REWRITING MYTHS: VOICING FEMALE EXPERIENCE IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *SURFACING* AND *THE PENELOPIAD* AND MARINA WARNER'S *INDIGO* AND *THE LETO BUNDLE*

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ABSTRACT

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Myths have been an undeniable source in both shaping and expressing the values, norms and behavioural patterns in societies. However, the archetypes in these myths have helped to oppress women in their personal and social lives and have forced them to accept identities which actually are not theirs. Feminist archetypal theorists propose that through a detailed study of common images of women's writings, fantasies, dreams and myths, the archetypes that women possess will be uncovered and the female experience will have the chance to be voiced more accurately.

The aim of this thesis is to explore *Surfacing* and *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood and *Indigo* and *The Leto Bundle* by Marina Warner to lay bare the attempts of both writers to break away from the male-oriented myths so as to rewrite female experience via rewriting myths. In four novels, the archetypes and mythical elements are used in rewriting the gender and sexual identity markers which have long been imposed on women by patriarchal mythmakers. By rewriting these markers, both writers not only voice the genuine female experience and the body but also pave the way for the creation of new myths which would celebrate female identity and freedom.

Keywords: Archetypes, Rewriting, Language, *Écriture Féminine*, Feminist Archetypal Theory.

ÖZ

MİTLERİ YENİDEN YAZMAK: MARGARET ATWOOD'UN *SURFACING* VE *THE PENELOPIAD* İLE MARINA WARNER'IN *INDIGO* VE *THE LETO BUNDLE* ROMANLARINDA KADIN DENEYİMİNİN DİLE GETİRİLMESİ

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Mitler toplumların değerlerini, normlarını ve davranış biçimlerini hem şekillendiren, hem de ifade eden kaynaklardır. Ancak mitlerdeki arketipler kadınları kişisel ve sosyal hayatlarında baskı altında tutmaya ve böylece onlara ait olmayan kimliklere bürünmeye zorlamıştır. Feminist arketip kuramcıları, kadınların yazı, fantezi, rüya ve mitlerindeki ortak imgelerin detaylı bir şekilde çalışılmasıyla, kadınlara ait olan arketiplerin deşifre edileceğini ve kadınların deneyimlerinin daha doğru ve yüksek sesle dillendirilme şansı elde edeceğini öngörürler.

Bu tezin amacı, Margaret Atwood'un *Surfacing* ve *The Penelopiad* romanları ve Marina Warner'ın *Indigo* ve *The Leto Bundle* romanlarını inceleyerek, her iki yazarın da mitleri yeniden yazma yoluyla kadın deneyimlerini yeniden yazmak için erkek merkezli mitleri nasıl tersyüz ettiklerinin ortaya konmasıdır. Bu dört romanda arketipler ve mitlere özgü elementler, uzun zamandır ataerkil sistem tarafından kadınlara empoze edilen toplumsal ve cinsel kimlik belirteçlerinin yeniden yazılması için kullanılmıştır. Bu belirteçleri yeniden yazarak, her iki yazar yalnızca özgün kadın deneyimini ve kadın bedenini seslendirmemiş, aynı zamanda kadın kimliğini ve özgürlüğünü yücelten yeni mitlerin yaratılmasının yolunu açmışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arketipler, Yeniden Yazma, Dil, *Écriture Féminine*, Feminist Arketip Kuramı.

To My Father

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Myths and mythology have always been among the elements which shape the lives of individuals and the working mechanisms of societies. They are not simple, innocent stories about old gods and goddesses, but symbols and images which bear political, social, historical and cultural meanings and codes. Many thinkers, writers and scholars have attempted to analyze and deconstruct these myths to uncover the ideology beneath or behind them. Likewise, many others have attempted to rewrite these myths from different points of view to emphasize the missing or consciously underestimated elements. As the inferior positioning of women in hierarchical societies has been the most consciously and intentionally practiced agenda for centuries, feminist thinkers and writers, too, have used myths to lay bare the reasons, means, and consequences of this systematic oppression women have been suffering for ages. They have tried to multiply the myths or rewrite them so as to enable women to speak their genuine experience through female characters in these myths. Their attack on the traditional coding of 'woman' in patriarchal societies has also become an attack on logocentrism and phallocentrism that have prevailed in Western civilizations for centuries, as, through the remaking of myths, these writers have tried to decipher the coding of fictitious identities enforced on women and the working mechanisms of dominant paradigms. They have also subverted the binary oppositions and the hierarchies logocentric patriarchal societies have produced, and disclosed the textuality of history by rewriting myths. Margaret Atwood and Marina Warner are among those writers who have not only used and recontextualized myths and archetypes in their novels but also attempted to find out new ones by unveiling, subverting and/or deconstructing previous archetypes and myths. In this study the novels *The Penelopiad* and *Surfacing* by Atwood, and *Indigo, or Mapping the Waters* and *The Leto Bundle* by Warner will be put under scrutiny so as to discover some common and persistent patterns women writers use when they rewrite myths. This thesis will also try to reveal the mythical

patterns and archetypes Atwood and Warner use in their novels as they try to rewrite their genuine experience as women and attempt to redefine their identities which have long been misdefined by male mythmakers. Their attempts to offer new sites of existence for women so as to enable them to get closer to their authentic "selves" will be discussed.

1.1. Myths, Archetypes and Feminist Archetypal Theory

The meaning and the different conceptions of myth and its relation to feminist archetypal theory need to be explained first to have a better understanding of how these patterns shape or limit certain exercises especially for women. Jean-Pierre Vernant, a French scholar who studied the relationship between the Western and Ancient Greek myth concepts, states that the origin of the word "myth" is *muthos* in Greek which means any kind of formulated speech such as a story, a dialogue, or the enunciation of a plan (204). However, the meaning of the term changed between the eight and fourth centuries B.C. due to several reasons. Vernant states that though *muthos* and *logos* do not originally contrast each other, the shift from oral literature to written forms of literature was one of the main reasons of the shift in the meaning of *muthos*. By disconnecting oral tradition which has a kind of powerful spell that charms its listeners from writing, the truth of the written records by both historians and philosophers were justified: "It is in and through written literature that this type of discourse becomes established; where it is concerned the *logos* is no longer speech but has come to imply demonstrative rationality and, as such, it is set in opposition, both in form and in fundamental significance, to speech of *muthos*" (Vernant 206). Therefore, through this binarism, the word "myth" was redefined as the opposition of *logos,* whose meaning was also shifted from "the different forms of what is said" to rational discourse (Vernant 204). In the Nietzschean sense, the connotations of the myths changed from the Apollonian to the Dionysian; from form to formlessness, from the rational to the irrational, from the fixed to the fluid.

Nietzsche acknowledges in his *The Birth of Tragedy* that with writers such as Euripides and thinkers such as Socrates, the Apollonian began to rule and the Dionysian was withdrawn. He argues that from Sophocles on, an "un-Dionysian and anti-mythical spirit" (95) has held sway over man's creativity, joy and the possibility to live harmoniously with his sufferings. This spirit:

> fights against Dionysian wisdom and art; it strives to dissolve myth; in place of a metaphysical consolation, it sets an earthy consonance, indeed, a deus ex machina of its own, namely, the god of machines and crucibles, that is, the forces of nature spirits, recognized and used in the service of a higher egoism; it believes in correcting the world through knowledge, in a life guided by science, and thus is really in a position to confine the individual man within the narrowest circle of soluble problems, inside which he can cheerfully say to life: "I want you. You are worth knowing." (96)

Vernant also notes that Greek historians and philosophers such as Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle all degraded myth in opposition to truthful discourse. However, it should be noted at this point that their preference of *logos* over *muthos* is not the same as Plato's preference of speech over writing, which Derrida deconstructs in his "Plato's Pharmacy" *(Dissemination)*. Their preference here is rather of reason over imagination and power of oral speech. The poets who use mythology or mythical elements also contributed to this change when they started to distinguish between mythical versions and their versions of stories in their works. Myth, thus, acquired "the significance of a paradigm": "It is no longer valid for and in itself but only in relation to something else, to exemplify some action or type of behaviour for men to emulate" (Vernant 212).

This paradoxical change in its meaning, along with other factors such as the Enlightenment project and the rise of rationalism, affected the way Western civilizations considered myths: "For much of Western history, the logos-ical (logical) ruled the mythical" (Doty, *Myth* 7). As Vernant states, there were three dominant schools which sought to find a rational answer to this irrationality in myths in the nineteenth century. The School of Comparative Mythology, whose forerunner was Max

Müller, saw mythology as "essentially a pathological type of discourse … whose roots lie in the original experience of great cosmic phenomena" (227), and regarded natural phenomena as the reason for myths. Edward B. Taylor and Andrew Lang's English School of Anthropology, which also includes thinkers like James G. Frazer, Jane E. Harrison, Gilbert Murray, Francis M. Concord, and Arthur B. Cook, advocated that the savagery in mythology testified to the evolution from barbaric societies to modern ones. Finally, the German School of Philology, one of whose leaders is Otto Gruppe, opposed the previous two schools by claiming that "the exact credentials of myth" could be explained by making use of philological and chorographical tools. However, all these attempts fell short in one way or another to give full explanation regarding the origin, function and/or the subject matter of myths. Therefore, it is essential to go over the symbolist theory of myths by Ernst Cassirer, who studied most systematically on this subject among others like Freud, Jung, Walter F. Otto or Paul Ricoeur.

Speculating on both the natural sciences and the social sciences, Ernst Cassirer is considered one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. He believes that myth has a very crucial role in the formation of cultural forms and that human culture is a historical and social structure. Recognizing mythical symbolism as "a mode of expression" (*Essay* 42) rather than conceptual thought, Cassirer argues that "the symbolic forms are grounded in the activity of the consciousness" (*Symbol* 29). He defines man as "an animal symbolicum" (*Essay* 31). Different from all animals which can perceive things by their receptor or effector systems, man has the symbolic system which he discovered to adopt himself to his environment: "This new acquisition transforms the whole of human life. As compared with the other animals man lives not merely in a broader reality; he lives, so to speak, in a new dimension of reality" (*Essay* 29). The symbolic forms, so to speak, constitute the basis on which men can converse and understand themselves and/ or each other.

Another important aspect of Cassirer's theory on myth is that it sees myth and language as inseparable. Cassirer states that myth and language come from the same source

though they subsequently depart from each other: “Language and myth stand in an original and indissoluble correlation with one another, from which they both emerge but gradually as independent elements” (*Language* 88). According to Cassirer, as one goes back to the more primitive stages of language, the fact that “linguistic thought is … impregnated and permeated with mythical thought” (*Symbol* 177) becomes clearer. While myth and language are one in the beginning, art and religion develop from myth later on and language develops towards science. Cassirer also states that language “bears within itself, from its very beginning, another power, the power of logic” (*Language* 97). Therefore, words are reduced to signs gradually; whereas the mythical symbol is fluid, polysemic and tauto-gorical as it stands not as the representation of something else, but for itself (Vernant 236-8). Cassirer thus states:

> Whereas empirical thinking is essentially directed towards establishing an unequivocal relation between specific “causes” and specific “effects”, mythical thinking, even when it raises the question of origins as such, has a free selection of causes at its disposal. Anything can come from it because anything can stand in temporal or spatial contact with anything. (*Philosophy* 46)

It is indeed quite reductive and simplistic to adopt a completely symbolist view of myths and to say that all symbols and archetypes, regardless of their historical, social or cultural contexts, have universal meanings. However, as Doty notes, the movement which was started and supported by Cassirer and his follower Langer has had important effects on the deconstructive movement, for what Cassirer and Langer initiated is “the logical fruition of the movement toward an acceptance of the radically symbolic (and hence radically relative, radically factitive) hermeneutics that touched all twentieth century disciplines in the liberal arts” (*Mythography* 443).

The symbolist attitude adopted by both Freud and Jung differ in the way whether the symbol stands on a position above or below the concept. For Freud, who regards the symbol as existing on a position below the concept, symbols appear as impulses in dreams, slips of the tongue or in fantasies. Although Freud’s dwelling on myths and

archetypes is generally centred on his study of dreams, his ideas on human psyche have paved the way for the development of many theories including those of Jung, who has provided the basis for the archetypal feminist theorists.

C. G. Jung's theory about mythology and archetypes is "one of the few theories which can fully answer" the three important questions regarding myth: its origin, its subject matter and its function (Segal, *Theorizing* 67). Jung believes that "[m]yths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings, and anything but allegories of psychical processes" (*Archetypes* 154). Unlike Freud, who proposes that the individual's unconscious communicates with his consciousness through slips of tongue, dreams etc., Jung believes that it intentionally and directly does so. Moreover, in addition to Freud's claim that there are fantasies which have a personal character, Jung suggests that there are some fantasies of impersonal character which cannot be explained by individual experience. Thus Jung introduces his concept of the collective unconscious from which he believes myths are derived: "The whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious" (*Collected* 8:152).

According to Jung, collective unconscious is different from personal unconscious and is independent from individual experience. It is inherent in all individuals and consists of mythological images and motives. Being "the unconscious object-imago", the collective unconscious consists of *a priori* "subliminal vestiges of archaic functions" (*Collected 7:* 303) and in two individuals it bears greater resemblance to each other than their personal consciousness:

> [This] personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the collective unconscious. I have chosen the term "collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other

> words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us. (*Basic* 287)

Thus, the collective unconscious is a part of the human psyche which consists of primordial images that are difficult to understand for the modern man, and these primordial images- archetypes- are conveyed by the collective unconscious and present themselves in dreams, fantasies, instincts, mythology, etc. For Jung, archetypes are universal archaic images and are inherent in humans as the contents of the collective unconscious:

> "Archetype" is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic *eidos* .For our purposes this term is apposite and helpful, because it tells us that so far as the collective unconscious contents are concerned we are dealing with archaic or- I would say- primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since the remotest times. The term "*représentations collectives*", used by Lévy-Bruhl to denote the symbolic figures in the primitive view of the world, could easily be applied to unconscious contents as well, since it means practically the same thing. (*Basic* 288)

The psyche, which accounts for the total personality for Jung, "is comprised of several interacting systems: *ego*, *personal unconscious*, *collective unconscious*, various *complexes*, *persona*, and the *archetypes* - such as the *anima-animus*, *shadow* and *mother*" (Brown 48).The archetypes of *the animus* and *the anima* are of special importance since most post-Jungians including the feminist archetypal theorists have some problems with them in terms of their problematic nature which depends on binary oppositions between the female and male psyches. Jung explains *the animus* as the masculine element in the female psyche and *the anima* as the feminine element in the male psyche. These elements are also connected to concepts of *Logos* and *Eros*:

> Woman is compensated by a masculine element and therefore her unconscious has, so to speak, a masculine imprint. This results in considerable difference between men and women, and accordingly I have called the projection-making factor in women the animus, which means mind or spirit. The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos, just as the anima corresponds to maternal Eros. (*Aspects* 171)

Therefore, *the anima* is "an inherited collective image of woman" in a man's unconscious which helps him understand the nature of woman (*Collected* 190). Jung explains that *the anima* is the image of a woman in a man in his relation to the collective unconscious while his persona is his image that he presents to the world. *The animus*, on the other hand, is the expression of the masculine nature in women and is connected with rationality, action and spirit. Jung states: "*The animus* is the deposit, as it were, of all woman's ancestral experiences of man -and not only that, he is also a creative and procreative being, not in the sense of masculine creativity, but in the sense that he brings forth something we might call… the spermatic word" (*Collected* 209).

Both *the anima* and *the animus* are essential in the process of individuation, which for Jung, is the goal of human development. In the end of the individuation process, the individual will realize and reach *the self*. For this, s/he has to balance the opposing elements in her/his psyche. Individuation is another important point where many post-Jungian feminists including archetypal feminist theorists make use of. Individuation for Jung is "a process of differentiation, having for its goal the development of the individual personality". (*Collected* 155) The process of individuation leads to "an intenser and more universal collective solidarity" than isolation as the individual ontologically presupposes a collective relationship (*Collected* 155). The individuation process is a long and difficult one. Sharp states that "individuation is a kind of circular odyssey, a spiral journey, where the aim is to get back to where you started, but knowing where you've been" (64).

Although feminist thinkers benefit from Jung's theories of myths and archetypes, their standpoint is totally different from those of Freud's and Jung's. The main reason behind this is mainly the logocentric thinking that works at the background of their ideas. Feminist theorists make use of Derridian and Lacanian theories to reveal and subvert the binaries and hierarchies which have conquered not only myths but all literary works and even languages of Western civilizations. In order to speculate more

on these theories, an introduction of how feminist thinkers have reconceptualized Derrida's and Lacan's theories is essential.

In his groundbreaking essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" (1966), Jacques Derrida suggests that Western thinking is based on logocentrism; Western science and Western philosophy, which are based on metaphysics of presence, have kept looking for an origin, a fixed centre. The centre limits the free play of the structure by organizing its elements inside the total form. However, the centre itself, which is at the centre of totality, does not belong to the totality as it escapes structurality. Therefore, "the centre is not centre" and it is both inside and outside the structure. Derrida asserts that the centre, whether called "the arche", the origin, or "the telos", the end, is always defined by "a full presence" and that the entire history of the concept of structure reveals the substitutions of different names for the centre: "eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia [truth], transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth" ("Structure" 177). The Western philosophy and science are therefore based on these 'metaphors' and 'metonymies'.

The metaphysics of presence prevails not only in Western philosophy and science but also in Western languages. The superiority of speech over writing in Western philosophy since Plato is based on phonocentrism which foregrounds spoken language as its "present" and devalues writing as it is a record of the "more natural". Derrida argues that phonocentrism is another representation of metaphysics of presence in Western thought:

> We already have a foreboding that phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as *presence*, with all the subdeterminations which depend on this general form and which organize within it their system and their historical sequence (presence of the thing to the sight aseidos, presence as substance/essence/existence[ousia], temporal presence as point[stigmè] of the now or of the moment[nun], the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of

> the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so forth). Logocentrism would thus support the determination of the being of the entity as presence. (*Grammatology* 12)

Language, thus, is marked by logocentrism and works through binary oppositions. What is worse is that these binary oppositions are also hierarchies as one leg of the binary is always superior to the other. There is no escape from such a language as one term requires the other's absence for its presence. Culler exemplifies this point as follows:

> In oppositions such as meaning/form, soul/body, intuition/expression, literal/metaphorical, nature/culture, intelligible/sensible, positive/negative, transcendental/empirical, serious/nonserious, the superior term belongs to the logos and is a higher presence; the inferior term marks a fall. Logocentrism thus assumes the priority of the first term and conceives the second in relation to it, as a complication, a negation, a manifestation, or a disruption of the first. (93)

Derrida argues that writing has always been regarded as secondary since Plato as it has been considered an artificial replica of 'word' or 'speech' which are thought to be more natural. He believes that this view counts in all kinds of philosophies where metaphysics of presence constitutes the basis. However, Derrida claims also by making use of Saussure's and Rousseau's theories that writing is not inferior to speech which is celebrated by phonocentrism and logocentrism. Saussure and Rousseau are worried that in case writing usurps the central role of speech which it represents and is intimately bound to, the sense of origin might be lost. Derrida states:

> What is intolerable and fascinating is indeed the intimacy intertwining image and thing, *graph, i.e.,* and phone, to the point where by a mirroring, inverting, and perverting effect, speech seems in its turn the speculum of writing, which "manages to usurp the main role." Representation mingles with what it represents, to the point where one speaks as one writes, one thinks as if the represented were nothing more than the shadow or reflection of the representer. A dangerous promiscuity and a nefarious complicity between the reflection and the reflected which lets itself be seduced narcissistically. In this play of representation, the point of origin becomes ungraspable. (*Grammatology* 36)

With the origin becoming ungraspable, the centre and/or all the structure that Western metaphysics is built on begins to shutter. By disconnecting the bond between the signifier and the signified and then by subverting the hierarchy of speech over writing, Derrida deconstructs not only the 'Word' but also the structurality of history, science, religion, politics, economics, technics, law and art, namely "the myth of the origin":

> The origins of these movements and these historical regions dissociate themselves, as they must for the rigorous delimitation of each science, only by an abstraction that one must constantly be aware of and use with vigilance. This complicity of origins may be called arche-writing. What is lost in that complicity is therefore the myth of the simplicity of origin. This myth is linked to the very concept of origin; to speech reciting the origin, to the myth of the origin and not only to myths of origin. (*Grammatology* 92)

Phallocentrism is quite interconnected with this relation as it suggests that 'masculine' constitutes the logos in Western thinking. This does not only mean that 'woman' is the secondary leg of the opposition, that she is the inferior, the absent, the lack, but also that Western metaphysics is built on the idea that phallus, or people who have the phallus, are more rational, stronger, and worthier. What Derrida suggests is to lay bare how these binaries undermine each other. Woman 'has' the secondary place as man has the positive place in the binary, but man needs woman so as to be able to define himself. The signifier 'exists' to name the signified; while it is the signifier which makes the signified present. Likewise, cause 'is' the origin of effect; however, cause would not be needed if effect did not occur. Derrida's deconstruction thus not only subverts the causality that is interconnected with hierarchical oppositions, but also attacks the idea of origin directly. Pointing to the relationship between cause and effect which makes cause an origin, Culler states:

> If the effect is what causes the cause to become a cause, then the effect, not the cause, should be treated as the origin. By showing that the argument which elevates cause can be used to favor effect, one uncovers and undoes the rhetorical operation responsible for the hierarchization and one produces a significant displacement. If either cause or effect can occupy the position of origin, then origin is no longer originary; it loses its metaphysical privilege. A

> nonoriginary origin is a "concept" that cannot be comprehended by the former system and thus disrupts it. (88)

The method of deconstruction that Derrida uses to show how dichotomies, language and rationality, along with all Western thinking including the Enlightenment project and humanism betray themselves is the model on which several feminists, especially Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous have based their discourse. Using deconstructive strategies, they have tried to show how the patriarchal society has expelled women from society, language and their natural identities. While doing this, they have also utilized the theories of another prominent poststructuralist theorist, Jacques Lacan.

