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Women's Autobiographies:
(Un)conscious Re-Presentations of Self and Mother

par

Patricia Ho

Département d'études anglaises

Faculté des arts et des sciences

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WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIES:
(UN)CONSCIOUS RE-PRESENTATIONS OF SELF AND MOTHER

Présenté par
PATRICIA HO

A été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:

Lianne Moyes
Directeur de recherche

Amaryll Chanady
Membre du jury

Jay Bochner
Président-rapporteur

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ABSTRACT

In their autobiographies, women depict their sexual identity as the continuing relations of the mother-daughter bond first developed in the pre-oedipal period. They represent their sexual development through multiple textual formation that reflects female identity as the plural relations of self with mother and other women. Just as the mother's face determines the daughter's reflection of the self in the mother in early development, the mother's body influences the daughter's textual representation of her sexual development in terms of maternal experiences. Thus, the various forms and subjects that make up the intertextuality of women's autobiographies evoke their intersubjective sexual relations. The diverse narrative structure comprising of research, interviews and oral and written testimonials of daughters and mothers in Friday's autobiography as well as the loose diary form of Chesler's maternity and the personal memoirs of Beauvoir's childhood demonstrate the multiplicity of the female autobiographical subject. The multidimensional form of women's representation textually illustrates their multiple sexual developments from menstruation, to sexual intercourse, pregnancy and childbirth.

Women's texts are shaped according to their own experience of female collective identity. Thus, their autobiographical texts demonstrate the concept of "relational selves" in Chodorow's object-relations psychoanalytic theory. Women represent the main question of the relations between gender and genre by illustrating the female "permeable ego" boundaries through the absence of textual boundaries. I explore women's life-writing from the feminist subject position, specifically from Cixous's concept of 'écriture féminine' which prizes women's writing of the female body and its expressions in order to counter patriarchal repressions of women's desires. Therefore, in the context of 'écriture féminine', women's autobiographical practice denotes subversive writing by crossing and blurring boundaries in the representation of sexual subjects and textual forms. Women writers challenge the unicity of phallogomorphic representation in a

coherent, unified and chronological narrative that delineates masculine identity as separate and different from the mother as the other. Women express the multiplicity and fluidity and their sexual identity through multidirectional forms of female (psycho)sexual-textual development.

Women's self-representation can be interpreted according to Irigaray's and Cixous's psychoanalytic feminist theories as a refusal of Freud's masculinist misrepresentation of femininity in female castration and female oedipal separation from mother. Beauvoir and Friday stress their desires for their mothers, and in this sense, support Irigaray's concept of women's representation of their relation to origin to counter Freud's notion of female castration which separates women from their origin by depriving them of their desires for the mother. Therefore, it can also be said that Beauvoir and Friday promote the refiguration of their mothers whose desires for sexual subjectivity come before maternal asexuality. Thus, they counter masculine disfiguration of women as castrated and lacking in personal desires according to Freud and Lacan who deem the phallus as the only sexual attribute of (male) desire. By the same token, maternal revaluation restores women from passivity and effacement by 'prosopopeia', the masculine trope of autobiography in Paul de Man's theory which, like Freud's bias against women, masks femininity with masculine representation of subjectivity.

Maternal identification, female interdependence and collective identity in women's life-writing represent the feminist autobiographical subject in opposition to masculinist discourse of individuation-separation from mother. Moreover, Chesler's re-presentation of motherhood as both intellectual production in public and physical reproduction in private questions the hierarchical binary opposition between male/female, mind/body, work in society/mothering at home. Thus, she strongly challenges the sexual division that privileges the superior term of the hierarchy as male attributes and consequently devalues femininity. Chesler, therefore, supports

Cixous's and Irigaray's protest against patriarchal oppression of women in Freud's valorization of the phallic male over the 'castrated' female. She reclaims maternal authority, agency and power in her defence of natural childbirth against male appropriation of birth in medical obstetrics. She re-presents maternity as female capacity for sexual reproduction, and for personal choice of childbearing, as well as the means of delivery. In her fragmented diary of motherhood, she delivers both her maternity and her text from male control over women's sexual-textual expressions of motherhood. Thus, women's autobiographical representation of their identity through the multiplicity and flexibility of female sexual-textual development offers a legitimate alternative to representations of femininity through rigid phallic forms of separation-individuation and hierarchical sexual polarization.

RÉSUMÉ DE THÈSE

L'identité féminine dans les autobiographies des femmes se caractérise par la relation mère-fille qui se prolonge après la période initiale pré-oedipienne. Les relations multiples des femmes avec leurs mères et avec les autres femmes sont reflétées dans la formation de leurs textes. La grande variété des sujets et des structures qui forment l'intertextualité des autobiographies reflète les relations intersubjectives des femmes. Les différentes formes textuelles démontrent la diversité du sujet féminin par la recherche, les entrevues, les témoignages verbaux et écrits des mères et des filles dans l'autobiographie de Nancy Friday, le journal en fragments de Phyllis Chesler et le mémoire personnel de Simone de Beauvoir. Ces textes multidimensionnels expliquent les développements sexuels des femmes dans leurs menstruations, leurs rapports sexuels, leurs enceintes et leurs accouchements.

La formation de l'identité collective féminine démontre le concept des êtres "en relation" avec les autres dans la théorie psychanalytique de Nancy Chodorow. Les autobiographies illustrent, par l'absence de limites entre les textes, l'égo perméable des sujets dans leur formation sexuelle et textuelle. J'entreprends ma recherche des autobiographies de femmes du point de vue féministe de Hélène Cixous dont le concept d'écriture féminine met en valeur le corps féminin et ses expressions de désir. Ceci a pour but de libérer les désirs des femmes par le dépassement des bornes dans la représentation du caractère sexuel-textuel des femmes. Les écrivaines contestent la forme unie and chronologique de l'identité masculine par la représentation de la multiplicité et la fluidité de l'identité féminine dans les directions multiples des formes variées.

La représentation des femmes peut être interprétée selon les théories psychanalytiques de Luce Irigaray et de Hélène Cixous qui refusent la considération Freudienne de la castration féminine et la séparation oedipienne à la mère. Beauvoir et Friday expriment leurs désirs pour leur mère et ainsi, elles donnent leur appui à Irigaray qui suggère aux femmes de décrire leur

relation d'origine à la mère afin d'opposer la castration féminine qui enlève aux femmes leurs désirs maternels. Ces filles s'engagent dans la refiguration des femmes-mères en les décrivant comme femmes avec désirs et non comme mère asexuelles. Donc, elles s'opposent à la disfiguration des femmes par la castration et le manque de désir dans les théories de Freud et de Lacan qui considèrent le phallus en fonction du désir exclusif de l'homme. La revalorisation maternelle sauve les femmes de la passivité et de l'effacement de soi causé par 'prosopopeia', le trope autobiographique masculin dans la pensée de Paul de Man qui, comme la mésinterprétation de Freud par rapport à la sexuation des femmes, cache la féminité par la représentation du sujet masculin.

L'identification à la mère, l'interdépendance féminine et l'identité collective dans la représentation des femmes montrent que le sujet féminin s'oppose au discours masculin à propos de la séparation à la mère. De plus, Chesler refuse la hiérarchie des oppositions polaires entre mâle/femelle, corps/tête et intérieur/extérieur en décrivant sa maternité par la simultanéité de production intellectuelle en public et reproduction physique en privé. Elle remet en question le concept de la supériorité de l'homme phallique par rapport à l'infériorité de la femme "castrée". Chesler réclame l'autorité et le pouvoir maternel pour son accouchement naturel tout en dénonçant la prise en charge par des hommes de la médecine obstétricale. Par sa maternité, elle confirme sa capacité de reproduction, sa décision de devenir enceinte et son choix du moyen d'accouchement. Elle libère son identité et son autobiographie du contrôle masculin de l'expression de la maternité des femmes. Donc, la représentation de l'identité féminine par la multiplicité et la flexibilité des sujets et des formes autobiographiques critique l'inefficacité de la mésinterprétation de la féminité d'après la forme rigide phallique de l'individualisation par la séparation à la mère et par l'hiérarchie de l'opposition sexuelle.

INTRODUCTION

Women's life-writing features in the wider context of self-representation as an alternative discourse that challenges dominant masculine (mis)representations of femininity. Women's autobiographies, as the writing (*graphia* in Greek) of the life (*bios*) by the self (*autos*), express women's own life experiences and break with the conventional discourse of (male) subjectivity.

My analysis reflects Sidonie Smith's view that

[d]uring the past five hundred years, autobiography ... of the West ... serves as one of these generic contracts that reproduces the patrilineage and its ideologies of gender. Women who do not challenge those gender ideologies and the boundaries they place around woman's proper life script, textual inscription, and speaking voice do not write autobiography. (*A Poetics of Woman's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation*, 44)

In my reading, I show that women's language of the self disrupts the patriarchal discourse of subjectivity in Sigmund Freud's and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory and Paul de Man's theory of autobiography. Women transcend the male *genre* (which in French denotes both the literary form *and* the sexes) through a re-presentation, that is, a new presentation, of female sexual identity. I analyse women's writing in a variety of mediums such as the diary, the memoirs, as well as the feminine autobiography to explore women's textual development of their (psycho)sexual identity. Feminine *formulations* of the self, I argue, put into question the male form of autobiography as a unique genre.

In my work, I examine both conscious and unconscious notions of women's self-expressions which challenge male repression of female desire. For this reason, I situate my thesis in the theoretical framework of the psychoanalytic account of the subject's identity formation in order to develop an effective critique of the male bias in Freud's theory expressed in his essay on "Femininity".

My thesis is a psychoanalytic feminist reading of women autobiographers' representation of their sexual identity in terms of the maternal subjectivity. The main focus of my argument is, in the first section, the daughter's revaluation of the mother's sexual agency and, in the second section, a feminist mother's interpretation of her sexual experience of motherhood. In my discussions of women's autobiographies, I adopt the psychoanalytic approach of Luce Irigaray's and Hélène Cixous's feminist theories for the outright challenge they present to Freudian and Lacanian misinterpretations of femininity. Their alternative discourse of female psychosexuality offers me a means of understanding and describing women's life-writing.

Throughout my thesis, I read autobiographical feminist theory, specifically that of Leigh Gilmore and Laura Marcus, in conjunction with psychoanalytic feminist theory. My aim is to position women's autobiographical projects in relation to the autobiographical feminist discourse and psychoanalytic feminist theories in order to counter the theoretical constructs of identity by Paul de Man, Freud and Lacan. The feminist theories disrupt the masculinist approach to (female) identity formation. They enlighten my presentation by providing the theoretical ground on which to build my central argument: how women autobiographers construct textual representations of their sexual identity from the perspective of autobiographical and psychoanalytic feminist discourses. Through a reading of the autobiographic feminist discourse from the psychoanalytic feminist perspective, I illustrate that women's self-representations challenge masculinist views of the self in men's autobiographical and psychoanalytic misrepresentations of femininity.

For this purpose, I have chosen Simone de Beauvoir's *Memoirs of A Dutiful Daughter* (1958), *A Very Easy Death* (1964) and Nancy Friday's *My Mother/My Self* (1977) for my analysis of the daughters' autobiographies. In the second section, I examine Phyllis Chesler's autobiography of motherhood entitled *With Child: A Diary of Motherhood* (1979). These authors and their books have been selected to show how, in their life and in their work, they challenge masculine concepts of femininity. These women autobiographers' in-depth exploration of feminine subjects such as the mother-daughter relations and motherhood facilitate my study of women's identity and its representation. Although belonging to different geographical and historical milieux and epochs with dissimilar socio-cultural values, they create a new textual identity that transcends the feminine sexual condition in life and in literature.

In the first section, I compare and contrast Simone de Beauvoir's and Nancy Friday's re-interpretation of (their own and the maternal) feminine sexual identity. Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), who was born and raised in the Parisian bourgeois society, describes in her (first) autobiography of childhood and adolescence her struggles for independence and freedom from the prescribed feminine duties of marriage and motherhood. In her *Memoirs*, she recounts her development into an intellectual, a teacher, and a writer as unusual accomplishments which have allowed her to attain higher education formerly reserved for men only, and to establish her place in the professional world. Thus, she refuses the feminine condition of subservience to husband and self-sacrifice to family which her mother has bitterly accepted. Her autobiography marks a strong rejection of social and literary norms of a world that favours men and oppresses women. Therefore, her self-representation becomes a manifest challenge to masculinist views of the privileged self in the subordination of women. Written after her monumental work entitled *The*

Second Sex which explores in great detail women's social condition, *Memoirs* depicts her personal determination of creating and living a different female sexual experience.

Even though Beauvoir narrates her growing detachment from the values represented by her parents, she still unconsciously holds their views. Following her wish to enjoy men's privilege of freedom, she relives her father's libertine ways through her own adventures in bars. Just as her father has debased himself with the loud, vulgar public talk of the common working-class, Beauvoir personifies the daring prostitute by engaging in verbal and physical quarrels with another "slut" played by her sister (nicknamed) Poupette. In her depiction of the separation from her mother's strong hold on her emotions and on her religious faith, is her paradoxical acknowledgement of maternal identification. Her loss of the Catholic faith seriously upheld by her mother does not lessen her moral views of the virtue of chastity and purity over raw sex in marriage. Moreover, inasmuch as her writing is a declaration of separation and independence from her mother, it nevertheless displays her strong attachment to the mother of her childhood and her adult years. Her reunion with her dying mother testified in *A Very Easy Death* alleviates her resentment felt towards her socially embittered, domineering mother. She depicts her weeping as an uncontrollable burst of compassion for her mother's sad married life. She identifies with her mother and her suffering during her last days in the facial expression of the downturned lip which reminds her of her youthful mother's anger at her childish mischief. As an adult and as an independent woman, Beauvoir reassesses her mother's autonomous identity after her father's death. Thus, she has accorded to her mother an alternative image of a fully independent woman to remove the earlier marks of maternal disfiguration and subjection in patriarchal society. Therefore, her re-vision of her mother as an autonomous woman with

personal desires and pursuits reflects her own achievement of liberation from female subordination.

In a similar way, Nancy Friday (1937 -), an American writer exploring women's sexual identity, confirms her maternal identification amidst her attempts at individuation/separation from her mother. In her writing, she delves into the socially prohibited and repressed mother-daughter intimate relations. She openly discusses women's socially silenced sexual desires and fantasies in her book *The Secret Garden* (1973). *My Mother/My Self* (1987, 1977) illustrates her engagement in the mother-daughter attachment as the daughter's understanding of her sexual identity. Friday shows that women's concept of their individual self is intricately connected to the feminine sexual identity shared with their mother and other women. In her depiction of the female collective identity, she shows that most women experience their sexual formations from menstruation to marriage, pregnancy and motherhood as the continuation of the mother-daughter relations of love, warmth and intimacy. In her effort to forge her own identity by differentiating herself from her mother's conservative personality, Friday denies any similarity between self and mother. However, by the end of her book, she confirms her sexual identity in her maternal identification. Somewhat like Beauvoir, Friday re-presents her mother's life in a totally different image from the feminist perspective of the female subject. She ultimately re-portrays her mother and grandmother as sexual agents with active desires and decisions, not mere women submitting themselves to their husbands' will and desire. In her narration of her mother's elopement and her grandmother's separation from her grandfather, she establishes her own sexual identity by way of a strong maternal genealogy. Thus, Friday's portrayal of self and mother challenges patriarchal domination over women as objects of men's sexual desires.

Phyllis Chesler (1940 -) is a psychologist, a writer and a lecturer who analyzes women's social status. She has written *Women and Madness* (1972) and *Sacred Bond: The Legacy of Baby M* (1988). In her book *With Child: A Diary of Motherhood*, she clearly articulates the maternal condition in the context of patriarchal social expectations of women-mothers. Chesler establishes maternal authority in her diary writing of maternity. She demonstrates sexual agency in her personal decision to become a mother. She, therefore, re-presents her own experience from the common feminine acceptance of motherhood as the inevitable outcome of marriage. Moreover, Chesler overcomes the constraints of maternity as the condition of women's subordination. She asserts her liberty over her physical and intellectual activity by working throughout her maternity. Thus, she defies social expectations and misogyny in the confinement of mothers at home.

Reclaiming maternity as a feminine experience of mother and child from the patriarchal reduction of woman to a mere womb, she defines natural childbirth as the spontaneous pains and joys of delivery against contrived medical obstetrics. In her diary addressed to the baby developing within her womb, she communicates the conscious and unconscious expressions of the feelings of her body in direct contact with her fetus. She depicts the close union of self with child throughout her pregnancy, even during sexual intercourse with her husband.

Her choice of maternity changes her subjectivity as a woman forever. Never again recovering her former identity, she has become a different woman(-mother) physically and mentally. She experiences her new subjectivity as a simultaneous duality: a working woman **and** a nursing mother. In her close connection to her newborn child, she exists and lives in both the child's and the (adult) mother's worlds. Caring for and playing with her baby, she identifies

with her child who brings back past memories of her own childhood.

* * * *

Paramount to my analysis is the issue of the mother-daughter attachment termed the 'pre-oedipal' in Nancy Chodorow's object-relations theory of psychoanalysis. The pre-oedipal symbiotic relation between mother and daughter, according to Chodorow, arises from the daughter's specially close relation to the mother during early nurturance. Unlike the son who separates from the mother and identifies with the father at the oedipal stage (around about three years of age) under the threat of castration by the father, the daughter is not compelled to differentiate from the mother and therefore, continues to experience an intimate relation with her.

My own reading entails a critical view of the Freudian notion of the oedipal accepted by Chodorow. Unlike Chodorow, Irigaray questions Freud's theory of the daughter's oedipal separation from the mother based on the male oedipal process of individuation. Likewise, Cixous testifies to her deep attachment to her mother in her autobiographical writing entitled *Coming to Writing*. My argument is based on Irigaray's and Cixous's defence of the pre-oedipal as the mark of women's identity against Freud's faulty assumption of the female oedipal rupture of the mother-daughter bond.

Similar to Freud, Lacan views individuation as division from the mother when the infant recognizes in its mirror-image (at about six months of age) that it is separate and different from the mother who is the other. I take up Irigaray's and Cixous's contestation of the Lacanian notion of the Mirror-Phase individuation in my interpretation of women autobiographers' depiction of their complete fusion with their mothers. Developing Chodorow's theory of mother-daughter reflexive subjectivity in the maternal face, I further argue for the daughter's mirroring

of the (m)other in her *self*-representation.

My aim is to give a psychoanalytic feminist counter-argument to Lacanian schism of *self* from (m)other in women's representations of their pre-oedipal tie with their mothers. I demonstrate that Beauvoir and Friday, rather than considering themselves separate from their mothers, confirm their early merge with their mothers in the maternal face that mirrors both mothers and daughters in their mutual feelings. Moreover, these women promote a continuous view of the pre-oedipal in their adult life through an autobiographical-photographic feminist discourse of their mothers. They challenge Lacan's concept of the mirror-image as division of *self* from (m)other with a narrative of *self* as a reflection on/of the photographic image of the *mother*. Their photographic discourse of the mother's image re-enacts the pre-oedipal in their mirroring of the *self in their mother's face*.

My study of women's autobiographies concentrates on the similarities between the pre-oedipal of American theory and *écriture féminine* of French feminist theory. Both theories assert women's language as the expression of the unconscious. With the specificity of this feminine discourse, I seek to dismantle Lacan's support of Freud's theory of separation/individuation through language. According to Lacan, men gain access to the symbolic realm of language as phallic subjects capable of self-representation whereas women are reduced to castrated objects and consequently, are condemned to silence and non-representation. In this context, I argue that women's self-representation rejects Lacan's repression of female subjectivity in language; in fact, women are not condemned to silence and non-representation. What is more, the pre-oedipal, as the pre-linguistic mother-daughter communications through bodily rhythms and the maternal face, is the hallmark of female identity long before the child's acquisition of language. Therefore, the

maternal discourse of the pre-oedipal in Beauvoir's and Friday's autobiographies refutes the patriarchal discourse of the oedipal in the language and law of the father according to Freud and Lacan.

Écriture féminine represents women's writing of their bodies and of the unconscious female desire repressed in the language of (masculine) identity. As upholders of *écriture féminine*, Irigaray and Cixous exhort women to establish their subjectivity in language through the writing of their bodies. Similar to the pre-oedipal, *écriture féminine* enables women to represent their relation to origin in the mother and to defy Lacan's theory of language deterring women's subjectivity.

* * * *

The maternal face acts as the pivotal point of many theoretical concepts and critical re-appraisals presented in my work. The daughter's autobiographical return to the mother in the pre-oedipal reflection of the mother's face is simultaneously the unconscious return of her desire for the mother expressed in *écriture féminine* advocated by Irigaray and Cixous. Moreover, I place my reading of the maternal face at the intersection of Leigh Gilmore's criticism of specularity in Paul de Man's theory of autobiography and Luce Irigaray's critique of specula(riza)tion in Freud's views on femininity.

I consider the mother's face that features in women's autobiographies as a feminist rejection of de Man's discussion of *prosopopeia*, the trope of autobiography that, while conferring a face and a voice to a lifeless object, paradoxically *defaces* it. As Leigh Gilmore comments, de Man's epitaphic reading of autobiography does not accord autonomous subjectivity to women; it renders them mute by speaking for them. According to my interpretation, the

figuration of both the mother and the daughter in women's life-writing disrupts the dis-figuration of the feminine self in de Man's death-bearing system of representation. Women oppose the discourse of self-effacement imposed on them by representing the mother's *face* -- which is termed *la figure* in French. Thus, the mother's face acts as the negation of the negative discourse of feminine *disfiguration* or *defacement* evoked in Paul de Man's essay "Autobiography as De-Facement" (my emphasis). Beauvoir and Friday counter de Man's discourse of *prosopopeia* with a refiguration of the maternal subjectivity that confirms women's sexual agency.

Moreover, the daughter's view of the self and the mother in the autobiographical and photographic feminist discourses challenges men's reflection of the self in de Man's concept of specularity in autobiography and Freud's theory of femininity from male specularization. Friday projects her own re-vision of the maternal-feminine self from the feminist perspective of the female I/eye that disconcerts the oculo-centrism of the male point-of-view. This re-presentation exposes the specularization denounced by Irigaray in Freud's theory as a direct consequence of his mirroring the male sexual model in his assumption of women's castration and their oedipal break with the mother. Similarly, Cynthia Chase speaks out against the negative impact on women who, in the specular moment of men's self-reflexion, are somehow blotted out. However, the daughter's re-reading of maternal agency disproves the masculine (mis)interpretation of the feminine image as castrated, as the opposite of the phallic male.

