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Psychology, Culture and Female Texts: Brigitte Schwaiger's *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Julianne Eden Basic for the Master of Arts in
German presented April 10, 1991.

Title: Psychology, Culture and Female Texts: Brigitte Schwaiger's Wie kommt das Salz
ins Meer

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Louis Elteto, Chair

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In recent years, there has been extensive debate in the area of literary criticism, much of it focused on real or imagined differences between male and female texts. French feminist theorists, Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray, to name a few, argue that biological differences necessitate textual differences, while others reject this essentialist position, considering it just another means for perpetuating the notion of female inferiority. Many

linguists assert that women use language differently than men, and that texts reflect these differences. But in order to analyze the origin of any textual differences, it is necessary to look beyond biology and linguistic performance, to concentrate on psychology and its wider implications in the cultural world. Because Brigitte Schwaiger's text, Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer, contains a number of elements which underscore the extent that psychology and culture influence text production, it will serve as the focus of this paper. While this work can be classified as a female Bildungs- or Reifungs-roman — a narrative about the development of a modern consciousness and the attendant struggles involved — it serves in a wider sense as an example of the "difference" argued by many feminists between male and female texts.

Virginia Woolf has said that "a woman's writing is always feminine; it cannot help being feminine; at its best it is most feminine; the only difficulty lies in defining what we mean by feminine". In this paper I hope to demonstrate, using Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer, and theories appropriated and formulated by feminist critics which relate to language and culture, that there is, indeed, a difference between male and female texts, but one which is based not on the genetic traits of gender, but on a wide range of psychological and cultural determinants, which then become internalized.

PSYCHOLOGY, CULTURE AND FEMALE TEXTS:
BRIGITTE SCHWAIGER'S WIE KOMMT DAS SALZ INS MEER

by
JULIENNE EDEN BUSIC

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When Brigitte Schwaiger's first novel, Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer, was finally published in 1977, it became an immediate bestseller {1} . The work was compared to Günther Grass' Die Blechtrommel, which, as his first novel, had enjoyed a similar success, and within a year, Schwaiger's book was among the ten best sellers in German and had been translated into all of the major languages. After the second year of publication, more than 200,000 copies had been sold, and paperback editions appeared throughout Europe. Response to the book varied, but none could deny that Schwaiger had touched a nerve, had succeeded in creating, or perhaps affirming, a consciousness of the liabilities of gender in Western society.

The book begins with a quote from Arthur Schnitzler's Liebelein:

Das ist es, ganz richtig! Erholen! Das ist der tiefere Sinn! Zum Erholen sind sie da. Drum bin ich auch gegen die sogenannten interessanten Weiber. Die Weiber haben nicht interessant zu sein, sondern angenehm.

The requirements of gender, in Schnitzler's time, are addressed and reiterated in Schwaiger's book. Woman has a role, prescribed by her psychology and her culture, from which she may not deviate unless she is willing to subject herself to rejection by her society. And because of what Schwaiger sees as an arbitrary, patriarchally-imposed role, woman finds herself living a schizophrenic existence, torn between the dictates of the maternal within her and the paternal, which determines culture.

This dichotomy produces profound loneliness and a sense of alienation from one's fellow man and, more importantly, from one's own self. A further quote from Schnitzler, from his Buch der Sprüche und Bedenken, describes the crisis in which Schwaiger's narrator finds herself, one which, judging from the phenomenal success of her first novel, thousands of readers could identify:

Die Seele mancher Menschen scheint aus einzelnen, gewissermaßen flot-
tierenden Elementen zu bestehen, die sich niemals um ein Zentrum zu
gruppieren, also auch keine Einheit zu bilden imstande sind. So lebt der
kernlose Mensch in einer ungeheuren, ihm selbst doch niemals völlig zu
Bewußtsein kommenden Einsamkeit dahin {Lederer, 2, p. 48} .

In her loneliness, Schwaiger's narrator, who remains nameless throughout the novel, exhibits just such a lack of center, identity, and sense of self: "Ich schrumpfe zu einem bitteren Kern, der sich ausspucken möchte" {1, p. 64} . The difference between Schwaiger's work and many others in which we find protagonists in search of self, characters who have lost their moorings, is that she places blame squarely on the patriarchal system into which she was born and by which so many of her fellow women are oppressed and denied transcendence. While this theme is not a new one, it has been addressed more and more frequently in the last twenty years, as issues concerning gender have emerged and been hotly debated.

Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex {3} provided perhaps the most exhaustive study of conditions under which patriarchal constructs could and did control the destiny of women, and provided a framework for later feminist research into the area of gender difference. In this celebrated work, de Beauvoir explores the many aspects of femininity — sexual, biological, historical, social and political — and explodes those myths which have perpetuated the perception of woman as inherently inferior to man. While man is considered the Subject, woman has been seen as the inessential, the Object, the Other. She addresses the issue of male sovereignty, and what conditions contribute to woman's

willingness to accept her role of Other, arguing that it is society and culture which influence the perception that woman is inferior:

It is a difficult matter for man to realize the extreme importance of social discriminations which seem outwardly insignificant, but which produce in woman moral and intellectual effects so profound that they appear to spring from her original nature {3, p. xxx} .

The influence upon Schwaiger's narrator of her society and culture support de Beauvoir's comments, and illustrate the pervasiveness of the patriarchal system in all areas of female existence, from the economic to the intimate. While it is a mistake to equate the author of a work with the characters he or she creates, it is no coincidence that Schwaiger and her narrator spring from the same cultural and societal background. Woman writes what she knows, and Schwaiger is writing from experience, but one which serves to define a communality of experience shared by all women.

A short summary of Schwaiger's background and of Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer will be helpful in order to more effectively analyze the text and its underlying elements in the following chapters: Schwaiger was born the second of four daughters of a housewife and a doctor in Freistadt, Oberösterreich. She studied in Vienna, Madrid and Linz, exploring many subjects, among them Spanish, history, philosophy, German, psychology and art. For a short time, she worked as a secretary and assistant director with the Austrian radio network. After an unsuccessful marriage to a Spanish military officer, she returned to Vienna, where she now lives and works. She has undergone extensive therapy relating to unresolved issues concerning her father, her family, and her sense of subordination to male values and constricts. She has engaged in several failed affairs with married men and undergone at least two abortions, but still seems unable to put things into perspective.

In one interview, she talks about married men: "Erst versprechen sie den Himmel, dann führen sie ihn vor, und wenn man ins Schweben kommt, dann lassen sie einen fallen. Ich hätte es wissen müssen. Warum, warum fall' ich immer wieder darauf rein?" {4, p. 267} . And she often thinks about suicide: "Ich denk so viel an Selbstmord . . . das macht mir so zu schaffen, diesen Gedanken loszuwerden" {4, p. 261} . But in another sense, her writing affords her an opportunity to transcend her situation and to exact revenge upon the system and its proponents, which have denied her an identity independent of patriarchy. "Wenn ich beschreibe, töte ich", she says. "Ich spieße Menschen wie Schmetterlinge auf. . . ich könnte viel grausamer sein, wenn ich möchte. Es macht Spaß, jemanden ganz langsam umzubringen." When asked whether literary murder is liberating, she answers: "Ja und nein. Im Schreiben überlebt man. Aber im Grunde ist auch das nur ein flüchtiges Distanzieren von den eigenen Erlebnissen. Es gibt Dinge, von denen erholt man sich nicht" {4, p. 265} .

Many feminist literary theorists support the view, using psychology and cultural foundations, that woman is more closely connected to her art than man, that her relationships to her characters are intrinsically different and that her identity is often effected through literature. In this sense, the parallels between Schwaiger herself and the content of Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer are unavoidable. Her narrator marries against her will, to satisfy the dictates of her society and to assume her place in culture, as Schwaiger had done. She sees the marriage as a trick and tries to extricate herself:

Ich habe es mir überlegt, ich will nicht, weil ich das eigentlich nie wollte,
weil ihr mich überlistet habt. Weil ihr gesagt habt: nur eine Formalität.
Und jetzt seid Ihr aufgeregt, nehmt es ganz wichtig, seid alle gegen mich.
Keine Angst, mein Kind, habt ihr gesagt, da ist nur Tradition {1, p. 9} .

During the marriage ceremony, she recalls her thoughts: "Du hast Ja gesagt und Nein gedacht" {1, p. 14} . Already in the first page of the book, the reader is presented with a

double discourse, that of the patriarchy and of the woman imprisoned within it. The narrator's sense of identity and role in the social structure is dependent not upon her own personality but her connection to a man. And so she marries.

Like Schwaiger, the narrator's father prepares her for her place within the culture, first by indoctrinating her with patriarchal views and then by passing her on, symbolically and literally, to yet another magisterial figure, her husband. But the narrator rebels, refuses to fulfill her traditional role, has an affair with a married man in an attempt to transcend her imprisonment, becomes pregnant, has an abortion, experiences a near nervous breakdown, considers suicide, gets a divorce, and moves back home to her parents, where she will look for a job, "etwas Weibliches, aber doch etwas, wofür meine Eltern sich nicht schämen müssen" {1, p. 20} .

Because of the apparent powerlessness of the narrator and the ambiguous ending — does she or doesn't she experience a radical and transforming rise in consciousness — reception to Schwaiger's novel has been mixed. Hans Wolfeschütz finds the thematic focus most significant:

... die Suche einer Frau nach Selbstverwirklichung, ihre Lösung aus den Bindungen einer traditionellen Ehe — , das über den privaten Bereich hinaus zeittypische Relevanz besitzt und in seinem kritischen Ansatz die Übereinstimmung mit einem allgemeingesellschaftlichen Unbehagen geradezu voraussetzt {5, p. 3} .

He observes further that the protagonist sees herself as a link in the maternal chain "Großmutter-Mutter." This perception creates the image of a patriarchal order consisting of the rulers and the ruled, symbolized by the word with which the novel begins: "gutbürgerlich." Thus the revelations about marriage experienced by the narrator serve as a "Paradigma für eine gesellschaftliche Normalität, zu der eine Gegenwelt auch in Ansätzen nicht sichtbar wird" {5, p. 3} . Again, the double discourse.

Karin Kathrein, in a review for "Die Presse", finds Schwaiger's book representative for "Situationen und Zustände, die viele Frauen betreffen, natürlich wird jede Frau in diesem Buch zumindest eine kurze Passage finden, mit der sie sich identifiziert, eine Szene, ein Bild, ein Gefühl, die sie wiedererkennt." She also recognizes and acknowledges the "tiefverwurzelte Rollenspiele in einer Welt der Männer" that the novel addresses. Nonetheless, she finds the book "platt, banal, und konturlos. . ." {6, p. 30} , sharing the opinion of many male critics, and some women as well, who find "women's issues" trivial and peripheral to the bigger questions in life.

In an anonymous review in Der Ausschnitt, "Zuflucht im Zersetzen" {7}, another critic expresses impatience with the inability of the narrator to rise above her circumstances:

. . . selbstzerstörerisch, abwertend, ohne konstruktive Vorschläge, nur leidend, ohne Mitleid für andere, geschweige denn etwas für sie zu tun, voller Ansprüche auf Freiheit von der Konvention, aber unfähig, damit verbundene Verantwortung zu tragen . . . das Buch gibt auch die Eindrücke einer Kranken wieder.

The reviewer goes on to say that what is needed in contemporary literary texts are positive role models, that readers are "müde der müden, abwertenden und ewig nörgelnden Personen, die keine kritischen Lösungsansätze bieten . . . immer noch scheint bei den Romanciers die Devise zu gelten: Zersetzen, statt aufbauen, sich entziehen, statt Verantwortung zu tragen" {7, p. 5} .

Jürgen Serke finds Schwaiger's book one which "jeden Leser erreicht, ihm nah kommt und ihn berührt — ganz wörtlich. . . es ist eine Analyse der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, die Betroffenheit ganz selbstverständlich auslöst, aber nicht eifernd erzwingt . . . unser soziales Gewebe, das sich ins Pathologische zerfranst hat " {4, p. 261} .

All the reviewers seem to agree that this is a book critical of either bourgeois or patriarchal society, but their opinions of the narrator tend to be critical as well. Why

can't she take control of her life? Why is she so powerlessness and unmotivated? How does her raised consciousness fail to break the cycle of victimization she has endured throughout her life? The answers, I believe, lie in psychological theory, the formation of identity, the differences between male and female identity formation, and the wider cultural realm in which this identity is enacted. Because these factors address the acquisition of language and its implementation in the realm of culture, they exert an influence on literary texts as well. It is my intention to use Schwaiger's text and current feminist literary theory relating to literature as an illustration of these influences on texts written by women.

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGY AND WIE KOMMT DAS SALZ INS MEER: THE OEDIPAL WORLD

Feminist literary theory has found in psychoanalysis a means for elaborating on differences between the sexes, as well as discovering the processes which produce such differences. Theoretical foundations can then be laid to argue differences which extend to literary texts. Through exploration of psychoanalytic thought, the production of and influences on these texts can be better understood and the wider cultural implications analyzed.

Generally speaking, the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and literature has undergone many changes throughout the years. The focus has, for example, been shifted from an analysis of the author's psychological state to the wider relationship between the author, reader, text and language. Because psychoanalysis has much to say about the acquisition and use of language, and the ways in which identity is formed, and because psychoanalysis, the "talking cure", has made use of linguistic material in its diagnoses, it is appropriate to apply some of its findings to literature.

In Schwaiger's text, for example, the narrator exists in a schizophrenic state. She is a part of both the patriarchal, symbolic world, and of the maternal, or pre-Oedipal world. The role to which she has been assigned in her culture has been determined by the patriarchy, yet she retains a consciousness of and affinity for elements from the maternal world. In this sense, gender exerts a strong influence on her and on the text. As Nancy Chodorow points out in "Gender, Relation, and Difference in Psychoanalytic

Perspective", {8} some women's movements have argued in the past for a degendering of society, as though gender differences are simply acquired, in order that male dominance be eliminated. Others support the essentialist position that male/female difference is innate and urge not the degendering of society, but its appropriation by women, whose virtues — nurturing, mothering, diffuse sexuality — are superior and unavailable to men. Still others propose that these virtues are a result of women's development or social location and can, given the necessary conditions, be acquired by men. And last, certain feminists who argue for degendering hold that women need to develop "male" traits, such as independence, assertiveness, and autonomy, if, indeed, these are acquired traits {8, p. 2} .

Chodorow's position is a non-essentialist one, and gender, she argues, is not "absolute, abstract, or irreducible; it does not involve an essence of gender" {8, p. 4} . Gender differences, in her view, are socially and psychologically created and situated solely within a relational construct. And these differences play an important role in the way women write and relate to their characters and the culture in which they live.

Focusing first on the entry of the child into the Symbolic order, or the Oedipal world, we find Schwaiger's narrator accepting the definitions that have been provided for women by men, and acknowledging the role to which she has been assigned by the patriarchal naming system, with the collusion and tacit acceptance of both her grandmother and mother:

Wenn ich ihm gestand, daß ich schon wieder etwas Neues inskribiert hatte,
tröstete er mich mit Umarmungen. Ich war nichts, aber ihm galt ich viel.
Ich taugte nichts. Ihm taugte ich viel . . . ich wusste nicht, was ich ohne
Rolf getan hätte. Das brauchst du nicht zu wissen, sagte er, denn du hast
ja mich {1, p. 11} .

