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Disinheriting the father: The nature and function of feminist rhetorical appropriation

Shugart, Helene Anna, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1994

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DISINHERITING THE FATHER: 
THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF
FEMINIST RHETORICAL APPROPRIATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Spaces can be real and imagined. Spaces can tell stories and unfold histories. Spaces can be interrupted, appropriated, and transformed through artistic and literary acts . . . . “The appropriation and use of space are political acts.” (hooks, 1990, p. 152)

. . . I no longer think of myself as a “woman warrior” as I once did. I am not fighting anything or anyone anymore, not mimicking men’s old deadly pattern. I think of myself and other like-minded women now as the goddess, creating a new pattern, creating the world afresh. (Johnson, 1989, p. 46)

Etymologically, appropriation shares its root with property—the Latin prop—meaning “possession,” or “one’s own.” Specifically, appropriation technically refers to any instance in which one uses the means commonly associated with and/or perceived as belonging to another to further one’s own ends. As such, instances in which any defined group borrows or imitates the strategies of another—even when the tactic is not intended to deconstruct or distort the other’s meanings and experiences—constitute appropriation. Presiding governments frequently are modelled on historically preceding empires, just as various marginalised groups have appropriated the tactics of historically marginalised groups. Indeed, the argument could be made that appropriation is all there is; one cannot help
but appropriate the knowledge and information of those who have come before.

As the survey of the relevant literature will reveal, however, appropriation generally is understood and discussed theoretically as a means by which the referenced “other” is challenged, distorted, or deconstructed. Most theorists understand appropriation as the claiming, by an individual or group, of another’s meanings, ideas, or experiences in such a way to advance the individual’s or group’s beliefs, ideas, or agenda. Consequently, the original meaning, which may pose a threat to the appropriator, is deconstructed, distorted, or destroyed so that the perceived threat is undermined and the agenda of the appropriator is advanced instead. Rhetorical appropriation, then, describes the act of garnering definitive support for one’s cause via claiming the words, meanings, or experiences of another while simultaneously defying and/or denying the other.

Significantly, from a rhetorical perspective, appropriation is more relevant to perception than to intent. That is, certain meanings and experiences are associated almost exclusively with a given group culturally, via popularly understood and accepted relationships. Thus, inherent to my definition is the assumption that rhetorical appropriation occurs primarily as a clear violation of these cultural norms in such a way that those norms are challenged, distorted, or deconstructed.

Examples of appropriation as an oppressive rhetorical strategy abound. African Americans, for instance, are very familiar with white America’s appropriation of Black culture in various arenas. Popular
examples of this phenomenon include white appropriation of rock and roll music, which very much has its roots in Black culture--Elvis Presley's singing and popularising what was considered, at that time, exclusively Black music is the most obvious example of this. Similarly, the relatively recent popularity among white women of wearing cornrows, a hairstyle associated with Black women--as symbolised by Bo Derek--constitutes white appropriation of Black culture.

Women's meanings and experiences, too, have been appropriated and distorted by patriarchy. The still-popular myth that "women really mean yes when they say no," for instance, bears witness to that fact. Popular images in which women's bodies and women's sexuality are appropriated and reduced to objects of male fetishisation abound, as demonstrated by the vast bulk of commercial advertising--virtually all beer advertisements qualify on this count. Ironically, even feminist messages and appeals constitute appropriate material for appropriation; popular Virginia Slims and Nike ads, for instance, purport feminist ideals while advancing age-old patriarchal stereotypes of women.

Instances of appropriation as practiced by submerged groups are readily available, as well; the civil rights movement contains many such examples. Malcolm X's rhetoric, for instance, includes numerous exhortations to African Americans to claim and use, literally, the violent means traditionally used by their white oppressors to subjugate them. Examples of appropriation as practiced by women, who also constitute a submerged group, also are available. Relatively recent feminist appropriations of traditional, culturally ingrained fairy tales constitute a
popular example of claiming patriarchal means in order to challenge patriarchal constructs. Similarly, as a recent example of appropriation between submerged groups, women hoping to increase attention to and funding for breast cancer research openly have appropriated tactics associated with the gay and lesbian organisation, ACT UP.

Clearly, appropriation is not uncommon as a rhetorical practice; the examples cited above are accessible and familiar, and they represent only a few. Its proliferation notwithstanding, however, appropriation as a specifically rhetorical strategy has received surprisingly little critical scholarly attention.

Statement of the Problem

The fact that appropriation as a specifically rhetorical strategy has merited so little attention may be because its nature and function have been perceived as self-evident. Almost all of the literature that exists currently on appropriation seems to take for granted the nature of appropriation or how it occurs. Perhaps more significant, appropriation is associated most often with issues of oppression, and scholarly attention to those issues is relatively recent.

Although scholarly scrutiny of appropriation as practiced by dominant groups is worthwhile, in that context, appropriation often functions as reinforcement of existing oppression. Social presumption along those lines has done much to render the image and meanings of oppressed groups inconsequential, so that calling up those images and meanings does not entail comparable risk to the dominant group. I am interested, instead, in appropriation as it bears on the discourse of disenfranchised groups because the implications of rhetorically conjuring up both the spectre and the
tools of one's oppression are profound; key to appropriation is the fact that it turns on referencing that to which it is opposed. Submerged groups take a significant risk with regard to challenging their oppressors directly on the latter's terms because those terms have been used historically precisely to oppress them and because the dominant group possesses a legitimacy and presumption not afforded to the disenfranchised.

I am interested in appropriation as a specifically feminist practice in an oppressive patriarchal context; namely, I want to articulate an understanding of the nature and function of feminist rhetorical appropriation. For purposes of this study, I have defined and examined feminist rhetorical appropriation as instances characterised by a process in which culturally popular patriarchal stories, songs, myths, rituals, legends, fables, and icons are referenced clearly in such a way that the messages apparent in the new text challenge the patriarchal conceptions of gender in the original. These so-defined feminist appropriations thus serve as a provocative forum in which feminist messages and appeals can be interpreted and evaluated. The research questions that guide my analyses are:

(1) What features characterise feminist rhetorical appropriation? How do they interact to constitute such appropriation?

(2) How does feminist rhetorical appropriation correspond with what we know about appropriation in general—is it oppressive, inappropriate, or empowering?

(3) What message(s) of emancipation is(are) implied by each instance of appropriation?
(4) Is appropriation a strategy that should be used by feminist rhetors to achieve emancipation? If so, how is appropriation best used by feminists as a tool for freeing women from oppression?

Significance of the Study

Critical scholarly treatment of issues relevant to submerged groups is still in its infancy. As a discipline, the field of rhetoric is beginning to explore the ramifications of the point that the contexts and conditions engendered by oppression have a profound effect on our understanding of rhetoric emerging from oppressed groups. This project is designed to inform women, who comprise one such marginalised group, about the implications, effectiveness, and significance of the specific rhetorical implications of appropriation, especially given that alternative available strategies for emancipation and social change exist.

I also hope that this study of feminist rhetorical appropriation prompts critical analysis of what emancipation means for women. Many different perspectives exist on this point: for example, some feminists feel that integrating women into society, where they have been conspicuously absent before, constitutes emancipation; others feel that women's ways and experiences ought to be privileged over men's; and still others feel that an entirely new system ought to be articulated, free of existing conceptions of gender. Because the act of appropriation raises the question of what kind of society we seek, I believe that an analysis of this rhetorical act may contribute to an analysis of what, exactly, women's liberation means.
Finally, an analysis of rhetorical appropriation as practiced by a submerged group expands our current understanding of rhetorical theory. Such a study obviously contributes to our general understanding of rhetoric as practiced by submerged groups. In particular, however, the study implies the expansion of our understanding of several traditional rhetorical constructs. For instance, the enthymeme is understood historically as a rhetorical device in which the audience participates in constructing an argument by supplying missing premises, based on common experiences and assumptions. Appropriation, however, which functions enthymematically in that the audience participates in constructing the argument, is premised upon challenging common experiences and assumptions.

A study of appropriation as practiced by a submerged group also expands our understanding of how aesthetics functions rhetorically; in an instance of appropriation, the significance of form to content is the subject of intense focus, for form (as per the appropriated artifact) provides the springboard for how we understand the appropriation. In addition, an analysis of appropriation in the context that I am proposing broadens our understanding of rhetorical genres and generic constraints, for instances of appropriation often conform to technical generic constraints while subverting traditional appeals of the genre.

Survey of the Literature

Although little literature exists on appropriation relevant precisely to its nature and function as a feminist rhetorical strategy, considerable literature exists on appropriation in general, feminist and otherwise. In fact, the nature and function of appropriation as a rhetorical strategy often can be inferred or
extrapolated from the existing literature on appropriation; however, such inferences are necessarily limited. Unless appropriation is examined as a specifically rhetorical phenomenon from a specifically rhetorical perspective, reliable knowledge claims cannot be made regarding the nature and function of rhetorical appropriation.