From my analysis of the specular and specularized male systems of representation, I deliver a critique of Freud's "error of superimposition" (Gallop, 68) through an examination of de Man's notion of the alignment of two subjects in autobiography. De Man asserts that

autobiography is a mode of reading whereby two subjects reflect each other during the specular moment. De Man's theory of autobiography reveals, according to Laura Marcus, that autobiography (as male self-reflection) or biography masks itself as autobiography and thus, projects a reading of the male self onto female identity. In this way, de Man's notion of specularity reflects Freud's specularization of masculine sexuality in his theory of femininity. By the same token, it can be said that Freud's "error of superimposition", that is a (mis)reading of two sexes as the one male sex, is displayed in de Man's revelation of the autobiographical moment as the alignment of two subjects. Thus, in de Man's specularity and Freud's specularization, women are (mis)represented from the **view** of masculine sexual identity. Therefore, I consider Beauvoir's and Friday's reclamation of their sexual identity as the smashing of men's mirror of self-reflection.

Women's autobiographical self-representation opposes both de Man's language of privation and Lacan's symbolic system of language which perpetrates the suppression of women's identity. In de Man's autobiographical discourse of language as the garb and not the soul itself, women's agency is obliterated in *prosopopeia*, the symbolic garb that cloaks women's selves in a passive identity. In Freud's and Lacan's configuration of the subject in language according to the oedipal and the castration complexes, women are relegated to passive objects of male desire and are therefore, rendered incapable of representing their own desires. But I argue that Beauvoir and Friday confirm feminine sexual agency in the narrative of their mothers' and their own expressions of desire.

* * * *

The overarching theoretical framework of my entire analysis of women's autobiographies is a psychoanalytic feminist critique of the male discourse of *individualism*. I examine Leigh Gilmore's autobiographical criticism of individualism jointly with Jessica Benjamin's psychoanalytic critique of (masculine) individualization. Gilmore faults de Man's (masculine) autobiographical language of (female) disfiguration because, in her words,

[t]hrough the political discourse of individualism, the privileged *I* stands in for you and for me so many times that its interests and trajectory in the social world represent our desire. (75)

She protests against the autobiographical theory that blots out women's subjectivity with a discourse of individualism reflecting exclusively male sexual identity and desire. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Jessica Benjamin defines individualization as

... male individuality ... [which] grows out of the repudiation of the primary identification with and dependency on the mother. That leads to an individuality that stresses, as Nancy Chodorow has argued, difference as denial of commonality, separation as denial of connection; and that is made up of a series of dualisms, of mutually exclusive poles, where independence seems to exclude all dependency rather than be characterized by a balance of separation and connection. (80)

Both autobiographical and psychoanalytic (masculinist) theories of individualism show the domination of the male subject in his desire to impose his individuality on the (maternal) feminine. However, Irigaray's and Cixous's feminist theorists of the pre-oedipal mother-daughter relations support Jessica Benjamin's critique of the masculine experience of individuation. They challenge Freudian and Lacanian assumptions of separation from the mother as the goal of development. Like Benjamin, Irigaray and Cixous defend female sexual identity in early maternal identification against the misrepresentation of the (male) repudiation of maternal connectedness in paternal identification at the oedipal stage.

This thesis examines women's autobiographies from the perspective of Irigaray's and Cixous's refusal of Freud's and Lacan's idealization of the penis/phallus as the sexual authority over the (female) subject. In chapter one of the daughters' autobiographies, I demonstrate that Beauvoir's and Friday's representations of their desire for the mother denounce the father's phallic separation of daughter from mother. Their maternal identification disproves Freud's theory of female oedipal rejection of the mother in the daughter's penis envy and identification with the father. Moreover, the daughters' re-presentations of their mothers as sexual agents who express their own desires demolish the dominant misrepresentation of women as objects of men's desire. Women autobiographers illustrate Irigaray's and Cixous's rejection of Freud's phallogocentric theory of femininity - as lacking the penis - that gives men the privilege of asserting their desire.

Resisting the phallus as the principle of mother-daughter separation, women autobiographers further challenge the phallic law of sexuality and of representation. In their writing, Beauvoir's and Friday's maternal identification illustrates women's expressions of their desires in an alternate form and content that subvert the phallic system of representation. Women's representation of their subjectivity disrupts the phallic order functioning as the universal signifying system governing (yet denying) sexual difference. As Irigaray has explicitly discussed in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, the specificity of feminine sexuality marks the failure of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theories of the phallic law. My interpretation of women's textual construction of their sexual identity is inspired by Shari Benstock's view that "feminine sexuality ... figures the Law of the Phallus as an inevitable transgression of its order, its excesses pointing to an-Other order" (16). Like Benstock, Irigaray maintains that women's

representation of their gendered subjectivity occurs outside the psychic law of the phallus which defines sexual difference and the symbolic order (and which assigns the sexual position to the male subject). In my own reading, I show that Beauvoir's and Friday's representations of their unconscious desires escape/bypass the phallic law of (self-)representation. I demonstrate that, with what Irigaray terms the excess of feminine sexuality, women autobiographers overthrow the phallic law as the law of sexual representation in language. As Benstock clarifies, the Law of the Phallus implies the Law of Genre due to the (unconscious) structuring of the symbolic order by the phallic signifier of sexual meaning. Unlike masculine representations of feminine lack, women's re-presentations of femininity exceed genre definition in terms of the phallic signifying system.

I read women autobiographers' textual-sexual inscription of self as a development of genre according to the feminine gender. My analysis focuses on feminine textual structures which are derived from women's psychosexual evolution and which challenge the conventional law of genre according to the psychic law of phallic division. The "permeable ego boundaries" of Chodorow's object-relations theory (*The Reproduction of Mothering*, 93), depicted by Beauvoir and Friday in their close interaction with their mothers, illustrate the possibility in women's writing of trespassing the strict law of genre which prohibits genre mixing. As Derrida suggests, the Law of Genre shows an inevitable violation of the limits of genre. This can be perceived from Lacan's acknowledgement of feminine *jouissance* (sexual pleasure) as an excess of phallic *jouissance* in his understanding of the double structure that paradoxically makes up the phallic order of representation and surpasses it. According to Benjamin, women's alternate structuring of the psyche promotes the "intersubjective mode" of representation (92). The

interconnectedness of self with mother and other women is illustrated in women autobiographers' intertextual representations of the self. With their multiple subjects and forms of representation enacting the intertwining relations of feminine self with others, the narrative of Beauvoir and Friday illustrates what Derrida calls the "principle of contamination" of the (phallic) law of representation. Beauvoir incorporates Zaza's letters in her own autobiography and, as Lisa Appignanesi suggests, unconsciously re-presents her mother's wish of marrying her cousin. However, she repeats her mother's failure in her own unrequited love for her cousin Jacques, the son of the man who also marries another woman for her dowry. Thus, women autobiographers express their conscious/unconscious desires in feminine forms of representation which manifest their capacity for connection and agency. Nancy Friday re-presents the mother-daughter relations in her autobiography through an innovative assimilation of women's oral and written testimonies, interviews, research, and expert/professional information. She depicts the plural views and subjects of the feminine self in a collective entity of simultaneous personal identity and group interaction. The multiple angles of representation in Friday's autobiography delineate feminine plural sexual *formations* in menstruation, marriage, pregnancy and motherhood as different facets of intimate relations between mothers and daughters. Therefore, women's writing demonstrates the flexibility and permeability of women's *jouissance* which excessively surpasses phallic representation of desire and pleasure. Friday's multi-layered narrative, patterned according to recurrent developments in the mothers' and the daughters' sexual cycles, challenges the inadequate representation of femininity according to the linear development of masculine sexuality. Beauvoir brings a (dis)solution to the teleological narrative structure by staging the climax to her autobiography at the start as a challenge to conventional development,

peak and closure of masculine sexual pleasure. From her resolution to shape her narrative according to the open form of feminine development, she demonstrates her escape from the masculine system of representation in her own expression of autonomous sexual and literary agency. Thus, Beauvoir's and Friday's autobiographies express the possibility of re-presenting the space-time of feminine sexuality that is unrepresented and unrepresentable in phallic representation. Moreover, women's writing shows not only psychic textuality but also "psychic textures" according to Benjamin. I make use of Benjamin's concept of "the relation of language laws to psychosocial symbolic construction of gender" (*Textualizing the Feminine*, 17) in my evaluation of Friday's incorporation of emotions in her autobiography. Friday's metonymic representation of feminine *jouissance* evokes the fluid and flexible construction of women's relations to (m)other(s) in a horizontal structure of language in contrast to the metaphoric organization of phallic desire according to a hierarchical system of representation. Friday demonstrates Irigaray's view of the psychoanalytic language of metonymy in women's expression of their overflowing unconscious emotions as a challenge to the containment of the solid and rigid form of phallic representation. Thus, she displays the metonymic eruptions of women's emotions in language as the disruptions of the hierarchical structure of phallic *jouissance* suppressing feminine desire.

In the section on the mother's autobiography, I discuss Phyllis Chesler's exploration of her sexual experience of maternity in the context of Cixous's psychoanalytic feminist critique of the binary oppositions resulting from Freudian and Lacanian theories of the phallic/castrated positions of male subjects/female objects of representation. In *The Newly Born Woman*, Cixous condemns the devalorization of women in the privilege accorded to men by the phallic signifier

which occupies the superior position of binary polarization. I consider Chesler's conscious choice of maternity as a feminist challenge to the masculinist relegation of women to their social role as (wives and) mothers. In her own decision to become a mother, Chesler demonstrates maternal sexual agency which, in Adrienne Rich's terms, signifies her refusal of the Freudian assumption of women's replacement of the lacking penis with a baby (boy). Chesler re-presents her maternal experience, which is expressed by Irigaray as the cultural debt to maternity, in her direct relationship with her baby outside the father's phallic position of authority.

By her continuous involvement in a public teaching career throughout maternity, Chesler re-presents motherhood as the dual experience of intellectually productive work and physically reproductive labor. Thus, she redresses the balance by dismantling the hierarchical opposition which reduces women to mere bodies and wombs, and reserves minds to men in their superior social accomplishments. Moreover, Chesler reclaims for women-mothers the consciousness of their minds in the childbirth experience of their bodies. She resents the separation of her mind from her body by medical obstetrics in its use of anesthesia to reduce her awareness and tools to operate on her birthing body.

In her writing, Chesler regains control over her maternity in the ability to reflect on her mental and physical faculties. Her personal expression of maternity challenges the socio-cultural confinement of women to their physical capacity only. Therefore, she questions the unreasonable segregation of women's minds from their bodies decried by Cixous in her essay "Castration or Decapitation?" Cixous explains that men's fear of castration is displaced on women as their social decapitation. Feminist psychoanalysts (such as Karen Horney) account for misogyny in men's womb envy resulting in the social suppression of women's intellectual power and the

production of artificial birthing techniques to compensate for male lack of natural reproduction. Chesler counters the dilemma arising from the mind-body dichotomy that sanctions women's choice of either work in public or mothering in private. Fulfilling the career of a working and nursing mother, she deliberately professes her maternity as an open statement of her (inner) feminine condition. Chesler's enriching maternal experience crosses the limited boundary dividing inside from outside, and self from other. She maintains a continuous relationship with her baby from early pregnancy to childbirth and parturition in a complete merge with her child. Past and present moments of in-utero and extrauterine maternity occur and recur simultaneously in her double subjectivity as a single person and as a mother with child inside and outside her body. Through the loose paratactic organization of her diary-writing, Chesler gives equal importance to the complex maternal aspects of self and other, inside and outside, and past and present. Thus, her re-presentation of the spatial and temporal dimensions of maternity challenges the segregation of the maternal mind from body and mother from child in the masculine view of individual identity as a separate entity based on the phallic law of division inherent in the binary system of oppositions.

From this introduction, my thesis now proceeds to an in-depth exploration of women's autobiographies as a feminist critique of the masculine representation of subjectivity. In the first chapter of Section I, I examine the daughters' re-presentations of female sexuality in the continuation of the mother-daughter pre-oedipal bond and in the refiguration of their mothers' autonomous sexual identity. Chapter 2 analyses women's textual illustration of their identity as the intermingling of autobiographical forms and subjects which delineate the multiple dimensions and directions of female sexuality. Thus, my argument in Chapter 1, on the interconnectedness

of women's lives, is further carried on in Chapter 2 to demonstrate women's autobiographical construction of their textual identity according to the pattern of their psychosexual development. I present, in Section II, Chesler's celebration of motherhood in the plurality, flexibility and continuity of self and other, work and mothering, internal and external aspects of self. Through her feminist experience of maternity as simultaneous aspects of mind and body, she joins Beauvoir and Friday to contest the patriarchal splitting of mother from child, and mind (as male attribute) from body (as female reproduction). My thesis, therefore, reconnects daughters to mothers in Chapter 1, relates genre to the gender specificity of women in Chapter 2, and re-establishes mind and body as the female capacity for both intellectual production and sexual reproduction in Section II.

SECTION I:

THE DAUGHTERS' AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

CHAPTER 1

RETURN TO THE MOTHER

In their autobiographies entitled *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* and *My Mother/My Self*, Simone de Beauvoir and Nancy Friday return to their mothers as the origin of their psychosexual identity. Viewed from the feminist psychoanalytic perspective of Irigaray's arguments in *Speculum of the Other Woman* and Cixous's discussions in *The Newly Born Woman*, these women autobiographers' representations of their early attachment to their mother emphasize the importance of the pre-oedipal dyadic relation between mother and daughter. Beauvoir and Friday represent their autobiographies as a record of past childhood moments with their loving mothers, and also show their present relationship with their mothers as the continuation of their past experiences together. In this sense, they strongly challenge Freud's psychoanalytic theory of female oedipal separation from the mother developed in his essay "Femininity" from his assumption of the mother's and the daughter's castration, and the daughter's transferral of her love for her mother to her father, who possesses the penis. Through their revalorization of the pre-oedipal period, Beauvoir's and Friday's writings also represent a theoretical return to the mother who has been turned away, repressed in Freud's theory of castration. Beauvoir's and Friday's depiction of their desire for their mothers can be interpreted from a feminist psychoanalytic perspective as the symbiotic relations between mothers and daughters in the Imaginary Phase, Lacan's term for the infant's development from birth, equivalent to Freud's pre-oedipal period. Women recuperate this stage as their initial formative period of bonding in the mutually reflexive mother-daughter relationship which will carry on in later life. Therefore, they counter the Lacanian Mirror-Stage - the equivalent of Freud's oedipal period - when the infant starts, by six months of age, to recognize the (m)other as the other from the reflection of the self in the mirror. When considered in the psychoanalytic context of Freud's and Lacan's

theories of identity formation, Beauvoir's and Friday's autobiographies delineate a kind of "*her-story*"¹ of the daughter's relation to origin in the maternal genealogy. Theirs is an intervention in the "*his-story*" of male domination in culture that perpetrates the repression of desire for the mother. These women writers contest Freud's theory of femininity with their own representation of female sexual identity in their life-writing. In her rejection of Freud's psychoanalytic theory of female sexual development, Irigaray exhorts women to represent the repressed mother-daughter relationship in language. Perceived in this context, female autobiographers' return to the mother as the source of an enduring relationship to origin counters the repression of desire for origin which subtends Freud's assumption of the daughter's rejection of the mother at the oedipal stage. As I will argue, Beauvoir and Friday have explicitly shown that their mother has always been their first and lasting relation of love to whom they return in their representation of the origin of their female sexual identity.

In the writing of their life stories, Nancy Friday and Simone de Beauvoir highlight the importance of their relationship with their mother whose portrait they draw from family photographs. These women autobiographers focus on the images of their beloved mothers in their act of retracing their origin. Simone de Beauvoir starts her autobiography with the presentation of an album that vividly depicts the story of her family's celebration of her birth in pictorial form. On each page she points out a picture of her mother with a baby in her arms, first herself and then her sister. In her reminiscences of her childhood, she describes her mother as "beautiful as a picture" (6). Both Beauvoir and Friday dwell on their mother's face to

¹Janet Todd explains *herstory* as women's re-writing of history to re-inscribe the repressed women and their silenced, suppressed existence.

describe the early attachment they experienced with their mother. The mother's countenance shows a variety of expressions which reflect both the mother's and the daughter's range of emotions. As Beauvoir confides, "When she was angry with me, she gave me a 'black look'; I used to dread that stormy look which disfigured her charming face: I needed her smile" (6, my emphases). The mother's angry look elicits the daughter's fear of the loss of her mother's love which the daughter solicits in a happy face. Thus, the mother's facial expression reflects both the daughter's and the mother's reciprocal feelings for each other: they both mirror each other in their mutual response, the daughter as the desire of the mother, and the mother as the desire for the daughter (desire of/for the mother). From the psychoanalytic perspective, the daughter's re-turn to the mother in the representation of the early pre-oedipal period of close attachment between mother and daughter denotes the return of the repressed desire of/for the mother. The close mirroring of the mother's facial expressions and the daughter's emotional responses illustrated by Beauvoir in her autobiography correspond to the Lacanian Imaginary Phase in which the daughter merges completely with her mother through her reading of her mother's face. Hélène Cixous analyzes in her book *Coming to Writing* that the woman-writer creates meaning from the act of reading her mother's face. She writes,

I adored the Face. The smile. The countenance of my day and night. The smile awed me, filled me with ecstasy. With terror. The world constructed, illuminated, annihilated by a quiver of this face.... I read the face, I saw and contemplated it to the point of losing myself in it.

I *read* it: the face signified. And each sign pointed out a new path. To follow, in order to come closer to its meaning. (2)

Cixous confides that her mother's face, which she represents with a capital letter, means everything to her, and can affect her by evoking different reactions. She also attests to her

identification with her mother in whose face she is completely absorbed to the point of losing her own sense of self. Thus, like Beauvoir's life-writing, Cixous's autobiographical writing derives meaning from the signification of the mother's face as a sign which she has read from the beginning of her life. As Deborah Jenson elucidates in "Coming to Reading Hélène Cixous", "the Face as the maternal geography ... is the signature of life for the infant (*Coming to Writing*, 187). From Jenson's explanation, we perceive Cixous's confirmation of her mother's face as the source of meaning for her life in her own revelation that "[a]t will her face could give me sight, life, or take them away from me" (*Coming to Writing*, 3). Similar to Beauvoir, Cixous dwells on her mother's face in her writing to express the close connection with her mother as the source of her life and love. More significantly, women writers evoke their merging with their mothers to oppose the social repression of the desire for the mother in the theory of female oedipal separation from the mother. Cixous reveals that "... I trembled: from the fear of separation, the dread of death" (2) and maintains that for her, "Writing: [is] a way of leaving no space for death ..." (*Coming to Writing*, 3). As Cixous explains, she writes to dissipate her fear of separation from her mother due to the social repression of her love for her mother. In the light of Cixous's theory of writing, women's life-writing counters death resulting from the social separation of mother and daughter. Beauvoir defends the close relationship with her mother from the beginning of her life as the foundation of her sexual identity.

Similar to Simone de Beauvoir, Nancy Friday dismisses mother/daughter division through her strong identification with her mother. In *My mother/My Self*, Friday gives much attention to her mother's face in the family photographs. She writes,

Over the years I've collected from family attics a sepia-toned history of my mother's youth The pictures hang in their

original ornate frames in a hallway in my house where guests invariably stop. The expression on my mother's face is always the same: concern. Whether at the peak of a six-foot hurdle or seated placidly at the piano ... the anxious face seems to be waiting for ... (85).

Friday finds in her mother's worried look a mirror reflection of her own fears. Friday associates conflicting feelings of courage and anxiety in herself when she reflects upon the images of her mother's apprehension during daring acts. Through these telling photographs, Friday depicts the pattern of her life from her mother's past when she recognizes that "[i]n her life I see an eerie and yet comforting precursor of my own" (87). Friday's writing reflects her reading of her self from the photographs of her (m)other, the mirror of her self. She en-visages² a similarity in her own development that repeats her mother's:

She jumped her father's horses at fourteen, daredevil enough to win silver cups -yet it took my marriage in Rome to get her into an airplane. That reckless physical courage I had as a child - no tree too high or dangerous to climb - had diminished now that I am grown. I will take the cable car to the highest mountain, but I will ski down carefully, always in control. Today I prefer trains and boats to flying. (87)

Friday's interpretation shows the symmetry in the mother's/daughter's early reckless bravery and later thoughtful caution. She engages in a continuous presentation of the mother to the daughter, in a direct reflection of the mother's character in the daughter's personality. Thus, she depicts a view of her mother as her other, the one preceding her self, in a spontaneous reflection of the mother as the mirror image of herself. From the psychoanalytic perspective, Friday's representation of the direct reflection of mother-daughter image constitutes the challenge against

²*Visage* is the French term that denotes 'the face'. Thus, Friday sees in her mother's image, the reflection of her own feelings.

the Lacanian Mirror-Stage mother-daughter separation/individuation. As Cixous clarifies, feminine writing is located "... where separation doesn't separate, where absence is animated;" (*Coming to Writing*, 4). In her autobiography which shows the direct connection between her mother and herself in the title *My Mother/My Self*, Friday confirms the continuation of the early mother-daughter original ties that still bind them together. Therefore, Friday's autobiography illustrates Cixous's notion of feminine writing as the textual link that reconnects the daughter to the mother in the absence of any difference between them. Thus, in her text, Friday re-animates the early symbiotic relationship with her mother in her wish to emulate her mother. She *collects* her earlier search for her mother as her role model through a *collection* of her mother's photos and apparel shown in those pictures:

Several years later, in my perpetual attic rummaging, I came across steamer trunks filled with all the riding and hunting regalia of the photos I so loved. I put on my mother's boots ... (86).

As a young child, Nancy acts out her identification with her mother whose valour she greatly prizes by trying out her mother's boots in order to follow her mother's footsteps. As an adult writer, she *looks* for her mother in her own life and in the images which give her so much pleasure. Throughout her book, Friday enacts the return to her mother as a means of access to her origin in her mother. She stresses the significance of the daughter's autobiographical act in the return to the mother when she explains in the introduction to her book (ten years later) that:

Understanding what we have with our mothers is the beginning of understanding ourselves..

Any effort to change or shape our lives must begin with that first woman in whose image we live. (vi)

Friday demonstrates, in her self-representation, the woman writer's urgent need to (re)present her (m)other as the image of her other self which is deeply imprinted in her life from the very

beginning. In this way, she upholds the psychoanalytic feminist valorization of the pre-oedipal period of close mother-daughter attachment in opposition to Freudian theory of female oedipal rivalry against mother for father's love.

Both women authors accord a privileged position in their autobiography to their mother in contrast to their father. Thus, they emphasize the female pre-oedipal primacy over the female oedipal complex. Nancy Friday never has any relationship with her father who died shortly after her birth and left her mother a young widow with two little daughters. Therefore, Friday experiences the mother-daughter relationship as her sole source of love. Moreover, growing up in a house consisting of her mother, her nurse, her elder sister and herself, she has no close relationship with any man in her developing years.

