

The University of Manitoba

Aspects of the Female Novel:
Experience, Pattern, Selfhood

by

© Jaqueline McLeod Rogers

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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EXPERIENCE, PATTERN, SELFHOOD

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JAQUELINE McLEOD ROGERS

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Going beyond studies which examine thematic and imagistic repetitions in women's fiction, this generic study has two objectives: first to analyze the formal principles as well as the content of the female novel and second to provide a systematic account of difference between this and the traditional novel. Working with American, British and Canadian fiction, ranging chronologically from Behn's Oronooko (1688) to Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1985), this study plays off the alternates of "Experience," "Pattern" and "Selfhood" against the elements E.M. Forster defines in Aspects of the Novel as "Story," "Plot" and "People." While reference to Forster facilitates a comparative mapping out of difference, designating alternate features ensures that female standards can be appreciated on their terms.

Dealing first with the distinction between "Story" and "Experience," this study examines the tendency of women novelists to recreate inner drama which emphasizes what is thought, felt or sensed over what is said, done or seen and which thus eschews such traditional organizational features as time and event. Secondly, this study proposes that "Pattern" appropriately conveys the extent to which the Psyche paradigm, and with it the psychological principle of necessity, informs the female novel; "Pattern" is thus unlike "Plot," whose forms are multiple and governed by conditions of logic and probability. Finally, consideration is given to difference pertaining to characterization. "Selfhood" replaces "People" to emphasize that the female novel typically features the single figure of the heroine engaged in a growth process, which is unlike the hero's in being ongoing and in always involving a relational component.

Defining conventions which have evolved rather than changed over time, this study not only provides a corrective to generic misconceptions that underlie many traditional interpretations of women's fiction but also challenges feminist readings that argue for the recent emergence of new plot forms or a new heroine. It further challenges interpretations that place central emphasis upon themes of power and oppression, demonstrating that instead a balanced and optimistic viewpoint characterizes the female novel from its inception.

in memory of my mother,
ELIZABETH MARJORIE McLEOD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter	
I. Masculine Story/Feminine Experience	18
II. Masculine Plots and Plausibilities/Feminine Pattern and Paradigm	53
III. Masculine Identity/Feminine Selfhood	164
Conclusion	224
Notes	232
Works Cited	235

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INTRODUCTION

That difference exists between texts authored by men and women has been variously argued by authors and critics since the rise of the English novel in the eighteenth century. Since male texts have been assigned priority--for chronological and cultural reasons--it has followed that difference has been located in the female text and has been seen as a sign of failure or inferiority. Much recent feminist criticism has challenged the priority of the male text, recommending such things as that Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (1688) replace Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) as paradigmatic of the first English novel and, more generally, that critical bias be set aside to allow for the re-examination of novels by women, which were popular in their day but have become obscure over time. The most significant and unanimous assertion that feminist critics make is that difference, when it is located between male- and female-authored works, need not signify fault or failure on the part of women writers. As Elaine Showalter suggests, English, French and American critics are united in "struggling to find a terminology that can rescue the feminine from its stereotypical associations with inferiority" ("Wilderness" 16).

The grounds on which feminist scholars conduct their struggle to reassess the value of women's fiction are in large measure determined by how far they take the concept of difference. Many have been unwilling to concede that sexuality affects textuality to the extent that the female novel is distinct from the novel as it has traditionally been defined. Such reluctance to distinguish generically between female and

male writing grows from two concerns. First, there is the desire to keep male texts and literary conventions in view in order to foster a dialogue of comparison with traditional works and to avoid conducting studies isolated from the mainstream of critical opinion. Second, there is the view that difference in the female text is a response to external conditions, a view which can lead critics to argue that women's writing is not a legitimate expression of the feminine. Annette Kolodny is suspicious of arguments that build upon the "assumption" that a "feminine mode" is distinguishable from a "masculine mode"--"before we can ask how women's writing is different or unique, we must first ask is it"--and warns that reductive generalizations are all that can result from approaching women's literature as a separate tradition, since such an approach discounts the "richness and variety" of which authors of both sexes are capable: "What we have not fully acknowledged is that the variations among individual women may be as great as those between women and men--and, in some cases perhaps, the variations may be greater within the same sex than that between two particular writers of different sexes" (40-41).

Yet as Showalter points out in rebutting Kolodny's argument, the mandate of feminist scholars need not be restricted to perennial "correcting, modifying, supplementing, revising, humanizing, or even attacking male critical theory" but can more productively address "questions about the process and contexts of writing" ("Wilderness" 13). Her point is that to engage in endless feminist revisions of traditional models is finally to restrict what can be known about women's writing, since the yardstick is always "the androcentric critical tradition"

(14). Kolodny herself, once her objection to assuming female difference is established, is aware that her own essay provides a number of examples which point towards its existence: "All these precautions notwithstanding, having spent the last four years intensively reading and teaching a fair sampling of contemporary United States and Canadian women writers, I would be less than honest if I suggested that I had not already begun to be able to catalogue clearly demonstrable repetitions of particular thematic concerns, image patterns, and stylistic devices among these authors" (41).

While like Kolodny in maintaining that difference results from cultural experience, Showalter claims that this experience, far from being ephemeral, "binds women writers to each other over time and space" ("Wilderness" 27). There is a female literary tradition, Showalter argues, yet it arises in response to cultural conditions rather than being expressive of a voice and vision that might be considered innately feminine. It is because the argument from experience thus externalizes the origin of difference that Judith Kegan Gardiner has called it "limited in its applications" in differentiating it from the other major approach to the issue of difference which she terms the argument "from a separate consciousness":

During the past few years, feminist critics have approached writing by women with an "abiding commitment to discover what, if anything, makes women's writing different from men's" and a tendency to feel that some significant differences do exist. The most common answer is that women's experiences differ from men's in profound and regular ways. Critics using this approach find recurrent imagery and distinctive content in writing by women, for example, imagery of confinement and unsentimental descriptions of child care. The other main explanation of female difference posits a "female

consciousness" that produces styles and structures innately different from those of the "masculine mind." The argument from experience is plausible but limited in its applications; the argument from a separate consciousness is subject to mystification and circular evidence. ("Identity" 178)

A brief profile of both approaches--the former of which could be said to grow from Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1953), the latter from Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own (1929)--will serve to highlight the problems associated with each and to indicate that adopting either can lead to prescriptive judgments.

In The Second Sex, de Beauvoir provides an in-depth examination of the traditional and contemporary position of women in Western culture. Her argument is that essential differences between men and women result from the roles in which they have been cast over centuries of cultural conditioning. Treated as "other" in a long-standing patriarchal society, women have been denied opportunity to develop meaningful selfhood through life-engaging and -developing pursuits. Lacking education and any access to channels of power controlled by men, women have been cast into secondary supportive roles, as daughters, wives, and mothers of men. These roles--while not evidence of any fundamental difference between the sexes--cause women to share experience different from men's in being marked by anger, alienation, and survival strategies.

According to de Beauvoir's view, art has been and continues a masculine domain, and important works--male authored--promulgate patriarchal values and attitudes, not least of which is the portrait of woman as other. Women are without an art, or specifically a literature, of their own, silent in a culture that will continue to suppress them

until significant social change makes possible the emergence of the "new" women--one demanding and achieving access to male-controlled power centers. The possibility of change is imminent, however, given that women are in the process of recognizing their unequal position and reacting against it. Yet de Beauvoir's own view of women's social inequality leads directly to her view that authentic female achievement has thus far been so restricted as to be impossible in our culture.

Developing from de Beauvoir's position is the theory of a number of influential feminist critics who hold that culture, having divided men from women, has not so much thwarted female creativity as it has forced deformations upon its expression, resulting in the appearance of novelistic difference. Cultural inequality has been responsible for the creation of two literatures, one belonging to the dominant male group and the other to the female sub-culture. Since culture is patriarchal, these critics contend that male art has been viewed as focusing the standards of excellence and that many female productions, failing to meet these standards, have been pushed aside. Their view is that de Beauvoir heard silence when she listened for a female literary voice since a kind of censorship has been imposed on works by women by masculine arbiters of culture. Over the last decade or so, many of these critics have undertaken the recovery of "lost" texts, submitting them to fresh analyses according to standards defined by Cheri Register as either "female" or "feminist" (272).

"Female" standards require that the evocation of experience be relevant, speaking to women of their history and themselves. Critics who apply these standards argue that women's stories have been

overlooked and that their value should be reassessed in order for the literary canon to represent authors of both genders in a more balanced way. Exactly what merit this recovered fiction has is still under debate, however, since literary value tends to be reduced to a matter of taste. Such is the case in Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America 1820-1870 when Nina Baym suggests that canonized novels have gained prominence by virtue of the appeal of their content:

I cannot avoid the belief that "purely" literary criteria, as they have been employed to identify the best American works, have inevitably had a bias in favor of things male--in favor, say of whaling ships rather than the sewing circle as a symbol of the human community; in favor of satires on domineering mothers, shrewish wives, or betraying mistresses rather than tyrannical fathers, abusive husbands, or philandering suitors; displaying an exquisite compassion for the crises of the adolescent male, but altogether impatient with the parallel crises of the female. (14)

Yet surrounding this placing of blame on biased male standards is her own denial that the fiction she studies reflects artistic merit of the first order: "I have not unearthed a forgotten Jane Austen or George Eliot, or hit upon even one novel that I would propose to set alongside The Scarlet Letter....While not claiming literary greatness for any of the novels introduced in this study, I would like at least to begin to correct such a bias [as masculine critics have shown] by taking their content seriously" (14-15).

Staking a claim for the value of female content without providing a way to reassess form, an approach like Baym's does little to defend this fiction against unsympathetic critics, particularly when detractors are themselves women. Challenging Baym directly, Myra Jehlen asserts that "the low quality of the women's fiction" is apparent when it is read

against men's fiction, whose moral seriousness and vision she affirms: "True, whaling voyages are generally taken more seriously than sewing circles, but it is also true that Melville's treatment of the whale hunt is a more serious affair than the sentimentalists' treatment of the sewing circle" (592). Arguing in general that criticism is short-sighted that focuses on women alone, Jehlen's position is that critics must refer as well to the dominant tradition and to cultural influences if they are to assess the value of women's fiction fairly. Her hypothesis is that by showing independence, "the sentimental heroines, perhaps rich as models, are poor as characters" (591), given that within patriarchal society "an impotent feminine sensibility is a basic structure of the novel" (600).

Although disagreeing on the merit of this branch of women's fiction, both critics share the underlying assumption that there is one novel and that men typically write it better than women; while Baym believes that women writers do enough if their heroines can serve as models to inspire real-life women, Jehlen believes they do too little as long as their heroines are not like those of male authors. Both are more concerned with what fictions say than with how they develop. So long as it is assumed that the formal principles of male- and female-authored novels are one, then debates like theirs will continue between those who believe that the female point of view is valuable in itself and those who point out that women's writing is without the artistry of men's.

"Feminist" standards are more political, attempting to discover in works by women a consciousness of their oppression and a consequent

expression of outrage, overt sometimes, but more often muted. Critics like Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue in The Madwoman in the Attic that nineteenth-century women's literature gives voice to female anger at oppression, creating fictions as powerful and engaging to the female reader as they are disturbing and antagonistic to the male reader. Critics of this school argue that women, denied access to education and power, yet able to construct fictions about the experience of alienation, found readership among the half of the culture whose situation they addressed--the half who had the leisure and interest to read enough to determine best sellers, but who lacked education and academic credentials to enable them to judge and rank what they read.

The main problem with "feminist" criticism is that fiction is evaluated according to political rather than artistic standards. Works are admired or recommended for further study only insofar as they reflect a consciousness of oppression. Literature from the past is analyzed for expressions of outrage, which these critics argue have been misread or ignored by unenlightened readers and critics, often male. Contemporary literature is read for signs that women are emerging from servitude and inequality, the "best" fictions being those that reflect liberationist concerns. While such an approach has produced some valuable insights, its prescriptive nature may draw away from defining what is truly constant in women's fiction. Moreover, to maintain that women's fiction merely reacts against the cultural conditions of a given historical period--conditions as they are currently understood--is to deny that fiction by women expresses anything of abiding value. Indeed, myth as well as literature is viewed as a product of masculine culture,

but--instead of sharing de Beauvoir's resentment of mythic constructs as masculine impositions--these critics encourage contemporary women writers to undertake revisionist mythmaking in order to reveal what Rachel Blau Du Plessis calls "the illusion of a timeless, unhistorical pattern controlling reality" (300).

Advancing the counter position that difference in the female novel results from a separate consciousness and is therefore indigenous and permanent is Woolf's argument in A Room of One's Own. She claims that the masculine sentence is inhospitable to feminine thought, going so far at one point as to argue that "the nerves that feed the brain would seem to differ in men and women" (117). While her accompanying suggestions to the effect that women should work toward achieving androgynous expression have led a number of critics to dismiss her views as contradictory, her position appears to be that men and women may develop inner feminine and masculine qualities, respectively, without forfeiting their dominant orientation which remains gender-distinct. This leads to her claim that the female author should balance femininity with masculinity, in order to ensure that her vision is shaped by reason as well as emotion and that the spontaneous quality of her voice is enriched by a tone of reflection.

Woolf's theory has inspired two critical approaches: one looking for signs of androgynous voice and vision, another for signs of a distinct feminine consciousness. Carolyn Heilbrun takes the former approach in Toward a Recognition of Androgyny, dismissing signs of difference in the female text as indicative merely of destructive patriarchal influence. Beyond cultural change, she argues, an

accompanying psychic liberation is needed to allow women to develop inherent but unexercised capacities for reason, judgment and control. She heralds the day when gender-free fiction will appear: "I am confident that great androgynous works will soon be written. No one can foretell their form, nor, in all probability, will they be instantaneously recognized when they do appear....Once the old marriage game, the old sexual game of hunter and hunted has ceased to be played, who knows what human possibilities the novel may discover?" (171). More recently in Reinventing Womanhood, while adding her voice to the growing chorus of praise for works by women, she nonetheless maintains that difference---far from being a thing to be celebrated---is a culturally imposed limitation to be overcome. Thus her response to a recent volume entitled Writing and Sexual Difference is skeptical: "I do not deny our need to explore the vast hidden culture of women, as Gerda Lerner and others have urged us to do. But I do believe there is a danger...of underestimating the force of the oppression women writers suffered, the terrible degree of restriction upon their lives" (293). Heilbrun's view, prescriptive of the desirability of maleness, inevitably undermines feminine achievements for having thus far remained non-androgynous.

Representative of the separate consciousness argument is Sydney Janet Kaplan in Feminine Consciousness in the Modern British Novel. Attempting to avoid the "mystification and circular evidence" that Gardiner suggests is basic to this position, Kaplan refuses to speculate about there being "inherent differences between the consciousnesses of men and women" (2-3), claiming that it is enough that the writers she examines hold this view. She stipulates further, however, that her

study, rather than assessing evidence of authorial feminine consciousness, aims only at analyzing the development of this consciousness in the heroine: "My focus is thus not on the authors' own consciousness but on how they develop uniquely feminine ones for their women characters" (4). Even though she deals exclusively with heroines in works by women (on the assumption that these figures share common features) and even though she describes "feminine consciousness" as a "literary device" (on the assumption that commonality goes beyond content to form), she avoids developing her claim that men and women appear to write differently for the commonplace that heroines think and act differently from heroes:

Consequently, when I use the term "feminine consciousness" here, I hope the reader understands that I am using it in a rather special and limited way. I use it not simply as some general attitude of women towards their own femininity, and not as something synonymous with a particular sensibility among female writers. I am concerned with it as a literary device: a method of characterization of females in fiction. In fact, I will go even further and say that I am not using "feminine consciousness" even so broadly as to take in the full range of any given women's consciousness in a novel, but only those aspects of it which are involved with her definition of self as a specifically feminine being.
(3)

Problematic in Kaplan's application of her term is that several of her assumptions remain untested. Neither comparing nor contrasting the works she examines to those of other and earlier women or to those of men, she never explores her claim that modern heroines are unlike those of old nor that modern women writers approach characterization and point of view in ways distinct from men. While her study is valuable in tentatively linking difference to form, her observations remain

localized by her peremptory refusal to examine such issues as whether there is a female tradition in literature and whether women's writing differs from men's.

To examine thoroughly evidence of difference in the form as well as the content of the female novel requires a generic study. Although such a study was called for as early as 1980, it remains true that "there is still no major work that examines the form of women's literature per se" and that establishes "claims that certain features are distinctly female through comparison with parallel texts by men" (Register 271-2, 274). That such a study must have a comparative edge is emphasized by Myra Jehlen, who warns against the danger of "creating an alternate context, a sort of female enclave apart from the world of masculinist assumptions" (576).

Yet as Annis Pratt points out, to undertake novel-by-novel comparison could be to engage in an overwhelming task: "The question of whether women's fiction is of a nature distinct from men's cannot be fully answered, of course, without a systematic novel-by-novel comparison of samples from each. Should I have attempted such a comparison in this study, however, I would have become involved in an endless 'Key to All Mythologies'" (ix). What Pratt overlooks here, however, is that novel-by-novel comparison is itself a suspect approach given that there is no system in place for pairing or grouping fictions by men and women that would not be open to challenge. Moreover, the tendency of such an approach would be toward explaining works by women in reference to works by men since it is on these traditional works that

much critical thought and terminology is based. While comparison is essential to any generic study of women's fiction, then, its success appears to depend on its being broadly based rather than tied to specifics.

* * *

The generic study I have undertaken has two objectives: first to analyze the formal principles as well as the content of the female novel and second to provide a systematic account of difference between this and the traditional male novel. To avoid working with novel-by-novel comparisons yet still to establish distinguishing conventions, this study refers to structural components identified by E. M. Forster in his classical Aspects of the Novel. Played off against three major features he defines as "Story," "Plot" and "People" are the alternates of "Experience," "Pattern" and "Selfhood."

Generating these new terms satisfies several concerns. First, while reference to Forster allows the traditional novel to be kept in view, and thus facilitates a mapping out of difference according to a comparative framework, designating alternate features ensures that the female standards can be appreciated on their own terms. My concern here is to emphasize the features of women's fiction itself rather than the ways in which it does not conform to traditional standards. Second, renaming Forster's aspects serves the non-revisionist aim of the study, which proposes to define aspects of the female novel rather than to broaden the terms applied to the traditional novel. My focus is primarily on women's fiction, then, with reference being made to traditional fictions primarily as a way to measure difference.

With these goals in mind, my study is divided into three chapters, each exploring the principles underlying fundamental aspects of the female novel. First, in place of "Story," the word "Experience" suggests the apparent tendency of women writers to recreate inner drama which emphasizes what is thought, felt and sensed over what is said, done and seen. This chapter explores whether outer world constructs like time and event--which Forster claims are essential to the traditional novel--are replaced by other organizational features in the female novel. In the second chapter, the word "Pattern" replaces "Plot" to emphasize the extent to which the female novel appears to unfold according to a single paradigm and in accordance with its psychological principles of necessity, rather than featuring multiple plots and answering conditions of logic and probability as the traditional novel does according to Forster. A major concern of this chapter is to identify the Psyche myth as the informing paradigm. In the final chapter, the term "Selfhood" emphasizes that the female novel typically features the single figure of the heroine as she engages in a growth process; examined here is the way in which other characters serve in the main to mark stages of the heroine's development, being in this way unlike "People" in the traditional novel who are relatively autonomous. Another contrast to be addressed here is the way identity formation is different in the male and female novel.

Although Forster's book is in some way a problematic touchstone, primarily because of its informalities and generalities, at the same time these qualities recommend it as a model for a generic approach. As Forster observes, to formulate generic terms and definitions, one needs

to be far-ranging and mobile. One needs to distinguish aspects broad enough to allow for the cross-cultural, as well as the a-chronological, examination of literature. His assumption, with which I agree, is that historical influences have less effect on literature than is often supposed--that "History develops, Art stands still" (36). I agree, too, with his corollary assertion that a literary tradition is best understood on the basis of its continuities rather than its inconsistencies.

Works examined in this study have been drawn from three nationalities: American, British and Canadian. Whether thus limiting myself to works written in English invalidates my generic conclusions, others must decide, and even if so my study should be of great value as the basis for such a more extensive investigation. The chronological range of the novels examined is from Behn's Oroonoko (1688) to Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1985). Within each chapter, the introduction of a novel is accompanied by a parenthetical reference to its publication date; for while my study eschews chronology as an organizing principle, one of its concerns is to suggest that historical and cultural influences are relatively insignificant.

Within this framework, my principle of selection was neither wholly systematic nor random, the former method being impossible since no definite canon of fiction by women has yet been established and since a generic study requires attention to little recognized as well as well-known texts.¹ In directing my reading, I have been guided by bibliographical sections at the conclusion of several book-length studies.² On the basis of extensive reading, I have selected

characteristic examples to illustrate a given point and discussed these in some depth, rather than attempting to catalogue all instances. Since, like Forster, my primary concern is with the contours of the fiction itself, critical interpretations of specific novels are introduced only when they help to focus broader issues or clarify misconceptions.

For the purposes of this study, what Forster defines as the generic novel is referred to as the "male" novel, on the basis that the texts he examines are predominantly male-authored while the standards he brings to bear on them are male-generated. Reference to novels by women is similarly gender-specific; terms like "the female novel" and "women's fiction" emphasize that my primary concern is with works authored by women. To use a culturally-based, attitudinal term like "feminine" would be to introduce issues of ambiguity and potential overlap: any novel might be considered feminine, for example, whose focus is on a female protagonist, just as arguments could be made for the feminine sensitivity or sensibility of a number of male writers. Clarity is served by the use of gender-specific terms, then. Further, since my concern is with examining whether women write differently from men, exactness is also served by referring to "male" and "female" novels. While my purpose is not to argue that men cannot write as women do, or vice-versa, the assumption I am testing is that women typically write in ways that distinguish their fiction from that of men.

Going beyond studies which note the persistent overlap in subject, theme and imagery in women's fiction, my study examines whether female novels share major structural and technical conventions distinct from

those generally said to operate in the traditional novel. If it is true that women share not only common experience but ways of perceiving and transcribing it, then it becomes possible to speak more convincingly of there being a female tradition in fiction which reveals a distinct female imagination. While neither claim is new, neither has yet been endorsed by evidence that goes beyond content to form. An approach like mine can clarify both the extent of the difference between female and male writing traditions and the kinds of terms needed to explain it. At the same time, by defining how the female novel works, this study can deepen awareness of what it says, just as establishing a generic core can provide a point of departure for recognizing the unique and varied talents of women writers.

CHAPTER I:

MASCULINE STORY/FEMININE EXPERIENCE

It is somewhat ironic, but very revealing, that E. M. Forster recommends Scheherezade as an exemplary story-teller figure "because she managed to keep the king wondering what would happen next" (41).

Real-life women writers seldom display either her fascination with external events or her flair for suspense and the sure time-sense needed for its evocation; instead they tend to write in a non-eventful, non-sequential, non-suspenseful manner. Moreover, to the extent that story connotes a careful selection and organization of events, the term itself is an inappropriate one for women's fiction. Experience with its connotations of unmediated transcription and perception of order only in retrospect is more suggestive of the compositional principle which characterizes feminine writing. Informing such a practice is a world view which sees life as inherently patterned. Dorothy Richardson's Miriam Henderson could be said to speak for women writers and heroines alike when she observes: "There isn't any 'chaos.' Never has been. It's the principle masculine illusion" (3:219).

The feminine perception of the mimetic process thus runs counter to the Aristotelian view which holds that since life is chaotic in nature, art should supply it with order or pattern. The Aristotelian definition continues to inform more recent literary theory from Wilde's pronouncement that "The proper school to learn art in is not Life but Art" (304); to Simon O. Lesser's suggestion that form functions "to transport us to a world committed to life, to love, to order, to all the

values the superego holds dear, and thus to allay that pervasive anxiety which is always with us" (128); to Mark Schorer's argument for the primacy of technique as "any selection, structure, or distortion, any form or rhythm imposed upon the world of action; by means of which--it should be added--our apprehension of the world of action is enriched or renewed" (69). Stories, from this perspective, succeed inasmuch as they give unity and coherence to what is seen as uneven or discontinuous.

Viewing life from a different perspective, women writers are less concerned with improving on experience. Unlike the male artist who "reflects the world as it is and can be ordered according to the invention of the poet" (Dipple 18), the female artist attempts to avoid artificial shaping and instead seeks ways to reveal that pattern is inherent in life. Virginia Woolf's description of her attempt to depict order underlying discordance in The Voyage Out (1915) in many ways encapsulates the attempts of women writers in general: "I wanted to give the feeling of a vast tumult of life, as various and disorderly as possible...and the whole was to leave a sort of pattern, and be somehow controlled" (Letters 84).

To Forster, story is "a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence" (42). Experience in women's fiction, by contrast, is typically without event to the extent that what is said, done or seen is insignificant compared to what is thought, felt or sensed. Criticized for being so far different from the traditional novel in this feature, the female novel has been defended by Anais Nin: "Critics love to describe the small, personal world of women, when psychologists know that this is the soil and roots of our larger involvements. Not all

large and crowded canvases have depth of insight" (Novel 179).

Collectively, heroines of the female novel share the experience of May Sarton's aging artist figure, Mrs. Stevens, who declares that genuine or meaningful life consists of inward episodes: "Sometimes I imagine life itself as merely a long preparation and waiting, a long darkness of growth toward those adventures of the spirit, a picaresque novel, so to speak, in which episodes are all inward" (174).

Typically, the outer world is given minimal narrative treatment in contrast to the space devoted to the heroine's inner world, even to the extent that tangible reality could be said to disappear from these novels. That these shifts from outer to inner scenes figure so prominently in early works by women calls into question Sydney Janet Kaplan's contention that twentieth-century development of stream-of-consciousness technique broke with all tradition in the shifting of "focus from the outer to the inner, from the confident omniscient narrator to the limited point of view, from plot to patterning, and from action to thinking and dreaming" (1-2). It is true that, as Kaplan points out, men have also written fiction treating inner life more intensively than outer. That they tend to do so, however, to create esthetic rather than mimetic effect--to explore form or pursue experimental technique--can also be argued. Canadian writer John Glassco, for example, describes those of his works in which action is minimal as "books utterly divorced from reality, stories where nothing happened" (ii). Experience in women's fiction consistently avoids action and event, conventionally employing a variety of devices that effectively de-emphasize outer action and circumvent its graphic or

immediate depiction.

The engagement scene from Emma (1816) provides a detailed example of the way in which the female novel shifts from what is said to develop intensively what is thought. While Mr. Knightley's proposal concludes with his requesting of Emma "once to hear your voice," the narrative never provides the reader with a report of her response. Instead we are given a lengthy account of the thoughts and feelings she experiences:

While he spoke Emma's mind was most busy and, with all the wonderful velocity of thought, had been able--and yet without losing a word--to catch and comprehend the exact truth of the whole; to see that Harriet's hopes had been entirely groundless, a mistake, a delusion, as complete a delusion as any of her own....And not only was there time for these convictions, with all their glow of attendant happiness, there was time also to rejoice that Harriet's secret had not escaped her, and to resolve that it need not and should not....Her way was clear, though not quite smooth. She spoke, then, on being so entreated. What did she say? Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does. (342)

The lengthy interval between his proposal and her acceptance is not directed toward creating suspense, since the reader has already learned of Emma's love for Knightley. Neither can the clipped paraphrase by which her acceptance is represented be seen as conditioned by Austen's maidenly coyness. Coming as it does, sandwiched between Emma's reflections, it serves as a reminder to the reader that one's behavior merely reflects the development of one's character and that real drama is therefore inward.

Apart from shifting the narrative focus from outer to inner response, a related device is to shift to the heroine's suppositions about what others think and feel. In Austen's Pride and Prejudice (1813), Elizabeth Bennet tours the grounds of Pemberley in a daze

following her unexpected encounter with Mr. Darcy, unable to attend either to the scenery or the conversation of her aunt and uncle; as a result, we receive no report of what is said, and only an abstract account of what might be seen:

Elizabeth heard not a word, and, wholly engrossed by her own feelings, followed them in silence....They had now entered a beautiful walk by the side of the water, and every step was bringing forward a nobler fall of ground, or a finer reach of the woods to which they were approaching; but it was some time before Elizabeth was sensible of any of it; and, though she answered mechanically to the repeated appeals of her uncle and aunt, and seemed to direct her eyes to such objects as they pointed out, she distinguished no part of the scene. Her thoughts were all fixed on that one spot of Pemberley House, whichever it might be, where Mr. Darcy then was. She longed to know what at that moment was passing in his mind; in what manner he thought of her, and whether, in defiance of everything, she was still dear to him. (230)

What is also suggested here is that Elizabeth is interested in Darcy the man rather than the land-holder: that she is interested in people and feelings above things.

So, too, does Jane Eyre not give a full account of the initial wedding scene; apart from being rushed for time, she is preoccupied with guessing Rochester's thoughts:

Mrs. Fairfax stood in the hall as we passed. I would fain have spoken to her, but my hand was held by a grasp of iron--I was hurried along by a stride I could hardly follow; and to look at Mr. Rochester's face was to feel that not a second of delay would be tolerated for any purpose....I knew not whether the day was fair or foul; in descending the drive, I gazed neither on sky nor earth: my heart was with my eyes, and both seemed migrated into Mr. Rochester's frame. I wanted to see the invisible thing on which, as we went along, he appeared to fasten a glance fierce and fell. I wanted to feel the thought whose force he seemed breasting and resisting. (323-24)

Immediately following, Jane faints, a strategy which serves frequently in women's fiction to slow down or halt the development of conflict in the narrative. In Jane's case, fainting serves to excuse her from reporting to Rochester that she has glimpsed two strangers and intuited their intention to attend the wedding ceremony, an intuition apparently accompanied by some sense of danger.

Fainting, then, also excuses the heroine from having to take action. At the same time, this performance of a "non-action" often serves to resolve conflicts within the narrative, since others are forced to act responsibly on her behalf. When the resourceful heroine of Fanny Burney's Cecilia (1782) faints toward the end of the final volume, excusing herself from further intrigue and personal turmoil, she compels her lover to work more decisively toward securing their relationship and her happiness. Equally effective in fostering relationship and shaping the direction of the narrative is the fainting of Dorinda in Ellen Glasgow's Barren Ground (1925). Having fled from home, pregnant with the child of a man who betrayed her, Dorinda is penniless and friendless in New York; falling into a faint which precipitates an accident, Dorinda not only loses the child which would have been an emblem of shame in reminding her of Jason, but also meets Doctor Faraday who offers her sanctuary.

With fainting frequently comes memory loss which calls the action to a halt just when it promises to work into a climax or crisis of the type developed in masculine story. In the first section of Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1966), for example, we are given only an outline of what happened on the fateful night when the house at Coulibri burned to

the ground, with Antoinette---sounding very like Jane Eyre, indeed---pleading ignorance to much that passed: "I was so shocked that everything was confused. And it happened quickly" (40). When she recounts a crucial event, Tia's stunning her with a stone, she focuses on things at some remove from the action itself, emphasizing her inability to see the scene clearly:

Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. (45)

Not until the next section, rendered from Rochester's more factual and even fact-finding perspective, do we learn that the blow and the excitement together left Antoinette unconscious and then ill "for a very long time" (133). Further, when she speaks to Rochester her memory seems to undergo expansion and she supplies "story-like" details, omitted from the first section of the novel whose narration she controls.

In this way too Rachel Cameron experiences a fit or trance in Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God (1966). While her loss of consciousness cuts short her ability to provide readers with the details of her painful experience at the Tabernacle, her account prior to this is largely subjective and sensory since she attempts to avoid perceiving the event visually: "I can't look" (43). She provides us with an outline of the climactic scene which, despite its exact adjectives and verbs, remains abstract and impersonal: "That voice! Chattering,

crying, ululating, the forbidden transformed cryptically to nonsense, dragged from the crypt, stolen and shouted, the shuddering of it, the fear, the breaking, the release, the grieving--Not Calla's voice. Mine. Oh my God. Mine. The voice of Rachel" (44-45). Further, that she may be in possession of more details than those she shares with the reader is implied later, when she claims to recollect the scene fully: "As for the rest, I remember everything, every detail, and will never be able to forget, however hard I try. It will come back again and again, and I will have to endure it, over and over" (45).

Characteristic of women's fiction in general is that to the extent that Rachel shares the Tabernacle scene with the reader, she does not depict it--which implies presenting it in visual terms--but could rather be said to evoke it--utilizing senses other than sight. Women writers appear in this way to endorse quite literally Nin's suggestion that "truth lies in what we feel and not in what we see" (Novel 172). Events may "disappear" because they are seldom given visible shape through physical detail. In Mary Brunton's Self-Control (1811), for example, the reader is given only a summary outline of the unusually active heroism of Laura Montrville, who escapes penniless captivity in the wilds of Quebec to return to Scotland and her lover. Not only is what she does given secondary treatment in relation to what she feels, but what she sees is subordinate to what she hears:

In a few days that dreaded land disappeared. In a few more the mountains of Cape Breton sunk behind the wave. The brisk gales of Autumn wafted the vessel cheerfully on her way; and often did Laura compute her progress.

In a clear frosty morning towards the end of September, she heard once more the cry of land!--now

music to her ear. Now with a beating breast she ran to gaze upon a ridge of mountains indenting the disk of the rising sun; but the tears of rapture dimmed her eyes, when every voice at once shouted, 'Scotland!' (2:448-49)

Similarly, emphasis is placed upon the aural component of experience in the scene in which she prepares her father's body for burial: "Unaided, and in silence, she did the last offices of love. She shed no tears. She uttered no lamentation. The dread stillness was broken only by the groans that burst at times from her heavy heart, and the more continued sobs of her attendant, who vented in tears her fear, her pity, and her admiration" (2:4).

Visual details are equally absent in Barren Ground, particularly in the first section which describes Dorinda as living in a state of heightened emotions, initially because she is in love and then because she is dazed by her lover's betrayal and perceives everything as if from within a waking nightmare. When described as "looking" at the landscape, for example, she hears sharply but is unable to see clearly:

Raising her head, she leaned against the bole of a tree and looked, with dimmed eyes, at the October morning. Around her she heard the murmurous rustle of leaves, the liquid notes of a wood robin, like the sprinkling of rain on the air, the distant shrill chanting of insects; all the natural country sounds which she would have called silence. Smooth as silk the shadows lay on the red clay road. Over the sky there was a thin haze, as if one looked at the sun through smoked glasses. "You've got to do something," repeated a derisive voice in her brain. "You've got to do something, or you'll go out of your mind." It seemed to her that the whole landscape waited, inarticulate but alive, for her decision. (184)

Even though the last sentence refers to the landscape as silent, its structure nonetheless establishes a link between aurality and vitality.

While everything she sees is in haze and shadow, everything she hears is vibrant, from the "country sounds" to her own voice. The climactic scene in this section, which emphasizes her inability to act, records her sensory perceptions, of which sight seems the least active: "Suddenly, while she stood there in silence, the gun went off in her hands. She saw the flash; she heard the sound, as if the discharge were miles away; she smelt the powder. The next instant she felt the tremor of the shock as the weapon recoiled in her hands; and she thought quietly and steadily, 'I tried to do it. I wanted to do it'" (167).

A variant device involves the heroine's emphasizing her position in relation to an object or situation which she claims engages her visual attention. In Life in the Clearings (1853), for instance, Susanna Moodie's purported concern is with the majesty of Niagara Falls, yet her focus is on the act of looking at them instead of on imparting visual details objectively: "After dinner....I preferred a seat in the latter [the balcony]; and esconcing myself in the depths of a large comfortable rocking chair, which was placed fronting the Falls, I gave up my whole heart and soul to the contemplation of their glorious beauty" (255).¹

Evident throughout Jane Eyre, this relational focus is most emphatic when Jane returns to Thornfield Hall, expressing her desire to see house and grounds in terms of where she will stand in relation to them. Determined to control what she sees, she undertakes the act of looking so self-consciously that it takes on covert and even voyeuristic characteristics: "'My first view of it will be from the front,' I determined....From behind one pillar I could peep round quietly at the front of the mansion. I advanced my head with precaution, desirous to

ascertain if any bedroom window-blinds were yet drawn up: battlements, windows, long front--all from this sheltered station were at my command" (483).

In general, this device conveys the heroine's perception that outer reality is ephemeral to the extent that it exists only insofar as she is willing or able to look at it. In To The Lighthouse (1927), once Cam Ramsay gains physical distance from her house, she is no longer able to see it; "far away," it becomes "unreal." Unlike her father who enjoys looking at the world of things, she looks only to please him: "'See the little house,' he said, pointing, wishing Cam to look. She raised herself reluctantly and looked." Her own pleasure arises from her inability to see the house: "Already the little distance they had sailed had put them far away from it and given it the changed look, the composed look, of something receding in which one has no longer any part. Which was their house? She could not see it" (188).

Even the visual artist Lily Briscoe shares this view that things far away are "gone forever" (213). Turning to sight the Ramsay's boat because awareness of its proximity impedes her ability to work, her brief description of it gives way to consideration of emotional in place of spatial relationships--her thoughts turn to Mr. Ramsay and the tension between them: "It was the boat with greyish-brown sails, which she saw now flatten itself upon the water and shoot off across the bay. There he sits, she thought, and the children are quite silent still. And she could not reach him either. The sympathy she had not given him weighed her down. It made it difficult for her to paint" (193).

When climactic scenes are depicted more fully in women's fiction,

the convention of avoiding graphic action is not really belied since emphasis is usually placed upon the heroine's reluctance or inability to look upon them. A case in point is Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (1688), wherein the depiction of violent action relates to the narrator's concern with telling a story of masculine heroics. These scenes moreover are reported from an historical and second-hand perspective, which has a distancing effect that simultaneously defuses suspense, since what is told is unalterable. Although the narrator establishes the immediacy of her contact with Oroonoko--"I was myself an eye-witness to a great part of what you will find here set down" (129)--whenever she recounts scenes of danger or violence, she announces her absence from their unfolding. In fact, the narrator's reluctance to bear direct witness to crisis situations is stated clearly toward the story's conclusion, when she explains why it was that she left the dying Oroonoko's side: "the sight was ghastly: His discourse was sad; and the earthy smell about him so strong that I was persuaded to leave the place for some time, (being myself but sickly, and very apt to fall into fits of dangerous illness upon any extraordinary melancholy)....But I was no sooner gone than [the torture and murder of Oroonoko took place]" (207). By leaving, the narrator avoids not only the spectacle of Oroonoko's slow death, but also that of his seizure, torture and dismemberment. The account of these events which ends the tale is therefore rendered in the style of second-hand reportage.

