'BIRD AT THE WINDOW': THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CANADIAN FICTION

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IN CANADIAN FICTION

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines English Canadian novels written by women during the 1970's in order to explore a possible feminist tradition in English Canadian fiction as well as to seek out a possible correspondence between the political themes of the Women's Movement and the representation of women in novels. There is a premise that women as writers bring different perceptions and expectations to their literary experience. This literary representation of gender difference is rooted in women's experience of oppression and the role women have played in the family structure. The result is a distinct representation of women by women in fiction that differs from the more traditional social image.

The sociology of literature is employed to construct a theoretical framework around the question of whether or not literature reflects society. The hypothesis is that a counter-tradition concerning the representation of women appears in the fiction written by women, and thus the social norms and values of society have not in fact been reflected in the novels studied.

The role of the themes raised by the Canadian Women's Movement in the seventies and their contribution to a counter-ideology which challenges gender ideology, are examined to support the hypothesis. Any correspondence between the themes of the Women's Movement and the novels

would point to a possible impact that the counter-ideology of the movement may have had upon women and their own self-image as portrayed by their fiction.

This study concludes, that, despite even the most notable exceptions, there is a distinct gender difference in the writing of fiction as it pertains to the representation of women. The themes of both the Women's Movement and the literature written by women all point to a unity of values, experiences and behaviours that women share and are subsequently represented in their fiction.

The conditions of the solitary bird are five:
The first, that it flies to the highest point;
the second, that it does not suffer for company,
not even of its own kind;
the third, that it aims its beak to the skies;
the fourth, that it does not have a definite colour;
the fifth, that it sings very softly.

-San Juan de la Cruz
Dichos de Luz y Amor

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And finally, I want to dedicate this thesis to a woman whose incredible strength has been my inspiration, my mother, Tama Frank.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As far back as the Middle Ages, through the Victorian Era to the present day, women have always found ways to describe the real conditions of their lives, hopes and desires, whether it be through their diaries, poems, plays or novels. Women's writing has been preserved from the fourteenth century and women first began to publish in the seventeenth century. Writing has never really been considered an unfeminine practice, yet women writers have encountered more critical resistance to their writing professionally than have their male counterparts. In the past, normal female creativity was supposed to be childbirth and maternity, making writing or painting professionally somehow an unnatural act. Women were stuck in the catch 22 of the Victorian myth. The unmarried or childless woman could never produce a major work because her nature was still incomplete. Yet no 'real' mother should have any time or energy left to devote to writing or any other career for that matter.

The female literary tradition in Canada stretches back more than two hundred years and includes writers who

have achieved both national and international recognition.

The very first Canadian novel, The History of Emily Montague, was written by Frances Brooke in 1769 and the first novel written by a native Canadian was St. Ursula's Convent, or The Nuns of Canada by Julia Beckwith Hart. In the nineteenth century Susanna Moodie, Catherine Parr Traill, Anna Jameson, Pauline Johnson and Sara Jeannette Duncan were all considered significant writers. Rosanna Leprohan, May Agnes Fleming and Isabella Valancy Crawford were some of the popular writers of the day. The early twentieth century saw work from Nellie McClung, Martha Ostenso, Laura Goodman Salversen, Marjorie Pickethall, Lucy Maud Montgomery, and Emily Carr. Mazo de la Roche become one of Canada's most famous writers. In the 1940's and 1950's, novelists like Ethel Wilson, Adele Wiseman, Sheila Watson and Gabrielle Roy were considered well known and serious writers.

Since the 1950's, a "visible minority of women" has been dominating Canadian literature, particularly during the 1970's. Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Marie-Claire Blais, Marian Engel and Alice Munro have been some of the biggest names in Canadian fiction. Women have won many of the literary awards of the 1970's, for example Aritha Van Herk for her novel Judith, Carol Shields for Small Ceremonies, Pauline Gedge, an Alberta housewife, for her

first novel Child of the Morning and Oonah McFee for Sandbars, to name a few. Most of the new fiction writers, as well as many of the more established writers such as Audrey Thomas, Jane Rule, Sylvia Fraser and Constance Beresford-Howe, are women who are now claiming a new critical success in Canadian fiction.

As Marian Engel once pointed out, one of the reasons why so many women write may be because of the fact that writing is the cheapest of the arts and can be accomplished at odd hours of the day or night. Other critics however, have pointed to the Women's Liberation Movement as one of the most important factors for the more recent output of fiction by women in Canada. Women in the 1970's were trying out a new voice, their heroines were characters with a feminist perspective, their novels had fresh appeal and the fiction was exciting, widely read and discussed.

Feminist criticism itself began its development in the late 1960's as part of the international women's movement. Feminist criticism began to show how women readers, writers and critics bring different perceptions and expectations to their literary experience. It has been concerned with the literary representation of sexual difference, the ways in which literary genres have been shaped by masculine or feminine values and the historical exclusion of the female voice from criticism and theory.

Feminist criticism has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis (Showalter, 1985:3).

Another direct result of the Women's Movement has been the blossoming of women's publishing houses and presses such as the Women's Press and Naiad Press. In the past, women writers (not just fiction writers) had been largely ignored or rejected by most of the large publishing houses. The Women's Movement created a new phenomenon - women as subject of study, and publishers began to sideline in the "women's book industry".

The relationship between women writers and the feminist movement has always been strained. Women writers are fighting for creative autonomy, and not many want to take a public stand or be labelled as a part of a movement. Some women writers have gone so far as to defend themselves against allegations of "unfemininess" by repudiating more radical women.

Some scholars and critics resent lumping women together in any sort of category and discussing them as such. They deny the term "women writer" and maintain that genius has no sex. Others say that "although genius may be sexless, an artist's potential cannot be realized without the freedom to explore individual perceptions of truth" (Showalter, 1971:5). For women, this has often meant seeking out and identifying with other women, which perhaps

the Women's Movement has facilitated.

The new feminist criticism has assumed that a woman writer's point of view will reflect an authentic female experience to the degree that her society has allowed her to define it. The Women's Movement has helped women writers produce an independent and confident literature unlike any produced before it.

Hedenstrom (1978) and others maintain that Canadian women novelists are a distinct group within the whole of Canadian literature. They work within a definite tradition of themes and similarity of images.

Shields discusses the possibility that it is the question of content which is the mark of difference between male and female writers - i.e. that "women are adaptive, pragmatic and realistic while men give way to ill-defined idealism and bouts of romanticism which are as damaging as disease" (Shields, 1978:151).

Kostash has pointed out that "women write about women in ways that few men ever have" not bound by traditional mythology and tending towards exposing female stereotyping rather than succumbing to it (Kostash, 1974).

Although Grayson talks about the strong role that male hegemony has played in forcing female writers to conform to masculine role models of writing, he also is forced to conclude that "despite male hegemony, the content

of at least some works by Canadian women differs from that of male writers" (Grayson, 1983:3).

David Aranson points out that a new image of women, or "the second New Woman" as he calls it, is reflected in the works of both male and female Canadian writers, particularly the new male fiction writers (Aranson, 1975). Nevertheless, more often, content differences between Canadian male and female writers seem to abound. Some of these differences have centered around expressions of the possibilities of growth and achieving personal happiness in the novels written by Canadian women compared to a pattern alternating between hope and defeat by male authors. As well, where defiance may be a creative force for women novelists, it is often a destructive force for men. Also, quite frequently male novelists have their heroes championing certain social conditions that are the very conditions that women novelists describe their heroes as escaping.

Whereas Canadian women seem to create heroines who want to expand the limitations of their socially defined roles, often through a kind of metamorphasis of escape, gaining something vital for themselves in the process, Canadian men often create heroes whose goals fail, whose personal lives are empty and often get worse. Women's heroines cast off unhappy relationships, men's heroes grimly

hang on; birth and rebirth are common in the novels of women, and death in the novels of men. Counter to the popular idea of the depressing women's novel, the creative force of escape and metamorphasis behind the plots of women's novels make them in fact more hopeful and positive than their male counterparts.

There is relatively little discussion concerning the image of women by women writers of Canadian fiction. Margaret Atwood in Survival looks at the attempts of the male-created hero in Canadian fiction to impose patriarchal relationships on females, as well as the pattern of the female-created heroines in Canadian novels to resist and escape, but her characterization of women as Venuses or Hectates, i.e. basically in relation to their sexual lives, is male oriented. As Matthews pointed out, "Atwood refuses to recognize the truly strong place of many women in the sexual and social order in Canadian fiction. If she did, how could she maintain her victim thesis? (Matthews, 1978:117).

In this thesis I propose to look at the image of women as portrayed by women writers of English Canadian fiction by examining the themes in novels written by women in Canada in the 1970's. The hypothesis is that there is a specifically female way of viewing the universe and in particular a distinct image of women portrayed by women in

Canadian fiction that differs from the traditional social image. It is suggested that a possible explanation for the emergence of this gender distinction is the convergence between the political themes (women's role in the family structure, the work place and sexual relations) that evolved from the Women's Movement and the corresponding representation of women in female literary production.

Chapter Two of this thesis attempts the theoretical and methodological analysis. The theoretical framework centers around the question of whether or not literature reflects society. The theoretical perspectives concerning the sociology of literature are examined, looking particularly at the relationship between literature and the society that produces it. As well, the various social theories of literature are examined, with an emphasis upon the Marxist framework of literature and society. Michele Barrett's analysis of ideology and the cultural production of gender is used in this chapter to explain how the political themes of the Women's Movement may have acted as a mediating factor between society and women's literature. Gender ideology is put forward as a possible explanation for the sexual differences between men and women's writing.

The chapter concludes by outlining the methodology employed in choosing the novels for the sample. It discusses the method of analysis used, rejecting the

quantitative description most associated with content analysis and opting for a more qualitative approach to the novel.

Chapter Three is the empirical chapter within which the themes of the novels are grouped into categories and applied to a discussion of the particular novels. Categories covered in this chapter are themes of development, motherhood, mother/daughter relationships, sexual relations and escape, women's relations with other women, self-identity and independence and rebirth and transformation.

It is argued in this chapter that the predominance of these categories in Canadian fiction written by women strongly suggests an image of Canadian women in fiction that differs from society's traditional view. The categories point to the fact that the novels are portraying women in the process of creating new roles for themselves and, as a consequence, draw out entirely new images of women.

Chapter Four centers around the correspondence between the Women's Movement in Canada and literature written by women. This chapter provides the link between the theoretical and empirical chapters. Themes examined in Chapter Three are fitted together with the dominant themes of the Women's Movement in Canada to discover an impact by the movement upon fiction written by women in this country.

This chapter explores the possibility of a feminine view of life and content in novels that could arise from a distinct female experience rooted in women's role in the family, the work force and sexual relations, resulting in a difference in what women choose to write about.

Although the Women's Movement emerged in the 1960's in Canada, it is argued that it was the decade of the 1970's which felt the greatest impact from that particular wave of feminism. A definite assessment of the 1970's as affected by the Women's Movement has yet to be written, and of course there are conflicting points of view concerning the success of the movement and its impact on any actual qualitative changes that may or may not have occurred concerning the actual position of women in Canadian society.

There is evidence to show that on issues such as labour force participation, concentration of women in sex-typed jobs, disproportionate shares of low-ranking positions and low earning, the situation has not changed significantly for women since the 1970's. Chapter Four examines how the movement may have changed other aspects of women's lives, in particular their own self image. The way Canadian women have portrayed women in the fiction that they wrote in the 1970's, and its subsequent place in the feminist literary tradition, gives us a clue. In the seventies, novels written by women moved beyond merely mimicing male models,

and even beyond a type of analysis that merely exposed the sexual stereotyping of women in Canadian literature in order to more sensitively deal with the impact that the ideology of the Women's Movement and the parallel development of feminist literary criticism had on women and their representation in the Canadian novel.

Chapter Five comments upon a feminist literary criticism in English Canadian literature by attempting to delineate an internally consistent body of work that can stand up as a female counter-tradition (counter-ideology) to the dominant male tradition (patriarchal ideology).

In drawing all the threads of the argument together, this chapter points out that the most important difference between fiction written by women in the past and the present may not necessarily be in the number of contributions by women to Canadian literature, but in the image of women portrayed in the writing. The women in Canadian novels of the 1970's at least, finally showed women with their own individuality, confirming their own destiny and having their own sexual identity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

This thesis proposes to look at the representation of women portrayed by women writers of English Canadian literature by examining certain themes in novels written by women. The hypothesis is that there is a specifically female way of viewing the world, or in other words, a distinct image of women by women that differs from the traditional (patriarchal) social image, particularly in literature. It is further hypothesized that a reason for this divergence between women's portrayal of women and the 'traditional' portrayal may be the particular effect that the Women's Movement has had upon women's conception of themselves in Canada.

Essentially this thesis is an attempt to examine within the confines of a sociology of literature (otherwise called sociology through literature) the possibilities of a feminist tradition within English Canadian fiction and the possible correspondence between the political themes of the Women's Movement and the representation of women in novels written by women in Canada during the 1970's.

The theoretical question of most concern to this study is whether or not literature reflects society or the common values of society (Albrecht, 1956). If literature directly reflects society, its cultural norms and values, then the fiction produced by society should reinforce those attitudes and ideals. Literature would serve as a means of social control and exert its influence upon the attitudes and behaviour of people within that society.

In this thesis, the hypothesis is that in the case of the fiction written by women in Canada in the 1970's, society's norms and values have not been reflected. The hypothesis in fact is that a counter-tradition of sorts concerning the image of women appears in the fiction written by women. Such a theoretical assumption challenges the idea that literature reflects society. The role of the themes raised by the Women's Movement and their contribution to a counter ideology which challenged gender ideology and possibly influenced novels written by women are examined to support the hypothesis.

I. SOCIOLOGY AND LITERATURE

Grayson (1978b) has pointed out that the social scientific study of literature has not aroused much interest in English Canada. He attributes this partly to the influence of American social science in Canada, partly to

the concern that social scientists, especially those on the left, have had with the study of the material structure of society and not with its culture, and partly to the idea that Canadian literature has not been deemed a worthy subject of study.

Literature, in particular the novel, is important to discuss in sociology if only because it raises issues concerning the relation of the fictional text and the social context within which the novel was both created and interpreted.

The sociology of literature is not to be confused with literary criticism. Sociology of course is essentially the scientific study of man and woman in society, social institutions and the social process, all the while asking how society functions. Sociologists achieve this by studying social structures, socialization and the concepts of social stability, and the process by which society changes, either gradually or by revolution, and the effects these changes have on the structure of society. Social change can also occur on a smaller scale in the form of internal change, i.e. the means by which conflicts between classes or other groups in society are regulated by social institutions.

Literature, or more specifically the novel, can be seen as an attempt to re-create the social world - i.e. individuals' relationship with society, politics or the

state. Sociology can cast light on certain literary problems and also provide a more complete understanding of literature. This concern with "external" society is a key feature in the difference between the sociology of literature and literary criticism. For the latter, literature is a self-enclosed, self-sustaining enterprise. That is, for literary critics, literature is approached primarily in terms of its own inner structure, imagery, metaphor, rhythm, etc., and the external society is only a necessary background and only useful as description. For the sociologist, however, the novel can be seen as dealing with the same sociological, economic and political constructs as society itself, taking into consideration that literature, as art, transcends description and objective scientific analysis.

Some critics of the sociology of literature argue that the method of transforming the private work of literature to more specific social meanings uses literature solely as a quarry of information to be ransacked by sociologists who do not possess the critical apparatus to understand and evaluate literature. Other critics argue that literature distorts history and sociological truth, resulting in disasterous interpretations. These critics argue further that any generalizations drawn from novels are of no value compared to what can be drawn from journals, factual reports and government inquiries.

One answer to this argument is that while literature can never replace the "facts", it can reflect certain norms and values of society and it is on this level that literature can reinforce and illuminate the findings of sociologists. Those who hold closely to the reflection theory argue that literature provides a sort of mirror to an age and is a direct reflection of the various facets of the social structure, family relations and class conflict. Through the study of the sociology of literature, one can learn about the nature of society, the way in which individuals experience that society; even the problems of social change can be related to the social meanings of the inner life of the novels' characters. Since literature can be viewed as a conveyor of feelings, values, women's hopes and aspirations, literature can become one of the most effective barometers of human response to the social process.

There are basically three perspectives within the sociology of literature that are pertinent to the examination of the image of women by women in literature.

The first is the reflection theory, referring to the idea of the documentary aspect of literature, or the argument that literature provides a "mirror to an age". From this point of view, literature is a direct reflection of the various elements of the social structure, that is, family relations, class conflict, divorce trends, etc.

(Albrecht, 1976; Inglis, 1938; Lowenthal, 1957). Literature is a social product which links the problems of society with a sociological analysis of the novel.

The second perspective is essentially the sociology of occupations. It deals primarily with the social conditions of the writer and attempts to relate the specific economic, political and social influences of society to the structure of the writer's work (Laurenson, 1972; Cappon, 1978; Hall, 1979). This approach concentrates upon studying patronage and the costs of producing works of art. It examines the writer's relationship with his or her patron, the rise of the publishing houses, the role of the publisher and the bookseller, the democratization of culture and the emergence of the novel as a middle-class literary genre. This perspective is concerned with how literary production and consumption affect the form and content of literary works and as well how the increasing alienation of the writer from society has had an impact upon literary style and content.

The third perspective, and perhaps the most difficult to examine, is the attempt to trace the ways in which a work of literature is actually received by a particular society or a particular historical moment. It is through the study of audience reception that changes in society's morals and values have been studied (Lowenthal,

1957).

It may be successfully argued that these three perspectives are by no means mutually exclusive. In fact, in order to have the most complete picture of the role of literature in society, all three perspectives may be necessary. It is, however, beyond the scope of this particular study to attempt to integrate all three perspectives. The theoretical approach addressed in this paper is the reflection theory.

Reflection Theory

The discussion concerning the role of literature in society has generally been centered around the reflection theory. Any debate that emerges, questions whether in fact literature reflects society or whether it shapes society or controls it.

Proponents of the "social control theory" (Rockwell, 1974) see literature as a product of society and not the result of a private fantasy or as merely entertainment. Fiction must represent social reality and therefore serves a necessarily functional aspect of social control by society. It can also be an important element of social change, as literature plays an almost crucial role in the socialization of infants and children, imparting norms, values and behaviours.

The underlying assumptions of a theory that sees literature merely as an element of social control, are that words themselves hold an inherent power within them, and that readers are passively swayed by this power. Critics however, have pointed out that "the proponents of censorship, those who lean most heavily upon this theory, have never adequately explained the process involved nor can they predict the social effect of a piece of writing" (Inglis, 1938:526).

The reflection theory tends to see literature as more of a document of society, to be analyzed in terms of the society it represents. Sociologists in particular, because they have a knowledge of the structure of society, are thought to be best equipped to examine a novel in terms of how social types and behaviours are reproduced in fiction. "It is the task of the sociologist of literature to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. He has to transform the private equation of themes and stylistic means into social equations" (Lowenthal, 1957:x).

Inglis pointed out one way to compare the reflection and social control theories in her study of heroines in short stories in the Saturday Evening Post. The reflection theory would maintain that the heroines in fiction are modeled after actual women in society, whereas

the social control theory would maintain that the fictional heroines are models for actual women. One might well argue that whereas literature reflects certain values of society, it can then in its turn serve the purpose of itself exerting great influence upon society by further emphasizing these values. In this sense, the reflection theory and the social control theory are not mutually exclusive; rather, they reinforce each other. Albrecht, in particular, has emphasized the idea that literature reflects the common cultural values of society and that this conception is "logically consistent with the theory of social control" (Albrecht, 1956:722). Viewed in this manner, fiction is a social product which also reproduces society, particularly because it can have a normative effect upon the members of that society.

There are many problems inherent in seeing literature as merely a reflection of society. Wellek and Warren pointed out that if we assume "that literature, at any given time, mirrors the current social situation 'correctly', it is false; it is commonplace, trite and vague, if it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality. To say that literature mirrors or expresses life is even more ambigious. A writer certainly expresses his experience and total conception of life, but it would be manifestly untrue to say that he expresses the whole of life - or even the whole life of a given time -

completely and exhaustively" (Wellek and Warren, 1977:95).

There are problems concerning what literature actually reflects, i.e. do literary devices distort the portrayal of society. Can one assume artistic fidelity to historical and social truth and are fictional characters or situations typical of an historical period? An even larger problem with the conception of literature as reflection is that such an approach ignores the writer, who the writer is, and the writer's intentions. While we can learn quite a bit about a particular historical period from novels, it does not necessarily follow that we can know about all aspects of society, or make sweeping generalizations from that knowledge. One danger from seeking social content from literature is that fiction often operates through what is left out in the writing as well as what is present.

It is more useful to say (as Rockwell pointed out) that literature does not reflect society, but is rather an integral part of it, to be treated as any institution in society similar to the structure and function of, for example, the family. What literature may reflect are society's norms, values and attitudes and above all the writer's intentions, none of which are social 'fact'. "The task of the sociologist is not simply to discover historical and social reflection (or refraction) in works of literature, but to articulate the nature of the values embedded within particular literary works...Thus Lowenthal

has suggested that the main purpose of any viable sociology of literature must be to discover the 'core of meaning' which one finds at the heart of different works of literature and which expresses many aspects of thought and feeling on subjects as varied as social class, work, love, religion, nature and art" (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972:16). For Lowenthal, it is through analyzing man's (sic) problems, that we can receive an image of society and it is through the individuals who live in society that we can learn about the nature of that society and the way that society is actually experienced. Through fictional characters we can understand the socialization of individuals into society and their response to this process.

