

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE WOMAN ARTIST FIGURE
IN AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WRITERS' FICTION

Sharon Therese Frost

B. Soc. St., (University of Sydney, 1973)

B.A.(Hons.), (University of Newcastle, 1981)

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I certify that the substance of this thesis
has not already been submitted for any
degree and is not being currently submitted
for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing
this thesis, and all sources used, have been
acknowledged in this thesis.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Sharon Frost.

Sharon Frost

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to explore, from a feminist point of view, the ways in which women writers 'author' the literary representation of 'woman' as 'artist', her identity and destiny, within the patriarchal context. Because women writers operate from a marginal position, and despite the fact that they are working within the patriarchal system of language, ideology and discourse, their texts to varying degrees critically evaluate their patriarchal contexts and the attendant notions of both 'woman' and 'artist'. At the same time, in response to previous texts, to changes in ideology (for instance, the emergence of feminist literary theory) and changes in society, the literary construction of the woman artist is also subject to change and development.

For this examination, a combination of the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin together with a feminist perspective and insights from feminist theory have been found to be most appropriate. Bakhtin has delineated the discursive relationships and strategies which marginal groups, such as women, might effect upon a centralist hegemony such as the patriarchy. His concept of carnival as a subversive strategy which may be adopted by marginal groups in relation to the hegemony suggests directions for the feminist analysis of women writers' subversive strategies. He locates the struggle for the meaning and value of particular ideologies in the nature of language itself and in the structure of discourse. His theory suggests that literary texts by women are engaged in an ongoing dialectic of critique and transformation of patriarchal literary and cultural values about 'woman'.

In the course of this dissertation, it has emerged that the women's texts which I am discussing are all, to some extent, radical texts. All challenge to varying degrees the patriarchal centralist assumptions about both 'woman' and 'artist'. These challenges are effected through a series of literary strategies. The literary representation of both 'woman' and 'artist' is developing from a specifically female point of view, and a new image of 'woman' is being inserted into the literary and cultural national tradition.

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PREFACE

This discussion of the woman artist protagonist will be confined to the fiction of Australian women writers. The woman writer writing about the female artist offers a quite complex dimension to the exploration of the cultural construction of female subjectivity within the Australian sociohistorical and literary context. Women writers occupy a marginal position in relation to the patriarchal cultural and literary contexts, while the relationship of identity between 'woman' and 'artist' is historically variable, and until more recent years, was usually regarded as incompatible. Hence women's texts, to varying degrees, both subvert and transform traditional modes of perception about both 'woman' and 'artist'. Their texts offer a critique of the patriarchal context from a woman-centred point of view, and effect a transformation of values which are attached to the identity of both 'woman' and 'artist'.

A number of texts by Australian women writers which deal with the woman artist protagonist will be discussed in chronological order. This will help to illustrate the interconnection between social change and literary development, and the nature of the engagement between the ideology of the text and the ideological purview of the context. The chronology of the texts refers to the time of publication, which situates the texts in their external and contemporary socio-ideological *milieu*, and which relates them to the social position of women at that particular time. The chronology of the narrative form itself is less specific and cannot be confined to a linear development from one text to another. Each text contains its own particular adaptation of narrative form and literary convention in relation to the contentious relationship between 'woman', 'artist' and patriarchal society.

It seems propitious to begin this study with *My Brilliant Career* by Miles Franklin, which was published by Blackwood in 1901, the year of federation and the year before universal suffrage was granted in Australia to all white men and women. The following texts will be discussed:

- My Brilliant Career*, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1982),
Miles Franklin.
- My Career Goes Bung*, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1983),
Miles Franklin. This text was written in 1902,
but was first published in 1946.
- Human Toll* (1907), in *Barbara Baynton*, ed. by Sally Krimmer and Alan
Lawson, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1980).
Barbara Baynton.
- The Getting of Wisdom*, (1910), (Melbourne, Heinemann Educational Books,
(1977).
Henry Handel Richardson.
- Intimate Strangers* (1937), (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1981),
Katherine Susannah Prichard.
- The Man Who Loved Children* (1940), (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970),
Christina Stead.
- The Pea-pickers* (1942), (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1984),
Eve Langley.
- For Love Alone* (1944), (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1973),
Christina Stead.
- All That False Instruction* (1975), (Sydney, Sirius, 1981),
Elizabeth Riley.
- Tirra Lirra by the River* (1978), (Ringwood, Penguin, 1982),
Jessica Anderson.
- An Item from the Late News* (1982), (Ringwood, Penguin, 1984),
Thea Astley.
- Miss Peabody's Inheritance* (1983), (St. Lucia, UQP, 1983),
Elizabeth Jolley.
- Kewpie Doll* (1984), (London, Chatto & Windus, 1984),
Barbara Hanrahan.
- Foxybaby* (1985), (St. Lucia, UQP, 1985),
Elizabeth Jolley.
- Lines of Flight* (1985), (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre, 1985),
Marion Campbell.

All textual references have been taken from these editions.

This is a representative but by no means exhaustive list of the women writers' texts which explore such a theme. The choice of texts does not imply an evaluation of their literary standards, although such evaluation will emerge in the course of my discussion. Rather, these texts have been chosen as representative of an Australian literary canon which is itself subject to a continuous process of evolution and change. They represent a broad range of approaches to the evolved literary representation of the woman artist. They demonstrate evolution in both ideology and mode. The relationships between the speaking positions within the texts and the differing plot resolutions reflect the varying ideological arguments which are connected with the theme of the woman artist in both the sociohistorical and literary contexts. At the same time, the texts effect this representation through various and changing literary modes. Thus *My Brilliant Career* and *Lines of Flight* represent a contrast in the images and attendant values of the woman artist which indicates the changes in the sociohistorical context, while Jolley's texts highlight the problematic construction of the realist narrative while realism is assumed without question in texts such as *The Getting of Wisdom*.

Thus the selected texts represent particular and uneven relationships between the ideological values of the context and narrative forms and literary conventions. The women writers are variously engaged in a discursive dialectic between complicity with and transformation of, between repression under and resistance to, patriarchal language, values and discourse. Varying degrees of ambivalence, contradiction and affirmation about the balance and values between 'woman' and 'artist' will emerge in the texts.

CHAPTER 1

FEMINISM, LITERARY THEORY AND FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY

The representation of the woman artist protagonist expresses a challenge to and a critique of both the literary and the cultural tradition. Within the parameters of patriarchal ideology, the image of the woman as an artist is contradictory. The social role, definition and expectation of the female has traditionally been prescribed according to her sex and her biological function. Despite the presence of women artists in history, the common cultural notion is that the artist is masculine. Hence, the texts which represent the woman artist are addressing both the cultural ideologies and the literary conventions which are interconnected with them. At the same time, the representation of the woman artist becomes a prominent event in literary development.

At this point, it will be useful to clarify the terms 'woman' and 'artist'. Teresa de Lauretis poses a feminist definition of 'woman', and draws a distinction between women as concrete historical subjects, and 'woman' as she is represented in cultural products such as literature. de Lauretis states that:

By 'woman' I mean a fictional construct, a distillate from diverse but congruent discourses dominant in Western cultures (critical and scientific, literary or juridical discourses), which works both as their vanishing point and their specific condition of existence...

Similarly here *woman*, the other-from-man (nature and Mother, site of sexuality and masculine desire, sign and object of men's social exchange) is the term that designates at once the vanishing point of our culture's fictions of itself and the condition of the discourses in which the fictions are represented...

By *women*, on the other hand, I will mean the real historical beings who cannot as yet be defined outside of those discursive formations, but whose material existence is nonetheless certain, and the very condition of this book. The relation between women as historical subjects and the notion of woman as it is produced by hegemonic discourses is neither a direct relation of identity, a one-to-one correspondence, nor a relation of simple implication. Like all other

relations expressed in language, it is an arbitrary and symbolic one, that is to say, culturally set up.¹

Thus 'woman' is a problematic image and construct for the woman writer. The meaning and value of the term is positioned in a particular relationship between the social definition and experience of women, and the cultural construction of 'woman' in literary discourse. These social definitions and cultural constructs reflect the values of the hegemony and the particular relationship of power between the genders. When women writers represent and construct 'woman' in their texts, they engage in specific and varying relationships with the social and cultural hegemony.

The representation of woman as an artist in the narrative becomes a significant vehicle to convey both a critique and a transformation of social definitions and cultural constructs of 'woman'. The ideological definition and position of the artist represents an alternative to 'woman' and as such permits the potential development of non-gendered representations of woman in narrative forms and literary conventions. Lee Edwards highlights this significance and states that:

The shift from the actor's role to the creator's, the identification of the imagination as a source of social redefinition, permits a theoretically infinite set of particular narrative alterations which might display the passions and preoccupations of the woman hero.²

She continues:

...artistic aspirations provide the most appropriate model for evoking female heroism's generative capacities. This model is compelling because it is both socially available and metaphorically refined: using the artist as a paradigm suggests that our traditional aesthetic, linking female regeneration to biological reproduction and the sanctity of marriage, is an impoverished literalisation...*The imagination replaces the womb as the structure's central icon.*³ (my emphasis)

Thus the artist becomes an alternative metaphor for the female protagonist's assertion of her identity and destiny in the narrative text.

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1. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, (London, Macmillan, 1984), pp.5-6.
 2. Lee Edwards, *Psyche as Hero*, (Middleton, Wesleyan Uni. Press, 1984), p.236.
 3. Lee Edwards, *ibid*, p.236.

However the texts illustrate that the representation of the woman as artist is a problematic transposition. The value, image and cultural representation of 'woman', 'artist' and 'woman artist' reflect the gender ideologies and the gender-based structures of power of both the social context and the literary system. These definitions and interconnections are historically changing. Hence from a chronological perspective, the texts represent, in an uneven, varying and developing way, the ideological relationship between 'woman' and 'artist'. At the same time, the narrative form, discursive structure and literary convention are developing in an interconnected, yet independent, process.

The texts represent the ideological contradictions between the positions and categories of 'woman' and 'artist'. However, the balance between these positions is shifting and changing. So, for example, when the ideological definitions and social expectations of 'woman' are more circumscribed, then the argument and representation of the 'woman artist' will have a different focus from that produced when the definitions of 'woman' are broader. The texts under discussion illustrate this process. In earlier texts, such as *My Brilliant Career* and *The Pea-pickers*, the gender ideologies attached to 'woman' are the main obstacles that the protagonist must confront in her determination to become an artist. The position of the 'artist' becomes an affirmation of her identity and destiny in spite of being a 'woman'. Within the ideological argument which is represented in the discursive structures of these texts, the position of 'woman', which is socially constructed and reinforced by gender ideology, and the position of the 'artist',^{to} which the protagonists aspire, are mutually exclusive and incompatible. More recent texts have been produced in a social context in which the definition of 'woman' is less restricted. Texts such as *An Item from the Late News* and *Foxybaby* do not question the fact of a 'woman' being or becoming an 'artist'. Instead they illustrate within themselves the artistic process of the narrative construction and the artistic consciousness of the woman artist who has produced them. In the earlier texts, the protagonists perceive motherhood as being utterly incompatible with artistic development. This is actually illustrated in *Intimate Strangers*. However the most recent text, *Lines of Flight*, represents a movement toward the compatibility of being both a 'woman' and an 'artist'. Here the protagonist is both a mother, that

is, a socially defined woman, and an active artist. Her child is incorporated into her process of creating.

Although the texts highlight to varying degrees the perceived ideological incompatibility between the positions of 'woman' and 'artist', at the same time, they also exploit the similarity between them. In history, tradition and culture, women have occupied a marginal position in relation to the patriarchal hegemony. The artist has also occupied a marginal position, although the nature of this marginality is different from that experienced by women. Because of the operation of gender ideology, the position of the artist has usually been defined as masculine. The artist has the potential to construct a new form and approach to the perspective of reality. The creative product of the artist has the potential to place itself beyond traditional values and power structures. Hence, by juxtaposing the positions of 'woman' and 'artist', these texts represent a critique of, and an alternative to, gender ideologies and definitions.

The woman writers of these texts are writing from a marginal position in relation to both their social context and the literary system. Therefore, because they are dealing with a contentious, ideological issue, such as the woman artist, one might expect that these texts will illustrate particular discursive strategies in relation to the patriarchal hegemonic discourse. These strategies become a particular form of cultural resistance. de Lauretis makes the point that:

Strategies of writing *and* of reading are forms of cultural resistance. Not only can they work to turn dominant discourses inside out (and show that it can be done), to undercut their enunciation and address, to unearth the archeological stratifications on which they are built; but in affirming the historical existence of irreducible contradictions for women in discourse, they also challenge theory in its own terms, the terms of a semiotic space constructed in language, its power based on social validation and well-established modes of enunciation and address. So well-established that, paradoxically, the only way to position oneself outside of that discourse is to displace oneself within it - to refuse the question as formulated, or to answer deviously (though in its own words), even to quote (but against the grain).⁴

4. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, p.7.

Thus even though women writers are working within the discourse of the patriarchal hegemony, they are often able to 'displace' its meanings and values.

This displacement is achieved partly by the effect of the point of view in the texts. The texts under discussion are woman-centred: they are written by women, and all centre on the point of view and consciousness of the female protagonist. This point of view becomes an ideological position which will determine the structure and the content of the texts, and the stance they assume in relation to their patriarchal contexts. From this point of view, 'familiar' constructs, meanings and values of patriarchal discourse will be seen as unfamiliar, or to use the Formalist phrase, will be made 'strange'. John Frow highlights this process and states that:

The choice of constructional elements (including material) is always a choice against ideology, since all available devices are preinvested with ideological value...The act of writing is thus political to the extent that it involves a repetition or a deconstruction of forms which have become ideologically assimilated and motivated, and which reflect the authority of a social order; and any reading of a text simply as a sequential reconstruction of choices made, is directed to the level of automatisation or defamiliarisation which the text manifests, and so, ultimately, to its degree of⁵ integration in a system of discursive authority.

Thus any choices which are made about the form and content of the text, and the relationships it intentionally establishes with other discursive systems, are ideological. They might either support the hegemonic values, or make them 'strange'. Thus in most of the texts under discussion, the hegemonic value of 'marriage' is made 'strange', because from the protagonist's perspective, it is a state which is contradictory to being an artist. The women writers are working within a literary system which is interconnected with patriarchal ideologies. They have a woman-centred view within the patriarchal enclosure; hence they are working within a double-voiced framework. From this position, they highlight specific aspects of patriarchal gender ideologies and reshape them from a different point of view.

5. John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1984), p.104.

The woman-centred point of view operates both within the text, and within the relationships the text establishes with other discursive systems. Each text contains a discursive system within which characters express their points of view and ideas. These characters and their positions are subordinate to either the protagonist's or the narrator's points of view and ideas. At the same time, the meaning and value of the woman artist protagonist is represented as a rejoinder and critical response to both the literary system and the cultural context. Some texts, for example, *My Brilliant Career*, address particular phallogentric values of the Australian culture and tradition. Other texts, such as *The Man Who Loved Children*, address prior texts, in this instance Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and incorporate and transform their original meaning. The effect of the woman-centred view of patriarchal values is one of ongoing transformation and transvaluation. However, this is also an uneven and contradictory process.

Women writers may adopt a point of view which is critical of particular patriarchal values within the texts but, at the same time, may also participate within a patriarchal frame of reference. A specific example of this is the realist narrative written by a woman writer from the female point of view. It is debateable whether the realist narrative *per se* is a patriarchal construct. However the underlying premises of realism and the realist narrative have much in common with those of the Western patriarchal epistemology. Furthermore, the realist narrative has developed concurrently with the phallogentric literary system. In general terms, a realist narrative assumes that reality and experience can be represented unconditionally; that the reality and the characters of the textual world correspond to a known, external and verifiable reality; that events are causal and lineal; that characters in the text are personalities, and that language is a direct reflection of reality. A text such as *Intimate Strangers* uses the realist mode without question, and within it explores the explicit concerns of the female protagonist.

However, other texts illustrate that the realist mode and its relationship to the representation of women's authenticity is problematic. *My Brilliant Career*, for example, uses realism ironically to highlight

a social reality which is hostile to women's self-determination. At the same time, the text disrupts the realist framework with disjointed, 'plotless' sketches, to illustrate that the realist mode is not adequate to the representation of female experience. Other texts, such as *The Man Who Loved Children*, develop a psychological realism in which the protagonist's consciousness and view of reality is a critique of the reality around her. Later texts are more critical of realist forms and values, and represent a gradual transformation of the realist mode. *Tirra Lirra by the River* is structured by the process of the protagonist's memory and recall, so that the narrative is circular rather than linear. *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* is a realist narrative which contains the actual construction of a realist narrative. This serves to undercut the premise that the realist mode is 'real'. *Lines of Flight* is a radical deconstruction of the unified subject, the lineal narrative and the view that language is a transparent medium of reality. Thus from a chronological perspective the texts represent an ongoing dialectic and transformation of particular patriarchal values. The content of the texts and the representations of the protagonists reflect critiques of various patriarchal values which are effected through the changing narrative forms and modes of fiction.

FEMINIST THEORY

One of the contextual factors which has influenced the representation of the woman artist protagonist and the form of the narrative text is the developing twentieth-century version of feminist ideology. The texts under discussion have, to varying degrees, been influenced by feminist thought and perspectives. As well, feminism has influenced the image and status of women in society, which in turn is represented and refracted in the narrative text. At the same time, feminism has influenced the literary critical approaches by which these texts are to be understood and evaluated.

So far, the question of whether there is a 'feminist literary criticism' is contentious. There are differing degrees and foci of feminism, and differing forms of feminist literary criticism. Feminism itself is a discourse which is situated in pluralism. It manifests the

choral nature of history and society, as a composition of different and sometimes opposed voices and points of view, each of which make the other possible. Elizabeth Gross states that:

No one method, form of writing, speaking position, mode of argument can act as representative, model or ideal for feminist theory. Instead of attempting to establish a new theoretical norm, feminist theory seeks a *new discursive space*, a space where women can write, read and think *as women*. This space will encourage a proliferation of voices, instead of a hierarchical structuring of them, a plurality of perspectives and interests instead of the monopoly of the one - new kinds of questions and different kinds of answer.⁶

However, feminist literary criticism does contain a hierarchy: the Anglo-American, white, middle class, heterosexual version has marginalised the voices of the Black, lesbian and Third World feminisms. Furthermore, feminist literary criticism has developed into different strands, such as Marxist and/or psychoanalytic and/or archetypal feminist criticism. This attests to the fact that feminism is an ideology in process. It is not a well-defined object of knowledge, such as 'Mathematics', but instead is fluid and changing, overlapping into other disciplines with the feminist point of view. However, although the terms 'feminist' and 'literary criticism' have been compacted together, I would argue that feminism has not evolved a method of literary criticism which is solely feminist. Traditional approaches, such as the psychoanalytic method, may be adapted and developed from a feminist orientation, while more recent methods, such as deconstruction, may be applied to non-feminist, avant-garde texts. This attests to the departure of feminism from more rigid orthodox theories and methods. The fluid nature of feminist discourse is one of its strengths.

Thus feminism is not a unified philosophy, but it is a point of view and an insight from the female position in relation to patriarchal systems and values. It is both a relational and an evaluative ideology;

6. Elizabeth Gross, 'What is feminist theory?' in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, ed. Carole Pateman & Elizabeth Gross, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp.203-4.

feminism has emerged in relation to, and in response to, patriarchy. Patriarchal values and structures provide the frame of reference for a feminist critique and transformation. Patriarchy has established the norms which feminism reacts against: but at the same time, the feminist reaction to patriarchal values is in turn paving the way for Gross's 'discursive space'. However, the varying orientations of feminism might be discussed in terms of how far they extend their critique of patriarchal ideology.

Patriarchy is that system which takes Man as its centre and norm. Western patriarchy is both a highly developed system of epistemology which structures our perception and definition of Reality, and a series of social structures which express the values and promote the interests of man/Man. The patriarchal system is supported by ideological structures which represent it as a 'natural condition' rather than as a reflection of the interests of the dominant social group. Ideology operates to suppress other points of view. Theodor Adorno for example illustrates the effect of patriarchal ideology upon the female point of view by stating that:

Instead of solving the question of women's oppression male society has so extended its own principle that the victims are no longer able even to pose the question.⁷

Feminist consciousness has developed since Adorno wrote this in the 1940s. However he also gives a potent example of the woman who is aware of patriarchal ideologies as compared to the one who is not:

The woman who feels herself a wound when she bleeds knows more about herself than the one who imagines herself a flower because that suits her husband.⁸

Feminist theorists are aware of how patriarchal ideologies operate to obscure and suppress questions from differing points of view. So far, the question of women's oppression can be posed only within the patriarchal framework. For, as de Lauretis states:

That patriarchy exists concretely, in social relations, and that it works precisely through the very discursive and representational structures that allow us to recognise it, is the problem and the struggle of feminist theory.⁹

7. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, (London, NLB, 1974), p.92.

8. *Ibid*, p.95.

9. de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, p.165.

Thus the tools available to feminism with which to criticise patriarchal ideologies are also enmeshed within the patriarchal system. Both Adorno and de Lauretis imply that there are different levels of ideology, of which women might become conscious, and in which feminist discourse might intervene. Some feminisms focus on the imbalance of power between the genders, and seek an equal representation and presence of women within the patriarchal system. Other feminisms challenge the basic *Weltanschauung*¹⁰ of patriarchal systems of knowledge and perceptions of Reality. Gender ideology becomes a particular aspect of the patriarchal *Weltanschauung*. Thus the different feminist approaches to literary criticism, which I shall discuss in more detail, are partly informed by their different perceptions of patriarchal ideology, which in turn determine their point of intervention in the patriarchal system.

Feminism as a critique of the basic ideological parameters of patriarchy is part of a broader twentieth-century phenomenon. New modes of conceptuality are emerging from various sources in response to the unprecedented changes of this century. These movements are mostly independent of, yet interconnected with, each other. Braidotti refers to this 'remarkable coincidence', and refers to the emergence and merging of two phenomena:

...on the one hand the revival of the women's movement throughout the Western world which led to new analyses of the role, the life conditions and the discursivity of women; on the other, something quite internal to the theoretical field and to philosophy itself - the crisis of rationality.¹¹

Robin Morgan deftly situates feminism in relation to the 'crisis of rationality' and the critiques of Western patriarchal epistemology:

It's been said that three developments, more than others in history, have shaken Man's sense of himself. *Copernican astronomy* changed Man's cosmocentric visions of himself as being at the centre of the universe.

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10. English terms, such as 'ideology', 'idea', 'world view', 'point of view' and so on, have become diffuse in their meaning and application. The German term *Weltanschauung* still carries the meaning of the very basic world view which structures our perception and experience of the 'Real'.
11. Rosi Braidotti, 'Ethics revisited: Women and/in Philosophy', in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, p.55.

Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* changed Man's biocentric vision of himself as being at the centre of life forms. The birth of the science of *anthropology* changed Man's ethnocentric vision of himself as being at the centre of one and only one possible, foreordained culture...But this list is incomplete if we would have it include the present and reach toward the future. In that case, we would have to add two more developments in their immediate and especially their potential effects equal to if not greater than the shifts in consciousness listed above: *feminism*, which challenges Man's androcentric vision of himself as being at the centre of humanity - and *modern physics*, which challenges Man's vision of reality itself.¹²

David Bohm, the physicist, provides an illustration of this interconnection between feminism and New Physics. Bohm is critical of the English language itself because it structures and reflects a view of reality which is at odds with the developing insights of New Physics. Whereas feminist thought highlights the operation of gender power relations in language, Bohm is critical of the operations of language which divide reality into a series of independent, static objects, rather than reflecting the process and relationship between them. His opinions are consistent with the Whorf-Sapir thesis which holds that language structures condition our access to reality.¹³ Bohm states that:

...every language form carries a kind of dominant or prevailing world view, which tends to function in our thinking and in our perception wherever it is used, so that to give a clear expression of a world view contrary to the one implied in the primary structure of a language is usually very difficult.¹⁴

This is precisely the problem that de Lauretis has referred to, when discussing the relationship between the insights of feminism and the patriarchal language in which they are conveyed. Fritjof Capra, also a

12. Robin Morgan, *The Anatomy of Freedom*, (Boston, Anchor/Doubleday, 1982), p.281.

13. The Whorf-Sapir hypothesis was presented by its authors to a conference of anthropologists, linguists and philosophers at Chicago University in 1953 and suggests, in short, that language pre-determines for its speakers certain modes of observation and interpretation, for language does not merely *express* the sort of experience we have, it *determines* our experience. Furthermore the hypothesis suggests that all attributes of experience (even Time and Space) are not absolute either of nature, or of the constitution of the human mind (as Kant would have it), but are relative to the language system we happen to subscribe to.

14. David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, (London, Ark Paperbacks, 1980), p.46.

physicist, supports Morgan's view about the radical potential of feminism:

The rising concern with ecology, the strong interest in mysticism, the growing feminist awareness, and the rediscovery of holistic approaches to health and healing are all manifestations of the same evolutionary trend. They all counteract the emphasis of the rational, masculine attitudes and values and attempt to regain a balance between the masculine and feminine sides of human nature.¹⁵

Feminists would not agree with the essentialist notions here: the male is equated with the rational and the destructive; the female is equated with the intuitive and the creative. However Capra has correctly positioned feminism as a force which radically deconstructs patriarchal assumptions. Feminism *per se*, despite its internal differences, is part of the radical reappraisal of the connections between language, reality and *Weltanschauung*, which has emerged with the dramatic changes of this century.

LITERARY CRITICISM

Traditional literary criticism itself has been influenced and challenged by the development of feminism and by insights from other fields, such as psychology, philosophy and linguistics. Literary criticism is a body of knowledge which has developed within the patriarchal social system, and which has been contained within an epistemological system that has been identified with Western patriarchal ideologies. Thus traditional literary criticism has been implicated in supporting both patriarchally defined gender relationships and a particular *Weltanschauung*. It has been based on the belief that language is a transparent medium for communicating experience and reality, on the principles of empiricism and rationality, and on the idea that Man is a coherent identity, the 'measure of all things'.

15. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, (London, Flamingo, 1983), p.15.

These basic values have been subjected to critique and change. Psychoanalytic theory has destroyed the Cartesian notion of Man as a unified Self. The principle of psychoanalytic theory is that unconscious processes shape conscious thought, and that the Self is shaped by material, social, political, economic and ideological factors. Hence, a complex network of conflicting structures produces the subject and its experiences. Sexual identity is regarded as a flexible subject position, which is culturally and socially constructed. Marxist-feminist theory, which has developed from Marxist theories of society and economics, studies the historical construction of gender and class, and analyzes the importance of culture in both representing and transforming these categories. This theoretical approach assumes that the author and the text speak from positions within an ideological system, so that the claims of the text are to be understood in relation to a particular historical view of culture and aesthetics. The more recent semiotic and structuralist approaches challenge the notion that meaning can be fully represented in the word itself, which has been the basis of the Western epistemological tradition. Instead these theories suggest that the relationship between the word and the object, the signifier and the signified, is arbitrary and a matter of convention which is the result of a shared value system. Language is both created by and conveys the values of the system which it both reflects and defines. The individual subject is positioned in social relationships through the values of language. Language is then both a means of communication and a means of constituting speaking subjects in relation to each other.

These developments and influences have been incorporated into contemporary literary theories, such as semiotics and structuralism. These approaches challenge the 'common sense' norms of orthodox literary criticism and its underlying idealist philosophy. According to contemporary literary theory, there is no longer a unified subject, and language is not a transparent medium which might represent reality and experience. Realism is regarded as an effect of language, not a product of it. The realist tradition has been based on a philosophy of identity, where the signifier is treated as though it has a fixed, static meaning, irrespective of its context or the point of view and intonation of the speaker. Realism promotes mimesis, and uncritically

accepts that reality can be imitated by a fixed signifier/signified identity and that a coherent subject is in control of the discourse. In contrast, recent theories take the view that reality and experience are produced in the text itself and are mediated through selected forms of linguistic representation. These forms reflect ideological values which structure and construct reality, and which, by convention, condition the subject's access to reality; thus the signification of reality and experience in the literary text is the *product* of particular practices of writing. These practices are conditioned by convention and manifest the ideologies, such as those of gender and class, of particular social interest groups.

Thus there are currently two predominant approaches towards the understanding of literature and the literary text. The traditional orthodox approach centres on the representation contained within the text, and highlights literary interpretation and hermeneutics, without considering the problematic nature of its parameters. The modern approach focuses on the textuality and construction of the text, and deconstructs the very categories used by orthodox criticism.

FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM

This brings me back to the original question about the relationship of feminism to literary criticism. A feminist approach to literary criticism reflects an attempt to merge the feminist perspective with developing literary theories. Because feminism is a pluralistic ideology, there are several positions within literary criticism which feminists might adopt. Consequently, there have been developments made in orthodox feminist literary criticism and radical feminist criticism. The difference between orthodox and radical feminism is determined partly by their approach to ideology, and hence where they choose to make their intervention. It will emerge that orthodox feminism focuses on the operation of the specific gender aspect of patriarchal ideology, whereas radical feminism questions the basic structures and parameters of the *Weltanschauung* of Western history and society.

Some feminist theorists have outlined what they believe to be the basic values or orientation of feminist literary criticism. They argue that feminist literary criticism is and must be political because it questions the very categories of aesthetics and literature which have been shaped by patriarchal ideologies, and attempts to transform them from a female point of view. Thus Toril Moi argues that:

The aims of feminist criticism are or should be revolutionary. It is politics, the opposition to patriarchy and sexism in all its forms, which gives feminist criticism its specificity.¹⁶

Moi delineates the point of intervention of feminist literary criticism:

...feminist criticism is about deconstructing such an opposition between the political and the aesthetic: as a political approach to criticism, feminism must be aware of the politics of aesthetic categories as well as of the implied aesthetics of political approaches to art.¹⁷

This aim and direction is compatible with the studies done on the relationship between ideology and aesthetics by such theorists as Althusser, Eagleton and Williams, none of whom has a feminist perspective on literary criticism. They too have set out to disprove the 'value-free' assumptions of orthodox criticism in order to question the hegemony's concepts of 'literature', and to relate literature and culture to the power relations on which the hegemony is built.

The Australian feminist literary critic, Carole Ferrier, also argues that feminist criticism must be political:

In my view, the 'success' of a feminist political practice would lie in its ability to contribute to the overthrow of the system that produces women's oppression and sexism.¹⁸

Ferrier is operating from a Marxist/feminist position. However, there are certain problems about the conjunction of Marxism and feminism which she does not address. For example, she does not explore the

16. Toril Moi, 'Sexual/Textual politics', in *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker *et al*, (Essex, Uni. of Essex Press, 1982), p.10.

17. Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, (London, Methuen, 1985), p.86.

18. Carole Ferrier, ed., *Gender, Politics, and Fiction: Twentieth Century Australian Women's Novels*, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1985), p.4.

contentious relationships between forms of class and gender oppression. Furthermore, whereas Moi has used politics in the broader sense of a point of view from which to evaluate forms of literary criticism, Ferrier has attempted to assert a political method of literary analysis. But although she has developed the ideological focus of her criticism, she has not developed a specific method by which feminist literary criticism might be seen to 'contribute to the overthrow'. Perhaps terms such as 'political' and 'revolutionary' need to be used more circumspectly. There is a confusion of definition. For example, is 'revolutionary' to be treated as an event, or as a process of transformation? The definition will determine the focus and point of intervention of the critical method. Furthermore, when the function of criticism as a tool for social change is over-emphasised, there is the danger that prescriptive and reductive constraints will be placed on it. The politics of literary criticism should emerge from the point of view, in this instance, feminist, and this should determine the methods of textual and cultural analysis. Therefore, the politics and revolutionary aspects of feminist literary criticism should be centred on the process of transformation which they effect upon hegemonic values. Feminist literary criticism should focus on the change of perceptions so that the suppressed point of view of the 'other' will have equal validity to that of the hegemony, and furthermore, should establish a method for analysing the subversive and transformational tactics by which the marginal group challenges the values and meanings of the hegemony.

Most feminist literary critical approaches focus on the operations of the relationship of power between the genders in the production, definition and reception of literature. Feminist theory highlights the process of gender ideology, by which the 'feminine' and 'femininity' are socially constructed identities, not biological essences. One *becomes* a woman.¹⁹ Images of 'woman' are constructed through a similar

19. This sentence, 'One *becomes* a woman', is an example of the power of a feminist intervention in transforming meaning and value. It was coined by Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1949/1983). Now, it has become part of the public domain of language - it does not belong to its author. A simple sentence - which has initiated fields of enquiry about image and representation, about culture and relativism, about the power to construct the subject.

process in literary texts. Greene and Kahn state that:

Feminist literary criticism is one branch of interdisciplinary enquiry which takes gender as a fundamental organising category of experience. This enquiry holds two related premises about gender. One is that the inequality of the sexes is neither a biological given nor a divine mandate, but a cultural construct, and therefore a proper subject of study for any humanistic discipline. The second is that a male perspective, assumed to be 'universal', has dominated fields of knowledge, shaping their paradigms and methods. Feminist scholarship, then, has two concerns: it revises concepts previously thought universal but now seen as originating in particular cultures and serving particular purposes; and it restores a female perspective by extending knowledge about women's experience and contributions to culture.²⁰

That ^{is} the female point of view should highlight the relative and phallogentric nature of patriarchal structures, and should question its assumptions about absolutism and 'universality'. However, it must be emphasised that this is a process of transformation of patriarchal structures in an ongoing dialectic. No single text, author or form of literary criticism will change the operations of gender ideology and the imbalance of power between the genders. But the very presence of such a point of view and its articulation will effect some kind of response in the system.

ANGLO-AMERICAN AND FRENCH FEMINIST LITERARY APPROACHES

There are various forms of feminist literary criticism today. Toril Moi has undertaken a comprehensive and critical review of these developments. She argues that feminist literary theory has moved into two main directions: the Anglo-American or 'sexual politics' approach; and the French, or 'textual politics' approach. Although these approaches are characterised by nationality and geography, they actually represent extreme divergences in their understanding of language, representation and textual analysis. It will emerge that the

20. Gayle Greene & Coppélia Kahn, 'Feminist scholarship and the social construction of women', in *Making a Difference*, ed. Gayle Greene & Coppélia Kahn, (London, Methuen, 1985), pp.1-2.

essential differences between them centre on the positions they take in relation to ideology. The Anglo-American theories focus on the various operations of gender ideology, but still remain within the patriarchal *Weltanschauung*, whereas the French theories question the very parameters of Western epistemology. Moi argues that neither group has developed a theory which maintains both a feminist perspective and a feminist mode of textual analysis.

The Anglo-American group has adapted orthodox methods and approaches to literature and literary criticism from a feminist point of view. However, in doing so, it has adopted uncritically the basic premises of orthodoxy. On the one hand, this group has highlighted stereotyped images of women and literary conventions in the text, has emphasised the sociohistorical context of the female author and her text, has resurrected forgotten women writers and their texts, and has attempted to establish a contrary 'female' literary tradition. Yet on the other hand, this group has accepted uncritically that literature is mimetic, and that language is a transparent medium of reality and experience. Moi states that in the Anglo-American approach to feminist criticism,

...writing is seen as a more or less faithful reproduction of an external reality to which we all have equal access, and which therefore enables us to criticise the author on the grounds that he or she has created an incorrect model of the reality we somewhere all know. Resolutely empiricist in its approach, this view fails to consider the proposition that the real is not only something we construct, but a controversial construct at that.²¹

Because the Anglo-American approach operates uncritically within these empiricist assumptions, Moi argues that:

...the main problem in Anglo-American feminist criticism lies in the radical contradiction it presents between feminist politics and patriarchal aesthetics.²²

Thus, the Anglo-American approach is an example of feminist ideology being grafted onto the patriarchal framework.

Although Australian feminist literary criticism up to date falls largely within this category, it must be seen as part of a gradual

21. Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, p.45.

22. Toril Moi, *ibid.*, p.69.

process which is moving through different stages. Each text has been a landmark at the time of its production, and in turn has stimulated further, sometimes critical, research. Australian feminist criticism has moved in several directions which are consistent with the Anglo-American approach. Some critics have attempted to recover the 'lost' women writers whose works have disappeared. This is indicated by recent lists of publications by Pandora Press and Penguin (Australia), and is illustrated by Dale Spender's *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing* (1988). Others are attempting to recover the female tradition of women writers which has been somewhat neglected in favour of the male tradition of realism and nationalism. This will be discussed later in this dissertation. Other texts, such as Shirley Walker's *Who Is She? Images of Woman in Australian Fiction* (1983), highlight the problematic image and construction of woman in mainstream fiction. On the other hand, magazines such as *Hecate* and *Australian Feminist Studies* have appeared. A large proportion of the articles published in these journals explore and develop the implications of French feminist theory in relation to marginal groups such as women and multicultural minorities.

Drusilla Modjeska's text, *Exiles at Home* (1981), investigates, for the first time, the social context of author and text rather than performing a textual analysis. Her text highlights the effects of gender, and the power relations between the genders, in the production and reception of Australian women writers' texts. Modjeska focuses on the sociohistorical context and the biographical backgrounds of these writers between 1925 and 1945. Although Modjeska highlights the important relationships between the gender of the writer, the text and the context, her text is a form of literary sociology rather than a method of textual analysis.

The text, *Who Is She? Images of Woman in Australian Fiction* (1983), edited by Shirley Walker, is a collection of articles, by women and men, about the image and representation of 'woman' in Australian texts by female and male writers. This text moves beyond sociological analysis, and concentrates on the literary construction of 'woman'. As Walker states:

...the prime consideration has been, as it should be, aesthetic; the essays are concerned with literature as an art form and attempt to come to terms with the writer's use of women figures and of the feminine as an integral part of the art form which the texts represent.²³

This is not a 'feminist' text *per se*, but carries a range of interpretations about the contentious representation of 'woman', including those of the feminist critics, Frances McInherny and Carole Ferrier. Overall, the approach of this text and the articles within it fall within the framework of Anglo-American criticism. As Moi has indicated, the definition and boundary of the term 'aesthetic' is problematic and is implicated in the hegemonic structure. However the theoretical aspects of this problem are not explored in Walker's text.

Two critics within this text have adopted a feminist analysis of their chosen texts. In her analysis of *My Brilliant Career*, Frances McInherny adopts Showalter's typology of a female literary tradition and sub-culture. This approach itself is contentious. The idea of a female sub-culture tends to ignore the synchronic contextual factors within which the text is produced, and thus fails to delineate the discursive strategies that the woman writer's text might establish in relation to patriarchal discourses. Thus for example, this approach does not highlight the subversive strategies which Franklin effects on the male-centred 'Australian tradition' of the 1890s. There may be common features in women's writing which cross cultural and historical boundaries. But this commonality might also suggest that these different cultural and historical contexts might have something in common which provokes such a similar response from women writers. McInherny states that:

The chief thematic concern which marks the novel as being part of a wider tradition of female literature is its discussion of the status and role of women within society.²⁴

23. Shirley Walker, ed.; *Who Is She? : Images of Woman in Australian Fiction*, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1983), p.x.

24. Frances McInherny, 'Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, and the female tradition', in *Who Is She? : Images of Woman in Australian Fiction*, ed. Shirley Walker, pp.73-74.

However, this definition needs more clarification. Male writers, such as Henry James and Thomas Hardy, who do not have a feminist perspective, have also written texts which explore the role and status of women. In contrast, Carole Ferrier takes a more circumspect approach to feminist criticism and analyses Elizabeth Harrower's *The Watch Tower* within several feminist frameworks. She remains critical of the Anglo-American approaches and is open to the insights of the French theories. However, there is the suggestion at the end of her article that she has reached an impasse at the point of difference between them.

K.K. Ruthven has produced a study of feminist criticism in his text, *Feminist Literary Studies* (1984). However his scholarly enterprise is marred by his own hidden agenda and sub-text. He is writing as a male academic who wants the right to lecture on feminist literary criticisms. His words are directed partly at both previous and anticipated, un-named feminists and feminist discourses. He defensively states the position from which he speaks, and parodies an unidentified 'feminist' discourse:

Any man who tries to 'master' the texts of feminism is guilty of replicating at the level of discourse those oppressive practices which enable men to subordinate and manipulate women.²⁵

He does not give any examples of this. He makes sweeping and unidentified generalisations, such as:

Many feminists, however, treat adverse criticism not as part of a process towards knowledge but as a threat to an immutable truth which is known already, believing that those who are not with them must be against them.²⁶

And further:

...in some respects it is easier for men than for women to object to the more ridiculous manifestations of feminist criticism, simply because the intimidatory rhetoric of radical feminism designates any woman who is sharply critical of feminist discourse as a female equivalent of the 'white-arsed nigger' of separatist black rhetoric.²⁷

25. K.K. Ruthven, *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction*, (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni. Press, 1984), p.2.

26. *Ibid*, p.14.

27. *Ibid*, p.14.

Apart from this address to a hidden agenda, Ruthven's text represents a reduction of feminist literary criticism. He is essentially arguing that the critical methods of feminist criticism can be detached from the feminist perspective and the woman-centred point of view, and that feminist literary criticism can be taught along with other critical methods. The equivalent is that of Marxist literary approaches being taught by a non-Marxist. He thus assumes that feminist literary criticism can be a method with women and/or itself as the object of enquiry. However, despite their differences, feminist theories take the feminist perspective as their starting point, and then literary criticism and literary texts as the object of their enquiry.

The text, *Gender, Politics, and Fiction: Twentieth Century Australian Women's Novels*, (1985), edited by Carole Ferrier, aims to bring together 'a range of new readings of twentieth century Australian women's fictions from socialist and/or feminist standpoints.'²⁸ The insertion of feminist and socialist perspectives is a move beyond the ideological assumptions of traditional orthodox criticism and is attached to Anglo-American feminist literary theory. However this text still operates within traditional frameworks. For example, Susan Gardner's article, 'My Brilliant Career: Portrait of the Artist as a Wild Colonial Girl', adapts Annis Pratt's typology of the heroine's development, in contrast to McInherny's adaptation of Showalter. The same criticisms of McInherny's approach apply to Gardner's interpretation; a different hermeneutics is substituted within the same framework. Furthermore, the socialist/Marxist perspective still remains problematic. 'Marxism' seems to have different meanings for different speakers. Essentially, it is both a specific ideology, and a method of analysing relationships, processes and transformations. In its application to literary criticism, one might expect that the Marxist dialectical method would highlight the relationship of a dynamic interaction and transformation between the text and the context, would explore the means by which the text can refract and 'defamiliarise' its context within the developing literary and narrative convention, and thence would delineate the subversive strategies that

28. Carole Ferrier, *Gender, Politics, and Fiction: Twentieth Century Australian Women's Novels*, p.1.

marginal groups, such as women, effect upon the hegemony through the literary text.

Pam Gilbert's text, *Coming Out From Under: Contemporary Australian Women Writers* (1988), sets out to explore the potential that the dialectic method offers. Gilbert refers to the tension of women 'writing within the masculinist language of a phallocentric world about the experience of being a woman':

This book focuses on this tension and the ways in which women's writing not only interrogates and undermines what have traditionally been masculinist discourses about literature and literary criticism, but also constructs alternative discourses which reject narrow and patriarchal frames for women.²⁹

Gilbert discusses a range of women writers and their texts. However, she confuses aspects of the biographical data of the 'real' writers with the textual analysis of their texts. These biographical details do not 'mesh' with the textual analyses, while the analyses themselves are superficial rather than innovative. Although biographical and contextual factors affect the production of the literary text, as Modjeska has illustrated, Gilbert has not explored the theoretical issues concerning their relationship to the textual analysis.

Such is the current position of Australian feminist criticism, which largely falls within Moi's typology of Anglo-American criticism. Moi argues that in contrast to the Anglo-American group French theorists are attempting to move beyond Western epistemologies. They are developing both a method of textual analysis, and a critique of the symbolic order of the official language of the Law of the Father (Lacan's term). They question the parameters of patriarchal language and discourse, which structures reality and which places the subject in a gendered position. They focus their studies on symbolic relations in the belief that social change is to be sought in the rearrangement of the symbolic order and modes of representation. However, with

29. Pam Gilbert, *Coming Out From Under: Contemporary Australian Women Writers*, (Sydney, Pandora, 1988), p.2.

Hence
 a few exceptions, the French theorists do not have a feminist perspective. They ignore the social and historical position of women, and define the 'feminine' in terms of a position within the patriarchal symbolic order. Much of the French theoretical developments have been stimulated by male theorists such as Lacan and Derrida. Thus there emerges a critique of patriarchy from a non-feminist ideological position. Within these theories, the 'feminine' becomes that form of discourse which has been excluded and repressed by the dominant patriarchal symbolic order. Hence, Kristeva splits the subject into two potential sites of discourse: the semiotic, which is pre-symbolic, and which is characterised as a plural, heterogeneous and feminine mode of discourse; and the symbolic, the entry into the Law of the Father, which is hierarchical, unified, phallic and masculine. Either gender may occupy either position. Kristeva has mainly selected the works of avant-garde male writers, such as Mallarmé, through which to explore her theory. In contrast, Luce Irigaray articulates the specificity of the 'feminine' which has been suppressed by the patriarchal symbolic order. However, the argument of a feminine specificity or essence is contentious. This argument has been used by patriarchy to justify the differential treatment of the genders.

Moi states that both the Anglo-American and the French approaches are valid, yet restricted. Both have failed to include a holistic critique which accounts for both the textual construction and its relationship to the wider sociopolitical context and ideological purview. She states that:

There is *no* method or theoretical approach used in feminist criticism which is not also used or usable by non-feminist critics. The problem for feminist critics is to find out which theories and methods are compatible with a feminist stance and which are not...³⁰

Since Moi's publication, feminist literary criticism has continued an uneven, diverse development. The text, *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*,

30. Toril Moi, 'Sexual/Textual Politics', in *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker *et al*, (Essex, Uni. of Essex Press, 1982), p.10.

edited by Mary Eagleton (1986), is a truncated selection of previous feminist literary approaches. Maggie Humm's text, *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics* (1986) adopts a simplistic and naive approach. For example Humm states that the purpose of feminist criticism

...is to re-evaluate the whole terrain of criticism itself as mapped out and colonised by men; that is, to change the language of literary criticism from one of power and possession to one of emotion and caring.³¹

She argues that a critic such as Terry Eagleton cannot produce a feminist literary criticism, because as she states: 'He cannot explore the full extent of the victimisation of women because he is male.'³² This is the sort of feminist criticism that Ruthven fulminates against, but fortunately Humm's views and approaches are not indicative of mainstream feminist theory. In contrast, *Feminist Issues in Literary Scholarship*, edited by Shari Benstock (1987), represents a well-informed attempt to link the insights of both the Anglo-American and the French approaches. Although the articles in this text are an uneven illustration of both approaches, there is an attempt to reach a synthesis between them. Benstock accurately summarises the dilemma facing the Anglo-American feminist critics who are recognising their impasse:

Must we choose, that is, between gynocriticism, with its emphasis on the reality, validity, and authority of women's experience, and gynesis, 'the putting into discourse of 'woman' as that process beyond the Cartesian Subject, the Dialectics of Representation, or Man's truth'? Do we choose gynocritics to explicate Gertrude Stein's life and gynesis to examine her literary works?³³

The question has been posed; but the articles in this text do not supply the answer.

To return to the original question, which concerns the relationship between texts by Australian women writers which feature the woman artist

31. Maggie Humm, *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics*, (London, Harvester Press, 1986), p.6.

32. *Ibid.*, p.11.

33. Shari Benstock, ed., *Feminist Issues in Literary Scholarship*, (Bloomington, Indiana Uni. Press, 1987), p.27.

protagonist and feminist literary criticism. The main theoretical text which covers this theme is that by Grace Stewart in *A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine 1877-1977*.³⁴ However, her enquiry falls within the Anglo-American framework. She adopts a mythic criticism which explores the 'universal' patterns of the female tradition and sub-culture. However, this approach ignores the sociocultural context, and the transformational relationships which might be established between the text and context, and between the text and other texts. Furthermore, Stewart has developed her framework from male theorists who have explored the male heroic myths, such as Campbell, Rank and Jung. She then attempts to transpose 'woman as artist' within this mode, thus reinforcing the centrality of the male mode. By working within this mythic framework, she is forced to generalise, so that the texts will fit into her *schema*, rather than working from the texts to produce a *schema*. Thus, when she applies the Demeter/Persephone myth, she argues that the mother/daughter relationship is often central to the novel of the artist as heroine.³⁵ As I will argue in subsequent chapters, this is not the case with the Australian texts.

The Theories of MIKHAIL BAKHTIN

The theories of Mikhail Bakhtin circumvent the impasses which have been reached by Anglo-American and French literary feminist theories. Some feminists may object to the suggestion that the theories of feminism and Bakhtin might amplify and highlight each other. However feminism is a fluid discipline and discourse which has emerged in reaction to patriarchal discourses and structures. It operates from a woman-centred perspective, and incorporates and adapts insights from various disciplines and thinkers, both male and female. Thus for example, psychoanalytic and Marxist feminisms are indebted to Freud and Marx while French feminism has been influenced by male thinkers

34. Grace Stewart. *A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine: 1877-1977*, (Montreal, Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981).

35. *Ibid*, p.41.

such as Lacan and Derrida. Only time will tell whether Bakhtin achieves the same status for feminism as these male thinkers. At the same time, the application of a feminist perspective and its insights amplifies Bakhtin's theories. He has proposed a method of analysis which departs from orthodox approaches, but he does not illustrate it with any particular ideological focus. Feminism, as a marginal discourse from marginal figures who are interacting within the patriarchal hegemony, is one such ideology which could be applied to his framework. Bakhtin's theory can also be applied to the relationship between other marginal groups such as the Aborigines and the white hegemony.

Bakhtin departs from the premises of both the Anglo-American and the French feminist theories. On the one hand, he places less emphasis on the critical interpretations of the meaning of the text itself, and instead explores the way in which the text creates its own meaning through its discursive networks. He discusses the relationships between the text and its context in terms of a literary network of relations rather than within the sociological mode. On the other hand, he avoids the abstract, self-referential solipsistic approach of the French theorists. His theory highlights the processes of interaction between speakers within the text and between the text and its context. Meaning emerges through this process of interaction. He does not deconstruct meaning but rather suggests that meaning and values emerge from the speakers' points of view in particular discursive structures.

Bakhtin's approach may be summarised as the politics of the utterance. He understands the text to be an utterance which is positioned within its cultural and literary context, while the text itself is composed of utterances between speakers. Thus as an utterance the text becomes an evaluative reaction and response to aspects of the patriarchal context. At the same time, the discursive system of utterances within the text conveys the conflict and debate about 'woman' and 'artist'. Through these discursive systems both within and without the texts, the texts address and 'defamiliarise' to varying degrees, aspects of ideologies which are attached to both 'woman' and 'artist'. Therefore the meaning and value of 'woman' is not static, but instead emerges and is produced through the text's discursive systems.

Thus within Bakhtin's framework, marginal groups are not necessarily powerless or victimised. They do have unequal power and representation in relation to the hegemony, but marginal groups are constantly subverting and undermining the pretensions of the *status quo*. Marginal groups, such as women writers, are engaged in an ongoing dialectic and transformation of patriarchal ideologies. Over a period of time, they are reappropriating the meaning and value of both 'woman' and 'artist' to the female point of view, and are developing a woman-centred literary form through which to represent the woman artist and her experiences. Hence, from Bakhtin's perspective, women writers actually have a position of discursive power from which to effect changes in patriarchal ideologies and discursive structures with regard to 'woman'. This is certainly demonstrated in the texts under discussion.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES OF MIKHAIL BAKHTIN

The philosophy and the critical approaches to literature which have been developed by the Soviet scholar, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), are compatible with the goals of feminism, and may be adapted to a method of literary criticism from a feminist perspective. I do not propose to engage in a detailed critique of Bakhtin's theories. Instead, I want to suggest that his ideas and approach might 'interilluminate' and 'interanimate' the connections between feminism, literary criticism, the Australian women's texts which represent the woman artist protagonist, and the patriarchal linguistic and cultural *milieu* in which they are positioned.

The theories of Bakhtin move beyond the impasses of both the Anglo-American and French literary theories and criticism. As I have noted in the last chapter, the Anglo-American theories have yet to develop a method of feminist literary analysis which moves beyond the patriarchal categories and constructs of the 'aesthetic' and which establishes the relationship between the text and the context in a literary rather than a sociological framework. On the other hand, the French theories have adopted an abstract, ahistorical and metaphysical approach whereby meaning is deconstructed, the subject is fragmented, and contextual factors are ignored.

Bakhtin has established a paradigm of communication which answers these deficiencies so that the text and the context are seen to be dynamically interconnected with each other, and that these interconnections are established within a literary framework. His paradigm is based on the essential and irreducible intersubjective relationship between self and other, and highlights language as the medium between the text and its context. Bakhtin believes that the subject, rather than being sovereign, rational and autonomous, is actually a social being which can only be considered in relation to an other. He suggests too that language is a heterogeneous process which reflects social structures of both discursive power and resistance, and that meaning itself is created in an utterance between at least two subjects within a specific context. In short, he considers that the literary text is ineluctably interconnected with its

social and literary context. This means that, in his view, there is a dynamic interconnection and interaction between language, ideology, the subject, the text and the context. Thus subjectivity is not prior to, but is rather constructed by, language and discursive structures. 'Reality' itself is not a self-evident 'given' factor, but is instead universally mediated through a differential system of signs such as language.

Bakhtin's theoretical framework suggests that the texts under discussion might be examined in terms of external and internal discursive relationships. On the external level, the texts establish specific discursive relationships of reaction and response to their contemporary social and literary contexts. These contextual factors are aesthetically represented and reconstructed within the thematic and ideological design of the text. On the internal level, the woman artist protagonist is to be defined in terms of her discursive relationships with other textual characters within the text. Through these systems of external and internal discursive structures, women writers 'fracture' and 'defamiliarise' patriarchal ideologies and reappropriate the meanings of 'woman' and 'artist' to their points of view. Hence the texts under discussion will be approached within a theoretical framework which highlights the discursive interconnections between the text and the context, and which focuses on the discursive structures among speaking positions within the text.

Bakhtin's theories are not only applicable to the literary text. They may be adapted to delineate the discursive relationships between marginal discourses and the social hegemony. Feminism is one such discourse in relation to the patriarchal hegemony. According to Bakhtin, social organisation is characterised by the discursive relationships between hegemonic and marginal discourses. The hegemony, in this instance, the patriarchy, is supported by an 'official' language. This language represents the centripetal forces which embody a monologic ideology, which homogenise differences and oppositions, and which establish hierarchical value systems in relation to the dominant interest group. In contrast, the marginal groups have 'unofficial' languages and are characterised by centrifugal forces which draw away from the centre of power and authority and which celebrate heterogeneity and plurality. This centrifugal movement relativises and 'carnivalises' the values of the hegemony.

Within this *schema*, feminism and its discourses are part of the centrifugal forces of language which draw away from the monologic centre of patriarchal authority. Feminism is a carnivalising force. The concept of carnival is central to Bakhtin's formulation of the relationship between the hegemony and marginal groups. Carnival reverses and rearranges the hegemonic social structures and relationships which are established within a hierarchical value system, and in doing so, suggests that such relationships and hierarchies are arbitrary and conventional, and exist to support the interests of the dominant group. Feminism in a broad sense is a carnival movement which challenges the monopoly of patriarchal discourses and values by inserting another, opposite point of view which has been repressed by patriarchal ideologies and discursive structures. This challenge from feminism is effected through a series of discursive strategies in relation to patriarchal constructs and discourses.

Before going any further, certain qualifications must be mentioned about Bakhtin and his theories. There have been disputes about the authorship of certain texts which do not bear Bakhtin's name. These are: *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* by P.N.Medvedev; *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, both by V.N.Voloshinov. Most scholars agree that Bakhtin had a large part to play in the writing and authorship of these texts, even though they bear the names of his colleagues. Soviet copyright now officially requires that Bakhtin's name should appear on any new editions of these texts.¹ I shall therefore refer to 'Bakhtin' when I mention these texts in the following discussion.

