CHAPTER 3
THE EMERGING NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

Autobiographies are possible when the biographer conceives a sense of self-identity that makes him different from others. The work becomes an exposition and justification of something different or new. Conventionally, personal experiences could be expressed only in limited forms. Diaries and autobiographies were rarely acknowledged as literature of value. Such works enjoyed only a private circulation. Above all, women were never encouraged to do so. Women writers of the latter half of the twentieth century make an attempt to detect the development of a kind of identity so far absent. The realist novel picks up this evolving sense of self. Nancy A. Walker speaks of this, "...assumption that each individual is set apart from all others by the possession of unique consciousness and characteristics" as a precondition of realist novels. (76).

With the advent of postmodernism, and the advance of women's oppressed feeling, confessional writers like Jong and Roy try to make women readers aware of their plight by speaking about their personal experiences. While dealing with such comparatively novel themes these writers make use of certain narrative strategies. Humour, irony, fantasy and myths are used with the specialized purpose of exposing the tyranny of the patriarchal ideology. Varied themes like sexuality, sexual fantasy, mother–daughter relationships and other purely female experiences and moments, find expression through their confessional media. While expressing familial topics, women characters of these writers often reverse the common strongman–weak woman image so far seen in literature.

Creative writing is the result of the creative instinct of the writer, merging with things recorded in her memory. A confessional writer moulds a novel out of the
fragments of experiences. Resembling one person, and now another, the characters are formed out of the imprints in the memory of the writer. The work of the artist thus becomes similar to a “process of free association which shuffles events out of sequence like a pack of cards and across great gaps of time, so that we continue to see people as young who have grown old”(Leon 115).

The narrative strategies are stretched to such an extent that lives of individuals become as valuable as history to the public. Memories of these individual characters are shuffled and associated in such a way that, the reader is able to distill the historical value of the individual’s life. It is not history or tradition that is controlling the individual here, but the writer’s intentional projection of the characters that gives the historical tone of the age. Biographical contents attain the power of historical interpretations of the past. What Hutcheon has said about Midnight’s Children is true of feminist confessional literature too. The biographical writer asserts the “primacy of individual experience”when she “subverts both this traditional inscription of [female] subjectivity and at the same time, the traditional notion of history as non-contradictory continuity”(Hutcheon 162).

Confessional writers effectively use irony in their works to expose the stereotypical world into which women are born. Verbal irony and situational irony are both effective in communicating society’s “traps”and the deceiving, scheming moves of men like Bennett and Adrian, who cultivate all their dishonest moves under cover of these socially prescribed feminine ‘roles’. Irony and humour become the writer’s weapons to expose the image society has constructed of her world. Isadora with her second husband Bennett feels that there is something wrong with her sexual fantasies. “You expected not to desire any other men after marriage. And you expected your
husband not to desire any other woman. Then the desires came and you were thrown into a panic of self-hatred. What an evil woman you were! How could you keep being infatuated with strange men? ?” *(Flying* 10).

Being a product of her age when sex was considered, as something not meant to be shared or discussed or advised upon, among women, she naturally speaks out about it to her husband. Bennett exploits the situation to create in her the feeling that her father-image was preventing her from enjoying her sexual life with him, while in truth, it was the lingering memories of his mother’s unhappy married life that pestered them. The irony of the situation is revealed in *How to Save* where she says to Bennett who has confessed his affair with Penny

So you were with Penny the weekend I was in Woodstock?

I really only went to say goodbye.

But why did you torture me so about my ‘fantasies!’ when I was right all along? What a cruel thing to have said!. (40).

Bennett is only trapping her. In creating such an image, he knew that Isadora would always “defer” to him, as cited by Eichenbaum and Orbach. The guilty feeling that precipitates in Isadora would drive her to the shrinks and it would be easy for him to keep her under him. It would also give him the free time for private life with Penny, while she was away at her shrinks’ clinic.

Irony helps the writer to reveal to the reader the world of conniving deceptions that men manage to construct around women. Women are taught to accept such violations as part of “men’s needs” or as masculine nature. It is this false reality that the writer successfully exposes with the help of irony.
What the writer has got to say, she says with the help of her ironic representation of the character Bennett. He tries to dupe her and succeeds for sometime. The use of irony is one of the most effective narrative techniques employed by the writer.

Starting from *Flying*, all of Jong’s novels show the tone of ambivalence in her heroines. Critics have blamed her for this. Close reading reveals that this ambivalent tone is only the immediate impact of the emerging generation that has to fight against the culturally constructed image of woman and the real woman they have experienced themselves to be. The oscillation between their mothers and themselves, as felt in their real life, they have tried to build it into the fabric of their novel. The result is, characters like Isadora who go out, leaving their husband, and feel the desire to come back to him, when she is in the company of Adrian. “... and I just sat there in silence being torn apart by my twin demons.” (*Flying* 154). She struggles between the “twin demons of ... [being] just a housewife” who wrote in her spare time and that of the adventurous woman who tries, for once at least, to make her fantasies match with her life. (154). She is always vacillating between the two polarized images of woman. She struggles between the two images of Beatrice and Alice as proved by Nancy Walker. In her moments of indecision she wonders whether it is her fate to live a “life of lie.” (*Flying* 154) But when the novel ends she has tasted both and decides to be none but her real self. That real self does not require a role model to support her. The truthfulness to her innermost self turns out to be the strongest guarantee against such demands of women having to repeat the patterns of the idealized girl “in someone else’s story”(Walker Nancy 96).

Double perspective helps these writers to expose the two, almost incompatible aspects of their experiences. Lost in the past of following the beaten path of their mothers and grandmothers, it takes sometime for these women writers to come
out of the cocoon of the socio-cultural image of woman. The struggle they have to take and the labour to be born as their real selves often lacks the stabilizing effect of tradition. The disjunctive plotting, cited as common in most of these early writers of the seventies, is a reflection of this lack of the strength of an accepted role model. This disjunctive plotting can be noted even if we study the Isadora novels of Jong.

In *Flying* Isadora starts with her life with Bennett and almost sandwiches it with spurts of sexual escapades with Adrian. She is in search of ideal love, which would give her full satisfaction. But this satisfaction has to couple with the almost juxtaposing allowances of freedom and security. She is in a confused state. The internal battle between her selves, that struggles to overcome the stereotypes of Alice and Beatrice, leaves her with little peace of mind. And with Bennett blaming it on her Oedipal attachments, she finds the situation unbearable. She has nothing to do other than keep on shuttling from one analyst to another. At times her fantasy of finding the ideal man drives her to Adrian Goodlove, who proves himself to be no good at any love other than self-love. Isadora literally tests the patience of Bennett when she makes her sexual advances to Adrian right in front of him. Days and nights together, as long as the conference goes on, Isadora leaves her husband to enjoy fits of sexual experiences with Adrian, who, she comes to understand, was impotent. It is only his overtures of free love, overflowing in the form of the uninhibited “quick transition from spirit to matter.” (*Flying* 11) that directs him to waste no time to grab somebody who has really attracted him, which traps Isadora. This gives her the wrong signals.

The Beatrice in Isadora emerges when she misreads the callous advances of Adrian as the sign of the ideal lover who does not bother about society as long as he could enjoy the opportunity that life has to offer. In that matter, he stands in sharp
contrast to Bennett who rarely makes such bold sexual moves, especially in public. This was the very same quality that Isadora missed and most desired in her husband. In between there are many occasions when Isadora tries to appologise to Bennett for her affairs with Adrian. She still tries to stick on to her matter-of-fact husband as she tries to maintain the traditional image of the truthful wife. Disjunctive plotting, a common feature of these novels, is a result of tracing the ambivalent nature of the heroines who are torn between the competing 'role models' and their real selves.

The double perspective stands out as one of the common techniques adopted by women writers to argue with and to expose the discrepancy between the self and the other. Its gives them a better opportunity to justify their stand. At times it serves as a self-explanatory tool in the hands of these writers. Being something meant to be read by both the sexes, the woman writer looks upon it as an occasion to frankly reveal her inner-most thoughts and emotions which were so long silenced, undetected or misinterpreted by some of the women themselves not to mention the men who ruled them. In *Flying* the double narrative begins as early as Isadora meets Adrian for the first time. “OK. So I admit my taste in men is unquestionable.”(32). What follows is a debate between the two selves of the writer—her self and other. The self's frank confessions are still in conflict with the other as society has drawn her. The whole paragraph, which takes up almost half the page, is her justification for the infatuations she has. It is almost an analysis of the real factors or qualities in these men that drew her towards them.

The double perspective here serves the purpose of soliloquy. Isadora has both a fearful dependent self and an ironic self-mocking self that sees clearly how the socially constructed female self is quite artificial. The three common elements of the feminine literature of the time — ambivalent tone, irony and disjunctive plotting — as
noted by Nancy Walker, is an outcome of the distrustful self as other, constructed by society. There naturally occurs a vacillation between the distrustful self and the socially constructed self, which in turn speaks of the different versions of their selves.

Writing a woman’s life, in what they “choose to call as fiction”, the confessional writers have succeeded to communicate those feelings that were simply nonexistent in women, as proved by the literature about or of them. Cultural representation of gender only gave a fictional account of the differences and oppression meted out to the female. Even in the first half of the nineties, male writers like Fitzgerald stole words from his wife Zelda with the full justification, since he had the right to the life of his wife as an artistic property. Fear of Flying, with its protagonist named Isadora Zelda by her mother, is the right challenge thrown at the culturally defined femininity. Heilbrun has named 1973 “as the turning point of women’s autobiography”(12). And this is the year that Jong published her “Tropic of Cancer” as Henry Miller called the book. More than anything the novel is important as one of the first books that cut open the female mind and revealed to the ordinary reader the simple yet unauthorized fantasies, fears, and psychological oscillations that wage wars within a woman born of a mother who lived during the first stage of feminism. Honesty is the brave tone she has accepted to express the most unauthorized of emotions. The novel is about the heroine’s attempt to control and accept her self as something natural and normal though her feelings do not have the approval of culture.