In *Memoirs*, Beauvoir confirms her mother's important place in her life and heart even as a young child: her mother manages her daily activities and later supervises her education. Her mother's presence is closely felt at home, at school and in church. She expresses her attachment to her mother as "... that is how we lived, the two of us, in a kind of symbiosis. Without striving to imitate her, I was conditioned by her. She inculcates in me a sense of duty as well as teaching me unselfishness and austerity" (41). Although Simone does not intentionally copy her mother's actions as Nancy does, she nonetheless reflects all her mother's values of dutifulness, devotion, and simplicity. And, like Friday, Beauvoir sees that she is a replica of her mother who has given a good example for her life. Beauvoir remarks this duplication of her mother's acts in her own life in:

... with ready unselfishness, she devoted her entire being to the welfare of those near and dear to her. I did not look upon her as a saint, because ... she lost her temper far too easily; but her example seemed to me all the more unassailable because of that:

I, too, was able to, and therefore ought to emulate her in piety and virtue. (39)

Thus, in her depiction of her early life with her mother, Beauvoir acknowledges the great impression her mother has made on her life so that her own conduct reflects her mother's qualities which are imparted to her. She holds her mother in great esteem and strives always to please her. However, unlike her loving mother, her busy father does not engage in a close relationship with her in her early childhood. Beauvoir devotes only a short paragraph to describing her early memory of her father:

As for my father, I saw very little of him. He used to leave every morning for the Law Courts, carrying a briefcase stuffed with untouchable things called dossiers under his arm.... I found him amusing ... but he didn't play any well-defined role in my life. (6)

Beauvoir's existence depends very much on her mother's love and approval. In her terms, "fundamentally I needed to be accepted for what I was, with all the deficiencies of my age; my mother's tenderness assured me that this wish was a justifiable one" (30). She appreciates her mother's understanding and indulgence for her childish ways but dislikes her father's disconcerting seriousness rejecting her playfulness. She expresses her feelings in favour of her mother's special love but speaks against her father's stern attitude. Her mother's love produces better effects from the special qualities in "[t]he warmth of her affection [which] made up for her unpredictable temper" (39). Beauvoir accepts her mother's vigilance which she needs as a little girl whereas her father's remarks would not evoke the same type of fear and respect that she holds for her mother. In her youth, Beauvoir gets along well with her mother because they mutually accept each other in the roles of mother-daughter they play to each other. However, in her father-daughter relationship, Simone never feels at ease with herself. As a little daughter,

she cannot meet the demands of her father who "treated [her] like a fully developed person" (39). As a growing adolescent, she does not secure her father's understanding during her difficult period of growth and adaptation but only meets with his disapproval for her looks, especially when she is much less charming than her younger sister, Poupette, who is the preferred child of beauty and sweetness, the apple of her father's eye. In what psychoanalytic discourse would call the resolution of the female Oedipal phase, Simone tries to identify with her father (whom she later admires and prefers to her mother for his superior intellect and knowledge of books and poetry) but she experiences only the rejection of her father who sides with her mother and orders her to obey her mother. Even when Simone grows older and feels her mother's continuous presence suffocating, she silently bears her mother's authority over her life and does not dare tell her mother of her loss of faith in God.

Thus, to both Friday and Beauvoir, the mother holds a very special place in their hearts. No one can compete with or take away the tender love they feel for their mother, not even the father. Beauvoir's and Friday's autobiographies can be viewed psychoanalytically as the daughter's defence of her close attachment to her mother against Freud's specularization of femininity from the male sexual model of separation-individuation. Through their focus on the mother-daughter bond in the pre-oedipal period, they challenge both the maternal separation in Lacan's concept of personal identity and Freud's assumption of female castration as a fact. As Luce Irigaray has argued in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, female relation to origin is at stake in Freud's theory of the female Oedipal development. She contends that, according to Freud in his essay "Femininity", the "girl is driven out of her attachment to her mother through the influence of her envy for the penis ..." (129). Irigaray objects to Freud's assumption of the

castration complex in the girl which dictates her abandonment, rejection, and hatred of her mother. Irigaray decries this formulation on the ground that "it assumes a break in contact with the original object, a turning away from the desire for origin. According to Freud, at any rate" (83). Furthermore, Irigaray denounces Freud's theory of castration in the girl as a 'fact', a 'biological destiny' in 'the accomplished fact of castration' since

[t]his castration that Freud accounts for in terms of 'nature', 'anatomy', could equally well be interpreted as the prohibition that enjoins woman - at least in this history - from ever imagining, fancying, re-presenting, symbolizing, etc. ... her own relationship to beginning. The 'fact of castration' has to be understood as a definitive prohibition against establishing one's own economy of the desire for origin. (*Speculum*, 83)

Irigaray faults Freud's notion of castration which serves to cut woman off from her mother, her origin, by requiring the girl's identification with the father (who has the penis) in order to compensate for her lack (her castration). Therefore, from the female viewpoint, woman is 'castrated' in her experience of being cast off from her original attachment to her mother. Moreover, in Freud's concept of the castration complex in the girl, woman feels her effort at self-representation thwarted. Irigaray speaks out against this:

In fact this desire for re-presentation, for re-presenting oneself, and for representing oneself in desire, is in some ways *taken away from woman at the outself* as a result of the radical devalorization of her 'beginning' that she is inculcated with, subject to - and to which she subjects herself: is she not born of a castrated mother who could only give birth to a castrated child.... This shameful beginning must therefore be forgotten, 'repressed' ... (*Speculum*, 83-84).

Freud's theory condemns the mother-daughter relationship to non-representation by reducing to silence the castrated mother giving birth to the castrated daughter, both of whom are, therefore, repressed from the very beginning of their mutual relationship (of castration). Viewed

psychoanalytically, women autobiographers' representation of their origin through a female genealogy negates Freudian misrepresentation of femininity. In her narrative, Friday relates her willful, inquisitive look for her mother in the image of her grandmother that will give her a means of knowing herself from her maternal genealogy. She traces this complex exploration saying, "I'd like to see that image, to share anything that may tell me more about my grandmother - and so about my mother, and so about me" (48). Friday's representation of her life is sketched from a deep search for her grandmother's image as an illustration of her mother's background that will, in turn, reflect Friday's own history. Thus, in the writing of her life, Friday goes back not only to the mother but even to her grandmother to search for more traces of her female lineage. She writes

But the **stories** my mother tells about her mother, lovely as they are, much as I like to hear them again and again, are as diffused with sentiment as the faded, misty **Bachrach photos** in the leather volumes at my grandfather's house that I have pored over every summer of my life, **looking** ... for what? (48, my emphases)

Friday's stories about her mother reiterate her mother's stories about Friday's grandmother. Thus, she depicts a repetitive pattern of desire in the daughter's narrative that tells about the loving mother-daughter relationship from one generation to the next. She loves to listen to these stories over and over -- "again and again" and to look at the photos at her grandfather's place where she goes "every" summer. Friday's tale of her mother, which echoes her mother's account of her mother, reveals a repeated mirror reflection of the mother-daughter attachment. Thus, the daughter's life representation is a record of the self from images of the (m)other. Friday depicts her mother's relation to her mother through an image of the past: "She was such a wonderful woman ... and her voice will drift away to some distant image which she sees

beyond me ..." (48). Like Nancy, her mother Jane yearns for her mother from her memory of an image of her mother she cherishes within her. In her autobiography, Friday supports her representation of her relation to origin in the strong female lineage that returns not only to her mother but even further back to her grandmother.

In their narrative, the daughters express their search for their mothers as an ongoing process which continues even in later life. Beauvoir's and Friday's illustration of the continuation of the early symbiosis into later life beyond the pre-oedipal years would disprove the psychoanalytic theory of the oedipal rupture of the mother-daughter attachment. Beauvoir and Friday demonstrate their original close ties with their mothers through the present reading of the maternal face that repeats the symbiotic gesture of the Imaginary Phase. Friday represents her old mother's face as a repetition the youthful maternal countenance. She admits the same feeling of guilt at seeing her mother's sad look later in life as she has experienced it earlier in her youth:

... it was not a far step for a child to decide my demands were what made her unhappy. That in some way I was the cause of her unhappiness... Her sadness was my guilt. Whenever she talks about her own mother, whom I never knew, that look comes over her face. It's worse when she talks about my father. She only does when I ask, and I was **twenty-one** before I dared. Can you stand your mother's sadness? We believe that if we had been better children or even right now could do or say the right thing, we could make it go away. I cannot bear to be in the same room when my mother's **face** changes from the **look** I love to that maddening unhappiness. (47-48, my emphases)

Even as an adult, Friday feels exactly the same sentiment of guilt she had experienced as a child whenever she notices her mother's face changing from glee to grief and still thinks that this facial expression is a direct result of her own conduct.

In her book named *A Very Easy Death* Beauvoir portrays the continuous mother-daughter relationship (experienced in the daughter's early life) until the mother's death. Beauvoir shows the difference in her reaction to her mother's and to her father's death. She did not cry at her father's death but she weeps bitterly at the sight of her dying mother's suffering in hospital. Similar to Friday who still notices her mother's countenance as she has done in her childhood. Beauvoir re-marks the curving motion of her old mother's lips and remembers this special feature of her mother's face in her childhood:

I was fascinated by the sucking motion, at once avid and restrained, of her lip, with its faint downy shadow, that rounded just as it had rounded in my childhood whenever Maman was cross or embarrassed. (25)

Here, Beauvoir juxtaposes present old age misery with past youthful ardour in a comparison of the present movement of her mother's lips sucking water with the past transformation in her face from love to anger. When she weeps for her suffering mother, she internalises her dying mother's downturned mouth as a sign of the presence/absence of her mother she has deeply loved from childhood. She relates her great mother-daughter bond with the following outpouring of her heart:

I had understood all my sorrows until that night: even when they flowed over my head I recognized **myself** in them. This time my despair escaped my control: someone **other** than **myself** was **weeping in me**.... I had put **Mama's mouth** on **my face** and in spite of myself, **I copied** its movements. Her whole person, her whole being, was concentrated there, and compassion wrung my heart. (28, my emphases)

Thus, she has become the mirror of her mother whom she internalises in her own person by the repetition of her mother's mouth on her mouth. In this tight symbiotic relationship between mother and daughter, Beauvoir enacts her mother as a direct reflection of pain and misery.

Therefore, she embodies an exact copy of her mother's being so that her mother's mouth is transposed on her own face. In this way, Beauvoir has put her mother's mouth on her face which, consequently, mirrors her mother's facial bitterness. Therefore, Beauvoir's autobiography re-enacts the mother-daughter attachment in the reflection that re-members the (m)other in the self in the facial expression of early symbiosis.

A Very Easy Death illustrates the special relationship between Beauvoir and her mother towards the end of her mother's life. Beauvoir confirms, as does Friday in *My Mother/My Self*, that the mother-daughter bond is held until the death of the mother. Beauvoir's revelation of her profound identification with her mother in hospital brings to her consciousness her deep undercurrent of emotions felt in sympathy and compassion for her mother's great sufferings.

The Mother's Face and 'Prosopopeia'

Simone de Beauvoir's unconscious personification of her mother's face signifies her strong identification with her mother. This identification repeats her earlier fusion with her mother in the mirroring of the mother's face during Lacanian pre-mirror stage. Her narrative of the symbiotic union highlighting the reflection of her mother's sad face in her own countenance and its expressions of grief can be interpreted psychoanalytically as a deliberate act of refuting the schism of self from (m)other. Therefore, women's representation of the daughters' pre-oedipal bond with their mothers as the threshold of female identity strongly counters the Freudian and Lacanian theories (mis)interpreting the female oedipal division from the mother. Here, I would like to explore different systems of representation to develop a critique of Freud's psychoanalytic misinterpretation of femininity through Paul de Man's concept

of *prosopopeia* which is used to reveal, first of all, Freudian specularization of male sexuality and secondly, the oppression of women, according to Leigh Gilmore. From these two perspectives, I will draw out the connection between the problems of referentiality in conventional autobiographic discourse and of specularization in the psychoanalytic theory of femininity. Through this approach, I will develop a feminist reading of autobiography from the feminist photographic discourse of women's subjectivity as both the expression of the daughter's unconscious desire for the mother and a re-vision of women's image in their own self-representation.

Beauvoir's refiguration of the maternal face can be considered as a feminist challenge to the (male) autobiographic discourse of *prosopopeia* in Paul de Man's essay "Autobiography as De-Facement". According to de Man, *prosopopeia* paradoxically defaces the subject while giving it a face in the project of representation. His interpretation of William Wordsworth's epitaphic writing (in "Essays on Epitaphs"), in which the dead is represented with a voice and a face from the sun's light (as the eye reading the epitaph on the tombstone), is critiqued by Leigh Gilmore. She contends that "making the dead speak also risks rendering the speaking subject speechless" (72). Thus, she shows the problematic nature of *prosopopeia* which misrepresents the subject and, consequently, obliterates its voice.

In the context of the autobiographic discourse of *prosopopeia*, Beauvoir's identification with her mother (rather than with her father) illustrates the feminist turn towards the mother - through the (un)conscious figuration of the mother's face. This gesture opposes the defacement of the (female) subject by the tropological system of (male) autobiography through *prosopopeia*. From the psychoanalytic perspective, Beauvoir's presentation of her mother's face can be further

considered as a challenge to Freudian specula(riza)tion of femininity. As Irigaray decries, the representation of woman from the perspective of male psychosexual development "make[s] her enter, in contempt of her sex into 'masculine' games, of tropes and tropisms. By converting her to a discourse that denies the specificity of her pleasure by inscribing it as the hollow, ... the negative, even as the censured other of its phallic assertions" (*Speculum*, 140). Here, Irigaray condemns the psychoanalytic (mis)representation of femininity as the opposite of male, phallic sexuality in the male project of tropological self-reflection. And, as Jessica Benjamin argues, Freud's contention that the girl's maternal identification is not truly feminine and "that only the penis wish and the passive love of the father are feminine, seems simply implausible" (Teresa de Lauretis, 82). Benjamin's rejection of Freud's misinterpretation of femininity further illuminates the feminist critique of '*prosopopeia*' in Laura Marcus's condemnation of "[t]he feminisation of *prosopopeia* as the 'tender fiction'" (206). Thus, women writers reject masculine self-reflections in the psychoanalytic and autobiographic discourses of women's identity. Benjamin defends femininity from Freudian specularization by maintaining that "long before the oedipal phase and the emergence of penis envy, the little girl has consolidated her feminine gender identity on the basis of her identification with her mother" (De Lauretis, 82). Benjamin's feminist psychoanalytic theory of female identity formation is illustrated in Beauvoir's moving narrative of her sudden weeping that repeats her mother's early facial bitterness. Unlike her recollection that "[w]hen my father died I did not cry at all" (28), Beauvoir's internalisation of her mother's face marks the return of her unconscious desire for unification with her mother as the original source of her binding love. Thus, in the (re)turn to her mother as the author of her life and identity, Beauvoir's narrative disrupts both the conventional psychoanalytic and

autobiographical representations of women from male standards of self-referentiality. Beauvoir's facial reflection of her mother's countenance dislodges the project of male reflexivity in Freud's and Lacan's theories of mother-daughter separation and in de Man's notion of (female) disfiguration by *prosopopeia*, the (masculine) trope of autobiography.

Beauvoir's maternal identification in the mother's face is further highlighted by her presentation of the image of her mother as a sexual subject. She condemns her father's domination of her mother's passions with his own personal desires:

[m]y father's selfishness burst out as early as their honeymoon: she wanted to see the Italian Lakes; they went no further than Nice She often recalled this disappointment She loved travelling.... She had to give up many of the things she had dreamt of: my father's wishes always came before hers. She stopped seeing her own friends, whose husbands he found boring. (30-31)

Therefore, Beauvoir disapproves of her father's strong masculine identity that totally eclipses her mother's own subjectivity. Beauvoir's denunciation supports Irigaray's contention that

[w]e can assume that any theory of the subject has been appropriated by the 'masculine'. When she submits to (such a) theory, woman fails to realize that she is renouncing the specificity of her own relationship to the imaginary.

Subjectivity denied to woman: indispensably this provides the ... backing for every irreducible constitution as an object: of representation, of discourse, of desire. (*Speculum*, 133)

From the autobiographical and psychoanalytic feminist perspectives, Beauvoir's objection can be considered as a confrontation against the representation of women as objects of male desire. Beauvoir puts up a strong defence for women's sexual identity in the re-vision she brings to the maternal image:

She had started a fresh chapter with astonishing courage after my father's death.... She had taken advantage of the freedom

that had been given back to her to rebuild a kind of life for herself that matched her own tastes. My father did not leave her a penny, and she was fifty-four. She passed examinations, attended courses, and she won a certificate that enabled her to work as an assistant librarian in the Red Cross.... She was eager to live in her own way at last and she discovered a whole mass of activities for herself.... She studied German and Italian, and kept up her English.... She made herself a great many new friends: she also took up again with former acquaintances and relations whom my father's surliness had driven away, and she was able to satisfy one of her oldest longings, and travel. (16-17)

Thus, Beauvoir refutes the male view of women's passivity. Her re-presentation of the woman-mother's subjectivity and agency would overthrow the phallic interpretation of femininity critiqued by Irigaray that "[o]nce reduced to phallic measures, woman is defined as 'really castrated' by Freud/man" (*Speculum*, 70). In her re-view of her mother's new life after her father's death, Beauvoir valorizes her mother's new identity as a female sexual subject with desires of her own. She frees her mother from the phallogocentric representation of (male) desire. Beauvoir shows her mother's strength of character and courage in hospital after her terrible accident:

No question of renunciation or sacrifice any more: her first duty was to get better and so to look after herself; giving herself up to her own wishes and her own pleasures with no holding back, she was at last freed from resentment. Her restored beauty and her recovered smile expressed her inner harmony and, on this death-bed, a kind of happiness. (53)

Beauvoir ascribes her mother's inner peace to her firm resolution to recover and to indulge in her personal desires. This positive change, resulting from her mother's new female identity, shows a great contrast with her mother's former life of sacrifice and resentment. Therefore, Beauvoir reveals from her mother's face the beautiful smile that paradoxically turns the end of her life to the sweet expression of peace and happiness. In opposition to the death-enhancing

disfiguration of the living female subject in *prosopopeia*, Beauvoir's refiguration of her mother's feminine identity endows life to her dying mother.

Beauvoir's representation of the female identity can be considered as a refutation of Freud's theory of symmetry assimilating the girl to "a male model, male history [of development] and, 'naturally' found lacking. The condition of that assimilation is the reduction of any possible complexity, plural sexuality, to the one, the simple [male sexuality] ..." (*The Daughter's Seduction*, 69). Beauvoir's re-interpretation of her mother's sexual autonomy in *A Very Easy Death* challenges the phallogocentric reduction of female sexual specificity to reflect male sexual desire (thereby suppressing women's agency). In the context of male autobiographical discourse, Beauvoir's new representation denotes a feminist refusal of the (male) subject's reflexivity in the (female) object which, in Laura Marcus's words, "comes into being as a specular image of the reader, a projected image of the reader's affective identifications" (205). As can be seen from *prosopopeia*, woman *faces* (male) autobiographical discourse in the projection of a 'mask' which Freud/man confers on woman as an abstract personification of the male phallic model. This can be perceived in Marcus's clarification that according to de Man, *prosopopeia*,

the trope whose definitions include personification (from *prosopon poiein*, to confer a mask or a face), a rhetorical figure by which an inanimate or abstract thing is represented as a person, and, applied to a person or thing, in which some quality or abstraction is embodied. (203-4)

Through de Man's rhetorical figure *prosopopeia* which de-faces the female subject, we perceive Freudian psychoanalytic distortion of feminine sexuality as the opposite of male sexuality. Thus, male autobiographical discourse simultaneously reveals psychoanalytic assumption of female

castration as a theoretical device that is imposed on women in order to repress their self-representation and expressions of desire. From Marcus's analysis, we remark that the male representations of femininity is precisely the abstract projection of phallogentrism veiling the specificity of female sexuality. However, as Beauvoir demonstrates, women's self-representation lifts up the screen of male autobiographical and psychoanalytic (mis)representations of women's subjectivity to reveal women's sexual identity.

Thus, by extension, Beauvoir would also refute the male specularization of femininity in "the autobiographical moment [which] happens as an alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution" ("Autobiography as De-facement", 70). She clearly shows that her father's wishes do not truly represent her mother's own desires so that even though she acquiesces to his will, her own subjectivity is forcefully repressed. Beauvoir reveals that "[s]he had appetites in plenty: she spent all her strength in repressing them and she underwent this denial in anger.... A full-blooded, spirited woman lived on inside her, but a stranger to herself, deformed and mutilated" (38). Thus, Beauvoir decries in the maternal self-deformation and self-mutilation the annihilistic nature of male specularity that *de-faces* women's sexual identity -- which can be observed from *prosopopeia* as the male disfiguration of female subjectivity according to masculine self-referentiality.

Moreover, Beauvoir's articulation of her mother's own freedom and control over her own life and recovery from injury asserts female sexual autonomy, and therefore, refutes the male psychoanalytic notion of 'superimposition'. The concept of *superimposition* can also be perceived as the domination of the male subject over the female object of representation in the

asymmetrical method of alignment of two subjects. However, as Gallop argues, Freud commits the 'error of superimposition' when he mistakenly assumes and represents two different sexes as one phallic sexuality. She finds that Freud is still fixed in the phallic phase since he restricts the little girl's genitalia to her clitoris, overlooking her vaginal sensations. Against the psychoanalytic devaluation of women as lacking the phallus thereby showing female absence of a sexual identity, Beauvoir's revaluation of her mother brings forth the mother's sexual autonomy in the self-restoration of her former passions after her father's death. Beauvoir's multiple representations of her mother's strong will would, according to Gallop, "make present [the woman-mother] again endlessly" (59). In this way, Beauvoir's narrative refutes male auto-biographical treatment of the female subject as an absent object that is spoken for in the male trope of *prosopopeia*. Beauvoir also refutes the male subject as the 'fiction' of autobiography (Marcus, 206) that implies the misrepresentation of women who are expressed by Irigaray as being "castrated of words" (*Speculum*, 142). Thus, Beauvoir's refiguration of her mother's autonomous sexual identity challenges male theory of female subjectivity in *prosopopeia* that silences women's true identity in their passive "castration", cut off from the possibility of voicing their own desires.