The other problem is that Bakhtin did not develop a complete or final theory. He was a scholar who firmly believed in the process of 'becoming', and of the 'unfinalisation' of the word in discourse. As his biographers, Clark and Holquist, state:

An account of a man who gave chief importance to being 'unfinalised' and 'becoming' cannot be conclusive.²

1. Katerina Clark & Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, (Boston, Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), p.147.

2. *Ibid*, p.2.

They state further that:

We must learn to characterise his thought while still heeding his constant mandate to resist finalisation.³

This does not diminish his scholarship or influence. Instead, his ideas may well be applied to other literary texts, apart from those of Rabelais and Dostoyevsky which were his particular concern, and may be applied in fields apart from literary criticism, such as political theory and linguistics. The 'incomplete' aspect of his theories creates a space from which a feminist literary criticism may develop.

The study of Bakhtin's ideas and the application of his approach is only beginning to develop. Already his theories have been applied to such diverse areas as the study of the Victorian multi-plot novel in Peter Garrett's *The Victorian Multi-plot Novel*, and the socioliterary study of the connections between authority and the body of the 'grotesque' in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* by Stallybrass and White. Sneja Gunew has employed his concepts of the carnival and the body of the grotesque to multicultural reading strategies.⁴ Humphrey McQueen has related Bakhtin's theories to his study of Keith Looby in the *Suburbs of the Sacred*. To my knowledge, there has not yet been a detailed feminist application of Bakhtin's theories, although Wayne Booth has read a feminist perspective into Bakhtin's work on Rabelais,⁵ and Drusilla Modjeska refers to Bakhtin's concept of dialogism in her introduction to Eleanor Dark's text, *The Little Company*.⁶ Carolyn Heilbrun also refers briefly to Bakhtin's 'dialogic imagination' and to Booth's feminist reading of Rabelais.⁷ The French theorist, Julia Kristeva, has adapted and developed some of Bakhtin's ideas, but she does not operate within a feminist perspective.

3. Mikhail Bakhtin, p.147.

4. Sneja Gunew, 'Rosa Cappiello's *Oh Lucky Country*: Multicultural Reading Strategies', (*Meanjin*, Vol.44, No.4, 1985).

5. Wayne Booth, 'Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism', (*Critical Inquiry*, Vol.9, September 1982).

6. Drusilla Modjeska, *Introduction to Eleanor Dark, The Little Company*, (London, Virago, 1985).

7. Carolyn Heilbrun & Margaret R. Higonnet, ed/intro to *The Representation of Women in Fiction*. Selected papers from the English Institute, (Boston, John Hopkins Uni.. Press, 1983), p.xii.

Bakhtin's theories about the literary text and the nature of literature are influenced by and interconnected with the growth of his personal *Weltanschauung*. He believes that there is a dynamic interconnection between the two premises:

In the beginning was the word. (John 1.1.)
In the beginning is the relation.⁸

Both the 'word' and the 'relation' are separate yet inextricably connected. They exist only in the speaking relationships between the self and other. They exist in between the entities of the self and other, crossing the boundary between them, but never quite bridging the immutable gap between them. The connection between self and other is formed by language. Thus the word and the relation constitute dialogue between the self and other; yet simultaneously the dialogue constitutes the word and the relation. From this interconnection between the word and the relation, Bakhtin defines language as being a living dialogue of dynamic continuity which exists only between at least two speaking subjects. Bakhtin believes that there is no self without the other, and that neither the self nor the other can exist without the word or language. Therefore the speaking subject can be defined only in terms of its relations with the other. The nature of this relation is established by and through the process of dialogue between them. According to Bakhtin, each exchange of dialogue between the self and other is a renewal of meaning. There is an open unity of grammar and semantic definition behind each speaker, but in the living speech situation, words and concepts might be re-evaluated and reaccentuated to give a new slant to meanings and values. This slant is an effect of the speaker's thematic design, and the discursive relationship which exists with the addressee.

The self-other relationships are of central importance to Bakhtin's theories. His view of this relationship forms the basis for his views about the speaking subject and the representation of character in the literary text. According to Bakhtin, there are two primary characteristics of the nature of the speaking subject: s/he exists only in discursive relations with the other; and s/he is constituted by social languages, by

8. Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (Edinburgh, Clark, 1970), p.69.

the voices of the other which s/he selectively assimilates. Bakhtin's concept of the other may be correlated with feminist thought which explores the theory of alterity, the position of woman as the other.

Bakhtin's view of the self/other relationship is influenced by the ideas of Martin Buber, from the text *I And Thou*. Bakhtin focuses on Buber's I-Thou form of relation, and extends it by arguing that language creates, and is created by, the self-other relation. According to Bakhtin, there is no such thing as an autonomous, individual human subject. Instead, the self is always social, bonded to the other by dialogue. The speaker and the addressee as such do not exist prior to the speech act. The process of dialogue between them defines them in relation to each other. This process is active and dynamic. The discursive relations between the two speaking subjects reflect the modes of authority in discourse which operate between them. This, for example, may be a direct, authoritarian mode which represses the differences of the other. However, the repressed other, in turn, may develop particular strategies, such as irony and parody, which may undermine that authority through ridicule. Thus there may be a 'contest' within the discursive structure for the meanings and values of particular concepts, such as 'woman'.

However, Bakhtin's concept of the other raises particular issues in relation to the feminist conception of 'woman' as the other in relation to patriarchy. For example, de Beauvoir explains the alienation and outsider status of 'woman' in terms of the dichotomy between self and other. As she states, 'He is the subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other'.⁹ Thus, according to her view, the masculine is defined as the centre and the norm, while the opposite, the feminine, is defined absolutely as the other. de Beauvoir describes how this perception of the other operates on women. She states:

...men say 'women' and women use the same word in referring to themselves. They do not authentically assume a subjective attitude.¹⁰

9. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans./ed. H.M. Parshley, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1939/1983), p.16.

10. *Ibid.* p.19.

Thus woman can define herself only through the authoritative male definition and perception of her. The meaning and value of 'woman' from the male point of view differs from that from the female point of view. de Beauvoir summarises woman's existential position as the other:

The dream of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego) - who always regards the self as the essential - and the compulsion of a situation in which she is the inessential.¹¹

This view also summarises the ideological position of the woman artist protagonist in her textual world. The texts under discussion represent a drama in which the artist protagonist is confronted with two essentially different identities: to be a 'woman', according to her position as the other and to the expectations of others around her; or to be an artist, which is the rejection of the position of the other and of social expectations. The position of the artist becomes the assertion of the female self. This drama between the female as self or other is explored from the point of view of the protagonist in the dominant speaking position of the text.

Some feminist theories highlight the characteristics and evaluations of woman as the other. Thus the phallogentric system is one which is established on a system of binary oppositions. Man is situated in the centre, and all that is non-male is the other. These oppositions are evaluated by a hierarchy of values, so that what is designated as the 'feminine' is devalued in relation to the masculine. Cixous, for example, postulates this binary system, and delineates some of the oppositions and evaluations. Thus she states:

Where is she?
Activity/passivity,
Sun/Moon,
Culture/Nature
Day/Night
Father/Mother,
Head/Heart,
Intelligible/sensitive,
Logos/Pathos.

11. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p.29.

Form, convex, step, advance, seed, progress.
 Matter, concave, ground - which supports the step,
 receptacle.

Man

Woman

Always the same metaphor: we follow it, it transports us, in all of its forms, wherever a discourse is organised. The same thread, or double tress leads us, whether we are reading or speaking, through literature, philosophy, criticism, centuries of representation, of reflection.¹²

From these binary oppositions, which are the basis of patriarchal epistemologies, all that is non-masculine is defined as the other, a largely negative concept, and is devalued in relation to centralist, masculine values.

The Anglo-American theories tend to impose a role-model perspective on self-other relationships. 'Woman' is thus defined and constructed according to the values and point of view of phallogentrism. From this perspective, women are determined by social expectations into prescribed social roles. The Anglo-American group has also provided significant empirical research which illustrates how women have been marginalised, as the other, from the centres of social discourse, such as history, philosophy and literature.

Of all the texts under discussion, Thea Astley's *An Item from the Late News* most forcefully illustrates the dichotomy between the self-other in gender terms. In this text, the white male is the norm and centre of power. Those who are non-white males, such as Wafer the 'poofteer', Rosie the Aborigine, Doss the 'strong' woman, are all marginal to, and powerless before, the white male hegemony, which in this text is characterised primarily by violence. Gabby the protagonist represents a contradiction. She is conscious of her marginal position as a woman within this textual world and as a recorder of the textual events. On the one hand, she identifies with the position and values of the marginalised group yet, on

12. Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', as quoted in Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Inscribing femininity: French theories of the feminine', in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Green & Coppelia Kahn, (New York, Methuen, 1985), p.82.

the other hand, she participates in the masculine violence and betrays Wafer in revenge.

This has been a brief overview of feminist conceptions of woman as the other. Bakhtin's theory of the self-other in conjunction with these views suggests an alternate view of woman as other. It is one which allows for woman's subversive engagement with the hegemony. Women are positioned as the other in patriarchal discourse, but, according to Bakhtin, it is possible for women to speak their 'self' from this position. Thus their discourse may be described as being double-voiced. They have two points of view within patriarchal structures. Their concept of their 'self' is at odds, to varying degrees, with their discursive position as the other and their definition as the other. From this position, women may effect various discursive strategies, such as those of the polemic, of parody and of satire, in an active engagement with patriarchal structures and language. The position of the other may become an affirmation of the self. Specific discursive strategies from this point of view may operate to make the male world 'strange'. This is the effect achieved by Riley's *All That False Instruction*. Here, heterosexual love is unfavourably compared to lesbian love. Thus this text makes the masculine 'strange' and, at the same time, promotes a specific woman-centred view of sexual experience. Despite being in the position of the other, Bakhtin's theory suggests that woman is able to 'author' herself and to effect 'internal' critiques of patriarchy through discourse from her point of view.

It is obvious, then, that Bakhtin's ideas about the nature of the self and the speaking subject may illuminate and extend the feminist conception of woman as other. Although Bakhtin believes that the self can only exist in relation to the other, and that the other represents an evaluation and expectation of the self, he also believes that the self is ultimately responsible for itself. He believes that we each have a unique aspect in existence and that we must shape an alibi for our place in the world. Each person is answerable to her/himself, and is responsible for 'authoring' her/his place in existence. Our existence as persons is essentially an event, an activity in which we structure our values and our points of view in discursive relationships with others. Clark and Holquist state:

What the self is answerable to is the social environment; what the self is answerable for is the authorship of its responses. Self creates itself in crafting an architectonic relation between the unique locus of life activity which the individual human organism constitutes and the constantly changing natural and cultural environment which surrounds it.¹³

Thus, woman is able to 'author' her own meaning, value and point of view, despite her position as the other within phallogentrism. Bakhtin correlates this architectonics of the self to the construction of the literary text. The author structures the discursive field within the text on the basis of the self-other relationships. The textual characters are constructed by words and 'voices' which indicate an ideological position and which are structured in relation to other ideological positions.

Bakhtin believes that the self/subject is constituted by the numerous words, 'voices' and languages of the other which exist in her/his environment:

The ideological becoming of a human being, in this view, is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others.¹⁴

According to Bakhtin, this is not a passive position for the subject. He argues that there are two basic forms of discourse, and two corresponding processes of the formulation of ideology. The subject is positioned between the authoritative discourse and the internally persuasive discourse. The authoritative discourse is a fixed, stable centripetal discourse which supports the interests of the hegemony. Bakhtin refers to it as 'the word of a father',¹⁵ although he does not endow this with a feminist perspective as does Jacques Lacan. This authoritative word is conveyed through discourses such as the legal, the religious, the ethical and so on. This discourse is balanced by the internally persuasive discourse of the subject, which is the individual's response and responsiveness to her environment. The authoritative discourse is supported by the 'official'

13. Katerina Clark & Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p.68. These authors describe Bakhtin's view of the self in the chapter, 'The Architectonics of Answerability'. Bakhtin's relevant text has not yet been translated into English.

14. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, (Austin, Uni. of Texas Press, 1981), p.341.

15. *Ibid*, p.342.

ideology which represents a fixed, monologic (or centralist and homogeneous) ideology and point of view. The internally persuasive discourse is supported by the behavioural ideology of the individual subject. This ideology is never fixed or finalised, because it represents the world from the point of view of a developing individual consciousness. There is always a gap between the official and the behavioural ideologies. No individual subject ever fully replicates the structure of society's official values. The subject shapes herself and 'authors' her responses within the dynamic interaction between these forms of ideology.

As Bakhtin states:

The struggle and dialogic interrelationships of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an ideological consciousness.¹⁶

Thus the subject never fully coincides with the expectations of the official ideology. Bakhtin moves us beyond the determinism of gender ideology. His theory highlights the process of the subject's resistance to official ideologies. This partly explains the 'slippage' which occurs between the individual female subject and the official gender ideology's expectations of her.

This form of female resistance and becoming is actively reflected in the texts. The representation of the woman artist protagonist oscillates between the official expectations of 'woman' and her own 'internal persuasion' to become an artist. There are various discursive strategies by which the protagonist steers her internally persuasive discourse through the authoritative discourses. For example, Sybylla from *My Brilliant Career* engages in direct polemic and satire against the official gender ideology which leaves her no option but marriage. Louie from *The Man Who Loved Children* becomes a female version of some of the aspects of the Nietzschean hero. Hence the subjectivity of the woman artist protagonist becomes an object of experimentation and representation. She is positioned discursively in the text between the differential evaluations and definitions of 'woman' and 'artist'. Essentially, she is represented and constructed between the oscillations of the official and the behavioural ideologies, and their forms of discourse.

16. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.342.

According to Bakhtin, dialogue forms the bridge between the self and the other. The process of dialogism constitutes the self-other relationship. This relationship simultaneously constitutes dialogue. The term 'dialogism' is crucial to Bakhtin's understanding of the self-other dialogic relationship. Yet the term is difficult to pin down to a single definition. However, a 'feel' for the concept emerges from Bakhtin's words and ideas, and their application. Bakhtin's ideas about dialogism emerge from his approach to the relationship between the subject and language. He believes that the meaning of the word is not fixed, but rather is re-accentuated and re-evaluated in the utterance which occurs between at least two speakers within a specific context. No word is neutral, because all words have been used before and carry a sedimentation of past meanings and values. There are different social 'languages', called *heteroglossia*, which exist within a single national language, each of which represents particular points of view according to race, class, gender, profession, locality and so on. The meaning of the word itself is inseparably connected to values and attitudes. These definitions of language which Bakhtin has characterised form the dialogical background to the foregrounded speaking subjects, and provide a pool of discursive strategies. These strategies manipulate the 'fickle' meaning of the word, and the various social 'voices', each of which represents ideas and values of the other. Thus the speaking subjects in the utterance, the speech act, may 'author' the meaning and values of words. This is effected through various discursive strategies which utilise the dialogic potential of the word. Thus dialogism is an inherent characteristic of dialogue, that living process of language between speaking subjects.

Bakhtin believes that there are two basic dialogical features of the word. On the one hand, the word has its own history of past usage and hence carries previous values and attitudes. On the other hand, social languages or *heteroglossia* surround the word with different social accents and points of view. Bakhtin argues that there cannot be a final or fixed meaning to the word:

There cannot be a unified (single) contextual meaning. Therefore, there can be neither a first nor a last meaning; it always exists among other meanings as a link in the chain of meaning, which in its totality is the only thing that can be real. In historical life, this chain continues indefinitely, and therefore each

individual link in it is renewed again and again, as though it were being reborn.¹⁷

Thus the word carries meaning from past contexts, yet this meaning is reshaped according to the present context. Contexts are potentially infinite, so that the meaning of the word is continually renewed. A history and context of contradictory meanings and evaluations cohere to the word. There is a 'light' and 'shadow' to each word, depending on how it might be used. The 'light' refers to the straightforward, unified meaning that the official language might promote, whereas the 'shadow' refers to its double, which might be subject to parody and travesty by the unofficial language. Bakhtin believes that the word is not a fixed entity, and states:

For the word is not a material thing, but rather the eternally mobile, eternally fickle medium of dialogic interaction.¹⁸

The meaning of the word is contextual in nature, carrying past accretions of meaning from previous contexts, and is subject to the intentions of the present speaker.

Bakhtin believes that there are three aspects to the word. He states that the word exists:

...as a neutral word of a language, belonging to nobody; as an *other's* word, which belongs to another person and is filled with echoes of the other's utterance; and, finally, as *my* word, for, since I am dealing with it in a particular situation, with a particular speech plan, it is already imbued with my expression.¹⁹

It follows then that:

Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness', varying degrees of awareness and detachment.²⁰

Thus there is a contest for meaning when a speaker uses a word in the utterance.

17. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'From Notes Made in 1970-71', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, (Austin, Uni. of Texas Press, 1986), p.146.

18. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed./trans. Caryl Emerson, (Minneapolis, Uni. of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.202.

19. *Ibid.*, p.88.

20. *Ibid.*, p.89.

Because of its fluid meaning and nature, the word is a sensitive indicator of social change. Bakhtin states:

The word as the ideological phenomenon par excellence exists in continuous generation and change; it sensitively reflects all social shifts and alterations. In the vicissitudes of the word are the vicissitudes of the society of word-users.²¹

The theme of the woman artist is an index of such social change. Because 'woman' and 'artist' are changing cultural constructs, one might expect that the meaning and value of these terms would change in the texts across a chronological perspective. Yet this change in meaning is not only effected by external social and linguistic development. The words, 'woman' and 'artist', have been used, defined and evaluated in past utterances. As Bakhtin states:

The word, directed toward its object, enters a logically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile.²²

Thus women writers must insert their meanings of 'woman' and 'artist' into the stream of previous meanings. They use discursive strategies which highlight previous ideas and values about 'woman' and 'artist' in a counterbalance with their own. For example, in the texts under discussion, the 'artist' is being defined as female against a dialogised background in which, despite obvious exceptions, the artist has been defined traditionally as a masculine role. Thus language, according to Bakhtin, is open to social change because of the fluid nature of the word. Each word is open to conflicting allusions to previous utterances, to varied social pronunciations which reflect *heteroglossia*, and to the intonation of the present speaker. The speaker's point of view is foregrounded against this dialogical background of the word.

Bakhtin believes that the dialogical process can be realised only in

21. Mikhail Bakhtin/V.N.Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka & I.R.Titunik, (New York, Seminar Press, 1973), p.157.

22. M. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.276.

the utterance. Essentially, the utterance occurs in the basic speaking situation, between two speaking subjects who share a common understanding and knowledge of the situation. The boundaries of the utterance are determined by the change in speaking subjects. According to Bakhtin, any utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication. Furthermore, he believes that the literary text is such an utterance. Hence the literary text is related to other forms of utterances and shares common ground with them. This approach to the literary text contrasts with those which relate the text only to other literary texts. As Bakhtin states:

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it - it does not approach the object from the sidelines.²³

In Bakhtin's terms, the listener does not occupy a passive position. Instead, the listener is potentially able to be actively responsive to the speaker's meaning. At the same time, the speaker is framing her/his speech, and takes into account the anticipated response of the listener. Thus, the utterance is a rejoinder to past utterances, and a continuation of them. The utterance is an activity which represents the speaker's point of view and values in a particular context. But the speaker's stance here is shaped through a dialogical juxtaposition of differing values and meanings from previous contexts. It in turn enters the stream of utterances, and becomes an utterance which future speakers will in turn address.

Bakhtin argues that no utterance is individual or self-sufficient. Utterances are aware of and mutually reflect other utterances, both those which have preceded it and those which it anticipates:

The word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way.
But this does not exhaust the internal dialogism of the word. It encounters an alien word not only in the object itself:

23. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp.276-77.

every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates.²⁴

This process occurs in all forms of discourse. Thus, it will emerge in this thesis that texts dealing with the contentions and the contradictory positions of 'woman' and 'artist' are taking up a position in relation to a stream of utterances about that topic. To varying degrees, the texts are responding to previous ideas and evaluations of 'woman' and 'artist', and at the same time, they are variously anticipating responses to their representation.

However, the re-evaluation of meaning and value involves conflict and struggle. As Bakhtin states:

Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other. The utterance so conceived is a considerably more complex and dynamic organism than it appears when construed simply as a thing that articulates the intention of the person uttering it, which is to see the utterance as a direct, single-voiced vehicle for expression.²⁵

Thus the texts dealing with the woman artist are a representation of the struggle for the meaning and value of these positions. In this arena, women writers can utilise their dual positions as self/other, which was noted earlier. They may employ double-voiced discursive techniques which represent, for example, 'the word of the father', from the representing, woman-centred point of view. In this way, the monologic, singular views of patriarchal meanings are fractured to reveal contradictions, opposing points of view and evaluations.

Thus, according to Bakhtin, dialogism occurs partly because of the unstable, fluid nature of the word. He proposes that dialogism is also influenced by *heteroglossia*. This term refers to the variety of languages, accents, 'voices' and points of view which exist in society within a single national language. These differences within the single national language

24. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp.279-80.

25. *Ibid*, pp.354-55.

reflect differences in class, locality or geography, racial background, professional specialisation and so on. Each group has its own meaning, point of view, accent and particular vocabulary. The opposite of *heteroglossia* is *polyglossia*, in which there are a mixture of national languages within a single, identifiable national culture. Bakhtin states that *heteroglossia* is an inevitable characteristic of languages:

Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These 'languages' of *heteroglossia* intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying 'languages'.²⁶

The utterance is interconnected with the background of *heteroglossia* through the process of dialogism. As Bakhtin states:

The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogised *heteroglossia*, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance.²⁷

Thus a diversity of social speech types exists within any culture and forms the heteroglot background which is dialogised by the speaker in the current utterance.

This existence of a variety of social speech types does not imply that there is a 'woman's' language that is particular to women. Women are present in any social stratification according to class, locality, profession and so on, and thus participate in the language of that level. However, women writers select and evaluate 'voices' from their heteroglot background, and subject the attendant values and ideas to the dominant point of view and evaluation of the text. The heteroglot languages which are selected represent particular ideas and notions which are then judged within the representing and evaluating narrative framework.

So far then I have considered the self-other relationship and the nature of dialogism in Bakhtin's theories. The self-other relationship

26. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.291.

27. *Ibid.*, p.272.

and his concept of dialogism form the basis of his approach to the literary text. Bakhtin builds upon the analogy he establishes between the utterance and the literary text. The literary text is another form of the utterance. Essentially the text consists of the words of speaking subjects which indicate value and meaning and which are positioned in relation to the words of other speaking subjects. The representation of these words and the relationships between the speaking subjects occur within the dominant evaluating and representing narrative framework. The text is inextricably interconnected with past utterances, such as previous texts and the history of literature, and with its contemporary literary and social context.

The text becomes the site of struggle for meaning and value, between past utterances and the present controlling design of the text. Such a struggle is indicated in the representation, meaning and value of the 'woman' 'artist'. In the earlier texts, such as *Human Toll* (1907) and *Intimate Strangers* (1937), the emphasis and focus of the argument concerns the nature and condition of 'woman' in society while the condition of the artist, though present, is secondary. *My Brilliant Career* (1901) is a text written by a potential female artist about the present condition of 'women'. The following text, *My Career Goes Bung* (1902/1946) illustrates the inimical position that the 'woman artist' occupies in her social context. In the later texts, however, 'woman' is not the main problematic for the female artist. *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* (1983) and *Foxybaby* (1985) represent female characters who are not stereotyped 'women' while the texts themselves highlight the artistic construction of the realist narrative. *Lines of Flight* (1985) centres on the artistic consciousness of the creating female artist, who is a mother as well as a writer and artist. The chronology of the texts illustrates a differential relationship between the positions of the 'woman' and the 'artist'. There is a movement between the struggle not to be a 'woman' according to gender definitions which preclude the identity of the female artist, and the affirmation of the female artist and her artistic constructions. The changing image of the woman artist in these texts reflects both the changes which have occurred in the social context, and the struggle for the meaning of 'woman' within women's texts.

Even though the text is inextricably interconnected with its context and with other utterances, Bakhtin argues that the text does not 'represent' reality. He states that:

However forcefully the real and the represented world resist fusion, however immutable the presence of that categorical boundary line between them, they are nevertheless indissolubly tied up with each other and find themselves in continual mutual interaction; uninterrupted exchange goes on between them, similar to the uninterrupted exchange of matter between living organisms and the environment that surrounds them.²⁸

The language of everyday reality, the *heteroglossia*, is absorbed by the text, but then it loses its immediate relation to reality. The languages are absorbed into the narrative background or are placed into the voices of the characters. Their significance then depends on their position in the discursive and evaluating structure of the narrative.

Bakhtin argues that characters in the literary text are speaking subjects, and that the text is a structure of discursive positions. He states that:

The fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel, that which is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the speaking person and his discourse.²⁹

The speech of each character represents both content and points of view. Yet, at the same time, this speech is an object of the narrative representation. Each character is framed by the narrative discourse which indicates an evaluation of their ideas and values, and is positioned within the discursive structure of the text. Thus the speaking person's discourse is an artistic representation and is structured into the design of the text. The plot resolution of the text indicates the outcome of the conflict between ideas and values which have been indicated by the discursive positions.

Bakhtin argues that the literary text is structured from the diverse forms of *heteroglossia* which exist in the social context, and which are then represented within the textual design:

The language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyse it as a single unitary language.³⁰

28. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.254.

29. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp.332-33.

30. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.47.

This system of languages, or diverse social speech types, enters the text and becomes artistically organised. As Bakhtin states:

Diversity of voices and *heteroglossia* enter the novel and organise themselves within it into a structured artistic system. This constitutes the distinguishing features of the novel as a genre...When *heteroglossia* enters the novel it becomes subject to artistic re-working. The social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms, which provide language with its particular concrete conceptualisations, are organised in the novel into a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the *heteroglossia* of his epoch.³¹

These languages and their points of view are represented in dialogic interaction with each other within the narrative frame:

To a greater or lesser extent, every novel is a dialogised system made up of the images of 'languages', styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language. Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation. Novelistic discourse is always criticising itself.³²

This process of dialogism will be illustrated in the texts which deal with the woman artist figure. 'Woman', 'artist' and 'woman artist' have been the focus of varying degrees of ideological controversy in the socio-historical context. Therefore there is a range of languages and 'voices' which convey attitudes and values and from which the writer might choose. These languages and their attendant ideas and values are then structured into an interaction with the discursive position and ideological stance of either the narrator or protagonist. These languages are not introduced passively into the text to represent particular ideas. Instead they are also objects, and are evaluated according to the writer's ideological design.

Bakhtin classes the literary text within two categories: the polyphonic and the monologic. These categories are determined by the modes of discursive authority which are represented by the writer's treatment of the textual character. Bakhtin praises the polyphonic text, which he believes is best represented by Dostoevsky. In this type of text, the

31. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.300.

32. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p.49.

writer allows the characters to speak their own ideas in their particular linguistic styles. These characters, their languages and their points of view, are represented in an equal relation to each other and to the represented narrator. They speak with integrity for themselves. By contrast, the monologic text homogenises the values and points of view, and subjects the characters to the writer's ultimate control. Characters are manipulated by the writer, instead of speaking for themselves.

The texts under discussion represent a mixture of these styles. *The Man Who Loved Children* is the closest illustration of the polyphonic text. Here, Sam and Henny speak their idiosyncratic languages, which represent their ideas and world views, from opposite positions to each other. Louie the protagonist is positioned to evaluate their values and points of view from her stance as the developing female artist. The polyphonic potential of the literary text is exploited by Elizabeth Jolley in the texts *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Foxybaby*. These texts represent a cacophony of 'voices' which at times appear random and chaotic. However, both texts reveal their narrative construction and the singular authority of the represented writer over these 'voices'. In contrast, *Human Toll* is the closest example of the monologic text. Although this text introduces heteroglot 'voices' such as Aboriginal pidgin, the writer does not allow her characters, including the protagonist, to speak for themselves. Instead, the characters are structured as types through which the writer represents her own ideas and evaluations. Most of the texts under discussion contain a mixture of the monologic and the polyphonic forms of discursive authority. A textual analysis of the discursive structures of the texts will show a differential relationship of authority between the narrator, the protagonist and other characters. I will discuss this in more detail in a later chapter. However, on the basis of gender, these texts are 'mono'logic to begin with. The texts are woman-centred points of view; they are written by women about the female protagonist and her specific female dilemma of being 'between a woman' and/or an artist. This does not mean that the texts are wholeheartedly in support of women. Some texts, such as *The Getting of Wisdom*, contain contradictory and ambiguous views of other women. However there are varying degrees of the inclusion of the male point of view and the male character in these texts. When women's texts attempt to assert a definition of 'woman' that conflicts with patriarchal constructs, then the male view may not be represented with full

integrity. Thus in *The Getting of Wisdom*, the male characters represent either the authority in the textual world, or the goal that Laura's fellows strive for, but they are not 'whole' characters. *All That False Instruction* represents males as typed characters who illustrate the protagonist's arguments. In contrast, *For Love Alone* represents Jonathan Crow in depth with his own ideas and language, through which he exposes himself and is exposed by another male character, James Quick. Thus there will be a range of polyphonic and monologic representations in the woman-centred texts.

A basic premise of Bakhtin's literary approach is that the text is interconnected with its context. Each text represents various languages from the heteroglot social background, and exploits the fluid nature of the 'fickle' word which has existed in the infinite range of other utterances and contexts. There are three basic types of context, although it must be remembered that contexts have fluid boundaries and are potentially limitless. Context refers to the contemporaneous social context of the text; to past literary texts within the literary context which the present text might allude to and resonate with; and to future contexts, such as the context of criticism and interpretation.

This interconnection between the text and the context has two main effects. On the one hand, the text is a struggle for meaning through the processes of dialogising and evaluating the meanings and values of other 'voices' and utterances, while on the other hand, the text is a developing narrative form itself. The texts to varying degrees challenge the 'official' versions of 'woman' and the nature of the woman/artist relationship. Hence for Sybylla in *My Brilliant Career* (1901), being a 'woman' is the greatest obstacle to her art, whereas the main concern for Rita in *Lines of Flight* (1985) lies in the development and expression of her art. In between these texts, there has been a dialogical process of reappropriating the meaning of 'woman' from patriarchal 'voices' and utterances to woman-centred views.

At the same time, the form of the text has been developing. Bakhtin believes that the literary text is always in a state of becoming, as is the social reality that it is part of. In conjunction with their critical representation of the female artist, the texts are developing

the narrative form and discursive structures. For example, *The Getting of Wisdom* is a structured realist narrative, in which the narrator 'speaks for' the protagonist at times, and in which the options for 'woman' are limited. In contrast, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* is a 'realist' text which illustrates the narrative construction of realism, and in which 'woman' is no longer the central problematic. This dialogic struggle for the meaning of 'woman' within the texts is interconnected with the developing form of the texts.

Thus, Bakhtin's theories may be adapted to the discussion of the texts which feature the woman artist protagonist from a feminist perspective. Feminist discourse may be situated within Bakhtin's *schema* of the unceasing interaction between centripetal and centrifugal social forces. On the one hand, there is the centralising patriarchal hegemony with its 'official' language and authoritative discourse, which is based on the monologic, phallogentric point of view. On the other hand, there are the decentralising, marginal forces, such as feminism, whose unofficial discourses operate to fracture the patriarchal monologism. Feminist literary criticism itself is a marginal discourse within the literary institution. A feminist literary criticism then might highlight the discursive strategies of women writers in relation to the ideologies and the discourses of the patriarchal hegemony.

The texts themselves are not necessarily feminist, but they do effect a woman-centred critique of their context. This context refers to both the sociocultural and the literary background of the texts. Thus these texts will be correlated to the Australian literary context of nationalism and realism, with the Australian tradition and mythology of itself, and to the literary development of the *Bildungsroman*. At the same time, the text might establish particular relationships between itself and prior texts, so that there is a mutual amplification between them.

These particular relationships between the text and its contexts are effected through the process of dialogism. For example, the text might engage with particular meanings and values of the social context, and make them 'strange'. This occurs in *My Brilliant Career*, where marriage and motherhood are made 'strange' instead of being natural inevitabilities.

The plot resolution supports the protagonist's point of view in the text and thus subverts traditional literary conventions as well. The mutual amplification of two discourses is represented in *The Man Who Loved Children*, between itself and the prior texts of Shelley's *The Cenci* and Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The dialogic process and the different points of view transform the original texts in relation to the present text, while the present text has a broader resonance through that relationship.

The female protagonist who wants to be an artist is represented in particular ideological and discursive positions. To varying degrees, she speaks her ideas about the woman artist. These ideas are represented and evaluated within the narrative design. The protagonist's definition of herself represents an oscillation between the authoritative discourses which define 'woman', and her own 'inner persuasive discourse' to be a woman artist. The struggle between these values is represented in the protagonist's dialogue with other characters, and in her 'inner speech' which is directed to the reader. Her discourse occupies a particular position in the discursive system which represents the modes of authority between, and control over, other discourses.

The applications of Bakhtin's approach to the literary text and the implications of his beliefs will be explored in the following chapters in relation to a number of Australian women's texts which deal with the representation of the woman artist protagonist. It is hoped that his theories and these texts will 'inter-animate' each other.

CHAPTER 3

THE AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL CONTEXT

The broader significance of the image of the female artist protagonist in the texts by Australian women writers is dependent upon the interconnections which are established between these texts and their cultural, social and literary contexts. The Australian cultural context is a lived system of meanings and values through which the individual perceives her/himself in relation to others, to nature and to society. Through concepts such as the national tradition and identity, the Australian culture represents its idea of itself as a whole way of life which shapes the perceptions of individual subjects and their positions within society. According to Bakhtin, there is a symbiotic relationship and process between the individual and the cultural context. The national culture is a constructive and a continuous social process. Individuals are constructed by and shaped within the national culture, yet they also actively construct the shaping of the culture itself and their relationship to it.

Although every culture encompasses a variety of points of view and experiences from the perspectives of gender, race and class, its dominant ideas and values actually reflect the interests of a particular hegemony and suppress those which are different or 'other' to it. Yet the position of this hegemony is not static or immutable. Its notions of culture, tradition and identity are constantly being modified and adapted by the subversive presence of marginal groups, and by the changing sociohistorical context.

The concept of 'Australia', which refers to its history, tradition, culture and identity, has been predominantly shaped and determined by white men from the phallogentric point of view. Groups such as women, the Aborigines and the Chinese have been marginalised in the construction of our history, in the formulation of a national identity, and in the corresponding yet interdependent literary context. From this marginal position women writers adopt particular discursive strategies of selection, interpretation, evaluation and subversion in relation to both the socio-historical and literary contexts. These writers reflect the tension between being Australian writers, being women and writing about women within the Australian context. On the one hand, they have inherited a

phallogentric cultural tradition and identity about women which does not furnish them with adequate images of women and their authentic experiences while, on the other hand, they are attempting to represent a 'new' image of woman as an artist. The representation of the woman as an artist in their fictions may well produce an exposé of the constructions of the national tradition and identity. These woman-centred texts indicate how women writers make meaning out of women's experience of, and position within 'Australia' as the 'second sex'. Thus the context 'Australia' is not an *a priori* entity. A different definition and connotation of 'Australia' emerges from the woman-centred texts. Within them certain aspects of the context are selected, reconstructed and refracted from the dominant female point of view in such a way that the meaning and idea of 'Australia' is evaluated and transformed. Thus the texts represent a woman-centred critique of the phallogentric national tradition, and at the same time, operate to construct an alternative female tradition and identity within the cultural ethos.

Thus the literary text is not generated in an exclusively literary context. Instead the text is positioned within the past and present sociohistorical context which provides the background reference. From that position, texts which feature the woman artist within the Australian context will produce particular transformations of 'Australia's' ideas about itself from the female point of view and evaluation. Bakhtin stresses that there are inseparable links between the literary text and the cultural background:

Literature is an inseparable part of the totality of culture and cannot be studied outside the total cultural context. It cannot be severed from the rest of culture and related directly (bypassing culture) to socioeconomic or other factors. These factors influence culture as a whole and only through it and in conjunction with it do they affect literature. The literary process is part of the cultural process and cannot be torn away from it.¹

This approach weakens the arguments of certain feminist theories which relate women's texts to each other without due regard for the specific past and contemporary cultural and national context of each writer. By

1. M.M. Bakhtin, 'From Notes Made in 1970-71', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, (Austin, Uni. of Texas Press, 1986), p.140.

adopting Bakhtin's approach, women's texts may be examined as subversive and critical responses to and transformations of cultural ideas and values.

The contact between the literary text and its context is effected through language. Language is the building block of the literary text. It is the pervasive and essential symbolic system of every social organisation which reflects the immediacy of social change and which expresses ideas and values in their process of generation and development. Hence the literary text incorporates 'new' words or aspects of the *heteroglossia*, the social voices of the cultural context which represent particular values or points of view. These words and voices may be likened to a two-way conveyor belt which conducts meanings and values from the context to the text, and vice versa. This does not mean that the texts directly reflect reality and context; instead the texts represent, refract and evaluate selected voices and words which construct the changing social reality. Thus ideas and meanings about 'woman' which are changing according to sociohistorical processes are reflected in language which in turn is incorporated into the literary text. This contact between the literary text and social change which is effected through the commonality of language contributes to the developing notions of tradition and identity.

This relationship between the text, language and the cultural context indicates that the literary text is both an ideological product and an evaluating container of opposing ideologies which are represented in relation to each other. The ideological horizons of a culture, its conflicts, contradictions, differing points of view and hierarchical structures of power may all be represented, refracted and revalued within the literary text. The texts cannot be isolated from the ideologies, values and meanings of their contexts. As Laurie Hergenhan states:

...it is now accepted that race, gender, class, regionalism and politics should enter into the discussion of books : that literature should not remain apart from these things in some kind of rarified pure state.²

Thus the theme of the woman artist within the Australian cultural and sociohistorical context will highlight certain ideological contradictions

2. Laurie Hergenhan, *Weekend Australian Interview*, Saturday, October 15, 1988, p.10.

of the patriarchal society. These contradictions will include the position of 'woman' within the national ethos of equality and self-determination, the relationship between the woman-centred view and ideologies such as socialism, imperialism, nationalism and consumerism, and the relationship between women and other marginalised groups such as Aborigines. The image and identity of the woman artist figure and the arguments attached to her position are represented within the texts within a system of 'typical' conflicting points of view and evaluations which represent cultural values. These opposing points of view will be evaluated within the discursive structure of the texts.

The connection between the social context, cultural values about female identity and the literary representation of 'woman' is illustrated by the issue of a woman's right to work outside the home. Only in the past twenty years has it been generally accepted that women have the right to work, whether married or not. The majority of protagonists within the texts believe that work represents financial independence to them. If they support themselves, they will not need to marry and might therefore become artists. The representation of this issue changes according to the historical position of the text. Earlier texts such as *My Brilliant Career* (1901) and *The Getting of Wisdom* (1910) represent a textual world in which marriage is the predominant option and supreme goal for women. Yet marriage is also represented as an anathema to the woman who wants to be an artist. Although the former text represents Sybylla's strident arguments about her right to work, the latter text indicates that other forms of female employment, such as teaching, are equally unsatisfactory. However the protagonist *must* work in texts such as *Intimate Strangers* (1937) and *For Love Alone* (1945). This need to work is related to the socio-economic conditions of the 1930s. This representation of the woman as a worker widens her options beyond marriage, and the issue of the woman becoming an artist is centred now on her relationship to her employment. Thus Elodie works to support her family, yet this contributes to her failure to achieve her artistic aspirations. In contrast, Teresa works to attain her goals of leaving Australia, of finding love and of becoming a writer. In the latest text, *Lines of Flight* (1985), there is no question about the protagonist's right to work or not. Instead her employment is represented as an integral factor to the production and sale of her art. Thus the literary representation of the woman artist is

interconnected with the values and image of 'woman' in the social context.

There are differential points of encounter between the context and cultural products such as the literary text, and differing approaches towards the delineation of the text-context relationship. A particular contextual approach is illustrated by Drusilla Modjeska's *Exiles At Home*. This important text concentrates on the contextual factors which influence the texts, such as the biographical data of particular women writers, their social and cultural position in Australia during the 1930s, and the social conditions of the production and publication of their texts. However this approach reduces the literary specificity and detailed critical analyses of the texts. In contrast, I propose to work from the texts outwards so that this analysis will centre on those aspects of the context which are selected, represented and evaluated within the texts themselves. In this and the following chapter, I will focus on the literary representation of the relationships between the texts and their sociohistorical and cultural contexts. Although the literary contexts into which the texts are inserted are interconnected with the overall cultural context, I will discuss them separately in a subsequent chapter which concerns the development of literary forms within the literary and social contexts.

Before considering the nature of the Australian cultural context, it is necessary to consider the problematic nature of concepts such as 'tradition' and national 'identity'. These concepts do not represent an absolute truth but rather our culture's myths about itself. Although, in Richard White's opinion, a 'national identity is an invention',³ these myths are 'true' in the sense that they represent images and values which become the background reference point for our culture. Graeme Turner too believes that national myths are constructed according to specific functions and interests of the dominant group and that they are in the process of developing:

For while these myths may serve different functions as they are used by different interests, they do operate as the 'maps of meaning' of the culture. Their meanings do not themselves change, but are rather available for

3. Richard White, *Inventing Australia*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1981), p.viii.

appropriation or incorporation by various interests whose own meanings may thus be recast or renovated.⁴

However, neither White nor Turner is stating absolute truths. They too, in their turn, are to a certain extent constructing fictions about what they believe to be cultural constructs. Although the view that the culture's ideas of itself are 'myths' may be contentious, this approach is valuable for the feminist perspective. Feminists regard cultural values and beliefs of the patriarchal society to be those formed by a masculine hegemony which has excluded women. From this perspective national tradition and identity are myths. Yet these myths form a background system of conventional images, themes and values which may be critically responded to, evaluated and transformed from the female point of view. This background system is also a developing process rather than a static belief system. Ideas about national tradition and identity are continually being modified, adapted and appropriated according to social change and to the effect of different points of view.

These 'myths', according to White and Turner, emerge as a complex and continuing interaction between the experiences and the cultural representations of the dominant social group. National myths thus reflect their interests, experiences and points of view, which in turn are represented in narratives such as history and fiction. Turner argues that the nation's myths about itself interact with and interpret its history and culture in a circular and developing process:

...the culture is formed *both* by history and its representations. Representation is a discursive mediation which occurs between the event and the culture and which contributes to the construction of national ideologies. The articulation of these ideologies is the work of constellations and alliances of groups or interests which appropriate, transform and mythologise the specific terms of the legend as part of the labour of producing and determining meaning.⁵

The literary text, as a system of narrative representations, becomes a secondary mediator of cultural myths and a facilitator for developing

4. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1986), p.77.

5. *Ibid*, p.123.

continuing nuances within them. The text represents and evaluates cultural myths from its particular point of view and thus contributes to the development of further ideas and images within the tradition. Hence the theme of the woman artist is constructed against a background of particular ideologies and images about 'woman'. The woman artist figure conveys a critique of this background. Yet at the same time, her literary representation and articulation modifies and expands the cultural notions of 'woman' which in turn become part of the continuing tradition. Thus the literary representations of the national tradition and identity are effected by particular points of view and their position in relation to the hegemony.

Notions about the characteristics of the cultural tradition and identity are not static, but instead are subject to and modified by successive critical interpretations. The history, tradition and literature of the past are subject to the changing interpretations and evaluations which reflect the concerns of the contemporary critical context. Particular relationships have been constructed between the literary text, notions of the national tradition and critical contexts. As John Docker argues, this occurred during the 1950s. In his text, *In A Critical Condition*, he suggests that during that period literary criticism fell into two camps: the 'radical nationalists' and the 'metaphysical ascendancy'. The former group attempted to restore the 'truth' about the national tradition and identity, while the latter group sought transcendental meanings in it. Specific literary texts were evaluated by each group according to its own vision of the national tradition and the text's relation to it. A specific 'canon' of literature emerged from the dominance of the 'metaphysical ascendancy'. The texts which they selected reinforced their established critical categories and notions of the Australian tradition and identity. The actual presence of and opposition between the 'radical nationalists' and the 'metaphysical ascendancy' indicates that there are contentious points of view about the nature of the tradition itself. Each point of view is 'true' for itself yet each is involved in a struggle to impose a dominant meaning of 'tradition'. At the same time, these differing points of view and interpretations of the 'tradition' also operate to influence the content and emphasis of what is termed the 'tradition'.

The notions of a 'canon' of literature, of a specific national identity and the relationship between literature and the national tradition have been critically highlighted by the most recent text about Australian literature and cultural traditions, *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*. This text reacts against the notion of a single national identity and of a 'canon' of literature. The general editor, Laurie Hergenhan, states that:

Since the 1960s, national identity has often been seen differently. It is regarded as both more a problematic and changing concept, and hence it is no longer such a dominating preoccupation.⁶

The notions of a 'national identity' are part of a homogenising process which suppresses the differences of those who are 'other' to the dominant group, such as women, Aborigines and ethnic groups. By the same token, ideas about the 'canon' of literature reflect the interests of those who determine what the 'canon' is. This operates to suppress or ignore literature which falls outside these critical categories. Thus *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* takes a pluralist approach to the notions of national identity and 'literature'. The text represents both the diverse forms of literary expression and the marginalised points of view of women, Aboriginal and ethnic writers. These differing viewpoints and literary styles fracture the concepts of a unified national 'identity' and of a self-evident literary 'canon'.

The ideas about the history, tradition and identity of 'Australia' have been shaped and evaluated by the dominant interest groups of a particular context at a particular point in time. The concept of a national identity presumes to be unified and inclusive, when actually it has been formed by suppressing the contrary and different views of marginal groups such as women, the Aborigines and ethnic groups. For example, the Aborigines are hardly mentioned in the literature of the 1880s and '90s. Women have a paradoxical status within our tradition: they have been represented within cultural products such as the literary text, but they have been excluded from the creation and formulation of our history and culture.

The notions of the Australian tradition and concepts of a national

6. Laurie Hergenhan, ed., *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1988), p.xiv.

identity were largely formalised within the nationalist and masculinist context of the 1890s. The images and values which emerged were based on the white male's experience and interests to the exclusion of other groups. As Richard White states:

Men embodied these values. The emphasis was on masculinity, and on masculine friendships and team-work, or 'mateship' in Australia. All the clichés - man of action, white man, manliness, the common man, war as a test of manhood - were not sexist for nothing. Women were excluded from the image of 'The Coming Man', and so were generally excluded from the image of the Australian 'type' as well. They could acquire a kind of second-rate masculinity by being clever with horses or being a 'tomboy', a phenomenon which began to appear in the late nineteenth century. More often, women were portrayed as a negation of the type, at best as one who passively pined and waited, at worst as one who would drag a man down.⁷

This marginalisation of women from the formulation and meaning of the national identity is being reevaluated and redressed by female historians. This in turn is expanding our contemporary awareness of the meaning of the 'tradition'. Texts such as *Damned Whores and God's Police*, by Anne Summers, and *The Real Matilda* by Miriam Dixson, describe the presence of women in our history from women's points of view, and the 'reality' for women behind the phallogocentric myths and legends. However, neither of these texts explores the way in which women have allowed themselves to be marginalised and to be subjected to masculine interests. Their limitation is that they represent Woman as a cohesive, coherent identity which might emerge under more conducive social conditions. This limitation has been partly redressed by Jill Matthew's text, *Good and Mad Women: the historical construction of femininity in twentieth century Australia*. This text describes the nature and focus of gender ideologies through the successive stages of Australian history and culture, and explores the interaction between aspects of gender ideology, the popular 'image' of woman and female identity. At the same time, other marginal and marginalised groups, such as the Aborigines, are critically evaluating the Australian tradition and identity from their experience and point of view.

A similar revaluation of notions about both the national identity and tradition and the 'canon' of literature is occurring in the literary critical context. The mainstream Australian literary context has had

7. Richard White, *Inventing Australia*, p.83.

complex interactions with the male-centred national tradition. For example, realism emerged as the preferred narrative mode in conjunction with the nationalist fervour, while romance which was associated with the English literary tradition and with women writers was disparaged. Some critics argue that there was an alternative female literary tradition during the nineteenth century, and that it was subsequently marginalised and suppressed by the 'takeover' of the 1890s. Susan Sheridan for example states that:

New directions in women's writing in this period were muted by the tumult and the shouting of cultural nationalism and marginalised by its newly dominant literary standards, standards of 'high culture' which left no middle ground for those negotiations with generic conventions and social ideologies that have been so important in women's fiction.⁸

Women writers did have an active presence during the 1890s. For example, in 1899 Rosa Campbell Praed was writing in favour of both a nationalist and a feminist form of Australian literature:

...there is little of art in Australia, and her literature to be palatable must have the English hallmark...If the Australian girl who aspires to be a novelist, poet or painter, would seek inspiration in her own forests, among the weird gum-trees and the giant chasms which suggest cataclysms of a prehistoric Titanic period; if she would listen to the voices of her own woods and streams and allow her imagination to be thrilled by the same glamour of the Bush; commune with her own nurse, nature - then she might become the pioneer in an entirely new intellectual region, and give the world a type of woman-worker, at once feminine and vigorous, practical and poetic, such as no other country has yet produced.⁹

The Girls' Realm, January 1899.

However, male writers had staked out the literary pioneering arena for themselves. Women were physically excluded from the centre of literary debate and discussion in the Dawn and Dusk Club. The previous literary tradition of women writers was ridiculed by male writers who both devalued women and who wanted to distance themselves from what they perceived to be escapist fiction with colonial stereotypes.¹⁰ Feminist

8. Susan Sheridan, 'Temper, Romantic; Bias' Offensively Feminine', (*Kunapipi*, Vol.vii, No. 2/3), p.55.

9. Beverley Kingston, *The World Moves Slowly: a documentary history of Australian women*, (Melbourne, Cassell, 1977), p.20.

10. Shirley Walker, 'Perceptions of Australia, 1855-1915,' in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, p.169.

literary critics are continuing to unearth the alternative and repressed female literary tradition of the nineteenth century. This is being achieved through critical revaluations from the female point of view, through literary biographies of 'lost' women writers, by the publication of forgotten texts, and by the publication of texts such as Catherine Helen Spence's *Handfasted* for the first time. Women's writing of the twentieth century has been contained and submerged within the male-centred literary and cultural version which emerged from the 1890s. However the marginalised female tradition may be recovered through the current directions of feminist literary scholarship.

The feminist critical point of view is also engendering a whole new critical framework through which to evaluate women's writing and the relationship between women writers and their contexts. By understanding their marginal position in relation to the cultural hegemony, the feminist critic is able to delineate women writers' subversive yet necessarily muted discursive textual strategies. At the same time, the feminist critical approach leads to a revaluation of the critical interpretations of the 1890s which in turn constructs new aspects and approaches to the nature of the tradition.

This may be illustrated by comparing the following critical interpretations of the 1890s, one being a conventional (male) view, the other a feminist one. John McLaren states that:

Three characteristics emerge from any reading of Australian literature written during the latter part of the nineteenth century. One is the predominance of the rural environment, and the lack of any real engagement with the life of cities - this, despite the fact that Australia was already one of the most highly urbanised societies in the world. The second is the uneasiness about the status of the hero. The third is an ambivalence towards the Aboriginal inhabitants of the country, or the total lack of any awareness of their existence. This last has been dealt with at length by J.J. Healy, and I do not intend to go into it at any length here.¹¹

In this context, 'hero' is an ambiguous and enclosing term which can be dismissed in one sentence, without qualification. There is no indication

11. John McLaren, 'Colonial Mythmakers: The Development of the Realist Tradition in Australian Literature', (*Westerly*, No. 2, June 1980), p.43.

that this critic differentiates between the male and female experience of the 1890s. On the other hand, Sheridan, in the quotation given below, restores the female point of view of that time from her own contemporary perspective. She highlights the fact that the 'feminine' is the excluded term of the dominant discourse on cultural nationalism. She delineates the underlying series of oppositions of the 1890s by which terms associated with the masculine are characterised as normative and positive, while those associated with the feminine are deviant and negative:

...throughout all the debates about the significance of literary and (more generally) cultural nationalism, the dominant critical discourse has mobilised the following set of familiar oppositions:

independent and original vs. conventional and
derivative
egalitarian and democratic vs. class-bound and
'aristocratic'
Australian nationalist vs. British colonial
vigour and action vs. emotion
outside (the bush or the city) vs. inside (the
domestic, the home)

Plus two pairs of terms which were specially salient at the turn of the century but which have by now formed a scarcely noticeable sediment of common sense about what constitutes *literary* value:

realism vs. romance

vernacular or folk vs. popular or commercial.

These are the oppositions I want to look at more closely here, and to suggest that in this period of debate during the '90s, they come to be cemented into *the suppressed opposition between masculinity and femininity*, thus defining the distinctively Australian tradition as masculine.¹²

Sheridan's analysis operates from a woman's point of view and is concerned with women writers in relation to their context. Her interpretation of the 1890s suggests broader critical implications than does McLaren's, and establishes a feminist theoretical base from which the tradition and women's literary tradition might be evaluated.

Despite these qualifications about the mythic nature of the values which emerged during the 1890s and the effect of successive critical

12. Susan Sheridan, 'Temper, Romantic; Bias, Offensively Feminine', p.50.

interpretations, a particular image and value of the Australian tradition and identity did exist. It was nationalist, sexist, and as Shirley Walker notes, xenophobic.¹³ It was centred on the white male's experience and interests. Walker succinctly describes the values and images which emerged during this period:

The image of Australia which resulted from the self-determining process was an indigenous one, centred upon the bush. By the 1880s and 1890s the bush had become a label for both the landscape and a social reality characterised by egalitarianism, collectivism and 'mateship'. Central to this perception of the bush was the dignity of rural work, the elevation of the bush worker as hero, and the celebration of radical nationalist values which were presumably to be found in their purest form in the bush among the bush workers.¹⁴

This decade, the 1890s, represents a peculiar interconnection between the social and literary contexts. The current ideologies and the actual experiences of individuals at that time were represented and promoted through *The Bulletin* so that a national identity was constructed through literary representation. Ken Stewart describes the merging of a preferred literary form and style with the current ideologies:

The official line sanctioned or preferred terse, economical prose ('Boil it down!'), bush subject matter, democratic nationalist sentiment, an aesthetic of realism, egalitarianism and social utility, and the racism of 'Australia for the white man'.¹⁵

Women writers had a problematic relationship with *The Bulletin*. They were under-represented in the magazine itself, and were physically discriminated against by some male writers at the time. Sylvia Lawson comments ironically that A.G. Stephens the literary editor was concerned about the position of women writers. She states that Stephens

...puzzled a good deal over the fate of women writers, proposing at times that the extinction of early promise might be put down to sheer want of red corpuscles. Once

13. Shirley Walker, 'Perceptions of Australia, 1855-1915', p.166.

14. *Ibid*, p.162.

15. Ken Stewart, 'Journalism and the World of the Writer: The Production of Australian Literature, 1855-1915', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, p.190.

at least, he was more realistic: 'How many bright aspirations, hopes of progress, mental triumphs, glorious poems, are trampled under the little pink feet of the army of babies'.¹⁶

It is significant that he considered *My Brilliant Career* to be 'the very first Australian novel', although he did not think it a notable literary performance.¹⁷ He thus draws a distinction between the nationalist ideology and the literary merit of the text. Furthermore it seems that a woman writer could gain recognition if she appeared to reflect the dominant values of nationalism through the realist mode.

Although this has been a cursory outline of the formulation and subsequent interpretations of the Australian tradition and identity, it is sufficient to establish the cultural and literary tradition which twentieth century writers have inherited. This formulation emerged in conjunction with previous nineteenth century interpretations of Australia as being a paradise or a hell. Changes in the twentieth century socio-historical, cultural and critical contexts have expanded the notions of the national tradition and identity. I shall return to these developing notions of the tradition in a later section. For the moment I want to discuss the specific nature of the woman writer's point of view of her context.