She and her activities have been defined by the patriarchal discourse. Her writing is seen as a harmless hobby or pursuit, whereas Rolf and his position in society represent

what is significant, transcendent, and valuable to culture. Jacques Lacan's expansion of Freud's Oedipal theory as it relates to entry into culture and language acquisition provides a background for the narrator's dilemma. Lacan posits the Imaginary and the Symbolic as one of the most fundamental sets of related terms in his formulation. The Imaginary corresponds to the pre-Oedipal time during which the child perceives no difference between self and mother, self and world. There is a totality of identity which admits no fragments, no separation. The Oedipal crisis represents entrance into the world of the Symbolic, and is contemporaneous with the acquisition of language and the unconscious. The phallus is equated with, in Lacanian terms, the Law of the Father (or the threat of castration), and also with loss, because it signifies loss of the maternal body. From this time on, desire for her and the imaginary unity she represents must be repressed. This primary repression creates an unconscious that could not exist before because, in the Imaginary, there is no unconscious since there is no lack. In Lacan's scheme, the unconscious is the product of desire's structuring by language. No word can capture the substance because that which has been named has "only apparently been named." Desire invests the signifier with meaning, but the meaning is felt only subjectively, not mutually acknowledged. There is an endless chain of signifiers used by the subject in his pursuit of "real" satisfaction, which Lacan calls "lack." In this sense, metonymy is at work. On a metaphorical level, desire reveals itself in the metaphorical substitutions for surface meaning of the repressed meaning. The metaphor thus represents the symptom which reveals the repressed desire, just as bodily, physical symptoms are often indicative of unconscious concerns {9, p. 122} . The act of speaking thus becomes the "representation of repressed desire" {10, p. 99} .

Lacanian theory continues to assert that an entry into language and the Symbolic order means accepting the phallus as a privileged signification, a representation of the Law of the Father, which, as a consequence, causes female displacement. In her paper,

"Language and Gender", Cora Kaplan has the following to say about the phallus' significant position in relation to language:

The phallus as a signifier has a central, crucial position in language, for if language embodies the patriarchal law of the culture, its basic meanings refer to the recurring process by which sexual difference and subjectivity are acquired. . . . Thus the little girl's access to the Symbolic, i.e., to language and its laws, is always negative and/or mediated by intro-subjective relation to a third term, for it is characterized by an identification with lack {11, p. 3}.

Because all human society and culture is determined by the Symbolic order, and by the phallus as the sign of lack, the subject either accepts this order or remains in the Imaginary, which can be equated with the psychotic. {10, p. 100} . Oedipus brings us, according to Juliet MacCannell's interpretation in Figuring Lacan, into "the domain of norms; it identifies and sorts us into categories that allow us to transform what Freud calls 'the family, with its erotic roots', into rational substitutes for the family" {12, p. 76} . In Lacanian theory, the Oedipal Father, the "primal Father with absolute phallic power", becomes the Name of the Father. By focusing on the patronym, which inscribes social identity in the patriarchal order, naming under patriarchy, he inserts the analysis of family structure into a wider social and linguistic order. The principle of the Logos is thus privileged as the formulator of meaning. Lacan argues that everyone is marked by the Name of the Father and that we have taken it into our psyches with the acquisition of language, within familial and social relations {9, p. 110} .

The result is that women are denied linguistic "weight" in culture, as Schwaiger's narrator painfully discovers:

Mein Mann wirft Wörter aus, und sie fallen dorthin, wo er sie haben will.
Meine Wörter haben kein Gewicht. Sie schweben sichtbehindernd im
Raum. Ich kann sie alle wieder einfangen {1, p. 58} .

Whereas male discourse determines the validity of ideas and concepts, woman's discourse is marginal to the magisterial discourse. The narrator's words participate in no subject/object relationship, no mutuality in a syntactic or psychological level. In the narrator's perception, her language hinders her ability to "see", or to enter the male world of the Symbolic. This social order, the Law, and the way it perpetuates itself as patriarchal discourse, provides a means for female readers to understand "the political in the personal" {9, p. 106}.

Schwaiger's narrator is subjected throughout the novel to this patriarchal discourse, which posits woman as immanence and man as transcendence. The Law of the Father, the Name of the Father, defines "woman." Because discourse is a living impulse, as Bakhtin has argued, there are no "neutral" words and forms. Each word "tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions" {13, p. 293} . And in patriarchy, the intent is to perpetuate that discourse and to force woman to choose a language, to choose a position for herself within it. Either she enters the Symbolic world and remains a valued member of society, or she is thrust into a closed environment, cut off from "socio-ideological becoming" {13, p. 295} . It is therefore critical that a text be analyzed with intention in mind, providing as it does the psychological and social situation of the word in life:

To study the word as such, ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond it, is just as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined {13, p. 292} .

Schwaiger's narrator occupies a role, intended by patriarchy in language and culture, as the "inessential", the Other, one which prohibits her engaging in transcendent activities such as writing. Her unconscious, which requires a massive repression of drives, plays

itself out as she attempts to see herself as a subject instead of an object. If desire is language, and she is only allowed vicarious access to it, her psychic state will reflect this repression. Instead of transcendent writing, she is allowed an inferior form:

An einem trüben Dienstag wurde im Festsaal der Hochschule Rolfs Sponson und Promotion gefeiert. Er lud Freunde ein, sich das anzusehen. Ich tippte die Adressen auf die Kuverts. Wenigstens Maschinenschreiben hättest du lernen können, sagte Rolf { 1, p. 11 } .

If, as Julia Kristeva has asserted, woman is defined only negatively, as being not-defined, not-represented in patriarchal discourse { 10, p. 163 } , this narrator's existence corresponds to her concept. Man is transcendent, allowed transcendent activities. She is not-transcendence. On the bus ride to Rolf's graduation, her immanence is further reinforced when she is asked by an older woman what she had studied:

Ich? Nichts. Ist auch besser, sagte sie, für eine Frau ist es besser. Was haben Sie denn für einen Beruf? Sekretärin, sagte ich schnell, weil mir einfiel, daß ich wenigstens Maschinenschreiben hätte lernen können. Das ist ein schöner Beruf für eine Frau . . . { 1, p. 12 } .

Again, the woman is defined through patriarchal discourse. Her relationship to the words, which represent lack, just as desire represents loss, amounts to a second displacement that men must not suffer. And Rolf's value is defined as well by the Law of the Father, in terms of the family dynamic: "Vater sagt, Rolf ist ein anständiger und tüchtiger Bursche, Mutter sagt, auf Rolf kann ich stolz sein, Großmutter sagt, das wichtigste ist eine gutbürgerliche Verbindung " { 1, p. 3 } . In patriarchal discourse, the first three elements are requirements for and indicative of male transcendence, and the "gutbürgerliche Verbindung" is necessary in order that the female adequately fill the immanent position into which she has been placed by language, or culture.

Frequent references to generational continuity reinforce the inevitability and repetition of female consciousness and roles. "Da sagte Rolf, dass ich meiner Mutter

ähnlich sehe, und Großmutter sagte, daß ich aber den Herzmund von ihr habe . . . "

{ 1, p. 14} . When told not to talk too much, the heroine's grandmother protests: "Man wird doch noch reden dürfen, sagt Großmutter, ich bin die Mutter, und wenn ich nicht wäre, wärt ihr alle nicht" { 1, p. 15} . Although the female is responsible for the birth of all mankind, she nonetheless is prevented from defining and explaining her world, her experiences, her life. When she attempts, her efforts are trivialized. In an attempt to reveal something of herself to Rolf, to correct a false impression he might have of her, our heroine admits to telling him a lie in the past. He doesn't care. "Warum interessiert es dich nicht, du solltest dich dafür interessieren, wen du geheiratet hast. Nein, sagt Rolf, es interessiert mich nicht." He is interested only in her surfaces, his definition of her, not her content, which is all that immanence requires. "Du bist betrunken", he tells her at their wedding feast. "Schämst du dich nicht?" { 1, p. 18} . Again she fails to conform to the Law of the Father, who has defined wife, propriety, and culture.

Nonetheless, Rolf attempts to convince her she is "free." As we have learned from Lacan, there are no firm signifieds corresponding to a single signifier. The concept of freedom, once again, has a different meaning in male and female experience. For Rolf, freedom means his wife may transgress the norms he and his gender have established for her behavior. She, on the other hand, would conceive of freedom as the opportunity to define those norms herself:

Du rauchst vor dem Essen? Ich mache die Zigarette aus. Warum raucht man vor dem Essen? Rolf hat recht. Aber rauch doch, sagt er, du bist ja frei. Natürlich bin ich frei { 1, p. 19} .

The events of the couple's wedding night only underscore the gap between male and female experience and the inadequacies of the Logos, or magisterial discourse:

. . . wenn eine Frau nicht will, daß man sie küßt, so muß sie es ausführlich begründen, und wenn sie das getan hat, bekommt sie dafür einen Kuß, weil

es rührend ist, wenn Frauen sich bemühen, etwas zu erklären, weil eine Frau eine Frau ist. Männer sagen einfach nein, und wenn sie nicht wollen, dann können sie auch nicht. Ich sage: Nein. Das Spiel beginnt. Warum nicht? Weil ich unglücklich bin, Rolf. Er dreht das Licht auf, schaut mich an und findet, daß unglückliche Leute anders aussehen {1, p. 21}.

The world of the Logos is seemingly available to women, but when they attempt to access it, they are continually devalued. The word "no" has different values for men and for women, but it is men who determine what the female negation really "means", and how "unhappy" people look, as though all is visible. And they have also succeeded in convincing the protagonist that it is her duty, based on biological fact, to accede to Rolf's demands:

Jetzt darf ich nicht mehr nein sagen, schließlich ist er ein Mann und nicht aus Holz, und ich schreie: Nein! Da liegt er wieder neben mir, sein Herz klopft, ich höre es, ich fürchte, daß er weinen wird, dann werde ich naß sein von seinen Tränen. Ich habe eine große Schuld auf mich geladen, ich weiß es ja, und vielleicht hilft er mir ab morgen, daß wir diese Schuld aufteilen und allmählich freier werden und wieder atmen können, miteinander {1, p. 21}.

She continues to hope, nonetheless, that the "guilt" can be divided equally. The next day dispels all hopes for an equal division when she is once again called upon to perform her duties and opts to disassociate from the event, to disengage both emotionally and intellectually:

Er zieht mich zu sich, ich lasse mich ziehen. Er hebt mich ins Bett. Ich lasse mich heben. Er schiebt mein Nachthemd hinauf. Ich lasse mich ganz entblößen. Weil ich draußen bin im Schnee, bei den schwarzen Vögeln, weil ich nicht da sein werde, wenn du mich berührst {1, p. 22} .

Her passivity becomes a profound form of rebellion and dissociation. According to Phyllis Chesler's study, Women and Madness, frigidity, along with depression, suicide attempts, and anxiety, are among the main characteristics of women who perceive their

situation as that of a master/slave relationship, confined to "women's work", or women's psychological identity, and exhibiting all the signs and symptoms of slavery: working around the clock in the kitchen, nursery or bedroom. Psychoanalytically, they are character symptoms of women "on strike against persons (actual or internal) to whom they relate with subservience and against whom they wage an unending and unsuccessful covert rebellion" {14, p. 41}.

Schwaiger's narrator engages in such a rebellion, whether consciously or unconsciously, by rejecting her sexual role. "Du bist frigid" says Rolf, during their honeymoon in Italy. The protagonist is unable to gauge the truth of the statement, answering:

Ich weiß nicht, sage ich, weil man sich das schnell angewöhnt zu sagen:
Ich weiß es nicht . . . ich kann ihm nichts sagen, weil er alles, was ich ihm
anvertraue, auspreßt. Er gibt mir die Schale zurück: Schau, so leer war
deine Behauptung. Sag noch was, ich will es prüfen. Schau her, es ist
wieder nichts {1, p. 29} .

The magisterial discourse is at work once again: the Logos, which, in the patriarchal discourse, is the counterpart to Chaos, represented by woman. The psychological cost to the protagonist of the role to which she has been consigned in the Symbolic world is significant. She longs to return to the pre-Oedipal world, where symbiosis is possible, a world devoid of gender:

Als ich ein Kind war, Rolf, habe ich mich gefreut auf Erwachsensein. Ich
war voll Vorfreude und Ungeduld . . . und jetzt möchte ich wieder zurück,
bis in den Bauch meiner Mutter möchte ich, wenn ich uns so ansehe
{1, p. 29} .

Because woman does not represent herself in the Symbolic, because she is not a subject in the same sense as a man, she is consigned to silence, muteness, and absence. She longs for a voice, to be heard:

Rolf hält das Auto an, um die Aschen in einen Papierkorb zu leeren. Ich möchte mit jemandem sprechen können, ohne zurechtgewiesen zu werden. Mit dem Papierkorb! Mich auf die Strasse legen und mit der Strasse reden {1, p.30} .

But she lacks an authentic voice. She is doomed to mimicry or ostracism. Her value lies simply in what her father does or how well she marries. This behavior of the unconscious as it manifests itself in language reinforces what Lacan has said about it being synonymous with desire:

... it moves ceaselessly on from object to object or from signifier to signifier, and it will never find full and present satisfaction, just as meaning can never be seized as full presence ... there can be no final satisfaction of our desire since there is no final signifier or object that can be that which has been lost forever (the imaginary harmony with the mother and the world {10, p. 101} .

Schwaiger's narrator is continually seeking this harmony, but through the patriarchal authorities. As a child, her importance derived from the prestige of her doctor father. The village's population realized it was an honor "Mutter und mich empfangen zu dürfen, weil wir zu Vater gehörten, und Vater war der wichtigste Mann in der Stadt, er machte alle Leute gesund, er rettete vielen Menschen das Leben" {1, p. 30} . Because the Oedipal identity for a female is bound closely to the father as love object, female surrender and subjugation to this idealized entity often occurs, as it does in this narrator: "Wenn Vater mir Schmerz bereitete, war es richtig, und ich war stolz, daß er mich wahrnahm" When she arrived to study in Vienna, nobody knew her father and she was suddenly without identity: "Da kannte niemand meinen Vater . . . ich war nicht mehr ich, nur noch irgendeine . . . und da kam Rolf, der mich wiedererkannte, er wußte, wer ich war, und mit ihm mußte ich schlafen, weil es so richtig war" {1, p. 31} . The effect of the repression of desire for symbiosis with the mother is replayed, again and again. The heroine moves from signifier to signifier, father to husband to eventual lover, in her search for lost unity and identity. "Die Frau braucht einen Mann", she states, "und

es geht uns gut. Er wird auf der Leiter immer höher und höher steigen, ich werde die Leiter festhalten, damit sie nicht umkippt." Once again, transcendence and immanence: the male makes progress towards a goal, aspires beyond himself. The female assists him. After all, according to Rolf, she has a task: to produce children, to strengthen and perpetuate the family: "Wir werden Kinder haben, aber nur eigene . . ." One doesn't know, otherwise, "was für Erbmaterial ins Haus kommt. Eine Frau ohne Mann, was ist das schon? Er ist stärker. Dafür kann sie Kinder machen" {1, p. 32} . But she feels alienated from herself and from her husband. The sense of self, of ego, is undermined by her knowledge that there is no unity, that she is defined by what she is not: a man. And her relationships with others are dictated by their perceptions of her husband, her father. The vegetable vendor asks: "Darf ich der Gnäfrau die Tür aufhalten? Ich bin nicht ich. Ich bin Rolfs Frau. Früher hat mir keiner die Türen aufgehalten." Doors are held for her mother as well, because, as her grandmother tells her "das ist so, wenn man die Gattin von einer Kapazität ist" {1, p. 34} . Because woman's identity is expressed negatively in the Oedipal world, it is contingent upon her connection to the male and her acceptance of his definitions, hierarchies, symbols and Logos. Our protagonist persists, however, in claiming a voice and an identity for herself, in asserting her right to access male institutions and discourse. She keeps a diary, which Rolf discovers:

Führst du ein Tagesbuch? Warum sagst du nicht, daß du so was haben willst? Ich werde dir ein richtiges Tagebuch kaufen, mit Schlüsseln, dann kannst du deine kleinen Geheimnisse vor mir versperren. Hast du überhaupt Geheimnisse? Nein? Ist etwas passiert? Was schreibt man denn ins Tagesbuch, wenn nichts passiert ist? {1, p. 50} .