In the re-presentation of her mother's image as an independent sexual woman, Beauvoir challenges male relegation of the female to silence in misrepresentations which Irigaray decries as "those blanks in discourse which recall the places of her exclusion and which, by their *silent plasticity*, ensure the cohesion, the articulation, the coherent expansion of established forms" (*Speculum*, 142). Beauvoir's refiguration of her mother's subjectivity is a revocalization of femininity that dispels the artifice of silence imposed by male autobiographical and

psychoanalytic discourses of women. Beauvoir presents her mother's own words to the nurse in the hospital about her new identity: "'I had lovely hair And she went on talking about herself, how she had taken her librarian's diploma, her love for books" (43). Thus, Beauvoir's narrative illustrates Irigaray's argument

[b]ut we must go on questioning words as the wrappings with which the 'subject', modestly clothes the 'female'. Stifled beneath all those eulogistic or denigratory metaphors, she is unable to unpick the seams of her disguise She has yet to feel the need to get free of fabric, reveal her nakedness, her destitution in language, explode in the face of them all, words too. (*Speculum*, 142-43)

According to Irigaray's argument, the mother's voice featuring in Beauvoir's representation would reveal true feminine identity as an internal understanding of self that tears down the fabric of (male) words disguising femininity in masculine tropes of self-reflexion. Thus, the figuration of the maternal voice would be, according to Irigaray, "a question of breaking (with) a certain mode of specula(riza)tion ... rendering female desire aphasic ... in all but its phallogomorphic disguises, masquerades, and demands" (*Speculum*, 143). Beauvoir's revised maternal image and her mother's personal voice demonstrate female articulation of personal desires in the *face* of male systems of self-reflection that disfigure women through disguises of "specularization" and "masquerades" of the male subject in the autobiographic rhetoric of *prosopopeia*. Through this refiguration of feminine identity, Beauvoir illustrates Irigaray's observation:

In particular the economy of discourse. Whereby the silent allegiance of the one guarantees the auto-sufficiency, the autonomy - of historical repression - is required. But what if the 'object' started to speak? Which also means beginning to 'see'... (*Speculum*, 135).

As Irigaray asserts, female voice expresses women's vision of their own image and sexual

identity. Irigaray's theory is demonstrated in Beauvoir's practice of female writing as (re)vision of female identity from the male view of femininity.

Friday presents a revision of her mother's subjectivity in a different way from Beauvoir's portrayal of the change in the maternal identity. At the end of her book, Friday discloses: "I am suddenly afraid that the mother I have depicted throughout this book is false" (460). She reviews her mother's personality from the feminist perspective that counters the image of the passive woman in conventional photography from the dominant (male) ideological viewpoint. She questions the dominant position in her grandfather's gaze that treats her mother as object in his photographs: "Whether at the peak of a six-foot hurdle or seated placidly at the piano, hands in her lap, the anxious face seems to be waiting for her father to tell her - what? To hide her unattractive hands? But how do you play the piano and hide your hands?" (85) Challenging the male subject position taken by her grandfather, Friday defends her mother's image according to the photographic feminist discourse of an autonomous agent in control of her life whether on horseback or on the piano. Friday promotes a re-interpretation of her mother's photographic image from the female view-point of personal identity that opposes the masculine domination in (male) photographic interpretation of woman as a passive object of representation. She contests her grandfather's photographic framing of her mother in the facial look of anxiety with her autobiographical re-reading: "Helpless? Why do I automatically associate that word with her? A woman who raised two daughters on her own, who ran her house smoothly, paid her bills on time, and never set a table or planned a trip where anything was left out?" (459) In her re-appraisal of her mother's independent success she overthrows the male definition of women as lacking in courage, a quality usually attributed only to men. Therefore, Friday's re-view of the

maternal image represented in conventional photography can be considered, in conjunction with the autobiographical discourse of *prosopopeia*, as a critique of male representations of women because "such a theory does not offer a self fully present, wholly representative and representable, at least to itself, waiting to leap into or out of the text" (*Autobiographics*, 75).

As Christiane Makward has clarified,

the 'Symbolic' (the Law, Language, Social Order) is said to function NECESSARILY (or in 'essence') on the basis of the repression of women's bodies. Language is said to function through male control of women's bodies at the cost of female silence and submission. The corollary of this conception of language is that the feminine is said to be by definition undefinable, unspeakable and silent. (96)

More significantly, women-as-subjects are silenced in male photographic and autobiographical representations because, if what de Man says is true, "[t]o the extent that language is figure (or metaphor, or *prosopopeia*), it is not the thing itself but the representation, the picture of the thing and, as such, it is silent, mute as pictures are mute" (80, my emphasis). From de Man's analysis, Friday's emphasis on her mother's active participation in her own life is a direct challenge to her grandfather's framing of her mother as a passive being/object of her father's wishes. In this way, Friday reveals that the image of her mother - from the male perspective - as a worried and anxious daughter and widow, is "a lie". It is the result of the male framing of the woman-as-object of the male gaze that fixes her in a moment of time. However, the female perspective releases woman-as-subject from the male hold on women's passivity as a kind of death.³

³Both Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag attest to the arrest of time in photography. However, contrary to the fixed nature of photographs which capture the image of the referent in a definite moment, time continues to flow outside the passive picture to denote it as, in

Friday's autobiography stages maternal revaluation as the refiguration of her mother's true identity from the female subject position, smashing the male photographic domination over the female image. She re-defines the images of her mother from the photographic feminist discourse: "The photos of her I love so much hang over my desk - jumping a horse over a high brick wall, wearing a daring two-piece bathing suit twenty-five years ago when she was my age" (406). In her re-vision of mother's image, Friday presents the new portrayal of her mother, whose photographs she collects to admire, from the daughter's eyes and not from the father's eyes. Thus, in her autobiography, Friday makes use of "photographs" - in Liz Stanley's words - "to enable us the better to lay claim to our *own* identities" (48).⁴ Therefore, her life-writing re-animates her mother's existence formerly perceived as passivity and anxiety under male photographic (mis)representation. The female perception fills the woman-subject with life, ending her death in the masculine frame of representation in both autobiographical and photographic discourses. Friday comes to the following conclusion at the very end of her autobiography:

Now that I have granted her the right to have run off with my father at seventeen because she was a sexual adventuress at heart - and not because it was some atypical bit of foolishness which had nothing to do with her true character at all - I can be proud of that part of myself that is a sexual woman too. (462)

Her autobiography reveals her mother's sexual autonomy which in turn reflects her own sexual

Barthes's view, "that which has been". In a similar manner, Sontag analyses in her book *On Photography* that photography displays an elegaic mode of representation from the freezing of the person in a fixed moment of time that results in the "death" of the subject who is turned into the photographed *object*.

⁴Here, Liz Stanley refers to Susan Sontag's notion of the use of photographs as "attempts to contact or lay claim to another indentity" (*On Photography*, 16).

identity. Friday has, by the end of her book, reclaimed for her mother and, by extension, for herself, an independent image of woman as a truly sexual subject in her own right. She has attributed autonomy and agency to her mother and herself as women with desires of their own.

Thus, Friday endorses Liz Stanley's notion that

[t]he seeing eye is always a living eye, a living I. When the seeing eye gazes on photographs with which it has a direct subject-relation, its gaze infuses the photograph and everything therein with life, ... it does put a perspective on [death] quite absent from Barthes's elegaic lament on death's all-power and absolute infusion of all photographic representation. (53)

Friday's (female) life-writing defeats the (male) death-encompassing photographic image of her mother's worried look. Her project of maternal- and self-restoration counters death and disfiguration of the mother's face by *prosopopeia* and by the male photographic gaze. Thus, Friday's feminist I/eye as a living I/eye opposes the oculo-centrism in the male photographic (mis)representation that further illustrates the psychoanalytic (mis)interpretations of the woman-mother as a castrated and a passive object of male desire. Friday re-views her maternal identity from the focal point of the daughter's subject-to-subject relation with the mother. From this visual perspective of the female seeing I/eye, the life-writing of a female living I/eye endows the female (maternal) subject with life.⁵ Consequently, she has re-interpreted the negative look on the maternal face in the male photographic representation from the feminist perspective to show the positive *facets* of her mother's life. In her re-vision of her mother's sexual identity, Friday has liberated her mother from the male frame of time that captures her mother's instantaneous

⁵"The female seeing I" can be interpreted, according to Liz Stanley, as feminist eyes of women who hold a different view of life through their own eyes and not through the eyes of the man (34).

look in an eternal death. She has, in her new way of looking and depicting her mother's personality, refused the passive image of her mother's 'anxiety' fixed in photography by showing the preceding and the succeeding moments of her mother's active and courageous life.⁶ Thus, Friday illustrates the continual flow of her mother's identity in time to demonstrate the emancipation of female subjectivity from the arrest of woman's image in time, seized by the male gaze, and captured in the photograph. Friday's autobiography distinguishes the woman-mother's life from her moments of death - interpreted as inertia, passivity, anxiety, concern, fear. Friday opposes the capture of time which Sontag denotes as "a privileged moment, a slice of time one can look again and again" (16). Friday's portrayal of her mother's flexible character counters the male photographic technique transforming the female subject to a photographed object, hence, a dead and fixed image.

Friday's feminist re-vision of maternal sexual identity questions the male centred vision of subjectivity dominating the woman-as-object of desire. She develops a re-appraisal of her mother's sexuality by interrogating her former approach from the male viewpoint:

... why have I always discounted that when my mother was seventeen she ran away with the handsomest man in Pittsburg, and married him against her father's wishes? I used to make her elopement sound like some out-of-character phenomenon, as if the idea had been totally my father's and she had only passively gone along. The fact is, my 'asexual' and 'timid' mother was into sex *four years younger than I, who didn't give up her virginity until twenty-one!* (400)

⁶Here, I have borrowed Irving Goffman's notion of frames in advertisements discussed by Liz Stanley as follows: "The idea of 'the frame' also encompasses the idea of prior and subsequent frames as well as that which composes 'the advertisement' itself; and what thus becomes available to us is the possibility of examining 'strips' of linked frames only one of which need be an advertisement, a photograph, a painting, itself" (35).

Friday's focus on her mother's sexuality from the feminist perspective refuses the male superior sexual position over women. By upsetting the unequal male overvaluation and female undervaluation, she overturns the structure of representation to give the woman-mother active participation and decision in her sexual life. Thus, the featuring of female sexual agency in Friday's redefinition of the maternal image can be perceived as a feminist defence against male specularization of femininity. The feminist vision of women's sexual life, therefore, counters the photographic male gaze of the female 'object' and the psychoanalytic male view of female 'castration' due to oculo-centrism that pervades Freud's theory of femininity.⁷ The feminist perspective of women's self-representation refutes the male vision of self-centredness denounced by Irigaray as follows:

Rising to a perspective that would dominate the totality, to the vantage point of the greatest power, he thus cuts himself off from the bedrock.... To speculate and specularize. Exiling himself ever further (toward) where the greatest power lies, he thus becomes the 'sun' if it is around him that things turn Meanwhile, the excess in this universal fascination is that 'she' also turns upon herself, that she knows how to re-turn (upon herself) ... (*Speculum*, 133-34).

From Irigaray's insight into the male/female pivotal point of self-expression and self-perception, we note that Friday returns to the mother the notion of self-determination to elope and to lead her sexual life according to her own choice. Thus, the feminist view of self is counter heliotropic; it does not revolve around the male gaze in male *theoria* and, in Friday's case, it

⁷Theory derives from the Greek *theoria*, which combines *theoros*, 'spectator', and *thea*, 'a viewing' which is discussed by Jane Gallop in *The Daughter's Seduction* (58).

is neither her father's will nor her grandfather's wishes but her mother's own will to elope.⁸

Therefore, Friday's re-vision of her mother's self-image in her life-writing illustrates the return to the mother as both the origin of her own sexual identity in the maternal autonomous sexuality, and as the female agent in control of her sexual life, not the father or the husband. Moreover, Friday returns to her grandmother as the supreme bearer of sexual emancipation. In her search for personal sexual identity from the model of her grandmother, she asks

Didn't she leave her dominating husband and their oldest children when she could no longer stand the tyranny - and that in the 1920s, long before liberation, long before the time when a decision like this could be thought anything but mad and irredeemably unfeminine? (460)

In addition to acknowledging her mother's strong sexual desires to account for her elopement, Friday further depicts her grandmother as a genuine sexual woman in her early feminist decision to leave her grandfather and her older children. Thus, in both her portrayal of her mother's and her grandmother's sexual autonomy, she counters the male view of female passivity as the mark of femininity in Freudian psychoanalytic theory of female castration. She shows that her mother and grandmother are sexual agents who strongly oppose their relegation to passive objects of male desire or tyranny. From her personal account of her grandmother, her mother, and herself as active, sexual women, she has given a new female self-definition to counter the commonly accepted female derogation which she analyses as follows: "The term 'passive' has been used so much as an all-embracing label for women that it has become almost a definition for femininity itself. And yet the meaning is always at least slightly perjorative" (110). Therefore, in her

⁸According to Jane Gallop in *The Daughter's Seduction*, "[t]he privilege of sight over other senses, oculo-centrism, supports and unifies phallogocentric, sexual theory (theory - from the Greek *theoria*, from *theoros*, 'spectator', from *thea*, 'a viewing')" (58).

autobiography, Friday defends her mother and grandmother, and thus herself too, from the male representation of female passive subjectivity. She analyses her grandmother's act of leaving her mother as follows:

... that her mother's act of leaving my grandfather when she felt his imperiousness too denigrating was proof that while she was a mother she was a woman first. She would not go through all her short life celebrating only self-abnegation and the maternal emotions. She loved other ideas and people besides her children. She was their mother, but would not be their martyr - which is one reason they loved her so. (52-3)

In her new representation of her grandmother as a strong-willed woman who acts on her own ideas and judgments, she counters the normally accepted view of women as passive, loving mothers who care for their family and consequently, sacrifice their own life. Friday stresses that although her grandmother is a wife and a mother, she lives her personal identity first and foremost as a woman with a strong sense of self and the personal desire for freedom.

Furthermore, Friday's re-presentation of her mother's feeling of love for her own mother who both loved her and left her is a special remark of a woman's existence besides her social function as a mother. This new perception illustrates the symbolisation of the mother-daughter relationship as an articulation of the dual possibility of a woman's identity. Therefore, women's autobiographies would, in Margaret Whitford's words, "imply an interpretation of the maternal genealogy, which would symbolize the relation between the girl-child and her mother in a way which allows the mother to be both a mother *and* a woman, so that women ... [a]re not reduced to the maternal function" (88-89). By acknowledging their mother's primary identity as a woman with a sexual identity of her own, Beauvoir and Friday deter the socio-cultural *effacement* of women in the sole function of mothering.

In her re-presentation of her mother's true image, Friday has expressed her own sexual identity which, in *The Bodily Encounter with the Mother*, Irigaray exhorts women to represent: "Let us try to situate ourselves within this female genealogy so as to conquer and keep our identity" (44). By the end of her self narrative, Friday attests to her own female sexuality from the history of her sexual grandmother, mother, and herself. She emphasizes that "I come from three generations of sexual, adventurous, self-sufficient women" (46). In her self-representation she demonstrates her strong sexual identity from the portrayal of her mother and grandmother who, as active, independent women, have chosen to live their sexuality against the constricting social role of asexual motherhood. In this way, Friday illustrates Irigaray's idea that "[t]here is a genealogy of women within our family: on our mothers' side we have mothers, grandmothers Nor let us forget that we already have a history, that ... women have ... left their mark on history ..." (*The Bodily Encounter with the Mother*, 44). In her autobiography, Friday re-turns to her mother and grandmother to illustrate her relation to origin. Thus, Beauvoir's and Friday's autobiographical and photographic depiction of their mother explicitly recuperate in the symbolic the repressed desire of/for the mother in the Imaginary pre-oedipal.

CHAPTER 2

MULTIPLICITY AND FLUIDITY
IN WOMEN'S SELF-REPRESENTATION

In this second part of the daughters' autobiographies, I will address elements in feminine writing that relate women's textuality directly to female sexuality. My exploration of women's construction of their sexual identity in a feminine practice of writing is inspired by Shari Benstock's discussions of "issues of textual organizations within psychosexual structure: how writing restages the drama of subjectivity, and how conscious/unconscious psychic structures stage a scene of writing" (xv). I interpret Beauvoir's and Friday's textual constructions of their sexual identity according to Nancy Chodorow's theory of women's "permeable ego boundaries" (169). Friday expresses her notion of female collective identity, developed from the mother-daughter bond, by blurring the textual boundaries between research, interviews, oral and written testimonies and professional talks on the mother-daughter relations. Beauvoir depicts her relations with her mother, her best friend Zaza, and her cousin Jacques as the (un)conscious recurrent patterns of the female self in symbiotic union with her mother. Her narration of Zaza's life and her love for Jacques re-enacts her own relations with her mother and her mother's unrequited love for her cousin, Jacques's father.

The main focus of my presentation is on the female alternative language of self-representation in new forms, both an (anti-)autobiographical form and a narrative structure based on women's representations of their psychosexual identity. I examine the relationship between gender and genre in Beauvoir's and Friday's life-writing through Irigaray's and Cixous's psychoanalytic feminist theory of female multiple, fragmented and fluid sexuality-textuality as a critique of the unified, coherent and fixed subject of conventional autobiography in the phallic representation.

Intersubjectivity and Intertextuality in Women's Sexual-Textual Development.

Simone de Beauvoir's and Nancy Friday's life narratives, depicting the close relationship with their mothers, extend to include the stories of other women with whom they are deeply connected. Their writing of the self connotes the female collective identity that develops from the daughter's experience of self with mother in early nurturance. Nancy Friday's perception of her individual identity encompasses the general subjectivity of a group of women in relation to their mothers: "My intention was to do a series of interviews with mothers and daughters within a family, and where possible, with grandmothers too" (xvii). Friday depicts, from the extension of her self narrative to that of other women, the intricate connection of the female individual with the collective experience. She remarks that

I had hoped to avoid the subjective through finding patterns that would hold for most women. By tracing these patterns through the generations, we could see the conscious and unconscious repetitions ... (13-14). As the reader follows the development of the argument, I hope it becomes clear that before I could explain the mother-daughter relationship to anyone else, I had to understand my own. (15)

Friday's own autobiography includes accounts of many other women's relationships. It is in effect a collective autobiography. Friday's investigations of the collective mother-daughter condition suggests that the daughter's unconscious desire for the mother is a frequent phenomenon; the collective confirms her individual experience.

Although her own story leads each chapter, it gradually spreads out to involve women's common life experiences. Throughout the twelve chapters of her autobiography, Friday's narrative position moves from "I" -- in the opening section focused on the self -- to "we" -- in the following section extended to other women. Friday indicates the interrelationship of her own

situation with other women's experiences through a gradual transition in Chapter 2 as follows: "I grew up in a house of women" (47). Opening her chapter with her personal story, she reveals the close relationship she shares with her mother, her sister and nurse from the beginning of her life. After a section break marked by the imprint of a feather, she then expands her individual case to women's more general condition:

We are the loving sex; people count on us for comfort,
nurturing warmth. (53)

... We get our courage, our sense of self, the ability to believe we
have value even when alone, to do our work, to love others, and
to feel ourselves lovable from the "strength" of mother's love for
us when we were infants ... (55).

She depicts, starting with herself, women's collective experience of symbiosis with the mother in early childhood that is crucial for successful functioning in adult life. In this way, Friday's life narrative expresses an understanding of the self, in the bond with her mother, as a member of the female collectivity sharing the same experience of early bonding necessary for later development and maturation. Her view of the individual self in the female collective, which informs her writing, illustrates women's textual formation according to their psychosexual development described by Nancy Chodorow, a feminist psychoanalyst, as follows: "[b]ecause of their mothering by women, girls come to experience themselves as less separate than boys, as having more permeable ego boundaries. Girls come to define themselves more in relation to others" (93). Thus, Friday's textual construction of her identity in women's collective subjectivity through the pronomial expansion from "I" to "we" illustrates Chodorow's psychoanalytic view of women's interconnectedness arising from maternal nurturance. From her close relationship with her mother from birth, she expresses an affiliation with other women who also live the same condition as daughters in relation to their mothers. According to Sidonie

Smith who also upholds Chodorow's psychoanalytic theory of female sexual-textual identity formation,

woman's subjectivity and therefore her text unfolds narratively in patterns tied to her different psychosexual development. Unlike men who experience the self, other, space and time in individualistic, objective and distant ways, women represent experiences in relatively interpersonal, subjective, immediate ways ... (13).

In this context, Friday's textual development of her sexual identity traces an interrelation between self and other women influenced by the early pre-oedipal bond with the mother. Susan Stanford Friedman writes that "[i]nstead of seeing themselves as solely unique, women often explore their sense of shared identity with other women ..." (44). She perceives women's awareness of group identity in feminine writing according to Chodorow's concept of women's fluid ego boundaries inherent in mother-daughter relationships. Friday's writing illustrates Friedman's view which is expressed in Cixous's psychoanalytic theory: "[a]s subjects of history, ... woman un-thinks the unifying ... history In woman, personal history blends together with the history of women" (*Laugh*, 882). Friday's story of the self, comprised of the history of other women, stresses the collective experience of self in close relation to mother.

Moreover, Friday's representation of her identity in women's plural subjectivity "we" challenges the conventional (male) singular "I" as an independent, individual authorial subject of autobiography. Friday asserts that "[w]e hold the world together with the constant availability of our love when men would tear it apart with their needs for power" (53). Opposing male divisiveness, she upholds the creative power of love generated from the group solidarity of

women's interconnected lives which Judith Butler terms "coalitional politics".⁹ Friday's defence of the female collective stance against male individual authority can be perceived from Sidonie Smith's discussion in "The Autobiographical Manifesto: that

Much ... of women's autobiography assumes a collective orientation. In the manifesto, however, group identification - "an awareness of the meaning of the cultural category WOMAN for the patterns of women's individual destiny" (Friedman 41) is the rhetorical ground of appeal. During her public performance the manifesto speaker positions herself expressly as a member of a group or community ... (193).

Friday strongly views her position as a member of the female group to voice out against the universal male position of authority:

Society plays us a dirty trick by calling us the loving sex. The flattery is meant to make us proud of our weakness, our inability to be independent, our imperative need to belong to someone. We are limited to need and nurture, leaving erotic love to men. (63)

Thus, her individual self-representation appeals to women's consolidated group position to effectively counter the dominantly male socio-cultural oppression of women. Nancy Friday's engagement of self with other women in the common mother-daughter experiences can be approached from Jeanne Perreault's analysis of women's writing. Perreault clarifies that "[r]ather than treating 'self' as a fixed notion, ... the feminist writer of self engages in a (community of) discourse This interrelation of self and community is one of the most provocative issues in the writing of feminist subjectivity" (7). Thus, like Friedman, Perreault endorses female group identity -- from the concept of self in relation to community -- consonant with Butler's notion of female solidarity in coalitional politics.

⁹Butler treats "coalitional politics" as "the insistence upon the coherence and unity of the category of women" (14).

Nancy Friday evokes the plurality and flexibility of her identity by including other women's expressions of their experiences in her own autobiography. In Chapter 3, she presents the following dialogue with a mother after the initial narrative of her first personal experience of individuation at age five:

In an interview with a young mother in Detroit which last five hours, she smiles and talks easily about how she is raising her daughter to be "an individual person" "You don't think then that mothers have problems separating from their daughters?" I ask as we are parting. She laughs nervously: "When you first said that word, I felt goose flesh up and down my arms". Separation - the word sounds so final, fraught with loss, abandonment, and guilt that mothers don't want to talk about it.