The reflection theory is useful for sociologists studying literature. Literature, if seen as a reflection of values and feelings, can point to "the degree of change occurring in different societies as well as to the manner in which individuals become socialized into the social structure and their response to this experience" (Ibid., 17).

II. THE SOCIAL THEORIES OF LITERATURE

At the start of the last part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, two approaches began to emerge in the social study of

literature. The first was the positivist perspective largely associated with the writings of Taine (1906). Later this theory began to fuse with structuralism and the early Marxism of Lukacs and Goldmann. The second perspective was a more critical and classical Marxism which tied heavily into the reflection theory. More recently, many schools of the sociology of literature situated within these two perspectives have emerged, for example, the English School, Popular Art and Mass Culture (Hall, 1979). For this study, we will attempt to apply a third perspective, one concerning ideology and gender, to the study of the sociology of literature as a possible third social theory. While mostly associated with the rejection of patriarchy in society, Barrett's approach in particular concerning the role of ideology and gender, may prove useful when examining the image of women as portrayed by women writers.

Positivism and Structuralism

In the nineteenth century, the term positivism was synonomous with the scientific method. The idea was that the scientific methods of natural science could be applied to the study of society. Research centered around social facts. Facts that could support observable laws of society were the only viable foundation for knowledge. Literature itself was considered a fact that could be applied in

scientific research.

For the positivists such as Taine studying the sociology of literature, literary texts were the very centre of the research. The research could not concern itself with the study of any other aspects of literature such as the study of social groups associated with literature, i.e. the writer, the reader or the publisher. Positivism was simply an attempt to find a meaningful way to link the texts of particular authors to particular historical conditions.

The positivists began the sociological approach to literature with attempts to develop a rigorous method of analyzing literary form - a science of literature. Literature was treated mainly as an external fact, an object to be discussed and analyzed. Literature for the positivist simply reflects society and can be used as a document of its era.

Positivism, which evolved as a mechanical deterministic approach to fiction, shared somewhat similar characteristics with the mechanical approach of the nineteenth century Marxists when Plekhenov first applied Marx's social theories to the analysis of culture. For Plekhenov, sociological analysis consisted of searching for sociological equivalents within literary works and relating literary structures to class structures. For Taine, as well as Plekhenov, literary works reflected society and had to be analysed purely as document.

For both the positivists and the early Marxists, the nineteenth century sociology of literature was essentially deterministic. Literature was causally related to and reflected whole societies. Since literature was produced by and for the middle classes (Watt, 1957), it necessarily reflected their dominant values and ideology. The role of sociology in literature was simply to explain away the work of literature as a passive response to external conditions. There was very little awareness of the complex dialectic between either form and content or form and external conditions. There was no attempt on the part of the positivists or the early Marxists to look at the dialectical unity of a literary work, the relationship between the various parts of the novel and the work as a whole. Literature was simply an objective fact which was useful for illuminating sociological themes.

For the structuralism which developed out of the positivist theories in the late nineteenth century, the concept of system which existed at any given moment in time, was extremely important. Like society itself, art was viewed as a self-enclosed system, only indirectly affected by external social factors. Literature, then, was its own totality in which all the constituent parts added up to a coherent whole. Each element of a literary work is in a dynamic relation with all the other elements, and no element has any meaning if it is not understood in relation to all

the other parts of the system.

Whereas positivism tended to see literature solely as a reflection of the socio-economic process, the structuralism that developed had a somewhat more internal perspective. Both positivism and structuralism had their basis in a specific social content, but the positivist method was not concerned as much with the literary text itself as were the structuralists, who still see the text as the very center of all literary sociological research. Positivism tended to relate literature to purely external factors through the reflection of the text, whereas structuralism, with its basis in the literary text, related literary structures to society.

Marxism

Against the empirical perspectives of positivism and structuralism, a critical tendency in the form of Marxism emerged. This Marxist perspective argued that literature was more than a reflection of society as a whole, no matter how complex the reflection. Literature was an attempt to understand the world through society's values. This perspective developed more and more into a sociology of literature which primarily studied the values by which individuals and society lived.

Some critics have argued that the Marxist concept of ideology necessarily points to a social conditioning of all

thought. This means that for Marxists, different contents in fiction represent nothing more than a direct link to a writer's class position. They interpret Marx to mean that the critical role that the division of labour plays in social life removes certain individuals from the sphere of material production to the sphere of mental production. Writing simply becomes a part of the production process, influenced by the dominant ideology in society. For these critics, Marx and Engels succumbed to the view that literature was a reflection of society and nothing more. The relationship between literature and society is conceived of in strictly economic terms, and literature and art as ideology can have no autonomy of their own.

Luckacs and Goldmann are examples of two Marxists who are associated with this deterministic approach. In trying to fuse structuralism and dialectical materialism, Luckacs in particular placed strong emphasis upon the totality of literature and the importance of seeing a literary work as a living whole which is understood only in terms of its constituent parts. Goldmann extended Luckacs' theories to the socio-economic sphere. He explained the novel form as a development of class relations in society and set up a direct causal link between the economy and literary structures, between the form of the modern novel and society as a whole and between the novel and particular phases of capitalist development.

For example, Goldmann outlined three historical periods through which he traced the heroes' disappearance from the novel as a direct result of the changes in capitalism. For Goldmann, 1880-1914 was the period of cartel capitalism when the heroes of the novels assumed less importance than they had before. 1918-1939 was a period of crisis for capitalism when heroes in literature are destroyed. Post 1945 was a period of consumer capitalism when only highly alienated heroes appeared in the novels.

Other critics (Noble, 1976) feel that Marxists have been unable to explain why writers with similar class backgrounds can produce such widely different works of fiction in response to the same historical period and class conditions.

Marx, however, was writing in a very different direction from that of positivist sociology, and developed a dialectical theory of society which stressed the role of consciousness and man's activity in producing his own world. For Marx, the relationship of man (and presumably women) to society was complex and dialectical. As man changed his environment through invention, science and technology, so he must change himself and his nature. "In the social production of their existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of

production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there corresponds definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx, 1976:3).

Swingewood also disagrees with the deterministic interpretation of Marx. "Literature and human purpose are inextricably intertwined: the values by which man in society lives are rendered through definite literary and artistic structures and in this sense reflect his desire to reshape the world. For although Marx argued for the crucial role of class conflict in shaping economic, political and social structure, he continually expressed that society was made by men - but not men living in isolation from others" (Swingewood, 1975:11).

Swingewood goes a step further in denying charges of a socio-economic determinism in Marx, by explaining that Marx saw writers who transposed economics and politics into literature as idealogues and not artists, and that although all writers were necessarily historically bound by class, it is only when writers transcend their own class standpoint

that they can truthfully portray society and man's relationship to it. As Engels wrote, "A socialist-biased novel fully achieves its purposes...if, by conscientously describing real material relations, breaking down conventional illusions about them, it instils doubt as to the eternal character of the existing order, although the author does not offer any definite solution or does not even line up openly on any particular side" (Marx and Engels, 1976:39).

It is quite possible then to develop a Marxist perspective of the sociology of literature that does not necessarily see literature as reflective of society in a one-to-one relation, but rather as an integration of literature and society through a complex structure of mediations, the response of writers living their own lives to the social, economic, political and human aspects of their society. Explaining works of literature in class terms does not have to be done mechanically, and a Marxist view of literature does not necessarily have to be either documentary or a passive reflection of the historical process. To do this, it is necessary to reject the positivist/structuralist use of the literary text as simply an object of analysis, as simply an illustration of social fact. The sociology of literature has to be understood, not in its simple reduction to a reflection of society, but as a dynamic articulation of society's values by writers who are

part of the world they describe and who are themselves struggling with the question of social values.

Engels wrote that the interconnection between ideas and their material condition of existence was complicated and even obscured by intermediate links. The content of literature (as well as art and philosophy) was more opaque than that of political science and economics. Since art and literature was more autonomous than political science and economics, the influence of social factors upon them were more obscure, more veiled and their content less obviously ideological (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972:47).

Whereas empiricism describes (reflects) what is most observable in society, presuming the total picture to be composed of separate parts, Marxists doubt the truthfulness of such a reflection. "Does not the continual pursuit of 'facts' which are selected by the social scientist according to the prior dictates of his own position lead to a misrepresentation of reality? If one concentrates on what is presently observable (snapshot) to the exclusion of the historical process which creates phenomena, is there any chance at all of explaining reality?" (Cappon, 1978:17).

The relationship between literature and society is determined by the role which they play in forming ideology. As was pointed out earlier, the imposition of values and norms of an ideology is a form of social control in which literature can play an obvious role. Grayson talks about

Canadian writers as an important elite in Canada because of their facility to transmit ideology and "the subtle ways in which works of literature can implant or reinforce particular ideologies in the minds of its readers" (Grayson, 1978:291). Although the literature which dominates in a society will reflect the values of the dominating class, literature can also be relatively autonomous and hence can play a crucial role in countering that dominant ideology, aiding in raising a consciousness necessary in order to undertake any social change. One would have to study the effects of a particular literature upon a readership to know this for sure. In reviewing novels by the women writers Minna Kautsky (the mother of the German social democratic party leader Karl Kautsky) and the English socialist Mary Harkness, Engels wrote that political ideology should not be the major concern of an artist and that the work itself benefitted if the author's views remained hidden. For Engels, the point of any novel had to emerge naturally from the situation and action depicted within it.

Cappon maintains that there exists in Canada a stream of writers, who, although not from the working class, have in mind large scale social change to destroy the dominant bourgeoisie or at the very least give the reader the cognitive tools to promote social change. For Cappon this can be achieved either unconsciously by the writer (for example, the novels of Margaret Laurence) or consciously

(for example, Philip Grove's The Master of the Mill). This stream of literature represents the working class and "collective consciousness" and argues that the working class is not isolated in society, but has the potential of uniting in a class struggle. To accomplish this, English Canadian novels have not necessarily had to deal directly or explicitly with the concept of class struggle itself. For Cappon, simply showing the real world without mystification, or depicting at least one aspect underlying the Canadian social structure as it relates to the totality of social organization is to contribute to the break-down of the dominant ideology.

Grayson also has attempted to argue against what he calls the claims of social science to use Canadian literature as a proponent for the idea of the conservative nature of Canada by outlining the ways "in which class and the ideology of class have found expression in English Canadian novels since the last century" and how class and ideology of class have changed in relation to the "number of complex changes in the socio-economic and cultural environments in which Canadians have found themselves" (Grayson and Grayson, 1978:266).

Although this study does not deal directly with class or the ideology of class, but rather women and women's images of themselves in literature, the framework offered by the Marxist analysis is a fruitful one. Although it would

be impossible to argue that the novels studied here have directly challenged the Canadian social structure, it can be seen how they formed a counter-ideology concerning the role of women in Canadian society, thereby contributing to the breakdown of a dominant ideology and traditional image of women in Canada.[1]

III. IDEOLOGY AND GENDER

If literature can be seen as a part of society and not simply as a reflection of that society, then the ideology that it portrays can not simply be seen as mirroring a dominant class. Raymond Williams defines ideology as "a relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values and beliefs, of a kind that can be abstracted as a 'world view' or as a 'class outlook'" (Williams, 1977:109). He goes further to discuss hegemony as stepping beyond ideology to include lived experience. "Hegemony is...not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipultion' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values...It thus contibutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of

absolute because of experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of society to move, in most areas of their lives" (Ibid., 110). Central to the concept of hegemony is the idea of the union of "man's" activity and practice and the domination of economic and political forces in the world.

Nevertheless, as Grayson points out, "despite the hegemonic properties of the dominant, it must not be assumed that in all social contexts, and in all periods of history, other elements are completely subordinate to it" (Grayson, 1981:425). Even though novelists have lived in societies dominated by the development of the capitalist division of labour since the eighteenth century, and although the novelists is socialized into the values of the dominant culture, there are often contradictory relations between the writer and that dominant ideology stemming from the social and economic relations in society. The overall structure of the novel, in fact, centers around the dialectic between a hero's freedom and autonomy as written by the novelist and the realities of the external world, just as there is the dialectic between the concept of people simultaneously creating their own social world and yet being determined by a dominant ideology. "Under certain circumstances, the revolutionary potential of literature and art is also recognized" (Ibid.).

A Marxist analysis is imperative to understanding why literature does not simply "reflect" the dominant ideology of society and in fact can aid in countering that ideology. In examining the novels of Canadian women writers in the 1970's, however, this analysis proves to be missing a vital link that is necessary in explaining why the heroes of these novels have been portrayed in a non-traditional manner. What has been missing from the orthodox Marxist analysis of ideology and culture, especially when discussing novels written by women, is a mediating factor which acts as a bridge between the individual writer and society, accounting for the specific nature of the writer's existence - in this particular case, women's oppression. By understanding works of fiction written by women in terms of examining them as they are mediated by their experience of oppression is to attempt a more dialectical method of studying literature. A more dialectical method allows the novel to remain in some ways autonomous, or influenced but not determined by the social context within which it is written. In other words, in examining the role of gender ideology in literature, it is more useful to see that ideology as relatively autonomous rather than as only a reflection of a specific historical condition or set of class relations.

As Michele Barrett points out, many of the theories taken up by contemporary feminists concerning sexist ideology are inadequate when transferred to the question of

gender because they merely see ideology as a reflection of class relations, or the "playing out of economic contradictions at the mental level" (Barrett, 1980:85). Such an analysis cannot work, Barrett argues, because the contradictory relations between labour and capital are sex blind and operate independently of gender. Barrett distinguishes between the relations of production (by which she means class relations, the divisions of gender, race, mental and manual labour and in which gender ideology plays an important part) and the means and forces of production (in which she says gender ideology does not play a crucial part).

This argument is particularly useful in examining the question of ideological representation and explaining why women novelists portray their heroes in non-traditional ways, rather than mimicing the traditional male hero or even reversing their roles. "We can explore the historical construction of the categories of masculinity and femininity without being obliged to deny that, historically specific as they are, they nevertheless exist today in systematic and even predictable terms. Without denying that representation plays an important constitutive role in this process we can still insist that at any given time we can have a knowledge of these categories prior to any particular representation in which they may be reproduced or subverted" (Ibid., 93). What this means for the ways in which women portray women in

fiction is that, because representation is linked to historical social relations, it is women's experience of oppression that determines the images they portray. These images are not simply traditional male views of women or even the inversion of these accepted images of women. The Women's Movement provided a non-traditional view of women, countering the traditional view established by gender ideology. Women's oppression, rooted in the social relations of production (class relations, division by gender and division of labour) has acted as a mediating agent brought to the fore by the Women's Movement and resulting in women writers creating new non-traditional heroes, certainly different from the heroes that men create.

Barrett makes a very important criticism of the present theories concerning how the ideology of gender is produced and reproduced in our culture. For Barrett, most of the research has placed too much emphasis upon the reading of the text itself rather than in locating questions such as those concerning the portrayal of the image of women in a more theoretical framework. "To restrict our analysis solely to the text itself is to turn the <u>object</u> of analysis into its own means of explanation; by definition this cannot provide an adequate account. To reduce the problem solely to the text is a form of reductionism as unprofitable as reducing it to the mechanical expression of economic relations...this reduction to the text 'simply privileges

the artefact itself, divorced from its conditions of production and existence, and claims that it alone provides the means of its own analysis'" (Ibid., 100). Although such a theoretical framework for literature has yet to be adequately formulated, analyzing the historical period in which a novel is written in terms of the mode of production (and here Barrett refers to Eagleton's literary mode of production) is essential to understanding the literary text. It logically follows, then, especially considering that the conditions under which men and women produce literature are materially different (Woolf, 1977), that the effects of the mode of production would be internalized within the text. It is for this reason that this thesis postulates a difference in men's and women's portrayal of women in fiction, and it is here where there appears to be a contradiction in Barrett's argument.

Barrett ties in her argument against relying on the text as the sole object of analysis with a denial of the validity of distinguishing between the images portrayed by male and female authors. For Barrett, the representation of image in fiction is too often open to interpretation to be useful. She claims that the reading of texts is not determined by the text itself, but by the subjective reading of literature and even more importantly by the presentation of the novel, its cover, who publishes it and what is written on the jacket cover. In other words, since we

cannot always really know the author's intention, it is futile to attempt it. It is also Barrett's contention that female authors are given too much "credit" for trying to raise the question of gender and women's oppression in their work and male authors discredited too often by assumptions that "any sexism they portray is necessarily their own" (Barrett, 1980:106). While in some feminist circles, Barrett's criticism may be true, certainly in the context of most literary criticism, it does not follow. Although Barrett warns against reading too much into the fictional narrative of women writers, in fact it is women's experiences that must structure their work, no matter that it is a fictional work. This does not equate fictional writing with sociology but simply reaffirms what we know about women's own experiences in society.

Gender ideology influences both men and women in society. The novels that people produce, whether they are sexist or feminist novels, are also influenced by that ideology. Women's experience of oppression, rooted as it is in the family structure, is also legitimized by an ideology of gender. The Women's Movement has contributed to an alternative or counter ideology which challenges gender ideology and perhaps has influenced women's writing as well. At the very least, the content of women's novels is derived from women's experience in society. Women's experience of oppression is therefore important to examine as a mediating

factor between literature and society in order to understand where the difference between male and female writing lies.

IV. WRITING AND SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

The question of whether or not there is a sexual difference in writing is a relatively recent focus in feminist criticism. It asks how if at all, gender relates to writing and how attitudes toward sexual differences generate and structure literary texts.

The term "feminist criticism" in literature has itself come to mean either (i) any criticism written by women, no matter what the subject; (ii) any criticism written by women about a man's book from a political or feminist perspective or (iii) any criticism written by a woman about a woman's book. Feminist criticism of literature has helped to define the portrayal of attitudes towards female characters in novels by both men and women and to better expose the sex stereotyping of women in society which has been a feature of the ideological role of literature.

At first feminist theorists stressed women's similarity with men in claims of equality in literature. But later on, as with feminist social theory, feminist literary criticism began to look more at the female experience and the distinctive features of the female texts

as the center of analysis. More recently, Abel contends, "feminist critical attention has shifted from recovering a lost tradition to discovering the terms of confrontation with the dominant tradition" (Abel, 1982:2-3). Twentieth century views of contemporary female novelists reflect the same dilemmas as twentieth century views of women's equality.

The structuralists have pointed to women's 'unique' biology and role as mothers as reasons for any sexual difference in writing. The traditional Marxist perspective sees sexism simply as a result of class relations in society. Women's oppression serves the interest of the ruling class and those women who cannot transcend sexist ideology exhibit a false consciousness. Radical feminists attribute any uniqueness in women's writing to the material conditions of male power and dominance in society. Sexism serves men's interest and although women's inequality has had consequences for both women and men in society, it has led to a raised feminist consciousness in women. Still others such as liberal feminists, argue that what women have so far been able to express through literature is more a result of the complex interplay between biological determinants, individual talent and opportunity and the larger effects of socialization. All of these theories suggest a female consciousness that evolves a literary style appropriate to that consciousness. All are assumptions that

ask how women's writing is different from men's, but none ask whether it is or even perhaps more importantly whether the variations among individual women writers are greater than the difference between male and female writers.

Based upon these theoretical perspectives it is at least possible to contend that there is a distinct female mode or tradition among Canadian female writers that distinguishes them from their male counterparts. This can be discovered through certain thematic concerns, image patterns and stylistic devices. Many feminist critics have attempted to outline some of these differences. Kolodny has termed certain of these patterns "reflexive perceptions" and "inversion devices" (Kolodny, 1975). Others have looked at what they call the "critical silence", but what emerges from their analyses is the contention that despite the fact that many male writers also explore the relations, self-perceptions and false images of their male characters, nevertheless the female experience of these situations is qualitatively different and hence differently structured. Although women's and men's fiction often explore some of the same themes, women's fiction writers both express and write about these experiences differently. Just as women themselves experience the problems of anxiety, paranoia and fears of entrapment differently from men, so their language and writing will mirror these differences. Therefore, while it is important to acknowledge a common ground shared by men

and women in our culture, it is more important to explore the ways in which this common ground is perceived differently as well as the ways in which the ground may not be that common at all.

In conclusion, it is not useful to accept the argument that literature reflects or controls society. Just as ideology is of course affected by the material conditions of the historical period within which it is found, to see literature as simply a reflection discounts the role of the writer and society's influence upon her. It is more useful to see literature as an integral part of society and to look at mediating factors such as women's oppression between them to explain the different image of women in novels written by women. "Nonetheless, the struggle over the meaning of gender is crucial. It is vital...to establish its meaning in contemporary capitalism as not simply 'difference' but as division, oppression, inequality, internalized inferiority for women. Cultural practice is an essential site of this struggle. It can play an incalcuable role in the raising of consciousness and the transformation of our subjectivity" (Barrett, 1980:113).

V. METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

In contrast to most of the analyses available on Canadian literature which is primarily research done on individual novels or more often on individual authors, this study examined twenty novels written by twenty different women writers.

The novel was chosen as the unit of analysis. Given the limitations of scope and length of a Masters thesis, the selection of the number of novels to study was limited to twenty. Also, since the primary concern of the thesis is the representation of women in novels written by women, only women writers were selected for the study. Further, because the French Canadian literary tradition has differed significantly in both content and influence from the literature produced in the rest of the country, the sample was taken from only English Canadian novels written by women. Again, given the numerical limitation of the selection, and in order to ensure a wide representation of authors and not bias the sample in favour of the more prolific writers (for example, Atwood, Engel, Laurence or Thomas), only one novel per author was allowed in the study.