Her secrets are "klein", if, in fact, they exist at all. Rolf suspects she has none, as he is confident he has prevented anything from happening in her life. The tension between fact and fiction present here heightens the irony and reinforces the alienation that has developed between the two characters. Much has happened in her world, but it

is invisible to him, it is, once again, that which is not represented in patriarchal discourse. "Ich finde es rührend", Rolf tells her, "wie du so sitzt und aussiehst, als dächtest du über etwas Wichtiges nach" { 1, p. 48} . It is not the subject matter of her thought and writing which is unimportant, insignificant. It is because it is a woman who is addressing weighty issues, and a woman is not supposed to create the discourse, but merely mimic it.

Early in the marriage, a dog, Blitz, is purchased by Rolf. Again, according to Lacan, no fixed bond exists between signifier and signified. The signifier "dog" means different things to Rolf and his wife. Rolf views the dog as an inferior creature, a temporary replacement for the child he hasn't yet been presented with, one which he can train and force to bend to his will. He means to engage his wife as his ally in reinforcing the commands he has taught Blitz, not as an underminer of his authority. He fails to make the connection, as she does immediately, between the role of Blitz and her role in the household. Blitz is the "Haustier" and she is the "Wohnungstier." "Bis so ein Vieh zimmerrein ist, heißt es nachhelfen . . . verstehst du nicht, daß er parieren muß? Das geht nicht anders. Man kann mit einem Hund doch nicht diskutieren. Aber das begreifst du nicht" { 1, pp. 56-57} . She does grasp the fact that she, like Blitz, must obey, must surrender to Rolf's discourse, or be excluded from the society to which she belongs. And like Blitz, who engages in rebellions and discovers ways to contravene Rolf's orders, she does the same. She and Blitz are soulmates, and the first stirrings of her will are shared only with Blitz: "Nur Blitz darf es ins Ohr geflüstert bekommen, er seufzt verständnisvoll und ist verschwiegen." She and Blitz creep through the darkness of the apartment together while Rolf is sleeping:

Er beschützt mich auf den Wanderungen durch die dunklen Zimmer. Wir tasten uns durch die Küche zum Küchenbalkon . . . er grollt nicht und macht kein Gejaule aus seiner Einsamkeit { 1, p. 63} .

When Rolf accidentally shoots Blitz in the eye, blinding him, and he must be put to sleep, she mourns his death as though it were her own. "Muß die ganze Stadt dich hören? So weint man nicht einmal um einen Menschen! Das ist doch nicht der Hund, um den du heulst, du hast doch was" {1, p. 84} . In this he is correct, but he has no sense of what she "has." No wonder that she entertains thoughts of suicide. When she looks out of her window, she thinks: "Die Straße unterm Fenster ist hart, ich müßte mich nur ein Stück weiter hinausbeugen, man ist nur einen Herzschlag vom Pflaster entfernt" {1, p. 117} .

But in her relentless search for unity and identity, she continues to hope for man as her salvation, beginning an affair with a married friend of theirs, Albert, who, like her father, is also a doctor: "Albert hat meine Schultern mit Flecken gebrandmarkt. Ich gehöre ihm. Meine Brüste sind grösser geworden unter seinen Lippen. Seine Erfahrung, seine Befehle, mein Gehorchen, sein" {1, p. 72} . She has simply exchanged the authority of her father and of Rolf, for Albert's authority. Because woman is silent within the male discourse, she is unable to create her own discourse or to find validity and connection within the female world. Albert's authority extends, like Rolf's, into the realm of her sexuality. Albert tells her during lovemaking when to climax:

Er bestimmt, wann es soweit zu sein hat. Daß es trotzdem nie soweit ist, liegt daran, daß ich immer daran denke und daß Rolf mich verpatzt hat. Für Rolf sind alle Frauen normal, nur ich nicht. Albert sagt, daß es keine normalen Frauen gibt, nur blöde Männer . . . daß es für eine Frau auch ohne Höhepunkt schön ist {1, p. 73} .

Albert professes his love for her, but when his marriage and family are threatened by her confession of their affair to Rolf, he is upset. He knows the family, the seat of all culture and all patriarchal discourse, must not be endangered, because it represents the core of patriarchy, the idea of property, and the desire to transmit one's property to one's biological descendents. And when she becomes pregnant by Albert, he decides what

shall be done, and then he aborts her personally: "Vorhänge zu. Leg dich auf den Tisch. Beiß die Zähne zusammen. Beine auseinander, locker, halte dich ganz locker, rutsch weiter vor, das ist doch keine Affäre." But when it is over, she is unsure whether she has the right to feel humiliated: "Bin ich überempfindlich, weil ich mich gedemütigt fühle?" He has given her injections, but still she is in pain: "Das bißchen Schmerz ist nur der Krampf. Die Gebärmutter muss sich öffnen, verstehst du? Ich habe eine Gebärmutter. Jetzt, wo sie beraubt wird, fällt mir das erst richtig ein, daß ich eine habe" {1, p. 106} .

Because of their investment in legitimacy, men have decreed that a child born outside the patriarchal family is illegitimate; thus the narrator is robbed of her baby and her body is invaded and devalued. But the family is kept intact. Motherhood is sacred so long as the offspring are "legitimate" — that is, "as long as the child bears the name of a father who legally controls the mother." As Adrienne Rich points out, the experience of motherhood and sexuality have traditionally been channeled to serve male interests and any behavior which threatens their institutions, such as illegitimacy, adultery, or abortion, is treated as deviant or unacceptable {15, p. 42} . Patriarchy would fail to exist without motherhood in its institutionalized form, and therefore must be treated as an axiom, as "nature", not open to debate or contradiction {15, p. 43} .

The full weight of patriarchal judgement ultimately falls on the protagonist when she makes the final decision to divorce, although Rolf disagrees with her decision to first seek psychiatric help, telling her: "Meiner Ansicht nach brauchst du keinen Psychiater . . . sondern einfach mehr Willensstärke. Du läßt dich gehen, und du tust dir selbst viel zu leid" {1, p. 108} . The validation she desperately needs is denied her, from yet one more male, magisterial authority, the psychiatrist, who diagnoses a "neuro-vegetative Störung" and prescribes "eine Pille nach dem Frühstück und eine nach dem Mittagessen" after she tells him that :

... der Mann, den ich liebe, hat mein Kind umgebracht, mit einem Mann, den ich nicht ausstehen kann, bin ich verheiratet, der hat meinen Hund eingeschlafert, und ich will nicht mehr leben, weil ich mich selbst nicht mehr ausstehen kann, das Kribbeln unterm Kopf, wie Käfer zwischen Schädeldecke und Hirnhaut, und morgens wache ich auf, weil mein Herz unter einer Klaue zuckt, tagsüber möchte ich am liebsten irgendwo unter einem Teppich liegen, nachts wünsche ich mir nichts sehnlicher als einzuschlafen und nie mehr aufzuwachen ... { 1, p. 107 } .

It is interesting to note, as Chesler has done, the analogies between therapy and marriage. Both enable the woman to "express and defuse her anger by experiencing it as a form of emotional illness, by translating it into hysterical symptoms, such as frigidity, phobias, chronic depression and hysteria" {14, p. 108} . She often seeks in a therapist what her husband is unable to provide: understanding, validation, relief, and attention. But psychotherapy and marriage ultimately support each other. Both operate from the patriarchal viewpoint and both are governed by patriarchal discourse {14, p. 109}. It comes as no surprise that the protagonist is denied the relief she seeks and opts for divorce afterwards.

Instead of support for her decision, she is attacked by the males and females alike for failing to fill her role as ordained by Oedipal dictates: "Mutter will nicht, dass ich ihnen das antue ... dein Vater würde sich zum Tode kränken"; "Mutter sagt, ich sollte Vater nicht belasten, und warum wir nicht endlich ein Kind bekommen, Rolf und ich, ein Kind würde dich ablenken" { 1, p. 110 } ; "Großmutter hat angedeutet, daß sie es nicht überleben wird" { 1, p. 111 } .

Rolf's mother, too, is outraged by her rejection of the role of wife: "Warum ist sie so böse auf mich? Rolf sagt, weil seine Mutter ihn liebt und es nicht ertragen kann, wenn ihrem Sohn Unrecht geschieht" { 1, p. 120 } . As has so often been emphasized, woman, woman's experience, remains unrepresented. She continues to occupy a marginal position within institutional discourse. As Julia Kristeva says, she has two choices: "mother-identification, which will intensify the pre-Oedipal components of the

woman's psyche and render her marginal to the Symbolic order, or father-identification, which will create a woman who will derive her identity from the same symbolic order" { 10, p. 165} .

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGY AND WIE KOMMT DAS SALZ INS MEER: THE PRE-OEDIPAL WORLD

Let me now turn to the pre-Oedipal component of female identity and explore these effects on Schwaiger's text and characters. Nancy Chodorow's exhaustive work on identity formation in girls and boys provides the best framework in which to analyze maternal influences as they pertain to Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer. Her theory can be summarized in this way: a boy defines himself first as a male in a negative manner; that is, by differentiating himself from his first caretaker, usually the mother. He is, in simple terms, "not Mother." As he moves beyond this initial sense of unity with the mother and adopts the role of the father, through the dynamics of the Oedipus complex, he seals his separation from the mother and comes to perceive himself as independent, autonomous, transcendent, and valued by family and society.

So far, Chodorow's view of male identity formation corresponds to those of the majority of her male predecessors in the field. However, in the area of female identity formation, Chodorow differs from her male counterparts, asserting that a girl first experiences her gender in a positive manner, in becoming like the mother, with whom she has merged symbiotically as a infant. Then she must develop in such a way as to be able to recreate pleasurably this same symbiosis when she becomes a mother. Consequently, women "develop capacities for nurturance, dependence, and empathy more easily than men do and are less threatened by these qualities" {16, p. 182} .

Autonomy and independence are more difficult to attain, since female sense of self is so intimately bound to and defined in terms of social relationships. Ego and body boundaries remain in flux and there are significant issues of fusion and merger of the self with others throughout the female life.

Therefore, the components of adult identity are formed early in childhood, but the identity process continues later. Children learn various roles in society and ways of group identification which contribute to identity and concept of self. The options for men, however, are more varied than for women, whose two main roles remain that of wife and mother. Being a wife and mother is, at the same time, an occupational role as well as one denoting personal relationships. Thus the roles become confused and merged with female infantile identifications with the mother, since being female assumes emulation of the mother and her traits, specifically, passivity and nurturance..

Additionally, in Chodorow's view, the social roles for females are more fixed and less varied than men's, and unlike the male identity crisis, the female counterpart might occur in a different manner, or not at all. As Judith Gardiner points out, it follows that the issues of identity and self-concept play such a major role and present so many problems for women and that many female texts reflect this dissonance {16, p. 184}.

As both Chodorow and Kristeva have theorized, the pre-Oedipal phase of identity formation, or the semiotic, is linked to the mother, whereas the symbolic is dominated by the Law of the Father. A little girl has to make a choice: to identify with the mother or to raise herself to the "symbolic stature of the father." In the first instance, pre-Oedipal phases are intensified. If her identification is with the father, the "access she gains to the symbolic dominance will censor the pre-Oedipal phase and wipe out the last traces of dependence on the body of the mother" {10, p. 165} . Though Schwaiger's narrator appears to have chosen identification with the Oedipal world, there are ineradicable and powerful traces of the pre-Oedipal in her behavior, her sensibilities, her language and re-

lationships. First, linguistically speaking, she makes extensive use of stream of consciousness, a technique which duplicates the oceanic feeling found in many texts by women, the merging of identities, the interior monologue, the shifting of subject and object. The function of the female "I" in many female texts signals the existence of a divided self, a consciousness endemic to many women and also to this narrator. This merging between subject and object, a feeling of "we", as opposed to "I", is then reflected in the text. The divided voices "evoke divided selves: the rational and the passionate, the active and the suffering, the conscious life and the dream life, animus and anima, analyst and analysand" {17, p. 331} . Language, as Paula Treichler points out, signals "the complicated struggles of the essential self"; the language serves as a "meter of consciousness" {18, pp. 239, 41} . In the first pages, the reader is plunged into uncertainty. Who is talking? Is anybody talking, in fact, or is it thoughts with which we are presented? :

Und sie? Was ist mit ihr? Warum liegst du auf dem Bett? Ist dir schlecht?
 . . . du zerdrückst das Kleid! Zieh die Schuhe an! Nimm den Mantel!
 Welchen Mantel? Deinen natürlich! . . . Siehst du, jetzt ist dein schönes
 Kleid zerdrückt. Warum legst du dich auch aufs Bett! Laß dich an-
 schauen! Warum warst du nicht beim Friseur? {1, p. 8}.

Eine Frau ohne einen Mann, was ist das schon? Er ist starker. Dafür kann
 sie Kinder machen. Und ob wir von Blutkreislauf, Leber und Nieren zu
 einem sinnvollen Leben befähigt werden, oder ob wir leben müssen im
 Sinne von Blutkreislauf, Leber und Nieren, das sind Fragen, die man sich
 nicht zu stellen hat. Wo kämen wir hin, wenn wir alle umdrehen?
 Grübeln führt zu nichts. Man sollte sich freuen, daß man lebt. Andere
 Kinder wären froh, wenn sie . . . {1, p. 32} .

It is also interesting to note that we never learn the name of the narrator, as we do those of the supporting characters. She has neither name nor patronym, though she bears all the marks of the patriarchal system. In the Oedipal, or symbolic, world, she remains unnamed and unrepresented as a woman, and in the pre-Oedipal configuration, her

identity is dependent upon the mother, with whom she merges and enjoys symbiosis. Regardless of her decision on whether to enter the symbolic world or to remain in the semiotic, her identity is not discrete, but positional.