Isadora’s life as depicted by the writer deals with all that is prohibited to woman. The right to sexual fantasies, the desire for power and control over one’s life are some of the recurring themes. Freedom and fear often go together in the life of a woman, though the two are different and incompatible in the life of men.
Giving honest expression to their emotions is the only way for these writers to claim their voice. The whole novel *Flying* is the intentional expression of the muted emotions that exist in Isadora. The fantasy of free love and the resulting "Isadora Icarus" feeling are part of the charm of the story (*Flying* 329). It is honesty to one's emotions that we see here. Isadora who started her 'flying' with the fear of the consequent results and reactions of translating her dream man to real life, is now honestly expressing the feelings of the misfired satellite that she feels herself to be (*Flying* 326).

Women of accomplishment, in consciously writing their lived lives, more recently, in trying honestly to deal in written form with lived past lives, have had to confront power and control as Heilbrun remarks in her book *Writing a Woman's Life*. Many of the emotions expressed in the novel become uncanonical due to its "vulnerable relation to the culture's notions of plausibility" as Heilbrun has borrowed from Nancy Miller (Heilbrun 18). But what is surprising is the application of honesty when the writer is speaking about her positive and negative sides. The sincerity showed in the depiction of the hedonistic life of Isadora is still there when the writer describes the Icarus Isadora when she has lost the game with Adrian. But whatever negative result the experience has on her, the net result is the decision of the protagonist to continue her life as a writer, definitely to begin flying on her own wings. The Icarus myth is also being adapted though not implicitly, in order to educate the reader and to tune the protagonist to the selfish hurdles of the patriarchic world that they have to cross so that they could reach their real selves clouded by social scripts. "Whatever happened I knew I would survive it. I knew above all, that I'd go on working" (*Flying* 339).

Honest depiction of emotions helps these women writers to fight against the organized and sometimes even fantasized literary image of women as conceived by
men. Their notions of plausibility are challenged by the collective acknowledgement of the female community. These writers share “the stories of their lives and their hopes and their unacceptable fantasies” (Heilbrun 44). Jong tries to control her self or express her freedom to admit and give expression to the most erotic fantasy that is beyond the notions of plausibility prescribed for her. She is here working on the expression of sexual fantasy, as only an example of the constraints of expressing the female self within the frames provided by the existing literary traditions and stereotypes.

Placed within the familial plot, these women writers find it impossible to give expression to their true selves. The images of women repeated down the centuries are all wanting in what could truly classify them as feminine. Honest depiction thus becomes the indispensable element of feminist confessions of the late seventies. They sense the potency of honest revelations to shatter the historically construed feminine image of woman. Critical and theoretical self-analysis then gains ground as the surest means of combating her social reality. Raising female consciousness is dependent on devaluing the importance, goodwill and credibility of this social reality placed in front of her.

Another offshoot of honest confessions is its ability to counter and pacify the negative feelings that raged within the average woman. She used to shy away from admitting or confessing the incomplete feeling within her or the guilty feeling within her in fear of being ostracised as an outlaw. This is the ”important collective phenomenon” that Heilbrun remarks, which “we have lost through shame or fear of ridicule” (45).

Jong begins her fiction working on sexual fantasy then takes the more disturbing theme of guilt when she moves to her novels How to Save and Parachutes and Kisses. These novels take the life of the same protagonist who has reached a stage
when she has understood the double-dealings of Adrian and even her husband Bennett. All along Isadora struggles to adjust with her shrink-husband fully aware of its short life span. The suicide of her friend Jeannie that coincides with Bennett’s confession of his secret affair with Penny, gives the reader a lot of the “individual guilt” as Heilbrun defines it. Isadora in these novels, both before divorcing Bennett, and after asking Josch to move out of her house, gives us the typical guilt feeling, supposing herself “a monster” only because “she did not fit the acceptable narrative of a female life” (Heilbrun 45).

Honest confessional literature becomes their tool to fight against the organized or fantasized depiction of the woman in men’s literature. It becomes the voice of the muted female self, the positive expression of the negative leftovers of feelings like guilt and shame and fear of ridicule.

For Jong skin imagery is often the symbolic of honest writing. Artificialities imposed by society is just skin-deep for Jong. She makes frequent use of Skin imagery in her works to highlight the honesty with which she has written her confessional literature. This gives her the feeling that each work is a layer of her skin with its cultural traits being peeled off. Jong speaks of the relation between her books and her life. “Since every book is a peeling away of skin, I was raw now. I wanted to grow new flesh to cover the blood… A love affair does that — grows new wrapping, if only scar tissue — Love doesn’t even have to be involved. The man was beautiful only to me, and provocation felt like love” (Fifty 187). Here Jong is speaking of Adrian Goodlove whom she meets in July 1971 in Vienna. As she had published her first book of poems, her skin had been peeled therefore she had to grow another skin to cover her “blood”. The “scar tissue “is Adrian, a “wrapping” to cover the otherwise exposed or bleeding self. Jong frequently uses scar
imagery. “You may look good in a glossy, but in life there are still scars” (Fifty 19). Jong says about “Fruits and Vegetables”: “I was peeling the onion of myself, and finding in that pungent vegetable my own endlessly shedding soul” (Fifty 166). “The nakedness of the book terrified me I had written on my skin and stood before the world like a naked tattooed lady…. A certain skinless experience goes with the ability to observe and describe feelings” (Fifty 190). This is her comment about her Flying.

Honest revelations in the confessional writers acts as a “treatise on overcoming received notions of her femininity” as Miller has described the received gendered identity of woman in her chapter “Writing Fictions: Women’s Autobiography in France”. Though Nancy K. Miller is here speaking about autobiography, it is equally true of confessional literature. As the account given on the cover page of the Signet Edition of Flying claims, Jong’s Isadora with her mad adulterous bolt across Europe in the wildest most uninhibited sexual extravaganza proves that such flamboyant life is no longer reserved for men only (New York: New American Library, 1974). This is her call for the “freer text” and the self that Isadora and Fanny reveals themselves as, are much different from the “occulted and overexposed … femininity” as represented in social reality:

The autobiographies of these women, to invoke another literary genre, are a defense and illustration, at once a treatise on overcoming received notions of femininity and a poetics calling for another freer text… the subject of women’s autobiography here is a self both occulted and overexposed by the fact of her femininity as a social reality. (Miller 52)

Women’s writing goes beyond the traditional narrative strategies when they try to describe typical female moments and experiences previously left unsaid. The state
of a pregnant woman, or the link between the lactating mother and child or the other biological glories of her body were simply ruled out of literary representation by giving them an inferior and unhygienic or private semblance. Women who feel them as privileged identities of their status, intentionally inscribe this reference to her autobiology through the autobiographical fiction. “I ’ll ne’er forget, if I live as be a Hundred, how your little Mouth latch’d on to my Nipples as if there were nothing upon this whole Earth but Mouth and Breast…” (Fanny 320–21). Descriptions of the menstruating Isadora in *Flying* and the struggles and sacrifices that a mother has to undergo as a single parent inorder to see that she can fill the gap of the absenting father in her daughter’s mind are all examples of the woman “determined to go beyond the strictures of convention, [where] conventionally female moments are not assigned privileged status” (Miller 52).

Confessional literature becomes a critical biography in the hands of these writers. While utilising various experienced as well as secondhand incidents in their works, their confessional writing becomes a critical analysis of the existing patriarchal ideology. Jong has combined biographical details with analytical conclusions in most of her Isadora novels. Jong traces the development of Isadora as a typical woman of the 1970s who is backlashed by the ineffectiveness of the feminism of her mother’s generation, yet yearns for a stabilized future for her daughter. The protagonist becomes the biographer and critic of her self. After her flying with Adrian and with the idea of free love, she “discredits the past and re-form[s] it in terms of meaning which transcends history, and therefore help[s] to establish a critical narrative … “ (Anderson 20). Though Anderson is here speaking of the “Historians of the Self”, specifically of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, going through the serialized biography of Isadora
supplies the critical reader an account of the psychological development of the protagonist.

The sociological and cultural value of her personal experiences raises her history to the level of “shared truths which everyone can endorse” (Anderson 4). The self that Isadora expresses through the novels charts the development of a typical woman of the time. She succeeds in allegorizing the episodes of her life. Even at the end of Flying, after the Adrian escapades, the protagonist frankly admits that she confuses dependency with love. (314). She has come to understand and criticize herself for considering Adrian as her “mental double” and admits that “we complete ourselves, the search for love becomes a search for self annihilation; and then we try to convince ourselves that self-annihilation is love” (328). Isadora is critical enough to draw generalisations from her own experiences. Jong intends this experience of her protagonist to penetrate the consciousness of her reader, which justifies the narrative style she has used.

Giving blunt expression to sexuality is something new in the field of women’s literature. It therefore becomes the duty of the writer to account for such violations and also to prove that women are not the “private domestic sexual experience of men” (Walker 98). It becomes an attempt to prove wrong the equation of their sexual existence to the men with whom they are linked. What Isadora tries to express is this side of woman, the sexual awareness and response that is there within her in the presence or absence of a husband or lover.