Both Jacobus (1979) and Grayson (1983) have argued that many novels written by women after 1900 have contained challenges to the traditional image of women portrayed

through literature. However, because of the hypothesis that there exists a possible correspondence between the themes of the Women's Movement and the themes in women's literature in Canada, the sample was further limited to those novels published in the 1970's. Two novels for each year of the decade was chosen to ensure a large enough sample from which to draw conclusions

The year that a novel was actually published was the category within which it was placed because, in most cases, it would be impossible to ascertain when the novel was actually written. As Grayson notes: "We can also appreciate that in a capitalist society most often works of literature are published when there is a perceived market. In this sense, publishing houses serve as censors over what we read. But - given market constraints, perhaps we can consider the mere fact of publication important. It indicates that a publisher perceives some connection between what is expressed in a novel and what some individuals in society are prepared to accept. To this extent, date of publication is extremely important" (Grayson and Grayson, 1978:266).

Therefore, the sample consists of twenty English Canadian novels written by women, which were published in the 1970's, evenly distributed throughout the decade. A list of these novels is included in Section VI.

The novels were selected randomly by placing all the novels written by women and published in each year of the

decade into a hat and making two selections per year. Literary merit was never a criterion despite Lucien Goldmann's contention that only great literature is worthy of study. Stronger arguments have been made in favour of studying "popular" writing (Ibid., 267).

There were problems in choosing the sample of novels written by women for the decade of the seventies. Many of the bibliographical sources consulted, despite their claim to be all-inclusive of Canadian writing, conspicuously left out many women writers. It should be noted that these bibliographical sources were compiled by males. Grayson (1983), in addressing the same problem, notes that considering the operation of male hegemony in society and in the publishing industry, "the works of excellent women writers may have been ignored" (Grayson, 1983:3). Excellent or not, a bibliography proposing to list all Canadian fiction for any period should include all the novels written. In light of this blatant sex bias, it was much easier to understand why women writers in the 19th century frequently published under male pseudonyms.

The study sample was finally selected randomly from two sources. For the years 1970-1975, the novels were taken from the bibliography, Bird at the Window: An Annotated Bibliography of Canadian Fiction Written By Women, 1970-1975 by Lois C. Gottlieb and Wendy Keitner. Interestingly enough, it should be noted that the bibliography was

compiled for the American Review of Canadian Studies. As there exists no similar bibliography compiled for the years 1976-1979, the rest of the sample was taken from Canadian Books in Print, 1984-1985 using the Canadian Literature (Fiction) section. The years 1970-1975 were also cross-referenced with Canadian Books in Print to ensure that no English Canadian novel written by women was omitted from the sample.

When the sample was finally selected, one further problem posed itself. Some of the novels selected were out of print and not available through any library. One of the reasons for this might be, as Jane Rule (1985) points out, that most publishing houses have no ambitions for their books but to break even. When a first printing sells out, no plans are made to repeat a printing unless there is enormous pressure from the bookstores. The bookstores in their turn will not risk a second order unless there is a publishing campaign to support sales. A lot of novels never make it to the paperback edition. And even when they do, mass paperback publishers buy up the rights to a book for five years, issue the book once or twice in that period for six weeks at a time and then let it go out of print. "Not only does this give a book too short a shelf life for the only advertising it gets, word of mouth from people who have enjoyed reading it, but it also makes its use in the classroom impossible. It isn't around long enough for

teachers to order it" (Rule, 1985:49). The problem is a similar one for libraries which might wish to acquire many of the novels.

For most of the 1970's in Canada, there were only roughly ten to fifteen novels by women published per year. Of these, in certain years, some were out of print and otherwise not available. When faced with the dilemma of a lack of access to a novel chosen for the sample, a reselection was made randomly for that particular year.

Perhaps one of the most difficult problems in using novels as units of analysis, is that of determining how the content of fiction can be used to prove and illustrate the contentions of a sociological study.

Very often in examining literature, content analysis has been used, that is, the supposedly objective, systematic and quantitative description of the "manifest" content of novels has been calculated. There often have been however, more difficulties than uses for content analysis. Some have questioned its very objectivity and others have pointed to the problems associated with quantification. For instance, frequency counts of content units do not necessarily relate to their importance and themes in novels do not lend themselves readily to quantification. Overall, content analysis poses the problems of "quantifying the different elements of the content;...taking account of the 'form' or style of the communication;...and the problem of the latent

content of the communication" (Burgelin, 1972:318).

A quantitative analysis might deal more appropriately with manifest content rather than with latent content. A qualitative approach was opted for in this study since in dealing with the themes of novels it might be important to be able to include in an analysis what is not present as well as what is. As well, qualitative analysis is more theoretically oriented and uses less formalized categories and allows for the use of more complex themes than does quantitative content analysis. A qualitative analysis also allows the research to draw more meaningful inferences from the novels. "In other words, the meaning of a frequently recurring item is not essentially linked to the fact that it occurs ten times rather than twenty times, but it is essentially linked to the fact that it is placed in opposition to another item which occurs rarely (or which sometimes is absent)" (Ibid., 319).

Therefore, in this study, a qualitative analysis was used by reading the novels and then making the arguments for the thesis by extracting certain perceptions, assumptions and meanings from the authors, looking for certain inconsistencies in the writing, searching for the themes pertinent to the argument in the novels and as well remarking on topics that might have been left out of the fiction.

The evidence for the thesis is presented in the empirical chapter by the extensive use of the citing of passages from the novels to show how the underlying themes that were examined in the writing had become embodied in concrete thought or action. Also an attempt is made to place this analysis in a broader social framework (in this case, the Canadian Women's Movement) so that it could be shown how the history of a society could be "read not in the literature, but through its literature and the formally constituted literary artifact it produces" (Zeraffa, 1976:64).

"At the end of the process the analyst should be in a position to ask himself/herself specific questions concerning the social encounter, drama, novel or other forms of discourse at hand. That analyst should also be in a position to answer such questions" (Grayson, 1983:5).

VI. THE NOVELS

Atwood, Margaret.
Lady Oracle. Toronto: Seal Books, 1976a.

Beresford-Howe, Constance.
The Book of Eve. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973.

Bhatia, June.
The Latchkey Kid. Don Mills: Longmans, 1971.

Brandis, Marianne.
This Spring's Sowing. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.

Engel, Marian.
Bear. Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1972.

Fraessler, Shirley.
Everything in the Window. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979.

Fielding, Joy.
The Best of Friends. New York: C.P. Putnam's and Sons, 1972.

Fraser, Sylvia.
The Candy Factory. Scarborough: Signet Books, 1975.

Gallant, Mavis.
A Fairly Good Time. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.

Henry, Ann.
It's All Free - On The Outside. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975.

Kaplan, Bess.
Malke, Malke. Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1979.

Laurence, Margaret.
The Diviners. New York: Bantam Books, 1974.

Levi, Helen.
Honour Your Partner. Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1979.

McFee, Oonah.
Sandbars. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

Rippon, Marion.
Ahmi. Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1978.

Rule, Jane.
Against the Season. Tallahassie: Naiad Press, 1971.

Staebler, Edna.
Cape Breton Harbour. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

Thomas, Audrey.
Songs My Mother Taught Me. Vancouver: Talon Books, 1973.

Truss, Jan.
Bird at the Window. Toronto: MacMillan Books, 1974.

Van Herk, Aritha.
Judith. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978a.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEMES OF THE NOVELS

There is a possibility that Canadian women novelists are a distinct group within the whole of Canadian literature, working within a definite tradition that can be shown by examining the themes and similarity of images used by Canadian women novelists. This chapter will examine the specific themes found in the twenty Canadian novels studied in order to find out whether or not the way women were portrayed and what women wrote about in the 1970's differed significantly from what has been considered "the traditional" "the mystical" or even "the archetypical" image of women in fiction. Very possibly the representation of women in female literary production, this "new" image of women in fiction, has some corresponding parallels to the themes raised by the Woman's Movement.

Simone de Beauvoir wrote in The Second Sex, "Woman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow-White, she who receives and submits. In song and story the young man is seen departing adventurously in search of women; he slays the dragon, he battles giants; she is locked in a tower, a palace, a garden, a cave, she is chained to a rock, a captive, sound asleep: she waits" (de Beauvoir, 1963:271-

272). Certainly de Beauvoir is describing what has been the traditional and mystical female role in fiction. That is, excluded from active social participation in the world, the fictional heroine's role is to wait. Traditionally, female sleep was interrupted by the arrival of the prince who awakened the heroine to adulthood (i.e., marriage) and a re-entering into social activity, but only in the private sphere, in the role of receiving and submitting, subordinating herself to her husband and her children. The traditional heroine was forced to develop inwardly, to explore and develop spiritually, morally and emotionally at the expense of all other aspects of selfhood. Female heroines who rebelled against the traditional female role were perceived as unnatural and paid the price for their rebellion with unhappiness, madness and death. As daughters of Eve and thereby inheriting the legacy of Eden, "heroines are destined to dependency and servitude, as well as to painful and sorrowful childbirth because, like their predecessor, they had dared to disregard authority or tradition in the search for wisdom and happiness" (Martin, 1977:329).

This description should not make it seem that all of the novels ever written have produced the traditional heroine. While the great majority of published literature in the western world has been produced by men, there have been many notable feminist and women novelists who have

attempted a different portrayal of the fictional heroine (Gilbert and Gubar, 1985). Any social system that is ripe with contradiction, such as the contradiction inherent in gender ideology, could not avoid reproducing these contradictions in its cultural representations. As was mentioned in Chapter Two, however, many of these novelists remained relatively unknown and have only been recently rediscovered as a result of a new feminist research.

The roots of women's oppression are found in their social roles, particularly in their role in the family structure. The novels of any period must reproduce both this oppression and the contradictions inherent within it. Annis Pratt in her examination of more than three hundred women's novels found that "even the most conservative women authors create narratives manifesting an acute tension between what any normal human being might desire and what a woman must become. Women's fiction reflects an experience radically different from men's because our drive towards growth as persons is thwarted by our society's prescriptions concerning gender. Whether women authors are conscious of this feminism or force pro femina in their novels or not, or whether they are overtly concerned with being and writing about women, the tension...between forces demanding our submissions and our rebellious assertions of personhood, characterize far too much of our fiction to be incidental" (Pratt, 1981:6).

The "traditional" heroine has often in the past been portrayed in the manner in which men have viewed women. This has largely meant that women heroines have been represented in an intrinsically contradictory way, i.e., as mother, as wife, as mistress and as sex object. In other words, women have been simply defined by their roles in relationship to men. Women in both real life and in literature are usually described using the male characteristic as the norm. Therefore women are passive when compared to men who take initiative, aggressive if they succeed in male spheres and hence unfeminine and unnatural. Women may be described as intelligent, but it is rarely in the logical way that men are intelligent. Rather, if women are intelligent it is attributed to a sort of mysterious intuition that is usually just a bit flighty. Women are also described as possessive, i.e. selfish and narrow, whereas possessiveness in men is associated with protectiveness and responsibility. In terms of sexual relations of course, women are described by whether or not they are more or less desirous of sex than men - i.e., if they desire it more they are lustful - if less, they are frigid. Women then are witches, bitches or goddesses or perhaps all three at the same time. These views of women are male views of women although, of course these images are often internalized by women as well as men. What all these descriptions of women point to is that in literature, as in

society, women are not equal to men and thus the sexist image of women has prevailed in myth and in literature for a very long time.

We of course are living in a time when these traditional images of women in both life and literature are undergoing analysis and change. "Fiction can contribute to changing female consciousness and men's concept of women by providing a vision of a new Eve, of a woman who is self-actualizing, strong, risk-taking and independent, but also capable of loving and being loved" (Martin, 1977:345). By the 1970's, women's desire for and in some ways achievements of new social freedom has provided new material for novelists, especially women writers. In earlier fiction for example, a woman living alone (i.e., losing the man's protection - the domestic reward) was usually a punishment for some female failing. Modern women's fiction often regards living alone as a form of freedom, a prize and not a punishment. Independence is something sought after and cherished.

In particular Kostash has pointed out that "women write about women in ways that few men ever have" by looking beyond mythology, and that they expose "female characters such as mothers, virgins, spinsters, adulteresses with an unconventional compassion and identification, unlike the sometimes 'venal and vicious' portraits offered up by men" (Kostash, 1974:5).

There also appears to be a difference to the content of the novels written by Canadian women and the men. While men seem to write in patterns alternating back and forth between hope and defeat (Cohen, Richler), women write about the possibilities for growth. Defiance, a destructive force for men, appears as a creative force for women novelists. Often male novelists have their heroes champion conditions that women writers have their heroines escaping.

Again, whereas Canadian women seem more often to create heroines who want to expand the limitations of their socially defined role, often through a metamorphasis of escape, gaining something vital to themselves in the process, male novelists often create heroes whose goals fail, whose personal lives are empty and often get worse. Women's heroines cast off unhappy relationships, men's heroes grimly hang on; birth and rebirth is common to novels of women, death more common in the novels of men. Hedenstrom (1978) concludes that escape and metamorphasis is a dominant theme in novels by English Canadian women. The themes of escape and metamorphasis are a creative force in women's novels and a destructive force in novels by men, making women's novels more hopeful and positive than those of their male counterparts.

In briefly reviewing the sample of novels chosen from the 1970's for this study, there are some general points that can be made in summary concerning the dominant

fictional modes and narrative style of the fiction. Firstly, "realistic" fiction was the dominant form in the sample. That is, none of the twenty books was either symbolic or existential fiction. Only one of the novels was predominantly a comic novel. Only two novels dealt with any form of "social protest." All parts of Canada from the east coast to the west were represented in the sample. About twelve of the novels took place in an urban setting and the rest took place either in a rural or small town setting. All of the novels but two had their dominant character as female while only two of the novels had male heroes.

Seven of the novels were written as first person narratives, ten were in the conventional third person, while three of the novels mixed the third person with interior monologues, stream of consciousness, diaries or letters. For example, one of the novels by Audrey Thomas, while employing the use of the first person narrative the majority of the time, often combined the first and third person together as in: "Isobel's family was eating - we must have spent a fortune every year on food" (Thomas, 1973:71).

Roughly half of the sample dealt in some significant way with childhood and adolescence. At least six of the novels either placed some importance or concentrated on older women. Twelve of the novels centered mostly on the lives of women between the ages of twenty and thirty-five.

In only five of the novels was women's work essential to either the plot or the theme of the fiction. Women were writers or aspiring to be writers, teachers, housewives, shopgirls, secretaries, factory workers, social workers, librarians, students, hospital workers, or farmers. There was one interpreter, one anthropologist and one circus worker. Only three of the novels followed the traditional pattern of representing women simply as wife and mother as their major role. Women in the Canadian novels in the 1970's expressed individuality and tried to control their own destinies. The attempts at writing and farming in particular were symbolic of metamorphasis and the need to escape.

The themes from the novels of the sample that have been chosen for examination are those that are shown later to parallel the major political themes of the Women's Movement, for example, the themes of development, mother relations, sexual relations, escape, relationships between women, self-identity and independence, and the themes of rebirth and transformation.

It seemed important to place these themes examining the literary image of women over the decade of the seventies along a continuum. I have attempted to place the themes in a developing pattern of women's rising consciousness. As Robin Morgan wrote, feminists have journeyed "through unchartered territory, via the intertwined roads of

daughterhood, artistry, marriage, motherhood, radicalism. The interior terrain was one of ambivalent love, of dreams and fantasies, an exploration of 'madness' and an affirmation of the artistic process" (Morgan, 1978:vi).

In this way, the themes from the literature will be categorized along the idea of a developing journey into womanhood and liberation. The first themes examined will be the rites of passage and novels of development, followed by mother relations, particularly the mother/daughter theme. Next the themes of sexual relations and escape will be discussed, followed by relationships and love between women, the theme of self-identity and independence and finally the themes of rebirth and transformation - i.e., women's "liberation."

In this way, we will best be able to see how women's identity as women, has not only differed from what we have called the "traditional" identity of women in literature, but also how the images of women by women have developed and perhaps expanded in parallel to the image of women expounded by the Women's Movement.

I. THE 'RIGHTS' OF PASSAGE: THE THEMES OF THE NOVEL OF DEVELOPMENT

The rites of passage, or the ritual initiation of youth into the mysteries of adulthood and the quest by youth for identity, is a fairly common theme in literature and the novels of development of young women in particular are often referred to as "bildungsroman."

Of the twenty novels in the sample, seven fall into the category of "bildungsroman," those of Staebler (1972), Thomas (1973), Truss (1974), Laurence (1974), Henry (1975), McFee (1977) and Faessler (1979). An eighth, by Bhatia (1971) is a novel of development, but is the only novel with a male hero and hence the rites of passage of a young male instead of a young female.

The idea of "Rites of Passage" has somewhat different meanings in the very many different contexts in which it is used. Feminists have talked about the "rights" of passage in terms of their "coming of age" with the Women's Movement, in particular the first inklings of the idea of the "personal as political." For this reason, the novels of development are the first theme to be approached in looking at women's novels of the 1970's. It's also particularly important because it is one of the more basic themes where the women's stories concerning rites of passage of the women they write about (and often somewhat

autobiographical) has differed so substantially from both the rites of passage of young men and the traditional rites of passage of young women. The novels of development are particularly insightful when linking literature to the Women's Movement, since one of the more important aspects of the movement has been the search for female role models and the recovery of a female history, searching for the hidden history of women. In literature, this may have come to mean a reinterpretation of the conclusions of the rites of passage of young woman, i.e. women have begun to speak and to write from their own experience, no longer seemingly content to act according to the standards of a patriarchal culture. This may mean inventing entirely new roles for women or appropriating for their own use aspects of the male role, no longer accepting the limitations placed on women concerning their behaviour or even their destiny.

The traditional novel of development portrays a society in which the young heroine is destined for unfulfillment. There is a conflict between the role the heroine hopes for in her future - i.e., freedom to come and go as she pleases, independence, the ability to exercise her intelligence and sexual freedom and the actual role that awaits her in patriarchal society. In the traditional novels, mostly novels written by men (although not exclusively) the heroine ends up submissive or trapped, restricted in her ability to use her intellect and in menial

or frustrating tasks. In both the traditional and modern novels, there is a conflict portrayed between what is essentially the heroine's evolving self and society's imposed identity. The question, of course, is do the Canadian female novelists in the seventies resolve the conflict of the two images in a non-traditional way?

In Audrey Thomas' novel, Songs My Mother Taught Me (1973), the heroine, whose name is Isobel, is plagued by a self-image as a failure and misfit and spends her youth alienated from her community and peers. In opposition to the traditional "bildungsroman", Isobel in fact matures through a lonely and depressed childhood to self-assurance and self-awareness with a new sense of security and independence. Symbolically, the novel is divided into two parts, the "Songs of Innocence" and "The Songs of Experience" distinguishing Isobel's girlhood from her emergence into adulthood and independence.

Margaret Laurence's novel, The Diviners (1974), while not a classic "bildungsroman", nevertheless traces the heroine, Morag Gunn, from her childhood to her maturity. Again, this novel does not fit the traditional model of the novel of development, as Morag, an orphan taken in by the town scavenger Christie Logan and his wife Prin, struggles to survive her girlhood until she can escape.

Morag above all wants to survive. Morag changes her personna from wife of an English professor, to lover, then

mother, and finally to successful author. She changes her "shape as it is required for her own survival, and the survival of her creative spirit...Morag offers a hopeful image of female courage, resourcefulness and daring..." (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979a:521). In the end, she gives up trying to achieve what she can't and finally "prides herself on being merely a survivor".

Oonah McFee's beautiful novel Sandbars (1977) is another novel of development, told as a retrospective inner journal and memory of the middle-aged Hannah Watson as she looks back over her childhood and emergence to womanhood. While it seems at times that the novel's heroine falls into the role of disappointed young woman as in the traditional novel of development as McFee chronicles the loss of youth and innocence, the aging process, and the collapse of relationships, in fact, the author uses this device to show the opposite. Hannah Watson comes to terms with the forces that shaped her, and comes to understand the significance of her life as she completes the patterns of her memory and "affirms that we mark each other indelibly and that we should never wish to escape from the memories of the things and the people we touch" (Brennan, 1978:157). The heroine eventually comes to terms with her past in a way that strengthens her personal life.

Jan Truss's novel Bird at the Window (1974) is an excellent example of a novel of development that escapes the

traditional role of acceptance in the young woman. Truss' heroine, Angela Moynahan is a beautiful and highly intelligent eighteen year old, who although pregnant, knows she has nothing in common with the father of the baby, travels through Europe, fails to procure an abortion and gives birth to a stillborn daughter in London. She rejects what is expected of her, choosing not to marry, but instead carries on her parents' farm independently and writes.

In Shirley Faessler's Everything in the Window (1979), the heroine Sophie Glicksman is a free-spirit who attempts first through politics and then through her relationships with men, to escape her childhood. In this particular novel, Sophie finds her escape in new relationships with men and rejects the politics (the reader is led to believe that she only embraces communism because of her boyfriend). Both Faessler's novel and Ann Henry's novel Its All Free - On The Outside (1975), interestingly enough are the only two novels to deal with left-wing politics at all, and both heroines while young girls reject the politics because of their lack of identification with the men involved (in Henry's novel, the young 15 year old girl Zenith Patrick O'Brien's father is a political radical). These are the only two novels in the sample as well, where in the end, the heroines do not clearly emerge having chosen the non-traditional role for women as opposed to the traditional one offered. In both novels the

choices are left somewhat ambiguous. Both became independent and "wiser" it's true, but in neither is their fate resolved at the end of the novel, and they are the only two where the heroines' futures are still tied to that of a man.