In Margaret Atwood's Bodily Harm (1981), Lora's grisly beating is given in graphic detail, but just as significant is the paralysis of the observer figure, Rennie, whose strongest wish is not to see: "Rennie

wants to tell them to stop. She wants to be strong enough to do that but she isn't, she can't make a sound, they'll see her. She doesn't want to see, she has to see, why isn't someone covering her eyes?"

(293). While Behn's novel depicts violence in the service of exploring masculine heroics, Atwood's novel continues to portray the feminine as non-active and to link violence with masculine actors. That this scene, and the majority of Rennie's experience, is narrated from a limited third-person perspective is a technique by which Atwood underlines that the heroine feels disembodied or divorced from the violent activity surrounding her, describing herself as "Rennie" or "she" rather than speaking in the first person as she does in certain sections of the narrative.

More typical of the treatment women's novels give to violent scenes is Nin's presentation of the death of Doctor Hernandez in "Seduction of the Minotaur" (1961). The car accident that kills him is over when the protagonist, Lillian, arrives at the scene, with the violence residing in the heroine's emotional response and in the grief of the doctor's widow:

Then in an isolated field she noticed a car which had run into an electric pole....In the dark she could not see the color of the car. But she heard the screams of the Doctor's wife.

Lillian began to tremble. He had tried to prepare her for this.

She continued to walk. She was not aware that she was weeping. The Doctor's wife broke away from the group and ran toward Lillian, blindly. Lillian took her in her arms and held her, but the woman fought against her. Her mouth was contorted and no sounds came from it, as if her cries had been strangled. The wife fell on her knees and hid her face in Lillian's dress.

Lillian could not believe in the Doctor's death. She consoled the wife as if she were a child with an exaggerated sorrow. She heard the ambulance come, the one he had raised the funds to buy. She saw the doctors and the people around the car. She realized that it was his car's hitting the pole that had cut off the electric current for a moment. The wife now talked incoherently: "They shot him, they finally shot him...." (548)

This passage also helps to explain why it is the events are developed minimally and a-climactically in women's fiction. As is clear from the emphasis that Lillian places upon the forewarning--"He had tried to prepare her for this"--the event serves only to make actual something she has "known" all along, if unconsciously. Significant, then, is not so much what happens on an outer plane, but the process of interior recognition that the event forces upon the heroine. The Doctor's death is not "new" to Lillian, but the actual enactment of something she has already sensed inwardly.

Focusing on what the heroine anticipates or remembers is another convention that insistently turns attention from chronological or climactic narrative development. We hear of the penultimate wedding scene in Jane Eyre (1847) only retrospectively, for example, and Jane dwells on her return to the kitchen more carefully than on her trip to the church: "Reader, I married him. A quiet wedding we had: he and I, the parson and the clerk, were alone present. When we got back from the church, I went into the kitchen of the manor-house, where Mary was cooking the dinner and John cleaning the knives, and I said,--'Mary, I have been married to Mr. Rochester this morning'" (512). Brontë's refusal to treat the wedding scene climactically suggests that for Jane the lived life is less engaging or "real" than its recollection. Since

the marriage ceremony is a social event, its detailed depiction would be anti-climactic; the union of feeling has already taken place at the point of betrothal.

The wedding scene from Emma shows Austen's similar reluctance to provide details which would encourage the reader to envision the event. The few details supplied come, retrospectively, from someone who did not attend the ceremony and who speaks of it in terms of what was not done: "The wedding was very much like other weddings where the parties have no taste for finery or parade; and Mrs. Elton, from the particulars detailed by her husband, thought it all extremely shabby and very inferior to her own. 'Very little white satin, very few lace veils; a most pitiful business'" (386 emphasis mine). Dismissing the ceremony itself in this way, Austen concludes by emphasizing that what is felt is more important than what is done: "the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union" (386).

In Excellent Women (1952), the attention of Barbara Pym's Mildred Lathbury is rivetted by the personal revelations of obituary notices, signifying her lack of interest in things present and actual, countered by her fascination with things past and things that can be imagined: "all these details and obscure references moved me so deeply that I hardly knew whether to laugh or cry" (113). Her unwillingness to account for events chronologically is dramatized in her inability to submit a detailed biographical account of her life: "'M. Lathbury is still working part-time at the Society for the Care of Aged

Gentlewomen'....somehow it seemed so inadequate; it described such a very little part of my life....'some people do write more details about themselves, don't they, so that one gets more of a picture of their lives'" (109). Conversely, but to the same effect, Carson McCullers's Frankie Addams, in The Member of the Wedding (1946), prefers to anticipate a future that will never be: "It was the actual present, in fact, that seemed to F. Jasmine a little bit unreal" (67).

In Carol Shields's Small Ceremonies (1976), it is Susanna Moodie's preference for anticipation and recollection that exasperates her fictional biographer Judith Gill, a middle-aged protagonist who herself seeks to be reassured that day-to-day life can be engaging and fulfilling:

The imagined sight of that mountain of water [Niagara Falls] had sustained her through her tragic years, and now at last the boat carried her closer and closer to the majestic sight.

She can hear the thunder of the water before she can see it, and her whole body tenses for pleasure. But when she actually stands in the presence of the torrent, she loses the capacity for rhapsody. She has exhausted it in anticipation. (123 emphasis mine)

Reference to the probable passage in question--from Susanna Moodie's Life in the Clearings (1853)--reveals that Judith has accurately, if over-critically, assessed Moodie's tendency to underplay actual experience. Her description of seeing the Falls discloses her belief that what is significant does not unfold over time, being instead instantaneous. Once she has glimpsed the Falls, their value resides in their capacity to remind her of what she has so fondly anticipated:

The first sight we caught of the Falls of Niagara was from the top of the hill that leads directly to the village....the great cataract burst on my sight

without any intervening screen, producing an overwhelming sensation in my mind which amounted to pain in its intensity.

Yes, the great object of my journey--one of the fondest anticipations of my life--was at length accomplished; and for a moment the blood recoiled back to my heart, and a tremulous thrill ran through my whole frame. I was so bewildered--so taken by surprise--that every feeling was absorbed in the one consciousness, that the sublime vision was before me; that I had at last seen Niagara; that it was now mine forever, stereotyped upon my heart by the unerring hand of nature, producing an impression which nothing but madness or idiocy could efface. (247-48 emphasis mine)

The narrative convention of privileging anticipation or recollection over actual unfolding experience is particularly evident when heroines encounter situations involving romance. In Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women (1971), for example, Del's first experience of sexual intercourse--which she has anticipated as crowning her development from girlhood to womanhood--is given in a single paragraph and accompanied by suggestions that she finds the actual event disappointing, more painful than exciting. Even if it is comparatively more graphic and complete than earlier depictions, this rendition is nonetheless slight when contrasted to the two-page treatment given to Del's voyeuristic encounter with Mr. Chamberlain or her exhibitionist display with Jerry.

While Munro's summary treatment conveys in specific the disillusionment of a youthful heroine, narratives focusing on more experienced heroines similarly circumvent the graphic or immediate depiction of sexuality. By confining intercourse to that which is verbal, women writers convey the view that the emotional quality of intimacy, not its physical depiction, is most fascinating and

meaningful. The heroine of Carol Shields's A Fairly Conventional Woman (1982) expresses this view directly when--involved in an "affair" that remains unconsummated--she counters her lover's assertion that "[s]exual failure" is "the worst thing" with the suggestion that worse is "the failure of love" (151).

While women writers typically emphasize inner over outer life, and while they also present heroines who experience from youth that things outer and actual are less compelling and fulfilling than things inner and imagined, they nonetheless explore as destructive the escapist attitudes of heroines who too far prefer fantasy to reality. In Elizabeth Bowen's The Death of the Heart (1938), so few scenes include Portia's lover, Eddie, that he remains an insubstantial figure to the reader; the youthful heroine prefers anticipating his arrival or recollecting his presence:

With regard to Eddie himself, at present, the hard law of present-or-absent was suspended. In the first great phase of love, which with very young people lasts a long time, the beloved is not outside one, so neither comes nor goes. In this dumb, exalted and exulting confusion, what actually happens plays very little part. In fact the spirit stays so tuned up that the beloved's real presence could be too much, unbearable: one wants to say to him: 'Go, that you may be here.' The most fully-lived hours, at this time, are those of memory or of anticipation, when the heart expands to the full without any check. (157 emphasis mine)

What Bowen depicts in Portia corresponds to what M. Esther Harding describes as a phase of feminine development during which the adolescent commonly prefers an inner or "ghostly" version of a lover to a real presence: "In particular, fantasies and visions of an imaginary lover play a necessary part in the psychological changes of puberty....we

often find the young girl retreating into the world of dreams where the suitor is more to her liking and plays his role more as she would have it played" (Women 46). Harding's assessment is that, if exaggerated or extended, this phase can endanger development. Similarly, when in the novel *Portia* ultimately shies away not only from actual encounters with Eddie but also from anticipation of these scenes, her assumption that reality seldom matches dreams is depicted as a sign of her vulnerability:

The time between Eddie's Friday morning letter and his arrival seemed to contract to nothing. In so far as time did exist, it held some dismay. The suspense of the week, though unnerving, had had its own tune or pattern: now she knew he was coming the tune stopped. For people who live on expectations, to face up to their realisation is something of an ordeal. Expectations are the most perilous form of dream, and when dreams do realise themselves it is in the waking world: the difference is subtly but often painfully felt. What she should have begun to enjoy, from Friday morning, was anticipation--but she found anticipation no longer that pure pleasure it once was. (198 emphasis mine)

An older heroine who self-destructively prefers her dreams to reality is Kate Chopin's Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening* (1899); ultimately unable to escape reality by retreating to fantasy, she chooses not to live. Her sense that disillusionment means betrayal is perhaps clearest in the single sentence in which she conveys her wariness both of life and the dreams life denies; she recognizes that some day she will tire of dreaming of Robert, who excites her only because he remains an imaginary rather than a real lover: "There was no human being whom she wanted near her except Robert; and she even realized that the day would come when he, too, and the thought of him would melt out of her existence, leaving her alone" (189).

While heroines typically engage more deeply in inner than outer life, by so doing they tend to enrich their understanding of reality rather than, like Edna, seeking to escape it. Each chapter typically depicts Edna's involvement in actual life, but the short sentences and brief scenes underscore the superficial quality of her engagement; her retreats to her inner world, receiving similar summary treatment, underscore the lack of compensation or fulfillment she draws from this world: "There came over her the acute longing which always summoned into her spiritual vision the presence of the beloved one, overpowering her at once with a sense of the unattainable" (148). Structurally, Edna's disorientation is represented by the superficial and disjointed scenes portraying her participation in life; the scenes portraying her reveries, which are antagonistic toward reality rather than focused on or following from it, are rendered in clipped and negative terms. Edna's plight becomes clearer, then, to the reader who is aware that in women's fiction the inner life, while always emphasized, is typically related to outer life, often anticipating or reviewing reality in a way productive of its clarification.

* * *

If, as Forster argues, the "allegiance to time is imperative" in the realm of story (43), this allegiance is loose and even tenuous in women's fiction. Rather than following the linear progression of the hero's encounters with new situations and insights, the heroine's experience typically involves sameness rather than change, to the extent that she often deepens her responsiveness to life by bringing "old" knowledge to the surface, rather than acquiring "new" insight. It is

to the feature of non-linear or non-progressive development that Shirley Rose refers when she suggests the way in which consciousness is portrayed in Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage (1915-38): "in speaking of the consciousness as Dorothy Richardson conceives of it, we require metaphors that indicate expansion without movement or change. We therefore must regard consciousness in spatial terms without the usual correlative of time" (368). In general, the heroine's growth proceeds from deepened rather than changed insights in response to experience that is better described as recurring than occurring.

If a word like events accurately connotes the linear sequence of masculine drama, a word like circumstances more aptly describes the multi-relational connectedness of feminine drama whose outer developments advance through repetition, composing an experiential pattern of which no one episode is complete in itself. At the end of Margaret Laurence's The Diviners (1974), for example, Morag expresses her awareness that experience is conditioned by and reflective of what has passed and will pass: "Look ahead into the past, and back into the future, until the silence" (453).

The word circumstances is also appropriate in helping to convey the relative inactivity of the heroine, as well as her tendency to feel helpless in the face of unfolding experience. While in The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), Ann Radcliffe appears to trap her heroine in a round of repetitive misadventures and misunderstandings, actually her purpose is to dramatize "expansion without movement or change." Held captive by the villainous Montoni, who by repeated threats attempts to secure her lands, she is simultaneously threatened by the villainous Morano, who

twice attempts her abduction. Once she escapes, she continues victimized, if unintentionally, by the Count de Villefort, whose slander of Valancourt twice forces Emily to renounce her lover. The repetitive course of her experience tests and retests her resistance to change and in so doing builds her sense of strength and resiliency. That Radcliffe presents Emily's experience as typically feminine can be argued by referring to the Count's daughter Blanche, who undergoes an experience of captivity similar to Emily's. When along with her fiancé and the Count himself, Blanche is trapped by bandits, like Emily she is forced to recognize that she cannot rely on others -- on father or on lover -- to protect her from life's misfortunes and dangers. The parallel between the two is made even clearer when it is remembered that Emily's father, related to the Count, bears strong resemblance to him.

Repetition also dramatizes growth without change in Mrs. Oliphant's Miss Marjoriebanks (1865-66) to the extent that the heroine, Lucilla Marjoriebanks, eventually learns to recognize what she wants. Entertaining and rejecting suitors one after another, she dismisses each affair with variations of the refrain "fortunately my affections were not engaged" (146). Experiencing circular rather than linear development, Lucilla ultimately settles on marrying her cousin, Tom Marjoriebanks, whose love was the first she rejected. That her married and maiden name are one and the same underlines the fact that her character has not so much changed as solidified as a result of her experience.

Still highlighting repetition as a feature of experience are authors whose heroines--rather than deepening their insights--grow

frustrated by what they perceive to be life's circularity. The young Martha Quest feels she will die if forced to continue living through a round of repetitious experience: "escape seemed so difficult she was having terrible nightmares of being tied hand and foot under the wheels of a locomotive, or struggling waist-deep in quicksands, or eternally climbing a staircase that moved backwards under her" (23). Heroines like this commonly attempt to escape sameness by altering external conditions, only to find like Margaret Laurence's Hagar Shipley that change is illusory: "For a while you believe you carry nothing with you...and nothing will go wrong this time" (155). That old problems and patterns typically reshape to continue haunting the heroine argues not only that outer is dependent on inner experience in women's fictions, but also that these fictions themselves depend on circular rather than linear structure to present heroines who repeatedly undergo a single experience until winning release through deepened insight. Hagar ultimately recognizes, for example, that life has seemed a vicious circle because, her unconscious knowledge never brought to the surface, her actions are all one in never being improved by insight: "How long have I known? Or have I always known, in some far crevice of my heart, some cave too deeply buried, too concealed?....I carried my chains within me, and they spread out from me and shackled all I touched" (292).

A variant often linking the recollective impulse to internal repetition involves the heroine's tendency to report her experience to other characters. A commonplace of women's fiction, this feature suggests that the heroine seeks to validate her experience through

sharing it. While the confessional nature of Jane Eyre generally reflects Jane's desire to share her experience, her retrospective announcement of her marriage to Rochester--"Reader, I married him"--is immediately followed by her similar announcement to the cook--"Mary, I have been married to Mr. Rochester this morning" (512).

That there is an urgency to this impulse can be argued in relation to Del Jordan who, although disappointed by the experience of lovemaking itself, feels compelled to tell of it; while she later shares all the "scandalous details" with Naomi (195), she immediately discloses something of her experience to her mother because, as she says, "I had to mention it to somebody" (189). According to Judith Gill, Susanna Moodie acts even more quickly in turning to others to validate experience whose actual unfolding she finds disappointing; instead of telling other characters about what she has undergone, however, Moodie understands and shapes her own responses by sharing those of others: "Turning from the scenery, she observes the human activity around her and, paragraph by paragraph, she describes the reactions of her fellow tourists. Their multiple presence forms particles through which she can see, as through a prism, the glorious and legendary spectacle of Niagara Falls" (123).

* * *

Apart from defining story as eventful and sequential, Forster further claims that a good story excites reader curiosity: "Qua story, it can only have one merit: that of making the audience want to know what happens next. And conversely it can only have one fault: that of not making the audience want to know what happens next" (42). Women's

fiction, by contrast, is deliberately non-suspenseful: while story is composed of a series of possibilities, feminine experience tends instead to move toward a single inevitability, since beginnings shape endings for characters who are less prone to change than to undergo a growth process requiring them to make conscious their insights. Building from internal repetitions, the female novel invites the reader to understand from the start both the central conflict and the heroine's ability to confront it. At the same time, external repetition further incorporates inevitability into the structure of the female novel, given that women writers typically borrow from preceeding works, recasting materials from their own novels as well as from those of other women. By employing what might be called recognizable fictional patterns, these authors make the destiny of their heroines clear from the outset, sharing with readers their view that life has order and shape despite its chaotic or circular appearance.

Frye, then, appears to reading from the perspective of story rather than experience when he describes the development of Austen's fiction as sometimes strained, since endings do not follow smoothly from middles: "Her characters are believable, yet every so often we become aware of the tension between them and the outlines of the story into which they are obliged to fit. This is particularly true of endings, where the right men get married to the right women, although the inherent unlikelihood of these unions has been the main theme of the story" (40, emphasis mine). Far from being an "inherent unlikelihood," for example, readers know that inevitably a union will take place between Emma and Knightley from the first time he is introduced, if not from the Knight

in Knightley, then from the narrator's evaluation of his character which, by promising to balance Emma's own, fulfills the condition generally governing romantic union in women's fiction. It is inevitability rather than unlikeliness that sustains reader interest--an inevitability which Emma herself recognizes at the culmination of her experience: "It darted through her mind with the speed of an arrow that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!" (324).

If there is a question in the sensitive reader's mind, it is not the episodic "[and] then?" that Forster says arises from story (87), but the more relational "how do we get from here to there?" While masculine story may be described as unfolding inductively, moving from one segment to the next and building to its resolution, feminine experience is better described as unfolding deductively, since the eventual conclusion is clear from the first, and the reader follows the way in which it is worked out, despite the obstacles. The reader's pleasure is not in discovering what finally happens, but in recognizing the revelation of pattern in experience whose surface only appears disorderly. When Frye compares Emma, and all stories, to detective fiction, claiming that it contains "mysteries impelling us to continue reading until we reach a 'solution'" (45), he overlooks that Austen, like all women writers, introduces inevitability into the narrative by employing a recognizable fictional pattern that makes the heroine's novelistic destiny clear from the beginning.

Even in novels that appear to rely more heavily for their development on the heroine's external conflicts and confrontations and more overtly on the cultivation of reader suspense, such as Mrs.

Radcliffe's Gothics, the pattern underlying the development is still so recognizable that readers cannot forget that the narrative pulls toward inevitability rather than building upon possibility. Again the question in readers' minds is not so much "and then?"--indeed Austen's Henry Tilney could tell them in several summarizing paragraphs--as "how will the heroine escape unblemished from these difficult encounters?" That she will is a *donnée*. Neither is it likely that the author would wish the reader to put this knowledge aside, to accept with "willing suspension of disbelief" that the heroine's life or moral nature is genuinely imperilled. Rather, Radcliffe, like all women writers, relies on the reproduction of fictional patterns in order to communicate that events, while they may appear overwhelming and even chaotic as they unfold, point all the time toward an inevitable outcome.

Not that this interrelation amongst events nor their inevitable outcome is commonly remarked upon by either narrator or character. It is common for a heroine caught in the midst of experience, like Martha Quest, to resent the apparent chaos of the outer world, which seems to trap her in a repetitive round of circumstances for no apparent reason, with no apparent result. Alternatively, it is also common for a heroine, like Emma Woodhouse, to believe that she understands the significance of external events and is therefore empowered to act effectively, only to discover that her understanding is faulty and her acts misdirected. But this disorientation--the heroine's distrust or misinterpretation of outer reality--commonly dissolves at the novel's conclusion when order--rather than being restored in the style of comic resolution--is found. Unbeknownst to the heroine undergoing experience,

all things lead her inevitably toward a destiny she ultimately recognizes; by re-forming and repeating themselves, circumstances in their entirety--rather than in a single climactic moment--contribute to the heroine's culminating insight.

While the female novel often concludes with the heroine's finding fulfillment in recognizing her destiny, the heroine who meets with death is as likely to recognize its inevitability. The doomed heroine is usually one who has attempted to shape her destiny consciously, often aware throughout that the choices she makes defy her natural inclinations and desires. Even when well-intentioned, this heroine dies recognizing that she has initiated her own fate and spread unhappiness amongst others. While the heroine of Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple (1791) traces her doom to her abandonment of her mother's counsel, Cathy in Wuthering Heights (1847) traces it to her betrayal of Heathcliff. More extreme protagonists who discover no meaningful pattern in their experience and insist to the end that they should be free to shape their own destiny are often imaged as immature and frustrated. Determined to escape destinies they fear, heroines like Lyndall [in The Story of the African Farm (1883)] and Edna [in The Awakening (1899)] neither find satisfactory alternatives nor develop insight into their plight.

Although modern works by women, in keeping with modern literature in general, experiment more frequently with characters whose destinies remain undetermined, the sense that experience will yield a pattern--that order will be revealed or found--nonetheless continues to be conveyed. After portraying life as a jumble of dark misfortunes and grotesque coincidences, Ann Beattie's Falling in Place (1980) concludes

with the union of two pairs of lovers, no one of whom has done anything decisive to secure partnership; instead, unbeknownst to any of the characters, things have taken care of themselves, unfolding for the good, as the young girl Mary finds they do in life and, by her interpretation, in another fiction, Vanity Fair: "'I haven't finished the book,' she said, 'but that's what Vanity Fair is like. Things just fall into place'" (79). In Janette Turner Hospital's The Ivory Swing (1982), while the heroine remains unsure of the exact shape and direction of her future at the novel's conclusion, she recognizes that leaving India and her husband is inevitable, and that she will be able to recognize when it is time to act decisively: "And some time soon, she thought, I'll follow them [the waves]. After the rituals of grief and atonement seem complete. She felt she would know when it was time" (245).

Nor is the concept of there being meaningful order beyond what appears merely repetitious abandoned by Judith Gill, in Carol Shields' Small Ceremonies. Attempting to assess her life from the standpoint of middle age, she is somewhat disillusioned to find herself puzzled by her fate, especially because she had been so certain as a girl of finding a place outside or beyond the monotonous details of daily life: "The trouble is that when you're a child you can sense something beyond the details. Or at least you hope there's something." But her disillusionment is not so deep as to lead her to agree with her friend's suggestion that, "Maybe it's all a big gyp." Instead, without wholly apprehending meaningful pattern in her life, she postulates its probable existence: "It can't all be a gyp....It's too big. It can't be"

(59-60). Later in the book she places herself squarely in the camp of those who perceive of life as being regulated by an agent "who sets up the signs and points the way" (135).

In Margaret Laurence's The Diviners, although the resolution is perhaps less straightforward, the sense is still conveyed by Morag that pattern and meaning can emerge over time. What seemed mere reactions to a maze of entrapment were in fact a series of choices made in response to circumstances that are depicted not only as inter-related, or repetitive, but also as very often self-generated. This latter point Morag recognizes during the course of her experience: "Opportunities for sex are minimal. Has she set it up like this for herself? Her kid, her work. And here is Fan, getting more than she wants. But not really. Fan has set it up for herself as well, in some way or other, unacknowledged" (316). Further, if the novel's conclusion fails to bring a ringing revelation of destiny to Morag, it nonetheless unfolds an insight whose inevitable nature she remarks: "Was this, finally and at last, what Morag had always sensed she had to learn from the old man? She had known it all along, but not really known. The gift, or portion of grace, or whatever it was, was finally withdrawn, to be given to someone else" (452).

With this repetition amongst novels comes what might be termed the improving tendency of the female novel, by which it is meant that women writers typically adapt features of earlier works toward more sophisticated usage. While a writer like Austen admired earlier productions by Mary Brunton and Fanny Burney--the title Pride and Prejudice being excerpted from a passage in Cecilia, for example--and

while her heroines resemble theirs in valuing characteristics such as self-control and moderation, she reveals the importance of these virtues in ways more realistic than melodramatic. While improper understanding endangers the very lives of earlier heroines, for Austen's heroines it endangers the quality of life; while earlier heroines are good women who become paragons, Austen's heroines are kind and intelligent women who undergo improvement. Austen need not heighten her portraits to emphasize points already established within the tradition, but can explore different techniques and further issues. Thus while women's fiction continues to recount similar areas of experience, it does so by expanding its reach and complexity over time.

Partaking more directly of this improving tendency in A Room of One's Own (1929), Virginia Woolf encourages women writers to develop more conscious artistry and greater variety amongst their works. Her reference to an improbable scene created by her fictional author Mary Carmichael could as well be to any number of such actual scenes, common throughout women's fiction: "However, by some means or other she succeeded in getting us--Roger, Chloe, Olivia, Tony and Mr. Bigham--in a canoe up the river" (Room 122). Within her own fiction, rather than abandoning this tendency to present reality as it is subjectively perceived, she uses it as a characterizing device in relation, for example, to the feminine Mrs. Ramsay. Consciously moving away from other writers whose writing is itself shaped by subjective and sensory perception, Woolf explores Mrs. Ramsay's predilection for perceiving reality as it suits and strikes her, creating a character who continues preparing to go to the lighthouse despite facts urging the improbability

of such a voyage and who predicts weather according to feelings rather than with an eye to "the barometer falling and the wind due west" (38).

* * *

Mimetic complexity appears to be served both by internal repetitions--which often evoke the heroine's immediate perception of experience as unsatisfactory and circular yet inescapable--as well as external repetitions of patterns shared among novels--which immediately convey the heroine's ultimate perception of experience to the reader, who therefore appreciates the underlying meaning of the experience as well as its developing pattern. Elizabeth Bowen's Anna Porter suggests that it is natural for women to seek pattern underlying repetition: "Experience isn't interesting until it begins to repeat itself--in fact, till it does that, it hardly is experience" (12). That the disclosure of pattern underlying surface disorder is pleasurable to the female reader is further suggested by Woolf's Mrs. Ramsay when she explains that retrospect improves experience, both in relation to re-reading a good book and reviewing life: "Mrs. Ramsay thought, she could return to that dream land, that unreal but fascinating place, the Mannings' drawing-room at Marlow twenty years ago; where one moved about without haste or anxiety, for there was no future to worry about. She knew what had happened to them, what to her. It was like reading a good book again, for she knew the end of that story, since it had happened twenty years ago, and life, which shot down even from this dining-room in cascades, heaven knows where, was sealed up there, and lay, like a lake, placidly between its banks" (107). Perception and preference both appear to be served by the reproduction of recognizable patterns in the

female novel, since while readers can empathize with the authenticity of the struggling heroine's confusion, at the same time they have the reassurance of knowing what the outcome of the struggle will be.

The epiphanies that appear in the female novel give weight to the claim that the feminine is naturally inclined to perceive order underlying surface chaos, given that moments of insight typically take the form of a sense of being related to all things. In older fictions, such moments usually signify to the heroine that all, after all, is right in her world, since she is connected to nature and God. Such an overpowering vision of relational-order occurs for the protagonist at the conclusion of Sarah Orne Jewett's A Country Doctor (1884):

And Nan stood on the shore while the warm wind that gently blew her hair felt almost like a hand, and presently she went closer to the river, and looked far across it and beyond it to the hills. The eagles swung to and fro above the water, but she looked beyond them into the sky. The soft air and the sunshine came close to her; the trees stood about and seemed to watch her; and suddenly she reached her hands upward in an ecstasy of life and strength and gladness. "O God," she said, "I thank thee for my future." (351)

In more recent fictions, this vision is different only in being perceived as less permanent. This feeling frustrates Doris Lessing's Martha Quest, for example, since her overwhelming sense of connection is more painful than pleasurable in being fleeting and more intuitional than conscious:

There was a slow integration, during which she, and the little animals, and the moving grasses, and the sun-warmed trees, and the slopes of shivering silvery mealies, and the great dome of blue light overhead, and the stones of earth under her feet, became one, shuddering together in a dissolution of dancing

atoms....But it did not last; the force desisted, and left her standing on the road, already trying to reach out after "the moment" so that she might retain its message from the wasting and creating chaos of darkness. Already the thing was sliding backwards, becoming a whole in her mind, instead of a process; the memory was changing, so that it was with nostalgia that she longed "to try again." (52-53)

Discussing this particular epiphany, Nancy Topping Bazin claims that even though the order Martha perceives has a chimerical quality, revealed in a moment only to be dissolved, its powerful impact ever after affects her vision, providing her with "a special lens through which to view everything that follows" (94). Even more important, as Bazin points out, Martha's epiphany is different from those experienced by male figures--by Paul Morel and Stephen Dedalus, in particular--in that its effect is ongoing, coming early in the text and therefore influencing her view of life through all the volumes, rather than occurring climactically and resulting, toward the conclusion, in specific actions toward selfhood or self-perfection: "It is not simply, as in Lawrence and Joyce, a moment of climactic synthesis" (98).

These moments revealing the relation amongst all things to the heroine stand out in the narrative because, cast so completely in visual terms, they suggest that the heroine's visual sense undergoes awakening. While what the heroine sees is typically accorded little significance in women's fiction, moments of epiphany heighten her visual awareness to the extent that she not only sees outer and actual things but the relationship that binds them together.

* * *

Both "story" and "experience" render life into fiction, then, but the former typically imposes order on what is perceived as chaotic while

the latter typically reveals that order resides all the while in what merely seems chaotic. Unlike the world of "story,"--in which time exerts a stronger presence than in life, according to Forster--the world of "experience" cannot be measured by the space between climactic moments, and the characters in it do not grow by undergoing decisive turning points or crises. Rather, while circumstances, loosely evoked, are indeed encountered by the heroine, often she cannot properly evaluate or fully appreciate their significance until her experience draws to a close. The aim of experience is after all to create a world whose pieces do not appear to fit; ultimately, however, these pieces not only fall into place, but also contribute to preparing the heroine for recognition of her destiny.

Given that women writers conventionally reproduce versions of either their own works or the works of others, the word reproduce is better than the word create to describe the generation of female fictions. By substituting reproduction for creation, nothing derogatory is denoted; rather, this term succeeds best if it brings to mind the rather remarkable effects of biological reproduction, wherein a type is reproduced but always individually marked. And indeed, while individual works of fiction by women bear a strong family resemblance, each reflects new features to the extent that an experience, once told, is commonly retold in an increasingly succinct form, allowing for the addition of new features and hence for experience to be explored in more complexity. Like feminine growth itself, which involves deepened rather than changed perceptions, the female novel grows by expanding its reach and insights, without radically changing its form.

CHAPTER II:

MASCULINE PLOTS AND PLAUSIBILITIES/FEMININE PATTERN AND PARADIGM

In describing the progression from story to novel, Forster sees plot as the major ingredient, which he locates in the concept of causality: "in a story we say: 'And then?'...in a plot we ask: 'Why?'" (87). Plot supplies reasons for actions, reasons which--if they are to convince and satisfy the reader--must be consistent with character development: "Incident springs out of character, and having occurred it alters that character. People and events are closely connected" (90). Events in the plot, then, must satisfy the reader's sense of what is logical (being causally linked) and probable (being character related or generated): one event should seem to lead to another, and no action should appear contradictory in light of what is known of a given character.

At the same time, Forster stipulates that a good plot must surprise by containing a "mystery element" (91). This mystery element he sees as resulting from a character's ability to think, feel, or do something surprising which still remains within the bounds of probable behavior. In George Meredith's The Egoist, for instance, Forster sees Laetitia Dale, twice jilted by Sir Willoughby Pattern, as surprising and delighting readers by rejecting his third suit; while readers are surprised by her action since Meredith has concealed her change of heart, they are not troubled by it since her character is capable of such growth. Yet, Forster is troubled by Charlotte Brontë's Lucy Snowe who, as the narrator of Villette, seems "the spirit of integrity" until

she conceals the fact that she recognizes in Dr. John her childhood playmate, Graham Bretton. "When it comes out," Forster says, "we do get a good plot thrill, but too much at the expense of Lucy's character" (91). The "mystery element," then, introduces a tension central to plotting that Forster believes the novelist must resolve, since the unexpected must derive from materials that are stable and consistent in nature and, once revealed, must seem itself to agree or merge with these materials: "This shock [when a mystery element is revealed], followed by the feeling 'Oh, that's all right,' is a sign that all is well with the plot; characters, to be real, ought to run smoothly, but a plot ought to cause surprise" (90-91).

In advancing a similar definition of plot, Edwin Muir is even more emphatic about the simultaneous need for "the logical and the spontaneous, necessity and freedom....The lines of action must be laid down, but life must perpetually flood them, bend them, and produce the 'erosions of contour' which Nietzsche praised. If the situation is worked out logically without any allowance for the free invention of life, the result will be mechanical, even if the characters are true" (48). Muir argues that the effect is equally dismal when freedom takes over, when the web of circumstance so far unravels as to allow characters to act out their desires; he criticizes Jane Eyre from this perspective, arguing that neither the plot nor Jane's character require that Rochester's first wife, Bertha, should die:

All Jane's character, all that should of necessity decide the direction of the action, is summed up in her refusal to go against her conscience. The story should have been worked out to the end on this assumption. Instead, Charlotte Brontë has the insane Mrs. Rochester conveniently burned to death; she

defeats fate, she defeats Jane, making her qualities irrelevant and meaningless, by introducing an accident containing a very curious mixture of amiability, cruelty, and nonsense. (50-51)

While Villette (1853) and Jane Eyre (1847) may not conform to the conventions of plot as it is traditionally defined, however, they do exemplify attributes of pattern as it is commonly developed in women's fiction. Unlike the variety of plots unfolding in the traditional novel, a single pattern appears to underlie the female novel, whose consistent concern is with the heroine's development toward the dual components of selfhood and relationship.¹ In contrast to the more consciously motivated hero who performs a series of steps toward achieving a definite end, the heroine is typically uncertain of her aim and she acts indirectly toward achieving an end whose desirability she ultimately acknowledges. The heroine, for example, who appears to elect individuality over love often discovers that her actions lead not only to her self development but also to her reunion with her lover; conversely but to the same effect, the heroine who desires romantic love above all else often experiences separation from her lover, thus leading her to develop selfhood through balancing her feminine nature with such inner "masculine" qualities as reason and perseverance. In novels depicting growth and fulfillment, the heroine often recognizes toward the conclusion that she has been mistaken in assuming that selfhood and relationship are exclusive and in consciously believing that she has sought one as opposed to the other; in novels that end sadly or tragically, while the heroine typically continues in the belief that relationship opposes individuality and seeks one component in abandonment of the other, she is nonetheless aware of remaining in some

way unfulfilled.

Since inner motives are unknown and outcomes unexpected to heroines, the law of probability that connects character and action in the traditional novel tends to be inoperative. If, as Forster and Muir suggest, traditional plots require characters to be relatively stable--so that their actions can surprise without confounding readers--characters in women's fiction are relatively unstable in being driven by unacknowledged needs to act in ways that are inconsistent with their stated goals. Instead of blending the surprising with the probable toward creating a plot both original and comprehensible, women writers, then, explore a single pattern whose basis is the tension inherent within female development, depicting characters who typically understand both the motive and meaning of their actions only retrospectively in a moment of awakening or insight.

When a heroine acts unaccountably in women's fiction, most often she is responding to an unacknowledged need (either for selfhood or relationship), depicted as being all the more urgent for being unconscious. As a result, it is less appropriate to ask whether action corresponds with a stated goal than whether it reflects an inner drive toward attaining the double components of feminine development. When Jane Eyre consciously elects independence over compromising bondage to Rochester, for example, the course she pursues, while indeed leading to selfhood, ultimately leads, too, to her reunion with Rochester: all of her actions prepare the way for such a reunion despite her conscious denial. From the time she leaves Thornfield Hall, consciously determined only to escape Rochester, she nonetheless appears to be

guided by unconscious knowledge toward fulfilling essential needs; after she finds security and self-respect amongst her Rivers cousins, to whom she is guided by knowledge that is unconscious, unconscious promptings again guide her return to Rochester.

Thus when Muir objects to the death of Bertha and the marriage of Jane and Rochester on the basis that the entire test of Jane's character resides in her cleaving to her determination to place principle before passion, he interprets her actions from a traditional point of view: he overlooks the duality of her desires and privileges that which is conscious over that which is unconscious. While it is true that her conscience shapes her determination to separate from Rochester, such an action appears at the same time to be undertaken to promote more genuine relationship between them. Typical of the heroine in the female novel, Jane acts in ways inconsistent with reason in being guided by knowledge that is inner and unconscious.

Forster is similarly tradition-bound when he accuses Lucy of acting out of character in concealing her knowledge that Dr. John is Graham Bretton; he believes she is "the spirit of integrity," this gesture excepted, and further that she has "laid herself under a moral obligation to narrate all she knows" (92). Judged by standards of pattern in women's fiction, however, Lucy's acting unaccountably is less a compositional flaw than it is a signal that she is acting from unconscious motives toward fulfilling desires she herself does not wholly comprehend. At the same time, by revealing only retrospectively that she has recognized Dr. John as Graham, she deflects the reader's attention from a larger feature of narrative eccentricity according to

traditional standards; that is, straining logic is that she encounters Graham at all. This fortunate encounter--very like Jane Eyre's coming upon her Rivers cousins when she might otherwise die of loneliness and exposure--suggests that the heroine "knows" more than she is willing to allow. While she appears to scramble about without map or plan, she nonetheless finds herself in the one place needful, discovering harbor and home. From this perspective, Lucy herself may not be wholly surprised by her encounter with Graham, since unconsciously she may have sought reunion in travelling to Villette, but she may not share all of her motives with her reader because of their hidden and indirect source.

In arguing that Bronte's heroines act improbably and that by this feature her plots fail to conform to traditional narrative standards, Forster and Muir are objecting to the introduction of narrative "implausibility," an objection that Nancy K. Miller suggests is frequently raised in reference to women's fiction. The logical plot that Forster and Muir recommend, which requires consistency between character and action, is very like the plausible narrative which, with more exacting literary reference, requires consistency among action, character and previous plots. According to Miller, the assumption underlying plausibility is that "art should not imitate life but reinscribe received ideas about the representation of life in art" (340). Reader expectations can still be satisfied by the introduction of "artificial plausibility," a condition achieved when any unusual twist or eccentric action is explained within the narrative, usually on the basis of "authorial commentary" which "justifies its story to society by providing the missing maxims, or by inventing them" (344).