Nor can we as daughters easily contemplate an act so desperate *vis-à-vis* our mothers. (90-91)

From her exchange of the commonly felt emotions on the mother-daughter issue with other women, Friday illustrates the continuity and fluidity of the self with other women-as-daughters in the expressions of feminine subjectivity. Opening up her own private narrative to the public testimonies of other women, Friday accords to these women a "voice" to articulate the mother-daughter attachment that makes up the collective female experience of identity. Friday gives expressions to women who, according to John Beverley's understanding of *testimonio*, claim a voice

... in the form of an 'I' that demands to be recognized.... This presence of the voice, ... is the mark of a desire not to be silenced or defeated, a desire to impose oneself on an institution of power, such as literature from the position of the excluded or the marginal. (96)

She expresses the female plural self through the collective voice of women openly speaking about the socially repressed mother-daughter bond in their testimonies. Viewed in the context of Beverley's concept of *testimonio* -- literally means "'testimony', as in the act of testifying" (94),

these women voice out against the cultural silencing of the daughters' special relationship with their mothers. Women's voices, which are recorded orally and textually in Friday's self-representation, denote a new narrative mode suggestive of women's multiple subjectivity. Contrary to the coherent subject expressing "a unique, ... autonomous ego" (Beverley, 102) in conventional autobiography, the narrative "I" in *testimonio*, according to Beverley,

... has the status of what linguists call a shifter -- a linguistic function that can be assumed indiscriminately by anyone ... the meaning of [a woman's] *testimonio* lies not in its uniqueness but in its ability to stand for the experience of her community as a whole. (103)

Friday's autobiography becomes a collective testimony of the strong mother-daughter ties that opposes the cultural separation of women from their mothers. Women's collective voice denotes Chodorow's psychoanalytic sense of female "permeable ego boundaries" in feminine identity perception. Friday's multiple narrative testimonies (of self and other women) reiterate Smith's view of feminine writing as autobiographical manifestos that stage women's collective orientation towards a public manifestation of marginalised experiences. Thus, Friday's flexible reconceptualization of personal narrative in collective *testimonio* would, in Beverley's words, constitute "an affirmation of the individual self in a collective mode" (97). Through women's collective voice in the sexual-textual conception of "we as daughters", Friday promotes the plural re-presentations of self in other women's testimonies.

Simone de Beauvoir's narrative of her personal identity starts with the development of her personality in close connection at first with her mother, then, when she was ten, with her best friend of her age named Elizabeth Mabile, better known as Zaza. Beauvoir expands the account of her childhood with her parents to the circumstances of Zaza's active family life. Her

inclusion of Zaza's life story in her own autobiography repeats in an amplified outward manner, her own sketch of the private, internal self. Zaza's mother, who "belonged to a dynasty of militant Catholics" and who is "an active worker for charity" (92), socially represents Simone's devout Catholic mother, a housewife. Simone clearly perceives Zaza as her double in intellectual and artistic pursuit, confirming that "Zaza like myself, liked books and studying" (93). They were drawn together in rehearsals for a musical and dramatic performance to the point where Zaza and she are considered publicly as "the two inseparables" (92). Moreover, in playing "the part of a high-spirited boy cousin" (92) opposite Simone who "impersonated Madame de Sévigné as a little girl" (92), Zaza reveals Simone's secret first love for her cousin Jacques. Beauvoir shows that, like her knowledge of her mother's sexual dissatisfaction with her marital life, "Zaza had a precocious understanding of why Madame Mabile had hated the first night of her marriage and had loathed her husband's embraces ever since" (115). And like Françoise de Beauvoir's conscious choice of loving Simone, the elder daughter like herself, "Madame Mabile made no bones about her preference for Zaza: "'She's a living image', she would say happily" (115). Thus, Beauvoir depicts the loving bond which both she and Zaza enjoyed with the mother whose love-life they understand completely. She, therefore, perceives in the text of her life the continuous emotional ties with her best friend as the outward aspect of her inner self with the same experience of symbiosis with the mother. Her depiction of her relation with Zaza in her autobiography, as the writing of the self, effectively becomes the dual exposition of the other (Zaza) of the self (Simone). Beauvoir presents the notion of female fluid and multiple identity in the repetitive revelation of the self in the other in Zaza's episode that echoes her own life events.

Moreover, in her life-writing, Beauvoir re-presents her own secret complex love for her cousin Jacques through Zaza's own expression of her sad love for her cousin André. She extends to André the same childhood condition "lonely, exiled from the land of his birth" (249) as Jacques, "... this little lord, dethroned, exiled, abandoned" (199) when each boy was sent by their parents away from home for their studies. The reason for Zaza's separation from her cousin André -- "[t]he parents of the two children had quarrelled - André's were much richer than Zaza's" (249) reflects Simone's similar experience when Jacques later marries Odile Riancourt for her dowry. Simone views her sad fate as the extension of her mother's unrequited love for her cousin who has preferred a richer cousin with a dowry to her mother. In loving Jacques, her mother's cousin's son, Simone repeats her mother's secret love for her cousin through a second generation. Thus, Beauvoir illustrates the unconscious pattern of the mother-daughter's merging sexual desire, which in Lisa Appapenisi's opinion, implies that Simone would like to succeed where her mother has failed in love (23). In this continuous way, Simone's narrative of her unrequited love for her cousin Jacques denotes her conscious perception of her unconscious re-living of her mother's unhappy experience in love.

Beauvoir presents in her writing of the *self*, Zaza's letters as the writing of the *other* of the self subsumed in her own text: "[d]uring the New Year holidays in 1926 [Zaza wrote] I was allowed to spend a single day here to see André and to tell him that all was over between us" (249, my emphasis). The revelation of Zaza's sad romance with André in smaller script intermingles with Simone's main text unfolding her love for Jacques. With this inter-textuality of Zaza's narrative in her autobiography, Beauvoir depicts her love as the feminine intersubjective bitter experience shared by her best friend. She evokes her relation with Jacques

in Zaza's revelation:

I see with great clarity all the differences and all the sacrifices which must result from a love between two such ill-assorted people as he and I, but I can't act in any other way, I can't give up the dream of my youth and all its cherished memories ... (250).

Beauvoir perceives her love for Jacques in the same circumstances as Zaza's situation and confirms that "[a]t first the past had a great deal to do with it: I loved Jacques because I had loved him in the past However, this did not give me much comfort, I knew how different we were..." (263-64). Like Zaza, Beauvoir understands that she longs for her past love for her cousin although he is very different from her. By linking up her identity represented as "I" in her own narrative to Zaza's personality recorded directly as "I" in the letters, Beauvoir projects in her autobiography, in Sidonie Smith's words, a "representation of continuous identity that stands for ... her subjectivity ..." ("Woman's Story and the Engenderings of Self-Representation", 47). According to Smith's analysis of the autobiographer's self-representation, Beauvoir illustrates her understanding of her coterminous identity with Zaza's through similar narratives which tell "stories about or versions of herself as her subjectivity is displaced by one or multiple textual representations" ("Woman's Story and the Engenderings of Self-Representation", 47). The plural textual representations of Beauvoir's self-narrative in Zaza's versions of unhappy love for André and later for Pradelle recount by multiple variations Beauvoir's perception of her unsuccessful love for her cousin as an extension of her mother's unrequited love for her cousin. Beauvoir re-presents the impossibility of her mother's marriage to her cousin through Zaza's and her own trials in love. Upon learning of Jacques's affair with an attractive colored woman named Magda, Beauvoir reveals that "[i]t was I alone who had built up the image of our friendship over the last three years; I still clung to it today because of the

past and now the past was nothing but a lie" (316). Simone's reckoning of her blind loyalty to her earlier love for Jacques is perceived as a continuous experience of Zaza's similar relation with André: "But she had to admit that after the parting in January 1926 she had artificially prolonged this past existence 'by will power and the power of the imagination'" (252-53). In her textual self-representation which relates the "image" of her love with Zaza's "power of the imagination", Beauvoir shows her desire for Jacques as a co-extension of her best friend's strong wish to continue loving her cousin after their forced separation. Moreover, Beauvoir's portrayal of Zaza's frustration with Pradelle's "lukewarm" love resisting marriage reflects Beauvoir's disappointment at Jacques's decision to marry someone else for money.

Multiple Autobiographical Forms and Subjects in Women's Self-Representations.

Beauvoir depicts the plural and fluid representation of her subjectivity through Zaza's voice expressing her similar experiences of love and passion. In the context of Cixous's psychoanalytic theory of writing, "voice" features in feminine texts as the unconscious return of the daughter's desire for the mother in the conscious articulation of the culturally repressed "voice of the mother" ("Castration of Decapitation?", 54). The overflowing of the self -- in Beauvoir's autobiography -- to the other -- in Zaza's voice, denotes the upsurge of the unconscious as the "voice of the mother" in Cixous's theory of women's writing. Cixous maintains that

... [i]n woman there is always ... something of "the mother" repairing and feeding, resisting separation, a force that does not let itself be cut off The relationship to childhood ... is no more cut off than is the relationship to the "mother" Voice: milk that could go on forever. Found again. The lost mother/bitter-lost. Eternity: is voice mixed with milk. (*The Newly Born*

Woman, 92-93)

In the context of Cixous's psychoanalytic insight into feminine writing, Beauvoir's continuous perception of her first love for her cousin Jacques in Zaza's own expression of her romantic dream with her cousin André recapitulates her mother's desire for her cousin. From the representation of her multiple and fluid identity, Beauvoir delineates the close connection with her childhood girlfriend as the inseparable link with her mother. Therefore, the "voice" of her text articulates feminine desire in the unconscious through the continuous identification with the mother and her sexual desire for her cousin. Thus, the emotional link that reconnects her to her mother also evokes the continuity she expresses in her childhood relation to her friend in Zaza's "voice mixed with milk" of her mother.

In Friday's polyphonic representations of the mother-daughter relation, "voice" features as an intersubjective representation of the multiple and fluid feminine self. Friday remarks:

... I talked to psychiatrists, educators, doctors, lawyers, sociologists. I did not want textbook answers alone: of the twenty-one professional women quoted in this book, sixteen are mothers of daughters themselves. (14)

She demonstrates the flexibility of the female self in writing from diverse social, legal and scientific perspectives. Friday's diffused self-representation spreading to other women's discourses of the mother-daughter experience denotes the close link between the female subject and the diversified subjects that make up her plural representation. The representation of the female multiple subjective expressions in Friday's autobiography can be read in the light of Jeanne Perreault's analysis of women's self-writing that

... if we mean by female writing 'subject' a complex, multiple, mutable (and self-consciously so) voice - a self for whom authorial 'sovereignty' is ... a foreign image, ... then that subject exists, and

not in solitude. (10)

Perceived according to Perreault's interpretation of "female writing 'subject'", Friday's writing of the self displays the nexus of women's expressions as the interrelation of the female self with others in different professional fields investigating feminine identity.

Moreover, Friday depicts feminine intersubjectivity with an intertextuality of mixed genres by blending her autobiographical writing with other literary modes varying from research, interviews, oral and written testimonies, to professional and psychoanalytic discussions of feminine identity under maternal influence. In the context of Perreault's discussion of female 'subject' as "a complex, multiple, mutable (and self-consciously so) ... voice" (10), Friday's construction of her identity is enacted through the *transformation* of her autobiographical subject to a series of different representations of women's voices. This deliberate diversification of form in Friday's autobiography proper amplifies her self-expressions into multiple and varying articulations of women's experiences from different angles of representation. According to Cixous, feminine plural sexual/textual formation is

[a] process of different subjects knowing one another and beginning one another anew only from the living boundaries of the other: a multiple and inexhaustible course with millions of encounters and transformations of the same into the other from which woman takes her forms. ("Laugh of the Medusa", 883)

In the context of Cixous's psychoanalytic theory of feminine writing, Friday's plural *formation* of self in relation to other female subjects in a close intertextuality illustrates women's fluid intersubjectivity through diverse forms of self-representation. Friday's narrative of the self unfolds in feminine subjects that cross beyond the boundaries of the self's expressions to other women's different forms of discourses of the mother-daughter relations. She links the story of

her development to other women's experiences in a re-presentation of variously informed and informal discourses to depict, in this *multiform*, her perception of the multiple processes from which feminine sexual identity is *formed*. Friday's narrative of her life through the revelation of women's various developments from symbiosis, menstruation, adolescence and marriage in differing representations evokes the female self in its manifold formations. According to Sidonie Smith's reading that "[u]ltimately [woman] may transform herself and cultural stories generally by shifting generic boundaries" ("Woman's Story and the Engenderings of Self-Representation", 59), the multiple narrative forms in Friday's autobiography illustrate the continuous self-transformations the feminine writing subject undergoes from the blurring of the boundaries of self with her other developing selves and those of other women in different textual forms. Friday depicts the Cixousian sense of subject *transformation* in her own multiple readings of symbiosis in botany, in the animal, bird and human worlds. She re-presents these different, shifting contexts "... because for so many of us, it becomes our lifelong way of relating.... As young girls, we are trained to see our value in the partnerships we form. To symbioze" (57). Friday presents the continuous process of perceiving women's self-*transformation* from their early symbiosis in close connection with other forms of symbiosis due to the pattern of relating typical to feminine psychosexual development. Thus, women's way of relating to others, i.e. "to symbioze", is reflected in the plural forms that represent multiple, connected subjects as an enactment, through repetition, of the "satisfying closeness" (56) in the daughter's early symbiosis with their mother.

In Friday's autobiography, the plural textual forms that reflect feminine multiple sexual *formations* further accentuate the manifold, complex dimensions of women's sexuality. Friday

delineates women's experience of menstruation as a symbiotic relation with their mother in a new sexual dimension:

But once we begin to menstruate, we can't look away. [Mother's] life is ours. Having to understand what the periodic cycle means to mother makes us unable to avoid any longer recognizing that mom is not merely the kindly, "pure," and totally unsexual being we had always assumed, but is as irrationally taken up by the same erotic desires as we. She feels our emotions and knows the same excitements as we do within our bodies. (144)

Friday shows that women experience the sense of a dual and continuous identity with their mothers in the menstrual cycles that become another form of the sexual expressions of the self and the mother through their bodies. Therefore, Friday promotes a textual representation of menstruation as another feminine sexual *formation* that continues the early mother-daughter symbiosis in what Irigaray describes as the "two lips" in women's sexuality when "several voices, several ways of speaking resound endlessly, back and forth. One is never separable from the other. You/I: we are always several at once" ("When Our Lips Speak Together", 209). According to Irigaray's interpretation of women's multiple sexual expressions, Friday's representation of symbiosis and menstruation can be perceived as the multiple, continuous forms of expressions of feminine sexuality according to the pattern of the two (vulvar) lips that depict the close, fluid psychosexual relation of the mother-daughter bond.

Furthermore, the plural textual forms that make up the *body* of Friday's work -- the corpus -- represent the multiple sexual experience of women's *bodies*. Friday presents the complex nature of feminine multiple sexual dimensions:

There are other emotions as secretive as the shame that surrounds menstruation. They are feelings that remind us of life, that we can give life, and that we are still alive, young - sexually capable of reproducing ourselves.... How do you describe the awe that has

always surrounded reproduction, the mystery and emotion that such a gift (the power to reproduce) and such a curse (to bleed once a month) must arouse in those who do not share them?

How do you not? (158-159)

The double meanings of women's menstruation -- as the feminine sexual capacity to give life in reproduction, and the incapacity to control bleeding -- are depicted in Friday's complex textual representations to evoke the plural and contrasting experiences of the feminine body.

The various, disparate, sexual subjects of menstruation and reproduction, life and death in Friday's textual body tie in with Irigaray's notion of "*what is in excess with respect to form ... [:] the feminine sex*" (*This Sex*, 110-111). In the context of Irigaray's psychoanalytic theory of the plural forms of feminine sexuality/textuality, Friday's feminist view of women's multidimensional sexuality challenges the limited phallic representation of masculine sexuality. She opens up the discourse of feminine sexuality to include both the physical and emotional aspects presented by gynaecologists and psychiatrists: "Menstruation, says Dr. Schaefer, is stepping into [the adult world] biologically, while loss of virginity should be the emotional step into adulthood" (301). In her depiction of the many continuous forms of feminine sexuality in women's menstruation and their loss of virginity, Friday represents the multiple physical and psychological dimensions of feminine sexuality.

The multiple textual forms also highlight the structure of feminine plural sexual pleasures. Friday shows the sexual/textual development of her self in multiple experiences of the mother-daughter bond in female experiences of loss of virginity, marriage and motherhood. These important events are demonstrated as the complex and subtle expressions of women's desires for the (m)other. In her writing, Friday depicts these multiple *formations* of self from other feminine subjects:

Aunt Kate was the only woman, after my nurse Anna, whose embraces I welcomed, whose breast I allowed myself to lie on ... her voice, her presence, the mere idea of her was something to hold on to ... it wasn't just the pain of adolescence that she got me through. She also gave me my present life. She got me ready for my husband and my work. The idea of her life, the picture of her, how she was physically and mentally, were my motivation and goal for years.... Long after my adolescence, things she had told me, ideas she believed in, ways I observed her to be, were my guideposts.... Her opinions and knowledge fell about me like gifts, waiting until I was ready to open them. One by one they were incorporated into the self I was forming. (224-25)

As Friday reveals in her text, her concept of her feminine self is based on her close identification with her loving aunt whose life and ideas she adopts for herself. Thus, the multiple forms of feminine subjects that are incorporated into her text illustrate her *self-formation* from her mother and her mother's sister, Kate. In her narrative of feminine sexuality in the coupling of menstruation and reproduction, menstruation and loss of virginity, Friday shows her merging with her mother in menstrual cycles, and her fusion with her aunt in her conceptions of sexuality, marriage and work.

Moreover, she depicts the plural *forms* of feminine sexuality in menstruation which is "simultaneous with pubic hair, the lift of a breast, the curve of a thigh" (148). Therefore, Friday's text displays feminine pleasures from the *form* of women's sex organs comprised of the breasts, the (facial and vulvar) lips, the vagina and the uterus. As Irigaray argues about women's sex organ,

She has at least two of them Indeed she has many more. Her sexuality, always at least double, goes even further: it is *plural* Is this the way texts write themselves/ are written now? (*This Sex*, 28)

From the psychoanalytic perspective of Irigaray's theory of feminine sexual/textual *formations*,

Friday's textual body replicates the feminine *form* of multiple sexual organs and their plural pleasures. Women's multidimensional sexuality is evoked in Friday's representation of the feminine self in continuous, plural experiences of symbiosis with the mother in the daughter's marriage and motherhood. Friday reveals women's unconscious desire of/for the mother in their sexual relation with men:

Being held in our lover's arms creates a feeling of warmth
 "The reason the feeling of love at these moments is so satisfying," says Dr. Robertiello, "is that in a perfectly acceptable, heterosexual situation, the woman has re-created the intensity of satisfaction she once felt at being held like this. It was when she was a baby in her mother's arms. (272)

She demonstrates feminine plural sexual pleasures in women's gratification of their unconscious longing for their mother's original love in their physical relation with men. Thus, in their relation of the heterosexual couple, women relive the close dyad with their mothers as the pattern of dual (psycho)sexuality in the continuity of women's genitals made up of two lips. This duality is further experienced in women's motherhood when

"As a new mother," says Liz Hauser, "part of what you're looking for in this heavenly blurring of dependency and closeness between you and your child is the desire to be taken care of You are not the child in this relationship. You are the mother. This is the problem of symbiosis: undefined boundaries. You don't know where you leave off and the child begins. (443-444)

Women express multiple desires when they become mothers and simultaneously merge totally with their babies to yearn for mother's nurturing love. Thus, women experience their need as both mother and baby in the symbiotic relation of dependency. Women's tight symbiotic union with mother is confirmed in professional women's experience:

Dr. Hauser may be speaking in terms of psychological theory, but she is speaking from the inside too. She is a mother with a

daughter of her own. All the women quoted in this chapter are both mothers and professionals trained to handle symbiotic problems. And yet they could not avoid nonseparation themselves when they had children. (444)

The multiplicity of women's desires -- demonstrated in the mothers' non-separation from their children and the daughters' continued symbiosis with their mothers in their sexual unions with men -- is enacted in the plurality of *forms* and subjects of Friday's self-writing. Feminine multiple, diffused gynocentric representations of the self (and the mother), thus, counter the phallogomorphic unified *form* of representation as the law of genre in conventional (male subject of) autobiography. In their autobiographical practice, Friday and Beauvoir illustrate Jacques Derrida's theory of "The Law of Genre" which reflects "a counterlaw" in that the genre limits are "always already crossed" (203-204). Moreover, as Caren Kaplan asserts,

As counterlaw, or *out-law*, such productions often break most obvious rules of genres. Locating out-law genres enables a deconstruction of the "master" genres, revealing the power dynamics embedded in literary production, distribution, and reception. (119)

In the context of Kaplan's discussion of "out-law" genre as a critique of the "master" genre, Friday's multiple genre *formation* challenges the "master" discourse by crossing the boundary of conventional autobiography proper to the outer limits of culturally repressed feminine sexual pleasures. With her multiply fragmented genre representing feminine plural sexual *formation*, Friday demolishes what Irigaray decries as "[t]he *one* of form, of the individual, of the (male) sexual organ, ... of the proper meaning ..." (*This Sex*, 26). In her deconstruction of the proper form of autobiography based on the representation of the "one" male sexual organ as the signifier of (universal) sexuality, Friday promotes the feminine textual (re)construction of women's multiple sexuality.

Friday depicts the different, more complex structure of feminine textual form representing women's sexual cycles (in menstruation, puberty, pregnancy and reproduction) to disconcert the linear representation of male sexuality. Feminine sexual multidimensionality as depicted in Friday's self-representations challenges the limited unidirectionality of male sexual pleasure from erection to detumescence. Unlike the closure in the structure of male sexual decline, the feminine textual representation of women's pleasure is open, unending. Female pleasure repeats itself continuously in multiple forms of feminine sexuality that re-enacts the original close mother-daughter bond. Thus, women express their spatial experience of closeness with their (m)other(s) in their plural temporal rhythms of sexuality. Through the multiple (textual) *forms* of feminine sexual cycles, Friday illustrates women's experience of their time as marked by plural, continuous *transformations* of the self in the chapters entitled "A Time To Be Close", "A Time To Let Go", "Body Image and Menstruation", "The Loss of Virginity", "Marriage: The Return to Symbiosis", and "A Mother Dies. A Daughter Is Born. The Cycle Repeats". Therefore, Friday's narrative structure represents the specificity of female sexuality as a challenge to the linear narrative time reflecting the structure of male sexuality. As Diana Holmes maintains, *écriture féminine* will disrupt the order of the masculine text, but beneath its apparent incoherence may display a different type of order, based on the [sexual] cycle rather than the straight line [of male sexual experience]" (226).

Another alternative to the masculine linear form in self-representation is offered by Beauvoir in her quasi-teleological life-narrative unfolding somewhat systematically from her birth to her independent adulthood. However, she clarifies that her life-writing challenges any conventional *form*:

My childhood and adolescence had passed fairly smoothly; But now it seemed that there had been a decisive break in the even course of my life; I thought I was authorized to liquidate traditions, customs, prejudices, and all kinds of political and theological particularism in the light of reason, beauty, goodness, and progress. If I established myself in life by writing a work which would do honour to humanity, I would be congratulated for having trampled conformity in the dust ... (187-88).