Certain aspects of the Australian context are selected and represented in the texts from the woman writer's point of view. These texts represent an argument and an ideological system of values about the representation of the woman artist, and her experience and position within the Australian context. This woman-centred representation is foregrounded against the values and myths of the hegemony. Thus this representation becomes a critical reflection upon, and an evaluative rejoinder to, the Australian tradition from a group which has been excluded from its formulations and representations. According to Bakhtin, the angle from which social reality is represented, such as the woman-centred one, becomes the transforming agent between reality and the constructed world of the text. Bakhtin states that:

16. Sylvia Lawson, *The Archibald Paradox*, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1987), p.173.

17. *Ibid*, p.172.

At the basis of our analysis lies the conviction that every literary work is internally and immanently sociological. Within it living social forces intersect; each element of its form is permeated with living social evaluations. For this reason a purely formal analysis must take each element of the artistic structure as a point of refraction of living social forces, as a synthetic crystal whose facets are structured and ground in such a way that they refract specific rays of social evaluations, and refract them at a specific angle.¹⁸

In the texts under discussion the woman's point of view operates from the dominant position in the text. This woman-centred dominant discursive position provides the angle from which the cultural, literary and social contexts, themselves a series of social evaluations, are selected, refracted and represented. Thus the woman writer's point of view becomes the constituting factor of the aesthetic qualities and ideology of the text.

The dominant discursive position within the text contrasts with the position of women and their discourse in the actual social and cultural reality. The Australian tradition is marked by the absence of positive female images and the presence of Woman as subject. As Gabby, the protagonist/narrator of *An Item from the Late News* states:

I come from a long line of men. This country tells me this. Rams this home. Well, women enter it, but peripherally.¹⁹ (pp132- 3).

Her father observes that this is a 'country of myth fits' (p.39), while Doss, the image of practical, female strength, states that men are 'the biggest myth of the lot' (p.51). The tradition in this text is represented as a myth constructed by men. The recent text by Kate Grenville, *Joan Makes History* (1988), in the year of the Bicentennial, makes a light-hearted redress of this situation and inserts the female subject, Joan, into the different phases of our history.

Although the broader cultural discourse reflects patriarchal viewpoints and interests, marginal groups such as women writers can resist and subvert it. The cultural positions of gender power and resistance are not inherent qualities of language itself. Instead - relations of power

18. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed./trans. Caryl Emerson, intro. Wayne Booth, (Minneapolis, Uni. of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.276.

19. Thea Astley, *An Item from the Late News*, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1982).

and resistance can be 'de-naturalised' and highlighted in the form of the literary text which reflects the marginal voice from the dominant speaking position and point of view. In theory then, a complex network of discursive positions is available to speakers of a language, even though some groups have marginal discursive positions within the social reality. There is no direct correspondence between the ideological and social position available to women, and the position they might assume in discursive structures such as the literary text. Hence the texts have the potential to be sites of struggle between the dominant patriarchal and the marginal female points of view and values. Thus relationships of discursive power which exist outside the texts might be reversed within the texts. In part, the image of the female artist becomes the vehicle of an evaluative rejoinder to the national cultural tradition and identity, and demonstrates the contradictions between patriarchal and female constructions of female identity. Women writers operate from a dual perspective; from how they are 'seen' by the patriarchal gaze, to how they 'see' with their own eyes. The texts in relation to their Australian context represent both a critique of patriarchal definitions and representations of woman/Woman, and an attempt to represent a woman-centred image of woman/Woman from the Subject position.

Women writers must explore their critiques of patriarchy through the parameters of patriarchy, such as language. The content and narrative mode of women's writing is not an original expression of female experience. Women writers must mediate through patriarchal language structures and their attendant values. Unlike other colonised groups, women do not possess their own language. So far, although the question of whether women have their 'own' language is debateable, there is no conclusive proof that women do have a specific language. French theorists such as Cixous believe that *l'écriture féminine* exists and is suppressed by phallocentrism. Others such as Mary Daly are creating their own language derived from patriarchal structures. The text, *A Feminist Dictionary* by Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler, documents patriarchal language which has been reaccentuated and transformed from a female point of view, instead of illustrating a 'new' language. Thus women's writing reflects a process from writing within the male idea of the feminine, to subverting that idea, through to representing a woman-centred perspective. Women's writing is a function both of their experience and perception as the 'second sex' in our history, culture and tradition, and of their assumption of the dominant

voice and point of view within the texts. Their texts are not simply a representation of reality and experience which might then be evaluated according to degrees of authenticity. Instead their texts are a practice of language within the power structures of the Australian context, and are discourses which encounter other cultural and literary discourses from their particular points of view and evaluations. This literary practice and discursive structure is conditioned partly by the preceding literary system which has been interconnected with ... ideas about the Australian tradition and identity, and partly by the nature and point of view of the theme, the woman artist, in relation to the patriarchal hegemony.

From this woman-centred perspective and cultural discursive position, women writers select, represent and refract their national and cultural context. This is illustrated by the relationship of three early texts, Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*, Baynton's *Human Toll* and Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom*, to the 1890s period and its literary and social ideologies. These texts represent a critical and ambiguous relationship to the 1890s. Franklin adopts the style and representation of the literary and cultural values of the 1890s, yet offers a critique of this tradition within its parameters. She inserts the female point of view and experience of these values, and incorporates aspects of the previous romance tradition to ironically highlight her critique. Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* represents a reaction to the values of both the 1890s and the earlier tradition of romance. Instead of the bush, mateship, egalitarianism, nationalism, or even romance, she represents a middle class world whose concerns are to maintain Anglo-centric values and social class structures. She depicts a world which was an anathema to the tradition but which nevertheless existed. Richardson's critique of this world operates from a moral position of exposing hypocrisy and crassness. Baynton's *Human Toll* represents the darker underside of the bush, Australian history and the 1890s tradition. Although there are sentimental and Gothic aspects to her text, she relentlessly describes the lack of civilising and moral values within the bush setting. The bush in her text purports to be 'real', stripped of the ideas about the bush and mateship which were generated in the 1890s. Later texts of the twentieth century, such as Anderson's *Tirra Lirra by the River* and Astley's *An Item from the Late News* reflect critically also upon this tradition and its cultural development from a retrospective position.

Thus the women's texts which represent the woman artist are inextricably connected with their cultural contexts. These texts represent an evaluative rejoinder to the phallogentric tradition and construction of national identity. Through this critique of their context, the texts are revaluating and redefining both the cultural context and notions of national identity from a female point of view. Through the theme of the woman artist, women writers are in the process of constructing a female literary archetype. This literary representation is emerging in response to sociohistorical contexts and is contributing to the construction of a female national identity.

CHAPTER 4

DISCURSIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TEXTS AND THEIR CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Australian women's texts which represent the woman artist figure select and refract particular aspects of the Australian tradition and sociohistorical context from the woman-centred point of view. These texts are produced within the containing context of patriarchal values and effect a woman-centred critique of certain aspects of them from the point of view and experience of the woman artist. According to Bakhtin's theoretical framework, women writers are operating from a marginal position in relation to the patriarchal hegemony, and are writing about women who also occupy a marginal position within the patriarchal Australian sociohistorical and literary contexts. Thus within the texts' critical evaluation of their contexts, the woman artist figure becomes a medium for both a woman-centred critique of the phallogentric tradition and for the insertion of a 'new' female identity within the national tradition.

The Australian tradition refers to this culture's ideas about itself and to the dominant values of this society, while the context refers to ideas and events within the contemporary sociohistorical *milieu*. The system of values which were attached to the tradition includes those of nationalism, egalitarianism and realism. Some texts amplify the concept of nationalism and connect it to racism, and cultural and sexual imperialism. This system of values is not static. Instead the ideas and values of the tradition have been changing and adapting in accord with the developing social context. Here events such as the two World Wars and the Depression, and ideologies such as feminism and socialism have modified and expanded the values and beliefs of the tradition. Thus the egalitarian values of the 1890s have become merged into the values of socialism. In turn, the ideology of socialism, as illustrated by *Intimate Strangers*, introduces a conflict between gender and class. Feminism is another ideology which has influenced the position and status of women in society, the representation of women in fiction and the critical interpretation of the patriarchal basis of the Australian literary and national tradition and social context.

At the same time, the sociohistorical position of the texts, on the

synchronic level, influences their representation and perception of the tradition. Thus the texts which are chronologically closest to the formulation of the tradition, *My Brilliant Career*, *My Career Goes Bung*, *Human Toll* and *The Getting of Wisdom* address the values and ideas of the 1890s, the period which forms the background to their hidden and overt polemic. Later texts which are further removed from the immediacy of the 1890s mainly respond to and address their immediate social context. However Langley's *The Pea-pickers* refers to both the fascist ideas of the 1930s and to the values and characters of the 1890s. Other texts such as *Kewpie Doll*, *An Item from the Late News* and most importantly *Tirra Lirra by the River* exploit the device of retrospection to represent aspects of the national tradition and history from the insights of the present. Thus in *Tirra Lirra by the River* Nora reviews her life during this century from the perspective of the present in the 1970s, and represents a woman-centred view of historical experiences such as the Depression. Her experiences of the gender ideologies and values of the Australian tradition and society prevent her from actually realising that she too could be an artist.

The 1890s image and value of the bush have been modified by the critical woman-centred view of the bush and by the changing sociological situation in Australia. The representation of the bush within the texts illustrates a progression by which the values attached to it are redefined from a woman-centred perspective in relation to social changes. Thus *My Brilliant Career* and *Human Toll* represent a woman-centred critique of the bush, while *My Career Goes Bung* refers to the bush-city opposition. There is no place in either the bush or the city for the woman artist in this text. *The Pea-pickers* illustrates that the bush of the 1930s is no longer the same as that of the 1890s. The indigenous Australian culture is disappearing, yet there is still no place for a woman. Later texts are set almost exclusively in the urban situation. The bush now becomes refined and redefined as 'nature'. For example, the urban world of *Intimate Strangers* is relieved by trips to the sea, while the imagination of the protagonist in *Kewpie Doll* is stimulated by her backyard cottage garden. The Depression, a most significant period in our history, is represented in the urban situation in the texts *Intimate Strangers* and *For Love Alone*.

These texts offer a contrasting view of the relationship between class and gender, or socialism and feminism. Other aspects of the Depression are represented in *Kewpie Doll*, *An Item from the Late News* and *Tirra Lirra by the River*. These texts adopt a retrospective view of the Depression in terms of its effects and consequences for the woman artist.

Most of the more recent texts represent the woman artist in the urban setting. However this too is an ambiguous situation. Just as Sybylla longs to escape from the bush to go to the city, the more recent protagonists long to escape from the city to somewhere else. Protagonists such as Teresa, Maureen and Nora all move from Australia to another country, and disparage the Australian situation. The perceived lack of culture and sexual repression here suggests to them that there are more cultured, permissive societies elsewhere. But other protagonists return to their place of origin; Nora returns from London to her small Queensland town, Gabby returns from the city to Allbut and Rita returns from France to Sydney. Even Miss Peabody decides to emigrate from London. This oscillation between the bush, city and country does not directly affect the aspirations of the woman artist. For example, Teresa becomes an artist in London while Nora does not. But such movements, which are textual settings, place the Australian context and tradition in relation to other places, and help to broaden the definition of 'Australia' itself. At the same time the representation of the woman artist protagonist herself is connected to and influenced by the contemporary ideologies about 'woman' and her position and status in the social reality. As we have seen in earlier chapters, this is illustrated by the comparison between the texts *My Brilliant Career* (1901) and *Lines of Flight* (1985). For Sybylla, the main obstacle to her becoming an artist is the contemporary definition of 'woman'. These values and the available social roles limited her to being a wife and mother. Sybylla perceives that these roles would prevent her being an artist, yet they are the only ones open to her. Her text represents a polemic against the social position and definition of 'woman', which must be overcome or resolved before she can be an artist. On the other hand, Rita in *Lines of Flight* is an established artist who does not have to argue for her right to be so. This text focuses on the development of her work and her artistic consciousness.

In this chapter, I will discuss the women writers' representation of their context in two sections. In the first section I will discuss the texts in relation to the bush-city aspect of the tradition, while in the second section I will discuss the texts in relation to their representation of contextual ideologies, such as nationalism, socialism and so on.

At the time of the formulation of the tradition during the 1890s, the bush was preferred and promoted above the city, even though Australia was already an urban nation. While contributions to the *Bulletin*, the chief forum for nationalist writers, certainly included representatives of the city intelligentsia, who were entranced by nostalgic notions of the bush, many contributors were themselves bushmen (rarely bushwomen) who continually added to the bush ethos by their yarns, 'pars' and short stories. However, a number of modern scholars and historians as well as literary critics, consider that the values which were associated with the bush were ideological constructions, influenced by particular interest groups, rather than direct reflections of reality. For example, Graeme Turner states that:

Our versions of nature and society are, then, fictions which prefer certain meanings, generate certain myths, and produce certain ideological results.¹

The realistic basis of bush myths must be conceded. What is certain, however, is that the conventional images of the bush and the city were generated by men, either from the bush or the city, on the basis of *their* experience and interests. Within this tradition, the bush became the focus for testing the Australian (male) identity. The representation of the bush in the realist mode was an aspect of cultural nationalism. The city was regarded as antagonistic to the emergence of male identity and the attendant values of egalitarianism and mateship. However by the same token, one might expect that women's experience and point of view of the bush and city would generate alternative ideological constructions about them.

However the centrality of the bush image and the values associated with it present a problem to the woman writer who might want to be 'true'

1. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1986), p.77.

to both the tradition of nationalism and to the representation of authentic female characters and their experience. In reality, a woman could not survive in the bush alone, and consequently, there are few literary examples of women who live in the bush as self-determining individuals. Hence this setting provides little opportunity for the emergence of an authentic female identity and destiny. Anne Summers refers to this problem:

Those who chose to write about women were forced into a thematic corner for the women of the bush were not able to be individuals: they could not rival the attributes of their men. They were copers, responding to settings that most of them had neither chosen or enjoyed, and as such their stories were chronicles of reaction.²

The tradition had helped shape the image of 'woman' in the bush as one who was passive and accepting of her circumstance. There was a limited range of female/female and female/male relationships, and women's experience was largely relegated to the private, domestic sphere. However, although women's circumstances might be limited in the bush, this actual limitation becomes the focus of the literary woman-centred critique of both the bush life and of the myth of the bush as formulated by the tradition.

The earlier texts, such as Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* and Baynton's *Human Toll* are set in the bush and represent critiques of bush life and of the values associated with it. *My Career Goes Bung* represents the bush-city polarity and concludes that, despite the problems, the bush is better. In contrast, Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* represents a reaction to the bush setting and the values of the tradition, and develops a narrative situation which in most senses is the opposite to the 1890s tradition. *The Pea-pickers* represents a critique of the bush situation of the 1930s from the standard of the 1890s. Other texts leave the bush behind. For example, in *For Love Alone*, Teresa lives in Sydney and looks out to the Pacific - away from the bush and towards Europe. She locates the realisation of her artistic aspirations and destiny in Europe rather than in either the Australian bush or city. In view of both the critique and the rejection of the bush in these texts, it is ironic that Jolley's text, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* presents a new twist to the bush, the tradition and the woman-centred view of it. Whereas texts

2. Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1975), p.37.

by Stead, Riley, Hanrahan, Anderson, Astley and Campbell have left the bush behind, Jolley represents an English woman who is preparing to come out to Australia to realise her 'great expectations'. Miss Peabody has been seduced by the writer's descriptions of the Australian bush. However when she arrives in Australia, she discovers that Diana, 'her huntress' had been maimed by a riding accident in the bush and had died. But Miss Peabody has also inherited the unfinished manuscript. Thus Jolley represents the contradictions of the position of the woman writer in the bush; here one woman writer has died while another has been 'born'.

In *My Brilliant Career*, Franklin represents the bush and women's experience of it from the point of view of the aspiring artist. She critically highlights the female perspective of women's lives and experiences in the bush and of the bushmen within the style and convention of the 1890s. The text expresses the values of nationalism and egalitarianism through the realist mode. This realist mode becomes the medium of Franklin's critique of the male-centred perspective. Realism ironically represents the 'real' reality of the bush. In this text the fate and fortune of the characters in general are largely dependent on nature, which is unreliable. Such a situation does not draw out the best in men. There is little evidence of mateship and fair play. Sybylla's father turns to drink, gives his money away to his 'mates' and is exploited by other men. Thus Franklin depicts what the bush life actually does to men, beneath the mask of the tradition. In turn she depicts what these men do to their wives and families who by law and social organisation are dependent upon them. For the women in the text, the bush represents endless hard work, poverty, failure and premature aging. Their condition stems from their necessary dependence upon men. Within this textual world, women have no choice other than dependency on men as fathers or husbands. The bush in this text is a symbol of entrapment for women, and is a world in which they cannot survive on their own terms.

The image of female entrapment in the bush is centred on Sybylla, the aspiring artist. From her point of view, the bush life offers no company, stimulation, or opportunity for her creative development. Her roles and options are limited to being a wife and mother. Thus she cannot take her life into her own hands. She has no money, is unlikely to get a

job, and is therefore unable to leave. Marriage appears to be the only way by which she might change her material circumstances. Yet her rejection of this opportunity confirms both her antipathy to marriage and her determination to remain independent in order to be a writer.

Thus Franklin operates within the social and literary values which are attached to the bush and to realism, and conveys a critique of them through the realist mode. Lawson, one of the proponents of the 1890s tradition, wrote a supportive Preface to *My Brilliant Career*. However he has missed the point of her critique. Furthermore the way in which he refers to the status of women writers and the nature of their writing within the patriarchal context ironically supports Franklin's view and representation of the status of women.

Lawson writes:

I hadn't read three pages when I saw what you no doubt will see at once - that the story had been written by a girl. And as I went on I saw that the work was Australian - born of the bush. I don't know about the girlishly emotional parts of the book - I leave that to the girl readers to judge; but the description of bush life and scenery came startlingly, painfully real to me, and that, as far as they are concerned, the book is true to Australia - the truest I ever read...She is just a little bush girl, barely twenty one yet, and has scarcely ever been out of the bush in her life. She has lived her book, and I feel proud of it for the sake of the country I came from, where people toil and bake and suffer and are kind; where every sun-burnt bushman is a sympathetic humorist, with the sadness of the bush deep in his eyes and a brave grin for the worst of time, and where every third bushman is a poet, with a big heart that keeps his pockets empty. (Preface.)³

There are a number of significant points in this extract which illustrate Lawson's representative point of view on Australian literature and 'girls'' writing and reading. The text as he saw it was written firstly by a 'girl' and then by an Australian. He assumes that some of the content is distinctively 'girlish' and is separate from writing about Australia which is the bush. He does not define the 'girlish' bits in

3. Miles Franklin. *My Brilliant Career*, first published in 1901, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1982).

the text, but the term itself conveys his values and attitudes towards them. He rejects the elements of romance style and content in the text, preferring to focus on those aspects of the text which appear to conform to the 1890s values of nationalism within a realist literary mode. He seems not to realise that the text is both Australian and 'girlish', that is, an Australian woman's point of view and experience of the bush. Furthermore his rejection of the 'emotional parts' of the text reflects the Australian male's antipathy to emotional experience, which is an aspect of the Australian male tradition. Lawson acknowledges the role of the reader in judging the authenticity of the text, but this is on the basis of a sexist division between subject and reader. Only girls can understand the 'girlish' bits! He measures Franklin's texts by the standard of *his* realism and by the 'truth' of her description of bush life. However, Lawson is distorting the true import of the text by selecting that which he regards as important and that which suits his preconceived ideas. He eulogises the males of the bush when actually Franklin offers a critique of the bushmen and the effect and power they have over their wives and families. In her text, all men, from whatever social class, are either weak or failures. This representation is far removed from Lawson's image of the 'sun-burnt bushman'.

My Career Goes Bung, which has intertextual relationships with *My Brilliant Career*, takes a different critical focus upon the tradition. Instead of concentrating upon the values associated with the bush and bushmen from the woman's point of view, this text critically examines the social and literary world of the city and society from the point of view of the naive female writer.

Sybylla satirises and caricatures contemporary literary figures and the world of the colonial *litterati* in Sydney. She perceives that the literary and social ideals of the 1890s have now been corrupted by the desire for wealth and social prestige. She illustrates the ideas of writers whom she meets in Sydney, writers who are thinly disguised caricatures of actual writers. Thus Witling denies that there is any society or culture in Australia, disparages the bush ballads and promotes Anglo-centric literary values and culture. Goring Hardy panders to English readers, emulates English poets, rejects socialism and egalitarianism as

'propaganda' (p.180).⁴ and wants only to marry a wealthy woman. Sybylla is disillusioned with writing when she perceives that the ideas of a national literary and egalitarian culture have been abandoned by writers, although her faith is restored when she meets Renfrew Haddington.

Sybylla has great hopes for her life and career as a writer when she leaves the bush for the city. However she discovers that there is little room for a female writer in this world. Those such as Witling who do take her seriously only want to direct and distort her writing style and content. Her presence in Sydney is as a unique little oddity, a bush girl who has been published, the 'flavour of the month'. In this context, she may only marry or become a spiteful gossip columnist. She is glad to return to the bush, even though her horizons are more limited. She now knows that the city is no alternative to the bush and that there is no true place for a genuine 'Australian' and female writer.

A contrasting view of the Australian literary tradition and context is represented in the later text, *For Love Alone*. Here Stead refers to the *Vision* magazine and the Norman Lindsay coterie which were present during the 1920s and 1930s. This was a city-based Bohemian group which sought to challenge the national aesthetic values which emerged from the 1890s tradition. This group was male-centred and either excluded women writers or regarded women as mere sexual objects for their physical and aesthetic titillation. When discussing Nettie Palmer, Modjeska refers to this group:

Norman Lindsay and *Vision* rejected all liberal notions of progress, social intervention and reform and envisaged instead an artistic aristocracy aloof from and scornful of society; thus they rejected and ridiculed the idea of a distinctively Australian and progressive culture based on democratic traditions. Furthermore Nettie Palmer's sexual moralism would have been offended by Lindsay's preoccupation with an elevation of sexuality. And she would have been sensitive to the anti-feminism of Lindsay and the bohemian group. The emphasis on female sexuality as a vehicle to male creativity and the denial of women's intellectuality would have been offensive, even grotesque, to her both as a woman and as an intellectual. This restrictive image of women and this aesthetic approach offered nothing to the young women

4. Miles Franklin, *My Career Goes Bung*. This was written as a sequence to *My Brilliant Career*, but was rejected by publishers, even in 1910 because it was too audacious. It was first published in 1946. (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1983).

writers who were beginning to explore, through literature, their situation as women in Australian society and to develop their literary social criticism.⁵

Stead does not directly criticise this group or their anti-national and anti women values in *For Love Alone*. Instead she inserts this reference and its meaning from the context into the text to counterpoint the differences between the characters, Teresa and Jonathan Crow. It is significant that Stead does not represent the *Vision* magazine, or *Quarterly* as it is referred to in the text, from Teresa's point of view, although she has bought it and has lent it to Crow. The images of women and love which it represents, for '...it was chiefly a question of free love and naked women' (p.209)⁶ stand in stark and implicit contrast to Teresa's own search for love, and the textual representation of her sexual fantasies in the narrative. The literary pretensions of the magazine are implicitly criticised by the narrative voice, '...with imitations of Marlowe and Shakespeare, Donne, and free verse...' (p.209). The inclusion and reference to the magazine and its values are explicitly directed towards Jonathan, the poor, sexually repressed youth who equates sexual relationships with wealth. The narrative voice describes Jonathan's point of view of the magazine and its values, and is critical of the wealth this group has and their consequent ability to experiment with sexual values and literary form. The narrative voice states that:

It was enough that a naked, buxom 'wench' flew along the cover. To tell the truth, the full-blooded Bohemian joys written up by these gifted and for the most part moneyed young men mostly took place in the near suburbs with an occasional trip to a holiday place and there were few Don Juans among them; they were mostly ambitious young artists trying to make their way in advertising, architecture, and commercial illustration. To poor Johnathan, it was the full use of all powers and all senses dreamed about by hot-eyed youth. (pp.209-10)

Despite his avowed socialist principles and contempt for money, Jonathan's perverted sexuality and view of women takes precedence so that he is attracted to this world. In contrast to both the magazine and Jonathan, Teresa is a poor female writer with 'authentic' sexual fantasies and a desire to explore her sexuality on her own terms. The textual representation of Teresa's fantasies and experiences represents an exploration of female

5. Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles At Home*, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1981), pp.92-93.

6. Christina Stead, *For Love Alone*, 1945 (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1973).

eroticism from a female writer's point of view which is in contrast to the values and points of view of the *Vision/Quarterly* group.

Following Franklin, both Baynton and Richardson represent alternative critiques of the bush and the values which were promoted by the 1890s. Baynton's vision of the bush and of human characters in *Human Toll* offers no consolation or hope. Here the bush and bush life is cruel, harsh and impersonal, although this is contrasted favourably to the town and civilisation which is characterised by vicious, amoral malevolence. Both the bush and the town represent horror and threat, but that of the town is personal and intentional. Women in this world are not the victims that Franklin had perceived them to be. Although women are at the mercy of men and nature, some women also exploit other women and children. Women such as the widow and Mina deserve their fate. The widow is exploited by the hypocritical religious minister, yet she has exploited Ursula. Mina represents a more intense form of evil, not only because of her lust, but because she tries to kill her child. The innocents of the text, as symbolised by the lambs and the baby, are destroyed or die.

Ursula stands out in stark relief against the other characters. She is represented as the centre of moral goodness. She is untouched by the evil of others around her. She embodies the maternal instinct which would try to save the innocent from human threat. Yet ultimately her efforts are ineffectual. The lambs and the baby die. Although Ursula's own fate is ambiguous, the conclusion is that her goodness is unable to stem human evil, and the bush offers no hope of haven or salvation. Like *My Brilliant Career*, this text implicitly argues that the bush is no place for the developing female writer. However this notion is more forcefully represented in *Human Toll*. Despite her arguments, Sybylla does at least write her text, although this is not actually represented within the textual world. However in *Human Toll*, Ursula loses all sense of her artistic ambitions, and instead becomes a 'mother' who tries to protect the young from social and natural vicissitudes. Ironically her fate bears out Sybylla's contention that motherhood is incompatible with an artistic career. Ursula's failure to become a writer in the bush is reinforced by the images of the bush in this text. There are two alternative perceptions of the bush. Initially it is represented as that harsh impersonal backdrop to human affairs, as though that is its absolute

reality. However at the end of the text, the bush is characterised and solely represented through Ursula's consciousness and perceptions. The bush becomes a projection for her inner search for spiritual meaning. Yet she is unable to transform the bush to her intentions; she realises that she will not find Christ there.

In contrast to Franklin and Baynton, Richardson's text *The Getting of Wisdom* represents a reaction to the values of the 1890s. The setting of this text and the values it highlights are perhaps as far as Richardson could go from the bush, its overt maleness, and the social and literary values attached to it. This text is set in a middle class ladies' college in Melbourne. It is a world occupied almost entirely by females, although it is the males in the background, the minister, the headmaster, the uncle, the teasing boys, the off-stage fiancé, who hold the dominant social power and are the centre of ideological values. The text is written in the realist mode with no hint of nationalism, and is almost entirely devoid of poetic imagery and metaphor which is often associated with nature. Richardson's critique of the Australian tradition seems to be to ignore it, although it is 'present' in the background as the focus of her hidden polemic.

Yet this world, which is the opposite to that of the bush and the values of the tradition, also has no authentic place for women. Women's expectations and options are equally limited. They might become wives or governesses. The text is critical of the values of the social class it represents, the pressures on women to prepare themselves for marriage and of the hypocrisy on which such values rest. Yet Richardson does not promise alternative values to them. The only hope for rescue or salvation in this text is that the protagonist learn to see her world clearly and to act on her own judgement. Here in this world, the aspiring woman writer is not directly assailed by contrary values about 'woman' which might prevent her artistic realisation. Instead, the protagonist who aspires to be an artist must learn not to conform to others' expectations of her, to be true to herself, and to accept that perhaps she will never fit in to a social group.

The critique of the bush and the amplification of the values of the 1890s is continued in Langley's *The Pea-pickers* although this text was

written several years after Richardson's. Here the bush is represented as a far better alternative to the town. However the bush that is represented by Steve in the 1930s is not the bush of the 1890s. Steve adopts a male character and pseudonym from Lawson's stories and determines to go to Gippsland to seek out the tradition of both Lawson and her mother, Mia. Ironically, Lawson himself had nothing to do with this area, which is a reflection back upon the essentially futile nature of Steve's search. At the same time, her mother had been disinherited and her people have all scattered. Lawson is meant to be taken on the symbolic level, as representing a living cultural tradition. Yet Steve finds no trace left of this literary and poetic tradition. Instead, in Gippsland in the 1930s, she finds a more vigorous Italian folk culture of bushwork, dress, song, poetry and dialect. She is conscious of the creeping intrusion of American culture which appears in the form of the Charleston dance and the American ukelele. There is little evidence of an indigenous Australian folk culture and tradition.

Steve herself departs from the nationalist realist descriptions of the bush, and perceives the bush mainly in terms of pastoral and classical eulogies. These poetic styles and perceptions are borrowed from another culture and do not suit the bush. Steve's use of them reinforces her position as an outsider who has no real personal or cultural roots.

It is significant that Steve's search centres on both the male and female traditions of Australia. Lawson signifies the male-centred national culture and tradition, while Mia, her mother, signifies the female tradition. Yet she discovers that Lawson has been displaced and her mother disinherited. At the same time, Steve perceives that there is no place in the bush for a woman. Like other females in our literary and historical tradition, she disguises her femininity. She dresses as a male and assumes a male *persona* because as a 'man' she will have more freedom and will be accepted more easily. The final image of Steve is both a critique of the bush tradition and a reflection of the contradictions of her search. She completely adopts the *persona* of the Australian bushman; she remains in a lonely bush hut, dressed as a man, with a rifle and dog, and plans to write a book. The text concludes that there is no authentic image of the woman artist within the Australian bush.

From Steve's point of view, there is no place left for Australian national culture and no place for the woman writer. The resolution of the text in part represents the effects of the loss of both the female and male tradition.

In contrast to the texts discussed so far, Anderson's *Tirra Lirra by the River* represents the Australian context from a different perspective and within a different form. Instead of focusing on the literary and social values of the tradition, the narrative structure and the point of view of this text centres on Nora's experience of the Australian social and historical context. She is positioned as an old woman in the 1970s who reviews her past in terms of the present. Anderson does not make any overt moral comments about the effects of this history and society on Nora's character and destiny. Instead the ideologies of the present context implicitly provide the evaluation of past events and ideologies. In this text, history is related to the private world and its effects are explored from an individual perspective. The historical events of two world wars and the Depression are represented solely in terms of their effect on Nora's life, even though her social situation is far removed from the actual, 'male' history of such events. Anderson thus reshapes these historical events from an ordinary woman's perspective and provides an alternative view of history and society. By referring to actual historical events in relation to the protagonist, Anderson is able to make oblique statements about the effects of those events upon women. Thus the fictional representation of Nora is expanded to include other women who confronted the same events from the same private position. However the experience of Australian history and society has had a profound effect upon Nora. This society and the position she has occupied within it have 'blinded' her to her own artistic potential. Nora has incorporated social evaluations of herself as a woman, so that the idea that she herself might be an artist does not even occur to her.

Nora's experience and destiny within the Australian context is paralleled by the fate of Dorothy Rainbow. Her image is a powerful reflection upon the Australian tradition and the position of women within its society. Dorothy is a shadowy figure in the narrative. She does not speak, and is only observed by other characters. Nora feels that they are similar. In their youth, they are both exotic creatures within an ordinary

reality yet on the threshold of great things in life. The surname 'Rainbow' suggests the marvellous land of the Wizard of Oz and of its heroine who is also called Dorothy. However there is irony in the fact that 'Oz' also refers to Australia. It seems that Dorothy does have everything a woman in this society could want; she marries a doctor, has a family and the best house in town. However it gradually emerges in the narrative that Dorothy has killed her husband and all her children, except one, with an axe, and then gassed herself in the oven. This domestic horror is heightened by the intertextual reference to Jimmy Governor and his actions in 1900, the decade after the formulation of the tradition. Their similar actions draw a parallel between the experience of women and blacks in this society. However the fact that a woman does it in this text is an added expression of the inestimable degree of her desperation. Because she has been a silent, observed character, as are women and Aborigines in our history and tradition, her action represents an uncontrollable 'crack' in the ideological and social system. This is the result of stress in the private world which is suppressed by the public world. The fate and experience of Dorothy and Nora within the Australian context are drawn in parallel. Dorothy acts outwardly and kills those around her, while Nora turns inward and kills her creative inclinations.

Thus the representation and critique of the bush tradition and the Australian context from these woman-centred texts indicate that there is little optimism and opportunity within it for the position, development and destiny of the woman artist.

Notions of the Australian tradition and national context also include particular ideologies and values which have shaped and are shaping the individual and national consciousness. According to Bakhtin's theory, these values are largely constructed by the hegemony, and are transmitted through language and discourse. Such values are not immutable verities, but are continually readapted and transformed by the effects of both sociohistorical change and the insertions of other points of view. This process is illustrated in certain texts which critically evaluate and refract selected values and ideologies from their contexts. *An Item from the Late News* is the most comprehensive critique of the values and tradition of the Australian context, and will be discussed in more detail.

Franklin's texts represent different aspects of nationalism and may be contrasted with the treatment made by other texts. In *My Brilliant Career*, she approaches nationalism largely from the aspect of a female national identity. Sybylla represents herself as a tomboy and enjoys the freedom of movement. This clashes with the expectations at Caddagat that she be ladylike and conduct herself with decorum. Sybylla describes the conflict of values between being 'Australian' and being a lady:

Uncle first said he was glad to see I had the spirit of an Australian, and then threatened to put my nose above my chin if I failed to behave properly. Grannie remarked that I might have the spirit of an Australian, but I had by no means the manners of a lady; while aunt Helen ventured a wish that I might expend all my superfluous spirits on the way, so that I would be enabled to deport myself with a little decorum when we arrived at the racecourse. (pp114-115)

A tomboy is an Australian female identity, yet this conflicts with the class-based Anglo-centric notions of being a lady. Grannie's expectations of ladylike behaviour are actually the values of the world of *The Getting of Wisdom*. *The Pea-pickers* is also concerned with the question of national identity. However rather than being concerned with questions of manner and conduct for women, Steve believes that there is no place at all for women in the Australian bush context. Instead of arguing the issue of national female identity, she adopts the male *persona*.

Nationalism in the form of a national culture is also developed in the texts. Both *My Brilliant Career* and *My Career Goes Bung* affirm the national culture in reaction to the predominance of the Anglo-centric values. In the latter text, Sybylla quotes the Englishman Harris who urges her to see Australia with her own eyes instead of importing English ideas into such an alien environment. He tells her:

But there is one thing, my dear, be Australian. It is the highest form of culture and craftsmanship in art to use local materials. That way you stand a chance of adding to culture. The other way you are in danger of merely imitating it, and though imitation is a form of flattery to the imitated, it is a form of weakness or snobbery in the perpetrator. You must find your own way and your own level. The material is in you: all that is required is industry in cultivation. (p.36)

Thus the text argues that the nationalist point of view should determine

the direction of Australian literature and the identity of its writers.

Yet *The Getting of Wisdom* represents a contrasting view of nationalism. Here the narrative voice refers to the 'young colonials' (p.71)⁷ which is an Anglo-centric point of view. Instead of focusing on the Australian writer as does Franklin, this text satirises the colonial readers and the national pressure towards realism. The narrative voice states:

For, crass realists though these young colonials were, and bluntly as they faced facts, they were none the less just as hungry for romance as the most insatiable novel-reader. (p.134)

This narrative voice thus disparages both the 'colonials' and the ideologies of nationalism and realism.

Nationalism is associated with the themes of racism and cultural imperialism. Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* promotes nationalist ideas, and has an ambiguous representation of other races. In contrast, Langley's *The Pea-pickers* also promotes nationalist values, yet is racist towards those peoples who are supplanting the national tradition and identity. In *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla, unlike her companions, shows consideration towards a Chinaman travelling on the coach. She reports the dialogue:

I cautioned him to talk lower for fear of hurting the Chinaman's feelings: this amused him immensely. He laughed very much, and leaning over to the red-bearded man, repeated the joke:
"I say, this young lady is afraid I might hert the chow's feelin's. Golly! Fancy a bloomin' chow havin' any!" (p.167)

Yet Aborigines are poorly represented in this text. This is partly indicated by Sybylla's own description of an Aborigine as 'a snivelling little Queensland black boy as a sort of black-your-boots, odd-jobs slavey or factotum' (p.101). Furthermore, Aborigines signify a moral comparison with whites. Sybylla employs this when she rejects Frank Hawden, saying:

I do not believe in spurning the love of a blackfellow if he behaves in a manly way; but Frank Hawden was such a drivelling mawkish style of sweetheart that I had no patience with him. (p.68)

7. Henry Handel Richardson, *The Getting of Wisdom*, 1910, (Melbourne, Heinemann Educational Books, 1977).

This form of comparison is also used by Harry Beecham when he describes the three kinds of women:

-one, that would marry a blackfellow if he had any money; another, that were shameless flirts, and who amuse themselves by flirting and disgracing the name of woman; and a third class that were pure and true on whom a man could stake his life and whom he could worship... (p.144)

Thus the Aborigine is not treated as an individual in this text. Instead, the black represents the Other to both male and female white society.

In contrast, the Aborigines in *Human Toll* are represented more as integral individuals. Here Baynton represents them with an uneducated dialect along with the Chinese, the German migrants and Boshy, the 'ex-lag'. In this text, the Aborigines are almost child-like, impish lazy rogues. Yet they are better people and more loyal to Ursula than are most of the white characters. However a similar evaluation between white and black emerges in this text. Boshy cajoles Nungi to work, 'like ther w'ite man w'at yer are' (p.123).⁸ Later in the text it is Nungi and Woonna who help Ursula save the baby from Mina. The narrative voice comments that:

There is no colour line in love, and though a-quiver with ungovernable fright, for Ursula's sake black Woonna went graphically through the final death contortions of the poisoned mangy pup. (pp.278-80)

Despite their efforts, the Aborigines cannot help Ursula. This is not a reflection upon them but rather indicates the prevailing hopelessness of defending good against evil in this text.

The Chinese are also represented in this text. The narrator represents the whites' racist attitudes towards them, and even Ursula is initially disgusted with 'these grown-up Sabbath desecrators' (p.154) who worked on Sunday. The narrator describes the conflict between the whites and the Chinese:

In varied ways all were intent on attracting the Chinaman, for the purpose of demonstrating the superiority of the white over the coloured races. Some shouted offensive orders, others, variegated Chinky-chows or Ching-chongs. The watching child got her first lesson in the gesticulative boy language of contempt, supplied by thrust-out tongues, "Bacon that fat", and other indications of scornful disgust, but for her mercifully confined to sight, not sound. (pp.154-55)

8. Barbara Baynton, *Human Toll*, 1907, in *Barbara Baynton*, ed. by Sally Krimmer & Alan Lawson, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1980).

Thus this racism is confined to boys, and Ursula is protected from hearing too much. However, divine retribution is enacted on the boys; one of them drowns while stealing the Chinaman's peaches. His fate is both a caution for misbehaving on Sunday and for teasing the Chinese.

In contrast, *The Pea-pickers* represents the social and cultural conflict between nationalism and cultural imperialism, and the reaction of racism. Instead of finding an indigenous Australian culture in Gippsland in the 1930s, Steve only finds evidence of the American and Italian culture. She makes an observation which has relevance for the 1980s:

Anything American was an anathema to us. We thought it strangled the originality of our native land's expression. (p.177)⁹

However, Steve herself has an ambiguous relationship to the national culture. For example, she listens to Hawaiian music on the ukelele, instead of the 'old traditional songs of bushmen' (p.23). Instead of adopting the realist modes and styles of Australian poetry, she depicts a picaresque romance and largely describes the Australian bush in pastoral, Classical and Romantic forms of poetry.

Steve expresses racist attitudes which partly reflect her anger that the Australian culture is being taken over, and which partly reflect her Australian identity. For example she dismisses an Indian friend saying:

Certainly, very beautiful letters still came from poor Borrelerworreloil, but, because of his race, I placed him firmly in the category of eternal friendship. Intensely Australian, although despised by her sons, I scorned defilement by another race. (p.292)

She is overtly racist towards Akbarah, 'a black man', stating that '...in my soul I was seething and twisting with hatred' (p.83). Yet he and Karta Singh have sexually harassed Steve, first as an attractive 'boy' and then as a woman. Steve has a more contradictory attitude towards the Italians. At first she regards them as interlopers who have taken over her work and her kitchen, and who are implanting their culture in Australia:

I felt half excited, half irritated to see these Italians in our room. We seemed to have descended another step in the ladder of our race. They really

9. Eve Langley, *The Pea-pickers*, 1942, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1984).

meant nothing to me, however, for I counted them as primitives, children, animals or deaf-mutes. Their faces pleased me, but the blankness of racial difference held me apart from them... Their quaintness pleased and excited my curiosity, and the comical English made me laugh and secretly ridicule them. (p.90)

The Italians here represent both the fascist ideology of the 1930s and the forces of cultural imperialism which would suppress national culture. Their imperialist nature and connection with fascism is satirised when they take over Steve's kitchen. However by the end of the narrative, in the midst of her disillusion with her quest to find love and the Australian tradition, Steve embraces the Italian presence and culture:

"Ah, Italy", I cried, sipping the wine, "what joys you bring! I give up my dreams of being a great Australian, a pioneer in racial purity and a passionate single-hearted lover of my country. The Australians despise me; they have nothing to give but awkward suspicions. Therefore I shall forsake them and cling to Italy, to her wine, her slow rich dialects, her food and her beautiful simian people, faintly savage... (p.307)

Steve has perceived that racism is part of the Australian identity. Now she rejects her racism as she rejects her female identity which to her has no place in Australian culture. By now she has fully adopted the *persona* of the Australian bushman, yet she turns to the Italian culture as one outsider embracing the culture of other outsiders. The Italian culture fills the vacuum now that the Australian culture has 'disappeared'.

The theme of cultural imperialism has been expanded beyond its connection with nationalism in some texts. Here cultural forms of imperialism are connected with sexism whereby women are taken over by men. As Shirley Walker has demonstrated, *My Career Goes Bung* draws a parallel between cultural, military and sexual imperialism.¹⁰ This parallel is centred in the character Goring Hardy. He supports the English military imperialism during the Boer War, he promotes the Anglo-centric, rather than national, style of literature which supports this war, and he is predatory towards women.

10. Shirley Walker, 'The Boer War: Paterson, Abbott, Brennan, Miles Franklin and Morant', (*ALS*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1985), pp. 207- 222.

Stead also highlights the connection between cultural imperialism, racism and sexism in *The Man Who Loved Children*. Here Stead does not depict racism *per se*, but she does explore Sam's professed Darwinian ideology in relation to both women and children and to other races. Sam speaks in abstract clichés from his perceived superior position as a white American male. Anyone else is an Other to him. Stead parallels his attitudes towards women and coloured races. For example, he adopts 'nigger' talk at times when he denigrates women, saying:

"Yiss, but you ain't in it," said Sam, "and what's more you never will be. En if I had my way no crazy shemales would so much as git the vote! Becaze why? Becaze they is crazy! Becaze they know nuffin! Becaze if they ain't got childer, they need childer to keep 'em from goin' crazy; en if they have childer the childer drive 'em crazy". (pp.142-3)¹¹

Sam's experience in the East with the Asian races is a form of cultural imperialism, and represents an ironic reflection upon his professed ideals and his treatment of his family. His lofty ideals of universal brotherhood are childish and superficial in comparison to the reality of the East and the wisdom it has accumulated over the centuries. He is magnanimous in his perceived superior position as a white man, despite his obvious unfitness in this environment. The narrator ironically contrasts his perceptions with the impressions of the servants whose thoughts are reported. For example, despite his talk of equality, Sam regards the white man as the universal standard. The narrator conveys a critique of this by reporting:

"You are but an ebonised Aryan, Naden, and I am the bleached one that is fashionable at present."
Naden pretended not to hear this. (p.242)

Here the term 'Aryan' possibly carried more weight in the mid-1940s because of its association with Hitler and nazism. Both Naden and the narrator reflect that Sam knows nothing about the racist conditions and the positions of non-white races in America, which strengthens the impression that he is naive and superficial.

Sam's professed ideals are not overtly racist, but they are insidious.

11. Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*, 1940, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970).

For example, he believes in the survival of the fittest, when he is the standard of such fitness, and promotes the science of eugenics, rather than the unpredictability of war, to control the human population. Sam's period in the East is an illumination of his ideas in relation to reality and apart from his family, yet this also places his attitudes to his family in stark relief. He has learnt nothing from his experiences there, but returns with his ideas about women and other races being like children confirmed. As the narrator states, 'the distant and authoritarian Sam who had come home was not quite the lighthearted Sam that had gone away; he was harsher, and a European, he had the germ power, in his brain' (p.311). He is determined that his daughters should be like the women of the East who defer to their men. Thus Sam's attitude to other races parallels his attitude to women and reinforces his own sense of white male superiority. In the development of the narrative, Louie must escape from his influence and ideas before she can become an artist.

The connection between racism and cultural and sexual imperialism is extended in *Lines of Flight*. The text is set in France, a 'neutral' territory so that issues about Australian nationalism do not emerge. However the narrative background contains references to the French military and cultural imperialism of Algeria and to the racist oppression of Algerians in France. In parallel to this, the narrative foreground illustrates the way in which Rita's words and meanings are redefined by male characters, especially Raymond, the 'Father' figure who lectures in literature and psychoanalysis. Rita refers to his form of cultural imperialism and addresses Raymond 'silently' in her thoughts:

Did you carry on like this, Master of Ceremonies, in your literary circles in Algiers, yes, see it quite well now, Raymond, you would be light-giver, perpetuator of Greco-Roman aesthetics, oh, honeyed voice of *France Culture*, modulating your harmonic variations, stringing out the prestigious jewels of your Port-Royal grammar, your imperfect subjunctives wearing almost visibly that coquettish circumflex, this is the real artillery of your colonisers, this is the way you would have annihilated the voice of *Algérie Libérée*, did you laugh when all the freedom fighters received on their transistors was the static interference of His Master's voice... (p.181)¹²

12. Marion Campbell, *Lines of Flight*, 1985, (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1985).

This same process of colonisation is effected by Raymond and Sébastien on her words and her art.

The implications of sexual colonisation are highlighted by the humiliation of Antonine, the white French woman, by Sun Diatti, the black Algerian student. He believes that he has been patronised by white women. As he says:

They're willing to play for a while, see just how NAUGHTY they can be, how LIBERATED. A casual fuck with a black o là là là là. (p.143)

He sexually humiliates Antonine, the image of female strength, yet she feels she cannot retaliate. Rita interprets the situation for her and says that he was just 'engaged in crude sexual warfare' (p.145). This white woman has been colonised by the black man. As Rita states:

No words of her own so she accepts herself as a product of his words: pale pink Europe spreading out its soft fats. (p.146)

Sun Diatti's action is that of a black man who has been subjected to white imperialism and of a man who can colonise women. In this case, he uses the woman for revenge. His behaviour towards Antonine reflects the linguistic and emotional colonisation that Rita is subjected to from Raymond and Sébastien. In this manner, Campbell resonates together the themes of racism and imperialism, both sexual and cultural. The differential relationships of power between the races are reflected in sexual relationships. She has extended the notion of imperialism to include not only land, people and culture, but also language, discourse and creative expression.

The notions of egalitarianism have also been developed from the 1890s. This particular value draws out the ambiguous relationship between class and gender. Egalitarianism has become socialism in the twentieth century, as illustrated in the texts *Intimate Strangers* and *For Love Alone*.

Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* illustrates both the values of egalitarianism according to the tradition, and the ambiguous relationship between class and gender. Here Sybylla is poor and is concerned about questions of social injustice, yet she draws a contrast between herself and the lower classes. She is ashamed of her own family's poverty yet

proud of her grandmother's wealth. She defines her identity in terms of this difference in class between her families:

It was right enough to be unearthed as Miss Melvyn, grand-daughter of Mrs Bossier of Caddagat, and great friend and intimate of the swell Beechams of Five Bob Downs station. At Goulburn I was only the daughter of old Dick Melvyn, broken-down farmer-cockatoo, well known by reason of his sprees about the commonest pubs in town. (p.139)

Sybylla is aware that her society is not egalitarian and states that '...the iron ungodly hand of class distinction has settled surely down upon Australian society - Australia's democracy is only a tradition of the past' (p.17). While she is at Caddagat, she feels sorry for the poor, unemployed tramps who come around for food and work. She relates their situation to the wider social system and its injustices, although she is the only one at Caddagat who has these 'silly ideas' (p.86). The others term the tramps as a 'lazy lot of sneaking creatures' (p.86).

However, Sybylla also represents contradictory views about class, which reflects her own unstable position between the poverty of her father and the wealth of her grandmother. She does not want to be poor herself, and sees herself as belonging to the culture and knowledge that Caddagat appears to represent. She herself is impoverished and has had a limited education, yet her own language is equivalent to that used at Caddagat. She reports the language of the lower, uneducated poorer class, such as that of the servant Jane, which establishes the distinction between them. Although Sybylla declaims against the condition of women in her world, she does not extend this to women of different classes such as Jane, nor is she conscious of the class - gender relationship. This is illustrated later in the text when Harold Beecham shows that there is a difference for him between women of different social classes. To him, Sybylla the 'servant' is different from Sybylla the lady, and can be treated accordingly. Yet Sybylla does not reflect on this. The text further explores the contradiction between class and gentility. This is illustrated by the McSwats. Despite Sybylla's superiority in manners and language, Jimmy McSwat says:

"She thinks she's a toff, but she's only old Melvyn's darter, that pa has to give money to". (p.174)

Thus Sybylla might have egalitarian principles in terms of class differences, but only when she is in a superior class position. This dichotomy reflects

her own sense of worth. She feels she is worthless when she is a pauper. Thus she has to some degree internalised the differential values attached to class.

The values of egalitarianism are represented as socialism in the texts *Intimate Strangers* and *For Love Alone*, although these texts represent widely different treatments of the class and gender issue. *For Love Alone* represents the individual woman who may transcend her environment by will and determination. Hence the actual period of the Depression is muted, and the values of socialism, although supported, are not highlighted. Instead Stead illustrates the political and social effects of the Depression by focusing on Teresa's family and Crow. All are victims of capitalism. Teresa's brother is involved in union politics and has been locked out of his job. Her sister Kitty is treated like a drudge in the household because she does not earn an income even though she is the housekeeper for them. She represents the devalued status of women's domestic work within the capitalist system. Crow on the other hand represents the vicious intellectual and psychological effects of poverty. His relationships with women are utterly corrupt. He feels exploited by the system, and in turn exploits women. He believes that women are men's property, and that they put a price on themselves and are only available to a man with money. There is no such thing as love in his vision. He exploits both rich and poor women: he humiliates Clara by taking her in the street like a prostitute after he in turn had been humiliated by her wealthy, clever brother; he exploits poor waitresses in London, taking advantage of his nominally superior position. He comes close to destroying Teresa who to him is a reflection of his male power over her.

However the text focuses primarily on Teresa's individual will and determination to succeed in attaining her goals. She herself does have a job, and finds no trouble in changing from the school to the factory. Her poverty and deprivation is largely an act of choice. She chooses to go without, and becomes anorexic, so that she can get the fare to go to London. Here she takes control of her destiny, finds love with men, and begins to write.

Stead thus explores the effects of capitalism from a socialist perspective, but these issues form the background texture of the narrative. Capitalism is not an absolute determinant of the individual's condition, while socialism is not offered as a panacea. Instead individuals such as Teresa have the power to transcend their condition. It is the will, determination and vision of the individual woman which effects change and through which she asserts her identity as an artist.

Intimate Strangers represents a contrasting view of the Depression, the issues of capitalism and socialism and the relationship between class and gender. Here socialism predominates over the woman-centred perspective. Thus Elodie chooses to become involved in the class struggle rather than to effect her own self-determination as an artist. The text presents the issues between self and others, between feminism and socialism, as mutually exclusive categories. Elodie must choose between them - and thus she fails to become an artist by becoming a socialist and once more committed to her husband.

In this text the socialist ideology is reflected directly in the polemic and debate within the text, such as Tony's speech from the soap-box, and Jerome's arguments against marriage. Working class socialists and bourgeois capitalists are drawn in contrast within the narrative. Greg's fate and the personal life of the family are related to the processes of the capitalist system rather than to any individual factors. This conflict between labour and capitalism is initially placed in the narrative background, while Elodie's dreams of regaining her artistic career and her romance with Jerome have dominated the foreground. Her moves towards her transcendence conflict with the needs of her husband and family. Then in a twist at the end of the narrative Elodie's woman-centred concerns become secondary to the now dominant ideology of the class struggle between (male) labour and capitalism. She now decides to remain with her husband and to become involved in the class struggle with him. Her domestic and social relationships are combined in a new vision. Yet this political commitment is represented ambiguously as a means of keeping the family together, and is in response to Greg's attempted suicide. The incompatibility between the woman-centred and the socialist points of view is not debated in the text. Instead the issues concerning

woman, such as the self-determination to be an artist, are made secondary to the concerns for class justice.

Consumerism is the other predominant ideology in the twentieth century. It has replaced the earlier texts' concerns about religious issues. Texts such as *Kewpie Doll* and *Lines of Flight* explore the relationship between consumerism and the image of 'woman' which is promoted through it. This image of female identity becomes an anathema to the woman who wants to become an artist. Astley's *An Item from the Late News* adopts religious symbolism as a parameter within which to explore the effects of a consumerist society. According to this text, the materialist Australian society is bored and spiritually bankrupt. Consumerism fills this spiritual vacuum, but this is creating the conditions for the American imperialist takeover.

Kewpie Doll represents consumerism in terms of the advertising industry which promotes a particular image of 'woman', and in terms of the products available to achieve this ideal. Here the products of consumerism 'consume' the protagonist's mother. She is the 'ideal woman', yet ironically she is one whose artistic talent has been channeled into advertising the products which create the perfect image. The protagonist herself is surrounded by products, words and images, such as 'Paris Mist skin perfume, Silk Velvet hand lotion; Fancy Free girdle, Make Believe bra'. (p.76).¹³ Some of these products will make her 'the Saturday night girl, adorably feminine' (p.143). However in this text, the values of consumerism, the products and images it manufactures, and the image of 'woman' that it promotes are contradictory to the woman who aspires to be an artist.

Lines of Flight also highlights the relationship between consumerism, 'woman' and the woman artist. In this text advertising becomes an ironic reflection upon the nature of art and of the ideas of semiotics. Advertising works to stimulate desire. Rita herself works in an advertising agency where her art is adapted to both create an image and to stimulate desire. As the manager tells Rita:

13. Barbara Hanrahan, *Kewpie Doll*, 1984, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1984).

OF COURSE we do not want direct representation of commodity...What we are looking for is the teasing enigma that will tick-le the retina, make the consumer chafe a lit-tle, yousee, and then lead him or her - we always have one sex or the other as primary target - to scrutinise the slogan itself, as a kind of promise that he or she will be released from that irritation by buying the commodity. That lit-tle germ of irritation has to work in the pit of the viewer's mind. (p.219)

Sébastien the semiotician sees no moral implications about this process of art which is used to construct desire. Rita quotes him saying:

To sell a polish no different from all the others, of course, you have to tamper with language a bit, it's what Sébastien says, what those linguists and semioticians he quotes say... (p.220)

Rita comments significantly later that Sébastien is

...offering a chapter of his thesis to a seminar on the reproduction of gender in advertising - she could tell him a few things about that if he'd bothered to ask. (p.231)

Rita herself is not affected by the consumerist direction of advertising.

It is a job that she needs in order to keep painting. However this passage offers ironic reflections about the distortion of art and language to stimulate desire for created images. The advertising message and the product create images of gender for the consumer.