The existing literature on appropriation comes from varied and diverse arenas; I have included literature that analyses appropriation from a variety of fields and perspectives, including art, literature, and critical theory. Perhaps not surprising, then, appropriation is conceptualised in a variety of ways. In this survey of the literature, I have organised the literature into broad conceptual themes: (1) appropriation is inherently characterised as an oppressive strategy, utilised by the oppressor; (2) appropriation, although plausibly employed by the oppressed, ought not to be; and (3) appropriation not only can but should be employed as a strategy by the oppressed on their own behalf because of its liberating nature. Notably, virtually all of the literature focusses upon the function of appropriation; where the nature of appropriation is addressed, it is done so implicitly. This is due, I believe, to the fact that most theorists consider how appropriation occurs to be self-evident; where they differ is with regard to its effects. Although all theorists hold generally to the noted description of the nature of appropriation, there are minor but notable differences between these "camps" with regard to the nature of appropriation; I shall outline those differences briefly by way of introduction into each section.

Although my interest is in appropriation as relevant to feminist discourse, I have not limited my survey to literature that addresses
appropriation in a feminist context. Much of the literature derives from feminist analysis, however, because many feminist theorists have dealt extensively with the question of the nature of appropriation with regard to gender, the act of appropriation itself, and the gendered nature of contested terms and meanings.

**Appropriation as Oppression**

Considerable literature has focussed on exposing appropriation as a strategy of oppression—as a tactic by which oppression is exercised, maintained, and reinforced, a tactic synonymous with exploitation. Indeed, the distinctive feature of theorists who take this position with regard to the nature of appropriation is that power is a necessary condition for its practice; it is a strategy "by which a dominant class nullifies a potential political threat," closely related to and often followed by projection, which ensures that "a dominant class can speak for an oppressed other and avoid listening to what the other might have to say" (Chapman, 1992, p. 91). Edward Said (1978; 1989) discusses appropriation as a form of representation to the end of colonisation, a phenomenon that he also refers to as "orientalism" (1978; 1989, p. 211). Appropriation is a means by which the voices of "subaltern figures" (1989, p. 210) are spoken for or asked to speak in a rigidly defined context of "fetishization and relentless celebration of 'difference' and 'otherness'" (p. 213) so that oppressive structures are inevitably reified, strengthened, and perpetuated. Anne Opie (1992), in her discussion of feminist qualitative research as a tool of emancipation, cautions against this very same danger of inadvertently appropriating the subject as opposed to highlighting difference. Specifically, Opie fears that "feminist interpretations
... can appropriate data to the researcher's interests, so that other significant experiential elements which challenge or partially disrupt that interpretation may also be silenced" (p. 52).

Some recent critiques of the singer Madonna have echoed these misgivings regarding the fetishisation and consequent oppression of the "other" engendered by appropriation. Intrigued by the recurrent spectre of "historically rooted struggles of the subaltern groups who populate her videos" (p. 259), David Tetzlaff (1993) claims that Madonna's "great triumph is to appropriate the signs of these struggles and to exploit them for their value as attention-getting display . . . to subvert the symbols of struggle to the construction of her own celebrity" (p. 258). Similarly, bell hooks (1990) has documented the way in which Madonna has appropriated and exploited the stereotypical image of the black male under the guise of anti-racism (p. 60). The overriding concern evident in these contributions is that appropriation, whether intentional or not, denies the historically constituted nature of oppression--it is a shortcut that ultimately bypasses truly critical treatment of complex issues.

Many feminist theorists have chronicled the ways in which women's meanings and experiences have been appropriated and exploited under patriarchy. Considerable feminist energy, for example, has been directed to exposing patriarchy's general appropriation of women's labour, especially unpaid labour in the home, and of women's bodies in the context of sexual and reproductive rights. Sonia Johnson (1989) eloquently summarises this perspective:
Women were the first owned, the first "ruled" people in every race and class and nation, the first slaves, the first colonized people, the first occupied countries. Many thousands of years ago men took our bodies as their lands . . . and have harvested us--our labor, our children, our sexuality, our emotional, spiritual, and cultural richness, our resources of intelligence, passion, devotion--for their own purposes and aggrandizement. These have been men's most profitable cash crops. (p. 21)

Indeed, some literature chronicles the specific and technical ways in which patriarchal appropriation is manifest; perhaps most representative of this literature is Mary Daly's (e.g., 1984; 1990) work. Daly refers to such appropriation as patriarchal "assumption" (1984, p. 124) of women's things; for Daly, appropriation is the means by which "phallocracy" has warped women's words and twisted their texts (1984, p. 121). Sharing that perspective, Jane Marcus (1984) likens feminist literary criticism to what she calls the "still practice" of "wrest[ing] an alphabet' from the 'speaking text' of women's [silenced and oppressed] bodies" (p. 80) and as necessary precisely because "male patriarchal writing in its aggressiveness often rings with guilt for its history of robbing women of language and art" (p. 81). Alan France (1988) offers a case study of precisely this phenomenon in his analysis of Richard Wright's Native Son; France chronicles the text's pervasive "violent and phallocentric appropriation of women"--enacted primarily via the novel's protagonist, Bigger Thomas--that effectively reduces them to "objects . . . in the struggle over property relationships that determine status" (p. 422). According to Gerald Chapman (1992), in his analysis of William Blake's purportedly pro-feminist work, even good intentions cannot head off patriarchal appropriations; Chapman suggests that even for "men
sympathetic to feminism . . . it is impossible to avoid appropriation of feminism, or projection onto it, and probably impossible to avoid responses which are inimical to feminism" (p. 92). For Chapman, oppressive patriarchal structures are ingrained too deeply to be overcome, and appropriation is a strategy inherent to those structures.

Many who adhere to the theory that patriarchal oppression is grounded in the appropriation of woman suggest as a suitable remedy expropriation--exposing an act of appropriation and reclaiming the original, female nature of the meaning or experience. If appropriation implies colonisation, expropriation implies the coup by which the natives are restored unto themselves. Daly (e.g., 1984; 1990), once again, is perhaps the most familiar advocate of this enterprise; indeed, her work, in general, appears dedicated to restoring women's things to women, to cultivating a "radical reconnection" (1984, p. 94) of women with their own history, meanings, and experiences.

Mary Kelly (1987) exhorts exactly this sort of expropriation--which she calls "de-propriation"--in the context of feminist art strategies. She advocates "exploring [the contemporary world's] boundaries, de-constructing its centre, proposing the de-colonisation of its visual codes and of language itself" as opposed to simply "pilfering its cultural estate" (p. 249), an activity she labels "curatorial confiscation" (p. 253). Her 1978 piece, Post-partum Document, represents an elaborate and complex "de-propriation" of motherhood. Similarly, in his analysis of the artwork of Sherrie Levine, an artist well known for her (alleged) appropriations, Craig Owens (1983) suggests that the clear disdain for "paternal authority" evident in her work actually is demonstrative
less of “appropriation--a laying hold and grasping” than it is of “expropriating the appropriators” (p. 73).

In her analysis of Marge Piercy's fiction, Frigga Haug (1992) describes expropriation (despite her use of the term “appropriation”) as she pursues her thesis that Piercy's “novels stimulate readers to appropriate knowledge about themselves and their relationship to their bodies . . . . They are therefore an attempt to make conscious the history of female people” (p. 31). Thelma Shinn (1986) examines how women's “mythmaking” within the literary genre of science fiction demonstrates that, by virtue of their appropriation of male myths (and genres), these authors have “penetrated that patriarchal surface and ‘dug the goddess out of the ruins and cleansed the debris from her face, casting aside the gynophobic masks that have obscured her . . . .’” (p. 12). Rather than actual appropriation, then, this strategy of seeking to restore inherent, original meaning is more appropriately described as “expropriation”—what Annis Pratt (1981) calls “unvention” (p. 178).

The literature that cites appropriation as a strategy of oppression tends to be characterised by four distinctive features. First, theorists who pose this argument seem to suggest that power is a condition of appropriation—dominant groups practice this strategy as a means to reinforce and perpetuate existing social conditions that privilege them. Second, appropriation is seen by these theorists as exploitation, an instance in which the meanings and experiences of submerged groups are distorted in such a way as to alienate and marginalise them further. Third, many theorists who describe appropriation as oppression advocate the act of expropriation by
submerged groups--actively reclaiming and demonstrating the origin and meaning of that which has been appropriated by the oppressor. Finally, the assumption undergirding this position is that concepts, ideas, and words have inherent meaning--they can "belong" to a given people--for only that which is one's own can be taken away.

This body of literature implies that, rhetorically, appropriation is limited to very specific (oppressive) contexts and rhetors and appeals to a very specific audience. This assessment, however, does not indicate how this happens rhetorically; for instance, how does ethos--the rhetor's actual character--play into this? How does the audience interpret the messages with regard to what and how things are referenced? What symbols or themes serve as rhetorical vehicles for the appropriation to qualify as an oppressive strategy? As such, rhetoricians inclined to examine appropriation as an oppressive rhetorical strategy can be informed, on a general, theoretical level, about its ramifications; however, a genuine understanding of the rhetorical processes that bear it out require an explicitly rhetorical analysis.