Jan Truss' novel A Bird in the Window, in particular, best illustrates the influence the Women's Movement may have had on fiction. Truss shows us that a heroine can be young, beautiful and intelligent, a combination that is difficult to find in any fiction. Her rejection of marriage, much less marriage to the father of her baby and the man she's most expected to marry, typifies the new heroine that women write about.

The seven novels from the sample that can be considered novels of development, or a "bildungsroman", show on the whole that Canadian women writing about women in the seventies no longer felt compelled to have their heroines fall into the traditional pattern of submission when their aspirations as young girls face the reality of society's discouragement of women's strong, independent role. In the majority of cases, the heroines of Canadian women's novels struggle somewhat successfully to avoid their usual role of submission and dependence.

To some extent these quests for independence and self-identity are bound up with their choice of livelihood, in these cases as hospital worker, circus worker and farmer,

but what is common to the majority of these young women is their desire to write. Laurence's Morag Gunn and Truss' Angela Moynahan in particular would like to earn their livings as writers. Rather than conform to the conventional image of women doing "women's work" these young women, perhaps somewhat unrealistically, turn to the more unconventional cultural sphere. The point of these novels of development, however, would seem to be that these young women are coming face to face with the traditional choice that all young women in our society are expected to make. They can either submit to dependence and conformity or struggle for independence and the right to make their own choices. What distinguishes these novels from the more traditional novel of development is that in choosing non-conformity these young heroines succeed and gain strength in their decision. For some of the young heroines, the quest for identity may be mediated by the image of their mothers (see the following theme of mother/daughter relationship). For most of the young heroines of these novels of development, the quest for self-identity and independence is an existential and somewhat solitary quest. While Sophie Glicksman and Zenith O'Brien are more susceptible to outside social influence, particularly their relationships with men as attempts to escape their childhood, the other heroines transcend society's imposed identity out of their own inner strength. For these young women turning to the cultural

sphere, writing in particular, is a symbol of this solitary transcendence. I will be able to demonstrate in a later chapter that this turn to the cultural sphere is also symbolic of a parallel struggle found in the themes of the Women's Movement and that is the struggle for women to integrate their desire to be women, lovers and mothers as well as artists.

II. 'MOTHER WAS A PERSON': THE THEME OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH MOTHERS

Family relations have always played an important part in women's lives, certainly in their rites of passage. One of the earliest and most important struggles women face every day is the apparent contradictions between being individual women and wives and mothers, and how to resolve them. In The Diviners, Margaret Laurence perhaps epitomized this contradiction best when her heroine Morag is talking to her college friend Ella about being "brainy literate young women." "And yet I envy girls like Susie Trevor so much I damn near hate them. I want to be glamorous and adored and get married and have kids. I still try to kid myself that I don't want that. But I do. I want all that. As well. All I want is everything" (Laurence, 1974:189).

Traditionally, most stories involving women have tended to restrict females to domestic settings, women as

wives and mothers at home, girls staying with the family until rescued by Prince Charming. In the sample of twenty novels dealt with here, only one novel (Bhatia, 1971) followed this traditional and domestic pattern. The rest had heroines who were either in the process of questioning or rejecting this traditional future image of the rest of their lives. Of these twenty novels, ten dealt with the theme of the mother/daughter relationship, seven from the daughter's perspective and three from the mother' perspective. Since only two of the novels dealt with mothers and sons, I have included them in the section on motherhood.

Motherhood: Mother's Perspective

The image of the mother in fiction is in fact an ambivalent one, in the sense that traditionally the mother has always been typed as Eve (mother of us all?) - the temptress who brought death and destruction into a future world, or the Virgin Mary - the Mother of God (mother of us all?) - the model for all women. The myth of Eve tells us that to disobey brings death upon mankind. The myth of Mary tells us that to passively obey brings immortality to mankind. The myth of motherhood is to portray women in their double role - giver of life and death, pleasure and pain.

Atwood writes that in Canadian fiction, mothers are "more likely to be Dianas or Hectates than Venuses" (Atwood, 1972:207). That is, Canadian mothers are portrayed as the maiden or young girl or the crone - either sinister and forbidding or the wise old woman, certainly not a figure of love, sex or fertility. "Diana-Maidens often die young. There is a notable absence of Venuses. And there is a bumper crop of sinister Hectate-Crones" (Ibid., 199).

Atwood further asks "Are there any real women? Or rather, are there any women in Canadian literature who appear to be leading normal, married lives, having children who are not dead..." (Ibid., 209).

One may very well question whether any form of modern realistic fiction is particularly "realistic". Yet the anwer to Atwood's question from the literature in the sample seems to be (at least to the extent that Atwood seems to intend the question) - no - perhaps not normal in the traditional sense, but struggling to find their way as new independent women, who can be wives, mothers and anybody else they choose. The struggle, perhaps somewhat displeasing to Atwood, is not always an easy one and its success is largely dependent upon interpretation.

In fact, only one of the novels in the sample, June Bhatia's The Latchkey Kid (1971), makes a plea for the traditional domestic mother who should stay at home primarily to serve husband and children. It is also one of the only two in the sample not to be centered around a

female hero. Rather than explore the special problems that children and parents share in the family with two working parents, the The Latchkey Kid condemns working mothers with comments about two pay cheques being more important than children. The novel itself is the story of a twenty year old young man, Hank Styck, who writes an essentially successful autobiographical novel as a way of getting revenge on his neglectful parents. The women in the novel are all unsympathetically described as social climbers who neglected their children to be free for social activity. "A determined mother could be free to groom herself, hold office in this or that community activity, or find a job in order to fulfill herself; though more of them seemed to be able to explain why acting as a bank teller or the secretary of a charity, for example, was more fulfilling than looking after their own children" (Bhatia, 1971:10). The mother, Olga, only redeems herself in the end by accidently immersing herself in a school for disabled kids (penance for neglecting Hank). The final proof of her "redemption" is the recognition of her work by the British Princess (!!). None of the other novels treat motherhood in so traditional a manner.

Constance Beresford-Howe's novel, The Book of Eve (1973), while not primarily a book concerning motherhood, centers around a sixty-five year old grandmother and housewife named Eva, who had lived all her life in middle-

class suburbs. Eva had an M.A. but gave up a brief career as a highschool teacher to be a wife and mother. On the day that Eva receives her first old-age pension cheque, she walks out on her family to finally find her own identity which has been hidden so long by her self-sacrifice as wife and mother. Unlike any traditional mother, she holds only a barely tolerant relationship as mother with her son, her daughter-in-law whom she dislikes and privately calls "Elegance" and her granddaughter Kim. Eva considers her son a nice boring person who is only capable of speaking in cliches. She only contacts him when she needs his interception on her behalf to secure her possessions and some money from his father. Never in the novel does she even attempt to open up to him or explain why she has left his father. While she secretly feels the most endearment for her fourteen year old granddaughter Kim, she refuses any attempt to explain her unconventional actions to Kim when they meet accidently in a pawnshop where Eva had been looking for clothes and where the girl had been "slumming" looking at old leather jackets. "'Like Gran, aren't you wondering now sort of who you are?' 'Like, no.' I said coldly" (Beresford-Howe, 1973:84). In Beresford-Howe's novel, Eva rejects her nuclear family to set up a heterogenous non-biological family with a man she meets in a boarding house and a retarded four year boy uncared for by his own family.

In Helen Levi's novel, Honour Your Partner (1979), the heroine Marion Giss is married to a retired Anglican bishop and has two daughters and two grandsons. The story centers around Marion Giss and her trials as she tries to cope with her two daughters, one about to divorce and the other about to marry, while she attempts to establish their lives in the new town they have just moved to.

While Marion is not nearly as untraditional as Eva, the book is nevertheless a strange mixture of contempt on the part of Marion for her own daughters and their need of her as the traditional mother. Levi, as author, mocks the mother/daughter relationship through her descriptions of the daughters through Marion's eyes. "Catherine Giss Radon was much like her father: she had a tremendous fondness for her mother and a great belief in her own importance in her mother's eyes" (Levi, 1979:11). Marion's daughter Catherine's rebellion at feeling like a sex object in her marriage and her desire for divorce is mocked by Levi. Catherine is described as a foolish woman, easily manipulated in the end by her competent and bright husband Barney, who, aided by Marion, simply has to pretend that he no longer desires Catherine anymore, to get her to come running back. Marion's other daughter Shirley is described as "very pretty" and "unbelievably stupid." She is living "in sin" with her boyfriend, who is also the child of a reverend. Her desire to avoid marriage and a family is

explained in a very mocking manner when she describes both her and Catherine's rebellion to Marion. "Of course she rebelled. Just the way I'm rebelling now. Only times have changed. She had to get back at Daddy by marrying a Catholic; I can get back at him by living with Peter. It's a normal stage in our development, you know" (Ibid., 44).

Considering the particularly jaundiced eye with which Levi appears to be examining daughters' relationships with their mothers, she may indeed be commenting upon what some have called the modern cult of children and parentalism. As children have ceased to be a productive investment for their parents, they have become a source of emotional consumption. The mother Marion seems to have tried to come to terms with this in her own struggle to balance her role as wife and mother. Marion is talking to the Reverend Spellman, Shirley's boyfriend's father: "'Sin is unhappy!' he moaned. 'I don't think so,' Marion said. 'Poverty is unhappy. Poverty is a greater burden for a couple than premarital sex is. This room, this apartment, is awful!' She looked about the room with disapproval. 'This is degrading and I resent the fact that my pretty little daughter is living like this, but you know,' she told a horrified Mr. Spellman, 'when you come right down to it, this is none of my business. Or yours'" (Ibid., 79).

Marion is the mother Nancy Friday, the author of My Mother, Myself, described when she wrote, "Mothers may

love their children, but they sometimes do not like them. The same woman who may be willing to put her body between her child and a runaway truck will often resent the day-to-day sacrifice the child unknowingly demands of her time, sexuality and self-development" (Friday, 1977:21).

Marion is a mother who wants her freedom from her children and her grandchildren. While outwardly she performs the correct motherly and grandmotherly duties, inwardly she resents her daughter's intrusion back into her life.

Bess Kaplan's book Malke, Malke (1979) is a humorous ethnic novel about a sixty-five year old Jewish woman, Malke, who has been married three times and when again a widow for only three months advertizes for a husband in the personal column of a newspaper. Part of the novel centres around the relationship she has with her grown married daughter Sarah with whom she often finds herself reversing the mother/daughter roles as Malke tries to keep her life private from her nosy daughter. "Sure, maybe it didn't look so good for a woman to marry a third time, but why doesn't Sarah think about me? Does she care that her mother is alone? No. Or she wouldn't worry so much what her friends think" (Kaplan, 1977: 4). She is critical of her sister Brunie living with her children instead of on her own. "That's what comes from having an empty mind and living her children's lives, instead of living a life of her own"

(Ibid., 37).

Malke, although a caricature of a Jewish mother in many respects, rejects the idea of a traditional motherhood which requires that she live her life dependent on a husband or vicariously through her children. Malke rejects a tradition that resigns a woman to passive acceptance of her fate as a widow, and she opts for an independent life, making her own choices and seeking out her own solutions.

The most complex mother-daughter relations occur within Margaret Laurence's The Diviners since Morag is all too conscious of her effects upon her only daughter Pique. She had chosen not to marry Pique's father and decided to raise her daughter alone. Morag spends most of the novel remembering her own childhood, trying to gather her own history and pass the family tales she has learned down to her own child. She tries to work through what she knows are Pique's mixed feelings about her, about her life and about Pique's father. Morag sees the old patterns of her own childhood forming in Pique when one day Pique yells at her "You've never had somebody tell you your mother was crazy because she lived out here alone and wrote dirty books and had kooky people coming out from the city to visit. Have you? Have you?" (Laurence, 1974:421). Morag knows that Pique has to live on her own; that to be a mother is to let your child free. "I don't want her living here anymore. She can't. She mustn't. She's got to be on her own.

Anything else is no good for her and no good for me" (Ibid., 98).

But Pique does come back to live with Morag for a while and try to work through some of the pattern of her own life. In perhaps one of the most poignant comments on the relationship that mothers have with their daughters, Morag confesses unhappily, "the plain fact is that I am forty-seven years old and it seems fairly likely that I will be alone for the rest of my life and in most ways this is really okay with me, and yet I am sometimes so goddamn jealous of their youth (her daughter and her daughter's lover) and happiness and sex that I can't see straight" (Ibid., 287).

In many ways Laurence's portrayal of the mother/daughter relationship from the mother's perspective is the most complex of all the novels in the sample. Morag as the central figure of the story as well as the mother is only too conscious of both the guilt and the influence that she as a single parent can inflict upon her only child. She is forever analyzing her relationship with Pique, forever conscious of the need to set her free and yet not reverse the roles to become dependent upon Pique herself.

The mothers in Canadian women's fiction still appear as ambivalent as they ever have, but there is evidence to show that female novelists are trying to break their mothers out of a pattern and understand them as independent women.

Although the mothers in modern fiction are not the Diana's or Hectate's that Atwood describes, they still are the source of life, giver of pleasure and pain. The mothers that Beresford-Howe, Kaplan, Laurence and even Levi write about are struggling with and are trying to break the pattern of their traditional role. The same is not necessarily true when mothers are viewed solely from the daughter's perspective.

The Mother/Daughter Relationship: Daughter's Perspective

The mother/daughter relationship has only relatively recently been regarded with any importance in fiction especially when compared to the more famous father/daughter and mother/son pairs in literature. The Women's Movement and the subsequent upsurge in feminist literary criticism most probably has had a large influence on the more recent interest in the mother/daughter theme in novels.

The mother/daughter theme from the daughter's perspective in Canadian fiction by women, certainly seems to be a strong one. It is an important aspect of the novels surveyed. One reason might be the awareness that more and more women have had, influenced to a large extent by the Women's Movement of the importance of a woman's relationship to the first woman in her life. There is "an awareness, conscious or not, on the part of Canadian women authors,

that a woman's relationship to the first woman in her life is of primary importance" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1977:142). Certainly the daughters in the novels are trying in various ways to work through their relationship with their mothers, and understand the kind of influence their mothers have had on their destinies. Some daughters have rejected the image of their mother, whether classic in the domestic sense as in Fielding's book The Best of Friends (1972) or with more independence and self-awareness as in Truss' novel Bird at the Window (1974).

Seven of the novels in the sample significantly explored the mother/daughter theme, although mothers and daughters were present in four other novels. Literature, traditionally, has portrayed mothers and daughters much the way the pairing has existed in the domestic image society has set up for women. For women who had grown up by the seventies, their mothers most probably did live another life quite different from theirs. Their mothers more than likely did not really make a choice in their lives, but tried to live up to society's image of the domestic life of the contented housewife, committed to the home, perfect, untroubled and uncomplaining - the archetypical "good mother." Daughters of course are supposed to accept this image, or if not accept the image, follow in mother's footsteps anyway. Daughters in traditional fiction who do not become 'good' mothers often die in childbirth, go mad or

receive punishment in some archaic way.

The novels in the sample do not necessarily all deal with the mother/daughter relationship in this traditional way. The daughters in Canadian fiction are rejecting the domestic image of their mothers.

The re-examination of the mother role by the daughters in fiction may be somewhat symbolic of the search that women have mounted for a role model for the new woman. While some women did not succeed in this search, other women saw their mothers change in order to fit this new role model. More importantly perhaps, some of the daughters in fiction began to see their mothers as independent individuals. "For as long as I can remember, I did not want the kind of life my mother felt she could show me. Sometimes I think she did not want it either. The older I get, the further away she gets from my childhood, from her ironclad role as my mother - the more interesting a woman she becomes" (Friday, 1977:20).

Gottlieb and Keitner have adopted an interesting schema for examining the first aspect of the mother/daughter relationship - i.e., the daughter's rejection of the domestic image of their mothers as an image to embrace for themselves. In their schema, the daughters in Canadian fiction reject a mother who is not a "cheerful, dynamic, petted, perfectionist housewife but usually a harassed, withdrawn, disappointed, disorganized, dependent woman"

(Gottlieb and Keitner, 1977: 515). Instead the young women turn to another female figure "usually an aunt, who is unmarried, childless, often economically independent, and better educated or sexier than the mother figure" (Ibid., 515).

In fact in all seven novels concerned with the theme of the relationship between mother and daughter, the daughter rejects the image portrayed to them by their mother but in only three do the daughters actually fit the Gottlieb and Keitner schema by succumbing to the influence of a second older woman.

In Audrey Thomas' novel Songs My Mother Taught Me (1973), the central female character Isobel has a mother Clara Cleary who is a bitter and domineering housewife. Isobel's own self-image as a failure and a misfit stems directly from her relationship with her mother, who constantly imposes her self-abnegation, sexual repression and maternal sacrifice upon both Isobel and her sister Jane and the embarrassment and guilt she suffers as a result of it. Isobel, talking to herself says, "'Isobel, do you remember when she (Clara) smashed the bathroom mirrow with a cold cream jar?' 'No.' 'Of course you do. The frame hung there for days and one night, brushing your teeth, you chanced to look up and saw only a black piece of cardboard and not your face. Your face had disappeared.' 'I remember. I thought it was an omen at the time'" (Thomas,

1973:84).

As Isobel grows up resisting and finally rejecting the mother image, she turns at first to her father's sister Olive, an English professor at the university, with an independent income, as her role model. "I liked her because she treated me like an intelligent human being" (Ibid., 75). Isobel eventually rejects even Olive as her role model, not wanting to end up "a devout Episcopalian," always wearing twin sets, good walking shoes, and looking "sack-shaped."

Isobel finally does free herself from her childhood, reaching security and independence and coming to terms with an awareness of her mother's wasted life. Once she accepts that she will never live up to her mother's expectations of her, she can face the fact that she never loved her mother, or more to the point, her mother could not allow herself to be loved. Isobel does not suffer from rejecting the mother image, but in fact is liberated by it.

In a somewhat similar mother/daughter relationship, Margaret Atwood's Lady Oracle (1976a) traces the many lives of the heroine Joan Foster from childhood to adulthood. Again, this novel presents a domineering mother trying to mold a daughter in some golden self-image and a sexless aunt as the alternate image. Joan's mother is a beautiful woman, trying throughout Joan's adolescence to make an obese Joan diet. Joan's obesity of course is her way of refusing to be cast in this image of her mother. Her aunt Louisa becomes

perhaps an "incomplete alternative." "One of my mother's ways of dismissing Aunt Lou was to say that she was bitter and frustrated because she didn't have a husband, but if this was true, Aunt Louisa kept it well hidden. To me she seemed a lot less bitter and frustrated than my mother, who, now that she'd achieved and furnished her ultimate house was concentrating more and more of her energy on forcing me to reduce. She really did try everything" (Atwood, 1976a:80). In fact, Joan never comes to terms with her rejected domestic image of her mother. The image in fact haunts her. In England, she has a "visitation" from her mother in her living room. "I pictured my mother floating over the Atlantic Ocean her rubber band getting thinner and thinner the farther she was stretched; she'd better be careful or she'd break that thing and then she'd be with me forever, lurking around in the parlour like a diaphanous dustball or a transparent Kodak slide of herself taken in 1949. What did she want from me? Why couldn't she leave me alone?" (Ibid., 174).

Even the news of her mother's accidental death brings disbelief to Joan - she doesn't believe it and thinks it's a trap set by her mother to lure her back. She goes to the funeral only to assure herself that her mother is really dead. Only after her mother's death can Joan "afford to speculate about her." She begins to want to know about her mother, looking at all the photographs (her mother had cut

out all the male faces), blaming herself ("Had I been wrong to take my life in my hands and walk out the door?") (Ibid., 181), trying to come to terms with their relationship and to finally understand her mother, something she never actually achieves.

Joy Fielding's The Best of Friends (1972) is a psychoanalytic novel that follows the emotional breakdown and recovery through psychoanalysis of twenty-seven year old Caroline Sutton Beacon. The story is told in a three part narrative form: Caroline's interior monologues; the objective third person recording Caroline's dialogue with her parents, husband and best friend; and a third person narrative in the form of Caroline's male psychiatrist.

Caroline's psychological problems stem from her constant struggle between what her parents expect of her, the pressure to accept the image of her mother for herself and what she really wants from her life. As a defence she develops an "alter ego" Cathy Collier who is Caroline's complete opposite, a tall, beautiful, independent, self-assured model, who is able to engage in group sex, gets pregnant and has an abortion - something that Caroline's upbringing wouldn't allow. "Girls just don't have babies unless they also have husbands...I'm just not that brave. I've always been brought up to believe that society has certain rules you follow, that society knows best, that you don't rock the boat" (Fielding, 1972:49).

In this particular novel, the character who is Caroline's mother is a housewife who cooks and cleans and lives with Caroline's domineering father and is never developed to have a personality of her own. Caroline never attempts to understand her. In this novel, Caroline rejects the image of her mother that she is expected to exemplify and only in finally coming to understand and to break out of her relationship with her parents does she emerge emotionally whole and capable of living a self-reliant adult existence.