Here, Beauvoir alerts the reader to her non-conformity to all socio-cultural norms in her literary aspirations. She shows that, by her emancipatory practice of writing, there will be a *reformulation* of traditional laws of self-representation in order to promote the feminine aspects of beauty and progress. Beauvoir's memoirs illustrate a critique of the unitary, linear form of conventional autobiography through the representation of female (un)conscious, multidimensional sexual orientation. Beneath the main narrative framework of Simone's childhood and adolescence lies the cluster re-presentations of Simone's close relations with her mother, her sister Poupette, her friend Zaza, her cousin Jacques, and her life-time companion Jean-Paul Sartre. Therefore, somewhat like Friday's autobiography, Beauvoir's subtle narrative forms depict the multiple and close identifications of self with others in the continuous symbiotic relationship first experienced with her mother.

Moreover, Beauvoir's narrative sequence reverses and upsets the normal narrative order (reflecting male sexuality) expressed by Diana Holmes as "opening, development, climax, and subsidence into the calm of closure" (225). Beauvoir places the climax and resolution right at the beginning of her narrative when she shows that her escalating struggles for independence at age three and a half attain their harmonious resolution. Therefore, she undoes her narrative knot with her review in structural form. She discloses that

I had made a definite metamorphosis into a good little girl. Right from the start, I had composed the personality I wished to present to the world; it had brought me so much praise and so many great satisfactions that I finished by identifying myself with the character I had built up: it was my one reality I no longer upset the grown-ups with turbulent outbursts of rage And so I said good-bye to the independence which I had tried so hard to preserve in my earliest years. For some time, I was to be the docile reflection of my parents' will. (30-31)

Beauvoir's observation of her marked metamorphosis into an obedient daughter is a textual remark of the jumbled order in which she reshuffles the normal development of her character to reach the end of her struggles at the beginning of her narrative. In this way, she has prematurely composed the end -- as the anti-climax to the development she has "built up" -- when she perceives herself as a little girl who "finished" by unconsciously identifying herself with the model she has consciously set up from the very beginning. However, Beauvoir illustrates her refusal to instill firm narrative closure in her temporary acquiescence to her parents' will. By her reflection "[f]or some time", which Beauvoir structurally places after bidding "good-bye" to the early independence, we note the constant reversal of time that is not perceived or represented according to the usual chronological order. Her depiction of her compliance to her parents' command is an affirmation through irony that she is a "dutiful" daughter, as shown in the title of her autobiography. However, her apparent submission is but a short episode in the long development toward her autonomy both in her character and in her narrative.

At the end of her autobiography, Beauvoir points to Zaza's death not as the final end to her narrative but as the very beginning of the freedom which both she herself and Zaza had longed for. Consequently, the end of her book marks the end of a life of subjection for Zaza -- who dies from exhaustion of the burdens of bourgeois family life -- and for Beauvoir who,

at last, enjoys independence. At the conclusion of her narrative, Beauvoir juxtaposes Zaza's death with her own autonomous life that has just started. In this way, her autobiography does not end in a dire mourning of Zaza's death but on a triumphant celebration of her own new life of freedom. Moreover, Beauvoir opens up the dimension of time beyond the end of her story and the end of Zaza's life. She ends her life-writing with the following conclusion: "We had fought together against the revolting fate that had lain ahead of us, and for a long time I believed that I had paid for my own freedom with her death" (360). At the end of her autobiography, Beauvoir looks toward the future to show that Zaza belongs already to Beauvoir's past and reveals that her guilt at paying her freedom with Zaza's death is but a momentary feeling. Beauvoir expands time beyond "a long time" of her writing to include the great expanse of her life after her autobiography which is the vantage point from which she looks back at this momentary haunting memory of Zaza's life coming to an end. She has re-presented her autobiography as the writing of the life that continues after the end: Zaza's death. Thus, Beauvoir breaks through the end and death to move time forward to life. Therefore, her autobiography resists closure to show that woman's writing embraces new life, thus reflecting freedom from literary conventions.

Beauvoir's and Friday's life-writing demonstrates an open, continuous and fluid structure of feminine sexual pleasure and thus, resists the regulated, teleological, solid form of representation according to male sexual desire. From the psychoanalytic perspective of linguistic representation, these women writers challenge "... the privilege granted to metaphor (a quasi solid) over metonymy (which is much more closely allied to fluids)..." ("The 'Mechanics' of Fluids", 110). Friday and Beauvoir re-assert a metonymic self-construction in language

according to Leigh Gilmore's view that women autobiographers promote representations of self in relation to others. From Ryan's linguistic analysis of metonym as the horizontal syntagmatic order of terms in relation to each other in contrast to metaphor as the vertical paradigmatic register of different terms in a sentence, Gilmore reads metonym as a "variety of arrangements" (*Autobiographics*, 79) that resists the singular meaning of a metaphorical representation which has but "one 'proper' interpretation" (*Autobiographics*, 79). In her self-representation, Friday highlights the fluid nature of women's multidimensional sexuality to counter the rigid phallic representation limiting autobiographic discourse to a single (male) subject. She contends that "[i]n a male-dominated society, the penis is seen as the symbol of the more privileged sex" (135). However, she shows from the multiple feminine sexual perspectives that women's sex exceeds the limited view of phallic domination in the singular form of metaphoric self-representation. Therefore, Friday metonymically represents the language of female sexuality, in Gilmore's words, in "a trope of contiguity and relation that resist[s] the perfect consistency of the sex organ" (*Autobiographics*, 78).

Besides her feminine plural sexual re-presentations, Friday also depicts women's emotions as an overflow of feminine excess of desire to displace the absolute containment of self in the solid and consistent phallic representation. Viewed in the psychoanalytic context, feminine emotions such as anger denote the liberation of women's repressed unconscious feelings of self and others. Friday remarks that marriage and "... any institution sold to women as a reward for lifelong inhibition must cause anger and disappointment" (405). She encourages women not to deny their emotions and contends that "... because society would rather we always wore a pretty face, women have been trained to cut off anger..." (408). As Irigaray maintains,

"the terms that describe pleasure evoke the return of a repressed that disconcerts the structure of the signifying chain" (*This Sex*, 114). Friday's expression of women's socially inhibited rage dislodges the solid discourse of male pleasure exhibited in the hierarchical supremacy of the phallus as the privileged signifier over the signified as the repressed feminine desire in the metaphorical structure of signification. Therefore, Friday's metonymic representation of women's emotions explodes the repression of female desire by crossing the bar and challenging metaphor as a hierarchical model of the phallic signifier. She challenges the phallic privileged position above the bar of signification which in French "avoir barre sur" denotes its having advantage over the signified. Thus, emotions feature in Friday's autobiography as *jouissance* in its fluid overflow of passions which is termed *ek-stasis* in Greek, meaning "'ek-stasy', outside, what is beyond 'the archaic rigidification [of male desire]'" (*This Sex*, 118). As Catherine Kirkwood asserts, emotional response gathered in social research data are important because they represent women's collective experiences and social behavior. Thus, Friday incorporates women's emotional responses in her self-writing to challenge the cultural exclusion of female emotions in favour of male rationality. She demonstrates women's reasoning capacity in their conscious analysis of their deep, unconscious feelings.

In my reading of the textual construction of feminine psychosexual identity, I have illustrated, in Marianne Hirsch's words, how "the sense of merging and fusion, of repetition and affiliation, of reflection and doubling is enacted in the texts' structure and style" ("Mothers and Daughters", 218). Both Beauvoir and Friday have, in their different ways, illustrated women's ways of relating the self to other feminine subjects in their sexual/textual *formation*. They depict the multiplicity and fluidity of the female concept of self in women's language that delineates

the spatial and temporal structures of feminine sexuality. In their sexual/textual representation, they demonstrate Irigaray's view that

... we need to proceed in such a way that linear reading is no longer possible: that is, the retroactive impact of the end of each word, utterance or sentence upon its beginning must be taken into consideration in order to undo the power of its teleological effect That would hold good also for the opposition between structures of horizontality and verticality that are at work in language. (*This Sex*, 80)

According to Irigaray's psychoanalytic theory of subversive feminine writing, Friday presents an alternative narrative structure in the re-presentation of women's multiple sexual cycles as a challenge to the conventional linear narrative. Women's expressions of their emotions liberate their unconscious desires to counter the hierarchical supremacy of male sexuality and its repression of feminine sexual pleasures. Women's fluid, metonymic representations of the self in relation to others defy male solid, metaphorical reflection of the individual in the unitary form of phallic sexuality.

SECTION II:

THE MOTHER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WOMEN'S CHOICES IN MOTHERHOOD:
MATERNAL REPRESENTATION OF AUTHOR-ITY
AND THE MIND-BODY DUAL CONCEPTION

In this section, I present a reading of the woman-mother's experience of maternity from the feminist psychoanalytic perspective that counters Freud's prescriptive theory of the female reproductive function as women's only sexual role in life. Phyllis Chesler's articulation of her experience of motherhood as a personal choice illustrates the way a feminist mother lives her sexuality. In her autobiography *With Child: A Diary of Motherhood*, Chesler enacts a female practice of writing that en-*corp*-orates or embodies the dual aspects of the woman-mother's physical and intellectual activity¹⁰. She engages in a revaluation of maternal subjectivity as female embodiment in response to the cultural disembodiment of the natural birth process through the medical, hospitalized procedure of obstetrics. Moreover, I examine Chesler's challenge of male domination of female reproductive power in the medical alienation of the mother's mind from her body - in anesthesia - that effects both the physical and mental lithotomy (horizontal) position of birth. Both Karen Horney and Hélène Cixous ascribe Freud's theory of female penis envy to male womb envy. Female psychoanalysts find that male creation of tools (for the obstetrical process of delivery) and inventions of formula milk and baby food (which replace mother's milk) are compensations for men's lack of procreation. Throughout this chapter, I explore the ways in which Chesler re-presents motherhood as author-ity in her writing that depicts the maternal dual conceptions of mind-body, work and mothering, one and two, and self and other in the mother-child in-utero and extra-uterine experiences of maternity. This duality re-works the cultural hierarchical system of binary oppositions reproducing phallogentrism in the privileging of the positive term of the dichotomy as male attributes.

¹⁰*Corps* in French designates "the body".

In her first diary entry of May 1, 1977, Phyllis Chesler raises three important questions: "Why am I having a baby?" (3), "What if I have to choose between my work and you - and can't?" (3), and "What if can't transform myself into a mother-person? (3)" These key issues make up the central theme of women's choices in motherhood addressed by Chesler in her personal experience. I will explore the ways in which Chesler re-presents maternal power in her choices of pregnancy, birth and motherhood. Chesler's representation of motherhood is all the more significant given the larger social context of powerlessness in patriarchy which has been analysed by Adrienne Rich, a feminist theorist of motherhood, in *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*.

When Chesler first feels her baby deep within her entrails in morning sickness, she immediately asks, "Why am I having a baby?" In her journal, she records the origin of maternity in her body which makes her mentally reflect on her sexual identity. By her provocative question, she initiates inquiry into the unprecedented "*hystory of female askings*" (3) through her "individual tale of pregnancy" (3). Therefore, her own story of maternity simultaneously evokes the first signs of her pregnancy and her personal exploration into the question "*ask[ed] as if for the first time*" (3). To mark the importance of her experience of being with child, she writes

Little one: This journal will be a record of my askings; a record of our beginnings; a record of our awakening; a record of the fact that before you there was me. Who in the middle of my life ... choose you. (3)

She assigns to her autobiography of birth the preservation of the founding moment of the close relationship between mother and child from conception. Through her diary as "a record of awakening", she confirms that she has consciously chosen to become a mother.

In her re-evaluation of women's decision in pregnancy, Chesler questions social expectations pressuring women to become mothers. She declares that "[t]o embrace what has been is foreign to me. *Women have always had children*" (4). She desists maternity as an automatically and unconsciously accepted cultural notion of female sexuality. Her own desire for motherhood does not conform to the narrowly defined reproductive female function. Thus, Chesler's re-presentation of maternity bears out Cixous's argument in *The Newly Born Woman* that

It is not the penis that woman desires in the child *The relation borne to the child* must be rethought, ... feminist thought denounces a trap in maternity that would consist in making the mother-woman an agent who is more or less the accomplice of reproduction ... phallogentric reproduction. (89)

Like Irigaray, Cixous strongly refutes Freud's assumption of the girl's acceptance of her castration as a 'fact' in the female oedipal phase when she seeks passively to be desired, and his deduction of her change of sexual focus from the clitoris to the vagina in the resolution of her oedipal complex. Paramount to these feminist psychoanalysts' defence of femininity is their opposition against Freud's prescriptive theory of reproduction as the sole sexual function for women who normally should become wives and mothers. In *Speculum*, Irigaray attributes Freud's interpretation of the 'phallic' sexuality in the pre-oedipal girl -- who, according to him, behaves as a little man -- to his representation of femininity from male sexuality as a means of "assuring the reproduction-specularization of the same" (27). Thus, both Irigary and Cixous confront Freud's theory of maternity as a trap which perpetrates (phallogentric) reproduction in his limited view of the female desire to acquire the lacking penis in the child (especially a boy) and the perpetuation of (homo)sexuality in his assumption of women's passive role of becoming

the receptacle to bear the man's children.¹¹ However, Irigaray and Cixous counter his claim that women wish to have a baby to make up for their lack of a penis which they desire. A similar critique of Freud's hypothesis of femininity is presented by Adrienne Rich, a renowned poet and feminist mother in her autobiographical theory of maternity:

Freud... held that the little girl experiences her lack of a penis as 'castration'; that, to become a woman, she must substitute pregnancy and a baby for the missing male organ. Given this assumption, it is not surprising that he should have invested the mother-son relationship with this 'libidinal', unconscious quality: the son is not only a baby, he possesses the penis the mother has craved. Over and over, this view of the impulse to motherhood has been challenged by women analysts. (198)

As Rich attests, the reason why she becomes pregnant is definitely not to acquire the penis indirectly from her sons. In contrast to the Freudian postulation of the maternal unconscious desire for the penis in the (male) child, Chesler offers another representation of the (un)conscious relation between mother and child that is not interrupted by the man-father's sexual authority over maternity. Reflecting her desire for motherhood against social expectations of "those who say that all else for women is ephemeral, unsatisfying" (3-4), she expresses the common maternal longing that "I am every woman who has dared to hope that *despite everything*, a child will sweeten her days, soften the blow of loneliness and old age" (4). Chesler confirms that she does not subscribe to maternity as the glorious fulfilment of women's role in life according to the

¹¹Here I differ from Nancy Chodorow's view of the mother as the agent of (patriarchal) reproduction in her role of inculcating different values to boys than girls for their gender roles in the family and society. Unlike Chodorow who presents an uncritical psychoanalytic view (in object relations psychoanalytic theory) of boys' different development from girls' -- which prepare them for their training in potential motherhood later in life --, I take up the Irigayan and Cixousian position of feminist counter-argument against Freudian prescriptive theory of female sexual reproductive function according to his phallogocentric discourse of femininity as a reflection of the male libidinal economy.

cultural notion of motherhood but consciously chooses to have a child who will console her and assuage her loneliness in old age. Therefore, she desires motherhood to establish close ties with her child until her death. According to Diane Richardson in her book *Women, Motherhood, and Childrearing*,

To ask, "Why do women have children?" is not merely novel, it is to start a revolution in the way we think about women and about motherhood. It is to imply that there is some choice in the matter.
(62)

Women like Chesler who ponder over their procreative power perceive their maternal experience in a different light from the social urge to bear children. As analysed by Richardson, they demonstrate that motherhood is a personal choice. In her personal record of her maternity, Chesler pledges her binding love to her child through her maternal vow in this solemn affirmation: "Why am I having you? Do I think you'll always be there for me? Do I believe that only you, an unborn child, are my true love, my marriage mate, till death do us part? *I do*" (3). She considers her choice of maternity in the context of the cultural institution of motherhood as the natural outcome of marriage. In her own acceptance of childbearing, she replaces her marriage vow to love her husband only with her maternal pledge to bestow all her love to her yet unborn child. Thus, Chesler questions male authority over her life in marriage and maternity and shows that by her conscious decision to become a mother, she achieves in her diary author-ity over her own sexuality in according life to her child and meaning to her motherhood and its representation.

Moreover, she manifests her personal authority in her celebration of maternity as a spontaneous dialogue in which she addresses herself as 'I' directly to her child as 'you'. Through this immediate bond, she engages in a free flow of communication with her child

without referring to her husband who would interfere in the mother-child dyad. Chesler's representation of her maternal experience illustrates Irigaray's plight to express the cultural debt to maternity which in Elizabeth Grosz's words, implies "the creation of a means of representing the mother's relations to the child beyond the orbit of the symbolic father's authority" (*Sexual Subversions*, 109). Chesler records in her journal the beginning of her baby's existence from the strong sensations that "swirl through [her] bowels, all the way up to [her] teeth" (3), making her vomit and tremble. From this physical condition, she depicts the close interaction with her intra-uterine fetus as an internal experience of her baby in her own body. Chesler's autobiographical account of conception shows the interrelation between female authorial creativity and physical procreativity in the maternal representation of pregnancy beyond the male discourse of female reproduction. This link can be perceived psychoanalytically in Cixous's evocation of the female drive for gestation in feminine writing that liberates women's repressed desire of living the deep experience with their bodies. In *The Newly Born Woman*, Cixous situates the gestation drive outside Freud's theory of female castration and asserts that

The child is the other The other rhythm Let's be done with repeating the castration that transmits and pedigrees itself ... all drives are good forces, and among them the gestation drive - just like wanting to write: a desire to live oneself within, wanting the belly, the tongue, the blood. We are not going to refuse ourselves the delight of a pregnancy. (90)

Cixous upholds that women conceive of their maternity in feminine writing not according to male notion of castration but according to female internal bodily rhythmic exchange with the baby. Chesler's diary of birth is a form of maternal writing, characterized by the gestation drive, which celebrates *jouissance* in the mother's physical bond with her child. Chesler relates in her autobiography of birth that in both wakefulness and in sleep, she lives her maternity as a direct

physical and mental relation with her child. She shares her life with her child in her body and notes in her journal their interconnectedness: "[a]ll night, discotheque music blasts across the Aegean. I stay awake with you. I light a candle. Child: Can you sense the moon, these waters" (43). In her writing, Chesler reflects her sensation of her child's close existence within her. She shows that she communicates to her baby the physical experiences of sight and sound through her body when she is awake. Her experiences of maternity during sleep are recorded as:

I dream a wonderful dream. I give birth to a little blond boy. We fall into conversation immediately in the white-tiled delivery room. He laughs uproariously. He is very small, but gets bigger as we talk. He tells me that his name is 'Alyce' or 'Alan'....

I wake up suffused with pleasure and excitement. I remember his face exactly. Is it your face? Have you really visited me in a dream? Are you requesting a name that begins with an *A*? (76)

Through the recounting of her dream as a vision of the delivery of her newborn baby, Chesler expresses her maternal longing for her child. She reveals that the dream brings her into closer communication with her child, a boy whom she desires. From her narration of her baby's development within her in the growing child who laughs and talks to her in her dream, Chesler experiences motherhood as a pleasant and exciting partnership between mother and child in their expectations and longings. Her recollection of her baby's face after the dream illustrates the many faces of her motherhood in waking and dreamy states of maternity.

Furthermore, Chesler describes the intense feeling of pregnancy as the rich and fecund part of her sexuality during orgasms as follows:

Visions in orgasm. Babies, mysterious with Mona Lisa smile. Hundred of tiny Cupids, Cupid-clouds, really above my head...

What richness in my blood, what heat in my clitoris, to sense, imagine, each of my orgasms enclosing a pregnancy, enclosing a hundred pregnancies. (51)

Chesler presents an artistic concept-ion of her orgasms in her imagination of Cupid-Babies with Mona Lisa smile as the products of her romantic love. She discloses that the great sexual pleasure felt in her clitoris is experienced simultaneously as a strong feeling of her baby in her stomach. Thus in sexual intercourse, Chesler shares deep intimacy with her child in her body because, as she reveals, "[t]here's a direct line from my consciousness of your existence to my clitoris" (50). She expresses her connection to her child in-utero in a direct fusion of bodily sensuality from her womb to her clitoris at the peak of sexual bliss.

With her textual creation of maternal procreation as the direct communication between mother and child in maternity, Chesler re-presents female corporeality in language which transcends the phallogentric discourse of female sexuality in the prescriptive reproductive function. Challenging the limited patriarchal representation of maternity as mere womb or passive receptacle, her own textual body promotes Pamela Banting's evocation of Cixousian *écriture féminine* (i.e. female inscription of the body) as "... writing [that] embraces new possibilities of inscription, signification, gesture, rhythm, orality, performance, pregnancy ..." (233). Banting ascribes to Cixous's feminine writing a new production based on bodily communication. Chesler brings forth the corporeal signification of her maternal text - according to Banting's understanding of female bodily inscription - when she explains that

The dictionary describes our last twenty months together expertly. **spin.** to make (yarn) by drawing out, twisting, and winding fibers ... to produce a thread from the body, as spiders, silkworms, etc. **spin off.** to create something new ... to produce, fabricate, or evolve in the manner suggestive of spinning thread; to spin a tale of sailing ships and bygone days. (274)

From her dictionary reading, she assigns to her physical activity of reproduction the new meaning of production in its dual connotations of "weaving" as "spinning a tale" of maternity and producing new life from her own body. Thus, Chesler represents her maternity with the artistic creation of a new story of the maternal physical activity of bringing forth new life to her child. She delineates production in maternal reproduction as follows:

In colors of blood and air I spin without stopping: colon, foot, eye. By day, by night, for nine months, I weave you: precisely....

What do we spin today? The shape of your smile? ...

Ah! You're moving through the eons, the centuries, more swiftly now, growing larger. The design grows thicker, swings back and forth on the loom of me. (98)

Chesler represents her child's formation within her as her bodily production with the weaving imagery. She views her maternal activity as "performance" (in Banting's sense) in her depiction of her child's evolution as the design she spins from her bodily loom. Thus, Chesler's tale of maternity inscribes the new "gesture" - elicited by Banting - of maternal production perceived in the continuous movement "back and forth" of the spinning loom that produces the baby from her maternal tissues.