Fantasy becomes a safe ground for women writers to speak about socially forbidden notions. Sexuality in women was always the most differentiating factor, which glued them to the socially determined stereotypes. These women writers are thus
striking at the very root of their slavery when they try to rewrite the sexual patterns prescribed for them. The interval between the 60's and 80's saw the use of myth and fantasy as the fertile ground to give expression to the other side of their sexual experience, unapproved by the conventional world. "If actual freedom is difficult to attain, it can still be imagined, and from imagination can come either movement out of her socially constructed self or deeper entrapment within it" (Walker 131).

The emerging work naturally carries a double perspective that parallels the self pitted against the socially constructed self. The presence of this fantasy of the ideal man lingers in Isadora’s mind on the borders of reality so much that, this dream man has "a face like Paul Newman and a voice like Dylan Thomas" and "a body like Michelangelo’s David" and "Shaw’s mind" (Flying 102). An attempt is thus made at translating the fantasy into something as real as the qualities of the face, the voice, the body, and the mind of these men who are so much part of the reality. Being related to the imaginary world fantasy thus offers the writer the freedom to write about the prohibited. A unique flexibility and freedom is thus acquired by the women writer totally ruling out the possibility of the patriarchal attack, or at least leaving behind a strong reason - fantasy - to defend her crossing the beaten path.

Appropriating the little scope offered to them by the dominant culture, women writers opt for the use of fantasy and irony in their works in order to criticize the existing norms of society. Fantasy becomes the only open space for women to automate their autonomy beyond the boundaries of domesticity. The American feminists who attempt to express themselves in the existing language lead to the exploitation of fantasy in their works. Fantasy thus becomes a critique of the existing norms and structures. As Nancy Walker has stated in her book *Feminist Alternatives* they not only challenge the
content of the works of the male writers but also go to the extent of contradicting their assumptions with the support of the use of biographical information in union with fantasy. *Flying* owes its popularity and authority to this combination of fantasy with biography. Simultaneously it becomes and remains something imaginative or creative and biographical. At the imaginative level it becomes something that asserts the presence of sexual fantasy in the female. This was something never before expressed or acknowledged, even by women before, due to the control that the male oriented culture had on their psyche. Thus the world of fantasy opened a media to them to go beyond what is prescribed to them.

The absence of real dependable knowledge or record of life or a person who could tell them about, love and sexuality in the life of these early writers naturally coerce them to go into the world of fantasy and thus give expression to their unauthorized versions of experience. As discussed earlier, Isadora complains of having nobody who could tell her something about the sexual disturbances that naturally comes to a woman. Even her mother who always preferred to be different did not tell her anything about sexual experience. "I sensed, despite her bohemian talk that she disapproved of sex, that it was basically unmentionable."(*Flying* 168). The writer even complains of her mother being reticent about sex. She had to go into books by D. H. Lawrence to know something about sex. She had to go into books by D. H. Lawrence to know something about sex. (168–69). The only advice she got from her mother was to make the men play hard to get it so that they really valued what was given. In *Fanny* Jong has made Mother Coxart remark to her in the same way. Hence the world of fantasy becomes the only arena to test the reactions of the outside conventional world to the expression of something as novel as the presence of sexual fantasy in women.
Powerlessness of women is another assumption that is reworked with the help of fantasy by Jong in her novel *Serenissima*. The journey to the sixteenth century world and back to the 1980s gives Jessica Pruitt the protagonist of the novel, the freedom of a longer span of life to prove what she wants to say in *Serenissima*. The powerlessness of woman, as constructed by tradition is questioned. Jessica Shalach gets the courage to overcome all the existing obstructions and thus becomes the saviour of the child whom her lover Will wished to save. The child to a certain extent compensates for the daughter Jessica Pruitt had to give up due to the cunning tricks practised by her husband. The powerless woman of the twentieth century becomes the strong woman of the sixteenth century strengthened by the experience of the guilty feelings of a mother who was reluctantly forced to surrender her daughter to a greedy and scheming husband. Fantasy here becomes the tool to talk about the hidden power of women, which was by tradition, declared to be lacking in them. More than that the return to the sixteenth century gives the writer the advantage of choosing for herself a man who has proved his literary bent of mind. Jong is once again experimenting the satisfaction of living with a man of the same profession. The role of woman has also changed. She crosses the domestic borders and takes up the responsibility to risk her life for the sake of the child. She gets an equal role in the ‘family’ as the male Will. Fantasy thus gives her the opportunity for “one’s stories to come back to one, as original, with certain particular details heightened or changed” (*Serenissima* 104). More than the thrill of writing something new it gave these writers the opportunity to go beyond what has been said of them by the early writers, critics and psychologists, both male and female.

The postmodern developments project the importance of the individual against the backdrop of a fixed identity which society has created. Isadora’s Candida
establishes and confirms to the doubtful woman reader the existence of similar unauthorized feelings like sexual fantasy. A certain amount of fluidity is attached to the idea of what a woman can be, which in turn accredits the existence of variations of the traditionally constructed types. Isadora of *Flying* speaks of the sexual fantasies that women do have. This becomes so much of a variation of the traditional type that she becomes a role model for many women of the time. The fear of flying on the wings of fantasy, when especially that flying goes beyond predestined gendered boundaries, is also typical of any woman who does something that is not approved by society.

Previous to her *Candida Confesses*, a woman discussing sex in public or even with her mother was considered as a taboo in the world of the protagonist and she says that she had to depend on the male interpretations that could be read from books. Jong’s Isadora says in *Flying* “So I learned about women from men. I saw through the eyes of the male writers ...[and considered them as] authorities, as Gods who knew and were to be trusted completely.”(168). D. H. Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley taught her about orgasm, Shaw taught her that women cannot be artists, Dostoyevsky taught her that women have no religious feeling, Swift and Pope taught her that they have too much religious feelings. Faulkner and Freud have also educated her. (169). But she still feels that everything written there is not true and writes her *Candida Confesses*.

Feminist writers of the twentieth century come to find in the repository of myths a set of culturally resonant material that chokes the very essence of their identity. Through the characters they create, these writers challenge the paradigmatic and timeless characteristics of the myths. They bring in individualized characters with biographical touch to question the universality of the myths. When Fanny takes up the role of the writer or the pirate, when the desire for free love is experimented through the
flight in fantasy by Isadora, it is the exclusive narrative coverage of myths that the
writers challenge. Women readers are shocked by the recognition of commonness that
went undetected and unexpressed due to their muted position. What once a sleeping
beauty did, loses its historicity and is interpreted by culture as the true nature of every
person who happens to be a female. That is what DuPleissis means by “historicized
sense of myth”(106). Jong has picked up this myth of the Sleeping Beauty and has given
an answer to the characteristic waiting for the Prince to kiss her back to life. The writers
are challenging the concept of the Sleeping Beauty as every woman, whose ‘sleep’ has
to be terminated by the debut of a Charming Prince. Jong makes a straight reference to
the conventional morality, politics and narrative that thrives through similar myths.

All of the greatest fiction of the modern age showed women falling for vile
seducers and dying as a result. They died under breaking waves, under
wheels of trains, in childbirth. Someone had to break the curse, someone had
to wake Sleeping Beauty without ultimately sending her to her destruction,
someone had to shout once and for all: fly and live to tell the tale!” (How to
Save 234).

Jong is here attacking the colonized or iconised image of the Sleeping
Beauty, as a paradigmatic and timeless archetype of any woman who has to wait for the
male intervention. Breaking the curse becomes symbolic both figuratively and literally.
It stands for freeing her physically from the curse of her subordinate position, and it
means freeing her consciousness from the grip of similar archetypal colonisations and
letting free the self to continue its quest in life rather than accept the death that traditions
have destined for the woman who violates such accrued ideology. She is trying to
expose the “strong system of interpretation masked as representation” and thus
challenges the aim of culture to use the masks as a model to “rehearse one’s own colonization or ‘iconization through the materials one’s culture considers powerful and primary” (DuPleissis 106). This “noncolonial consciousness” of Isadora, as Dupleissis describes such attitudes, makes her a critic and also a member of culture within which positions she often oscillates.

The stories of Jong begin from the ending effect of the myth or their hold on the female consciousness. When Jong brings in the myth of the Sleeping Beauty, it is a “displacement of attention” and “delegitimation of the known tale” that she aims at. The reader is forced to turn her attention from the culturally accrued impressions that she has carried about the Sleeping Beauty story and to question the sequences of the events that result from the priorities of the narrative. The priorities are defined and destined by the dominant culture and hence fail to take into consideration the talents and thirsts within the muted female characters. Importance in the narrative is given to the cultural message that the Sleeping Beauty represents --- she has to sleep till the Prince comes. And if this muted female is to acquire her voice she has to think of alternative options like breaking the curse without the intervention of the Prince Charming and at the same time escaping the curse of death that has been destined for such violators.

The reader’s attention is thus being displaced from the “impact point of a strong system of interpretation” to the position of the interpreter of the representative meaning of the myth (106). She begins to detect the role of patriarchy in focusing attention only on the ‘favour’ done by the Prince. She slowly acquires the voice to speak from her own angle, instead of just cohering to their patterns. The “representative” meaning is revealed to be the scheming priorities of the dominant class that transfer the male oriented desires on to what according to them can be the expected goals in the life
of the weaker class. The ‘inevitable’ end of death for the violators then becomes the punishment defined by the powerful when anyone attempts to go against the code of priorities prescribed by them. The sequence of events like the punishment with death or suicide shoots out from the selfish priorities of patriarchy.