Pre-Oedipal influences also explain, asserts Claudia Hermann, why and how women use space and time, metaphor and metonymy differently than men. "Women seldom treat time as a positive element in their works, a dimension that enriches vision by adding another complexity and a factor of truth" {19, p. 172} . "Time our torture", as Simone Weil has said in reference to women, as time is harder on women than on men. "Man's love is for her body, and in age, she has nothing left." Because women are more intimately bound to cyclical events than men, time for them is not related to social, but to intimate life. The masculine system has "placed upon women the task of material continuity — of daily life and of the species — while men assume the function of discontinuity, discovery, change in all its forms; in essence, the superior, differentiating function." Such a perspective necessitates the recuperation of this complementary lost function, and woman must "provide another division of time and space, fragmenting them into moments and places that are not linked together . . . so that each is a sort of innovation in reference to its temporal or geographical context." Schwaiger's narrator refuses to consider life as simply "a landscape that goes by while one thinks about something else" {19, p. 172} . On her honeymoon with Rolf, she succumbs to the physical world, its colors, rhythms, sensations, which resurrect pre-Oedipal longings, rhythms, and melodies:

Rote, gelbe, ockerfarbene Häuser, Gebirge mit Schnee und blauem Himmel, Brescia, Milano, wie schön sich das anhört: Milano. Das hab ich als Kind vor mich hingesungen, Milano, ich möchte wieder ein Kind sein.

Rolf, on the other hand, "erklärt mir alles Wissenswerte über den Hafen und seine wirtschaftliche Bedeutung" {1, p. 25} . The reader is once again confronted with the

male Logos, the urge to define, explain, categorize, hierarchize. The female retains the bond with the maternal, or pre-Oedipal world. It is this sense of continuity, of universality, that continues to occur to her and which Rolf denigrates or fails to recognize or appreciate:

Michelangelo ist über diese Pflastersteine gegangen, barfuß. Glaubst du, daß es damals keine Schuhe gab? fragt Rolf. Michelangelo hat vielleicht einmal seine Hand auf diese Türklinke gelegt. Ein kleines, heimliches Glück. Ich stehle mir Splitterfreuden aus Rolfs Tag {1, p. 26} .

Whenever she thinks about her childhood and the days in which she felt happiness, at one with the world, he tells her " . . . denk nicht immer an deine blöde Kindheit, befaß dich mit der Gegenwart, werde endlich erwachsen. Wie wird man denn erwachsen? Das bringe ich dir schon bei" {1, p. 29}. Dwelling in the past is for the male a regression, a return to the pre-Oedipal, one which negates his transcendence, his gender. Although he urges his wife to abandon her desire to return to the past, to live in the present, he does not, however, urge her to aspire to patriarchal ideals. She is, after all, a woman. He simply wants his needs met. And he wants her to relate to others in such a way as to benefit his career, in a calculating, systematic way irreconcilable with her urges. She admits to him that she can change her handwriting at will. "Das kommt", he tells her, "weil du eben doch Beziehungen zu den Menschen hat, die um dich leben. Warum doch? Jetzt gesteht er, daß seine Mutter sich über meine Beziehungslosigkeit zur Umwelt beklagt hat." But she has a deeper connection to everything around her, not just to people, but objects, sounds, noises, colors:

Ich gehe ins Bad, Rolf folgt mir, und ich habe Beziehung zur Zahnpasta, zur Zahnbürste, zu Mandelkleie, Feuchtigkeitscreme, Schwefelstein, eine starke Beziehung zu meiner Nagelbürste, zum Achselspray, der jetzt reglos auf dem Regal steht wie alle anderen kleinen Freunde im Badezimmer, und vorhin haben sie noch über mich gekichert" {1, p. 51} .

Her reactions to music also illustrate another pre-Oedipal influence, one which allows her once again to merge and expand. Rolf is unable to achieve this union, nor can he understand her ability to do so:

Er sprach von den angenehmen Seiten des Jahrhunderts, in dem wir leben, schaltete das Radio ein, bis die richtige Musik kam, war froh, wenn ich die letzten Tränen schluckte und sagte, daß mich das Leben wieder gepackt habe, und ich sagte ihm nicht, daß die Musik das bewirkte, nicht er {1, p. 23} .

Was tust du? Was für ein Tanz soll den das sein? Das ist doch kein Tanz! Und ohne Musik? Wie soll ich das verstehen, daß du die Musik in dir hast? Paß auf, du stürzt, erklär mir das mit der Musik! {1, p. 63} .

The semiotic is closely connected to the unconscious and "expresses itself as the organization of instinctual drives through the resources of rhythm, intonation, gesture, and melody" {9, p. 111} . It is also reminiscent of the maternal rhythms and the world before gender differentiation, so it is understandable that the narrator, who is less threatened by the loss of autonomy and transcendence than Rolf, is able to succumb to it. As Helene Cixous has put it, the voice in each woman, that which she responds to, is not only her own, but "springs from the deepest layers of her psyche: her own speech becomes the echo of the primeval song she once heard, the voice the incarnation of the 'first voice of love which all women preserve alive . . . in each woman sings the first nameless love'." This voice, this melody, is the mother's voice, the omnipresent and omnipotent figure dominating the fantasies of the pre-Oedipal baby {10, p. 114} .

Her desire for the fluidity and continuity of identity, which existed in the pre-Oedipal world, is further expressed when she asks Rolf "ob es etwas gäbe, das jeder Mensch habe, ganz gleichgültig wer." He would like to know why this is so important to her. She answers: "Weil ich etwas finden will, was jeder Mensch hat. Etwas, was uns

alle verbindet. Uns gleichmacht." Rolf is unable and unwilling to continue the discussion. "Sei nicht böse, sagte er, aber ich will jetzt schlafen" {1, p. 113} .

While it is not uncommon to find fragmented characters in texts by men, those by women, because of pre-Oedipal forces which are less repressed in the female psyche, introduce characters with fluid, less fixed, identities. One thinks of Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein in connection with this, both of whom dealt with themes of androgyny, permeable ego boundaries and pre-Oedipal structures shaping women's relationships. Some feminist critics explain the particular closeness of female writers to their fictional creations using the psychoanalytic theory discussed here: "The self creates itself in the experience of creating art" {20, p. 222} . Because female identities often depend on the identification with the mother and the recreation of the maternal, it follows that, in this sense, the "hero is the mother's daughter" in female texts, as Gardiner has theorized {16, p. 186} . Schwaiger attempts to nurture and sustain her protagonist by recreating the maternal through her literary identifications.

Her use of dreams also underscores the role of the unconscious and repressed desire in her text and in women's experience generally. Because primary differentiation occurs under patriarchy through engendering, and because the two socially produced genders have different qualities, the differentiations contribute to the reproduction of patriarchy. Dreams represent the psychological consequences for women, developing as they must in and through patriarchal systems . The first dream with which we are confronted in Schwaiger's text illustrates precisely these consequences:

Während Rolf nicht schlafen konnte, träumte ich, daß der Standesbeamte zu mir sagte: Sie können nicht heiraten, warten Sie einen Augenblick! Er kam und wollte mir einen Stachel aus der Armbeuge ziehen. Ein langer schwarzer Stengel war es, aus dem Wasser spritzte, als der Standesbeamte ihn knickte. Wir müssen ihn herausziehen, sagte er zu Rolf, aber Rolf hatte es eilig und wollte nicht warten. Ich riß an dem Stachel, da war plötzlich ein Loch in meiner Armbeuge. Das ist noch nicht alles! rief der Mann, und jetzt war es nicht mehr der Standesbeamte, sondern der Pfarrer.

Ziehen Sie fest! rief er, und ich zog und zog und zog, und da war eine Pflanze in meinem Arm, mit Blütenkelchen, Staubgefäßen, und ich zog und zog und zog, und da waren neue Kelche, die sahen aus wie fruchtbare Disteln, und das hörte nicht auf, und ich mußte immer wieder ziehen, und ich erwachte erschöpft, und Rolf lag wach neben mir. Da hob der Standesbeamte sein Buch, hielt eine Rede, auf die er sehr stolz war, und er zeigte uns, daß er sie mit Füllfeder geschrieben hatte, eine gestochene, klare Schrift war es, und Großmutter stand hinter mir, und sie sagte, das sei eine sympathische, anständige Handschrift. Und Rolf hatte überhaupt nicht geschlafen! {1, pp. 24-25} .

If, as many psychoanalytic critics have posited, Freudian symbolism involves the horizontal/vertical binary unit as representational of the female/male configuration, the first dream the reluctant newlywed has during her honeymoon is a useful example of this type of analysis. First, the dream presents a thorn, a long, black stalk, which has been thrust or stuck into our heroine's arm. She wants it removed, as does the pastor, but Rolf will not help, he is in no hurry. The pastor is transformed into a justice of the peace. All three are males, all three representatives of patriarchal authority: the husband, who represents the patriarchal institution of marriage, phallic authority and privilege; the pastor, the representative of religious patriarchal discourse; and the justice of the peace, who embodies the Law of the Father in the judicial realm. She is told to pull hard, but she is unable to extricate herself from the role of sexual object to which she has been consigned, or, perhaps, to free herself from the oppression of patriarchal influence and thought, and the longer she pulls, the more all-encompassing and overwhelming the effects of the original invasion become. The thorn, the Law of the Father, simply perpetuates itself without end. Finally, the justice of the peace, who is raising a book, another symbol of patriarchy and the Symbolic, makes a speech written with a fountain pen, a second phallic symbol. The grandmother reinforces the importance of patriarchal norms by praising the handwriting, or, in symbolic terms, the magisterial discourse.

Going back to Freud, one must remember that entry into the Oedipus complex represents the beginnings of morality, law, conscience, and all forms of social and

religious authority. It signals, as Eagleton has said, the transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle, and the adoption by the post-Oedipal child of its position within the cultural order necessitates the repression of the unconscious. This human subject has now an individual identity, a place in the various cultural networks, but can successfully adapt only by splitting off its guilty desires and repressing them, thus becoming, in essence, a split subject {21, p. 156} . Since women are unrepresented by the patriarchal order, their repressions are often recreated in dreams. For Freud, dreams were symbolic fulfilments of unconscious wishes, cast in symbolic form because, if directly expressed, they might be so shocking as to awaken us. Basically, the ego is at work, censoring images or scrambling messages. Sets of images are condensed or displaced; the meaning of one object to another closely associated with it might appear, so that anger can be safely vented. This process prompted Lacan to make the observation that "the unconscious is structured like a language" {21, p.157}. And Schwaiger makes use of both language and repression to illuminate the effects on woman of the tyranny of the patriarchy.

The second dream related by the protagonist displays similar conflicts, displacements and repressions:

Du mußt lernen, sagt Gerlinde, wir waren in einem ungültigen Jahrgang, wir haben alle keine Matura, wir müssen noch einmal die Schularbeiten machen und die Prüfungen, aber ich habe doch alles vergessen, du mußt es noch einmal lernen, sagt Gerlinde, ich habe dir doch so viele Privatstunden gegeben! Bist du wirklich so dumm gewesen oder hast du dich so gestellt, du mußt die Matura doch machen, was sagen denn deine Eltern, wenn du heimkommst ohne Matura, und ich habe doch alles vergessen, aber Gerlinde steht neben mir, sie ist eine Streberin, sie hat alles im Heft und im Kopf auch. Dann sind wir in einer Jugendherberge, Gerlinde muß zum Arzt gehen, ihr ist nicht gut, sie kommt zurück und sagt, jemand hat versucht, ihr Essen zu vergiften, ich komme als Täterin in Frage, mein Verteidiger ist der Lateinprofessor, er hört sich an, was ich vorbringe, ich sage, daß ich Gerlinde nicht mag, obwohl sie meine beste Freundin und Helferin in Latein ist, aber ich wünsche ihr den Tod. Ich sage, ich wäre froh, wenn sie vergiftet worden wäre, trotzdem war nicht ich es, die das Gift ins Essen gestreut hat, ich schwöre es, und der Lateinprofessor verhält

sich neutral, er sagt, auf den Stoff kommt es an, und ich sage, ich habe keine Angst, verurteilt zu werden, weil ich mich freue, daß jemand den Mut gehabt hat, Gerlinde zu vergiften. Aber wenn Gerlinde stirbt, stirbt doch auch Rolf. weißt du das nicht, sagt jemand, und dann wache ich auf { 1, p. 41 } .

The character, Gerlinde, can be seen as both a displacement, a symbol, for the narrator, who sees Gerlinde as the academic and social success she is not permitted to be and who serves as a constant reminder of this fact, and as yet another patriarchal authority; in this case, the husband, Rolf.

In either case, the narrator is made aware of her inadequacies and inability to conform to what is expected of her. When Gerlinde, or the censoring authority, is poisoned, the narrator is happy. She wishes she had done it herself. She is freed from the expectations which imprison her, and would willingly be punished for what she has not done, but has wished for so often. When told that if Gerlinde dies, so does Rolf, she wakes up. The meaning of Rolf's death can be interpreted in various ways. If Gerlinde is our narrator displaced, Rolf, as a man and authority in culture, exists only as long as his identity and supremacy are affirmed by the "inessential Other", his wife, and would die along with Gerlinde. Man needs woman to reinforce and accept his authority, his privileged place in culture. He needs her to remind himself of what he is not: woman. Gerlinde might also be Rolf displaced, in which case the repressions our narrator has undergone, the desires to eradicate the source of her suffering, are played out in the unconscious, the dream world. Again, as Freud has said, the dream is a "disguised fulfilment of a repressed or suppressed wish" { 22, p. 115 } . And dreams are another part of the semiotic, or pre-Oedipal processes, a metaphor for the unconscious, a signifier of unconscious desire.

The semiotic, pre-Oedipal languages of sexuality, death, and madness are also represented in many female texts, providing, as they do, an opposition to the discourse of the Logos, a break in the symbolic within language. Schwaiger's narrator has access to

all of these discourses. She longs especially for death, which will provide her with the unity she has lost, the symbiosis of the pre-Oedipal world. If satisfaction means the end of desire, as Freud has said, death is the ultimate object of desire — it represents the "recapturing of the lost unity, the final healing of the split subject" {10, p. 101} . The final goal of life is death, a "return to that blissful, inanimate state where the ego cannot be injured" {21, p. 161} . As the narrator stands on her balcony with Blitz, late at night, she considers death for herself and the desire of other women to die as well: "Man kann die anderen Frauen nicht sehen, die vielleicht auch jetzt auf ihren Balkonen stehen und springen möchten oder fliegen . . . " {1, p. 63} . It is this continual opposition between Eros, or sexual energy, and Thanatos, the death drive, which characterizes much of literature, and especially female texts. The narrator has lost a love object, Blitz, and now craves death. After he is put to sleep, she wanders the fields to the cemetery:

Ich besichtige den Friedhof und lese alle Namen und fürchte mich nicht vor freigeschaufelten Gräbern, weil die Erde ja offen ist, um uns wieder aufzunehmen, und hier wächst ein Wind, der uns kleiden wird, und den Totenschädel tragen wir ja schon unter den Haaren {1, p. 85} .

Not only is she aware of death, but welcomes it as an alternative to the split existence she must endure in the patriarchal world. She even contemplates hastening her death, imagining the reaction of her husband and family to a suicide:

Rolf hat gute Rasierklingen. Einen Eimer holen, den Arm hineinlegen, dann kommt er heim und findet seine Frau teils neben, teils im Eimer. Großmutter würde vom Küchenstuhl fallen! Vater ratlos. Mutter würde es büßen und alle Schuld auf sich nehmen, weil das bequemer ist, so eine angenehme Last ohne Konturen . . . {1, p. 87} .