**Appropriation as Inappropriate**

A distinctive feature of the literature cited above is that appropriation makes sense only as undertaken by the oppressor--many feel that power is a necessary condition of appropriation. Not everyone shares this view, however. A significant body of literature exists that recognises appropriation as plausibly practiced by the disenfranchised, although theorists disagree about the ramifications and effectiveness of that practice. At this point, I would like to discuss the body of appropriation literature that, while
recognising the feasibility of appropriation as practiced by the oppressed, ultimately rejects that strategy, on principle, as inappropriate.

As with the preceding position, significant to this general perspective—the inappropriateness of appropriation as practiced by the disenfranchised—is the fact that it is founded upon the premise that contested terms, meanings, and experiences are distinguished by an inherent nature and/or belong to a given party. Thus, the appropriation of a given concept cannot eradicate its nature, rendering such a strategy in the hands of the oppressed futile at best, dangerous at worst.

The point that given concepts, meanings, and experiences are imbued with a definite, ineradicable nature has been made frequently in the appropriation literature, particularly by feminist theorists who hold that given concepts and meanings are inherently patriarchal and that appropriation of those meanings by women simply reinforces patriarchy. On precisely this note, Hélène Cixous (1976) warns feminists specifically about engaging patriarchy on the terms—literally—of men, for “language conceals an invincible adversary because it’s the language of men” (p. 887). Johnson (1989), too, premises her misgivings with regard to appropriation as a feminist strategy on the point that it evinces women as acknowledging, endorsing, and reinforcing patriarchy by utilising patriarchy’s terms exclusively. Articulating the consequences of appropriation, Johnson describes it as an “imitative behavior” that clearly implies that “the best way to be a woman is to try to be a man” and that “men’s world view and their ways are not only okay but preferable” (p. 88).
Many feminist theorists have chronicled examples of failed feminist appropriations on the grounds that those endeavors inevitably sanction and reinforce patriarchal constructs. Mary Hawkesworth (1988), for instance, illustrates this point as she chronicles the failure of feminist appropriations historically in the case of the rhetoric of reason, a tradition imbued with overtly patriarchal premises and assumptions. She points out that “despite Christine de Pizan’s brilliant refutation of the ‘slanders against women,’ misogynist myths” are pervasive even today; “despite 600 years of cogent arguments concerning women’s status as human, it is still common to encounter analyses that treat women as ‘a species apart’” (p. 455).

Appropriation of a patriarchal tradition, claims Hawkesworth, succeeds only in “reinforcing prevailing values” (p. 454). A. Cheree Carlson (1992), too, in her analysis of women’s moral reform rhetoric, examines appropriation on two levels: how that movement “attempted to use traditional ‘masculine’ avenues of power to achieve its goal” (p. 18) and how it employed “ironic manipulation of the traditional, and powerless, feminine role” (p. 19). She sees appropriation as an ironic strategy, citing moral reform rhetoric, in particular, as an example of Burke’s notion of casuistic stretching to the end of creating perspective by incongruity. Carlson claims that an oppressed group that accepts the terms of the oppressor in this fashion inevitably and fundamentally constrains itself: “It is likely that any disenfranchised group that attempts to create social change without a complete revolution will be hampered by the use of this technique” (p. 30).

Theorists who reject appropriation as an emancipatory tactic often feel that it reifies existing oppressive paradigms by virtue of inevitably
acknowledging the status of the oppressor. In her discussion of feminist counter-cinema (which she equates with deconstructive cinema), Annette Kuhn (1982) is hesitant to endorse a practice ultimately reliant upon patriarchal standards: “Deconstructive cinema is always, so to speak, casting a sideways look at dominant cinema” (p. 161). Kuhn’s concern is that this dynamic ultimately may undermine a feminist project, for locating the oppressor as the stimulus for feminist counter-cinema simply acknowledges and reifies existing power structures and relationships. Mary Ann Doane (1984) presents similar, albeit more specific, concerns regarding the futility and danger of appropriating film for feminist ends. In a tradition in which women are exclusively fetishised and objectified by and for the male gaze, she claims, any deviation from that patriarchal form results only in women’s desexualisation, and, “in a patriarchal society, to desexualise the female body is ultimately to deny its very existence” (p. 80).

Other theorists who reject appropriation as an emancipatory tactic feel that oppression is reified precisely because originally and inherently oppressive codes are decontextualised, thus rendering them even more insidious. Alan Sinfield (1981), for instance, rejects appropriation as a defensible tactic on the part of literary critics whose intent is to reform morally or socially reprehensible material. He argues that, in rejecting context, appropriation denies the value of “otherness,” thus risking the perpetuation and/or reinforcement of established evils inherent in that material (p. 182). Discussing the case of artistic appropriation specifically, Griselda Pollock (1987) also rejects appropriation as an effective strategy for the same reasons that Sinfield does. Referring to appropriation, or what she calls
“reversal,” of the artistic nude in which men replace the objectified woman, Pollock points out the inevitable failure of this strategy “because of the particular [ideological] signification of woman as body and as sexual” (p. 137). No such corresponding conditions exist for men, so reversal only provokes amusement rather than awareness and never addresses directly—if at all—feminist issues surrounding the female nude art form.

Many theorists who reject appropriation as a strategy of emancipation do so because the best that can be achieved is the inversion of existing oppressive paradigms. Inversion, they feel, fails truly to challenge and change oppressive structures and systems; rather, inversion simply reconfigures who is located where in these systems, and oppression itself is never genuinely addressed. Hooks (1990), for instance, points out that inversion, assimilation, imitation, and assumption of “the role of rebellious exotic other” (p. 29) are never desirable ends, for they reify and reinforce existing power structures that inevitably craft oppression. Maggie Anwell (1988) has in mind exactly these reservations when she makes the point that “a radical retelling must delve deeper than a simple manipulation of the familiar plot” (p. 78). Similarly, Elaine Showalter (1985a) articulates the need for “the female tradition” to “generate its own experiences and symbols which are not simply the obverse of the male tradition” (p. 265).

Many theorists reject appropriation on principle; that is, they feel that such an act is inherently exploitative and oppressive, even if the intent is exemplary. Johnson’s (1989) strong and pervasive belief is that the means are the ends (p. i), that “how we do something is what we get” (p. 35). To partake of or to work within patriarchy, Johnson feels, simply reifies,
sanctions, and perpetuates oppression in general and women's oppression in particular. In an ironic variation on this theme, Nilli Diengott (1988) chides feminists for their penchant for "appropriat[ing] fields of study which rely on totally different premises and questions to their own enterprise" (p. 50), thus violating and exploiting those fields in order to serve feminist ends.

Similarly, Nina Baym (1984) feels that even acceding to the terms of patriarchy constitutes appropriation, which undermines feminist principles by condoning and perpetuating the exploitative patriarchal legacy of appropriation. Recognising theory as an inherently patriarchal construct, she claims that

[feminist] theorists constrain what may be allowably discovered; their totalizing, in the name of feminism, reproduces to the letter the appropriation of women's experience by men, substituting only the appropriation and naming of all women's experience by a subset of women: themselves. This repetition of authoritarian structure betrays an infatuation with male forms and deconstructs the feminist project. (p. 45)

This feminist appropriation of patriarchal terms is what Jane Marcus (1984) calls "taking father-guides to map the labyrinth of the female text" (p. 89). Carol Sternhell (1983) suggests that the impulse to appropriate, in fact, may be less strategic than feminists would like to think and more indicative of residual mystification: "our haste to adopt these [patriarchal] styles, I would suggest, stems from our own divided consciousness. We are too damn eager to be good daughters . . . . [We] must find our own voices" (p. 275).

Some theorists, although cognisant of the potential dangers of appropriation, nevertheless are unwilling to reject appropriation categorically as an emancipatory strategy; these theorists conceptualise appropriation as
a means to an eventual revolutionary end. Others, however, disagree. Anjelika Bammer (1982), for instance, in her analysis of feminist science-fiction utopias, states that she does not find feminist appropriations and revisionings of male utopian thought valid, for "[patriarchal] ideology . . . is encoded in the form of the text itself" (p. 58); consequently, feminist utopias inevitably reify patriarchal gender norms. On those same grounds, Johnson (1989) argues that "there is simply no getting to a feminist value system by acting out of the old patriarchal values of competition, expediency, hierarchy . . . . [W]e can't touch filth, even while trying to clean it up, without getting it on our hands" (p. 41).