Two other novels, Jan Truss' A Bird in The Window (1974) and Mavis Gallant's A Fairly Good Time (1970) portray the mothers as individual women with lives and careers independent of their family ties. Mavis Gallant's heroine, Shirley Norrington Higgins Perrigny, is a twenty-seven year old Canadian living in Paris, having lost her job and been abandoned by her French husband. Part of the novel is narrated by a series of letters between Shirley and her mother which Shirley calls a "dialogue of the deaf." Shirley's mother is portrayed as an agnostic free-thinking woman from a long line of university trained, quasi-feminist prairie women. Shirley, on the other hand, is a woman whose life and emotions are in constant disorder, confusion and chaos. "The difference between Shirley and her mother was that while Mrs. Norrington did not see how other people were or guess that her own appearance was in any way unusual,

Shirley longed to dissolve in a crowd but did not know how to go about it. The same climbing roses that had been lent distinction by the person of Mrs. Norrington had turned the child into a freak and she grew up with the idea that this could never change" (Gallant, 1970:101). In this novel it is not a case of the daughter rejecting the image of the mother, but in finally recognizing the strong flow between her grandmother, her mother and herself (a flow of defiance and eccentricity) that finally provides Shirley with her stability and survival.

Similarly in Jan Truss' novel, A Bird at The Window, Angela's mother Dinah is a beautiful, reserved British woman who gave up an art scholarship to move to Canada and marry Angela's father, yet remains a successful artist. Angela has difficulty relating to her mother, loves her, but cannot confide in her. Instead of telling Dinah that she is pregnant, Angela confides in an older woman whom she doesn't know and who happens to sit beside her on the plane to England where Angela had decided to vist after graduating from high school. Angela, in describing her mother, says "My mother? If I met her at an airport I would like her, would ask, 'Who is that interesting woman?' But it's only the look she has. Only an interesting stranger" (Truss, 1974:44). It is only after Angela is able to embark upon her own journey of self-discovery, helped in part by the miscarriage she suffers in England, the discovery of her

father's real mother, the experience of her father's death and the courage she finds to refuse to do what is expected of her, that she finally comes to understand her mother Dinah as the truly independent woman that she was. As she appreciates Dinah's art, so she understands her own need to write. "Days went by into January, with no further mention of selling the place, days of oasis, snowsoft peace, two women working, their eyes closed against seeding and harvest, closed against the end of a tapestry, against the end of a journal summer. Time hanging tranquil" (Ibid., 165).

Shirley Faessler's book Everthing in The Window (1979) has her heroine Sophie Glicksman, her husband Billy James and their daughter Emma, living with Sophie's father Avrom and her stepmother Chayle. Sophie rejects the image her stepmother represents, but Chayle is an extremely traditional old world Jewish woman who is totally helpless and powerless. Nevertheless, Sophie never develops much of a real relationship with Chayle and although she is able to communicate with her stepmother in Yiddish, never attempts to understand her or draw her out. Faessler's book, however, is another example of a novel where the young heroine turns to and later rejects a second older woman as her role model.

Oonah McFee's Sandbars (1977) is a novel in which the heroine Hannah Watson searches for her past in an inner

journey of a memory of a particular summer. Her early relations with her mother were close and understanding, a child's adoration for her mother. "My mother and I. As close together as we would ever be" (McFee, 1977:88). Later on, as Hannah grows up, she and her mother drift apart, as do her mother and father, who eventually divorce. Yet, McFee's heroine, rather than simply rejecting the image of her mother, tries as best she can to understand her as both a mother and a woman. In trying to come to grips with what had made her mother unhappy in her relationship with her father, and why she herself had blocked out her mother's feelings, Hannah says to her father, "Do you think the best part was being a mother, the times when we could all act crazy and have fun? Do you suppose that might've had something to do with it, wanting to stay...like a girl?" (Ibid., 241). Hannah is hurt over the split up but fiercely loyal to both parents,not wanting to take sides even though her mother's bitterness towards her father prevents him from attending Hannah's wedding.

What is particularly interesting about Sandbars is the very beautiful descriptions of the mother/daughter relationship, especially during Hannah's younger years. Also, despite the fact that Hannah's mother's bitterness had driven a wedge into what Hannah had always thought was a happy family, Hannah and her mother continue to interact as two equal women, even living together harmoniously when

Hannah's husband Brian and her brother George are away in the army. Sandbars was one of the only novels in the sample that described a loving and giving relationship where mother and daughter managed to transcend their traditional social roles. Unfortunately, the novel leaves this relationship rather abruptly with the death of George. Although Hannah is in her fifties by the end of the novel, her mother is never mentioned again after George's death.

It is clear from the novels, first of all that the mother/daughter theme in Canadian fiction is as important to women as writers as it has been for women's developing consciousness as expressed through the Women's Movement. Women in fiction, as in life, are trying to understand their relationship with their mothers and indeed their mothers themselves in ways that are not traditional to fiction. The daughters in the sample, do, on the whole, reject the domestic image of motherhood, and with one exception, do not go mad or die as punishment for it. Even Fielding's heroine is cured. While only McFee's and Truss' novels developed to any degree the idea that the daughters do in fact come to know and understand their mother as independent women, to actually become their friends, there is evidence in Gallant's and Thomas' and even Atwood's novels that while these daughters might never want their mothers as friends, they have attempted to know them as women. In all of the novels dealing with mothers and daughters, from the

daughter's perspective, the relationship, in whatever form it takes, is paramount to the daughter's understanding and sorting out their own lives.

III. WOMAN AS REBEL: THE THEMES OF SEXUAL RELATIONS AND ESCAPE

When examining the sexual relations between men and women in literature, traditionally we find women caught in the obvious double bind, i.e. they are damned if they do and damned if they don't. Women who engage happily in sexual relations are "whores" and those who do not are "frigid."

"Women are the passionate sex, they are always told, and therefore love is their natural subject; but they must not write about it. If they avoid love, that proves they are mere women, inferior to men, next to whom women are always told they are cold, narrow, childish. If they dwell on love they are doing what is expected of the worst of women, who are said to be stupid, sentimental, hysterical creatures incapable of thinking of anything else (Moers, 1976:143). Women must remain chaste for the marriage market and once married must remain monogamous. Traditionally those women in fiction who stray from the path of gender norms of pursuit and submission must be punished, usually with insanity. Matrimony is "one of the primary tools for dulling a hero's initiative and restraining her

maturation...marriage becomes the turning point in the hero's life, and once again she protests; however loudly she argues, though, these novels remain primarily accomodationist, the author either understanding their criticisms with conformist denouements or punishing rebellious heroes with tragic fates" (Pratt, 1981:41). Women are limited in their ability to develop fully in their sexual relationships by the stereotyping of female sexuality. The traditional women's virtues of chastity, modesty and obedience have meant in reality the subordination of women to men in sexual relations. Women's needs, desires and interests are secondary to a man's, especially after marriage. "The modern novel of marriage continues to picture a patriarchy that controls economic and political activities, a wife as subordinate to her husband, and feminine sexuality as a target of fear and loathing" (Ibid., 42). Monogamy, or as Germain Greer calls it, sexlessness, or eunuchry, is important to the patriarchal society to ensure men their biological heirs. Hence, adultery in fiction, or even initiative in courtship or the enjoyment of sexuality, has been linked to the "fallen" woman, the whores. Sexual fulfillment and women's passion are forbidden in patriarchal society and traditionally have been fatal for fiction's heroes, their punishment very often being madness and death.

There is evidence to say that the treatment of sexual relations in the modern twentieth century Canadian novels by women has changed. Perhaps because of the Women's Movement and the examination by women of their role in society and the efforts of many women to redefine their sexuality, the sexual roles of women in literature are no longer following the conventional traditional models. Sexually active women heroes are no longer guilty and women are questioning their sexual relationships in most of the fiction. Women who are deserted by their husbands and lovers are no longer destitute and pitied, but often portrayed as freer with a sense of exhilaration. Women are rejecting the traditional concept of feminine moral standards and women's position in the family. "Women are describing in detail and widely publishing descriptions of sexual activity seen from the woman's point of view; and...they are committing to print accounts of the specifically female areas of sensuality and sexuality which have hitherto been neglected, childbirth, menstruation, masturbation and lesbianism" (Miles, 1974:159). Women are rejecting the traditional response to crises in sexual relationships, no longer solely laying the blame on themselves or their own inadequacy, although guilt still exists for their own part in failed relationships.

Burton and Morley (1975) point out that there is a strong overlap between contemporary life and fiction by

Canadian women novelists. They examine what they call a woman's "sense of grievance" in society as well as in fiction, which results from the patterns of dependency and inequality which are characteristic of contemporary relationships, resulting sometimes in bitter women, women who feel at the same time both exploited, yet dependent on those relationships. Abel believes women in fiction also become confused over sexual relationships, resulting in an alienation between their inner and outer selves.

Often the result of the bitterness and confusion is an overwhelming sense of entrapment and the need to escape. Women feel trapped by inadequate sexual relations that keep them emotionally, economically, socially, and legally dependent upon men. The confusion that Abel writes about most often results from the emotional dependency - i.e., the dynamic of loving men yet feeling oppressed by the relationship with them.

The themes of sexual relations and escape in these novels written by women are closely parallel to the theme of "personal is political" in the Women's Movement, a theme to be developed more fully in a subsequent chapter. As in the fiction, women in the Women's Movement were raising the question of the importance of sexual choice and the possible consequences of such a choice, including leaving or changing their relationships. The feeling that women must at last have a real choice in their sexual relationships was always

accompanied by a coming to terms with the guilt associated with making such choices.

One of the conclusions that can be derived from the sample of novels chosen for this thesis is that women are more aware and concerned than men about this oppression. "What women sense, finally, is man's lack of sympathy, sensitivity and compassion necessary to understand her problems - among them, women's need to balance emotional security as represented by marriage, with their need for individual freedom and self-worth" (Burton and Morley, 1975:58). The second conclusion that can be drawn from the sample is that women are not only rejecting their traditional sexual roles, but are no longer willing to shoulder all of the guilt, no longer resigning themselves to the failed relationship or becoming the traditional "mad housewife." Women are choosing to leave, to walk out and to escape, sometimes to another heterosexual relationship, sometimes to solitude and often to relationships with other women (a theme dealt with further on).

Seventeen of the twenty novels in the sample deal with heterosexual relationships and one deals primarily with lesbian relationships. Of the seventeen novels dealing with sexual relations between men and women, at least twelve of them are also concerned with the theme of escape from these relationships and the life they represented. In most of these novels the image of the bird and flight are used

frequently.

In an attempt to deal with her own sexuality, Margaret Atwood's hero Joan Foster in Lady Oracle (1976a) takes on a different personality with each of the relationships she has with men. Often this meant that when she entered into simultaneous relationships she took on multiple personalities.

The first sexual relation Joan has is with the Polish Count with whom she lost her virginity ("If you find yourself trapped in a situation you can't get out of gracefully, you might as well pretend you chose it. Otherwise, you will look ridiculous" (Atwood, 1976a:149). Her second sexual relationship was with her husband, Arthur, a student radical she met while living with the Count. She moved in with Arthur by simply deserting the Count one day, packing her bags and landing on Arthur's doorstep. But even while in love with Arthur, she dreams of escape. She fantasizes dancing with a tall man in evening dress, "he would whisper, 'Let me take you away. We will dance together always.' It was a great temptation, despite the fact that he wasn't real..." (Ibid., 19). She is never honest with Arthur. She never reveals her other lives to him such as the fact that she is also a successful gothic romance writer called Louisa K. Delacourt. After her marriage to Arthur, her writing becomes more than a way to earn a living. The important thing to Joan about her

writing "was the fact that I was two people at once, with two sets of identification papers, two bank accounts, two different groups of people who believed I existed" (Ibid., 214). Joan feels there are two kinds of love, passionate and mysterious or meaningful and in depth. Women "wanted multiple orgasms, they wanted the earth to move, but they also wanted help with the dishes" (Ibid., 217). Arthur provided her with meaning, but Joan has her third relationship with the "Royal Porcupine" in order to have the "mysterious stranger" relationship. Finally, in order to escape from the Royal Porcupine and because she is wanted for a bombing, she sheds all of her past lives by faking a drowning and flying to Italy. Even after this elaborate escape, alone, with no money and no friends, she realizes that she is trapped again ("why did every one of my fantasies turn into a trap") (Ibid., 335) and plans another escape. This time "I would dance for no one but myself" (Ibid., 335). Instead, in the end she falls in love again, this time with a man she almost kills and decides she doesn't want to escape anymore. Grace Stewart writes that Atwood's novel "implies that women can lead assertive and exciting lives. To fantasize about such excitement in traditional modes, however, is to steer oneself into a trap...to escape the morass of sexual fantasies based on patriarchal myths, the artist must have an imagination, a sense of humor, an understanding of her vulnerability and a

readiness for the next entrapment" (Stewart, 1979:174).

The importance of Marion Engel's novel Bear (1972) doesn't lie necessarily in heterosexual relationships, but nevertheless Engel's description of the hero Lou's sexual relations with both a lover and her current employer are important because they involve her being manipulated as a sexual object - hence our ability to later understand her relationship with the bear. Engel portrays the men in Lou's life as self-centered, selfish, and petty. In her relationship with her lover, "She discovered that he loved her as long as the socks were folded and she was at his disposal on demand; when the food was exquisite and she was not menstruating" (Engel, 1972:118). Her employer offered her weekly sex, but no love. Sex had become a "procedure." "There was no care in the act, only habit and convenience. He had become something she was doing to herself" (Ibid., 93). It led her to believe that "what she disliked in men was not their eroticism, but their assumption that women had none. Which left women with nothing to be but housemaids" (Ibid., 112). Lou accepts an assignment to do research on an island estate and begins her escape from the dead end relationship she leaves behind. "The road went north. She followed it. There was a Rubicon near the height of land. When she crossed it, she began to feel free" (Ibid., 17). When she arrives at the island, she writes to her Director, "I have an odd sense of being reborn" (Ibid., 19).

For Engel, then, the bear/lover in the story is a symbol of the difference between physical sex and love and the theme of bisexuality plays an important role in the story. On the one hand, the bear is portrayed as a woman. It is described as a "full grown bear with a widow's hump" (Ibid., 35), a "large-hipped woman" (Ibid., 69), and looked like a "fat dignified old woman" (Ibid., 138), "not a creature of the wild, but a middle-aged woman defeated to the point of being daft, who had sat night after night waiting for her husband for so long that time had ceased to exist and there was only waiting" (Ibid., 36). On the other hand, the bear is "indubitably male" (Ibid., 35) and bears are described as king, hero and priest. Lou herself is not the traditional woman. She is able to survive alone quite well in the wilderness. The other woman in the novel is also an androgenous figure - a woman who's first name is Colonel (she changed her name to overcome a male-prejudiced land claim ruling), who was quite capable of both trapping and skinning a lynx or presiding over a silver tea service in a glamorous evening gown.

In contrast to her heterosexual relationships, Lou's relationship with her bear/lover is free and unmanipulative. Through their relationship, Engel portrays a woman who is creative, sensible, sexually active and independent. "Impregnated by the bear's tongue, Lou may not give birth to a hero, but she may well discover her own 'voice.' The real

intercourse with the bear is a spiritual one and the resulting birth is an ability to speak in one's own voice from one's own centre" (Kennedy, 1976:390-391).

Fielding's heroine Caroline falls into the more traditional pattern of the fallen woman driven to madness and frigidity by her guilt. Unlike the traditional "mad housewife", however, Caroline comes to terms with her passivity and hostility and turns those feelings into healthy anger. As Caroline tells her psychiatrist, "Maybe I do harbour an unnatural resentment towards men. But if I do it's with damn good reason. Look at the crap you men have gotten away with all this time. Just because you're physically stronger. And you're not even that really are you? I mean, all you really have are muscles...(women) even withstand pain better than men. Christ, if a man had to have a baby, he'd never survive. That's another thing...if men could get pregnant - there'd be none of this controversy over legalizing the abortion laws...abortion would be legal so fast you wouldn't know quite what hit you...God damn you anyway, you're damn right I resent you. What are you anyways?....You've just cocks...and grossly inadequate cocks at that" (Fielding, 1972:110). Fielding shows us in her novel that even when women succumb to the guilt of failed relationships, they are angry and can bounce back and become emotionally whole again.

dear, even if a girl doesn't really need that sort of thing' - 1922); files of high school essays hen-tracked with red ink corrections; long strings of baby wash, rows of currant-jelly jars, more essays; 'Cleopatra died from the bite of an aspirin'; ironing fourteen shirts a week; courses at night, fighting sleep in dusty lecture rooms ('What the hell do you want a Ph.D. for')...massaging the thin, knotted shoulders, measuring out medicine, hurrying to the bank, the drug store, the grocery, the bank, home, the fruit shop, the cleaner's ('What the hell took you so long? I suppose you realize if there ever was a fire here... .') All that for this? Crazy. One or the other was. If nothing else, somebody to look after me could be the sum of my achievements. It made no sense at all to die down here with nobody to bring me a drink of water, after all that invested effort" (Ibid., 36).

But Eva survives. She doesn't return home sadder but wiser. She finds a new lover with whom she finds happiness. Beresford-Howe shows us that even older women can reject the roles they have been expected to play and survive. "The knowledge, including carnal knowledge, which this woman gains does not lead to evil and death. Reversing the patriarchal version of the Fall, this novel demonstrates that woman as rebel can succeed in creating a better life not only for herself but also for those around her" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979a:523).

Margaret Laurence's hero, Morag Gunn, in The Diviners (1974), manages to survive divorce, a child out of wedlock and adultery and yet emerge a strong, competent and creative woman. She escapes her first relationship by walking out on her marriage to Brooke, a university professor, who in nine years of marriage has treated her like a child and a possession. "Listen, Brooke...please don't misunderstand me. Only - I wish you wouldn't call me that." "Call you what, for heaven's sake? What've I said wrong now?" "'Little one.' Brooke, I am 28 years old and I am 5'8" tall, which has always seemed too bloodly christly tall to me but there it is, by judas priest and all the sodden saints in fucking Beaulah land, I am stuck with it and I do not mind like I did once, in fact the goddam reverse if you really want to know, for I've gone against it long enough, and I'm no actress at heart, then, and that's the everlasting christly truth of it.' 'You,' Brooke says, 'are hysterical. Are you due to menstruate?'" (Laurence, 1974:256). Her relationship with Brooke follows the classic model of inadequacy. She drops out of university to marry him, at first succumbs to the usual double standard of his infidelity and hides her writing from him. Even in their sexual relations, he maintains her dependence. "'Have you been a good girl, love?' Brooke asks. It has become his game, his jest, before going into her, and indeed before permitting his arousal or hers. If she protests the

sentence, he will withdraw all of himself except his unspoken anger...then she is angry and wants to shove him away, wants no part of him. But her flesh responds to him; and she rises to him, rises to his bait, and then everything is all right" (Ibid., 243).

Morag is finally able to leave Brooke, and has a brief adulterous affair with Jules, a Metis she had known in her youth, who fathers her child Pique. Jules is a self-confident and somewhat distant man, yet treats Morag in a way in which she is able to finally recognize her own self. But she rejects this relationship to grow on her own, bring up her child alone and write novels. Her third relationship is with a British artist, Dan, with whom she ends that encounter as well when she finds she is harming Dan's wife. Moss (1977) writes that Morag is not a feminist heroine and that in fact she does not reject society's gender roles but "bows to the virtues of convention" allowing however that this is perhaps Morag's "primary attribute, she is human, not a symbol" (Moss, 1977:79).

It is in fact this reality of women's role in society that makes Laurence's view of relationships in The Diviners so interesting. She uses her male and female characters to show how women and men can share the same lonliness and alienation, yet experience them so differently. Morag's independence from men and relationships stems from the growing sense in her life that

she needs to write - her centre is her writing and her child - not sexual relationships. Although Morag has difficulty in earning enough to make a living for Pique and herself, and to continue writing, and despite Morag's strong sexuality, she actually rejects marriage and lives alone. She decides that sex is unsatisfactory without love, and determines never to have sex with a man unless she is willing to bear his child, a rather traditional and moralistic twist to her non-traditional rejection of marriage. It is with Jules that Laurence's comments on male/female relationships are so poignant. As Moss writes "Theirs (Morag and Jules) is a story of bonds and affection more enduring than love; of sex more potent than passionate embraces; of a lasting connection between psyches and souls, occasionally complemented by sexual consumption and wordless lovemaking, but needing no reinforcement to endure" (Ibid., 79).

Aritha Van Herk's novel, Judith (1978a), is also a novel of a woman who successfully manages to escape a relationship with a man to live independently and alone. Gottlieb and Keitner write that this novel "shapes woman's anger against men as a constructive force in the renewal of woman's image, and as a healthy alternative to the depressions and self-depreciation" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979a:525). Judith rejects her traditionally female job of secretary and the sexual relationship she had with her boss

("his eyes on her naked back, the same insatiable hunger, so masculine, that instant desire, she wanted to clutch his arm, insist that she was different from the lines of the car") (Van Herk, 1978a:39) to escape to the freedom of running her own pig farm ("trying to think of her field, her barn. They were hers, a place for her to go") (Ibid., 29).

Judith develops a relationship with a neighbour's son and it is through this developing affair and the imagery of her pigs that women's anger toward men is exposed. She and her lover's mother watch the mating of a sow and a boar. "Beneath the onslaught of his heavy clumsiness, she staggered but held herself braced and quivering, until he dropped to the ground, whoofing and snorting. Outside the fence, Mina and Judith started to clap. The boar turned startled orange eyes on them as if caught doing something foolish. Then blindly he turned again to Marie Antoinette but she whoofed and snarled at him. His necessity dispensed with, she wanted no more of him. And the two women clapped again" (Ibid., 177-178).