Jong on another occasion speaks of the Sleeping Beauty who has to think of kissing herself back to life incase the Prince does not turn up. Though the suggestion is only part of a dialogue between a mother and her child, still the alternative of breaking the normal procedure offers an opportunity for displacing the delegitimated attention on to another option that would offer woman a role and involvement of her choice. “The poet’s attitude towards the tale as giver determines whether there will be displacement of attention to the other side of the story’ or delegitimation of the known tale, a critique even unto sequence and priorities of narrative” (DuPleissis 108). This use of displacement and delegitimation as critique of the dominant culture serves to rupture the conventional morality and politics as colouring the narrative ideology.

A deeper study into the myth of the Sleeping Beauty as used by the writer clearly speaks of the type of displacement of attention and the extent to which displacement of priorities can be studied as the cause for the resulting plight of women, both in the story and outside. It is interesting to note the development in feminist narrative especially in relation to the myth of the Sleeping Beauty. The attention has been displaced from even the time of Simone de Beauvoir. There has been a marked shift in attention being projected towards the Princess rather than the vantage point of the Prince. It has traveled quite a bit from Beauvoir’s “What would Prince Charming have for occupation if he had not to awaken the Sleeping Beauty?” (183). In Parachutes and Kisses Jong has titled a chapter almost on the myth of the Charming Princess. But the wording of the title
itself begins to displace the attention of the reader to a different angle, which gives the Sleeping Beauty a role in deciding her fate. "Isadora's Shwantz-Song or What if the Prince Doesn't Come?" is itself a question that makes the reader think of a different option in case the Prince does not turn up. The casual reader's attention parallels the attention of the innocent three-year-old daughter. It is depicted as deeply interested in the scene where the Prince comes to awaken the Sleeping Beauty. Attention is concentrated on the effect of the masculine intervention. The reader is usually mesmerized by the relieving charm of the Prince on the Sleeping Beauty. The chapter and the title thus becomes a strong message that the writer drills into the reader

Jong also speaks of another 'feminine' aspect unknowingly being stabilized in the female consciousness of the reader — the image of the Sleeping Beauty. 'Are women most beautiful when they are asleep — like children?' (Parachutes and Kisses 118). Beauty of a woman is here defined as dependent on her 'sleeping' attitude. In other words the passive unquestioning attitude of women is what makes her the source of attraction for the Prince. Rather that is what the male expects. A Sleeping woman becomes symbolic of a woman who is not expected to question or assert her talents in front of the Prince who seeks her hand. The female has no right to ask any questions about the justification for the curse on her. Neither does she feel the need for an alternative action that might save her from the 'sleeping' condition by thinking of kissing herself back to normal life. The priorities set by the masculine narrative can never feel such a need to provide a voice for her whom they have muted down the centuries.

Right from the time of the rule of the Judeo-Christian myth the image of the unquestioning virgin has repeatedly been drilled into the consciousness of women through similar stories. But the twentieth century writer is ready to offer her worried
daughter another option, in case the Prince does not arrive. The thought of having to sleep away her life because of the "absent male" disturbs the mind of the twentieth century three year old, Mandy (Parachutes and Kisses 118). Isadora convincingly provides the answer in telling her daughter that kissing herself back to life is also possible. "Well then, darling, she just kisses herself and wakes herself up" (Parachutes and Kisses 119). Here Isadora is producing a "critical mythopoesis" that could save women from the institutional authority and lead them to the "liberated mythopoesis" (DuPleissis 107).

Women writers work out revisionary myths so as to forge an "anticolonial mythopoesis", as DuPleissis has pointed out. They have already sensed the hand of cultural hegemony in imposing these cultural patterns on women. The Sleeping Beauty myth also offers the writer the critique of another basic ideology or belief that women have learned as true to their nature. Their physical and psychological dependence on the male for realizing their goals in life has always rated them as subordinate to the men. The "pariah" feeling cited earlier, that Isadora describes in Flying, when a woman is single is a result of dependence complex (11). "How we women, three and thirty, five and fifty, long for him to come and make all things right!" (Parachutes and Kisses 118). Whether she is a three year old like Mandy, Isadora's daughter, or a forty year old Isadora, the feeling that there should be a male to "make all things right", sends the woman on a race "yearning for the Prince" (119). Whether the Prince is a Daddy as in the case of the three–year–old Mandy or a husband as in the case of her mother, they are still unbelieving of the fact that "Princess are temporary;" (Parachutes and Kisses 119). Isadora goes to the extent of justifying her promiscuity to this yearning for the Prince
who could lead her to the living-happily-ever-after state. This yearning is actually the swan song of every woman’s life.

Here again we get another case of “displacement of attention” from the story content to its psychological impact on the believer of these myths. The title of the chapter, “Isadora’s Shwantz-Song or What If the Prince Doesn’t Come?” itself awakens the curiosity and interest of the reader with its seductive power, but manipulates this interest and diverts it in such a way that the reader takes in the message along with the story. Here the myth or just the name of the Sleeping Beauty stirs the desire of the reader and thus helps the writer in using the same medium used by patriarchy to control women, as a means of releasing women from the same grits that suffocate them. The writer simply “recapitulates one of the affirmative functions of myth and applies it to the muted group” (DuPleissis 107).

Twentieth century confessional women writers redeploy the socially established authority of the symbolic impact of traditional mythology in order to speak on the behalf of the female community. The writer’s personalized experiences are so communicatively relayed to women readers, that these experiences instantaneously acquire the symbolic effect of a myth. The moment women read the first novel of Jong, they are likely to feel the commonness of the ideas expressed there. Theses writers rearrange the “socially maintained rites, through which the individual is required to experience certain insights sentiments and commitments” so that the gendered priorities show a shift towards a more androgenic approach. The resulting unfiltered accounts of their experience pushes back the traditional myths to their historical society and relieve the current generation from the hangover of an outdated pattern. In place of these outdated myths, honest revelations that emerge as confessional literature “will have the
value and force of living myth” (Campbell 4). The individuals who read these stories and respond with uncoerced recognition will spontaneously observe its symbolic significance. The seductive power these fairy tales once had is now reassigned to the real life situations depicted in these confessional works. This accounts for the popularity of confessional literature though its significance is also bound by its historic context.

Just as traditional myths were the products of their age, confessional literature is also an outcome of the socially muted and subordinated position of women. In other words “the mythogenetic zone of some particular place and time, as the depth-language spontaneously shared by all or most of the members of a largely homogenous community” is replaced by the account of personalized versions of individual experiences that have the communicative skill and seductiveness of the traditional myths (Campbell 93). Speaking about function of myths and rites in traditional system Campbell remarks: “The mythogenetic zone today is the individual in contact with his own interior life, communicating through ... [her] art with those ‘out there’”.

Twentieth century confessional writers too make use of the interpretative value of myths, so as to expose the failing male and not the saving male. But instead of giving prominence to their patriarchal side they project the same myth from the feminine side. Instead of glorifying the service done by the Prince, the same story is used to teach women of the failing men in their lives. Instead of the image of the saving male of the myths it is the failing male that is more relevant to the contemporary woman. Confessional writers begin to communicate stories from the twentieth century social context, a century that has already proved to Isadora that the avatar of the Prince is only temporary. The Sleeping Beauty has to learn to kiss herself awake. Jong reiterates the repetitive roles that a Prince can take in the life of a woman. When she is
just a girl of three, the absenting male of the twentieth century, may be a father who refuses to live for his daughter. “Besides, I refuse to live my life for Mandy. My needs come first” (Parachutes and Kisses 127). Later the Prince may be another Bennett who vows as the protector-husband of the writer-wife, but turns out to be cheating her all the time. The Prince can also be a Josch, who goes to the extent of being the father of Mandy and finally gives her up in the name of professional jealousy. It is the “contemporary consciousness” that any myth aims at creating, that is being channeled by these writers for the purpose of consciousness raising. As Campbell has stated, any myth aims at rendering “an interpretive total image” of contemporary consciousness. The life as they have experienced thus becomes the contemporary, and their account of this life as brought out through their works, becomes the total image that is to be interpreted by the reader, thanks to “the depth and import” of the events shared through them (Campbell 4).

More than its irrelevance to the contemporary society, it is the moral tone of the myths and the absence of the female consent or opinion in its evolution, which these writers challenge. They examine the coordination between Sociology and Ethics in attributing an authority to the morals conveyed through myths. Myths aim at “shaping the individual” so as to become a worthy member of a historically and geographically governed social group. Through their confessional accounts these writers try to utilize the same shaping effects the myths have on future generations. These myths acquire referential value when placed against the silenced female self that was never given any voice in their formulation. The right of one half of society to decide the code of behaviour and to decide what story should have a mythical application, is being gradually and forcefully taken up by women writers. What they are trying to point out is
the third function of myths as cited by Campbell, "the enforcement of a moral order the shaping of the individual to the requirements of his geographically and historically conditioned social group."(4-5).