Jacques Lacan, whose theories have influenced many figures from many different disciplines like cultural studies, film studies and literature along with psychoanalytical theory, makes use of many different discourses such as "Saussurean semiology, Jakobsonian rhetorical analysis, Freud's Oedipal schema, Benveniste's linguistics, Levi Strauss's idea of women as exchange, Hegel's concept of desire" (Sarup X). Lacan's theories on psychoanalysis mainly stem from reinterpretations of Freudian concepts and theories. By revising Freud in light of Saussure's linguistics, Lacan has developed his theories about the relationship between the unconscious and language arguing that the subject is an effect of language. The three registers Lacan uses as the basis of his theories on the formation of identity, namely the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, display how one's ego is formed by a self-illusion of its autonomy, how the subject is constructed through language and how it is alienated from its authentic Self.

According to Lacan, language belongs to the Symbolic register through which the subject is constituted. The emphasis Lacan puts on language is essential in this study as many feminists have based their theories on his views. Lacan believes that the subject is born into language which with his/her entry to the Symbolic order takes hold of him.

It is not only that the subject speaks language but that language speaks man:

> This passion of the signifier now becomes a new dimension of the human condition in that it is not only man who speaks, but that in man and through man it speaks (ça parle), that his nature is woven by effects in which is to be found the structure of language, of which he becomes the material, and that therefore there resounds in him, beyond what could be conceived of by a psychology of ideas, the relation of speech. (*Ecrits Selection* 217)

In contrast to the traditional idea that the subject is fully able to control his speech, Lacan argues that the speaking subject is never able to express what he means and that all the signifiers lead to other signifiers, not to truths which according to Lacan are a fantasy. In this endless chain of signifiers, meaning floats forever and thus truth is impossible to capture. As Sarup states, the subject is caught in, tortured and poisoned by language when s/he enters the Symbolic register and loses contact with his/her authentic being (46).

Jouissance is an essential concept in Lacan's theories as it is the inexpressible mixture of pain and pleasure. It has strong sexual connotations and is different from satisfaction of a drive where the goal is set by the pleasure principle. *Jouissance* is the satisfaction of the death drive which is "the constant desire in the subject to break through the pleasure principle towards the thing and a certain excess *jouissance*" (Evans 94). Braunstein argues that it is evident in all of Lacan's teachings that one can approach *jouissance* only through language and that the Other is always involved (108). Thus *jouissance* is a subjective experience beyond pleasure principle and is painful:

> The pleasure principle functions as a limit to enjoyment; it is a law which commands the subject to 'enjoy as little as possible'. At the same time, the subject constantly attempts to transgress the prohibitions imposed on his enjoyment, to go 'beyond the pleasure principle'. However, the result of transgressing the pleasure principle is not more pleasure, but pain, since there is only a certain amount of pleasure that the subject can bear. Beyond this limit, pleasure becomes pain, and this 'painful pleasure' is what Lacan calls *jouissance*; '*jouissance* is suffering'. (Evans 93)

Different from Freud's concept of libido which is only masculine, Lacan says that there is feminine *jouissance*; "A 'supplementary *jouissance*' which is 'beyond the phallus', a *jouissance* of the Other" (Evans 94). However, Lacan is accused of sexism at this point as he argues that the woman knows nothing about her *jouissance*. On the other hand, when Lacan claims that "*woman* doesn't exist" (La femme n'existe pas) and "*woman* is not whole" (pas toute) (*Feminine* 7), he makes it clear that he is talking about "Women with capital W indicating the universal" (*Feminine* 72). As Fink states: "Woman with a capital W, woman as singular in essence doesn't exist; Woman as an all-encompassing idea (a Platonic form) is an illusion. There is multiplicity of women but no essence of "Womanhood" or "Womanliness"" (*Feminine* 7).

Another important concept Lacan speculates about is the phallus. It is one of Lacan's most controversial concepts as many theorists including feminists condemn Lacan for his phallocentrism. His famous phrase "the phallus is the privileged signifier" (*Ecrits First* 581) is taken as a proof of his subordination of women. Gallop states that the defenders of Lacan accept the significance of the phallus in his theories but claim that the meaning of the term is misunderstood and is mistaken for the penis instead of a neutral signifier (133). Lacan states:

> The phallus is not a fantasy, if we are to view fantasy as an imaginary effect. Nor is it as such an object (part-, internal, good, bad, etc.)… Still less is it the organ -penis or clitoris- that it symbolizes…. The phallus is a signifier…. it is the signifier that is destined to designate meaning effects as a whole, insofar as the signifier conditions them by its presence as signifier. (*Écrits First* 579)

Thus in general, the phallus is the signifier of anything that can fill up the sense of the Lack. After the child becomes aware of the Law of the Father and enters the Symbolic register becoming a speaking subject, s/he is sexually differentiated by its relation to the phallic signifier. Campbell states that the phallus operates in all three registers for Lacan: "In the Symbolic order, the phallus 'is the signifier for which there is no signified'; in the Imaginary order it operates as a narcissistic object of the phallic image

which fulfils that lack; and in the Real as the real phallus, the organ of the penis" (61). The acquisition of the sexed subjectivity is therefore related to the Symbolic phallus. The resignation from the infant's identification with the Imaginary phallus after the encounter with the Law of the Father leads the infant to identify with the Symbolic phallus after his/her castration. The difference in this phase is obvious for the sexes: the boy identifies with the phallus whereas the girl identifies with the lack of it. Sarup states:

> The phallus is the signifier of lack marking castration. It signifies what men (think they) *have* and what women (are considered to) *lack*. The woman does not *have* the phallus, the object of desire for another. The phallus is the signifier of the signifiers, the representative of signification and language. The phallus is the crucial signifier in the distribution of authority and power. It also designates the object of desire. (94)

Though Lacan makes clear that the phallus is not the penis or the clitoris, the privileged role it possesses in the sexuation process- even if it does not correspond to the male sexual organ and his categorization of sexual difference on the basis of masculinity and the male body are strongly objected to by many feminists and other theorists including Derrida. Gallop states that Irigaray has accused Lacan of phallocracy (133) and Elizabeth Grosz argues that "in the phallocentric model Sexual difference becomes codified into the presence or absence of a single feature- the male sexual organ" (Campbell 61). Campbell underlines the fact that Lacan's use of the term in different places in different contexts creates ambiguity and his employment of the phallus as a real phallus in some of his works proves that the phallus has a strong logical and symbolic bond to the penis: "The phallus does not therefore function as a sexually 'neutral' signifier. The relation of the subject to the phallic signifier is structured with regard to anatomical difference" (63). Derrida too accuses Lacan of his phallogocentrism due to his use of the phallus as "a transcendental element which acts as an ideal guarantee of meaning":

> How can there be such a thing as a 'privileged signifier', asks Derrida, given that every signifier is defined only by its differences from other signifiers? The phallus, in other words, reintroduces the metaphysics of presence which Derrida denominates as logocentrism, and thus Derrida concludes that, by articulating this with phallocentrism, Lacan has created a phallogocentric system of thought. (Evans 146)

Though Lacan is criticized by many feminists, the essentiality of his theories in the feminist movement is undeniable. As Campbell states, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray have argued that Lacanian epistemology is feminist ally due to "its account of the psychic register of sexual oppression and liberation" (25). Kristeva makes use of the Lacanian Imaginary and the Symbolic to form her own theory about the pre-symbolic realm which she calls the *semiotic*. Kristeva's *semiotic chora* :

> specifies the pre-signifying traces that underlie and at times break through the order of signification. Within Kristeva's semiotic terms, the shared bodily space of mother and child resists representation, yet is experienced as desire, the uncanny or the mystical. The *chora* as maternal desire threatens to destabilise the finite unity and autonomous identity of the modern 'man'. (Gamble 169)

The way women see their bodies and the way they should write them have long been a focus of interest. The conceptions suggested by the archetypal feminist theorists are very much in line with those associated with *écriture féminine,* a movement which started in France around the early 1970s and which praises female difference in writing. When Hélène Cixous published her article "The Laugh of Medusa" in 1975, it was "regarded as one of the foundational texts of movement known as *écriture féminine,* perhaps the most sustained exploration of myth's inspirational potential for feminism" (Zajko and Leonard 3). In her renowned essay, Cixous celebrates the plurality of femininity and encourages women to write their bodies and to write through their bodies. She renounces the past in favour of the future, the "dark" in favour of women's "inexhaustible" imagination ("Laugh" 334). Like archetypal feminists, she condemns the myths created by the patriarchal society. The qualities attributed to women in these

myths have been oppressing women for centuries and forcing them to live in alien bodies:

> Where is the ebullient, infinite woman who, immersed as she was in her naïveté, kept in the dark about herself, led into self-disdain by the great arm of parental-conjugal phallocentricism, hasn't been ashamed of her strength? Who, surprised and horrified by the fantastic tumult of her drives (for she was made to believe that a well-adjusted normal woman has a …divine composure), hasn't accused herself of being a monster? ("Laugh" 335)

The dichotomy between culture and nature, and their associations with men and women, which the feminist archetypal theorists attack, are also undermined by the writers in this movement. They invite women to get out of the linearity of the patriarchal realm by writing through their bodies and express their female experiences by rewriting their roles as women. Elaine Showalter in her 1979 dated article "Towards a Feminist Poetics" coins the term *'gynocritics'* , a program which "begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture" (269). When women rewrite their experiences through their bodies, they will have the chance to transcend the boundaries of *the Logos* in the Jungian sense, and will create for themselves a space in which they can freely flow. As Irigaray points out, when a woman speaks through her body, "one would have to listen with another ear, as if hearing *an 'other meaning' always in the process of weaving itself, of embracing itself with words, but also of getting rid of words in order not to become fixed, congealed in them*" (*Ethics* 355).

Shoshana Felman has in her famous essay "Women and Madness" pointed out the significance of the phallus as a master signifier and the label "mad" attached to women when they refuse to be identified with the patriarchal codes including language:

> The Masculine thus turns out to be the universal equivalent of the opposition: Masculine/Feminine. It is insofar as Masculinity conditions Femininity as its

> universal equivalent, as what determines and measures its value, that the textual paradox can be created according to which the woman is "madness," while at the same time "madness" is the very "absence of womanhood." The woman is "madness"…since the woman is difference; but "madness" is "nonwoman" since madness is the lack of resemblance. What the narcissistic economy of the Masculine universal equivalent tries to eliminate, under the label "madness," is nothing other than feminine difference. (15)

The woman therefore is defined in terms of phallogocentrism in the traditional discourse. The phallus or the phallic figure not only defines her sexuation as Lacan argues, but also her identity, her language and her social positioning in society. Therefore, Felman, too, calls for a new discourse that would enable women to break away from the phallogocentric discourse they are enslaved to:

> The challenge facing the woman today is nothing less than to "re-invent" language, to re-learn how to speak: to speak not only against, but outside of the specular phallogocentric structure, to establish a discourse the status of which would no longer be defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning. An old saying would thereby be given new life: today more than ever, changing our minds-changing the mind-is a woman's prerogative. (18-19)

Feminist archetypal theory is "an interdisciplinary re-visioning" that makes use of Jungian studies. It began to nourish in the late 1970s but the works of feminist archetypal theorists were first brought together in a book titled *Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-visions of Jungian Thought,* edited by Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht, in 1985. Lauter and Rupprecht state that they decided to write this book after a conference in Miami University of Ohio on "Creativity and Unconscious" in 1979 though they were "aware as early as 1976 of the need to bring feminism to archetypal theory" (XI). Each essay of the five writers in the book studies an aspect of Jung's theories under a different light from feminist perspectives. Demaris S. Wehr, Annis Pratt, Estella Lauter, Sylvia Brinton Perera, and Carol Schreier Rupprecht all revise the concepts of archetype Jung put forward in one way or another to voice the need for and the existence of genuine female experience and its expression through archetypes.

However, in contrast to traditional Jungian feminism, feminist archetypal theory is not related to Jung's attempt to form a "grand narrative" concerning cultural and gender issues. Like archetypal psychologists, feminist archetypal theorists break away with Jung's "archetype" in a very radical way proposing that archetypes are not inherent images in the collective unconscious. Instead, they believe that any repeated psychic image can be the archetypal image:

> Archetype is … the tendency to form and reform images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences. …The archetype may be universal, in the sense of being a tendency that is shared by women across time and cultures.… The images are transpersonal in that they partake of the history of the image, as well as the individual's subjective experiences. They are often numinous because of their cumulative energy. (Lauter and Rupprecht 14-5)

Archetypal feminists are against Jung's concept of the archetype as a fixed image and the concept of collective unconscious which totalizes, categorizes and generalizes human experience. Jung himself states that the concept of the archetype has been present since Plato, and its source is Plato's concept of "eidos" or "εἶδος", which are imprinted ideas in human soul before one is born. Such a logocentric and totalizing concept which leaves no room for human experience is totally opposite to what archetypal feminists offer. As Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace proposes, feminist archetypal theorists object to "the conventional Jungian view of anima and animus, see archetypes as changeable cultural constructs rather than genetically programmed absolutes and view woman writers as reflecting and contributing to the development of new archetypes" (23).

The aim of Lauter and Rupprecht is to establish a theory that will help them to study and analyze the patterns found in women's thoughts and images to "clarify distinctively female concerns that have been persistent throughout human history" (14). By applying this theory to a broad range of works by women writers, they seek to "expose a set of reference points that would serve as an expandable framework for defining female

experience, and ultimately the 'muted' culture females have created" (14). Therefore, it is not surprising that feminist archetypal theory rejects the archetype as a fixed image. Feminist archetypal theorists consider archetypes as changing images which are not normative as they cannot completely be analyzed until all their previous, present, and future manifestations are discovered. Their aim to express multiple female experiences prompts them to depart from the Jungian 'archetype' concept as an inherent, fixed image: "In such a theory, the archetype cannot be defined as an image whose content is frozen but must be thought of as a process, a tendency to form and re-form images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences" (16). By altering, combining and developing the concepts of the archetype proposed by other orthodox Jungians such as Naomi Goldenberg, James Hillman, Eric Neumann and James Hall, feminist archetypal theorists come to suggest that archetypes, which are ignited by experience, are "'part of the tendency to structure experience in certain ways'; they are 'the ordering structure of the mind'; they determine the flow of libido 'when there is an activation of the psychic process'"(12).

In "The Religious and Social Dimension of Jung's Concept of the Archetype: A Feminist Perspective" Wehr criticizes Jung for the ontological quality of his concept of archetype. She claims that the Jungian concepts of anima and feminine validate the inferior role the patriarchal society has attributed to women and proposes that the images related to gender should not be seen as archetypal expressions of immanent realities but "as inner representations of socially sanctioned but oppressive roles (images and behaviour patterns)" (Wagner 24). Sylvia Brinton Perera, in her essay "The Descent of Inanna: Myth and Therapy" explores the possibility of contemporary woman writers' expressing themselves through the myth of Inanna, an Ancient Sumerian goddess. In "The Common Language of Dreams: Colloquy of Mind and Body" Rupprecht mentions the need to reverse the patriarchal correspondence of womanhood to body and thus evil only, and suggests a feminist archetypal way of interpretation which unites body and mind be used in interpreting dreams.

Lauter and Pratt, the two writers whose studies are more explanatory and thus more acknowledged about the specifics of feminist archetypal theory, have done studies regarding numerous women writers, poets and artists to find common patterns present in their works. In her book *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (1981) Pratt already draws the frame and the function of the technique she uses in exploring women's writing. Though she admits Jung's recognition that "a fully developed individual personality must transcend gender" which is very essential in analyzing archetypes, she refutes Jung's use of *anima* and *animus*, or *Logos* and *Eros* highlighting the fact that they push women behind boundaries which prison them to an inferior, submissive position and deprive them of thinking or acting independently:

> Women, in Jung's schema, are either exterior containers for male projections or subordinate elements of the male personality. The feminine quality becomes a prized elixir sought and usurped by the male, to whom real, individual women are objects of use. (*Archetypal* 8)

Lauter, in "Visual Images by Women: A Test Case for the Theory of Archetypes" also underlines the inadequacy of Jungian archetypes like *the animus* and *the mother* in reflecting the female psyche and supports her objections by a thorough analysis of the visual art of women. She comes to conclude that the two images do not represent women's psyche adequately and truthfully and that there is a third archetype she has discovered common in these works which is "the independent woman" involved in productive tasks. As it is scientifically proven that there are no deficiencies in women's capacity to think, *the animus* image should be left aside and the female experience of the body, the world and the self should be analyzed through the archetypes in women's works:

> The boundaries between self and other, upon which Western Civilization rests, are not so firm for women as for men. Precisely at this point the archetypal approach to images produced by women becomes crucial. For how else will we find out how women regard the body except by examining women's images?
> ("Visual" 82)

Marina Warner explains in BBC annual series of Reich Lectures in 1993, later published as *Six Myths of Our Time,* that though in common usage myth implies falsehood and delusion, she tries to employ and deconstruct them to show:

> that myths are not always delusions, that deconstructing them does not necessarily mean wiping them, but that they represent ways of making sense of universal matters, like sexual identity and family relations, and that they enjoy a more vigorous life than we perhaps acknowledge, and exert more of an inspiration and influence than we think. (*Six Myths* xix)

When she talks about her approach to myth, Warner, like the feminist archetypal theorists, underlines the point where her approach is different from Freud's or Jung's:

> The work amplifies and extends the Freudian interpretation of myth as a key to the inner structures of consciousness, but it differs fundamentally from both Freudian and Jungian approaches by insisting that the very meanings of stories, rituals and images change in relation to the social structure with which they interact. (*Six Myths* xx)

Warner believes that this characteristic of myth as an interactive and changing medium in shaping people's lives can be used to rewrite new myths which can correct the negative and false qualities attached to women and leave room for the genuine female experience:

> I believe the process of understanding and clarification to which Barthes contributed so brilliantly can give rise to newly told stories, can sew and weave and knit different patterns into the social fabric and that this is a continuous enterprise for everyone to take part in. Ancient myths of the kind I describe, dangerous mothers, warrior heroism, are perpetuated through cultural repetition, transmitted through a variety of pathways. But this does not mean that they will never fade, to yield to another, more helpful sets of images or tales.
>
> (*Six Myths* xx)

Therefore, the rewriting of myths and writing new myths are possible for many theorists when the ever-changing quality of them is considered. To give voice to women who have been oppressed by the male-defined myths for centuries is the

concern of many women writers, including Atwood and Warner. Myths, mythical figures and archetypes are employed in the novels of both writers in order to narrate the "true" stories of women, for myths "like fiction" Warner states, "can tell the truth even when they're making it all up" (*Six Myths* 28).

1.2. The Works of Margaret Atwood and Marina Warner

Margaret Atwood

Margaret Atwood is considered among the most influential writers and poets of Canadian literature in the twenty first century. She has published more than fifteen poetry books, one of which (*The Circle Game*, 1964) received the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry, though she is mostly known for her fiction. She won the Booker Prize in 2000 for her novel *The Blind Assassin* (2000). She has published many other works including short stories, children's books, television scripts and non-fiction including her work of literary criticism *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), which is considered by many critics as an imprint in Canadian literature for self-recognition (Turner).

Atwood makes use of myths, archetypes and fairy tales extensively both in her prose and poetry. According to Atwood, myths are "stories, and traditional myths mean stories that have been repeated frequently. The term doesn't pertain to Greek myths alone. Grimm's fairy tales are just as much myth as anything else" (Ingersoll 114). Murray states that Atwood was influenced by T.S. Eliot and his conception of "the mythical method" by Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, which argues that matriarchal goddess myths preceded patriarchal ones, and by Northrop Frye's perspective on myths and archetypes in her approach to and employment of myths (149). As Stein proposes, Atwood uses mythic elements to tell women's quest stories and "a key component of the quest is the search for a voice with which to tell their stories, for women's plots have traditionally centred on romance and passivity" (5).

Atwood frequently uses in her works the archetypes of the heroine's journey towards self-recognition and rebirth; to express in other words, "the hero's quest" and "individuation" in Jungian analogy, trying to express the experiences of women who have somehow lost their sense of belonging and their true nature. Identity, both as a woman and as a colonized presence, is a notion that is repeatedly problematized in Atwood's works. Having been born in a post-colonial country to an entomologist father and a nutritionist mother, Margaret Atwood uses in her works every possible material that enables one to trace her experiences back to the social, historical, cultural and natural aspects of her 'identity'. Her familiarity with the Canadian wilderness can be detected in her employment of nature and animal imagery in her poems and novels. These images, too, play an important role in Atwood's heroine's quest and her rebirth. Nature or/ and the archetype of Mother Nature is a possible way of returning to the self and is used as a subversion of culture/nature dichotomy. Identification with nature or animals is thus offered as an alternative to the contemporary patriarchal culture which is contaminated by human beings to the worst degree.

Another notion Atwood problematizes is victimhood. This issue, like many others in Atwood's agenda, is examined on different levels. Atwood questions both national and female victimization in her works. About her novel *Surfacing* she states:

> What I'm really against in that book is the great Canadian victim complex. If you define yourself as innocent nothing is ever your fault- it is always somebody else doing it to you, and until you stop defining yourself as a victim that will always be true…. And that is not only the Canadian stance towards the world, but the usual female one. Look what a mess I am and it's all their fault.
>
> (Ingersoll 22)

The victim position of women and of Canadians is not something to be accepted for Atwood, for whom "every myth is a version of truth" (*Lady Oracle* 92). By rewriting myths, one can create new spaces of existence and survival. Thus Atwood states in an interview: "I don't believe that people should divest themselves of all their mythologies

because I think, in a way, everybody needs one. It is just a question of getting one that is livable and not destructive to you" (Ingersoll 32).