Unlike those who posit power as a condition of appropriation, these theorists readily conceive of appropriation as viable in the hands of disenfranchised social groups. These theorists, too, believe that contested terms and concepts have an inherent nature; because of this, the overriding argument featured in this body of literature is that appropriation is unethical regardless of who practices it, for it is characterised inherently by exploitation and violation of that which belongs to another. A secondary but still-powerful argument represented in this literature is that appropriation succeeds only in perpetuating generally oppressive systems and conditions by endorsing the oppressor's terms, whether or not that endorsement is intentional. Many theorists feel that appropriation succeeds only in making those general oppressive terms more subtle, thus less identifiable. Finally, many theorists who reject appropriation do so because they feel that it reifies and reinforces existing oppressive conditions by accepting the same terms that have been used to oppress select groups—including acknowledging the power and
status of the oppressor and accepting one's own status as powerless.

Here, too, rhetoricians can infer that appropriation suggests, rhetorically, the reification and reinforcement of oppression, regardless of the rhetor and/or the specified intent. Understanding of how this occurs, however, still is constrained by these general, theoretical implications. In order to know that a given artifact is harmful or otherwise inappropriate for a given audience, an investigation and evaluation of specifically rhetorical dimensions and processes of the artifact and how they function for the audience are needed.

Appropriation as Empowerment

Many theorists, several of whom acknowledge the reservations noted above, nonetheless endorse appropriation as a legitimate, effective, and wholly appropriate strategy of empowerment—a strategy utilized by the oppressed to the end of their own emancipation. Indeed, a term closely associated with appropriation is “re-vision,” which Adrienne Rich (1979) defines as “the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, entering an old text from a new critical direction” (p. 35). Such re-vision, Rich feels, is not only appropriate for women but an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. . . . We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us. (p. 35)

Theorists who share Rich’s perspective tend to view appropriation as a strategy key to challenge, protest, and social change; they see the nature of appropriation as actional and assertive—in this way, appropriation resembles
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a revolution. Rachel Blau DuPlessis (1985) argues just this point in her description of mythic appropriation as an “attempt to forge an anticolonial mythopoesis, an attack on cultural hegemony as it is, which necessarily had included a vision of gender” (p. 107).

Perhaps not surprising is the fact that, in contrast to those who reject appropriation as a defensible tactic, most of those theorists who advocate appropriation reject the notion that contested concepts or terms have an inherent nature. Indeed, appropriation, they feel, eloquently makes and reinforces the point that meaning is entirely socially constructed. Michael Kaufmann (1989), in his analysis of Gertrude Stein’s linguistic experimentation in Tender Buttons, celebrates her appropriation of language precisely because it evinces that language does not inherently “mean.” Premised on the assumption that, rather, habit is accountable for linguistic convention, Stein’s appropriation, claims Kaufmann, is characterised by “wear[ing that habit] consciously, and perhaps in wearing it, wear it out” (p. 457). Laurie Finke (1986), addressing appropriation in terms of feminist literary strategies in particular, wonders “whether [they]--or indeed thought itself--ought to be gender-typed at all” (p. 261). Endorsing appropriation as a general strategy, Finke suggests that “feminists ought to be just as interested in deconstructing culturally erected ‘differences’ that relegate one way of thinking to men and another to women” (p. 261) as they are with articulating new patterns.

Many of those who advocate appropriation argue that reservations regarding the decontextualisation of formerly oppressive meanings are unfounded. Robert Weimann (1988), for instance, rejects the claim that
appropriation denies the historical context of oppression: he argues that defining appropriation

at the intersection of both text-appropriating and world-appropriating activities . . . [as] making things one's own . . . literally . . . would provide us with a concept denoting an activity which, even while it can precede ideology and signification, is not closed to the forces of social struggle and political power or to the acts of the historical consciousness of the signifying subject . . . [T]he process of making certain things one's own becomes inseparable from making other things (and persons) alien. (p. 433)

Similarly, suggests Weimann, a conception of appropriation as not possible, for all practical purposes, summarily rejects the notion that “property . . . is fixed or invariable” (p. 434).

Some of the literature that advocates appropriation does so conditionally; that is, several theorists acknowledge the potential hazards associated with appropriation but are willing to condone it as a means to an end. Hooks (1990), for example, advocates appropriation to the end of wholesale cultural transformation in her description of appropriating the margins, designated by the oppressor, as a “site of resistance . . . radical openness and possibility” (pp. 153). Cixous (1976), too, on locating woman “‘within’ the discourse of man,” urges her to dislocate this “within,” to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of . . . Just because there’s a risk of identification doesn’t mean that we’ll succumb. (p. 887)

In the same vein, Christine Di Stefano (1989) specifically advocates appropriating the highly problematic, essentially patriarchal concept of
motherhood as a position from which to enter into a feminist analysis of text: "the (m)other provides us with a critical means of engaging masculine discourse on its own unsteady, yet largely hegemonic, terrain without getting lost in it; of ‘returning the masculine to its own language’ and perhaps finding our own voices in the process" (p. 169).

Unlike those who are committed exclusively and explicitly to eventual revolution, many theorists endorse appropriation because they perceive as invaluable its function as social criticism. Appropriation, these theorists contend, serves to provoke reflection and/or anger and to foster a critical consciousness, largely by virtue of the dissonance created by removing a concept from its conventional context. Lisa Ann Lewis (1987) identifies this dynamic in her analysis of female-address videos, which feature women musicians proliferating a traditionally male arena:

Symbolically, they [female musicians] execute take-overs of male space, the erasure of sex-roles, and demands for parity with male privilege. In this way, female address videos challenge assumptions about the boundaries which gender, as a social construct, draws around men and women. (p. 59)

The function of appropriation as social criticism has been chronicled admirably in the art literature. Although questions of plagiarism do complicate the issue of artistic appropriation, with particular regard to postmodern contemporary art,

appropriation is generally understood as a method that uses recontextualisation as a critical strategy. In theory, when an artist places a familiar image in a new context, the maneuver forces the viewer to reconsider how different contexts affect meaning and to understand that all meaning is socially constructed. (Buskirk, 1992, pp. 37-39)
Again, this description explicitly refuses the contention that meanings may be characterised by an inherent nature, a point reinforced by Abigail Solomon Godeau’s (1984) contention that Sherrie Levine’s work represents “confiscation, displacement and re-presentation” (p. 91). According to Godeau, the categorical rejection of conventional notions of authorship/ownership that characterises Levine’s work reveals that she is engaged in appropriation rather than expropriation.

Closely associated with the notion that appropriation functions as social commentary largely by virtue of decontextualisation is the idea that irony lies at the root of appropriation. Proponents of this view advocate inversion precisely for its clearly ironic value. Jacqueline De Weever (1991), in her discussion of Black women’s fiction, suggests that even traditions generally perceived as alien to a writer—the Puritan tradition for example—may be inverted and made to yield positive meanings . . . [they] yield new perspectives when refracted through the lenses of the people oppressed by . . . those same . . . traditions. (p. 55)

Referring to Gerd Brantenberg’s novel, *Egalia’s Daughters*, which depicts a matriarchy that is really an inversion of patriarchy, Marleen Barr (1989) points out that “on the level of ideological reversal,” this hypothetical appropriation, rendered tragicomically, “becomes a tendentious joke, a social corrective—a weapon” (p. 93). This particular strategy of ironic (tragicomic) appropriation, Barr argues, “can help women to avoid complacently accepting demeaning identity constructions” (p. 97). Kornelia Hauser (1992), too, describes the way in which Marge Piercy’s female protagonist in *Fly Away Home* appropriates heterosexual sexuality—historically, characterised by male
sexuality exclusively—so that “the sexual power of the male, which . . . involved the equation of sexual activities (the entering of a woman, taking possession of her, the penetration of the inner space) with the subordination of women, is disrupted . . . ” (p. 40), and female sexuality is evinced as powerful in that same heterosexual frame.

Considerable appropriation literature exists that chronicles the subversive function of appropriation; this is particularly evident in discussions of the appropriation of established and conventional genres. Interested particularly in how to problematise traditional conceptions of gender, Mary Gerhart (1992) advocates “genre testing” (p. 11)—the advancement of an alternative message under the guise of a traditional genre—because “the reconstruction of texts is a construction of reality” (p. 131). Marie Lauret (1989) chronicles just this practice on the part of Marge Piercy; Lauret points out that Piercy’s “self-consciously feminist fiction . . . draws on popular women’s genres like romantic fiction, the family saga and the historical novel” (p. 97), genres historically approved, by patriarchal standards, as appropriate reading material for women. As such, Lauret argues, Piercy’s novels effectively subvert patriarchal oppression.