Later on Judith has to castrate her piglets and is insistent on doing it herself while her lover watched. Through the castration she releases her anger at past treatment of her own sexuality "Perhaps it was atonement for the acts of barbarity she had committed herself for him: plucking her sleek eyebrows, rolling her straight hair into curls, thrusting golden posts through the holes in her

ears....She knew that they would stay with her, those indentations, those marrings of her pale and pliant flesh....And still she could not quarry her response to him, could not lay bare that vehement craving and cut it out" (Ibid., 166).

Although Judith was criticized by some feminists for showing little concern and posing no solutions to women's situations today, in fact the novel does transcend the traditional roles for women. Judith is a strong independent courageous woman willing to face her own doubts and in the process overcomes her feelings of guilt.

As a closing note for this section concerning the imagery used in the theme concerning escape, it should be pointed out that two images recur frequently in the sample. The first is a self-imposed solitude, the "room of one's own" often linked to the idea of writing. Heroines turn to the art of writing as a way of escaping the alienation of society and their entrapping relationships. In Brandis, Gallant, Bhatia, Staebler, Beresford-Howe, Laurence, Thomas, Truss, Atwood, Engel and Van Herk, the escape is a physical one, most often to privacy and a place of of their own. Brandis, Bhatia, Thomas, Laurence, Truss and Atwood's heroines took to writing as their escape outlet as well. The second recurrant image is that of the bird, of wings and of flight. In some novels such as Truss' Bird At The Window the image is an obvious one, the heroine watching the

birds building their nest, laying their eggs, hatching and taking flight until at the end combining both the images of writing and birds. "The girl ended her novel sitting by a window watching magpies acrobating in the fat she had taken from the slaughtered pig and hung on her mother's trees. Magpies, gleaming poems of power, lunging at fat, devouring" (Truss, 1974:178). In others such as Laurence's Diviners, the bird imagery is used more subtly, but effectively to express the strong desire to escape. "The Canada geese are flying very high up in their wide v-formation, the few leaders are in front, the flock sounding their clear cold cry that signals the approaching frost. Going somewhere. Able to go, at will. Last year she saw them and thought 'This time next year, I'll be away too.' Now she is away. Away is here. Not far enough away. Morag watches, angerly grieving and loving, until the geese have passed over" (Laurence, 1974:177). Laurence uses the bird imagery again when Morag tries to come to terms with Pique's youth and restlessness "young swallows fidgety and flittering in the nest, waiting to fly" (Ibid., 235) and later when the fledglings venture to a nearby branch, shaky but courageous. "Tomorrow they would all be flitting back and forth across the river, skilled already" (Ibid., 242).

Atwood is more skeptical of her heroine's flight. Joan's wings are either ludicrous attachments to an Earth Mother figure or skimpy wings on a Fat Lady. Other novels

use the imagery of birds and wings less obviously or frequently, but the word flight itself is used frequently throughout the sample.

As Burton and Morley conclude, then, Canadian women are writing about the breakdown of core relationships that are either being "damaged or abandoned with few possibilities of enlightened substitutes" (Burton and Morley, 1975:60). Women in Canadian fiction are becoming more self-aware and assertive, willing to move on if the men cannot follow. Women no longer go mad or die to pay for their sin of independence, although they may lose their man. But no longer is this a punishment, more often it is a relief and new source of strength.

IV. THE LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN: THE THEME OF WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER WOMEN

Novels concerning women's friendships have followed a somewhat circular path. Whereas before 1920 strong passionate and mutually supportive friendships among women were not that rare to read about, after 1920 with a backlash in society against feminism and lesbian sexuality, it became a more questionable topic. Between 1920 and the present, women were depicted in competition with each other for male affection, fickle, backbiting, gossipy and vicious. When women writers did want to portray friendship between women

they used the circumstances of women living apart from society - i.e., a girl's school or college, or more often described the friendship as a transitory phase on their way to marriage, abandoned when men enter the picture. It may be with the rebirth of the Women's Movement which re-examines some of the fundamental questions concerning female relationships and the importance that friendship with a member of one's own sex has on one's development, as well as the development of the feminist criticism, that novels began to reflect the real friendship and love among women. Women in modern Canadian fiction find real and lasting friendship and even love with other women, often seeking other women as a refuge when they escape their relationships with men.

Aside from Jane Rule's novel, Against The Season (1971), love and friendship among women is not the main theme in any of the novels, nevertheless it is an important theme in most of the fiction. In many of the cases, it is other women's friendship that the heroines either count on or turn to for solace and understanding. In very few of the novels do women exhibit the traditional competition and backbiting gossip that has been associated with female friendship.

This is not, of course, true in all of the novels. In Shirley Faessler's novel Everything In The Window (1979), the heroine Sophie establishes an important close and intimate relationship with her landlady which breaks down

over a dispute concerning the landlady's son - and she never manages to establish another one.

The most difficult novel to deal with in terms of women's relationship with women is Sylvia Fraser's The Candy Factory (1975). Hostility among the women, particularly over men, seems to be the main focus of many of the vignettes that comprise the novel. Yet each episode resolves itself with an interesting twist that delivers a nonconventional ending, leaving the female characters united.

Although John Moss thought the novel, or at least "Sylvia Fraser's fictional view of the world obscene and depraved" (Moss, 1977:199), it is more useful to view it as a black comedy and social satire. In fact, as Gottlieb and Keitner point out, the setting of the novel, a candy factory, "is a microcosm of contemporary agitated society where traditional hierarchies based on wealth, class, race and sex are in the process of being attacked and overthrown" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979b:47). The women on the whole are an unsympathetic lot; an aging virgin who meets her end in a murder rape committed by a grotesque tramp; a 1930's career woman, single, smart and bitchy; a young hippy turned feminist; a psychology major with a boyfriend who is "the ideal Playboy subscriber" and terrified of her; and the wife of the factory owner who is a snob, bored and interested only in trivial social projects. Fraser's comments on

women's relationships are often somewhat contemptuous. "The bitter feud between Eve Martin, Mr. Hunter's senior secretary, and Brigitte Young, his junior secretary, rebuked Mary with a memory of the petty jealousy that had festered between herself and her own sister Julie, depriving them both of a friend. Mary would read the women's liberation pamphlets Brigitte circulated throughout the Hunter office, with their pleas for honest confrontation and womanly understanding and she would wonder: why couldn't Julie and I have treated each other better? And then, thinking of Eve and Brigitte: Why can't they?" (Fraser, 1975:8).

It is the end of the novel, though, where the women overcome their petty differences and unify in militant action. Led by the novel's "feminist", they attempt a comic attack on a sales promotion that uses women's bodies as display cases for various candies in a beauty contest. The feminists grab the crown from "Miss Marshmallow Mounds", remove the pants from a male employee and crown him "Mr. Nut Cluster." In the climax of the novel, the factory owner realizes he can no longer run the factory and turns the presidency over to his wife. In this novel, then, hostilities between women are turned into solidarity. Although all the characters of the factory (a metaphor for society) are seen critically, in the end, it is clear that the women emerge united and more advanced.

Marianne Brandis' This Spring's Sowing (1970) has a simpler message concerning the friendship of women. The hero, Jane Darrow, not only discovers love in a heterosexual relationship in the last months of her life, but perhaps more importantly, for the first time, also establishes a deep friendship with another woman. It is to this woman to whom she turns for support and reaffirmation and it is this woman and not Jane's lover who finds her diary and writes the epilogue for the novel.

In Gallant's novel, A Fairly Good Time (1970), the sometimes hapless Shirley makes an attempt to befriend Claudia a young oppressed lower class woman. This relationship assumes a particular importance since it is one of the very few Shirley manages to maintain on more than an acquaintance basis. Even in Kaplan's Malke, Malke (1979), although Malke's friendship with her friend Goldie is gently mocked because Goldie is so nosy, the reader is nevertheless impressed with the importance Malke puts on this friendship quite apart from her attempted love affairs and matchmaking. Edna Staebler's novel Cape Breton Harbour (1972) is not a book concerning relationships, yet the heroine, Edna, instinctively turns to the women of the Harbour for her closest friendships.

Aritha Van Herk's novel, Judith (1978a), is probably one of the more developed in the sample concerning women's friendships. At first Judith is wary of her female

neighbour. "Judith was hesitant, had expected this woman to be like all women, like the secretaries, the typists, her schoolmates, a common denominator. She had come prepared to give polite and acceptable answers to all the inevitable female questions, curious and probing but fundamentally disinterested in her replies; waiting to make their own answers" (Van Herk, 1978a:52-53). Gradually, though, Judith's frienship with Mina grows. "She hesitated, then blindly thrust her right hand toward Mina. Eyes following relentlessly, the pigs saw Mina get to her feet, take Judith's hand in both her own and hold it there, the two of them caught together in the incantation of this joy" (Ibid., 93-94). Judith is a particularly exciting novel because the love and friendship between the two women Judith and Mina grew to be more important to Judith on many levels than Judith's relationship with Mina's son. Although not a lesbian novel, it is heavily implied that this friendship has reached the stage of an abiding love, and the reader is left with the idea that its depth was not yet fully explored. "For a long moment they looked at one another, these two women, caught in their complicity like lovers or children who have started a fire together...Judith rushed to the fence and hugged her, holding Mina's body against her own. And when they broke apart their faces were no longer laughing, but still and frightened, as if they had seen too much of something" (Ibid., 160). It is this aspect of

women's friendship, the depth that can lead to love, possibly, if allowed, to physical love, which is often hinted at in novels of women's love and friendship, although rarely explored except in lesbian novels.

The lesbian novel emerges as the further development of the theme of the love and friendship among women. The lesbian novel is defined here as a novel where at least one of the characters abandons both the idea of a male life partner and the idea of the male/female social framework in order to seek out female sexual and/or love relationships. Interestingly enough, in the lesbian novel of the sample, women are not depicted particularly more happy or content in their choices than are the women in the novels who are involved in the more conventional sexual relationships.

In the sample chosen for this thesis, only one novel, Jane Rule's Against the Season (1971), emerged as a lesbian novel. The novel portrays a cross-section of a small American town which is remarkably accepting of its homosexual residents. Amelia Larson is a lame seventy-two year old spinster, "the strong woman who is in some sense the stable hub of a revolving group of volatile personalities, yet whose own life is thwarted by combined choice and circumstance and worked out vicariously through the emotional adventures of those around her" (Biggs, 1985:13).

Amelia is the central character who knows more about motherhood than 'anyone else in town' and takes into her home unwed pregnant teenagers until they deliver - the last of whom is a rebellious woman named Agate. "When Agate sat, Amelia reached over and took her hand. Agate looked down at the old hand over hers, joints swollen, liver spots stretched on the tight, sore skin. Where did the comfort come from out of all the unspoken pain?" (Rule, 1971:110). Throughout the novel the relationship between Amelia and her recently deceased and domineering sister Beatrice is examined through Amelia's obsession with her memories and Beatrice's diaries. Amelia comes to realize that her lameness was used by Beatrice as an excuse for her own inability to live an independent life. "Pride for Sister was harder. She tried to be proud of loving me, but that got tangled with a failure of nerve, need. Perhaps all relationships have something of fact in them" (Ibid., 127). Rule's portrayal of female relationships are not always idyllic. Many of her female characters, such as Grace Hill, described as a "large, bored, expensive woman with migraine eyes and an unalterable mouth" is a very unsympathetic character. "While many of her people are strictly gay or straight, others resist classification, moving with a multiplicity of possible physical, emotional and intellectual attractions, all erotically based or overlaid" (Biggs, 1985:14). Hence, there is young Cole Westaway,

confused over his own sexuality; Peter Falliden, the gay bank manager, who marries Harriet Jameson; Ida Setworth who at seventy-eight is an independent elderly virgin who has probably loved a woman all her life and decides to finally marry Carl Hollinger, who dies tragically before the wedding night.

One of the most interesting relationships between women is the sexual one between Dina and Rosemary Hopewood. They move from a rigidly defined butch/femme, upper/lower class, tough/weak role towards more erotic equity by the end of the book. Nevertheless, Dina, who has many female lovers, wants a dowry to offer to a husband. "Dina often did not understand the pairing of people, as she did not understand her own singleness going on so long, while she waited for a mythical Greek to come and claim her and her dowry" (Rule, 1971:56). "Since there had been no one to tell her how to live, she had invented this dowered virginity against all sense and appetite. It was ludicrous" (Ibid., 79). For Rule, then, her lesbians might be more lonely and dissatisfied than her heterosexuals. The key to relationships for Rule is not in sex, or sexual preference but in the transcendence of the classification. "Rule's work is perhaps most strongly characterized by her conviction that human beings are inescapably interdependent and must assume the burdens, develop the tolerance and cultivate the love needed to live together responsibly"

(Biggs, 1985:15).

The conclusion which can be drawn from the sample is that the love and friendship among women is very much alive in modern Canadian writing by women. On the whole women's writing has managed to transcend, even to the point of lesbian love, the traditional image of women in cutthroat competition with each other.

V. GOING TO FAR?: THE THEMES OF SELF-DISCOVERY, SELF-IDENTITY AND INDEPENDENCE

The one theme that is common to almost all (16/20) of the novels in the sample, is that of a growing sense amongst women of self-discovery, self-identity and independence. Whereas Heilbrun believes that women's "search for identity has been even less successful within the world of fiction than outside of it" (Heilbrun, 1979:72), Gilbert and Gubar (1979), for example, write that women's quest for identity is the underlying plot of almost all of the nineteenth century fiction written by women, and Showalter (1977) talks about the ideas of self-discovery as the main theme of women's literature since 1920.

What may be true is that while 19th century fiction by women showed women's "quests" to be primarily internal journeys, the modern Canadian women's quests have led them back outwards, a movement from the world within to the world

without. Women are emerging more often as triumphant and stronger than in the traditional novels of development.

In the traditional novel, the independence of the heroine was usually shortlived. They very often returned to the shelter and comfort of some man after their short and misguided 'fling'. In fact, being deprived of man's protection or the 'domestic reward ' was seen as punishment for women's failing. What women are now discovering in Canadian fiction is that "the qualities she displays are not solely those traditionally considered feminine, such as tedium, passivity, and initiative. She makes discoveries and influences events and evinces characteristics usually considered masculine, such as courage, aggression and ambition" (McMullen, 1977:134).

In women's fiction social quests are usually found in novels of development and spiritual quests are found in novels where the heroines are at least over thirty. In novels of development, the young woman is usually trying to integrate into her society, often finding her dreams and aspirations to be in contrast to those of the society into which she wants to assimilate. Unlike men, the older women in novels of self-discovery tend to show women developing later in life after the conventional expectation of marriage and motherhood have been fulfilled or found insufficient.

Unlike the novels of development, the female heroine's goal is not to integrate into society, but to

integrate her "self with herself." The heroines of the novels of self-discovery and independence already know that society can not assimilate them. This implies, in part, that for women in fiction (as in real life) there is an important role for a developing "female consciousness," a female identity that is a process of development quite seperate from a male identity. The difference between the themes of the rites of passage and the themes of the search for identity, self-discovery and independence is that a major portion of this latter theme is really a development of gender consciousness. It is this gender consciousness that makes a woman's writing so different from a man's. And in this way, the authors may use the text or novel as the mediating agent. "The woman writer uses her text, particularly one centering on a female hero, as part of a continuing process involving her own self-definition and her empathetic identification with her character" (Gardiner, 1982:187). This developing gender consciousness is a major aspect of the fact that so many of the novels in the sample were written either in the first person or were autobiographical.

Marianne Brandis' novel, This Spring's Sowing (1970), is a story about Jane Darrow, a school teacher in her mid-forties, who is the victim of an incurable disease and moves out of Vancouver to a small log cabin in a desolate spot in Howe Sound to live out the last few months

of her life. The story itself is told in the first person through Jane's journal and the epilogue is written by her friend Val Williams. In essence, the novel is one of self-discovery, as Jane for the first time in her life, in her final summer, discovers love and courage with the help of the deep friendship of another woman. Jane finally confronts her own emotions and fears and her belief that her own death process, very much like the spring, was a new beginning. The course of her death freed her for a sort of 'inward vitality.' "Perhaps in fact all that was cancelled out by her early death was dutifulness and mediocrity and lonliness, a mere filling of measured spaces of clock time, something of far less value than this timeless spring" (Brandis, 1970:140). In the end as Jane in her final act swims out alone into the vast sea, Brandis tries to show us a woman who finally discovers the purpose of her own existence. Her "final emancipation came not in waiting for her fate but in courageously going out to greet it" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979b:8).

In The Best of Friends (1979), Fielding's heroine Caroline Sutton is so confused about her identity that she can't stand up to her own developed alter-ego, Cathy. "Goddamn it! Everyone always tells me what to do. I'm really tired of it, all of my life, people telling me what I should do. My family, Richard...now, now you're telling me what I can and can't tell my psychiatrist" (Fielding,

1972:30). She is at loose ends, doesn't know where she's going, what she's doing or who she is. Yet, in this novel as well, the heroine emerges from her internal journey, no longer dependent but stronger and mature.

Beresford-Howe's heroine Eva trades respectability for an independent identity. As she tells God in a letter, "Do you realize, I wonder, what submerged identities women like me can have? How repressed and suppressed we are by a life that can give us no kind of self-expression? Unless you are really female after all...even You can't know what it's like to be invisible for years on end. To live locked up. Never spontaneous. Never independent. Never free..." (Beresford-Howe, 1973:116). She journeys in her quest of self-discovery through a series of trials and tests - physical and psychological illness, lonliness, the temptation to return home, "but women, by their inner chemistry, are resilient creatures; with men around they develop this talent out of grim necessity" (Ibid., 50). She emerges from her inner journey as she emerges from her basement apartment into the outer world and even at the age of sixty-six successfully discovers a new self and a free woman.

Gallant's heroine Shirley is also on an inner quest, searching her husband's wastebasket and coat pockets. "She was not trying to discover where he had been or where he was going: she usually knew. She was searching for

enlightenment he could not willingly provide" (Gallant, 1970:19). She is confused about her own identity as she evolves from dependent to independent woman and her confusion is expressed in temporary losses of reality. "She was flooded with happiness, with relief, at seeing a person who knew her, who would not make mistakes with her name or ask for more than she could give. She walked toward the woman from home...The woman smiled as sure of Shirley as Shirley was of her. Claudie's hand, which she violently tried to shrug away, prevented Shirley from walking into a large mirror" (Ibid., 204). Even Shirley emerges from her vagueness and a sense of confusion to accept a self-identity that had always been hers.

In the novels, one of the external aspects that emerges frequently from the journeys of self-discover is anger or defiance. For women novelists, the anger is expressed as a creative force in the sense that it is an expression of the possibilities of growth and achieving happiness. Woman's anger in novels has a tendency to be pragmatic and realistic, with a resolution of some sort, be it resistance or escape, but at the very least as a renewal of woman's image and usually as an alternative to leaving the heroine depressed and/or self-depreciating. The anger is turned outwards and not inwards.

VI. WOMEN'S LIBERATION: THE THEMES OF REBIRTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Although none of the novels in the sample are examples of "the liberated woman," i.e. a self-made, integrated human being as both artist and woman, the majority of them certainly focus on the process and courage necessary for her development. Almost all of the novels stressed the idea that women must take stock of themselves and their own capabilities and stop acting the "victim" and many suggested the idea of a rebirth of a "new woman" who is courageous, strong, independent and womanly. Women in these novels needed to find themselves, and for the most part, succeeded. Those who chose to stay married or to marry for the first time struggled to identify a new role for themselves that did not fulfill the old role of a double standard. The old image of living happily ever after was challenged over and over again.

Younger women were searching for alternative lifestyles; very few of the women remain home in domestic bliss. Only two or three of the novels portrayed the nuclear family and none of them happily. Women chose to be mothers, but not wives. They still gave birth, but chose to rear their children (always daughters) alone. Women were not punished for adultery or sexual freedom, or at the very least emerged both whole and stronger from society's

attempted punishment. Lesbians and women's love and friendship came out of the closet. But most importantly, perhaps, was the realization for a lot of the heroines that they were not alone in their problems, not alone in struggling against the stereotypical roles. Women no longer went insane or died for questioning the validity of these old stereotypes. On a certain level they understood that they shared their experiences with other women. In this realization came their strength.

In the novels of the sample, women had begun to transform themselves. They began to choose a new "public" image over the old "private" traditional and domestic image that had been forced upon them in fiction for so long. Those heroines who expressed the desire and showed the ability to choose have been more successful than those heroines who tried to synthesize the private and the public image, who tried to achieve success as wife and mother as well as be everything to all people, including herself. The "new woman" has to choose to be successful.

The women heroes in the sample did not fulfill the image of the perfect contented housewife. Even those women such as Levi's heroine who chose to remain married knew the consequences for their own development and both Marion and her relationships suffered for it. "Her entire life had been built on a bedrock of pretense, and more resentfully as she grew older, she blamed her husband" (Levi, 1979:9).

Most of the women chose to reject the domestic image. "I then learned to my dismay that Arthur expected me to cook, actually cook, out of raw ingredients such as flour and lard. I'd never cooked in my life. My mother had cooked. I had eaten, these were our roles" (Atwood, 1976a:210). They also chose to reject the social roles that accompanied these images. "Where did she fit in? A secretary. It made her angry and disgusted just to think of it - and worried too because nobody else got angry and disgusted" (Henry, 1975:32). Or Faessler's heroine on a first date, "Put your money back. That's another bourgeois conception - that the man must always pay" (Faessler, 1979:15).