In this study *Surfacing* and *The Penelopiad* by Atwood will be closely examined as both texts offer subversive readings of myths and call for pluralistic versions of truth. Meanwhile, their rather different contents enable one to take a closer look at different problems and traumas women suffer, the experiences they live through and the solutions (if any) they come up with. The recurrent myths and archetypes in both novels are victimhood, survival, nature, identity, origin, parental complications, and the myth of Mother Nature in the former, and Odysseus myth along with Trojan War and Helen in the latter.

Surfacing is a story of a nameless protagonist who takes a trip back to her homeland, her past, her memory which proves to be fictional later in the novel. As the protagonist searches for her father and (M)other, she also searches for her childhood, her memories and the point which split her body from her head. Alienated from the world and from her boyfriend and two other friends whom she has taken the trip with, she reconnects to nature and the wilderness with an attempt to get rid of "the Americans" and the language they use. The end of the novel signifies the metamorphosis the protagonist goes through, and the *jouissance* she has experienced.

Surfacing is one of the most frequently studied novels by the critics for its intense material applicable to several literary readings ranging from ecofeminist to psychoanalytical. The reason why this study focuses on *Surfacing* is that, along with the mythical elements and archetypes that are subverted from a female perspective, it connects feminine to nature and language to culture. Although Margaret Atwood has many other novels which employ myths and archetypes, *Surfacing* seems to offer more material regarding not only its combination of identity and origin problems with femininity and nature but also the bodily, feminine language it uses. Tolan states thus: "*Surfacing* (1972) is celebrated as the work that most closely associates Atwood's

novel writing to her poetry, with which it shares 'a considerable thematic and stylistic territory', containing echoes of *The Circle Game* (1966) and *Power Politics* (1971)" (35).

The Penelopiad is a retelling of Odyssey myth from the perspective of Penelope, Odysseus's wife and Helen's cousin. It retells the story of Penelope, who is left alone to raise her son Telemachus in Odysseus' twenty years of absence: ten years in Troy fighting to get Helen back, and ten years on his way home, full of adventures, dangers and pleasures. The novel voices the real experiences of Penelope behind the official myth: how she managed to rule the palace, how she survived without getting married to one of the one hundred and twenty Suitors and how she suffered as a woman and a mother. *The Penelopiad* is an attack on the society and literature, which through myths subordinate women as virtuous, domestic beings who do not know how to assert themselves. Employing the twelve maids of Penelope, who are slaughtered by Odysseus and Telemachus for their 'infidelity', as the chorus, Atwood once more problematizes victimhood and patriarchal violence. The novel is also an attack on origin as it offers alternative narratives to a grand myth both by Penelope's and by the chorus's versions of the story. Moreover, Penelope's comments on her experiences from the underworld in her disembodied state and the analogies she makes between the course of things in ancient times and in today's world enable Atwood to make Penelope tell her alternative story both from the dead man's land and from thousands of years ago to today's audience. Atwood thus tries to make it clear that, as the maids say in *The Penelopiad*, "truth dear auditors, is seldom certain" (148) and that female experience cannot be voiced by a myth produced by male myth-makers.

Marina Warner

Marina Warner is a researcher and a mythographer who writes not only fiction like novels, short stories and children's books but also non-fiction exploring the birth, development and current use of myths in contemporary cultures. Being a scholar and a

historical researcher, the focus of her employment of myths and fairy tales both as elements in her fiction and as subject matter in her cultural studies is on "the symbolic meanings of the term woman, and how these meanings have influenced the realities of women's lives" (Haslett 2). Warner is aiming at deciphering the causes and effects of the ancient Western beliefs about women and looking for a way to rewrite genuine feminine experience. She states that "within the myths there is a strong emphasis on what they mean for women as individuals" (Williams 260) and in most of her works she gives voice to the silenced individuals, especially women. Warner explains that her approach to myth is based on studies of Greek myths and states that she uses a sociological perspective while exploring their meanings:

> My approach to myth is influenced by the French school of classicists, anthropologists and historians… who have analyzed with exhilarating bravura certain stories and legends, cult practices and festivals, paying detailed attention to the way they are interwoven with social systems and how they both inform and reveal their workings. (*Six Myths* xix)

In her *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (1981) Warner deciphers and deconstructs the underlying meanings and roles attached to the cult of Joan of Arc comparing and contrasting historical documents from her 1431 Inquisition trial for heresy and later documents, histories, plays and other works of art which mainly serve to 'honour' the archetype of Joan D'Arc as a French myth in the national and cultural context. Likewise, in her *Alone of All Her Sex* (1976) Warner explores the cult of Virgin Mary in several changing historical and social contexts, and displays the artificiality of the Catholic adoration by showing how the myth of Mary has been shaped and how it has deliberately and successfully positioned women in an inferior status.

Marina Warner was raised in Cairo, Brussels and Berkshire, England by an Italian mother and an English father who was a book seller. The traces of her family history, of both her maternal and paternal ancestors who took part in the colonization of the

Caribbean islands in the 17th century, can be found in most of her fiction, especially in *The Skating Party* (1983), *The Lost Father* (1987) which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and awarded with The Commonwealth Writer's Prize, and *Indigo* (1992).

Warner's interest in myth is interrelated to her interest in history: "Historical research has always led me to myth; the attempt to see and hear people in the past carries investigations into areas far beyond the legal, economic and personal circumstances in which they lived, or the sequence of events in their experience" (*Six Myths* xviii). Myths, as stories from the past, are also stories in the present which display the codes and more importantly the coding of even a vanished civilization in the archaic times. Warner argues that myths and archetypes are not innocent symbols; they bear within themselves highly political and social meanings and invisible enforcements which shape not only individuals' but also societies' and peoples' lives:

> The literature of the imagination isn't separate from ethical and political issues and facts; it develops in active dialogue with them, illuminates experience in history and now, and I believe its effects are overlooked and misunderstood, with sometimes dangerous consequences." (Warner *Official Web*)

Warner regards myths not as fixed entities but as changing symbols which can reveal historical, social and cultural elements as well as the agendas behind them. For Warner, not the origin of the myth but its influences on people, especially on women, is of importance: "Pleas for a return to reason, for simply stripping away illusion, ignore the necessity and the vitality of mythic material in consciousness as well as unconsciousness" (*Six Myths* 20). Almost in all of her works, Warner underlines the originary rather than the origin, the plural rather than the single, the circular rather than the linear. In her use of myths and archetypes, she offers multiple ways of seeing while highlighting with different colours the fact that there is no simple or/and single truth. In a paper given at Charter 88 Independent 1991 Constitutional Convention, she states her starting point: "We need a new myth to live by, and live with, and only by examining the old ones can we start its creation" ("Imagining"). Also in "Paradoxical Power" she

underlines the significance of offering new perspectives to voice genuine women experience:

> Widening the categories, extending the available symbols, expanding the repertoire so that we will not use the past to lay atavistic traps for ourselves and repeat the domestic and sexual servitude that has made equality so difficult to achieve, without plunging down the cul-de-sac of separatism- these are the story teller's, the woman historian's tasks. (79)

The two novels by Warner that will be examined in this study, *Indigo* and *The Leto Bundle,* are chosen because both novels subvert these "atavistic traps" while hosting many myths and archetypes. They disrupt the spacio-temporal linearity by offering different time periods and spatial settings ranging from ancient Greece to today's London. The repeated myths and symbols are identity, both national and gender, motherhood, victimhood, rape and trauma, animal imagery, nature, and so forth as well as mythological Greek figures or rewritings such as Leto, Artemis, Apollo, Zeus, King Midas etc.

Indigo, *or Mapping the Waters* (1992) tells the story of the muted women and the violent men, the colonizers and the colonized, including their descendants within a time span of almost four hundred years making use of trans-spatial and trans-historical elements. The novel opens with Serafine telling a story to Miranda, the granddaughter of Sir Anthony Everard. When he has his daughter Xanthe born from his second wife, the listeners to Serafine's stories and advices are doubled. After her birth, christening and the family relations are told, the narration continues from the midsection of the novel where events take place in the seventeenth century on a Caribbean island. This section, which is also a rough rewriting of *The Tempest* by Shakespeare, introduces the characters of Sycorax, Dulé- or Caliban, Ariel and Kit Everard, the reflection of Shakespeare's Prospero. Sycorax, the healer and wise woman of Liamuiga, delivers Dulé from the womb of her mother, an African slave who drowned when she was thrown from the ship with many others. Sycorax secludes herself and Dulé, and goes to

a remote part of the island to dye indigo, and to practice healing recipes for the locals. Another child, a small Arawak girl named Ariel, is also adopted by Sycorax after her mother is taken away from the island as one of the colonizer's "women". Sycorax teaches Ariel her magic and how to dye indigo. When Kit and his men come to the island to conquer it in the name of God and the King, Kit is immediately attracted to Ariel and ends up having a son with her. After bloody fights between the Europeans and the natives, Sycorax dies and is buried under a Saman tree where she becomes the voice of the island; Ariel is muted and left with her son alone; and Dulé, with his new name Caliban, is enslaved under the control of the colonizers who burn down most of the island to build their own settlement and cultivate sugar and tobacco to trade. Then the narration goes back to the twentieth century to tell the stories of Miranda and Xanthe. Miranda who has been suffering from her ancestors' past ends up marrying a black actor who plays Caliban on stage, having a baby named Serafine, and compromising with her personal history. Xanthe, after marring an entrepreneur, goes on to foster the family business by fostering tourist trade to Liamuiga, where she is killed in an accident, during a rebellion of the islanders. The novel ends with Serafine telling stories, this time, to Astrid, Miranda's mother, who is hospitalized for her alcoholism.

Warner's *Indigo* is an attempt to go beyond not only Warner's own familial and national myths, but also the myth of the colonized through the eyes of women. *Indigo* has mainly been studied and read from a post-colonial perspective both because of its contents and because of being a remaking of a play about colonization. However, to ignore the fact that it, at least, is as much a voicing of women as voicing the colonized is in slight terms doing injustice to the novel. Warner skilfully mixes several myths and archetypes in the novel while primarily retrieving the women's experience from a male-centred text. Warner makes it clear that by rewriting the play, by closing up the gaps and blanks, she tries to write the missing female voice: "On the whole *The Tempest* is distinguished by the silencing of women" (Williams-Wanquet 395). The voicing of muted Sycorax in *The Tempest* and later of Serafine and their connection to

Miranda, who is totally an alternative figure in Warner's novel, turn the myths upside down and reveal how the experience of women and the colonized is different from those in the myths.

The Leto Bundle, Warner's last novel, also dwells on mythology by recruiting the myth of Leto, the Greek titaness, who is raped by Zeus, who gives birth to the twins Artemis and Apollo, and who is cursed by Hera to wander all over the world in a continuous strife for survival. In Warner's story, interwoven by different time periods and places, after her long and painful travelling Leto is in today's Albion (England) as an asylum seeker, with her war-wounded daughter, searching for her son whom she has given away to save his life. Voicing the experiences of Leto through millenniums, Warner skilfully mixes mythology and contemporary events, and embodies in the transforming body of Leto all women and men, who have been sent on an archetypal exile away from their bodies, homes, genuine identities and natures. By multiplying womanhood with war, refugees, multiculturalism and motherhood, Warner explores the notion of unbelonging and survival. In an interview, she states: "In *The Leto Bundle* I try and look at the internal heroic life – a nondescript woman going through with her baby - I wanted to get that feeling of how you'll do almost anything for your children. Everything that stands in the way is made good by that" (*Restless*).

The novels by Atwood and Warner will be analyzed in this study in the light of all these theories by women about women, the archetypes and mythical elements. The writers' attempt to pronounce the experience of women and the search for the expression of their bodies, identities and psyche through rewriting myths will be the focus of attention. The next chapter will deal with the question of how Warner and Atwood challenge the traditional myths and archetypes in terms of their attack on origin, linearity, temporality and causality in their novels. The questioning of God or gods and religious faith systems are also the focus of these writers' attention as they constitute the primary totalizing discourse which have subordinated women for centuries. Atwood's and Warner's common problematization of origin and religion and

the alternatives they offer will be examined. All novels undermine the notion of origin and replace it with the originary, putting the emphasis on the experience rather than the beginning or the end. Atwood's Penelope and her nameless protagonist in *Surfacing*, and Warner's Leto, Sycorax, Ariel and Miranda try to regain their subjectivity and identity in the midst of their struggle to survive in a patriarchal society where women are nothing but objects of desire. All these women try to create third space to exist as they are.

The third chapter will mainly discuss the attempts by Atwood and Warner to offer alternative sites of being for women through their writings and rewriting of myths. The possible suggestions they have come up with for the elements they have attacked in chapter two will be examined with references to feminist archetypal theory, *écriture féminine* and post-feminist ideas. The alternative use of language, circularity and the amorphous writing as well as the connections with the body and nature will be of importance while the narrative strategies employing different kinds of imageries will be studied in terms of their relation to language and body against the background of postmodernist and post-feminist theories. *Surfacing*'s nameless protagonist's and *Indigo*'s Ariel's withdrawal from the Symbolic will be examined in the light of psychoanalytic literary theories while the importance of body and bodily writing, their connection to nature and the body inscribed against the Cartesian dualism will be analyzed mainly in relation to *écriture féminine*.

The search for and the analysis of the common archetypes and myths in women's fiction and the rewriting of myths from the female point of view can pave the way for women's voicing their experiences and getting rid of the artificial and unnatural identity markers patriarchal society has attached to them. The deciphering of the working mechanisms of the Western epistemology as well as the subversion of the binaries which constitute the basis of most myths and archetypes through the voicing of the female characters in Atwood's and Warner's novels reveal that the genuine experience of women is quite different from and usually opposite to the ones told in

myths. This study, thus, tries to explore the possibility of plurality, flow and multi-layeredness that women writers can achieve through their mythmaking processes with references to *Indigo*, *The Leto Bundle*, *Surfacing* and *The Penelopiad*.

CHAPTER 2

AN ATTACK ON ORIGIN: THE TRUTH IS NOT ONE

2.1. Myth of Origin and the Textuality of History

In *Of Grammatology* Derrida states, "the desire for the origin becomes an indispensable and indestructible function situated within a syntax without origin…it is unthinkable and intolerable that what has the name *origin* should be no more than a point situated within the system of supplementary" (243). Logos is the origin and the organizing principle of Western metaphysics and the paradigms it has constructed. The categories it has offered and the binary oppositions which are also the working mechanisms of language man is born into have created hierarchies that privilege one leg over the other. Logocentrism, as Derrida notes, has kept looking for a centre and whether it is the origin (arche) or the end (telos), it organizes other paradigms around itself; the centre categorizes, freezes, fixes. The myths and archetypes in the traditional discourse reinforce these categories, usually inexplicitly, by validating their de facto position with the messages they convey. They serve to sharpen the boundaries between good and bad, men and women, immortal and mortal, human and beast, always carrying a message, either a warning or advice to the listeners. They consolidate the totalizing discourses and the notions that work in it by repeating or justifying figures such as the strong, brave, nationalist hero image in opposition to the beautiful, virtuous, submissive mother-wife figure, or the evil, jealous, witchy, alluring goddess figure. Either regarded as a reflection of a common past or as a way of controlling the society, myths have helped to establish certain notions and dichotomies which define our world.

As the centre lies at the heart of the working mechanisms of Western epistemology, it is not by accident that women writers, feminists and poststructuralists attack 'the origin' first and foremost. In order to talk about female body, power, desire and language, one must first deconstruct the principal codes of patriarchal logocentric

system. In the four novels by Atwood and Warner to be analyzed, this attack on origin is executed both against the myth of origin itself and against notions interrelated to it such as national identity, history, memory, linearity, causality, etc. Their attempt to use/rewrite mythological figures and archetypes in a way which redefines women's experience is in parallel with decentring the origin and multiplicating alternatives to create a site of being for women to exist.

2.1.1. Multiplicity of "Truth" in *The Penelopiad*

> *Now that I'm dead I know everything*. This is what I wished would happen, but like so many of my wishes it failed to come true. (*The Penelopiad* 1)

The first sentence *The Penelopiad* opens with displays an attempt of Penelope from the underworld, the dead-man's land, the other side of the River Styx for an access to truth and knowledge, and the second sentence is a negation of the first, declaring the impossibility of absolute knowledge or truth as such. Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, the daughter of the King Icarus of Sparta, the cousin of Helen of Troy, and the mother of Telemachus, tells her story in *The Penelopiad* from her perspective; a story based on what remains on the other side of the coin when all these identity markers are subtracted. Being an alternative version of the great myth of *The Odyssey*, the novel is an ontological attack on origin as it destroys the notion of simple truth. The account of the twelve maids of Penelope who were killed by Telemachus on Odysseus' order pluralizes not only Odysseus' account in *The Odyssey* but also Penelope's in *The Penelopiad*. The multiplication of the myth not only invalidates the notion of simple truth or origin, but also negates the male account of history or memory.

The account of Homer about Penelope in *The Odyssey* as a faithful, constant, intelligent wife and mother is different from Atwood's account of her in *The Penelopiad* as a self-conscious, self-sufficient, manipulative, productive and aspirational woman. Odysseus, the great warrior and the witty, talented, inventive hero who made a fool of her and

"got away with everything" (*The Penelopiad* 2) is the husband of Penelope. In contrast to the idea of Penelope as an all-suffering, reliable, understanding wife, she is fully aware of her husband's true colour: "I knew he was tricky and a liar, I just didn't think he would play his tricks and try out his lies on me" (*The Penelopiad* 2). The reason why she did not ask questions about his 'unscrupulousness' is because she "wanted happy endings in those days": "And happy endings are best achieved by keeping the right doors locked and going to sleep during the rampages" (*The Penelopiad* 3).

Despite Penelope's enduring disposition and exceptional efforts, the myth was quite different from her experience: they turned her to a story she did not like to hear. Moreover, the official account of the events is used as an example to shape and fit other women into roles they do not fit:

> Hadn't I been faithful? Hadn't I waited, and waited, and waited, despite the temptation -almost the compulsion- to do otherwise? And what did I amount to, once the official version gained ground? An edifying legend. A stick used to beat other women with. Why couldn't they be as considerate, as trustworthy, as all suffering as I had been? That was the line they took, the singers, the yarn-spinners. *Don't follow my example*, I wanted to scream in your ears –yes, yours! But when I try to scream, I sound like an owl. (*The Penelopiad* 2)

The oppressing and limiting qualities of myth are therefore highlighted by Atwood as Penelope tries to warn today's readers from the underworld. The personal account of Penelope as opposed to the official version of the myth stresses the importance of myths as a medium which organizes individuals' behaviours and roles around it.

The slipperiness of the origin is also displayed when Penelope wants to start telling her story: she does not know where to begin, as there is not one, simple, original beginning:

> Where shall I begin? There are only two choices: at the beginning or not at the beginning. The real beginning would be the beginning of the world, after which one thing has led to another; but since there are differences of opinion about that, I'll begin with my own birth. (*The Penelopiad* 7)

As there are different versions of the same story, there are many different beginnings. Atwood at this point makes a reference to myths in general regarding their subject matter about the origin of life or the beginning of the world, and argues that as there is not one fixed truth, there is not one beginning; not one transcendental signified that other signifiers end up with. The possibility of many beginnings is in accordance with the poststructuralist idea of the free play of signifiers, with the possibility of multiple meanings and the various originary traces rather than the original; as Culler notes: "It is non-origin that is originary" (88).

The possibility of ends is multiple as is the possibility of beginnings. Talking from the dead men's land, Penelope states that they can themselves be reborn and try their chances in other lives provided that they drink from the Waters of Forgetfulness and wipe all that is in their memories. By adding: "Such is the theory; but like all theories, it's only a theory" (*The Penelopiad* 186), Hilde Staels believes that Penelope "questions the logos or traditional interpretation of mythology, specifically the theory of the ritual origin of myth" (103).

The parental ambiguity in *The Penelopiad* also destroys the certainty and centrality of origin. The beautiful Helen of Troy, Penelope's cousin, is claimed to have "come out of an egg, being the daughter of Zeus who'd raped her mother in the form of a swan" (*The Penelopiad* 20). On the other hand, the mighty Odysseus' grandfather, a trickster figure, claimed that the god Hermes, the god of thieves, liars and cheats, was his father. Another rumour has it that Anticleia, Odysseus' mother was seduced by Sisyphus, who was said "to have cheated Death twice" (*The Penelopiad* 46) and that tricky Sisyphus was Odysseus' real father. Penelope concludes that her husband's basic qualities of slipperiness, foxiness and wiliness were not unexpected when these rumours were considered: "Odysseus had crafty and unscrupulous men on two of the main branches of his family tree" (*The Penelopiad* 47). The ambiguity of both Helen and Odysseus not only dismantles the illusion of origin but also demythologizes the divinity of these

characters by involving rape, seduction, adultery, cheating and so forth. At this point it might be interesting to give a hearing to Warner, who cites Helen in Euripides' play about her own declaration on the ambiguity of her origin: "The anxiety about the status of the story is revealing; it shows how the myth's incongruity persisted and that the idea of a human woman lying eggs after mating with a swan could not settle into a fixed form" (*Fantastic* 98).

The difference between the accounts of Helen and Odysseus about Helen's abduction by Theseus and his pal Peiritheus when she was twelve is another instance in *The Penelopiad* which displays the textuality of grand myths. Not only 'the official version' of the story contradicts with what actually happened, but also the experiences of different persona contradict with each other. Odysseus's account of Helen's abduction states that Theseus did not rape Helen, "or so it was said" because she was only a child, while according to Helen, both men were so overwhelmed by her divine beauty that "they grew faint whenever they looked at her, and could barely come close enough to clasp her knees and beg forgiveness for their audacity" (*The Penelopiad* 75).