Some theorists extend their consideration of the initially subversive function of appropriation to posit that it is key to cultivating consciousness. Elliott Butler-Evans (1989) argues that the works of Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker, by virtue of their strategic “breaches and infractions” of traditional narrative forms, stimulate and signify “the emergence of a specific Black feminist consciousness” (pp. 186-187). Similarly, upon identifying the relegation of mass culture to the feminine
because of its perceived inferiority, Anne Cranny-Francis (1990) celebrates the fact that “feminist writers have embraced it, seeing its characteristic popularity as a powerful tool for their own propagandist purposes”; for her, appropriation is a means by which these writers may expose “the ideological processes (of patriarchy) in (textual) operation” (pp. 5-6). The end of this enterprise, according to Cranny-Francis, is “the construction of a feminist subject” who is provoked into “detect[ing] the boundaries of patriarchy . . . by [literature] going outside those boundaries, introducing contradictions” (p. 210).

Discussions regarding the subversive function of appropriation are not limited to literary theory; indeed, appropriation as subversion has been identified and described extensively in the art literature, with a particular emphasis on its impact on the consumer-agent. Judith Barry and Sandy Flitterman (1987) suggest, in their analysis of various feminist resistance strategies in art, that appropriation “transforms the spectator from a passive consumer into an active producer of meaning by engaging the spectator in a process of discovery rather than offering a rigidly-formulated truth” (p. 320). Estella Lauter (1992) also describes various feminist resistance strategies in art, among them what she calls “reversal.” To exemplify this, she refers to Alice Neel’s 1972 nude painting of art critic John Perrault: “Perrault’s prone position in this painting invites us to focus on his body in much the same way we are often invited to admire attractive women” (pp. 13-14); hence, the male gaze is appropriated by women and turned back upon men. Interpreting a body of women’s art that features men in the way that women are typically featured in male art, Rozsika Parker (1987) argues that “to take men as the
objects of our fantasies and the subject of our art is to shift power relations within art... presented through women's eyes, men can no longer be Man" (p. 221).

Suzanne Valadon, especially, is noted for interrupting and appropriating the male gaze in a different fashion. Rosemary Betterton (1987) traces how Valadon “disrupt[ed] the conventions of a genre” while working within it (p. 250)—that of the female nude, the almost exclusive province of male artists. Rather than perpetuating the tradition of fetishising and objectifying the female form, however, Betterton claims that Valadon’s focus on the “intensity of a particular moment of actions rather than a static and timeless vision... suggests a conscious and deliberate attempt to change existing codes of representation” of the female nude (p. 263). An example of Valadon’s changing the codes of representation is her appropriation of Edgar Degas’ Woman In A Tub, entitled Young Girl Sitting At Her Toilette. Betterton describes how Valadon’s selection of placement, contrary to that of Degas, “offers no ideal viewing position from which to look at the nude figure of the woman” (p. 265). In addition, where Degas’ pastel is soft and sensuous, suggestive of the softness of flesh or the blurring half-tones of shadow, Valadon’s lines are abrupt, edgy and harsh, denying any erotic sensation. Valadon’s drawing... transforms the narcissistic and private gesture of Degas’ woman, who gazes at and touches her arm, into a movement which is both more awkward and more immediate. She reaches towards the edge of the space for a towel while clutching her foot. The beautiful, undulating line of Degas’ figure has become lumpy and discontinuous, the lines are sharper and no longer voluptuous. (pp. 265-266)
Valadon's appropriation, Betterton claims, is a conscious subversion of Degas' explicit, stated intent to depict woman as "a human creature preoccupied with herself--a cat who licks herself" (p. 264). Valadon effectively "ruptures the particular discourse of the fine art nude in which nudity = sexual availability = male pleasure" (p. 269) by appropriating both the voyeuristic male gaze and genre.

Significant feminist literature exists addressing and endorsing the subversive potential of appropriation of the male gaze in cinema, as well. Judith Mayne (1984) sanctions appropriation precisely for this reason in her concept of the "woman at the keyhole" (p. 64); she cites both the appropriation of the camera and the appropriation of male-manufactured notions of woman as evidence of this phenomenon. Echoing Silvia Bovenschen, Mayne is intrigued by instances in which "those images of femininity constructed by men or by the male art industry, are turning against their creators in ever-increasing numbers" (p. 60). Examples of this, Mayne claims, are Marlene Dietrich, who appropriates the role of the sex object in order to challenge patriarchal designations of gender and sexuality, and Dorothy Arzner, under whose direction a female performer in Dance Girl Dance turns to her male audience and describes how she sees them.

According to Mayne, "the effect is stunning, and this 'return of the look' does indeed turn the convention against itself" (p. 56). Claire Johnston (1979) advocates this cinematic appropriation as a necessary strategy: to disrupt truly the "fabric" of male cinema, "it is not enough to discuss the oppression of women within the text of the film; the language of the cinema/the depiction of reality must also be interrogated, so that a break between ideology and text
is effected” (p. 140). Mary Gentile (1985) refers to the subtle “gaps” in cinema—the places where women are not—and endorses appropriation to correct this. In particular, she recommends, in the context of the traditional, patriarchal narrative, “ask[ing] the traditional ‘heroine’ to act, to rebel against the limits of her role” (p. 66). This tactic fosters audience consciousness of women’s general absence, Gentile claims, in that “the audience’s surprise at our character’s disregard for the boundaries of her role may force them to recognise their otherwise invisible expectations” (p. 67).

This subversive feature of appropriation, some theorists suggest, necessitates its practice. Annette Kolodny (1985), for instance, identifies the utter urgency of “re-visionism”; she argues that feminists are “bound, if we are to survive, to challenge the (accepted and generally male) authority who has traditionally wielded the power to determine what may be written and how it shall be read” (p. 59). Anticipating and rejecting the Freudian critique on that point—that appropriation is symbolically characteristic of the child’s inevitable struggle with the parent—Lucy Fischer (1989), in her discussion of feminist counter-cinema, argues that such appropriation occurs “not out of some personalized Oedipal or Electral desire to replace the parent but, rather, out of a wish simply to speak at all. For the canon/cannon has functioned aggressively to intimidate and silence women” (p. 9).

Finally, many theorists endorse appropriation primarily for its intensely personal emancipatory value; a recurrent theme of this literature is that appropriation is viscerally liberating and invigorating on its own terms, not only or even necessarily as a means to an end. Patricia Yaeger (1988), in her unconditional endorsement of appropriation, conveys a sense of
intoxicating, visceral satisfaction associated with the practice; she urges us to recognise and celebrate “the woman writer’s ecstatic espionage, her expropriation of the language she needs, her own invention of a ‘terrorist text’” (p. 3). Feminist literary critic Alicia Ostriker (1985; 1986) is a vocal advocate of appropriation for these very reasons, describing it as “a vigorous and various invasion of the sanctuaries of existing language, the treasuries where our meanings for ‘male’ and ‘female’ are themselves preserved” (1985, p. 315). She concentrates particularly on that appropriation that occurs when women featured in patriarchal myths (by definition, rendered from an exclusively male perspective) are given voice, and those myths are retold from the female characters’ perspectives. In this way, “the old stories are changed, changed utterly, by female knowledge of female experience, so that they can no longer stand as foundations of collective male fantasy” (p. 318). To “‘seize speech’ and make it say what we mean” (1986, p. 211), for Ostriker, is profoundly liberating. She cites Ann Stanford’s appropriation of Medusa (1977) and Margaret Atwood’s appropriation of Circe (1976), among others, as exemplars of potent “revisionist mythmaking . . . a means of redefining both woman and culture” (1986, p. 211).

Penina Adelman (1986) demonstrates and guides just such a revision in her redefinition of woman in the Jewish culture; she chronicles “the efforts of Jewish women . . . to reassess, redefine and recreate their position within religious Judaism” (p. 6), a heritage that traditionally has defined women as “gashmiut: earthy and tactile beings . . . volatile; unstable” as opposed to men, who are considered in that tradition to be “ruchniut, spiritual and heavenly beings” (p. 9). In particular, Adelman advocates and describes the
appropriation of Jewish rituals, originally designed to reinforce these gender ideologies, to the end of revisioning, validating, and, consequently, liberating Jewish women.

In the literature that stresses the intensely personal value of appropriation, theorists consider the decontextualisation—or, more accurately, recontextualisation—characteristic of appropriation an asset rather than a liability. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) advocates what he perceives as the critical act of taking another's word or concept “into new contexts, attach[ing] it to new material, put[ting] it in new situations in order to wrest new answers from it, new insights into its meaning, and even wrest from it new words of our own” (p. 347). On this note, Vicki Nogle (1981) recounts lesbians' appropriation of the “old, patriarchal definition of dyke,” typically wielded as a misogynist slur, in the experience of one woman: “To me dyke is positive; it means a strong independent Lesbian who can take care of herself” as well as, in general, “woman-identified culture, identity, pride and strength—women . . . no longer seeking definitions or approvals according to male values” (p. 271).

Those theorists who advocate appropriation as an appropriate strategy for submerged groups tend to deny that concepts and experiences inherently belong to given peoples. Rather, these theorists advocate appropriation precisely to expose the fallacy of that notion—consequently, they view appropriation as a powerfully subversive tactic. This position takes various forms, however. Some of these theorists feel that the irony and dissonance engendered by appropriation provoke critical reflection on the part of the audience by challenging accepted, traditional premises and
assumptions; thus, appropriation is a strategic means to the end of eventual enlightenment and liberation. Finally, others advocate appropriation for its immediate and relatively visceral—rather than cerebral—value; these theorists see appropriation as vitalising, as emancipation in and of itself rather than as a means to that end.