Her innovative illustration of maternity is further animated by an additional dictionary meaning of "**spin**. to cause to turn around ... as on an axis; twirl; whirl ... **spin**. a downward movement or trend ..." (274). In her description of birth, she evokes the meaning of spinning as the movement of turning her baby around and pushing it downward through the birth canal. Chesler expresses the bodily rhythm between mother and child to depict motion in birth: "You're 'sunny side up'. Facing the top of my uterus. Pressing on my back with yours. That's why I'm in 'back labor'. I have to turn you around, slowly, before I can push you down. Twisting

me round, slowly ..." (116). She expresses her birth movement as spinning her baby around and down from the uterus. The close contact and movement of the mother and child's interaction during the birth process illustrates the new possibility of feminine writing of the body which, as Barbara Freeman asserts, produces "a kind of corporeal and textual movement that does not return to or reinforce masculine thought" (62). Chesler's maternal writing expresses the body in both its corporeal and textual movement in the depiction of the rhythmic exchange of mother and child. Thus, she confirms the importance of the body in the language of maternity which, as Banting explains, "... signification has always already been constituted in the sonorous envelope, the eye contact, and the gestural hieroglyphs of the relation between child and mother" (235). As Banting suggests, feminine writing derives its meaning from the mother's and the child's bodily communications. Chesler relates to her maternity in her maternal text that promotes her bodily contact with her child as "[y]our satin palms. Your high sweet voice. That body warmth, that toothless smile" (200). She experiences her motherhood as the close contact with her child's body, hands, voice, and smile. Therefore, her writing manifests the corporeal signification of maternity in the eye, ear, and bodily exchanges between mother and child. In *The Newly Born Woman*, Cixous evokes the maternal body in women's writing: "Text, my body: traversed by lilting flows; ... it is the rhythm-me that laughs you;" (93) Cixous shows the close relation between the maternal text and the mother's body in that her speech and her writing produce communication in the rhythmic bodily interaction with her child. In her diary of motherhood, Chesler conveys the mutual delight through the rhythm of bodily exchange between mother and child expressed in Cixous's perception of the relation between textual and corporeal rhythm. Chesler writes,

I want to be with you. I'll surprise you. Are you still up? ...

You're awake! What screams of joy. We renew our acquaintance every five minutes. Making sure the other is really here, exclaiming our pleasure that we are. (242)

Chesler's maternal text celebrates the direct corporeal relation between mother and child in the child's excited laughter as a response to the mother's loving presence. Thus, her autobiography of motherhood situates the maternal body in female language of birth that relates the mother to her child in a continuous rhythm of bodily exchanges.

Similar to Rich, Chesler strongly objects to the male technological appropriation of female natural childbirth through obstetrical hospital procedure. As Rich has analyzed, men's inventions of tools and machines compensate for "the lack of the one, elemental, creative power of motherhood" (113). Rich stresses that the woman-mother should not be treated as a womb in male domination over the birthing woman's body in medical obstetrics which takes over female reproduction in male technical production. According to Karen Horney, to defend themselves against "their envy of women's pregnancy, childbirth, motherhood as well as the breasts and the act of suckling", male psychoanalysts (especially Freud) say that women desire the penis and not a child. Thus, in Horney's view, Freud's phallogocentric discourse of female penis envy reveals a masculine defense against men's womb envy. Azizah al-Hibri remarks that, through technology, men reverse their feeling of inadequacy by imposing their power over women's reproductive capacity from their artificial means of creation. Reviewing Freud's defense in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (37) that "with every tool man is perfecting his own organ" (87), Hibri asserts that male "production became an imitation of reproduction" (87). This is further strengthened by the male view of the father's right in which man claims authority over the mother to assure his right over his child(ren). Margaret Mead gives a psychoanalytic explanation

of men's envy of women's procreative power as the reason for the cultural recognition of men's work as achievement and the consequent devalorization of women's labours in motherhood.

The rhythm in Chesler's autobiography of birth springs from the maternal voice which expresses the experience of childbirth as an outburst of emotional responses against the medical domination of her birthing body. Chesler's maternal text illustrates the voice in feminine writing expounded by Cixous in *The Newly Born Woman*:

Voice! ... Exclamation, cry, breathlessness, yell, cough, vomit, music.... And that is how she writes, as one throws a voice - forward

Voice-cry. Agony - the spoken 'word' exploded, blown to bits by suffering and anger, demolishing discourse ... (94).

In her diary, Chesler voices against medical intervention in her slow and painful labor with the following cry: "*No Pitocin! I'm deathly afraid of roller coasters*" (113). Thus, her writing emits the birthing woman's voice in the exclamatory cry against the hospital procedure of dispensing drugs to speed up her labor with stronger contractions. Like Rich, Chesler strongly opposes labor induction as an artificial obstetrical remedy to counter the dulling effect of demerol administered to the mother to calm contractions. Chesler has, at the start of her labour, protested against being drugged: "*What contractions? There aren't any. How dare they drug me?*" (111). Her disapproval of drugs which numb her sensations of contractions is sounded off in her writing through the "breathlessness" - as evoked in feminine writing by Cixous - of the weak laboring mother whose body is under male medical control.

Chesler's expression of her protest against the artificial medical production of birth as a poor imitation of natural childbirth is an effort at establishing her own control over her body in the birth experience. Throughout her narration of her childbirth experience, she indicates her

wish to live a natural birth free from medical control. In response to her doctor's suggestion of medical stimulation of labor, she declares, "No. I don't want to lose control. I want it to happen by itself" (251). Yet, she expresses her childbirth as a personal confrontation against the medical establishment and its contrived means of control over her natural resources in labor and parturition. Articulating her humiliating experiences of being reduced to a mere body under the control of the medical institution and its inhuman system, she writes:

... with all my professional knowledge of hospitals and experts; with a friendly obstetrician of my choice; with a midwife and my husband present - I barely managed to control what happened to me. I had to fight hard not to be treated as a routine medical emergency. They strapped me down too, and lifted my legs onto stirrups in the delivery room Anger floods me. Shame too. (251)

Thus, Chesler's cry shows anger in her "demolishing discourse" - according to Cixous's concept of feminine writing - that overthrows male medical control over the birthing woman's body because, as Rich points out, "[n]o more devastating image could be invented for the bondage of woman: sheeted, supine, drugged, her wrists strapped down and her legs in stirrups, at the very moment when she is bringing new life into the world" (170-71). Chesler's objection against male technological control reclaims her own body as a source of charisma in the personal birth experience outside medical intrusion. Her writing depicts Cixous's exhortation to women to "[w]rite your self. Your body must be heard" ("Laugh", 880). Chesler's maternal text voices out the maternal body in its expressions of longing to experience birth and parturition in a natural spontaneous way. Chesler speaks against the dual alienation from her own physical and mental experience of birth in the male medical control over her body and over her mind during childbirth. In her text, she reflects her consciousness of the birth experience under local

anesthesia - which takes away her mental consciousness in her physical participation in childbirth - through her body. She shows the relation between her half-conscious mind and her birthing body as follows: "I watch from above, recording this terrible break with reality. *There are people down there but I can't hear them very well.* If I must speak, I can speak through my body" (116). Recording her mental alienation from her physical delivery in her diary, Chesler reveals the male fragmentation of her body from her mind. As Cynthia Huff has explained in her essay "Sexual Silencing: Anesthetizing Women's Voices In Childbirth 1910-1960",

What has been established during the twentieth century in America as the 'safe' way to give birth acts to invest power in the routine and those who control it. Each part of this parturient ritual - ... giving the enema, shaving the pubic hair, ... exposing [the mother's] body, tying down her hands and feet, and finally blotting out her memory - takes away the woman's power to control her maternal body. (145-46)

Thus, like Cynthia Huff, Chesler denounces the medical detachment of the maternal mind under anesthesia for the purpose of medical encroachment on her body. In her writing, she reflects upon the possibility of relating her body with her mind in what Rich calls "*to think through the body*, to connect what has been so cruelly disorganized - our great mental capacities, hardly used; ... our complicated, pain-enduring, multi-pleasured physicality" (284). Chesler demonstrates, in her maternal text, the rethinking of the maternal body - advocated by Rich - as the conscious mental knowledge of the complex physical experience of maternal sexuality through different stages of painful labour to joyful delivery. She voices out against maternal powerlessness in male appropriation and domination of natural childbirth:

Now I'm talking. I list the matter of the Demerol "routinely slipped into my intravenous glucose. Maybe it stopped contractions for six hours. The Pitocin slipped to me to start up contractions again. The episiotomy I never wanted....

I've never said this aloud before. For ten months I've kept socially silent

Do I insist childbirth was all right because it's too painful to dwell on it as otherwise? Because I don't want to admit - to myself - how powerless I am, too? (252-53)

Thus, through the protest against her physical powerlessness in hospitalised birth, Chesler defends her body from the male reduction to a uterus to be worked upon by a medical practitioner. In this way, she speaks for active maternal participation perceived by Rich as "the claim to share justly in the products of our labor, not to be used merely as an instrument, a role, a womb ... to participate fully in the decisions ..." (xviii). Therefore, by speaking against male obstetrical domination over her body and her mind, she establishes her maternal power in both her artistic and physical acts of creation that re-present her maternal powerlessness under (male) medical control. From her personal account of medical birth, Chesler reflects the possibility of expressing the maternal choice over the process of birth in which the woman-mother, as producer, can actively reunite her body to her mind in the labor of her maternity. In this reclaiming of her mind and her body, she assumes control over her own birth experience.

In her choice of work and motherhood, Chesler expresses her maternity both as an intellectual and physical activity. Her re-presentation of the dual mind-body in motherhood challenges the (male) cultural notion of a split between women's minds from their bodies, and the private realm of the home as women's place of childrearing and the public domain of work as men's social place. Viewed psychoanalytically, the mind-body split reflects the male fear of castration represented by the female body. In "Castration or Decapitation?" Cixous analyses that men project their fear of castration onto women's decapitation: "... if masculinity is culturally ordered by the castration complex, it might be said that the backlash, the return, on women of

this castration anxiety is its displacement as decapitation, execution, of woman, as loss of her head" (43). Moreover, male fear and envy of the woman's power of reproduction is allayed in man's projection of his fear of castration onto woman's decapitation. This displacement not only relegates women to their physical biological function of reproduction but also elevates male domination in the technological production of birth to the higher realm of men's minds. By controlling women's mental consciousness in drug induced labour and anesthesia, men appropriate the birthing mother's mind in a symbolic decapitation and thereby reduce her to a passive body at the mercy of the male medical establishment. As Cixous points out in *The Newly Born Woman*, Western cultural thinking is ruled by the dual hierarchical opposition between superior and inferior qualities organized as male/female attributes such as activity/passivity, and sun/moon. This binary system of thought is ultimately related to "the couple man/woman" (64). Situated negatively in this repressive scheme of representation, the woman-mother can be perceived according to Cixous's metaphor of culture:

ever her moon to the masculine sun, nature to culture, ... matter to form, immobility/inertia to the march of progress, terrain trod by the masculine footstep, vessel While the man is obviously the active, the upright, the productive ... ("Castration", 44).

From Cixous's clarification, we perceive Chesler's renunciation of motherhood from the hierarchical concept of binary oppositions in which the male medical institution is the upright party employing advanced technological equipment and medicine to control the birthing mother's supine body by drugging, attaching and subjugating her both physically and mentally.

Moreover, in her choice of active work and mothering, Chesler definitely rejects the mental control accompanying the physical lithotomy position of birth -- the horizontal position of the mother's body in hospital procedure which obstructs the gravity pull facilitating the baby's

descent in delivery. She chooses to remain upright in order to work to support her child and to be financially independent. In rejoining her mind to her body in motherhood through work, she challenges the dichotomy masculinity/femininity expressed in Barbara Freeman's reading of Cixous's mind-body opposition: "by aligning bodies with women and minds with men, [male thinking] asserts the superiority of the mental over the corporeal and in so doing elevates masculinity (and the mind) over femininity (and the body)" (62). From this analysis, we can deduce that the relegation of mothering to nursing and childcaring in the home is the patriarchal limiting of women in their bodies. Consequently, the external field of social achievement is reserved to men and their superior minds. Chesler decries the social discrimination of her maternity in the misogynist mind-body distinction which functions to keep women-mothers' inferiority in the workplace:

The men at my university are displeased. My belly, my brain, offend their flatness. They will not forgive me for offending them. They have 'doctored' my teaching schedule. Now I must leave home at 3 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and return close to midnight. Dusk-through evening classes: the worst hours for me.... Why have I been ordered to teach at precisely those hours when pregnant women grow drowsy, cranky? ...

They're punishing me for daring to get pregnant - *by not treating me in a humane way.* (68)

She decries her rejection by the male educational institution which devalues her physical capacity of reproduction in their valorization of the mind in teaching. The male cultural segregation of body from mind results in men's spurning the woman-mother's body in her intellectual work at the university. The hatred of women's potential in childbearing is retaliated in the strong disapproval of women-mothers' social engagement in the workplace. This is expressed by a man who objects to her lecturing as follows: "Pregnant? Why? Hasn't she done enough damage

already?" (31) Thus, (male) organizations deny a social place for women, especially mothers whose place should belong at home. Criticizing the social injustice done to working mothers with special needs for nursing and mothering, Chesler writes,

Why are so many women never hired, hired last, paid least, fired first, because they are, or might become mothers? ... I know what they're doing - and why.

I am 'gross'. They wish to 'flatten' me. (69)

Chesler finds that women's employment inequality stems from the male misogyny which blots out female intellectual activity as an indirect attack against female prestigious, exclusive procreativity.

In taking up work during maternity, she promotes both her intellectual and physical creativity. She explains her position as a working mother to her college department head as follows: "Please let me teach part-time in the spring. Or full-time, but based somewhere in Manhattan. I plan to breast-feed ... I *do* want to teach ..." (99). Her decision to combine teaching and breastfeeding illustrates the mother's choice of a social-maternal career which displaces the cultural challenge for mothers to choose either work in public or mothering in private. In her autobiography, she expresses her rejection of the social splitting of her vocation into *either* work *or* nurturance: "Why don't you make up your mind? Do you want to teach or be a mother? the Administrator snarls at me" (99). As an intellectual mother, she resents this cruel male order commanding her to select only one function by splitting apart her intellectual endowment from her physical capacity as a working mother.

Chesler's challenge of the binary opposition between mind and body in culture depicts, in Cixous's words, an "exploration of women's powers: of her power, her potency, her overdreaded strength, of the regions of femininity" ("Castration or Decapitation?", 52). By

taking up intellectual work in society, Chesler shows the power of her maternity in its active engagement in the social realm and transcends the confinement of mothers at home.

After the birth of her son, Chesler fulfills her maternal responsibility in her choice of being both a mother and a woman. This entails an understanding of her maternal subjectivity that partakes of both maternal and individual female identity. Although she has the natural maternal instinct of wanting to breastfeed her child, she cannot do so when working far away from her home. She expresses the separation from her son as weaving time for both of them. Even when she is at home, she does not entirely play a motherly role. She expresses this in her diary: "After fifteen minutes with you I'm bored with you.... You are too consuming.... You are too limited.... I have other things in my life" (197). Chesler voices the need to live her personal identity as a writer as well as being a mother. She claims "[n]ever will I be a 'mother first' or 'a mother only'" (219). She totally rejects the cultural idea of motherhood as women's only goal in life. Refusing her mother's advice to put herself second to her maternal responsibility, she declares, "I can't put myself second. It's too painful" (237). In her own maternal experience, she challenges motherhood as both the social institution and personal experience passed down from mother to daughter: "I can't be like my mother. I can't allow myself to be swallowed up by either the experience or the institution of motherhood" (206). She opposes the conventional view of her mother and other women who persuade her to be a full-time mother as they have been. Instead, she maintains, "Ariel: We must do things a little differently, a little sanely. I cannot drown in you" (270). Chesler wants to live her motherhood in an entirely new way, blending maternal responsibility with personal freedom. To alleviate the terribly demanding maternal duties, Chesler seeks the help of her husband and a babysitter.

She gives up her prescribed maternal place and creates for herself and her son a more flexible relationship. She claims that "I don't shop for your bananas or mash them myself. I don't take you to the pediatrician. I'm not sure I have a set place: as your personal nurse-maid or full-time companion. *If I do, I don't want it*" (272). Thus, she refuses to restrict herself solely to full-time maternal activities. Chesler re-presents her motherhood as a new, different experience:

My little love: forgive me. The giggles, the laughs, so foreign to my "other" life, turned my head. No, I don't want to diaper you. I don't want to measure out the required ounces of milk, Kaopectate, paregoric. I want to play with you. Laughing deep in each other's eyes. (263)

She declines motherhood in its meticulous daily maternal duties of feeding and childrearing. Chesler lives her motherhood as a happy exchange of fun and laughter with her child through interpersonal communication during games. In this relaxed atmosphere, she constructs motherhood as an enjoyable activity that stimulates personal growth for both herself and her child. Thus, in her new experience of motherhood, she puts into practice Susan Suleiman's theory that

Playing, as ... Winnicott (1971) among others have shown us, is the activity through which the human subject most freely and inventively constitutes herself or himself. To play is to affirm an "I", an autonomous subjectivity that exercises control over a world of possibilities; at the same time, and contrarily it is in playing that the I can experience itself in its most fluid and boundaryless state. (280)

From Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory of playing, we can appreciate Chesler's play with her baby as an active engagement in the making of a maternal self other than the routine maternal function. She shows, from the freedom experienced in play, the possibility of a new self-definition of maternal subjectivity. In play, she depicts Winnicott's double, contradictory

concept of playing through assuming control over her own maternal life style by re-defining her maternal identity as a fluid subjectivity. Seen from Suleiman's analysis of maternal play, Chesler experiences the continuous expansion of her maternal subjectivity through self-creativity generated while playing with her child. Autonomy and freedom of the self are expressed in the activity of playing expressed by Winnicott as "... a non-purposive state ... it is only here, in this unintegrated state of the personality, that that which we describe as creative appears" (280). Perceived from Suleiman's reading of maternal play in the psychoanalytic perspective presented by Winnicott, Chesler's carefree attitude towards mothering can be considered as maternal creativity arising from the re-constitution of her self outside the conventional boundary of maternal identity. Thus, Chesler's autobiography of motherhood performs maternal creativity expressed by Suleiman as "the possibility of playing with the boundaries of the self, especially if Winnicott is right in seeing such play as a necessary part of artistic creativity. I believe that women - women artists in particular - must be strong enough to allow themselves this kind of play" (280). Viewed in the light of Suleiman's notion of artistic creativity in mothers as writers playing with the boundaries of the self, Chesler's writing reconstructs her identity beyond the strict notion of maternal self in her re-presentation of her maternal activity as play that frees her from her mothering work.

Moreover, by challenging the single maternal identity, Chesler demonstrates Barthes's notion of being liberated "from the binary prison, putting oneself in a state of infinite expansion" (*Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, 137). In her choice of living her motherhood through the dual maternal-individual identity, she emancipates her maternity from the patriarchal segregation of self from mother. She counters this division with her multiple selves that proliferate her

maternal experience. Chesler's maternal play can be perceived as the doubling of self - into both mother and game companion - in order to defy her double subjection, according to Marianne Hirsch in her book *The Mother/Daughter Plot*, to family and culture in the social function of reproduction and childrearing.

Furthermore, Chesler re-presents her maternal subjectivity as "combin[ing] the divisions, contradictions, and erasures theorized ... in psychoanalysis ... with the sense of uniqueness and singularity ... in the constitution of personhood as our culture conceives it" (Hirsch, "Review: Mothers and Daughters", 95). Chesler articulates her double subjectivity as the contradictions in maternal identity:

I can't just "go out " anymore. I have to plan everything. I must always replace myself before I can be alone - to write, to take a walk. Always, now, I am doubled. (There is me and my surrogate.) Always I am halved. (I am a "pretender" in the world when I go out without you: behaving as I did before - hiding the fact of your existence merely by not mentioning it. (190)

Chesler expresses her maternal subjectivity as a doubling of the self in the babysitter's playing her role of mother to her son. Paradoxically, when she is alone in society, she experiences the reduction of her maternal identity into a single woman without her son's presence. Thus, Chesler depicts her maternal subjectivity as the simultaneous and contradictory experience of multiplication and division of the self. Her experience of dual paradoxical aspects of maternal subjectivity counters the cultural notion of individual identity of the self with the maternal double identity.

Refusing to act the mother only, Chesler also displays the double identity of mother and child. In her engagement in playful activity with her son rather than in austere maternal function only, and in her living the maternal experience as both academic work and motherhood, Chesler

combines the activities of a single and maternal person, as well as those of a child and of an adult mother. She explains, "[w]ith your coming, I am both provider and lover, child and mother" (272). By working during and after childbirth, Chesler provides for her son's nurturance both physically and economically. Therefore, she acts as the mother who nurses her child with her physical body and who also pays for child support through teaching. Chesler also relates her dual maternal personality with this description: "[t]he park: a sandbox, swings, a semi circle of benches My blurred universe slows down. Remembrance of things past. You, a child, do this. Like madeleine cakes, you fill me with memories. Perceptions of my own childhood" (224). Through her son, she re-lives her past childhood days. Therefore, her maternal subjectivity is suffused with her son's identity. She feels her own existence connected to her newborn's presence in the world. Thus, her new identity is a subtle merging of the maternal with the childish. She leaves the adult world to become united with her child in his own surroundings. Chesler's movement between the children's world and the adult sphere illustrates another aspect of the subject, which according to Marianne Hirsch, also includes a definition of 'subjectivity' as 'interiority' and depth. Her easy communication between both the adult and the child's realms springs from her experience of maternity as both "inside" and "outside" her body. Her personal view supports Adrienne Rich's contention against Freud's differentiation of the personal ego into either inside or outside oneself. Rich refuses Freud's assumption of inside-outside and asserts that

The boundaries of the ego seem to me much less crudely definable than the words "inner" and "outer" suggest.... Nor, in pregnancy did I experience the embryo as decisively internal in Freud's terms, but rather, as something inside and of me, yet becoming hourly and daily more separate, on its way to becoming separate from me and of itself. (63)

Similar to Rich, Chesler also experiences her baby within her body as a separate being with whom she engages in bodily and mental exchange. Yet when her child is born, she does not feel completely cut off. She articulates the paradoxical maternal feeling of inside-outside, one-two, self-other as follows: "Ariel: When I hold you close, I feel us as One. I'm comforted by having you near. Strange, that I didn't feel 'at one' with myself when I was pregnant. Why such comfort now that you're outside?" (217) Chesler depicts her maternal subjectivity as a displacement that turns upside down the standard notion of personal identity in Freud's concept of the ego as a distinct opposition between self and other, and between inside and outside. She illustrates her relationship to her newborn after separation of the umbilical cord as a re-union of mother and child. Thus, she expresses her extra-uterine relation to her son as a close union into one person whereas she views the intro-uterine contact of her foetus as a separate entity. Therefore, she upsets the internal-external balance of self and other according to the conventional notion of the subject.

More significantly, Chesler extends the concept of internal-external experience of subjectivity in her re-presentation of maternal physical-mental feelings of self. She evokes maternal feelings of pregnancy eight months after parturition: "Phantom kicks in my womb! Wonderful, strange. The body never forgets. *My* body will never forget *you* ..." (216). She continues to live her maternity in her bodily pulsations after delivery and thus, rethinks the strict cultural dichotomy between inside and outside, between the mother with child and the individual self. Therefore, she re-evaluates the cultural distinction between self and other analysed by Rich as follows: "In early pregnancy the stirring of the fetus felt like ghostly tremors of my own body, later like the movements of a being imprisoned in me; but both sensations were *my*

sensations, contributing to my own sense of physical and psychic space" (63). Here, Rich illustrates the baby's kicks as the mother's sensations of movement within her own body. Thus, the existence of the foetus as another being in the womb is experienced as physical and psychic feelings of the self. More so than Rich, Chesler erases the sharp contrast between self and other. Chesler depicts her bodily sensations as traces of her baby's existence arising from her maternal consciousness of her maternity. Thus she overthrows the cultural separation of self from other, inside from outside by expressing her child's existence outside her body in the feeling of her body's former fetal kicks in her womb. Therefore, she depicts maternal subjectivity as a continuous inside-outside, self-other experience of close relationship with her child.