Chesler's studies on women point out that housewives comprise the largest percentage of attempted and successful suicides, and what is considered "madness", whether appearing in women or men, is "either the acting out of the devalued female role or the

total or partial rejection of one's sex-role stereotype." When women are hospitalized or treated, it is for stereotypically female behaviors, such as "depression", "suicide attempts", or "anxiety disorders" {14, p. 56} . But first, the magisterial authority often undertakes to convince the patient, as he does in this text, that she is imagining everything, and that if only she could become complacent about her prescribed role, her symptoms would disappear. The narrator can convince neither Rolf, Albert, nor the psychiatrist that she is sick: "Warum glaubt mich keiner, daß ich krank bin? . . . Das sind Krisen, sagt Albert, und wenn du erst ein Kind hast, wirst du sehen, wie du dich änderst" {1, p. 101} . In other words, it is her rejection of the maternal role that is causing her depression. If only she would accommodate herself to it, her problems would disappear.

The psychiatrist, in his wisdom, informs her that : "Geisteskranke wissen doch nicht, daß sie geisteskrank sind" {1, p. 99} . The male Logos is unable to accept her protestations. But she knows otherwise: "Warum bin ich nicht verrückt? Wenn sie wüßten, wie es in meinem Kopf tobt. Ich würde ihn gern unter eine rotierende Säge halten, damit das Geräusch da drin aufhört" {1, p. 100} .

As in so many female texts which feature a search for self and identity, this text fails to resolve the problems with which the narrator is presented, but offers, instead, a hint that the journey towards self-affirmation will continue, that "identity is a process" {16, p. 179} . Because of this processual nature, female texts will continue to deviate from generic prescriptions of the male literary canon. Carolyn Heilbrun, in "Reinventing Womanhood", notes that autobiographies by women, for example, are less linear, unified and chronological than men's autobiographies {23, pp. 46, 40} . Novels by women are also more often called autobiographies and autobiographies novelistic — like Kingston's Memoirs of a Woman Warrior, or Mary McCarthy's Memories of a Catholic Girlhood. Due to the tenuousness of boundaries between self and other, female texts are often

vague about the public and the private, and cannot be completed, just as Schwaiger's life seems to merge with her text. The diaries, journals, correspondence, and fiction of Anais Nin provide a further example of life and text becoming almost "coterminous" {16, p. 185}. Feminist literary historians have also noted women's contributions to modernism, which are marked by fluidity and interiority, using Woolf, Stein and Richardson as examples of texts which chronicle the breakdown of the "integrated character." While male fiction more often makes use of fragmented characters, characters in female texts tend to merge and dissolve into one another, as they do in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer. Schwaiger's women, for example, are barely distinguishable from one another, mimicking as they all do the patriarchal discourse. The same can be said of the males. Because the ways female identity manifests itself in culture are significantly different than male behaviors, some themes and features which recur in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and female texts in general will now be examined.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE AND FEMALE TEXTS

In the preceding chapter, psychoanalytic theory was analyzed as it pertained to texts, and then applied specifically to Schwaiger's. Because early psychological development determines one's place in "culture", and because the roles for men and women are, as we have seen, so disparate, a look at cultural theory as it relates to women's texts and Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer is now necessary.

In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness", Christiane Rochefort is quoted as saying: "I consider women's literature as a specific category, not because of biology, but because it is, in a sense, the literature of the colonized" {24, p. 27} . The idea of woman as an oppressed minority, whose situation is analogous to others oppressed because of race, religion, or nationality, is one which has been advanced by numerous feminist literary critics. Because the early childhood psychological development extends ultimately to and manifests itself within the cultural realm, a theory based on a model of women's culture is perhaps the most instructive, including as it does some of the biological and psychological elements already discussed, as well as the linguistic component. Such a theory, while admitting significant differences among women as writers, such as class, nationality, history and race, posits, at the same time, the idea that "women's culture forms a collective experience within the cultural whole, binding women writers to each other over time and space" {24, p. 27}.

Over the years, extensive work has been done by sociologists, anthropologists, and social historians, in order to formulate hypotheses in the area of women's culture and

to break away from masculine hierarchies and systems in order to discover the essence of female cultural experience. The freeing of women from the linear absolutes of male literary history in order to focus, instead, on the world of female culture is a necessary step. Hypotheses of a female subculture have been developed within the fields of feminist research, which include not only the "ascribed status and the internalized constructs of femininity, but also the occupations, interactions, and consciousness of women" {24, p. 27} . This subculture is studied by anthropologists in relationships between women; in areas of sexuality; in rites of initiation; and in myths and taboos. Michelle Rosaldo, in Woman, Culture, and Society, has the following to say on this subject:

The very symbolic and social conceptions that appear to set women apart and to circumscribe their activities may be used by women as a basis for female solidarity and worth. When men live apart from women, they in fact cannot control them, and unwittingly they may provide them with the symbols and social resources on which to build a society of their own {25, p. 39} .

In Schwaiger's text, this emphasis on areas in which women have control, though devalued by many feminists as "trivial", provides nonetheless the opportunity for women to share a particular consciousness and to create a culture independent of male dictates. As Schwaiger herself has said in an interview with Hilde Schmölzer, "jeder Mensch braucht einen Machtbereich, egal ob er Briefmarken sammelt oder politisch einen Machtkrieg führt, den er mißbraucht oder nicht" {26, p. 139} . Women can exercise control, but traditionally use different means for achieving it. Although Schopenhauer is not generally known for his feminist leanings, he does have something to say about how women must often achieve power and independence in a patriarchal society:

... the secret, unspoken, indeed unconscious, but nonetheless inborn morality of women is: 'We are justified in deceiving those who, because they provide a meagre support for us, the individual, think they have acquired a right over the species'" {27, p. 84} .

Man, he goes on to say, "strives in everything for a direct domination over things, either by comprehending or by subduing them . . . woman is everywhere and always relegated to a merely indirect domination" {27, p. 86} . Schwaiger's narrator, and indeed all the female characters in her work, collude with one another both to affirm patriarchal values and, at the same time, to circumvent them, to indirectly seize power. Rolf's wife, for example, is able, through conscious or subconscious dereliction of wifely "duties" to effect a successful rebellion against her cultural role:

Sein harmloser Test: Zeig mir, wo die Schuhstrecker sind. Hier, Geliebter, sind diene Schuhstrecker. Jetzt nimm sie und steck sie in diese Schuhe. Warum? Frag nicht, steck sie hinein. Ich gehorche. Man weiß ja nichts, vielleicht kommt jetzt der große Gag unserer Ehe, alles war nur ein Traum, jetzt lachen wir gleich und alles wird gut. Rolf lacht nicht, obwohl die Schuhstrecker schon stecken. Er sagt, das hat er sich gedacht. Was? Die Schuhe haben sich verformt, weil ich die Strecker immer falsch hineingesteckt habe, nämlich oft den linken in den rechten und den rechten in den linken, und jetzt ist alles ausgebeult { 1, p. 104} .

In another instance, the narrator is awarded points by Rolf, plus and minus, for her behavior in a social setting:

Plus: ich war hübsch. Minus: Ein bißchen zu still. Plus: Du hast Hilde ausreden lassen. Minus: Mit Albert hast du aber gar nicht gesprochen. Minus: Warum haben wir keine Kinder? Rolf ist beschwipst, er will mich lieben, das Essen war auch so schwer, das ist keine Kritik, das ist ein Motiv, und er irrt sich fast nie, aber hier irrt er immer, er sagt: Schon lange war es nicht so schön mit dir. Dabei war ich gar nicht zu Hause { 1, p. 62} .

She retains power, in a manner necessitated by her culture, in indirect, yet effective ways. She is having a secret affair with Albert, she refuses to have children with Rolf, and she is totally uninvolved emotionally with her husband, unbeknownst to him, while making love: "nicht zu Hause", yet has succeeded in tricking him into believing she, too, has enjoyed the lovemaking .

Her grandmother engages in acts of manipulation as well in order to achieve a small measure of power. As the mother of a doctor, she makes a habit of going to his office, finding out who is last in line to see him, and sending that person to the butcher for her so that she won't have to stand in line:

Vater drohte Großmutter, seinen Beruf an den Nagel zu hängen, wenn sie nicht endlich begriffe, wie sie sich als Mutter eines Arztes zu verhalten hätte. Das weiß ich besser als du, sagte sie, du bist halt kein praktischer Mensch {1, p. 50} .

And when she is traveling on a train between Rome and Naples and the other passengers are reluctant let her sit or make room for her suitcase, she tells them simply: "Io mamma dottore in Österreich, io catolica sempre {1, p. 46} , thereby gaining indirect domination of them by exploiting her role as a doctor's mother and a devout Catholic.

Thus feminine values, behavior and consciousness are able, in much literature written by women, to undermine the patriarchal constructs which confine them. Women's culture, when considered in light of women's psychological development and history, is still a controversial issue, but on a theoretical level nonetheless significant. Gerda Lerner explains the importance of exploring women's experience in its own terms:

Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centered terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women. To rectify this, and to light up areas of historical darkness we must, for a time focus on a woman-centered inquiry, considering the possibility of the existence of a female culture within the general culture shared by men and women {24, p. 27} .

Showalter points out that historians, in defining female culture, distinguish between the behaviors prescribed and considered appropriate for women and those actually generated out of women's lives. In the Victorian era, for example, separate roles were mandated for men and women. The "women's sphere" was totally distinct from that

of the men. This sphere, though defined and maintained by men, often became internalized by women, who strove to exhibit those qualities implicit in the "cult of true womanhood" and the "feminine ideal" {24, p. 28} . A redefinition of woman's culture would, according to Lerner, present women's activities and goals from a woman-centered point of view, and would refer to "the broad-based communality of values, institutions, relationships, and methods of communication unifying . . . female experience, a culture nonetheless with significant variants by class and ethnic group" {24, pp. 28-29} .

Although some feminist theoreticians see the movement of women from a separate sphere to a theory of women's culture and then to activism, as an evolutionary political process, others view it as a continual negotiation between women's culture and the general culture. Lerner argues the latter view, saying that "woman's culture" is not a subculture and should not be seen so. It is hardly possible for the majority of the population to live in a subculture. Women, she argues, live their social existence within the general societal structure and transform and redefine it when patriarchal limitations restrain it. Women, thus, exist as a duality — as members of the general culture and as participants in a solely female culture {24, p. 28} .

In literature, woman is able to escape these limitations, to express her own culture, and to use it as "die Bewältigung ihrer Unterdrückung durch den Mann." As Jürgensen puts it, Schwaiger succeeds in freeing herself, through her book, of the forces which threaten her existence:

Die Frau, die von der herrschenden Gesellschaftsform getötet wird, bedient sich der literarischen Tötung, um die soziale Unterdrückung der Frau zu bekämpfen. Ihr literarischer Mord am Mann ist die verzweifelte Notwehr gegen einen ihr gesellschaftlich auferlegten Selbstmord {28, p. 282} .

The idea of women as a "muted group", whose culture is not contained by, but overlaps, the dominant patriarchal system, was advanced by Edwin Ardener, who found a

model of women's culture crucial to understanding how the culture is perceived both externally and by women themselves. Schwaiger's muteness on one level results, for example, in her texts, which transcend and transform her silence within the culture. Ardener's model is especially useful for feminist literary theory, dealing as it does with the concepts of perception, silencing, and muteness, which play a central role in female literary texts {24, p. 30} .

The implications for female authors of this marginality are apparent in the reception of their works. Nelly Furman says, in "The Study of Women and Language", that a male reader "finds himself entering a strange and unfamiliar world of symbolic significance" and, if language is, indeed, "imbued with our sex-inflected cultural values", male readers will find themselves excluded from the symbolic systems which comprise female experience and will then reject them as trivial and inaccessible {29, p. 184} . Silvia Bovenschen underscores the tendency of men to equate truth and reality with the male perspective:

Der Skandal: die Identifikation der Wahrheit mit der männlichen Optik, mit dem nämlich, was man durch die männliche Brille, die auch wir sehr früh schon angepaßt bekamen, gesehen, untersucht und dargestellt hat, beherrschte nicht nur Kunstproduktion und -rezeption, sondern garantierte darüber hinaus, das uns Frauen auch dieser Bereich oft ganz äußerlich blieb, fremd und entfernt trotz heißem Bemühen, und war ein Grund für unseren Ausschluß neben offenen und luziden Strategien der Verhinderung von männlicher Seite, die immer dort einsetzten, wo unsere Sehschärfe noch nicht genügend getrübt war {30, p. 84} .

Ardener presents this "Ausschluß" in a different way, as being an additional level of consciousness not accessible to men. He calls this area the "wild zone", the circle of female experience which lies outside the dominant one. While male consciousness, he asserts, is all within the circle of the dominant structure and accessible to language, the female experience is, in a spatial, metaphysical or experiential sense, a "no-man's land." It "stands for the aspects of female life-style outside of and unlike those of men" {24, p. 30}.

As we have seen, Rolf is aware of this area to which he has no access, and finds himself constantly misunderstanding his wife, failing to perceive a separate consciousness, and neglecting to recognize or analyze her alienation. Though it can be argued that women also cannot access male experience, Ardener says that women, in fact, do, because male experience is available, in terms of cultural anthropology, as the subject of legend. This postulated "wild zone", or female space, becomes the focus of much female-centered theory, art and criticism. Many feminist critics would take this "wild zone" as the basis for the difference between male and female texts, as the place for revolutionary writing, women's language and all that is repressed. By entering the "wild zone", women can extricate themselves in their writing from the "cramped confines of patriarchal space" {24, p. 30} .

These confines are often described as representing the structures of "culture", versus those of women, or "nature." Some such cultural institutions instrumental in the oppression of women are, for example, the news media, health, education and legal systems, theater, literary and art worlds, and financial institutions. Woman is thought to be closer to nature, the environment, and to a matriarchal principle, which is, as we have seen, simultaneously biological and psychological, and many recent female texts have exhibited this concept in the furtherance of a new, female, mythology. Other feminists, and de Beauvoir comes immediately to mind, reject the idea that woman is more closely tied to nature, restricting as it often has woman's opportunities for transcendence. A nature-bound woman, in de Beauvoir's view, is one tied to the reproductive process, to the home and hearth, and is "to a greater extent than the male, a slave to the species" {3, p. 60} . And as such, she is often unable to engage herself in the projects through which culture is generated and defined. The crux of her argument is presented in the following quote:

. . . on the biological level, a species is maintained only by creating itself anew; but this creation results only in repeating the same Life in more individuals. But man assures the repetition of Life while transcending Life through Existence (i.e. goal-oriented, meaningful action); by this transcendence he creates values that deprive pure repetition of all value . . . in serving the species, the human male remodels the face of the earth, he creates new instruments, he invents, he shapes the future {3, pp. 58-59} .

Woman's body, in her view, dooms her to the mere reproduction of life, while the male, because he lacks natural creative capabilities, must create externally, through technology and symbols. Because woman is perceived as closer to nature, and because it is culture's role to "subsume and transcend nature" it follows that "culture" should naturally subordinate and oppress "nature" {31, p. 73} .

This devaluation of women's projects, activities, interests and preoccupations extends into the area of women's texts. The literary theorists have been male, and it is they who have established the criteria for works of art. As yet, no established literary theory has been devised that builds on women's own experience of literature and on their ways of looking at the world. Women's poetics can be analyzed more successfully than men's through poems, novels, plays, letters, diaries, and even in records of conversation. And, according to Josephine Donovan, there are themes common to women's experience, though there is a diversity of histories and cultures among women, which must be taken into account as well. However, most feminists agree with the notion of a separate "cultural feminism" which stresses "the identification of women as a separate community, a separate culture, with its own customs, its own epistemology, and, once articulated, its own aesthetics and ethics" {31, p. 101} .