The literature included under this general theme of empowerment tends to address specific artifacts more explicitly than that chronicled under the two prior themes. Consequently, the relevance of this literature to rhetoric can be extrapolated more easily; that is, many theorists discuss, often in detail, how specific symbols and processes influence the consumer. Even so, however, the value of these findings for rhetoric often is subsumed by theorists’ particular field of inquiry; that is, an understanding of appropriation is framed as a cinematic or literary or artistic strategy, constraining a perception of the rhetorical nature and function of appropriation. A genuine understanding of appropriation as a specifically rhetorical strategy can come about only as a result of a specifically rhetorical analysis.

This review of the literature, although not exhaustive, is thorough; it reflects adequately the variety of perspectives that currently exist on appropriation—I hope that limiting them, as I have, to broad thematic commonalities does not belie that fact. As noted, however, an explicit discussion of appropriation as a specifically rhetorical strategy is absent in the literature; existing literature tends to discuss appropriation in theoretical, abstract terms. Although one often can infer from the literature how appropriation functions rhetorically (and many of the theorists included in the review do so themselves, although they do not use that terminology), in this
study, I examine the phenomenon as a specifically rhetorical one, through the lens of rhetorical criticism. That is, I analyse how specifically feminist rhetorical appropriations of patriarchal constructs are interpreted and evaluated by their audiences.

**Method**

**Data**

To discover the nature and function of appropriation as a feminist rhetorical strategy, I analyse three instances of appropriation by examining the relationship between the appropriation and the original artifact. I selected my artifacts according to the following criteria: (1) the appropriation clearly references the original artifact; (2) the appropriation challenges the patriarchal messages contained in the original artifact, in this way qualifying it as feminist; (3) each instance of appropriation represents the use of a different medium in order to provide a wider range of appropriation techniques; and (4) each instance of appropriation features a distinctive approach.

Bearing these criteria in mind, I have chosen three artifacts for analysis. I have limited my analysis to three artifacts primarily in order to be consistent with the method that is guiding my analysis--grounded theory--which I will discuss presently. Grounded theory emphasises close, or deep, inductive analysis of qualitative data--as a result, a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied emerges because concepts and relationships among them can be scrupulously studied and justified. Because I value that in my approach to analysis, a broad, relatively superficial study of numerous feminist rhetorical appropriations--even if that
many are available—would not have been conducive to my study. A study of breadth would render this a more descriptive than interpretive project; because my purpose in this endeavor is to contribute a greater understanding of the nature and function of feminist rhetorical appropriation, I believe that a relatively deep, close analysis is necessary for that end. More than one or two artifacts are necessary for that purpose, however, because—again consistent with grounded theory—I must be able to identify and interpret concepts and relationships among them across artifacts in order to advance a justifiable theory. For this project, I have chosen to analyse the film Shame as an appropriation of the original Western film, Shane; Susan Dorothea White's The First Supper as an appropriation of Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper; and Margaret Atwood's poems, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" as a collective appropriation of the classic Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Shane/Shame. The American film, Shane, released in 1952, is representative of the typical Western; indeed, it is an archetypal film of that genre, showcasing a traditionally masculine cowboy who rescues a community held hostage by local villains. Shame, an Australian film released in 1988, clearly references Shane as its springboard by including analogous characters, scenes, and settings, although in such a way as to challenge the messages of the original film. Shame chronicles the experiences of a woman stranded in a small Australian town in which girls and women are sexually terrorised by the resident boys and men; the lead character is the catalyst for ending this terrorism. The appropriation demonstrated in Shame is distinctive from the other artifacts to be analysed
in two ways. First, and most obvious, *Shame* is a cinematic appropriation, and I am interested in seeing how the use of various media affect appropriation, if at all. A cinematic instance of appropriation provides rich and complex data for analysis, which may include techniques of appropriation unique to that medium.

The second reason for my selection of *Shame* as an instance of appropriation is that, even though *Shane* is clearly referenced, the appropriation practiced in *Shame* is representative of an appropriation of a genre. That is, although *Shane* is the springboard for the appropriation, it seems to have been selected primarily because of its archetypal nature and form, characterised by classic patriarchal interpretations of individualism, community, and gender as well as classic incarnations of plot and character. I explore *Shame*, then, as an appropriation of genre as per those stylistic and substantive elements present in *Shane*.

*The First Supper/The Last Supper.* Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* is a classic work depicting Christ and his twelve male disciples breaking bread on the eve of Christ's crucifixion. The painting embodies Christianity as it is commonly understood and celebrated--male and patriarchal. Susan Dorothea White's appropriation of that work, entitled *The First Supper*, addresses precisely those qualities; her painting depicts thirteen women from various parts of the world, and da Vinci's Christ has been replaced with an Aboriginal woman. I have chosen to analyse *The First Supper* as an example of appropriation for two reasons. First, it represents an exclusively visual instance of appropriation, and I am interested in
examining whether and how selected use of particular media have an impact on appropriation.

The second reason for my selection of White's appropriation of *The Last Supper* is that her piece is a clear and explicit instance of appropriation. *The Last Supper* is a well-known work of art, one that is instantly recognisable even to those not acquainted with art. Given that White has replicated da Vinci's painting almost exactly, *The First Supper* is a blatant challenge to *The Last Supper*. An examination of how degree of familiarity with the original artifact affects audience's understanding of the appropriation is relevant to discovering the nature and function of appropriation as a rhetorical phenomenon.

*Orpheus and Eurydice*/*Orpheus (1)*" and "Eurydice." The romance of Orpheus and Eurydice constitutes the classic Greek myth—as described by Edith Hamilton (1969)—in which Orpheus, a blessed and wondrous musician, attempts to bring his beloved wife, Eurydice, back from the dead. He is granted his wish as long as he does not look behind him as she follows him out of the caverns; however, he does look before she is out, and she is lost to him forever. The myth, as classically told, is rendered from the perspective of Orpheus. Margaret Atwood (1987), however, in her poems, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," renders the same myth from Eurydice's perspective; in so doing, Atwood provides a qualitatively different understanding of the myth. I have chosen Atwood's appropriation, first, because it represents a literary instance of appropriation—originally rendered in prose and later in poetry. Again, I want to explore appropriation as it occurs in various media so that I
have access to a wide range of appropriation techniques, some of which might be unique to a given medium.

The second reason that I have selected Atwood's appropriation for analysis is that it represents an instance in which appropriation occurs exclusively by virtue of a change of narrator; no fundamental change in character, plot, or scene is ventured. An analysis of this very specific strategy of appropriation provides valuable context for my project in terms of my research questions.

Method of Analysis

According to Patti Lather (1991), a distinction can be made among methods whose goal is to predict; to understand; to emancipate; and to deconstruct. These goals can be correlated with, respectively, quantitative, qualitative, critical, and postmodern methods. In general and in terms of my project, I am interested particularly in forging a workable method that combines the virtues of qualitative and critical perspectives in order to contribute in some significant way to understanding and to emancipation. Specifically, the method I use to analyse the artifacts relevant to my project is informed by three perspectives: feminist, critical, and rhetorical.

The first perspective informing my study is the critical perspective. The relatively recent advent of critical theory and research into the social sciences has challenged both quantitative and qualitative research traditions and procedures. Critical research has a clear and overt social agenda; unlike the previous research traditions, it owns its ideology outright. Although qualitative research denies that research ever can be value free, it does not overtly claim its ideology as a theoretical tenet and methodological
tool, as critical theory does. The social agenda of critical research, consistent with its goals, is the liberation of those who are oppressed. Critical research is premised upon exposing and problematising power and its corrupt practices; methodologically, this entails active and interventionist research practices that actively aid the liberation of the subject—raising her/his consciousness. Not to do so, for the critical researcher, is to perpetuate oppression; researchers have an ethical obligation to subjects to free them by helping them recognise, name, and reject their oppression.

Second, the method with which I am engaging this project is also informed by a feminist perspective. Feminist research and methodologies place gender at the centre. Sonja Foss, Karen Foss, and Robert Trapp (1991) claim that

three primary assumptions [characterise] a feminist perspective on theory and research in any discipline. . . . first. . . . that gender has been constructed so that women's experiences are subordinated to those of men. . . . [S]econd . . . that women's perceptions, meanings, and experiences are valued. . . . [T]hird . . . that research is conducted for the purpose of improving women's lives. Feminist research is done to empower women. . . . (pp. 275-276)

Vickie Shields and Brenda Dervin (1991) see feminist research as characterised by very similar assumptions and criteria: First, it assumes that women and their experiences are valid and valuable; second, it perceives gender as socially constructed; third, it is self-reflexive; and fourth, it contains an emancipatory potential.

