release; "Then the plane will take off" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 299). As Atwood mixes future and present tense, in a fascinating interplay of reality and fantasy, Rennie sees herself now as "a subversive. She was not one once but now she is. A reporter. She will pick her time; then she will report" (Atwood, Bodily Harm 301). It is never ascertained whether her future will allow her testimonial--"she will never be rescued" (301), the narrator says of Rennie's imprisonment. But she has changed--"she has already been rescued" (301), says the narrator about Rennie's isolation from "massive involvement" (another of the novel's italicized phrases) and her fellow human beings; "she is not exempt" (301).

The interrogation of language and its constructions of the female body and human identity form a compelling challenge in the work of women writers, such as Margaret Atwood, women whose writing works with and against language in an attempt to reconstruct reality--and fiction--as women experience them.

The bringing together of French feminist theory (the work of Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Jane Gallop, and Stephanie Demetrakopoulos)<sup>1</sup> and Canadian women's novels (the fiction of Margaret Laurence, Marian Engel, and Margaret Atwood) has hopefully been proven here to be a valuable union. French feminist theory and its emphasis on the forces in the female body and woman's bodily experience provide a more thorough understanding of both sides of the conflict between woman's body and spirit as experienced by the protagonists of these novels. Feelings of betrayal and imprisonment stemming from the reactions and responses they are having to their bodies initiate conflicts between body and spirit for Hagar, Minn, and Rennie. Their struggles for resolution are not always successful, but the insight provided by French feminism allows the reader to comprehend the protagonists' struggles more fully and accept the outcome of them.

Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel, is the novel

---

<sup>1</sup>I consider both Demetrakopoulos and Gallop to be French feminists, despite the fact that both are Americans. The terms "American" and "French" must not be taken to represent simply national demarcations: they do not necessarily signal the critics' birthplace rather the intellectual tradition within which they work. Gallop's dedication to the analysis of French feminist theory and Demetrakopoulos's concern with the relationship between the female body and feminine consciousness insist that they be recognized as French feminists.

which has the most "victorious" heroine. The resolution of the conflict between body and spirit becomes apparent as Hagar accepts the feminine principle, thus completing her growth into wholeness. Hagar's young, determined spirit (newly strengthened by this acceptance) is released, through death, from the prison that is her ailing, aged body. Hagar's "victory" must not be minimalized because it comes in the shadow of her death. Death, for Hagar, comes only after spiritual mending and this healing, Laurence suggests, is the key to Hagar's cell--a key she has always had but needed to find in order to secure release.

Resolution of the body-spirit conflict in Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival is less than absolute. By the last page, Minn is still pregnant but there is the knowledge that she will eventually be freed of that imprisonment. However, uncertainty surrounds Minn's emotional plight; her attack on the police officer shows a glimmer of hope that she is finally allowing herself to unleash her anger and frustration, the key that will release her from the prison that is her willingness to "make sure that everybody is happy, even if it means that she herself is put upon or ignored" (Thomas, "Introduction to The Honeyman Festival i-ii). But, because the novel ends immediately following the incident with the policeman, the impact of Minn's action is never revealed to the reader. Minn is left straddling the line between freedom and retreat back into her cell.

Engel's decision to end the novel without a definite pronouncement on the outcome of Minn's struggle suggests that resolution is not easily attained, and that sometimes the struggle to cope with life and its experiences is more crucial for survival.

Atwood concludes Bodily Harm with a statement similar to the one Engel makes in The Honeyman Festival. The ending of Bodily Harm suggests that not coming to terms with the struggle between body and spirit, not trying to resolve and then forget "bodily" harm (on both levels--the harm done to woman's body/consciousness by patriarchy, and the harm done by repressive states to their resisters) is a more positive way of dealing with reality. On a physical level, the disease has been removed from Rennie's body but there is never an indication that Rennie has accepted and forgiven her body for its betrayal. Also, the novel's ambiguous ending does not make clear whether or not Rennie escapes the confinement/entrapment of her prison cell. However, Atwood does suggest that Rennie has decided, despite the consequences, to take a stand and not resolve and forget what has happened and what has been done to her. Rennie's spiritual transformation, her joining with humanity, does not resolve the conflict of body and spirit but instead redefines it so that the ultimate goal is not resolution--it is a willingness to continue struggling.

Laurence, Engel, and Atwood have each explored the

female body and women's responses to their bodies; and their novels suggest a growing concern with the female body as a touchstone for understanding women's experience. Whether or not future generations of female writers will further this exploration and continue to establish this trend in Canadian women's fiction is unknown, but Laurence, Engel and Atwood will stand as leaders of a genre of fiction dedicated to extending the boundaries of woman's reality, man's perception of it, and the way in which it is written.

## WORKS CITED

- Atwood, Margaret. Bodily Harm. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981.
- . Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1972.
- . True Stories. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1981.
- Cixous, Hélène. "La jeune née." Trans. Ann Liddle. New French Feminisms: An Anthology. Eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron. New York: Schocken Books, 1981. 90-98.
- . "Le rire de la méduse." Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. New French Feminisms: An Anthology. Eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron. New York: Schocken Books, 1981. 245-264.
- Conley, Verena Andermatt. "An Exchange with Hélène Cixous." Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1984. 129-61.
- Demetrakopoulos, Stephanie. Listening to Our Bodies: The Rebirth of Feminine Wisdom. Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.
- Engel, Marian. The Honeyman Festival. Markham, ON: Penguin, 1970.
- Gallop, Jane. The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1982.

- Hinz, Evelyn J. "The Religious Roots of the Feminine Identity Issue: Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel and Margaret Atwood's Surfacing." Margaret Laurence: An Appreciation. Ed. Christl Verduyn. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press and the Journal of Canadian Studies, 1988. 82-100.
- Irigaray, Luce. "Et l'une ne bouge sans l'autre." Trans. H el ene Vivienne Wenzel. Signs 7 (Fall 1981): 60-67.
- Irvine, Lorna. "The Here and Now of Bodily Harm." Margaret Atwood: Vision and Forms. Eds. Kathryn VanSpanckeren and Jan Garden Castro. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1988. 85-100.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l' criture f eminine." The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory. Ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. 361-77.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Des chinoises." Trans. Se an Hand. The Kristeva Reader. Ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986. 139-59.
- Kuhn, Annette. "Introduction to H el ene Cixous's 'Castration or Decapitation?'" Signs 7 (Fall 1981): 36-40.
- Laurence, Margaret. The Stone Angel. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964.



- Marks, Elaine. "Women and Literature in France." Signs 3 (Summer 1978): 832-42.
- Marks, Elaine and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds. New French Feminisms: An Anthology. New York: Schocken Books, 1981.
- Moi, Toril, ed. French Feminist Thought: A Reader. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- . Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Moss, John. Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel: The Ancestral Present. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.
- Rosenberg, Jerome H. Margaret Atwood. Twayne's World Authors Ser. 740. Boston: Twayne, 1984.
- Stanton, Domna C. "Language and Revolution: The Franco-American Dis-Connection." The Future of Difference. Eds. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980. 73-87.
- Thomas, Audrey. Introduction. The Honeyman Festival. By Marian Engel. Markham, ON: Penguin, 1986. i-iv.
- Thomas, Clara. "Pilgrims' Progress: Margaret Laurence and Hagar Shipley." Margaret Laurence: An Appreciation. Ed. Christl Verduyn. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press and the Journal of Canadian Studies, 1988. 58-69.

Wenzel, Hélène Vivienne. "Introduction to Luce Irigaray's  
'And the One Doesn't Stir Without the Other.'"  
Signs 7 (Fall 1981): 56-59.