An action remains "arbitrary" if it has neither literary precedent nor textual explanation. Its arbitrariness troubles readers and critics who have no frame of reference for it, and exclusion from the canon is often the fate of novels marked by such implausibilities.

Miller's argument is not that critics are wrong in judging arbitrary acts harshly, but rather that they have often misapplied this judgment in denouncing plots in women's fiction whose plausible nature is overlooked--or whose arguments for artificial plausibility go unheard. Her point is that unlike male writers, women writers seldom rely on direct authorial commentary to clarify actions that appear unmotivated, but that the comments their characters make on these actions, often registered in an emphatic tone of voice, "constitute an internally motivating discourse" (344). Often thought to write of characters motivated by erotic rather than egoistic desires, women writers, Miller claims, often explore the female impulse to power under the guise of exploring erotic impulses. While erotic longings are emphasized more loudly, egoistic desires may be expressed more intensely and may in fact provide a "pre-text" or motivation for the heroine's "refusal to love" (345), a resolution often criticized for being implausible.

Miller's argument for the artificial plausibility of plots in which heroines refuse love is problematic in two ways. First, her argument overlooks that a generic feature of women's fiction is the heroine's being driven by two desires, which to use her terms can be designated egoistic and erotic, one of which proves to be all the more powerful for being unconscious. In the plots she examines, the heroine pursues

erotic desires overtly and egoistic desires more covertly, yet as she points out it is the latter which ultimately explain the heroines' desire to remain single. So, too, is the heroine's motivation indirect in plots that end in romantic closure. During the course of these, heroines typically separate from lovers in egoistic self-assertion, only to reunite with them upon awakening to the knowledge that a desire for relationship--what Miller terms erotic desire--has all along guided their action.

A second problem is Miller's claim that plots wherein heroines refuse love represent an imaginative and artistic advance over plots that end in romantic union, since the former reflect the woman writer's attempt to resist masculinist literary maxims. Her assumption is that to place the heroine in an eros-dominant plot is to associate her with powerlessness and depict her as love object, and thus to reinforce a maxim created by "the dominant culture" (357). The best women writers, she argues, are ambitious of going beyond the limitations of this maxim and therefore generate plots in which the heroine's "superiority" is "to be read in the choice to go beyond love, beyond 'erotic longings'" (347). Overlooking that plots that culminate in romantic closure are still those which require the heroine to fulfill egoistic desires, she dismisses the entire group for conforming to "the inevitably happy end" (347), and quotes from George Eliot's "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" to explain their development. By underestimating the complexity of novels that resolve in romantic union, then, Miller overlooks not only that they challenge patriarchal assumptions in exploring feminine strength and masculine vulnerability, but also that the heroines within

them share both the dual motives and indirect motivation of heroines who ultimately refuse love. It is therefore misleading to distinguish as she does between plots as being either eros- or ambition-dominated, since the interplay between erotic and egoistic concerns is commonly featured in all of women's fiction, despite the specific course of their resolution.

It is because heroines in women's fiction typically proceed according to indirect motivation that they are often seen as acting without motive at all. To traditional critics, like Forster and Muir, these heroines behave implausibly in an unrealistic world; not only are their actions illogical, but they seem themselves unaware of why they travel the course they do. On the other hand, like Miller, feminist critics often explore the apparently unmotivated actions of the heroine by referring to the hidden anger or rebelliousness they suppose she feels; uncontrollable actions are not unaccountable, but register the outbreak of feminine anger. The weakness of this explanation lies mainly in its being one-sided, so that in effect heroines are excused when they are unconsciously directed toward the fulfillment of ambitious ends but remain a puzzle or are viewed as having failed when they are similarly directed toward fulfilling erotic ends. When a heroine like Dorothea Brooke "denies" her ambitions to marry Will Ladislaw, for example, heroine and author are alike accused of having suffered a failure of nerve in seeking out the traditional happy ending.²

In fact, whether heroines remain independent or follow the more frequent course of finding romance, maxims for their actions appear to derive from a common source, that being the ancient tale of Eros and

Psyche. Central to the figure of Psyche is first that she abandons love, despite sensual pleasure, in an act of self-assertion, and second that she seeks reunion with her lover, in a series of acts that lead her to develop strength and self-sufficiency. Even though at the culmination of her experience Psyche has grown more conscious of both motive and action--since, indeed, she has grown conscious of loving and undergone labors that teach her to consult reason over passion toward purposeful action--she typifies the feminine throughout by continuing to be guided by intuitional or inner knowledge to reach goals of which she consciously despairs. Consciously determined to abandon love, for example, she is nonetheless guided by inner knowledge toward redeeming it, and later despairing of reunion, she is guided not only toward developing selfhood but also toward reunion with her lover. Like the heroines of women's fiction, Psyche's struggle to serve two needs often unfolds indirectly, then, in that conscious commitment to one often coincides with unconscious action toward fulfilling the other.

Seen as the paradigm underlying women's fiction, the tale of Psyche suggests that novels in which heroines refuse love, instead of reflecting on artistic "advance," represent a piece of the pattern whose overall concern is with the way in which the two needs can be balanced, both being urgent despite their apparent exclusiveness. From this perspective, it is further clear why it is that fulfillment or happiness is denied to extreme heroines--heroines who sacrifice all for love or who assert Amazonian independence. While the youthful Psyche delights in the sensual pleasures of relationship, before long a desire for selfhood arises within her, forcing her to rebel against bondage to a

powerful other whom she can reverence without knowing, a situation symbolized in the tale by her mortality and Eros's divinity. Like the fictional heroine who gives all for love, Psyche at this early stage remains unfulfilled both in terms of egoistic concerns--which compell her toward knowledge and selfhood--and, somewhat paradoxically, of erotic concerns--which compell her to seek mutuality in place of possession. When Psyche advances to the next stage and rebels against her lover, she is much like the heroines Miller analyzes in being determined to act on principle even if doing so means abandoning erotic fulfillment. Because she fears that relationship threatens her personal growth as well as her dream of perfect love, her choice is to cut herself off from the possibility of earthly happiness.

At the same time, recognizing Psyche as the paradigmatic heroine calls into question Miller's assertion that for the heroine to "be herself and love" is an "unscriptable wish" in women's fiction (355). The tale, as well as a number of fictions that follow in full its lines of development, demonstrates to the contrary that love or genuine relationship is possible only after the heroine achieves selfhood. So long as the maiden Psyche accepts Eros's decree that she remain in the dark, she remains possessed by him. Love, whose basis is mutuality, is impossible so long as Eros is all powerful and Psyche, wholly dependent; moreover, such circumstances further prohibit love whose requirement is understanding in place of fear, since Psyche is as unaware of her lover's nature as she is of her own. Psyche's light-bringing act registers her refusal to be ruled by her lover, as well as her determination to "be herself" and know her lover. The ultimate reunion

of the lovers occurs only because Psyche's achievement of selfhood allows for a relationship based on love rather than power. Psyche no longer fears Eros as a powerful other since she has learned to understand the masculine as a force both within and outside herself, while Eros no longer attempts to control Psyche as love object since he recognizes her as an individual whose beauty is inner as well as outer.

What is finally called into question by reading the Psyche tale as the paradigm underlying women's fiction is a feminist assumption like Miller's that the pattern of courtship and marriage reflects the female imagination debased by dependency on men and their maxims. What might be posited instead is that this pattern continues to be featured because it makes a genuine appeal to the female imagination. As the tale suggests, the heroine is naturally inclined to follow a quest for love, or, to use a broader and less emotive term, for relationship. At the same time, the union of lovers in the outer drama often symbolizes the heroine's inner marriage of feminine with masculine nature. It is by working with two levels of meaning that women writers express that the goals motivating the heroine are not only dual but inter-dependent even to the point of being symbiotic. Rather than being bankrupt of genuine meaning, then, the love story dramatizes the heroine's concern to form relationship, both on an outer stage with an actual figure and within herself, by developing and balancing inner principles.

Although interpreting the tale as disclosing in general "The Psychic Development of the Feminine," Erich Neumann's "Commentary" is of particular relevance to the development of the heroine in its analysis of the way in which Psyche's labors lead her to develop a deeper

understanding of her lover Eros as well as of her inner masculine qualities. Neumann loosely equates the movement toward selfhood she undergoes with the development of inner masculine qualities, like reason and determination, although he maintains that she is distinct from the hero throughout in responding to "the unconscious and the instincts" (96); while "compelled to build up the masculine side of her nature" to complete her labors, "she remains true to her womanhood" by acting "not directly but indirectly" (110). Completing the first three of her tasks, she confronts what Neumann calls "the overwhelming numinous power of the masculine" (106), overcoming her fear of such principles as "masculine promiscuity, the deadly masculine, and the uncontainable masculine" (118). The masculine guides that the tale depicts as residing in nature, outside of Psyche, symbolize her developing ability to be guided by inner masculine nature: to consult reason and enlist resolve, rather than to act out of passion. Before she completes her final labor, however, her desire for love or relationship, which Neumann equates loosely with her feminine nature, reasserts itself when she abandons her quest for "spiritual development" to keep for herself the casket of divine beauty; as Neumann suggests, she reverses the motives that informed her initial drive for separation and selfhood: "In the beginning Psyche sacrificed her Eros-paradise for the sake of her spiritual development; but now she is just as ready to sacrifice her spiritual development for the immortal beauty of Persephone-Aphrodite, which will make her pleasing to Eros" (122-23). Neumann emphasizes that while she continues in this instance to act unconsciously, what she does continues to be efficacious of achieving the relational goal she holds

most deeply: "Psyche fails, she must fail, because she is a feminine psyche. But though she does not know it, it is precisely this failure that brings her victory" (121).

Distinguishing as masculine Psyche's gestures toward selfhood and as feminine her gestures toward relationship, Neumann adds a refinement to the argument that the Psyche figure is dually motivated: his suggestion is that because she is a feminine being, relational concerns are those most elemental to her nature. While his theory allows that developing inner masculine resources like strength and self-sufficiency are imperative to her survival and growth, it holds that the realm of feeling remains dominant within her, whose deepest desire is to love: "Psyche's individual love for Eros as love in the light is not only an essential element, it is the essential element in feminine individuation" (110). While Neumann speaks of Psyche in relation to feminine being rather than to the female heroine, what he says appears to be borne out by the female novel with one qualification: while the strongest and deepest desire of the heroine is to be united with Eros, Eros is not always or only depicted as a masculine lover, being often represented in a disembodied form as a principle of caring or even, to borrow M. Esther Harding's definitive terms, as a "principle of psychic wholeness" (Mysteries 29). While Neumann appears to be right in analyzing the tale itself, which specifically foregrounds the element of sexual or romantic love, many women writers explore this element in symbolic terms, particularly as their treatment of the paradigm has grown more sophisticated in modern fiction. While it is fair to say that the heroine's drive for relationship is her deepest concern, then,

establishing relationship between inner masculine and feminine principles is often depicted as bringing opposites into balance, and therefore as productive of fulfillment.

That Psyche's ultimate achievement is to effect a balance between her double drive for selfhood and relationship, drives she previously conceives of as contradictory, is suggested in Neumann's "Commentary" when he uses antonyms like "failure" and "victory" to explain her success. When Psyche refuses to complete her final labor, she demonstrates on the one hand her ongoing commitment to relationship and on the other her determination that this relationship be based on equal involvement of two individuals; antagonistic to love and selfhood both, the old relationship based on mastery and subservience is transformed when Psyche refuses to strive for perfection in opposition to Eros's demonstrated vulnerability. During the course of her labors, Psyche has grown in strength, while Eros, rather like a Sleeping Beauty figure, has languished in bed, passive as well as vulnerable for having had his supremacy undermined. By refusing to complete her last task, Psyche makes clear that she desires neither to challenge or master him and that there is still room for him to act meaningfully in relation to her. Thus as a result of her actions, both individuals are free to be themselves and to love. Not only has relationship been cleansed of inequity, but the drive for selfhood cleansed of egoistic self-absorption. Psyche's ascension to the stature of a goddess at the conclusion of the tale emphasizes that opposites have been transformed or overcome: while Psyche's growth is underscored by her new status, her reward is not to be singled out but to be united with Eros in a

relationship based on equality.

* * *

In all of women's fiction, Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre perhaps bears the closest resemblance to the paradigm, mirroring its unfolding step by step. Like the paradigm, it foregrounds the romance plot to the extent that the heroine's strongest desire appears to be to unite with her lover, a desire which the conclusion fulfills. Yet Jane's choices consistently reveal that finding relationship is only one part of her quest, the other part involving finding a channel in which her energies can flow productively. As feminist critics so often point out by referring to passages like the following, the early Jane speaks not only of wanting love, but of striving after further ambitions:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally. But women feel just as men feel: they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (120)

While during the course of Jane's experience the goals of ambition and love appear to be discrete and even antagonistic, by the conclusion of the novel she has redefined their meaning so that the two have become one.

It is in the scene just before Jane's reunion with Rochester that she rejects the fulfillment of egoistic and erotic desires in ways which are exclusive of each other, ways which might typically satisfy

masculine characters in fiction. When she rejects St. John Rivers' proposal that she take up missionary work in India as his wife, she makes clear that the achievement of ambition holds little allure if it is to be gained at the expense of love. After she counters St. John's argument that she should choose service to himself and the spiritual needs of the world with the proposal that she follow this course with relative independence as a "female curate," it seems for a moment as if her egoistic longings may take precedence. But when she rejects his final proposal that she go to India using her "own fortune," independent of him altogether, she makes clear that for her, personal commitment to a goal, shorn of all relational considerations, is without appeal. In fact, work in the world--what Jean Sudrann refers to as Jane's "unfulfilled aspirations for freedom," (237)--is finally viewed by Jane as self-sacrifice and enslavement to ideals that thwart vitality and even threaten her very life:

I am not under the slightest obligation to go to India, especially with strangers. With you I would have ventured much, because I admire, confide in, and, as a sister, I love you; but I am convinced that, go when and with whom I would, I should not live long....God did not give me my life to throw it away; and to do as you wish me would, I begin to think, be almost equivalent to committing suicide.
(472)

In rejecting Rivers, Jane refuses to pursue masculine goals associated with work and ambition which for her are empty and unnatural. While work is attractive to Jane earlier and abstractly as an avenue to adventure and power, in the scenes with Rivers it becomes identified with the maintenance and development of patriarchal culture and religion, both of which require female subservience and hence the

suppression of feminine energy. When Jane rejects St. John, a figure of Christian heroism, she rejects not only a man of God, but a highly refined version of patriarchal authority that demands female submission before the all-powerful Father. In contrast to Rochester, who finds fulfillment with Jane, Rivers serves his masculine God throughout, and it is union with this figure that he desires most deeply: "'My Master,' he says, 'has forewarned me. Daily He announces more distinctly, "Surely I come quickly!" and hourly I more eagerly respond, "Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!" "' (517). In rejecting Rivers, then, Jane resists a hierarchical structure that would place her beneath both man and God, seeking instead, as Psyche does, relationship whose basis is mutuality.

At the same time, Jane's rejection of Rivers demonstrates her refusal to fulfill erotic longings at the expense of egoistic assertion. She refuses to love a man who is incapable of recognizing her value and returning her feelings. That Jane finds Rivers physically attractive is evident from her description of his appearance:

He was young--perhaps from twenty-eight to thirty--tall, slender. His face riveted the eye; it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline; quite a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin. It is seldom, indeed, an English face comes so near the antique models as his did. He might well be a little shocked at the irregularity of my linements, his own being so harmonious. His eyes were large and blue, with brown lashes; his high forehead, colourless as ivory, was partially streaked over by careless locks of fair hair. (390)

Nor does Jane ever deny that his strength of character, intellect and breeding all appeal to her; these attractions make his proposal more dangerous to her, as she explains to Diana:

"And then," I continued, "though I have only sisterly affection for him now, yet, if forced to be his wife,

I can imagine the possibility of conceiving an inevitable, strange, torturing kind of love for him, because he is so talented, and there is often a certain heroic grandeur in his look, manner, and conversation. In that case, my lot would become unspeakably wretched. He would not want me to love him; and if I showed the feeling, he would make me sensible that it was a superfluity, unrequired by him, unbecoming in me. I know he would." (474)

What Jane recognizes here is that if she submits to being Rivers' wife, and ultimately to loving him, she will sacrifice not only her selfhood, but the chance of being loved for herself. Rivers cannot love but only master her. He represents manhood as it is ideally depicted to women in patriarchal culture, since he assumes his right to mastery on the basis of his inviolable strength of character. Although he does not physically bully Jane as her young cousin John does in Chapter I, when Rivers argues the superiority of his spiritual commitment and his consequent right to govern her, he reveals that he deals in power rather than in love, and that in this way he is a brute:

As I walked by his side homeward, I read well in his iron silence all he felt towards me: the disappointment of an austere and despotic nature, which had met resistance where it expected submission; the disapprobation of a cool, inflexible judge, which has detected in another feelings and views in which it has no power to sympathize;--in short, as a man, he would have wished to coerce me into obedience....I would much rather he had knocked me down. (467)

Jane's rejection of Rivers demonstrates a specifically feminine redefinition of love and ambition, wherein neither is independent of the other. She no longer hungers to distinguish herself by her works above those dismissed by St. John for following "a track of selfish ease and barren obscurity" (466). Nor does she want love if it is to be gained at the expense of self-worth and -assertion. When she returns to

Rochester, she glories in finding someone who values her for all her qualities, and places her before all other things, willing to admit his need; when he confesses the depth of his love--"all the sunshine I can feel is in her [Jane's] presence"--her delight is complete: "The water stood in my eyes to hear this avowal of his dependence" (502). But if she enjoys Rochester's "dependence," she does not force him to make a show of it, since she has learned that the intrusion of unequal power destroys the possibility of love in relationship.

In fact, when Jane finally returns to Rochester, she continues to call him master as she has throughout, although she voluntarily commits herself to him only because the balance of power has been revised, even to the extent that her command of it is ascendant. Not only is she more aware of her value, but she and Rochester both recognize that his strength, and with it his formerly inviolable right to mastery, have been undercut; his vulnerabilities have been demonstrated physically (in the loss of his hand, eye and vision), socially (in the loss of Thornfield Hall), and morally (in the polygamous intent of his marriage proposal to Jane). Using the metaphor of the tree and the vine that describes the relationship between Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, Rochester laments his inability to act, Adam-like, as a stable and sturdy prop for Jane; when she cuts short his apology to prop up his confidence, effectively insisting that if she is determined to be the vine he has no choice but to stand as tall as he can and let her grow around him, she demonstrates both her recognition of her own energy and her expectation that he should share in and grow by it too:

"I am no better than the old lightning-struck chestnut-tree in Thornfield orchard," he remarked ere

long. "And what right would that ruin have to bid a budding woodbine to cover its decay with freshness?"

"You are no ruin, sir--no lightning-struck tree: you are green and vigorous. Plants will grow about your feet, whether you ask them or not, because they take delight in your bountiful shadow; and as they grow they will lean towards you, and wind round you, because your strength offers them so safe a prop."

Again he smiled: I gave him comfort. (507-08)

Jane no longer expects Rochester to be an ideal patriarch, perfect in understanding and power. While she now feels herself possessed of these qualities in large measure, still she does not revel in egoistic triumph, attempting to take the lead. Instead she returns to Rochester not just because he loves her, but because he is able to submit to being loved by her, which ability entails his willingness to be guided by her. Her egoistic desires--desires of the type "serving to exalt the person creating them" (Freud 47)--have merged perfectly with her erotic desire to attain love, and as a result the issue of power or mastery has been transformed.

While taking actions that lead her on the one hand to develop new strength and on the other to reunite with Rochester, Jane is like Psyche in responding to knowledge whose source is inner, being more instinctual than rational. Recoiling from the disclosure that Rochester's marriage proposal is improper, for example, she states that separating from him defies both her reason and passion: "while he spoke my very conscience and reason turned traitors against me, and charged me with crime in resisting him. They spoke almost as loud as Feeling: and that clamoured wildly. 'Oh, comply!' it said" (358). What impells her to go is an inner voice, in this case appearing before her in a dream-vision as a

feminine guide:

I watched her come--watched with the strangest anticipation--as though some word of doom were to be written on her disk. She broke forth as never yet moon burst from cloud: a hand first penetrated the sable folds and waved them away; then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in the azure, inclining a glorious brow earthward. It gazed and gazed on me. It spoke to my spirit...."My daughter, flee temptation." (361)

In its message, the voice counselling Jane resembles the voice of the sisters that directs Psyche to expose Eros and escape bondage. While this counsel reflects the feminine tendency to respond to the masculine with anger and fear, and while acting on it brings pain to the heroine, it is not villainous or vicious in that it propells her toward necessary self-assertion. While Psyche kills the sisters in an act symbolizing that she has overcome inner fear and aggressiveness, Jane undergoes similar growth, which is evident when she is able to hear and respond empathically to Rochester's own voice.

Separated from Rochester, Jane's apparent indecision is very like Psyche's as she despairs of all action while simultaneously pursuing the surest means to fulfilling her labors. Jane describes her motives to continue her journey in contradictory terms, saying in one breath that she has no will to go on and in the next that she is determined: "as to my own will or conscience, impassioned grief had trampled one and stifled the other....I had some fear--or hope--that here I should die; but I was soon up, crawling forwards on my hands and knees, and then again raised to my feet--as eager and as determined as ever to reach the road" (363). This scene invites the further comparison that Jane like Psyche remains "determined" to act because interior knowledge acquaints

her with her eventual return to Rochester.

Certainly her ensuing actions lead to this conclusion. Without apparent intention, she arrives at Marsh End to find the home and security she needs to outgrow the identity of dependent waif. That her wandering has all the while been unconsciously directed toward finding the Rivers family is implied by Jane's forcing herself forward, "again searching for something" (369); when she sees the Rivers girls, her recognition of kinship is immediate, if not wholly conscious: "I had nowhere seen such faces as theirs; and yet, as I gazed on them, I seemed intimate with every linement" (376). All the steps Jane takes, even when they seem to move her away from her lover, are on some level designed to win reunion. The bond between them, far from being severed by social laws, is itself strong enough to break physical laws, so that Jane will ultimately hear Rochester's voice despite distance. She neither hears nor responds to Rochester's request for her return, however, until she is able to proclaim, "I am an independent woman now" (496).

* * *

The Psyche paradigm continues to underlie the development of novels that, while they resolve in romantic union, tend to foreground the heroine's egoistic concerns, often expressed by her in anti-relational terms as a desire to remain single and independent. This heroine commonly discovers not only that she loves, much as Psyche does when she brings light to the figure of Eros, but also that conscious pursuit of freedom frustrates her deeper desire to form relationship. Awakening to what she really wants, moreover, she discovers her authentic goal is not

wholly new, since it has always been within her awaiting conscious recognition.

This pattern of disorientation and sudden awakening is apparent even in novels often thought to conform to standards of social realism, in a novel like Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice (1813), for example. While for a large segment of the novel Elizabeth Bennet resents Darcy's attitude of superiority and fears being undermined by him--much as the youthful Psyche fears the mastery Eros assumes over her--she awakens to her love much as Psyche does by gazing at the figure of her lover, albeit in portrait form:

At last it arrested her; and she beheld a striking resemblance of Mr. Darcy, with such a smile over the face as she remembered to have sometimes seen when he looked at her. She stood several minutes before the picture, in earnest contemplation, and returned to it again before they quitted the gallery....There was certainly at this moment on Elizabeth's mind a more gentle sensation towards the original than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance....as she stood before the canvas on which he was represented, and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before--she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression. (228)

While Psyche is overwhelmed by love gazing at Eros in the flesh, Elizabeth's experience, more subdued, leads nonetheless to her acknowledgement that her feelings for Darcy are deeper than she had formerly allowed. Perhaps because Elizabeth's contemplation of Darcy is limited to his face and because what she sees there speaks mainly to her reason, she continues at this point to think of relationship in terms of power, "gratified" by his "regard." The final clause, however, in which she adjusts her inner and biased view of her lover to one that

corresponds more closely to outer and actual reality, suggests that she has only begun the process of deepening her understanding of both Darcy and her feelings for him.

Until the point of engagement, Elizabeth wrestles with her view that egoism or pride, her own or Darcy's, may prove an insurmountable barrier to the exchange of love between them. Her first concern, for herself, is that Darcy would triumph if he were to know of her changed feelings; her next concern is that Darcy's pride will never allow him to repeat his proposal, whatever assurance of success he might have. It is by confronting Lady Catherine, however, who is as possessive of Darcy as Aphrodite is of Eros, that Elizabeth and Darcy alike recognize that if they are to be and please themselves, they will place their love above all other considerations. When Darcy ultimately proposes to Elizabeth, her acceptance is immediate and, far from attempting to assert mastery, each argues his or her own culpability in having acted in the past from selfish rather than caring motives.

Even though Elizabeth remains consciously insecure of her lover until he proposes, her hopes as well as her instincts argue that he continues loving her; remembering his actions on Lydia's behalf, "Her heart did whisper, that he had done it for her" (296). Although she consciously dismisses the likelihood of union with Darcy following Lydia's elopement, her refusal to deny outright its possibility not only to his aunt but also to her own suggests that she may be guided by reassuring inner knowledge; even though Mrs. Gardiner awaits an answer to her letter, Elizabeth puts off writing until she can announce her engagement: "From an unwillingness to confess how much her intimacy with

Mr. Darcy had been overrated, Elizabeth had never yet answered Mrs. Gardiner's long letter; but now, having that to communicate which she knew would be the most welcome, she was almost ashamed to find that her uncle and aunt had already lost three days of happiness" (346). Much as Psyche despairs of regaining Eros while acting nonetheless to secure this end, Elizabeth, from the time she falls into a Psyche-like swoon, acts to secure Darcy's affection while at the same time despairing of doing so. Moreover, it is when she feels he is lost to her that, like Psyche, she grows fully conscious of her love:

The wish of procuring her regard, which she had assured herself of his feeling in Derbyshire, could not in rational expectation survive such a blow as this. She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what....She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was a union that must have been to the advantage of both: by her ease and liveliness his mind might have been softened, his manners improved; and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance. (282-83)

While Elizabeth resembles Psyche in the final scenes, awakening to love and securing union unconsciously, her early interest is not solely in preserving dignity and independence: her commitment to relational concerns can be deciphered in her abiding determination to unite Jane with Bingley. That Elizabeth pursues erotic aspirations through Jane can be argued on the basis not only that the sisters are close but also that the character of each represents a different aspect of feminine nature, not unlike the balanced character Elizabeth ultimately attains when she adds love to reason. Elizabeth is determined to win back a

lover who has withdrawn from relationship; Jane, on the other hand, expresses the aspect of Psyche that despairs of taking active measures to regain the lover she believes lost. When Elizabeth and Darcy agree that union between Jane and Bingley is appropriate, what is most significant is that these central figures have been transformed to the extent of sharing the recognition that love is not a contest of power. Jane and Bingley have been like pawns in a game that Elizabeth and Darcy have played, Elizabeth insisting that Jane has taken Bingley fair and square, Darcy countering that he continues in possession of Bingley and may move him at will. Not until Darcy "gives up" Bingley does he resign his attitude of superiority and his assertion of independence; not until Jane is courted by Bingley is Elizabeth able to desist from competing for superiority with Darcy. From this perspective, the novel is like the paradigm from the outset in focusing on the lovers' separation, Elizabeth expressing her concern to promote relationship through the interest she takes in Jane and Bingley.

In Austen's Emma (1816), the heroine's concern with relationship and selfhood is similarly divided, with Emma consciously pursuing love matches for others and spinsterhood for herself. There is perhaps more evidence here than in Pride and Prejudice, however, that the heroine unconsciously seeks to attract her lover; moreover, resembling Psyche more closely than Elizabeth does, Emma is overwhelmed by love in a single moment of awakening, as the reference to Cupid's arrow helps to reinforce: "A few minutes were sufficient for making her acquainted with own heart. A mind like hers, once opening to a suspicion, made rapid progress; she touched, she admitted, she acknowledged, the whole

truth....It darted through her with the speed of an arrow that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!" (324). Intimating that her love for Knightley has affected her even before penetrating her consciousness, she later says to him that some force kept her from becoming serious in her flirtation with Frank Churchill: "It was his [Churchill's] object to blind all about him; and no one, I am sure, could be more effectively blinded than myself--except that I was not blinded--that, in short, I was somehow or other safe from him" (339). Rather than representing female inconstancy, the heroine's shifting her interest from one male figure to another, here as in a number of women's fictions, represents the transformation of the masculine. While a novel like Pride and Prejudice foregrounds this transformative process as it takes place in the masculine lover, Emma emphasizes instead that aspect of the tale dealing with the heroine's need to develop inner masculine qualities and hence to transform her view of masculine nature.

Emma's initial fear of the masculine evidently underlies her antipathy to the change that marriage would bring, when early in the novel she confides to Harriet her intention to remain single: "I am not only not going to be married at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all...I must see somebody very superior to anyone I have seen yet to be tempted...and I do not wish to see any such person. I would rather not be tempted. I cannot really change for the better. If I were to marry, I must expect to repent it" (70). She displays here an attitude similar to what Neumann calls Psyche's feminine resistance to "the marriage of death," by which he means that the feminine fears separation from "the primordial relation between mother and daughter"

(62,63). Although without living mother, Emma nonetheless fears being separated from the guaranteed security of home and the doting admiration of her father, a wholly non-threatening figure of the masculine. What she displays by resisting marriage and change is a maidenly self-love which dissolves when she awakens to love; accompanying her recognition that she loves Knightley is her recognition that, far from having attained changeless perfection, she needs to grow in understanding: "She was most sorrowfully indignant, ashamed of every sensation but the one revealed to her--her affection for Mr. Knightley. Every other part of her mind was disgusting. With insufferable vanity had she believed herself in the secret of everybody's feelings, with unpardonable arrogance proposed to arrange everybody's destiny. She was proved to have been universally mistaken" (328). Her attitude toward herself and others has been transformed: initially closed to the masculine out of fear and self-protective narcissism, she grows more open in recognizing not only that she loves but also that she needs to grow and change.

Once she admits to loving Knightley, Emma does not, however, admit to consciousness her awareness that he returns her feelings. That on an interior level, she recognizes his love for her early in the novel, and that, on this level, she has used this knowledge to attract him to her, is evident in the narrator's description of the way Emma draws Knightley to her to thank him for protecting Harriet: "Emma had no opportunity of speaking to Mr. Knightley till after supper; but when they were all in the ball-room again, her eyes invited him irresistibly to come to her and be thanked" (261). Further evidence of Knightley's ardor is given Emma before his final excursion to the John Knightley's, when he is

moved to a display of physical affection; indeed, Emma's reciprocal affections are evident here, too:

It seemed as if there were [in Knightley] an instantaneous impression in her favour, as if his eyes received the truth from hers, and all that had passed of good in her feelings were at once caught and honoured. He looked at her with a glow of regard. She was warmly gratified--and in another moment still more so by a little movement of more than common friendliness on his part. He took her hand; whether she had not herself made the first motion she could not say--she might, perhaps, have rather offered it--but he took her hand, pressed it, and certainly was on the point of carrying it to his lips--when, from some fancy or other, he suddenly let it go. Why he should feel such a scruple, why he should change his mind when it was all but done, she could not perceive. He would have judged better, she thought, if he had not stopped. The intention, however, was indubitable. (306)

Emma's inner awareness of Knightley's love for her, despite her conscious protest, becomes clearest when she attempts to instruct herself not to hope for his love. She moves within the space of one paragraph from dismissing the possibility that he loves her to resolving that, even if he asks, she will never consent to marriage: "She could not flatter herself with any idea of blindness in his attachment to her....She had no hope, nothing to deserve the name of hope, that he could have that sort of affection for herself which was now in question....Marriage, in fact, would not do for her. It would be incompatible with what she owed to her father and with what she felt for him. Nothing should separate her from her father. She would not marry even if she were asked by Mr. Knightley" (330). Although Emma continues consciously to resist the idea that fulfillment of her feelings lies in marriage, that she weds Knightley at the novel's conclusion suggests that she has sought this end indirectly.

In George Eliot's Middlemarch (1874), Dorothea expresses the desire not merely to remain independent but further to pursue a career goal of active philanthropy. Ending in marriage, the novel does not so much chart her abandonment of ambition, as often interpreted, as it explores her development of what could be called a feminine orientation toward life. Admittedly, on the surface some of her statements sound of stoic resignation or, less philosophically, of mere giving up: "I used to despise women a little for not shaping their lives more, and doing better things. I was very fond of doing as I liked, but I have almost given it up" (376). Underlying observations like these, however, is her growing awareness that conscious attempts to shape her life have led to situations both disastrous and unforeseen. Developing an orientation toward experience similar to Psyche's in being indirect, Dorothea abandons determined attempts to do as she likes in order to allow herself to awaken to desires more inner and urgent.

Gaining self-knowledge over the course of her experience, Dorothea learns to credit insights and recognize needs that spring from an unconscious source. When the novel opens, she is willful and independent, guided by reason in determining with whom to share her life. Like Psyche who, terrified of darkness, exposes Eros to the light to gain awareness and power, Dorothea is similarly compelled to seek the light of consciousness, controlling her life toward the pursuit of knowledge. Yet as nothing else could, her struggle to survive life with the bloodless scholar Causabon helps her to recognize the dangers inherent in too far forcing one's will on one's destiny. The view to which she comes, while unfolded in moral terms, is closely aligned with

Psyche's, emphasizing as it does the value of underlying intention over willful action and conscious knowledge; rather than signifying the earliest stage of feminine development in which the heroine, imitating the hero, attempts to control destiny, Psyche's lamp imagery in this passage signifies the stage in which the heroine, awakening to inner light, grows conscious of valuing love:

That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil--widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower....It is my life. I have found it out, and cannot part with it. I have always been finding out my religion since I was a little girl. I used to pray so much--now I hardly ever pray. I try not to have desires merely for myself, because they may not be good for others, and I have too much already. (271)

While Dorothea's view here is further tied to Psyche's in emphasizing caring and relational concerns over those that are personal or ego-based, her orientation is abstract and impersonal as Psyche's is not. Ensuing developments suggest, however, that she is still in the process of "finding out" how to respond to life, since she will ultimately allow individualized desire for love not only to surface from within but also to be fulfilled in marriage. Imaging Will as the winged god Eros when he meets Dorothea after Causabon's death, Eliot emphasizes that Dorothea's resolve "to construct" her coming life according to conscious plan is undertaken without reference to her unconscious commitment to "Love":

She did not know then that it was Love that had come to her briefly, as in a dream before awakening, with the hues of morning on his wings--that it was Love to whom she was sobbing her farewell as his image was banished by the blameless rigour of irresistible day. She only felt that there was something irrevocably

amiss and lost in her lot, and her thoughts about the future were the more readily shapen into resolve. Ardent souls, ready to construct their coming lives, are apt to commit themselves to the fulfillment of their own visions. (378)

Having already allowed that the unconscious is a powerful force and having shown skepticism toward the efficacy of striving after goals that are conscious, Dorothea demonstrates feminine wisdom in refusing consciously to strive for love, pursuing it, as it were, with Psyche-like indirection.

Marrying Will, Dorothea satisfies her newly awakened need for individualized relationship, for being herself and loving. From early in the novel, she has not only felt a strong attraction to Will, but associated him with work and freedom, seeing in him the representation of all she forfeited in her marriage to Causabon--a marriage she had thought would foster intellect and activity, but which instead forces upon her a "helplessness" which is "wretchedly benumbing":

she longed for objects who could be dear to her, and to whom she could be dear. She longed for work which would be directly beneficent like the sunshine and the rain, and now it appeared that she was to live more and more in a virtual tomb, where there was the apparatus of a ghostly labour producing what would never see the light. Today she had stood at the door of the tomb and seen Will Ladislaw receding into the distant world of warm activity and fellowship--turning his face towards her as he went. (329)

Once she is convinced that Will loves her, the image of freedom reappears: "It was as if some hard icy pressure had melted, and her consciousness had room to expand: her past was come back to her with larger interpretation" (438). In marrying Will, moreover, Dorothea

asserts her independence from social conventions and restrictions that have forced the pair to remain separate and caused much of the darkness in the novel. "Yes, I will see him," Dorothea says, before she meets Will and they agree to wed, claiming like Psyche her right to look upon her lover and to acknowledge the truth of her own feelings (556 emphasis mine).

Enabling her to serve humanitarian interests, Dorothea's marriage promotes a second goal similarly formed by ambitious and relational concerns: rather than cleaving to the determination to act single-handedly and thereby fulfilling the expectation of "[m]any who knew her" (576), Dorothea joins her efforts, willingly anonymous, to those of people who work "for the growing good of the world" (578). Through Dorothea, Middlemarch argues against heroism that distinguishes individuals--the type of heroism which ranks first in patriarchal culture--and for an alternate and more feminine model of achievement in which individuals willingly join themselves to a collective effort for good. While it is true that Eliot introduces Antigone and Saint Theresa as embodiments of female heroism in an earlier age, she points out that "the medium in which their ardent deeds took shape is for ever gone" (577); a modern-day Saint Theresa, Eliot says, could only fail: "Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some long-recognizable deed" (xiv). That the novel argues the wrong-headedness of those who continue striving for heroic distinction is clear from Causabon's being the character who most notably seeks to perform "some

long-recognizable deed." A figure associated with cruelty and frustrated egotism, he portrays the individual determined to make a name for himself or, more kindly, to make of his life's work a contribution to future generations.³ While deliberate self-promotion is often associated with the wrong-headed drive of masculine ego within women's fiction, specific to this text is the suggestion that it is far better, like Mary Garth, to turn one's hand to work which can be successfully completed, rather than attempting like Causabon to grasp what cannot be held. The concern with fame, with ensuring that one's name stand in the annals of special achievers, is precisely what Dorothea abandons as a result of her experience with Causabon, a development reflective of her growth. Abandoning ego-fulfillment and self-promotion, Dorothea joins her labor to Will's, and in turn they join their humanitarian efforts to those of the collective, able to do so because, unlike Causabon, each has attained selfhood that can thrive within relationship.

* * *

If novels ending in romantic closure frequently feature heroines who have consciously pursued independence, just as common is the pattern variant wherein the heroine consciously pronounces that love or relationship is most vital to her, only to emphasize through her actions the essential nature of developing selfhood. Like Psyche, this heroine works indirectly to effect an overall balance between the need to be an individual and still to love. She differs from the heroines discussed previously only in electing love as her conscious goal; at the same time the narrative of her experience differs from theirs only in emphasizing the development of selfhood over awakening to love. Centrally, what

this distinction underlines is that indirection is generic to the heroine of women's fiction, those claiming to pursue independence finding love, and those claiming to place love above all else establishing their individuality and growing in self-knowledge.