In *Of Grammatology* Derrida states: "History and knowledge, istoria and epistémè have always been determined (and not only etymologically or philosophically) as detours for the purpose of the reappropriaton of presence" (10). Therefore, history as well as knowledge is a construct, configured by the organizing principle of Western epistemology which is the metaphysics of presence. History as a fact or as a linear plane of events in which one cause leads to one effect leading to another is thus an expression of logocentric thought. Culler by stating that "meaning is context-bound but context is boundless" (123) underlines the impossibility of the traditional philosophical context of history as a dependable source of meaning. Derrida states in *Positions* that the metaphysical character of the concept of history " is not only linked to linearity, but to an entire system of implications (teleology, eschatology, elevating and interiorizing accumulation of meaning, a certain type of traditionality, a certain concept of

continuity, of truth, etc.)" (57). Therefore, any attack on linearity, teleology or traditionality, along with origin, is an attack on the metaphysics of presence and logos.

The various gossips and charges about Penelope and her relationship with the Suitors are one of the most outstanding examples of textuality of history. Penelope states that these rumours about her are "completely untrue" and gives "rational" explanations for each gossip. One of the "slanderous gossips that have been going the rounds for the past two or three thousand years" is about her sexual conduct with Amphinomous, the politest suitor (*The Penelopiad* 143). Penelope accepts her affinity with him and states that she accepted expensive gifts from the Suitors because they were eating up Odysseus' estate. Another rumour has it that she had sex with all the Suitors, ending up giving birth to the Great God Pan. Yet another rumour explains the reason why Anticleia said nothing to her son Odysseus about the Suitors when he spoke to her on the Island of the Dead for she would have been obliged to explain Penelope's infidelity in case the Suitors were mentioned. Others claimed that the reason why Odysseus was disguised was because of his distrust of his wife, and that was also the reason why he preferred to get help from Eurycleia instead of Penelope when he slaughtered the Suitors and the Maids. Penelope says that she was locked up because Odysseus knew how emotional and tender-hearted she was and he did not want to expose her to dangers.

Some people also claimed that the reason why Penelope kept the impudent maids under the roof of mighty Odysseus is because she was also whoring like them. This last claim lies at the heart of the novel as the hanging of the twelve maids remains a question in both *The Odyssey* and *The Penelopiad*. Atwood states in the introduction of *The Penelopiad*:

> The maids form a chanting and singing Chorus which focuses on two questions that must pose themselves after any close reading of *The Odyssey*: what led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to? The story as told in *The Odyssey* doesn't hold water: there are too many inconsistencies. I've

> always been haunted by the hanged maids; and, in *The Penelopiad,* so is Penelope herself. (xv)

Penelope's account of the story admits the hanging of the maids as her fault and explains that she used the maids to gather information about the Suitors. However, she argues that she did not mean any harm to them and claims that she loved them as "sisters" and that these twelve maids were very valuable for her as she brought them up. They were the ones who helped her with the weaving and unweaving of the shroud for more than three years. She told them "to hang around the Suitors and spy on them, using whatever enticing arts they could invent" (*The Penelopiad* 115). Though they were raped and abused, Penelope told them it was one of the ways to serve their master. She did not tell this to anyone, so no one except Penelope knew that they were saying "rude and disrespectful things" about her and Telemachus, and whoring to the Suitors according to Penelope's orders. When they were hanged, Penelope was sleeping- she blames Eurycleia for giving her a comforting drink, and when she learned about the slaughter, she could not say anything as it would make Odysseus suspect her, too: "What could I do? Lamentation wouldn't bring my girls back to life. I bit my tongue" (*The Penelopiad* 160).

The account of the maids is quite different from Penelope's as well as from the one in *The Odyssey*. In the prologue spoken by Melantho of the Pretty Cheeks, they cite the rumours about Penelope's sexual conduct:

> There is another story.
> Or several, as befits the goddess Rumour,
> Who's sometimes is in a good, or else bad, in humour.
> Word has it that Penelope the Prissy
> Was- not when it came to sex- no shrinking sissy! (*The Penelopiad* 147).

Then they invite the reader to take a peek behind the curtain and present Penelope, after hearing from Eurycleia that her husband is back and admitting that she already recognized him, worried of Odysseus's wrath for her infidelity:

Penelope: And now, dear Nurse, the fat is in the fire
He'll chop me up for tending my desire!
While he was pleasuring every nymph and beauty,
Did he think I'd do nothing but my duty?
While every girl and goddess he was praising,
Did he assume I'd dry up like a raisin? (*The Penelopiad* 148-9)

The effect of the representation of Penelope as a lustful, unfaithful wife is doubled by the representation of Eurycleia, Odysseus' old, loyal maid, as Penelope's accomplice. While Penelope sends Amphinomus out from the hidden stairs, she orders Eurycleia to dress her up. On Penelope's question about which of the maids were aware of her infidelity, Eurycleia replies:

Only the twelve, my lady, who assisted,
Know that the Suitors you have not resisted.
They smuggled lovers in and out all night;
They drew the drapes, and then they held the light.
They're privy to your every lawless thrill
They must be silenced, or the beans they'll spill! (*The Penelopiad* 150)

Penelope asks Eurycleia to save her and Odysseus' honour by reporting to Odysseus the twelve maids as "not fit to be the doting slaves of such a Lord as he!" and then announces her final motive:

And I in fame a model wife shall rest
All husbands will look on, and think him blessed!
But haste--the Suitors come to do their wooing,
And I, for my part, must begin boo-hooing! (*The Penelopiad* 151)

The account of the twelve maids displays Penelope not only as a woman of desire but also of tactic: she consciously takes revenge from her husband by repaying him on the same grounds and putting the blame on her maids so as to achieve her own survival and consequent fame as a myth of the virtuous wife.

The different accounts of the events in *The Penelopiad* underline the textuality of history and display how myths are constructed. The importance of twelve maids' account lies in its disclosure that not only male myth-makers create myths in time but also there is the possibility for women to create myths according to their own agenda as in the case of Penelope, who has consciously deceived humanity under her virtuous wife mask. Moreover, different accounts of the myth not only problematize the concept of "truth" but also show, as Shannon Carpenter Collins argues, how subversive the pattern in the relationship between the official and the unofficial records of the myths is. Carpenter Collins states that while there is no difference between the official myth about Odysseus and his own account of the story, which makes it actually quite mundane, Penelope's account of events, which fits neither the official account nor the gossips about her, occupies "a third position" which she claims has not been articulated: the difference between her account and the slander about her becomes mythic as "conceiving and bearing the Great God Pan is hardly the work of an average woman" (61).

2.1.2. Narrating His-story in *Indigo*

In *Indigo or, Mapping the Waters,* Warner rewrites the story of both the colonization of the West Indies in the seventeenth century and the consequences this colonization has led to in the twenty-first century. The novel is also a rough rewriting of Shakespeare's *The Tempest:* the characters of Caliban, Ariel, Miranda and Sycorax are recreated in a similar setting and context, though with completely different associations. Miranda, unlike the character in *The Tempest*, lives in today's England as a descendent of Kit Everard, who took an active role in the colonization of the islands Liamuiga and Oualie, Grand Thom and Petite Thom with their Christian names. However, the other characters live on the island before the invasion takes place. Sycorax is a woman of wisdom and supernatural healing powers, Ariel is an Arawak girl adopted by her, and Caliban, the name given by the colonizers after enslaving him, is the son of a woman who was thrown overboard by one of the slave ships.

The myth of origin is problematized in the character of Dulé, - Caliban-, who is "an orphan from the sea" (*Indigo* 85). The natives of the island cannot at first make sense of the waterlogged dead bodies hitting ashore in their unrecognizable shapes without their extremities. They bury them after certain rituals but at night, Sycorax, who can have different visions, goes to the place where the bodies are buried only to deliver Dulé from his mother's womb. Warner's play with the origin of life is represented by the villagers' reactions to her: "It was not natural, some said. It was pure witchcraft. Sycorax had cast a spell and brought the dead to life. Nor should she had done it, even if the child were still alive" (*Indigo* 85). The delivery of the child from an already buried dead mother is an attempt to go beyond the binaries of alive/dead and it is also an attack on the notion of fixed truth considering the "deep sorcery in Dulé's origin" (*Indigo* 86).

Though Tiguary, the head-man of one of the villages and Sycorax's brother, announces that Sycorax is full of *sangay,* "preternatural insight and power", the origin of Dulé keeps others worried and scared. Some people believe that she produced Dulé during her concoctions "by taking the foetus- curled black pit of a certain fruit only she understood" while some others claim that she had coupled with one of her tamed animals and Dulé is the offspring. Thus, the obscurity of Dulé's origin effaces the bar between many binary opposites, and Warner underlines the anti-platonic qualities of the natives' belief system, which, contrary to its representation in *The Tempest*, is much less cruel and natural compared to the colonizers': "Her people blurred distinctions between man and beast, domestic and wild, the furred and the feathered, the five-toed and the web-toed" (*Indigo* 86-7). By abolishing the bars between these polarities, the traditional concept of knowledge is challenged; and the rational, humanist perception of the world is dethroned.

Another attack on logocentric thinking in *Indigo* is Warner's use of the cyclical concept of time as well as her employment of double temporal and spatial settings as opposed

to the linear character of time in Western epistemology. The concept of time for Sycorax and for the islanders is not linear. “The isle is full of noises” is a sentence borrowed from *The Tempest*, and is used both as the first and the last sentences of the midsection of the novel, parts two and three, which recounts the storyline in the seventeenth century (*Indigo* 77, 213). Warner hints by the date she puts in the beginning of the chapter as 1600- , without closing it, that the story she will be telling has not come to an end. Likewise, the date she puts in the beginning of the last chapter of this part as 1700- stresses the collapse of teleology as, though she has voiced the story of the island during a century, it cannot come to an end for Sycorax is still the source of many noises on the island and “her death will never come to an end” (*Indigo* 78). Sycorax has been dead for some time in the beginning of the chapter and she “thinks- and speaks- of her death as beginning when the children first spotted the bodies and brought the record back to the village” (*Indigo* 77). In the end, “her long death has barely begun” (*Indigo* 210) and “she and the island have become one” (*Indigo* 213).

Throughout the midsection, Warner uses several examples to repeat her challenge to linearity. “The deconstruction of the traditional historical perspective” Williams-Wanquet argues about *Indigo*, “goes hand in hand with that of the traditional notions of time and space and of the subject” (“Towards” 397). The time and space for the islanders were like “a churn or a bowl, in which substances and senses were tumbled and mixed, always returning, now emerging into personal form, now submerged into the mass in the continuous present tense of existence, as in one of the vats in which Sycorax brewed the indigo”(*Indigo* 122). Unlike the European colonizers or the African slaves, the concept of time on the island was not conceived as linear; it cannot be interrupted or broken, it did not have a beginning or an end as the islanders “did not see themselves poised on a journey towards triumph, perhaps, or extinction” (*Indigo* 121). Putting the stress on the process rather than the end, Warner shares the poststructuralist attack on time and space in the traditional sense, and offers the flux instead of the fixed: “The flux did not swallow up individuals, or snatch their own

stories away from them… but folded them deeper into the pleats and folds of the whole tribe's existence, like spices in a dough that flavours the entire batch of baking" (*Indigo* 122).

Dulé, on the other hand, is not like the islanders in his understanding of time as the chance of circularity was stolen away from him when he was in his mother's womb by the colonizers: "Dulé knew that at the very moment of his emergence something inalienably his had been drowned alongside the body of his mother, and been irretrievably lost to him" (*Indigo* 121). The civilized world of colonizers sentences him and other dislocated Africans to a linear continuum. However, he develops his vision of a ladder with which he tries to transgress borders of space and time.

The structure of the novel mimics Warner's attempt to challenge the linear concept of time and space. Though the spatial settings are geographically and historically coherent, Warner's narrative of almost four hundred years has trans-temporal and trans-local references as it alternates between the seventeenth century and the twentieth century, mixing the concepts of circularity and linearity as she deconceptualizes and reconceptualizes the story of *The Tempest* and the histories of the islanders, invaders, and their descendants. The narration of Serafine Killebree, the old Caribbean maid from Enfant Béate, "a kind of Sycorax *rediviva*" (Bonnici 2), who has taken care of not only the Everard men but also Miranda and Xanthe, serves as a bond that connects the past with the present and is of importance not only because of its employment as a means to break linearity, but also because of its context which includes fairy tales and myths. This issue is also highlighted by Julie Sanders who states: "Framing the entire narrative is the storytelling of Serafine Killebree, a figure who connects both with Sycorax and Miranda, thereby drawing the novel into a more circular mode of being than the teleology of 'History' allows" (51). The deconstruction of historical narrative as such is also an attack on presence, and hence the logos as Culler states in *On Deconstruction:*

> Deconstruction emphasizes that discourse, meaning, and reading are historical through and through, produced in processes of contextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization. When Derrida writes that we must attempt to think presence (including meaning as a presence to consciousness) "á partir du temps comme difference" [starting from/in relation to time as difference, differing, and deferral], he makes clear both the historicity of articulations and the impossibility of making this historicity a ground or a foundation. (128)

While rewriting the history of the colonizer and the colonized, Warner also negates history as factual and undermines the causal scheme of the logocentric system. By subverting the cause-affect relationship in the colonization period, she attacks the myth of origin as she overturns the roles and the binaries ascribed to both parties by the official Western history. As Warner explores the figure of the savage as opposed to the civil man of reason, she displays how this figure is constructed by the tools Western epistemology provides, how the source of violence has been misrepresented and how the notion of knowledge is ambiguous.

As Culler in *On Deconstruction* states: "If the effect is what causes the cause to become a cause, then the effect, not the cause, should be treated as the origin" (88). The violence of the savages which is presented as the cause of the battles by the Western history is treated by Warner as the effect of the colonizers' endless ambition for profit and their rootless belief in their right to civilize. These invaders who "are seizing and occupying the present time" are represented as self-righteous, disrespectful hypocrites who are themselves violent barbaric men motivated by voracity and lust, which deconstructs the historical narrative of the West. Their Cartesian heritage allows them to ignore nature in their bloody wars and they destroy the vegetation and aura of the island to build their own mansions. Williams-Wanquet, thus, argues that "the myth of essentialist origin" is challenged by Warner through the negation of the image of the colonized land as a tabula rasa ("Towards" 398).

The textuality of history is also presented by Warner's technique of employing personal letters and family memoirs which had an important role in constructing history in the colonial period. The most striking point in Kit Everard's letters to Rebecca, his future wife, and her father, who is the patron and sponsor of Kit, is how much of what has been experienced is hidden and subverted. Kit says nothing about his relationship with Ariel and their son, or his attack on an old, unguarded woman, whom he burned along with her house and animals. Warner also underlines the hospitality of the natives and how the colonizers take advantage of it. When Tiguary brings Ariel to Sycorax, he tells his experience with the colonizers who took away Ariel's mother but left her behind:

> These men had promised her people that they would take them back once the crops were planted and established…But they have no idea of what it means to give your word, the shellfish people, they have double faces and double tongues and never kept their promises. This is why we have learned to watch them, not to listen, for they reveal their inner thoughts and plans by their deeds far more surely than by their speech. (*Indigo* 99-100)

Caliban, in whose body the myth of the savage is eternalized, is deconstructed by Warner in her presentation of Dulé as a man of his word and much more brave compared to the colonizers. His understanding of attack or survival explained by Warner when he sneaks in to see Sycorax and Ariel while the guards were sleeping is used as a foil to the colonizers' treatment of Sycorax, Ariel and other islanders: "It did not come to his mind to murder any of them; it was not his way, or the way he had been raised, to take cold blood, without a formal challenge or warning, without the necessary ritual preparation for combat and maybe death" (*Indigo* 155). Such an action is considered cowardly and unjust by the inhabitants of the island though it eventually causes them to die or be captured. Warner at this point discloses how Western epistemology encodes people and how different the islanders who follow the way of nature from these men of reason are: "So much that was to come would have not happened on Liamuiga and Oualie, or would have happened later, perhaps not to him, and with a difference, if Dulé had fallowed another code" (*Indigo* 155).

2.1.3. Origin of Eggs in *The Leto Bundle*

"Forms do not only take on different forms; the whole of nature evolves through the creative power of shape-shifting and the transmigration of souls….This kind of metamorphoses- shape-shifting-breaks the rules of time, place, human reproduction and personal uniqueness" (*Fantastic* 3, 27). Marina Warner writes thus as she explores the notion of metamorphoses prevailing in many myths, literature and art. The protagonist of *The Leto Bundle*, Leto, too breaks these rules in many ways: seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan, Leto transforms into a goose, a salmon and a cuttlefish, gives birth to twins who hatch from a blue egg, turns her assaulters into frogs, is breastfed by a she wolf, survives through different geographies and centuries, and ends up in the twentieth century Albion, the novel's England, only to disappear again.

Warner's deliberate use of the Leda myth enables her to deconstruct the basics of the Western epistemology with all the paradigms that have been constructed by it so far. Employing Leda, who according to early Greek myths is the daughter of Theistios and the mother of two sets of twins including Helen and Klytaimestra (Gantz 318-20), as the embodiment of the universal woman who is able to transgress not only geographical borders between war-torn countries but also temporal, physical, and national linearities, Warner attacks the notion of centre by all possible means.

In the first fragment of the novel called "A Grainy Blue Egg", Leto's rape by "her lover and the god, now men, now dove, now fish, now hawk" and the hatching of her twins from an egg are described. Warner, from the beginning, underlines the ambiguity of the origin: "Given their origins, they could have taken on the scales and fins of fish or the claws of raptors; she was glad that they looked like babies and their peculiar hatching could be concealed" (*Leto* 10). Warner, in her nonfiction study *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds* too comments on the myth of Leda: "Leda's progeny in this perspective are matrilineal, made in their mothers' image, not their swan fathers'. Here mythical biology became Ipso Facto perverted, into a traducing of divine order

itself" (109). The twins without navels also symbolize the problematization of the origin: they have no bones. The lack of resemblance to the Father- God in the form of an animal and the lack of connection to the mother make these twins creatures of non-origin: "Who would know that her twin children had no navels? That no bud of flesh peeped stickily from the infants' taut, chestnut-smooth, domed tummies? That there had been no umbilical cord for her hatchlings?" (*Leto* 10).

The animal imagery included further blurs the boundaries between man and beast, the rational and the irrational: the twins and Leto, unable to find water and food, are helped by a she-wolf and her cubs. They find shelter in the she-wolf's den and she shares all her resources with them, including her milk: "The supply's not the freshest, so if your milk is dry and thin, you and your babies can drink mine- my own cubs are so lively they excite more than enough from their mother. It'd be a relief to me" (*Leto* 28). Warner questions the rationality of rational thinking when she has the she-wolf give advice to Leto about love, men, and life. Upon Leto's complaints about her lover who has let her down despite the promises he made, the wolf protests: "Love! You don't have to love someone to enjoy them! You humans justify your actions with grand passions and grander promises. What hypocrisy, in the name of Love!" (*Leto* 29). The distortion of natural love by the reason of humans is thus disclosed through the eyes of an animal who believes women of any species have similar naiveties: "Try not to believe a word men say. They're different, different from us creatures, different from you people, different from women, from mothers, from our kind" (*Leto* 29). Motherhood, then, becomes an umbrella term which connects all those who have the ability to produce. The wolf also warns Leto not to make herself needier than she is Warner's employment of a wild animal to voice "rational" warnings also shatters the boundary between the binary opposites such as culture-nature, manly, beastly, etc.

Nonetheless, Leto's sufferings from love continue this time in the eleventh century in a country called Cadenas-la-Jolie where different peoples of different religions or sects fight for control over the area. Leto is named Laetitia in the Convent by the nuns after

the leader of the country Procurator Cunmar throws her out of the palace due to Leto's merchant father's failure to keep his promise to Cunmar. The spatio-temporal linearity is once more disrupted not only by Leto's incarnation after more than a millennium but also by the ambiguity of the fragments in which the Greek myth and the eleventh century setting and characters are mixed: Leto, who stays in the Keep and is watched over by Doris, an old maid in Cunmar's palace, is raped by a "he" with whom she transforms into a goose, a salmon and finally a cuttlefish which fights back in return: "He hauled her; she hung, a dead weight, dripping, mute, and just as he felt that he had at last vanquished as was his due, she sucked the last of her reserves from her body…and flung their full mass of energy at him" (*Leto* 105). The resistance Leto shows in her new shape echoes Warner's comments on transformation when she says: "From the perspective of creation and the life force, the shape into which they shift more fully expresses them and perfects them than their first form" (*Leto* 4). Thus, Leto or Laetitia, in her cuttlefish form, demythologizes the victim's role of the raped woman and attacks with all her force that definitely has sexual connotations:

> He was nothing but a man, and a man well passed his first youth at that, and she now knew how to entangle him in her flesh, flesh that was all mouth, fringed about with lips and tongue to lick and swallow, to suck and consume. She closed the waving tentacles of her new form around his spent energies and with a last throe of her powers, clouded the water that lapped them in the musky jet of her black ink. (*Leto* 105)

With the spray of her ink onto her lover, Leto, in the form of a cuttlefish, leaves her mark on him like a signature.

On the other hand, the twins are again defined as of non-origin, in the image of their mother, who is this time in the form of a bird and a fish herself:

> …the children will be born from an egg the blue of a wild hyacinth. Fish roe, cuttlefish spawn, quail's eggs: it would resemble all of these, though it is *sui generis,* a species unknown, on their downy bodies beneath the first chick feathers, in the starred interlacing of their epidermis, there will be tiny

> calligraphy, the spoor of their inky matrix, from their mother, the cuttlefish, who squirted sephia at her lover during the rape when they were conceived.
> (*Leto* 106)

Warner goes one step further parodying the traditional perception of man over animals when she announces that this calligraphy "will be a sign to those that come after they belong to a sacred line" (*Leto* 106). The note about how this story is told to fend off blows of fate for young women in a similar situation underlies the importance given to this story and highlights the universality of the danger.