More than the authority of the supporting canons of myth, it is the decision and choice of the individual that becomes important for them. Analytical studies favoured the confessional writers with a well-marked scheme in fighting against the mythified image of a woman and in delineating its role in retarding the real feminine consciousness. Once the involvement of the individual is defined, it becomes easy for them to motivate women to ignore the mythified image of tradition and put their experience of their selves, as the deciding authority. Biographical stories with the women characters giving vent to their experiences then become the role model for them. The hold that the cultural authority exerts is dependent on the attitude of the individual. Sans the consent of the individual, a mythified image or message can never attain any meaning. Anecdotes from the experience of Arundhati Roy or Jong are powerful enough to oust the mythic image of a woman as remaining passive, obedient and accepting any amount of inflictions from their masculine 'superiors'. A myth gains currency only when the individuals in the social context aspire to reach up to the goals prescribed. Feminist writers educate women readers and focus on a displaced attention that helps them to read the gaps in the same myths. Taking their own experiences they teach the reader of the crucial, yet unknown role of the woman, in internalising and regenerating these myths. The willingness of her brain to accept and to act out the message it has received from outside, is thus being utilised by these writers, "for not authority but aspirations is the motivator, the builder, and transformer of civilizations" which in turn charms women to follow their mythic models (Campbell 5).
Postmodernism gives these women writers the opening to think in terms of personal values as contrasted to the values imposed by and through the traditional myths as aspired and realized by the dominant culture. When the individual woman "foster to the centering and unfolding of the individual integrity" in accordance with the microcosm that is herself, the mesocosm that is the culture in which she is, and the macrocosm of the universe, she believes to be striving towards the ultimate mystery according to Campbell. But this mythological move becomes fully creative when "an adequate individual, loyal to... [her] own experience of value" takes up her own version of the myth she has experienced and shatters the fixed concepts. This is what women writers of the twentieth century are doing. By elevating individual experience to the level of shared experiences they are "reintegrating the fixed" with "their insights, sentiments, thoughts and visions" communicated with utmost loyalty to their own experience of value (Campbell 7). These individual writers become "the leading minds" as Campbell calls them, who progressively interpret and analyse the myths to the reader, through their experiences retold through their literature. Unlike civilizations that were considered as the "vehicle of its own mythology", these leading minds take up the task of interpreting and analyzing the accepted myths and concepts transferred blindly through tradition (Campbell 36).

Confessional literature with its characteristic honesty and frankness becomes a shock treatment to woman whose consciousness was a storehouse of the social archetypes. Women writers understand that the socially authorized mythologies and the force of habit as unconsciously constructed within her, are all obstructions, which they have to remove before awakening the reader's honest consciousness of her female self. The manacles of the authorised version are strong within the individual's
consciousness. The opponent is not only the patriarchally tuned society, but more than that the women themselves who have internalized these versions as their true selves.

"The novelist uses familiar mythic or historical forms to combat the content of those forms and to conduct the reader ... to the real, away from mystification to clarification, away from magic to maturity" as Bradbury has quoted Robert Coover (184). These socially authorised mythologies also colour the individual's experiences through its powerful optics of social acceptance. The aspiration of the individual to gain the approval of the society is so strong that, often any nonconforming instincts or opinions that she may have is ignored in her desire to comply with the accepted schemes. When these "leading minds" find the courage to give honest expression to some of their experiences and opinions, even when they are in marked disagreement with the accepted traditions, this helps the reader to think differently and even feel differently. In fact this is what takes the writers closer to their goal of raising the female consciousness in the reader. When Ammu gives honest expression to her feelings whether it is sexual or just related to a casual event like speaking openly about the anglophilic attitude of the family, it always shocks the other members of the family that represent the unquestioning society.

In The God when Babykochamma comes to know of Indu's relationship with the paraya, she is shocked mainly because such a situation is beyond the traditional patterns drilled into her from childhood. Through her Flying, when Jong speaks about the existence of sexual fantasy in women, women and even some men look upon it as something new. This reaction serves to prove that "socially authorized mythologies and cults of the classical and medieval as well as primitive and Oriental traditions were intended, and commonly functioned, to inculcate belief; and in salient
instances their effectiveness was such that they determined the form and content of the most profound personal experiences” (Campbell 85). The “most profound experiences” of Roy’s Babykochamma and Jong’s reader are clouded by the authorized versions transferred to and unconsciously duplicated with their lives and experiences. This accounts for their shocked feeling. In their urge to foster “authentic individuals” these women writers have to fight against the “painful realization of the depth to which the imprints, the stereotypes, and archetypes of the social sphere determined our personal sentiments, deeds, thoughts, and even capacities for experience” (Campbell 86).

Postmodernism inspires women writers to retell certain myths from a feminist point of view so as to expose and strengthen the socially underplayed role of women. Even while the four functions of mythological symbols, the “mystic, cosmological, sociological and psychological” are taken out of focus and delegitimated by women writers, they find some of the ancient myths conducive to exposing the strength of the species. As Barr, Marleen S. as remarked, feminist writers start to think and work on “how to retell from a feminist viewpoint, the patriarchal stories which construct the world” (270–71). Writers like Jong and Roy take up the myth of Demeter–Persephone and give it a modern implication, which serves to bring out the positive side of women. Such reactions speak of the “woman’s relationship to systems of patriarchy” as Barr has defined it (XXVI). Especially when some of them take up biographical novels with the heroines as artists, where themes like the mother–daughter relationship acquire mythic proportions.

The writers raise everyday relationships like that between a mother and children or mother and daughter, to mythical dimensions. *The God* describes the sufferings of the mothers and daughters and even a son. Pappachi permits Mammachi to
be only a parlour-violinist; yet he becomes jealous of her talent on the violin. When her
tutor praises her, he stops her classes. This along with the scenes of wife-beating that
frequently occurs in the Ayemenem house inspires the daughter Ammu to go to the
extent of boldly expressing her ideas and feelings without bothering about the
patriarchal system silently accepted by her mother. It is this that causes many of the
sharp comments she showers on her brother Chacko. The writer is thus tearing to pieces
the mythical image of the divorced son as legitimate inheritor of the paternal rights and
property and the outsider position the same system confers on the divorced daughter.
What inspires her is definitely the muted role of the woman of the house
uncomplainingly internalized by her mother. Ammu’s strength to rebel is born out of the
mixed feelings of anger and sympathy she has for her mother.

*Fear of Flying* works out the mother daughter story told from a daughter’s
point of view. *Matrophobia* as Grace Stewart names the typical fear of duplicating
everything the mother stood for, is a recurring theme of the novel. We hear Isadora
deciding to give up her ambition to become a painter since she would only be doing
something already done by her mother. She hated her mother so much for her unique
 tastes and desire to be different from others. She always wanted to be just one in the
crowd so that she could fight against the characteristic attitude of her mother. She still
fondles the sweet memories of her mother who took the trouble to be along with her
children even while teaching them ice-skating. She nurses the image of the mother ready
to nurture any of her ambitions. She provided Isadora with Biology books when she
thought of becoming a doctor, gives her basic lessons in painting when she thought of
becoming a painter. The combination of the good mother and the bad mother image that
runs through the story of Demeter provides the background for the work of the writer.
"Good or bad, the relationship energizes many women’s novels and forms the core of most of their Kunstlerromanen" (Stewart 47). Demeter is both the Good Mother and the Terrible. As the myth goes she is the personification of fecundity, nurturance and loving concern yet she is always depicted as determined to maintain the control over her offspring to the extent of challenging patriarchy by withholding the gift of the grain.

Isadora is definitely a twentieth century Persephone. Like the mythic maiden she is also charmed by the “male power and cleverness” as she has experienced through Bennett her husband and Adrian (Stewart 46). Most of Jong’s novels end with the heroines, learning to maintain control over the patriarchal concepts, like maternity being imperative for a woman, the presence of the omnipresent male as a ‘protector’ in any woman’s life, etc. The twentieth century Persephone has succeeded to a certain extent in freeing herself from her mother’s hold over her offsprings.

Like her mythic counterpart, Isadora is fully conscious of the power that her mother had, as an artist. She praises her ability to switch over from the painter to the poetess until her father and her husband rob her gifts. Even then her artistic turn of mind gets a kind of satisfaction in choosing the unique type of clothes and upholstery and paint for her house. The name Zelda is an echo of Zelda Fitzgerald who has become a mythic image of the misused artist “...this strange, valuable girl from Montgomery, Alabama, had to endure unnecessary rebuffs and discouragements—in a life where so much suffering was foreordained and beyond repair”, who felt at times her images robbed by the patriarchal husband (Lowell 103). It is the thwarted artist in her who names her daughter thus. This becomes another example of creativity finding out other space to express itself.
Another mother-daughter tension crystallised by the myth is the ambivalent attitude of the daughters towards their mothers. The mothers have sacrificed their artistic talents at the altar of nurture though they have secretly longed for nurturing the artist within them. Daughters want to become the artist that their mothers could not become.

Isadora cannot accept the idea of herself as mother of at least one child till very late in her life. Even when she is realizing the dream-man with Adrian, she longs to be the dutiful loyal wife of Bennett. The ambivalence between the good and bad girl is already in her though she has not become the mother of her child. The role of the mother-daughter artist also offers scope for oscillations between the resulting artistic satisfaction and prick of conscience for choosing art rather than maternity. This is the “inevitable sacrifice of self that biology demands of women in most societies” as pointed out by Grace Stewart when she speaks about the female version of the Demetrian myth (50). The haunting image of her artist-mother’s martyrdom at the altar of nurture is so disturbing that she does not consider having a child. She is still disturbed by the words of the bad mother who told her that but for them she would have been a famous artist and the good mother who coaxes her to finish the book she has almost finished. Her impressions of her mother like Persephone’s are both terrible and good. Demeter becomes symbolic of the traditional role of maternity that a woman has to accept with all its ingredients of sacrifices and dejections.

A close study of the structure of the feminist novels of these writers supports the embedded pattern of birth, death and rebirth, which is repeated in them. The mothers of the heroines, who were artists themselves, are denied space and time for cultivating these talents by either maternity or coercion. Symbolically patriarchy or maternity spells out the death of their art. But the rebirth comes with their daughters.
The mothers strongly wish and encourage their daughters to develop whatever talents they have. Within the daughters themselves a kind of rebirth takes place, when they refuse to budge in the name of conventions or tradition. Jong speaks of the rebirth of her heroine many times in the novel. "What I really wanted was to give birth to myself—the little girl I might have been in a different family, a different world..." (Flying 51).