Typically foregrounded in these novels are the lonely and difficult labors the heroine pursues while separated from her lover. While expressing Psyche-like despair at the possibility both of regaining her lover and of surviving the ordeals of life alone, the heroine nonetheless demonstrates perseverance and develops self-sufficiency, allowing her at first to survive and then to flourish. When her lover returns, there is no longer a question of her depending on his superior strength; yet, liberated from need, the heroine retains undiminished her desire for reunion. The final union is often presented as her triumph or reward because, cleansed of inequity, it is based on love.

In place of mutuality, however, a number of novels developing this variation emphasize the exaltation of heroine over hero, contrasting her strength to his vulnerability. Women writers may be drawn to this placement of emphasis when presenting heroines so consciously committed to fostering love in order to help readers to see that the novel records female growth. A feature of the heroine's development as an individual involves her recognition that the masculine, although exalted by the culture, is vulnerable and imperfect, and that the feminine, although subservient in the culture, is strong and competent. At the same time, the heroine herself develops inner masculine characteristics, driven in this direction by awakening to flaws in figures of the external masculine on whom she learns it is dangerous to depend. Consistent with

the paradigm, this heroine is depicted as ascending, while the hero--initially adored by the feminine not only because of patriarchal conditioning but also because of feminine infatuation--is "reduced" in the sense that he is no longer worshipped but loved, humanized rather than all powerful and god-like.

Where emphasis on the exaltation of the heroine is extreme, the novel generally presents a heightened or exaggerated picture of reality. Rather than being expressive of wish-fulfillment or fantasies of female power, however, this variation is better understood as expanding the range of narrative possibilities by emphasizing certain features of the paradigm. Independence does not replace relationship, despite the heroine's being depicted as close to perfection and male figures being in general associated with vice. Although the eventual union between lovers can appear to be relatively unnecessary to the heroine, the author herself does not challenge the rightness of this outcome, in this way sanctioning the attitude of the heroine who claims throughout that relationship is central to her.

A heroine like Emily St. Aubert in Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), raised in seclusion by her protective father, is innocent of the worldly corruption and hypocrisy she encounters upon his death. Symbolizing patriarchal misrepresentation, father presents daughter with a false image of masculine perfection, encouraging her to develop dangerous dependence. M. St. Aubert's retirement from the world, his failure to retain his fortune, and his failure to solve the mystery of his sister's murder all expose him as an imperfect counsellor and all become part of the menacing destiny that Emily must herself

confront and work out. In shrouding his sister's death in mystery, St. Aubert errs most obviously. When Emily sees him crying over the picture of a woman she does not know, and when his dying wish is that she burn unread a packet of letters, she suppresses the fears and doubts she feels about the character of a man she had heretofore believed perfect. A central awakening that Emily undergoes--positive to the extent that she grows by it--is that the father, the masculine figure empowered by the culture to legislate feminine destiny, is without the perfection by which he represents himself.

That the villainous Montoni becomes her guardian in her father's stead symbolizes Emily's recognition that the masculine is not only to be loved and emulated, but dreaded. Like Psyche's labors, Emily's trials at the hands of the villainous Montoni and the lecherous Morano teach her that she can overcome "masculine promiscuity, the deadly masculine, and the uncontainable masculine," forces over which Neumann suggests Psyche triumphs (118). Yet her vision of the masculine is distorted as much by Montoni's energetic corruption as by her father's assumption of perfection. When Emily finally solves her father's secret, she discovers that he is less corrupt than she unconsciously feared, learning at the same time that Montoni is less the villain than she had suspected, since he did not murder Signora Laurentini.

The lesson of masculine fallibility, however, is reinforced by the introduction of the Count de Villefort, a final father surrogate who closely resembles Emily's father. On the one hand, Emily demonstrates that she can be as strong-willed as any man when she acts on his recommendation to consult reason and shun her lover Valancourt: "she was

obliged to recollect all the arguments which the count had made use of to strengthen her resolution to part with Valancourt, and all the precepts which she had received from her deceased father on the subject of self-command, to enable her to act with prudence and dignity on this the most severe occasion of her life" (2: 188-189). On the other hand, the revelation that the count has judged from false facts proclaims the superiority of Emily's inner knowledge, which has throughout caused her to struggle against belief in Valancourt's disloyalty and corruption. Emily's experience ultimately teaches her not to fear the masculine principle, and even to exercise the power of masculine reason: but more important, she learns to value her own way of knowing through the heart or through feelings, which has proven a sensitive guide throughout.

When Emily initially refuses Valancourt's offer of clandestine marriage, she does so more on the basis of "relational" morality than abstract principle: "Above all, she dreaded to involve Valancourt in obscurity and vain regret, which she saw, or thought she saw, must be the too certain consequence of a marriage in their present circumstances; and she acted, perhaps, with somewhat more than female fortitude, when she resolved to endure a present, rather than provoke a distant misfortune" (1: 159).⁴ On a deeper level, however, Emily's resolve reflects her determination to live singly until union can be openly acknowledged as well as her underlying perception that she and her lover still know too little of each other and themselves. As unintentioned as Psyche when she wounds Eros, when Emily refuses Valancourt she forces him to make the painful move from youth to manhood so that he will be better suited to be her mate. Like Psyche, too,

Emily must live with her lover's pronouncement that her actions destroy the possibility of relationship; he never comes to her aid during her ensuing trials, and there is little consolation for Emily in remembering "the conviction he [Valancourt] repeatedly expressed that they should never meet again in happiness" (2: 255).

Upon their reunion, Valancourt returns tarnished but not corrupt, in a condition that Emily has learned to accept as part of the masculine character. While she initially adored him, as Psyche did Eros, their eventual union rests on her recognizing his frailty and error, accompanied by his similar admission. Shorn of "pride and resentment," he acknowledges that her self-command surpasses his own: "The merit of the sacrifice is indeed not my own, for I should never have obtained strength of mind to surrender you, if your prudence had not demanded it" (2: 180, 190). By contrast, she is essentially unchanged, although her beauty has been faded by care: "In her he perceived the same goodness and beautiful simplicity that had charmed him on their first acquaintance. The bloom of her countenance was somewhat faded, but all its sweetness remained; and it was rendered more interesting than ever, by the faint expression of melancholy that sometimes mingled with her smile" (2: 173).

The stage of the paradigm that Radcliffe de-emphasizes, then, is the "failure" of the heroine, which occurs when she elects "immortal beauty" over "spiritual development" and therefore invites her lover to become active in seeking union (Neumann 121). Instead the female protagonist is portrayed here as so fully capable of exercising reason and controlling passion that she almost seems complete in herself,

without need of masculine complement. The couple's plan to live in her home rather than his further signifies her apparent ascendancy. Yet Radcliffe never undermines Emily's desire to unite with Valancourt even though, by emphasizing Emily's ascent and Valancourt's fall, the novel underplays equality and mutuality, the cornerstones of union in the paradigm.

Charlotte Yonge's historical romance The Dove in the Eagle's Nest (1866) is still more fervent in glorifying the feminine spirit and the maternal principle, despite a claim like Vinetta Colby's that "the dogma of Anglo-Catholicism filled Charlotte Yonge's personal life as fully as romance and motherhood filled the lives of most women of her generation" (187). For the heroine Christina Sorel to grow, she must leave the Christian community of Ulm to go to the rough mountain fortress of Adlerstein in the company of her father, a godless outlaw who refers to her more romantically as Camilla. Raised by her pious aunt and uncle, Johanna and Gottfried, in place of their own dead child, Christina is without strength, vitality or a sense of beauty. Although like Psyche she fears craggy exposure to rough masculinity, she is similarly pleased to discover life rather than death in the new world she enters: "Yet, alarmed as she was, there was something in the exhilaration and elasticity of the mountain air that gave her an entirely new sensation of enjoyment and life, and seemed to brace her limbs and spirits for whatever might be before her; and, willing to show herself ready to be gratified, she observed on the freshness and sweetness of the air" (32).

Although Christina's father represents the beast-like nature of the masculine, accompanying him leads her to improve her understanding of

masculine and feminine nature both, undeveloped so long as she has been "shielded from all evil like a very nun in a cloister" (19-20). Just as her father demands subservience, insisting when they meet that she kneel and remove his boots, so the Christian community similarly relegates women into dependent roles to the extent that daughters are the "absolute chattels of their fathers" (19). In the opening scenes, Johanna herself is accused of shrewishness by her husband in a sharp debate during which she barely conceals her resentment of his inaction and his restrictions on her. Liberated from Ulm and convention, Christina enters a world which will enable her to define the feminine role anew, replacing subservience with such loyalty as she chooses to show.

When she initially encounters Eberhard, the heir to Adlerstein whom she will wed, he is imaged diminutively as boy rather than as man or "lord": "Some amount of illusion was dispelled. Christina was quite prepared to find the mountain lords dangerous ruffians, but she had expected the graces of courtesy and high birth; but, though there was certainly an air of command and freedom of bearing about the present specimen, his manners and speech were more uncouth than those of any newly-caught apprentice of her uncle" (35). It is Christina who is associated with Divinity, and she arrests Eberhard with her moral strength: "his alarm at Christina's superior power returned in full force....If only she had known it, it was the first time that head had ever been bent to any being, human or Divine" (52, 53 emphasis mine). The light that Christina holds to Eberhard is therefore not physical or physically revealing, but the light of spiritual knowledge which he

finds beautiful in her and kindled in himself. Yet he becomes attractive to her because of his physicality, leading her to grow by undergoing sexual awakening. Like Eros's, Eberhard's power is associated with sexuality, and on this basis attraction between hero and heroine is depicted as natural and urgent. Moreover, the marriage which results is depicted as ennobling of both, Eberhard's dignity and social position given new emphasis during the wedding scene in a way that highlights Christina's elevation from the rank of commoner.

Because their marriage is shrouded in secrecy, however, it introduces a phase of darkness corresponding to "the dark anonymous love" of Eros and Psyche "that consisted only of drunken lust and fertility, the transpersonal love" (Neumann 92-93). Like Eros, Eberhard enjoys the secrecy, insensitive to his bride's frustration; moreover, he fears the wrath of his mother who, like Aphrodite, would attempt to destroy the bride, resenting her son's union not only to one of low birth but also to one so unlike herself in being gentle and caring. Like Psyche, Christina is discontented with a relationship restricted to stolen moments of pleasure and feels oppressed when others assume that she has become mistress to her lover. Rather than exposing her lover to the light in a single gesture like Psyche's, however, Christina acts as a force of spiritual enlightenment and ultimately causes her husband to abandon old outlaw ways to seek a new contract of peace.

Yet here the novel begins to depart from the paradigm in that, rather than being rewarded with union for their growth, the couple is separated and Eberhard reported dead. That he serves many years as a manacled slave on a galley-ship appears to symbolize none other than

punishment for his attempt to enslave Christina in a secret marriage that denied her rights and dignity. When he returns toward the conclusion, he scarcely recognizes Adlerstein since Christina has transformed the place itself from rough masculine wilderness to feminized and civilized beauty:

Ah! Stine, my white dove, I knew thine was a wise head; but when I left thee, gentle little frightened, fluttering thing, how little could I have thought that, all alone, unaided, thou wouldst have kept that little head above water, and made thy son work out all these changes--thy doing--and so I know they are good and seemly. I see thou hast made him clerkly quick-witted, and yet a good knight. Ah! Thou didst tell me oft that our lonely pride was not high nor worthy fame. (292)

His sense of nobility and authority have both been chastened and, reduced to a pathetic figure, he admits to one guiding principle which is his knowledge of the superior spiritual refinement of women: "I thought by that time that the infidels had the advantage of us in good-will and friendliness; but, when they told me women had no souls at all, no more than a horse or dog, I knew it was but an empty dream of religion" (283). Finally he resigns all authority, submitting himself to his wife's care and correction: "I could once slay a bear, or strike a fair stroke....I am good for nothing now but to save my soul....my little Christina thinks the saints will be just as well pleased if I tell my beads here, with her to help me, and I know that way I shall not make so many mistakes" (292). Christina is neither alone nor wholly without a lover at the novel's end, however, since her adoring son is always at her side, preferring his mother to his father and even to his wife in a way that the narrator seems to condone. Emphasized many times is Christina's changeless beauty which makes her appear to be more of an

age with her son than her husband.

In effect, then, the story conveys that Christina is unable to find an earthly mate worthy of the spiritual development she has attained, unless it be in the form of her own son, whose goodness has been inherited from and modelled by her. In the end, he is guided by her feminine wisdom, allowing that it is generally best to let things fall into place so that truth can be revealed rather than to act directly: "I doubt me whether it be ever easy to see the veritably right course while still struggling in the midst....That which is right towards either side still reveals itself at the due moment, whether it be to act or to hold still" (301).

Yonge goes further than Radcliffe, then, in emphasizing the growth and strength of the heroine and the limitations of the hero. Underlying this development is a concept of the masculine as divided between God and man. Since the heroine grows in her understanding of both figures, she is ultimately superior to her human lover who remains associated with worldly power and knowledge. Yet a work like this remains positive in its treatment of male-female relationship, portraying it as not only natural but also necessary to personal growth and to the production of children, whom the heroine molds. Far from criticizing the patriarchy for placing women at a false disadvantage, a novel like this proposes that women have access to a good deal of power, which they can wield effectively even without an official matriarchy.

Another novel that can be understood in light of this pattern variant is Charlotte Bronte's Villette, despite its open-ended conclusion which discourages the reunion of Lucy and M. Paul. It is

perhaps because the desire for love is so central to the heroine that Bronte's refusal to provide conventional romantic closure has puzzled critics and readers, who have seen Lucy as personally thwarted or limited for failing to lament the loss of a man she loves.⁵ While Lucy is desperately alone throughout much of her tale and haunted by her need to love, Villette is nonetheless a novel of growth even before it is a love story--Lucy coming into relationship with the inner masculine as well as with the external figure, M. Paul. While the heroine may be consciously impelled by erotic desires throughout most of her experience, the novel emphasizes that their fulfillment rests on her attainment of private, even egoistic, aspirations.

Leaving open to question whether M. Paul returns or suffers death by shipwreck, Lucy emphasizes in her narrative that, absent or present, he has become a real presence in her life: "I have cultivated out of love for him (I was naturally no florist) the plants he preferred, and some of them are not yet in bloom. I thought I loved him when he went away; I love him now in another degree; he is more my own" (592). What she expresses here is neither possessiveness nor an unhealthy preference for a world of illusion, but an improved sense of self-worth and an increased sense of selfhood, characteristics which enable her to love herself and others better. While her relationship with M. Paul is what first encourages her to recognize herself as an individual whose traits and talents are worthy of expression, over the period of his absence she pursues their development bringing about an inner marriage of her masculine and feminine selves, and hence coming to need Paul less while loving him more. Empowered by love to attain difficult goals, she is

transformed from being one who feels lost, worthless and suspicious of others to being one who feels joy, fulfillment and connection to others. Although Lucy is without tangible lover at the conclusion of Villette, she has nonetheless awakened to love and enriched her understanding of it; perhaps more significant, as this novel emphasizes by the pattern variant it explores, is the personal growth Lucy undergoes, residing in the inner balance she attains between feminine and masculine principles.

* * *

Still comprising pattern in women's fiction are two variants that avoid the closure of romantic union by foregrounding early developments of the Psyche tale. First and simplest is the variant depicting failed relationship resulting from the limitations of the hero, portrayed as a failed Eros-figure to the extent that he refuses to grow in response to the heroine's growth; the heroine, like Psyche, loves, suffers and learns, while the hero, unlike Eros, is not sufficiently moved by her caring to undergo transformation. Often imaged as the beast--and thus as the being that Psyche fears--the hero displays such traits as promiscuity, willfullness and arrogance--and thus resembles the youthful Eros. Rather than focusing on the hero's limitations, however, these novels highlight the heroine's self-sufficiency. If anger is expressed, it is not directed toward the patriarchal structure, which places no impediment in the way of female development, but on a more personal level toward the flawed hero. This pattern variant is common among American fictions, a number of which explore the barrier to union resulting from masculine failure to respond to feminine caring and competence.

Exemplifying this variant is the eighty-page story "Drifting Down Lost Creek" in Mary Ann Murfree's In the Tennessee Mountains (1884).⁶ The heroine, Cynthia Ware, is a model of self-sufficiency while at the same time demonstrating unflagging loyalty to Evander Price, a figure not only willful but promiscuous and arrogant to the extent that he seeks out another to advance his social standing. When the story opens, Cynthia loyally defends Evander against her mother's criticism of his quarrelsome nature, as well as of his fascination with creating mechanical inventions that strike the mountain woman as unnecessary and bothersome. She objects further to his defensively sheltering his "idjit" brother, who she claims should be locked up for the safety of the community. While in the paradigm, Aphrodite is critical of Psyche, in this story Mrs. Ware accurately assesses Evander's shortcomings. Through the experience of loving, however, Cynthia develops to a stage higher than her mother's much as Psyche develops beyond Aphrodite, never growing shrewish in her anger.

While on the surface, Evander's care for his brother might seem commendable, the story argues otherwise, since in stubbornly assuming responsibility for his brother's attempted murder of Jubal Tynes, and accepting a prison term and separation from Cynthia, he becomes himself associated with the idiot's role. His own violent nature, after all, leads him to strike the first blow at Jubal, and his brother only goes further by using a sledge hammer instead of his fist. Brotherhood and violence both, then, are associated with idiocy. Like his family whose "animals were the more emotional, alert, and intelligent element," he is associated with animality as well as idiocy in a final image: "The idiot

Lijah was welcomed at his side, and the ancient yellow cur, that used to trot nimbly after him in the old days, rejoiced to limp feebly at his heels" (77).

With no proof of Evander's innocence other than her heart's assurance, Cynthia begs him to clear himself of allegations she "knows" to be false. Before their separation, they meet in the light of his blacksmith's forge, whose ominous glow and shadows symbolize that Evander remains hidden from the light of truth that Cynthia wants shed, her cheeks "aflame" with her desire for justice. In a variant of the paradigm, Cynthia here burns herself with light, since Evander, more adamant than Eros, refuses to be seen. Once he is gone, she is like Psyche, however, in being at first overcome by despair, while hoping at the same time for her lover's return. While Psyche is awakened from despair and lethargy by Pan, Cynthia is awakened by the coming of Spring, in which she believes hears the voice of the Lord encouraging her to seek Evander's release and return. Again like Psyche, the labors she undertakes are particularly difficult since she has to work "agin his own word" to reclaim her lover (40).

Unaided, she performs tasks that require bravery, dedication and endurance, developing inner masculine strengths while learning to confront successfully figures of the external masculine. From the vicious Jubal Tynes, she exacts the statement that Evander is innocent of the assault; from a wily and lazy lawyer, she exacts the promise that a petition in Evander's favor will be circulated; from Evander's jurors, she gains signatures for this petition. Her long, hard walk from the mountains to the valley is described in terms very like those describing

Psyche's descent to the underworld: "The descent to a lower level was a painful experience to the little mountaineer. She was 'sifflicated' by the denser atmosphere of the 'valley country,' and exhausted by the heat; but when she could think only of her mission she was hopeful, elated, and joyously kept on her thorny way" (159). Yet when her labors conclude, Evander neither sends word of his release nor returns, and she must recognize that her love exceeds his: "He had forgotten her. His genius, once fairly evoked, possessed him, and faithfully his ambitions served it. His love, in comparison, was but a little thing, and he left it in the mountains,--the mountains that he did not regret" (71 emphasis mine). Throughout, Cynthia's nature is depicted as nobler than his, since his personal ambitions are all worldly and belong to the valley and the iron forge, an orientation described as hellish: "He [Evander] 'lowed ez he hed ruther see that thar big shed an' the red hot puddler's balls a-trundlin' about, an' all the wheels a-whurlin', an' the big shears abitin' the metal ez nip, an' the tremenjious hammer a-poundin' away, an' all the dark night around split with lines o' fire, than to see the hills o' heaven! It 'pears to me mo' like hell!" (68). If initially he is gifted with the potential to be a winged Eros-figure, he loses his distinction by failing to respond to Cynthia: "He could still lift his eyes to great heights, but alas for the wings,--alas!" (77).

Without fit object in her lover, then, Cynthia performs Psyche's labors without being similarly rewarded. Bending the original tale, however, is that Cynthia may from the start have a "subterranean" awareness that it is her destiny to remain free, since she claims that "ter live single" is her ambition both at the opening and conclusion of

the story (8, 78). If this is so, despite all her efforts to free Evander and to make possible his return, she may know that he is incapable of commitment to her. She acts, then, not out of self-gratification, intending to secure happiness on a physical plane, but out of "self-immolation," intending to fit herself for union with the Lord, the Divine spirit who coaches her actions (72). As a possibility, union with a human lover has dropped from the story, since he is only a base copy of the Divine masculine figure adored.

For an example of a heroine who is not so much perfect, as perfect in her spinsterhood and of a masculine lover who is imaged as a beast incapable of transformation, one might turn to the title work of Mary Wilkins Freeman's short story collection The New England Nun (1891). Returning to marry Louisa after a fourteen-year absence, Joe is like a "bear" in her "china shop" home; after his visit, she inspects her floor, not surprised to discover that "[h]e's tracked in a good deal of dust" (5). Imagining her married life, she has visions "of dust and disorder arising unnecessarily from a coarse masculine presence in the midst of all this delicate harmony" (10). Louisa further fears that once she marries, Joe will insist on freeing her dog Caesar, who has been chained in her back yard ever since he "sinned" fourteen years ago by biting a neighbor (10). As it is imaged here, masculine energy is disruptive and even dangerous, too far opposed to feminine refinement to live symbiotically with it.

Left alone so long, Louisa has matured in a way Joe has not, achieving self-sufficiency and independence that she is reluctant to surrender. Not only associated with the beast, Joe is also associated

with boyishness: "He was not very young, but there was a boyish look about his large face" (4). If Louisa marries Joe, she will have to leave her home for his, gaining by this exchange the care of his mother who shares certain of Aphrodite's "terrible" aspects in being "domineering" and "shrewd" (9). Divided between the roles of son and lover, Joe appears to place his mother first: "for Joe could not leave his mother" (8). Associated with animality, with boyishness and, for his flirtation with Lily, with promiscuity, Joe retains the features overcome by Eros in preparation for relationship.

As in Murfree's work, the separation of the lovers is initiated by the masculine figure, who errs in failing to value the woman he loves above all else. Although Joe left Louisa in order to acquire the means to make their marriage materially comfortable, his long absence testifies against his dedication to her; in fact, the narrator comments disparagingly on his dedication to the pursuit of wealth: "He stayed until it [his fortune] was made. He would have stayed fifty years if it had taken so long, and come home feeble and tottering, or never come home at all, to marry Louisa" (6). When Joe returns, ready after fourteen years to turn "from fortune-hunting to romance," he is simply too late, and Louisa is surprised to discover herself unwilling to change from maiden to matron, despite having "looked forward to his return and their marriage as the inevitable conclusion of things" (7).

While the narrator does not glorify Louisa, depicting her as excessively feminine in her refinement, she implies that the heroine does not so much suffer from this condition as grow gracefully into it, given that the failings of her lover make impossible the alternative of

marriage. So divorced from physicality, Louisa treats herself like "a guest in her own home," (2) a phrase which, while referring to the delicate customs she observes day by day, symbolizes the extent to which she lives as spirit temporarily lodged in flesh. She loves the ideal form of her lover with whom she has lived in her imagination, but fears her human lover who, by returning, threatens to violate the fulfillment she has found in living alone with her vision.

By contrast to Louisa who develops extreme femininity in the absence of her lover, union between lovers fails in Sarah Orne Jewett's A Country Doctor (1884) primarily because Anna Prince, as her name implies, has developed a masculine outlook that intimidates potential lovers while at the same time discouraging her own desire to seek a lover. Raised by Dr. Leslie, she has adopted his view that work is more compelling than personal relationship. Having so often heard the story of her mother's unfortunate encounter with love, Anna seems in this way to have undergone the feminine stage of impassioned infatuation vicariously; in the main, the stage of the paradigm she enacts in the novel is the Psyche-like struggle to develop selfhood. Her strongest awakening is not to physical love, but to love of God and service to Him, of which she conceives in terms of serving humanity through healing the sick:

Her whole heart went out to this work, and she wondered why she had ever lost sight of it. She was sure that this was the way in which she could find most happiness. God had directed her at last, and though the opening of her sealed orders had been long delayed, the suspense had only made her surer that she must hold fast this unspeakably great motive: something to work for with all her might as long as she lived....her former existence seemed like a fog and uncertainty of death, from which she had turned

away, this time of her own accord, toward a great light of satisfaction and certain safety and helpfulness. (166-67)

She is not so much hostile toward masculinity as wary of sexuality, impassioned by principle from the outset rather than by an individual figure.

Yet in the midst of pursuing her career, "Love" comes to Anna in the form of George Gerry. Validating her fear that she will be reduced by romantic love, however, is that he places himself in opposition to her professional plans. The struggle between romance and ambition is relatively mild here, on the one hand because Anna's ambitious drive is inspired by love of God, in this way promising to satisfy the dual components of feminine need. On the other hand, George's proposal fails because, as he himself recognizes, he is weak where she is strong:

Alas! If he had been more earnest in his growth, it would have been a power which this girl of high ideals could have been held and mastered by. No wonder that she would not give up her dreams of duty and service, since she had found him less strong than such ideals....his whole soul was filled with homage in the midst of its sorrow, because this girl, who had been his merry companion in the summer holidays, so sweet and familiar and unforgettable in the midst of the simple festivals, stood nearer to holier things than himself, and had listened to the call of God's messengers to whom his own doors had been ignorantly shut. (327-28)

He is further accurate in recognizing that he has failed to win Anna by his reluctance to speak of his love--by his having felt too much in awe of her to attempt lover-like intimacy. There is a period when she appears vulnerable to his advances, and the narrator suggests that she might have been moved to respond warmly to him. But George's backwardness is merely another expression of his weakness, and the

extent to which he is generally portrayed as unworthy to shape Anna's destiny, which she believes controlled by God: "'O God,' she said, 'I thank thee for my future'" (351).

While Anna is perhaps less open to romantic union than the other heroines examined in this pattern variant, she is best understood in their company first because it is the hero's vulnerability that emphatically precludes relationship and second because, like the other heroines, she finds an alternate route to balancing selfhood and love. Even an extremely feminine figure like Louisa attains a measure of inner balance, since her lover's absence provides her with opportunities to develop strength of mind and purpose in place of passion and passivity. Moreover, as their experience documents, none of the heroines in this pattern variant turn with finality from the possibility of romantic union until discovering their lovers incapable of returning their depth of feeling. Like Psyche as well as the heroines discussed earlier, these heroines, while developing selfhood and self-sufficiency, continue to express a desire to love, although they turn its force upon a disembodied and idealized form of the masculine. While heroines like Cynthia and Anna are devout in loving God, at the same time they conceive an equally strong love of nature, a feminine principle of growth and change in which they see the hand of God. Much like Psyche, then, who learns to love rather than worship Eros through a process in which understanding replaces otherness, these heroines, instead of being subservient to a powerful and alien Patriarch, understand and love God through the medium of nature. Rather than being embittered in their independence, they thus fulfill the feminine need to love.

* * *

In the final variant, relationship fails because of the heroine's own failure to undergo Psyche-like growth toward balancing her dual needs. While the heroine expresses the desire to grow through relationship, she is unable to overcome fear and misunderstanding, which ultimately leads to her despair and early death. The anger she expresses against possessive others and oppressive life is presented less as an appropriate response to reality than as a register of her inner resistance to growth and change. Experiencing frustrated self-development as well as alienation from others, this heroine can be, like the masculine or animus-driven Lyndall in The Story of the African Farm (1896), bound by principles that contradict inner needs or, like the feminine Edna Pontellier in The Awakening (1899), enslaved by passions that curtail growth.

Although generally an active critic of patriarchal oppression, Olive Schreiner creates in Lyndall a figure destroyed by her determination to gain power and by her inability to surmount anger. Unlike Psyche on these counts, she bears stronger resemblance to Aphrodite, both being vain and manipulative in their dealings with men, and even to the angry sisters, each feeling bitterly resentful toward men. To designate her a "failed Psyche," however, is to take into consideration that when she enacts these other roles she remains unfulfilled, aware that she is neither an individual nor free to love.

Raised amid corruption and competition, Lyndall learns hate before love and to seek power rather than happiness; as a child, she idolizes Napoleon for his acquisition of power: "he had what he said he would

have, and that is better than being happy. He was their master, and all the people were white with fear of him" (17). As she grows older and better able to judge the evil that accompanies power, her desire to get what she wants merges with the more selfless goal of helping others, even though her motives continue distorted by hate: "When that day comes, and I am strong, I will hate everything that has power, and help everything that is weak" (75). Women are the group whose cause she champions, arguing convincingly from reason against the social system that oppresses them, closing all doors to legitimate power until they are forced to use wiles and wit to manipulate men to do their will. Yet she expresses Psyche-like insight when she points out that woman's desire for equality springs from her desire to be able to love:

A great soul draws and is drawn with a more fierce intensity than any small one. By every inch we grow in intellectual height our love strikes down its roots, and spreads out its arms wider. It is for love's sake yet more than for any other that we look for that new time....Then when that time comes....when love is no more bought or sold, when it is not a means of making bread, when each woman's life is filled with earnest, independent labour, then love will come to her, a strange sudden sweetness breaking in upon her earnest work; not sought for, but found. (207)

As she reveals, she is less frustrated by cultural repression than by an impulse to love that, springing up from within and demanding fulfillment, thwarts her desire to act: "I will do nothing good for myself, nothing for the world, til someone wakes me. I am asleep, swathed, shut up in self; til I have been delivered I will deliver no one" (208). Like Psyche under the influence of her sisters, Lyndall has adopted masculine values that equate love with power, and she feels unable to love until she is assured of a partner strong enough to

deserve her. Her development is threatened, then, because even though her feminine nature compells her to seek union, she takes a masculine view of love that makes her competitive and fiercely independent: her feminine nature urges her to love, yet her masculine nature legislates against this urge.

Her determination to become an actress symbolizes that her development as an individual is threatened, since, by her own premonition, if she is not awakened to love, she will be relegated to playing out scenes of life rather than living it fully. She expresses Psyche-like willingness to undergo labor and learning, but her motives make clear that she acts only out of self-love, without the component of relatedness:

Before her are endless difficulties: seas must be crossed, poverty must be endured, loneliness, want. She must be content to wait long before she can even get her feet upon the path. If she has made blunders in the past, if she has weighted herself with a burden which she must bear to the end, she must but bear the burden bravely, and labour on. There is no use in wailing and repentance: the next world is the place of that; this life is too short. By our errors we see deeper into life....if she waits patiently, if she is never cast down, never despairs, never forgets her end, bending men and things most unlikely to her purpose,--she must succeed at last. Men and things are plastic; they part to the right and left when one comes among them moving in a straight line to one end. (236 emphasis mine)

Her orientation toward her goal differs from Psyche's in two central ways: with resolve, like the masculine-minded sisters, she is determined to approach her goal directly and, without love, like the narcissistic Aphrodite, she intends only to manipulate others to help her on her selfish way. That her scheme fails to engage her on the deepest level,

however, is implied when she refers to herself in the third-person, unable to speak from an integrated and internal first-person perspective.

Like Psyche, Lyndall recognizes her need to love, but unlike Psyche she refuses to go beyond self-love, having become addicted to exercising her own will and competing for power. While she knows that her inability to love has warped her vision of herself and others, she is unable to find anyone or anything beyond herself to reverence:

"why am I alone, so hard, so cold? I am so weary of myself! It is eating my soul to its core,--self, self, self! I cannot bear this life! I cannot breathe, I cannot live! Will nothing free me from myself?" she pressed her cheek against the wooden post. "I want to love! I want something great and pure to lift me to itself....one day I will love something utterly, and then I will be better," she said once. Presently she looked up. The large dark eyes from the glass looked back at her. She looked deep into them. "We are all alone, you and I," she whispered; "no one helps us, no one understands us; but we will help ourselves." (268-69)

Because her alienation makes her bitter and self-protective, at times she attempts to blame others for her plight. She attempts to blame her parents: "when I was a baby, I fancy my parents left me out in the frost one night, and I got nipped internally--it feels so!" (197). She attempts to blame her lover for being too weak and too much a "typical man" in attempting to prove his power through sexual struggle: "Your man's love is a child's love for butterflies. You follow till you have the thing, and break it. If you have broken one wing, and the thing flies still, then you love it more than ever, and follow till you break both: then you are satisfied when it lies still on the ground" (263). As a corollary, she blames her lover's failure to awaken and satisfy her

for her inability to love their child: "'It crept close to me; it wanted to drink, it wanted to be warm.' She hardened herself--'I did not love it; its father was not my prince'" (316).

Nearing death, imaged as a bloated figure who nonetheless resembles a "child" or "doll," Lyndall begins to recognize, as other characters have throughout, that love must be given naturally rather than stored up for a "prince" whose superiority marks him as deserving of reverence. Attempting to express enlightenment in this speech, she not only continues to refer to herself as an objectified third person--the neuter "it" replacing the feminine "she"--but also loses her train of thought, trailing off repetitively rather than deepening her insight: "'I see the vision of a poor weak soul striving after good. It was not cut short; and, in the end, it learnt, through tears and much pain, that holiness is an infinite compassion for others; that greatness is to take the common things of life and walk truly among them; that '---she moved her white hand and laid it on her forehead--' happiness is a great love and much serving. It was not cut short; and it loved what it had learnt--it loved--and--'" (319). Despite this brief vision of empathic caring, her last act signifies her failure to grow beyond destructive self love, since she dies holding a mirror to her face, contemplating her own features; moreover, the final narrative question suggests that she continues to think of love in terms of mastery, rather than exchange: "The dying eyes on the pillow looked into the dying eyes in the glass; they knew that their hour had come....Then slowly, without a sound, the beautiful eyes closed. The dead face that the glass reflected was a thing of marvellous beauty and tranquility....Had she

found what she sought for--something to worship?" (324).

That Kate Chopin creates in Edna a heroine whose "loss of resolve" and "refusal to learn from experience" bars her path to selfhood is documented by Rosemary F. Franklin in "The Awakening and the Failure of Psyche" (517, 16). As Franklin points out, Edna never achieves individuation because she never moves beyond the fantasies of fulfillment that grow from her romantic infatuation with Robert, a "reflection of her emerging self" (520). While she wants to become an individuated self, she fears the loss of illusion that would accompany growth to consciousness. In particular, she fears the separation and aloneness that would follow from her seeing Robert in the light of reality, differentiated from herself. Suggesting that Edna must choose "either to accept the fantastic nature of romantic love and continue on her solitary journey to self, or to refuse to acknowledge romantic love's transient nature and embrace death" (524), Franklin goes on to argue that while Edna, finally "aroused to consciousness," acknowledges romantic love's transience, she nonetheless loses her resolve to journey toward selfhood: "alone, Edna is prey, as Psyche repeatedly was, to suicidal thoughts, the voices which distort the victim's choices and exaggerate her plight" (526).

While Franklin is generally accurate in interpreting Edna as a failed Psyche figure, she appears to go too far in arguing that Edna is ultimately conscious of love; never aware of Robert as an individual and consequently never experiencing love for him as other, she becomes conscious only of her undeveloped feelings which remain those of identification. Unlike Psyche who sees Eros and knows desire, Edna is

possessive of Robert throughout their relationship, refusing to grant integrity to any of his actions that are not in keeping with those she desires of him. Although he claims to act out of love in finally leaving her--"I love you. Good-by--because I love you"--she interprets his action as a betrayal which marks the end of love: "The lamp sputtered and went out" (185). Still wanting to live through her lover, imagining "no greater bliss on earth than possession of the beloved one" (185), she is plunged into darkness when he leaves, unable to love someone who remains independent of her: "Despondency had come upon her there in the wakeful night, and had never lifted. There was no one thing in the world she desired. There was no human being she wanted near her except Robert; and she even realized that the day would come when he, too, and the thought of him would melt out of her existence, leaving her alone" (188-89).

Edna remains a failed Psyche because, despite her effort to assert individuality, she is unable to rise above Aphrodite-like narcissism and possessiveness, above what Neumann calls "the collective principle of sensual drunkenness represented by Aphrodite" (91). When Robert returns, for example, her awareness of him is largely sensual, and she refers to love in terms of jealousy, power and possession. After they meet, she is overcome by jealousy and insecurity, maddened by the thought that she fails to possess him completely: "She stayed alone in a kind of reverie--a sort of stupor....She writhed with a jealous pang. She wondered when he would come back. He had not said he would come back" (170). Without inner assurance, she attempts to argue herself into believing in his love: "She lay in bed awake, with bright eyes full

of speculation. 'He loves you, poor fool.' If she could but get that conviction firmly fixed in her mind, what mattered about the rest?" (171).

During their last encounter, she acts manipulatively and possessively in calling him "the embodiment of selfishness" to force him to confess his love (175). While responding like a wounded Eros, Robert objects less to her attempts to expose his feelings than to the dilettante cruelty of her motives: "you would have me bare a wound for the pleasure of looking at it, without the intention or power of healing it." When she changes the subject, making no attempt to clarify her motive and put an end to their mutual distrust, she verifies his accusation, in effect treating their exchange as no more than provocative banter: "I'm spoiling your dinner, Robert; never mind what I say. You haven't eaten a morsel" (176). Her response further discloses the extent to which she, with "her hungry heart," associates her relationship with Robert with the fulfillment of sensual pleasure, encouraging him to allow her to satisfy his physical hunger (170). At the same time, it shows that she expects to gain by her munificence a position of power, since she assumes the role of doting mother, caring for her "very, very foolish boy" (178).

Edna's attempts to wrest fulfillment from Aphrodite-like pleasures cannot succeed, however, because of her Psyche-like aspirations. While she has grown conscious of her sexual needs, at the same time she has grown aware of a deeper, underlying need, whose nature she is unable to identify. After she makes love with Alc  e Arobin, her sexual desire is satisfied, but she recognizes that more urgent inner feelings remain

unexpressed: "There was Robert's reproach making itself felt by a quicker, fiercer, more over-powering love, which had awakened within her toward him....there was a dull pang of regret because it was not the kiss of love which had inflamed her, because it was not love which had held this cup of life to her lips" (170). Caught between the positions of Aphrodite and Psyche, she cannot be satisfied by "the dark anonymous love that consisted only of drunken lust and fertility, the transpersonal love" (Neumann 92-93). She ultimately dismisses as chimerical her dream of finding fulfillment with Robert because her relationship with him never develops beyond the anonymity of Aphrodite-like "desire and sexual intoxication" (Neumann 90); indeed, looking forward to meeting Robert, "she grew numb with the intoxication of expectancy" (185). For this reason, she is right to recognize that her relationship with him differs in intensity but not in kind from the sexual relationships that have failed to fulfill her: "Today it is Arobin; tomorrow it will be someone else. It makes no difference to me" (188).