From this point, I want to discuss Astley's *An Item from the Late News* in more detail. Among those which I am discussing, this text represents the most comprehensive critique and representation of the male-centred Australian tradition and identity. Here, too, the protagonist, although an artist, is part of the patriarchal society and participates in its values. Thus her art is a reflection of the banal world about her, rather than being 'true' art that is represented by Emmie's poem.

This narrative world highlights certain aspects of the Australian tradition and culture, such as the marginal position of women within Australia's cultural and social history; the underlying racism, materialism and sexism which take form according to the current context; and the patriarchal interests and power structures in this society. This textual world has evolved from the male-centred history and tradition, and is dominated by men in positions of power. The text draws the link between

masculinity, both in its national and international form, and aggression, and suggests that this type of culture is bringing the world closer to nuclear war on the global level. This possible consequence is paralleled on the narrative personal level, where both Moon and Gabby have erupted and destroyed Wafer.

In the narrative content, structure and characterisation, Astley depicts a world divided into masculine and feminine groups. The males occupy the positions of power and the masculine principle is the dominant ideology. The feminine group is marginal and more fragile yet possesses the more positive virtues. These divisions are not characterised by gender. Wafer falls into the feminine category, while Gabby herself participates in the masculine aggression which destroys Wafer. These divisions refer more to the qualities of the masculine and feminine principles. The feminine world is the Other. It largely consists of individual characters who are not male, white or 'masculine', such as Archie/Clancy, Doss, Rosie, Emmie and Wafer. They embody the 'feminine' qualities of gentleness, pacifism, tolerance, spirituality. But these individuals and the qualities they represent are all vulnerable to the 'masculine' world. Thus Clancy becomes Archie after being raped; Rosie is humiliated as an Aboriginal woman; Wafer is killed; Doss compromises and Emmie disappears.

The intrusion of the media in the text, the TV and the radio, counterpoint the events at Allbut with events on the global scale. The particular expression of masculinity in Allbut is related to the broader background of international masculine violence which threatens to culminate in nuclear war.

The media are also connected to the promotion of consumerist values. Consumerism here creates insensate desires and demands, motives which will precipitate the tragedy. It is ironic, in terms of the broader themes, that the TV also advertises bomb-shelters. Gabby has been caught up in the consumerist world, and her art has been distorted by its values. For example, she would paint the sterile boredom of the society around her, and sell off her paintings to tourists. Wafer, on the other hand, is different. He sees this world as 'an anarchic world of money-grabbing, fast food bars, asylum advertising that refuses to accept its repeated

mediocrity' (p.149). He himself cultivates utter indifference to the values of this world. Thus to him the sapphire is a pretty stone which symbolises luck. Yet the townspeople become crazed by what it signifies in terms of wealth. Gabby wants a child from him, but her desires are frustrated. Wafer is destroyed by this pressure of greed and insatiable demand around him. As Gabby states:

We had hemmed him in with our demands and they had holed him out like years. (p.173)

A religious structure is introduced in this text. It is not meant to promote religion itself. Instead the religious themes and principles which have shaped Western culture are introduced to highlight the nature of Wafer's message and the sacrifice that is made of him by the new religion of consumerism.

The world of Allbut itself is represented as one which has been shaped by past history and tradition, as well as by the present. Gabby is conscious that women have been marginal figures in the shaping of our tradition, and that she herself is a marginal figure in the male world of Allbut. She explores this problem from her position as the female narrator, and reports the narrative techniques that she must use as the marginal figure exploring the centre. Despite the limitation of her perspective, Gabby is conscious that she is now creating history, where history itself is composed of narratives and points of view. The present context is a consequence of its past. The present bull-fight is 'true local history' (p.119), yet women at the time of its beginning during the Depression did not know about it. Now Gabby inserts her view and experience of it. However, she occupies an ambiguous position when recording her history. She is conscious of the gender and race inequality in history and society, and personally rejects aspects of the male-centred culture: yet she participates with the men in the act of destroying Wafer. Her narrative history becomes a confession and a search for her own motives which have shaped the event of Wafer's death.

Astley highlights characters and situations which 'ring true' because she has absorbed and reshaped contemporary images and situations. Wafer the 'poofter' and Cropper the Queensland 'cop' are clearly identifiable from the present contextual stereotype. Wafer, who is not a homosexual, is represented by those qualities which contemporary culture

has labelled as 'poofster' qualities. He was a mis-fit as a boy who preferred a 'dreamy otherness' (p.148) to playing football and joining the cadets as did other boys. He refuses to join in because, as he puts it, 'male group activities of this violent nature were a sop to homosexual proclivities' (p.48). In the present textual reality, he is a male who is 'Other' to the male characters. He has no values or ideas which are in common with them. He is excluded from mateship, and other mates gang up on him. Before he dies, his killer, Cropper, reminds him of gangs of school boys who used to bash him up, calling him a 'poof' (p.196) for not joining the game.

Cropper, the local policeman, fits the stereotype of the Queensland cop we hear about through the media. He is the instrument of law and order in the text, but this is represented as only the legitimised version of Moon's insane violence. Cropper is a bully in a town not big enough for his talent. Because of his legal position, his racism, sexism and violence are upheld by the law. He brutally humiliates Rosie and other Aboriginal women, he is the 'poofster basher' who has haunted Wafer all his life in Australia. At the end of the narrative Cropper legitimately murders him. But Cropper is also supported by the other townsmen. His interpretation of the law is supported by the ethics and attitudes of the masculine principle and the male-centred tradition - its racism, sexism, materialism and violence.

Rape is a central motif in the text, reflecting the male violence upon women and the country, Australia. Veronica Brady has made an interesting observation about rape within the Australian context which may be applied to Astley's representation of the rape/women/Australia relationship. Brady quotes from D.H. Lawrence;

...Australian culture tends to be so masculine and so suspicious of the feminine. As Lawrence remarked, our relationship to the land has been generally exploitative, a rape rather than a long-standing relationship of love. Power and conquest matter, and material gain is the reward to be valued. Women, too, with the claims they make for tenderness and some kind of reposeful love to be valued for its own sake, represent a threat.¹⁴

14. Veronica Brady, *A Crucible of Prophets*, (Sydney, Theological Explorations, 1981), p.64.

In Astley's world, the land is raped for profit, while rape is an expression of male power over women.

There are different aspects and effects of rape within the text. Astley introduces a new twist to the traditional Australian image of women who dress as men. Clancy was raped in the early years of this century, then 'disappears' altogether as a woman, and reappears as the male *persona*, Archie Wetters. It is only at 'his' funeral that the townspeople realise that 'he' was a she. Ironically, her identity and what men have done to her becomes lost to history. She remains as an honorary male. As one character states, "He wasn't a bad old sod. Not when you consider he was a woman" (p.18). The irony is further compounded because Gabby, the narrator who is conscious of the position of women in tradition and society, does not realise that Archie is actually Wafer's aunt Clancy. The same pattern begins to recur again with Emmie. Wafer notes the similarities in appearance between Emmie and Clancy. Moon attempts to rape Emmie who, like the blue stone, is what he wants but cannot have. Unlike Clancy, Emmie escapes him. But like Clancy, Emmie too disappears after the horror at Allbut. Within the text, Emmie is someone who is precious. Gabby is jealous of her inner goodness, youth, mature perspicacity and artistic ability. Yet like Clancy, Emmie cannot survive as herself in the male-centred society.

This violation of women is paralleled by the act upon the store dummies. These dressed models in the shop-front window, the commercialised images of woman under capitalism, are 'sexually molested' (p.62). This is an ambiguous act which could have been perpetrated by a number of different groups in the text. The female dummies become objects of male revenge and aggression. Although no one discovers who did it, Cropper uses the incident to scapegoat Wafer. Cropper himself thinks that it is funny, but is angry that the act is public and that it has been done to a Town Councillor's property.

The image of rape is extended from that done to women and the store dummies. Rape is the act of commercial violence that has been done to the country. Gabby's father states that Australia has been raped by foreign companies and investments. It is significant that he likens the country to a woman, and then argues that both women and the country look

for rape, "like a dame with hot pants" (p.89). Here even his choice of words reflects a rape, his American idiom suggests the cultural rape of Australia's language and idiom through foreign cultural imperialism.

Rape extends to the American cultural imperialism of the country. Such imperialism is expressed through the intrusive medium of the TV which promotes consumerism and which televises global male violence. As Gabby comments:

Father crashes each evening before a commercial channel that has only recently achieved transmission to Allbut and is supposed to be enlarging our vision of the world. Every five minutes he takes communion from an American Colonel and a chain of fast food take-aways. I can no longer bear to watch. I have sat fascinated, too, through the esperanto of telly in Europe and America and that old sense of belonging to a tenth-rate culture has engulfed me as if Cro-Magnon man took a wrong turning somewhere. (p.26)

Shows such as *Dallas* are promoted internationally as the new religion. However in this text there is a sinister aspect to the American cultural imperialism; it is connected with the masculine aggression of the Australian tradition and of the international manifestations of nuclear arms.

Thus rape is the act of violence and expression of power perpetrated by men on women, and the Australian land and culture. This is paralleled in the text by the other dominant motif: the bull-fight which is the act of men's violence upon other men and an expression of masculinity. It is the men's entertainment. Ironically this ritual is part of the town's 'tradition'. Gabby, Emmie, Tim and Wafer are the horrified observers of the ritual, although Wafer is forced to participate. To them, it is madness and anarchy. As Gabby thinks, 'There aren't any rules at all...' (p.125). The bullhorns represent masculine symbolism. The primitive bestiality of the ritual parodies the intense drama of the 'real' bullfight, while the horns are an absurd image of the cuckold. Thus the bull-horns indicate that this is a ritual of male aggression and sexual violence. Moon and Cropper fight it out as a test of manhood and masculinity. Moon as victor chooses Wafer as an opponent. Their fight is more than a test. It is to both terrorise Wafer into revealing

where he found the stone and to revenge Moon's humiliation that Emmie prefers Wafer. At the point of Moon's victory, he straddles Wafer's body as though he were taking part in the sexual act. This is an ironic reinforcement of Wafer's view of the latent homosexuality in male sports.

Although Gabby thought there were no rules to the game, there is a code of 'honour' among the men. The act of violence, humiliation and intimidation is supported, but the participants must protect each others' genitals. Moon breaks this code of honour, and horns Wafer in the groin, shouting that it is for "Emmie" (p.129). This stirs the watching men and incites them to intervene. Only at this point does Cropper act. He kicks Moon about, saying, "No dirty fighting!" (p.130), and getting in a few for himself as revenge for his defeat. Male genitals are sacred, and as Gabby's brother says:

"The old crown jewels. They ought to be on the national emblem along with the beer can". (p.130)

Other moral and civilising considerations about the bull-fight are non-existent.

Thus of all the texts considered, *An Item from the Late News* is a most comprehensive representation of the male-centred tradition and culture from the female point of view. In Astley's vision, it is not only women who are the victims and outsiders; it is both the country and all characters and principles which are not masculine and male-centred. Astley does not only criticise the Australian tradition within the content of the text. The actual construction and process of the narrative illustrates that current events are still shaped by the same operations which created the earlier myths and traditions. Whereas previous texts have represented the Australian tradition and context from the point of view of the woman artist and its effects on her artist realisation, Astley's text suggests that this tradition and its continuing process will culminate in nuclear war. Furthermore, she explores the moral responsibility of the woman writer in relation to this threat.

Thus in accordance with Bakhtin's theories, these texts are interconnected with their sociohistorical and cultural contexts. These texts by women writers, who operate from a marginal position, critically react and respond to the values of their contexts within the literary framework. Through this process, they are inserting the woman-centred point of view into the national tradition and are reappropriating traditional meanings and values associated with 'woman'.

CHAPTER 5

DISCURSIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TEXTS AND THEIR LITERARY CONTEXTS

While these texts which feature the woman artist protagonist establish evaluating discursive relationships with their sociohistorical and cultural contexts, they also establish particular relationships with the historical literary context. As Bakhtin suggests, by highlighting certain aspects of the previous literary tradition, these texts insert the voice and image of woman as artist into the literary chain, and fill the 'space' left by the patriarchal literary and cultural tradition. The literary context is a separate yet interdependent body of knowledge within the sociohistorical and cultural context. It too is a changing and developing entity which develops a complex set of relationships with the changing social and cultural contexts and the changing context of critical interpretation. Literary texts and literary criticism are a continuing and changing social practice of language which interacts with the cultural and sociohistorical context. As Bakhtin argues, the literary text is that medium which has the most immediate contact with its social context and which participates most actively in the social flux and change of meanings and values. This contact is established in two directions, although both are inextricably connected with each other. Thus on the diachronic level, the text is related to its past literary and cultural tradition, while on the synchronic level, it is related to its immediate, surrounding sociohistorical context. This relationship with the context affects both the development of the textual form, and the nature and meaning of the content which is represented and evaluated within the text.

Within the Australian tradition, the relationship between these texts and their literary contexts will cover several areas. In Australia, realism has been the dominant, but by no means exclusive, literary mode. This mode has been largely supported by literary, critical and academic institutions in preference to the alternative and muted tradition and mode of romance. The texts themselves operate largely within the realist mode, yet use both realism and romance to effect a woman-centred critique of conditions in both the literary and social contexts which are inimical to the woman artist. As well as this, some texts to varying degrees establish intertextual relationships with previous texts. They incorporate

such references, and their prior meaning and usage, into the producing woman-centred text to amplify and resonate both the prior themes and the current representations associated with woman, art and the woman artist.

In this developmental process, the predominantly male tradition of the *Bildungsroman* is being adapted and transformed by both the woman-centred perspective and by the representation of the female artist protagonist and her experiences. This emerging form of the female *Bildungsroman* is connected with the developing image of a female identity within the national literary and cultural context. The intertextual relationships and the developing form of the woman-centred *Bildungsroman* will be discussed in the following two chapters, while in this chapter I will discuss the texts' relationships to the modes of realism and romance.

According to Bakhtin, all literary texts are part of the literary chain of communication. A literary system stands behind each text so that none exists in isolation:

There can be no such thing as an isolated utterance. It always presupposes utterances that precede and follow it. No one utterance can be either the first or the last. Each is only a link in the chain, and none can be studied outside this chain. Among utterances there exist relations that cannot be defined in either mechanistic or linguistic categories. They have no analogues.¹

Thus the texts derive their full import and intelligibility from a dialectic of identity and difference in relation to the literary system into which they are inserted. Because they operate from a marginal literary, cultural and social position, and from a different point of view, it is to be expected that women's literary texts will establish a critical rejoinder to the dominant norms and ideologies of the literary system. Thus, for example, in the Australian context, women's texts develop realism to highlight critically the 'real' nature of women's social conditions and the aesthetic representation of 'woman'. Women's

1. M.M. Bakhtin, 'From Notes Made in 1970-71', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, (Austin, Uni. of Texas Press, 1986), p.136.

texts which portray the female artist are addressing and modifying male-centred literary and cultural ideologies. Through this process, they are establishing a woman-centred literary tradition and representation of 'woman', which is interdependent with the 'mainstream' literary system.

Bakhtin thus situates each text, as an utterance, in the ongoing stream of literary and non-literary discourse. The literary text is a representation of discourse. This representation is drawn from the heterogeneous utterances of both the literary system and the non-literary contemporary *heteroglossia*. On the literary level, all texts are to be understood in relation to other individual texts and to the broader, historical literary context. On the non-literary level, 'social voices' or *heteroglossia*, which represent contemporary values, idioms and social characteristics, may be incorporated into the text. Bakhtin describes this process:

Any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere. The very boundaries of the utterance are determined by a change of speech subjects. Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. These mutual reflections determine their character. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the commonality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word 'response' here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account. After all, as regards a given question, in a given matter, and so forth, the utterance occupies a particular *definite* position in a given sphere of communication. It is impossible to determine its position without correlating it with other positions. Therefore, each utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication.²

Thus the essential nature of the literary text is that it is an incorporating and responsive entity. It incorporates various aspects of ideology and reality from past and contemporary social and cultural systems. Yet these elements are not neutrally transposed. They are selected and represented from the particular point of view of the text.

2. M.M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, p.91.

This point of view determines the critical and evaluating nature and degree of the text's response to its *milieu*. Woman-centred texts illustrate such an incorporation and response. They are responding to the patriarchal literary and social context and critically evaluate it from the woman-centred perspective. The medium of the woman artist protagonist becomes the focus of a critique of patriarchal norms, values and images, and at the same time operates to insert an alternative, woman-centred image of 'woman' into the literary, cultural and social tradition and context.

Some of the texts under consideration here illustrate this responsive and evaluating attitude to the literary system itself. They perceive that this system has favoured images of 'woman' in fiction which embody male-centred representations and values and which have little relationship to the representation of authentic female experience. With this critique, these texts imply that a woman-centred point of view and experience have not been authentically represented in some previous texts, and that there are a limited number of literary models for the female protagonist.

Thus, for example, the texts *For Love Alone* and *The Man Who Loved Children* address what they perceive to be the absence of authentic images of 'woman' and her experiences in past literary discourses. The former text highlights the absence of a literary portrayal of female eroticism and, through this critique, actually produces such a representation. The latter text addresses, without the familiar paternalistic sentimentalisation, the life and death of the mother and its hidden meaning - the release of the daughter as a woman and an artist. Both texts represent an alternate image and destiny of 'woman' in relation to their perception of such representations in previous literary texts.

In *For Love Alone*, Teresa is a woman who discovers and recovers her own erotic nature beyond the limitations which are prescribed by the ideological nexus of romance/marriage/monogamy. She becomes a writer through the inter-relationship between her personal experience, her desires and her will. Her ideals and quest for authentic love set her apart from the 'suburban romances' of her context. Hence she

explores literature to discover other worlds which might exist beyond her immediate social world. However she finds no books which are written by women about female love and eroticism to which she might turn as models and validations of her own feelings and experiences. The narrative voice describes her thus:

At each thing she read, she thought, yes, it's true, or no, it's false, and she persevered with satisfaction and joy, illuminated because her world existed and was recognised by men. By why, not by women? She found nothing in the few works of women she could find that was what they must have felt. (p.76)

Teresa connects the absence of the literary representation of women's erotic experiences with the laws which have institutionalised love and sexuality. The representation of female eroticism in literature has been excluded by phallocentrism. Teresa speaks aloud to herself, saying:

And it's more misery for the men who make the laws than for me who never made a law, for women are outside the law; they make nothing, they say yes or no, to some collection of whereases. Why do men make the laws, about marriage, decency and the like, to shackle themselves? (p.93)

The content, theme and plot of this text, and the image of Teresa as the protagonist address this condition. Teresa is a protagonist who explores her own erotic nature and who becomes a putative writer. The text thus becomes a response to Teresa's questions about the literary representation of female eroticism. Yet at the same time, this text is now inserted into the literary chain as the representation of female eroticism which Teresa has searched for.

On the other hand, Louie from *The Man Who Loved Children*, is a female adolescent who wants to assert her destiny and to trace out an identity which goes beyond the prescriptions of becoming a wife and mother. However she finds no examples of alternative female destinies in either her social *milieu* or in her reading of literature. She rejects Sam's version of her own mother's identity which was that of '...a true woman whose home was dear to her' (p.163). Yet as the narrative voice states:

Then she wished to be great. At present she only read about *men* of destiny. (my emphasis.) (p.163)

By tracing her personal and artistic development, the text represents her as a woman who is becoming a woman of destiny.

Her step-mother Henny is conscious that women such as she are not represented in literature. As the narrative voice states:

Where, indeed, was she to find heroes to succour her..."I'm a failure all right," said Henny; "and why don't they write about deadbeats like me - only it wouldn't sell!" (p.445)

Yet the text does represent a woman like her, perhaps as a failure, but also as a lot more. She is not a true victim at the mercy of patriarchal values, but she does represent the intolerable and often unacknowledged negative experience of being a wife and mother. Henny is represented as the feminine in a dialogic complementarity with Sam, the masculine, although Sam becomes the dominant partner. Through the representation of Henny, the text exposes the darker, ambiguous underside of female experience which carries broader ramifications than just 'failure'.

Tirra Lirra by the River represents a different perspective on the relationship between women and the literary context. Here Nora is able to question an author about the relationship between 'real' experiences, their consequences and their representation in literature. Nora, who is pregnant herself, wonders how lovers seem to avoid pregnancy in fiction, and how Huxley, Lawrence and Coward manage with lovers in their texts. Olive, the author in the text, is disconcerted by the question, and replies that contraception, or the avoidance of pregnancy, is simply not her theme. As she says, she develops only '...the delicate nuances of feeling, you know, between a man and a woman in that position' (p.77)³. Thus Anderson has used the fictional mode and the experiences of her protagonist to raise the problematic relationship between the reality of 'real' experiences, and the representation of reality and experience in fiction from a woman's point of view. One of the major themes in this text is the influence that manufactured styles and images have on the individual woman's self-concept and presentation to the world. This achieves a more ironic effect when the text illustrates that these fictional images are not related to reality and experience, and that what purports to be 'real' is actually selected and modified for aesthetic effect.

3. Jessica Anderson, *Tirra Lirra by the River*, 1982, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1984).

Thus some of the texts consciously address certain aspects of the representation of 'woman' in the general literary tradition on the level of discourse and thematic development. They highlight certain traditional images and values associated with 'woman', and then produce a critical alternative to them within the plot development and the image of the protagonist. This critical attitude constructs a dialogic relationship of response and evaluation between the woman-centred text and the male-centred literary tradition.

On a broader plane, the form of these texts represents a responsive, evaluating and developing relationship with the Australian literary context. During this century, Australian fiction has been characterised by the predominant realist form. Some feminist critics, such as Fiona Giles and Susan Sheridan, have argued that the preferred mode of realism has emerged from the male-centred experiences and points of view, while the female-centred romance form of the nineteenth century was discounted.⁴ The romance tradition of the nineteenth century was associated with women writers and women's domestic experience, and was a continuation of the English literary tradition. This literary form was disparaged by the nationalist, realist and male-centred literary movement of the 1890s. The texts which represent the woman artist operate within the general parameters of the realist mode. However to varying degrees they represent a critical dialectic between romance and realist forms. This relationship between the realist and the romance modes constructs a literary medium and reflection of a social critique about women's relationships to social and literary structures. It suggests further that perhaps neither literary mode is completely adequate to the literary representation of the female artist. This is illustrated in *My Brilliant Career*. Here Franklin exploits realism to represent ironically her 'real' world 'realistically', while at the same time exploiting romantic conventions to highlight her theme. Here there is no place for the woman artist in either reality or romance, and neither mode of realism or romance can provide a plot resolution.

Yet at the same time, the realist mode of women's writing is being influenced and developed by modern forms of psychological

4. For example, see Fiona Giles, 'Romance: An Embarrassing Subject', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, and Susan Sheridan, 'Temper Romantic: Bias Offensively Feminine: Australian Women Writers and Literary Nationalism', (*Kunapipi*, Vol. vii, No. 2/3).

realism to represent the critical consciousness of the woman artist. Thus the mode of realism is being adapted to contain the dilemma that the women's texts highlight: the dilemma between the individual woman's identity and desires and her relationship to a social reality which is inimical to that realisation. This dilemma is predominantly represented through the protagonist's inner consciousness which highlights the disparity between her inner and outer worlds. Stead and Hanrahan provide good examples of this development of psychological realism. The reality of social conditions may be inimical to the ambitions and identity of the woman artist, but her critical inner evaluations and perspectives of the relationship between herself and her environment are represented through her inner consciousness.

In more recent years, the premises of realism and the realist mode have come under critical scrutiny, and no longer have the same unquestioned authority. Certain literary theories, such as semiotics and structuralism, stress that the individual subject is fragmented rather than unitary, and that language itself constitutes the subject. Furthermore, the concept of the 'Real' is being questioned. Instead of being an immanent truth which must be discovered and represented, reality is now regarded as a construct of language itself. Hence recent texts by Jolley and Campbell place less emphasis on the representation of 'reality' and the 'real' experiences of women which had been illustrated by writers such as Franklin and Richardson. Instead these writers highlight the issues concerning the fictional representation of the divided subject, the constituting relationship between language and experience, and the actual similarities between the construction of fiction and reality. These issues are explored from the point of view of the woman artist.

Both Jolley and Campbell incorporate and refract recent ideas of literary and contemporary philosophy. Jolley represents a sceptical and ironic picture of the modern theories of structuralism in her narrative constructions, while Campbell critically evaluates these ideas in the structure and content of her text.

Elizabeth Bruss discusses the character of the modern challenge

to realism in terms which might be specifically applied to Campbell's *Lines of Flight*:

One can, with more or less effort, find almost the entire range of contemporary critical preoccupations - with signs and reading, with textuality and inter-textuality, with praxis and performance - at work in contemporary 'creative writing' as well. The opacity and autotelic play of language has certainly figured prominently in literature since the earliest modernist experiments, so much so that French theorists often seem more indebted to Mallarmé than to Saussure.⁵

Rita, the protagonist of *Lines of Flight*, makes a similar observation. She silently replies to Sébastien's questions about the meaning of her art, rather than directing her opinions into the textual world:

Why not take up the whole personality bit? But that myth has long since been deconstructed, he would say with a so-what intonation. The self as social construct is practically a cliché. And I would say: Yes but it's harder to do without some imaginary self in practice and with fatigue in my voice, give him Mallarmé's line about literature consisting in the suppression of the Monsieur and add that about the same year, Einstein Adolescent got off on a beam of travelling light and holding up the mental mirror to himself, marvelled at the idea of his no-reflection, perceivable only from the immensity of space beyond, so in what, whose, time did that image form? And he would say: But yes, of course...We've got beyond those crises though: Freud, Marx, Saussure... (pp.78-79)

Campbell's text, and Rita's paintings within the text, are illustrations of the modernist alternative and challenge to realism. However both the text itself and Rita's Narrative Sculpture within the text explore the biases against the female gender which underlie modernism, and both constructions are working towards the expression of the authentic 'feminine' voice.

The texts from *My Brilliant Career* to *Lines of Flight* thus represent a continuum of changing images and positions of the female artist. These developments are related to the concurrent changes in the social position and perception of women and to the changing conventions of representing

5. Elizabeth Bruss, *Beautiful Theories: The Spectacle of Discourse*, (Boston, John Hopkins Press, 1982), pp.71-72.

reality and 'woman'. However the predominant mode of realism has raised problems for women writers who might want to depict the woman artist with an assertive identity and self-determining destiny within a social reality and national ideology which is antipathetic to such a role and image of woman/women.

This problem is partly redressed by the representation of the split image of the protagonist. Realism is based on ideologies which purport to be 'normal' or 'the way things really are'. Hence there is little margin for the representation of 'atypical' female characters, such as the woman artist, who might transgress the norms of social reality or of reader expectations. However within the realist mode, the writers may represent such an 'atypical' female character by concentrating on her critical perceptions and consciousness of the restrictions of her 'real' textual reality. Thus the female artist is a subject whose inner and outer worlds are divided. Her inner imagination and consciousness in which she plans her destiny is disconnected from her inimical textual world, while her critical perceptions of her textual world and her creative consciousness are usually reported 'silently' to the reader rather than directly to the textual world. This convention becomes a critique of her textual reality, and establishes her as an artist even if she cannot develop herself as such in her 'real' textual world. Thus some protagonists such as Sybylla (*My Brilliant Career*), and Nora may not become artists in their textual worlds, but the representation of their critical perceptions and artistic consciousness suggests that they do have the potential and ambition which could be developed under more conducive circumstances.

Realism then has been adapted as a mode to highlight the disparity between the woman artist's desires and talents, and the 'real' textual reality which would deny such a realisation. The mode and ideology of realism limits the representation of the woman artist unless this is consistent with the ideologies and expectations of 'reality'. However the convention by which the protagonist's consciousness and perceptions are made central to the narrative, whether reported in the first or third person, both expands the parameters of the realist mode and reveals its limitations. The disparity between her desires and her opportunities within her textual world ironically illustrates the tension between the individual woman and her society.

Because the form of realism relies so much on representing 'typical' aspects of social reality, and its own conventions of that representation, it may be developed to heighten the ironic effect of a realistic portrayal of women's social experience. Women writers might exploit the irony between the mode of realism and reality when representing it from the female point of view. Thus Sybylla in *My Brilliant Career* decides to write a realistic, truthful account of her life, 'simply a yarn - a *real* yarn' (Introduction). Using the conventions of realism, she depicts the true experiences of women in her textual reality who do pursue the goals of marriage and motherhood. They become drudges in thrall to the men they marry, or rejects like Aunt Helen who have no social role or position without a man. Sybylla concludes that 'A woman is but the helpless tool of man - a creature of circumstance' (p.15). The 'realness' of her yarn means that she herself must remain trapped in a social reality which is inimical to her desires and talents.

Another example of the structured irony of realist portrayals is to be found in *Tirra Lirra by the River*. This text is a form of modern realism. The narrative medium of Nora's memories and perceptions dislocates the lineal sequences of cause and effect, past and present time, and notions of space. However Anderson depicts an ironic contrast between both Nora's perceptions and her experience of society, and the historical construction of 'real' social events. This irony is heightened because Nora has no awareness that she herself might have the potential to be an artist or that she has been limited by the 'reality' of her circumstances, even though she is reporting the narrative.

Although the texts are written from a critical position within the parameters of realism, some texts represent aspects of the repressed romance tradition. The relationship between realism and romance is problematic. This is problematic because critics and readers have preferred realist narratives during this century and because 'romance' itself represents particular ideologies which are inimical to the authentic female identity and destiny. Romance is both a particular narrative genre, and a social ideology which is attached to marriage. Hence some texts might highlight the mode of romance narratives, while others attend to the ideological values of romance.

Both aspects of romance are developed within the realist parameters of *My Brilliant Career*. This text plays with ironic inversions between reality and romance. Sybylla herself is repelled by the force of her 'realistic' descriptions, and longs for the romance of the improbable. The romantic interlude at Caddagat, which is an Anglo-centric world, is structured in the narrative between the grimly realistic descriptions of Possum's Gully and McSwat's. The irony works when Sybylla rejects the romance with the eligible Harry Beecham which would have lifted her out of her oppressing situation. Her decision to reject this romance and to accept her 'real' situation reflects the strength of her determination to be an artist, while the realism in contrast to the romance reflects the reality of the situation of women.

On the other hand, in *The Getting of Wisdom*, Laura is at first attracted to the romance genre instead of to realism, yet is repelled by the ideology of romance which in this text is represented as the main option for women. The form of this text itself is tightly realist, and within it, Laura learns how to write realist as opposed to romance genres. Her education in this world is not simply a literary one. All her experience here pushes her towards realism and pragmatism.

In contrast, *Human Toll* moves beyond the forms of realism and romance and in some ways approaches modernism. Within the text itself, any idealistic notions about romance are shattered. The veil is removed so that male and female relationships are characterised by selfish lust and greedy exploitation. Here, neither romance nor realism provides the framework for exploring Ursula's development, and romance is no longer offered as a way out of her dilemma.

The Pea-pickers reflects the distortions and contradictions of romance and reality through Steve's perceptions of her world. Although she adopts the romantic *persona* of the troubador, recites Romantic poetry, writes in that genre, and searches for romance, the realism of her world and her position within it work against her. It is ironic that she assumes the realistic image of the Australian bushman before she determines to record her narrative.

Intimate Strangers represents a dichotomy between the world of reality and the world of romantic escapism. However the latter world is a temporary retreat in the form of sea-side holidays, dance halls and race tracks. The text does begin to suggest that romance with Jerome might provide the opportunity for Elodie to escape the drudgery of her everyday life and to become an artist. However, the 'real' world in the form of family responsibilities intrudes and thwarts both her romantic and artistic desires. Furthermore the resolution of this text promotes socialism and active involvement with the class struggle above woman's self-determination, romance and art itself.

For Love Alone continues to explore the nature of romantic love. Here the polarity is drawn between the shallow nature of suburban romances which are the natural prelude to marriage, and the deeper intensity of female erotic passion. Teresa avoids compromising herself by romance, and does find both love and artistic expression in a passionate relationship with James Quick. This text thus suggests that pallid romances are inimical to the development of the woman artist, whereas female creative and erotic expression enhance each other.

The nature of romance and the realist-romance dichotomy are no longer such pressing issues in the later texts. Apart from *Tirra Lirra by the River*, the social critique of the woman artist's position is no longer effected through the counterpoint of realism and romance. Instead realism has been developed as a form so that the protagonist's consciousness determines 'reality' in the narrative, and her critical perceptions convey the social critique. At the same time, romance is no longer such a predominant option and concern for women. This frees the protagonist so that she can explore wider relationships, such as the lesbian relationships in *All That False Instruction* and *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*.

Some texts represent a critical reappraisal of the form and premises of realism within their content and structure. Here realism in art is represented as a tool to be evaluated and explored by the developing artist.

In *The Getting of Wisdom*, as we have seen, Laura undergoes her apprenticeship as a budding writer. Part of her learning process is to distinguish between telling a story as a truth, and telling a story as a story. Reality must be 'truth', whereas fiction is a lie within the realist narrative. This philosophical point has been explored by Helen Daniel in her text *Liars: Australian New Novelists*. According to Daniel, Jolley's texts for example are built upon lies, upon deceiving the reader, and upon the shifting and arbitrary boundaries between fiction and reality. Thus Jolley's representation of the 'truth' of lies and their pervasiveness in both reality and fiction provide an ironic counterpoint to the argument and conclusion of *The Getting of Wisdom*. Here, whatever happens in 'real' life must be true and free from falsehood, whereas fictional stories are known to be untrue, but they might have been 'real'.

Laura discovers Ibsen's *A Doll's House* which is a significant intertextual reference.⁶ This text is Laura's first contact with the form of realist, dramatic fiction. It is significant that the feminist aspects of this play are not highlighted in the text. Instead the play is represented as yet another stage in her aesthetic discrimination between romance and realism in both fiction and reality. Ironically Laura chooses to read the play because of its title. She accepts it at face value, expecting it to be a child's story. Her only response to the play is disappointment because it is about ordinary people and seems true to life although unreal. Hence the form and style of the symbolic realism of the play is highlighted whereas the feminist content and the contemporary impact of the play are not alluded to.

As part of her initiation into the school's Literary Society, Laura writes three stories which represent the stages of romance, realism and fictional realism in her literary development. The first story represents her inclination to romance. She chooses the most

6. Deborah Campbell, 'A Doll's House: The Colonial Response', in *Nellie Melba, Ginger Meggs and Friends*, (eds.), Susan Dermody, Docker & Drusilla Modjeska, (Melbourne, Kibble, 1982).

'romantic of romantic themes' (p.171), and writes a romantic story along the lines of a Scott novel. It is significant that the romance she chooses was particularly antithetical to the realist-nationalist movement of the 1890s. Laura finds it difficult to express her imaginative flight in words. Even so, her story is ridiculed by the Society because she has used wooden, second hand material. Unlike *My Brilliant Career*, in which romance is criticised because it does not use 'Australian' material, there is no suggestion here that Laura should try to be 'nationalist' in her writing. Laura's second attempt at writing is a reversal of her first approach. Now, she writes a 'faithful transcript of reality' (p.173) in which she describes every minute of her day at school. She has reported reality without a selective fictional structure or construction. She is as bored writing it as her audience is listening to it, even though every word of it is true. Finally her third attempt represents a blend of truth and fiction, of realism and romance, of a known reality reconstructed into fictional realism. She bases her story on a setting she knows, so that 'not a word of her narrative was true, but every word of it might have been true' (p.174). The narrative and thematic structure of the text highlights the balance between truth and lie, romance and reality, romantic and realist fiction. This is the essence of what Laura learns about writing:

In your speech, your talk with others, you must be exact to the point of pedantry, and never romance or draw the long bow; or you would be branded as an abominable liar. Whereas, as soon as you put pen to paper, provided you kept one foot planted on probability, you might lie as hard as you liked: indeed, the more vigorously you lied, the louder would be your hearer's applause. (p.175)

This has been Laura's education into the craft of writing. The theory of writing which is promoted in the text is an ironic counterpoint to the literary values of the 1890s. Moreover the actual form of the text illustrates Laura's lesson. Richardson rejects romance as did the majority of writers of the 1890s, and does promote realism, but she detaches the realist mode from ideologies such as nationalism. Instead she draws the parallels and differences between reality and realist fiction. Unlike Jolley's texts, this text differentiates sharply between fiction and reality.

The theories of realism are extended to include another art form in *Tirra Lirra by the River*. Here creative embroidery is explored in relation to realism. The ideology of romance and romantic poetry is situated in relation to Nora's experiences. Nora herself has romantic expectations of life which are nourished by her preference for romantic poetry. However these romantic notions make her ill-equipped to deal with the oppressive ideologies of her textual reality, and partly prevent her from realising her own artistic potential.

In this text, Anderson employs theories of realism ironically to highlight the dichotomy between 'high' art forms and domestic art. Women's domestic art is usually dismissed as 'craft' and is not regarded as an art form in itself. Anderson elevates Nora's embroideries and describes them in terms of aesthetic stages which are similar to Richardson's in relation to fiction. Thus Anderson is indirectly referring to the social and historical context whereby women have done creative crafts at home, but they have not been regarded as artists and their products have been diminished.

Nora looks back upon her past, and examines her youthful work from this retrospective position. She notes that her first embroidery has technical flaws, but its images of the orange tree and the little birds is very promising, that they are both 'all fabulous yet touchingly domestic' (p.65). She discovers that she has been able to blend the opposite aspects of reality, the fabulous and the domestic, in her art. She is disappointed with her second work which depicts a realist image of jacaranda leaves, with the head and breast of a magpie bursting through. She criticises her muddled technique which resulted because she tried to imitate reality too closely. Significantly, this embroidered depiction of reality incorporates both the Australian image of the magpie, and the 'imported' Brazilian jacaranda tree. However her companion, who acts as the critic or audience, prefers this work because of its realism: "You would think the magpie was real!" (p.102). But Nora is astonished by the excellence of the design and conception of her third work. It reflects a powerful and creative imagination, which as Nora thinks was 'drawn out of the compression of a secret life' (p.128).

By this, she means that her work is an example of the luminosity and glow which she believes occurs in some individuals when their sexuality is repressed. Nora describes her impressions of her work, highlighting its reflection of the imaginative world of colour, form and fantasy:

It is truly amazing. I swear that with my swirling
suns, moons and stars, I forestalled Lurcat...Its
excellence disturbs as well as amazes me.' (p.128)

Thus Anderson demonstrates that the mode of realism need not only apply to fiction. It may be shaped and adapted to other forms of art. By relating the domestic craft of embroidery to aesthetic theories of realism, she has raised the status of Nora's craft to an art form. The irony is that Nora's realisation of her talent is too late for her even to think that she could have become an artist herself.

The more recent texts by Jolley and Campbell exploit the insights and discourse of contemporary literary theories about the nature of realism, language and the subject. The modes and conventions of realism are revealed in their texts as creative structures rather than as building blocks which purport to create a 'reality' which might be 'real'. These writers employ a selfconscious textuality which dissolves notions of 'character' and 'reality'.

In the texts, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Foxybaby*, Jolley represents 'realistic' stories within a narrative structure which serves to highlight their actual construction. Thus Jolley makes the premises of realism seem 'strange'. In both texts, the construction of the narrative is revealed within the narrative itself: the construction of *The Treatment* is contained within the broader narrative of Miss Alma Porch and her experiences at the summer school; the narrative of Miss Thorne is constructed within a series of letters which are addressed to Miss Peabody, the Reader. It is not until the reader reaches the last pages of each narrative that she realises the final 'trick': the author of each narrative is either dead or has disappeared. Miss Peabody learns that 'Diana' is not like the image she has presented in her letters, and that she has died before completing her manuscript. The question of authorship is complicated further here because Miss Peabody inherits the unfinished manuscript from the original author and continues the narrative herself. Alma disappears into the distance with the characters of her *Treatment* - but then the reader learns that

the bus has just arrived at the school. The preceding narrative which has seemed real although absurd is now revealed as a lie.

Both texts are written in the realist style yet consciously counterpoint with the background of contemporary literary theory. Realism is now viewed as a construct of reality, while reality itself is also a construct. The concept of the Author is problematic. Jolley does not believe that 'the Author is dead', but rather that there are multiple authors in the construction of narrative. Jolley plays with the concepts of truth and illusion, fiction and reality, and allows the boundaries between them to shift and intersect. She minimises narrative descriptions of characters and situations, and instead develops multiple voices within the narrative texture. These voices represent the unstructured chaos and random nature of reality, and thus are ironic constructions of reality.

Jolley does introduce a specific reference to structuralist literary criticism in *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*. In this context, the journal containing the extract is given to Miss Thorne, the literary headmistress and main character of the story within the story, by a young male stranger. This is significant in that males have a marginal role on both textual levels of this text, while ironically it has been a male who disrupted Miss Thorne's relationship with her neophyte, Gwenda. The inclusion of this extract represents an ironic contrast between the language and criticism that is external to the text, and the language and structure of the text itself. Miss Thorne, who represents a 'classic' literary background, is left to contemplate this language which has no meaning for her:

Looking back now from the edge of the kitchen table she remembers her extraordinary feelings, extraordinary because she is unaccustomed to being unable to understand anything she reads. It is the same with foreign languages. Being able to understand and speak fluently (if slowly at times) several, she had to realise, with surprise, that there are tongues so foreign that she does not know to which country they belong.

The article and her lack of comprehension which she recalls makes her, for a moment, doubt her own position, particularly as she is, because of not understanding what was being discussed, unable to

remember any words or phrases. She does remember vaguely reading another statement that being a character in a novel is apparently not being a character at all. (p.151)⁷

Jolley treats this intrusion of structuralist criticism with a playful irony. Miss Thorne is a character in the text, and is portrayed so 'realistically' that Miss Peabody the reader believes in her. The incomprehensible language of this extract of literary criticism is set against the apparent simplicity of the narrative language. Here the simplicity and naturalness of the text conveys the same ideas as this criticism, but in a more accessible framework.

Campbell's text, *Lines of Flight*, is representative of those modernist texts which displace the conventions of realism. Here the narrative progression, the reporting of dialogue and the image of the protagonist displaces the reader from the identification which is presupposed by the conventions of realism. In this text, language is not merely a transparent reflection of reality. Subjectivity is not represented as a fixed identity, but is rather split according to specific speaking positions. The text represents an attempt at a new articulation of the female subject and discourse which goes beyond masculine discursive structures.

This text makes a definitive break from the Australian literary context and its preferred mode of realism. The literary structure and ideology of the text refers to French theories of semiotics, structuralism and psychoanalysis. The narrative is set in France within an intellectual and artistic *milieu*. The text is interspersed with French, which in part allows for verbal play about the notion of the subject. Unlike English, the French language includes singular and plural articles before the noun, and attributes the feminine and masculine gender to them. The structure of the text and the speaking positions represent the fragmentary nature of the subject and consciousness, which is a focal point in French semiotic theory. Theory itself is illustrated within the narrative texture. The protagonist

7. Elizabeth Jolley, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, 1983, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1983).

incorporates aspects of semiotic theory in her own language. For example, she consciously uses puns throughout the text, which is a characteristic of Lacan's and Derrida's writing:

...*Catachresis*, cata catapult put you into my scene, see that catacomb in there, catastrophe of Laurence's hair, can't do a thing with it, *mnemosomething* and *metoblahblah*, talking about those shifts, Finnerty to Nefertiti, not a bad one eh, self-glorification in that one and *metaphoric collapses*... (p.71)

There are also streams of language which are representations of Irigaray's *l'écriture féminine*. For example:

Leave me alone with this head, she says, aaaah boliii *ah beau lys*, the saint as man abolished, abstracted by the bowl from which she flings his head, his necrophiliac gaze pillows her between the pleats, the belly beneath the textual mash becomes - she hums a music contradictory to the intellect - we all know of course that intellect is Phoebus, solar, male, and virile flight is saintly yet...The rhythm, man, the rhythm of the drives we get from mother night, it's heard now through her jungles, insistently it pounds and pipes and her name is sown below the respectable words in the text, opening them up for ever *eh eh éros héro* and *día* not of diamonds any more but *día* for... (pp.46-47)

The French literary and semiotic theories are not criticised within the text, but they become the means for creating this modernist departure from realism. The polemic within the text is directed more against men who happen to embody these theories, such as Raymond who is both a father figure and a professor of literature and psychoanalysis, and Sébastien, the archetypal patriarchal tyrant who is preparing a PhD thesis on semiotics.

Rita is an artist within the text. She consciously draws on semiotic concepts to describe and illustrate what she is doing in her paintings. She tells Raymond and Sébastien:

What...What I'm aiming at is the risk in...er structure. To make forms scatter in space, just maintaining a tenuous connection, to the point where it almost but doesn't quite fall apart... Like disparate voices that almost fail to harmonise. To get the viewer's gaze in but make it fail to possess, make it the desiring subject okay, but make it assume responsibility for its intervention, make it aware of the loss it's trying to cover... (p.118)

The shape and narrative structure of the text in turn illustrate premises from French theory, and the principles that Rita is working out in her paintings. Rita highlights her art, the Narrative Sculpture, because it is removed from discursive and linguistic constraints. Words are the building block of the realist narrative, yet from Rita's experiences, words are a form of colonising marginal groups such as the Algerians and women. She finds that she is in control of her expression when she moves into art forms that are beyond words and linguistic representations.

Thus the texts from *My Brilliant Career* (1901) to *Lines of Flight* (1985), have evaluated, critically responded to, and developed the mode of realism, which is the predominant narrative mode in the Australian literary context. Realism has been adapted by these writers to represent the tensions between the woman artist and her society. In these texts there has been a development from the male centred realist and nationalist mode of the 1890s through to an expansion and departure from realism under the influence of contemporary French literary theory. In the earlier texts realism was counterpointed with romance and was employed to make ironic comments about the 'reality' of women's 'real' social conditions. Psychological realism has developed to portray the protagonist's critical perception of her social context, and to represent her artistic consciousness, even if her context opposes her realisation as an artist. The later texts have moved beyond social critique and have employed realism and modernism critically as means of articulating the female Subject and of exploring the nature of women's discourse. Thus these texts are interconnected with their literary contexts and, in Bakhtin's terms, become part of the chain of literary communication. They operate within the literary context, but they move beyond its traditional forms and conventions as they represent the identity and destiny of 'woman' from a woman-centred point of view.

The intertextual relationships which are established between these texts and selected preceding literary texts will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Some texts have employed intertextual references to other selected, prior texts. Within the framing woman-centred point of view and textual structure, these references are reshaped to convey both a critical response to male-centred literary ideas and forms, and to amplify the original references to include woman-centred ideas and experiences as well. Thus the original and the producing woman-centred text are juxtaposed and enter into a particular dialogic response and adaptation of one to the other. Stead, for example, has selected and incorporated aspects of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* into her texts, *For Love Alone* and *The Man Who Loved Children*. She thus transforms Nietzsche's original themes from a woman-centred perspective and amplifies her representation of the woman artist. Other texts such as *The Getting of Wisdom*, *Foxybaby* and *The Pea-pickers* employ particular references to expand irony, parody and satire. Texts such as *Kewpie Doll* and *An Item from the Late News* extend the dimension of literary intertextual references to incorporate extraliterary 'texts' such as the TV and advertising slogans. This latter representation reflects the nature of the contemporary social context in which visual media and advertising slogans are replacing the literary text as a form of information and entertainment.

These prior meanings are transformed in relation to the theme of the woman artist figure and the woman-centred point of view which controls her representation. Bakhtin refers to this process:

The relationship to others' utterances cannot be separated from the relationship to the object (for it is argued about, agreed upon, views converge within it), nor can it be separated from the relationship to the speaker himself.¹

1. M.M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of the Text', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, (Austin, Univ. of Texas Press, 1986), p.122.

Thus the intertextual relationships are functionally integrated into the transforming structure and perspective of the creating text. The previous textual references are not neutrally transposed. Instead they are represented within the representing and evaluating point of view and discourse of the creating text.

Bakhtin has used his term 'dialogism' to refer to this responsive relationship between literary texts. However this application of his term becomes diffuse because he uses it to designate other processes of such responsiveness as well. Todorov states that Kristeva coined the term 'intertextuality' to refer specifically to the responsive relationships which are established between literary texts.² In her own writing, she states that:

...what appears as a lack of rigour is in fact an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of subjectivity...³

However in her later works she qualifies and expands her understanding of the concept:

In this connection we examined the formation of a specific signifying system - the novel - as the result of a redistribution of several different sign-systems: carnival, courtly poetry, scholastic discourse. The term *intertextuality* denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources', we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic - of enunciative and denotative positionality. If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an *intertextuality*), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, are always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. In this way, polysemy can also be seen as the result of a semiotic polyvalence - an adherence to different sign-systems.⁴

2. Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin : The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich, (Minneapolis, Uni.of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.60.

3. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1986), p.37.

4. Julia Kristeva, 'Revolution in Poetic Language', *ibid*, p.111.

Kristeva's objections to the concept of intertextuality being reduced to 'source criticism' are justified. However her later adaptation of the concept into the potentially limitless world of sign-systems reduces the necessary specificity of the concept. The concept of intertextuality does have the potential to refer to an unlimited field of intertextual relationships, but it must be specified and contained to maintain the 'literary' nature of particular sign-systems and textual references that constitute the literary text. Kristeva's later definition does imply that the text might be shattered into a plurality of meanings. Indeed, Bakhtin believes that the meaning of the text is not fixed or static because of its dialogic relationships with other utterances and the changing contexts of interpretation. However Bakhtin also believes that the literary text exists as a unified entity, whole and consistent in itself. The parts of the text which make up the whole cannot exist on their own. The meaning of intertextual references with the creating text only exist as such within that context.

However Kristeva fails to highlight the critical aspect of intertextuality - that it is a selective and transformational process. The intertextual reference that is selected and established within the text is reshaped according to the thematic design and controlling set of ideas of the new text.

Laurent Jenny argues that intertextuality is connected, but not reducible, to source criticism. He highlights the transformational aspect of the intertextual process within the controlling design of the creating text:

Contrary to what Kristeva says, intertextuality in the strict sense is not unrelated to source criticism: it designates not a confused, mysterious accumulation of influences, but the work of transformation and assimilation of various texts that is accomplished by a focal text which keeps control over the meaning.⁵

5. Laurent Jenny, 'The Strategy of Form', in *French Literary Theory Today*, trans. R. Carter, ed. T. Todorov, (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni. Press, 1982), pp.39-40.

Thus intertextual relationships are selected from a wide field of literary discourse. These prior meanings are reshaped and transformed according to the point of view of the producing text. Intertextual references do not retain their original 'pure' meaning. Instead, the conjunction between the original meaning and context within the new context and its controlling point of view both transforms the former meaning and allows a new or renewed meaning to develop.

Elizabeth Bruss qualifies the process of transformation:

The angle of relationship and the kind of operation linking one text to another may produce anything from seamless ingestion to violent purgation to petty thievery, parody or overt controversy. Intertextuality may include anticipation as well, a⁶ dialogue with posterity or the omnipresent Other.

Bruss draws a Bakhtinian distinction between the ways one text might encounter a previous text. On the one hand, 'compartmentalisation' refers to discourse in the producing text 'about' a prior text, as would be illustrated by the simple introduction of direct quotes or specific references to texts and writers. This occurs for example in *My Brilliant Career* in which Franklin mentions Australian poets such as Gordon and Lawson in order to establish her text in relation to the literary tradition and ideology that they signify. On the other hand, 'confrontation' refers to discourse 'with', or 'through' the producing text and the prior text.⁷ There is always an active dialogic relationship between the texts.

Bruss delineates the basic intertextual operations between the producing and the prior text as selection, intervention and incorporation. The producing text selects crucial fragments from the prior text and introduces them as citations, allusions and illustrations. It intervenes with the selected material by rewording, recombining or truncating the original quote, by, for example, changing the voice and gender of the speaker. It then incorporates the alien material and represents it from a different point of view so that the original meaning of the

6. Elizabeth Bruss, *Beautiful Theories: The Spectacle of Discourse in Contemporary Criticism*, (Boston, John Hopkins Uni. Press, 1982), p.65.

7. Elizabeth Bruss, *ibid*, p.111.

prior text might exist, to varying degrees, with the transforming meaning of the producing text.⁸ The remaining problem is to specify the limits of intertextual references, which theoretically are multiple. For the purposes of this chapter, my starting point will be the 'obvious' references which are alluded to or quoted from in the producing text. So, for example, Anderson's *Tirra Lirra by the River* will be discussed in relation to Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott".

Once selections from prior sources have been made, women's texts dealing with the female artist incorporate and transform them from the woman-centred point of view. The change of gender and the point of view of the speaking subject which represents and evaluates past patriarchal literary discourse will produce both a critique of that ideology and representation, and will broaden its original parameters to include woman. Thus through intertextual relationships, Stead in *The Man Who Loved Children*, represents the developing Nietzschean female hero/artist.

Texts such as *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, *Tirra Lirra by the River*, *For Love Alone* and *The Man Who Loved Children* have selected and integrated intertextual references into the basic thematic and narrative structures. In *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, the lives of the characters are more related to art and literature than to aspects of their sociohistorical context. Here intertextual references are incorporated as both a means of adding humour and irony, and for amplifying the nature of female experience which is represented. The reference to Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* in connection with Miss Peabody's confusion of fiction and reality introduces humour, while the insertion

8. Elizabeth Bruss, *Beautiful Theories: The Spectacle of Discourse in Contemporary Criticism*, p.112.

of Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* is ironic in relation to the relationship between Miss Thorne, Gwenda and Mr Frome.

Intertextual references to Dickens' *Great Expectations* and to Shakespeare's *Othello* are more deeply integrated into the textual themes and plot development. Miss Peabody quotes from *Great Expectations* (p.23). The quote itself is not particularly relevant, but the book itself is significant to her. It reminds her of the pleasure she had as a child when her father used to read it to her. It signifies a broader dimension of hope, imagination and learning that she has now lost in adulthood. In the context of the text, this quote is contrasted ironically with the type of reading her mother prefers and with the relationship which exists between her and Miss Peabody. As Dorothy is reading, her mother interrupts:

"Dotty!" her mother's tired little voice persisted,
"there's an article on 'hair care' in the magazine
over there on the dressing table". Wearily, Dorothy
read about hair care. (p.23)

The title of Dickens' text refers to the expectations of characters in both narratives. Ironically it is only Miss Peabody, who exists in the 'real' narrative, who has her expectations fulfilled with Diana Hopewell, and by going to Australia. Ironically, the reference to Dickens' text suggests that Miss Peabody's 'great expectations' may not be so straightforward. In contrast, the characters of the 'fictional' narrative have their expectations dashed. Thus Miss Edgely does not have the type of European tour she has imagined, and her hopes of a particular relationship with Miss Thorne are unfulfilled, while Miss Thorne is frustrated in her relationship with Gwenda by Mr Frome.

The narrative within the narrative, which concerns Miss Thorne's relationship with Miss Edgely, Miss Snowden and Gwenda, draws on *Othello* to pursue the theme of jealousy. This is a transposition of the original text, which concerns the jealous passion of a black male, to the present context which explores the jealousy between white, middle aged, female lovers. References to the play itself and repetitions of the passage beginning: "But jealous souls will not be answered so" (p.43) occur several times throughout the narrative. Here (p.43), Miss Thorne muses about the theme from a superior position, aware that Miss Edgely is jealous of her affection for Gwenda. However

the tables turn in the narrative. Miss Thorne continues reading the play when she feels jealous herself about Gwenda's relationship with Mr Frome (p.117), and the same quote appears again when she realises that Mr Frome has won (p.122). Miss Peabody in turn thinks about *Othello* and the theme of jealousy which she might develop in the unfinished manuscript (p.157). Hence the use of these references to *Othello* and the marked contrast between the original and the current text adds both dignity and irony to the representation of female lovers. At the same time Miss Peabody as the novice woman writer, begins to adapt such references into the manuscript.