There are structural conditions, also, which appear to have shaped traditional women's experience and practice in the past and in nearly all cultures — conditions that have shaped, in short, women's world-views. Donovan delineates several of these conditions and relates them to an epistemology which enables us to interpret women's art and establish a women's poetics.

Like Christiane Rochefort, Donovan believes that women share a condition of oppression or otherness, imposed upon them by the patriarchal ideologies, and thus share certain experiences typical of the oppressed. The "colonized mentality" has been described by a number of writers and theorists, among them Sylvia Plath, Franz Kafka, Frantz Fanon, and Edith Wharton. Because it is not possible to describe the phenomenon in great detail here, suffice it to say that its most significant manifestation, as noted by Donovan, is the "internalization of otherness", a "psychic alienation that is fundamentally schizophrenic." Because the social construction of reality has been created by males and has cast woman in the role of Other and deviant, woman has withdrawn, remained silent. "To internalize otherness, Donovan says, is "almost definitionally to be unable to speak in the language of the self . . . to experience being an Other is often to feel so schizophrenically torn, that not even a clandestinely authentic 'I dares to speak' {32, p. 101} . As Helene Cixous points out, language "conceals an invincible adversary, because it's the language of men and their grammar" {33, p. 149} . Schwaiger's narrator is often speechless when confronted with male logic and language, and has internalized her speechlessness to such an extent that it threatens to drive her insane. As she drives along the highway with Rolf, she carries on an interior monologue; the only person she is able to converse with is herself:

Ja, fahr bitte schnell, schneller, vielleicht schmilzt etwas in der Flugkraft, vielleicht lötet uns etwas zusammen, oder zerdrück mir den Schädel, wenn wir zu Hause sind, wenn wir schon nicht reden können miteinander, rede mit den Käfern, sag, sie sollen aufhören, ich bin aufs Maul gefallen, sowie du es dir gewünscht hast. . . {1, p. 109} .

Her muteness must be seen, on a broader scale, as the continual disenfranchisement of women which takes place in the Symbolic world. And because of the ways in which

culture impacts on literature, women's art, in Kolodny's view, can only be comprehended in the political and social conditions of oppression which facilitated its creation, and women's poetics must "be seen as part of the 'conscientization' process" {33, p. 162} .

Another almost universal structure of female experience is that women have been restricted to the domestic or private sphere. Donovan defines this as an "important determinant of traditional women's consciousness", and points out that such labor is usually, if not always, repetitive, static and non-progressive, and that it is seldom accorded importance and significance in the realm of culture {32, p. 102} . De Beauvoir makes a similar point in The Second Sex when she says that "a continual renunciation is required of the woman whose preparations are completed only in their destruction"; and "the housewife wears herself out marking time" {3, pp. 429, 425}.

But women's domestic work, paradoxically, can obtain a greater value under certain conditions. Ortner gives the example of cooking. When it is developed by a culture into "haute cuisine", it is practiced entirely by men, as opposed to "trivial ordinary domestic cooking." In the area of socialization, then, women perform "lower-level conversions from nature to culture, but when the culture distinguishes a higher level of the same functions, the higher level is restricted to men" {31, p. 80} .

Christa Reinig emphasizes, however, in "Mein Herz ist eine gelbe Blume", that household imagery in literature is important because it is accessible to all women and representative of the realities of women's daily life, and the many roles that women play, the variety that epitomizes female life, contrast sharply with man's position of occupying only one or two roles {34, p. 20} . This fact has wide implications in the imagery employed by women in their texts. Using the domestic situation as a source of literary inspiration "makes the invisible visible" {35, p. 312} , and incorporates housework into part of woman's art. In addition, Reinig asserts that there exists a direct line between housework and the existing power structures. By insisting on the presence of housework

in their literary texts, women writers make a political statement, recalling the direct relationship of sex, power, and domestic work in the social institution of marriage: "... denn der Mann, der dir deinen Orgasmus verpaßt, das ist nicht der, der dir die Stiefel putzt, das ist der, dem du die Stiefel putzt" {34, p. 55} . In the opinion of many women writers and critics, no detail of household, marital or biological reality is too mundane or too vulgar. Each has significance in delineating the female experience and culture. Barbara Frischmuth underscores the importance of such texts in "Eine Literatur, die entwaffnet":

Diese Art von Sachbezogenheit, von unsentimentalem Akzeptieren des Physischen, an das Frauen mindestens einmal im Monat in aller Deutlichkeit erinnert werden, halte ich für eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für Frauen geschriebene Literatur . . . und genau das ist es, worauf ich hinaus will, was, wie ich meine, nicht nur mir nottut: eine Literatur, die entwaffnet. Die in ihrer Unbekümmertheit physischen Dingen gegenüber, die nichts mit der forcierten Obszönität der auf Kosten der Frauen aufgeführten Befreiung der Sexualität zu tun hat, auch an eine Beschreibung dieser Dinge aus einem ganz anderen Aspekt herangeht {36, pp. 22-23} .

In addition to the repetitiveness and lack of progression of much domestic work, there is also the above-mentioned element of cyclical existence. As Kathryn Rabuzzi argues in "The Sacred and the Feminine - Toward A Theology of Housework", the plot as described by Aristotle, that is, a progressive movement from beginning to middle to end, does not conform to women's fundamentally cyclic, repetitive existence. Women's poetics must re-define the concept of plot to more closely approximate "an idea of temporal order more appropriate to the cyclic experience of women's lives" {37, pp. 163-167}.

Schwaiger's text is illustrative of just a cyclic and repetitive existence. There is an emphasis on housework throughout the narration, an awareness of the monotony of the narrator's actions and the triviality that has been attached to them by patriarchy. As Sandra Frieden points out in her essay, "The Left-Handed Compliment", it is the

arrangement of these experiences into a confining pattern of monotony which reveals a larger meaning, broader implications for the common situation. The daily chores are lifted to a "symbolic, ritualized level that can no longer be seen as trivial, but rather are significant as internal experiences and as steps forward in the growing sense of awareness of the character" {38, p. 316} . It is what lies beneath the surface of the action that raises her novel to the level of the profound. She has succeeded in deconstructing and then transforming the banalities into highly-charged symbols for the lack of connection, identity and self-esteem felt by many women. "Occupation: housewife", reads the narrator's new passport. She contemplates what this means:

Tisch decken, Tisch abräumen, Geschirr spülen, einkaufen, kochen, Tisch decken, Tisch abräumen. Geschirr spülen. Was koche ich zum Abendessen, dreihundertfünfundsechzigmal im Jahr die Frage: Was koche ich zum Abendessen? Sein oder Nichtsein, ob's edler im Gemüt, was kosten jetzt die Tomaten? {1, p. 33} .

It is interesting to note the juxtaposition of housework and repetitiveness, often consigned to irrelevancy, with one of the most weighty questions of all time: "To be or not to be?." But housewives are not automatically excluded from consideration in such existential issues. In fact, the very quality of their lives, as exemplified by the world of the domestic, lends itself even more readily to such introspection. She questions wryly the many requirements she is expected to fulfill as a "housewife":

Und welches Waschpulver? Muß ich heute Maresi kaufen, weil es auf der schwarzen Tafel unter 'Ankündungen' mit Kriede aufgeschrieben steht? Heute ist Maresi billiger, nur bis morgen. Ich verstehe jetzt den Sinn der Werbung . . . das ist eine Wissenschaft. Der Salat ist auch nicht immer gleich teuer, und es gibt Saison für Paprika und Zeiten, zu denen man Paprika nicht kauft {1, p. 35} .

The seasons and times to buy certain products are the same seasons recurring in her life, without change — winter, spring, fall, summer — and each time of the year will

signal, without fail, the appropriate time to purchase such products. Just as her existence is divided into discrete blocks of time which recur, a form of "Ewige Wiederkehr", as Nietzsche put it, so is this reflected in all her household activities. Men, of course, are also subject to the seasons, to cyclical phenomena, but less so in the biological and, especially, the psychological sense. One must remember that female activities have a different value placed upon them by culture. Man has been indoctrinated as the formula-tor of the cultural discourse; he holds the power to determine his form of transcendence and he is not, as de Beauvoir has said, a "slave to the species." Man's role is transcendence, change, progress. For woman it is immanence, reinforced by the continuity of generations, by the knowledge passed on, from mother, to daughter, to granddaughter:

Ich wußte so wenig. Zum Beispiel wußte ich nicht, daß man das Holzbrett mit Wasser abspült, bevor man die Zwiebeln schneidet. Großmutter sagte es mir: Damit kein Geruch im Holz bleibt . . . den Knoblauch mit dem Messerrücken zerdrücken, immer mit Salz, und vorher natürlich schälen, und ein breites Messer für den Knoblauch, und die Zitronen nicht wegwerfen nach dem Auspressen, Zitronen immer in Reichweite für schmutzige Hände. Der Hausfrauenhand darf man es nicht ansehen, daß sie gearbeitet hat {1, p. 35} .

These are activities which afford little if any opportunity for innovation, change or creativity. They have, nonetheless, assumed the authority of law, representative of feminine discourse as a discourse of marginality: they are part of women's "culture."

The protagonist is carrying on an internal rebellion against just such proclamations, which, as the repetitiveness and monotony of her life continue, threatens to manifest itself in her external life:

Gib doch dieses Buch weg, sagt Rolf, Kochen lernt man nicht aus Büchern, nur durch Erfahrung. Blätterteig ist seine Lieblingsspeise. Zwiebelsuppe ist die einzige Suppe, die ich tatsächlich kochen kann. Er mag Zwiebelsuppe nicht. Und es ist noch nichts geschehen heute. Ich habe gewartet. Nach dem Abendessen war wirklich der Tag zu Ende. Ich habe das Geschirr in die Küche getragen, das Tischtuch eingerollt und

über dem Geländer des Küchenbalkons ausgeschüttelt. Es geht mir gut. Andere Frauen haben keinen Küchenbalkon {1, p. 37} .

Her irony underscores the desperation she endures, day after day. Even as a housewife, in her "realm", she is still subject to patriarchal authority and discourse, which dictate even how she must learn to cook. Her attention to detail when she relates the dreariness and repetitiveness of her existence reinforces her sense of oppression:

Wie er den Zucker in die Tasse wirft, umrührt, den Löffel auf den Teller legt, die Tasse hebt, trinkt, wie er die Brille poliert und aufsetzt, die Tasse in die Küche trägt, Wasser rinnen läßt, die Tasse ausspült, wie er den Mantel nimmt und die Aktentasche, die Tür aufschließt und hinter sich schließt, und wieviel Zeit ich habe, das zu sehen, jeden Morgen {1, p. 38}.

All these habits in which her husband engages assume symbolic weight as she moves towards her final renunciation of the patriarchal role and affirmation of her individual values and goals. Her identity and role in the social structure, initially dependent upon her "Beziehung zu einem Mann", is transformed. While she had built a "fensterlose Mauer" {1, p. 53} around herself in the beginning days of her marriage, and considered herself a prisoner in her own apartment, "eine schöne Wohnung ist ein ausbruchsicheres Gefängnis" {1, p. 45}, she develops in time the consciousness that she is not simply dough to be molded by her husband, "so lange geknetet, bis er mürb war" {1, p. 53} . Her relationship to life and consciousness of lost time is evoked by the mere winding of his watch:

Das ist eine seiner Gewohnheiten, an der Schraube zu drehen, sein Daumen ist breit, er hält die Uhr gegen das Ohr, hört sich an, wie Zeit, Zeit, Zeit vertickt. Ein Tag hat vierundzwanzig, eine Stunde sechzig, mal sechzig, mal sechzig, sechshundertachtzigtausendvierhundert Sekunden verticken jeden Tag. Wie viele Tage sind wir schon verheiratet? Er fürchtet sich nicht, daß uns etwas weglaufen könnte {1, p. 58} .

She, however, is afraid. Time means different things for men than for women, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Man lives "in a organized, temporal perspective, de-

lineated by the realization of goals he sets for himself; woman . . . prefers to consume immediately, without keeping anything in reserve and prefers one happy moment to a momentary deprivation that would assure future advantages" {35, p. 172} . These differing perspectives towards time have wider cultural implications, one of which is the element of interruptibility where the domestic work experience is concerned.

Interruptibility is analogous to the invadability of the life of the colonized, whose work is subordinated and devalued in favor of those in power. Not only do the constant interruptions affect the domestic work of women, but their artistic labor as well; they create a "consciousness that is aware of contingency, that perceives itself bound to chance, not in total control. Such an awareness has obvious ethical and aesthetic implications" {32, p. 63} . Not only does this awareness have an aesthetic impact, but it creates within woman the belief that her work, her accomplishments, are inherently inferior and rightly place her outside culture. We are reminded of the experience the narrator has while attempting to write in her diary. Rolf interrupts her efforts continually, while at the same time devaluing them, until she finally gives up the project. Her observations on the honeymoon of the sights, sounds, and colors around her are interrupted and trivialized in favor of Rolf's "superior" knowledge of the historical, economic and political backgrounds of the countries they visit. These constant invasions create in the narrator, and in women in general, the feeling that they are prey to forces outside their control, and that their efforts, observations, activities, are of little or no value within their culture. However, if they diverge from the role to which culture has assigned them, their ostracism is swift and merciless. Either way, transcendence, a voice, is denied them.

Some argue that the fact that women often share the physiological experiences of menstruation, childbirth, and sometimes breast-feeding, which create within them an awareness of being "bound to physical events beyond the self" and a "consciousness of repetition and of the interruptibility of one's projects" {32, p. 104} , reinforces the notion

of woman as "nature" and not "culture." I contend that biological differences only assume significance within the cultural context. Man, of course, does little to dispel this notion that biology consigns woman to inferiority, that it explains much of her inability to be "reasonable." Schwaiger's narrator tries to explain her depression to the psychiatrist, as well as her husband's reaction to it:

In letzter Zeit ist mein Mann auch sehr beunruhigt, weil ich jeden Tag das Gegenteil von dem sage, was ich am vorigem Tag behauptet habe. Das hebt sich doch jeden dritten Tag wieder auf, sagt der Internist, und Sie haben nur zwei Meinungen. Nein, es ist immer wieder ein neues Gegenteil! Dann sind Sie unstet, das macht doch nichts {1, p. 100} .

It is irrelevant simply because, in patriarchal thought, it is the nature of women to be inconstant, ever-changing, and unreasonable; to represent the opposite of Logos: Chaos. When she creates a vivid and logical scenario to support her ideas about the meaningless of Rolf's job, he asks "ob ich vielleicht meine Tage habe" {1, p. 96} .