I am aware of the methodological tensions that exist between feminist and critical research; because those tensions are significant and my awareness of them has influenced my methodological assumptions so
greatly, they bear discussion. Of course, there are many similarities between
the two research approaches; Lather (1991) perceives feminist research as
inherently critical, and Sandra Harding (1987) also rejects any significant
distinction between the two. There is good reason for this perspective. Like
critical research, feminist research has a clear and unapologetic social
agenda--specifically, the liberation of women. Feminist scholarship is
committed to exposing and problematising power in the form of patriarchy--
the historical, political, social, and economic dominion of men over women.
Also like critical research, feminist scholarship assumes that reality--in
general, but gender in particular--is socially constructed. Feminist research,
like critical research, also claims its ideology overtly. Methodologically, this
certainly can mean bringing that ideology into research and--as per the
activist and interventionist modes of critical research--engaging in raising the
consciousness of those who are oppressed; for feminist scholars, this would
be women.

The many characteristics that feminist and critical methodologies
share are compelling; however, many scholars reject a proposed connexion
between critical and feminist scholarship. Some critical scholars reject
feminist scholarship as truly critical because it places gender at the centre. In
so doing, it simplifies, distorts, and decontextualises power, as opposed to
the critical project, which recognises power as profound and complex.

Some feminist scholars similarly object to being associated with
critical scholarship. Many of these scholars claim that, in fact, the critical
research tradition has overlooked gender entirely and continues to do so.
Also, the critical focus on power as abstract, complex, and profound is
precisely the problem for many feminist scholars. In the first place, they feel, that focus reifies power. In the second place, theoretically and methodologically, it dehumanises the subject--power is at the centre for critical theorists, claim these feminist scholars, whereas feminist scholarship's emphasis on gender and women's experiences in particular inclines feminist scholarship to place the subject at the centre. The focus for feminist research thus becomes, literally, giving voice to the individual subject as an end unto itself.

Feminist researchers have other objections, perhaps the most significant of which is that they see critical methodology as reproducing the "rape model" of research. Many feminist theorists see the activist and interventionist methodological component of critical research as, at least, potentially dogmatic and manipulative and--particularly relevant to feminists--patriarchal and patronising in nature. The critical researcher imposes her worldview upon the passive subject for the latter's "own good." There are two sub-issues relevant here as well. First, the critical research tenet that the researcher must correct the subject's mystified consciousness--in addition to being paternalistic--assumes that one true consciousness exists. This tenet perpetuates apparently inconsistent (with critical theory) ideals of objective "truth" or "reality," and it clearly violates the feminist tenet that multiple realities and perspectives and consciousnesses exist--that they are created rather than discovered. Second, this leading of the subject to consciousness by the critical researcher suggests a significant lack of trust in the subject by the critical researcher. In addition, many feminist scholars who value reciprocity feel that it is absent in critical scholarship; that is, the critical
researcher is assumed to have knowledge and authority, and the subject is assumed to have none.

Feminist scholars who perceive these flaws in critical scholarship often prefer to premise their research, theoretically and methodologically, upon the dignity of and respect for the subject, manifest most clearly in the tenet that the subject must be responsible for her/his own emancipation—the function of the feminist researcher is to enable her/his subject to liberate her/himself. Sally Miller Gearhart (1987) is a committed advocate of this perspective; she suggests that any intent to change others is inherently violent; methodologically, she feels that what we must do instead is create the conditions in which a person might change.

With regard to my project in particular, I locate myself methodologically as a feminist rhetorician who is informed and influenced by critical assumptions and contributions. Namely, as a feminist, I claim my political, ideological, and ethical allegiances to engaging and exposing women's oppression. Concurrently, I share feminist concerns, articulated by Gearhart and others, that methodologically, I must be conscious of not imposing emancipation as opposed to presenting it as an option to my subject, the reader. My overriding methodological intent is feminist: to enlighten and to enable.

In terms of critical methodological inclinations, I make the assumption that the emancipation of women is desirable and necessary, and I want my research to contribute actively to it. Also indicative of my critical moorings, I have a rather clear idea of what that emancipation is not. I conceive of emancipation as something qualitatively different from "mainstreaming" or
simple inclusion of women in the patriarchal system. I do not think "making it" in a man's world constitutes emancipation, for that scenario does not address adequately the issues of gender oppression. I am not as confident that I know what emancipation is; however, I think that this uncertainty is useful for my project, for it ensures my openness to what emerges from each artifact with regard to how emancipation is articulated.

Even though these assumptions regarding emancipation are embryonic, that they are present is indicative of the critical moorings of my methodological stance. As such, I describe my method of analysis as primarily feminist, informed by a critical perspective, in that my analyses are primarily interpretive and illustrative with an eye toward emancipation as self-achieved. In this way, I hope to have forged a method that combines the best features of feminist and critical scholarship--one that tempers my deep commitment to women's emancipation with an equally profound respect for the dignity and integrity of my subject, the reader.

On the most practical level, my method is shaped by a third perspective: rhetorical. Rhetorical analysis entails the inductive, interpretative investigation and evaluation of a given rhetorical artifact. As such, a rhetorical perspective lends itself to my commitment to contribute, with this project, to understanding. In particular, incorporating and applying a rhetorical perspective satisfies that obligation in two ways: (1) in contributing to a better understanding of the specific artifacts included in this project; and (2) in contributing to a greater, perhaps broader, understanding of rhetorical theory (Foss, 1989, pp. 5-6).
One of the features that attracts me to a rhetorical perspective is that, because this rhetorical analysis is inductive, my project is less likely to be influenced by a predetermined theory; in this way, my reading of the respective texts is relatively unhampered by a specific set of constraints. Of course, my assumptions necessarily flavour my conclusions; however, as long as I am reasonably aware of those assumptions, I think that this feature constitutes an asset rather than a liability. In the first place, I reject the notion that one can be objective; in the second place, I make no claim to articulating definitive and absolute conclusions. The value of a rhetorical perspective is that it cultivates, implicitly, various interpretations and insights, each of which contributes to illuminate further our understanding of particular rhetorical artifacts and of rhetorical theory.

Specifically, I am guided in this project by the set of assumptions embedded in grounded theory. The impetus of grounded theory, as articulated by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), is theory generation rather than theory verification; this is particularly consistent with my commitment to embarking on this endeavor free of a predetermined set of hypotheses. In addition, grounded theory is steeped in qualitative data in such a way that the emergent theory is based on the data themselves. That is, data are collected and coded in such a way that conceptual categories and their respective properties can be identified and explained to the end of formulating generalisable claims about relationships among those categories and their properties. As such, grounded theory allows and encourages the researcher to begin where she begins in relation to the data;
the resulting findings, based upon grounded theory's criteria, constitute one of many valid ways of interpreting and providing insight into those data.

A rooting of my method in grounded theory anticipates and addresses a significant and legitimate potential concern with my project--namely, that my decision to select artifacts from various media will hamper my project, given my lack of expert knowledge of those media. Although a rudimentary grasp of the basic elements characteristic of a given medium prior to embarking on an analysis of an artifact that comes out of that medium is necessary, a sophisticated knowledge of that medium is not necessary for purposes of my project. Historically, rhetorical critics (e.g., Brummett, 1991; Foss, 1986; 1988) have not employed the specialised literature and knowledge relevant to the respective media they study. This is because rhetorical critics read in a particular way for particular ends--to contribute to an understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical theory.

Rhetorical critics contribute their particular expertise to a better understanding of a given phenomenon from that perspective, just as critics with other areas of expertise may contribute theirs. Specifically, the expertise to which rhetorical critics can lay claim has to do with analysing how messages within a text, whatever the medium, are interpreted and evaluated by an audience--not with, for instance, discerning or evaluating how highly technical features function within a medium or with complicated theories relevant to a particular medium. Although those contributions are enormously valuable for purposes that entail them, they are not particularly relevant to rhetorical analysis, which turns on asking very different questions for purposes other than furthering knowledge of a specific medium.
To the extent, also, that artifacts are investigated by rhetorical critics in terms of how an audience would apprehend, interpret, and evaluate those texts, incorporating specialized and highly technical medium-specific knowledge may not be particularly helpful to that end, given that most audiences apprehending a given text do not have access to that information. An audience will be aware of obvious, or basic, technical elements of a given medium, however—light, colour, and style, for instance—in which case attention to those features is not only appropriate but critical for rhetorical analysis.