In this text Jolley draws on classical mythology to depict Diana Hopewell, the author. This serves to develop the ironic contrast between levels of fiction and 'reality' in the text. Miss Peabody, the reader, constructs an image of Diana the writer from her letters, her previous novel, *Angels on Horseback*, and from classical mythology. Diana is at first the Goddess of the Hunt, an image which is faintly sexual and which is related to Diana's previous novel about female love and erotica (p.8). The image of Diana is expanded when Miss Peabody consults the library. Diana embodies contradictory aspects about female sexuality: 'She is both the Goddess of Virgins and the Goddess of Birth' (p.73). The contradictions do not worry Miss Peabody, who thinks that 'Contradictions made the Goddess human', and as she tells Diana, 'The contradictions make you even more splendid' (p.73). The contradictory aspects of the Virgin and the Birth refer to the relationship that is being established between Diana and Miss Peabody, between the writer and the reader. Diana assumes the role of the initiator, introducing Miss Peabody to life through her fiction, which in turn recreates her own life and image. As Diana states, 'It is a tremendous pleasure to initiate a person whom one believes to be innocent' (p.34). The birth refers to the act and process of initiation. Thus Miss Peabody is truly born when Diana dies and she assumes her place. This relationship and its sets of ideas are ironically contrasted in the alternate narrative. Here Miss Thorne likewise wants to initiate the innocents into her world of art, culture and love. She plans to initiate Gwenda in Europe as she had once done for Miss Edgely. It is Miss Edgely

who compares Miss Thorne to a goddess, which is an ironic similarity between the two textual narratives. Miss Edgely tells her:

"You're a sort of goddess. You can hunt for whatever you want and take it. Don't think I didn't notice you at the theatre with that man". (p.137)

Miss Edgely is quite mistaken about Miss Thorne's intentions. However she correctly describes Miss Thorne as a hunter who seeks people like Miss Edgely and Gwenda for her own gratification. This contrasts with Diana who gives, or initiates, with no strings attached. The resolution of this text indicates that Diana has been successful - Miss Peabody is truly initiated. In contrast, Miss Thorne loses both Gwenda and Miss Edgely, who is a counterpart to Miss Peabody. Thus the inter-textual relationships to Diana of the classical myths highlight the relationship between fiction and reality, and indicate the role that fiction might have and its effects upon a reader such as Miss Peabody.

Intertextual references are also integral elements to the theme and narrative structure of *Tirra Lirra by the River*, which incorporates Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" to explore the relationship between woman, art, reflection and reality. The title of the text refers to Sir Lancelot's song as he rides past the lady's tower to go to Camelot. Anderson adapts the themes and images of the poem to represent a contemporary illustration of the clash between romance and reality from a woman's point of view and experience. The title of the text itself sounds playful and does not suggest the terrible reality which is represented in the text. This is an ironic counterpoint to the merry blitheness of Sir Lancelot who remains utterly unaware of the Lady and her fate.

The text draws parallels between Nora and the Lady. The Lady weaves in her tower, not from direct reality, but from its reflections in her mirror. Nora creates embroideries from her own fantasies in her backwater childhood home. Nora herself has a special spot where reality is distorted through a broken piece of glass. By turning this 'required angle of vision', she states that:

I was deeply engrossed by these miniature landscapes, green, wet, romantic, with silver serpentine rivulets and flashing lakes, and castles moulded out of any old stick or stone. (pp.8-9)

Thus a required angle of vision and the imagination can construct a reality. Nora incorporates this distortion into her imagination so that she can summon an idea of Camelot at will, without any external stimulus. As she says, that 'landscape had become a region of my mind' (p.9). This relationship between reality and the imagination is paralleled by Nora's memory globe through which she controls her recall and representation of her past.

For both Nora and the lady, art and the imagination have the power to transform reality, whereas direct contact with reality destroys both the Lady and Nora's artistic inclinations. The Lady dies when she follows Lancelot to Camelot. In Nora's world, this figure is associated with death. Nora does not think about him after the First World War. Most of the young men have been killed. The reality of death is too strong for romance. Nora discovers too that her husband and Sydney do not represent the world of courtly love, romance and Camelot. During the interlude of her marriage, her own love for poetry and her creative imagination are stifled. At the same time, the fate of Dorothy is a terrible counterpoint to the romance of Camelot.

Sir Lancelot is also associated in Nora's memory with her father and with a terrible sense of grief. By the end of the text, Nora has returned to her beginnings. She begins to search through her memory for her father, and for the associations with grief and Sir Lancelot. She states:

I am almost angry that there continues to flash on my memory that old chimera, the step of a horse, the nod of a plume, and that always, always, it is accompanied for a second by a choking chaos of grief. (p.140)

Anderson draws different yet parallel relationships between the Lady and Nora. The Lady goes after Sir Lancelot and dies, while Nora searches for her father who died long ago. Thus through this intertextual relationship, Anderson suggests that women can create art and control their lives through the imagination which is both removed from contact with reality and is a distortion of it. Romance itself conceals the grim nature of reality, while contact with reality from a romantic perspective leads to death or destructive disillusionment. Sir Lancelot can no longer treat the Lady so lightly.

Stead's writing is largely characterised by the incorporation and amplification of diverse social ideologies and intertextual references. These are integrated into the structure and ideology of her texts and are redefined from the woman-centred point of view. She draws heavily on the ideas of Nietzsche, and recreates the female Nietzschean hero artist in Teresa and Louie. This is a radical diversion from, and expansion of, Nietzschean principles, because his low opinion of women is legendary.⁹ Both Teresa and Louie have to struggle against Crow and Sam respectively. These men embody Darwinian and Nietzschean precepts which from their points of view, are hostile towards women. Both Teresa and Louie must confront and surpass these men and their male-centred values before they can become artists.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche develops ideas about the nature of the hero (male), the artist-genius, the *Übermensch*. Nietzsche celebrates the drive of the will to power which from his perspective is the primary motivating principle of all human actions. The *Übermensch* will embody the will to power by overcoming himself, and by transcending his environment through suffering and courage. Nietzsche believes that there is no such thing as absolute Good and Evil, and that truth is subjective and relative. Moral laws and values have been created by men to serve their own interests. Hence the *Übermensch* should overcome this false morality and transvalue accepted norms and values by asserting his own. The concepts of will, evaluation and creativity are dynamically interconnected. As Zarathustra states:

No more to will and no more to evaluate and no more
to create! ah, that this great lassitude may ever
stay far from me!¹⁰

The hero/artist is born through this process of willing, evaluating and creating.

The text *For Love Alone* illustrates and develops these qualities in the female character, Teresa. She implicitly adopts these Nietzschean precepts, and develops her will and courage to suffer for her ideals and to transvalue accepted moralities. She becomes an

9. Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, ed./intro. Geoffrey Clive, (New York, Mentor, 1965), p.xxxi.

10. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969), p.111.

artist through this process. Teresa is driven by her belief in herself, for as she asserts:

I have a great destiny. (p.285)

Her destiny is cast in bronze and she will not compromise. This belief is an echo of Zarathustra who also asserts his belief in himself and his destiny. He states:

O my soul's predestination, which I call destiny!
In-me! Over-me! Preserve and spare me for a great
destiny!¹¹

Teresa's belief in her destiny stems from her belief only in herself rather than from conventional moralities. She herself is her only reason for living. She states that she can live for herself alone (p.127), without the ties of family and religion. She tells Crow later that:

Whatever I want to do, becomes a higher law with me. I am a very moral being, you see. For the first time I understand what is meant by calling puritans and the like, English people, hypocritical. Of course, they are not hypocrites, it's the singular corset of Protestantism, which forces them to invent religious law even when there is none, don't you think? (p.352)

These values of the Self, which transcend moralities and social ties, are promoted by Zarathustra. He states:

Sensual pleasure, lust for power, selfishness: these three have hitherto been cursed the most and held in the worst and most unjust repute - these three will I weigh well and humanly.¹²

Teresa's determination to transcend her circumstances and to attain her ideals is supported by her will, for she believes 'firmly in the power of will to alter things and to force things to an end' (p.87). She determines that 'Love, learning, bread - myself - all three, I will get' (p.87). Through her will and courage, she determines to break the moral chains which circumscribe female sensuality and cause women's suffering. She draws a distinction between herself and

11. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969), p.231.

12. *Ibid*, p.206.

other women, who do not have 'an ounce of bravado to throw off the servitude of timidity' (p.101). As she states:

I put up with it because I belong to the bloodless
rout of women. If only I have the will I needn't
suffer as I do. (p.102)

She realises that she can change things if she has the courage to break the rules. When she goes to Narara she decides that she will not return to her teaching job, which is a symbol of her oppressive condition to her, and realises that:

Chains do not exist, they are illusions. (p.137)

At first, Teresa develops her will without knowing what her goal is. She is merely rejecting what she does not want. Then she determines that she will love Crow and will make him love her (p.245). At this stage, he seems to be the symbol of what she searches for: free love, higher learning and the transcendence of the restrictions of poverty. This motivates her suffering and privation while she is saving up for her trip to London. Later when Crow rejects her, she determines that she will die. She illustrates this determination in her literary notes. She writes:

The last star. To die terribly by will, to make death a terrible demand of life, a revolt, an understanding, such as rives life, blasts it, twists it. To die by the last effort of the will and body. To will, the consuming and the consummation. To force the end. It must be dark; then an extraordinary clutching of reality. This is not understanding, not intellectual, but physical, bitter, disgusting, but an affirmation of a unique kind. (pp.421-422)

Her will to life, to love and to write is restored only after she releases Crow from her will (p.408) and begins to love James Quick.

Through her will and determination not to compromise, Teresa critically revalues conventional morality. She believes that moral values have been constructed by men in their interests, and that women have not had the courage to challenge them. In a letter to Crow, she states that:

Where we have passions that are uncontrollable as in sex, a difficult social web is consciously spun out of them, with the help of the oppressor and oppressed, so that practically no joy may be obtained from them, and I believe that it is intended in society that we

should have little joy. Religion, morality, consists of the word No! (p.254)

Teresa is in the process of re-evaluating morality, which consists of destroying old values and asserting new ones. This refers again to Zarathustra who states:

Man first implanted values into things to maintain himself - he created the meaning of things, a human meaning! Therefore he calls himself: 'Man', that is: the evaluator.
Evaluation is creation: hear it, you creative men!
Valuating is itself the value and jewel of all valued things...
A change in values - that means a change in the creators of values, he who has to be a creator always has to destroy.¹³

Zarathustra celebrates the will which would break down conventional morality and create new values. Teresa reshapes this injunction and establishes a female view of morality. She realises that:

Woman, as well as man, had the right to happiness. Only it was necessary to know how to answer the grim, enslaving philosophy of the schools. (p.464)

Zarathustra has stated that:

The great dragon is called 'Thou shalt'. But the spirit of the lion says, 'I will!'¹⁴

Teresa develops her will to challenge others' moral values and now states;

I only know one commandment, Thou shalt love. (p.493)

Ironically love for her means the love of men that she is determined to experience.

Stead has created a female *Übermensch*. Zarathustra has stated:

The man's happiness is: I will. The woman's happiness is: He will.¹⁵

Stead has created a female protagonist whose happiness is: I will.

Teresa's adversary is Crow who embodies a complex conglomeration of Darwinian and Nietzschean principles. He is drawn in contrast to

13. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, p.85.

14. *Ibid*, p.55.

15. *Ibid*, p.186.

Teresa and represents a distortion of her will, determination and transvaluation. He too affirms the necessity of the will to surmount the limitations of an impoverished environment. However he limits his will to discipline and to practicalities. Whereas Teresa expands her being, he reduces himself 'to a miserliness of mental life' (p.198). While Teresa believes that she should learn to transcend the rules, Crow sees himself as an ordinary man who belongs 'in the belly of the bell-shaped curve', (p.359) and who has always followed the rules. He is prepared to surrender his will to Teresa (p.208). However when Teresa transcends a rule and takes the initiative to write him a letter, he realises that he has power over her, that he can dominate her (p.230). Ironically Crow echoes Zarathustra and states that:

I'm beyond good and evil. (p.376)

Zarathustra believes that 'good' and 'evil' are relative and subjective moralities, and that they might be transcended by the *Übermensch*.

As he states:

For all things are baptised at the fount of eternity
and beyond good and evil; good and evil themselves,
however, are only intervening shadows and damp
afflictions and passing clouds.¹⁶

However Crow does not transcend moralities in the Nietzschean sense. He perverts any moral goodness without establishing an alternative morality. He conceals his depravity and exploitation and determines only to destroy women such as Teresa. In the text, women are the focus of his depravity. He wants to degrade them for reasons which stem from his sense of class inferiority, inflated gender superiority and perverted morality.

The Darwinian aspects which Crow embodies act as a counterpoint to Nietzschean precepts. Whereas Teresa embodies the qualities of the *Übermensch*, Crow represents a 'knack of biological survival' (p.128). He interprets Darwin from his misogynist position and asserts that the white male has natural superiority. Instead of developing his Self and transcending his circumstances as does Teresa, he preys upon and exploits women who are weaker than himself. As Teresa expands through transvaluation and creativity, he sinks further into depravity

16. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, p.186.

and corruption. He represents Nietzsche's contempt for women within a Darwinian framework, yet distorts some of Zarathustra's principles. Teresa on the other hand, represents the true, but female, Nietzschean hero who has readapted Nietzsche's principles to the female personality, destiny and desire.

In *The Man Who Loved Children*, Stead has developed Louie as a Nietzschean hero/artist within a narrative framework which adapts and counterpoints intertextual references from Nietzsche, Darwin and Shelley. Shirley Walker has succinctly described the interconnection between Darwin and Nietzsche in this text and states that:

The opposition of the ideas of Darwin - biological, pragmatic, deterministic, to those of Nietzsche - imaginative, ebullient, fantastic - adds immeasurably to the psychological depth of the struggle between Sam and Louie, as Sam attempts to make her conform to his philosophy, and Louie strives for personal and artistic integrity.¹⁷

Intertextual references to Shelley's *The Cenci* add further dimensions to this struggle. There is a suppressed incestuous attraction between Sam and Louie. The selected extracts of this play which are represented in Louie's *Herpes Rom* suggest that this is a struggle for power between them rather than an explicit sexual relationship, and highlights Louie's own search for a language which might adequately express both female experience and her own independence from Sam's language. Instead of highlighting Freud's Oedipal Father, this text, by drawing on *The Cenci*, anticipates Lacan's Law of the Father, and introduces the problems of patriarchal language from the point of view of the female subject and developing female artist. Louie can only transcend Sam's power and authority by asserting a language which is beyond his reach. At the same time, she discovers, like Beatrice, that patriarchal language is not adequate to expressing certain aspects of female experience. The opposition between Sam's and Louie's language in part indicates the distinction between the symbolic and the semiotic which Kristeva has highlighted. According to her theory, the symbolic language represents patriarchal law, while the semiotic language is

17. Shirley Walker, 'Language, Art and Ideas in *The Man Who Loved Children*,' (*Meridian*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1983), pp.16-17.

pre-Oedipal and contains the poetic dimensions of language. Louie transcends Sam by writing her own code as in the *Herpes Rom*, or by developing her own poetic discourse.

Louie is both familiar with the Nietzschean ideas and represents another version of the female *Übermensch*. Like the herofartist, she believes that she has a destiny and that she is a genius:

If I did not know I was a genius, I would die:
why live? (p.87)

There is evidence in the text to support her belief, as is illustrated by her 'Aiden cycle' of poems and her adaptations of Confucius. Louie uses statements from Zarathustra as a motto. At one stage she misquotes Nietzsche, but keeps the sense of what he had said. She says to Sam:

...if it is chaos, it will not be chaos forever.
"out of chaos ye shall give birth to a dancing
star!" Nietzsche said that. (pp.314-15)¹⁸

Louie is becoming the 'dancing star'. There is struggle, chaos and strife in her family home, but her creative power and destiny is emerging from this. She has a personal motto from Zarathustra which she clings to to preserve her faith in herself. There are two references in the text to Zarathustra's entreaty,

But, by my love and hope I entreat you: do not reject
the hero in your soul! Keep holy your highest hope.¹⁹

It is significant that Louie does not write down the last sentence. Furthermore it is Sam who quotes this in the text, and in doing so, he reveals his attitude to Louie. At first he interprets Louie's motto in terms of himself. He tells Saul what his 'silly Louie' has written, and states:

In that, at least, she shows the power, the strength,
and the glory of her poor Sam. She is beginning to
see the light. (p.324)

However when he sees her motto again (p.340), he realises that she is moving beyond his power and unconsciously describes her in Nietzschean terms. The narrator reports his insight ironically:

18. The original reference is: 'I tell you: one must have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: you still have chaos in you,' in Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, p.46.

19. Nietzsche, *ibid*, p.71.

His nice Louisa, brought up on sawdust excerpts from potted philosophers, intended for the holy life of science, he could see (much as he closed his eyes), was a burning star, new-torn from the smoking flesh of a mother sun, a creature of passion. (p.340)

Louie also develops the Nietzschean concept of the will to power. She has realised that 'whatever she did for herself, on her own initiative, was right and she would defy the world' (p.202). By the end of the text she determines to kill her parents. This decision is represented without sentiment or conventional morality. Her decision is represented as a logical act to change a destructive situation, where no other act seems possible. Furthermore her decision to kill them emerges from her context. Both Sam and Henny have talked about killing without any moral censures; Sam has promoted eugenic solutions to the problems of overpopulation and the presence of 'mis-fits', while Henny frequently threatens to kill the family and herself. Louie's actual decision to kill them is associated with the presence of the eagle (p.519) which is a Nietzschean image.²⁰ Thus Louie, the female equivalent of the *Übermensch*, commits the supreme act of will:

There is no question of it: I have the will, I must have the firmness to get rid of the two parents. (p.501)

She knows that once they are dead, 'she would at once be free herself' (p.501). She realises that:

she should have done it before but had not the insight nor the will. Everything was will: 'The world stands aside to let the man pass who knows whither he is going!' (p.502)

Sam is Louie's main adversary in the text. He is the prototype of the patriarch, and from this position, sees himself as the product of Darwin's natural selection and survival of the fittest. He has the paternalistic notion that the white male is superior, both in the Far East and in his home. The law of the survival of the fittest endorses his belief that he, the white male, is at the top of the evolutionary ladder. 'Female hannimiles' (p.107) are to be confined to the hearth and home, and both they and children are to be subject to his superior

20. Shirley Walker, 'Language Art and Ideas in *The Man Who Loved Children*,' pp.11-19.

guidance and wisdom. He distorts Darwin's ideas of competition and natural selection, and instead attempts to control nature and his family.

The intertextual references to Shelley's *The Cenci* highlight the complex relationship between Louie and Sam. On the surface, there is a battle for control between them. He wants to make her a copy of himself. Ironically he gives her three books to read: Shelley's *Poems*, Frazer's *Golden Bough* and James Bryce's book on Belgian atrocities.²¹ He tells her the 'following strange words':

It is the father who should be the key to the adult world, for his daughters, for boys can find it out for themselves. (p.386)

This occurs at the same time as the report of a father's incest with his daughter. From this incident and from her father's books, Louie comes in contact with the terrible mysteries of men's violence. At the same time, the incident highlights the deeper conflict between Sam and Louie. There are indirect allusions to his attraction to Louie, for he feels abhorrence for her physical development and her emerging sexuality.

These themes of the battle for control and his abhorrence and attraction for Louie are drawn to a climax through the references to and adaptation of Shelley's *The Cenci*. This reference also highlights the broader theme that language is not able to encompass all aspects of female experience, particularly in the area of father/daughter relationships. When Louie first reads the play she is astonished 'for it seemed that (eliminating the gloomy and gorgeous scene) Beatrice was in a case like hers' (p.389). The likeness between them remains ambiguous and suggestive. Louie would know that *The Cenci* is a story about a family which is terrorised by the father who rejoices in his power over them. He

21. Susan Sheridan also discusses this in her article, '*The Man Who Loved Children and the Patriarchal Family Drama*', in *Gender, Politics and Fiction*, ed. Carole Ferrier, pp.136-149.

commits a crime against his daughter which cannot be named or recognised because there are no words to describe it and hence no laws which might forbid it. Beatrice and her family are imprisoned after it is discovered that she has conspired to kill her father. The Pope refuses mercy, because the Law of the Father is inviolate, and patricide the most heinous of crimes because it is a challenge to the source of law and authority. Beatrice knows that she cannot escape her father, even though he is dead, because the laws have been made by the fathers in their own interests. Beatrice refers to her father's injustice upon her, a crime which has no name and which therefore cannot be recognised as an injustice. She says:

Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds which
have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.
(*The Cenci*; Act 3.1. 1.141/2)

And adds that:

If I could find a word that might make known
The crime of my destroyer. (Act 3.1. 1. 154/5)²²

Louie adapts this play as a surprise for Sam's birthday. She highlights the inadequacy of language itself to describe the father/daughter relationship and female experience. The play is written in a language which only Louie can understand and translate. At this point, this is her only means of fighting off Sam's intrusions on her privacy. He would have more power over her and know more about her if he could read everything she thought of and wrote down. Because Sam's incestuous attractions are never mentioned on the surface, she cannot challenge them in a direct way, but she can allude to them indirectly through this play. She adopts a 'foreign' language:

...so that she could write down what she wished, she would invent an extensive language to express every shade of her ideas. 'Everyone has a different sphere to express, and it goes without saying that language as it stands can never contain every private thought.' (p.391)

Hence Louie seizes the ultimate control over the meaning of her language. However she has stepped outside Bakhtin's framework. Bakhtin has stated that meaning can be appropriated and reformed in the speaking context between at least two speakers. Here, however, only Louie knows the meaning of her language. She will learn to create her meanings in a context of mutual understanding.

22. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, (Oxford, Oxford Uni. Press, 1970).

When the children perform the play (pp.406-09) which depicts a father murdering his daughter through his perverted affection and his intrusions upon her privacy, it is the 'foreign' language, not the content, which is at issue. Louie is puzzled that her father should question her language. She goes to some lengths to prove that her linguistic system and translation are quite correct. The theme and content, which encapsulate her relationship with Sam, are neglected. Thus Stead has adapted this play to expose the ambiguous relationship between Sam and Louie and the inability of language to encompass this experience.

In both her texts, Stead has integrated and adapted intertextual references to amplify the female point of view and experience. These references are integral elements in the textual themes and structures. Both Louie and Teresa embody the Nietzschean values of the will to power, of evaluating morality and of creating both new morals and new texts. They are representations of the female *Übermensch*, which is the female embodiment and expansion of a male-centred ideology.

Other texts illustrate intertextual references to heighten the effects of irony and parody. However these references are not as deeply integrated into the thematic and narrative structures as are those in the texts which have been discussed so far. In *Foxybaby*, for example, Jolley incorporates intertextual references to both satirise the convention itself and the literary pretensions of characters who adopt them. Miss Porch and Miss Peycroft, who are locked in a battle for control of the literary Treatment, throw references from Goethe, Brahms and Samuel Johnson at each other in a one-upmanship manner. The quotes themselves do not have any specific importance to the theme and plot of the text. Intertextual references also occur in the Treatment, the narrative within the narrative. Here Steadman remembers a quote from Sophocles which he had inscribed in a book for his daughter. Although Sophocles was an educator, it is ironic that his words are inappropriate and irrelevant to the troubles of Steadman's daughter.

On the other hand, Richardson adopts intertextual references to heighten the irony and distance between religious injunctions and the reality and experience of Laura in her textual world. The title of the text, *The Getting of Wisdom*, refers to the Old Testament, and

the text itself is prefaced by the relevant extract from the Book of Proverbs. However, this 'getting of wisdom' is shown to be an ironic enterprise in the text. The 'wisdom' that is taught consists of lessons on how to become ladies and how to acquire husbands. The Bible is referred to in the text but only as a source of forbidden knowledge about sex, an area of education which is ignored by the curriculum (p.98). Ironically the 'wisdom' that Laura learns is the way in which she should subdue herself and appear to conform to the institutional and ideological values. The distance between religious principles and experience is heightened by Laura's failure to 'find' God and her determined rejection of Him when she cheats in her exams. There is no moral censure about her cheating. Her act is represented amorally and pragmatically. If she does, she does - it is the only way she can escape from school. Her act is also the logical effect of an education which has been based on cultivating slyness, duplicity and hypocrisy - the skills needed to get a husband.

Langley presents a more complicated adaptation of intertextual references in *The Pea-pickers*. She draws on intertextual references from Romantic and classical poetry and values, and through Steve, represents a parody of Romantic ideals and the Romantic poet *persona*. The irony is extended because Steve believes in the *persona* she has adopted and takes its values seriously as being a better alternative to being a 'woman'. Ultimately there can be no solution to Steve's dilemma. She is caught in a double bind: she wants to be loved according to the Romantic tradition, yet she is afraid both of her own desires and her fears of the consequences if her love were to be consummated. She cannot resolve certain contradictions implicit in the Romantic ideology with the reality of her experience as a woman. She wants to be young, but must grow old; she wants to be loved but cannot bear the consequences for what it means to her art; she wants to hold onto youth and beauty, but knows that this only happens in the ephemeral world of art. Her relationship with Macca is at the apex of these contradictions. The dialogue between them is cast in Romantic and classical language, and is completely inappropriate to their surroundings. Steve quotes from a variety of English and Latin poets.

She makes Macca an ideal of youthful, poetic purity. Ironically when Steve realises that she does want Macca despite her own ideals, he tells her that she is too pure for that kind of love.

There is humour in the image of this romantic troubador poet let loose in the Australian bush. Steve adopts the Romantic speech style and freely uses quotes in her dialogues with other characters. For example, while Steve is proclaiming:

"I'll leave the country of Gippsland", I cried,
 "and let my lover be free. O Abnegation, how holy
 thou art! O Apostasia, what a nobility is in thy
 flying garments!"

Blue is grumbling, "Where the hell did I put the butter?" (p.29) only to discover that Steve has been sitting on it.

Steve quotes prolifically from poets such as Verlaine, and has written poetry herself in this style (p.21). This is in marked contrast to the nationalist realist thrust of the Australian tradition. Her perceptions of the bush are also coloured by classical imagery and description. At one point, she is aware of the distance between her writing and her background. She reads an old poem she has written, and states:

It was keen agony to me once, this poem, and now
 it is such a minor thing, written in an un-
 Australian language. (p.63)

However, although Steve's characterisation is a parody of the Romantic poet *persona*, she is not aware of it. She takes the *persona* and her Romantic ideals seriously. She blurs the distinction between poetry and reality. She represents an image of ironic contradictions at the end of the narrative. She abandons the poet *persona* and becomes the prototype of the Australian bushman, yet she remains faithful to the ideals of romantic love. Thus intertextual references in this text expand the irony and the contradictions of the protagonist's position and her values.

Some writers have referred to extraliterary texts. For example, Astley represents the 'voice' of the TV news in her text. The title itself, *An Item from the Late News*, represents the voice of the external

media. It adds an ironic twist to the events in the narrative, and highlights the influence that the media has. Hanrahan on the other hand draws on advertising slogans, brand names and current film stars as a source of extraliterary reference. These references are taken from the social and cultural context. They are capitalised in the text *Kewpie Doll*. This makes them prominent and important. For example, in one passage the protagonist refers to a string of brand-names which convey patriarchal values of the 'feminine' and of consumerism:

A Gothic bra gave smart separation; Wild Rice was
Autumn's chosen colour. I would be perfect with
Kiss the Blarney lipstick and I washed my face with
Beauty Grains. (p.110)

The protagonist is surrounded by a linguistic world where slogans and brand-names carry insidious connotations and represent the values created by a consumerist world which advertises a particular image of woman. The relationship between advertising, consumerism and the 'feminine' images represent a trap to the protagonist. She must break free from these values, remove them from her consciousness, before she can become an artist. By incorporating these references, Hanrahan is implying that language and images are endowed with specific ideological values which are exploited by consumerism in conjunction with patriarchal ideologies. Hence the struggle for artistic freedom lies in the linguistic consciousness of the female subject.

An interesting twist to intertextual relationships is illustrated by Franklin's texts, *My Brilliant Career* and *My Career Goes Bung*. The latter text was written in response to the public reception of the former, and the style and content represent an answer and response. Consequently there are significant differences between the texts. Although *My Brilliant Career* purports to be an autobiography and is a fictional narrative, *My Career Goes Bung* purports to be a factual structure which encapsulates the former text, explaining its genesis and consequences. *My Brilliant Career* was generally received as a 'real autobiography' which had embarrassing consequences for Franklin and her family in the underpopulated colonial society.

My Career Goes Bung explains the process of conceiving and writing *My Brilliant Career* as a 'burlesque autobiography', of creating characters who are both real and fictional, and of developing

the protagonist, 'Sybylla', as her ideal. Hence there are marked differences between the Sybylla and her parents of the first and second texts. Because the second text is not written in a predominant realist style, the polemics of this text are openly feminist and are directly related to the social context. Now the suffragettes, universal franchise and politics are discussed as positive options for women and the improvement of their conditions. In contrast, the theme of romance from the first text is made ridiculous by the appearance of Grayling, 'Harold Beauchamp' and her romantic adventures in Sydney.

This text ironically extends the theme of the woman artist in Australia. Sybylla is now a recognised and published writer. But this is not a glorious recognition. She is treated as a freak by her family and neighbours, and as a curious oddity by the Sydney social and literary society. Her publication precipitates her trip to Sydney. Whereas *My Brilliant Career* represented the role of the writer and 'Sydney' as an unknown ideal, *My Career Goes Bung* represents the reality of her ideals and her disillusionment. Through satire, Sybylla, the artless ingénue from the bush, describes the interconnection between social snobbery, servile male writers, and patronising attitudes to women writers. She realises that there is no place for a woman writer in Sydney. Thus whereas *My Brilliant Career* stands alone as an independent text, *My Career Goes Bung* can be fully appreciated only in relation to it. It amplifies the creation, reception and the consequences of the former text. Between them they illustrate most forcefully the position and image of the woman writer at the turn of the century.

The use of intertextual references thus becomes a strategic tool for women writers dealing with the woman artist figure. Through them, the woman-centred texts may effect a critique of patriarchal values, while at the same time amplifying these references to include woman. This is most effectively illustrated by Stead's appropriation of Nietzsche.

CHAPTER 7

THE EMERGING IMAGE OF 'WOMAN' AND THE *BILDUNGSROMAN*

Women writers in the texts under discussion critically evaluate the notions of 'woman' and the woman artist which predominate in their cultural contexts. From their woman-centred perspectives, they are appropriating the meaning of 'woman' to include the identity of the woman artist, and are thus inserting a new image of female identity into the developing patriarchal cultural and national tradition. At the same time, the representation of the woman artist and her experiences of Australian society is adapting and modifying, if not radically transforming, the traditionally male-centred *Bildungsroman*. Earlier female examples of the *Bildungsroman* within the Australian literary tradition have involved the modification of female individualism in order to fit into the accepted definitions of 'woman'. However the texts under discussion are a departure from this pattern of conformity. Although the gender definitions of 'woman' within the patriarchal social structure are still the main obstacles to women's artistic aspirations, the woman artist figure in these texts refuses to conform or to compromise. Hence the woman artist figure is predominantly an outsider and an exile from her social reality which is inimical to her artistic destiny. Thus the emerging image of the woman artist and the developing female form of the *Bildungsroman* presents a radical challenge to centralist patriarchal cultural and literary values.

The literary representation of the woman artist figure is interconnected with the cultural notions which are attached to 'woman'.

As Graeme Turner states:

There is...an historical and ideological nexus between modes of characterisation in fiction on the one hand, and the ideology of the self articulated in the culture which produces that fiction on the other.¹

However, women writers are representing images of 'woman' within a cultural context in which images of 'woman' have been constructed from the patriarchal point of view, and are operating within a male-centred

1. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1986), p.90.

literary system. This patriarchal cultural tradition has formulated images of 'woman' in relation to the male, rather than images of 'woman' as an independent subject. Hence there has been a limited definition and image of 'woman' and a restricted range of models of women as historical and social subjects within the Australian cultural, national and literary tradition. At the same time, the artist, whether female or male, occupies a devalued position and status within the Australian context. Thus women writers are representing the image of 'woman as artist' within a cultural and social tradition in which the image and status of both 'woman' and 'artist' are diminished.

The definition and position of women, of artists and of women artists is culturally specific to particular historical contexts and is changing accordingly. Changes in the developing social context have influenced the representation of the female artist within the texts. Although the position and image of the artist is by tradition masculine, there are similarities between the sociocultural positions of women and artists. Both women and artists are outsider figures. Women are outside the social structures of power which have formulated the national history and tradition, while artists are by convention outside the values of the *status quo*.

Richard Nile and David Walker, for example, have discussed the image and position of the artist within the Australian social context. They quote the opinions of two women writers who have dealt with the theme of the woman artist:

Shortly before her death in 1954 Miles Franklin complained that Australian readers were conditioned to accept a third-rate English novel ahead of a first-rate Australian one. In 1943 Katherine Prichard remembered she had once been told that 'You're better dead' than to be a writer in Australia.²

2. Richard Nile & David Walker, 'Marketing the Literary Imagination: Production of Australian Literature, 1915-65', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, ed. Laurie Hergenhan, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1988), p.291.

This devaluation extended to male writers as well. Nile and Walker continue:

Looking over a literary career spanning forty years, Hal Porter (1975) wrote that a serious writer might be better thought of along with 'cripples...,midgets, Fat Ladies, female impersonators, Siamese twins, and Jo Jo the dog-faced boy' all of who displayed 'their special abnormalities for money'. Writing was considered a morally unhealthy pursuit, a personal disorder rather than a skilled occupation which deserved appropriate rewards.³

Women writers also have the potential to subvert patriarchal values and to establish new forms of perception. This potential ability stems from their ambiguous positions in relation to the patriarchal hegemony. Women writers occupy a marginal position in relation to the centre, and they represent a woman-centred view of patriarchal values. Thus, to use Bakhtin's terms, both women and artists represent the centrifugal forces of society which react against the centripetal positions of the hegemony. For different reasons, both women and artists have a marginal and devalued position in relation to the hegemony. Despite this devalued position, the artist by tradition and convention has a critical role within a cultural context. As such the artist has the potential ability to subvert the values of the *status quo* and to constitute new cultural and literary forms of perception.

These similarities between the discursive positions of women and artists in relation to the hegemony are exploited in the texts. Here, for the female protagonists, the role of the artist is an alternative to the restrictive definitions of and roles for women within their textual realities. Although the image and expectation of 'woman' has in our society undergone significant changes during this century, her role and definition has been largely restricted to marriage and motherhood. Thus the role of the artist becomes an alternate and radical role to these protagonists. At the same time, the image and representation of the female artist becomes a medium for woman-centred critiques of various aspects of patriarchy.

3. Richard Nile & David Walker, 'Marketing the Literary Imagination: Production of Australian Literature, 1915-1965', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, ed. Laurie Hergenhan, p.293.

The changing social roles for women and the development of the role and position of the female artist is reflected in the literary representation of the female artist. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the developing image of this protagonist can be illustrated by comparing her representation in *My Brilliant Career* (1901) and *Lines of Flight* (1985). Whereas Franklin centres her critique on the condition of women within society, Campbell highlights the discursive practices by which men colonise women's meaning and expression. Franklin has explored the role of the female artist in relation to the patriarchal social context, while Campbell represents a woman-centred exploration of art itself within the patriarchal context. There is a relationship between the sexual and creative expression of the woman artist. However the representation of female sexuality is conditioned by the nature of the contemporary context, which may be restrictive or permissive. This development from a restrictive to a more permissive moral climate is reflected in the texts. Hence, female sexuality is muted in the earlier texts. Issues such as lesbianism, which I shall discuss below, illustrate the differences between the earlier and later years of this century. The accessibility of contraception has affected female sexual expression. Thus, prior to contraception some protagonists forego their sexuality, because as Steve in *The Pea-pickers* states, it leads to a 'procession of perambulators' (p.103). Yet at the same time, some texts suggest that female sexual and creative expression are related. For example, in *Intimate Strangers*, Elodie's initial artistic aspirations are dashed because her husband will not use contraception, and she becomes a mother instead. Then her former artistic dreams are resurrected along with her buried sexuality when she is with Jerome. This connection between artistic and sexual expression is also highlighted in *For Love Alone*. Here Teresa's artistic expression emerges from her sexual experiences. Yet on the other hand, Nora from *Tirra Lirra by the River* offers a different view of this relationship. She begins to suggest that she might have been creative, that she might have something 'drawn out of the compression of a secret life' (p.128). This 'secret life' is connected to sexual expression. She states that while the repression of sex produced some warped natures, for others, implying herself, it produced 'a luminosity, a glow...and that for those natures, it was possible to love and value that glow far beyond the fire that was its

origins' (p.11). Nora has had limited and demeaning sexual experiences and has chosen to cut herself off sexually. It is ironic that perhaps this has something to do with the fact that she does not become aware that she might have been an artist herself.

The representation of the lesbian figure also indicates the developments of the social context. According to some strands of feminist theory, the lesbian represents an alternative to the subordination of women in heterosexual relationships and to the options of being a wife and mother. Hence the lesbian figure might represent an alternative sexual expression which is compatible with being an artist. However because the literary representation of this figure is interconnected with the social context, the lesbian as an authentic image is only beginning to emerge in the texts. Thus *The Getting of Wisdom* (1910), which was produced in a restricted context, represents a muted form of female homosexuality, whereas *All That False Instruction* (1975), which was produced in a more permissive climate, explores the difference and conflict between heterosexuality and homosexuality most explicitly, yet the protagonist in this text does not realise her artistic nature. She becomes enclosed in the conflicts of her sexuality which centre on the reactions of others around her. In *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* (1983) lesbian relationships are matter of factly represented with no hint of moral censure. However, the lesbian has not yet become an artist. The aspect of motherhood is also discussed in relation to the woman artist. *Intimate Strangers* indicates that motherhood and artistic development are incompatible. However in *Lines of Flight* (1985) Rita has a small child but this does not inhibit her development. Instead this text indicates that a heterosexual and domestic relationship hinders the female artist's development. This illustration of the relationship between female artistic and sexual expression and its representation in the texts in part indicates the interconnection between values about 'woman' writers, the literary and social contexts and the literary representation of 'woman' as artist.

It is obvious then that the representation of the woman artist in the texts is constructed against the background of images of 'woman' in our cultural context. A particular woman-centred identity of 'woman'

as artist is emerging, and is being inserted into the developing literary and cultural tradition.

Feminist historians have highlighted the limited range of models of women in our history. In her text, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Anne Summers argues that women have been constituted into two historical types: the 'damned whore' and 'God's Police'. She argues that there are two dominant features about the relationship of women to the Australian tradition: that women are a colonised sex and have been dominated by the imposition of a code of 'femininity';⁴ and that women have been provided with such a limited range of cultural identity that they are almost invisible in the Australian cultural tradition.⁵

The major impediment to female rebellion, and that which keeps women physically and psychologically bound to their family-centred roles has been the absence of any cultural tradition which approved of women being anything else.⁶

She adds that:

For at no level in our culture is there a rallying point, a legitimate tradition or even a socially valued metaphor which begins to explore, much less fully articulates, the experiences of women.⁷

Miriam Dixon has also noted that:

Our short history has bequeathed us a marginally more impoverished stock of 'models' for female identity-formation than has the history of analogous countries.⁸

Women's texts which attempt to depict an authentic image of women, such as that of the female artist, an image which goes beyond cultural conventions and ideological constructions, both respond to this cultural background and move outside it. The image and identity of woman which emerges from the texts is both a critique and a reconstruction of the broader cultural values. These writers fill the gap, the space left in

4. Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1975), p.199.

5. *Ibid*, p.114.

6. *Ibid*, p.33.

7. *Ibid*, p.34.

8. Miriam Dixon, *The Real Matilda*, (Ringwood, Penguin, 1976/82), p.34.

the Australian tradition for woman. They redress the lack of authentic images and representations of women, and in the process create an authentic image of 'woman' in fiction.

This process can be illustrated, for example, in relation to Turner's observations about the ideology attached to the Australian subject. He is referring to the male-centred tradition and representation of the male subject:

The dominant myth of the Australian context sees the imperatives of the self surrender to the exigencies which are imposed by the environment, and this is true regardless of whether the myth is rural or urban in application, or articulated in a celebratory or critical mode. Regardless of whether that environment is a 'natural' one or a 'naturalised' one, there seems to be little that the individual can do to affect or change *his* condition.⁹ (my emphasis)

This opinion must be qualified in relation to the representations of the female artists. These protagonists do confront inimical social conditions such as poverty, isolation from their fellows, oppressive family and social relationships and the ideological contradictions of 'femininity' which are also contradictory to being an artist. However they do not surrender to their environments. Even if they cannot change their situations, the protagonists maintain their ambitions to become artists. Four of the protagonists do not become artists, but this failure is related to the wider thematic concerns of the texts rather than to individual inadequacy. Thus Ursula's fate is ambiguous and reflects the moral concerns of the text; Elodie channels her desires into working for political change which seems more important than her artistic realisation; Maureen's artistic ambitions are deflected into her struggle to assert her homosexuality; and Nora does not realise that she might have been an artist, but she has survived what being a 'woman' means through divorce, abortion, facelift, attempted suicide and the need to support herself. Teresa and Louie are the extreme examples of what the aspiring female artist can do to change her circumstances.

9. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions*, p.50.

The image of the female artist within the texts may be approached from two directions. On the one hand, the predominant metaphor of the protagonist's condition is that she is an outsider, trapped as an exile in an inimical social reality. This metaphor is shaped from both the early images of Australia as a place of exile for outsiders, and from European feminist thought whereby writers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf have used the images of the exile and the outsider to describe women's historical and metaphysical condition. On the other hand, the image of the female artist may be approached in terms of the ideological struggle which is represented between the social prescriptions of the 'feminine' within gender ideology, and the female creative spirit which must transcend such prescriptions before she can attain performance and expression.

This latter point is illustrated by the lineal comparison of the texts. The earlier protagonists, by Franklin, Baynton, Richardson, Prichard and Stead, all indicate various stages of struggle with the gender expectations of their social realities. Marriage and motherhood, the predominant and often only options for women, are represented as contradictory to female artistic creativity. The image of Elodie represents these contradictions between being 'woman' as artist, and 'woman' as wife and mother according to gender ideology. Because of her social roles and emotional connections with others, Elodie is unable to pursue her artistic inclinations. Langley represents her protagonist as a writer, but she must still struggle for definition in the male-centred world. The later texts by Hanrahan, Astley, Jolley and Campbell represent their protagonists in textual worlds in which there are wider options for women and in which gender ideologies are less restrictive. These protagonists are, or are becoming, artists, so that the prime focus of these texts concerns their creative development and the processes of artistic creativity. Now there is less of a struggle against the notions that women should be wives and mothers, so that the authentic image of the 'woman as artist' begins to emerge.

The image of 'woman' as exile or prisoner in an alienating environment is drawn partly from the early tradition of the images of Australia. Ross Gibson in *The Diminishing Paradise* argues that the white male

hegemony had to have an underdog. As the convicts disappeared and as attitudes towards the Aborigines were relatively mollified, then women in Australia were left to feel the prejudice of being near the bottom of a social and ideological set of values. Gibson states that:

The English image of the Aborigines can be seen to have influenced more than the developing attitudes to the natives themselves and to the bush. It is possible to argue that the portrayal of women in Australian culture derives in part from a complex interplay of English images pertaining to savages, convicts and slaves.¹⁰

Turner also refers to this earlier tradition and images of Australia:

Imprisonment, convictism, is a rich source of imagery and meaning within Australian culture, and in its specific meanings as well as its wider application, it provides us with a central paradigm for the depiction of self in Australian narrative.¹¹

The paradigm which emerges is a debased image of woman, and an image of the exile in an alienating environment.

This image also emerges in feminist literature, where women are regarded as outsiders to the phallogentric basis of Western history and culture. For example, in *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf refers to the 'Outsiders Society', in which women's alienation transcends national boundaries, and in her argument she states:

'For', the outsider will say, 'in fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the world.'¹²

Simone de Beauvoir explains the alienation and outsider status of woman in terms of the dichotomy between self and other. She states that 'He is the Subject, he is the absolute - she is the Other'.¹³

Furthermore the image of the outsider is associated with the

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- 10. Ross Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise*, (Sydney, Sirius, 1984), p.182.
 - 11. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions*, p.60.
 - 12. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1938/82), p.125.
 - 13. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans./ed. H.M. Parshley, (Harmondsworth, Penguin Modern Classics, 1949/83), p.16.

conventional Romantic notion of the artist. The theme of the artist as an outsider or marginal figure living on the fringes of society is a familiar convention, although by tradition, the artist is male. The women's texts highlight the outsider status of both women and artists and then produce both a social critique and an alternative image of 'woman'.

In most instances, the protagonists are depicted as outsiders because they do not meet the conventional expectations of beauty, appearance and behaviour according to the notions of the 'feminine'. In the textual worlds, these qualities are mainly represented in terms of the protagonists' eligibility for marriage. The majority feel alienated in textual worlds which promote these values. Frequently they long to go overseas, to go somewhere else.

The theme of the artist/outsider is related to the perceived dislocation between the protagonist and her textual world. She feels an outsider because of the discrepancy between her own desires and talents, and what her social world expects of her as a 'woman'. This dislocation is represented primarily between the perceptions of the protagonist and the significant figures in her textual world who attempt to enforce the standards of the 'feminine'. The outsider status is not one which the protagonist willingly chooses. She feels an outsider because she does not match the standards of the 'feminine': she becomes an outsider when she refuses to compromise with or to comply with these expectations.

In most texts the protagonist is conscious of being an outsider, and this awareness helps to precipitate her exploration of herself in relation to her textual reality. Sometimes she feels an outsider because she does not fit certain expectations, and then turns to her art and her imagination, while at other times she is an outsider because of her inclination to art and to literature. Ursula and Elodie do not consciously feel they are outsiders, yet they feel alienated in their environments and want to escape to other places that are located in dream or in nature. The Sybylla characters, Laura, Steve, Louie, Teresa and Maureen all feel that they are outsiders because they do not meet gender expectations and because they want to pursue their art. Nora had felt an outsider when she was young because she was exotic and romantic.

Now in her old age, she is an outsider because of her eccentricity, yet as she states:

...I am finding that when one is really outside, and alone, it is less of a burden (and much more private) to be thought quite ordinary. (p.4)

Gabby is an outsider to both the male-centred national tradition and to the dominant events in the textual world. Ironically she does become a participant in violence, that predominant aspect of masculinity in the textual world.

Jolley's protagonists are not conscious of being outsiders, although they are represented as women who do not fit the gender roles. They are single women and some are lesbian. Campbell's protagonist does not consciously feel that she is an outsider, even though she is an Australian living in France. Thus these two writers are establishing a different image of woman in relation to the outsider theme. Their texts represent 'woman' as the centre. The textual worlds are perceived and represented from the protagonists' standards and points of view, as though they were 'natural'. This contrasts with earlier texts such as *For Love Alone* in which the protagonists must react against the values of the patriarchal others before they may assert their own as women artists. Thus the woman artist is developing from the powerless, marginal figure of earlier texts into one who appears to be at the centre.

In connection with the theme of the woman artist as an outsider, the texts represent the protagonists as having a secret space away from the banal social pressures in the worlds of their imaginations, where they can transcend the limitations of their textual realities. Thus in *For Love Alone* Teresa's erotic fantasies and fancy dress become a means for representing a form of female sexuality which cannot be explored directly by experience. Their imaginations and fantasies represent a world of escape, privacy and creativity. Their needs and desires to escape are represented as moving to a more congenial place from a hostile or banal social reality. They wish to escape from the restrictions applied to the 'feminine' in their textual worlds, but the better world they want is often represented in aesthetic terms, as the freedom to write or to create. Overall, they do not want better worlds in which the social condition of women is improved. This is despite the fact

that it is predominantly social and ideological factors which prohibit their artistic destinies. Instead they want the solitude of the world of art and literature, and they prefer social isolation rather than social integration.

A particular image of the female self emerges from these texts. She is represented in opposition to her social environment, in which the operations of gender ideology are the main obstacles to her progress. She may not be able to change her environment, but she can move away or refuse to compromise. Sybylla from *My Brilliant Career* represents the ultimate refusal to compromise. She rejects a promising marriage proposal which might have improved her material condition, but which would also impede her art. Ursula is finally defeated by the bush but she does not compromise with her human environment. Laura learns how not to compromise in her world without appearing to be a rebel, and the narrative voice intimates that one day she might find that her social unfitness might also be creative fitness. Steve has a paradoxical fate. She assumes the identity of a male from the 1890s tradition, but she determines that she will write. Teresa and Louie both escape from their environments and there is evidence that their struggles have intensified their sense of destiny and creativity. Maureen's creative ambitions are deflected by pressures against her homosexuality, and she exiles herself to Afghanistan. Nora's appearance and behaviour conforms to the expectations of the 'feminine', but her inner perspicacity remains clear and undetached, even though she does not become aware that she could be an artist. Miss Peabody escapes from London to Australia and inherits the novelist's unfinished manuscript. Rita escapes from the male intrusion into her domestic and private space, writes a narrative of her experiences and produces a Narrative Sculpture.

The social definitions and constructions of the 'feminine' are the main obstacles to the protagonists becoming artists. These definitions become the metaphor of entrapment and repression of the female self. Art becomes the alternative to this social situation and to the protagonists' drives to authenticity. The texts represent this obstruction in different ways. Franklin's texts represent the most outspoken polemic against patriarchal values. She rejects the religious God whom she

states was created in man's image and acclaims the hope offered by female suffrage for women. She draws attention to the general condition of women as well as to the specific condition of the woman artist. *Kewpie Doll* on the other hand represents the textual world solely from the protagonist's consciousness, with the occasional smattering of reported dialogue. This un-named protagonist explores the meaning and values of the 'feminine' which surround her in the 1950s in relation to herself and her mother. She makes a deliberate choice to be an artist rather than to be 'feminine', for these are dichotomous terms in her world.

Both Richardson and Baynton depict textual realities in which women are evaluated according to their appearance, dress and behaviour. Women are expected to become wives and mothers. Both their texts however focus on the individual protagonist who is at odds with both women and men in her world. Women may have less power than men, but other women in these texts are represented equally as threats to the protagonists. In *The Getting of Wisdom*, women enforce the rules, even though it is the men in the background who have the power. There is authorial sympathy for Laura, but little for the female sex in general. In *Human Toll* both women and men are cruel and rapacious and threaten both Ursula and the young life which is represented by the lambs and the baby.

Thus the dominant image of the female self in these texts is that she is an exile and an outsider, oppressed not only by the patriarchy but also by other women in the service of the patriarchy. Her desires and ambitions are obstructed by gender definitions and social relationships. She must by-pass the social definitions of the 'feminine' and remain true to herself and her art. Even if she does not escape, or create anything, she still does not compromise her inner self. A woman cannot be an artist and a wife and mother. She must choose. Once she makes the choice to be true to her artistic destiny, then she can create the situation in which to create. This situation becomes one of isolation, limited social relationships and a distance from the values of the 'feminine'.

The values of the 'feminine' which the protagonists react against are, in a sense, the values of the other. Susan Sheridan highlights the process by which an identity is constructed in terms of the opposition between self and other. She states that:

The discursive process by which dominant images of identity, whether national or female, are constructed involves the naming of others against which the subject is defined.¹⁴

Within the texts, the protagonists are mainly defined against other women who embody the images and values of the 'feminine'. Thus the texts represent problematic relationships between the protagonists and their mothers, which are characterised by open hostility and muted affection. In the texts, *My Brilliant Career*, *The Getting of Wisdom*, *All That False Instruction* and *Kewpie Doll*, mothers represent the expectations of the 'feminine'. They attempt to enforce the rules in the best interests of their daughters. It is Sybylla's father who defends her against her mother's injunctions that she act like a lady. *The Man Who Loved Children* represents a more complex relationship between mother and daughter. Henny is utterly vile towards Louie, yet there is a strong protective bond between them. Henny wants to protect Louie from the trials of womanhood that she has experienced, yet at the same time she wants Louie to be 'feminine'. Both form an allegiance against Sam and the world of men. Henny is an ambiguous representation of the other. She does not represent the values of the 'feminine', but rather the effects of it. There is little likelihood that Louie will emulate her, although her sister, under Sam's influence, might. But Henny in relation to Sam becomes Louie's obstacle. Through a bizarre series of events, Henny the mother dies, and this frees her daughter as a woman and an artist. In some texts, other women apart from the mother become the other that the protagonists are set apart from. Baynton depicts Ursula's difference from women such as the widow and Mina in moral terms. She is as virtuous as they are depraved. In contrast, Steve caricatures other women who are 'feminine' in appearance and behaviour, and draws a distinction between herself and them, and Teresa constantly compares herself with her contemporaries and her cousins who think only of getting married.

14. Susan Sheridan, 'Women Writers', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, ed. Laurie Hargrehan, p.328.

15. *Private Impressions: The Secret Lives of Women*, p.100.

Yet at the same time, the texts display a sympathy for women who suffer adversely from marriage and motherhood. There is a differential mixture of reaction to and sympathy for women who have embodied the values of the 'feminine'. However this representation of these women as the other sets the protagonists apart from them. Only then are they able to declare their destinies as artists. The protagonists establish their identities as artists in opposition to other conventional images and identities of 'woman'.

The woman artist figure is set apart from other female characters who do embody the patriarchal ideologies of 'woman'. The radical implications of this figure are indicated by the nature of the ideological and social opposition which she must confront in order to assert her artistic destiny. The nature of her assertion in relation to the opposition from patriarchal values is transforming the *Bildungsroman*.

These texts which represent the woman artist are interconnected with the European literary form of the *Bildungsroman*, which is the novel of apprenticeship and personal development. However the effect of the representation of the woman artist and her experiences within the Australian context is modifying and adapting this form to a woman-centred point of view. It will emerge that social integration, in the form of conforming to the patriarchal values of 'woman' and the attendant social relationships, is antithetical to the female artistic identity. Hence the narratives depict the woman artist as one who does not conform, and as one who chooses social isolation.

Within the literary tradition, this narrative form has been centred on the male protagonist. Its definitions and archetypes have been developed from his experience of his society. Here he achieves social and psychological maturation, learns to make moral choices and realises his creative potential. However the female experience of society is radically different. As Annis Pratt states:

Women's fiction reflects an experience radically different from men's because our drive towards growth as persons is thwarted by our society's prescriptions concerning gender.¹⁶

16. Annis Pratt, Barbara White, Andrea Lowenstein & Mary Wyer, eds., *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fictions*, (London, Harvester Press, 1982), p.6.

This different social experience is reflected in the literary context. There is already a social and aesthetic role and image for the male artist, and the *Bildungsroman* reflects the literary form and archetype of his progression and experience. However the role and image of the female artist must be created and inserted into an aesthetic and cultural nexus which implicitly denies her existence. Hence the individual's experience of society, which is the dominant motif of the *Bildungsroman*, must be qualified when the gender of the protagonist is female. The female *Bildungsroman* throws doubt upon the traditional ideas of social integration. Social integration for a woman has meant the assumption of her roles as wife and mother. However these roles are perceived to be contradictory to the development, or *bildung*, of the female artist. Hence the maturity of the female artist becomes an assertion of her artistic identity *against* the social and literary values of 'social maturity'. At the same time, she refuses to compromise, even if she cannot change her social *milieu*. The image of the female artist represents a counterbalance between social integration and personal, artistic fulfilment. Social integration thus represents a conflict between submission and assertion for the female artist. Hence the texts under discussion illustrate a continuum between social critiques of the integration of women, and the development of the image and art of the female artist.

Feminist theorists have focused on the male-centred aspects of the traditional definitions and forms of the novel of development, and have attempted to adapt this form to the female point of view. Ellen Morgan, for example, quotes a definition of the *Bildungsroman*, taken from Thrall, Hibbard and Holman, and then concludes:

The *Bildungsroman* is a male affair...But by and large, the *Bildungsroman* has been a male form because women have tended to be viewed traditionally as static rather than dynamic, as instances of a femaleness considered essential, rather than existential.¹⁷

17. Ellen Morgan, 'Human Becoming: Form and Focus in the Neo-Feminist Novel', in *Images of Women in Fiction*, ed. Susan Cornillon, (Ohio, Bowling Green Popular Uni. Press, 1973), p.184.