The images associated with Edna's suicide symbolize her plight as one caught in a stage of development between Aphrodite and Psyche. Unlike Aphrodite, she is not at home in the sea that "preserves all the anonymity that is characteristic of the collective unconscious," because her human nature demands that she assert "the principal of individuality" (Neumann 90). Unlike Psyche, however, she has failed to explore and understand her inner nature and develop independent strength, thus remaining to the end one who, without self-possession, attempts to possess others while fearing their possession of her: "She

thought of Léonce and the children. They were a part of her life. But they need not have thought that they could possess her, body and soul" (190).

The image of Edna as like the broken-winged bird conveys the failure of her aspirations to find an end beyond that which Neumann defines as Aphrodisian: "The end seems to be desire and sexual intoxication; actually it is fertility. Aphrodite is the Great Mother, the original source of all five elements" (87). Because her children represent her role in the round of "desire," "sexual intoxication" and "fertility," Edna resents them as she propels herself to suicide. While Franklin suggests that this anger be read merely as one more sign of Edna's failed self-knowledge--"Edna's idea in these last moments that her children are 'antagonists' whom she must 'elude' is patently irrational, for her progeny have given her little obvious trouble and seem her happiest links to life" (526)--her resentment, more deeply rooted, lies in her feeling at once entrapped by the needs of her body and compelled to go beyond these needs. Her conversation with Doctor Mandelet forces her to recognize that she has found nothing to propose against his view that love is illusory: "'The trouble is,' sighed the Doctor, grasping her meaning intuitively, 'that youth is given up to illusions. It seems to be a provision of Nature, a decoy to secure mothers for the race'" (184). After agreeing with Mandelet, Edna no longer assumes that her sexual encounter with Robert will provide anything more than temporary pleasure, followed by the resumption of maternal care, which burden she associates with sexuality as the pattern of her thoughts indicates:

She let herself in at the gate, but instead of entering she sat upon the step of the porch. The night was quiet and soothing....When she thought that he [Robert] was there at hand, waiting for her, she grew numb with the intoxication of expectancy. It was so late; he would be asleep perhaps. She would awaken him with a kiss. She hoped he would be asleep that she might arouse him with her caresses.

Still, she remembered Adele's voice whispering, 'Think of the children; think of them.' She meant to think of them; that determination had driven into her soul like a death wound--but not tonight. Tomorrow would be time to think of everything. (185)

Once conscious of the link between sexuality and fertility, the capacity to experience spontaneous sexual pleasure leaves her: when she anticipates physical excitement with Robert, she now arouses herself before their encounter, stimulating her desire by remembering the excitement she earlier felt and by imagining their intimacy in ideal terms. Unfulfilled by the sexual pleasures of Aphrodite, then, neither has Edna grown toward the individuality of Psyche. Feeling betrayed by an infatuation which has failed to make her complete, she never awakens to love for any person or principle outside herself which would infuse her with desire to continue growing.

* * *

As this last pattern variant indicates, it is not atypical for women writers to explore the heroine in early stages of Psyche-like development, examining her resemblance to Aphrodite as she awakens to sensual pleasure or to the sisters as she reacts to what she grows to resent as sexual enslavement. In the twentieth century, a number of novels have foregrounded an exploration of this latter situation, depicting heroines responding on some level to the call to militancy. Although this attitude continues to be associated with "sisterhood," and

hence with collectivity rather than individualism, many feminist critics have nonetheless argued that because the modern heroine more frequently expresses anger in opposing the patriarchy, grappling with personal freedom as her literary forebears did not, she represents a "new" or "free" woman. A standard assumption is that the modern heroine, liberated from the entanglements of love, represents a marked advance over the domestically confined heroines of earlier fiction.

Significantly--but ironically--the figure of Psyche is frequently seen as paradigmatic of the modern heroine. Lee R. Edwards, for example, argues not only that contemporary female fictional characters participate in activities of greater number and kind, but also that such participation signals their Psyche-like liberation from enforced domesticity and from traditional plots that pose marriage as the "happy ending": "Having given heroes new things to do, as well as provided new shapes for the plots in which they figure, such novels suggest that the forces represented by these characters are the nodal points of an entirely new social order, an alternative to the repetitions and rigidities of patriarchy. Women enter the public worlds their fictions portray. They take on jobs previously reserved for men and command respect--and money--for their labors" (145-46). Mary Anne Ferguson sees a similar connection between Psyche and the contemporary protagonist, whom she distinguishes from the diminutive heroine created by men and women alike in earlier fictions: "The view of women as passive has been integral to the male novel of development. Most women authors have shared this view of women and have represented female characters either as finding satisfaction within their limited development in the domestic

sphere or as expressing their dissatisfaction through various self-destructive means" (229). She suggests that with the recent admission of woman into "man's world," women authors turning to the Psyche story "have found a rich paradigm for representing the adventures of a sexually mature female who profits from her often painful encounters with reality to become a self-confident adult in control of her own destiny" (229).

By valuing "doing" over "being," critical assessments like these appropriate standards of masculine heroism that have long been applied to the male novel. As the designation "female hero" underscores, heroic actions, for female as for male, are those based on reason and aimed at definite ends. From this perspective, what is considered as being unique to female heroism is the conscious resistance to conventional feminine roles, as Edwards's argument suggests: "By the beginning of the twentieth century, novelists seem readier to abandon the project of entrapping the female heroic character and begin the task of inventing maneuvers whereby she can break out of familial, sexual, and social bondage into an altered and appropriate world" (16).

In making their case, unfortunately, these critics tend to limit their focus to Psyche's act of separation and her subsequent lonely labors. What is not kept in view is that underlying her rebellious act is her unconscious determination to make genuine relationship possible between the masculine and the feminine: she desires physical union with her lover Eros and an inner psychic union of masculine with feminine nature. Moreover, her journey toward selfhood and the re-establishment of relationship requires that she consult not only masculine reason and

will, but also that she remain receptive to feminine inner knowledge, a less direct but no less potent force.

Critics aside, the twentieth-century female novel, while depicting heroines who like the early Psyche expect fulfillment from pursuing independence and freedom, nonetheless emphasizes elements of the paradigm that affirm the heroine's desire to promote relationship. Moreover in many works, as in the paradigm, liberationist philosophy itself is perceived as an oppressive force to be overcome. It is before Psyche develops selfhood that she is vulnerable to the manipulation of her sisters who argue from their own anger and frustration that she should kill her husband whom they pretend to know as "cruel monster" and "strange beast" (23, 24). In advising Psyche to cut herself free from the coils of her lover, they claim to speak from duty and loyalty: "we cannot sleep for the care with which we watch over your happiness and are torn by your misfortune....we are partners of your grief" (22). Reflected in women's fiction is Neumann's argument that, apart from being characters in their own right, the sisters also represent the rebellious attitude of the heroine before she outgrows her fear of the masculine on the way to maturing and achieving fulfillment.

Liberation from family and dedication to career, then, far from being a formula for fulfillment, is typically productive of the heroine's frustration and never serves as an end in itself. Even when a heroine remains unmarried from start to end, she undergoes an inner marriage of the masculine and feminine within the psyche, an integration requiring her to re-evaluate the masculine as a force external to herself and, in so doing, to improve her relationship to external

masculine figures. From this perspective, relationship continues central to the fulfillment of the modern heroine, even when not depicted in an outer drama of courtship and marriage.

To the extent that the contemporary novel has developed beyond earlier works, it has done so by examining the components of relationship and selfhood in more complex forms. While in earlier fictions the heroine typically struggles against a backdrop of domestic snares, given that the home front is usually where she asserts her individuality often through demonstrating her commitment to relationship, the modern heroine who finds romantic love often balances this with pursuit of a profession, the latter being essential to relationship in signifying the development and maintenance of her selfhood. Moreover, the heroine who does not find romantic love can still fulfill the relational component of female development on an inner level, albeit that the catalyst of this process is the formation of relationship with a masculine figure in the outer drama. It is the corollary of this development that has proven significant in broadening the range of the modern female novel, however, given that heroines, no longer pursuing relationship through courtship circumstances alone, can as often be married or aged as young and single. Despite such expansion, linking the heroine both early and late to the ancient Psyche is that the interdependence between relationship and selfhood is typically revealed to each, prompting her to revise her view of the two components as distinct and often to correct her belief that she pursues one in exclusion of the other.

* * *

Foregrounding the heroine's fulfillment through romantic union and

by so doing conforming to the broadest outlines of the paradigm is Margaret Drabble's The Realms of Gold (1975), although the heroine bears little surface resemblance to Psyche in being both a middle-aged mother and distinguished archeologist. Yet while Frances is full of purpose in pursuing her career and raising her family, she acts with Psyche-like uncertainty in relation to her married lover Karel, their ultimately uniting "as a happily married couple" attesting to the efficacy of her indirection (323). During the period of separation they undergo, she experiences Psyche-like despair, despite her underlying reassurance that "he would...come to her" (67). While being directly responsible for their parting, she indirectly initiates the transformative process which leads him to declare his love for her above all others and her to abandon destructive "Pride" and "Fear" (10). During their separation, Karel grows more steadfast by realizing that his need for Frances is stronger than his need to give of himself to secure the happiness of others; like Eros he learns to love one rather than serve many. During this time, too, Frances recognizes that she cannot manipulate Karel by willful possessiveness: "She had lost him because she had believed that if she relented, he would come back. She did not like herself much for this. But even more, she disliked the way that Karel now, finally had accepted her departure" (68).

In a context more modern than Psyche's within the novel it is Karel's wife rather than mother who creates an obstacle to the union between lovers. While Frances is never fully conscious of the motives underlying her separation from Karel--"Had he driven her away, or had she departed?" (10)--she often returns to the point that he continued

living with his wife, like the philandering Eros in professing no intention of committing himself to the heroine in marriage. Although the option of divorce is treated as a common-place in this novel, the hero's prior marriage creates an obstacle to union between lovers much as it does in Jane Eyre: as Bertha is to Jane, Joy is to Frances a cautionary figure of the madwoman she could become were she to submit to relationship with a man whose hidden nature she fears; much as Jane must overcome Bertha-like rage before union is possible, Frances must transcend the angry will to power she shares with Joy, a transcendence symbolized in the novel when Joy's pursuit of lesbian relationship is contrasted to the union of Frances and Karel. Recognizing in Karel's violent relationship with Joy the beast-like elements of masculine force, Frances flies from him, initiating the transformative process that will enable each to place love before power.

When they finally reunite, elements of the Psyche story continue, albeit with a comic twist. While Karel seeks out Frances and revives her life spirit, much as Eros revives Psyche, he is denied heroic dimensions: his excursion to Egypt to renew their love is made in vain, since he must return home to find Frances, being reunited with her in a bar. While they speak lightly of his "gesture" (303), it is significant nonetheless in that Karel had earlier refused to undertake the same trip because of prior commitments. Immediately understanding his absence and return, Frances demonstrates a final instance of Psyche-like perception in accepting his explanation as something "I must have known" (300).

While romantic love continues central in A Nest of Singing Birds (1984), Canadian writer Susan Charlotte Haley explores in Anna Callaghan

a heroine who, while she places union first, is willing to postpone it in order to pursue as its precondition independence and individuality. While on one level she performs Psyche's light-bringing act in asserting herself at the expense of relationship, paradigmatic elements have been conflated since she acts not from anger but from love: from the motive inspiring the laboring Psyche. It is as if Anna is a more knowing Psyche, since she willingly undertakes the pattern of experience that Psyche encounters indirectly.

Yet her increased awareness may arise from her having already undergone Psyche-like transformation in an earlier scene, during which she abandoned consciousness and love only to be reawakened by her lover. Without intending to regain Ian, indeed certain he is gone, Anna walks in nature, abandoning herself to the sensual pleasure of relaxing in the masculine sun. Much as Psyche abandons consciousness for beauty, Anna's "whole consciousness was focussed on the surface of her skin," in a scene evoking a number of the elements of nature that are helpful to Psyche at various points throughout her tale:

The day was warm and summery, and the westering sun fell favourably over this place, casting long shadows back from the dead reeds at the water's edge. Careless of the damp, Anna took off her hat and lay down on the sun-warmed ground. She closed her eyes. She lay still there on her back, feeling the sun on her eyelids and listening to the bird calls, her arms at her sides. After a time it seemed as though she were drifting in a warm medium between earth and air.
(185)

Ian's son awakens Anna, and they are immediately joined by Ian himself who is so moved by seeing the two together that, as he says later, he determines to leave Judith, his manipulative and possessive wife, for Anna. Like Psyche, Anna becomes irresistably beautiful to her lover and

compells him to act when she herself can do no more to secure union.

When after their reunion Anna chooses to separate from Ian, her logic and commitment both are called into question. Her decision is challenged, for example, by her lover. It is challenged even more strongly by Helen, an older woman who has ultimately become Anna's loyal advisor and who thus represents the helpful side of Aphrodite in offering resistance that leads to the heroine's growth and romantic union both:

"Like Judith, you are ambitious."

"Like Judith and not like Judith. I want to pursue my profession if I can, yes; but if I can't, I won't use Ian as a vehicle for economic and social security. Especially not now when he wants to be married so much...."

"It is right. I see that. If you could go on as before it would be different."

"If I had got a job here for next year we could have. But as it is, I'd just end up living on him. I'd make him horribly unhappy in the end....If only we had time," Anna wailed. (220-21)

When Anna is ultimately rewarded with "time" with her lover, the thing she wants most but refuses to take or maneuver for, the novel's conclusion seems neither forced nor implausible. That a disgruntled professor resigns without notice--creating a position for her and thus enabling her to stay with Ian--exemplifies once again the indirection by which experience typically unfolds in the female novel: the "impossible" goal is most likely achieved by the heroine who, abandoning willful aggression and conscious plotting for her own ends, performs steps that are necessary to the dictates of inner knowledge.

* * *

Far from being the rule in the twentieth-century female novel, the resolution of romantic union frequently gives way to one more open-ended, depicting a heroine who has separated from lover or husband and faces the future alone. Sharing Psyche's determination to assert her individuality, this heroine often acts defiantly in extricating herself from a relationship she has come to recognize as oppressive. Yet she is also like Psyche in being indirectly motivated by her unfulfilled desire to love, often expressed by her envisioning future relationship. Moreover, rather than despising the relationship she has outgrown, the heroine is often as ambivalent as Psyche in at once wanting to retain its comforts and needing to develop beyond its restrictions. Neither is this relationship depicted as destructive of growth since, while it finally propels the heroine to assert herself, at the same time it has encouraged her to become responsive to inner needs and knowledge.

While the youthful Del Jordan remains independent at the conclusion of Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women (1971), for example, the sexual relationship she abandons has nonetheless fostered her recognition that she possesses an elemental need for relationship. Rather than being a figure of the "new" woman who elects freedom over relationship, Del resembles the heroine as she is traditionally portrayed in women's fiction in refusing to be bound to a sexual relationship that denies the development of the self. Like the initial relationship between Psyche and Eros, the relationship between Del and Garnet is based on impersonal sexuality, Del claiming outright that she loves "the dark side, the strange side, of him" (183). As in the

paradigm, the heroine feels ambivalent about exposing her lover to full view, part of her compelled to challenge his assumption of authority, part of her reluctant to leave the sensual paradise they inhabit together. Even though sexual intimacy distinguishes these lovers from those depicted in earlier novels, the enlightenment scene between them places similar emphasis on the deceitful role the heroine herself has played in attempting to shroud her lover in darkness: "I had thought I wanted to know about him but I hadn't really, I had never really wanted his secrets or his violence or himself taken out of the context of that peculiar and magical and, it seemed now, possibly fatal game" (198). That, like Psyche, she has participated in her entrapment--and that she is even reluctant to end it--challenges an argument like Edwards' that the act of bringing light registers the anger of the feminine upon recognizing her lover as her oppressor. While outrage may motivate the heroine to end her sexual enslavement, novel and paradigm both balance this point by submitting that the female not only contributes to and enjoys this period but, more important, is able to end it when she chooses.

Moreover, as much as Del's relationship with Garnet is restrictive, the novel still emphasizes that it is helpful in educating her to the elemental feminine within herself. Unaware of her feminine needs earlier, Del rebels against the notion that she will want a family, determined instead to pursue the single component of ambition which she identifies as belonging to the masculine: "men were supposed to be able to go out and take on all kinds of experiences and shuck off what they didn't want and come back proud. Without even thinking about it, I had

decided to do the same" (147). While her response reflects her fear of the restrictions attaching to being female, which condition she sees as having diminished her mother and Fern Dogherty and destroyed Miss Farris and Marion Sheriff, her fear deepens when she comes to believe that her femininity is inadequate to the task of stimulating or satisfying male desire: "I was not going to be able to do it" (161). After her sexual encounters with Garnet, however, Del is assured of her femininity in a way that affirms her desire to have a child, even though she is unable to explain this affirmation consciously:

"Would you like to have a baby?"

"Yes," I said. The water which was almost as warm as the air touched my sore prickled buttocks. I was weak from making love, I felt myself warm and lazy, like a big cabbage spreading as my back my arms my chest went down into the water, like big cabbage leaves loosening and spreading on the ground.

Where would such a lie come from? It was not a lie.
(196)

From the perspective of the paradigm, when Del achieves this recognition, she enters the stage wherein the heroine, while embarking on independent trials, does so having abandoned her antagonism toward love, indeed having developed new consciousness of its value. Her experience with Garnet, then, far from closing the door on her interest in feminine relatedness, opens it to new possibilities.

As a register of male-female difference, the contrast between the source and nature of the advice given to the adolescent Del and that given to the adolescent Holden Caulfield is instructive. Hers issues from an intimate source, a same-sex parent, who, while emphasizing the dual components of feminine growth, cannot avoid apparent contradiction

in their expression: "All women have had up till now has been their connection with men. All we have had. No more lives of our own, really, than domestic animals. He shall hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force, a little closer than his dog, a little dearer than his horse. Tennyson wrote that. It's true. Was true. You will want to have children though" (147). Significantly Mrs. Jordan is unable to find a quotation that suggests the goals for which Del should strive, referring to Tennyson by way of admonishing against female subservience. By contrast, Mr. Antolini, Holden's ex-teacher and a more objective outsider, finds a quotation summarizing the dictates of manhood with apparent ease: "'The mark of a immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of a mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one" (The Catcher in the Rye 188). In general, Del and Holden are advised respectively against assuming positions of extreme femininity and masculinity. She is cautioned to avoid victimhood, resulting from inactive dependence on others; he is cautioned to avoid empty heroics resulting from acting on principle rather than from care. While Mr. Antolini assumes that fulfillment for Holden lies in his commitment to a productive social role, however, Mrs. Jordan suggests that waiting Del is a two-part struggle whose outlines are relatively uncharted.

Despite attempting to give balanced advice, Mrs. Jordan is far from providing Del with an actual model of feminine fulfillment, being frustrated by her lack of achievement and her family commitments. Determined that her daughter escape her fate, she becomes like the paradigmatic sisters in warning Del to awaken to the threat she

perceives in Garnet: "Well I'm only trying to open your eyes. For your own good" (183). Advocating liberationist views, Mrs. Jordan represents a position whose extremes Del avoids. At the other pole of feminine response is Del's friend Naomi, who expresses Aphrodite-like anger at Del's refusal to attempt to captivate men sexually: to take the "normal" route to "putting herself on the road to matrimony" (161). As Munro's assigning liberationist consciousness to the sisters and Aphrodisian unconsciousness to the friend or "sister" suggests, in fiction these attitudes can be held by women of any age. That the inexperienced and non-thinking Naomi is associated with Aphrodisian principles and the experienced and even embittered Mrs. Jordan with liberationist concerns further suggests, however, that while neither outlook provides fulfillment, the latter is an advance over the former in representing a movement toward consciousness.

Moving beyond such extreme stages of unconsciousness and consciousness both is Juliet in Janette Turner Hospital's The Ivory Swing (1982), whose learning to trust inner knowledge is emblematic of her deepened understanding of both herself and love. Married, Juliet has lived in a state of unenlightened unconsciousness, refusing to act on her conscious drive toward individual achievement or to respond to her unconscious desire to develop a relationship fulfilling needs beyond those that are sexual. It is when she feels trapped in an Indian jungle that Juliet is forced to confront herself, much like Psyche in awakening from her sensual paradise. While Psyche's first task is to sort out a disordered heap of seeds, Juliet's is to sort out her feelings which are similarly jumbled and confused, a task which cannot be completed by

referring to reason: "Her life was as segmented as an orange, her fragments held together by the mere rind of her will....The question was--and she would pound out a final answer--which cluster of losses was the most death-dealing?" (250-51). Just as natural instincts guide Psyche through this task, slow indirection leads Juliet to discover the course of action she will take; she learns to trust insight to signal when she should leave--"She would know when it was time" (245)--and to recognize the limits of reason, refusing to pretend to know what the future will bring when her husband asks if they will reunite. What in a male hero might be read as vacillation and weakness appears in Juliet as positive growth: having become more receptive to life, she no longer attempts its manipulation.

The product of a rash decision, Juliet's marriage brought about her separation from her lover Jeremy, whom she resented for refusing, like the promiscuous Eros, to pledge fidelity. Much as Psyche wounds Eros, she hurts Jeremy by refusing to continue loving him impersonally in darkness: "They stood staring at each other. Jeremy looked like an animal wounded but belligerent. His pride is hurt, she thought" (75). When he accuses her of seeking marriage in reaction to his infidelity, her verbal denial cannot fully silence her inner doubt: "'Is that what all this is about?' Jeremy asked finally. 'My staying out for a handful of nights?' 'No.' (Absolutely not! Surely not?)" (76). While on the surface, Juliet's separation from Jeremy resembles Psyche's refusal to continue loving in the dark, in fact it signifies her determination to cling possessively to her lover since, in marrying David, she responds to his declaration that she alone is the object of

his love. Yet, as she learns, he treats her as a dependent, undercutting her individuality by seeing only the parts of her that suit him. It is Jeremy she associates with growth and change: "He stretches my mind. Gives me wings" (72). Abandoning him, she abandons the struggle to develop selfhood alongside relationship, voluntarily becoming like one of the museum pieces David admires, fixed and defined by his terms.

When finally resolved to leave David, Juliet acts in a way that promises to reunite her with Eros, either in the actual form of her lover Jeremy or, less literally, in the form of the masculine experience he represents to her. She longs for a life "urban, intellectual, and political" (250), a life she has always associated with Jeremy, yet her refusal to read a letter he finally sends underlies her resolution to engage in challenge on her own terms rather than in reaction to his. What she seeks is not freedom from relationship like her sister Annie's, but from entrapment and possessiveness of the type binding her to David. While the novel furnishes no definite solution to Juliet's dilemma, it suggests that Jeremy himself, apart from what he represents, may be more vital to her than she consciously allows; it suggests further that she is right in leaving David and a relationship that denies emotional maturity, the pair imaged on the brink of separation as "frightened children" (252).

More broadly, Juliet's belief that the complications arising from her dual need to be free and to love are peculiar to her as one caught between traditional and liberated attitudes is refuted by the novel as a whole. At an early point, for example, Juliet blames as accidental to

her time of birth her inability to balance freedom with commitment: unlike her mother she is unable to find fulfillment in family life and unlike her younger sister Annie she is unable to enjoy a lifestyle free of commitment. But Annie contradicts Juliet's assumption that freedom is fulfilling, enacting a part in reverse of Psyche's liberationist sisters: "I'm jealous of all the permanence in your life" (174).

Moreover, Juliet's beautiful Indian friend, Yashoda, raised in a culture that opposes women's freedom, struggles just as the Western women do to find a way to balance freedom with commitment. While it may appear ironic that her wish is to escape commitment to confining family traditions in order to be free to love, her desire in fact parallels that of the Western women who also attempt to balance their apparently contradictory drive for independence and relationship. Juliet errs, then, so long as she gives historical dimensions to the eternal dilemma she faces, a dilemma whose resolution is, as the tale of Psyche suggests, fundamental to female development.

A lonelier figure than Juliet, the spinster Rachel Cameron in Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God (1966) nonetheless undergoes a growth experience whose components are similar in requiring her to take responsibility for her life--to execute choice and assert control by awakening to inner masculine principles--while at the same time to be more open to change--to become sensitive to instincts and inner needs like the feminine Psyche. While Juliet develops from being like a child under her husband's protective care, Rachel more literally develops from being the child of a mother whose hold is more powerful than Aphrodite's over Psyche, since Rachel knows no alternative to serving her. When

Nick's refusal to take responsibility for her teaches Rachel that she cannot transfer her neediness from her mother to him--"I am not God. I can't solve anything" (182)--she learns that she must draw upon her own resources to sustain her through a crisis she thinks at first "isn't to be borne" (203). Alone, she moves from being overwhelmed by her supposed pregnancy to uncovering the strength to make a choice and the will to execute it. When it turns out that what she faces is not the birth of an illegitimate child but the removal of a cancerous growth, again she finds that she possesses the strength to accept risk and mortality, much as Psyche must during her descent to the underworld. To emerge from this test, both must arm themselves against self-destructive pity. Instead of dissolving in the face of loss and mortality, Rachel begins to take control of her life: "I am the mother now" (225).

At the same time, the motif of Psyche's victory through "failure" is foregrounded here. According to the specific terms of Psyche's tale, she sabotages her labor by stealing Proserpine's potion in hope of making herself more beautiful to Eros; in more general terms, she reasserts her femininity by valuing relationship over principle and achievement. Similarly, there is a limit to the self-control Rachel adopts; as she looks ahead, she "fails" to dictate a rigid blueprint of her future, but speculates instead about the relational possibilities that may arise from the course she pursues: "Maybe I will marry a middle-aged widower, or a longshoreman, or a cattlehoof-trimmer, or a lawyer or a thief. And have my children in time. Or maybe not. Most of the chances are against it. But not, I think, quite all" (245).

The extent to which she "feminizes" the perception that one

controls one's destiny is clear when her expression of it is compared to Hector's and Nick's. Hector, for example, states in definite terms his belief that Mr. Cameron lived as he pleased: "But I would bet he had the kind of life he wanted most" (153). Nick is similarly certain that Buckle Fennick chose his fate: "He got what he wanted, didn't he?" (179). Rachel, however, resists their notion that, by choosing, one has a full measure of control over destiny; she offers this adjustment to Hector's assessment of her father: "No, I don't think you were wrong. He probably did do what he wanted most, even though he might not have known it. But maybe what came of it was something he hadn't bargained for. That's always a possibility, with anyone" (243). While on the surface this sounds of Rachel's old caution and pessimism, in fact it asserts the feminine quality of her thinking which allows for the irrational, as well as for fluidity and change. Neither Psyche nor Rachel attempt to shape their fate in full by the exercise of will and reason: it is, in fact, by abandoning these that Psyche wins back Eros and that Rachel leaves herself open to the possibility of relationship.

Rachel's experience with Nick is significant, then, not only because it familiarizes her with the unknown masculine but also because it awakens the feminine nature within her, assuring her of her desirability. Earlier, her vanity is hurt by the assumption of others like her mother and Dr. Raven that she is beyond the possibility of sexual encounter, but more threatening to her growth is her own fear that she will never be desired or share desire with another. Within her sexual relationship with Nick, she is able to experience and express her elemental femininity, opening to possibilities she had feared closed and

ultimately replacing rigid with fluid attitudes: "Anything may happen, where I'm going" (245).

Like Rachel, the spinster Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse (1927) is personally and professionally vulnerable so long as masculine and feminine powers both remain dormant within her. Further like Rachel, she awakens to these powers by improving her relationship to external figures of the masculine and feminine. In particular, Lily abandons idealizing the feminine Mrs. Ramsay (thus overcoming frustration and despair) and villainizing Mr. Ramsay (thus overcoming fear and anger). Specific to her role as female artist, however, is that much of this process takes place on a inner level, imagined and often understood vicariously rather than enacted in a way that is personally engaging. While she comes to recognize that the relation between masculine and feminine can be balanced and harmonious, she does not participate physically in such a relationship but instead gives it physical representation on her canvas. Moreover in completing her painting, she demonstrates the achievement of selfhood, unattained so long as she had envisioned the masculine as an external source of opposition. That Lily's experience ultimately represents a heightening of the archetypal pattern of female maturation, then, is suggested by its being at once more indirect (for being inner and abstract) and more conscious (for leading to vision and understanding).

While on the one hand, Lily initially fears what she perceives to be the masculine will to dominate and oppress the feminine, on the other she fears that in dedicating herself to her work she intrudes on the masculine domain of achievement and ambition and abandons the feminine

realm of caring. She is as much oppressed by a pronouncement like Charles Tansley's that "Women can't write, women can't paint" (99) as she is by Mrs. Ramsay's view that women seek first to love and her consequent refusal to take "[Lily's] painting very seriously" (23). Yet as much as she fears the masculine and resents Mrs. Ramsay's argument for the primacy of male-female relationship, she continually confronts a need to understand Eros: to understand masculine nature and the relationship between male and female. While remembering her sexual response to Paul Rayley is immediately painful, for example, the indirect effect of such a powerful memory is to forbid her from scorning Mrs. Ramsay's "mania" for marriage (199):

Suddenly, as suddenly as a star slides in the sky, a reddish light seemed to burn in her mind, covering Paul Rayley, issuing from him. It rose like a fire....And the roar and the crackle repelled her with fear and disgust, as if while she saw its splendour and power she saw too how it fed on the treasure of the house, greedily, disgustingly, and she loathed it. But for a sight, for a glory it surpassed everything in her experience and burnt year after year like a signal fire on a desert island at the edge of the sea, and one had only to say "in love" and instantly, as happened now, up rose Paul's fire again. (199-200)

Even though Lily's feelings are denied actual outlet--Lily being denied Psyche's opportunity to hold a lamp to Eros and being instead burned by the intensity of unexpressed passion--her memory nonetheless leads to her improved understanding of relationship since pursuant of it she begins imaginatively to recreate the courtship of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and thus vicariously to overcome her fear of the masculine as a force threatening to the feminine: "He stretched out his hand and raised her from her chair....Time after time the same thrill had passed between

them....She [Lily] was not inventing; she was only trying to smooth out something she had been given years ago folded up; something she had seen" (225-26). Contemplating as harmonious a relationship she hitherto viewed as destructive of both individuals, she recognizes characteristics of mutuality and sharing in place of dependence and bondage, correcting her view of the masculine and of male-female relationship and thus indirectly healing her own wounded feelings.

Having opened toward Mr. Ramsay and the pleasure of masculine/feminine interchange, Lily no longer sees Mrs. Ramsay's role as endless giving to his taking, beginning instead to envision the vital connection between the two in a way that leads toward the completion of her painting. Discussing it earlier, she suggests that the masses represent, if in the abstract, mother and child, to whom she pays tribute: "the picture was not of them, she said. Or, not in his sense. There were other senses, too, in which one might reverence them. By a shadow here and a light there, for instance. Her tribute took that form, if, as she vaguely supposed, a picture must be a tribute" (61-62). She goes on to state that something essential is missing: "It was a question, she remembered, how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object (James perhaps) so. But the danger was that by doing that the unity of the whole might be broken" (62-63). What is missing appears to be the masculine influence: it is Mr. Ramsay, whose masculinity is symbolized throughout by sharp linear images--"lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one" (6); "the beak of brass, the arid scimitar" (45)--who becomes

the central presence in her composition: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she draw a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished" (237). Hence her perception at the end is that she has finally done justice or paid "tribute" to Mr. Ramsay: "Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last" (236). Having finally looked upon the masculine, which Mr. Ramsay represents to her--"Lily could see him" (235)--she completes her canvas and claims "I have had my vision" (237).

If the novel is thought of as Lily's journey, then the title, To the Lighthouse, takes on additional meaning. Like Psyche, Lily brings light to the realm of the masculine, seeing not only its dimensions but also the way in which the feminine can work in concert with it. Just as Psyche is advised by the tower as to how to fulfill her apparently impossible labor, so does Lily begin to approach her task of completing her canvas with new insight, by listening and speaking to Mr. Ramsay--the figure identified so closely with the lighthouse tower, particularly in the last section. Ultimately, Lily's representation of man, woman and child can be seen as connected to the final issue of Psyche's labours when, reunited with Eros, her lover in the flesh, she produces an actual child. Linking the experiences is that creation for both results from love arising from feminine and masculine balance, rather than from the sexual energy produced by the opposition of otherness.

Another figure of the masculine who helps Lily toward her vision is the old poet, Augustus Carmichael. Pleading with him earlier to answer her questions about life and death, Lily experiences the sensation that

he hears her silent communication. At the end, this sensation is reasserted: "They had not needed to speak. They had been thinking the same things and he had answered her without her asking him anything" (236). That Mr. Ramsay forms the link in their thoughts suggests that Augustus, a reassuring guide-figure, has helped Lily all along toward achieving her vision of the masculine, much as Pan is helpful to Psyche; indeed, Carmichael is described as "looking like an old pagan God, shaggy, with weeds in his hair and the trident (it was only a French novel) in his hand" (236). Significantly, Lily is last depicted as standing beside Carmichael, a successful male artist, a "union" symbolizing that--as well as allowing the feminine realm of feeling to come alive within her--her experience has led her to develop masculine strengths that urge her toward completing her work. She no longer perceives the masculine as either threatening or mysterious to her, but has learned to understand and to work harmoniously with it.

Neither is courtship the focusing motif in relation to older Psyches, who nonetheless continue concerned with attempting to balance privacy and intimacy. While union with Eros often means attaining right relationship with a lover for the youthful Psyche, for the mature heroine it involves gaining a more generalized understanding of the connection between self and other, her concern being with Eros in a "philosophical sense" as "the principle of psychic relatedness" (Harding, Mysteries 29). Often having experienced an impassioned need to love at an earlier age, the older heroine experiences as more urgent the need to understand her connection to others, particularly because she has grown to fear as final the separation that death brings.

As Clarissa's courtship recollections demonstrate in Mrs. Dalloway (1924), for example, the heroine has undergone in youth a passionate situation requiring her to separate from a possessive lover in order to remain an individual and still to love. Middle-aged and fearing aloneness, her immediate concern is not with establishing a new intimacy but with understanding how it is that an individual can retain "the privacy of the soul" without sacrificing vital connection to others (192). Early in the novel, Clarissa describes with puzzlement the pleasure she takes in glimpsing her neighbor through the windows dividing them, revealing her fascination with the components of separation and relationship: "How extraordinary it was, strange, yes, touching, to see the old lady (they had been neighbours ever so many years)....And the supreme mystery...was simply this: here was one room; there another" (193 emphasis mine). Having resolved the "mystery" of shared privacy toward the novel's conclusion, Clarissa is delighted with the way in which her relationship with her neighbor provides an image of the principles of unity and separation that she has come to see as connecting all facets of life. While like Psyche's, Clarissa's experience demonstrates that selfhood and relationship are companionable rather than antagonistic, Clarissa's fulfillment lies in her bringing this recognition to consciousness.

Looking back on her intense intimacy with Peter and Sally, Clarissa enshrines these relationships as touchstones of significant interaction and being because it is her fear that, no longer youthful, she has grown beyond developing and experiencing such deeply personal attachments. It is on the basis of her assumption that one lives most fully when

connected to others that she defends her parties, describing them as promoting interaction amongst individuals whose customary isolation threatens to cut them off from life: "Oh, it was very queer. Here was so-and-so in South Kensington; some one up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. And she felt quite continuously a sense of their existence; and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to create, to combine; but to whom?" (184-85). That Clarissa elsewhere equates creating a party with paying a tribute to life discloses her belief to the effect that one lives most fully when one is aware of being connected to others: that the principle of relationship is linked to vitality.

The corollary of this belief--that death signifies separation, and that in death the individual is alone--is a thought that impinges upon Clarissa whenever she feels excluded from the lives of others and grows conscious of her age and approaching death. She experiences piercing sensations of loss when Miss Kilman "takes" Elizabeth from her, when Lady Bruton holds a luncheon to which she is not invited, and when Peter Walsh, visiting her, declares his love for another. The fear that haunts her appears to be that, aging, she will continue to grow more separate and alone, the passionate choices of youth spent: "It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow. She had gone up into the tower alone and left them blackberrying in the sun" (70). The use of the tower as an image of confinement is significant if one thinks of the Psyche story; there, according to Neumann, the tower functions as a useful guide, representing masculine strength and logic.

Here, Clarissa's reference to the tower as confining suggests that in her desperation to recover intense feeling it is as if she blames her masculine side for having guided her toward privacy and selfhood.

Yet even as she reveals her desperation for intimacy, she controls and corrects it. During her party her determination to maintain separateness is particularly clear: meeting guests her aim is to promote exchange, but uppermost in her mind while talking to them is her awareness that she will move on to speak to others. Moreover, when she leaves her guests to find a temporary room of her own in which to contemplate the suicide of Septimus, a man she has never met, she awakens in her moment of isolation-in-community to the potency of intangible relationship. Her ability to understand meaning in the act of an unknown dead man signifies to her that death does not end all relationship and being, since one continues to exert indirect influence on the lives of others and on life itself after one dies. It is significant that even before Clarissa hears of Septimus' death, she is moved first by the thought of Miss Kilman, absent but hated, and next by the recollections of a guest who speaks of her mother, dead but beloved. Experiencing successively in this climactic scene that relationship and its capacity to inspire individuals with feeling is bounded neither by time nor space, Clarissa consciously develops an insight that earlier led her to envision death as expanding rather than ending her connection to life and others: "did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her...but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived...being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best,

who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself" (12).