Later in the same novel she says; "surviving meant being born again" (339). Modern Persephone that Isadora is, she wants to give birth to a little girl who had other alternatives than surrendering to the maternal image of Demeter or succumbing to tricky charms of the underworld as duplicated by modern patriarchy. This is exactly what Grace Stewart says about women writer's use of Demetrian myth in some other novels: "The myth is pertinent to these novels for yet another reason. Structurally the myth celebrates the origin of a cycle of birth/death/rebirth, supposedly the monomyth of all literature. But in the female version, the cycle is perpetual. Demeter’s success is limited; Persephone is doomed to return to Hades" (49).

The feminist writer adapts the nature of Persephone in their novels to transmit the muted message they have in mind, namely to show their allegiance to the sacrifices their mothers have made in order to bring out the artists in their children. Stewart, Grace speaks of Persephone thus: "The story does not reveal any of the emotions of the maiden. She stands mute, a pawn of forces operating on her" (49). But modern persephones are no longer mute. These daughters clearly and boldly prove their allegiance to their mothers and the sacrifices they have made for the family. Unlike the mythical Demeter, the mothers of these feminist novels are more passive to the opposing social context. They can hardly show their dissatisfactions openly. Ammu gains courage from the passive sufferings of her mother. Rahel too gets the courage to
go against the social taboo from her mother’s experience of accepting the social order practiced by those at Ayemenem house.

Jong’s Isadora is a very active artist in her own way. Though she does not want to do any thing that her mother has done, she is aware of the sacrifices her mother had to make in order to bring her up. Isadora the talented writer is indebted to the wasted artist that her mother was. Each time she claims success and popularity, the thought that it is the result of the sacrifices that her mother had to undergo tarnishes her joy. Even when the writer’s mother is on her deathbed, the sacrifices that he mother had to make to keep her alive when all the children in the hospital died, spurs her to complete the book. (Fifty 388). Stewart speaks of this change in the use of myth by feminist writers thus: “The new mythos emerges in recent portraits of the woman as artist, in the Kunstlerromanen which focuses on the experiences of the mother/daughter artist and which allow the daughter to speak” (49).

Fairy tales, history, myth, and romance plot, the typical ingredients of traditional narrative, were all impediments to the creative instinct of the woman. Their novels have in common the hidden agenda of breaking these fortresses of the cultural paradigm so that their experiences could be expressed without the pollution of the patriarchal impurities. The world of fantasy that Isadora creates for her reader is what DuPlessis calls the “transgressive invention of narrative strategies”. Walker, Nancy quotes Rachel DuPlessis to speak of the revisionary critique of the stories and myths familiarized by public.

There is a consistent project that unites some twentieth-century women writers across the century, writers who examine how social practices surrounding gender have entered narrative, and who consequently use
narratives to make critical statements about the psychosexual and sociocultural construction of women.... Writing beyond the ending means the transgressive invention of narrative strategies, strategies that express critical dissent from dominant narrative. (89).

What Jong's novel transgresses is the image of the obedient satisfied compliant wife who proudly publishes the satisfaction and security she enjoys under her husband. Isadora is not a mobile live advertisement of a conventional wife nor does her behavior and attitude reinforce the image of an all-satisfying husband. The enclosed plot of traditional fiction is violated and the female psyche encroaches upon the limits of the standard narrative. As Isadora admits towards the end of *Flying* "Life has no plot" (399). The result is the search for free love that haunts Isadora. The fairy tale metaphor of the husband and wife who happily lived ever after, is rewritten.

One of the traditional images of woman that is shattered is the concept of the 'good' woman. There is always the role of the good woman, the good wife, the good sister, and the good daughter for the woman to accept. All her life is a sacrifice she has to make in order to tune herself to these types. Virginia wolf said that she wanted to kill the angel in woman and she could. But she could not write her body as experience. Writers from Doris Lessing start off this tradition which confessional writers like Jong improve. Isadoras, Fanny, Jessica, Ammu, Rahel, can never be categorized as 'good'. The consciousness emerges out of the knowledge that another man's version of what a woman should be can never be repeated in them. These characters live not according to social scripts but according to their desires and talents. They no longer strive to maintain the good girl image that society has drawn for them. Their selves go beyond
socially permitted limits that bless them with such comforts. “The enemy is niceness, manners, trying to be good” (Fifty 144).

The myth of the inevitable strong supportive selfless man behind every successful woman is another image that is being demythified by both these writers. The two men who occupy most part of the book are Adrian and Bennett. Bennett claims himself to be “…the only person in your life who’s held you together this long—…” (Flying 152). This man who emanates the impression of a protector of the writer-wife Isadora, threatens her that her involvement with Adrian would only rob her of the precious time, that Bennett took care to give her so that she could continue writing. Not to mention anything about the double-dealings of Bennett, he represents the typical patriarchic voice that asserts itself even through one of the most creative and personal work of a woman as writing. He tries to reinstate the image of the provider and protector man, this time, not in terms of the economic side of the woman but her spatial side. In other words he assumes the role of the man who provides Isadora with the unencroached space and uninterrupted time to write.

Adrian, the next man, has got experience to offer. Having read some of her sensual and erotic poems, his ‘magnanimity’ lies in providing Isadora with something to write about. Jong, through him is mocking the provider image of men. “I offer you an experience that could really change you, one you could write about, and you run away.” (152). Besides he is confident of trapping her, since he knew Isadora from her “bits and pieces” (153) which lay scattered along her works. These certified the importance of novel experiences to her. Though initially Isadora falls a prey to these masculine pretensions, when the novel ends, she has learned to go on working without
depending on any Adrian or Bennett to provide her with the time or space or experience itself, to write about.

Arundhati has also dealt with the same theme in her novel. Ammu’s husband turns out to be her destroyer rather than the stereotyped protector. For his own selfish ends he is ready to lease his wife to his employer.

The traditional strong man and weak woman are missing in these works. Roy works out a different pattern in the two children. Of the two Rahel the female appears to be much stronger than the male Estha. Later in their lives when Estha is "re-related" to Ayemenem it is Rahel who comes to help him. Though unhappy with her life in Boston, she decides to come back to her brother. Here too Roy rewrites the concept of the strong man and the weak woman. Rahel becomes another Hillary Clinton, ready to break any norms written down by culture, only to make amends for all the loss that even Estha the man has felt when he was burdened with the guilty conscience of killing a man he most dearly loved. Blessed with the super-sensory skill of feeling the pain or laughing at the funny dream that her brother has, it is not difficult to understand how Rahel would have felt the sorrow of her brother who drifted towards silence. Rahel even dares to break the basic pattern of a brother-sister relationship and provide the comfort that a woman could give to a man. This is also a result of sharing all that Estha has undergone. It is born out of a last frantic attempt to save her brother.

The writers of the latter half of the twentieth century try to break the social construct of the possibilities offered to women. Having felt the pungent grip that these determined opportunities have in store for woman, writers like Jong scatter a plethora of women characters that compete with one another to expose their talents and options in front of them.
The world of fantasy gives Jong the freedom to write about the female side of her protagonist, which is restricted by social reality and its norms. In *Serenissima* it is the problem of aging and sexuality that Jong picks up. Society’s “rules” about women and aging are tested against the backdrop of the world of fantasy that the writer constructs for the protagonist. Jessica Pruitt of the twentieth century feels that only part of her life is revealed in her script. She is doubtful about her role as a storyteller. She feels that even that story of her life is not complete. Only a sojourn into the world of Jessica Shalach and Will would help her to give expression to, and give credible explanations to the world of reality, where a husband, who has deprived her of her only daughter, and a mother who has committed suicide disturb her consciousness. She thus sneaks back and forth into the world of reality and fantasy, this shuttling being one of the adventures she takes, encroaching on the boundaries fixed by the world of reality. Going beyond the limits prescribed, she thus attempts to describe the untold side of her story. Jong is studying the full dimension of freedom and how much of it is denied from the sixteenth century onwards. “Sometimes freedom is just a matter of changing perspectives.” (*Serenissima*. 199)

Maternal subjectivity gains reputation as the apt media of communication. Its compatibility with the intentional writing of confessional literature makes it very popular, since till then it had only occupied a figurative position in the male dominated world of letters. The range and applicability of maternal subjectivity, especially its narrative impact is exploited by the feminist writers of the second half of the twentieth century. The second wave of feminism gives an impetus to the latent power of maternal perspective. Decoding the embedded dangers of accepting the patriarchally constructed ‘honour’ of motherhood, these women writers divert its potentiality towards rewriting
and establishing certain other aspects of the mother–daughter relationship. Feminism is thus being restarted by them, by not only listening to their mother’s stories but also by providing the “space in which mothers might articulate those stories” (O’Daly and Reddy 11).

There is nothing new in the theme of the novel *The God* unless we take into consideration, the way in which Roy handles this, in order to bring out the unbreakable chain of the mother and her children. Any psychologist will stress the importance of the impact of the absence of a listening ear, especially when the children are at their early age of seven or eight. The reader can understand the far-reaching impact of the children being forced to give false evidence especially against Velutha whom they really loved. This is what destroys Estha and Rahel, and what can account for the offending eyes of Rahel that behaved as though “they belonged to someone else” (*The God* 19) or the “Never intrusive. Never noisy” (10) the least protesting silence of Estha.

Ammu’s tragedy is more a result of the forced disruption of the family chain. She wants to make sure that at least the brother sister relationship, another offshoot of motherhood is not broken. She makes them promise that they will love each other. “‘Promise me you’ll always love each other’ she’d say, as she drew her children to her” (225). Maternal subjectivity is stretched to include its psychological impact on the young minds irrespective of their sexual status. The traumatic experiences of her own childhood serve as an inspiration and warning that motivates the mother in Ammu to defend and correct her children wherever necessary.