Moreover, Warner attacks the myth of origin by attacking the myth of home. Leto under Hera's curse is supposed to wander around the world until she finds a place that she can call home. Warner, by making Leto travel through time, locations and myths, demonstrates the impossibility of identity as a fixed entity and underlines the multiplicity of truths, histories and women. Cixous, as she speculates about women and how they differ from their imposed traditional logocentric identities, states:

> Because she arrives, vibrant, over and again, we are at the beginning of a new history, or rather of a process of becoming in which several histories intersect with one another. As subject for history, woman always occurs simultaneously in several places. Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield. In woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women, as well as national and world history. ("Laugh" 352)

Warner, by voicing such a character who can transgress borders of any kind, creates a trans-temporal/local heroine who, instead of moving around the centre or looking for an origin, experiences the truth or any of its substitutes in fragments. Thus, Warner not only underlines the artificiality of the centre and logos, but also emphasizes the fact that women have a more fragmentary and pluralistic perception of truth, history or home. A fixed identity is, therefore, a myth for Warner's heroine who has been a member of almost all important civilizations in history and also a non-citizen who seeks refuge; who is the only one for many people who believe in her holiness and

power, but also no one, as almost all of her names indicate, as she does not even exist in the bundle. Belonging everywhere and nowhere at the same time, Warner's Leto goes far beyond the boundaries drawn by the patriarchy.

2.2. Problem of God/s

The problematization of God/s is another attack on logos as God is one of the master signifiers Western epistemology has placed in the centre. Wehr in *Feminist Archetypal Theory* argues that just as the religious, psychological, scientific and many other institutions which have been created by humans in the need for the ordering principles these institutions provide have come to control and limit human behaviour and thinking, Jungian "archetypal images of the collective unconscious and the social structures, institutions, and roles also become congruent with one another" ("Religious" 24). Wehr rejects the ontologizing character of Jungian archetypes and the Jungian mythological language placing the archetypes within "a sacred and cosmic frame of reference" ("Religious" 26). Jungian theory, according to Wehr, confuses theology and the unconscious, and the numinous character of archetypes gets closer to Rudolf Otto's concept of "numinosity" which is related to experiences of God, the holy, the religious ("Religious" 30-1). Though Jung's major theological standpoint declares the Christian perception of an almighty God as erroneous, Wehr believes that in his theoretical explanation of the God archetype present in the human psyche, he could not differentiate between the psychological and theological realms. Thus the collective unconscious serves "to legitimate socially constructed roles for women" ("Religious" 32).

Irigaray also argues that the present symbolic framework in the West not only relates masculinity to the divine but also presents masculinity as the ideal measure of all human aspirations, legitimizing privilege for men in cultural practices and social policies over womanly desires (Jasper 130). In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray states: "The Gender of god, the guardian of every subject and every discourse is always

masculine and *paternal* in the west" (6-7). The religious institutions, God or gods like any authoritative patriarchal organizing principle, therefore, pose danger for women regarding their genuine femininity, both socially and psychologically: the emphasis in the Western faith systems "still tends to be placed on belief in a single transcendent and masculine divine being as creator and sustainer of human life within and beyond terrestrial existence and on the corresponding institutional structure; that is, the Christian Church" (Jasper 125). Both Warner and Atwood problematize these central images and question their constructedness in their novels, underlining the power attributed to the male-God who positions women according to his self image and who limits female experience as unnatural, worthless or irrational.

2.2.1. Gods and (In)justice in *The Penelopiad*

Penelope's attitude towards Gods in *The Penelopiad* is quite ironic and subversive. Though the Ancient Greeks did not believe in their gods the way people have done since the emergence of monotheistic religions, the technique Atwood uses in her novel in which she approaches and comments on mythical events with the twenty-first century sensitivity makes Penelope's attitude quite deconstructive. When Penelope talks about foods and meat especially, she mentions Prometheus's victory over Zeus and remarks: "Only an idiot would have been deceived by a bag of bad cow parts disguised as good ones, and Zeus was deceived; which goes to show that the gods were not always as intelligent as they wanted us to believe" (*The Penelopiad* 39-40). She also states that she doubted their existence earlier when she was alive but could not pronounce it as she was afraid of punishment. However, she can say what is in her mind now as she has the privileged vantage point of being dead.

These remarks are of importance because of several reasons. First of all, Penelope draws attention to the fake divinity of gods demonstrating the stupidity of Zeus, who was easily deceived. Then she underlines the fact that the exaggeration of gods' powers is an intentionally practiced campaign to limit the boundaries of men and especially

women. Then she openly states that because she is dead and has seen the otherworld and what was to come later, she can speak her mind without fear of the gods' punishment. At this point, Penelope also transgresses the gender boundaries imposed upon her by the patriarchal society and articulates herself without any censorship. Therefore, the divine powers of gods are not only parodied, but also shown as an element of an agenda in the logocentric system. Moreover, their non-existence or non-functionality is testified to by Penelope, who is already talking from the underworld where one is supposed to be punished.

The gods are not to be trusted for Penelope and she problematizes their reliability throughout the novel in many instances. After Telemachus sails off to look for Odysseus, Eurycleia, who helped him in his design, tells Penelope that he will come back safe and sound as "the gods were just", and Penelope reflects: "I refrained from saying I'd seen scant evidence of that so far" (*The Penelopiad* 123). Likewise, the image in Penelope's mind about gods is quite funny and ironic. She imagines them like a bored ten –year- old child with lots of time and a sick cat to play: "'Which prayer shall we answer today?' they ask one another. 'Let's cast dice! Hope for this one, despair for that one, and while we're at it, let's destroy the life of that woman over there by having sex with her in the form of a crayfish!' I think they pull a lot of their pranks because they're bored" (*The Penelopiad* 135). This attitude ascribed to gods in Olympus as rapists randomly choosing their victims shatters both the concepts of divinity and causality.

The lack of justice in gods' dispositions and their tendency to encourage and support injustice so as to legitimize their violent behaviours are also presented in *The Penelopiad* towards the end of the novel where two performances of the maids as the chorus are given as "An Anthropology Lecture" (*The Penelopiad* 163) and "The Trial of Odysseus as Videotaped by the Maids" (*The Penelopiad* 175). In "An Anthropology Lecture" the twelve maids of Penelope discuss the various theories that are attributed to their hanging. Atwood, playfully employing theories from James Frazer and Levi

Strauss, not only dwells on the notion of justice and how any kind of ritual- polytheistic or not- might be used as a cover for injustice, but also shows that patriarchy has always found a legitimate theory to justify its actions. The maids first take Jesus as a reference point by likening themselves to the twelve apostles of Christ, or the twelve days of Christmas. Then highlighting the similarity between themselves and the twelve virgin maidens of Artemis, they discuss the possibility of being the sacrifices of a moon-goddess fertility ritual. The connotations in this remark of the myth-ritualist theory call to mind James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. In it, James Frazer, who regards the cycle of vegetation as the reason behind savage rituals and myth as that which ritual enacts, argues that the god in myths was the god of vegetation, the function of the rituals was to make the crops grow and the king was a figure for the incarnation of the god of vegetation (Ackerman viii). By alluding to James Frazer's theory of myth Staels argues that Atwood "attacks Frazer's influential myth-ritualist theory among mythopoeic critics such as Jessie Weston and Northrop Frye" (104). When the maids ironically speculate on the likeliness of a probable "overthrow of a matrilineal moon-cult by an incoming group of usurping patriarchal father-god-worshipping barbarians" (*The Penelopiad* 165), they state that even though the modern educated minds are unwilling to accept this possibility, such actions of rape and murder are proved to have happened in "all around the Mediterranean Sea" (*The Penelopiad* 166). Satirizing the insufficiency of theories in explaining the rape and murder of women in myths, the maids thus finish their lecture by telling the educated minds not to worry as they are not "real girls, real flesh and blood, real pain, real injustice" (*The Penelopiad* 168). As Suzuki states (274), they conclude the lecture with a statement straight out of Levi-Strauss's *Elementary Structures of Kinship*: "Consider us pure symbol. We're no more real than money" (*The Penelopiad* 168).

In the following chorus performance, the maids are in a twenty-first century trial where Odysseus is charged with the murder of the Suitors. Odysseus's attorney, acknowledging the one hundred and twenty slaughters, states that Odysseus, "seizing the only opportunity Fate was likely to afford him" acted in self defence (*The*

Penelopiad 177). Even though the judge dismisses the case, the twelve maids, asking for justice, crave for Odysseus's punishment. However, the request of the maids who "were forced to sleep with the Suitors because if they'd resisted they would have been raped anyway, and much more unpleasantly" is rejected by the judge who does not want such a "regrettable but minor incident" to blot Odysseus's exceedingly distinguished career and who is afraid of being charged with anachronism (*The Penelopiad* 182). Upon this comic-ironic attitude of the judge, the maids summon the dog-headed, bat- winged, serpent-haired Angry Ones asking for vengeance, demanding from them never to let Odysseus find rest. The attorney of Odysseus in return calls on "the gray-eyed Pallas Athene, immortal daughter of Zeus, to defend property rights and the right of a man to be the master of his house" (*The Penelopiad* 184). The scene ends as the angry Erinyes look at Odysseus with their flashing eyes and Odysseus is spirited away in a cloud by Athene.

Although Atwood lets his Odysseus escape with the maids' blood in his hands by the assistance of the goddess Athene, she makes it clear in the end of the novel that the gods and goddesses are of no help in Hades. The twelve maids have imprinted themselves on Odysseus's consciousness, never giving him rest, always making him want to go away and to be reborn: "Now you can't get rid of us, wherever you go: in your life or your afterlife or any of your other lives… We're here to serve you right. We'll never leave you, we'll stick to you like your shadow, soft and relentless as glue. Pretty maids, all in a row" (*The Penelopiad* 192).

2.2.2. God as a Dead Man in *Surfacing*

The questioning of God and religion is in the form of problematizing Christianity in *Surfacing*. The nameless protagonist of the novel is on her way to her homeland in Quebec wilderness in search of her father who has been reported missing. In the car with her boyfriend Joe, and her friends Anna and David, a married couple, the protagonist also travels back to her past. Seeing that there is a new road replacing the

old one, she contemplates on the signs of a road accident: “A road crucifix with a wooden Christ, ribs sticking out, the alien god, mysterious to me as ever” (*Surfacing* 15). This image of the mysterious alien God prevails throughout the novel as a question mark whose answer is never satisfactory. When the protagonist talks about a woman with only one hand from her childhood, she states:

> This arm devoid of a hand was for me a great mystery, almost as puzzling as Jesus. I wanted to know how the hand had come off (perhaps she had taken it off herself) and where it was now, and especially whether my own hand could ever come off like that; but I never asked, I must have been afraid of the answers. (*Surfacing* 29)

The analogy between the missing hand and Jesus, concerning both their origin and end, discloses the protagonist’s prospective problems with these concepts.

The protagonist relates religion to sex when she tells how she learnt about the former: “I learned about religion the way most children then learned about sex, not in the gutter but in the gravel-and-cement schoolyard” (*Surfacing* 50). The children told her that “there was a dead man in the sky watching everything” she did, and in return she told them where the babies came from (*Surfacing* 51). Atwood here dwells on the portrayal of God as a dead man who patrols on people’s behaviour and underlines the plausibility of this image, while the natural conceiving of two bodies is considered as unbelievable and deserving punishment: “Some of their mothers called mine to complain, though I think I was more upset than they were: they didn’t believe me but I believed them” (*Surfacing* 51).

This portrayal of God as “an old man with a beard in the clouds” is itself contrary to the Christian belief according to Atwood, who states that this figure is not recorded anywhere in the Bible (“Faith”). She believes that this image has been taken from the Greek and Roman sculptures of Zeus. She refers to William Blake, who argues that

there are two kinds of gods people believe in, and the first one is "Nobodaddy" which is:

> the false picture of God that human beings create for themselves…the one that a lot of people believe in. Instead of believing in the living spirit, they believe in a tyrannical, angry person who's going to squash you basically. So they believe in a series of rules and restrictions imposed by Nobodaddy because they have a desire for rules and restrictions. ("Faith")

The image of God in children's minds in *Surfacing* is similar to a Nobodaddy: a man-made god who has no spiritual divinity but a set of rules to follow and a list of things (not) to do. Atwood's employing this image of Noboddady taken from the Greek god Zeus is playful in the way that it displays how intermingled myths and religions are and how easy it is to make people, especially children, believe in religious dogmas as humans are inclined to follow rules rather than questioning them.

The protagonist's father does not send her and her brother to Sunday school because of his opinion of Christianity as a distortion; and when he decides she is old enough to see for herself, the protagonist's experience with the mysterious god in the United Church is not very inciting: "The teacher wore maroon nail-polish and a blue pancake-sized hat clipped to her head by two prongs; she told us a lot about her admirers and their cars. At the end she handed out pictures of Jesus, who didn't have thorns and ribs but was alive and draped in a bed sheet, tired-looking, surely incapable of miracles" (*Surfacing* 62). When she tells her brother about the possibility of her choosing Catholicism, he defies it with a simple note of experience though he is also unaware of Blessed Virgin Mary: "'They believe in B.V.M.' I didn't know what that was and neither did he, so he said 'They believe if you don't go to Mass you'll turn into a wolf.' 'Will you?' I said. 'We don't go', he said, 'and we haven't'" (*Surfacing* 63).

The antagonist's approach to God is manifested through other examples, too: When the protagonist tells about the fish under the water on their fishing trip she states: "I believe

in them the way other people believe in God: I can't see them but I know they are there" (*Surfacing* 71). On another occasion she explains why she quit Sunday school. When a friend of hers told her that she asked for a Barbara Ann Scott doll and she got it for her birthday, the protagonist decides to do the same: "So I decided to pray too, not like the Lord's Prayer or the fish prayer, but for something real. I prayed to be made invisible, and when in the morning everyone could still see me I knew I had the wrong God" (*Surfacing* 81).

After the protagonist sees the hanged heron in the wilderness, her ideas about religion and Christianity are made clear:

> Whether it (the heron) died willingly, consented, whether Christ died willingly, anything that suffers and dies instead of us is Christ; if they didn't kill birds and fish they would have killed us. The animals die that we may live, they are substitute people, hunters in the fall killing the deer, that is Christ also. And we eat them, out of cans or otherwise; we are eaters of death, dead Christ-flesh resurrecting inside us, granting us life. Canned Spam, canned Jesus, even the plants must be Christ. (*Surfacing* 160)

Atwood's identification of Christ with animals and plants and her identification of people, including Christians, as cannibals of Jesus is an attempt to decentre the origin of both religion and rational thinking of the Western mind which proposes that animals and nature be in the servitude of mankind. Atwood thus deconstructs the divinity of Christianity, replacing it with nature, as will be seen in the next chapter, and subverts logocentric thinking by substituting uncanny images of cannibalism for an all-powerful, civilizing mind.

Towards the end of the novel, while the protagonist is looking for her mother's gift, she finds a picture she drew in her childhood scrap book in which there are two figures: the figure of a woman with a round belly inside which a baby is gazing out and the figure of a man with horns and a tail. The first figure is the protagonist in her mother's womb before she was born and the other is God: "I'd drawn him when my brother learned in

the winter about Devil and God: If the Devil was allowed a tail and horns, God needed them also, they were advantages" (*Surfacing* 181). Atwood first employs a little child's logic to show the absurdities of religious myths, highlighting the fact that a child is preconditioned by the patriarchy to assume the existence of a male-gendered God. Then she moves on to speculate about the true shape of the gods. Their true shape, according to Atwood's protagonist, is fatal to the humans. But as soon as she immerses herself in the other language, that is as soon as she makes a connection with the maternal, with her body, with nature, their true shape "could be reached" (*Surfacing* 181).

This view is in accordance with the arguments of Irigaray, who states that women "are to be mothers of sons for fathers and a male God is the perfect projected ideal for masculine being" (Gray 111). Women cannot identify themselves with any kind of divine figure who is not defined by a kinship to a man or by total alienation from her body such as a nun. Atwood, on the other hand, replaces these patriarchal God or holly figures with nature, thereby allowing space for the extra-linguistic experiences of the female body and mind. Here it might help to refer to Carol Christ, who states that Atwood has "suggested a direction for the transformation of modern religious consciousness, which might lead to a despiritualization of Western religious traditions, or to the development of new female-centred religious forms" (328).

2.2.3. Womb Envying God and Christian Deeds in *Indigo*

In *Indigo*, Warner dwells on two different types of religion: the religion of the islanders and the religion of the invaders. The islander's system of faith is based on natural elements and is more mythological, and probably personally variant in itself; they believe in the sea monster Manjiku and the God of fire, Adesangé. Manjiku is a creature who steals and swallows babies "in his burning desire to be a woman": he cannot give birth to his own (*Indigo* 85). The figure of Manjiku is of quite importance as it is the embodiment of the subversion of penis envy which Freud and many other

psychoanalysts and theorists have placed at the centre of woman's psyche. Freud claims that the girl-child, who interprets her lack of a penis as a failure has hostile feelings against the mother whom she has taken after (595). In the meantime, her desire to grow a penis is not diminished; it is replaced with the desire to bear a son. The subversion of this theory by Warner manifested in Manjiku's desire to have a womb is an attack on both religion and patriarchy. Manjiku's position close to a god shatters the traditional gender of God as male, and his inability to become a woman underlines his inferiority. Moreover, the stress on his inability to produce and consequent violence is also an attack on a male God in the traditional sense.

The story of Manjiku, who tries to allure women to swim in the sea by spreading sea emeralds, is narrated by Serafine to Miranda and Xanthe centuries later, only with a different ending. Serafine, whose voice is the continuum of Sycrorax's, combines the story of Amadou and Amadé with that of Manjiku. Serafine repeats the desire of Manjiku both to be a mother and a woman:

> What Manjiku wants- more than food, more than drink, more than sweet life itself- is to have a child of his own. Yes! Not just to have it, like a father-no, he wants to be a mother, to bring the child out of his mouth, spit out a little Manjiku, think of that! For Manjiku is a monster, a seadragon, he sets fear in the heart of every man. Yet he wants nothing better than to be a woman.
>
> (*Indigo* 220)

When the fisherman Amadou catches a silver starfish, a tiny silver starwoman with a soft voice, blue eyes and silk hair, he hides her as a prisoner in a fish pond, not mentioning anything about her to his wife. But the loving Amadé, who senses the difference in Amadou's behaviour and discovers his secret, does not confront him out of her love for her husband. The starwoman dies soon and when Amadé sees her husband in great grief, she collects a red flower, the flower of Adasengé the god of fire, and resurrects the starfish for Amadou. The same night under full-moon, Amadé goes into the sea with the hope of being eaten by Manjiku. However, Manjiku throws her out

as soon as he swallows her for she is the woman with the power to set Manjiku free from his curse:

> She's cast up ashore and a man's standing before her, waiting for her to open her eyes. He's a handsome man, oh yes, brown and glossy, with a light in his eye, and a smile on his lips….Manjiku was under a curse.…Only a woman who knew what real loving is could undo its power. And Amadé it is understands real loving-. (*Indigo* 224)

Serafine's alterations in the story stress the importance Warner ascribes to her storytelling. Just like Amadé who can turn an envious cannibal semi-god semi-monster into the prince charming, rewriting myths as Serafine does can change the course of things: the angry volcano god Adesangé can blossom flowers which can reanimate souls or the suffering women can find the true form of god through the love they bear in themselves.

Christianity also receives its share in Warner's challenge to the omnipotent patriarchal god figure. After all, every action the colonizers take is justified as their holy mission "to further the walls of Christendom" (*Indigo* 153). When Kit and his party burn Sycorax and wound Ariel, Kit justifies himself for "firing in self-defence" (*Indigo* 136), indeed lying to God, and asks for his protection from Sycorax and "her foul magic" (*Indigo* 136). However, Warner makes it clear that it is the islanders who deserve God's protection. Although Kit, when Ariel advises him to take off his shoes, refuses to go barefoot despite his wounds as he did not want to "dishonour his monarch disparage the image of the Christian gentleman" (*Indigo* 168), he does not hesitate to kill hundreds of natives to turn "a chapter in the history of God's kingdom to come" (*Indigo* 199).

Another striking example of Warner's questioning of religion is Kit's inability to resist Ariel's charm. Though he cries and prays to God - "The Lord is my shepherd, I'll not want" - to help him not become "a murderer and a ravisher" (*Indigo* 149), Warner

ironically tells that Kit failed "in this trial of his will" because "as it turned out, his God proved more willing to try him than catch him up to safety" (*Indigo* 167). Thus Kit lies in front of Ariel's hut comforting himself -masturbating- and praying to God, performing a kind of twisted anti-ritual:

> He turned over on the ground, and put his hand to his cock and squeezed himself…Yea, though I walk through the alley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil...For thou art with me; thy rod and staff shall comfort me. He was holding himself rhythmically now, pumping with long, smooth strokes.
>
> (*Indigo* 149)

While Kit is having dreams to "baptize the maiden", marry her and "cherish her beneath the fruit-ladden tree" with the ecstasy of their sexual intercourse, his attitude is typically phallogocentric: "his heathen hoyden" is another land to be conquered as is her island, and it is his burden to save them both, to civilize them, to teach them the ways of God. Ariel is not only a heathen who is unaware of God's commandments, but also a hoyden who does not know how to act as a "woman": a woman as defined by the Western epistemology. Therefore, it is the responsibility and duty of Kit, who is the image of God on earth, to tame, to construct and to have Ariel, turning her into a Christian lady. Nancy Frankenberry argues:

> Insofar as Western monotheism has constructed the meaning of "God" in relation to "world" around binary oppositions of mind/body, reason/passion, and male/female, traditional theism remains complicitous with the very system of gender constructs and symbolic structures that underlie women's oppression. In the binary opposition between "God" and "world," the term "God" occupies the privileged space and acts as the central principle, the One who confers identity to creatures to whom "He" stands in hierarchical relation. ("Feminist")

This hierarchical relation legitimizes Kit's possession of both Ariel and the island in the logocentric system of thought. However, Kit owns neither her nor their child after the birth. This time he legitimizes his previous attitude towards her by claiming that she had "taken possession of him" (*Indigo* 179) and calling her a devil who "had taken bodily form to keep close by him and seize his soul" (*Indigo* 166). Ariel, the previous

objet petit a for the Christian Man, has now become a devil spirit, a witch with supernatural powers who should be shunned and punished. The appropriation of the woman in the religious discourse for any kind of agenda that serves the patriarchal ends is thus revealed in Warner's portrayal of the colonizer male and the colonized female. The hypocrisy the colonizers perform in the name of God for any action, murder, rape, destruction, robbery etc. is executed under the name of the Christian God by the agents of God. By displaying the inconsistencies in this pathologic relationship between man and God, Warner attacks religion and man with the same stick and implies that the islanders are closer to divinity.