Clarissa sees further that by aging and choosing to lead a relatively pacific life--a life unpunctuated, since her marriage, by deeply intimate encounters--she has lost nothing, since all relationships in which she has engaged remain part of her, untarnished by time and change. No part of her need lament that her marriage to Richard caused her separation from Sally and Peter. Instead she recognizes that since these youthful intimacies live within her, she has access to them and to her youthful self, and hence she is able to feel again the vitality she felt when a young girl at her Bourton home. Moreover, she realizes that had she attempted to sustain these friendships, they would have cooled over time. Looking at Sally, for example, Clarissa sees that little remains of the young girl who had moved her to intense emotional response:

"Clarissa!" That voice! It was Sally Seton! Sally Seton! after all these years! She loomed through a mist. For she hadn't looked like that, Sally Seton, when Clarissa grasped the hot water can....One might put down the hot water can quite composedly. The lustre had gone out of her. Yet it was extraordinary to see her again, older, happier, less lovely.
(260-61)

Yet if Clarissa deepens her understanding of separation and relationship, and thus fulfills the end she seeks, she nonetheless attains it through Psyche-like indirection. While Psyche regains Eros by giving up actively seeking after him, Clarissa discovers the deep and abiding nature of her connection to others and to life itself by abandoning her role as party hostess, separating from others to contemplate death. Moreover, by remembering her courtship

experience--so like Psyche's--it is as if Clarissa refers to a paradigmatic experience that guides her, albeit indirectly, in middle-age: she reawakens to valuing her private life and feelings, recognizing that, while others continue important to her, she does not need them to validate the former and inspire the latter. While there is a repetitive quality to Clarissa's experience, then, its effect is to deepen her understanding, to help her to a mature view of Eros in its "philosophical sense."

That Clarissa reflects upon her contentment with her husband at the novel's conclusion, however, connects her more immediately with the youthful Psyche: while it remains true that Clarissa generally approaches Eros more philosophically, these final passages emphasize that she continues to derive fulfillment from relationship whose basis is personal and sexual. Focusing on the harmony of her union with Richard, she speaks of their privacy and silences as not only strengthening their bond but also creating joy within her: "Even now, quite often if Richard had not been there reading the Times, so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive, send roaring up that immeasurable delight, rubbing stick to stick, one thing with another, she must have perished" (281-82). When ultimately she assigns all credit to Richard for having helped her to a beautiful life--"It was due to Richard; she had never been so happy"--her reference is less to Richard as an individual and more to Richard as he exists in relation to her since together, as she has just described, they have learned to balance unity and separateness in a way that both renews and fulfills her.⁷

The ninety-year old Hagar in Laurence's The Stone Angel (1964) is engaged in a similar process of attempting to gain conscious understanding of the principle of Eros, reviewing relationships with her "lost men" with whom actual reunion is impossible. Much as Clarissa is convinced that her connection to others is ongoing and meaningful after unifying her feminine desire for relationship with her masculine desire for individuality, Hagar ultimately gains insight into the value of relationship after balancing her inner masculine and feminine needs. While independent to the end, she learns to affirm that life is cooperative, others having shared her suffering and eased her burden.

Yet while Clarissa exemplifies the older heroine who deepens her understanding of the interplay of selfhood and relationship, having balanced these components in youth, Hagar is more like the youthful Psyche in struggling for the first time to unify these principles. Unlike Psyche, however, Hagar guards her emotions from youth to age, fearing the masculine as a power destroying any who fail to resist it. A militant daughter and then a frustrated and carping wife, Hagar approaches life with the attitude of Psyche's sisters, always angry and resistant. Appropriately, several scenes depict her as the "angry sister," unable to express warmth or kindness to Dan or Matt, being instead competitive and armored against them. She separates from her husband, then, without needing Psyche's advisors to encourage the belief that her husband is an uncouth monster who has consumed her energy and destroyed her beauty.

Although Bram is unlike her father and his masculine God, both of whom Hagar fears and resents for defining as acts of love their

determination to coerce others to their will, Hagar assumes from the outset that he shares their nature. When they first make love, for example, she identifies the act as one of masculine aggression: "It hurt and hurt, and afterward he stroked my forehead with his hand. 'Didn't you know that's what's done?' I said not a word, because I had not known" (52). When no longer frightened of her sexual feelings or their consequence, she nonetheless continues to fear their expression and views marriage in terms of struggle rather than of sharing: her opinion that sex is not one with love builds from her belief that sexual relationship, like all relationship, involves domination and submission. After separating from Bram, she experiences what she dismisses as sexual longing, but that she refers to herself as having become "dark" and "empty," suggests that the feelings she cherishes for her husband are deeper than she consciously allows: "I never thought of Bram in the days any more, but I'd waken sometimes, out of a half sleep and turn to him and find he wasn't beside me, and then I'd be filled with such a bitter emptiness it seemed the whole of night must be within me and not around or outside at all" (160).

Significantly, the incident that moves her closest to tears as a mature woman occurs when Bram, grown aged, feeble and disoriented asks whether he should have subdued her by force: "'That Hagar--I should of licked the living daylight out of her, maybe, and she'd have seen I could. What d'you think? Think I should of?' I could not speak for the salt that filled my throat, and for anger--not at anyone, at God, perhaps, for giving us eyes but almost never sight" (173). Forced to gain insight into Bram and masculine nature, Hagar is as angry as sad to

learn that she has wounded Bram, whom she need not have feared: he has suffered and struggled, as he reveals, without ever resorting to the brutality Hagar has assumed to be part of masculine nature. If at this moment, Hagar relinquishes some of her fear of the masculine, she remains even at Bram's death unable to explain her feelings for him, acknowledging only that "he mattered to me" (194).

She clings consciously to her belief that sex and love are not one until, with the help of Murray Ferney Lees--a male guide figure who helps liberate in Hagar the inner qualities required for growth--she is forced consciously to admit that the two may not be discrete, as she has always believed. Moreover, like Bram in contradicting her conception of the masculine as powerful and destructive, he contributes to its slow erosion. Ultimately becoming a figure of mercy in Hagar's experience, Lees corrects her vision that life is controlled by a malevolent masculine power whose purpose is to abuse those too weak to escape his will. When she finally abandons the self-control she has imposed upon herself to oppose his will, what occurs is not punishment or pain, as she has always expected, but insight, ease and renewed relationship. Only after recognizing that she has been driven by baseless fear to suppress natural emotions is she able to recover and express her feelings for Bram--to transform the beast and be united with her lover. Instead of analyzing her feelings and reductively categorizing them as merely sexual or physical, she remembers him with love: "'He was a big man, too,' I say. 'Strong as a horse. He had a beard black as the ace of spades. He was a handsome man, a handsome man'" (72).

Recovering her feelings of love for Bram long after his death, and

at the same time transforming her image of him from beast to beloved, Hagar rights her understanding of this relationship, if actual "reunion" of the type known to the youthful Psyche is impossible. Her experience resembles Psyche's, however, insofar as both initially flee from relationships whose value they ultimately affirm. Moreover, while fear of the masculine initiates their struggle, desire to restore relationship compells them to pursue it.

Perhaps because both Hagar and Clarissa fear that, become aged, they are beyond love, the motif of pity is foregrounded in these novels. While both experience the self-pity that is dangerous to Psyche in threatening purposeful action, Hagar in particular needs to abandon this attitude if she is to understand herself and others. Like the masculine guide who instructs Psyche that "pity is not lawful" (Neumann 112), Lees similarly challenges Hagar's right to cut herself off from life by clinging to personal sorrow: "'These things happen,' the man says. 'I know it. I don't need anyone to tell me that. But I don't accept it.' I can feel him shrugging, in the darkness. 'What else can you do?'" (245). If Clarissa's retreat from her party to contemplate death is compared to Psyche's underworld journey, both heroines can be said to affirm their commitment to life by refusing to give in to hopelessly pitying others: "The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on" (283). Developing beyond her initial impulse to feel self-destructive identification, Clarissa ultimately recognizes that even if Septimus and his act speak intimately to her, she nonetheless remains dissociated from him in choosing life over

death.

* * *

While the heroine's attempt to balance selfhood and relationship is thus variously developed and rewarded in a number of modern fictions, the pattern variant depicting the heroine as a failed Psyche also continues current. If earlier works tended to dramatize this failure by depicting suicidal heroines like Edna and Lyndall, however, recent novels like those of Margaret Drabble have linked this failure to the heroine's fatalistic acceptance of personal limitations and domestic drudgery. Perhaps because these heroines act as their own apologists in justifying their embittered immobility as self-sacrifice, a number of critics have mistakenly interpreted these novels as expressing Drabble's own vision of female limitation rather than as portraying heroines whose development is problematic.⁸ A number of paradigmatic references, however--many so direct as to provide imagistic echoes of Psyche's experience--are helpful in illuminating the extent to which these heroines are depicted as responsible for their failed growth.

Helping to distinguish Emma's stasis from Psyche's growth, for example, are the paradigmatic motifs recurrent throughout The Garrick Year (1964). When Emma recalls her initial feelings for her husband, she refers to a darkness she feared to illuminate. Unlike Psyche, she clings to the experience of impersonal sexuality as attested to by references to her deliberate unconsciousness: "When he tried to tell me about himself I would stop listening: I did not want to know. All I wanted was the feeling of terror with which he inspired me....Indeed, such personal attributes as I against my will discovered in him I rather

disliked" (24-25). If she learns anything over the course of the novel, it is only that she longs for a return of dark sensuality and passionate excitement: "We stood there, under that lamp, not looking at each other, for a long time....I have never been so frightened in my life, and perhaps the whole of my effort since has been nothing but a struggle to repeat that fright" (23-24 emphasis mine).

After her marriage, she begins to see David more clearly, but her vision is accompanied by a sense of loss. No longer challenging as a dark stranger stimulating new feelings in her, David becomes little more than a reflection of herself: "We are so alike that it alarms me" (22). While she concedes that she continues to "like" him (27), such expression of love as she is able to give lacks depth and commitment both: "I lay there laughing and sneezing and saying 'I love you, David,' for quite a long time, not particularly because I meant it or felt it, but because I knew that in view of the facts it must be true" (168). Her resistance to the light registers her resistance to growth and the assertion of individualized personality. Having failed to develop as an individual capable of loving another, she is simultaneously dependent on David to complete her sense of self and frustrated by his inability to stimulate strong feelings in her.

When Emma meets Wyndham Farrar, the man who will be her lover, again the image of darkness accompanies her feelings of terrified excitement: "I had just time to see his face before I had to blow out the light....The dimness and the suddenly extinguished brightness and the ensuing undefined closeness reminded me of something, and my guts sagged or stiffened or dropped...from intense fear or apprehension or

memory" (87). With Wyndham, what Emma recreates in exact if abbreviated form is the period of infatuation that she experienced with David and has longed to recover. As she herself recognizes, she is excited by the non-personal force of attraction between them: "passion certainly seemed to be somewhere around, and although it may seem ludicrous to talk in such circumstances of Venus attached to her prey, such were the literary allusions which arose from time to time in my mind. For I hung on his every word and gesture: every compliment enchanted me, every glance unclothed me, and yet I could not deceive myself that it was him, himself, that I liked" (112 emphasis mine). Unlike Psyche who struggles free of the snares of Aphrodite/Venus, Emma seeks to be "enchanted," to lose herself in impersonal sensuality.

Once her knowledge of Wyndham grows, she returns to David, motivated more by her unacknowledged dependence on him than by active concern for her children and family. Having involved herself in an affair whose "accidental" nature is symbolically reinforced when Emma is pinned to a wall by Wyndham's car, she is saved from romantic and physical entanglement by David, being herself helpless. Unlike Psyche who, similarly incapacitated, is rescued by Eros, Emma needs David to rescue her because she lacks any resources to save herself. Moreover, she is largely unaware of her dependence, since their faded passion is accompanied in her mind with his faded masculinity. Again unlike the paradigm in which the renewed union of the lovers results in the birth of a child, Emma and David have already salvaged their bad marriage by having a baby: "What I had dreaded as the blight of my life turned out to be one of its greatest joys. David too reacted overwhelmingly

strongly toward the child, and in the shock of our mutual surprise at this state of affairs we fell once more into each other's arms" (27). Having parenthood in common with David, Emma identifies him with herself, refusing to acknowledge his masculine nature. Unlike Psyche, then, Emma clings unknowingly to an externalized form of the masculine, refusing to develop herself and attempting to see her husband as reflecting or extending herself.

Emma's dilemma, then, results from her refusal to move from impersonal to personal relationship. She has no desire to conquer her terror of otherness, and resents her husband for assuming human face and shape, wanting only to be possessed without love. Appropriately, her final observations resound with false pity and over-protectiveness. Leaning on her husband while at the same time claiming to act responsibly for others, Emma believes that the safest course in a threatening world is to refuse to acknowledge fully all she sees: "supported by David, I looked more closely and I saw curled up and clutching at the sheep's belly a real snake. I did not say anything to David; I did not want to admit that I had seen it, but I did see it, I can see it still....One just has to keep on and to pretend, for the sake of the children, not to notice. Otherwise one might just as well stay at home" (172). That she claims to effect blindness "for the sake of the children" underscores her failed self-knowledge, since demonstrated throughout the novel is her childish determination to protect herself by blindness.

In Rose Vassiliou in The Needle's Eye (1972), Drabble creates a protagonist who is even more insistent upon dignifying as self-sacrifice

her refusal to face reality and the challenge of self-development. Her father, her husband, the law, and even God--Rose looks in turn to each of these masculine sources for guidance and protection, feeling betrayed as each fails her. Instead of accepting masculine imperfection, and going on to develop within herself such compensating strengths as reason and perseverance, she continues dependent on masculine others to shape her life, believing, for example, of her return to her husband that "Christopher and God constructed it, they connived it, they left me nothing else to do" (264). While originally she turned to her husband in a kind of blind faith, worshipping him without knowing him, when she returns it is in bad faith to the extent that she feels herself martyred to him whose will alone has proven stronger than hers: "What freakish providence had given her Christopher, so obsessed by the thought of possession that he refused to let her reject him? His desire to grab--herself, children, money, even parents-in-law--had proved too strong for her will to renounce" (333).

Allowing herself to be possessed by her husband, she acts at the same time in a way that is possessive of him, never allowing him to forget that he has fallen in her estimate and that she defines her return in terms of self-sacrifice. Unlike Psyche's reunion with Eros which reflects the union of her masculine and feminine nature, Rose's reunion with Christopher signifies that she continues to view the masculine as a powerful force all outside herself, if she has come to be critical of its nature. Without faith in herself and without genuine faith in another, she finally envisions herself as having grown monstrous with frustrated anger; although she still cherishes an

aspiration to love, her expression of it in abstract terms underlines her failure to move toward its attainment:

She had seen her soul, suddenly, as she spoke: it was dark and crying and bloody, like a bat or an embryo, and it was not very nice at all, not an agreeable thing, and it flapped and squeaked inside her whenever Christopher touched or spoke to her. Let it go, let it go, strangle it, burn it. The warm daylight of love she would aspire to, oh she would make it, though her nails were torn, her knees barked with hanging on....From the hall below them, a dog barked, irritably. Another answered, then another: barks, followed by long drawn out slow echoing moans and howling. (366)

While she likes to believe that the bondage she suffers is temporary and that she will ultimately be able to express love, the image of the chorus of barking dogs suggests that her lament, like theirs, is irrational and reactionary, rather than inner determined. Unlike Psyche who emerges from the underworld by relying on will and reason, Rose is continually buffeted by pity and passion and never emerges into the light. Had Psyche given into pity, she would have lost her long-range goals of selfhood and genuine relationship; Rose gives in and both these possibilities are lost to her. In fact, no one gains by her actions, for she makes her husband and children suffer when they fail to recognize what she has given up for them. Her sacrifice enables her to feel possessive of them--for she feels responsible for securing whatever happiness they glean from renewed family life--but destroys the possibility of love.

* * *

In the twentieth century, then, the Psyche paradigm continues to inform the female novel even when the heroine bears little surface resemblance to the maiden Psyche. To develop as an individual, this

heroine continues like those before her to transcend attitudes of the collective feminine: she must overcome not only a position of extreme femininity (where passion reigns) but also--and of particular urgency to the modern heroine--a position of opposition and anger often expressive of liberationist concerns (where animus-driven reason rules). Despite arguments that modern women's fiction has evolved a "new woman"--a female hero who "can break out of familial, sexual, and social bondage" to find work that "liberates her soul" (Edwards 16, 146)--this fiction continues to link loving with being, depicting as blunted and diminished heroines who act from a spirit of opposition rather than love.

From this perspective, a novel like Alix Kates Shulman's Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen (1969), popular among feminists for fictionalizing their militancy, may say more about female limitations than heroics in depicting a heroine who ultimately knows no more than to fear the masculine as a destructive and alien power. Sasha Davis spends much of her recorded experience in darkness, reassured of her vitality only when she sees herself reflected in a lover's adoring eyes. From youth onward she feels she cannot compete with her mother--"the most beautiful woman in the world" (23)--and her ensuing actions are all to convince herself that she is attractive. Unlike the rivalry between Aphrodite and Psyche in which the older woman resents the younger for developing selfhood, Sasha accepts without question the terms established by the Aphrodite-figure as the basis for competition. Beginning to emerge from this stage at the novel's conclusion, she is more angry at men than at herself for the captivity into which she has maneuvered herself. While she is empowered by bonding with a friend who shares her anger, her

attitudes remain reactionary as, for example, when she delights in the publication of Roxanne's poetry because she believes it will frustrate her ex-husband: "Wait till old Franklin Raybel sees one of us in his Intersection," I said. And though it was probably mean, I couldn't wait" (272). Having achieved nothing herself--bereft of selfhood and love both--she has transferred her dependence to her friend, whom she calls for support in the novel's last sentence.

The self-destructive nature of an orientation like Sasha's toward opposing the masculine as a force external to the self is explored in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1985), a novel which, despite its futuristic setting, in effect summarizes the perspective of the modern novel in affirming the heroine's commitment to love. Caught in a severely restrictive patriarchy, Offred is compelled to see that to be a "free" woman means foremost to be free to feel rather than to act and achieve, her strongest desire being to reclaim love and relatedness. Maintaining personal beauty, an act Sasha ultimately eschews as representative of female oppression, is to Offred a right which, when denied her, she is prepared to steal; just as Psyche risks death in keeping the beauty potion of the Goddesses, in order as Neumann suggests to renew "her bond with her feminine center" (123), Offred ignores regulations against vanity to maintain her beauty, which she identifies with femininity and ongoing receptivity to love: "There's no longer any hand lotion or face cream, not for us. Such things are considered vanities....As long as we...butter our skin to keep it soft, we can believe that we will some day get out, that we will be touched again, in love or desire" (90-91).

Moreover, Offred's experience demonstrates that women rather than men seek to repress the expression of feminine nature, on the mistaken notion that women who love are vulnerable to men. In the society of Gilead, the aunts are as determined as Psyche's sisters to ensure that other women are "liberated" from sexual entanglements which they perceive as undermining female freedom. In her former life, too, the narrator confronted similar opposition from her mother, whose radical feminism not only failed to influence the narrator but is remembered by her as having destroyed her mother's happiness: "A man is just a woman's strategy for making other women. Not that your father wasn't a nice guy and all, but he wasn't up to fatherhood. Not that I expected it of him. Just do the job, then you can bugger off, I said, I make a decent salary, I can afford daycare. So he went to the coast and sent Christmas cards. He had beautiful eyes though....Sometimes she would cry. I was so lonely, she'd say. You have no idea how lonely I was. And I had friends, I was a lucky one, but I was lonely anyway" (114-15). Through portraying the mother as a lonely and frustrated woman who shapes her life according to a reactionary ideology, the novel suggests that remaining independent of intimate relationship may entrap rather than free women; through portraying the maintenance of Offred's individuality as dependent upon her expressing her feminine nature in opposition to collectively imposed restrictions against it, the novel further suggests that the freedom to love is essential to the heroine. When the narrator risks forming a sexual relationship with Nick, she does not betray her former relationship, as she fears for a moment when judging her actions according to traditional moral standards, but rather

affirms her capacity to love which, despite having been brutalized, continues vital: "I'm ashamed of myself. But there's more to it than that. Even now, I can recognize this admission as a kind of boasting. There's pride in it, because it demonstrates how extreme and therefore justified it was, for me. How well worth it. It's like stories of illness and near-death, from which you have recovered; like stories of war. They demonstrate seriousness. Such seriousness, about a man, then, had not seemed possible to me before" (255). Similar to Psyche who affirms her femininity by serving love rather than the law even if it means death, Offred risks her life for love by visiting Nick; in turn, she ultimately appears to be saved by Nick who, like Eros, is inspired by love to perform a selfless gesture. Identifying non-being with non-feeling, Offred ensures self-preservation by insisting upon her right to establish relatedness, opposing all attempts to outlaw "falling in love" (206).

While Offred is a futuristic figure created by a contemporary novelist, the features of her story are not significantly new. Epitomizing the heroine as Psyche, she tells of the painful process by which she surmounts the obstacles to love. While she is like Psyche in being motivated most directly by her desire to reunite with her lover, a further resemblance is that pursuit of this desire leads each to assert individuality.

* * *

In the first chapter of this study, I argued that unlike masculine stories, feminine fictions of experience limit the depiction of external action to focus on inner drama, and that this is so by and large because

heroines doubt the efficacy of active heroism and draw more naturally toward contemplative acceptance of what is. On the one hand, they appear simply to be uninterested in shaping events; on the other, they seem lulled into acceptance of what befalls them because of their assurance that things "fall into place," that pattern or destiny resides in what appears circular or chaotic and will, inevitably, be revealed. By focusing on the Psyche pattern, the present chapter adds to our understanding of the heroine's motivations by suggesting that while she may appear placid or passive in her orientation to outer events, she in fact takes an active role in shaping her destiny, even though both actions and ends are pursued with unconscious determination. Guided by powers of the unconscious, the heroine acts in ways that help her toward an end she desires as well as toward recognizing the twin-sided nature of this end which involves the attainment of selfhood and relationship both.

Yet even though inner knowledge plays an ongoing role in the heroine's development, like Psyche's, the general direction of her growth is nonetheless from unconsciousness toward consciousness. Refusing to remain in a state of unconsciousness, the heroine is fulfilled who achieves a vision of herself as a separate individual desiring relationship with a masculine figure of otherness. In the process of exploring her individuality, this heroine develops an understanding of masculine nature (by developing and relying upon masculine qualities within herself), while at the same time growing in her capacity to love a masculine other (by cleaving to her essential femininity). When a heroine fails to find fulfillment, accepting

relationship without developing individuality or asserting independence that precludes love, she is dogged by an awareness, never fully formulated, that she desires a component remaining out of reach; yet, her unconscious is unable to help her because, like Psyche before she separates herself from her lover in an act that enables her to see Eros and to love, she is without a sense of distinct selfhood and without desire for another. Unconscious promptings can shape the actions of both heroines, then, but only the heroine who has become conscious of self and other can be directed by inner knowledge.

It is the heroine's responsiveness to her unconscious that distinguishes the female novel from the male novel, in which the protagonist uses reason and will in conscious pursuit of a goal. Because traditional critics expect motives and actions to be connected in fiction, they have been led to judge the heroine's tendency to act indirectly toward an end of which she remains unconscious as a sign of implausible development. On the basis of traditional fictions, for example, Forster builds his argument that the best plots satisfy the reader's sense of what is logical and probable, one event seeming to lead to another, and no action contradictory in light of what is known of a given character. Women's fictions, however, do not satisfy these conditions; instead, the heroine performs actions that appear unmotivated in relation to her stated goal: actions which often accomplish an end whose pursuit she has consciously abandoned.

As Miller points out, women's fiction often fails the test of plausibility because heroines are judged as acting in ways which do not coincide with convention and which the novel itself fails by any traditional means to explain. But in place of her argument for the

artificial plausibility of novels in which heroines refuse love and elect independence, the argument here is that the female novel conventionally depicts a heroine who not only divides the pursuit of selfhood and relationship but who also finds that conscious pursuit of one leads to attainment of the other. Apart from establishing a unique standard of plausibility, recognizing the tale of Psyche as the paradigm or maxim underlying the female novel is helpful in placing in perspective a feminist claim like Miller's that the heroine who seeks love merely embodies male maxims governing the fictional destiny of women, as well as an argument like Edwards' that romantic love, tantamount to entrapment, is eschewed by the female "hero." While Miller believes that the heroine's refusal to love reflects her author's attempt at genuine expression and Edwards believes that the heroine's breaking free of domestic snares reflects a new heroism, both overlook that, emblemizing the new woman, Psyche chooses both to be a self and to love. Moving beyond the unconscious sensuality of Aphrodite and then beyond the animus-ridden consciousness of the militant sisters, Psyche, while developing strength, self-sufficiency and reason, retains her passionate, intuitive and loving nature. What Miller and Edwards describe, then, is neither a new fictional form nor a new heroine, but a pattern variant in which the heroine, reminiscent of the unenlightened Psyche, refuses love because she remains unawakened to it. In fact, reference to the Psyche paradigm suggests why it is that lack of fulfillment typically befalls extreme heroines--whether they are those remaining unconscious of themselves as individuals or of their desire to love--as well as why it is that the female novel, while rich in variations, unfolds with a patterned continuity.

CHAPTER III:

MASCULINE IDENTITY/FEMININE DEVELOPMENT

Many of Forster's observations about "People" are general enough to apply to women's fiction. His masculine bias is apparent, however, when he objects to the disproportionate emphasis given to love: "it has done them [novels] harm and made them monotonous...especially in its sex form" (62). Arguing that the "constant sensitiveness of characters for each other has "no parallel in life," he accounts for its presence in terms of the author's heightened state of mind when he composes, just as he regards love and marriage as a strategy for ending a book "conveniently" (62, 63). Consistent with an androcentric concept of character and identity formation, such an explanation ignores the extent to which concern with others is definitively central to female development.

According to Nancy Chodorow, whose pioneering theory of female development has become widely influential, women tend to develop a sense of self-in-relationship rather than self-as-autonomous. Since the mother is typically the primary caretaker, the child's relationship with her is the one that determines the degree of autonomy he or she attains; whereas daughters experience bonding, sons experience separation. Never relinquishing her bond with either mother or father, the developing female oscillates between the two figures; she is drawn toward the otherness of the father but without ever severing the emotional ties that bind her in identification to the mother. In contrast, the formation of masculine identity requires separation from the mother, and

while the son adopts the gender role of the father, the two never grow so close as to replace the early intimacy between mother and son. Concerned with explaining the female urge to mother, Chodorow contends that while women turn to men for erotic stimulation, they look to mothering to recover the emotional intimacy they experienced with their own mothers. Men, she argues, achieve autonomous identity at a relatively early age, whereas women throughout their lives continue to view themselves as part of a relational complex.

Applying Chodorow's theory to women's fiction, Elizabeth Abel posits that the heroine defines herself through the experience of identifying intimately with others. Assuming that it is by "relaxing ego boundaries" that the heroine recovers "psychic wholeness" ("Identities" 418), Abel suggests that bonding between women friends as well as between mother and child can lead to the heroine's finding emotional fulfillment. She claims moreover that a heroine's self-understanding can be clarified or enriched "through relation to an other who embodies and reflects an essential aspect of the self" ("Identities" 416).

While Abel's point is that the heroine is most complete when she recaptures the emotional intimacy known first in the form of the mother-daughter bond, actually women's fiction suggests that fulfillment lies in her asserting individuality and abandoning infantile identification. Often a heroine undergoes same-sex bonding as a stage that can be helpful in affirming her femininity, yet the central emphasis is on overcoming such intimacy. Although heroines of any age appear naturally inclined to define self-as-other, and can in this

limited regard be said to act in keeping with Chodorow's model of identity formation, women's fiction repeatedly foregrounds their struggle toward developing a sense of self-and-other. Seeking fulfillment through individuality, the heroine's ongoing commitment is to developing selfhood, which is, however, a process different from that of the hero who acts more decisively toward establishing autonomy or achieving identity. Always forming and never achieved, the heroine's selfhood develops through a series of separation experiences. That there is, however, a growth dynamic in this process can be argued from the evidence that older heroines, even if they never wholly discard the impulse to define themselves relationally, appear more conscious of needing to overcome this impulse through self-assertion.

It is in her relationship to the father-figure that the youthful heroine, by confronting otherness, begins to view relationship in terms of self-and-other, thus challenging her initial identification with her mother. Symbolically, this same Hegelian process continues even as heroines advance in age, to the extent that in turning from "the mother," they turn from the tendency to merge the self with another which characterizes the mother-daughter bond; at the same time, in turning toward "the father," they turn as individuals toward another in a way that characterizes the father-daughter bond. Developing relationship with the masculine is productive not only of leading the heroine away from the mother, from sameness, from collective identity; ultimately it also leads her toward an understanding of masculine nature, both within herself and embodied in external figures. Until understanding is achieved, the masculine remains unknown and threatening, perceived as a

powerful external force on whom she can depend as daughter or whom she can attempt to possess as mother. Both attitudes are themselves evidence of the heroine's tendency to define herself relationally rather than individually, and hence the turn to the father is never a gesture that is single or complete. Instead the heroine's growth can again be explained in terms of undergoing the experience of separation, since she confronts a series of masculine figures whose otherness--rather than being perceived as a force to be feared or controlled--she learns to understand and value.

In this light, the father-daughter relationship is the one most crucial to the heroine's development. Transferring affection to the masculine, the heroine begins to move away from identification that precludes both individuality and the possibility of relationship. Discussing why it is that the daughter turns to the father, Chodorow claims that the attraction between the pair is less urgent and primary than the attraction of son to mother: "The feminine oedipus complex is not simply a transfer of affection from mother to father and a giving up of the mother. Rather, psychoanalytic research demonstrates the continued importance of a girl's external and internal relation to her mother, and the way her father is added to this. This process entails a relational complexity in feminine self-definition and personality which is not characteristic of masculine self-definition or personality" (92-93). That the transfer of affection from female to male figure is essential to heterosexual development and that this process remains shrouded in some mystery to the extent that it does not unfold in either a predictable or climactic way may explain the attraction of women

writers to this issue. Stories of a woman's coming of age and courtship, though told so often, may continue to be so popular because they map out areas whose boundaries are never distinct in women's experience. Although Forster is dismissive of the novel's "monotonous" focus on matters of love, the female novel suggests that the heroine's turning toward "the father"--manifested in various forms as a turning toward the masculine--is essential not only to her sexual development but also to her psychic development wherein self-assertion replaces passive identification.

* * *

In early fiction by women the mother-daughter relationship is often absent. On the one hand it might be said that removal of the mother-daughter bond tends to streamline the developmental process since, unimpeded by issues of bonding and identification, the heroine moves directly toward improving her understanding of masculine figures. Yet on the other hand, these early fictions emphasize that developing relationship with the masculine is never simple or straightforward. At the start of her tale, the heroine often labors under the sense that the feminine is inferior to the masculine, encouraged in this view by the men to whom she looks for care and by patriarchal conditions in general. What she comes to see, however, is that her father is a figure both human and fallible whom she need neither fear nor reverence, a lesson which teaches her not only to question male authority but also to demonstrate self-reliance.

Raised to be dependent on a father she has learned to think perfect, Emily St. Aubert in Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho

(1794) does not begin by seeking to assert her independence; rather she is forced to do so by circumstances surrounding his death. Brought up to rely excessively and uncritically on him, Emily is implanted with doubts about his moral character when she witnesses him looking tearfully at a picture of a woman, not her mother. Although it is ultimately revealed that her father is unblemished, Emily's experiences after his death indicate that he has failed as a father by raising a daughter whose sense of security is based on unrealistic expectations of masculine perfection. In doubting him just before he dies, Emily is introduced to the possibility of masculine fallibility whose reality she experiences to the full when she is left to face life alone.

Forced to abandon her reliance on the external masculine, she develops a more accurate understanding of masculine nature, both outside and within herself, as a result of her relationship with the villainous Montoni, a father substitute, as well as with the morally vulnerable Valancourt, her lover. Her final willingness to accept the suit of the repentant Valancourt measures how far she has grown in knowledge, learning to depend on such inner masculine qualities as reason and adherence to principle while learning to accept fallibility as part of external masculine nature. Indeed, so much emphasis is given to her growth toward independence not in order to convey that she becomes complete in herself, but because it is this quality which facilitates relationship in place of female dependence. Without abandoning individuality, she willingly gives up the stance of independence when her lover proves himself able to recognize her worth and no longer desires to act as protective father.

Laura Montrville, the heroine of Mary Brunton's Self-Control (1811), goes through similar ordeals which help her toward the development of inner strength, as the title suggests. Here, however, the failure of the father is more pronounced, so that from the outset the daughter distrusts masculine judgment and suspects betrayal. The point that this melodrama places in such high relief is that the heroine's growth results from her painful recognition that she must rely on herself alone in matters of moral and practical survival. While she loves her father who is throughout well-meaning, his lack of judgment endangers her safety so long as she depends on him; significant of his "failure" is that by raising his daughter in country seclusion, innocent of worldly ways, he allows her to be vulnerable to the machinations of vice-ridden individuals. When a rich young rake, Hargrave, proposes to Laura, for example, it is up to her to recognize the immorality of his intentions and to reject him on grounds that her father cannot fully understand. Unable to sustain his daughter spiritually or practically, his moral misjudgment is followed by evidence of his financial mismanagement, which results in the pair's moving to the city where Laura must work to support them both.

After her father's death, Laura continues to suspect masculine motivation and judgment; she is unable to accept the help of her lover, Montague De Courcy, in rebuffing the unwanted attention of Hargrave, since she fears that masculine passion will result in a duel. Once she is engaged to De Courcy, however, he proves unable to protect her from Hargrave's aggression; he is shot by the villain who then steals Laura away to the Canadian wilderness. Since Hargrave is threatening and De

Courcy ineffectual, the lesson Laura continues to learn is that she must develop self-reliance. When she wins her own release and returns to England, she continues demonstrating strength in attempting to guard her fiancé from harm, even as she had guarded her father: despite his pleas, she refuses to marry De Courcy until evidence removes the moral cloud that she believes hangs over her name as a result of her captivity with Hargrave.

While exploring the separation of daughter from father in focusing so firmly upon Laura's overcoming her tendency to place trust in the external masculine, at the same time this novel depicts her growth as requiring her to internalize such masculine strengths as independence and perseverance. Because her independence is so strongly asserted, Laura in fact courts the danger of too far abandoning relationship to men; her primary allegiance is to God, whose counsels presumably are never false. The story documents the way in which she is so allied with masculine principle that the feminine desire for relationship appears to become secondary to her. Yet that Laura's attaining self-sufficiency coincides not only with the death of Hargrave but also with her marriage to De Courcy signifies that the dangers associated with the external masculine no longer pose a threat when the heroine is securely possessed of inner strength. Moreover, by stipulating that Laura ultimately postpone her marriage until it can be proven that she herself is worthy of De Courcy, Brunton not only humanizes Laura but also feminizes her by revealing the depth of her commitment to establishing right relationship.

What this novel also illustrates is the role of the mother-surrogate. Influenced by this figure, the heroine's femininity is nurtured while at the same time she escapes identifying with a birth

mother in a way that is threatening to her emergent selfhood. As close as this heroine may be to the mother-surrogate, she is able to separate from her with relative equanimity, since there is intimacy but not identification between them and since the blood tie to the father is stronger. Often when the birth mother's death marks the start of the heroine's story, the mother is portrayed or recalled in non-exemplary terms and the heroine therefore overcomes her negative influence by consulting a replacement figure. Just as Laura Montrville is guided by the pious Mrs. Douglas, for example, Matilda never loses the virtuous counsel of Miss Woodley in Elizabeth Inchbald's A Simple Story (1791). Yet the peripheral nature of these mother-surrogates, coupled with the heroine's strong drive to secure relationship in place of the inequities of dependence/domination, argues that the heroine's feminine nature is never an issue.

Much the same purpose is served by the use of orphaned heroines. Offered protection by lovers who would fill the office of protective father, these heroines learn that their survival depends upon their developing resources like wit and determination--upon their developing inner masculine characteristics that allow them to demonstrate selfhood. While they continue to love the masculine figure whose vulnerability is revealed, they grow beyond needing him. The orphaned Jane Eyre learns, for example, that relationship with Rochester is impossible as long as he assumes the role of beneficent father and she of dependent daughter.

Equally, the romantic intrigues in Radcliffe's The Italian (1797) can be understood as opportunities for the orphaned Elena to gain knowledge of the masculine as well as to develop inner strength that

frees her from being dependent on Vivaldi, her lover. Lacking father or father-surrogate, Elena initially views the masculine as other, fearing and then reverencing Vivaldi. Apart from initiating plot intrigues, the hero's superior social status symbolizes Elena's tendency to cast him in a god-like role, a tendency which he encourages by pledging to take over care of her. That she is endangered by such dependence is signified when her life is imperiled coincident with his proposal; she is taken captive, almost forced to join a religious order and then almost murdered, actions symbolizing that love like Vivaldi's is imprisoning and limiting. Equally symbolic are the events that befall the hero, forcing him to revise his view of himself as the caretaker on whom his beloved should rely. On the night Elena is first abducted, for example, he is unable to aid her, and becomes caught in a trap whose harmless nature makes him appear foolish; unable to locate the real culprits, he is waylaid by a chimerical foe who, when Vivaldi would strike a heroic blow against him, disappears into thin air. Twice later his attempts to free her are also foiled, which symbolizes that he offers her no sanctuary as long as he views himself as the figure on whom she depends for freedom.

During her separation from Vivaldi, Elena not only develops inner masculine qualities, but also improves her understanding of the paternal masculine, the figure worshiped in religion and empowered to dominate in patriarchal culture. Without knowledge of her father's true nature, she mistakenly identifies him as the villain Schedoni in an unconscious error that reflects her fear. When she learns that her father was a mild and good man, only brother to the villain, her new knowledge

symbolizes that fear has been replaced by understanding. Her attainment of this knowledge coincides with the death of Vivaldi's "terrible mother" and with the emergence of her own mother from seclusion and anonymity. Such a turn of events symbolizes that the feminine principle has finally won the right to free and genuine expression; it is neither confined to reacting in anger against the masculine (as Vivaldi's mother did) or in fear of the masculine (as Elena's mother did). By developing personal strength and simultaneously abandoning the belief that the masculine is a power external to the self, Elena demonstrates both to herself and to her lover that she is capable of assuming responsibility for herself and indeed that the security of their relationship depends on her doing so.

This understanding of the masculine and the right relationship of the feminine to it is also the primary concern of the narrator of Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (1688), a figure who presents herself as orphaned and independent throughout most of the story. Part of her fascination with Oroonoko appears to lie in his resembling her dead father, both being deprived of the honor and power that they claim is their due. Through her relationship with Oroonoko, the narrator gains knowledge of "the father" which is positive to the extent that he encourages her to respond to her own masculine side by demonstrating a capacity for bravery and a willingness for adventure. Yet to learn about the masculine through Oroonoko is also to learn that men can be enslaved by their desire for power and adherence to principle. Recounting Oroonoko's murder of his wife, Immoinda, the narrator suggests not only that it is dangerous for women to reverence men as they might "a Deity"

(202), but also that men are limited so long as they honor principles before love.