Jong tries to undo the mythified image of motherhood as an extension of the ‘femenine’ qualities. Jong works out the Persephone–Demeter love and hatred that she has for her mother and which she knows will be within her daughter too. As she
acknowledges in the dedication of her book *Fear of Fifty*: “For my daughter, Molly—
your turn now”. She wishes to make it clear to the reader that, whatever be the contents
of the emotions exchanged through a mother and daughter, there exists a bond of
understanding which, sometimes, even they understand only later in their lives. The
mythified image of women who have to sacrifice their lives to become their mothers
dies away with Jong’s mother. Towards the end of *Fifty* she declares that the world has
changed too much for the women to replicate their mothers. There is very little sense in
sacrificing the creativity in them in the name of family. “The world has changed too
much to let us have the lives our mothers had. And we can no longer afford the guilt we
feel at not being our mothers.... We have to stop blaming men and mothers and seize
every second of our lives with passion. We can no longer afford to waste our creativity.
We can no longer afford spiritual laziness” (*Fifty* 387).

Maternal subjectivity, in these writers is capable of both biological and
artistic creation. Socially constructed environment of motherhood comes under strong
criticism of these daughters. They claim themselves to be the daughters of the mothers
of the early twenties who had to secede to the socially accepted norm of mothering or
childcare. The whole scene of the incest at the end of *The God is Rahel* is Rahel’s answer to the
society that failed to care for the life of the two seven ear olds, that was thwarted as
society’s sense of sin was being punished for. When Isadora struggles to continue
writing, when Fanny decides to write her own life history, it is the same mother
daughter link that acquires prominence over the socially accepted norms of woman as
the muse or the mother, other than the writer or any other roles denied to woman.
Maternal subjectivity in the beginning is defined as bound to her relationship with her
children and family. Her individual talents, likes and dislikes are just secondary, and so likely to be sacrificed at the altar of motherhood or family interests.

The second wave feminists go a step further to describe the mother as not only biologically reproductive but also capable of creative works like painting, writing, singing etc. provided she manages to find a space within which she could articulate it. The boundaries of female subjectivity are thus expanded to include the mother who is still involved in her creative work. In other words these feminist writers who balance their dedication towards their children with an equally sincere dedication towards their inner selves, develop a female bildungsroman. Maternity becomes a perennial source for them, from where, their subjectivity and childcare can best be explained to the reader. Isadora is not ready to sacrifice here creativity in the name of her daughter or to prevent her husband from leaving them. She has already named the typical guilty feeling of the twenties—mother as “spiritual laziness” (*Fifty 387*).

The intrapsychic link of the mother–daughter relationship becomes a strong weapon in the hands of confessional writers who wish to empower the female consciousness of the reader. This intrapsychic relationship is capable of exposing the muted maternal subjectivity as another social construct. Ammu’s unmixable mix of the tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber owes much to the sadistic experiences she had received from her father. The helpless image of her mother and her “mute resignation” even while her daughter’s favourite gumboots are being shred to pieces by her sadist father, makes her ready to do anything to protect her twins. Having felt the lack of protection, that a child naturally expects from her parents, Ammu is always ready to defend her twins ever for the least silly reason like comparing the height of her children with that of Sophimol who has become the center of the family’s
interest for more than one reason (174). Ammu thus becomes that which her mother was not, thus proving that the pliable obliging obedient muted image of a woman is only society’s creation. By her “suicide bomber” attitude she reminds the reader that such passive women were created for the conveniences of the patriarchy.

The mothers of the twenties blamed themselves and not history for their subordinate position in the family and society. The role of cognition in accepting their secondary position did not occur to them. Hence they could never believe that women could demand their own space. Isadora in *Flying* speaks of an experience that Judith her mother had. The prix de Rome was not given to her though she was the most gifted of the artists at the National Academy of Designs (*Fifty* 363). Isadora’s stubborn dedication to her work springs from the weakness of Jong’s mother’s accommodating attitude. She had to paint with a “folding easel” that once again made her work as a painter subordinate to the work of the men in her family who had their own studios. As Jong herself has written in *Fifty*: “I know there is something in the beatings of the daughters against maternal limitations that pushes us to find out who we are. I see my own daughter demolishing me, deconstructing me. She has to do this to get free of me” (366).

As O’ Daly and Reddy have commented, feminist writers have used “the universal experience of daughterhood as the basis of a critique of patriarchally defined motherhood, with the feminist daughter analyzing the social conditions which must change if motherhood is to be redefined” (O’ Daly and Reddy 2). We hear the feminist daughter Isadora asserting that it would be “spiritual laziness” if she continues to sacrifice her creativity in the name of her family especially when the present day world does not offer the same life as their mothers had. She tries to redefine motherhood by combining the creativity of a writer with the nurturing nature of the mother.
Feminist writers have not stereotyped the quality of mother–daughter relationships. Though they may be borrowing many details from their mothers, their creativity comes to their aid in projecting different types of mothers and daughters. Ammu is a daughter who gains the courage to divorce a husband who is ready to offer his wife to the employer so that he can continue in the job, which, otherwise would be taken away from him. In her paternal home she adjusts to all the double-dealings of her mother who is ready to understand her son Chacko. But when the question of her twins’ comforts and rights come, she is not ready for any compromise. Though she trains them as the best brought up children, she is not ready to give in to any hint of superiority that her family tries to give to Margaretkochamma or her daughter. The whole family is shocked at the change in Ammu who has learned not to suppress her anger as her mother had done in front of her father. “In the angry quietness of the Play... Ammu walked back to the Plymouth, took out her suit case, slammed the door and walked away to her room...”(180). This leaves every body there wondering from where she had learned her effrontery, since she had not been brought up thus.

Here in comes the daughter who is not ready to replicate the mother she had when she was a child. But Fanny’s mother Alice has a different lesson to teach her. Though she does not know that Alice is her mother, Alice knowingly prepares her daughter for the future in front of her. She teaches her that the power that the outside world declares as witchcraft is only the fear in the mind of men. The power the women gain by “extreme concentration, by Meditation solitude and by many other Mental Rigours” is interpreted as witchcraft by the men(76). “All the rest was but the evil Report of evil Men who fear’d the Wisdom of Women, who fear’d Female Knowledge, thus Female Pow’r...” (77) Alice not only saves Fanny, but as Ferguson has pointed out
“Fanny’s daughter receives the gift of life because of her grandmother’s female lore and her mother’s persistence and skill in surviving, with no help from fathers (Ferguson 72).

In Flying we have a typical mother-challenging daughter who wanted to do something her mother did not do. Isadora’s attitude towards her mother is a mixture of Ammu’s and Fanny’s attitude. As pointed out in relation to the Demeter myth, she disliked her mother’s deferring attitude yet she admits that she was inspired by her mother’s complaint that she had given up her professional life so that she could bring up the four children in the family. Her choice of nurture instead of career life has inspired Isadora to become a professional writer and a mother at the same time. Thus maternal subjectivity offers further scope for analysis with the individual mothers and daughters contributing in their individual way towards building up a consciousness among women.

The potentiality of maternal subjectivity to inspire the daughter is closely connected to psychodynamics of self-creation. Confessional writers exploit this aspect in their works. The daughter’s protest against the gendered identity feeling their mothers had, is the net outcome of the reproduction of mothering that takes place within her as she tries to understand the full meaning of the maternal image. The daughter’s concept of motherhood becomes very much related to the emotions displayed by the mother in relation to the other members around her. Ammu’s concept of mother is very much related to wife-beating that her mother silently accepted from her father. But the reproduction of the mother in Ammu is a foil to her mother. She specialises in exhibiting the very qualities that were absent in her mother. The suicide bomber is born out of the relationship with her mother. “Mother–daughter relationships and the unconscious fantasy and emotional constructions and symbolizations of the self and mother are not all alike, interpersonally or intrapsychically…” (Chodorow 536). For
Ammu it symbolizes the “resentment of dependence” and the rejection of nurturance. Both the aggression of the father and the submission of the mother leave a very bad imprint on her consciousness, which develops into the “unmixable mix” of the “suicide bomber” and the mother with infinite tenderness.

Jong’s mother’s frustrations, as she admits in *Fifty* “powered both my feminism and my writing... I had to find a way to be like her and unlike her at the same time” (46–47). The relationship gets symbolised in her consciousness as the sacrifices of an artist–mother for the sake of bringing up her four girls, when the father still carried on with his artistic work. It is this personalized development of one’s sense of gender that makes possible the varied attitude of daughters of the same parents. Isadora’s sisters, Randy with her nine kids and Lalah and her “quints”, and Chloe and her son are all proud of their brood but she alone believes that “it was a denial of my name, my destiny, my mother” (*Flying* 45). As Chodorow as theorized in “Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction”, Isadora’s particular sense of self and relationship with her mother is different from the intrapsychic meaning gathered by the other daughters of the same mother. Her consciousness did not decode the sacrifices of her mother, as an inspiration to conceive as many children as did her sisters.