2.2.4 Female Divinity and Holy Folly in *The Leto Bundle*

The question of god(s), religion and faith in *The Leto Bundle* covers a time span of thousands of years and different sects of beliefs including pagan religions and different sects of monotheistic systems. Moreover, the inception of "godly" or "holy" goes hand in hand with the inspection of myths such as divine female figures like Mary or Hagar. The signification of these figures in the all powerful patriarchy that has written the history and all the myths so far for its own purposes towards status, power and dominance is deciphered throughout the novel in different cases. The heroine Leto, "whose power Zeus took through rape" (*Leto* 31) is abused, assaulted and raped over and over several times by many different men in the novel. However, in the very beginning when the Leto Bundle is exhibited in the Albion National Museum as an "Anonymous Female" (*Leto* 14), many women and men start considering her holy, offering flowers and leaving notes to ask help from this "homeless lady", " Lady of Scattered People" and "our holy mother" (*Leto* 15). The increasing demand for the item's re-display forces the museum's administration to announce the genuine identity in the cartonnage: that there is nobody in the sarcophagus, but it is believed to have belonged to a Titaness called Leto who was raped by Zeus and gave birth to twins Apollo and Artemis. The public interest and the spiritual qualities attributed to the Leto Bundle increase much more despite the museum's declaration about the ambiguous

identity of the non-existent body in the sarcophagus and the novel turns out to be the search for Leto as the new signifier for the mis/dis/un-signified people all around the world.

At the meeting organized by the Cultural Identities Department at the Prime Minister's, Kim McQuy, an adopted Tirzahner/ an elementary school teacher/ Leto's son Phoebus/ Leto's son the god Apollo, underlines the importance of the same holiness in other and more striking words:

> She's everyone who's ever been driven from home, who's been stolen or beaten out… she's Persephone and dozens and dozens of young women who've been raped- not least Europa, you know that story. That victim gave her name to where we live now. She's Hagar and Mary and … well, she's Leto. (*Leto* 95)

Warner argues in *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* that the Virgin Mary has been an essential part of the Catholic Church's argument to inform women of their duties and sins and impose on them the "true nature" of womanhood:

> The Virgin Mary is not the innate archetype of female nature, the dream incarnate; she is the instrument of a dynamic argument from the Catholic Church about the structure of society, presented as a God-given code. The argument changes, according to contingencies. (*Alone* 338)

The symbolic sanctification of Mary throughout history has been a conscious procedure and the naturalization of the myth causes people to regard this cult as pre-given, not feeling the need to question its nature. Warner also makes use of the theories of Roland Barthes, who in his *Mythologies* states that "in myths, things lose the memory that they once were made" and that the basic principle of myth is that it "transforms history into nature" (142, 110). Warner thus makes it clear firstly that the boundary between myths and religions is not as manifest as it is taught. Enlisting the names of Mary and Hagar with other female deities who are victims of rape, violence and all kinds of abuse and harassment such as Europa, whom Zeus tricked disguised as a white bull and raped in

Crete in the shape of an eagle (Smith 78), and Persephone, the abducted maiden for whom the course of nature changed (Smith 69), Warner draws attention to the mythical qualities of these "holy" figures and implies that holiness is just another label patriarchy uses to fit women in the forms that serve for its end. In Foucauldian terms, the dominant discourse has always altered the stories of these women to make it useful for its purpose; and holiness, although it has "positive" connotations, is just another means to appropriate women and to empty them of the genuine experiences they have had or of their desire to have such experiences.

The story of Hagar, the slave-concubine of Abraham and the mother of Ishmael, a holy figure in the Hebrew Bible as well as in other monotheistic religions, has gone through the same kind of appropriation according to many feminist critics and theologians. Even though Hagar's story in the Bible and other "holy" books stresses the sacrifices she has made and the difficulties she has gone though in order to protect her son Ishmael in the desert, feminist critics think that she was a young woman who suffered "slavery, rape, sexual exploitation, violence, class oppression (when Sarah forced Abraham to evict her), and homelessness…but she was also resourceful, defiant in the face of adversity and won a promise of God's blessing and protection" (Allitt 129-30). Likewise, Amy-Jill Levine cites Phyllis Trible who alludes to Hagar as:

> The faithful maid exploited, the black woman used by the male and abused by the female of the ruling class…the resident alien…the other woman, the runaway youth, the religious figure feeling affliction, the pregnant young woman alone, the expelled wife, the divorced mother with child, the shopping bag lady…the homeless woman…the welfare mother, and the self-effacing female whose own identity shrinks in service to others. (*Daughters* 16)

These remarks are closely connected to what Warner has achieved next by grouping Leto with the other holy figures: including a titaness raped and impregnated by the god of gods, and later by many others in the following two thousand years in the same group as the milestone female figures of monotheistic religions, Warner deconstructs

the concept of holiness once more only to show its constructedness more openly this time.

The qualities attributed to Hagar by Trible can also be used without exception for Leto, who has continued to live for another two millenniums after Hagar in many different places in many religious systems. The striking similarity between the deciphered stories of all these female figures stresses the fact that independent of time, place or other details related to the settings, there is a universal woman whose story is written by patriarchy and who, despite all kinds of reformations, developments or changes, is kept deprived of genuine experiences and her authentic self. The attempt to fix the meaning of "woman" which, according to many feminists and postructuralist thinkers, is impossible as the meaning itself is always subject to deferral. However, using "the woman" to enforce the stronger leg of the binary has always been a practice executed by the patriarchy. The important point in this case is that religion is the most influential and successful weapon that has been used by the Western epistemology against women and the most difficult one to distinguish as it is invisible and naturalized.

The violence and harm the quest for power in different religious discourses has caused is again demonstrated by Warner in *The Leto Bundle* when Leto becomes the subject of martyrdom which has been an object of desire for followers of different religions and sects in the twelfth century Middle East country. The fragments written by Barnabas, a monk at the Shrine of the Fount in the Pearl Quarter of Cadenas-la-Jolie who is loyal to the religion of the Enochites, by a nun of the Convent of the Holy Swaddling Bands at the Hospital in Cadenas, and by a Lazuli scribe display not only how the "truth" changes according to different discourses but also how people suffer due to the conflicts among these religious parties.

Leto, who is given to Lord Cunmar Procurator, the leader of the Ophiri Empire, by her merchant father at the age of four as "surety for his trade" (*Leto* 109), is sent to the convent when her father fails to keep his promise to come back. According to the

monk, this little child of *Deodata* - given by god - is educated according to the principles of "the true faith" in the convent where she was renamed as Laetitia by the head nun Mother Cecily. However, after she was called back to the palace and fell pregnant by the Infidel Cunmar the Procurator, she was killed and canonized: "Laetitia was drawn into their snares, but, through the mercy of Our Lord, she found grace and repented, and as we shall relate here, she expiated her early vanities and heedlessness and wantonness and shed her blood to cleanse us" (*Leto* 112).

According to the nun's fragments, Laetitia was very happy in the convent and was able to feel the love of God through the nuns. When the stiff head nun clasped the children, Laetitia "herself understood the abbess's love: she told me that in these embraces she felt her body bending, becoming that instrument of God's will that only Mother Cecily knew how to handle to achieve the purpose for which God has first formed it" (*Leto* 125). Cunmar's equerry Karim on the other hand testifies that Leto told him after she came to The Keep that she felt "she was suffocating" in the convent and that he was glad he did not obey Lady Porphyria's order to kill Leto (*Leto* 79).

The oppositions in these narrations and the hypocrisies revealed in between the lines display how the religions construct the truth according to their own purposes. Leto, who is named by the dominant religious discourse, is thus killed for her infidelity and then sainted for her holiness. Warner highlights the constructed and political nature of religious discourses by creating a reincarnated figure of Joan of Arc whose canonization and mythification she analyses in *Joan of Arc: Reality and Myth*. By employing the testaments, records and comments from different religious groups, Warner also unfolds the agenda behind the religious dogmas. As Linda G. Propst states: "In each case, Leto's story reflects the desires of the person who records it" (338).

The relationships between the religions or the sects explained in detail in the novel suggest that many similar murders and wars might have happened in the past due to the

same synthetic reasons. In *The Leto Bundle*, the Ophiri Empire is neighbouring the Lazuli Empire, and the lands which their peoples inhabit are considered holy by many religions. Depending on the details given by Warner in the novel such as the trade of turquoise glass, the sacred rock Moses split, the mention of Sinai region, it can be argued that Lord Cunmar's Empire is probably located somewhere between today's Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Enochites, who believe in the same God as Lazulis are people from Europe, most probably England, and Christians. Lazulis are probably Orthodox and Enochites are probably Catholics as all the fragments by a member of Enochites are in Latin and by a member of Lazulis are in Greek. Besides, there are many references in the novel to the rituals they carry out and the differences they have regarding religious practices.

In the fragment by Barnabas, he states that there has been an on-going struggle for the holy places around the region: "these infidels came to triumph over my people the Enochites who had come from the far west across land and sea to defend the holy places for our faith" (*Leto* 111). However, these crusaders are beaten by the Ophiri and the Lazuli are of no help. The success of Ophiri is mainly due to the tricks of Cunmar, who has succeeded in changing his besieged army's disadvantageous position to its benefit by using the Christian belief of the Enochites against itself. Cunmar, while criticizing Enochite belief, states:

> They believe…that the spirit is like a shadow, bloodless, insubstantial; their ghosts have no bodies, they glide through closed doors, they walk on fleshless feet, they touch you with bloodless hands…. For them, shadows exercise influence over the bodies they possess, over the person to whom they stick….This was their folly, that I used against them. (*Leto* 141-2)

Three Lazuli men have been killed for spying for the Enochites by the people of Ophiri and Cunmar makes use of their corpses by beheading and flaying their heads to produce their simulacra which he displays in their dishonour outside the camp of the Enochites and on the city gates. When Cunmar raids the camp with the original heads,

flensed and cured with translucent skins, on the lances fastened to their horses, the Lord Laurent of the Enochites is bewildered by the ghost of the men whose bodies he refused to bury properly according to the Christian tradition due to the Lazuli's lack of cooperation in the siege. At the end of the night the Enochite army is scattered and at the end of the spring they lose the war.

The loss of a battle is depicted by Warner in the *Leto Bundle* as an example of how faith can haunt and paralyze people and how much influence it has on their actions. Furthermore, it is an example of how different sects of the same religion can be used against each other easily and how faith can be used to provoke hate among groups which actually share the same differences. As Lord Cunmar states: "Although they warship the same god, their conflicts are deeper and more bitter than our differences with them: the closer sects are one to another, the more terrible their hatred- that is the way it is, as we know from ourselves, let's admit it" (*Leto* 142).

CHAPTER 3

CULTURE VERSUS NATURE: SUBVERTING HIERARCHIES

3.1. Language as a Site of Being

Language has been one of the most controversial and vital issues among feminist thinkers as well as other critics in both social and applied sciences for it is the only means by which any kind of emotion, data or thought can be constructed, expressed conveyed and preserved. However, most feminist critics, liaising with the poststructuralist theories, maintain that language is another major medium that tyrannizes women and silences them, preventing their genuine experiences from being voiced instead of enabling them to be expressed. Language, as Knellwolf argues, "enforces gender difference…projecting men into the position of linguistic agency and authority and women into the position of objects who cannot go beyond expressing their failure to gain autonomous subjectivity" (201). "Woman" as a term does not and cannot be applied to women in general as it is not possible to define the genuine identity of women and as there are infinite possibilities of women who are different from each other. Moreover, as it is revealed by the poststructuralist thinkers, meaning is never fixed and is always deferred; the meaning of "woman" is therefore always subject to deferral. Diane Elam states that "'Women' is a permanently contested site of meaning, where meaning is always deferred, ultimately indeterminate" (209).

French feminists like Cixous and Irigaray highlight the importance of finding an alternative to the phallocentric language which others women, and they offer *Écriture Féminine*, or feminine, bodily, fluid writing. Cixous argues that the histories of writing and of reason are quite similar and writing is "that same self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallocentrism": "writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural - hence political, typically masculine – economy" and "a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over" ("Laugh" 337). Irigaray advocates a

similar view and states that “woman’s desire has doubtless been submerged by the logic that has dominated the West since the time of the Greeks” (“This” 351). Both Cixous and Irigaray call for feminine writing: “a female libidinal economy… always endless” (Cixous, “Castration” 488) where woman “in her statements…retouches herself constantly” (Irigaray, “This” 353). Evoking and in accordance with Roland Barthes’s concept of the writerly text (text of bliss) which “imposes a state of loss” and “unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language” (Barthes 14), *écriture féminine* is a representation of a resistance which “does take place in the form of *jouissance*, that is, in the direct reexperience of the physical pleasures of infancy and of later sexuality, repressed but not obliterated by the Law of the Father” (Jones 358). Kristeva argues that women should “reject everything finite, definite, structured, loaded with meaning, in the existing state of society” admitting that men too can “have access to the *jouissance* that opposes phallocentrism” (Jones 358):

> a woman cannot "be"; it is something which does not even belong in the order of being. It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we may say "that's not it" and "that's still not it." In "woman" I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies. There are certain men who are familiar with this phenomenon. (“Woman” 137-8)

Kristeva in “Revolution in Poetic Language” explains the registers of the *semiotic* and the Symbolic as modalities which regulate each other in the meaning making process. She states that the *semiotic* “precedes the establishment of the sign” (*Kristeva* 95), a pre-Oedipal stage in the Imaginary before the subject is constructed in the Symbolic via language and the Law of the Father. The *semiotic* is repressed after castration but it continues to be manifested in “rhythm, syntactic irregularities and linguistic distortions such as metaphor and metonymy” (Gamble 292) and it allows creative space for multiple meanings.

The importance of the relationship between the *semiotic* and the Symbolic lies in the fact that it links the person to the repressed maternal body:

> this semiotization sets off against social and linguistic norms a signifying practice in which the flux, the desire of the subject runs into language and disarticulates it by always maintaining it on the verge of being disintegrated by the drives - drives which, in turn, extricate the body from its homogeneous position in order to link it to an exterior space, locus of the heterogeneous and of multiplicity, to eroticize it once more, to re-analize it (re-anality). (Féral 10)

The novels of Margaret Atwood and Marina Warner offer narratives that are open to such reading as both the form and the content of their writing celebrate the female body and its representation with non-linguistic references; seek for multiplicity, flux, alternatives, and *jouissance* in all possible ways.

3.1.1. Dispossession of Language to Survive in *Surfacing*

Language is one of the major themes in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. As the nameless protagonist tries to find her memories, her parents and her authentic self, language becomes something that puts a barrier between her and what she is looking for. In *In the Beginning Was the Love* Kristeva says that, "We are no doubt permanent subjects of a language that holds us in its power. But we are subjects in process, ceaselessly losing our identity, destabilized by fluctuations in our relations to the other, to whom we nevertheless remain bound by a kind of homeostasis" (9). The journey the protagonist takes not only changes her identity and relations with the others, but also changes her relation with the language. Throughout her journey, she tries to establish the Imaginary order in the Symbolic and connect to her self-imago where she considers herself as a whole.

The problematization of language is apparent from the start: the protagonist does not have a name; it is never mentioned in the novel. Her inability to possess a name is related to her inability to be registered in the Symbolic which is regarded by Lacan,

Kristeva and many others as the order where the subject is constructed by the Name of the Father and is disconnected from her/his authentic self. The depression and the melancholy she experiences throughout the novel are connected to her discomfort in locating herself in the Symbolic order. Kristeva believes that melancholia, or the narcissistic depression stems from a loss of one's primary love while s/he is still in the chora: "Their sadness would be rather the most archaic expression of an unsymbolizable, unnameable narcissistic wound, so precocious that no outside agent (subject or agent) can be used as referent" (*Black* 12). Along with sadness or loss of interest, one of its symptoms is the problems with language. When Campbell explains why women are vulnerable to Kristeva's conception of depression as a disavowal of the Symbolic, she states that:

> Depression represents a melancholic disavowal of the Symbolic. It is a reaction to a social order in which the Symbolic order is structured by the phallic signifier, the phallus conflated with the penis, and the bearer of the phallus/penis privileged in the social world. If a female subject disavows the Symbolic, it is because she confronts a Symbolic order that says all and nothing. She confronts a symbolic economy that fails to represent her sexed social subjectivity as other than phallic. (*Jacques* 176)

The protagonist of *Surfacing,* reacting to the Symbolic order and the phallic signifier which constitutes it, shows similar symptoms from the beginning of the novel. As the party drives through the border to Quebec, the protagonist reflects: "My throat constricts, as it learned to do when I discovered people could say words that go into my ears meaning nothing. To be deaf and dumb would be easier" (12). Her wish to demolish words and the Symbolic presented in the beginning of her journey continues up to the end. Speaking English in the French part of the country, she has always felt this "strangling feeling, paralysis of the throat" during her childhood (20). However, as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that this strangling feeling is not due to the discomfort of a foreign language but the language itself.

The protagonist, as she spends more and more time on the island in the wilderness, recognizes her inability to use language. When Joe demands from her a straight answer about whether she loves him or not, she is unable to give one:

> It was the language again, I couldn't use it because it wasn't mine. He must have known what he meant but it was an imprecise word; the Eskimos had fifty-two names for snow because it was important for them. There ought to be as many for love. (*Surfacing* 122)

The protagonist's inability to express her feelings using language and to fit into the logocentric symbolic frame where there has to be an "either/or" answer for every question makes her suffer more along the barrier that divides the binary oppositions. After she sees her vision under the water in the lake, probably the vision of her father who had drowned while trying to photograph the Indian rock paintings that the lake flooded, Joe comes after to look for her and she states: "I touched him on the arm with my hand. My hand touched his arm. Hand touched arm. Language divides us into fragments, I wanted to be whole" (*Surfacing* 167). The urge to go back to her pre-oedipal stage in the Imaginary where she thought she was a "whole" becomes irrepressible, and the protagonist, after having sex with Joe in the wilderness under the moonlight and believing that she has fallen pregnant for a semi-god semi-animal child, announces that she "will never teach it the words" (*Surfacing* 187). The protagonist, running away into the wilderness letting her friends leave the island without her, declares her denial of language as her friends keep calling her name: "It's too late, I no longer have a name. I tried for all those years to be civilized but I'm not and I'm through pretending" (*Surfacing* 195). The protagonist's final dispossession of her name is due to her discomfort in the Symbolic order and the Name of the Father which has been trying to 'civilize' her by a set of rules, institutions, roles, codes etc., which are all of phallic quality. Her failure as a traditional woman who is supposed to give up her unborn baby in accord with the father's wish who is married to someone else and has children, and her melancholic desire to go back to her pre-oedipal image, triggered by her forced abortion, where she feels she is a whole, push her one step away from the

outer world. As the protagonist becomes closer to nature, her desire to establish the Imaginary in the Symbolic gets stronger. After the others leave without her, she is alone on the island and stops using language at all. Moreover, she announces the mirror as forbidden:

> I must stop being in the mirror. I look for the last time at my distorted glass face: eyes light blue in dark red skin, hair standing tangled out from my head, reflection intruding between my eyes and vision. Not to see myself but to see. I reverse the mirror so it's toward the wall, it no longer traps me".
>
> (*Surfacing* 203)

Her attempt to "clear a space" is not limited to the abolition of language and mirrors; she rips out one page from all the books and burns them as "to burn all through the words would take too long" (*Surfacing* 205) and breaks and tears up everything that belongs to the Symbolic order. As the protagonist becomes a part of nature, she gets closer to what Barthes distinguishes as the characteristics of *jouissance*: an action rather than a state (Barthes vi). Then she becomes a space which encompasses both; she now has a different language, a language of becoming, of flux, of fluidity:

> In one of the languages there are no nouns, only verbs held for a larger moment. The animals have no need for speech, why talk when you are a word. I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning…I'm not an animal or a tree, I'm the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow, I'm a place. (*Surfacing* 210)

When her friends come back to look for her, she is so immersed in her own language that she cannot recognize the language they speak; it is unknown to her: "They are talking, their voices are distinct but they penetrate my ears as sounds only, foreign radio. It must be either English or French but I can't recognize it as any language I've ever heard or known" (*Surfacing* 213). Unable to hold her laughter, she causes them to hear her, and as she runs away from them, their speech and language become a threat once more: "language ululating, electronic signals thrown back and forth between them, hoo, hoo, they talk in numbers, the voice of reason. They clank, heavy with weapons and iron plating" (*Surfacing* 214).