She goes on to state that:

...the female *Bildungsroman* appears to be becoming the most salient form for literature influenced by neo-feminism. The novel of apprenticeship is admirably suited to express the emergence of women from cultural conditioning into struggle with institutional forces, their progress toward the goal of full personhood, and the effort to restructure their lives and society according to their own vision of meaning and right living.¹⁸

Pearson and Pope argue that works which have a central female protagonist in effect challenge patriarchal assumptions but also that such a protagonist may need to argue her own position in the text. The difficulty in representing such a female character is that the reading audience may not sympathise with such a position. *My Brilliant Career* comes to mind as a strident polemic asserting the protagonist's right to write an autobiography which is centred on the female 'I', and her perceptions of the devalued position of women in her society. Pearson and Pope state that:

This artistic difficulty has given rise to a new form of the traditional *Bildungsroman*, which combines literary elements with essayistic ones; that is, the novel is part story and part argumentative essay...Readers who make conventional assumptions about the ideal form of a novel may criticise the works of many feminist writers for being polemical. But it might make more scholarly sense to recognise the form as legitimately that of an essay/novel. Whatever the critical justification, the structural and stylistic principles used by such works make it possible for other readers to empathise with a hero who challenges the assumptions of the culture.¹⁹

It should be added that the form of this polemic develops in the literary context. Whereas Franklin largely inserts the feminist polemic into her texts, particularly in *My Career Goes Bung*, other texts incorporate this polemic into the experience of the protagonist, the dialogues of the characters and the narrative structure of the texts. Thus *All That False Instruction* explores the polemic against heterosexuality which is illustrated in the protagonist's experience and in the plot development.

18. Ellen Morgan, 'Human Becoming: Form and Focus in the Neo-Feminist Novel', p.185.

19. C. Pearson & K. Pope, *The Female Hero*, (New York, R.R. Bowker & Co., 1982), pp.12-13.

An Item from the Late News develops a polemic about the nature of the Australian tradition and of women's position within it, which is reflected in the narrative and reporting position of the protagonist.

Ruthven presents a feminist view of the appropriation of the *Bildungsroman* to female protagonists and to woman-centred issues, and also, as do the critics quoted above, argues that the plot cannot end in social integration:

...in so far as women react differently from men to the acculturation processes of a male-dominated society, their 'development' is likely to result in a degree of alienation far removed from the sense of having come to terms with society which is the destination of a successful *Bildung* in the masculine tradition.²⁰

He quotes from studies of women writers by feminist critics, and concludes that:

The sequence of events which brings success to the hero of a *Bildungsroman* may bring disaster to the heroine of one, as can be seen by comparing the status in masculine and feminine versions of the genre... the novel, more than any other form of art, is forced by the contract of the genre to negotiate with social realities in order to remain legible - and that not until new plots are sanctioned for women in their everyday lives will the female or feminist *Bildungsroman* be anything other than a record of maladjustment to society, an anti-*Bildungsroman* in effect.²¹

This reference to 'maladjustment' is problematic, because such a judgment is determined by the ideological values which are upheld by the standards of the hegemony. The predominant argument in the texts is that social institutions and gender ideologies are inimical to women who want to assert their authentic identities and chosen destinies as artists. In this context, it may be 'maladjustment' for them to remain within such a society. For example, in *Intimate Strangers*, Elodie remains integrated in her society as a wife and mother, yet this resolution stunts her personal and artistic growth. Most other protagonists remain isolated or choose to run away in order not to compromise their artistic destiny by becoming socially integrated.

20. K.K. Ruthven, *Feminist Literary Studies*, (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni. Press, 1984), p.120.

21. *Ibid*, pp.120-21.

Thus from a woman-centred view, society is maladjusted to the needs of women, rather than women being maladjusted to society.

The image of 'woman' which is represented in the female novel of development is interconnected with the changing image and role of 'woman' in the social context. The literary form, the *Bildungsroman*, adapts accordingly. Hence the novel of development is a transitional and transformational form in which the issues associated with the definition and socialisation of women are being explored. As Sandra Frieden states:

Women authors, most noticeably, have evolved a new model that alters the socialisation process depicted in the traditional *bildungsroman* to correspond to the new awareness of women's roles. This model moves from the recognition of restrictive social roles, through a rejection of arbitrary standards, to the generation of a counter-figure who creates a new role and a new, positive life-style into which she becomes integrated. In works of this kind, style and structure reveal the new authorial consciousness shaping the conventional form and presenting a new claim upon it.²²

This development is reflected in a chronological review of the texts. Whereas earlier texts indicate a critique of the social conditions which are inimical to the female artist, later texts by Jolley and Campbell concentrate on the relationship between women and art, and highlight the actual construction of these narratives. This changing emphasis, which is connected with both the changing social context and literary development, has affected the form of these latter texts. Instead of presenting a realist narrative to depict women's concrete experiences in society, both Jolley and Campbell illustrate the construction of the narrative. Campbell centres her critique of women's position within language and discourse, rather than in social conditions, and these are represented as the vehicles for women's colonisation.

22. Sandra Frieden, 'Shadowing/Surfacing/Shedding: Contemporary German Writers in Search of a Female *Bildungsroman*', in *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, ed. Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, & Elizabeth Langland, (Boston, Uni. Press of New England, 1983), p.305.

Annis Pratt has explored the presence of archetypes and patterns in the female novel of development which reflect the tensions between the social prescriptions of the 'feminine' and the individual drive for self-determinism. She states that:

The clash between this 'concept of liberty (that is, the right to do as she wishes until marriage - SF) and norms of monogamous, wifely chastity undermines the structure of many women's *bildungsromans*, or novels of development, accounting for a pervasive imagery of maiming, dwarfing, and suffocating forced upon young girls as part of 'coming of age'.²⁵

The first half of her statement is readily applicable to Australian women's texts which represent the clash between the female's artistic aspirations and social prescriptions of the 'feminine'. However the images of maiming which Pratt refers to are not so prevalent in the texts under discussion. Elodie is symbolically maimed, and her domestic life and family relationships have crippled her talent. Gabby and Nora also bear psychic scars, yet Gabby, in contrast to Nora, transmutes her pain into art rather than into withdrawal. In contrast to Pratt's statement, the Australian artist protagonists do not become maimed or dwarfed, nor do they surrender to their environments. They are frustrated and oppressed, but this provides the impetus of their dissatisfaction and their refusal to compromise. Their concept of liberty is not defined in terms of sexual exploration and experience. Apart from Teresa in *For Love Alone* and Maureen in *All That False Instruction*, the sexuality of the female artist is displaced in favour of her artistic development. Steve, for example, perceives that sexuality is the entry into social integration. The structures of *The Pea-pickers* represent Steve's antipathy to and avoidance of her sexuality which she associates with marriage and motherhood, the preclusion of her artistic destiny.

Pratt describes two archetypal structures in the female *Bildungsroman*; that is, the green-world and the rape-trauma. The green-world is a special place of childhood, nature and innocence, while the rape-trauma is the violation of her inner self and destiny when the female hero comes into contact with adult experience. However this typology does not apply

25. Annis Pratt *et al*, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fictions*, p.9.

unconditionally to the Australian female *Bildungsroman*. Contrary to Pratt's opinion, 'archetypes' as such have not emerged. Pratt's archetypes are correctly induced from the texts she has selected, but Australian women's texts cannot be reduced to them. This is illustrated by the application of the green-world archetype. Susan Gardiner has applied this archetype to *My Brilliant Career*,²⁴ and from it describes Sybylla's return to her green world of Caddagat. However when this text is placed within the context of the realist nationalist Australian tradition, the green world of Caddagat is more ambivalent. In terms of its connection with the national context, this interlude at Caddagat is essentially a return to 'innocence' which denies Sybylla's adult principles of nationalism, feminism and socialism. Caddagat is an Anglo-centric world which is antipathetic to those values, and it reflects the contradictions that Sybylla experiences as both an Australian and a woman.

The Australian bush itself is a problematic arena in which to locate the green world of nature. For instance, Shirley Walker has explored this aspect of the bush in relation to *Human Toll*. She argues that the bush in this text which Ursula returns to is a hostile, terrible place, not Pratt's 'naturistic epiphany', and states that:

...perhaps the minimalisation of this ambition [to become a writer] ... and its formlessness says something about the impossibility of achieving any artistic integrity in the bush.²⁵

This ambivalence about the bush as 'nature' is represented in other texts as well. Stead's *For Love Alone*, Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* and Riley's *All That False Instruction* have a significant absence of images and interludes in nature. Langley's *The Pea-pickers* represents a protagonist who chooses the bush in preference to the city and who creates a position within the bush in order to write. Prichard's

24. Susan Gardiner, 'My Brilliant Career: Portrait of the Artist as a Wild Colonial Girl', in *Gender Politics and Fiction*, ed. Carole Ferrier, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1985).

25. Shirley Walker, 'Barbara Baynton's *Human Toll*: A Modernist Text?', (*Southerly*, Vol.49, No. 2, 1989).

Intimate Strangers represents nature in a Lawrentian manner which connects female sexuality to nature and a submissive relationship with a male. Anderson's protagonist in *Tirra Lirra by the River* returns to the world of her childhood, but nature here is refracted through poetry, imagination and memory. It too has its own terror and ambivalence. Hanrahan's protagonist in *Kewpie Doll* comes closest to the return to the green world. Here however nature is defined in terms of a backyard cottage garden. Furthermore she wants to restore her childhood relationships with her mother, before the entry of her new husband. Here nature and the return to childhood are connected with the return to the mother. Thus Pratt's green world archetype is not readily applicable to the Australian context.

Furthermore the rape-trauma archetype must be qualified. The majority of the protagonists avoid their sexuality before 'rape' occurs. Teresa from *For Love Alone* explores her erotic nature, and is traumatised by her relationship with Crow. But instead of retreating, she transcends this relationship with the help of James Quick. Maureen from *All That False Instruction* explores her sexuality with women, but it is the negative social attitudes to lesbianism which defeat her. The rape-trauma archetype is most explicitly represented in *Intimate Strangers* and *Tirra Lirra by the River*. Elodie is both physically and psychologically raped by her husband, while Nora, who is abused both by her husband and the doctor who performs the abortion, retreats from any further sexual experience. It is significant that neither woman becomes an artist.

It may be too soon at this point to delineate specific archetypes in these Australian women's texts which represent the development of the woman artist. However the texts do represent a transformation of the traditional male *Bildungsroman*. The woman artist is represented in opposition to her patriarchal milieu. Only by social isolation does she attain her artistic destiny. This transformation is characterised by social critiques of the limited options made available to women in the patriarchal social context, and of the limited range and definitions of 'woman' within the cultural context. At the same time, the image of the female artist in the texts is connected to the cultural notions and

literary representations of 'woman' and 'artist', and thus represents a counterpoint to the male-centred tradition and its preferred images of 'woman'. This transformation of the novel of development is interconnected with the changing social context, in which roles and images of women are developing, and with the changing literary context in which literary construction, language and the notions of 'character' are more problematic. The texts thus represent a developing and changing continuum from social critique to the affirmation of the female artist.

CHAPTER 8

DISCURSIVE TEXTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

The struggle for the meaning and definition of 'woman' is conducted within the discursive system of the text. This system consists of various discourses from different speaking positions which are hierarchically represented in relation to the ideological design of the text. These discourses illustrate particular ideas and values about 'woman' and the woman artist which are usually contrary to those which the protagonist represents and asserts. The text explores the conflict between these definitions within the discursive structure, and illustrates the outcome in the plot resolution.

In the broader social and epistemological context, patriarchal ideologies and discursive relationships have had the privileged power to define and to evaluate all other sites of discourse. Thus woman-centred discourse is in a subordinate and marginal position in relation to patriarchal discourse. However, in the literary text, 'woman' may be represented from the dominant speaking position, and from that position may subvert or carnivalise the patriarchal position of ideological dominance and discursive power. Thus she will argue her right to be an artist rather than a wife and mother. The position from which the character speaks in the narrative context determines the evaluation and representation of her/his ideas. When 'woman' is represented in the dominant speaking position and when this is reinforced by the narrative discursive context, then the text will become the site of struggle and change over the meaning and value of certain gender based concepts and evaluative systems such as the definition of 'woman' and her relationship to art.

This conflict between patriarchal notions of 'woman' and the protagonists' artistic ambitions is debated and represented within the discursive system of the texts. This system consists of varying speaking positions between the narrator, the narrator/protagonist, other characters

and the reader. These positions function both as indicators of interpersonal relationships between characters, and as mediums for expressing and evaluating ideas and values about 'woman'. Thus characters and their ideas are dialogically juxtaposed and counterpointed with other characters and their ideas within the texts. The content of these ideas cannot be treated abstractly or in isolation from their position within the texts. The ideas must be related to the speaking position within the narrative context from which they are uttered and in which they are evaluated. The voices of characters and their ideas are incorporated and evaluated within the artistic and ideological design of the texts. The crucial factor about their representation is that they are *evaluated* within the structured hierarchy of ideas and values within the narrative discourse. From this position of discursive power in the text, women writers can control the argument about definitions of 'woman'. Within the discursive structure of the text, they can 'defamiliarise' negative attitudes about 'woman' and will argue for those values which are conducive to the definition of 'woman' as artist.

Bakhtin has referred to the position of each character's speech within the narrative. He stresses that it is a form of reported speech and states that:

Reported speech is speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time also *speech about speech, utterance about utterance*.¹

The character's reported speech is positioned within the reporting speech of the narrative. Thus there are two speech centres within the narrative. The reported speech indicates information about the character and her/his ideas and values, while the reporting narrative context indicates the narrator's evaluation of such ideas in relation to the overall ideological design of the text. Various notions of 'woman' are represented and evaluated within the discursive structure. The plot resolution indicates the outcome of the conflict between the characters and their ideas about 'woman' and the woman artist.

The discursive positions within the texts illustrate systems of

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1. V.N. Voloshinov (Bakhtin), *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka & I.R. Titunik, (New York, Seminar Press, 1973), p.115.

dominant and subordinate discourse in which arguments which are related to the image and theme of the woman artist are hierarchically evaluated. This representation of the debate will affect the form of the text. Thus the difference between the first and third person narratives represents a choice between representing single or multiple points of view within the texts. For example, the first person narrative usually represents the sole point of view and consciousness of the protagonist, rather than illustrating other, perhaps oppositional, points of view in their full integrity. This includes both male and female characters whose values and ideas may be contrary to those of the protagonist. This is illustrated in *Kewpie Doll* which represents only the ideas and consciousness of the protagonist. The dialogues of others and their ideas are filtered, evaluated and transformed from her dominant position. The third person narrative might represent the sole point of view of the protagonist, such as that of Laura in *The Getting of Wisdom*, but it may also represent the ideas and consciousness of a character who is diametrically opposed to the protagonist. This is illustrated by Stead's treatment of Jonathan Crow in *For Love Alone*.

The form of the text itself is inter-related with the discursive structure which represents characters and ideas in the narrative. The form structures the representation of and the dialogic relationships between the various ideas and values of the characters; at the same time however, the form of the text is influenced by the ideas which are represented. The ideas about the definition of the genders and the relationships of power between them are represented within the narrative discursive system from the woman-centred point of view, and become a determining factor for their representation within the text. For example, the protagonists share the perception that they are outsiders or misfits within their textual worlds. They want to be artists in a world which defines them as potential wives and mothers. This conflict of ideas and values is reinforced by the form of the texts. Thus the protagonists are represented on two discursive levels. On the one hand, the outer level of discourse focuses on their dialogues with other characters in the texts, while on the other hand, the inner level focuses on their indirect monologues and states of consciousness which are addressed to the presumed reader rather than directly into the textual dialogues.

The outer level of discourse frequently represents a collision between the protagonists' point of view and what others might expect of them as 'women'. The inner level usually represents their 'true' opinions and ideas about the nature of 'woman' in relation to patriarchal society and their desires to be artists, all of which may be ridiculed, misunderstood or perverted in the outer textual dialogues. The author behind the text structures the work so as to orient the reader to the 'ideal' position from which to view both the content and the narrative evaluation of the textual world.

The first and third person narratives also represent different discursive structures between the narrator and the protagonist and the representation of ideas about the woman artist. Thus in texts which are narrated in the first person, the voice and point of view of the protagonist becomes the dominant discursive position which selects, evaluates and filters the textual world to the reader. The protagonist appears to be in control of the narrative representation. This is illustrated for example in texts such as Langley's *The Pea-pickers* and Campbell's *Lines of Flight*. In the former text, Steve appears to be in control of the narrative representation. However her perceptions of her world become problematic because there is no narrative counterbalance to her 'flights of fantasy' and the boundaries between her fancies and the textual facts are blurred. In the latter text, Rita shifts her discursive position from the first to the third person, merges past and present times and blurs the boundaries between reality and her consciousness. On the other hand, texts which are narrated in the third person narrative voice illustrate different degrees of autonomy between the protagonist and the narrator. These texts tend to speak for the protagonist, to amplify or qualify her discourse by narrative comment and to describe other aspects of the textual worlds which fall outside her consciousness. For example, Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* and Baynton's *Human Toll* both represent a narrator who has a controlling, authoritarian attitude towards the representation of the protagonist's ideas and discourse. Here these narrators speak for the protagonists and indicate to the reader that they know more than do the protagonists. On the other hand, Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children* and *For Love Alone* allow more freedom for the protagonist within the third person narrative. Thus Louie

develops her consciousness and her creative powers which indicate both her potential abilities and her challenges to Sam's ideas and discourse through her own poetic discourse, while Teresa is represented in the first person when she explores her erotic fantasies.

However some texts indicate that the assumption of the dominant speaking position by women is still not entirely adequate to the expression of the woman-centred point of view. Language itself remains limited in its ability to represent female experience. As we have seen in previous chapters, Stead illustrates this difficulty when dealing with the ambiguous father-daughter relationship between Sam and Louie. The inadequacy of language and its inability to name certain aspects of female experience is reinforced by the intertextual relationship to Shelley's *The Cenci*. Yet despite this difficulty, the text indicates that Louie's poetic discourse becomes her means of asserting her control and of transcending her father's discourse. Campbell's *Lines of Flight* explores the relationship between language, female discourse and experience from a different perspective. Here, Rita the protagonist/narrator, discovers that her words and discourse do not belong to her. Men reshape her words according to their preconceived ideas about her. The first person plural grammatical structure of French is highlighted to expose the assumption and exclusion of interpersonal relationships on the basis of similarity and difference. Rita loses her voice and her creative insights as she is penetrated by male voices and ideas. Finally she disappears from the narrative after constructing her Narrative Structure. Here her pre-recorded voice shapes her own self-definition as woman and as artist and her 'female' art. According to her vision and experience, the definition of the female artist and the development of female art lies beyond the boundaries of patriarchal language and discursive structures.

The discursive structures and the evaluating narrative contexts of the texts represent particular ideas about the definition of 'woman' within patriarchal society and the relationship between 'woman' and art. The texts vary as to how this argument is constructed within their discursive systems. The outcomes of this polemic are represented in the plot resolutions.

Overall, the realisation of the woman as an artist depends on the nature of the society which she inhabits. Thus art is represented as a social practice which is interconnected with the protagonist's experience of her social context, rather than as an exercise of specific individual talent or as an indication of personal inadequacy. However, even though the nature and representation of the social contexts within the texts are relatively uniform, some protagonists do become artists while others fail to do so. This difference concerning the fate of the woman artist reflects the varying agendas of the writers. With the exception of *Tirra Lirra by the River*, texts which feature the protagonist who fails to become an artist indicate that other themes have predominated over that of the woman artist. Thus *Human Toll* illustrates the dominant theme of maternalism as an ambiguous form of 'saving grace' in this textual world. The values of socialism and social responsibility predominate over the protagonist's desire for self-determination in *Intimate Strangers*, while issues about homosexuality predominate in *All That False Instruction*. *Tirra Lirra by the River* represents the effects of the social context upon the protagonist which are so extensive that she fails even to become aware that she might have been an artist.

In contrast to these texts which represent the failure of the woman to become an artist, other texts, such as *The Getting of Wisdom*, *The Man Who Loved Children*, *For Love Alone* and *Kewpie Doll* explore the progress of a young woman who is becoming an artist. These texts represent a mosaic of ideological values and images connected to the patriarchal definition of 'woman' which the protagonist must negotiate if she is to become an artist. At the same time, the ideological design of these texts is centred on the woman artist and is not deflected by other thematic concerns.

The third group of texts is of those in which the woman is already an artist. Here the emphasis varies. Some protagonists may not be writers within the narrative itself, but are the authors of the text; some may be the narrators and artists within the texts; and others may be writers described in the third person. This group includes *My Brilliant Career*, *My Career Goes Bung*, *The Pea-pickers*, *An Item from the Late News*, *Foxybaby*, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Lines of Flight*. The specific ideas about 'woman' and the representation of other contrary discourses will be discussed in detail in Chapters 9 and 10. However the meaning of

'woman' is debated from the position of the subject/protagonist with the intention of convincing the reader.

SUBJECT AND READER

The positions of the Subject and the reader are at the opposite ends of the discursive structures within the texts. Each needs the other in order to make sense of the narrative world and to fulfil the narrative contract which makes a text a form of communication. The Subject, the woman artist protagonist, represents to the reader both particular ideas about the woman artist figure and her relationships to art and to society. In turn, she is also an object of literary representation. Although the forms of the polemic vary among the texts, the Subject in each of them argues her position and expects to convince the reader. The reader is placed in an 'ideal' position from which to make the narrative intelligible and to be convinced of the text's ideological arguments and literary representation of the woman artist.

The representation of ideas and values about the woman artist is interdependent with the representation and construction of the Subject. The Subject, the woman artist protagonist, speaks her ideas and conveys her points of view from a particular position within the discursive structure in relation to the narrator and to other characters. At the same time, the Subject has been constructed according to particular literary theories and conventions about her literary representation. Recent literary, philosophical and feminist theories have highlighted the intrinsic relationship between the Subject, language and ideology. According to these approaches, the Subject is a construct in both the fictional, the social and the cultural worlds of words, values and ideologies, yet at the same time is also able to construct other, oppositional ideologies and values. Furthermore, the female Subject is constructed according to particular images of 'woman' and within a particular discursive relationship with the patriarchal hegemony. *Lines of Flight* selfconsciously illustrates contemporary theories about the Subject, such as semiotics, from the woman-centred point of view. Other texts such as *For Love Alone* and more particularly *Kewpie Doll* suggest that the Subject's consciousness is shaped by the voices and values of others.

The texts then explore her becoming an artist. To use Bakhtin's terms, this development is indicated by the conflict between the authoritative discourse which indicates the value and image of 'woman', and the internally persuasive discourse of the Subject which challenges such values and asserts her own. These types of discourse about 'woman' are frequently represented on different levels of discourse in the text. Thus the authoritative discourse is illustrated mainly in the outer structure which is directed to the textual world, while the Subject's internally persuasive discourse is represented on the inner structure of discourse which is 'silently' directed to the reader.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, ideas about the Subject and the literary representation of the Subject, have undergone significant changes this century. Since the work of Marx, Freud, Lacan and Althusser, the Cartesian definition of the Subject as a transcendental ego which is the source of all meaning and understanding is no longer tenable. Instead there is the notion that the Subject is divided, decentred and socially determined. Subjectivity is thus constructed in the Subject according to particular ideologies within discursive positions. As Catherine Belsey states:

The subject is constructed in language and in discourse and, since the symbolic order in its discursive use is closely related to ideology, in ideology.¹

This subjectivity, which is linguistically and discursively constructed, reflects the dominant cultural values which organise subjectivity according to sexual difference.

Feminist theory explores the relationship between the construction of the Subject, modes of representation and ideology. Teresa de Lauretis states that:

As social beings, women are constructed through effects of language and representation...a woman (or man) is not an undivided identity, a stable unity of 'consciousness', but the terms of a shifting series of ideological positions. Put another way, the social being is constructed day by day as the point of articulation of ideological formations, an always provisional encounter of subject and codes of historical (therefore changing) intersection of social formations and her or his personal history. While codes and social formations define positions of meaning, the individual reworks those positions into a personal, subjective construction.²

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1. Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice*, (London, Methuen, 1980), p.61.
 2. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, (London, Macmillan Press, 1984), p.14.

Thus woman is a social construct whereby social values of gender and sexuality are inscribed into the subjectivity of the female self.

French theorists have further developed the notion of the Subject. Irigaray and Cixous argue that the notion of the integrated, unified Self/Subject is a phallic idea which attempts to suppress and deny conflict, ambiguity and contradiction. Kristeva has developed the notion that, in the act of narration, the Subject splits into two: the Subject who speaks as the Subject of enunciation, and the Subject who is addressed as the object of the utterance. The French thus emphasise the fragmentation of the self.

In contrast to the Cartesian notion of a unified, separate ego, and the French notion of a solipsistic, fragmented self, Bakhtin promotes a pluralistic, intersubjective notion of the Subject. According to him, the Subject is constructed from the social voices, languages and world views of the other, to form an integrated unity which can come into being only in relation to the other. Thus the Subject does not exist without the other, and this relationship between self and other can only be effected through the discursive situation. Wayne Booth summarises Bakhtin's views of the Subject, and states:

We come into consciousness speaking a language already permeated with many voices - a social, not a private language. From the beginning, we are 'polyglot', already in process of mastering a variety of social dialects derived from parents, clan, class, religion, country. We grow in consciousness by taking in more voices as 'authoritatively persuasive' and then by learning which to accept as 'internally persuasive'. Finally we achieve, if we are lucky, a kind of individuality, but it is never a private or autonomous individuality in the Western sense; except when we maim ourselves arbitrarily to monologue, we always speak a chorus of languages. Anyone who has not been maimed by some imposed 'ideology in the narrow sense', anyone who is not an 'ideologue', respects the fact that each of us is a 'we', not an 'I'. Polyphony, the miracle of our 'dialogical' lives together, is thus both a fact of life and, in its higher reaches, a value to be pursued endlessly.³

3. Wayne Booth, Introduction to: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, M.M. Bakhtin, ed./trans. Caryl Emerson, (Minneapolis, Uni. of Minnesota Press, 1984), p.xxi.

Thus Bakhtin denies the absolute boundary between the self and the social. Instead there is an indissoluble bond between the self and the external world. The self is composed of various social voices and dialogues, and reaches self-definition only by the interchange of dialogue with the other in the discursive formation.

Some of the texts, to varying degrees, illustrate and represent such a view of the Subject. Thus in *For Love Alone*, Stead incorporates representative social voices and their expectations in Teresa's consciousness. For example, Teresa is described as thinking about the social expectations of these external voices about a woman's marital state:

Teresa suffered for herself and for the other girls; each year now counted against them; nineteen, and has she a boy-friend? Twenty, and does she like anyone particularly? Twenty one, now she has the key of the door; she ought to be looking around! Twenty two already! Twenty three and not engaged yet? (pp.18-19)

Teresa feels the shame of a woman who does not meet these criteria, and she determines not to fail according to their standards. On the other hand, *Kewpie Doll* represents notions of the Subject which are intrinsic to the construction of the narrative, and which come closest to Bakhtin's definitions. The un-named protagonist in this text represents a Voice which is filled 'unconsciously' with the voices of others. These voices and their values construct the Subject. Within the narrative, the incorporation of the voices of others and their values about the 'feminine' gradually become submerged by the protagonist's assertions of her own voice and values. The protagonist refers to these voices as 'they' and 'you'. For example, she refers to the way that the voices and values of others have shaped her mother's values and way of life, and states:

She had to live with Reece and her granma and granpa in the house beside the bakery in the worst suburb of all, but she told the girls at school she didn't live there, she pretended she lived somewhere else. God had made you, given you pink skin, put you on the earth, but because of where you lived you could never be good enough - for proper people, for yourself. (p.33)

In this text, the protagonist does not engage directly in dialogue with others in the text. She is addressing a monologue, filled with her own and others' voices, to the reader. On the other hand, Jolley's *Foxybaby* and *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* represent narrative worlds which are filled

with voices and dialogues. The Subjects' voices belong to them, instead of being echoes of the voices of others. But each Subject's voice reverberates with the voices of others. Thus Jolley illustrates the polyphonic nature of social, discursive reality.

Lines of Flight self-consciously illustrates contemporary theories about the Subject, and represents a Subject who is split within discursive positions. Here the protagonist, Rita, is represented in past and present time, in both first and third person narrative positions, and between inner and outer levels of dialogues. She is conscious that the voices of others are present in her own words and self-definition, and she regards this as a colonisation of her self. Rita is aware of contemporary theories about the Subject. For example, she states in a textual monologue that:

In a long greedy scrutiny of space from that pinnacle,
I would see that crazy queue of arbitrarily fused
selves, oh yes, from moments past recede, I would
pluralise and scatter on horizons ebbing into horizons
that composite persona which you, your eyes, your words,
your space, your time concertina into *personality*. The
mock determinisms in the definitions you and all the
rest of them offer. (pp.23-24)

On one level, the narrative structure of the text endorses the structuralist view of the Subject, yet on another level, Rita is exposing the process through which her language is colonised by men in discourse.

In general, the majority of the texts present a traditional Subject with little apparent awareness of the nature of that construction. However some texts do explore certain issues about the female subject within traditional parameters. For example, the issues of the ego and egotism from a woman-centred point of view are emphasised by Franklin and Astley. In both *My Brilliant Career* and *My Career Goes Bung*, Sybylla stridently asserts the value of ego and egotism. This gains particular strength because this is the voice of the female ego which is suppressed in the discursive formations within social reality. In the Introduction to *My Brilliant Career*, she asserts her egotism which has produced her autobiography without apology. She states:

I make no apologies for being egotistical. In this particular I attempt an improvement on other autobiographies. Other autobiographies weary one with excuses for their egotism. What matters it to you if I am egotistical? What matters it to you though it should matter that I am egotistical? (*Introduction*)

She emphasises the theme of egotism in *My Career Goes Bung* to both validate her form of autobiography and to justify the attention she has given herself. She states:

In company with ninety nine per cent. of my fellows,
the subject of self is full of fascination to me. (p.11)

She 'naturalises' egotism and argues that everyone is:

...a mass of egotism. They must be if they are to remain
perpendicular...each fellow's self-importance is the only
thing that keeps him going. (pp28-29)

She thus generalises the presence and importance of egotism to everyone, whether in everyday life or in the autobiographical form. It is significant that she has used the masculine pronoun in this instance, which serves to mute the assertion of female egotism even though it is made here through the female voice. On the other hand, Gabby, the protagonist of Astley's *An Item from the Late News*, takes a different approach to the notion of ego. Here she defines ego as that destructive, inner, selfish demand of hers which was instrumental in causing Wafer's death. She refers to her ego as that 'nonsense of self' (p.65) and to that:

...inner country where I keep my screwed up rag of
self with its primitive wants and silent expressive
yowls. (p.6)

In this confessional narrative, she explores her motives and actions which had led to Wafer's destruction. She realises that he was a person who did not get caught up with others' demands of him and that he had no demands to make of anyone else:

I know I have come to see his downfall, but for those
few moments I wanted nothing of that, could forget his
seeming indifference and abstract only the mildness of
a human who truly wished for singleness. We had hemmed
him in with our demands and they had holed him out like
years. (p.173)

Thus Sybylla celebrates the assertion of the female ego while Gabby asks forgiveness for doing so.

However, within the parameters of traditional form and without the support of contemporary literary theories, most of the texts do illustrate the problematic relationship between the Subject, language and ideology. To varying degrees, the texts explore the effects of ideologies upon the protagonist, and represent a conflict between the inner ideas and direction of the protagonist to be an artist and the external demands and expectations of her as 'woman'. This is represented by the two levels of dialogue

and the consequent split of the protagonist within the texts. Dialogue is represented on the inner level, which is addressed to the reader, and which represents the protagonist's 'true' self; and on the outer level which is directed to the relevant character within the text and which represents the muted 'social' aspect of the protagonist.

Bakhtin has discussed the relationship between ideology and the Subject. He argues that there is an interactional dynamic within each Subject between the discourse of authority and the discourse of the self. The authoritative discourse refers to the word of authority, the Law of the Father, which comes from sources such as parents, religious and political doctrines, and social ideologies about the nature of the Subject. The internally persuasive discourse refers to the Subject's inner evaluations of these discourses and the assertion of her/his inner beliefs and values. As Bakhtin states:

The struggle and dialogic interrelationships of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual ideological consciousness.⁴

The representation of the female artist Subject within the texts may thus be defined in terms of the interaction between these ideological discourses. The authoritative discourse refers to those external injunctions that she be a 'woman' according to specific social definitions, while her internally persuasive discourse evaluates these values and asserts her own ideas. Thus the narrative development of the protagonist traces the process by which she absorbs some values, rejects others, and asserts her own.

Some texts highlight the effects that ideologies have on the protagonists. For example, in *The Getting of Wisdom*, Laura is represented as a person who wants to please, who wants to be accepted. The textual world illustrates varying forms of praise and punishment to ensure that certain rules and standards are met. Thus Laura learns from painful

4. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist & Caryl Emerson, (Austin, Uni. of Texas Press, 1981), p.342.

experience that 'the unpardonable sin is to vary from the common mould' (p.76). Despite her intentions, Laura cannot fit into this world. She rejects the values of the school on this basis rather than from an informed critique of these values and the process of conditioning the individual. This theme of social acceptance is also pursued by *All That False Instruction*. Here the protagonist, Maureen, is in conflict between her need for the approval of others on the one hand, and her desires for women lovers, which are socially disapproved, on the other. Maureen enjoys being a lesbian but she cannot withstand the voices of social rejection and disapproval which she has internalised within herself. She plans to go to Afghanistan to escape the inner voices of the 'ordinary, normal, complacent bastards who populate this country' (pp.237-38). On the other hand, *Tirra Lirra by the River* represents a protagonist who reflects upon how gender values and her experience as a 'woman' have shaped her character, with a mocking, ironic tone. Nora states that she has a 'tendency to be a bit of a toady' (p.8), and that she smiles until her face aches. Ironically she thinks that she might have saved her marriage with Colin had she learned 'the defensive uses of flattery' instead of acting with her 'usual frankness' (p.51). By the time she becomes a theatre dressmaker, she has learned diplomacy in social relationships, and has learned to have influence while appearing to have none (p.111). This image of the female subject who has adapted to patriarchal society with enforced subtlety and indirect manipulation is echoed by Gabby in *An Item from the Late News*. Gabby lies and ironically states that:

I was practising too the protective veneers of womanhood
had I known. (pp.19-20)

Stead on the other hand represents two protagonists who do take control of their destiny, and who assert their will and their values in relation to patriarchal values. In *The Man Who Loved Children*, Louie develops an alternative discourse of poetry and drama to escape from Sam's patriarchal values. She can dispassionately decide to kill her parents to save herself and the family from them. In *For Love Alone*, Teresa determines that she will know love and passion on her own terms, without compromise. Through her will, she asserts her destiny beyond such determining factors as poverty and patriarchal laws, and learns to assert her own values which are based on her own experience. These protagonists become writers once they have asserted their own internally persuasive discourses against the authoritative patriarchal discourses.

Some texts develop two images of the protagonist to represent these conflicts between the authoritative discourse and the internally persuasive discourse. For example Sybylla from *My Brilliant Career* represents herself as others see her on the level of outer dialogue with other characters, while at the same time, she conducts a commentary about her observations and her own self-image on the inner level which is directed to the reader. On the one hand, she denigrates herself in terms of the standards of patriarchal values. She thinks:

Why was I ugly and nasty and miserable and useless -
without a place in the world? (p.46)

She addresses her reflection in the mirror and states:

You are the most uninteresting person in the world.
You are small and nasty and bad and every other thing
that's abominable. (p.62)

She scorns the fact that she is a woman and cannot wholeheartedly accept Harry's love for her:

You, a chit in your teens, an ugly, poor, useless,
unimportant, little handful of human flesh, and,
above, or rather below, all, a woman - only a woman!
It would indeed be a depraved and forsaken man who
would need your services as a stay and support. (p.152)

This self-loathing reflects her distance from perceived patriarchal values and her inability to see and to accept herself. However, this inner voice also questions and comments upon other characters and their values within the text. For example, when her grandmother is encouraging her to marry Frank Hawden, she thinks between the lines of the narrative:

No, I would never marry. I would procure some occupation
in which I could tread my life out, independent of the
degradation of marriage. (p.72)

Thus on the inner level of discourse, Sybylla represents both her internalisations and her critiques of some aspects of patriarchal values and standards. *Lines of Flight* also represents the protagonist whose image is split between levels of discourse, but here this representation illustrates aspects of contemporary theory about the Subject, and the protagonist's inability to 'own' her meaning in discourse with others. Thus the text illustrates the view that the self is a flowing process, to the extent that voices might merge and the boundaries between speakers and the speech act are harder to define. At the same time, Rita loses power over her meaning in discourse, and can only regain it on the inner level which is directed to the reader. For example, she reports a

dialogue in italics and her comments in capitals, when she assesses Jean, and states:

Say what I mean? How can he assess that? How can I say what I mean *anyhow*, when as soon as the words are out, they become what *he* means? (p.28)

This inner level also represents her anger which she is unable to voice in the textual world. Thus she states indirectly:

Almost a pleasure in the austerity of martyrdom, the undercurrent of the rhetoric she denies herself simply playing at her speech organs: You bastard, here I am involved in the most Vicious Games of Capitalism at Publikon to get some degree of autonomy - for us both - let you forget your Material Situation so you can do your Intellectual Work... (p.228)

The inner level of discourse in this text represents Rita's ideas and emotions which cannot be expressed on the outer level. She learns that her art will become her true medium rather than discourse with others.

Prichard and Stead represent a more conventional image of the split female protagonist. In *Intimate Strangers*, Elodie is a 'snail of a woman'⁵ (p.106), a 'domestic animal' (p.81), in her everyday life of struggle and care for her family. Yet she has a rich inner life which responds to nature and to music, which she expresses in the indirect narrative from her point of view rather than directly to characters in the textual world. Her romance with Jerome is incorporated into this inner world of that 'other' self of Elodie who remains detached from her surroundings. *For Love Alone* also describes the protagonist's erotic imagination in terms of an inner world which is directed to the reader. Here the languages and images are in stark contrast to that of Teresa's everyday life and appearance. Although Teresa is alone in her room, the narrative description of her erotic fantasies changes from third to first person singular and plural, from polemic to imagined, inserted dialogues. This brings her fantasy world to life, and celebrates her private and unashamed eroticism which cannot be expressed in her textual world.

5. Katherine Susannah Prichard, *Intimate Strangers*, 1937, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1981).

Thus some of the texts illustrate the dichotomy between the protagonist's own values and ideologies and those of others in her textual world. This is represented by the different levels of discourse and the split image of the protagonist within the texts.

The position of the protagonist within the discursive, narrative structure as the first or third person reflects her relationship to the ideas and values of other characters, including the narrator. The narrator, the protagonist, the narrator/protagonist and other characters are all factors within the ideological design of the text. Each participant here represents a context of discourse which is in active, dynamic relationship with the others. The position from which the narrative is related determines the value and meaning of what is represented within the textual world from the protagonist's point of view. Thus when the protagonist is represented as the first person narrator, then she is the 'I' of the text, the dominant, controlling voice which filters the textual world to the reader, and which interprets and evaluates the points of view of other characters. By contrast, in the third person narrative, the voice and point of view of the protagonist is encapsulated by the narrator's point of view and evaluation of the textual world. There are varying degrees of dependence and independence, intimacy and distance, between the narrator and the third person protagonist. The voice of the protagonist may only filter through the narrator's control and perception of the narrative description.

The majority of the texts under consideration here are written from the first person position of the protagonist/narrator. Although these texts differ widely in their representation of the image and values of the woman artist, they all reflect a textual world in which the voice of woman is limited or muted. As the first person narrator, the woman takes the dominant discursive position within the texts. From that position she represents and evaluates notions of her textual world which concern her relationships to art and society, and inserts her own point of view and meaning as a woman who is or who is becoming an artist. Texts which feature the first person protagonist are *My Brilliant Career*, *My Career Goes Bung*, *The Pea-pickers*, *Kewpie Doll*, *All That False Instruction*, *Tirra Lirra by the River*, *An Item from the Late News* and *Lines of Flight*.

The representation of the discursive relationships between the first person narrator and other characters will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

By contrast, when the narrative is in the third person, then the protagonist, along with the other characters, is encapsulated within the narrator's discourse and evaluation. The protagonist no longer has a direct voice in the text, and although the narrative might be depicted from her point of view, there are also other areas in the narrative which she is unaware of. There are varying degrees of dependency and intimacy between the position of the narrator and the protagonist. Some protagonists have more freedom from the narrative voice than others who are described rather than being able to speak for themselves. Points of view and values which differ from those of the protagonist are more likely to be more fully represented than those of the first person narratives, and are subject to the narrator's as well as the protagonist's evaluation. Texts which employ the third person protagonist are *The Getting of Wisdom*, *Human Toll*, *Intimate Strangers*, *The Man Who Loved Children*, *For Love Alone*, *Foxybaby* and *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*. They too will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent chapter.

The arguments of the Subject/protagonist and narrator are ultimately directed toward the position of the reader within the discursive system. The role and position of the reader is represented to varying degrees within the texts. Some, such as *All That False Instruction*, represent the reader in a conventional position. Others such as *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* explore the literary notions and representation of the reader within the narrative. Other texts such as *The Pea-pickers* at certain points prove to be unreliable to the reader.

In *The Pea-pickers*, Steve's position as the protagonist/narrator becomes unreliable to the reader who might want some consistency. Steve's point of view is the sole and dominant one in the narrative, and she implicitly invites the reader to see the textual world from her position. She represents her world as 'real' while the resolution of the narrative is represented as a logical outcome of her perceptions and experiences. Yet the text is interspersed with absurd incidents which counteract its impression of 'realness'. This includes such absurd

incidents as the great bell tolling a warning (p.13), the old man selling poisons (p.14)^{and} the appearance of Captain Kettle (p.98). Furthermore there are indications that Steve is not totally reliable in her perceptions and reporting. For example, she states that she has the power to transform men such as Kelly (p.24) and Macca (p.74) into objects that she might love, rather than seeing them as they are. The text swings ambiguously between elements of the tragic and the absurd. Yet there is not enough absurdity or tragedy within the narrative to signify whether Steve's resolution is an absurd or a tragic image. The reader is left confused as to how seriously Steve and her world should be taken.

Similar ambiguities from the reader's position exist in *Human Toll*. Here narrative interests and threads are submerged or highlighted with little apparent relation to the logic of the narrative itself. For example, the Gothic portrayal of the mystery about Boshy's treasure in the early part of the narrative becomes submerged by other narrative events. Later there is a series of frightening episodes when someone is trying to find the treasure. Then it is obliquely mentioned that Hugh Palmer has found it and has disappeared with it. Meanwhile the dominant narrative focus centres on the theme of maternal protectiveness in the contrast between Ursula and Mina. The reader is left confused at the end of the narrative when the narrator's voice disappears and only Ursula's delirious point of view and consciousness remains. The narrative resolution remains unsolved.

Jolley's texts offer a further exploration of the significance of the reader position. In *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, the narrative explores the effect that fiction has on the reader, Miss Peabody. Here Diana's fiction initiates her into a hitherto unknown world of the senses and of passion. Miss Peabody is so absorbed that she begins to blur the boundaries between fiction and reality, yet the world of Diana's fiction is more preferable to her banal reality. Miss Peabody begins to construct her own fictions in her letters to Diana, and finally she becomes a writer herself when she inherits the unfinished manuscript. Thus Jolley has represented a continuum between the writer and the reader. Each contributes to the creation of the fictional world, while the narrative itself is unfinalised and continues to be created. In this text Jolley has placed the reader in a conventional position. However

in contrast, the reader position becomes a source of irony in *Foxybaby*. As in the previous text, *Foxybaby* illustrates the effect that fiction has upon the 'reader'. Here Mrs Viggars responds to the Treatment.) She decides to adopt the characters who participate in it in order to create a mother role for herself in the real world. Her response gratifies Miss Porch, the writer. However the reader's expectations of a conventional resolution are shattered at the end of the narrative. Miss Porch, the character we presumed we knew and had fixed in reality, actually runs off into the distance to join her characters from the Treatment, while at the same time, the 'real' Miss Porch wakes up at the end of her bus journey, ready to begin her classes. Now the 'real' narrative will presumably begin. The preceding narrative which has been represented realistically despite its absurd elements, has been a dream.

Other texts place the reader in a more conventional position. Thus *All That False Instruction* represents a textual world as though it were reality, which is a convention addressed to the reader in the conventional position. Even though the narrative structure and process of *Kewpie Doll* is unconventional, the reader is positioned to see this world solely from the protagonist's point of view. The narrative of *Intimate Strangers* presents the textual reality as a 'natural' world, and the reader is positioned to view both Elodie's, and to a lesser degree, Greg's, internal thoughts, feelings and dilemmas within the narrative context. *For Love Alone* also places the reader in the conventional position. However, in the introduction, the narrator is positioned in the northern hemisphere and addresses the reader as though it, rather than the southern hemisphere were at the centre. The implication is that Teresa's world in Australia is upside down. Later the theme and plot will illustrate that from Teresa's point of view, the moral world itself is upside down. The narrative traces her own revaluation of moral laws and her inversion of the gender bases of morality. In this text, the reader is also positioned so that she will know more about the narrative world than does Teresa herself. Thus the reader becomes aware of Crow's lies and depravity before Teresa does, and the reader's sympathy for Teresa is enlisted. In *The Man Who Loved Children*, the reader is positioned to have a relatively equal exposure to the points of view of Henny and Sam, and thus shares Louie's position of viewing them with a critical objectivity. Thus the reader's position is structured so that Louie's decision to kill

her parents is judged as the logical outcome of her world.

Other texts incorporate the role, image and value of the reader within the narrative itself. Thus in *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla directly addresses her presumed readers: the fellow Australians who will determine the 'truth' of her story in the Introduction; the 'Girls' whom she admonishes not to be clever if they want to get married (p.34); and her fellow Australians once more at the end of her narrative. The position and representation of the reader is more complex in *My Career Goes Bung*. Here Sybylla both addresses the reader in order to explain her first text, and incorporates readers' reactions to it within this narrative. She addresses other 'young Australian writers' and cautions them not to repeat her mistakes (pp.5-8), and young women, both those who responded to the 'reality' of *My Brilliant Career*, and those she wants to convince in this text. She addresses the 'Girls!' who will read this text, and assumes an identification with them by referring to:

The dead dank gloom that settled on us upon learning
that the eternal feminine was the infernal feminine. (p.17)

Sybylla has an ambiguous view of the reader response to her first text. On the one hand, she is anxious to prove that the text was a fiction written as 'a spoof autobiography and therefore not to be taken as 'real'', yet on the other hand, she points out that such a response from her female readers indicates that she did write about their experiences and reality in her fiction (p.62).

Although *The Getting of Wisdom* allows the reader to have more information than the protagonist, this text explores the relationship between the writer and the reader. This is illustrated by the relationship between Laura's story about her lover and her audience's expectation of her. The fact that she is lying is not highlighted in the text. Instead the narrator describes the pressure from her audience, the 'four predatory faces that hemmed her in' (p.131), who insist on hearing her story. Laura knows that she would lose her prestige if she told the truth, so she succumbs to their demands for a story. She thinks on the spot and tailors the details of her story according to their responses and expectations. The narrator disparages this audience, rather than the lies Laura tells, and describes them as 'crass realists' with their 'slower brains' (p.134). The fact that Laura can deceive them reflects their

stupidity and gullibility, yet their demand for detail about Laura's romance causes her to elaborate upon her lies. The reader is not positioned here to make a moral judgment, but rather to observe the effects and interactions between the story-teller and the audience.

The effect of the audience or reader upon the narrative is further illustrated in *Tirra Lirra by the River*. Here the text illustrates that the presence of an audience actually changes the shape and image of an individual's life, as well as the presentation of a story. As she narrates her story, Nora is conscious that at times she is addressing her friends in London, and that she shapes her style and point of view to what they might expect. She does this in the present time of narrating and recalls that she had done this in the past. The image she represents of Colin exemplifies this process. As she begins to recall memories of him she states that she had a particular image of him, 'an edited version that I kept on the light side to present to chosen audiences' (p.25). However when she attempts to see the 'real' Colin whom she has concealed even from herself, she states:

I am disconcerted when all I see is the usual figure,
the version I edited for the entertainment of my
friends. (p.32)

In contrast to her structured image of Colin, Nora discovers a fresh, undistorted memory of Archie, and now she can be glad that 'he was never overlaid by discussion, speculation, and humour that will always bring uncertainty' (p.98) to her memory of Colin. Nora's conclusion, which is illustrated in the reporting of the narrative, is that there is an immutable bond between the real and the fictional. Fiction intrudes into reality as soon as it is reported in a dialogue to a listener. Nora states:

I find myself thinking that we were all great story-tellers at number six. Yes, all of us, meeting in passages or assembling in each other's quarters or in the square, were busily collating, and presenting to ourselves and the other three, the truthful fictions of our lives...An audience, especially so sympathetic an audience, imposes restrictions I now wish to do without. (pp.139-40)

Nora is also represented as a reader herself in the narrative. Thus she is able to ask questions from the 'real' author, Olive, about the relationship between 'real' experiences and their fictional representation.

However Olive implies that there is no such relationship because the writer of fiction creates her own reality.

This representation of the presence and the effect of the reader and audience is more implicitly illustrated in *An Item from the Late News*. Gabby states that this is a confessional narrative in which she will explore and expose her role and motives behind Wafer's death. She adopts an intimate, revealing tone. There is the implicit yet unstated sense that her 'I' is addressing a particular listener who will give her absolution. The fact that it is a 'confession' itself implies that it is a self-revealing monologue addressed to someone with the power to forgive. It may be that it is Emmie who is the unstated particular listener who has the power to forgive. This narrative ironically puts the reader in a superior position to the narrator. The reader realises Archie's identity, and is aware that Gabby has helped Clancy to 'disappear' by not realising that she is Archie. There is an ironic similarity between Emmie and Clancy which suggests that Gabby has 'lost' Emmie as well.

In *Lines of Flight*, the position of the reader is expanded to include other aspects of the observer role. Within the narrative, there are analogies drawn between the reader and the observer. Thus it is the observer who looks at Rita's art and narrative sculptures; the voices of Laurence and Raymond, her internal listeners, judges and audience, become her internal censors; and the observer becomes the subject of desires which are stimulated by the advertising agency. The resolution of the narrative places the reader in the viewer/listener position as well. This is the position from which to view the critical, visual descriptions of the Narrative Sculpture, the symbolic images of the protagonist/artist, and Rita's voice against the background of sounds which simulate the narrative description. At the same time, the relationship between the reader and the protagonist becomes more objectified. The protagonist shifts from the first person narrative, which implies intimacy, to the more objectified third person narrative which distances Rita from the reader because she is described from another point of view, to the final image of a recorded voice 'speaking' to the reader.

Such then is the reader position in the texts. This is a point of view on the textual world which is mediated by the narrative context, in which the dilemma between the protagonist and other characters is represented and evaluated. The dilemma confronting the protagonists is essentially their relationship to art and the patriarchal society. Their ideas differ to varying degrees from those of other characters. The narrative voice reports and evaluates the competing values, ideas and points of view and directs them towards the reader. With varying degrees of subtlety and success, the texts operate to convince the reader of the truth of the woman artist's perceptions of her patriarchal reality. There are multiple levels within the text which are geared toward eliciting a reader response, which will be convinced by the text's argument. Through this necessarily one-sided interconnection between the texts and the readers, the texts employ discursive strategies to extend their meaning of 'woman' as artist back into the context. In theory, then, the reader becomes the medium for transmitting the text's argument about 'woman' from the text into the public arena.

LETTERS AS ILLUSTRATIONS OF DISCURSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Some particular discursive relationships between characters within the texts are indicated by letters which pass between them. It is significant that the letter form has been a popular medium of communication between women. Such representations of letters within these texts has several effects. Letters become a medium for arguing certain ideas with relative discursive freedom from certain constraints within face to face discourse. Letters illustrate particular discursive and personal relationships between characters in sharper detail. Furthermore, they become the medium for conducting the narrative when characters are separated. At the same time, the convention of letter writing as a form of literary representation may be exploited. Thus some texts use the letter form to ironically reveal information necessary to the narrative, while others satirise the convention itself.

Some of these characteristics and functions of the letter are illustrated in the texts *My Brilliant Career* and *The Getting of Wisdom*. Sybylla's letter to her sister (p.83) represents a contrast to the one she begins to write to Everard Grey (p.84). Her letter to her sister represents a stream of consciousness, incorporating a 'spoken' rather than a literary style which is 'interrupted' by events happening at the time of writing. For example, she writes:

There are seven lemon-trees here, loaded (another hawker). I hope you think of me sometimes. I am Just as ugly as ever. (A traveller wants to buy a loaf of bread.) (p.84)

This letter indicates her freedom from constraints and the need to impress. This contrasts with the style, tone and *persona* she adopts in her letter to Everard. For example, she writes:

I suppose you have quite forgotten us and Caddagat by this time. The sun has sunk behind the gum-trees, and the blue evening mists are hanging lazily in the hollows of the hills. I expect you are donning your 'swallow-tail' preparatory to leading some be-satined 'faire ladye' in to a gorgeous dinner, thence to the play, then to a dance probably. (pp.84-85)

She does not complete this letter, because she convinces herself that Grey would only laugh at her. A similar dichotomy between freedom and constraint is illustrated by Laura's letters to her sister and her mother in *The Getting of Wisdom*. She freely expresses her opinions to Pin and is careless about her grammar. For example, she writes:

You would not like being here I think you should always stop at home you will never get as far as long division. Mrs Gurley is an awful old beast all the girls call her that.⁴ (p.84)

4. Henry Handel Richardson, *The Getting of Wisdom*, 1910, (Melbourne, Heinemann Educational Books, 1977).

She is more circumspect when writing to her mother although her grammar is still careless. She has written to Pin about the relationships between the girls and boys at school, but to her mother she focuses on clothes, writing that:

They wear dresses down to the ground. Lilith Gordon is a girl in my class she is in my room to she is only as old as me and she wears stays and has a beautiful figure. All the girls wear stays. Please send me some I have no waste. (p.43)

Letters from both Sybylla's and Laura's mothers represent their own values and ideas and expectations of their daughters. Sybylla's mother appears to be harsh towards her in her letters. Her mother thinks that Sybylla is lazy and that she thinks she is too good for the hard work that is needed to keep the family together. Thus when she informs Sybylla that she has to go to McSwats', she writes:

No doubt what I have to write will not be very palatable to you; but it is time you gave up pleasuring and began to meet the responsibilities of life. (p.161)

She writes to her own mother, Sybylla's grandmother, stating:

I don't know where she her rebellious spirit will eventually lead her. I hope McSwat's will tame her; it will do her good. (p.180)

Sybylla responds directly in the narrative to her mother's letters, and uses them to illustrate the lack of understanding between them. Although the text recounts Sybylla's perception of women's victimisation by men, her mother is her greatest adversary to her dreams of anything better. It is her mother's letters which sentence her to McSwat's. Laura's mother appears to be less harsh, but she has a standard of behaviour which she expects of Laura. For example, her mother replies:

I do want you to have nice feelings and not grow rough and rude. (p.45)

However the narrator in *The Getting of Wisdom* supports Laura and the perceptions of her 'unkind eyes'. Her mother is concerned about her manners, whereas the narrator supports her perspicacity which sees the reality behind the manners. In *My Brilliant Career* letters continue the relationship between Harry and Sybylla. When this is removed from their face to fact contact, Sybylla is clearer, more mature and more compassionate about her decision not to marry him (pp.224-25). Thus letters in *My Brilliant Career* continue the plot development, while their presence in both this text and *The Getting of Wisdom* highlight the nature of particular relationships between the protagonists and other characters.