Muting the impact of socially imposed ‘female’ identity, Jong uses these situations to reveal the rearrangement of priorities, blooming in Isadora’s consciousness. To Isadora, the sacrifices of her mother remind her of the subordinate position she had in the family. This is exactly what Isadora wishes to defeat through her decision of postponing a pregnancy. Judith’s concept of her body is different from Isadora’s. To Judith the sacrifice of an artistic vocation for the sake of the family is justifiable. They speak of the priorities that her consciousness has given to her biological duty. Nurturing
is fully the duty of the mother even after the children have grown up. To Isadora a woman has an equal right to vocation as men. She has constructed her consciousness differently from her sisters. Isadora’s sister Randy’s words speak for all the daughters except the writer-sister. “It’s just that you’re still my little sister and I really think you’ve gotten off on the wrong track! I mean you’ll find it so much more fulfilling than writing…” (Flying 49)

The belief of having children being forced upon Isadora becomes something as cruel as the work done “missionaries” (Flying 51). She has her own religion that has taught her that her grandfather’s jealousy towards her mother, who was a better artist than him, had thwarted the artist in her. It is Judith’s creative superiority surrendering to patriarchy that Isadora reads in the situation. Judith sieves out the explanation “Women cannot possibly do both, You’ve got to choose. Either be an artist or have children” “as only an excuse to cover-up the dejection that the artist-mother might have struggled to kill. Isadora decides to honour the “little gold chain [that] chained “her mother to her mother and Isadora to her mother (Flying 44).

The confessional label has the magnetic power to attract those ‘feminine’ qualities in their mothers and invoke the consciousness of the daughter so that the theme becomes imitative yet reactive at the same time. How Rahel reacts to the bitter experience of her mother as a subordinate species in her position as a divorcée and a woman—as contrasted to Chacko who is also in a similar divorced position—and how Ammu herself is the answer to the subordinate position of Mammachi, how even Isadora’s putting off of pregnancy is a reaction to her mother’s maternal sacrifices, reveals the self of the daughter as double, triple or multiple. “As a result of the impenetration between mother and daughter” the daughter is forced to see her own
mother whenever she looks at herself in the mirror (Hirsch 1981, 69). But though as Hirsh quotes Jung, "... every mother contains her daughter within herself and every daughter her mother..." each daughter "extends backwards into her mother" by identifying those 'feminine' characteristics that subjugated her to the men around her (Hirsch 70). Every mother "extends ... forward into her daughter" to provide her with the material and reactions to become the spontaneous reaction to her depraved condition (Hirsch quoting Jung.70).

With Fanny the daughter, Jong extends beyond her mother when she is able to look upon pregnancy itself as an invitation to writing. The feeling of the growth of the child within her, is so inspiring that she looks upon the child as the muse inspiring her with many wonderful fancies. The very experience of pregnancy becomes the inspiration to the writer who was also pregnant, while she wrote the novel. Fanny admits this.

'Tis said by some that bearing Babes is all a Woman's Fire and Inspiration; that as her Womb fills, her Head empties; that the Act of Bearing substitutes for all Acts of the Imagination. But I swear that 'tis not so! Rather as my Womb fill'd my Head teem'd as well with Fancies. As my belly grew so did the Children of my Brain! (292)

Whatever be the extent and range of the mothers and daughters, their individualized identity does not destroy their overwhelming continuity. Jong's novel *Inventing Memory* does a wonderful work on the theme. The lived lives of their mothers become a source of nourishment and criticism to the daughters. These experiences, simultaneously breed inspiration and anger towards their sacrificing mothers. The inherited family ties attain the honour of a rich legacy that is treasured for the sacrifices their mothers had to do to maintain it. The double selves of the daughters untangle
these strands by relating their lives to the changes in the world before them. The same intelligence of their mothers and grandmothers that taught them to suppress their creativity for the good of the family now goads the daughters or granddaughters to make the best of the chances the world has got to offer. Sally the singer recounts the mother–daughter chain that runs through the five generations of women. Daughters to mothers, each one is fit enough to compete with their mother for the role of the protagonist:

But who would be the hercine? Sarah Sophia, Salome, Sally– or Sara herself? Did it really matter? After all, wasn’t she the portrait painter with the robber baron bleeding on her stoop, and the flapper in Paris who goes home to find her country sunk in Depression, and the singer of the sixties who throws away her talent and her life? She had to try on the souls of all these women in order to become herself” (Inventing Memory 304).

It is not difference and autonomy that these daughters claim from their maternal ancestors. On the other hand, they struggle to stress the continuity and relationships with their mothers. Isadora, Sara and many other heroines go to the extent of accepting their maternal heritage as the live wire in their creative work. It is the feeling of loss their mothers felt, their helplessness, in front of the strong male characters in their lives, that trigger the daughters to make use of their creative gifts.

“To study the relationship between mother and daughter is not to study the relationship between two separate differentiated individuals, but to plunge into a network of complex ties to attempt to untangle the strands of a double self, a continuous multiple being of monstrous proportions stretched across generations, parts of which try desperately to separate and delineate their boundaries”(Hirsch 73).
Postmodernism gives these writers an opening to map the psychic geography of maternal subjectivity. What is commonly accepted as maternal consciousness is split up into its various contributory factors that mould its formation like political, social, personal, etc. The political motives of patriarchy are brought to light when the personal life of an Ammu manages to gain satisfaction in spite of her manless state. Her personal identity is very much linked with her identity as a mother of the twins. Yet she senses the cognitive process that lingers in the characters like Mammachi, who are ready to accept the man’s needs in Chacko. It is not only the patriarchal myth that has influenced the consciousness of characters like Mammachi, but even the typical super cast attitude of the Ipe family that looks down on the paraya who is still considered as an underdog. Here the political and the social aspect of the dominant class has a combined impact on Mammachi’s maternal subjectivity.

Whatever be the experience of Ammu and her children, it is this multilayered subjectivity, especially of Mammachi that inflicts the oppression and political struggle of Ammu, her children and Velutha. These situations are transparent enough to give the reader a glimpse of personal consciousness in them, being attacked by the collective identities established by society.

The subjective experiences of Fanny has taught her that it is the cognitive process of identification with the socially constructed identity of a woman that has labeled a woman as unfit for the role of a writer or a pirate queen. The maternal subjectivity and its intense emotional attachment towards the newborn, credibly stirs Fanny into the situation that helps the writer to expose the emptiness of such myths. O’Daly and Reddy has taken up Hirsch’s comment on the complicated work the critics and writers and readers have to do before the maternal subjectivity is fully mapped:
As Hirsch emphasizes, this project requires that we ‘develop a more complicated model of identity and self-consciousness’. That selfhood, she says, “would have to balance the personal with the political, the subjective experiences with the cognitive process of identification with various group identities. It would have to include a consciousness of oppression and political struggle. It would have to be both familial and extra-familial” (194).

Jong also tries her hand at the themes of the “familial and extra-familial” in her novels *Fear of Flying* and *How to Save Your Own Life*. Maternal subjectivity with its heavy demand on the responsibility of the mother, leaves Isadora still not confident of conceiving. She wishes to make the reader understand that the life of a woman can still be worthwhile or her self can attain satisfaction outside the circumference of maternity. She looks upon maternity as a grave responsibility and its choice should never be an accident. Like Ammu, she is ready to make any sacrifice for her child once she is a mother. She literally pleads to Mandy’s father who deserted her, so as to reduce the sufferings of the child they both loved.

These novels have started shifting to the postfeminist tone of familyism. *The God* as well as the later novels of Jong gives more importance to the family. The woman turns out to be ready to make any amount of sacrifice for the sake of holding the family together. Isadora in *Flying* is vacillating between the two generations. Born and brought up in the feminist stage and coming of age in the postfeminist age, she repeatedly finds fault with her mother who sacrificed the prospect of a professional painter and remained satisfied with her folding easel. She belongs to the whiplash generation. But the Isadora of *How to Save Your Own Life* is ready to make any sacrifice to provide the loving family for her daughter. She faces and bears all the
troubles so that Josch may remain home with her. When Jong reaches *What Do Women Want* she has finally discovered the right woman in Hillary Clinton who has not only become "inured to ridicule" but has become the saviour and consoler of a husband and daughter (*Fifty* 12).

"The postfeminist woman is more nurturing and concerned with others’ needs than with her own" (*Tremplin* 139). *Fifty* devotes a whole chapter "The Mad Lesbian in the Attic" (57–81) to endorse the nurturing quality in Jong. She nurses her mother’s sister Kitty who has nobody to take care of and who is being robbed by all of money and everything valuable. Ammu has also the same changing message to convey. The whole novel is about the “disempowered sections of Indian society—outcastes, women and children” (*Dhawan* 196) The message the novel contains is also an understanding accommodating and nurturing family that is strong enough to withstand any attacks from outside in the name of caste, class or power. Thus postfeminist writers try to depoliticise some of the fundamental issues of the second wave feminism and return to some of the traditional values giving up the emphasis on self-development at the expense of the family. The difficulties of the single parent are well defined in the later woks of Jong and in *The God*.

Unlike the writers of the first and second wave feminism, the writers of the eighties are able to detect positive values in heterosexual love and the family structure. The protagonists of these novels are depicted as struggling to merge motherhood and career for their mutual benefit. Ken Frankling has classed Isadora of *Parachutes and Kisses* as "a postfeminist woman of the 1980’s—mixing motherhood, career, and a lusty love life in search for herself…" (*Tremplin* 149).
The narrative strategies displayed in the works of these confessional writers are all inspired by the themes they handle. Talking about themselves and living in a world, that is highly critical of self-revelation by women, these writers have chosen techniques to reach the reader with minimum interference from social artificialities. The repetitive use of irony, fantasy and themes like mother–daughter relationships, double/multiple perspectives, displacement of attention of myths from its story to its psychological impact are just some of the narrative strategies adopted and adapted by women writers to convey their message. Whatever they found favourable in the traditional style, they wholeheartedly incorporated in their works. Whatever they found unsuitable, they either rejected or modified to suit their purposes. The result is the warm reception their works have received at least among women readers.
Works Cited