But, as far as the domestic is concerned, the fact that women have traditionally created objects for use rather than exchange has enabled them to develop closer relationships and affinities with their domestic labor products. Such objects are valued in and of themselves, for their "immediate physical and qualitative worth" and not purely for a monetary or exchange value. The household can still be, therefore, a site of "pre-industrial production" and "unalienated labor", in Marxist terms, where the housewife has creative control over the design and execution of her products. Because she is immersed in concrete realities, unlike men, who are slaves to the "alienated world of exchange or commodity production", men live a life "structured completely by commodity exchange and not at all by production", which leads, Donovan argues, to entirely different epistemologies. {32, pp. 104-105} . Women's work, such as cooking, sewing, and knitting, can be seen in this light as truly creative, unbound by extrinsic factors. This view can be extended as well to female texts, written purely for one's personal fulfillment and/or

catharsis and emotional relief, and not subject to requirements of publishing companies or financial considerations. Thus the journals and correspondence of women tied otherwise to a life of domestic labor represent the most compelling aspects of women's poetics. Some of the diaries kept by women of all classes, races and groups illustrate this type of poetics. Examples of entries which show the communality and range of female experience are given in Moffatt's collection of diary excerpts by women, Revelations:

Sophie Tolstoy: It's quite clear. If I am no good to him, if I am merely a doll, a wife, a mother, and not a human being, then it is all useless and I don't want to carry on this existence. Of course I am idle, but I am not idle by nature; I simply haven't yet discovered what I can do here {39, p. 144} .

Frances Santamaria: Nursing Joshua gives me more pleasure every day... The special tingling and fullness as the milk comes flooding in or is "let down", hardening and tensing the entire breast. Tension builds, and is released at the moment when the baby takes hold. It is not sexual pleasure, but the rhythm of buildup and release is not dissimilar. We are like interlocking gears . . Why isn't more said about the sensuousness between mother and baby? Men paint it and seem to assume it — women don't even mention it among themselves . . . The growing mutual familiarity, the sensations I get each time I pick him up . . . we merge into one another giving and taking heat, comfort, love {39, p. 110} .

These thoughts are echoed in the journal of Evelyn Scott, who experiences motherhood as the expression of loss of self and fusion with the infinite. After the birth of her baby, she writes:

I relaxed in the inertia which I craved. I had become huge, passive, and undefined. I was without contours, as wide as the world. The baby wailed indistinctly. I heard the cry almost without responding to it. Nothing could touch me. I was outside time. I was rest {39, p. 106} .

In this sense, her femaleness expands instead of entraps her, she is able, through the experience of giving birth, to transcend her gender and become, in a manner of speaking, more than herself. She is aware that

... it is impossible to control creation. I don't mean this only in the sense of giving birth to new physical life. That which really is continues with the impetus which propelled its origin. I am, and I am going on and on to the end of myself where something else begins {39, p. 104} .

Michael Rutschky posits that the act of writing is representative of the "Antiwelt", an antidote to reality, which makes it particular attractive to women who have no other means of escaping:

... daß Schreiben eine Antiwelt zu unserer Realität darstellt, und diese Antiwelt ist mit sehr vielen Ängsten und Gefahren verbunden. Denn um in unserer Welt zu bestehen, muß man schlecht sein, muß man grausam sein, und die künstlerische Antiwelt bedeutet eine Illusion, ein Märchen von einer besseren Welt und einem besseren Ich. Man verliert die Realität, lebt nur in dieser besseren Welt und vergißt die Kälte des Alltages"

In other words, "drinnen ist das Positive, draußen das Negative" {40, p. 50} . The outer world is cold and mean, and whoever enters into it is subject to its laws, and becomes likewise cold and mean and must forget the warmth and goodness of the inner world. In the inner world, "in der alles möglich ist, in der es keine irreversiblen Bestimmungen und Begrenzungen gibt, dort wäre man unsterblich" {40, p. 50} . Thus the writing of the diary symbolizes to Schwaiger's narrator, and by extension to Schwaiger herself, the possibility of liberation from cultural imprisonment, a return to the pre-Oedipal, and a form of immortality.

The phenomenon of "maternal thinking" discussed in the previous chapter creates, according to Donovan, yet another level of consciousness among women which is then reflected in female texts and critical theory. Because most cultures assign the childrearing roles to women, they are socialized to function as caretakers. Even women without children often fill roles which are essentially maternal {32, p. 104} . Schwaiger's female characters all play such a role, but especially towards the males:

Zu Mittag herrschte immer Nervosität, die aus der Stimme und den Gesten meiner Mutter spürbar wurde, wenn Vater sich an den Tisch gesetzt hatte. Mutter nahm die Fleischstücke aus der Pfanne. Ich reichte ihr Vaters Teller. Gemurmelt. Kleiner Ärger. Zweifel, Zögern. Dieses Stück für Vater? Nein, für Vater das magere. Er mag kein Fett {1, p. 36} .

When there was any indication that the caretaker role had been inadequately performed, despair reigned over the household:

Immer schwebte ein Damoklesschwert über ihr, und so war es an allen Mittagen, und Resignation, wenn Vater nicht aufaß, Ratlosigkeit und Verzweiflung, wenn er wortlos den Teller zurückschob und erklärte, er sei nicht hungrig {1, p. 36} .

The narrator is even concerned about people she doesn't know, such as the people who live above them. Rolf tells her "du bist manchmal wie eine Hausbesorgerin. Weil ich wissen wollte, wer da über unserer Wohnung auf und ab ging in der Nacht . . . das geht dich nichts an, sagte Rolf, sei nicht neugierig wie eine Hausbesorgerin" {1, p. 102} .

Such female traditions and practices produce a certain distinctive type of thinking, one which springs from the social milieu. In "Maternal Thinking", Sara Ruddick shows the ways in which this type of thought contrasts with the archetypal thought practices of the patriarchal system, the scientific. Mothers, who are responsible for the growth and preservation of the child, develop what Ruddick calls a "holding" attitude, characterized by the desire to "keep" rather than "acquire." The acknowledgement of the priority of keeping over acquiring, Ruddick says, "distinguishes maternal from scientific thought, as well as from the instrumentalism of technocratic capitalism" {41, p. 350} .

The maternal recognizes "excessive control as a liability", which is in sharp contrast to scientific practice. Maternal ethics imply, also, a reverence for the processes and the unfolding of life, as well as the acknowledgement that much is beyond individual control. This "attentive love" is an attitude that "accepts not only the facts of damage and

death, but also the facts of the independent and uncontrollable, developing and increasingly separate existences of the lives it seeks to preserve." Ruddick argues that this "reverential love" provides a compelling basis not only for a feminine ethic but a "feminist critique of androcentric literature that is distinguished by the absence of attentive love for women" {41, p. 351} .

Further, the "holding" attitude, Rabuzzi offers, is synonymous with the "waiting" modality familiar to traditional female experience; that is, the model of the housebound woman as opposed to the questing male epitomized in legend and myth. Again, man is transcendence, woman is immanence. She notes that the plot in masculine literature is often that of the quest, which is characterized by change, movement forward, revolution, evolution. In the quest, salvation is achieved by the hero, who is always male. The female characters are represented as symbols of pure goodness or evil, and, if good, are rescued by the hero, instead of being able to save themselves. If evil, they are portrayed, like the Sirens, as destroyers of men. The hero must fight to preserve himself from such "evil" women. At any rate, women are identified as either maternally bound or deviant, depending upon whether they personify good or evil. And, by extension, a "good" woman is a passive one, one who epitomizes the "feminine" {37, p. 166} . In Schwaiger's and other female texts, these elements are often present, although on a different level.

The idea of the quest, for example, is prevalent in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer. From the beginning of the novel, Rolf is clear about his goals and aspirations, while his wife is in a state of perpetual confusion, frustration and indecisiveness about hers. He tells her even before the marriage that she needs no ambition: "Ich habe genug Ehrgeiz für uns beide" {1, p. 111} . When she fails to finish her degree, he reminds her:

Deine Heirat war für deine Eltern die letzte Hoffnung . . . er sagt, daß er es sehr weit bringen kann. Wie weit? Zum Beispiel kann

ich Generaldirektor der VÖEST werden! Ja? Mit deiner Unterstützung werde ich jedes Ziel erreichen, so hoch es auch gesteckt ist {1, p. 31} .

Later, Rolf figures how much money he will make as the years go on:

Rolf rechnet aus, was wir verdienen. Er sagt wir. Was wir heuer verdient haben und nächstes Jahr verdienen werden, und im zwanzigsten Jahr nach seiner Anstellung bei der VÖEST, was er da alles für uns verdient haben wird. Ich soll nicht die Fäden aus dem Tischtuch ziehen, wenn er mit mir die Zukunft bespricht. Und warum ich traurig bin, er liebt mich doch, er will, daß wir harmonieren . . . {1, pp. 81-82} .

Her role under patriarchy is simply to further his aspirations instead of seeking to fulfill her own. His insistence on monitoring and overseeing even her choice of clothing and her toilette supports this claim: "Rolf findet, daß ich in letzter Zeit gut rieche und gepflegter aussehe. Es entgeht ihm nicht, daß er mit der Zeit noch eine richtige Frau aus mir machen wird" {1, p. 68} . When she insists on wearing a favorite yellow dress, which he dislikes, he raises her insistence to a symbolic level: if she loves the dress, she doesn't love him:

Warum durfte ich am Freitag nicht das zitronengelbe Kleid anziehen? Das ist doch über ein Jahr her, das mit dem Fetzen, schreit Rolf. Fetzen, hat er gesagt, nach einem ganzen Jahr sagt er noch immer Fetzen. Also warum durfte ich vor einem Jahr, damals am Freitag, nicht das zitronengelbe Kleid anziehen? Weil du kindisch aussiehst darin. Er mag es nicht, fühlt sich provoziert, wenn ich es trage. Daß ich es liebe: gut. Aber daß ich es noch immer liebe, wo er es doch haßt, das beweist, daß ich ihn nicht liebe. Das Kleid wurde zur Machtfrage {1, p. 104} .

Believing that he can replace the old dress to which she is attached with others, he buys her two new lemon yellow dresses:

Rolf kaufte zwei neue zitronengelbe. Und ich versteife mich auf das alte. Da sagt er: nimm bitte Rücksicht auf mich. Alle sagen, daß du dich unmöglich anziehst und daß sie nicht verstehen, warum ich dich nicht einkleide. Du erweckst also, wenn du das liebe Kleidchen anziehst, den Eindruck, ich sei ein Egoist {1, p. 104} .

Because clothing powerfully defines sex roles, and because women's clothing has a much closer connection with the pressures and oppressions of gender, women have more to gain from the identification of clothing to gender or self. Schwaiger's narrator is fully aware that her choice in clothing is not a trivial issue, that it has to do with her identity, her power, and her social role. A woman's sense of gender, her sexuality, and her body play a more prominent role in her conception of self than they do for a man. Woman, as Gardiner has pointed out, are "encouraged to judge their inner selves through their external physical appearance and to equate the two. At the same time, though, they learn to form images which are acceptable to society through manipulating clothing, speech and behavior." Philosopher Sandra Bartky, quoted by Gardiner, agrees, saying that "our identities can no more be kept separate from how our bodies look than they can be kept separate from the shadow selves of the female stereotype." She defines female narcissism as a woman's "alienated infatuation with an inferiorized body" (16, p. 190). Schwaiger's narrator's infatuation is somewhat different. She is infatuated with her body to the extent that it symbolizes rebellion against, instead of conformity to, the patriarchal dictates. When she reminisces at the novel's end on the excitement she felt when she received Rolf's marriage proposal, the recognition of her rebellion and enlightenment is clear: "Ich habe so oft das Gefühl, ich gehöre nirgends dazu. Weil Rolf mich liebte, gehörte ich dazu. Dann gehörte ich aber zum zitronengelben Kleid" (1, p. 115).

Rolf fails to gain insight into her consciousness. He continues to see his life as a linear progression, and expects her to live vicariously through him, and to contribute to his success in the material world, as though they shared the same experiences, and then fails to understand why she is unhappy and why she resists him. In Schwaiger's text, there are two discourses taking place. The narrator is first presenting the male discourse, that of the Logos, progression towards a goal, transcendence, the quest. At the same time, there is a muted discourse, that of the female, who operates within the male dis-

course to undermine and deconstruct it. Woman should be happy with a man who loves and provides for her. This is the fantasy which the narrator so ably deconstructs.

Woman, in fact, is not. Rolf is a good provider, loves her, and yet she is dissatisfied, rejects her role, and all the cultural norms to which she is expected to conform. On the surface, the marriage appears good, but, just as her parents and grandparents belie the fantasy, so does our narrator:

Mutter ist froh, daß ich eine gute Ehe führe. Sie sagt, daß mein Vater sie nicht verstehe. Großmutter sagt, sie hat mit Großvater allerhand mitgemacht. Vater sagt, daß Großmutter Großvater nie verstanden hat. Großmutter sagt, daß Vater Mutter mehr achten soll. Vater sagt, daß Mutter ihn nicht versteht { 1, p. 68} .

To underscore the extent of female muteness within the culture and the ways in which she is able to transform it, an observation from the narrator's father is illustrative:

Du bist vernünftig geworden, sagt Vater, man kann jetzt mit dir reden. Früher warst du wie aufgewirbelter Sand in stürmischem Wasser. Jetzt ist das Wasser klar. Der Sand setzt sich ab { 1, p. 69} .

His observation couldn't be further from the truth. Shortly thereafter, the narrator, who believes she is going insane, who is trying to find meaning in the world around her as she struggles to free herself from the patriarchal discourse, has an affair, an abortion, asks for a divorce, and literally violates all patriarchal norms. And Rolf can only comment from his privileged position, as authority, he who names, the establisher of norms:

Ich wollte eine normale Frau haben, sagt Rolf. Warum stellt er sich nicht eine Wirtschafterin an? Warum leistet dieser Automat sich keine Hure? Weiß er, wieviel er mir schuldig wäre, wenn ich eine Hure wäre? Rolf sagt, wenn ich eine wäre, müßte ich viel dazulernen. Was, zum Beispiel? Parieren, zum Beispiel { 1, p. 96} .

But man always knows that the "wild zone" exists, that area which is not a part of man's knowledge, the part of culture to which he has no access: female experience. Rolf

asks her "was ich so lese und tue, wenn ich allein zu Hause bin, ob ich ein Doppelleben führe in Gedanken oder Taten." And when he is unable to gain insight into her consciousness, he tells her "du redest ja wie ein Mann" { 1, p. 97 } , or "wenn jeder so dächte wie du, also danke!" In order that he may have some clue as to her wishes, he says: "Vielleicht machst du mir einmal eine Liste, damit ich mich noch auskenne und mich weniger irre bei dir" { 1, p. 103 } . As Irigaray points out in New French Feminisms, the difficulties women encounter in their relationships to logic and language, which are masculine, are constant:

'She' is infinitely other in herself. That is undoubtedly the reason she is called temperamental, incomprehensible, perturbed, capricious — not to mention her language in which 'she' goes off in all directions and in which 'he' is unable to discern the coherence of any meaning. Contradictory words seem a little crazy to the logic of reason, and inaudible for him who listens with ready-made grids, a code prepared in advance. In her statements — at least when she dares to speak out — woman retouches herself constantly { 74, p. 103 } .

But language, as Robin Lakoff points out in "Language and Woman's Place", often submerges a woman's sense of personal identity; first, by denying her an appropriate means of expressing herself strongly and, second, by encouraging expressions suggesting triviality in subject matter and uncertainty about it; and, when a woman is being discussed, by treating her as an object — sexual or otherwise — instead of as an individual with serious opinions and views { 42, p. 7 } . The effect of this is that women are systematically denied access to power, and considered incapable of holding it, because of their linguistic behavior. Women find themselves in a double bind: they either conform to the dictates of patriarchally-imposed speech and linguistic patterns, and thereby perpetuate the myth of female inferiority and powerlessness, or break free and become ostracized by the system, devalued as unfeminine. In other words, whichever course a woman chooses, she is not respected in the patriarchal society. This imposed condition

is, coincidentally, a precursor to schizophrenia and, in fact, many more women than men are institutionalized for mental illness {14, pp. 61-61} .