Through the expansion of her maternal subjectivity to encompass both self and other, inside and outside, she lives both the experience of the mother and the child in her motherhood. In her diary, she delineates her double mother-child subjectivity:

Since I gave birth, ... I've moved into turquoise, green blue: the colors of the sea

I dress myself in original shades of amniotic fluid. (250)

Chesler expresses her motherhood in her choice of sea-colors for her garments. Thus, she celebrates her feeling of **interiority** - an aspect of her maternal subjectivity - through the **exterior** display of colors depicting amniotic fluid. She reveals motherhood in its simultaneous double expression of inside-outside the maternal self by demonstrating the continuity between the interior and the exterior aspects of her maternal subjectivity. Chesler re-conceptualizes maternity through the amniotic fluid which represents the space shared by both the mother and the baby. Enveloping the baby yet constituting the liquid in the mother's womb, the amniotic fluid breaks down the strict boundary between self and other since it pertains to both the mother's and the

child's spatial constitution of self.

In her re-presentation of maternal subjectivity as a continuous interrelation between internal-external, past and present selves, Chesler questions the cultural notion of identity in the binary opposition of self against other. Her diary of motherhood subverts the conventional form of (male) autobiography featuring a unified, coherent, teleological and closed construction of the self. Chesler's open, non-linear, fluid self-representation is constituted creatively in the loose, flexible structure promoted by the diary. Her diary-writing displays a form of female creativity in a "new feminine writing" described by Christiane Makward as "open, nonlinear, unfinished, fluid, exploded, fragmented ... attempting to 'speak the body', i.e., the unconscious ... which seems to exemplify perfectly the diary form" (96). Examined in the context of Makward's analysis of feminine writing, Chesler's diary manifests the unconscious aspects of the repressed maternal body evoked in *écriture féminine*. In the juxtaposition of her past pregnancy with her present maternity, her diary restructures different moments and experiences of her motherhood in a loose crossing of boundaries that blurs spatial and temporal differences. As Rebecca Hogan analyses, the diary is "by its very nature open-ended, unfinished, ... both repetitive and cumulative, each entry discrete (and discreet)" (100). In this way, the diary evokes *l'écriture féminine* defined by Ann Rosalind Jones as follows: "broken syntax, repetitive and cumulative rather than linear structure" (88). Thus, Hogan deduces that

like *l'écriture féminine*, then, diary-writing can be seen as a potentially subversive form of writing because it tends to cross and blur boundaries between things traditionally kept separate. Since the diary crosses the thoughts and feelings of past selves and present self without necessarily privileging one voice or stage of life over the others, it crosses the boundaries between self and others (100).

In her choice of the diary as autobiography of motherhood, Chesler creates an open, elastic form to express simultaneously her multiple experiences of self. She depicts her multi-layered maternal experience through the paratactic form and content of the diary analysed by Rebecca Hogan as follows: "... as well as being paratactic on the level of grammar and syntax, diaries are paratactic on the level of full entries and of content too" (103).¹² Chesler's diary evokes grammatical parataxis in the depiction of a series of activities without principal or subordinate clauses: "*You 'bliss out' at my breast. You gulp desperately, then sleep for a minute, startle yourself awake. Then start all over again. Like me in labor with you*" (136). The paratactic form gives Chesler a possibility of perceiving herself in a close relation with her son in a semi-conscious state during breastfeeding that reconnects him to her in the earlier experience of delivery. Therefore, present and past moments of sleep and wakefulness are shared equally by mother and son. Parataxis in grammar allows for a coexistence of identity and actions since the sentences are given equal weight in grammatical structure in the absence of subordination. On the level of content, the female *subject* is expressed through parataxis which can be perceived in Irigaray's notion of simultaneity and fluidity as feminine (non-)forms. In *This Sex*, Irigaray maintains that the style of woman "... resists and explodes every firmly established form ..." (79). Hogan observes in Irigaray's definition of feminine creativity as movement and plurality a challenge to the "so-called 'phallic' or monolithic principle of the ONE ... to bring [differences] back to the same, function, with the familiar binary oppositions" (101). Viewed according to the psychoanalytic perspective of Irigaray's description of fluidity in the plurality

¹²Hogan picks up the concept of "radical parataxis" coined by Rachel Blau Duplessis in her new theory on the diary discussed in her essay "For the Etruscans; Sexual Difference and Artistic Production - The Debate over a Female Aesthetic".

of feminine writing, Chesler's diary writing incorporates, through the incompleteness of the loose structure, other with self, work with mothering, past with present experiences of motherhood. Her description of maternal subjectivity evokes the fluid ego boundary of Nancy Chodorow's object-relations in the diary form analysed by Hogan as follows:

This possibility for mutual paratactic relations among genres, entries and voices in the diary, and for the paratactic meeting among selves, world, experience and text at the boundaries of the diary are reminiscent of Nancy Chodorow's description of the porousness, elasticity and the relational structure of the feminine ego. (104)

As Hogan asserts, the paratactic aspect of diary writing illustrates the psychoanalytic view of women's permeable ego boundaries. Chesler depicts the close merging of herself with her child, the combination of work and motherhood and the fusion of past and present moments of maternity as the complex maternal experience presented paratactically in her diary as follows:

January 10-17, 1978.

I take the messages off the answering machines, return ten business calls, open the mail.

I see you at your moment of birth. I'm shocked by how naked you are.... Over and over again, I watch you being born.

I interview two students who want to study with me for school credit. I begin to answer my mail. I dictate everything I can remember about labor and delivery into a tape cassette.

Whenever I'm lying on my back or half lying down, I'm in the delivery room, pushing down, pushing a baby out. Suspended on the ceiling. I'n still there.

I go downtown to see about teaching some courses in Manhattan.
(135)

Chesler's diverse expressions of actions and thoughts, present and past moments of maternity, conscious and unconscious memories of her childbirth and parturition are presented together,

moving swiftly back and forth in the loose, paratactic form of her diary entries grouped together from January 10 to 17. Thus, her diary enacts the maternal space-time in which she re-creates her present maternal self from her past childbirth experience. Alternating continuously between present and past moments, she re-constructs her identity in her diary. Chesler's open diary form illustrates her fluid maternal subjectivity as a continuous two-way flow of her past childbirth experience to her present maternal identity. The paratactic structure of her diary-writing re-organizes her experience of motherhood as a re-conception of maternal space in time expressed by Irigaray in *Ethics* as "Between. In the interval of times.... Weaving the veil of time, the fabric of time, time with space, time in space. Between past and future, future and past ..." (53). Chesler's subjectivity features in her diary in a loose intermingling of present with past maternity as disparate senses of the self scattered through different moments of time. The recurring memories of her past delivery that interferes with her daily work re-present her maternal identity in a re-thinking of time marked by maternal space. Chesler defines her subjectivity as a repetitive vision of the "moment of birth". She depicts maternal time with maternal space in her diary through the repetitive act: "[o]ver and over again ... I watch you being born" (135). Therefore, she reconceptualizes maternal time as the recurrence of maternal space in delivery. Moreover, her maternal identity is constituted by her sense of time in space when she relives the experience of being "suspended on the ceiling" while pushing her baby out whenever she is on her back.

Chesler demonstrates, through the paratactic structure of her diary, the possibility of experimenting with a form that expresses the maternal experience of subjectivity as the subversion of coherence and wholeness of self-representation. Her diary writing illustrates

Cixous's notion of feminine textual body which is "really ... allowing departure, allowing breaks ... with the specular relations ruling the coherence, the identification, of the individual" ("Castration", 53). By simultaneously presenting her current maternal identity at work in public and her past experience of childbirth in private, she challenges the construction of unity of self in time, and the cultural split of work (in society) from mothering (at home). Thus, her diary re-organizes her maternal identity by offering a balance between private and public aspects of maternal self in a non-teleological, repetitive structure of past and future experiences depicted as a recurrent pattern of maternal time-space from January 10 to January 17, 1978 in a single journal entry.

In her diary of motherhood, Chesler represents maternal author-ity in her experience of her conscious choice to have a baby, to engage in both work and mothering, as well as to live both her maternal and her individual subjectivity. She convincingly presents a reconception of binary oppositions through her defence of maternity as a dual mind and body activity in pregnancy, childbirth and parturition. Through the feminine flexible form of the diary, Chesler depicts a reorganization of the maternal space-time as the simultaneously fluid and continuous moments of past and present experiences of internal and external, and bodily and mental concepts of the maternal self.

CONCLUSION

My analysis of women's autobiographies, as the special relationship between women's identity (*autē*) and women's life-writing (*bios-graphia*), has revealed the importance of women's reclamation of their subjectivity from subjection to autobiographical and psychoanalytic masculinist discourses of femininity. I have explored women's complex position in issues of the subject, language and history through women autobiographers' relation to, on one hand, their mothers and other women and, on the other hand, the textual signification of this maternal identification. Women's self-representation confirms the feminist subject position which, according to Leigh Gilmore's and Laura Marcus's autobiographical feminist theories and Luce Irigaray's and Hélène Cixous's psychoanalytic feminist theories, shows a marked opposition to de Manian autobiographical notion of universal (masculine) subjectivity and Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalytic misrepresentation of feminine sexuality respectively. Here, I would like to draw several conclusions to my work by focusing on the implications of women's self-writing, namely how and for what purposes women autobiographers represent their (psychosexual) identity in their texts. These issues can be further investigated to evaluate how women's face/body serve as a subversive autobiographical practice in the context of Irigaray's and Cixous's theories of *écriture féminine* as the writing of the body. By extension, this alternative practice can be used to demonstrate how women's refigurations of their subjectivity simultaneously denotes a re-writing of the traditional autobiographical subject. Women's reformulation of their own histories, in turn, shows how both the form and the content of women's autobiographical subjects are re-interpreted through narrative counterpractices that open up new possibilities to the genre.

Women's textual *formulation* of their sexual identity is directly influenced by the close relationship between mothers and daughters and by women's collective identity springing from

their relations with other women developed from the early mother-daughter bond. The daughters's reflection of the self in the mother's face denotes women's permeable ego boundaries which are further reflected in the loose textual forms ranging from memoirs, diaries to interviews, oral and written testimonies, research and professional discourse of feminine sexuality. These diverse forms of self-representation demonstrate the flexibility and plurality of women as subjects of autobiography. Thus, women stretch the autobiographical form to better represent the contents of their sexual identity. Women redefine their sexual identity in the multiplicity of mother-daughter plural, repetitive sexual cycles such as menstruation, loss of virginity, pregnancy and motherhood. The mother's multiple experiences of the body, shared by the daughter in her own sexual development, are amplified in women's multidirectional and multidimensional sexual-textual self-representation. Their plural sexual-textual forms denote the manifold meanings ascribed to female pleasure derived from women's multiple sexual organs. They open up the conventional form of (male) representation limited in a closed, fixed and teleological structure typical of masculine sexual pleasure from linear progress to the climatic end. Through this self-*reformulation*, women have shown the possibility of an alternative spatial-temporal discourse of sexuality. They represent the manifold layers of their sexual identity in a metonymic language that releases multiple meanings of self-engendering. As Cixous has effectively exclaimed in "*Laugh of the Medusa*", "I, woman, am going to blow up the Law" (887), women autobiographers take pride in spreading the fluid nature of female sexual pleasure which can never be contained by masculine sanction to feminine sensual pleasures. Therefore, women's metonymic representation of the flexible nature of their sexuality displaces the masculine metaphoric form of firm and rigid self-representation.

The vast corpus of women's autobiographies denotes the writing of women's bodies as the textual points of resistance to dominant social-cultural representations of (masculine) subjectivity. Refusing the name of the father in patriarchal authority over identity, women's self-engenderings interrupt the regulatory laws of gender and genre. Women's writing practice illustrates Cixous's concept of the textual representation of sexual experience as "Text: my body - that part of you ... that ... urges you to inscribe in language your woman's style.... We will rethink womankind beginning with **every form and every period of her body**" ("Laugh", 882 my emphases). Women's re-presentation of their sexual-textual identity, centering on the body and its multiple forms of sexual expressions can be considered from the psychoanalytic feminist critique of Cixous and Irigaray as a rejection of Freud's misinterpretation of female castration in his phallic representation of gender identity. The daughter's focus on the mother's face confirms the feminist viewpoint of pre-oedipal union with mother in opposition to Freud's theory of female oedipal separation from mother resulting from women's recognition of their castration. The textual significance of the daughter's autobiographical return to their mother can be interpreted in Butler's terms as "... a troubling return, not only as an imaginary contestation ... but as an enabling disruption, the occasion for a radical rearticulation of the symbolic horizon on which our bodies come to matter at all" (23). Texts become extensions of the mothers' bodies when daughters represent the fluidity of their continuous relations with their mothers in multiple sexual-textual forms and subjects. Therefore, women's autobiographies simultaneously demonstrate textual representations as sexual rearticulations of the daughters' close bodily connections with their mothers. Thus, the daughters' return to the mothers in women's writing disproves the notion of female castration as oedipal (sexual-textual) segregation from mother.

My thesis explores the duality of the mother-daughter (sexual-textual) relations in the proximity of autobiographical and psychoanalytic feminist theories which promote women's representation of their desires. Analyzed from the perspective of these feminist theories, women's autobiographies become the project of self-revaluation in the affirmation of female desires to counter feminine devaluation in masculinist discourses of sexuality. In her juxtaposition of autobiography and psychoanalytic theories, Friday demonstrates Irigaray's and Cixous's notion of women's writing of the body and its expressions of desires in her textual illustration of women's sexuality based on the morphology of the female body. My thesis rests on the conclusion that Beauvoir and Friday express their original desires for the mother. Thus, they illustrate Irigaray's denunciation of Freud's repression of women's origin in castration due to his assumption of castrated mothers giving birth to castrated daughters. Women express their relation to origin by situating their present close relationship with their mothers as a continuation of their original mother-daughter bond from infancy. Therefore, women's autobiographies support the psychoanalytic feminist critique of Freud's theory of female castration and oedipal separation from mother.

Moreover, Beauvoir's and Friday's re-presentation of their mother's sexual desires enhance maternal refiguration in the face of masculinist disfiguration of femininity. Women's representation of plural sexual-textual forms and subjects evoke both the mothers' and the daughters' desires as an alternative discourse of sexual specificity outside the phallic misrepresentation of women as castrated and lacking in desires. Therefore, in both autobiographic and psychoanalytic feminist theories, (maternal) feminine refiguration/revalorization implies a contestation of 'prosopopeia' as a mask in conventional

(male) autobiography which should be discarded to unveil women's true identity. Beauvoir and Friday promote a re-presentation of their mothers as women with autonomous sexual lives and desires of their own. Therefore, the daughters' re-vision of the mothers' image, as a positive feminine refiguration in women's autobiographies, displaces the defacement caused by "prosopopeia" in de Man's autobiographic discourse of (male) subjectivity that eclipses femininity. By extension, women contest Freud's disfiguration of feminine sexuality in female castration due to his specula(riza)tion of femininity from male sexuality. Beauvoir's and Friday's re-view of their mother's preference of sexual autonomy to maternal asexuality confirms the psychoanalytic feminist critique of Lacan's misinterpretation that "*what is at issue as potentially lacking in castration is not so much the penis - a real organ - as the phallus, or the signifier of desire*" (*This Sex*, 61). In their autobiographical project, women present the refiguration of their sexual identity through the representation of (maternal) feminine desires, and thus rule out the negative image of women lacking desires of their own.

The daughters' re-presentations of the self and of the mothers denote women's emancipation to liberate both their subjectivity and textuality from the masculine form of representation. The feminine alternative form of self-representation, displaying duality/plurality of female sexual pleasures, disrupts the misrepresentation of femininity as the effect of a masculine discourse of sexuality based on the hierarchy of an essential binary opposition governing all terms and values: phallic male vs. castrated female. Women's reflection of their continuous merge with their mothers demonstrates Irigaray's concept of female sexuality in the embrace of two (sets of) lips to reject the primacy of the phallus as the privileged signifier of (solely male) desire. Therefore, Beauvoir and Friday have shown that, in Irigaray's words, "...

to liberate ourselves with our mothers..., is an indispensable condition for our emancipation from the authority of our fathers" (31, *Bodily Encounter with the Mother*). Thus, Beauvoir's and Friday's representation of the daughters' and the mothers' desires is an effective means of liberation from patriarchal repression of the mother-daughter mutual attachment influenced by Freudian theory of masculine sexual individuation/separation from mother.

Chesler re-presents her maternal subjectivity from the feminist subject position as the duality of both self and mother. She re-visions the spatial-temporal dimensions of maternity in the simultaneity of in-vitro and extrauterine development of her baby in past and present moments of pregnancy, childbirth and parturition. Moreover, she expresses her motherhood as both childcare in private and work in public. In her diary depiction of her maternal experience, she upholds both intellectual/mental production and sexual/physical reproduction. Thus, Chesler combines mind and body, inside and outside, work and childbearing as simultaneous experiences of the woman-mother. Therefore, her maternal narrative confirms Irigaray's view that a disruptive excess is possible in women's representation of their sexual identity to counter singularity in the discourse of hierarchical, phallic sexuality. Like the multiple subjects in women-daughters' autobiographies, Chesler's fragmented diary is a form of emancipation from the masculinist control over women-mothers' sexual-textual representation of maternity. Her tripartite narrative of pregnancy, birth and motherhood, spread out over irregular journal entries, forms a gynaecological representation of maternity and thus challenges the coherent and unified form of masculine self-representation.

The main conclusion I have drawn from my analysis of women's autobiographies is the value of feminist theoretical intervention in conventional autobiographical and psychoanalytic accounts of gender identity and subjectivity. The feminist stance enables women to represent their desires and thus promotes their self-revalorization through the strategy of sexual-textual emancipation from masculine form of representation. More significantly, feminist self-representation endows women with sexual specific powers such as the confirmation of maternity as a personal choice. Chesler's desire for motherhood, reflecting a feminist sexual decision, implies the refusal of Freud's prescription of reproduction as women's sexual function, and having a baby (boy) to compensate for the lacking phallus. She re-defines her maternal role as an active agent in her sexual life to bear a child and become a mother. Chesler's feminist experience of maternity denotes the woman-mother's project of self-empowerment. She reserves the mother's right to natural childbirth, and in her strong protest against male medical obstetrics which appropriate and subdue women's normal labour, establishes maternal power of reproduction as women's exclusive capacity.

Chesler's affirmation of her maternal powers in response to her social powerlessness denotes women's reconstruction of their subjectivity in their life-writing. They figure as subjects in their own representation and defend their concepts of femininity through a critique of masculine misrepresentation of sexuality. By promoting the bond between mothers and daughters and expressing their own desires and pleasures, Beauvoir, Friday and Chesler engage in a representation of female gender identity. Their sexual-textual reorganization can jointly be perceived with Irigaray's revision of psychoanalytic theory of femininity to oppose the relegation of women as objects of male desire. Thus, from the psychoanalytic feminist perspective, women

autobiographers question 'femininity' as a norm, an image, or a mask, to be imposed on women by masculinist representations which perpetrate feminine devaluation. They challenge phallogomorphic representation through a re-thinking of their position in the relations between gender and genre. Friday elicits the close relationship between generation and (textual) formation of female sexuality. Her autobiography simultaneously represents her identity as the continuation of the mother-daughter relations in three generations and as the structure of multiple forms and interrelated subjects. The interconnectedness of Friday's sexual-textual representation serves to demonstrate the inter- and intragenerational relations of women's collective identity. The multiplicity in the corpus of women's writings denote self-representation as both genesis and as regeneration. The daughters' autobiographies express their mode of formation in a derivation of the self from the mother as origin. The direct line of descent is represented in Chesler's maternal writing as the reproductive capacity that generates her next of kin. Women's concept of their generation-formation is at least two-fold in the multiple relations between sexual and textual, creation and procreation, and mind and body. Friday delineates her life-story through the maternal genealogy that enacts a re-membering of her connectedness to her mother and grandmother and thus, counters the patriarchal dismembering of female history separating daughters from mothers. Through the multiple forms of self-representation, Friday restores the continuity of subjectivity with the female body in her illustration of the mother-daughter relations. Her matrilineal narrative preserves the female heritage of her mother and grandmother who pass on to her the feminine sexual experience. Friday stresses the importance for women of tracing back to their mothers. In telling 'herstory', she reveals the close relationship between the autobiographical subject and female collective social identities. She demonstrates

matrilineage as a valuable means of voicing out women's collective sexual experiences.

Women's life-writing challenges the singularity of hierarchical representation of sexuality through the plurality of female autobiographical forms and subjects which highlight the consolidation of female intersubjective relations. Thus, women's reconstruction of their identity from matrilineage reinscribes femininity as both subjectivity and sexual-textual development. Maternal identification breaks with patriarchal version of phallic representation. Moreover, maternal genealogy promotes the voice of the mother to oppose the name of the father as the law of sexuality in patriarchal history. In her re-presentation of maternity, Chesler counters paternal authority with her maternal narrative of sexual-textual authorship. Demonstrating the woman-mother's desires for motherhood and the desire to write her maternal experience expressed by Cixous as the "gestation drive", Chesler reaffirms maternal authority to confront social devaluation of maternity through patrilineal history. Chesler re-conceives of her maternity in the duality of intellectual and physical capacities and thus removes the patriarchal confinement of women to mere receptacles of reproduction and childrearing at home. As both author and agent of her sexuality, Chesler refuses sharp distinctions between inner and outer, and self and other to represent her public career and her private mothering as interwoven facets of her maternity. Chesler joins with Beauvoir and Friday to refuse maternal self-effacement through the celebration of maternal desires and pleasures that express maternal powers. In her project of self-realization, Chesler represents her maternity as a guarantee of female sexuality derived from the values of mothering. She expresses her commitment to motherhood in public work and creative play with her child besides daily routine childcare. Thus, Chesler describes the mother as the guarantor of true, feminine sexual experience.

I am convinced that women's autobiographical practice *incorporates* their concept of the female body in their text. The daughter's experience of the close bodily connections with the mother as well as the mother's labour of social intellectual production and personal physical reproduction denote women's signature in their self-representation. Women's concept of female corporeality in their self-narration challenges the language of phallic representation of femininity as the other, the opposite of the phallic male. In their self-revaluation, women reconnect daughters to mothers, and body to mind in order to counter the devaluation of women who are castrated and cut off from their mother as origin, and from their bodies and their own desires in patriarchal discourse of femininity.

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