When the protagonist finally sees the visions of her mother first and then her father, she goes back to the Symbolic order, believing that she has been able to talk in the other language with her parents: "They were here though, I trust that. I saw them and they spoke to me, in the other language" (*Surfacing* 218). Trying to cure her melancholy with the vision of her mother and having another vision of her father, she experiences a rapture out of the Symbolic and a moment of *jouissance*, after which the Law of the Father is re-established. According to Lacanian theory, jouissance, especially the *jouissance* of neurotic symptoms "is a way of relating to the Other" (Braunstein 108) and the first Other one appoints to this position is the mother. Thus both by attempting to open a hole in the Symbolic and make a connection to the (M)other, the protagonist writes herself anew.

Kristeva argues in *Desire in Language* that it is useless to withdraw from language as it would marginalize the positioning of women in the society further and states that the subversion of language can be achieved only through the language itself. As Féral states:

> We must attempt to subvert the symbolic, not from the exterior by trying to function outside of it (even if that were possible, the only result would be a reinforcement of the dismissal [non-lieu] of woman), but from the interior by struggling against the repression of the maternal body, by permitting it to reemerge in order to break, to shatter all the structuring forms of law: we must attempt subversion of discourse as did Artaud, Celine, Brisset, Roussel, Saussure (with his anagrams), the subversion of all academism, all positivism, of mastery, of the body.... (10)

The protagonist, having realized the impossibility of rewriting her body without using language and re-establishing herself in the Symbolic, turns the mirror back to its previous position and stares at her image: "in it there's a creature, neither animal, nor human…eyes staring blue as ice from the deep sockets; the lips moving by themselves" (*Surfacing* 220). Her image as insane reminds her of the definition of sanity by the western epistemology: "To have someone to speak to and words that can be

understood: their definition of sanity" (*Surfacing* 220). The subject, encoded in the Symbolic and constructed by the Law of the Father, thus, is unable to tolerate the ones that are encoded differently: the ones that speak another language. The protagonist, aware of the *jouissance* she has experienced, is also aware that the alternative to her withdrawal "is death" (*Surfacing* 212). Therefore, she 'reenters' her 'own time' and starts considering going back to the city with Joe who has come back to look for her again. She does not move yet; she is in a limbo but she believes that she can trust Joe. She is aware of the fact that she will have to start to talk again. It includes talking to Joe, too, which, she believes, will fail sooner or later. The novel ends with Joe calling the protagonist's name and her not answering his call, yet.

The open ending of the novel offers multiplicity and difference as does the female body. *Surfacing* is "a feminine textual body" in the sense that it is without ending:

> There is no closure, it doesn't stop…doesn't finish…goes on and on at a certain moment the volume comes to an end but the writing continues and for the reader this means being thrust in the void"; as femininity, the feminine text is "written outside anticipation: it really is the text of the unforeseeable.
>
> (Cixous, "Castration" 489)

3.1.2. Language of Women and Silenced Tunes in *Indigo*

Both languages used in Warner's *Indigo*, the first which belongs to the twentieth century setting mostly in England and the second which is peculiar to the islands in the seventeenth century, show the importance of language not only for the formation of the subject but also for the relationships in society. The islanders' language carries the tones of a more maternal realm whereas the Western language of the colonizers embodies patriarchal and phallogocentric notions.

The middle section of the novel that covers the history of a century on the Caribbean islands depicts the islanders using a language that is closer to the maternal realm.

Sycorax, who "speaks in the noises that fall from the mouth of the wind" (*Indigo* 77) both when she's alive and dead, is a witch- Great mother archetype with supernatural powers. Jung states that Great mother archetype appears in almost infinite ways such as the personal mothers or the figurative ones, and has both positive symbols such as Earth Mother or mandala and Evil symbols such as the witch, the dragon, deep water, death or the sarcophagus (*Basic* 333). However, the meaning Sycorax bears changes according to the language in which she is heard: Though she carries the positive and the negative aspects of the mother archetype as Jung presumes; the symbols she evokes are subverted and the meaning she possesses changes in the language of science and reason which speaks and is spoken by the colonizers.

As Lacan points out, one is born into language and is spoken by it: s/he cannot perceive the world outside of the language on which her/his subject formation is based (*Ecrits Selection* 217). This subject, however, is formed by a language which is of phallocentric quality. It disconnects one from his/her authentic being by asserting the Law of the Father. However, it is far more repressing for women as it erases their body, their needs, their desires and their voice altogether:

> For as soon as we exist, we are born into language and language speaks (to) us, dictates its law, a law of death: it lays down its familial model, lays down its conjugal modal, and even at the moment of uttering a sentence, admitting a notion of "being", a question of being, an anthology, we are already seized by a certain kind of masculine desire. (Cixous, "Castration" 481)

Warner, aware of the phallocentric language which celebrates the male dominance, attempts to create new vocabulary with less dependence on logos which is more connected to nature. Therefore, the islanders who are foreign to the language of science are unable to say what happened to the drowned people whom the sea brings ashore. Most of the water logged bodies without extremities cannot be recognized even by someone who knows them. There are "particular gashes in them around their necks and ankles" and their flesh was "puffed up and festering in a manner drowning would never

inflict, but only earlier, direct hurts" (*Indigo* 79). Thus, these bodies can not be defined by the natives because the language they use does not have any phenomenon as such. Their language is rather endowed with images that can be traced back to the extra-linguistic realm: the imagery of colours, of water, of movements, of natural phenomena. The vocabulary of the islanders' language is insufficient in signifying a process where some men from the other end of the world sail to places which they have no relation to, conquer them in the name of a God which approves such actions, kidnap people to make them work in their fields without discriminating between pregnant women and children and throw them overboard when they realize they are heavy or not "worth" carrying. However, they realize that their language has vocabulary which has "fourteen words for the way a crocodile moves its head… and ten words for the sound of the wind in the palms along the shore" (*Indigo 8*).

This language whose vocabulary and syntax are quite different than that of the colonizers also has different versions when it comes to men and women. Warner explicitly announces in *Indigo* that the islanders have a language reserved for women only; men's language is different and it has more to do with the manners to be taught. The language women use when they are alone is a language that is closer to nature, the animals, the senses: It is the same language Sycorax uses when she talks with the wind and Ariel uses when she talks with the animals. It is a language with a pattern of cyclical time and space.

Ariel, the Arawak girl who is mothered by Sycorax from the age of five, has learnt the language the native women speak. Ariel and Sycorax "spoke with the same intonation, in familiar counterpoint, they added words to the language they used together, which was reserved, according to the customs of Sycorax's people for women when they were alone" (*Indigo* 114). Ariel is also good at music: she keeps coming up with tunes and lyrics and she prefers songs over speech: "The girl did not speak much. She liked to sing, and was more gifted than Sycorax at inventing charms and tunes spontaneously" (*Indigo* 106). Ariel, who has learnt to communicate "with the same animation" (*Indigo*

114) as Sycorax, prefers to use rhythms and tunes to express her thoughts. Though the old witch and the little girl "moved to each other's rhythm" as they "lived intensely side by side intimacy" (*Indigo* 113), Ariel is the one who sings and Sycorax who talks. Sycorax moved by the silence of the girl, and listening to "the song that Ariel sometimes began to improvise to the rhythm of her fingers" while she's washing Ariel's hair, believes that deep inside the girl she's like a flint with hidden fire (*Indigo* 106). Cixous argues that women's writing and speech involve "that element which never stops resonating, which, once we've been permeated by it, profoundly and imperceptibly touched by it, retains the power of moving us – that element is the song: first music from the first voice of love which is alive in every woman" ("Laugh" 352). Ariel's songs are also the voice of the fire burning deep inside her soul; her way of expressing the silence of her loss, the narration of the rhythms of her body, the expression of her fears and excitements for the future, her way of writing herself. However, with the arrival of the colonizers on the island and with her acquisition of their language Ariel's body is erased and her voice is silenced forever.

Ariel, who becomes the object of desire for Kit Everard the moment he encounters her, shares the destiny of the island and also becomes a site to be colonized. Unsurprisingly, she is the first native to learn the language of the colonizers. She learns it, however, not from Kit but from a marginalized figure: Jack Esley from Southwark. This nineteen year-old boy who is the cook of the ship is the son of a Thames waterman. Ariel, therefore, speaks English "with the accent of Thames River rat" while Kit scolds her and tries to correct her accent "into proximate lady likeness" (*Indigo* 161). However, the more Ariel speaks the language of the colonizers, the more she gets alienated from her mother and herself. At first excited and bewildered by her sexual power over Kit, Ariel soon realizes how fatal the law he has brought to the island is. With her (M)Other mortally wounded, her son rejected, and her island to be destroyed by Kit, she begins to understand the heaviness of her loss. The feeling she experiences is almost the same as what Sycorax has gone through when Ariel left her to move out to her new tree-cabin: "A first feeling of loss stabbed her; she found she could not speak" (*Indigo* 119).

Paralyzed by the intensity of her loss, and mourning for that loss where lack will never be filled, Ariel, too, loses her voice:

> She no longer made up words: she had no more words, indeed it seemed to her she no longer owned a voice, but only a hollow drum for a head on which others beat their summons. And it had been so since the day that she had turned to leave Sycorax at the hot springs. (*Indigo* 173)

Ariel is unable to locate herself in the Symbolic order which is doubly alien to her because of causality and linear temporality in Kit Everard's language and her violation by the colonizers in that register. Deprived of motherly love due to her refusal to abort Kit's child and anxious about the future of the island, Ariel directs her attention to her baby, sometimes patting out a tune softly after feeding the baby and rubbing his back. Her withdrawal from the Symbolic order has to be broken when she communicates with Dulé in the language of visual signs for Dulé warns her in the language they sometimes use against the danger to come that night. Ariel, therefore, decides that it is time to kill Kit before the islanders' attack. She breaks her silence to woo Kit in order to make him eat the poisonous whelks, which fails due to her inability to hide her excitement. However, her re-entry to the Symbolic order has physical effects: "The return to speech and motion had cost Ariel so much that when Kit has gone, she choked and vomited from the pit of her belly until green bile came up and burned her" (*Indigo* 185).

This unsuccessful attempt is the last symbolic undertaking of Ariel narrated in the novel as the few records about her afterwards clearly state that she no longer uses language and even her voice except for a piece of tune:

> They remember that the guardians of the tree run back through time to the one who only sang and never spoke, who used to keep vigil by the tree, where the sorceress Sycorax (but they have forgotten the name) lies deep with her grave goods. To her daughter who came sometimes to weep silently and only opened her mouth to sing tonelessly after...well, after many things the details of which are best forgotten. (*Indigo* 211)

Ariel's withdrawal from language on a larger scale marks the fall of a symbolic signification system as understood from the journals of one Père Labat, a French missionary priest, who meets Ariel, "Mme Verard" as the islanders call her, when she was over a hundred years old: " She was the last person living to speak the language of the native islanders so it was a pity that she could no longer use her tongue, except now and then to rasp out a harsh fragment of a song" (*Indigo* 226).

3.2. Body Versus Mind and Nature Versus Culture

The female body has historically been an object whose boundaries are drawn by patriarchy and whose shape is limited by the fear of rape, pregnancy, immorality and violence. It has been a dark continent which is full of terror, mystery and danger. It *is* because it *lacks*. Women have always envied the penis which they would never have since the moment they realized its lack. As Irigaray points out "her lack of penis and her envy of the penis *ensure the function of the negative*, serve as representatives of the negative, in what could be called a *phallocentric* -or phallotropic- dialect" ("Another" 408). Therefore, the female body is the weaker leg of the Cartesian dualism, while the male stands for the stronger: the female body versus the male mind. The hysterical, the irrational versus the logocentric, the rational. The passive, the submissive versus the active, the assertive. However, feminist theorists reject this subordination and argue that neither women's body nor their mind is inferior to men's. Therefore, the associations of culture with mind and the body with nature are subverted by deciphering how patriarchy has objectified the female body and how it has subordinated women by labelling them as irrational, confusing, hysteric etc. French feminists draw attention to the special qualities of female body, decipher the negative associations that have been attached to womanly experiences such as childbirth, motherhood, menstruation, pregnancy etc., and subvert these hierarchies by subverting language itself. They try to use a more feminine language that is full of resonances of flow, fluidity, plurality, flux, and void. They avoid structures; they reject fixed truths

that are inscribed by the phallogocentric system. By attacking the phallus, they simultaneously attack the logos. They advocate continuity and they avoid rigid beginnings and ends. They celebrate nature and their bodies, and reject becoming the object of desires and language instead of subjects.

Warner and Atwood portray women characters that are very similar to "the woman" who can write her story through her body. Both writers employ women characters who have been oppressed by the Western epistemology and feel uncomfortable both in the social and the Symbolic registers. They have problems with what culture has imposed on them, and they are in search of a connection to their authentic Selves. Heroines of both *Surfacing* and *Indigo* are thus in a constant process of rewriting themselves, women's stories and their bodies.

3.2.1. Body and Culture in *Surfacing*

The binaries of culture/nature and mind/body play a crucial role in *Surfacing* where the protagonist's search for her missing father turns out to be a search for her missing connections with her body and nature. Not only because the protagonist is repressed in the Symbolic by the Law of the Father but also because she is oppressed by the patriarchal society and her former lover she experiences a split concerning her mind and body. Moreover, her memory is fragmented; she cannot make sense of the memories which surface to her consciousness now and then. The language she uses has also become alien to her and she is disconnected from the wilderness and the natural environment where she has grown up. Besides, she has become the object of desire of the male gaze which has passified her to the degree of a commodity which is not self-referential at all. The protagonist, whose unconscious is triggered by the images from the Semiotic, seeks refuge on the island in the middle of wilderness which welcomes her as she is. As the protagonist transgresses the boundary between culture and nature, she rewrites herself, reconnects to the maternal realm and closes the gap between her mind and her body which has been opened up by the patriarchy.

The Cartesian dualism has changed the perception of the body and the soul by demarcating forever the mind from the body as a distinct entity. It has imprinted itself in the Western epistemology. The mind and the body are not only turned to oppositions but also hierarchized: "Descartes rejects Aristotle's account of souls containing both rational and irrational elements; he replaces the Aristotelian soul with a dualism of rational mind and irrational body" (Anderson 118). The subordination of female body to the rational mind imposed on the protagonist causes her to experience a deep split in her personality which has had many effects on her behaviour. When she comes to realize this distinction, she speculates:

> The trouble is all in the knob at the top of our bodies. I'm not against the body or the head either: only the neck, which creates the illusion that they are separate. The language is wrong, it shouldn't have different words for them. If the head extended directly into the shoulders like a worm's or frog's without that construction, that lie, they wouldn't be able to look down at their bodies and move them around as if they were robots or puppets; they would have to realize that if the head is detached from the body both of them will die.
>
> (*Surfacing* 87).

Having recognized the working mechanisms of the Symbolic which other the female body inscribing on her the law of the logos, the protagonist regrets not having used her own language. She slowly realizes that she is unable to experience any emotion or understand the emotions she experiences because she has been shut up in her head, separated from her body. When Anna investigates about the way the protagonist feels due to Joe's cold attitude towards her after she rejected his marriage proposal, the protagonist reflects:

> I didn't feel awful; I realized I didn't feel much of anything, I hadn't for a long time. Perhaps I'd been like that all my life just as some babies are born deaf or without a sense of touch; but if that was true I wouldn't have noticed the absence. At some point my neck must have closed over, pond freezing or a wound, shutting me into my head; since then everything had been glancing off me, it was like being in a vase, or the village where I could see them but not

> hear them because I couldn't understand what was being said. Bottles distort for the observer too: frogs in the jam jar stretched wide, to them watching I must have appeared grotesque. (*Surfacing* 121)

The protagonist's split is not only apparent in her relationship with language, but also with her memories. The protagonist's unconscious, which is structured like a language in the Lacanian sense, is fragmented as is her language. The repressed material in her unconscious comes to the surface at odd times in fragments: she sent a postcard to her parents "after the wedding" (*Surfacing* 25), "when Madame lifts a cube of sugar" her husband intrudes putting his hand on hers (*Surfacing* 25-6), her parents "didn't understand the divorce" nor the marriage (*Surfacing* 31), her child which did not really belong to her, was her husband's as "he imposed it" onto her and she was of no use to him after it was born (*Surfacing* 37). The accuracy of the memories cannot be verified as what she seems to remember contradicts with what actually has happened. The protagonist, when she first returns on boat to her childhood home on the island in the wilderness, speculates about the dock as the boat approaches: "It is the same dock my brother fell off the time he drowned" (*Surfacing* 35). Her memory of his drowning, although it happened before she was born, is clear: "It was before I was born but I can remember it as clearly as if I saw it, and perhaps I did see it: I believe that an unborn baby has its eyes open and can look out through the walls of the mother's stomach, like a frog in a jar" (*Surfacing* 35).

The protagonist, thus, is aware of the fact that the Semiotic residues in the unconscious can pop out at times and affect the human psyche. In her case, this memory seems to be connected not to her brother's drowning but to the repressed memory of her child's forced abortion, which again has maternal connotations. Unable to differentiate the fictitious memories from the ones that were experienced, the protagonist gradually gets closer to her pasts, both the prenatal and the historical ones, as she spends more time on the island in the wilderness.

The island in the middle of the lake surrounded with water is of special importance in the novel is it stands for not only the protagonist's physical home but also for the mother's womb. Water imagery dominant throughout the novel is also connected to this symbol as well as symbolizing the flux in the female body. Water has always been associated with women and bodily writing due to its boundlessness, intensity and flow. It has also been substituted for the liquid that envelops the fetus during its development in the womb. Therefore, the protagonist, getting away from the land and spending more time in water, gets also closer to her prenatal memories. When the party reaches the village the protagonist lived in as a child, she contemplates: "Now I'm in the village, walking through it, waiting for the nostalgia to hit…but nothing happens" (*Surfacing* 19). However, as soon as she sails off in the lake, with the water embracing her from all sides, she starts to feel homesick: "The feeling I expected before but failed to come comes now, homesickness, for a new place where I never lived" (*Surfacing* 133). When the protagonist takes the party fishing, she states: "I stare into the water, it was always a kind of meditation" (*Surfacing* 72). She tries to meditate via water to reach her inner self, to regain the ability to have emotions which she has lost somewhere on the way. The protagonist, having repressed her bodily language and desires, experiences herself as half:

> I didn't know when it had happened. I must have been alright then; but after that I'd allowed myself to be cut in two. Woman sawn apart in a wooden crate, wearing a bathing suit, smiling, a trick done with mirrors. I read it in a comic book; only with me there had been an accident and I came apart. The other half, the one locked away, was the only one that could live; I was the wrong half, detached, terminal. I was nothing but a head, or, no, something minor like a severed thumb; numb. (*Surfacing* 124)

Estranged from her body, experiencing it like "a dead finger" (*Surfacing* 125), the protagonist attempts to make a connection with it via sexual *jouissance*, which she regards as a rescue: "In the night I had wanted rescue, if my body could be made to sense, respond, move strongly enough, some of the red light-bulb synapses, blue neurons, incandescent molecules might seep into my head through the closed throat,

neck membrane" (*Surfacing* 128). For the protagonist, the sexual *jouissance* is "something different, not a word but pure pain, clear as water, an animal's at the moment the trap closes. It's like death" (*Surfacing* 94).

However, as Joe needs to be rescued too, they do not touch each other and pretend to be sleeping. The *jouissance* the protagonist desires comes after the uncanny images she experiences: the hanged heron on the tree with beetles on it, stinking, and staring at her with its "mashed eye" (*Surfacing* 133), and the vision she has when she dives to find the rock paintings that her father was exploring. The uncanny encounter with her father's corpse under the lake enables another uncanny memory to surface: the memory of her forced abortion, the image of her murdered baby which she has confused with her almost drowned brother's memory. The outburst of this memory which has its roots in the Semiotic enables the protagonist to realize her mistake in letting the patriarchy decide for herself: "I could have said No but I didn't; that made me one of them too, a killer" (*Surfacing* 165). Recognizing herself to be the murderer of her authentic self, and also of her unborn baby, the protagonist turns to nature where, she realizes, she can find her murdered half. After diving deep into the lake where she has experienced her "true vision, at the end, after the failure of logic" (*Surfacing* 166), she takes off her clothes which, according to Maggie Humm, is associated "with the social script of femininity" by Atwood (137).

Only after the protagonist gives her clothes as an offering to nature does she begin to sense that the gap between her head and body is closing up: "feeling was beginning to seep back into me, I tingled like a foot that's been asleep" (*Surfacing* 166-7). The reconnection with her body changes the way the protagonist perceives things. When she goes back to the cabin after her vision and offerings, she realizes that she has started to experience things differently: "It [the cabin] was different; larger, as though I hadn't been there for a long time: the half of me that had begun to return was not yet used to it" (*Surfacing* 169).

The split between the head and the body that the protagonist experiences is related to the split between culture and nature stemming from the binarism prevailing in the Western epistemology. The associations of culture with the rational male reason and nature with the irrational female body are subverted in *Surfacing* where Atwood ironically associates culture with violence, senseless killing, unscrupulousness, abuse and death; and nature with rebirth, freedom, multiplicity, transformation and life. By employing this subversion of the binary oppositions between culture and nature, Atwood displays not only the enforcement of hierarchy but also the other side of the coin where the rational mind legitimizes any action as long as it serves for the phallogocentric agenda.