Various types of letters are represented in *The Pea-pickers* which illustrate particular linguistic and literary styles as well as ideas and inter-relationships between characters. Letters are incorporated within the narrative as representations of romantic love, and ironically highlight Steve's relationships with men. For example, she writes 'long and artificial' love letters to Kelly and 'long and natural' were his silences (p.60). Later, letters of romantic love are exchanged between Steve and Macca but finally, 'to all my gilt-and deckle-edged scraps of yearning and sorrow and poetry, no other answer came' (p.183). The artificial and contrived nature of Steve's letters contrasts with those that Blue unwittingly receives from her admirers. The letters from Jim and Peppino, which are both unsought for and rejected by Blue, represent different literary styles. Jim represents the dispossessed class of Gippsland and has little education, while Peppino represents the marginalised migrant class which has not mastered English. Furthermore, Peppino's letters represent Steve's ambivalent attitude towards the Italians. She is both fascinated by the exoticism and repelled by their difference. She states that:

Their quaintness pleased and excited my curiosity,
and the comical English made me laugh and secretly
ridicule them. (p.90)

Peppino's letters represent his inferiority, and make him a figure of fun to Steve. However in the context of the text, Steve perceives that the Italians represent a form of cultural imperialism. Thus the representation of and comparison between Jim's and Peppino's love letters and their peculiar linguistic and grammatical styles are connected with the textual themes of national culture and cultural imperialism. Jim's class is being supplanted by Peppino's race, but their letters place them on the same level. Both Jim and Peppino are clownish figures to Steve, but Peppino represents a more insidious threat which is diluted by ridiculing his letters.

In both her texts, *For Love Alone* and *The Man Who Loved Children*, Stead incorporates the letter form to objectify certain ideas, motives and relationships which might become 'muddled' in the direct discursive relationships. This is illustrated in the letters between Teresa and Jonathan Crow. Teresa's letters to him are statements of an idea in themselves, as well as containing her ideas. For example, Teresa tests her courage by writing a letter to Jonathan telling him she loves him.

She feels shame and daring that she has broken the rule by doing this, and believes that 'no woman had ever done this bitter, shameful, brave thing before' (pp.225-26). Once Jonathan goes to London, their relationship is represented by their letters. This distance and separation reduces their spontaneity and gives 'their sentiments a false beauty and elevation' (p.248). Teresa adopts an essayistic style in her letters through which to develop and expound her ideas. For example, she writes to Jonathan and argues that certain emotions, like passion, are too circumscribed by social rules, and states that 'Religion, morality, consist of the word No!' (p.254). While Teresa is represented taking time and care over her letters to him, the narrative represents Jonathan's careless reception and dismissal of them. The narrative reporting of his behaviour in relation to her letters becomes one means by which the reader learns more about him before Teresa does. When he writes letters to Teresa, he thinks of them as a reflection of his cleverness. The narrator ironically comments that:

So easily did he write now after all those essays and letters, in engaging, acceptable confidences, with a soft, modest indiscretion; it flowed like peaceful meandering, he scarcely knew what he had written. (pp.200-01)

Although he assumes the dominant position in their relationship, he writes in his letters that he has no will and that he wants to take direction from Teresa. For example, he writes:

I put myself in your hands; it's your affair entirely. We shall see what we shall see. I have no will of my own, I only want to be saved and I don't care who does it. Let it be you. I prefer that. (p.208)

When Teresa finally goes to London, she discovers that Crow has left some of her letters unread or has passed them around to his fellows. She is hurt but dismisses any ill-feeling towards Jonathan. It gradually emerges in the narrative that Crow has several female correspondents, whom he has encouraged apart from Teresa, and that he gives them all the same bait. The narrative, for example, depicts him writing a letter to a woman in Australia, which is full of lies and distortions (p.342). Here Crow is revealed to the reader, but Teresa remains unaware of his duplicity. It is Miss de Haviland who writes to Teresa to inform her about Jonathan's letters to other women. She writes:

It's common knowledge now that he wrote love-letters to several girls here (it amounted to that) and even asked them to live with him. (p.426)

Teresa is the only one who responds to him. In view of his actions and character, it is highly ironic that he should contemplate putting his letters into a book about himself and his affairs, to be entitled 'Letters of an Obscure Man'. The narrator ironically describes him from his point of view:

He was amazingly fluent when he wrote letters, could pour himself out, especially to women, and surely it would be a fascinating little study, both literary and psychological, the complexity, yearning, misfiring, of a dull but tender affair that was not quite love? (p.323)

Thus the letters between Jonathan and women expose his emotional cannibalism of Teresa, while his literary and intellectual pretensions are evaluated and exposed by the narrator.

The representation of James Quick's reading of Crow's dissertation may be included as a letter form in the narrative. Here extracts of Crow's ideas are interspersed with Quick's reactions and comments. The narrative in this section, (pp.412 ff.) represents layers of ideas and contextual evaluations. Crow's dissertation represents his points of view and values; this in turn is encapsulated by Quick's evaluative interpretation; which in turn is contained by the narrator's evaluative context. Quick's view is represented as an objective and critical observer's view of Crow's ideas, even though he does have sympathy for Teresa. In this way, he becomes her rescuer. His point of view is more reliable than Teresa's tortured involvement and subjectivity. Almost immediately, this narrative scene is contrasted with the representation of Teresa's own creative writing which draws on her own experience and which is called 'A System by which the Chaste can Know Love; Notes'. Quick is as astonished by the excellence of her writing as he was by the mediocrity of Crow's. By this medium and through Quick's position in the discourse, the narrative ironically contrasts Teresa's and Crow's ideas and styles of writing, endorsing the former and adding condemnation to the latter. As Crow's own points of view, ideas and values are exposed and criticised, Teresa at the same time is emerging as a writer capable of synthesising and integrating her ideas and experience into creative form.

In contrast, letters in *The Man Who Loved Children* are incorporated to illustrate the balance of discursive power between various characters. For example, Henny and Sam reach such a deadlock in their arguments that they no longer communicate verbally. Instead they leave notes to each other. The letters between Sam and his family while he is in Malaysia may be compared to the positions they have in relation to each other in everyday dialogue. Sam is dominant in the latter situation. He uses his family as a forum for his ideas and insists that they think like him. The letters that the family write to him reflect both their writers' relationships with Sam and the relative freedom from him. For example, Louie's letter is mainly a report of what the family is up to. She reports their dialogue at home, rather than any information about herself and her ideas. Her control over Sam lies in her freedom not to tell him everything about herself, which is what he wants to know. Sam realises this when he refers to her 'un-news' (p.258) in his reply to her. Little Evie makes a highly significant slip of the pen when she addresses her letter to 'Dead Dad' (p.255). Later this is ironically echoed by Sam when Louie tells him that Henny is dead. He parodies her, not yet comprehending that Henny really is dead: "Dead Dad, Dead Dad," he said... (p.506). In their letters, both Ernie and Louie parody Sam's corruption of their names, which is another aspect of his discursive power over them. Louie signs herself by his ambiguous nickname for her, as 'Loo-loo', while Ernie signs himself as

Your stupid son,
Ernest-Paynim-Pigsney-Princeps. (p.255)

Sam's reply to Louie represents his attempts to control her. He writes a graphic description of the Buddhist painting which illustrates women being tortured by demons because they 'wouldn't do what their husbands told them' (p.259). Sam describes the effect the image has on a Chinese lady who is looking at it, and speculates that her husband 'will have no trouble with her for a while' (p.259). Sam describes the instruments of torture which are depicted in the paintings, and then draws a connection between art and the creation of wicked weapons. He criticises Louie's own interest in art, which is the discourse that she is developing to exclude him. He writes:

And perhaps, says I, we should suspect all art capable of being applied to such a use. Think of that, Looloo-girl, when you are reading your Styles of Ornament and all those funny, dopey things you read, god-father knows why! (p.260)

It is ironic that in his post-script, after his descriptions of women's torture, he cautions her to be free from the 'horrors of superstition' (p.261). The letters from his family are contrasted to the letters between him and Gillian Roebuck. She writes to him telling him how much he has influenced her, that she really loves 'Wild Life' (p.257) and nature thanks to his teachings. This becomes an ironic medium for undercutting Sam's pretensions. He suffers from the oppressiveness of nature in Malaysia. The narrator has commented that:

Destroying and breeding nature reached in everywhere
here, could not be banished, made man ridiculous. (p.258)

The 'nature' which he has introduced Gillian to is tame and controlled, and is a direct contrast to what he now experiences in a land and culture which is beyond his control. He replies to Gillian, stating:

Yes, it is wonderful to have something to love,
something that will last a lifetime, or many
lifetimes, and if it's nature and man in nature,
that is the best thing of all. (p.261)

Thus this letter illustrates an ironic counterpoint between Sam's ideas about and experience of nature.

The letters discussed in the texts so far have represented a freedom of expression, or non-expression, which may be more problematic in direct speaking relationships. Anderson and Jolley to varying degrees exploit this trend and convention. In *Tirra Lirra by the River*, Nora realises that the letters between her and her family when she was in London did not reveal very much at all. She recalls extracts from their letters about the Rainbow family which are little more than clichés (p.28). She thinks that when her family sat down to write to one another,

...the very act invoked a spell compelling us to
present our lives and our surroundings as utterly,
impossibly, banal. (p.28)

At the same time, she is ironically represented composing a letter to her friends in London. She is adopting a similar tone and style to them which in this context conceals her true anxiety about the Rainbow family (p.31). Later Nora realises the 'truth' behind her letter writing when even then extended into her letters to Olive. She states:

I was banal because I was lying. If my pride had allowed
me to tell the truth, my letters would not have been
banal. (p.58)

The incorporation of letters in this text is connected to the structure of the narrative. Nora tries to remember what happened to the Rainbow family. Other characters are certain that her sister had informed her about it in her letters. Nora is puzzled about Dorothy, and in her memory she counterpoints her life with hers. It ironically emerges that Nora was planning suicide at the time when her sister would have written to her about Dorothy. Nora had not bothered to read the letters before she took her own overdose. Thus the loss of the letters and the information about Dorothy provides the 'mystery' which Nora unravels through her memory globe.

Both of Jolley's texts, *Foxybaby* and *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, are a counterpoint to each other on the representation of letters in fiction. *Foxybaby* satirises the convention to some degree, whereas letters are the structural principle around which the narrative of *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* is organised. In *Foxybaby*, the narrative opens with a series of letters from Miss Porch to Miss Peycroft, and includes one to Mr Miles. Only Miss Porch's letters are represented, but the reader senses the 'voices' of the letters to which she responds. Miss Porch makes a series of mistakes about the names and addresses, and it seems that her respondent corrects them in her reply. The tone of the letters moves from conventional politeness to frustration. Although the mistakes and their corrections are objects of satire, the letters illustrate the issue that Miss Porch will confront within the narrative world. This issue centres on the battle for authorial control between herself, the writer, and Miss Peycroft, the headmistress. In these letters Miss Porch is trying to assert herself against Miss Peycroft's intrusions. This will be highlighted in greater detail within the narrative when various characters try to wrest control of the Treatment from Miss Porch.

In contrast, letters within *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* are the medium for the relationship between Miss Peabody the reader, and Diana the writer. The letters between them oscillate between several discursive levels: that is, on the personal level between Miss Peabody and Diana; on the literary level between Diana the writer who explains the fictional process to her reader, Miss Peabody; and on the narrative level where letters are the medium for representing the parallel narrative about

Miss Thorne. This narrative world seems to be controlled by Diana the writer. However Jolley includes a structural irony which exploits the convention of the letter. Miss Peabody received an inserted, typed letter discussing a hip replacement with a surgeon, in between the usual handwritten pages which have described Diana's personal and narrative worlds. This irony makes sense at the end of the narrative when Miss Peabody discovers the truth about her 'goddess'. This destroys the image of the writer which both Diana and Miss Peabody have constructed within the letters. The letters between them graphically illustrate the writer-reader relationship in fiction. Miss Peabody is seduced into the narrative world of Diana's fiction, a world which offers her more possibilities than the real world where she works at Fortress Industries. Miss Peabody's whole experience and outlook changes as she is initiated into the world of fiction by Diana. Gradually Miss Peabody herself becomes a writer through writing letters to Diana. She becomes more practised at the technique of writing, and more involved in the construction of the fictional narrative, so that she can truly pick up the manuscript where Diana left off. At the same time, the text highlights the image of the writer which readers deduce from their texts. Thus Miss Peabody constructs an image of Diana the Huntress from her readings in mythology and from the impressions that Diana gives in her letters. She realises the truth when she goes to Australia to see the 'real' Diana.

Thus the presence of letters serves as a link between characters who may be separated by time and space within the narrative, but more importantly, it highlights particular discursive relationships between characters and their ideas about 'woman' and the woman artist figure. In contrast to direct speech and indirect narrative reporting, letters represent both the writer's ideas and her relationship to the reader in a dialogic context which is relatively free from the experiential effects of discursive power. Furthermore the actual form, style and grammar of the letters represent particular relationships between the writer and the reader. These relationships may not be so clear-cut in the actual face-to-face discursive situation.

CHAPTER 9

THE FIRST PERSON NARRATIVE

The literary figure of the woman artist represents a challenge to particular patriarchal notions about 'woman'. The discursive position and the point of view of the woman artist is explored within the internal discursive structure of the texts, and from this perspective, a new image of 'woman' emerges. These internal discursive structures consist of competing discourses from particular characters, which are arranged in a hierarchy, in which their ideas and meanings about 'woman' are illustrated and evaluated in relation to the definition of the woman artist. These discourses and their attendant meanings and values about 'woman' are represented from the dominant narrating position of the narrator or the woman artist protagonist. According to Bakhtin's theory, the meanings and values of particular words and concepts emerge through discursive relationships. Discourse constitutes rather than reflects meaning. Thus in the texts under discussion, the meanings of certain concepts which are attached to 'woman' are either 'defamiliarised' or reconstructed within the discursive structure. This process occurs, for example, in relation to 'marriage', which is of particular concern to the aspiring woman artist. This discursive structure constitutes and evaluates her ideas about herself as a woman and as an artist in relation to those of other characters which may oppose such an image of female destiny.

In this and in the following chapter, I shall discuss the competing definitions of 'woman' which are represented and evaluated within the discursive structures. Hence the analysis will concentrate on the discursive strategies and processes by which women writers construct their meaning of 'woman'. This approach contrasts with those textual analyses which highlight the meaning itself of the texts. This includes both the orthodox critical approach which explores the transcendental meanings of the text, and the radical deconstructionist approach which suggests that there is no meaning. By applying Bakhtin's theory, it will emerge that the discursive systems of the texts 'defamiliarise' and constitute meanings about 'woman', so that a new meaning of 'woman' is being reconstructed from the woman-centred point of view.

This chapter will concentrate on the first person narrative, while the following chapter will discuss the third person narrative. The first person narrator protagonist appears to have maximum control over the representation and argument of her point of view as a woman who is or who is becoming an artist, while in the third person narrative, her ideas and experience are encapsulated by the dominant perspective of the narrator. As the first person narrator, the protagonist represents aspects of patriarchal notions about 'woman', and from her dominant narrative position, both evaluates and reconstructs them. She makes patriarchal values about 'woman' 'strange'. This debate between patriarchal notions of 'woman' and the woman-centred view of them is constructed within the discursive system of the texts.

The first person narratives fall into two categories. The first group illustrates the protagonist/narrator who is also the 'author' of the textual world. This includes *My Brilliant Career*, *My Career Goes Bung*, *The Pea-pickers*, *An Item from the Late News* and *Lines of Flight*. These protagonists who creatively 'construct' their textual worlds illustrate the most control over the selection, representation and evaluation of notions about 'woman', and have implicitly or explicitly established their identities as women artists. In contrast, the second group concerns those texts which have not been 'created' by the protagonist. This includes *Kewpie Doll*, *All That False Instruction* and *Tirra Lirra by the River*. It is significant that of these three, two protagonists do not become artists while the third is a painter.

The most detailed analysis of 'woman' within the patriarchal system is depicted in Franklin's texts, *My Brilliant Career* and *My Career Goes Bung*. The second text has been written in a direct intertextual reference to the first, yet each text reflects a different focus upon 'woman', and both have different narrative and polemical structures through which to argue their points of view.

In *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla is an aspiring artist. Here she highlights aspects of patriarchal values about 'woman' and the position of women within patriarchal society which she perceives to be inimical to her chosen destiny. It is significant that she is not an artist within

her textual world. However her pessimistic view of women under patriarchal structures is relieved by the fact that she has produced her text, although this production is 'outside' of her textual world. Within the text, Sybylla's representation of 'marriage' reflects the conflict between her artistic aspirations and the patriarchal values of her culture. On the one hand, Sybylla opposes marriage because she has observed the negative consequences of women's experiences as wives and mothers, and because she is aware that the state of marriage is incompatible with her artistic destiny. Yet on the other hand, marriage is the predominant option for women in her world, and is supported by other significant characters. Thus Sybylla concludes that 'A woman is but the helpless tool of man - a creature of circumstance' (p.16). The debate about the meaning of 'woman' is reinforced by the exploration of the psychological consequences of patriarchal values. Despite her point of view, Sybylla's own sense of self worth is determined by whether she is 'marriageable' or not. Even though she rationally rejects marriage and is critical of patriarchal values, she can only define the importance and value of herself within the parameters of the patriarchy. Hence the three marriage proposals she receives confirm her sense of worth, because she is 'marriageable', even though she has no intention of accepting them.

Sybylla structures the conflicts between her points of view and those of others about 'woman' within the narrative system which falls into two dominant sections. The first centres on her polemical descriptions and evaluations of her world and the position of women within it. This section becomes the forum for her ideas. Here the statements and opinions of other characters are selected and encapsulated by Sybylla within her dominant subjective narrative evaluation and from her point of view as an aspiring artist. As well as criticising patriarchal notions about 'woman', she describes her loneliness and isolation and concludes that she is woefully out of her 'sphere' (p.34). She is in this situation because she is only interested in the world of Art, and because she believes that by being ugly and clever, she is unworthy and no man will want to marry her.

This polemic is balanced by the second section of the narrative system. This is a conventional narrative which focuses on romance and marriage, and which acts as a testing ground of her polemical position. Here a plot

develops and characters speak and act with greater freedom from her authorial and narrative control. Other characters support marriage and pressure her to conform. Her outspoken polemical position is subdued because she herself is a character in the plot. However she promotes her point of view through particular discursive strategies. For example, she makes 'silent' retorts to other characters' values which are directed to the reader rather than to the textual world. This is illustrated when she is confronted with the dilemma about marriage with Everard Grey. She 'silently' conveys her opinion to the reader:

Why did not social arrangements allow a man and a maid to be chums - chums as two men or two maids may be to each other, enjoying each other without thought beyond pure platonic friendship? (p.69).

This reflection undercuts the values which are expressed on the level of textual dialogue in which Sybylla the character has an unequal discursive position, and conveys a wider view of the issues to the reader.

Caddagat, which is the centre of this narrative section, is a significant interlude. Here Sybylla is confronted with several proposals of marriage. These proposals become mechanisms by which Sybylla furthers the distance between her own and patriarchal notions of 'woman'. By refusing these proposals, she does not compromise herself and remains true to her artistic aspirations, while indicating that she is indeed 'marriageable'. At the same time, other issues such as nationalism, egalitarianism and the relationship between women and class are explored. Caddagat may be a more comfortable and cultured world than Possum Gully but the position of women in relation to men remains the same. Wealth and class have not protected her mother or Aunt Helen from the consequences of marriage, and do not give women an equal relationship of power with men. At the same time, as we have seen in earlier chapters, there are ambiguities about Sybylla's own stance in relation to issues of class and gender. This is illustrated in her first encounter with Harry Beecham who will become her most ardent suitor. Because she is dressed like a servant, he treats her as one, taking liberties, flirting outrageously with her, and testing her grit with a whip. He is completely disconcerted to meet her in her 'proper' station. However, although she has highlighted his differential treatment of women according to their class, Sybylla chooses to exult in the power she has over him. She thus reverses the dimensions of class, gender, social status and physical size.

Three men propose marriage to Sybylla. She has set the stage so that these proposals should be carefully considered, in terms of social advantage, by the poor bush girl from Possum Gully. Thus her rejection of them conveys more impact. The first two proposals are rejected on polemical grounds. However her arguments against marrying Harry are represented in psychological as well as in ideological terms. She does not reject him solely because she disagrees with marriage. Instead their courtship and her refusals represent a complex psychological process of dominance and submission. For example, during their courtship, she constantly tries to provoke him. When he does lose his temper, Sybylla later discovers black bruises on her arms and concludes that it had been 'a very happy day' for her (p.148). The same psychological process is operating when she whips him across the face as he tries to kiss her after proposing to her. It is significant here that Sybylla cannot explain herself, that she is 'dumb' (p.126). Her silence leaves a space of ambiguity for her true reasons for teasing, provoking and rejecting Harry. Her treatment of his marriage proposals also points to her inner feelings of being unworthy. However she does come close to promising to marry him when he goes bankrupt: that is, she is prepared to marry a failure, just as her mother had done. Yet when his fortunes are restored to him, she rejects him outright, preferring to remain single in Possum Gully where she had started from.

There are several approaches to her final refusal of Harry. From one point of view, it defies narrative romantic conventions as well as good common sense. Yet from another point of view, Sybylla's refusal highlights the strength of her antipathy to marriage and her determination to be an artist. She herself tells Harry that she wants to write and that this is incompatible with marriage. Yet from another point of view, her refusal is consistent with the psychological patterns in the narrative. Sybylla is aware that she could not marry Harry because she would be the master in the relationship, whereas she would be constrained if the man were stronger than she (p.223). Thus Sybylla remains true to her principles of not marrying, while indicating that she *is* marriageable, and represents her disagreements in both polemical and psychological terms.

Sybylla explores the conflict between her ideas and those of other

characters about the meaning of 'woman'. She presents her argument directly in the polemic, and controls the illustration of other oppositional views so as to highlight her own. In contrast, she has a less assertive voice in the Caddagat narrative, but conveys her views through the plot development itself, and by counterpointing the opinions of others in dialogue with her own 'silent' asides to the reader. However the main source of argument and conflict occurs between herself and her mother. Her mother, who represents the consequences of patriarchal values about 'woman', wants to induce her daughter to accept the values of the patriarchal *status quo*. It is significant that her mother is directly represented in the textual dialogue on only one occasion. Here she and Sybylla argue about the latter's future, an argument which precipitates both her decision to write and her visit to Caddagat. These decisions indicate the different paths open to Sybylla. During this argument, Sybylla curses God for what He has done to her. Her mother responds by calling her a 'perfect she-devil' (p.27), and believes that she is mad. Thus her mother places Sybylla and her ideas 'beyond the pale'. This illustrates how far Sybylla is moving from the conventions of the patriarchal *status quo*. However at all other times, her mother's views are reported through letters or indirectly through Sybylla's narrative commentary. This indirect reporting of their conflict keeps the issues about 'woman' at the forefront and gives less attention to the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship.

The relationship between Sybylla and her mother is ambiguous. Sybylla has sympathy for her mother's position and holds her father responsible for it. However it is her mother who attempts to coerce Sybylla into conforming to patriarchal notions of 'woman'. This is illustrated when her mother tells her not to be a 'great unwomanly tom-boy' (p.3), and it is significant here that it is her father who defends her. Despite Sybylla's sympathy for her mother, and her mother's good but misguided intentions, their relationship is one of hostile confrontations and misunderstandings.

In some ways Sybylla's relationship with her mother counterpoints her relationship with Harry. It seems that she has refused to marry him because, in psychological terms, she would be able to dominate him.

Yet she is dominated by, and fights against her mother's control. This is illustrated by her mother's decision that she leave Caddagat and go to McSwat's. This narrative incident highlights the complexities of their relationship. Here the mother attempts to subdue her daughter and to make her conform whereas the daughter resists. Thus Sybylla's mother writes that she has 'always been a good mother' (p.180) within her frames of reference, while Sybylla interprets her action as one of cruelty and rejection by a mother who has no understanding. When Sybylla does return home, she is more resigned to the fact that she and her mother are incompatible, although she wishes that they 'were more companionable' (p.227) in their shared misery at Possum Gully. In some ways, the resolution indicates a stalemate between mother and daughter. Neither has defeated the other, and Sybylla still refuses to compromise.

Thus from her dominant narrative reporting position, Sybylla represents her views about patriarchal notions of 'woman' and her determination to be a woman artist in spite of them. Her ideas are established in the polemical section and are tested out in the narrative. Instead of a conventional plot resolution, Sybylla's refusals of marriage and her return to Possum Gully confirm her antipathy to marriage, her refusal to compromise and her determination to be an artist. Although she does not become an artist in the text, she does illustrate that marriage and the roles of wife and mother are incompatible with the female artistic identity and destiny.

To some extent, *My Career Goes Bung* develops the polemic about notions of 'woman' which was outlined in *My Brilliant Career*. However there are significant differences between them concerning the nature of the conflict about the meaning of 'woman' and the narrative style of reporting it. Now Sybylla is actually a published writer and she explores the position of the woman writer within the Australian context from several aspects. Thus Sybylla illustrates that she is misunderstood and patronised as a woman writer in both the bush and the city. She is ridiculed in the bush, while in the city she is treated as the flavour of the month, and her appearance and demeanour seem to be more important than her artistic achievement. She concludes that there is still no place for the woman writer in the Australian culture. From her position as a published writer,

she addresses the misconceptions about her family and her narrative purpose which have arisen after the publication of *My Brilliant Career*. Thus on the polemical level, she discusses the relationship between fiction and autobiography, and argues that *My Brilliant Career* was a 'burlesque autobiography' (p.37) to satirise that convention, and that 'Sybylla' in that text was a heroine she had dreamed of. This argument is reinforced by significant differences between the texts. Thus here her relationship with her mother is more congenial, she has a more positive self-image, her father's lack of success is due to his altruism rather than to his drinking, and the romance theme is no longer central to the narrative.

In this text, Sybylla widens the scope of her polemic about 'woman'. From her position as an acclaimed woman writer from the bush, she satirises the social and literary scene of Sydney. She highlights the hypocrisy and crassness of the *nouveau riche*, and their images of 'woman'. In this world, women use marriage as an entry into 'society' and wealth. At the same time, the writers she meets there are imperialist and self-seeking, values which are the opposite to nationalism and egalitarianism. From this experience, her optimism about being a woman writer is diminished. However in this text she argues that female suffrage and the involvement of women in politics will change the position of women within the patriarchal society. Current laws may be changed and women may have more roles and options. It is significant that it is her father who is her most active supporter on this issue.

This text is also divided into two sections which explore her arguments in relation to the ideas of others. The first section is a mixture of Sybylla's ideas, her recollections of events and of characters' opinions which are framed by her narrative evaluation. Again she illustrates the unhappy position of women in her society and her determination to avoid such experiences. For example, she states that:

The chief burden...for the woman, was unrestricted child-bearing, and now I was a woman, as Ma reminded me, a fact which made me rebellious. (p.17)

She does not want to be a male, but rather wants to pursue her destiny as a female without the artificial restrictions of 'WOMANLINESS' (p.17). The use of capital letters in this and in other examples signifies her satire of these values. Within this section, she also represents the ideas

and values about 'woman' of other characters, and qualifies them with her 'silent' evaluation. For example, her Aunt Jane tells her:

You'll grow to sense. A husband and children of your own will put you in your place. (p.18)

To which Sybylla 'silently' comments:

The dire soul-crushings with which old wives threaten me consequent upon the glories of motherhood are enough to quell a quadruped. (p.18)

Thus her own ideas predominate as she represents the opposing ideas of others within her evaluating narrative framework.

The second narrative section which centres on her experiences in Sydney is neither a straightforward polemic nor a narrative plot as was the interlude at Caddagat in *My Brilliant Career*. Instead it is depicted as though it were a 'real-life' autobiographical event. However here Sybylla satirises identifiable social stereotypes of characters and their ideas about 'woman' and writing from her position as a detached observer from the bush. This reinforces her own points of view about 'woman' and writing in relation to them.

The technique of her satiric representation is illustrated by her treatment of BIG CHECKS. His name and the use of capitals indicates her evaluation of him. He is an example of the wealthy, snobbish *nouveau riche*. He opposes female suffrage, would sooner have a 'performin' bear' about the place than a woman writer (p.128), and states that a woman with brains is a 'monstrosity' (p.128). His argument is diminished by her satiric representation of him, and by her 'silent' retorts which are directed to the reader. For example, she comments that it is not worth arguing with BIG CHECKS because they do not share the same language, and states that:

Big Checks would put me on the level with a performing bear, and never know the alphabet of my language, but I could talk his pidgin while thinking about something else, so I indulged him on the subject of horses. (p.129)

Thus she illustrates her superiority to him and the fact that she does have a brain by the way she reports him and his ideas.

Although Sybylla opposes the unjust social class system, she discovers in Sydney that the worlds of the upper social class and the *literati* are intermeshed. As we have seen in earlier chapters, she observes that the

nationalist and egalitarian values of the 1890s tradition have been discounted. Male literary figures have shaped their work to please the upper class Anglo-centric imperialist views. Her encounter with Mr Witling illustrates the issues confronting the nationalist woman writer. For example, in contrast to others in the text, he champions the woman writer, saying that 'immortal Sappho was a woman' (p.150). Yet on the other hand, he condemns the nationalist stream of Australian writing, saying that instead of a culture there is only a 'set of local cacklers unknown out of their own barn' (p.151). She retaliates with her own argument that Australians should do something of their own rather than imitating the English.

Her relationship with Goring Hardy expands the issues which confront the woman writer. I have already discussed Shirley Walker's article which suggests that Sybylla is highlighting the relationship between the treatment of women, the imperialism of the Boer War and literary values. Walker suggests that Sybylla has portrayed Hardy as both a sexual and a cultural imperialist. Within the text Sybylla enhances the interconnection between sexual, cultural and literary imperialism by reporting his attempts to seduce her, the naive bush girl, and then his determination to marry a wealthy woman himself. This perception about the relationship between forms of imperialism was radical at the time of writing, ^{under discussion} and of the texts which have followed *My Career Goes Bung* (1902), *Lines of Flight* (1985) is the only one which continues to explore the nexus of cultural and sexual imperialism.

The themes of romance and marriage are made objects of satire in this text. It seems that here Sybylla is more certain of her own polemical position in relation to marriage. At no stage does she appear to be tempted as she was in *My Brilliant Career*. The satire on marriage emerges partly because of the relationship between the two texts. In her attempts to argue that *My Brilliant Career* is 'not true' while *My Career Goes Bung* is, Sybylla playfully confuses the boundaries between fiction and reality by introducing the characters of Old Grayling and Henry Beauchamp. Grayling appears in response to *My Brilliant Career*, and proposes marriage to Sybylla. However she is terrorised by Old Grayling's ardour and it seems that he is actually senile. Henry Beauchamp himself signifies an improbable coincidence with Harry Beecham. Neither Grayling nor Henry fits the image

of the eligible young suitor as Harry did. Henry's explanation of his appearance and his proposals of marriage cannot be taken seriously by either Sybylla or the reader.

However Sybylla highlights his proposal of marriage in order to illustrate the conflict between her and his values about 'woman'. For example, Sybylla reports that Henry believes that according to NATURE women should serve men and have their children (p.224). He opposes female suffrage and the idea of single women, and discounts her ambitions by telling her that she could not endure being an old maid. Sybylla reports her 'silent' response to the reader, which both contradicts his argument and which serves as a forum for her polemical ideas, stating:

Why have men invented monogamy? All the laws, all the philosophies and religions of academic education, as well as organised fighting and politics, are men's inventions and are preserved by men as their special concern and business. (p.228)

This idea will later be echoed by Teresa in *For Love Alone*. In this instance, Sybylla rejects his proposal although there is no suggestion that she might have seriously considered it. It is significant that her mother in this text supports her decision. Sybylla reports that her mother did not advocate marriage as the sole option for women and furthermore that she:

...said if women had the sense to organise themselves and refrain from marriage till they won better conditions there wouldn't be so many wives wishing they had some other chance to earn their living, nor so many spinsters either thankful they had escaped marriage or regretful that they had not known the fulfilment of love. (pp99-100)

It is significant that here it is the mother who has reservations about marriage. Furthermore, the terms used in this extract reflect the influence of trade union principles which are ironically represented here from the woman-centred point of view about women's 'working' conditions as wives.

Thus Sybylla in this text is a published writer and has moved beyond the issues about whether to marry or not. However she has illustrated that being a woman writer does not appear to be a positive option within the Australian context. She now argues that female suffrage and political change will address the condition of women. She is expanding the meaning of 'woman' to include women as political activists as well as writers. These ideas emerge from the polemical rather than from the narrative structure of the text. Sybylla outlines her own ideas and values, and

counterpoints them with the points of view of others. These others are not well developed characters within the text. Instead they are both objects of Sybylla's satiric views and are vehicles of ideas and values which oppose her. From her position of discursive control she discredits their stereotyped notions of 'woman' and promotes her alternative views which are that a woman may be unmarried, may be a writer, and that a political identity of 'woman' may emerge.

In *The Pea-pickers*, the controlling position of the protagonist, Steve, and her perceptions and representations of her textual world raise certain problems. Here the ideas and the dialogues of other characters are rarely focused on the polemics about the meaning of 'woman'. The characters have more freedom from the narrative and ideological design and represent a wider range of discursive styles than do those of the two preceding texts. Hence each character and her or his dialect represents the unique social experiences which Steve encounters during her adventures. However this text mainly represents Steve's own ideas and perceptions about 'woman'. These ideas are seldom expressed in relation to those of other characters, and instead are mainly represented in Steve's monologues and her 'silent' thoughts. Thus Steve perceives that there is conflict between being a poet and being a sensual woman. She has artistic ambitions and believes in her poetic genius, but perceives that this destiny is incompatible with her biological female nature. She thinks that if she succumbs to her own sensual desires, then she will be trapped as a 'woman', bound to earth by her fertility. This conflict between her artistic ambitions and her sensual nature is highlighted in her relationship with Maçca. After her disappointment in this love, she decides to reject her female identity, although she also assumes the Romantic role of the faithful lover who waits faithfully for her errant love to return. Thus she adopts the *persona* of the Australian bush man, living alone with a dog and a rifle in a lonely bush hut. From this position she has written her narrative and waits for her lover's return. It seems then that the woman writer needs social isolation in order to produce a narrative. However this plot resolution also suggests a radical alienation as well. Within the terms of her perspective, Steve must reject her female nature and identity as 'woman' before she can become a writer.

However Steve's perceptions from her controlling narrative position are not totally reliable. This raises questions about her arguments and resolutions which concern the identity and destiny of the woman writer. The text is far from being an 'objective' representation of the 'real' world. The narrative is studded with absurd incidents and characters which cannot be 'real'. Steve thus creates her world as well as shaping her perceptions of it from her controlling narrative position. There are no counterbalances to her perceptions within the narrative and thus questions arise about her reliability as the narrator, and the logic of her resolution.

From this controlling and ambiguous narrative position, Steve poses the essential dilemma she perceives by being a woman: she is a female, whose physical desires and their consequences subject her to Nature; yet she aspires to be a poet, which is a masculine role within her terms of reference. Steve believes that if she were to express her sensual nature, then she would probably become a mother and be trapped as a 'woman', subject to the passing of time. To be a mother and a sensual woman is incompatible with being a poet. Steve aspires to be a poet, believing that only through poetry can she stop the passing of time, that through poetry she can fix the present moment of youth and beauty into an aesthetic eternity, like the 'Grecian urn'. This transcendence of the passing of time is a masculine function in contrast to the female function of childbirth within Steve's frame of reference. Hence the narrative itself, which fixes her youthful experiences forever in the world of fiction, is a masculine act within her logic. Steve's perceived dichotomy between the ideological nexus of the feminine/sensuality/fertility/earth and the masculine/poetic/creative/infinity is not contested by any other point of view.

Steve's conflicts between being a 'woman' and a poet are highlighted during her romance with Macca. In contrast to *My Brilliant Career*, there is little polemic about romance and the related issues of marriage and the meaning of 'woman'. Up to a point, Steve wants a poetic, romantic, platonic relationship in which sexual desires are not acknowledged. However she does begin to desire Macca. The conflict between her sexual desires and her poetic ambitions increases. She then tells Macca that she wishes she herself were a man because '...then I shouldn't desire man. I should

have woman to work my will on; and she is tractable' (p.149). Thus Steve identifies the male with strength and control over women, and 'woman' as a passive being swayed by instinct and emotion. However, despite her poetic ambitions and her views about 'woman', Steve decides that she wants to make love with Macca. But he rejects her. She retaliates by assuming both the masculine identity and the ideal of faithful love.

Steve's fate - her decision to 'become' a man and to write poetry - seems to be a logical outcome of her ideas, experiences and perceptions about 'woman'. However Steve has set up the frames of reference about 'woman' and her relationship to art in the text. She has presented a dichotomy between being a poet and being a sensual woman, and has then proceeded to explore the inherent conflicts rather than illustrating any other alternatives or points of view. There are no other voices, ideas or frames of reference which contest her point of view and the logic of her resolution. Steve controls the parameters of the argument so that it is inevitable that Steve the woman, should 'become' a man in order to assert her artistic destiny.

The protagonist from *An Item from the Late News* is a woman who is self consciously constructing the narrative, as well as reporting it. From this perspective, the text explores particular ideological aspects of the position of 'woman' within the Australian context and relates them to the construction of the narrative. It will emerge that the narrative structure and reporting style of the text also illustrate Gabby's ideas about 'woman'. Furthermore this text explores and illustrates the moral function of art. The text itself is a confessional narrative, in which the moral purpose predominates. Here the woman artist explores her guilt and complicity in a past tragedy, and writes her confession as an act of expiation. The moral purpose of her art contrasts with her earlier motives as a painter, which are reported within the text. Her woman-centred perspective of her textual world is a stark moral statement about the relationship between capitalism, consumerism and patriarchy and the inevitable consequence of nuclear war. This perspective is amplified by the religious symbolism which is attached to Wafer. At the same time, this woman artist is not only a victim of patriarchal values: she is one who admits her own complicity.

In this text, the position of women and the image of 'woman' is represented within a broader critique of patriarchy. The text explores the capitalist, racist and sexist aspects of patriarchy. The abuse of Aborigines, the American cultural and military imperialism, the commercial rape of Australia and the threat of nuclear war are interconnected with the historical and social positions of 'woman'. These are all results of the patriarchal hegemony and its preference for violence. This text centres on the structure and operations of the hegemonic male power in relation to marginal groups such as women and Aborigines.

Gabby, the protagonist and reporter, occupies a contradictory discursive position. On the one hand, she represents an acerbic, woman-centred view of patriarchal society, and pays particular attention to its emphasis on violence, threat and intimidation on both the local and the global levels. Yet on the other hand, she is confessing her guilt in the death of Wafer, the Messiah. Up to a point in the narrative, she has endorsed and supported Wafer's views about an 'alternative' society to the capitalist, war-mongering patriarchy. However in reaction to his emotional rejection of her, she betrays him to the men, who kill him. Thus this protagonist treads a balance between criticising this patriarchal society, and exposing her own contradictory position in relation to it.

The protagonist has a strong discursive position in this text. She is not only reporting and evaluating the narrative events, dialogues and characters: she is also remembering this event from the past and is reconstructing it in to the narrative form. This position enhances the force of her argument, which is pursued on two levels within the text. On the one hand, she represents the narrative from her woman-centred perspective. Thus events and ideas within the narrative confirm her views about patriarchy. Yet on the other hand, she is self conscious and reflective about her position as the narrator who is constructing the narrative, and as a woman who is marginalised within patriarchal tradition and social structures.

Gabby is the 'omniscient narrator' (p.15). She is at the centre of this narrative world which she is also constructing. Yet her position in the text reflects the problems of being a woman in the society she depicts. Here women are outsiders, on the margins of our history, tradition, and

social structures. This is illustrated during the episode of the bull-fight. It is her father who ironically tells her that this is 'true local history' (p.119), and yet in the past women have had no knowledge about it. Her father resents Gabby's presence there. Furthermore as a woman Gabby is excluded from events which she needs to know about as the recorder of the narrative. This is illustrated when she is excluded from Wafer's 'trial', because she is a woman. She must spy through a window to see what is happening in order to record it. Hence Gabby's position as a woman does not allow her to have direct access to the 'truth', which as the narrator she needs to know.

When she reports and describes other characters and their motives, Gabby also illustrates the process by which this information is obtained, interpreted and reconstructed into the narrative. For example, she obtains most of her information about Moon from her brother Jam. She reports the story that Moon told Jam and that Jam in turn tells her. Jam is not an unbiased reporter. Gabby reports 'Jam's awful thrill' (p.33) as he tells her about Moon's violent rages in battle. Gabby is conscious that she in turn reinterprets Jam's version of Moon's version of himself. Yet Gabby constructs her own interpretation and representation of Moon. She paints him into her landscapes of his past. She reports an 'objective' description of his history as though she were the direct observer or creative controller. She describes the process by which fact can be embroidered to create the story:

There was what Jam told me and rumours and half-truths from dodgier characters in town, the gossip intrusions of Doss Campion who pulled pints at the Wowser, the threads spun out painfully one mothy evening to Wafer - all stories grown rampant, sprouting tendrils until they covered whole structures, blunting original lines, disguising shape before the support collapsed. (p.38)

Later, on her own volition, she reports the incident where Moon finds Emmie in bed with Wafer. By now, she does not rely on second hand resources, but allows her own imagination and point of view to embroider the original events.

At other times, Gabby's own points of view intrude on her reporting of other characters. For example, she 'paraphrases' (p.43) the story about the Colleys which Tim says Emmie had told him. Gabby here moves beyond the constraints of his reporting and fills in the gaps of the story with her own views.

Thus Gabby's position as the narrator reflects the tension between her position of narrative control, and her marginal position as a woman who is excluded from particular events and personal disclosures. However, despite her position, the text has an inbuilt irony against Gabby. A certain fact emerges from the narrative without her awareness. I have outlined in earlier sections that although Gabby realises Archie Wetters is a woman, she does not realise that she is also Wafer's Aunt Clancy. Gabby, from her omniscient position, does not draw the connection between them, even though her reporting is motivated by a woman-centred consciousness about women's position in relation to male power.

As the narrator and creator of the narrative, Gabby introduces particular structural elements to highlight her arguments and points of view. For example, she highlights the Christian religious symbolism and structure in relation to Wafer. Thus she draws an implicit contrast between the town and the Christian myth, and elevates Wafer to a Christ-like figure. This parallel elevates the specific event at Allbut to the level of universal proportions of Good and Evil. This inclusion of the Christian parallel also introduces the possibility of forgiveness for the horror at Allbut.

There are parallels between the idea of the Christian Saviour and Wafer. The events at Allbut happened between Christmas and New Year. Wafer's arrival in the town and his murder suggests the Christian myth of the birth and sacrifice of the Saviour. The name, 'Wafer', connects him to the Christian communion host which symbolises the sacrifice and redemption of an innocent victim of evil. Wafer operates as a symbol of salvation on several levels in the narrative. Gabby states that she is personally 'ripe' for Wafer (p.3) after the boredom and sterility of her city life. It is ironic that this imagery of 'ripeness' is also used by Moon, although in his terms 'ripeness' refers to his desire for Emmie and Wafer's stone. Gabby begins to love Wafer whom she sees as the salvation to her emptiness. On yet another textual level, Wafer becomes a generalised symbol of hope for the threatened planet, which is being destroyed by materialism, consumerism and war. Wafer is a 'hippy' character, emptied of all material desires. He has retreated from civilisation to build a bomb shelter and to establish an alternate life style. In the textual world, he is linked to other characters who are the victims and outcasts

of the patriarchal society, such as women, Aborigines and homosexuals. The townsmen, who misunderstand his message, kill him after he refuses to show them where he found the stone. He has been made a sacrifice, an act which reinforces his Messianic potential.

At the same time, the TV is represented in the text as both an illustration of and as a medium for Gabby's perspectives. The 'voice' of the TV reflects the surrounding culture, and Gabby records characters' reactions to it. The TV transmission has also arrived in Allbut just before Christmas, so that its presence is a parody of Wafer's arrival. Gabby ironically connects the TV to the religious theme by highlighting the fact that the TV on the global level is replacing the social function of religion. The TV is a new, ersatz religion which reflects the moral bankruptcy of consumerist society.

The TV itself represents particular ideas and values which Gabby counterpoints in the narrative. For example, she comments that the TV highlights 'manly games' (p.26) and asks her father:

Is there only a choice between crotch sniffers and cricketeers with menstruation envy? Those red streaked groins! (p.26)

To which her brother responds:

Jesus, Gabby...You're sick. (p.27)

and he turns the volume up on the TV. This interchange reflects the difference between female and male views of men's sports. However the focus on the TV switches from manly games to manly wars. For example, the TV reports a documentary on American MX installations. Gabby reports the argument between those watching it. Her father who 'is excited with all the paraphernalia of aggression' (p.57) gives his version on the subject of arms buildups as a 'reasonable man' (p.58). Wafer, whose father was blown up by a bomb, opposes him. Gabby supports Wafer. Later Doss, the strong woman who defends those who are victims of the men, highlights the idea that the violence on the TV is masculine. Gabby reports Doss stating:

Islands might sound marvellous, lovey, but that's another myth, like men. They're the biggest myth of the lot. God! When I look at all those screaming Arab males on telly, I wonder what it would be like if men were the emotional sex. (p.51)

The TV reports masculine acts of violence on the global level, which in effect counterpoints with that on this local level.

Gabby represents two male characters, Cropper and Moon, who are at the centre of violence on the local level. Cropper, the local policeman, perverts the law, and uses it to victimise marginal characters such as Wafer and Aborigines. His characterisation, dialogue and values are an ironic reflection upon the evidence which has emerged from the Fitzgerald Commission and Muirhead inquiry. However Cropper is supported by other townsmen such as Gabby's father, Brim and Colley. Other men treat Aborigines the way Cropper does, and they share his antipathy to 'poofsters' and women. Cropper's violence is counterpointed by Moon's, which is a more treacherous form of anger. He is a trained soldier, and is the prototype of men who commit additional atrocities in war. His anger and frustration at not having Emmie or Wafer's stone erupts into a terrible rage. This masculine violence of the townsmen is graphically illustrated by the bullfight.

Thus Gabby represents the masculine violence on both the local and global levels. Gabby represents her own point of view as being like that of Wafer, Emmie and Doss, in contrast to the men. These characters signify the alternative to masculine violence, that is, the principle of the feminine, which is not restricted to gender. It seems that in this world, the feminine principle is suppressed by the masculine. Characters who represent this principle become victims, are destroyed or disappear.

However it emerges that Gabby herself has also participated in the masculine destruction of Wafer. She represents a particular feminine rage, which is a counterpoint to Moon's masculine rage. She wants Wafer, and is enraged when he rejects her. Her own rage merges with the frustrated rage of the townsmen. For example, she watches passively as Moon burns down Wafer's home. She does not defend Wafer when she has the chance to. Her passivity makes her an accomplice in what the masculine violence achieves. She is a 'traitor' (p.162), full of 'jealous spite' (p.163). Later she tells the men that Wafer does not know where he is leading them. This precipitates his death. After Cropper shoots Wafer, Gabby realises the depth of her betrayal. She is like the men. As she states:

I am Moon.
 I am Cropper.
 I am my father's daughter, the old man doing a
 Pontius Pilate as he watched the trucks pull out.
 I am all of them. (p.195)

This self discovery is ironically the point of her confession about her complicity in masculine violence.

Gabby has represented a complex view of patriarchal notions about 'woman' and the role of the woman artist. She highlights the consumerist, racist and sexist aspects of patriarchy, and the relationship of marginal groups, such as women, to its power structures. Yet she herself, despite her woman-centred perspective, has also participated in the values of patriarchy. However her position as the narrator and the creator of the narrative ensures that narrative events, characters, dialogues and structures all reflect her point of view and thematic design. At the same time, she expands the literary representation of the woman artist. Instead of being a victim of patriarchal values, she is a woman who develops the narrative as a confessional through which to explore her own guilt and responsibility. Thus there is now a moral purpose behind her creativity.

Lines of Flight approaches the meaning of 'woman' and the woman artist from a different perspective. Instead of highlighting the social position of women within a patriarchal society, or the moral position of women and their art, this text focuses on the masculine control of the position of 'woman' within discourse itself. The events of the narrative and the reported dialogues illustrate Rita's argument. She perceives that women are colonised through patriarchal discursive power structures, that men appropriate women's meanings, and that there is a relationship between the discursive forms of racist, sexist and cultural imperialism. Rita illustrates that she loses discursive control in dialogues with men and that her painting itself reflects her colonisation by patriarchal and consumerist values. This process is amplified by her relationship with Raymond and Sébastien. However, she begins to develop her own 'voice' and a female style of painting in which she both asserts her artistic destiny and her freedom from the constraints of patriarchal discourse. This is illustrated by her final Narrative Sculpture, in which female artistic expression is situated beyond the constraints of the discursive structure. Only now is she able to assert her own meaning of both 'woman' and female art.

The predominant pattern of representation in the text is that Rita reports the words of others in dialogue to illustrate the appropriation of her meaning, and then counterpoints these with her own inner thoughts. This process of discursive struggle also occurs on the internal level: the words of others are incorporated into her consciousness. This includes both females and males. For example, Laurence is Rita's first internal censor in the narrative. She will be replaced by Raymond, who imposes other words and values as Rita's censor. This process is illustrated on the external level in dialogue with male characters. For example, Rita reports a phone conversation with Jean, in which her thoughts between the spoken responses are italicised. Thus, when Jean asks:

It's just what, ma grande taciturne?

she thinks in reply, addressing the reader:

*Always my or our Rita. First I'm little, then I'm big...
Ladies and gentlemen, let me present the prototypical
inflatable woman. Guaranteed obedience to perspective.
Place advance orders now. (p.50)*

Here she highlights the way in which their relationship and her self are defined by his language and the process of dialogue between them.

This process of colonisation is further highlighted by her relationships with Raymond and Sébastien. She is actually colonised by Sébastien when he takes over her living and working space after she invites him to live with her. As we have seen in earlier chapters, Rita reinforces this argument by contrasting her linguistic and artistic colonisation with the relationship between Antonine and Sun Diatti, a relationship which explores the sexist and racist aspects of patriarchal imperialism.

Rita is concerned that Raymond and Sébastien will shape her according to their psychoanalytic and semiotic interpretations. At one stage, she inserts her thoughts between their dialogue in order to highlight the implications of their discursive practices. She is aware that she is 'losing' her voice and critically reflects that:

They would discuss nothing of the hungers, doubts, fears, wounds, all that sediment suspended in the dark slush of the unconscious to be repressed, compressed, aligned into the neat substratum of the MEN THEY ARE so why should I be an open pit for the miner, uncover my murky waters and giddy for their descent or now this rush of words...I can let out one. One word, any one; they will not see the others banking up, constricting me in my throat, but I

must tell something, I am going to tell, tongue is a trampoline, words will come to pelt their quiet wine, dissolve the rigidity in the aura of the splash...No: a few words carefully released would be sufficient to maintain this connection between us... (pp105-06).

Throughout the narrative, Rita realises that Raymond will be able to reconstitute her, to make her a product of his thoughts, as he has done to Gerard.

At the same time, Raymond colonises her artistic expression. He organises her art exhibition, but as she reflects, 'Rita Finnerty, the artist, is to emerge, but the metamorphosis is no longer hers' (p.169). Raymond has become her new 'censor against whom she might find a voice' (p.169). Both she and Sébastien are losing their identity in relation to Raymond, who is now surrounded by 'his Linguist with no words of his own, his Painter who can no longer put brush to canvas' (p.183). Rita's friends notice that as she becomes more involved with Raymond and Sébastien, her art becomes more sterile. One tells her that she is taming her aggression, while another observes that she is repressing her inner powers and creative flow. Rita herself is aware that the meaning of her paintings is being distorted by that process of discursive colonisation. As she reflects:

Of course, there is desire in my paintings, female desire, but it's not received as anything that might disrupt the impeccable surfaces of their world. They can see it as the lyrical expression of my own conflicting drives. (p.149)

Her painting, Triptych, represents unarticulated female desire, but it too is reinterpreted within discourses which are alien to its meaning. Rita points this out, stating that it is:

...a nest of possibilities to the spaces it articulates - the very contradictions will be read as *her* silence, *his* horizon: *Oh yes, it's a figure in a landscape*. The painting only *is* when *they* say it is: it's becoming-voice is theirs. (p.151)

Rita believes that the painting resists definition, yet Sébastien is dismayed to see that the painting represents '*toute la violence féminine*' (p.155). It is significant that Raymond refuses to enter this painting in the exhibition, and Rita suspects that the market does not want to be confronted by the image of female violence in art.

Although Raymond rejects the painting, to Rita it becomes a symbol of the emergence of her female voice and style in art. It becomes the backdrop to her later artistic assertion because it has resisted the 'voice-over' (p.163) of masculine interpretation. Later another character observes that it is a statement of 'female power' (p.239) which was missing in her earlier works in which contradictions are 'over-achieved' and 'resolved' (p.236). Her art itself is affected by the presence of Sébastien. He not only colonises her physical space, which makes it difficult for her to work, He is also enraged that she seems to escape his power over her through her art. As he tells her:

What do you want? Yourself? Perpetuated, non-stop?
Your female interiors. All those *vagina dentata*...
all those kilometres of...well, it's like Michelin
tyre tread...you seem to have been chain-producing
the same...Amazonian fantasy... (p.249)

Finally Rita is able to tell him what she is doing with her art, and in effect is beginning to define the nature of 'female' art. She speaks directly without qualification or silent asides, saying:

Maybe what you mean is that it's out of your control.
And you're jealous of any expression...any action of
mine that doesn't ask for your sanction. What I'm
trying to explore...Well, it's my need for a space.
Space that you deny me. You can call it violence if
you like. What I've tried to show in these paintings
is a potential...A potential for movement outside the
boundary, outside the frame. And what there is inside
is only a mark. An impulse that might look violent
because of its concentration... (p.248)

Sébastien loses control and bashes her, but now Rita is in command of her voice and her art.

The narrative ends with a detailed description of RAMSHACKLE, her Narrative Sculpture. The voice and character of Rita disappears. Her sculpture is described by the unsympathetic voice of the critic and by Rita's prerecorded voice. Rita has moved into a space which is beyond discursive constraint and she is representing a 'pure' female artistic approach. Furthermore, she has created ironic self-portraits of herself as a woman artist, such as the Self-Portrait-as-Shish-Kebab, and the ventriloquist's doll.

However this text adds a significant dimension to the image of the woman artist. On the one hand, the Sculpture suggests that the female voice in art will emerge only when female art is isolated from patriarchal

discursive structures and constraints. Yet on the other hand, Rita now has a child and has returned 'home' to her mother in Sydney. Thus she has constructed her narrative from a position of social integration within a female-centred family.

From this point, I shall discuss the texts in which the narrator/protagonist is not the 'creator' of the narrative. Although the protagonist of *Kewpie Doll* actually becomes a painter (whereas up till now the women artists have been writers), both *All That False Instruction* and *Tirra Lirra by the River* suggest that particular patriarchal values about 'woman' suppress or divert the protagonist's artistic inclinations.

Thus in *All That False Instruction*, the protagonist learns to assert her homosexual rather than her artistic identity. Here the issues of gender definition and female sexuality predominate, while Maureen's initial artistic aspirations become secondary to the conflicts which these issues generate. The point of her argument is focused on her right to be a homosexual instead of her right to be an artist. She represents the conflicts about her sexuality from two angles. On the one hand, she highlights particular patriarchal definitions of 'woman' and records women's experience within their patriarchal contexts. Hence she illustrates that there are different standards and unequal relationships of power for women and men. Furthermore, she makes heterosexual values 'strange'. From her observations and experiences, homosexuality is her preferred option. On the other hand, she also explores her inner conflicts about her sexual identity. Although she accepts her homosexuality, she cannot withstand the vehement social disapproval it engenders.

This argument is illustrated in the text through a variety of techniques. Although Maureen is not the 'author', she does have the dominant position as the narrator from which to select, represent and evaluate patriarchal aspects of her textual world. She represents the narrative solely from her point of view. Although she has disagreements with other characters, particularly her mother, there are no substantial alternative arguments to her perceptions of men and heterosexual relationships. The ideas and values of other characters are filtered and evaluated through the process of her narration in order to confirm her point of view.