This rejection of the domestic image is connected to the earlier theme of motherhood and mother/daughter relationships. As we saw, young women in the sample were rejecting the domestic images their mothers had portrayed. Brandis, Bhatia, Thomas, Fielding, Truss, Atwood, Van Herk, Howe, Faessler and Levi all searched for an alternate "public" image. The idea, then, that emerges from the novels is that women had other options open to them in life aside from marrying, settling down and having children.

A transformation of the domestic image of women concerned the idea of a rebirth of a new woman, especially in the areas of marriage and childbirth. In modern Canadian fiction by women, the heroines either chose to remain single (Brandis, Rule, Thomas, Laurence, Truss, Engel, Van Herk) to

marry and remain childless (Gallant, Fielding Atwood, McFee) or bear and raise their children alone (Laurence, Rule, Truss). An idea that becomes increasingly clear, though, is that women had a very difficult time synthesizing the images of "domestic" and "public" woman. In an interesting switch of the idealized image of women, Gottlieb and Keitner point out that the image of the "new woman" which emerged from magazines such as Chatelaine in the seventies was that of a "joyful female, sexy, smart and tough-minded, who can cope with everything from home repairs to her husband's menopause, whose panache is equally impressive in bedroom and boardroom, who luxuriates in makeup, clothes of infinite variety and enjoys jazzing up budget recipes with herbs and wine. On top of everything else, she continues to raise strong, healthy children" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979a:519).

Atwood's heroine, Joan Foster, has so many aliases simply because she finds it so difficult to integrate all of the women she wants to be and that everyone wants her to be. "Once I'd dyed my hair, all the obvious evidence would be taken away and I would start being another person, a different person entirely" (Atwood, 1976a:16). "I was searching for a city I could move to, where I could be free not to be myself...I just wanted to fit in without being known" (Ibid., 139). Perhaps Joan's inability to become an integrated whole is best summed up in the comment "For years I'd been trying to get love and terror into the same title,

but it was difficult" (Ibid., 29). One of Fraser's characters, Daphne, "was tired of being something she wasn't" (Fraser, 1975:51). Gallant's heroine Shirley is in a constant state of confusion. She tries so hard to combine so many women, that of traveller, lover, wife and working woman into one integrated whole existence that she can no longer cope with everyday existence. "Just as now, she had embarked on the wrong ship; she had drifted away from shore and to the wrong destination" (Gallant, 1970:73). Even the people she collects around her constitute confusion and disjointed existence. "Philippe had never recovered from the first party she had given after they were married and his discovery that she had not known who half her guests were. 'You're life is like a house without doors,' he said" (Ibid., 110). Henry's heroine had difficulty in reconciling society's dream of the perfect domestic image "the small white house with a blue roof and a garden, curtains white as snow at the window, real furniture, and Smitty coming home from work" (Henry, 1975:151) and the beliefs of her socialist father with which she was raised.

In view of the problems women seem to have in synthesizing the traditional and new image of women, the heroines who seem to have transcended the old problems of both ambivalence and contradictions are those who avoided the dichotomy between the domestic and public image and strove for that new image through the rebirth of

independent womanhood. In the novels that are successful in portraying the new image of women, a sense of solidarity underlies the stories. Constantly these novels are marked with a new sense of strength and potential, a rebirth for women. We saw this solidarity emerge in particular in the section on love and friendship between women, and more to the point here, this theme emerges when the heroines are portrayed as having chosen their own life-styles, or are about to.

The most successful novels portraying women's rebirth and transformation are those that "explore constellations of women and men, women and nature, woman and woman...(the heroines) usually have left behind painful, humiliating and unsatisfactory experiences in the world shaped by men" (Gottlieb and Keitner, 1979a:527). They are in control finally of their own destiny. Beresford-Howe's heroine Eva, Engel's heroine Lou, Brandis' heroine Jane, the birth of Agate's baby in Rule, Faessler's Sophie, Fielding's Caroline, Thomas' Isobel, Laurence's Morag, Truss' Angela, Fraser's women, McFee's Hannah and certainly Van Herk's Judith all fit the new image, a fictional image that is "radical, searching, complex and finally, feminist" (Ibid., 525).

Women who write fiction must obviously inherit a tradition of patriarchal myths and images of women's roles that society has maintained for many generations. Old myths

die hard, they persist long after actual experience has been changed. But an old myth, once universally challenged, must in the end expire. The sample of novels here show that Canadian women writers are at the very least challenging the old myths and contributing to their eventual demise. Women in literature are no longer psychologically and economically dependent upon men; mothers are no longer the optimal role models for their daughters; daughters are beginning to see their mothers as independent women and women are finding love and friendship with other women and discovering their own self-identity and independence. Women's needs as wives "for social and economic self-determination, as well as their loss of erotic liberty, disrupt the institution of matrimony in many novels of marriage" (Pratt, 1981:9). Women's anger is no longer directed inwards at themselves or at other women, but emerges as a creative force in a new growth and rebirth where gender becomes a decisive element in women's transformation. In the novels "we find women who consciously reject their societies and declare themselves persons in spite of it; young women not yet enclosed, on the one hand and older women beyond bothering with the domestic enclosure, on the other" (Ibid., 11). While women in literature are not the picture of an "ideal new woman," completely liberated and free of the old traditional images, they are taking their place in the challenge which the Women's Movement has presented to both men and women.

Perhaps the decade of the eighties will further expand the heroine's options and possibilities.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND LITERATURE

The intent of this chapter is to explore the themes of the novels written by women in Canada in the 1970's to see how closely they might parallel the themes that emerged as part of the Women's Movement in Canada during the same era. The discovery of any impact that the Women's Movement may have had upon women's writing would possibly show a feminine view of life and a content in the novels that could arise from a distinct female experience rooted in women's oppression resulting in a difference in what women choose to write about about, how they write and even a difference in the language that they choose to write in.

It has been pointed out by Canadian literary critics (Aranson, 1975) that the most important difference between fiction written by women in the past in Canada and the fiction being currently written may not necessarily be in the amount of contributions by women to Canadian literature, but in the representation of women portrayed in the writing. This corresponds to the conclusions drawn from the empirical chapter where it was argued that women were portrayed in Canadian fiction written by women in the 1970's in quite a different manner from the "traditional" portrayal.

I. THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN CANADA IN THE SEVENTIES

Although the women's movement in Canada first emerged in the late sixties (Teather, 1976), it might be argued that it was the decade of the seventies which felt The greatest impact from that particular wave of feminism. The year 1969 saw the beginnings of four trends emerging from the previous loose myriad of women who had formed the "movement" in the sixties; liberal feminism, orthodox Marxism and a Marxist/feminist interaction which evolved into radical feminism and socialist feminism.

Liberal feminism distinguished itself from orthodox Marxism by placing its emphasis upon achieving equality for women by working through the existing social system and not questioning the class system. Betty Friedan's work (1963) is most identified with liberal feminism since it was Friedan who first emphasized lobbying for legal and educational reform as a solution to women's struggle for their democratic rights. In Canada, liberal feminists placed their priorities upon the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission carried out its investigations between 1966 and 1969; it's report was tabled in 1970, it was only in 1973 that even one of the Commission's recommendations was implemented, the establishment of a Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women. In 1975, the Council itself finally became the National

Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).

The second trend to emerge in the early seventies, was an orthodox Marxist trend evolving from the student activism and the New Left Politics of the sixties and emerging in various Women's Liberation groups which sprang up across Canada. The unifying theme of the Women's Liberation groups was the realization on the part of radical women, that they had been either left out or presented in a male-biased way in most of the political works they had been reading and in the political actions in which they had been participating. The first formal Women's Liberation group in Canada was formed following the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) conventions in the late sixties, where women's issues and a separate women's voice were denied, and in particular, as a direct result of a similar circumstance at the SUPA (Students Union for Peace Action) conference in 1967.

The orthodox Marxist trend in Canada was influenced by the domestic labour debate and in particular by the attempts of Benston (1969) and Leacock (1972) to "pick up where Engels left off". Benston's article and Leacock's new introduction to Engels' The Origins of the Family, Private and the State helped to establish Engels' work as the Marxist starting point to further contributions to feminism. Engels' analysis of the origins of women's oppression was either supported or criticized by feminists in the debate on

matriarchy and women's status in a pre-class system. Following Benston, many orthodox Marxists began to apply concepts derived from Marx and Engels along more economic lines, to the study of capitalist production and the "women question". The domestic labour debate was continued in Canada by Morton (1972) and others who defined the family in terms of its economic function in society as it maintained the already present workforce and "reproduced" a next generation of workers.

By 1972, the Women's Liberation groups in all its various non-structured forms, had grown to exist in even the smaller centers in Canada. Although there was more or less an agreement among feminists over the issues that concerned the movement, for example, daycare, birth control, abortion, education and actions against sexism, there was debate over the possible solutions that women were proposing to end their oppression. The orthodox Marxists tended to see these women's issues as a secondary contradiction in society, the primary contradiction being that between the bourgoisie and the proletariat. Others, such as the socialist feminists saw both gender and class as primary contradictions.

The third and fourth trends to emerge out of the Women's Liberation Movement was radical feminism and socialist feminism. The Radical Feminists in Canada officially broke away from the Women's Liberation Movement in 1969. Radical feminism developed as a trend in the

women's movement largely because the orthodox Marxists' economic approach to the questions that feminists were raising was unsatisfactory. Radical feminism began with the assumption that although a revolution to change the economic system was necessary, it was not sufficient in itself to liberate women. De Beauvoir (1953) perhaps initiated this trend in the Women's Movement when she rejected the "economic monism of Engels." Millet (1969) is associated with the radical feminists' attempt to examine women's oppression simply as women and not as part of any other social group or class, thereby rejecting the traditional notion of class. Firestone (1970) continued this analysis by arguing that it was the psychosexual roots beneath the economic system which motivated the classes and until these roots were analyzed, women's problems would not be understood. She argued further for a feminist revolution as the only solution to the struggle for social change for women.

A fourth trend in the Women's Movement became what is called socialist feminism, associated in part with Mitchell (1971) and Rowbotham (1973a). This trend included the vein of socialists who accepted that the liberation of women demanded more than a change in the economic system, but disagreed with the radical feminists over whether sex or class was the primary contradiction in society. While the socialist feminists focus on class antagonisms as primary,

they distinguish themselves from the orthodox Marxists by the fact that they reject the idea that it is only through basic economic change in society such as that proposed by Marx, which would allow for the equal status of women. Mitchell (1971) for example uses a Marxist framework while rejecting the orthodox Marxist economic reductionism with regards to women's oppression. She argues, with an emphasis on Freudian psychoanalysis, that sexuality is the site of most contradiction for women in society, and it is this contradictions between sexual freedom and the sexual objectification of women that must be examined. Rowbotham (1973a) rejected the idea of a feminist revolution in order to attempt to connect feminism to a socialist revolution.

A definitive assessment of the 1970's in Canada and how the decade was affected by the various streams within the Women's Movement has yet to be written. There are conflicting points of view concerning the success of the movement and to what extent there has been any impact on actual qualitative changes that may have occurred in relation to the actual position of women in Canadian society.

There is evidence to show that on issues such as labour force participation, the concentration of women in sex-typed jobs, disproportionate shares of low-ranking positions and low earnings and education levels that the objective situation had not changed significantly for women in Canada in the 1970's. As Pat and Hugh Armstrong write in

The Double Ghetto, even by 1984, "while some women have significantly improved their position, the overwhelming majority continue to do women's work at women's wages. The labour force remains highly segregated, domestic work is still women's work, and the reasons for this segregation have not changed" (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985:12-13).

While the female participation rate in the labour force more than doubled between 1941 and 1981, the division of labour by gender has changed very little and gender segregation of work in Canada remains a prevalent characteristic. As well, there is evidence to show that women's domestic labour has undergone very little change. "The majority of women in Canada still work primarily in the home, and even those women with paid employment outside the home are still responsible for most domestic chores" (Ibid., 16). The wage gap between men and women remains quite large. While at best there is evidence that on the average the gap is narrowing very slowly, there is more evidence to show that in some occupations the gap is in fact widening. The jobs where the wage differences between men and women show evidence of narrowing are the occupations where the female share of employment is actually declining.

Women's jobs are still rated low on the prestige scale. Women rarely hold employment where they exercise any control over their own work, and in fact most women are directed in their work by men. It is still the case that

the work women perform in the labour force parallels the domestic work that they do in the home. Chances for advancement are few, and women tend to end their working lives quite close to the income levels they were at when they entered the work force (Marchak, 1977).

The one rather important change that has come about over the decades is that while fewer than 5 percent of married women worked outside of the home in 1941, 51.9 percent of married women had entered the labour force by 1981 (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985:204). More and more women were leaving their role as full-time housewives and for economic reasons, taking on a dual role - that of both labour force participant and full-time housewife (Meissner et al., 1975). As well, the number of women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four who were full-time students had doubled over the same time period. Women, therefore, while not necessarily making major gains in acquiring PhD's or entering the professional world, have nevertheless increased their educational levels on the whole, finishing high school, entering the universities (in sex-typed courses) and even receiving graduate degrees.

The two areas, then, that have changed dramatically for women are their labour force participation rates and their educational levels. Armstrong and Armstrong contend that the apparent contradiction between "aspirations developed in the educational system and the reality of

occupational opportunity" as well as the resulting conflict from the exhaustion of holding down a job in the labour market and having major responsibility for the housework and the dissatisfaction that occurs with partners who do not share the responsibilities of the work at home, have contributed in a large part to a change in women's ideas (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985:203). Women's experience in facing the contradiction of their lives in both the workforce and the home have led to a change in their ideas about themselves and the traditional "women's place." While it is true that the Women's Movement had its birth on the university campuses across North America, and it may be only today, after more than a decade that the ideas of the movement are filtering down to working women, the contradictions that women faced in both the workforce and the home may have contributed in part to the growth of the Women's Movement and provided a partial "basis for resistance and altered consciousness" (Ibid., 204).

II. THE THEMES OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND LITERATURE IN THE SEVENTIES

It is this changing consciousness or rather women's changing ideas about themselves which is of particular interest to this thesis. There has been relatively little written concerning women's representation through the medium

of fiction, especially in relation to any possible influence by the Women's Movement.

In particular there has been a large void concerning the examination of the representation of women in the literature written by Canadian women, and its subsequent place in the feminist literary tradition has not been examined very thoroughly. As was pointed out earlier, women authors may write quite differently from men because of the profound differences in their contradictions and experiences as women in this society. Women's critique of their experience in the Canadian labour force, as well as their experience of oppression in the family and areas of sexuality, may have found their legitimization in the ideology of the Women's Movement. Perhaps it can be further postulated that women's experience of oppression as well as their expanding ideology through the Women's Movement has found a parallel in the development of literature by Canadian women, women's representation in that literature and even in Canadian feminist literary criticism. It may be as well that it is this legitimization through the ideology of the Women's Movement that has influenced the novels written by women during the 1970's, inspiring the writers to move beyond merely mimicing male writers and even beyond a mere expose of sexual stereotyping of women in Canadian literature.

In nineteenth and early twentieth century Canadian fiction, women tended to be identified by the role of wife, mother or daughter. If women were written about in any role other than their familial relationship to men, they merely provided a love interest in the story, or were symbolic figures used to seduce or redeem the male hero. After World War II a new literary image of an independent woman appeared, influenced to a large extent by the suffragette movement, women's entrance to the workforce and a new sexuality in advertising. This "new woman", was at least capable of making some of her own decisions, but while sexually available, she very clearly remained the "good girl" and in the end it was necessary that she marry and subordinate her new independence to the old conventional role patterns.

By the 1970's, women in Canadian fiction, especially that fiction written by women, were again exhibiting their economic independence, but this time with more emphasis upon women's individuality, their control of their own destinies and upon their owning their own sexual identity and sexual feelings which did not necessarily lead to love or marriage or even relationships with men.

Although there exists no consensus concerning the success that the Canadian Women's Movement has had upon the improvement of the day-to-day lives of women, certainly there is at least agreement concerning the question of

consciousness. Few would doubt that the issues and demands raised by the various groups making up the movement have raised new questions concerning women's role in society, how women view themselves and, in turn, new research and new approaches to the study of women. The area of "Women's Studies," a direct outgrowth of the Women's Movement, blossomed in the seventies in academic circles in particular (Wilson, 1976). Feminist critics maintain that women's studies have altered our perception of literature by, at the very least, challenging previous categories of analysis and the very literary system itself. Women's studies have examined the historical status of women, their daily lives, views, depths of accomplishment and drawn attention to their writings, including diaries in which women wrote down their experiences. The courses in Women's Studies in the 1970's, had titles like "Search of Self" or "Discovery." Women's Studies was described in Sheridan College's catalogue as an area "to help women discover themselves and their place in today's society and to help women gain the confidence and knowledge necessary to deal with life today" (Ibid., 184). The idea behind the courses was to bolster the confidence of the rapidly expanding number of women who were beginning to move out of their traditional roles of housewife and mother and to encourage them to enter the world of work and education. The idea behind Women's Studies was not solely to concern itself with consciousness raising, but also to

provide legitimization to women's very real and concrete experiences.

In particular, Susan Koppelman Cornillon points out that at the university where she taught, more than half of the additional new courses in Women's Studies over the years were focused upon literature. "People - both women and men - are beginning to see literature in new perspectives which have been opened up by the Women's Liberation Movement" (Cornillon, 1972:ix). The effect that the Women's Movement has had upon literature has been to reinterpret literature by and about women, and to rediscover a feminist literary tradition, that is, a literature written by women, posing alternate representation of women which differed from the previous assumptions of the male dominated culture. The Women's Movement has helped to show a different routine of women's lives through both the psychological patterns that shape women's identity and the personal ties that have given women their social strength.

Personal as Political

One of the themes to emerge from the Women's Movement in the 1970's was the idea of the 'Personal as Political' (Morgan, 1978). The politics of sex, the politics of housework, the politics of motherhood, etc. have always been the "themes of consciousness". Robin Morgan in the

introduction to Going Too Far eloquently describes the painful politicization process of women going through the Women's Movement; the consciousness-raising groups, the marches, meetings, demonstrations, pickets, workshops, collectives, the questioning of one's role as a housewife, describing women who leave the domestic setting as "runaway wives" who are "women who simply have picked up one dirty sock too many from the living room floor" (Ibid., 7). She describes the period she called "anti-motherhood" as the era where women in the Movement were made to feel guilty for wanting and having children. She then describes the next era of "collectivizing children" which eventually evolved into the present era which she terms "mother-right." Morgan believes that today, women in the Movement are emphasizing the right to their own choice concerning child-bearing and/or child-rearing, the end to guilt over the choice they make and an emphasis upon the freedom of sexual choice including relationships with other women. For women, personal is political means the relationship between personal pain and political oppression, men's power over women and how this power influences a woman's life. How women and men share labour, money and decision-making power at the domestic level is political; how men dominate and control the public sphere is personal (Levine, 1982).

Intrinsic to the Women's Movement has always been women's sense of grievance and awareness of the oppression

that they suffer as people because of their sex. The strongest demand has always been that of equality and an autonomous selfhood for women, co-existing with an acceptance and even celebration of the differences between men and women (Pierson and Prentice, 1982).

In the novels the themes of sexual relations and escape closely parallel the issues surrounding the personal as political raised by the Women's Movement. Fictional heroines too were demanding the right to their sexual choices and willing to accept the consequences in their lives. A strong theme in the fiction as well as in reality is women's desire to escape from the contradictions that they find themselves immersed in. However, whereas women in the Women's Movement were consciously and practically grappling with the questions of class and gender, fictional women were attempting to escape to individual solutions. Their vision of escape was often to a form of independent commodity producer, i.e. writing, art, farming, small business. For fictional women, I believe that these forms of escape were really symbolic of a need for solitude (one does not dream of 'escaping' to factory work). Still, class contradictions very rarely enter the fictional lives of women heroines from the sample and even though they struggle with gender contradictions, the social contents of the novels on the whole were quite conventional. After all, most of the women do end up in petite bourgeoise class

positions, still reproducing the wider social system where all of the contradictions remain.

Socialization

One of the major aspects to emerge from the novels of development in the 1970's was the theme of the socialization process of young women and the contradictions they face when their desires and dreams come head-on with social reality. The socialization of young girls was one of the first themes to be addressed by the Women's Movement. Women were critical of what was called the destructive socialization process that was inflicted upon everyone at birth, a process which categorized and classified girls and boys for the rest of their lives. Research was done on the toys male and female children were encouraged to play with, the books they were read and later taught, the games they played and the effect the media - television, movies and ads - have all had on this socialization process and hence what girls and boys aspired to be as adults.

Women became more critical of a process that pre-defined sexual roles. Boys were taught to seek adventure, pursue a career; they were oriented upwards and outwards. Girls were to be the wives, mothers, and homemakers of society, oriented to be happily accepting of that role. Those girls who grew uncomfortable with these roles knew

only a sense of frustration and unhappiness.

Many of the women's novels of the period also addressed this socialization process and the contradictions young girls faced, particularly when confronted with their mothers as the accepted role model. As we saw from the sample studied, just as women in the Women's Movement were critical of such a socialization process, so did the girls in fiction rebel. Their rejection of their role models took on varied forms, yet for the most part they were not satisfied to accept society's traditional role for them. Very few of the fictional heroines became traditional wives and mothers and those who found themselves in a traditional situation often changed their minds and attempted, again often successfully, to change it. The sample of novels showed again and again young women rejecting what society expected of them.