Living in a world controlled by powerful men, then, the narrator nonetheless tells a tale that ultimately emphasizes the limits of masculine heroics. Those admissions of female inferiority that she makes appear to be only superficial. Although she deprecates herself for being "only a Female Pen," for example, she nevertheless raises the point that no man can survive the violence and invasion that the novel as a whole associates with aggressive masculine nature; able herself to survive, the narrator has taken over the writing task because one man in particular "died before he began it, and bemoan'd himself for not having undertook it in Time" (169). While the narrator's concern with Oroonoko reveals her fascination with the masculine, the novel ultimately suggests that women should neither depend on nor attempt to resemble men. In the final paragraph of the novel, by making reference to having both mother and sister, the narrator abandons the independent stance she has assumed, thereby affirming her femininity, but only after she has deepened her understanding of the components of masculinity.

While the earliest women writers emphasize the frailty of the father, and the daughter's consequent need to internalize masculine strengths, a more mainstream writer like Jane Austen tends to emphasize the frailty of the motherless heroine herself, whose growth requires that she begin to allow for otherness in an external masculine figure. Like earlier heroines, Austen's protagonists need to outgrow the attitude of daughterly dependence which makes them vulnerable to men, but they also need to avoid the further hazard of motherly

possessiveness, which attempts the reverse in making men captive to women. Cast in melodramas, the earlier heroines are more or less forced to develop inner masculine strength in environments that constantly threaten their very survival--coming to the painful recognition that if they don't protect themselves, no one will. Staged more realistically, an Austen novel suggests that growth (rather than life) is at stake for a heroine who often controls and directs a relatively stable domestic environment. Raised by a doting father, this heroine tends on the one hand to identify with a paternal figure who approves all she does and on the other to grow manipulative and possessive both of him and others, having been indulged in an attitude of self-importance. The turn toward "the father" in this case involves recognizing the value of a figure who, coming from outside the safe confines of primary family, represents otherness and resists control.

In initially failing to develop genuine relationship with the masculine in place of possessiveness, for example, the heroine of Jane Austen's Emma (1816) does not face a life-threatening situation as is so often the case with heroines of early fictions, but she does face being isolated. Raised uncritically by governess and father alike, neither of whom encourage her to aspire to be anything beyond what she is, she develops a false sense of security. The influence of her ineffectual and doting father is disparaged by Austen in particularly strong language: "The evil of the actual disparity in their ages (and Mr. Woodhouse had not married early) was much increased by his constitution and habits...though everywhere beloved for the friendliness of his heart and his amiable temper, his talents could not have recommended him at

any time" (7 emphasis mine). In Emma's father, masculine nature is characterized as vulnerable and dependent, since he tolerates and admires all she does so long as she ensures the satisfaction of his whims, even when this requires that she withhold details he might find troubling. As in the earlier novels, the frail father instills a false view of the masculine in his daughter. But different here is that he is explicitly cast as the protected rather than the protecting figure; as a result, rather than learning through hardship to assert her individuality, the heroine is convinced from the start that she is mistress of all she surveys.

In believing that she is always right, as her father affirms, a heroine like Emma conforms to the pattern of the animus-driven daughter as described by Jung: "the animus is basically influenced by a woman's father. The father endows his daughter's animus with the special coloring of unarguable, incontestable 'true' convictions--convictions that never include the personal reality of the woman herself as she actually is" (Symbols 199). In Emma's case, the problem is compounded by the effeminate nature of her father as well as by his glowing vision of her, occasioning her desire never to marry and never to leave him. Her animus-driven character thus inhibits development not only of qualities of the inner masculine--reason and judgment--but also of feminine qualities that would lead her to care for others and respect their feelings; her mockery of Miss Bates registers her fall from feminine feeling, although her immediate remorse upon reviewing her actions argues that her feminine nature is only in temporary eclipse. "How could you be so unfeeling to Miss Bates," asks Knightley; Emma's

response is to "blush" and feel "sorry" (297).

As with her father, Emma's initial approach to other men is to try to dominate them. With Mr. Knightley, for example, she struggles to gain his admission that she has judged better than he in pronouncing Harriet Smith superior to Robert Martin; as their discussion draws to a close she competitively reiterates the wisdom of her opinion: "Now, Mr. Knightley, a word or two more and I have done. As far as good intentions went, we were both right, and I must say that no effects on my side of the argument have yet proved wrong" (81). Similarly, her infatuation with Frank Churchill proceeds from her feeling that she has possession of his affections: "To complete every other recommendation, he had almost told her that he loved her" (207). Reviewing her feelings for him, she feels secure in holding the upper hand: "I do suspect that he is not really necessary to my happiness. So much the better. I certainly will not persuade myself to feel more than I do. I am quite enough in love....He is undoubtedly very much in love--everything denotes it--very much in love indeed!" (209).

To grow, Emma needs both to develop relationship with an external figure representing masculine reason and judgment and to develop these strengths within herself. The former function is served by Knightley, who comments critically on her actions and therefore challenges her to separate from her father, from her animus-inspired beliefs. The latter is played out when Knightley is away in London, and Emma begins to recognize that in order to be able to live comfortably with herself she must develop reason and judgment. While Knightley may guide the direction of her growth, then, she undertakes it as much to improve herself as to make possible relationship with him. Indeed, her marriage

signifies that she has already worked toward bringing about an inner balance of feminine and masculine qualities. Opposed to her early match-making, undertaken on the false belief that, beyond needing to change herself, she can direct the lives of others, her marriage takes place only after she recognizes that she has been wrong to manipulate those for whom she cares (thus responding to an urge to foster relationship) and that she needs to develop a stronger character if she is to become "more rational, more acquainted with herself" (336).

The experiences of Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and Prejudice (1813) and Fanny Price in Mansfield Park (1814) also illustrate the way in which "motherless" daughters engage in a growth process which requires above all else that they develop relationship with the masculine both within and without. While both heroines have mothers, neither Mrs. Bennet nor Mrs. Price exert significant influence on their daughters, who need not expend energies in either attempting to resemble or react against them. Mrs. Bennet is something of an embarrassment to Elizabeth, who tends to identify with her father. Mrs. Price is a distant figure who Fanny believes she loves until an extended visit home teaches her that her mother is self-consumed and short-sighted. Each heroine becomes an exemplary figure not only for being herself guided by reason and principle in her judgments but finally for marrying well. While their commitment to loving the hero underscores their femininity, their choice of a lover of high standards and station underscores their internalizing masculine reason and judgment.

While Radcliffe's heroines tend to be dependent and Austen's possessive in novels that draw toward melodrama and realism,

respectively, it is possible for both types of heroines to appear together, as they do, for example, in Charlotte Brontë's Shirley (1849). If the implicit argument of these early novels is that love relationships between heroine and hero are the most serious business in life, this contention becomes explicit in Brontë's novel. Further, Brontë can also be seen as exploring the limitations of female friendship to the extent that Caroline and Shirley, despite drawing close, require masculine lovers to balance their characters. Apart from providing a detailed account of the courtship experiences of the orphaned heroines, the novel also presents a number of characters who, for having failed to find fulfillment in love, have grown warped in ways that are destructive of personal, family and social life. Older women who have failed to attain inner balance, and failed at the same time to find fulfillment in marriage, act as cautionary figures to Caroline and Shirley of what may befall them if they do not understand the masculine and gain satisfactory relation to it. A warning figure to the submissive and dependent Caroline, Mrs. Pryor shrinks before others, desperate for signs of affection and devastated by criticism; a warning to Shirley against continuing fearful and angry, Mrs. Yorke wants mastery without love, attempting to dominate because of her fierce anger and frustration. The novel, however, avoids focusing on problems of female inter-relatedness since neither Caroline nor Shirley identify with these older figures, who serve merely as instructive examples of problems befalling woman who fail to understand or form relationship with the masculine.

Resembling Radcliffe's heroines, Caroline must overcome being

dependent on masculine figures whom she tends to view as other. The daughter of a terrible father and raised by her harsh Rector uncle, Caroline grows up with deep-seated timidity. As a young woman, she is reunited with her mother, Mrs. Pryor, who is not only terrified of outer masculine figures but has also abandoned development of the inner masculine, declaring herself "deficient in self-confidence and decision" (290). While serving as a cautionary figure of the bitter fate befalling women who continue fearful of and dependent on male figures, Mrs. Pryor at the same time serves as a positive influence, offering maternal love that gives her daughter a sense of relationship and substance: "you have been so neglected, so repulsed, left so desolate" (339). Revealing her identity at a late stage in Caroline's development and at a time when Caroline is desperate to feel connected to another, Mrs. Pryor literally saves Caroline's life, enabling her to go on living, to maintain herself. To grow, however, she needs to avoid growing dependent on her mother or absorbing her influence by instead developing the inner masculine.

The figure to whom Caroline looks adoringly and dependently is Robert Moore, who causes her pain since his signs of caring for her are given so inconsistently. In inflated language, the narrator suggests that while Robert's behavior may be cruel, and while Caroline may be emotionally crushed by it, it may ultimately help her toward growing more resilient: "You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation: close your fingers firmly upon the gift; let it sting through your palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed

scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test--some, it is said, die under it--you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive" (87). Experiencing masculine rejection, Caroline is forced to carry on and rally her strength, which helps her toward caring for Robert without being dependent on him. Ultimately demonstrating "self-reliance--self-dependence" when she seeks out Robert in a visit that leads to their union, she is helped in this enterprise by the young boy, Martin Yorke, a figure symbolizing her emergent masculine character (466).

Resembling Austen's Emma, the orphaned Shirley is Caroline's opposite in being a wealthy, strong-willed and self-reliant young woman whose vulnerability lies in her prideful claim that she needs no one. While her independence is never in question, it is based on a false sense of personal power which threatens to alienate her from others whose value she undermines. Her growth is demonstrated when she develops her relationship with Louis Moore, Robert's brother who is his opposite in being wise, gentle and unassuming. Like Caroline and Robert, these lovers undergo periods of symbolic sickness during which each gains self-knowledge that promotes their final union. Louis must overcome his pride, which makes him reluctant as a poor man to offer marriage to Shirley, while Shirley must limit her self-sufficiency by recognizing that others are worthy of respect and love. Having tended to undermine the masculine to make a show of her superior strength, she nonetheless desires a union with a man who is her equal. "Leading and improving! teaching and tutoring! bearing and forbearing!

Pah! My husband is not to be my baby" (486). With Louis, as indicated in her reference to herself as a subdued leopardess in their final exchange, she believes she has found a challenging figure to whom she can look for guidance: "I am glad I know my keeper, and am used to him. Only his voice will I follow; only his hand shall manage me; only at his feet will I repose" (490). That Louis's mastery does not lead to her servitude, however, is clear in the lines immediately following, in which she describes him as subdued by her: "Shirley's pet and favorite, lie down!" (491). Despite apparent contradiction, what Shirley expresses here is the extent to which cooperating individuals can inspire each other with love.

* * *

Noting the way in which the nineteenth-century story of the motherless heroine gives way to the twentieth-century story of the heroine who experiences the death of her mother, Judith Kegan Gardiner suggests that this pattern argues that mother-daughter relationships "are central to the development of women's identities": "The nineteenth-century fictional mother often died in childbirth to insure her child an unencumbered ascent as a self-made person. The twentieth-century heroine's mother also dies--in the birth of the heroine's identity" ("Daughter" 244). More accurately, it is the overcoming of the mother-daughter bond that is central to the heroine's development, just as for heroines both early and late, developing the father-daughter relationship is central to growth.

Even though early novels typically feature a heroine who is freed

at birth from the mother-daughter bond, this heroine nonetheless acts on an impulse to define herself relationally which is evident in her initial perception of herself as either dependent on or possessive of the father. It is by encountering a variety of masculine figures that she ultimately separates herself from the role of daughter or mother to evolve a sense of herself as an individual who is able to love another. By adding the mother-daughter bond to the portrait of the modern heroine, this same struggle toward individuality is examined in more complexity. Often this heroine transfers her affections to the father less on the basis of positive attraction than on the basis of reaction against her mother, seeking otherness in place of identification. While the daughter often feels compelled to undertake such a transfer, it is nonetheless painful in requiring her to break from the safety of sameness and frightening in propelling her toward unknown otherness; moreover, the daughter's first turn to the father is often disillusioning in requiring her to recognize that she can neither depend on nor possess this figure. The movement from relational self-definition--rather than being performed as a series of steps each of whose completion results in self-satisfaction--is often experienced as necessary but painful by a heroine whose immediate wish following separation is often to recover the severed bond. While seeking individuality in abandonment of identification, then, the heroine is strongly ambivalent as she experiences such growth.

In Carson McCullers' The Member of the Wedding (1946), for example, the twelve-year old Frankie, despite being motherless, is portrayed as being intimately connected to the black housekeeper, Berenice. Unable

to end this dependency by turning her affections toward her father--indeed interpreting her rejection from his bed as one of the signals that she must abandon the role of child--she seeks in the outsider Mary Littlejohn a figure who represents a non-threatening form of otherness, whose "difference was a final touch of strangeness, silent terror, that, completed the wonder of her love" (151). Befriending Mary, Frankie transfers her affections to a figure Berenice rightly recognizes as her opposite, causing friction between mother and daughter which ultimately leads them to separate: "There had been words between them on the subject. Berenice had spoken of Mary as being lumpy white, and Frances had defended fiercely" (150). The turning from "mother" to "father," from the sameness of femininity to the otherness associated with masculinity, is at the core of a novel like this, even though not immediately discernible since the role of the masculine is performed by a female figure.

The turmoil accompanying Frankie's separation from the mother is instructive of the heroine's ambivalence and even resistance to a process that she nonetheless undertakes toward differentiating self from other; compelled to seek separation and selfhood, Frankie still remains committed to the belief that identification with others is essential to self-definition. Separation is particularly threatening in Frankie's case because she feels that the death of a parent--in this case, the death of her mother coincident with her birth--has already set her apart from others. Alone, she envisions herself as a "freak" (18), a "criminal" (20), and--using an image of self-entrapment recurrent in women's fictions--as someone caught in "a silent crazy jungle under

glass" (I emphasis mine). When she thinks about the relational mystery she perceives at the heart of life, she sounds like a young Clarissa Dalloway who has not yet learned how to forge the connections between individuals that affirm and enrich life. Clarissa feels optimistic about her power to foster relationship, and thus about her ability to overcome divisiveness which, as a natural condition, threatens to keep people apart. Frankie, on the other hand, feels overwhelmed by her inability to understand the underlying connection which she assumes binds individuals together: "I mean you walk around and you see all the people. And to me they look loose.....All these people and you don't know what joins them up. There's bound to be some sort of reason and connection. Yet somehow I can't seem to name it" (114-15).

Despite her anxious desire to connect with others, in large part the experience of separation that Frankie undergoes is voluntary; her coming of age makes her seek to break free of the "family" she has found in her cousin, John Henry, and in the mother figure, Berenice. From this perspective, separation, perceived as threatening since it challenges a desire for "membership" that appears instinctual, is not only necessary to her growth but even self-generated. Rather than simply breaking away from the pair and asserting her independence, Frankie postpones withdrawal until she finds others with whom to identify. That she no longer wants to be known as Frankie but rather as F. Jasmine at this point helps to emphasize the feminine character of her dilemma: as a young girl, she resists the experience of separation until she is certain of identifying with an alternative source.

Reflecting her cautious and even resistant attitude toward growth, F. Jasmine chooses mother and father substitutes, in selecting her brother, Jarvis, and his bride-to-be, Janice, as "the we of me" (138). Her desire to be a member of the wedding, while it remains wholly unrealistic in that she never articulates exactly what such membership involves, reveals her compulsion to break free of the mother-daughter bond coupled with her ongoing belief that identification with others is essential to self-definition: "At last she knew just who she was and understood where she was going. She loved her brother and the bride and she was a member of the wedding. The three of them would go into the world and they would always be together. And finally, after the scared spring and the crazy summer, she was no more afraid" (43).

When she is denied this identification and forcibly separated from the pair, she enters another phase of development in becoming Frances to her new friend Mary. Something of a "transition" figure, Mary represents otherness on the one hand but reassuring sameness on the other. Over the course of their friendship Frankie strengthens her femininity by bonding with Mary, but it is equally significant that Mary, initially perceived as other, takes the place of the "nice little white boy beau" that Berenice has recommended Frankie find (78). When Frankie says, "I consider it the greatest honor of my existence that Mary has picked me out to be her one most intimate friend," part of her pleasure derives from her having demonstrated a capacity to attract others; having broken away from the identity granted her as part of a family to identify instead with an outside figure, her self-image is strengthened. Thus Frankie's initial experience of separation and

otherness is resolved in a non-threatening fashion, Mary acting out the role that Frankie will later assign to masculine figures.

Ending with the death of John Henry and the pathetic retirement of Berenice, the novel symbolically conveys that, despite pain and sadness, Frances Addams has succeeded in separating from a mother-child relationship that was repressive of her femininity. While such a separation results in growth, the cycle of her development is far from complete. Since she has transferred her identification from one figure to another, her definition of self is still firmly rooted in relatedness to other. The connection between her relationship to John Henry and Mary Littlejohn is suggested by the link between their names--John Henry, her junior and the friend with whom she identified in her tomboy youth being replaced by Mary, two years her superior (signifying her newfound maturity), the friend with whom she will identify in her female adolescence.

That ambivalent feelings appear to be particularly strong in the youthful heroine when she turns for the first time from mother to father is further illustrated in Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women (1971); like Frankie, Del Jordan is determined to replace her mother, but reluctant to do so by turning directly to her father. Both have been raised in a "woman's world" to the extent that a mother-figure presides over their day-to-day lives, from which their fathers remain absent, a situation that intensifies around the time of their puberty or coming of age. As a result, Frankie and Del regard their fathers with a mixture of disappointment and fear, which is compounded as they cast about for a figure to replace their mother as affectionate center. Moreover, while

both question the mother-figure about male-female relationships, thus revealing lively interest in this area, the answers they receive tend to dampen further their willingness to rely on the masculine. Although Berenice shares with Frankie stories of the undiminished love she feels for her first husband, at the same time she uses her experience of loving and losing a man as an example to warn Frankie away from depending on others or seeking permanence in love. Mrs. Jordan's recollections of the love between herself and her husband are even less reassuring to Del because the appearance of her father in the role of lover seems to mark the end of her mother's achievements and adventures; when Mrs. Jordan refers to her husband as a "gentleman" by way of answering Del's insistent questions as to why her parents fell in love, Del's disillusionment is obvious when she wonders, "Was that all?" (67). In neither case is the father particularly attractive to the daughter; instead, as a figure remarked upon most often for his remoteness, he produces feelings of fear and, at best, ambivalence.

While Frankie and Del could be said to have "failed" relationships with "absent" fathers, each finds a non-threatening substitute figure in the form of a female contemporary. Gaining a measure of distance from her mother--whom she initially, and as she discovers erroneously, views as "powerful" and "content," "like a princess" (67)--Del establishes a friendship with Naomi that "extended and gave resonance to life" (101). Further representative of the unknown masculine, Naomi is attractive to Del because, preoccupied with the subject of sex, she is able to offer a number of "facts" about it. While these same-sex friendships involve the intimacy that Abel describes as typifying the feminine, it is

significant that otherness presides at their inception. Moreover, rather than serving as "a vehicle of self-definition for women," "clarifying identity" in a way that Abel suggests is productive of "psychic wholeness" ("Identities" 416-17), Del's broken relationship with Naomi suggests that such friendships are fated to be outgrown over time, as the heroine repeats the pattern of development that has already urged her to free herself from identification with the mother.

Taking place over a longer time span than Frankie's, Del's story demonstrates that her growth continues to be measured by her movement away from identification with her mother and toward ever deeper ties with figures of the masculine: she is drawn in friendship to Naomi; in fantasy, to Frank Wales; in voyeuristic and exhibitionistic experiment, to Art Chamberlain and Jerry Storey; and in sexual fulfillment, to Garnet French. What is significant is that once Garnet reveals his need for her--and his desire to possess and control her--he is portrayed as being very like her mother. Like Ida before him, he attempts to control Del's religious principles, her attitudes toward family, as well as to dictate the shape of her future. When the novel closes, Del has separated from him, determined at this point to seek an independent future. Such a situation does not suggest, however that she has given up on heterosexual relationships; rather, it suggests that she has moved beyond being satisfied by infantile possessiveness, like that which binds mother to child. Del's story--composed of a succession of relationships that close with separation--is about the necessary movement away from the mother-daughter bond, away from identification, and toward the development of an independent self that is able to allow

for otherness and therefore to participate in relationship.

In many ways, the turn from "mother" to "father" continues to underlie the actions of more mature heroines like Mildred Lathbury and Ianthe Broome in Barbara Pym's Excellent Women (1952) and An Unsuitable Attachment (1982). While both have some reservations about entering into marriage, both willingly accept the risk, being on the one hand attracted to their lovers and on the other eager to admit change into their lives. Until they consider marrying, both Mildred and Ianthe think of themselves as daughters of clergymen, men typically portrayed as non-masculine in Pym's fiction. Although the death of their parents has left them without family to care for, they continue in the role of dutiful daughter. Without being critical of these characters or their lives of quiet devotion, Pym does depict their worlds as having grown more restrictive as they have aged. Mildred, for example, remarks on the sameness that characterizes her life--"I sometimes thought how strange it was that I should have managed to make a life for myself in London so very much like the life I had lived in a country rectory when my parents were alive" (11)--acknowledging at the same time that her circle of friends has narrowed: "for who was there really to grieve for me when I was gone?....I could so easily be replaced" (39). Both Mildred and Ianthe live amidst Victorian relics from their parish homes which, like the heroines themselves, represent a time and way of life that charm the modern world without being vital to it. In cleaving to sameness, in continuing to define themselves as the clergymen's daughters and thus doing selflessly for others in a diminishing circle of Christian fellowship, both women perceive their lives as at best

orderly and helpful, at worst, unadventurous, restrictive, and even sterile.

At the start of Excellent Women, Mildred has already begun the process of separating herself from feminine connections, having adjusted to the death of her parents and then to the departure of Dora Caldicote, her girlhood friend who becomes her roommate. In the second chapter, she resists moving in with Winifred and her clergyman brother, Julian--in effect refusing to revert to the position of infant to surrogate parents, even if she herself continues living much as she did when her parents were alive. At this stage, she appears to have moved beyond child-like identification with an external figure of the feminine because, being herself wholly feminine, she needs no further affirmation of this way of being. Masculine influence intrudes upon her life, unasked for, when the flat below hers is rented to the Napiers, a "modern" couple whose mutual assertiveness challenges quiet self-effacing and service as a way of life: "people like the Napiers had not so far come within my range of experience. I was much more at home with Winifred and Julian Malory, Dora Caldicote, and the worthy but uninteresting people whom I met at my work or in connection with the church" (27). In her infatuation with Rockingham Napier, in particular, she admires a "manly" man unlike others she has known--different from Dora's effete brother, William, as well as from the clergyman, Julian, who must argue for his masculinity: "'I suppose I am not to be considered as a normal man,' said Julian, taking off his yellow-streaked cassock and draping it over the step-ladder, 'and yet I do have these manly feelings'" (42).

As much as Mildred attempts to avoid the Napiers and to continue living according to her established pattern, she is drawn into their world and fascinated by them. Shopping with her old friend Dora, she feels momentarily as if she has returned to the safety of feminine concerns, remembering fondly "those happier days when the company of women friends had seemed enough" (102). She is no longer as she was before her encounter with masculine otherness, however. No longer content merely to be like others and do for others, she now wants to be attractive to others, her feminine vanity stimulated by her attraction to Rocky. As a result, even her shopping trip does not unfold uneventfully as of old; recognizing and resenting signs of change in Mildred, Dora accuses her of having learned to care about fashion and appearances.

At several points throughout the novel, Mildred claims to want to withdraw from disturbing masculine influences in order to return to the former security of her feminine world: "'I almost wish the Napiers hadn't come to live in my house,' I said. 'Things were much simpler before they came'" (165). Here, the qualifier "almost" is central, since it emphasizes her ambivalence to an experience that is at once painful--in requiring her to separate from routine, from sameness, from collective femininity--and exciting--in requiring her to act in new ways and interact with new people. Toward the end of the novel, Mildred herself actively seeks out the masculine, determined now to place herself in relationship with another rather than to remain an observer figure, one amongst many excellent women. Much like a young girl, she courts Everard Bone by frequenting his haunts, although, more

experienced than a young girl, she recognizes that she courts complications, too. Significant here is that she has developed to a stage where the sameness of friendship between women or between women and feminine men, like Julian and William, is less comforting than restrictive: "And yet, what had I really hoped for? Dull, solid friendship without charm? No, there was enough of that between women and women and even between men and women" (226).

Although similar developments lead Ianthe Broome to marry John Challow in An Unsuitable Attachment, Ianthe, even more naive than Mildred in her understanding of masculine nature, turns with more enthusiasm toward her lover, cherishing romantic expectations about the happiness marriage will bring. The novel opens with many references to the recent death of Ianthe's mother, an event which helps Ianthe toward loosening the influential hold her mother has had. Most restrictive has been Mrs. Broome's concern that she and her daughter retain their appropriate genteel social position as wife and daughter of a deceased Canon. In being attracted to John, Ianthe chooses a man whom she knows her mother would find unsuitable, one who attracts her because he is so unlike the feminine men she has known: "she had forgotten not only how good-looking he was but how different from the men she had been seeing on her holiday and indeed all her life--different from Mark Ainger and Basil Branche, from Edwin Pettigrew and Rupert Stonebird, and from all the ranks of clergymen and schoolmasters stretching back into the past like pale imitations of men, it now seemed" (198). Although her admiration for John may exceed his merits, and although some of it may be based on her need to react against the role of quiet gentlewoman into

which she has been cast by all but her lover, it nonetheless represents the beginning of growth, since by it she separates herself from the role of daughter and the identity accompanying it.

Married or aged, the heroine continues to separate from "the mother" and to turn to "the father." Not only does she separate from a lover or mate who attempts to possess or control her as her mother has, but, on an interior level, she also eschews mothering instincts. In Janette Turner Hospital's The Ivory Swing (1982), for example, while Juliet shows concern for her children's happiness, her emotions are engaged by the figure of Jeremy and her actions are toward uniting with him. In contrast to the intimacy of the family life she shares with her husband, David, and their children, she yearns for the "world of authority and exploration and freedom. The world of men" (146). This is the world that she feels she inhabited with Jeremy, and she often fantasizes about his returning her to it, "riding out of the West to cut his way through jungle walls and rescue her with a kiss from the tropics" (104). Wanting to be saved from "feminine" domesticity, from "the mother"--from all the things that her relationship with David symbolizes--she desires the "father"--the freedom that her relationship with Jeremy symbolizes. Yet her fantasies of being rescued by Jeremy have the effect of preventing her from facing the inner changes that compell her to assert herself. Ultimately, she acknowledges as her own the need to let go of her clinging and possessive self. What this novel also suggests is that when the heroine initially turns to her "inner father," she may do so in a way that is extreme or reactionary, placing independence and achievement before caring; as a result, she may face

disillusionment much like that which the youthful heroine experiences upon first turning from actual mother to father.

Forming one of the most eloquent arguments in favor of seeing the heroine's developmental experience as leading her, through progressive separations, away from relational self-definition toward individuality is a novel like Penelope Mortimer's The Handyman (1983), which features the growth of an elderly protagonist. Typifying the attitude of older fictional heroines, she is able to face death with courage and calm as a result of gaining a sense of herself as separate from those she loves. Much like Clarissa Dalloway, she learns that privacy does not undermine intimacy and by extension that with aging and death, one may naturally begin to withdraw from others without feeling cut off from life.

When her husband Gerald dies suddenly, Phyllis not only turns to "the father" within, developing qualities that make her strong and resilient, but turns simultaneously from "the mother" within, which ultimately leads to a more mature relationship with her children, specifically with her son, Michael. While she has developed a close relationship with her daughter based on same-sex bonding, she has been unknowingly deceptive in her relationships with men. Claiming to rely on them like a daughter, she assumes the role of mother in treating them as emotional dependents: "she treated her grandson exactly as she had treated Gerald, with love and concern and mild exasperation" (9). When Gerald dies, so used is she to acting dependently that she turns to her son, as she would to Gerald, with the pretense of helplessness: "Phyllis longed to take his hand, but leant on him instead, as seemed proper" (8). Reviewing herself, she is able only to see herself in relation to

others: "She no longer knew what her role was, pulled this way and that, protected and unprotected, assumed to be dependent on those who ought to depend on her and independent by those who didn't know how to treat her as a solitary women" (13). Excessively feminine at this point, she reacts much like youthful protagonists, who feel compelled to separate from the mother and court the father, toward asserting independence. Moreover, just as reacting against the mother causes youthful protagonists to feel anxious and alone, Phyllis suffers by moving to a remote country cottage at some remove from her family.

Attempting to foster inner masculine strengths, Phyllis projects this desire upon an external figure, the much younger handyman, Fred Skerry, participating in a "January-May" friendship that ends abruptly when he reveals his sexual desire: "I like to see old women" (151). His betrayal has the positive effect of forcing Phyllis to recognize that while she does not have the energy or inclination to establish new intimacies, she does not want to be cut off from those she loves. Seeking comfort for the first time from her son, Michael, and not, as of old, from her married daughter, Sophia, Phyllis is no longer afraid that to ask for his emotional support is to demand too much. She falls asleep in his arms, awakening with him to a relationship of new depth; he experiences "the sensation of being born" (155), while she is similarly moved: "It was a first morning. She was awed by it" (156). By relying on her son, Phyllis acknowledges her right to a relationship based on mutual give and take, learning to see that even within the mother-son relationship she alone does not bear responsibility for emotional nurturance. That the two move beyond postures of dependence

and independence and toward the exchange of love is emphasized in her final analysis of the mutuality in their relationship: "Her new relationship with Michael filled her with peace, which the old one had never done. Asking his help in that time of extreme despair seemed to have enabled her to see him for the first time. Of course that couldn't be true, so perhaps it was he who had, as it were, become visible. Whatever the reason, they had become equals" (177). Her exchange with Michael gives her a renewed sense of the value of her relationship to the masculine, both without and within: she can look outside to a masculine figure for support and care, aware now that she possesses enough inner strength to allow her to maintain independence. When Michael pledges to devote himself to his mother--"I'll come down as often as I can"--Phyllis insists that she has no wish to become dependent and possessive, and recommends that they each continue with their lives: "'No!' she protested, distressed for the first time. 'That isn't why I came! That isn't what I want! I'm not an invalid. I won't have it!'" (160).

Reflective of the female novel in general, this story of an aged protagonist meeting her death focuses on the experience of learning through separation, learning that is occasioned by turning from the comfort of "the mother"--from a secure feminine world of sameness and dependence--to explore the challenging otherness of "the father." Like other protagonists Phyllis surrenders the role of mother, and the accompanying family ties, in order to explore life as an independent woman, as she does on her own with Fred. She turns from same-sex bonding with her daughter--where each identifies with the other and

attempts possessively to rule the other while fighting to maintain a separate self--to explore and develop a relationship with her son--where each is separate and able to show care. Initially equating pleasing others with pleasing herself, she ultimately elects to live in a care home because she recognizes that by so doing she can fulfill personal needs that are distinct from--but not antagonistic to--the needs of others: "After a lifetime of service, however willing it had been, she was prepared to be shamelessly selfish....The greatest bequest she could make to Michael and Jasper, to Sophia and Selina, was the memory of a well-cared-for, happy and independent old woman trotting off to death in the company of her peers" (176). Typifying the heroine is that when Phyllis thus asserts her individuality, she does so without abandoning concern for others and indeed acts in a way that ultimately fosters deeper relationship.

* * *

Although in modern fiction, the three components of development (self, mother, father) continue to be found, developmental direction becomes a more complex issue. Early parental loss, for example, is often portrayed as an experience that undermines the heroine's self-definition and consequent growth. While the orphaned heroine of early fiction is similarly vulnerable, the modern heroine often fails to correct this situation, unable to find alternative parental figures with whom to undergo bonding and separation.

In Jean Rhys's Voyage in the Dark (1934), for example, eighteen-year old Anna Morgan believes she inherits misfortune from her

parents--promiscuity from her mother, instability from her father and early death from both. Although physically separated from them, she remains psychically their child, unable to regain the way of life they knew and lived as a group, but unable to establish a compensating alternative. What she terms her "rebirth," following their deaths and her separation from home ground, is in fact experienced by her as being more like a death. Attached to nothing, she has nothing from which to separate. Having lost all the relationships on which her youthful sense of identity was based, she feels insubstantial, a kind of non-being, referring to herself as a zombie: "looking in the glass and thinking sometimes my eyes look like a soucriant's eyes..." (114). Her new life is a sort of non-life, from which she wishes she could awaken as if from a bad dream. Even during her brief interlude of feeling cared for by her lover, Walter, Anna is beset by depression whenever she is alone, and must seek out the feeling of camaraderie supplied by company and alcohol if she is to convince herself that she is alive and that her life holds some promise.

Having no sense of self, Anna is terrified at the prospect of having a child. Instead of seeing mothering as a way to regain meaningful intimacy, she yearns instead to be returned to the role of cared-for child. Moreover, her self-image distorted, she fears its reproduction. Initially, perhaps because of her certainty that nothing comes of nothing, she finds it hard to believe herself pregnant; later, when arranging for her abortion, she discloses her fear that a child of hers would be disfigured or maimed: "It would have something the matter with it. And I think about that all the time, and that's what I mind"

(120). While part of her concern is aroused by what she may have done in taking a number of drugs to induce abortion, another part grows from her sense of herself as doomed and damaged, an assumption she demonstrates in acting by turns as if she is nothing or as if she must destroy what she is. After her abortion, the thought of "starting all over again," is threatening to Anna, given that as much as she is terrified of dying she is equally depressed by the prospect of living through a repetition of sterile experience: "Everything was always exactly alike--that was what I could never get used to. And the cold; and the houses all exactly alike, and the streets going north, south, east, west, all exactly alike" (125). The repetition and ellipsis in the final phrases underline the extent to which she faces the continuation of her life without enthusiasm or direction: "And about starting all over again, all over again..." (129).

While Anna suffers a general loss of family and homeland, her insecurity and unhappiness can be traced back most directly to her experience of losing her father. When she turns to Walter, a father-figure lover who is twice her age, she seeks a masculine protector. Having experienced masculine instability in her father, however--in his absences, his temper, and finally his death--she is terrified that Walter will leave her, a feeling partly reasonable given her expendability as his mistress. Having been trained to expect both loss and instability, she responds to both his shows of affection and offers of money with an overwhelming gratitude that embarrasses and surprises him:

My handbag was on the table. He took it up and put some money into it.... I meant to say "What are you

doing?" But when I went up to him, instead of saying, "Don't do that," I said, "All right, if you like--anything you like, any way you like." And I kissed his hand.

"Don't," he said. "It's I who ought to kiss your hand, not you mine."

I felt miserable suddenly and utterly lost. "Why did I do that?" I thought. (37)

When Walter finally leaves her, she is devastated but not surprised since she has always viewed his departure as something to be forestalled but ultimately inevitable; at their last encounter, for example, despite there being no talk of their relationship ending, she anticipates his leaving her and begs, "Don't forget me, don't forget me ever" (69). Moreover, when questioned about her goals by Walter, she reveals herself totally unambitious of independent action or achievement: "I said, 'I want to be with you. That's all I want'" (45). In response, Walter calls her a "baby" and perceives of her as a "child," responsibility for whom he is ultimately unwilling to shoulder. It is not her young age alone that prompts him to see her as childish, but her attitude of vulnerability and helpless dependence.

An equally instructive example of the importance of the father in female self-definition is Sylvia's Plath's The Bell Jar (1963), wherein Esther Greenwood states outright that, following the death of her father, "I had never been really happy again" (61). With the death of her father, Esther loses the security of her childhood world, helplessly undergoing separation from all that she feels closest to and identifies with. While at times she assumes the identity of the orphaned "Elly Higginbottom," she is less committed to generating a new identity than to destroying herself. Feeling as if part of her died with her father,

she is obsessed with a death wish whose achievement would reunite her with him and remove her from "the motherly breath of the suburbs" (93).

The name of her New York hotel, the Amazon, symbolically focuses on the problem she faces, which, unresolved, leads to her breakdown: the need to understand her relationship to the masculine, both as it operates within, leading her to strive for success, and as it exists without, in relation to the men she meets and the father she lost. It is during her stay at the Amazon that she loses the inner drive which formerly compelled her to compete and succeed, opening instead to a sense of indirection which culminates in the chorus of self-destructive voices she hears: "Doesn't your work interest you, Esther? You know, Esther, you've got the perfect setup of a true neurotic. You'll never get anywhere like that, you'll never get anywhere like that, you'll never get anywhere like that" (120). It is as if the inner masculine, formerly overactive in compelling her to be first no matter the cost, instructs her to give up struggling toward goals that appear impossible, in a way that corresponds to a Jungian assessment of a typical animus problem: "A strange passivity and paralysis of all feeling, or a deep sense of insecurity that can lead almost to a sense of nullity, may sometimes be the result of an unconscious animus opinion. In the depths of the woman's being, the animus whispers: 'You are hopeless. What's the use of trying? There is no point in doing anything. Life will never change for the better'" (Symbols 202). Similar to Emma Woodhouse, whose animus-dominated determination to control life--and specifically to manipulate others--results from her relationship to a father who lacks judgment, Esther's animus-driven attitudes arise because she lacks

the corrective influence of masculine judgment; whereas Emma, responding to a misguided father, is sure she is correct, Esther, without a father, is terrified of failure and error.

The weakening of Esther's animus is accompanied by growing recollections of her dead father, whom she begins to seek out through suicide attempts and a visit to his grave. When her inner masculine qualities begin to founder, she cannot strengthen them by identifying with a strong figure of the masculine; instead she connects the hollowness of her ambitions to a sense that she has been fathered by a weak man: "It [the statement that she does not know what she wants to do] sounded true, and I recognized it, the way you recognize some nondescript person that's been hanging around your door for ages and then suddenly comes up and introduces himself as your real father and looks exactly like you, so you know he really is your father, and the person you thought all your life was your father is a sham" (27). When Esther visits her father's grave and mourns his death for the first time, her experience does not liberate her from grief--"I couldn't understand why I was crying so hard" (136)--but affirms her sense of loss and determination to unite with him in death.