Her arguments are reinforced by narrative events of Maureen's experiences which illustrate an evaluating contrast between female and male lovers. At the same time, the narrative is a realist one which purports to tell things as they really are. These aspects of realism support her dominant point of view.

Maureen's initial and most profound conflicts about the meaning of 'woman' are centred on her relationship with her mother. Her mother, like Sybylla's in *My Brilliant Career*, is a victim of the values and expectations of 'woman' under patriarchy, yet she is also the figure who tries most persistently to induce Maureen into its values. Their relationship is represented by the direct dialogues between them, and by Maureen's evaluative reporting of her mother's words in her own angry, narrative context. Maureen describes her family life in which her mother is the dominant parent, her father is secondary and her brother is given preferred treatment because he is male. Although her mother supports the patriarchal values of 'woman', she actually distorts Maureen's female sexuality. Thus her mother refers to Maureen's periods as her 'pain' (p.19) and Maureen herself hates to have anything to do with this 'filth' and 'degradation' (p.19). Her mother becomes ill with 'female troubles', and from this, Maureen determines that she will not have children herself. Thus her initial representation of her relationship with her mother sets the stage for her gradual and utter rejection of patriarchal values about female sexuality.

The conflict between Maureen and her mother reaches a climax when her mother discovers that Maureen has a female lover. She believes that Maureen is 'unnatural' and is indulging in 'filth' (p.67). It is ironic that she wishes Maureen were pregnant instead, so that she could at least talk about it with her friends. Maureen and her mother have several bitter confrontations. Ironically, by the end of the narrative, Maureen realises that she and her mother have a lot in common as victims of both heterosexual values and sexual experiences with men. However she also realises that she and her mother will never become close enough to share their common experience.

Other characters also have negative attitudes towards lesbians and homosexuality. This is illustrated by the attitudes to which Maureen is exposed in the group session, such as: 'I don't like poofers' (p.171); '...every woman needs a man. That's nature'; 'We all need morality'; 'I don't like aggressive women' (p.173). Although Maureen prefers women lovers, she is affected by these attitudes of social disapproval.

However she does introduce characters whose ideas and social position confirm her own views. Thus the psychiatrist, who also defends her in the group session, acts as an implicit arbiter of the values of 'normality'. It is significant that the psychiatrist is a male. Maureen does not want to be 'normal', but she does want to be free of the need for social approval. The psychiatrist does not project any of his own views about female sexuality. Instead he tells her that the sex of her lover is unimportant, so long as she is able to love. The Student Counsellor also supports Maureen's position, and here she learns that female lovers do have a physical relationship.

Maureen illustrates her adult experiences of the patriarchy in such a way as to make values such as heterosexuality 'strange'. It becomes obvious to her that there are different standards of sexual behaviour for women and men. For example, a man who picks her up hitch-hiking wants to pay her to watch him masturbate. She angrily reflects that while a man could provoke such a situation, a woman would not have the gall to suggest it even if she wanted to. The term 'lesbian' itself is used by men as a term of abuse for unattractive women or for women who reject them. Maureen illustrates generalised encounters with men through the narrative. Here Maureen realises that only certain types of women fit the male norm of 'attractiveness', and that men make the rules in social and sexual relationships.

Maureen's relationship with Andy illustrates her argument that the patriarchy pressures women to be heterosexual, and that women are not necessarily satisfied within heterosexual relationships. Thus by going out with Andy, Maureen appears to be a 'regular woman' (p.137) according

to patriarchal expectations, yet she finds no emotional or sexual satisfaction. Andy is a more acceptable companion according to patriarchal mores, but he is an unsatisfactory lover in comparison to female ones.

Maureen contrasts these heterosexual experiences with her female relationships. Here she confronts a painful contradiction. Her relationships with women are more satisfying both sexually and emotionally. Yet each relationship flounders because her female partners cannot withstand the intense social disapproval of others. Maureen decides to leave Australia altogether in order to get away from the inner and outer voices of social disapproval.

The resolution of this narrative is not an optimistic one for either a homosexual woman or a woman artist. Maureen decides to go to Afghanistan. This decision illustrates her refusal to be socially integrated on the terms set by patriarchal values, and furthermore indicates her deeper social alienation from her Australian culture because of her sexual identity.

The figure of the woman who does not become an artist is represented from a different perspective in *Tirra Lirra by the River*. Here the protagonist, Nora, has no awareness of her artistic potential, even though the reader realises this. At the same time, Nora occupies the dominant discursive position as the narrator and protagonist. Furthermore, Nora has control over the narrative representation because events of the past are recalled, reported and reconstructed solely from her point of view. This effect, whereby the reader knows more than the narrator, is achieved through the use of various strategies, suggestions and ironies of which Nora, even though she is in the dominant position, is unaware. This effect amplifies the argument of the text; which is that patriarchal notions about 'woman' can 'blindfold' women such as Nora, so that despite their experiences, they still have no realisation that there may have been other options. Nora has no intimation of her artistic potential.

The text suggests that Nora's lack of awareness of her potential is related to her experiences as a woman in both Australia and England, and to her internalisation of particular patriarchal definitions of 'woman'. Nora records her narrative without any of the polemic about patriarchal values of 'woman', which has occurred in previous texts. She represents

her experiences with a perspicacious irony but never with direct anger or self assertion. It is ironic that her passivity and her unawareness are actually in conformity with patriarchal notions of 'woman'. Thus Nora is unable to begin to define her own meaning of 'woman'.

The disparity between the protagonist/narrator's ignorance and the reader's awareness is achieved in several ways. Nora's artful contrivance and control of the narrative suggests that she could actually be the 'author' who has 'created' it. As I have discussed in an earlier chapter, her embroideries also suggest that she could have been an artist. Her employment as a theatre dressmaker reinforces this impression. Here Nora is content to make suggestions, which the top designers accept, without getting any credit. She prefers the situation in which she does have influence while appearing to have none. Thus she does not have the necessary assertion or aggression which allows the artistic ego to emerge.

Nora represents a series of life situations in which it appears that she has little control. Her life spans various 'typical' experiences of women within patriarchal society: her waiting period until she married; her marriage which was a state of dependence and submission; her divorce; her humiliating abortion; her plastic surgery; her attempted suicide; a career; and a domestic relationship with two women which had been disrupted by a male. However, Nora does control the representation and structure of the narrative. The narrative is her reconstruction of her life. The selection and representation of her experiences unfold according to the process of her 'memory globe' of which she is in absolute control. There are dark and light patches to the globe, but she can decide when the spin will stop and can choose which side to look at. This is illustrated when she recalls her marriage and her husband. She had believed that the 'real' Colin existed on the nether side of the globe, while the edited version remains on the light side. Now, at the time of recall, she realises that the two sides and images of Colin are blurred, and she wonders: 'Have I given an accurate account of Colin Porteous, or have I merely provided another substitute?' (p.73). From her position of control, the ideas and discourses of other characters are limited and framed by what she chooses to remember and the way in which she represents it. The discourses of others indicate the values of 'woman' according to which Nora has lived her life. There is no debate about the meanings of 'woman'

because Nora does not challenge any of these ideas with her own.

Nora's stance and tone as the narrator is consistent with the ways she has learned to present herself as a 'woman' in her patriarchal society. She is incapable of the direct speech which Maureen, for example, adopts. Instead Nora encodes her anger in a series of ironic observations which are directed to the reader. At times she has no words to describe her experiences. For example, she recalls that as a young woman she used to walk constantly to 'outrun oppression' (p.11), but she does not clarify this. The description of her suicide attempt is also 'silent' and circumspect.

Nora represents herself as a female whose character has been shaped according to her position as a woman and to the definitions of gender within her patriarchal society. She has learned survival techniques. For example, she is conscious that she smiles too much and that she has a 'tendency to be a bit of a toady' (p.8). She becomes 'sly' (p.41) during her marriage, stealing money from her husband's pockets because she has none of her own. She concludes that perhaps she is submissive now because any open aggression on her part has always caused trouble. However she is not completely cowed, for she states that '...beneath my renewed submission a sour rebellion lay' (p.52). The strongest critique that she is able to make of her unhappy marriage is that it was a 'vile wastage, vile wastage' (p.25).

Despite Nora's dominant discursive and narrative position, this text suggests that she is an artist herself although she is unaware of it. Her unawareness is related to her passivity and compliance in relation to patriarchal values, and her failure to ever become angry or assertive. Thus this text depicts the image and experiences of the woman who has conformed to patriarchal values about 'woman', the consequences of which are that she fails to realise her potential.

Although the un-named protagonist of *Kewpie Doll* is not the 'author' of her narrative, she does become an artist. The narrative explores certain patriarchal meanings of 'woman' and relationship to consumerism, suggesting that the consumerist industry has shaped the image of 'woman' and the products necessary to achieve such an ideal. However these values of

'woman' are inimical to the emergence of the woman artist. Thus the protagonist must confront and reject them before she can become an artist herself. In this text the protagonist has sole control over the reporting of her narrative world. Characters and events do not exist independently, but instead are filtered solely through the protagonist's voice and from her own point of view. No direct dialogue is reported, but instead each example is encapsulated by the protagonist's voice. This text represents the conflict between various values about 'woman' in terms of language. The consciousness and the language of the protagonist are constructed initially by the words and values of others. The narrative illustrates that the point of view and values of the protagonist develops in relation to these words of others. Initially she reports these words and values of others without any apparent judgement of them, but as the narrative progresses, she learns to evaluate these ideas, and to assert her 'own' voice.

The mother of this protagonist, like others whom I have discussed, represents and promotes the patriarchal values of 'woman' within the consumerist society. However unlike other protagonists, this protagonist does not engage in open conflict with her mother about the meaning of 'woman'. The protagonist represents her mother at a distance in a detached, ironic manner. Her mother does not actively intrude into her life, and does not *insist* that her daughter follow her. The dress, appearance, behaviour and goals of this mother conform to the ideal of the 'perfect' 'woman' which is promoted by the advertising industry and consumerist products. She is a consumer who keeps up with the latest style and who values new goods. It is ironic that this mother is an artist herself. However she has channelled her talents into commercial advertising where she actively promotes the image of 'woman' and the associated products.

The protagonist explores the immediate effect of consumerism on her family. The adoption of consumerist values coincides with the entry of the male, her mother's new husband. Initially her family is matriarchal. It consists of her grandmother, her great aunt, her mother and herself, who all live in an old house in an old suburb. It is a domestic, peaceful world which is centred on her grandmother's cottage garden. Their relationships and lifestyle are disrupted by the social changes of the 1950s, in which consumerism begins to emerge as a social ethic, and by the

entry of the man. Her mother is detached from this female-centred group, and they all lose their attachment to things of the past. It is significant that at the end of the text, the protagonist dreams of a return to this childhood home in which she and her mother are reunited. This desire is unaffected by the different values about 'woman' which they stand for.

In her textual world, the protagonist is surrounded by the voices of others and their values about 'woman'. At first, she appears to have no consciousness of what she observes and reports. For example, she naively states that:

New Australians lived next door to Carl's house and one of them did rape in the parklands and the name of our street was in the newspaper. (p.25)

Here the phrase 'did rape' suggests that she is reporting what 'they' say without being aware of the full implications. As she approaches early adulthood, the protagonist begins to evaluate her experiences of patriarchal values. This growing awareness is counterpointed by her discovery that the world of art offers an alternative to these meanings of 'woman'. She realises that by being a 'woman' according to patriarchal definitions and consumerist values, she is only a 'Kewpie Doll', constantly afraid that she will be a failure. In contrast, her absorption into the world of art makes her realise that her own life 'seemed small and all the certitudes faded away' (p.151). She rejects her mother's 'little rules' (p.151) which seem meaningless. Her life is now possessed by her art (p.149).

The protagonist of *Kewpie Doll* becomes a woman artist by negotiating the profound alternatives which are represented by patriarchal values of 'woman' within a consumerist society. The collision between and the resolution of these conflicts about the meaning of 'woman' are represented in the protagonist's linguistic consciousness which is reported in the narrative monologue. The protagonist moves from an unconditional acceptance of the words and values of others, to a testing of them in experience before she finally rejects them. By the end of the narrative, she speaks with her own words and values as she determines to be an artist.

Thus from the first person narrative position, the protagonists in these texts explore and evaluate patriarchal notions of 'woman' and her relationship to art and to society. Through a variety of discursive and

narrative techniques, they 'defamiliarise' particular patriarchal values, and constitute a new meaning of 'woman' from a woman-centred point of view. 'Woman' is emerging as the woman artist.

CHAPTER 10

THE THIRD PERSON NARRATIVE

The conflict between patriarchal and woman-centred values of 'woman' is explored through a series of different but related discursive strategies in the third person narratives. Here the narrator and protagonist are separated, and have different discursive positions and functions. Thus the third person narratives incorporate two speech centres, each of which illustrates particular ideas and values about 'woman'. One speech centre concerns the protagonist's ideas about the meaning of 'woman' and her relationship to art. These are represented by her external dialogues with other characters and by her internal thoughts which are directed to the reader. This speech centre is in turn encapsulated by the narrator's dominant speech centre, which represents and evaluates the ideas and values of both the protagonist and other characters. Thus the protagonist does not have a direct, unmediated voice in the text and does not occupy the dominant discursive position. The narrator also holds particular values about 'woman' which influence the nature of the narrative representation and the plot resolution concerning the fate of the woman artist. Thus the presence of the narrator adds another level to the discursive struggle for the meaning of 'woman'.

The texts which represent the woman artist protagonist in the third person are *The Getting of Wisdom*, *Human Toll*, *Intimate Strangers*, *The Man Who Loved Children*, *For Love Alone*, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Foxybaby*. These texts offer a more complicated illustration of the struggle for the meaning of 'woman' and of the identity and destiny of the woman artist. Thus *The Getting of Wisdom* represents a woman artist, and adopts a critical attitude towards both the female sex and patriarchal notions of 'woman'. Both *Human Toll* and *Intimate Strangers* suppress the woman artist figure in favour of alternative definitions of 'woman'. *The Man Who Loved Children* and *For Love Alone* illustrate a range of discourses about 'woman' which the protagonists must transcend, by the exercise of their wills and by the development of their alternate artistic discourses, in order to become women artists. *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Foxybaby* explore the construction of the narrative by the woman writer, without engaging in discursive debates about the meaning of 'woman'.

The Getting of Wisdom highlights particular patriarchal meanings of 'woman' and the relationship of these definitions to the values of the Anglo-centric upper class. The narrative illustrates that these meanings are inimical to the development of the woman artist. The narrative represents a critical evaluation of the values of Laura's world, exposing its hypocrisy, superficiality and double standards. At the same time, it explores the process by which individuals such as Laura are induced to conform to the values of their *milieu*. Thus Laura is an eccentric individual who does not fit into her world. She tries to conform to its values, in order to belong, even though she has a critical perception of them. At the same time, the narrative illustrates that those qualities which make Laura 'eccentric' are also the characteristics of the artist, and that she is a potential woman artist. However, she must overcome her needs to conform to the terms and values set by others before she will be free to be an artist.

The narrator in this text occupies the controlling discursive position. The narrative context encapsulates Laura's experiences and ideas, 'speaks' for her at times, and actively supports her points of view and values in relation to those of other characters. The resolution of this narrative, which suggests that one day Laura will be an artist, indicates that the narrator knows more than she does.

However there is some ambiguity about the narrator's own values concerning 'woman', even though the narrative is a critical evaluation of particular patriarchal meanings of 'woman'. For example, the narrative itself is interspersed with loaded adjectives such as 'womanly' and 'manly', suggesting that 'womanly' is a term of disapprobation, while 'manly' is a term of praise. Thus Laura speaks 'manfully' to Bob (p.107) while Mrs Shepherd is ridiculous because she runs in a 'womanly' way (p.125). The narrator also expresses particular attitudes about the nature of women. For example the narrator states that Laura's schoolfellows 'were cruel with that intolerance, that unimaginative dullness, which makes a woman's cruelty so hard to bear' (p.148). Laura too is included in this negative appraisal whereby the narrator states that like 'most rebels of her sex, she ardently desired to re-enter the fold of law and order' (p.161). Furthermore, there are no positive images of 'woman' within the text.

The narrator describes the frustrations of school governesses who read romances, and dream of marriage or of succeeding Mrs Gurley. Women who are wives, such as Mrs Shepherd, are depicted in humiliating relationships. Among Laura's contemporaries, of whom the majority want to marry, M.P. and Cupid want to pursue a career, but the narrator states that they marry soon after leaving school. The narrator does not suggest a specific option for Laura either. This is possibly because there is no social space for the woman artist. The narrator can only hint that she might become an artist.

On the other hand, the narrator is critical of the values of 'woman' which the school promotes, and its mechanisms by which girls are encouraged to conform. Here 'wisdom' and 'education' are designed to make young ladies 'marriageable'. They learn the arts of capturing a husband, a process which requires duplicity, deceit and a pragmatic perversion of morality. It is significant that it is other women who shape the female individual into patriarchal notions of 'woman', whereas men, who actually hold positions of power, such as husbands, the headmaster, the minister, remain largely in the background of the text.

The narrator supports Laura's perceptions of her world, and represents her experiences of its values. Laura's initial source of conflict is with her mother. In this instance, the narrator supports Laura's views, yet also is sympathetic to her mother. Laura's mother wants her to conform and to be 'ladylike'. Part of their difficulties stem from the fact that Laura is growing up but does not want 'to behave in a modest and womanly way' (p.9). Their relationship is characterised by conflict, indirect affection and misunderstanding. Yet Laura is also loyal to her mother, even to the point of lying to protect her. This is illustrated when she lies, at school, about her mother's dressmaking. The narrator puts her lie into context here, and supports her, because had she told the truth, she and her mother would have been humiliated. At the same time, the narrator tempers the conflict between Laura and her mother, by illustrating both sides of the arguments. This occurs when Laura cuts off her hair. In this way, Laura's point of view is highlighted, but her mother is not criticised or ridiculed.

However, the narrator is more partisan and directly supports Laura's point of view and perception of the school world. Here the narrator endorses qualities in Laura, such as her 'unkind eyes', which her mother has been critical of. This support is illustrated when Laura describes her godmother's family. Here the narrator reports Laura's perception, and follows it with an 'indirect' narrative fact:

Like dogs barking at one another, thought Laura,
listening to the loveless bandying of words... (p.62)

The narrator thus supports her 'unkind eyes', and suggests that she needs them in order to see through the double standards of her world so that she might transcend it and become a writer. Furthermore, Laura's perception of Annie John's expulsion illustrates that her 'unkind eyes' can be deployed to create fiction.

The narrator also counterpoints her mother's ideas about being a 'lady' with those of the school. Her mother has encouraged Laura to 'remember that you are a lady though you are poor and must behave in a ladylike way' (p.47). It is ironic however that in terms of the school's values, her mother is not a 'lady' because she has to support her family. Her mother had admonished Laura not to be vulgar, yet the narrative abounds with examples of 'vulgar' behaviour between girls and boys. Thus the narrator suggests that Laura's mother is the real 'lady', while exposing the hypocrisy of the school's standards.

By the end of the narrative, Laura has learnt to rely on the truth of her own perceptions, and has grown beyond the need to conform to the particular values of the school. She escapes from the school's definition of 'woman'. Although the position and fate of women is not optimistic in this text, Laura does emerge as a putative artist. Her points of view and critical perceptions about notions of 'woman' have been supported by the narrator.

Human Toll represents the woman who does not become an artist. In this text, the narrator occupies the dominant discursive position, and imposes an ideological and thematic design about the meaning of 'woman' which suppresses the artistic aspirations of the protagonist. Ursula's artistic ambitions are briefly mentioned early in the narrative, but these are counteracted by the emergence of her maternal feelings, which in

turn are essential to the narrator's controlling design. This text also illustrates an ambiguous attitude towards issues of gender, and represents women as both victims of evil and transgressors. Ursula stands in stark relief against her textual world, but her points of view are totally encapsulated by the narrator's representation.

The points of view and evaluations of the narrator dominate those of others in this narrative. Characters in the text are depicted as types rather than as full characters. Instead of speaking their own ideas and points of view, they represent the narrator's ideas about these types, and are positioned into the moral design of the text which is controlled by the narrator. Ursula is a character in the text but she becomes a symbol of particular qualities which are projected onto her by the narrator. She is mainly a passive observer in the narrative which is controlled by the narrator's point of view. Ursula does not introduce her ideas into dialogue with other characters, and the question of her artistic destiny is reduced as the ideological design of the narrator unfolds. Instead the narrator develops Ursula into a symbol of moral goodness, whereby her maternal impulses transcend the corruption of her social world and her own artistic ambitions.¹ Ursula represents the maternal force which stands opposed to the greed and hypocrisy of the textual world and to the rapacious lust of Mina. The narrator does not explore the contradiction that Ursula is both a virgin and a 'mother'. The narrator represents a textual world of evil and corruption in both women and men, and in religious figures. Ursula symbolises the principle of maternity, which the narrator suggests is the source of good in this world. The ultimate irony, according to the narrator's vision, is that Ursula fails to save either the baby or the lamb.

The narrator's discursive control over the thematic design of the narrative is illustrated by the symbolic structure in the text. The symbolic imagery of the lamb and of Mina's eyes recurs. They are thematic polarities and counterpoints in the narrative. The lamb is an image of innocence and the need for protection, while Mina's eyes represent

1. A different interpretation is suggested by Shirley Walker in her article, 'Barbara Baynton's *Human Toll*: A Modernist Text', forthcoming in *Southerly*, Vol.49, No. 2, 1989.

malevolence and lust. The lamb imagery has broad Christian connotations which are implicitly included in the textual references.

In the text, the lamb is associated with 'good' characters and becomes a parallel to Mina's baby. In the early stage of the narrative, when Ursula is a child, Boshy likens her to the lamb (p.133). At this point, the lamb and the girl-child are images of innocence and the need for protection. However this image of 'woman' will be qualified as the narrative progresses, because apart from Ursula, they are not innocent. In contrast, the imagery of the lamb is used ironically against Mr Civil, the religious minister, who is the 'leader of lambs' (p.162). Ursula also becomes the vulnerable innocent who needs protection from Civil's attempts to acquire her property. The actual lamb itself becomes the object of Ursula's maternal urges, but it too becomes a victim of Mina's and Palmer's lust. This is a foreboding of the fate of the child and of the ultimate ineffectuality of maternalism in this world.

In this textual world, the narrator expands the imagery of the lamb and maternalism so that they become standards by which to evaluate other women. The narrator evaluates female characters according to how maternal they are, and draws a juxtaposition between sexuality and maternity. Ursula is represented as a maternal figure even as a child when she plays with dolls. In contrast, the widow is 'childless' (p.167) and lives in a 'loveless' home (p.156). There are dual aspects of motherhood in the narrative, Palmer's wife dies in childbirth, 'having paid the toll of motherhood' (p.211) while Mina is an 'unnatural' (p.280) mother who represents the dark, murderous aspects of motherhood. Mina's unnatural maternity is balanced by her rapacious lust, and she is a figure of the narrator's deprecation. For example, the narrator illustrates her 'grief' as she asks about the deceased widow with 'orthodox interest and intent' (p.209) and 'dabs her dry eyes' (p.210). Images of Mina's green eyes intersect with the gradual exposure of her shiftless, deceitful character, which is illustrated in several narrative scenes, such as the bush dance.

The arrival of the baby draws together the symbolism of the lamb, the principle of maternity and the malevolence of Mina. Ursula feels an 'intense maternity' (p.275) for the child, and is aware of Mina's

undisguised hatred and menace. However Ursula fails to save the baby, just as she has failed to save the lamb.

The resolution of this text is ambiguous. The narrator has suggested that the meaning of 'woman' lies in the maternal principle, yet this principle is ultimately ineffective in this world of evil. Furthermore the narrator 'disappears' from the final narrative frame which is centred on Ursula's consciousness. Because of this, Ursula's own fate remains ambiguous. There is no longer a narrative frame in which to verify whether she does 'see' Andrew or not. The removal of the narrator is a structural device which heightens the irony of the narrator's ultimate design: that maternalism is a value of goodness and is a positive meaning of 'woman', yet is ineffectual against the absolute evil of this world.

The protagonist of *Intimate Strangers* also fails to become an artist, although up to a point in the narrative it seems that she will succeed. The narrator, who has the dominant discursive position and who controls the ideological design of the text, explores Elodie's artistic aspirations, and locates their realisation in the worlds of art, nature and romance. At the same time, socialist ideals which indicate an alternative ideology are represented favourably in the textual background. However after the narrative incident in which Greg attempts suicide, the ideological argument is reversed. Elodie's plans to live for her Self, to have a relationship with Jerome and to develop her artistic talents are diverted. Instead she adopts the ideals of socialism and returns to her domestic situation where she is at the service of others. Thus she becomes socially re-integrated into the family structure and the conservative values of 'woman', yet this is at the cost of her Self and her art.

The ambiguity of this resolution may be related to actual circumstances which occurred in the author's life² Prichard's husband killed himself during the period in which she was writing the text. The effect of biographical details about the author upon the literary text is a contentious area in literary criticism. However the literary text does stand on its own apart from its author, and biographical influences are 'lost' over a period of time, unless they are actually incorporated into the narrative. Hence in this analysis, I will ignore the biographical

2. Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles at Home*, (Sydney : Sirius, 1981), pp138-39.

information and focus on the text as it presents itself to the critical reader. Thus the ambiguous resolution of the text may be related to the contradictory meanings of 'woman' in relation to capitalism and socialism, which the narrator illustrates but fails to confront.

The narrator in this text has the dominant discursive position from which to represent the argument and to evaluate all other discourses within the narrative context. From this position, the narrator illustrates the contrasting ideological arguments about Elodie's fate and, implicitly, the meaning of 'woman'. On the one hand, the narrator indicates the reasons for Elodie's decision to leave Greg. This is not explored in a direct, polemical fashion. Elodie herself is a passive, unassertive protagonist. However the narrator develops her point of view by illustrating the points of view of others about her, by representing Elodie as a 'split' person, and by drawing comparisons between Elodie and Dirk. On the other hand, the narrator has an ambiguous evaluation of Greg, even though he is responsible for Elodie's suppression. This ambiguous attitude in part makes the resolution seem somewhat plausible.³ At the same time, Greg's position is depicted within the paradigm of socialist values. Socialism is represented as the only means of redressing the unjust class system, although in this text, socialism is not related to the position of women within the capitalist patriarchal society. Thus the resolution of the text, which affirms socialism, implicitly suggests that class issues predominate over feminist issues, and Elodie remains in the same domestic position which the narrator has previously argued against.

The narrator depicts Elodie's position from the points of view of other characters, such as Greg. Ironically there is little narrative evaluation of his position. Greg unwittingly presents the arguments why Elodie should leave him. For example, he admits that he neglected to use contraceptives in order to make Elodie pregnant and thus to remove the possibility of her having an artistic career. He justifies his

3. A different interpretation of this text is suggested by J.A. Hay in his article, 'Betrayed Romantics and Compromised Stoics : K.S. Prichard's women', in *Who Is She? Images of Woman in Australian Fiction*, ed. Shirley Walker, (St. Lucia, UQP, 1983), pp.98-117.

actions because he was filled 'with a fury of desire to absorb and dominate her' (p.22). The narrator has an ambiguous evaluation of Greg in relation to his sexuality and his relationships with other women. This is illustrated when he rapes Elodie. There is no evaluative comment from the narrator, and Elodie's point of view of this incident is not represented. The narrator seems to support the notion that man is the dominant sexual being and that woman is the passive, subordinated sexual vessel. Furthermore, Greg's relationship with Trixie, which he initiates to spite Elodie, is represented in such a way as to make Greg himself the victim of a female capitalist exploiter. His attempted seduction of Dirk precipitates her disastrous decision to marry Ted. Yet despite these consequences, Greg is quite elated that he had stirred the 'fires of sex' (p.217) in her, while the narrator makes no comments about his actions. Thus the point of view and behaviour of Greg does support Elodie's decision to leave him, yet the narrator does not highlight or evaluate the implications which his characterisation suggests. At the same time, the narrative illustrates that Greg himself is a victim of broader social and economic forces. Elodie is sympathetic about his position and without complaint or criticism supports him and the family herself. Thus Greg is both himself a sexual predator and exploiter, and a victim of an unjust class structure.

Jerome represents an alternative point of view and set of ideological values, yet he too is an ambiguous figure. He promotes a hedonistic self-centred view of life and would allow Elodie to exist for her Self in music, nature and passion. His ideas justify Elodie's decision about her marriage. For example, he delivers a polemic about the nature of marriage under the capitalist system, stating that it is a 'business contract' which is based on the 'property relation' (pp182-83). Furthermore he is indignant, on Elodie's behalf, about the relationship between her and Greg.

However the relationship between Elodie and Jerome is ambiguous. There are darker aspects to him which are suggested by descriptions of him as being a 'hunter stalking his quarry' (p.179), and looking 'rapacious and cruel' (p.342), Elodie loses her will in this relationship, and is dominated by the 'centripetal force of this man's magnetic virility' (p.373). The narrator does not comment on the pattern of dominance and

submission between them, and instead represents this as the inevitable result of true sexual passion between woman and man.

Elodie is not an assertive protagonist and does not conduct a polemic about the meaning of 'woman' in relation to her own experiences and desires. Instead the narrator develops her point of view by depicting her as two 'women'. There is the outer Elodie, who is a drudge caught up in domestic affairs, and the inner Elodie, whose fantasies and consciousness represent the richer, alternative world of nature, music and passion. The outer Elodie is 'insignificant and unattractive', a 'snail of a woman' (p.106) who is caught up in the 'round of female duties' (p.139). However the inner Elodie comes alive in response to Jerome, and she is closer to realising her 'true' world which lies in music, passion and nature rather than in domesticity. She is stirred by Jerome and 'the invitation to rebirth' (p.112). Despite the ambiguities about the representation of Jerome, Elodie does decide to go with Jerome, and this is supported by the narrator's representation of the issues.

The relationships between Elodie, Greg and Jerome are counterpointed by the relationship between Dirk and Tony. This latter couple represents the interconnection between passion, nature and, most significantly, socialism. Tony is an active socialist, whose characterisation and ideals are favourably represented by the narrator. Tony and Dirk represent the ideal synthesis of elemental passion and socialist ideals, a synthesis which Elodie is unable to attain with either Greg or Jerome. It is significant that the dimension of art is missing from this relationship and, in relation to Elodie and Jerome, has been replaced by socialism. Dirk herself has been a victim of capitalism, which is illustrated by her former marriage to Ted. It is significant also that she influences Greg who adopts socialist ideals. Thus Greg transmutes Dirk from his earlier ideal of the unattainable woman to the attainable ideal of social change. After Greg's suicide attempt, Elodie foregoes all considerations about herself and decides to remain with him instead. Their reconciliation is reinforced by socialist ideals. Yet the text concludes with the ambiguous sentence:

Between them burned the fire of a regenerating idea in which it seemed they would attain freedom and unity. (p.410)

This resolution represents an uneasy alliance of ideas and values, in view of the arguments outlined in the preceding narrative. There are still unresolved tensions among the issues of socialism and class struggle for social change, the social position of women and their rights as individuals, and the relationship between Art, nature and passion. The affirmation of socialist ideals suppresses Art and the aspirations of the individual female Self. Greg represents the further denial of Elodie's Self in favour of the Others who need her in both the domestic situation and on the level of class struggle. The psychological aspects of Elodie's decision to remain with him under these circumstances are not explored. This includes the manipulative aspects of Greg's suicide attempt, and his denial that he has ever been physically unfaithful to her. Thus although this text promotes a radical alternative to capitalism, the position and meaning of 'woman' is unchanged.

In contrast, both of Stead's texts, *The Man Who Loved Children* and *For Love Alone*, represent female protagonists who do become artists. During this process, the protagonists must negotiate the discursive power positions and meanings of 'woman' which are upheld by other significant characters. They do this by asserting their wills, by evaluating conventional moralities and by developing their own artistic discourses. Thus the texts argue that women can become artists by taking control of their destinies, and then as artists, they can synthesise their own ideas, values and experiences into artistic discourses. The narrator represents and evaluates other notions of 'woman', and the characters who uphold them, which oppose the emergence of 'woman' as an artist.

In *The Man Who Loved Children*, Louie must confront the Scylla and Charybdis of ideological values about 'woman' which are represented by Henny and Sam. The narrator illustrates their discursive and ideological positions and their points of view in depth. Sam and Henny are utterly opposed to and yet are complementary to each other. Each battles for Louie's support against the other, although Sam is the main adversary to her moves for autonomy. Louie is in the process of evaluating her parents' ideas and of asserting her own in relation to her identity and destiny.

The narrator also evaluates the discourses which are represented, and, in this way, supports Louie's arguments and points of view. Although Sam's discourse and point of view is represented, the narrator indicates support for Henny's position. For example, at an early stage in the narrative, the narrator undercuts Sam by relating his ideas to the perceptions that his children have of them:

Sam tried to impart everything he knew to the children
and grumbled that the *mother* taught nothing at all:
yet their influence on the boys and girls was equal. (p.46)

In contrast, the narrator has sympathy for Henny who is represented in an unequal discursive position in relation to Sam. For example, after describing the relationship between Henny and Sam, the narrator states that Henny was 'losing, losing all the time' (pp337-38). Henny is thus locked into a struggle that she cannot win, whereas Louie will withdraw into the field of alternative discourses.

The narrator explores the battle for control between Sam and Louie. They have conflicting notions about 'woman' and female destiny, and both of them want the dominant discursive position: Sam wants to dominate and to influence Louie, while she wants to assert her own ideas about her own identity and destiny. Sam is the Father who represents the standard of patriarchal Reason in the textual world. His male-centred expectation of 'woman' is not optimistic for either the definition of 'woman' or for the fate of the woman artist. He has a conservative view of women, and defines them according to their biology and their perceived inferiority in relation to the male. He illustrates his view of women by referring to them as 'female hanni-miles' (p.107). Sam is determined that Louie should agree with his values, and adopt his outlook. However this identification would mean the death of the woman artist because Sam's patriarchal vision precludes such a meaning of 'woman'. In a bizarre way, Henny's situation illustrates the consequences and experiences of Sam's definition of 'woman' for women.

The narrator indicates that the ambiguous sexual relationship between Sam and Louie is another aspect of the battle for control. Sam is uneasy about his own sexuality, and is embarrassed by Louie's puberty. This uneasiness about sexuality extends the battle of control between them, because now Sam wants to know everything that she thinks about, reasoning that what she does not share with him must be depraved. As I have

outlined in an earlier chapter, Louie's play, *Herpes Rom.*, which is in an intertextual relationship with Shelley's *The Cenci*, highlights the struggle of discursive power between them. Here Louie recreates their relationship in the dramatic form in a language which Sam cannot understand. This illustrates that her artistic discourse can remove her from her father's power to influence and control her.

The conflict between Louie and Sam is represented in terms of a struggle for discursive power. Louie's creative discourse begins to crystallise in the battle between them. Sam bombards Louie with his ideas in one-sided discourses in which she has no right of reply or debate. She develops alternative languages to block him out of her thoughts and to stop him prying. Thus she writes her diary in a secret code, her play in her own language, and her own poetic discourse. She has realised that she does have control over her language and her discourse, and that she can shape language to create her own meanings. These artistic discourses move her beyond Sam's ideological control because he is unable to understand them.

Sam's points of view and his relationship with Louie are counterpointed by those of Henny. Louie and Henny have a contradictory relationship. Louie is the object of Henny's vileness, and bad temper, yet they are also in alliance together with that 'natural outlawry of womankind' (p.275). There is a strange bond of affection between them. For example, Henny, who has been through the rigours of childbirth, wants to protect Louie from this fate, which she refers to as 'the darn muck of existence' (p.155). Louie and Henny form a 'unified front' against Sam, even though he tries to turn Louie against her. Louie perceives that she and Henny have a similar powerless position in relation to Sam. Both are 'guilty, rebellious and got chastised' (p.72). No matter how vile her outbursts and suggestions, the narrator depicts Henny as a powerless figure who identifies with the mouse that Sam is trying to eradicate (p.50).

It is significant that it is Henny, the mother, who drinks the poisoned cup of tea that Louie has prepared. The narrator describes Louie's decision to kill her parents without conventional moral censure. Her motives for this decision are both childlike and adult. Yet from Louie's point of view, it seems the logical thing to do under the circumstances,

and she believes that she has the right to do it in order to free the family from their parents (p.500). This decision is an assertion of her will and of her own moral judgement in combination with her self interest. It is ironic that here Louie is highminded like Sam, and that she is acting out his values of eugenics. However this action frees her for her emergence as a woman artist. On the mythic level, the daughter has killed the mother. Only when Henny is dead can Louie say: 'I'm my own mother...And I can look after myself' (p.521). Louie is now in control of her identity and destiny.

Thus the narrator has represented the struggle for discursive control between Louie and other significant characters over the meaning of 'woman'. This meaning is centred on Louie's definition of herself as an artist. The text illustrates that she must oppose patriarchal notions of 'woman', and must assert her will and her discursive power before she can become an artist in control of her creative discourse.

Stead's other text, *For Love Alone*, represents a similar discursive structure. The narrator is in the dominant discursive position and represents the conflict between Teresa's meanings of 'woman' and those of others within an evaluating context. Jonathan Crow, who illustrates contrary values of 'woman', is Teresa's main adversary, although the reader is made aware of this before she is. Teresa is a young woman who explores the right of women to love and passion. During this process, she learns to assert her will and to challenge conventional moralities and definitions of 'woman', such as the institutionalisation of women's passion within the sterility of marriage. She establishes her own rules and moral guidelines. Her artistic destiny and identity emerges from these experiences. Teresa is able to establish her polemical position in relation to conventional meanings of 'woman', but she becomes entangled in the emotional complications of these meanings during her relationship with Crow. Although Teresa's point of view is the focus of the text, the narrator also explores the point of view and consciousness of Crow, and reveals his unsavoury character to the reader.

The narrator establishes the background of conventional meanings and images of 'woman' which Teresa critically evaluates. Thus her father

illustrates a male-centred view of 'woman', believing that women should be modest and understanding and should maintain the hearth and home for the men who go out into the world. Teresa's sister, Kitty, who is the embodiment of these 'womanly' virtues, is the household drudge. In contrast to Teresa's search, Kitty exchanges one domestic situation for another. Teresa's condition and points of view are contrasted with those of other women in the text. For example, her cousins are also unmarried, but Anne remains depressed and frustrated, unable to make the break from her mother, while Ellen, who had been 'educated out of a husband' (p.138) according to her father, compromises and marries a neighbourhood oaf in desperation.

The contrast between Teresa's points of view and conventional definitions of 'woman' is highlighted at Malfi's wedding. In this textual world, marriage is the supreme goal of women. Teresa does not reject marriage, nor does she want to be an old maid. She believes that marriage should be the expression and fulfilment of women's passionate nature, yet she observes that the marriages around her are shallow substitutes. Thus Malfi's wedding is a carnivalised image which highlights the form and ritual, whereas the dimension of love and passion is missing.

The narrative contrasts this wedding with Teresa's own inner fantasies about passion and eroticism. This narrative scene establishes the image of a passionate 'woman' which as Teresa observes is a dimension of the experience of woman which does not exist in patriarchal discourses. It is significant that this exploration of her fantasies is associated with her determination to assert her will and to direct her own destiny in spite of patriarchal meanings of 'woman'. She realises that she is trapped by home and work and that she must first escape from them. The narrator here supports her 'bravery' which is defined in terms of defying and challenging the rules (p.85). Teresa perceives that women are circumscribed by laws which have been made by men (p.93), but there is hope because women only appear to be submissive (p.101). Teresa believes that women have the power to change their condition, but have never had 'an ounce of bravado to throw off the servitude of timidity' (p.101). Although Teresa's critique here is centred on women's right to express their passionate natures, Teresa's first act of defiance is to run away to Narara, an act which releases her from her teaching position. She realises that

chains are an illusion; they fall apart once they are directly challenged.

Teresa's challenge to conventional moralities is later reinforced after her experiences of erotic relationships with men. Now she asserts the idea that:

Woman, as well as man, had the right to happiness. Only it was necessary to know how to answer the grim, enslaving philosophy of the schools. (p.464)

She rejects the man-made moralities which have determined the erotic nature and experience of women, and ironically asserts her own law: 'I only know one commandment, Thou shalt love' (p.493).

Teresa perceives the implications of patriarchal meanings of 'woman' on the polemical level, but her emotional relationship with Jonathan Crow presents the strongest obstruction to her journey of self-discovery. Here the narrator and hence the reader know more about him than does Teresa. The narrator reports his points of view in the evaluating narrative context. For example, when Crow delivers a distorted view of female and male relationships at a public lecture, the narrator comments that it was a 'disordered, impertinent paper' and that it was 'reason arraigning hypocrisy' (p.181). Later the narrator reveals that he lies to Teresa about his relationship with Lucy and about his correspondence with other women.

Initially Crow inspires Teresa with a new vision of life and sets an example to her about the worth of personal struggle against social circumstance. It is ironic that here Teresa is deflected from her exploration of the senses into the direction of academic study. She is attracted to him because he too seems to challenge conventional morality. Yet in contrast to her own perspective, he promotes a male-centred view of morality in which women exist to serve men who are dominant and superior. His study about the erotic nature of women is an implicit contrast to Teresa's experiential exploration of her own erotic nature. During the process of their relationship, Teresa centres her sense of worth on his evaluation of her, believing that he is her superior. He becomes a goal to her, so that despite her struggles, she joins him in London. Yet he withholds any positive regard for her, exploiting her on the personal level and acting out his own perverted beliefs about 'woman'. When Crow finally tells her he does not love her, Teresa believes

that she is not worthy of love. She determines that she will die as a supreme act of her will.

Teresa is saved from this fate by James Quick. He is a man who will defeat Crow's arguments, who will assert a more positive belief of 'woman' and who will offer Teresa the type of love she is searching for. He is the objective outsider who will rescue Teresa from Crow's web, in which she is too emotionally implicated to be able to see her own way out.

However Teresa's journey does not stop with Quick. Through her relationship with him she is able to both love and write. Her own writing is a reflection of and a response to her experiences.

Thus Teresa has asserted that 'women' have a right to love and passion which extends beyond patriarchal definitions of 'woman' and institutions such as marriage. The emergence of the woman artist is correlated with the emergence of female erotic expression. Teresa has achieved her perspective and her position by exercising her will, determination and intelligence to transcend the material and ideological obstacles of her world. Her assertion is connected to her relationships with men, who it seems have the power either to destroy her or to rescue her. Yet at the end of the narrative, she is also moving beyond her relationship with Quick. Thus Teresa emerges as a figure of life, able to express and to will her erotic desires and artistic destiny.

Stead has explored Teresa's development as a writer within a conventional narrative, and has suggested an alternative meaning to the patriarchal definitions of 'woman'. Jolley's texts, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Foxybaby*, indicate a departure from this narrative form and illustrate a new approach to the definition of the woman writer. In these textual worlds, the gender of the woman writer is unaffected by patriarchal ideologies. Unlike other texts which have been considered, these texts do not illustrate the polemic about the meaning of 'woman'. Instead they explore the shifting boundaries between reality and fiction, the problems associated with narrative construction and the ambiguous position of the woman writer. Characters and ideas are represented from two aspects: they are 'real' characters who develop through the inter-relationship between fiction and reality, and they are 'constructed'

figures. Both texts contain a narrative within them which is in the process of being constructed. The 'fictional' and 'real' narratives are counterpointed within the overall textual structures. It is ironic that Jolley, whose texts are largely composed of 'voices', should allow the relationship between the structure and the construction of narratives to illustrate the ideas and arguments of the texts, rather than having them articulated as such by 'voices'.

Miss Peabody's Inheritance represents a 'real' narrative about Miss Peabody, and a 'fictional' narrative which is conveyed through the letter form. This device personalises the relationship between the writer and the reader. The narrative threads between these constructions counterpoint each other. The 'fictional' world of Miss Thorne is constructed and narrated, while Miss Peabody is profoundly affected by the story in her 'real' life. She is seduced into the world of fiction, and emerges as the inheritor of the unfinished manuscript. She has been initiated by Diana, the writer, into both fiction and reality, and becomes a writer herself.

The narrative explores the development of Miss Peabody as a result of this intimate encounter with fiction. On one level, she blurs the distinction between fiction and reality, which is a reflection upon the banality of her everyday life. This confusion provides scenes of humour and irony in the text, such as the incident where Miss Peabody, the drab, eccentric spinster, asks people if they know where *An Ideal Husband* is. The fictional narrative and her relationship with the writer become more 'real' to Miss Peabody than does her reality. Thus 'the nights belong to the novelist' (p.8) and become a world of 'magic and enchantment' (p.98). The writer is the 'initiator'. Miss Peabody is introduced to aspects of life such as the love relationships between women which are illustrated in the 'fictional' narrative. More importantly, she is initiated into the process of creating fiction herself, as she tries to recreate her own life in her letters to Diana. At first she tries to recreate fictions about her life, such as a love relationship, but then begins to offer suggestions about the development of the 'fictional' narrative. When she picks up the unfinished manuscript at the end of the text, Miss Peabody idly thinks about the next development in the fictional world. Furthermore Miss Peabody is initiated into what she

believes to be Diana's life in Australia. The image of Australia is constructed by both the writer and the reader here. Ironically Miss Peabody will discover the disparity between the reality of Australia and the meaning she and Diana have developed about it. For example, Miss Peabody constructs images of Diana, the 'Goddess of the Hunt' (p.8), who rides horses in the Australian paddocks. This image has been encouraged by the writer, yet later Miss Peabody discovers that Diana has actually been crippled in a riding accident. Thus the image of the writer is a construction by both the writer and the reader.

Certain parallels are drawn between the 'fictional' and the 'real' narratives. Miss Thorne and Miss Edgely counterpoint Diana and Miss Peabody. Thus Miss Thorne is an initiator also, but Gwenda, the object of her desires, escapes her. Miss Edgely, who is like Miss Peabody, is an inadequate, ridiculous figure, who in part represents the consequences of Miss Thorne's earlier ploys of 'initiation'. However Miss Edgely is suppressed by Miss Thorne, whereas Miss Peabody transcends Diana, her initiator and her 'author'.

The fictional narrative also explores the art of creating fiction and the position and role of the writer. As the writer, Diana draws attention to the manner in which she constructs the narrative itself. The device of the letter form allows her both to construct her narrative and to comment upon it in personal asides to Miss Peabody the reader. Diana states that writers do not have personal friendships, although a relationship does develop between this reader and writer through their letters. Diana highlights the fact that the meaning of a narrative emerges from the relationship which is established between the writer and reader and from the effects that the narrative has on their imaginations. This has ironically been illustrated in the constructed image of 'Diana'. As Diana has stated to Miss Peabody, 'the writer remakes himself and his world' (p.15). The use of the masculine pronoun here is ambiguous, and reflects Diana's own values about the gender of the writer, but this point is not pursued in the text. However both writer and reader work together to construct images and meanings of both the fictional world and of the writer, while Miss Peabody herself is emerging as a writer.

Thus *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* illustrates a particular relationship between writer and reader, between fiction and reality, while highlighting the actual construction of a fiction within the narrative. Miss Peabody becomes a writer through a self-referential process. Instead of conducting a polemic about 'woman' and of acting out her ideas in the external world as do other protagonists, Miss Peabody becomes utterly absorbed in the world of fiction. In turn, she begins to write fiction herself. Unlike other texts which have been considered, these ideas about the woman writer are not debated through the narrative discursive structure within the narrator's evaluating context. Instead the ideas about the woman writer and the process of constructing fiction are explored through the structured relationship between the writer and the reader, and upon the interconnections between the 'fictional' and 'real' narrative structures of the text.

A similar process whereby ideas and arguments are counterpointed within the narrative structures is depicted in *Foxybaby*. Here, however, the protagonist is actually a writer. The text concentrates on the issues confronting the writer in her personal life and on the process of constructing a narrative. This writer's authority and presence will be dislocated within the text. The narrative argument is largely illustrated through the structural interconnections between the narratives, rather than through the discursive relationships between characters. This text also contains two narrative structures, and the boundaries between fiction and reality become blurred. The narrator reports both the real world of Miss Porch and the Treatment she is constructing. Although the textual world is absurd, the narrator reports it as though it were 'real'. It is only on the final page that the narrator is exposed and Miss Porch disappears into her fictional world. It seems that the whole episode has been a dream. Thus the presence and the authority of the writer and the reliability of the narrator are not debated as ideas in the text, but instead are illustrated by the actual structure and resolution of the text.

Miss Porch is not a 'full' character who is in charge of her discourse and ideas. Instead, she is controlled by the narrator who reports her in the narrative, and who allows her to 'disappear' into her fictional world. At the same time, Miss Porch is an unassertive protagonist who is swamped by the demands of competing voices around her.

The narrator records the despair and loneliness of Miss Porch, the woman writer. She has sacrificed any personal life she might have had in order to write, and must also work to support herself. The narrator counterpoints the images of the 'female writer'. For example, Miss Peycroft had expected that she would wear 'hobnailed boots and a man's hat' (p.24) because she is an 'authoress and perhaps something of a feminist' (p.24). In actuality, Miss Porch's appearance and dress are 'an image of ugliness' (p.116), which she has chosen as a form of defence. Miss Porch despairs of ever writing anything that is good because there are so many younger, more talented writers.

Miss Porch's authority and position as the writer is undermined and challenged in the narrative by both Miss Peycroft and members of her Treatment. A battle for control develops between Miss Porch and Miss Peycroft, while the students misdirect and misunderstand her artistic intentions. This is illustrated around the image of the lesbian. So far, references to lesbianism within the narrative have been handled ambiguously or matter-of-factly. However Miss Peycroft suggests that the lesbian scenes in the Treatment should be enhanced so that a character should be 'a little more demented' in the presence of 'the enraptured wardress' (p.159); while Christobel is so offended by the lesbian scenes that she is unable to say the word herself.

However Miss Porch does have an inner defence. She is a writer who has an active imagination. Thus when she is assailed by the words of others, she is able to imagine and to reconstruct aspects of their lives. For example, she imagines the 'orgy' between Miss Peycroft and Miss Paisley. With this ability Miss Porch is able to detach herself from their discursive demands. At the same time, her fantasies, which are represented in the narrative, become another element by which the fictional world is constructed.

The construction of the Treatment highlights the particular techniques and influences which create fiction. This includes the creative block that Miss Porch experiences as she outlines her Treatment. Once the Treatment is presented to the class, it is subjected to the influence and distortion of others. Literary aspects such as the first person monologue are satirised. The video is introduced as a source of irony

and satire. Characters in the class introduce their own prejudices which, for example, concern the use of the word 'pregnant' (p.158). Although Miss Porch takes her Treatment seriously, it does become a means of satirising certain characters within the narrative and of particular literary conventions. She is exploring her own position as the writer in a relationship with her audience.

It is ironic that a relationship is established between her Treatment and a member of the audience. Mrs Viggers has now been given a purpose in life, and she proposes to 'adopt' a character from the Treatment and to be a 'real' parent to her. This in turn gives Miss Porch a *raison d'être* for her own writing. The irony is enhanced here, because at this point, Miss Porch 'sees' her characters coming towards her and she walks off to meet them. As Miss Porch 'disappears' into her fictional world, the 'real' Miss Porch wakes up.

Jolley's texts indicate a departure from those which have been discussed already. Whereas other texts have highlighted the polemical issues about the meaning of 'woman' and the position of the woman artist, Jolley develops certain conventions about fiction to illustrate ideas about the relationship between fiction and reality and between the writer and the reader. Her texts highlight the actual processes of constructing fiction and the role and position of the established woman writer. The narrator speaks for the protagonist and other characters so that these ideas do not develop within the discursive structure, but instead emerge through the counterpoint of the 'real' and the 'fictional' narratives. In both *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and *Foxybaby*, the woman writer realises her destiny and identity through an imaginative engagement with the world of fiction and through the construction of fiction rather than by direct confrontation with conventional notions of 'woman'.

The meaning of 'woman' and the future of the woman artist is developing from the woman-centred point of view in these women's texts. The texts overall both criticise particular aspects of patriarchal definitions of 'woman' and construct alternative meanings. The texts illustrate this polemic and struggle for the definition of 'woman'

through a variety of discursive strategies. The woman artist signifies a challenge to the patriarchal definitions of 'woman' as a wife and mother. The approaches to the definition of the woman artist are changing. Earlier texts have focused on the sociological position of women and ideological definitions of 'woman' which counteract the emergence of the female artistic identity. Later texts now explore the narratives which the established woman writer constructs, and the problems associated with her identity and destiny as a woman artist.

CONCLUSION

The women's texts which I have been discussing illustrate the ways in which women writers 'author' the literary representation and meaning of 'woman'. As we have seen, these texts are, to varying degrees, radical texts; they have 'defamiliarised' particular patriarchal notions of 'woman' which have been traditionally upheld in their literary, social and cultural contexts, and have constituted a new perspective on 'woman' which they are inserting into the broader literary and cultural *milieu*. This renewed constitution of 'woman' illustrates an ongoing dialectic in which patriarchal cultural and literary definitions of 'woman' are being transformed by a woman-centred critique.

The figure of the woman artist, because it presents a double focus on the marginal position of women within the patriarchal context, is particularly suited to such a critique of patriarchal definitions and for the emergence of an alternative definition of 'woman'. Within the literary system, the representation of the woman artist and her experience is creating a new and more authentic female literary archetype. Consequently the form of the female *Bildungsroman* is being significantly adapted to demonstrate the development and maturation of this more positive image of 'woman'. At the same time, a new image of an active, assertive woman who revalues morals and meanings from her perspective instead of shaping herself to fit patriarchal definitions is being inserted into the cultural tradition, and is expanding the cultural notions of the female identity.

Moreover, these women writers have given their critiques more force through a series of discursive strategies which are conditioned by their marginal position. Their texts are, in every way, both ideological and technical, the site of struggle for the meaning of 'woman'. As we have seen, this struggle occurs within the discursive structure of the texts, while at the same time, the texts are constructed in a critical relationship with other cultural and literary discourses. On the external level, the texts as a whole are evaluative and subversive rejoinders to patriarchal values which historically have been preferred in the social and literary

context while, on the internal level, the texts illustrate a discursive system in which the various and contradictory meanings of 'woman' are debated between the protagonist and/or narrator, and other characters. The ideological designs of the texts and their meanings of 'woman' emerge through the hierarchical representation and evaluation of these differing values and are highlighted by the plot resolutions.

This interpretation of the texts, and the method by which they have been analysed, has been developed from a combination of Bakhtin's theories and feminist perspectives. Both Bakhtin and feminism interanimate each other so that an alternative view of women's writing emerges. Most feminist theories regard women as historically passive subjects who have been oppressed by patriarchy, and this, most certainly, has been the case. However this study, which has adapted Bakhtin's theories, demonstrates that women, as writers in the dominant discursive position, have been more active and more critical than has so far been acknowledged. Despite their undoubted cultural and historical inequality within the patriarchal society, women writers may 'author' their own meanings of both 'woman' and 'artist' in their texts in which they assume the controlling voice. Although women writers *do* occupy a marginal position within the patriarchy, they have been able to develop discursive strategies, such as that of the carnival, in order to challenge the values of the hegemony and to insert an influential voice into the literary, social and cultural context.

Furthermore, Bakhtin's theories suggest a new approach for feminist literary criticism and its analysis of women's texts. According to his view, meaning emerges from the discursive context; hence the text is a representation of the struggle for meaning and is itself a statement of values and meaning. In a technical sense, the struggle for the reconstitution of the meaning of 'woman' is achieved through subtle and sophisticated discursive tactics. Feminist literary criticism may well adapt Bakhtin's insights and in future might explore the effects of the female narrative point of view and the nature of the discursive strategies by which women writers subvert and transform patriarchal values, rather than concentrating, as they have done, on the analysis of 'authentic female experience' and the specifics of 'female aesthetics'.

Thus women writers, such as those who have been discussed, have the power to 'author' their meaning and destiny of 'woman' in spite of the power of patriarchy, and despite their position as the other within phallogentrism.

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