From a cultural, or male, standpoint, the main earmarks of feminine cultural experience, and of Schwaiger's narrator — stasis, repetition, incoherence, muteness, immanence, and intimacy — are evils to be avoided, and texts delineating and validating this experience are often relegated to the status of inferior literature. But female experience, Rabuzzi says, cannot be represented by traditional history and story, replete as they are with the concept of the quest. Therefore, new, formal patterns to describe and identify female poetics are necessary {37, p. 105} .

Feminist theoreticians today are struggling with some of the arguments confining, for example, female domestic labor and experience to mediocrity, immanence, and self-denial. As Felstiner argues, a common feminist dilemma is that, on the one hand "work set apart by gender, status, and compensation demeans the sex that does it, but, on the other, culture and context determine whether such work contributes to the status quo or to its transformation" {44, p. 263} . De Beauvoir insisted on the first view, she says, "in order to reverse some prevalent assumptions — that women's satisfaction in being at home justifies what they do there, and that staying at home means tending to the moral virtues." As a result, de Beauvoir's female literary characters display deep dissatisfaction with dependence and domesticity in a world that demands activism and self-sufficiency. But Felstiner points out that culture and context determine to a great extent the possibilities for female transcendence, especially in the area of domestic labor and responsibility, and that housework, in contradiction to de Beauvoir's statement that it "is not directly useful to society — it produces nothing", is not consigned to the "ghetto of immanence" {3, p. 430} . Historically speaking, homeworkers have kept the socioeconomic system on its feet, regardless of one's views about the system. Fluctuating labor markets rely on female household reserves, woman-made goods have replaced,

specifically during the Depression, consumer goods, and housewives have substituted their time for social services cut back by the state. If social context, in fact, set the moral value on house-work, then women have waged significant battles at home. Felstiner gives the examples of women's role in fomenting the bread riots during the French Revolution, of their contributions to the modernization of agriculture, their ability to withstand the interests of masters or employers, landlords, and supermarkets, and of preserving ethnic and cultural values {44, p. 263} .

Asked about the possibilities for female transcendence, de Beauvoir later in her life agreed that "there are women who are lawyers, physicians, government ministers, who do have, at the same time, children" {44, p. 264} . She realizes that liberty is possible, even when woman's freedom to choose "attracts them toward that area marked off for wifehood and motherhood." But her long-held assumption that raising children, regardless of the ethical commitments involved, gives women no claim on transcendence, remains constant. Woman "cannot consent to bring forth life unless life has meaning; she cannot be a mother without endeavoring to play a role in the economic, political, and social life of the times" {3, p. 495} .

While most feminists would agree that the mere fact of maternity does not endow woman with a privileged view of the world, nor does it guarantee her access into patriarchal systems, it does prepare her for her respective role within the culture and its economy. Chodorow has delineated several traits of gender personality which influence the ultimate roles occupied by the sexes in "The Reproduction of Mothering" {45} . These personality traits, originating from the earlier discussed child/mother dynamic — "independence and relatively affectless behavior in men and interdependency and emotional intensity in women" — enable men to function in the capitalist world of production; women's prepare them for their place in the world of reproduction, particularly the reproduction of mothering:

As long as women mother, we can expect that a girl's pre-Oedipal period will be longer than that of a boy and that women, more than men, will be more open to and preoccupied with those very relational issues that go into mothering — feelings of identification, lack of separateness or differentiation, ego and body-ego boundary issues and primary love not under the sway of the reality principle . . . {45, p. 110} .

Girls emerge . . . with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not. Girls emerge with a stronger basis for experiencing another's needs or feelings as one's own . . . girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object-world {45, p. 167} .

The traits lead, as well, to differences in moral reasoning between men and women {32, p. 105} . Carol Gilligan, in "A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development", relies on Chodorow to explain these differences. She finds that women's thought processes are more oriented towards context and less concerned with abstract notions of right and wrong, and that women attempt, instead, to reconcile "conflicting responsibilities." Women's thought systems are, she argues, "contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract" {46, p. 19} .

While men tend to place value on "separation rather than connection" and "a consideration of the individual rather than the relationship as primary", women consider morality and the preservation of life crucial elements "contingent upon sustaining connection, seeing the consequences of action by keeping the web of relationships intact" {46, p. 59} . Gilligan concludes that the images of hierarchy and web represent the basic differences in the male and female modes of knowledge {46, p. 33} . These thoughts contribute greatly to an understanding of women's texts and the epistemology being developed to explain women's culture. As mentioned earlier, the traditional Aristotelian notion of plot, which is linear and progressive, is not representative of women's experience, which is cyclical. Women's texts are thus often structured in a nuclear, and not a linear, fashion. The "narrative moves out from one base to a given point and back again,

out to another point, and back again, out again, back again, and so forth, like arteries on a spider's web" {47, p. 85} . This notion of web is present in Schwaiger's text, which employs the motif of knitting to represent the different relationships and plot developments. The narrator's mother-in-law "strickt etwas Graues. Ihr man war auch so klein und grau." She "strickt alles in die graue Wolle hinein. Sie sagt: Du solltest stricken" {1, p. 53} . In women's cultural experience, life is like knitting, each stitch dependent upon the other for its total effect, its usefulness, its utility, just as people are dependent upon one another and cannot exist in a vacuum. The narrator observes that : "Das Leben, es ist eben so, meine Schwiegermutter strickt es in graue Wollsachen, das ganze Leben . . . " {1, p. 108} . While his mother was pregnant with Rolf, she "strickte gerade einen schönen Tag aus ihrer Ehe ins Wollzeug hinein. Es war auf dem Pöstlingberg, und sie trug Rolf unterm Herzen, und unter ihnen lag Linz . . . " {1, p. 54} . Stories of women's lives, like the stories the narrator's grandmother tells, are "verwickelt und verästelt wie das Leben selbst. Kein Anfang und kein Ende. Von Hundersten ins Tausendste, immer den Faden verloren" {1, p. 47} . Such a "plotless" structure, according to Donovan, is "representative of an essentially feminine literary mode that expresses an inductive, contextual sensitivity." And this sensitivity epitomizes the traditional "woman's consciousness", which constitutes, in essence, a break from "the androcentric time of history into transcending gynocentric space" {32, p. 106} . Elaine Showalter, in her essay "Piecing and Writing", argues that those pieces of women's culture and consciousness represented in the time-honored practice of quilting, for example, appear in an analogous fashion in women's texts. She quotes a poem by Joyce Carol Oates, "Celestial Timepiece", which celebrates the power of the quilt to evoke women's history, women's universe:

Can you read it? Do you understand?
By squares, by inches, you are drawn in.

Your fingers read it like Braille.
 History, their days, the quick deft fingers.
 Their lives recorded in cloth.
 A universe here, stitched to perfection.
 You must be the child-witness,
 You are the only survivor {48, p. 223} .

The piecing, which is part of the art form of quilting, reflects best, Showalter argues, the fragmentation of women's time, the dailiness and repetitiveness of women's work. The mixing and matching of fragments is "the product of the interrupted life . . . what is popularly seen as "repetitive", "obsessive", and "compulsive" in women's art is in fact a necessity for those whose time comes in small squares" {48, p. 228} . The metaphor of piecing has also been used as an organizational model of language in the "wild zone" of the women's text. According to Rachel Blau Du Plessis, a true women's text would be "nonhierarchic . . . breaking hierarchical structures, making an even display of elements over the surface and would, she says, display no climactic place or moment, having the materials organized into many centers." In the so-called verbal quilt of a feminist text, there would be "no subordination, no ranking" {49, p. 274} . Examples of this type of text are to be found in writers as diverse as Gertrude Stein, Willa Cather, and Eudora Welty. Brigitte Schwaiger's text displays these elements as well. Influences in the present are merged with a chain of associations from the past in an interior monologue. Although it is an "Icherzählung", and the narrator's point of view is presented to the exclusion of the others, their personas are not neglected and there is no sense of ranking among them, except according to gender. As Schwaiger herself has indicated, the Ich-Erzählerin in the book is a "Wünscherfüllerin: sie erfüllt die Wünsche des Vaters, der Mutter, der Gesellschaft. Und auf einmal merkt sie, daß sie krank wird {26, p. 142} . However, Schwaiger also succeeds in deconstructing the apparent privilege of the male and exposing the flaws in the patriarchal system. Dialogue is presented in direct discourse, though without quotation marks or indication of the speaker's identity, a

further non-hierarchical stylistic component. And, as already mentioned, the narrator has no name and hence no identity or social function, unlike the others, whose names are given {2, p. 51} . A climactic moment does not exist, but, rather, a series of moments which radiate out from and return to the narrator, in much the same way as a spider spinning its web. The notion of hierarchy is sometimes present in this text, but the binary pairs so evident in male texts — Logos/ Pathos, Culture/ Nature, Head/Emotions, Activity/Passivity — are deconstructed so capably as to render them ineffectual.

The final deconstruction occurs at the end of the novel, as the narrator recalls a childhood memory of a party, during which her face is painted and her hair decorated with wooden balls. To overcome her reluctance to have her picture taken, her parents devise a plan. Her father tells her:

Dieses Foto kommt morgen in die Zeitung . . . und ich stellte mich neben ihn, Füße zusammen, stillhalten neben Vater, aufgeregt und beschämt über so viel Glück. Mit Vater, und in die Zeitung! Aber er wollte nur, daß ich mich ohne Widerspruch fotografieren ließ, und das Bild klebt im Album. Alles Trick {1, p. 168} .

For a moment, the little girl is deceived into believing she enjoys a certain equality with her father. But this manufactured illusion is intended only to overcome her resistance to being photographed. Just as the answer her father gives to her childish question, "Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer?", exposes the underlying motif of female exploitation, so does this instance of patriarchal manipulation. In the first instance, the little girl is told that "die Fischer fahren hinaus . . . und sie haben Pakete, und sie streuen das Salz vorsichtig in die Wellen" {1, pp. 37-38} . The patriarchal authority "explains", in an absurd fashion, the mysteries of the universe, but in such a way as to undermine the intelligence of woman. It is, as Jurgensen says, "die lächerliche Apologia für ein Gesellschaftssystem, das die individuelle Sensibilität der Frau unterdrückt. Der Mann ist buchstäblich von Hause aus der Alles - oder Besserwisser." It is of no help that woman sees through this

patriarchal "knowledge", because the social power structure perpetuates the institutionalization of just such an arbitrary superiority. The male father figure always plays a professional role as well, integrating woman into the patriarchy by underscoring the concept that "knowledge is power." And women collude with men against their own sex, as the example of the photograph illustrates {28, p. 276} . "Alles Trick." But Brigitte Schwaiger has rejected the tricks and has transcended them through her text. In one of her poems, she celebrates her rebellion, but mourns the fact that the battle is not over:

Ich habe immer
kaltes Wasser getrunken,
wenn ich erhitzt war.
Ich habe nie
Obst gewaschen vorm Essen.
Ich war
mit vollem Magen schwimmen.
Ich lutschte
Bonbons nach dem Zähneputzen.
Geschadet
haben mir nur
die jugendfreien Filme
mit langem Kuß
zum Schluß
und
glücklicher Hochzeit.
Die hängen mir
bis heute nach.
Vielleicht
werden sie mich eines Tages
töten.

She continues to be haunted by the illusions with which she was indoctrinated throughout her childhood, illusions later painfully shattered.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This short study illustrates that much theoretical work has been done in the area of gender difference as it pertains to the production of literary texts. We have also seen what influences have worked upon Brigitte Schwaiger's Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer. Because of the diversity of theory in this area, there has been much debate about whether there, in fact, exists a difference and upon what, if anything, this difference is based. As has been shown, there is wide support, especially in France, of biological difference, which is then said to influence texts. Others have argued that linguistic differences exist between the sexes, which play a role in how women use language and produce texts. The first is intimately linked to psychoanalytic theory and the development of identity, while the second manifests itself within the culture and is a product of socialization.

Because there is a demonstrable difference in identity formation and language acquisition among the sexes, as illustrated by the theories and studies of Lacan, Kristeva and Chodorow, it follows that literary texts will exhibit such differences. The social construction of sexual difference plays a constitutive role in the production, reception, and history of literature. It has become equally clear that conventions and categories of critical discourse and the interpretive acts we perform and which describe us are inextricably linked with conventions and categories of identity itself {50, p. xi} . This is not to argue, as some have done, that male texts cannot access female experience or that female texts cannot utilize the patriarchal discourse, but only that there are elements which occur more

often in female texts and others that appear more prevalent in male texts, and for the reasons outlined in the above theories of psychological development and language access.

To argue this difference is problematic, as Peter Shaw has pointed out. Though it can be demonstrated that because both genders write from experience, female texts would concentrate on "domestic matters" and display a "special sensitivity to details of dress and interior settings" {51, p. 499} , for example, most feminists admit that the author's sex cannot be identified from literary style alone, or by plot. And most female writers display elements which derive from patriarchal thought, such as grammar, logic, syntax, extensive footnoting and narrative organization {51, p. 500} . The notion of difference and the emphasis on female culture must allow room for the use of male discourse instead of just its subversion. As Carolyn Heilbrun has so aptly put it, the "discourse of males is not all 'male' discourse: much of it is human discourse that society has denied to women" {23, p. 295} . Feminist criticism must be able to acknowledge that which men and women share as well as that which is alleged to be intrinsically feminine.

The essence of difference lies, in my view, in the way female writers relate psychologically to the characters they have created, the way those characters respond to the culture into which they have been placed by the cultural requirements of gender, and the manner in which the limitations placed on gender are transcended in the text. Women must discover their difference and their own culture but must, at the same time, refuse to forfeit that part of culture men have deemed "male" when it is, in fact, human. And although there are obvious differences based on class, race and sexual orientation, feminist criticism must not lose sight of the fact that there does exist a communality of experience among women, and that it will be reflected through their art.

As Schwaiger's text demonstrates, identity formation and language acquisition have played a role in text production, the relationship of the author to her characters, and the narrator to herself. Cultural influences then serve to enhance and reinforce the female

consciousness and to affect issues of theme, plot and narrative strategies, as an unpublished poem by Schwaiger illustrates:

Ich träume oft von meinem Vater.
 Ich träume oft von Wänden
 die Schlafzimmer verengen.
 Ich versuche mir vorzustellen, was geschehen hätte können
 in Madrid,
 wenn ich in der San Bernardo Gasse
 im Zimmer geblieben wäre
 und ihn angesehen hätte ohne Lächeln.
 Wie er saß im Pyjama, wie er
 mich angesehen hätte,
 ernst, stumm.
 Denn ich stelle mir vor, ich hätte
 ihm die Zunge abgeschnitten.
 Das Glied meines Vaters
 hatte nie so viel mit mir zu tun
 wie seine Zunge.
 Unser ödipales Verhältnis
 ging über die Wörter.
 Der Geist meines Vaters ist schlecht gehegt.
 Ich fühle mich verfault von
 so viel Abfall in mir,
 der aus Wünschen und Verwesung besteht,
 der durch so viele Filter gegangen ist

The extent to which psychology and culture have influenced her, extreme as it may be, is not so incapacitating as to prevent her from transcending, through literature, the "censors" within her society.

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