The issue of "Americans" is discussed throughout the novel from many different perspectives. Although it is necessary to note here that Atwood is highly concerned with the positioning of the Canadian identity against the American imperialism, the term "Americans" goes far beyond the criticism of national identity: "Americans" as the protagonist finds out throughout the novel is a nickname for culture for her. The spontaneous thought that crosses her mind when she and her friends find the hanged heron – "It must have been the Americans" (*Surfacing* 135) - shows the primary connotations "Americans" bear: destruction, showing off and murder. When the protagonist and her group run into them while canoeing, she keeps criticizing them for their "bland ignorance", which is their armour against anything, and for their "heads as empty as weather balloons" (*Surfacing* 147). The "Americans" are capable of doing anything as "there is nothing inside the happy killers to restrain them, no conscience or piety; for them the only things worthy of life were human, their own kind of human, framed in the proper clothes and gimmicks, laminated" (*Surfacing* 147). However, the "Americans" are not Americans as it turns out to be: they are Canadians who have assumed that the protagonist and her friends were Americans. The two parties start throwing jokes at each other and get intimate immediately except for the protagonist, who still has not changed her mind about the two men:

> But they'd killed the heron anyway. It doesn't matter what country they're from, my head said, they're still Americans, they're what's in store for us, what we are turning into. They spread themselves like a virus, they get into the brain and take over the cells and the cells change from inside and the ones that have the disease can't tell the difference… If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them, I was saying, you speak their language, a language is everything you do. (*Surfacing* 148)

The language of the "Americans" is the language of reason, that is the phallogocentric language which justifies violence over tolerance. After David accosts her and is rejected, he accuses her of hating men. The protagonist reflects: "I realized it wasn't the men I hated, it was the Americans, the human beings, men and women both" (*Surfacing* 176). Right after the protagonist runs away from her friends and declares that she no longer has a name, she dispossesses any kind of rational equation beside culture. Joe, Anna, David and Evans are "all Americans now" (*Surfacing* 195). The culture that is embodied in the "Americans" is therefore disowned by the protagonist who destroys any belonging of hers that bears a cultural reference such as books, ring, maps, pictures, photographs and clothes. However, after the rapture she experiences in the Symbolic, she comes to understand that even if she cannot fit in this phallocentric culture, she has to live with it: "They exist, they're advancing, they must be dealt with, but possibly they can be watched and predicted and stopped without being copied" (*Surfacing* 219).

One of the other main critical insights into culture employed in *Surfacing* is about the subordination of the female body to the male gaze. Laura Mulvey argues:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness.* (425)

Anna who works as a foil for the protagonist is the typical object for the male gaze: she has internalized her role and is ignorant of her position and exploitation. She wears make up all the time, and cannot dare to let her husband David see her without make-up claiming that “he does not want to see (her) without it” and then that “he does not know (she) wears it” (*Surfacing* 49). When she forgets to take her make up with her on their trip into the wilderness, she confesses to the protagonist that David uses physical or psychological power on her: “He watches me all the time, he waits for excuses. Then either he won't screw at all or he slams it in so hard it hurts” (*Surfacing* 141). The protagonist is quite critical of Anna whom she considers a second hand copy:

> Rump on a packsack, harem cushion, pink on the cheeks and black discreetly around the eyes, as red as blood as black as ebony, a seamed and folded imitation of a magazine picture that is itself an imitation of a woman who is also an imitation, the original nowhere, hairless lobed angel in the same heaven where God is a circle, captive princess in someone's head. She is locked in, she isn't allowed to eat or shit or cry or give birth, nothing goes in, nothing comes out. (191)

Accordingly, Anna’s husband David is the typical embodiment of the male gaze. He is the one who has come up with the idea to film their trip and he calls himself the director while he makes Joe do the camera work. His typical patriarchal obsession to direct, to lead, to know is deciphered by himself, too, when he tells that he and Joe are “the new Renaissance men” (*Surfacing* 10). The name of the movie will be “Random Samples”, or “Random Pimples” in Anna’s words, but when the protagonist questions the contents of the film, David, who stands for the eternal warrior of the status quo, patriarchy and the male gaze, ironically replies that the protagonist should be open to change and that what she needs is “flow” (*Surfacing* 11).

When the party goes canoeing to find the prehistoric Indian rock paintings, they come across a murdered heron hanging on a tree. David instinctively wants to film it as “it looks so great” (*Surfacing* 134). The question why a heron would be hanged like a lynch victim as well as the question why David and Joe want to film it as if it were

something delightful are answered by Atwood through the protagonist's voice: "To prove they could do it, they had the power to kill"(*Surfacing* 135).

The last victim of the male gaze exemplified in the novel is Anna. David orders Anna to undress her bikini to pose for "Random Samples" while they are on the dock sunbathing. When Anna refuses, David first insults her with his sexual remarks belittling her body: "Come on, we need a naked lady with big tits and a big ass" (*Surfacing* 154). Joe asks David to leave her alone if she doesn't want to, but David tells him to shut up as Anna is "his wife". Then he forces her physically: turning her upside down in the air and threatening to throw her into the lake, David makes Anna take off her top, and then her bottom to show her butts while Joe is filming. Humiliated and abused, Anna eventually shows her middle finger to them and jumps into the lake crying.

The protagonist, watching the scene from the house and choosing to stay invisible as she has always lost the battles she has fought so far, destroys the film reel later the next day when the men are not around. She unwinds it and throws it into the water as she speculates about Anna, who has "crystallized" since they filmed her naked body: "The machine is gradual, it takes a little of you at a time, it leaves the shell" (*Surfacing* 192). By destroying the film reels, the protagonist symbolically frees the woman's body from the male gaze. She watches as the film coils touch the sand under the water:

> The invisible captured images are swimming away in to the lake like tadpoles, Joe and David beside their defeated log, axemen, arms folded, Anna with no clothes jumping off the end of the dock, finger up, hundreds of tiny naked Annas no longer bottled and shelled. (*Surfacing* 192)

3.2.2. The Colour and the Voice of Women in *Indigo*

Indigo, Warner's successful attempt to rewrite Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, is also an attempt to narrate the story of the repressed through a female voice. The narrative of

Serafine, who opens the novel telling her version of the Midas myth to Miranda and who closes it telling a story about a tigress who is captured when she is playing with her image in a round mirror, is the sequel of Sycorax's voice and is an attempt to go beyond the boundaries that limit female voice and shape female experience. Her excellent storytelling ability with the use of her body language and with the way she transforms bad endings into good ones- she is associated with change in the very beginning of the novel by Miranda-, relates her to the act of changing the positioning of women in society. Williams-Wanquet states: "Serafine's stories are also fables that create a new feminine myth, calling out for change" ("Marina" 278). Heslett also argues that Feeny, as Miranda and Xanthe call her, is "the guide for Miranda" whose stories "point the way to a possible utopia for Miranda, and a counter-story to the family history she has heard all her life which centres on British male exploits and power" (182).

The colour imagery Warner uses to mark certain sections of the novel and the water imagery that prevails especially in the middle section where the island before the colonizers is narrated, are other mediums employed to offer a more feminine language as these images refer back to a space before the Symbolic register is formed. These images offer alternatives to the logocentric system, which has imprisoned the female body to a male-determined role, through its associations with an extra-linguistic realm. As Brînzaeu notes, *Indigo* "turns out to be both a wonderfully intricate amalgam of colours as well as a maze of narratives, arguments, and themes, where nothing is perfectly black or white" (12).

The colour imagery that names each part in *Indigo* is of importance in stressing the fact that the characters and the events narrated in the novel cannot be defined solely by the words that posit a strict sense of materiality. "Indigo/ Blue" part where the story of Sycorax, Dulé and Ariel is narrated, or "Orange/Red" part which stands for the story of Kit and his offspring Roukoubè as well as the conquest of the island by the colonizers have connotations that go far beyond what the words can say. Moreover, offering two

colours instead of one for each part, Warner highlights the fact that one colour is not ever enough to define the whole story and that there is always an alternative to truth. Cao Li suggests:

> To make the rewriting historically meaningful so as to suggest "history is sea," that is a constantly changing surface with capacity for interrogation, supplement and resounding of many voices, Warner structures Indigo along a colour-spectrum drawn from indigenous flora and fauna of the island, corresponding to the various stages of the story. (74)

In part one titled "Lilac/ Pink" where Miranda and Xanthe, Astrid and Gillian, Serafine and Gillian and the old Princess who becomes the Godmother of Xanthe are contrasted with each other, we see that although pink has sweeter and happier connotations than lilac, the wishes of the Princess for the little baby who is the embodiment of a "quintessential fairy tale princess" and the wishes of Miranda who is "a Cinderella figure" (Haslett 192) change the end of the fairy tale.

In Part four titled "Gold/ White" Warner tells the story of how pink (Xanthe) has turned to gold as would be expected with her golden complexion, high living standards and proper education and manners and how lilac (Miranda) realizes that she is not considered "musty" in different social settings. Miranda, left studying and working alone in Paris by her parents in one of their flees, begins to realize the difference of her inner as well as outer complexions and joyfully acknowledges that pink/gold are not the only colours to be accepted in places like Paris where the differences are celebrated.

Part five titled "Green/ Khaki" tells the story of Miranda and Xanthe's return to Enfant Béate for the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Englishmen's landing on the island. Xanthe and her husband Sy, who make huge investments on the island, build hotels and spas, cultivate oysters and make lots of money by getting the only gambling permit on the islands. The imperialist abuse that started on the green island with Xanthe's great grandfather thus has been continued by her green dollars until it is

stopped by the Muslim guerrillas (Khaki) that end up killing the Prime Minister. Atala Seacole, the granddaughter of Serafine, a former Union leader in England when she was studying there (Khaki), becomes the voice of the island, continuing the female tradition after Sycorax and Serafine and calling for change:

> If we are to survive we must replace the gambling dollar with another source of revenue, one which will do good to our people. We have to find something else- and you must support us, not undermine and break us...No- no more…The time has come for a change, my friends. (*Indigo* 375)

The last part of the novel "Maroon/Black" is a story of compromise as Miranda (Maroon), who has united with George Felix (Black) whose new African name is Shaka, has had a daughter whom they have named after Serafine. Jennifer Sparrow states that little Serafine "repeats the birth of Ariel's Roukoube, the novel's first mixed race child; however, rather than a "mongrel", reviled by both colonizer and colonized, this child of Europe and Africa holds the possibility of transcending the bitter divisions of the past" (186). She stands for the hope of erasure for both the victim/guilty and colonizer/colonized binarism and the victim/victimizer relationship between women and men. The colonized islanders' positioning changes in accordance with Miranda's: now having the chance to make themselves heard through Atala Seacole's voice, they attempt to rewrite their destiny on the island. In the last paragraph of the novel, Warner explicitly points that the noises of the island in Serafine's ears now as if she carries the mystical tradition she has inherited from Sycorax, will keep being narrated forever, only with the chance to be voiced by women who can change things.

The second and the third parts of the novel titled "Indigo/ Blue" and "Orange/Red" offer a subversive reading of the dominant discourse concerning the female body and gender roles as well as the animistic perception of nature. In "Indigo/ Blue" Sycorax and her townsmen are presented as the embodiments of the colours indigo and blue. Sycorax is physically covered in blue due to the dyeing of indigo, which she has produced more than a decade: her hands, her tongue, her skin and her eyes all represent

the colour she creates. However, she is immersed in blue spiritually, too: "The emptiness in which all things revolve is blue…Time was no other colour but blue, since distances were blue and water too" (*Indigo* 147-8). Blue, which is the colour of the sea and of the sky, is also the colour of multiplicity, flow, creativity and spirituality. Red, on the other hand, is the colour of Adesangé: the god of the volcano and the colour of the colonizer. Kit Everard, the red man, is associated with red not only for his physical qualities but also because of the destruction he has brought to the island. Red, the colour of fire, anger and destructive power is the colour Sycorax has forgotten for she has been entranced by the beauty of blue:

> Red was close to blue, Sycorax thought. When you looked up too long without blinking on a day when the sun was high and the blue saturated the sky evenly and deeply from the horizon to the zenith, and closed your eyes, what you saw then was fire, crisscrossed with rivulets of blood. (*Indigo* 147)

However, as she was too much indulged in the colour of nature, she forgot the colour of mind. The day she was in the springs with Ariel marks her enterance to the red realm in two ways: both stepping into a world of violent civilization and into fire which Kit and his men set to kill her. As Sycorax has failed to read the other colours, she is now being punished by Adesangé. Red is also the colour of Ariel's son Roukoube, as he is cursed by Sycorax to turn into "a small, red-furred beast with sharp teeth and sharper claws that will grow up a bear, a fox" (*Indigo* 171). The shift from the blue to red also marks the shift from nature to culture: as soon as the colonizers arrive on the island, they start to cut trees, build houses and start a trade. This colonial process is thus marked by red, which is also the colour of blood.

Apart from the "colours" that Sycorax and others are forced to transgress, there are some other boundaries that they transgress naturally. The gender roles in *Indigo* are subversive in the way that they are not determined by sex or by culture. Sycorax, who has enjoyed her sexuality freely with many man along with her husband, celebrated her body and the chances of *jouissance* when she was young:

> She was captivated and intrigued by herself, by the motions of her inner being, the extent of her powers, by the leaps and forkings of her wishes and the unpredictability of her pleasures and skills. As a young woman, she was undiscovered territory to herself, and her passions took her by surprise and delighted her (as well as leading to grief sometimes). (*Indigo* 107-8)

On the other hand, Sycorax is not gendered as a woman: she produces indigo, and makes a living out of it. She is the spiritual leader for most of her people; her body and her manners are completely manly and most important of all; she is the law maker for Dulé and Ariel as well as the other islanders who come to her for her advice. Therefore, although Sycorax generates the Law of the Mother, her position is quite similar to the Law of the Father as it is rather totalizing.

Dulé, the child of the sea, is also outside the mainstream in terms of the traditional gender roles: he is sent to learn the language of men when he is old enough, however, he can also speak the language of the women: "he was using the language of women to her, the language of food and animals and colours; words that were forbidden to young men" (*Indigo* 117). Moreover, he has created a dream language for himself "in a form of mimesis": "he stripped boughs and lashed them together for a light ladder, stood it up on one end on the shore and balanced it with the tips of his fingers, then set foot on the bottom rung…until the ladder swayed and fell" (*Indigo* 95). The feminine language Dulé has adopted and the dream language he has created not only challenge the traditional positioning of genders, but also reinforce the opposition that Warner reveals when the genuine identity of Dulé is compared to the Caliban he is turned into by the Western epistemology.

1. CONCLUSION

Myths, as other elements that belong to oral or written literature, have been under the control of patriarchy for centuries. Although the initial meaning of "myth" was derived from speech, it was changed to mean an irrational discourse when it was situated opposite of logos. However, this definition of myths does not change the fact that they have executed logocentric processes. Myths have been loaded with symbols, images and codes that represent the social, cultural and political agenda of the culture they inhabit. On the one hand, myths supply researchers with valuable information about how societies lived in the past: what they valued, what they feared, how they celebrated certain events, and/or why they differed from today's civilizations. On the other hand, and most crucially, they represent, in between the lines or when deciphered, how they have been used as a primary medium by the dominant discourse and how they have controlled the behaviours and attitudes of women and men: what we should value, what we should fear, how we should behave in certain circumstances and why we should differ from those in the past.

Among the researchers that concentrated on and explored myths and their origin, function and subject matter, the ones that stress their symbolic quality are of special importance as they also stress the vital relationship between myths and language, and therefore, unconscious. Following Freud and later Jung, whose studies about myth and archetypal images are among the most renowned and applied ones in many disciplines, some feminist groups both made use of and rejected certain aspects of these theories. Feminist Archetypal theorists, who agree that archetypal images might reveal a pattern of repeated experiences, radically differ from Jung as they reject the archetypes as fixed identities of the collective unconscious, arguing that any recurrent image can be an archetype. Along with the French Feminists who advocate *écriture féminine* and stress the binarism and hierarchization in the Western epistemology, Feminist Archetypal theorists object to the subordinate and pacified position of women in these myths and archetypes. Proposing an analysis of common images and issues in woman writers'

works, they argue that there is a possibility to rewrite myths and archetypes so as to voice genuine female experience.

The purpose of this study has been to explore the common archetypal images and subjects in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* and *Surfacing* and Marina Warner's *Indigo, or Mapping the Waters* and *The Leto Bundle*. Both writers employ myths and archetypal elements in their novels and rewrite the female experience that is usually contrary to what has been written or told by the male mythmakers. Emphasizing the restrictions, oppressions, and the hierarchization practiced by the patriarchy on women, they explore the alternatives to be used in rewriting female experience against the logocentricism that has prevailed in the West for centuries. Problematizing the centre and its substitutes, they try to undo the dichotomies that have been used to structure not only women's minds but also their bodies.

Following a short introduction about the content and aim of this thesis, the first chapter has given information about myths, the theories on myths and where this material is situated within the poststructuralist, feminist and Archetypal Feminist frames. Basic information about the writers and their works is also provided.

In the second chapter, the four books by both writers have been analyzed in relation to their problematization of certain notions such as origin, history, linearity, teleology, causality along with God, religious dogmas and images. Atwood and Warner demonstrate that official history is just another version of the many histories and is intentionally structured in the way it is so as to control, shape and silence women according to the needs and desires of men. By attacking origin, both writers display the slippery grounds on which the myth of origin as well as the myth of truth and the myth of home are situated. As narrated by the protagonist of Atwood's *Surafcing,* home is a "foreign territory" (12) in Atwood's and Warner's novels. In *The Penelopiad*, Atwood multiplicates the myth of Odyssey, subverts Penelope's role as a virtuous and devoted wife, questions the myth of sacred home by turning it into a house of deceit, lust and

massacre, questions the myth of justice besides the myth of gods and their efficiency, evaluates the events of the past with the sensitivity of the twenty first century. In *Surfacing*, she also attacks the phallogocentricism that prevails in Christianity. Warner on the other hand, demonstrates textuality of history in *Indigo* by rewriting Shakespeare's *The Tempest* from a woman's point of view and subverts the binaries of not only colonizer/colonized, man/woman but also divine/manly. In *The Leto Bundle*, she problematizes the origin and the divine by offering plural accounts of the life story of a 'Lady Noone'. By transgressing the linear and spatial temporality in both novels, Warner also applies her theory to her works.

In the third chapter of this study, language and body are the main concerns in relation to women's ability or inability to express their experiences. Language is problematized by both Warner and Atwood as its phallogocentric quality prevents women from establishing themselves in the Symbolic order. The dispossession of language by women is a current theme in both writers underlining that the silence of women is not caused by their ignorance, confusion or submission as has been claimed so far by the patriarchy. The discomfort in the Symbolic is presented by both writers employing elements that refer to the Imaginary order such as songs, colours, water imagery and animals and nature. The dichotomies between mind/body and culture/nature are also problematized in Warner's and Atwood's novels in which these binaries are either subverted or erased by employing a more bodily language: the heroines in both *Indigo* and *Surfacing* come closer to nature, get rid of patriarchal norms and rules and let their bodies flow. Although the former is named a witch and the latter a lunatic by patriarchy, these women allow themselves to celebrate the feminine *jouissance* and deny the traditional impositions that have been forced on them such as marriage, sacrifice, devotion, etc. Both Atwood's and Warner's characters are problematic concerning their gender, national identity or social positioning. The problematization of the Americans in *Surfacing* and of the British in *Indigo* go hand in hand with the enculturation process that stands as the stronger leg in the traditional culture/nature

dichotomy. However, both writers subvert this binary by associating culture with violence, pollution and murder while nature with feminine, flow and multiplicity.

To conclude with, both Atwood and Warner have practiced a promising mythmaking in these four novels. They have rewritten the female experience which has been restricted to a position either related to a man such as a wife, a mother, a sister, a daughter or defined by men such as a lunatic, a witch, a whore or a hysteric. They have deciphered the phallogocentric working mechanisms of the Western epistemology by problematizing the central notions. They have removed these notions from the centre to show their constructedness and hypocrisy. They have rejected the Jungian theory of archetypes as fixed, inherent, common images in the collective unconscious by portraying women with their ability and need to allow differences, pluralities, multiplicities, circularities, alternatives, ambiguities, tunes, *jouissance*, movements, and different voices as their common quality. Contrary to the divine figures, archetypal mothers, mythical witches or evil goddesses, the heroines of Atwood and Warner are strong women who listen to their bodies like Ariel or Penelope in the maids' portrayal, who stand up for their right like Atala Seacole or Phoebe, who engage with nature and the natural like Sycorax or the protagonist in *Surfacing*. Like Leto who has been raped by men- gods and human alike- for centuries for the sake of her children only to keep wandering to be able to exist, or Serafine, who has been taken away from her family and her home but has never stopped voicing women's stories, the heroines of both writers rewrite the female experience by crossing the older ones leaving their traces. They survive through the worst situations, saving their experiences to change sad stories of sad women into happy and promising ones, not only for themselves but also for those who are inspired by them. Like Leto who has changed the story of a raped and exiled titaness into a unifying female figure and an embracing mother image who has brought hope to many people who do not have fixed identities, or like Serafine who has the power to change the stories of jealous monsters into love stories and to transmit the past into the future, into Miranda and new Serafines, the female characters Warner and Atwood create carry the potential to write new stories out of the old ones.

The myth of the victimized woman or the binary victimizer/victim is undone by Atwood and Warner whose heroines never give up trying. One of the most important common patterns in their works is the new image of this independent woman who does not mourn over her victimization or colonization by men, by society or by his-story as in *The Penelopiad* or *The Leto Bundle* or by the colonizer countries such as America and Britain as in *Surfacing* or *Indigo*. Nor does this new woman archetype subvert the binaries in a way that legitimizes the weaker leg as the stronger, or let her feeling of guilt to pacify her, as in the case of Miranda. Warner and Atwood, aware of the poststructuralist tendency to question the effects as the causes, problematize the victimized woman myth and regarding it as a cause for the ever-going abuse, oppression and subordination of women, they rewrite the effect-cause to rewrite the cause-effect. By creating this new independent woman image, Warner and Atwood have dephallocentralized the body, opened a space for the female experience, voiced the unnamed, the muted and the colonized. Cixous once stated that a feminine text should "work on the beginning but not on the origin" and that should be "always endless, without ending" ("Castration" 488). Atwood and Warner achieve the bodily writing in voicing the female experience both through their writing and through their female characters who write and rewrite themselves, transgressing histories, spatial and temporal linearities, gender roles, national identities and cultures, laughing, singing, and colouring, becoming and coming their existences.

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