Even though loss of happiness is the only impact she believes her father's death has had on her, then, her excessive zeal to achieve accompanied by her refusal to like or to rely on men--"The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way" (62)--argues that she has interpreted his death as a kind of betrayal. Certainly she feels anger at his grave when she speaks of paying him back for the years of neglect; the following passage bears an eerie triple meaning implying on

one level that she has neglected his grave, on another that he has neglected her by his death, and on another still that she intends to commit herself to him and the grave: "I had a great yearning, lately, to pay my father back for all the years of neglect, and start tending his grave. I had always been my father's favorite, and it seemed fitting I should take on the mourning my mother never bothered with" (135).

Her anger is also directed against her mother, whose memories of her father are antithetical to her own: while Esther remembers experiencing joy with him, Mrs. Greenwood remembers drudgery. She interprets her mother's refusal to mourn as a facade behind which she hides her anger against Mr. Greenwood, whose lack of planning left his family to struggle financially. Given the number of resentful references Esther herself makes to her family's reduced circumstances--circumstances which, for example, make it essential for her to win scholarships if she is to attend a prestigious college--the truth appears to be that she is angry at her father for dying while being simultaneously angry at her mother for helping her to adopt this attitude and afraid of growing more like her on the basis of this commonality. Without a father-figure to whom to transfer her affections when she reacts against her mother, Esther becomes enamored with death itself, in this way turning toward her father. At one point, she identifies with the dead baby in a glass jar who looks out at her with "a little piggy smile" (101), a relational identification based on her being the daughter of a dead man and of a woman she imagines killing in order to silence "the piggish noise" of her snoring (51).

While Esther's breakdown is caused by her unsatisfactory relation

to the masculine--particularly by her assumption of masculine attitudes which, because they are false to her, break down under pressure--at the same time it is caused by her unsatisfactory relation to the feminine, with whom she attempts to refuse to identify, but whom she is unable to resist, finding no replacement figure. As much as she despises figures who represent conventional femininity, she feels that if she lives she cannot escape conforming to a similar pattern; that she reacts so violently to "that lady in the brown suit" argues that she remains influenced by women like her mother and Mrs. Willard, even if she resents their false counsel and example: "what an awful woman that lady in the brown suit had been, and how she, whether she knew it or not, was responsible for my taking the wrong turn here and the wrong path there and for everything bad that had happened after that" (110).

In specifically identifying Mrs. Willard with "that lady" responsible for misleading her, Esther distinguishes her from her mother. In sanctioning independent achievement, Esther's mother could be placed, at least peripherally, in the gallery of old women like Jay Cee and Philomena Guinea whose kinship Esther denounces as they push her to achieve success. By contrast, Mrs. Willard appears to pose an alternative by professing to find fulfillment in the roles of wife and mother, like Dodo Conway, another figure outside the home whom Esther studies with fascination. While these women interest her, however, she cannot adopt their position, having been raised by her mother to see it as false. Mrs. Greenwood has always presented Esther with a threatening picture of the dangers befalling women who give up careers to marry and raise children. It is as if, by keeping her mother's experience in

view, Esther feels herself able to see the reality that underlies the surface contentment:

And I knew that in spite of all the roses and kisses and restaurant dinners a man showered on a woman before he married her, what he secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for her to flatten out underneath his feet like Mrs. Willard's kitchen mat.

Hadn't my own mother told me that as soon as she and my father left Reno on their honeymoon--my father had been married before, so he needed a divorce--my father said to her, "Whew, that's a relief, now we can stop pretending and be ourselves?"--and from that day on my mother never had a minute's peace (69).

While Esther is angry at her mother for exposing contentment in love and marriage as a sham, she is angry, too, at these "feminine" women for posing an alternative, seductive in its simplicity, which experience argues is fraudulent.

In large part it is because Doctor Nolan provides Esther with a positive image of the feminine that she experiences recovery, which she speaks of as a rebirth. Indeed, the doctor becomes a mother-figure to Esther, but is one at once more successful, glamorous and feminine than her real mother, as the physical details suggest: "This woman was a cross between Myrna Loy and my mother. She wore a white blouse and a full skirt gathered at the waist by a wide leather belt, and stylish, crescent-shaped spectacles" (153). Moreover, Doctor Nolan encourages Esther to explore the realm of the feminine by advocating that she begin expressing and understanding her feelings; Esther believes that she is helped toward health more by Doctor Nolan's caring than by her knowing, responding to a feminine approach as she would not to one more masculine: "Dr. Quinn had an abstract quality that appealed to Joan, but it gave me the polar chills" (183).

That Esther is not only mothered but fathered into rebirth, however, can be argued in relation to the references she makes to the hospital director, a kindly father-figure whose facts "about rivers and Pilgrims" reach through her disturbed emotions to appeal to her reason (153). While her relationship with this figure remains undeveloped, it is significant that in a final passage she finds some reassurance in recognizing his face among the strangers who will assess her condition and presumably judge her healed. Although she retains a defensive and aggressive attitude toward masculine figures like Buddy and Irwin to the end, that she finds comfort in this father-figure suggests that she has begun the process of improving her relationship to the masculine.

Early loss of the father is portrayed as particularly damaging to the modern heroine, who unlike her counterpart in earlier melodramas is not so much threatened by external masculine figures as by her punishing animus, which leads her to become self-abusive or suicidal. Reacting against the mother, her sense of who she is appears to flounder when she fails to find an alternative figure with whom to establish relationship. By contrast, when a heroine like Hagar Shipley in Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel (1964) loses her mother, her physical survival is never called into question since, indeed, the effect of this loss is to make her excessively independent and self-protective. While her failure to form relationships undermines the quality of her life for many years, in ultimately valuing human caring she recovers her femininity, awakening to truths she has "always known" (292).

If the selfhood of heroines like Anna and Esther is undermined because of their inclination toward defining themselves in terms of

others, so is selfhood undermined in heroines who take what appears to be the opposite tack--attempting to deny the relational component of self-definition. Violently refusing to identify with "the mother" and at the same time dismissing "the father," these would-be independent heroines are caught in a reactionary circle, always asserting that they are not their mothers but never able to affirm who they are. An episodic novel deliberately parodying the male quest, like Aritha van Herk's No Fixed Address: An Amorous Journey (1986), focuses on the adventures of Arackne Manteia who refuses the restrictions of conventional life, despite having been "saved" in fairy-tale style from the drudgery of lower-class life by a "Prince Charming" figure, who opens the doors of upper-class refinement. This tale remains true to pattern, however, in that the heroine is portrayed in relation to her parents, both in her present situation and, retrospectively, as a child; these scenes indicate that, far from acting as a "free" woman in her refusal to commit herself to another, Arackne is reacting against her mother in particular and her restrictive way of life. Even though she refuses to identify with her mother and thus refuses relational self-definition, she is not acting independently so much as reacting to a pattern established in her infancy.

Of course, the classic example of this type of reaction is Doris Lessing's Martha Quest (1952). Here the young heroine dislikes both mother and father, attempting to deny any resemblance to people who seem to live by protective illusions and determined to escape becoming like her mother. Already sixteen at the outset of the novel, she appears to have passed through a period when she might have turned her affection

toward her father, a physically attractive man whose "good looks were conventional" (19); yet relationship between them fails because, psychically damaged, he offers her nothing: "And worse, far worse, she was watching her father with horror, for he was coming to have, for her, the fatal lethargy of a dream-locked figure. He had the look of a person half claimed by sleep....to meet her father was rather like trying to attract the attention of an irritable spectre" (24, 53). Locked in conflict with her mother, whom she sees as trying possessively to live through her, Martha refuses to act in concert with her on any issue, being in this way confined to acting out a series of reactionary gestures.

In The Four-Gated City (1969), the final volume of the series, Martha acknowledges that her promiscuity and general reluctance to commit to permanent relationships have resulted from her determination to defy and resist her mother's influence: "When at last I became a girl, and I spent years and years longing for the moment when I would have breasts and be a woman, I was able to defy her at last. I made myself beautiful clothes, and every man I had, for a long time, was a weapon against her" (241). Within this final volume, however, Martha ultimately suggests to her psychologist that the real issue resides in a human problem so widespread as to indicate impending social collapse--namely, that family continues operating as the primary unit despite its proven failure; she suggests to Dr. Lamb that it is not a question of her attempting to understand her relationship to her mother, but of attempting to understand why humanity continues organized around the destructive family unit: "It's not my fault. If it were my fault

that would be easy. Or if it were her fault. But I wish I didn't know what's going to happen. It's like Paul and Francis--you know what's going to be eating them in twenty years' time. It's not their fault, it's not Lynda's fault, it's not Mark's fault....Was it always like this? What's gone wrong with us?....Or are we just children, and not responsible at all, ever, for what we live in?" (283). When the novel ends with social collapse and restructuring to the extent that surviving groups replace family units, Martha appears to have judged accurately in thinking that social organization, not individual relationships, are the issue.

Yet Lessing's work continues to explore family relationships. Her most recent novel, The Diaries of Jane Somers (1984), depicts the attempts of an independent career woman to begin establishing meaningful intimacies with others. An observation as painful to Jane as to Martha is that the young become caught up in patterns of identification and rejection with their influential elders. Jane watches with fascinated horror as her niece, Jill, grows into an image of her own younger self, since Jill is as careful to model herself upon her aunt as she is to distance herself from her mother. When she takes in her younger niece, Kate, Jane determines to avoid molding her in any way, attempting instead to allow her to develop without the pressure of influence. Her experiment fails, however, because Kate remains lost and vulnerable when left to her own devices, looking to join any outside group to strengthen her self-image. Giving up hope that her niece has any individuality to assert, Jane finally allows a co-worker to take Kate to a feminist commune, which Kate claims to "like" (504), once she recovers from her

initial sense of having been rejected by her aunt. While Martha's ideal is the dissolution of the family, Jane moves toward accepting as inevitable that young girls find reaction and identification natural to growth, making heroes and villains out of those who raise them; connected to this relational approach to self-definition, moreover, is the attitude of adult women whose individuality, Jane observes, is never so firm as to outlaw the possibility that they will respond to the inclination to consider and please others instead of acting for themselves.

The degree to which Lessing's treatment of her heroine's perceptions is ironic still needs to be assessed, given that she casts Jane in the suspect "world" of romantic fiction. That Lessing continues herself to be fascinated by issues of mother-daughter bonding, however, is apparent in her "Preface," in which she declares that writing the novel enabled her to experiment with using her mother's voice: "Another influence that went to make Jane Somers was reflections about what my mother would be like if she lived now: that practical, efficient, energetic woman, by temperament conservative, a little sentimental, and only with difficulty (and a lot of practice at it) able to understand weakness and failure, though always kind. No, Jane Somers is not my mother, but thoughts of women like my mother did feed Jane Somers" (n.p.). The position Lessing takes here may be intentionally ironic in convoluting a current feminist theory whose argument, stated succinctly, is that "The hero is her author's daughter" (Gardiner "Identity" 179). Far from acting as mother to a heroine who reflects a youthful self, Lessing claims, more literally, to become like her mother in the service

of character creation. Regardless of the irony, however, the novel suggests that having moved beyond the stage of identifying with the mother, the author is fascinated with attempting to understand a figure whose otherness she grants; in this way, Lessing is herself unlike her character Martha who, while ultimately separating from the mother instead of continuing to react against her, never takes the further step of developing relationship based on understanding.

If self-development is impeded by refusing to identify with the mother, developmental problems also arise for the heroine who remains bonded with her mother, especially when maternal bonding is pursued as a reaction against the masculine world. Beginning with Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple (1791), often described as the first American novel by a woman writer, a number of American women's fictions explore this situation. A heroine like Charlotte, for example, who turns away from her mother and the regulated safety of the domestic circle, suffers and dies for having placed her affection and trust in a man whom she fails to recognize as her betrayer. In so far forgetting the bonds of affection and respect that should lead her to embrace her mother's wisdom as her own, and abandoning herself to a predatory male, Charlotte defies nature and may even earn damnation, according to the narrative voice: "as you value your eternal happiness, wound not, by thoughtless ingratitude, the peace of the mother who bore you: remember the tenderness, the care, the unremitting anxiety with which she has attended to all your wants and wishes from earliest infancy to the present day...you must love her; nature, all powerful nature, has planted the seeds of filial affection in your bosoms" (89-90

emphasis mine). Mrs. Temple, anguished by her daughter's defection and "fall," yet struggling to pronounce forgiveness, prays thus for her "thoughtless girl": "Make her not a mother, lest she feel as I do now" (89). These words--elsewhere composing the curse of barrenness, as in King Lear for example--measure the distance that has grown up between Charlotte and the feminine world, since the best that her mother can now wish for her is that she never fulfill the feminine role of motherhood. While the author appears to sanction exclusive mother-daughter bonding, the division between men and women in a novel like this suggests that there is an imbalance in the fictional world thus created, the domestic circle closed to any who fail to share the values of the presiding matriarch.

Rather than providing positive affirmations of feminine power and spirit, then, these novels evidence an unresolved problem. As such these works reveal the anger that Linda Schierse Leonard suggests plagues women who fear the dominance of the masculine and, feeling oppressed, blame their oppressors: "Whether the father-daughter wound occurs on the personal level or on the cultural level, or both, it is a major issue for most women today. Some women try to avoid dealing with it by blaming their fathers and/or men in general" (10). In this clear-cut portrayal of men as villains and safety as residing in sisterhood, these novels take the view that men represent otherness which must at all costs be controlled and subdued.

A novel which particularly addresses the cultural level of the "father-daughter wound" is Helen Hunt Jackson's Ramona (1884). "Americans" are portrayed here as rapacious men responsible for

destroying the land, imaged as feminine, as well as the lives of its gentle native inhabitants. Even the bold and strong Alessandro, Ramona's lover and husband, is violated by American aggressors, who feminize him into attitudes of passivity, retreat and madness. Deserted by her white father Angus Phail ("fail"), Ramona learns early to fear those who have power, growing suspect of men and their God, and turning with reverence toward the figure of Mary, who offers consolation in the face of doom and destruction which has overtaken the land. Portraying men as selfish violators, a novel like this suggests that women resent the establishment of patriarchal culture in America, the "new world" having recreated the power base of the old and having thereby betrayed the sense of promise women felt awaited them in participating in the settlement and development of America.

In a novel like Little Women (1868-69), while the struggle between masculine and feminine is submerged, Alcott still promotes matriarchal supremacy, to the extent that her heroines turn to the father and to male figures in general not because of active affection and admiration, but because the mother instructs them that such is their moral duty. Comparing Alcott's novel to Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice (1813), Nina Auerbach points out that they are similar in portraying families of daughters and in depicting the marriage choice of the favored daughters, Jo and Elizabeth, as a tacit rejection of their fathers: "The father lives in a ghostly haven of "philosophy," while the mother thrives as an administrator: in order to survive economically and emotionally, the girls must scatter themselves in marriage. In each novel the favored girl, the surrogate son who is allowed into the private sanctuary of the

library, marries a man who embodies all the administrative power her father lacks. In the marriages that conclude the novels, the father's philosophic detachment is honored as a distant beacon, but the mother's executive ability survives to be transmitted" (34). What needs to be further observed here are the substantial differences between the two heroines, deriving from their relationships to mother and father. To the extent that Elizabeth Bennet is portrayed as a "surrogate son," she is so in relation to her father, with whom she exchanges witty and sensible opinions that are not otherwise heard in the household of women. If in Darcy she "marries a man who embodies all the administrative power her father lacks," this man is so far Mrs. Bennet's opposite that toleration of her company is one of the concessions that, pride overcome, he is able to make. By contrast, Jo is portrayed as "surrogate son" to Mrs. March, the daughter whose outspoken energy and imagination the mother enjoys, even because it reminds her of her younger self before she developed the "patience and the humility...to keep still" (104-05). Jo's marriage to a man whose capabilities might be seen to resemble her mother's is ultimately revealed as marriage to a man who allows her to continue identified with her mother, since he stands back before her superior powers: instead of "scattering" by her marriage to ensure her emotional survival, Jo becomes her mother through marriage, never loosening her identification.

Distinguishing domestic life from the outside world of politics and war as being the genuine center of power, Little Women is less concerned with portraying female anger and fear than with examining the ways these feelings can be overcome so that heroines can assume control. Mrs.

March discloses to Jo that she herself has lived as an angry woman: "I am angry nearly every day of my life, Jo" (104); with four children and without sufficient income, she has been angry within her marriage: "when I had four little daughters round me, and we were poor, then the old trouble began again; for I am not patient by nature, and it tried me very much to see my children wanting anything" (105). In struggling to conceal her feelings, she has called upon her husband to act as her mother did to check her outbursts, forcing him to placate her whose explosive potential could erupt with any irritation; having gained power over him in this way, she strengthens her resolve to conceal her anger in order that she may attract and influence her daughters: "the love, respect, and confidence of my children was the sweetest reward I could receive for my efforts to be the woman I would have them copy" (106). It is no wonder that Jo is initially taken aback to hear her mother lay claim to feelings of anger, so apparently content and masterful is she, her daughters rallying around her and her husband dismissed to the war.

Although bonding between mother and daughter is portrayed here as fostering growth and creating fulfillment, its darker underside is nonetheless apparent. Centered on "Marmee," this matriarchy grows from a base of feminine anger against the conditions of life--against masculine "failure" and feminine powerlessness--which is concealed but never defused: "I have learned not to show it [anger], and I still hope to learn not to feel it, though it may take me another forty years to do so" (104). Because they identify so wholly with their mother, the girls inherit her attitudes rather than breaking free from them to form their own. Moreover, without genuine respect or admiration for men, they know

only to be possessive and manipulative in relationships with them, looking forward to the advent of children whom they can shape and mold, taking over where their mother left off.

More recently, reflecting the climate of feminist thought, a number of fictions have turned their focus away from heterosexual relationships in order to examine intimate relationships between women. Alcott's powerful "Little Women," who uphold and transmit matriarchal values, give way, for example, to Lisa Alther's rebellious "Other Women," who resist the patriarchy in open anger. Rather than celebrating same-sex bonding, however, what becomes central in these contemporary novels are the problems of identification and merging that arise between women and result in their separation, the imperfect agent of which is often portrayed as a male figure. Far from being conducive to feminine development, this bonding is depicted as resulting from a dilemma that has both personal and cultural dimensions. Women turn away from the masculine not only because of failed relationships with fathers and masculine lovers, but also because of the perceived failure of patriarchal culture.

Certainly, in two recent fictions, The Color Purple (1982) and Other Women (1984), personal and cultural pressures are what push the heroines to replace heterosexual with lesbian relationships: lesbianism, become an attractive alternative given that these pressures have taught them to fear the masculine, is more a reactionary than a free choice. While loving women helps Celie and Caroline to a stronger self-image, it fails to resolve the anger they feel against men and the patriarchy and thus, while on the one hand they establish a separate peace, on the

other they remain imprisoned by their fears. That at the end of these novels neither protagonist is involved in a lesbian union suggests that same-sex relationships, neither perfect nor permanent, fail to resolve relational problems.

Other Women further suggests that intimacy between women is beset by tensions of identification and possessiveness, similar to those that force mother and daughter to separate. On the surface, this novel treats the lesbian experience as reflective of choice rather than indicative of developmental problems. Caroline's psychoanalyst, for example, appears to believe that individuals are by nature bi-sexual: "If she were thirty years younger and hadn't met Arthur, maybe she'd have gone Caroline's route herself. Who could say?" (220). Yet the novel implicitly criticizes same-sex relationships and sexual orientation, first by locating the basis of Caroline's adult problems in her childhood experience of being rejected by her mother and expelled from the feminine world within which she sought naturally to place herself. At the same time, it exposes the pressures that destroy female bonding. Both Caroline and her lover, Diana, attempt to establish themselves in the position of mother, leading each to smother the other with care; as a corollary both resent signs of growth in the other as threatening to the stability of their relationship. Finally, the novel implies that maturity resides in Caroline's outgrowing the motive that has led her to seek fulfillment in lesbian relationship; if she is to abandon the circular pattern of experience that leaves her depressed and dependent on others, she must grow beyond her infantile need to identify with others, specifically with a mother-figure.

Whenever women are depicted as intimates--whether as mother-daughter, in friendship or in sexual relationship--they commonly share feelings of anger and fear toward the masculine. Remaining bonded with women may be as much a reaction against the father and the masculine world as the original seeking out of the masculine is a reaction against the mother and identification with the feminine world. While women friends can experience identification based on what Abel calls "commonality" rather than "complementarity"--reassured by "sameness" rather than challenged by "otherness"--novels typically depict this union as unstable and impermanent; on the one hand, the participant feels threatened by the absorbing influence of the other and, on the other, as M. Esther Harding explains, growth is restricted: "Their acquaintances come to think of them as inseparable, they are dealt with as a unit; one is never invited out without the other. Neither ever comes home with fresh interests, for each has been the same place, has met the same people. All of this increases their identification and leads to a sterilizing of the relationship. It is as though they have only one life between them, instead of two related lives" (Way 106).

Thus while Abel is right in asserting that the modern heroine often believes she may discover herself by identifying with a female other and while she is possibly right in pointing out that the urge for female bonding--rooted in the lingering pre-oedipal mother-daughter tie--is more elemental than the masculine urge to form same-sex friendships, she overemphasizes the value of identification between female friends. Instead of providing a solution to identity formation, such bonding is

typically presented as a problem--or more neutrally a stage--which heroines must surmount if they are to develop selfhood. Required for the latter are acts of separation, which in turn lead to a balancing of masculine and feminine qualities.

* * *

In seeing a concern with relationship as an overworked theme, a traditional critic like Forster is thus dismissive of an essential component of identity formation in the female novel. While a heroine's individuality is signified by her engagement in relationships in which self and other are perceived as distinct, of greater significance is that the female novel depicts the process of developing selfhood as involving the heroine's abandonment of relational self-definition in place of individualized relationship. In specific, the formation of heterosexual relationships--which Forster singles out as particularly "monotonous"--is treated as essential to the heroine's development, challenging her to grow by responding to otherness; it is through developing relationship with "the father" that the heroine begins to understand the masculine principle, feared for its otherness until its relation to the self is understood. Discovering her father's imperfections, the heroine discovers at the same time that she has herself inherited many of his traits that can provide her with strength, and thus release her from dependence on an external other. While on the one hand, she develops inner balance between masculine and feminine characteristics, on the other she is prepared to enter into relationship with another in place of experiencing the possessiveness typical of the

mother-daughter bond or the dependence typical of the father-daughter bond.

While the heroine's initial tendency is to define herself relationally to mother and father both, by undergoing separation experiences she moves toward a sense of individuality depicted in literature as productive of fulfillment. "Identity" is seldom depicted as a thing "achieved," however, since older heroines typically undergo experience that has the same triadic composition--self, "mother" (the feminine), "father" (the masculine). To separate from figures who, regardless of gender, represent the bondage of feminine identification, they turn toward figures who, again regardless of gender, represent the challenge of masculine otherness. The point is not that the heroine ever abandons the mother, or her relationship to the feminine world, but that she initiates the process of freeing herself from the instinctual feminine urge to define herself relationally. While the principle of relationship itself always remains paramount, the heroine appears to know, if unconsciously, that it is best served by separating from infantile bonding in order to move toward otherness which, transformed by understanding, leads to selfhood and genuine relationship.

In addition to development portrayed thus positively, however, the female novel, particularly in its contemporary form, also explores the developmental problems experienced by heroines who are unable to separate from "the mother" and who do not develop relationship with "the father." In common, these heroines could be said to be oppressed by their feminine nature insofar as they continue defining themselves relationally rather than individually. This inclination may be judged oppressive to the extent that they are often aware of feeling somehow

incomplete or unfulfilled, even if they are unable to see acting to please the self as an alternative to acting in reference to others. While the tendency toward relational self-definition explicitly underlies the breakdown of a heroine like Esther Greenwood, who feels lost when she is unable to replace her father with a substitute, a heroine like Martha Quest is no closer to achieving individuality so long as she is confined to reactionary denials of family bonding. At the same time, identification limits the selfhood of heroines who remain bonded with the mother, since these protagonists share a collective outlook, often based on a fear of otherness and productive of restrictive sameness.

Critics who argue that female identity is synonymous with identification are thus like Forster in overlooking that establishing relationship between self and other is essential to the heroine's development. An argument like Chodorow's, for example, that women mother to regain the primary emotional intimacy they experienced with their mothers can not be helpfully enlisted to offer insight into the motivation of fictional heroines, for whom the experience of forming relationship with the masculine is treated as emotionally compelling in a way that having children is not. Only in a metaphorical sense is Chodorow's assertion that women are driven to mother helpful in explaining the heroine, who can be described as giving birth to an individualized self only after separating from "the mother"--abandoning both the safety and limitations of bonding with figures of sameness--in the process of transferring affection to "the father"--exploring and developing relationship with figures of otherness.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this study I noted the way in which the need for a generic study of the female novel has been voiced by several feminist critics. Yet it is not women only who have called for a study like mine; albeit indirectly, men too have recognized the need. Thus in his Structuralism in Literature, Robert Scholes suggests that "most serious misreadings of literary texts and most instances of bad critical judgment are referable to generic misunderstandings" (130). Similarly, in his monumental study of genres, Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye defends "as exquisite and precise...in his medium" a writer like Peacock, who has been dismissed as "a slapdash eccentric" so long as his works have been assessed according to traditional novelistic standards (309). Or again, E.D. Hirsch notes that a "preliminary generic conception" is directly related to the question of "validity in interpretation" (74-78).

Equally worth emphasizing is the way in which a study of the female novel throws new light on what male critics have said about problems inherent in generic approaches to literature. In Literature as System, for example, Claudio Guillén has observed that genres not only pre-exist naming, but reflect the writer's "active dialogue with the generic models of his time and culture" (128). Such of course is true of women's fiction, a critic like Elaine Showalter counterpointing Woolf's assertion that "a woman writing thinks back through her mothers" with the assertion that "a woman writing thinks back through her fathers as well" ("Wilderness" 33). Yet such critical obstacles as locating the

generic source and defining generic features in a broad enough way to account for the changes that take place over time are minimalized in the case of the female novel. First, since the female novel is gender specific, the question of finding the source is largely a question of finding the earliest examples of women's writing. Second, the degree of consistency within this tradition facilitates the process of determining a central core; while the female novel is a developing genre, the dynamic here is less "change" than "refinement" and "enrichment." As such, the female novel provides an interesting variation on Guillén's observation that genres are never "new" so much as newly distinguished (125).

Another fruitful interaction between genre theory and the example of the female novel pertains to the question of why the distinctiveness of women's writing has been so long overlooked. According to Guillén, a distinction must be made between the "codified" and the "unwritten" assumptions that shape literary judgment, unwritten assumptions being those that are codified when a critic defines a new genre. I would suggest that it has long been an unwritten assumption that the female novel is in some ways different from the traditional novel, and that the reluctance to codify this difference stems from equation of the latter with inferiority. That such codification is now desirable can perhaps be explained in terms of the changed attitude toward difference, examination of which has gained prominence and respectability in contemporary feminist scholarship.

Guillén further observes that generic studies are generally helpful in directing both writers and readers--clarifying "certain principles of

composition" that help the former to focus their work and the latter to focus their understanding (72). The same is true of a generic study of the female novel, but to a certain extent it is the critical community (rather than women writers or women readers per se) to whom my study is addressed. Women writers' awareness of participating in a tradition has been already aided by such seminal studies as Patricia Meyer Spacks' The Female Imagination (1972) and Ellen Moers' Literary Women (1976); similarly, given the popularity of the female novel, it seems that the largely female reading audience has already intuited this novel's conventions. This is not to suggest that these groups will not be aided in their response by a generic codification, but that the situation here is different from that in which one is proposing radical revision within a tradition; that is, since the female novel constitutes a unique tradition which has flourished despite critical neglect and censure, it is essentially the critical audience who should find a study like mine helpful in reshaping some of their perceptions. Within this framework, my study has in common the general objective of generic studies: "to approach new or unfamiliar works in a specially informed way or to question known works in newly enlightening ways" (Bruffee 19).

While confining myself to speculation, perhaps this is the place to consider why it is that traditional critics have recognized from amongst the ranks of women writers the merits of such authors as Austen, Eliot and Brontë. Although the works of all three can be understood according to the conventions of the female novel, the works of Austen and Eliot can be accommodated by traditional standards largely because, in providing a relatively detailed account of outer world

events, they fulfill such requirements as variety and verisimilitude. Conversely, perhaps it is the emotional power of a writer like Charlotte Brontë, extremely "feminine" even among female writers, which accounts for the appeal of her novels, although such has not saved them from being sharply criticized and, I would argue, misunderstood.

A further speculation concerns the reasons for the critical acclaim and attention given to a number of twentieth-century women novelists. One explanation may be the simple topicality of their writing; earlier women writers, forgotten now, were similarly influential in their day; another explanation may be the role feminist critics have played in familiarizing audiences with contemporary women's fictions. Still it must be remembered that the rendering of inner life into fiction, which has become popular this century, has always been a primary concern of women writers. Similarly, if the modern female novel appeals by reason of its greater complexity, this is also in keeping with what I have termed the "improving tendency" inherent in the tradition itself. Rather than wholly following earlier writers in the privileging of feeling over fact, for example, a writer like Woolf uses such an orientation as a device by which to characterize feminine figures like Mrs. Ramsay and Mrs. Dalloway. To further the example, rather than writing of heroines who are young and in love, thus recreating the Psyche drama in its exact dimensions, over time women writers have explored an increasing variety of Psyche figures, so that in place of a courtship and marriage situation, modern novels are as likely to examine the way in which an aged heroine discovers on her own both herself and that she loves. Finally, rather than depicting the heroine's developing

successful selfhood, contemporary women's fiction often explores the problems that stand in her way. Thus while there is a deliberate intertextuality, there is at the same time a broadening of that which is borrowed--which tendency, while fostering the vitality and variety of the female tradition, discourages the kind of systematic ranking which has been undertaken by critics of the traditional novel.

The female tradition, from this perspective, could be said to develop in much the same way as the fictional heroine, both partaking in a process whose components are changeless but in which a growth dynamic is nonetheless discernible. Yet to see in such a borrowing and improving tendency confirmation of current theory which holds that women are by nature more cooperative and less competitive than men may be somewhat misleading; in many instances the corrections an author makes are firm and deliberate, conveying the sense that she feels that it is her job to show others how something is done properly.¹ Thus women writers approach their work in a way that is both relational and individual, and from this angle can again be said to resemble their fictional characters.

It would seem, moreover, that the same kind of connection exists between the female novel and its female audience. While not denying the complexity of the relationship between reader and text, it is possible to suggest that women characters, and the literary depiction of female experience in general, appeal less to men than to women because female readers recognize their own reality in these fictionalized people and worlds, perhaps even resembling heroines in deepening their understanding of life by confronting forms of its repetition. Since few

heroines are extraordinary, tending rather toward homely virtues and concerns, it seems unlikely that readers are drawn to them only on the basis of wish-fulfillment. Moreover, the world of female fiction is not as artfully arranged as the fictional world of men, thus forging a further link between art and the lived life. Finally, the nature of female epiphany as it is unfolded in these novels appears to correspond with real-life experience, many women having undergone the sensation of feeling connected to everything in a moment of sharp insight. The appeal of the female novel, in short, may have to do with a particularly feminine sense of verisimilitude. Not only does this situation provide further illustration of the feminine relational tendency, but it also argues for a striking contrast between the male and female novel, Forster speaking with a chorus of others when he describes the male novel as presenting fictional worlds that are unlike life and fictional characters that are unlike people.

In turn, one is led to question whether a theorist like Chodorow might not be mistaken in arguing for primacy of the mother-daughter bond in female development. Time after time, women's fiction insistently asserts that central to the heroine's development and fulfillment is balancing the masculine and feminine, this being the focus of the drama involving heterosexual union as well as of the heroine's inner marriage of feminine/masculine nature. Being thus decidedly without radical edge in emphasizing that masculine/feminine otherness should be brought into relationship,² women's fiction also runs counter to a number of feminist interpretations which argue that anger is the distinguishing feature of the female novel and signifies genuine emotion breaking through the

oppressive structures of masculine language, myth and maxim. Far from being seen as an ultimate breakthrough, aggressiveness and hostility are presented as a stage through which the heroine passes if she is to achieve fulfillment. Moreover, while male figures are seldom idealized in women's fiction, just as seldom are they villainized or ridiculed, since indeed the heroine balances her own needs by establishing relationship with these figures. If invincibility and independence are the traits with which he is first identified, characterizing the hero in the female novel is his eventual vulnerability and caring. In a recent study, Women Writing About Men, Jane Miller has documented the way in which these figures have antagonized male critics, falling so far short of "a man's hero, who would put achievement before love" (153); feminist critics have been equally unsympathetic, seeing heroines as debased for uniting with men so far their inferiors. What both types of criticism ignore is that these women's heroes are "sexually alive....aware and awake" (Miller, 159), and that they are so because, rather than being depicted as static figures of authority, they too are alive to the possibilities both of growth and relationship.

Finally, what also argues against seeing anger as a definitive feature of the female novel is the prevailing spirit of optimism--which feature might also be pinpointed as constituting a major difference between female and male fiction. Implicit in the female novel's tendency to reveal that order or pattern has all the while resided in surface disorder, optimism is most dramatically reflected in the portrait of older heroines. Whereas in male fictions, aging male protagonists are characterized as embittered or alienated, with old age

being regarded as synonymous with frustration because authority and achievement lie in the past,³ in female fictions the aging female protagonist, for whom personal power has never been an issue, continues the process of balancing individual with relational concerns, whether by engaging in new relationship or by deepening her commitment to long-standing connections. She is thus associated with youth, not only because her growth is ongoing but also because the components of her growth are those of the youthful heroine; to the extent that her understanding has deepened, moreover, she is at the same time a figure associated with dignity and wisdom.

NOTES

To Introduction

¹Issues surrounding the need for establishing a canon of fiction by women are discussed in six essays in "What Do Feminist Critics Want? The Academy and the Canon," Part I of The New Feminist Criticism, ed. Elaine Showalter.

²Particularly helpful in offering an extensive bibliographical section is Ellen Moers' Literary Women, pp. 272-320.

To Chapter I

¹While autobiographical rather than fictional in traditional terms, Moodie's work is included here by way of suggesting the connection between "experience" as it is rendered in women's fiction and life-writing. Moreover, that Moodie's work is a central reference in Small Ceremonies, a novel discussed in this chapter, indicates that it has been treated as part of the female tradition, whose development depends on women writers drawing upon and responding to other women writers.

To Chapter II

¹In the "Introduction" to The Voyage In (1983), the editors (Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland) make the case that the female novel often explores the heroine's growth. While they point out several major distinctions between the female and the traditional Bildungsroman, they overlook the way in which romantic or male/female relationship is a component essential to the heroine's development. Moreover, perhaps because they are introducing a collection of independently-authored essays rather than a focused study, they ultimately underplay difference in arguing only that the traditional definition of the Bildungsroman be revised to take into account the features of "female fictions of development."

²Several critics have suggested that Eliot suffered a failure of imagination in having Dorothea marry Will rather than pursue personal ambitions. Jean Sudrann suggests that "the open ending of Daniel Deronda seems a pointed rebuke to George Eliot by herself for the easy dismissal of Dorothea Brooke's vision of 'a grand life here--now--in England' in the earlier novel" (237). Sharing this perspective, Lee R. Edwards questions why Eliot abandons exploring the image of female energy: "But we can only wonder--and perhaps regret--that this image was not pursued further and in another direction, that George Eliot did not finally create a woman who knew before the fact that she neither liked nor needed husbands since such liking would force her either to submit or destroy" ("Energy" 692).

³It is not surprising that Causabon, a wholly egocentric figure, is unable to see genuine significance in the balance of selfhood and relationship that the tale of "Cupid and Psyche" represents: "the fable of Cupid and Psyche...is probably the romantic invention of a literary period, and cannot, I think, be reckoned as a genuine mythical product" (137).

⁴Analyzing the basis of moral action, Carol Gilligan distinguishes the female tendency to consult motives of care and relational considerations from the masculine tendency to consult abstract principles: "The moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the 'real and recognizable trouble' of this world. For men, the moral imperative appears rather as an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment" (100).

⁵One critic, for example, argues that Lucy, lost in fantasies, is "a character who cannot grow up" (Bledsoe 219).

⁶Although this is not the place to discuss the issue, my choice of short story examples is designed to suggest not only that the paradigm also informs this fictional form but also that there may be less distance between the female short story and novel than between these forms as they are traditionally defined. Consider here, for example, the extent to which Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women is a novel in the form of a collection of short stories or the fact that a number of female authors write novels and short stories (as well as poetry).

⁷In the British edition, the cause of Clarissa's happiness is not named: "Odd, incredible; she had never been so happy" (Hogarth Press, 1925; reprint Penguin Books, 1973, 205). The effect of this variation is to reinforce my argument that Clarissa's reference is less to Richard than to her relationship to him. Citings within the chapter are to the American edition.

⁸Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, for example, believes that Drabble's own view is that femininity and freedom are mutually exclusive and that her novels are thus a "condemnation of female experience" (234):

Taken as a group, Drabble's women offer a picture of predatory narcissism, their occasional victimhood and suffering being as Drabble acknowledges, no more than another way of getting what they want. Emma's forthright acceptance of being made the way she is made constitutes a foreclosing, not an opening of shared consciousness. She decides how she is made and offers her self-image not as some difficult reality, but as self-determined justification and arbitrary explanation. Such a female consciousness opens the path to condemning women to find a human identity only by becoming men. (248)

Even Elaine Showalter, generally sympathetic to Drabble's fiction, concludes her discussion of the early novels with the expressed hope that Drabble will begin to depict more independent women, free of marital bonds: "In some respects she has been clinging to a tradition she has outgrown. The Needle's Eye is evidently the end of a prolonged phase in Drabble's writing; perhaps she will now allow herself more freedom, more protest" (Literature 307).

To Conclusion

¹Analyzing the responses of British women writers to gender-based questions has led Daniel Dervin to question the claim that "women are less competitive than men in the sphere of literary creations." Without pretending to answer this question, he observes that "they are often at odds with past writers' visions of reality--especially did Virginia Woolf and Margaret Drabble pit themselves against Jane Austen's sanguine outlook" (ff. 6, 435).

²While my argument here places emphasis on theme, a cross-gender computer analysis, the results of which appear in Hiatt's The Way Women Write (1977), suggests that conservatism characterizes the female style, women writers being "moderate in tone as compared to men, well-balanced, rational, organized and 'unextreme' in almost every aspect of writing style" (135).

³My thinking here has been stimulated by "Old Age in Contemporary Novels: Reflections in the Gender Mirror," a paper given by Emily Nett at Contexts: A Conference on the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature (The University of Manitoba, May 14-16, 1987). Exploring the issue of aging, she provided a number of literary examples which contrasted the optimism of the female protagonist to the anger and pessimism of the male protagonist.

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