Independence

Canadian women questioning the socialization process quite naturally began to also examine the area of economic independence for women. The Women's Movement began to engage in strong demands and actions over the inequality of women in the labour process. Attention was at last paid to exposing the unequal participation rate of women in the labour force compared to men, the lack of representation by

women in certain occupations and professions, the need for daycare to free women to work and the need for women to unionize. Overall came the demand for power and an end to women's inferior economic position in society. Women were no longer content to always be identified as someone's wife or someone's mother, recognizing that the taking on of a man's name after marriage was denying her own individual identity, symbolic of what prevented her from developing as her own person and keeping her in her place. With the recognition of the personal as political, the Women's Movement was able to make the connection between economic independence for women and their individual growth as human beings.

The novels of the period tended to be somewhat idealist in largely ignoring the problem of economic independence for women. Although the fiction writers recognized the necessity for their women heroes to be economically independent (women's need for money is a recurrent theme), they often either took the idea of wage labour for granted or had their women getting along remarkably well without it. Most of the emphasis in the novels was placed on the personal search for self-identity and hence personal independence. Although mentioned in almost all the novels, very little emphasis was placed on what women actually did for a living, or at least the work process itself and its impact on the day-to-day lives of

women, and this fits with Dorfman's (1975) analysis of the general absence of the world of production and labour from literature common to all bourgeoise ideology. All the women heroes, except the two older women, worked for a wage. They were teachers, social workers, librarians, hospital workers, farmers, secretaries, students, researchers, did odd jobs or were writers (often a combination of both writing and other work). Only one woman was primarily a housewife. Independence, perhaps economic independence, was symbolized for the most part in women's desire to become writers. None of the novels really addressed the question of a woman's double work day, or the sharing of household labour with men. Similarly, the contradictions that accompany an analysis of class are also absent from the literature. These are not proletarian novels in the classic sense at least. Yet they do address problems of gender that are specific to women. Often their most important feature may be "the way in which, regardless of their economic condition or social class, women are permanently anchored by personal relationships. Daughters, wives, sisters, mothers, widows - all are pegged by the roles they assume toward the men in their lives (Keefer, 1985:19).

Although the lack of detail concerning women's work and descriptions of women supporting themselves as writers seems somewhat idealistic, when women's turn to the writing process is seen as symbolic of economic independence, then

the underlying themes of both the novels and the Women's Movement form essential parallels to each other. This suggests a common desire amongst women to be independent of men, to stand on their own no matter what occupation they spend their lives at.

Choice

The theme of choice in the Women's Movement is a wide one, encompassing women's desire for making their own choices in their sexual relations, lifestyle, and their demand to have sole control over their own bodies. The Women's Movement created formal demands concerning women's role in the decision-making process over whether or not to bear children, how to raise them, the very institution of marriage itself and their sexual relations with both men and women.

The subtitle of the anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement in 1972 was "Up from the Kitchen Up from the Bedroom Up from Under". Women wanted free and safe birth control, to reclaim for themselves lost knowledge and information about women's health care issues, in particular the reproductive process. They wanted abortion on demand and the decision concerning whether or not to bear children to be one made by women alone if they so chose. Women were examining alternatives to the traditional family structure,

that is living with male partners outside of the marriage institution, and deciding to remain childless. Those who chose to bear children were demanding collective childcare and quality daycare. Women began to see that bearing children out of wedlock was a choice they could make, and that living with a man was not necessarily what was needed to complete or fulfill their lives or relationships. The myths of female sexuality, virginity, desire, orgasm and pleasure, women as sex objects and the concepts of sex and love were all being challenged on various levels in the Women's Movement in the seventies. Even further, women were "coming out of the closet", declaring in 1972 that lesbians also belonged in the Women's Movement.

"The efforts of many women to redefine their sexual natures is explicitly linked with the examination of women's place in society at large, with a reconsideration of the female role in literature and in life" (Miles, 1974:153). The question of choice runs through the novels of the seventies in the themes of sexual relations and escape, as well as in the theme of the love and friendship between women.

Sexuality, as portrayed in the novels, certainly is what Mitchell called "the weak link in the chain - the particular structure that is the site of the most contradictions" (Mitchell, 1966:24). Women in the fiction of the seventies, as women in the Women's Movement, were

choosing to leave their traditional relationships, have abortions or rear their children on their own. Only three of the novels portrayed women in the traditional marriage including children, and none of those women were happy and contented with their lot. Most of the heroines were refusing marriage, refusing monogamy and not succumbing to guilt over the change in their roles. Women were experimenting sexually in fiction, even to the extent of loving other women if they chose. The empirical chapter showed that women were no longer seen simply as "witches, bitches or whores" for denying this tradition, but in fact emerged stronger, more independent, happier and more likeable women for their choices.

Solidarity

Solidarity with other women emerged as a dominant theme in the Canadian Women's Movement and it proved important to the novels as well. Women who had been socialized to compete with each other for men's affection, to turn away from their mothers and their mother's experiences, were beginning the process of discovering each other and while rejecting their mothers' traditional position, affirming and identifying with them as women. As with any false consciousness, the socialization of women to compete with each other, when systematically questioned and

analyzed, finally began to break down.

One of the main emphases of the Women's Movement was "consciousness-raising" where women began to share their experiences openly and to learn that their problems were not unique. "Women unite" became a rallying cry as women learned that their strength grew when they were able to collectively question the old roles, the old stereotypes and not their own sanity. It was in solidarity with other women that women came to realize that they could overcome their isolation, one of the strongest instruments of their oppression.

The literature of the seventies added to the desire to overcome the stereotyping of women by reflecting this new solidarity and by also redefining women's relationships with both their mothers and their daughters. While women were rejecting the role models that their mothers had presented, many of the novels delved behind the rejection to show women learning to love their mothers as women, sometimes even as friends. The novels showed us the importance that women attached to the friendship of other women, frequently outlasting heterosexual friendships and relations. It was women who the women heroes turned to for friendship, understanding and trust, not to men. The novels showed through the themes of family relations as well as the love and friendship between women that these ideas had indeed permeated fiction.

Feminist Creativity

The last of the themes that will be considered in both the Women's Movement and the fiction of the seventies was the changing patterns of creative expression for women. Although it has been argued by some that social conditions dictate the opportunities available to women for creative expression, it can also be argued that a feminist self-awareness emerges through literature and art in any period. Nevertheless, "one index of the growing strength and confidence of women as a group is our ability to lay claim to our own experiences and to name and interpret them in our own terms" (Read, Donegan and Martin, 1982:288).

Women in the Women's Movement were asking questons about creativity, some trying to define a feminist creativity, some trying to "clarify the relationship between the artist, artwork and audience. For example, what is the difference between art created by women politically committed to feminism and other art? What can a feminist audience demand of a feminist artist? How can we in feminist communities, nuture our artists?" (Ibid., 288). In literature in particular, a lot of the debate in the Women's Movement concerning creativity centered around the question of a male-dominated language and a male-dominated book industry. Attempts were made to try and create a feminist language. For others, the emphasis was upon discovering a

lost literature, i.e. writing, biographies and diaries of women once considered flighty and inconsequential.

An underlying question for many of the heroes of the novels studied, was how to be women, mothers and artists simultaneously. Although none of the heroes took an explicitly "feminist" approach to the question, most of them discovered some sort of answer for themselves as individuals and for most, creativity was the driving force behind their inner journeys and eventual successes. For fictional women, while solidarity with other women was extremely important, their inner journeys were crucial to their survival and often only undertaken successfully because of the support of other women. These ideas emerged again and again in the themes of rebirth and growth in the novels.

Also "in one way or another, imagination has been for many women the seed of grace, and often the subject as well as the impetus for writing. Directly and indirectly, women discuss the function of their creativity - expressed through their domestic and maternal life, through their artistic achievement, sometimes through their evolution and presentation of a 'self'" (Spacks, 1975:6). Or, as Marian Engel once put it, "writing is the cheapest of the arts, which is why so many women are able to practise it and have been for so long" (Morley, 1978:154).

III. THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND WOMEN WRITERS

Though the various organizations that make up the Women's Movement may have at various times laid claim to some Canadian writers, the women who have written our fiction have, for the most part, resisted any formal similar claim. Nevertheless, of the women writers covered in this study, Jane Rule, Audrey Thomas, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Marian Engel, Judith Van Herk and Mavis Gallant have at some time at least acknowledged the effects of the Women's Movement on them as women and hence as writers. Above all, there seems to be a unanimity amongst women writers that any formal involvement with the Women's Movement would be a detriment to women's writing. As Atwood put it, "Some of my reservations have to do with the questionable value of writers, male or female, becoming directly involved in political movements of any sort; their involvement may be good for the movement, but it has yet to be demonstrated that it's good for the writer" (Atwood, 1976b:257). One reason for the distance between writers and the Movement, Atwood explains, is that for the writers "old enough to have a career of any length" there was no Women's Movement in their formative years and "these writers, if they are honest, don't want to be wrongly identified as the children of a movement that did not give birth to them. Being adopted is not the same thing as being born" (Ibid.,

258-259).

But probably the greatest fear that writers have is of "socialist realism" or, in other words, writing to conform to an ideology, stifling or subordinating one's individual creativity. "No good writer wants to be a transmitter of someone else's ideology, no matter how fine the ideology may be...the aim of any political movement is to improve the quality of people's lives on all levels...Imaginative writing, however, tends to concentrate more on life not as it ought to be, but as it is, as the writer feels it, experiences it" (Ibid., 271).

Women can and do write effectively about women's experiences without any formal ties or active involvement with organizations. Writing, for the most part, is a private and individual endeavour. It keeps the writer out of the work force and away from the direct discrimination that goes hand in hand with women's occupations, i.e. concerning wages, hiring, etc. This is not to deny the difficulty, as was pointed out earlier, that women writers have and have had in getting their writing published. Yet, "women writers" and hence how they react to the Women's Movement either as "women" or as "writers" often depend on whether in fact they can or want to split themselves into these seperate categories. "The woman writer in Canada, then, exists in a society that, although it may turn certain individual writers into revered cult objects, has little

respect for writing as a profession, and not much respect for women either" (Ibid., 271).

Aritha Van Herk, in an interview with the feminist magazine, Branching Out, while acknowledging that she is a feminist, also stresses the importance of writing for the "sake of art" and not to "sermonize." For Van Herk, "If you can explore a woman with a reasonable amount of intelligence, sensitivity and realism and if you're offering an alternative, I think you are writing a feminist novel. Ideally a feminist novel should teach us more about ourselves" (Batt, 1978:27).

Marian Engel held more poignant views of the Women's Movement. Engel was once a member of the CCF and the first chairperson of the Writers Union in 1973-74, which she viewed as an inevitable offshoot of the feminist movement because of the patriarchy enshrined in the publishing industry. Yet in an interview with Carroll Klein in Room of One's Own, she maintains that she had remained independent from any group within the Women's Movement because she was too involved in the writer's movement, hated "singing party lines" and tended "to reserve her anger for the state." Although Engel spoke about her problems with the ideology of the Women's Movement, she traced this back to her youth when she was brought up to both idealize and seek out the company of men. She also spoke about the changes the Movement has brought to her, her growing

relationships with other women and the effects of women's experiences on her writing. At the same time she was critical of what she called "the whole genre of women and women's problems, and women's problems are getting milked dry. We will have to go in another direction" (Van Herk and Palting, 1978:14).

Jane Rule perhaps sums up the relationship between women writers and the Women's Movement best, when she writes, "Literature and politics have never been easy bedfellows...Though many good and even great writers have revealed strong political biases in their work, they are not remembered long for the way they voted or revolted...Those movements which have shunned their writers or required them to follow the party line have got the literature they deserve" (Rule, 1985:21). Rule maintains that the Women's Movement in Canada has never been able to dictate to writers, but because most of Canada's respected writers are women, the movement has tried with little success, to claim them. "Gradually nearly everyone agreed that in one way or another the women's movement in Canada had helped women writers by being a newly honouring audience, by making men nervous enough to want to know what women are saying. Canada still does not have writers either created or controlled by the movement" (Ibid., 23). For Rule, "It is not a question of whether Margaret Atwood or Elizabeth Brewster are feminists, but whether the women's movement is

confident enough to claim their power without reducing it to any sort of narrow political correctness" (Ibid., 24-25).

It is impossible to determine conclusively exactly what the effects of the Women's Movement in Canada have had on Canadian writing, or what effect our women writers have had on the Movement. It is clear that a parallel of themes exist between the Movement and the fiction and it is also clear that Canada's major women fiction writers acknowledge the Women's Movement and its importance on them as women and hence most probably as women writers.

It would be difficult to document objectively what the force of a Women's Movement ideology has had on a literature. It would be fair to conclude, however, that at the very least it had a catalyzing effect in that the movement provided a backdrop of ideas against which women are able to write out their pain, anger, hope, rebirth and finally, survival.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

"What does it mean to a woman to write? For the real person Anaïs Nin and the fictional character Anna Wulf, writing represented the only viable possibility for freedom...The cliché that women, more consistently than men, turn inward for sustenance seems to mean, in practice, that women have richly defined the ways in which imagination creates possibility: possibility that society denies" (Spacks, 1975:37).

Many female writers have pointed to the difficulties that women novelists have faced as far back as the Restoration in writing professionally. At worst they faced hostility and indifference in response to their work, and were forced to write according to "male" literary criteria. Otherwise they subverted the male literary forms and conventions with what has been termed the "art of silence", or a sort of recognition that a patriarchally-conceived language, devoid of meaning for women writers, had excluded them from the literary genre (Relke, 1984:35). At best, the novel provided women with an appropriate outlet for emotion and fantasy. Jacobus explains that women were granted "access to the novel as a sort of repressive desublimation,

a harmless channel for frustrations and drives that might otherwise threaten the family, the Church and the State" (Jacobus, 1979:33).

Grayson has defined the Canadian literary elite as a group whose importance "stems from their facility with the written word and their ability, through their work, to transmit ideologies. The transmission of ideology, in turn, can be thought of as sustaining a particular social order or of contributing to a false consciousness on the part of certain classes. The difference is one of perspective" (Grayson, 1978:291). Yet since 1900, women, although better represented in the English Canadian literary than any other elite, still only comprised twenty percent.

Showalter has developed a theory of the developmental phases in the evolution of the female tradition of the novel.

The first stage she calls the Feminine phase, between 1840-1880, when women wrote either under male pseudonyms (in the United Kingdom) or with ultra-feminine pseudonyms (in the United States) as a way of coping with what they perceived to be a double literary standard for men and women. Many women during this period wrote in an effort to prove their equality with the intellectual achievements of men and internalized male assumptions about female nature. The second phase, from 1880-1920, Jacobus calls the Feminist phase, within which she maintains that women used

literature to dramatize the ordeals of wronged womanhood. Novels by women in the United Kingdom became explicitly feminist in their depiction of class struggle and factory life. In both the U.K. and the U.S., the 1890's were the years of the "Amazon Utopias", fantasies about the perfect female society of the future seen as a protest against male government, male laws and male medicine. The third phase Jacobus outlines as the Female phase, 1920 to the present. It is in the twentieth century, she maintains, that women have rejected both imitation and protest as forms of dependency, and instead have turned to the female experience itself as a source of autonomy. It is in this present phase that women have turned feminist analysis of culture and society into the techniques of literature. Women writers have only recently begun to think in terms of a patriarchal language, of male and female sentences, distinguishing between masculine and feminine journalism and fiction.

Certainly modern fiction has come a long way from what Simone de Beauvoir and others outlined as the traditional female role in fiction. Excluded from active social participation, the traditional heroine's role was to wait. Traditionally, female sleep was interrupted by the arrival of the prince who awakened the heroine to adulthood (marriage), a reentering into social activity, but only in the private sphere we are to assume, of receiving, submitting and subordinating herself to her husband and her

children. The heroine was forced to develop inwardly, to explore and develop spiritually, morally and emotionally at the expense of all other aspects of selfhood.

This "novel of development", or "bildungsroman" as it also has been called, was written in a circular pattern by women as opposed to the male novel of development which followed a spiral pattern. Unlike male heroes who got to test their self images in adventure in the outside world, female heroines learned the rituals of human relationships at home. Female heroines who rebelled against this traditional female role were perceived as unnatural and paid the price for their rebellion with unhappiness, madness or death.

Miles (1974) argues that the twentieth century brought the first attempts to establish women's writing on its own terms. Although the Victorian novel is still being written, by the 1920's and 1930's the most "admired" women writers were seen, and saw themselves, as expressing a female consciousness in their work, and were clearly differentiating themselves from the work of male writers. While on the one hand one could argue that there was little political consciousness in their work concerning male domination, the novels of the twentieth century showed a growing and resentful awareness of the ramifications of the social oppression of women. The reconsideration of the female role in society is linked with an examination of

women's place in literature.

Feminist critics maintain that women's studies have altered our perception of literature by, at the very least, challenging previous categories of analysis and the very literary systems that have been analyzed. Women's studies have examined the historical status of women, their daily lives and views, and drawn new attention to their writing, including diaries in which women wrote down their daily experiences. The effect of this work has been to reinterpret literature by and about women, and to rediscover a feminist literary tradition. Literature written by women has, as we have seen, posed alternative representation of women from the previous assumptions of the dominant male culture. It has shown a different routine of women's lives through the psychological patterns that shape women's identity and the personal ties that have given women their social strength.

Feminist literary criticism itself has undergone many stages. In its beginnings, feminist literary criticism concentrated on exposing literary stereotyped images of women and the literary abuse of women in both classical and popular fiction. A second phase began the discovery of women's own literature and its historical, thematic and artistic importance that had been obscured by patriarchal values in our culture. The discovery of a concept of a female aesthetic emerged, and debates still rage over its

precise nature. Most recently, a lesbian aesthetic has separated out from the 'female' aesthetic. Today, in the third phase, feminist literary criticism demands "not just the recognition of women writing but a radical rethinking of the conceptual grounds of literary study, a revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing that have been based entirely on male literary experiences" (Showalter, 1985:8). "Adrienne Rich has defined what the new feminist approach means to the literary critic: 'Revision,' she calls it, 'the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction - is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival'" (Anderson, 1975:9).

In summary, then, although novels embodying an acceptance of female subordination have been written by both men and women, and have appeared throughout history and are still being written today, it has been the contention of this thesis that in Canada a feminist tradition exists in English Canadian literature. Despite even the most notable exceptions, some critics have pointed to a distinct gender difference in the writing of fiction as it pertains to the image of women. This difference irks some critics such as George Woodcock who wrote of Mavis Gallant: "Gallant's mature work is in no way male and ideological: it is feminine and intuitive, and the rightness of detail and

surface which are so striking come not from intellectual deliberation but a sense of rightness as irrational but true as absolute pitch" (Woodcock, 1978:82). More often however, this gender difference has been noted as a literary exploration of a specifically female experience, usually linked in some way to the influence of the Women's Movement. In the seventies (and today) many of Canada's best selling writers were women who were (and are still) presenting the lives and perceptions of women.

This thesis has attempted to move beyond an exposure of the sexual stereotyping of women in Canadian literatue in part because such analysis has failed to deal sensitively with works written by women, but also because the ideology of the Women's Movement has moved feminist literary criticism (and the sociology of literature) beyond looking at the world as it has been to looking at the world the way women want it to be. Literature, as with other disciplines, has recognized and addressed a certain "structural inconsistency" in Canadian society. As Grayson points out with his quotation from Frances E. Merill, "the characters of great fiction are important whether they are 'real' or not. For generations readers have identified with these personages in much the same way as if they existed in the finite world...and have a 'reality' that in many ways surpasses that of the people we 'know'. Literature is a cultural product that reflects past interaction as

integrated by the author and influences subsequent interaction on the part of the reader" (Grayson, 1983:13).

That certain themes have been consistently discovered in the novels studied here point to a feminist literary tradition in English Canada, delineating an internally consistent body of work that can stand up as female countertradition to a dominant male tradition. Despite the different influences on the women writers in the sample, most of them "hold as common ground the understanding that what women do, and what happens to women, has a great deal to do with the social structure in which they exist. Whatever is personal, intimate, individual is connected - often in an extremely complicated and subtle way - to the material and ideological institutions of this society" (Flood and Goldsmith, 1980:9). Women's writing has demonstrated, through the themes examined in this thesis, a unity of values, experiences and behaviour - a female view of life and content arising from a distinct female experience rooted in the women's oppression and in gender ideology now established in English Canadian literature.

Studying the representation of women by women in Canadian literature must take us beyond the concentration on women's subordination, mistreatment and oppression as it appears in fiction. The study of Canadian women's own literary tradition through an analysis of a symbolic construction of gender and sexuality through literary

discourse would aid in the recovery of that tradition.

"For three hundred years the woman's novel has been a repository of not merely horrors but hopes, chronicling historical facts while carrying out speculative experiments with possibilities unheard of in our recent history. Most inspiring, and most invigorating, are the many hints about and clues to a power capable even at this late date of turning our wastelands once again into fruitful orchards where men and women can walk in amity and equity" (Pratt, 1981:12).

Although the last decade in feminist literary criticism has been very productive and exciting, a specifically Canadian content must be further developed. The bird is at the window. It is ready to soar.

FOOTNOTE

[1] Unless otherwise specified, the term ideology refers to dominant ideology. This is not to deny, however, that internal contradictions may exist within dominant ideology that can challenge its dominance. A counter-ideology may indeed contribute to the break-down of the dominant ideology. In this thesis, the novels studied may be seen to have contributed to a counter ideology that directly challenges gender ideology.

It is also important to note, as already stated in the text, that neither the class structure of society nor the concept of the ideology of class is an important theme within the novels. It may be important at this point to warn the reader that this exclusion prevents the empirical chapter from following a traditional socialist feminist analysis, i.e. the study of class and gender.

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