My particular assumptions as a rhetorical critic, of course, characterise my analyses and my findings, and I would like to address and describe those assumptions. Historically, rhetorical analysis has been characterised by a description and evaluation of the relationship between an artifact, its specific audience, and its creator. Specifically, rhetorical criticism had been characterised by a focus on effects as measured specifically by the intent of the rhetor. Because rhetoric is recognised generally as human, purposive symbolic action, an effects model of rhetorical criticism appears sensible and even obvious, and this is why rhetorical critics traditionally have utilised that approach. James Andrews (1990), for instance, describes the role of the rhetorical critic within this effects model as discerning the purpose of the message, or what effect is desired by the speaker. In essence, within the effects model of rhetorical criticism, a particular audience is assumed as targeted by the rhetor, and its response—gauged as the success of the rhetorical event—is measured against the speaker’s intent.
Recently, within the discipline, alternative models of rhetorical criticism have been articulated and practiced, models that challenge the assumptions that undergird an orientation to effects. Most of these models, in fact, take issue with the notion that intent is a reliable or even plausible measure of a given rhetorical text. Specifically, contemporary models of rhetorical analysis suggest that intent is not conducive to rhetorical criticism because one cannot know, truly, what a rhetor's intent may be; even if she explicitly states her intent, the critic cannot be sure of it--Rod Hart (1990), for instance, points out that "all rhetoric denies itself" (p. 41). Furthermore, the rhetor herself may not be aware of her own or her actual intent; contemporary rhetoricians are beginning to explore the role of the unconscious in rhetoric (see, e.g., Hallstein, 1994).

The model of rhetorical analysis to which I subscribe assumes that intent is not a plausible measure of a text. Rather--consistent with how Sonja Foss, Karen Foss, and Robert Trapp (1991) and Malcolm Sillars (1991) describe it--I organise my approach to rhetorical analysis around the assumption that rhetoric is, primarily, a perspective humans take, so that rhetorical criticism entails an analysis of the process of symbolism, or how people interpret symbols. That is, rhetorical criticism is "an argument that interprets or evaluates the messages to which the individual or society is exposed" (Sillars, 1991, p. 2). In this way, rhetorical analysis begins with the critic, who relates the messages contained in the artifact to someone other than the author. As a result, rather than privilege rhetor intent, the rhetorical analysis that I practice is critic centred, in terms of or on behalf of the audience, which I define as anyone who might encounter a text. To function
as rhetoric, a text must be received as such--meaning is interpreted by and resides in the receiver; as a result, even if the audience has no idea who the rhetor is (or her intent), the artifact still has a rhetorical impact. Within this model of rhetorical analysis, the critic approaches the artifact as an audience member but with a particular understanding of how texts function for audiences in terms of interpretation and evaluation of messages. Of course, my analyses are informed by my own particular perspective--including my feminism--and this necessitates that my interpretations and findings may not be generalisable to all audience members; certainly, they will be most representative of interpretations and evaluations to which persons with perspectives similar to mine would arrive.

A significant concern related to a critic-centred approach to rhetorical analysis is that relevant to how a critic adhering to such a model adequately justifies her interpretations and conclusions. Under traditional models of rhetorical criticism, as described above, claims regarding effects on a particular audience are justified in terms of their consistency with the rhetor's intent. In models of rhetorical analysis that privilege interpretation and evaluation of messages, however, claims are justified by scrupulous demonstration of the movement from data to claim. In this respect, rhetorical critics are obligated to explain and offer reasons for the judgements they posit. In this context, critics do not enter the endeavor deductively, as effects-oriented critics tend to in order to discern the relationship between effects and intent. Rather, critic-centred analyses proceed inductively and describe, interpret, and evaluate the data so that resultant claims are obligated to the artifact at hand.
Informed and guided by the assumptions that I have described, then, the method with which I proceed in my analyses of the data is as follows:

1. I identify significant similarities between the two texts in each case of appropriation and identify the techniques used to convey the similarities or to reference the original.

2. I identify significant differences—points of divergence—between the two texts. Those instances of the original that are not referenced in the appropriation can be as illuminating as those that are.

3. On the basis of the similarities and differences I have identified, I interpret the messages regarding emancipation that each instance of appropriation seems to suggest.

4. I offer an assessment of the effects of using the type of appropriation demonstrated in each artifact as a strategy to the end of the emancipation of women.

I would like to discuss, briefly, the final step of my method in an attempt to anticipate concerns with my decision to assess effects and how I do so. The actual procedure is rooted, again, in grounded theory as I have outlined it above; that is, I can contribute only my reading of the data and my interpretation as to their effects, and that interpretation is one of many possible. I am aware that an assessment of effects is not obligated to data as clearly as the identification and evaluation of actual components of the text are. Good criticism moves beyond the purely technical realm to contribute to the betterment of social conditions, which necessitates an evaluation of effects. The responsibility of such an evaluation, however, does require
standards; in this case, the primary standard is scrupulous justification (see, e.g., Foss, 1983) on the part of the critic of how she has arrived at her claims and assessment. Along these lines, Brock, Scott, and Chesebro (1990) hold criticism to be an art of evaluating with knowledge and propriety. Criticism is a reason-giving activity; it not only posits a judgment, the judgment is explained, reasons are given for the judgment, and known information is marshaled to support the reasons for the judgment . . . . Accordingly, criticism is an inherently ethical activity, for future actions can be affected by the work of the critic. (p. 13)

Ideally, I am able to fulfill my obligations as a feminist rhetorical critic by contributing positively in some way to women with my project. To do so truly, however, my criticism and consequent evaluations must be characterised by demonstrable and thorough reflection.

In addition, my specified interested in understanding feminist rhetorical appropriation with an eye toward its use as a strategy my appear inconsistent with my earlier description of the model of rhetorical analysis to which I subscribe; namely, that my interest is with interpreting and evaluating messages on behalf of the audience. I do not suggest, however, that intent--implied by the word, "strategy"--is irrelevant; it may, in fact, have significant bearing on meanings and messages received by the audience. Nonetheless, as described in the model above intent is not a reliable measure of audience's apprehension and understanding of the text, with which I am concerned. This project, ideally, will contribute to feminists' understanding of how appropriation functions for audiences and this will, in turn, inform strategy; however, this is not inconsistent with the tenets of the model of rhetorical analysis to which I adhere, given that it remains an
unreliable standard by which to measure audience interpretation and evaluation of the text.

Limitations

As with any project, my study of feminist rhetorical appropriation includes several limitations. Because issues of gender are central to feminism, an analysis of feminist rhetorical appropriation necessarily invites an obvious limitation: my analysis and conclusions may not reflect adequately the dynamics of appropriation as practiced by other submerged groups, although I hope that my findings provide some helpful insights. My choice of artifacts reveals another limitation: all but one reflect and advance a white, middle-class perspective on feminism. As such, my findings are relevant primarily to artifacts representative of that perspective. The small number of artifacts that I have analysed, too, constitutes a limitation; my findings based on these artifacts cannot necessarily be extrapolated and applied to other instances of appropriation, feminist or otherwise. Finally, this project contributes little to an understanding of appropriation as practiced by dominant social groups, for the dynamics and conditions surrounding such an enterprise are qualitatively different from those surrounding appropriation as practiced by submerged groups.

Structure of the Study

This project entails five chapters. In Chapter One, I introduce the project, state the problem, survey the existing literature on appropriation, describe my data and method of analysis, and lay out what I perceive to be the limitations and significance of the study. In Chapter Two, I analyse Shame as a cinematic appropriation of the film Shane; Chapter Three
features a close analysis of The First Supper as an artistic appropriation of The Last Supper; and I analyse Margaret Atwood’s poems, “Orpheus (1) and “Eurydice,” as a collective appropriation of the classic Greek myth in Chapter Four. Finally, I summarise my findings and conclusions in Chapter Five and offer an evaluation of the nature and function of feminist rhetorical appropriation.
CHAPTER II

SHAME: APPROPRIATING SHANE

In this chapter, I will examine an instance of rhetorical appropriation that represents what I shall call completion of the narrative. In this case, the original, appropriated artifact is reconfigured in such a way that perspectives and often conclusions absent in the original are featured—perspectives and conclusions that remain true to the terms of the original. To that end, I analyse the function and nature of appropriation in the film, Shame (1988), as a rhetorical appropriation of the film, Shane (1952). Shame represents an instance in which an archetypal patriarchal artifact is appropriated and revised in such a way that the original story, in this case, is completed from a feminist point of view.

Description of the Artifacts

Shane

Released in 1952, Shane epitomises the classic Western film—it is described as the standard on which many films of that genre are based (see, e.g., Rushing, 1983). The film, directed and produced by George Stevens, is based upon the novel of the same name, written by Jack Schaeffer. Set in the old West, the film chronicles Shane’s (played by Alan Ladd) rescue of peaceful homesteaders from the town’s terrorists, who are trying to run the homesteaders off their property—these bullies perceive the homesteaders to
be squatters on land that is rightfully theirs because “they were there first”—before the homesteaders arrived. Consistent with the traditional Western hero, Shane is a mysterious fellow with a questionable past; a history as a renegade cowboy gunslinger, although never explicitly addressed, is thinly veiled. Frequent references are made to his established knowledge of gunslinging, usually pursuant to his quick, jumpy draws to any unusual noise. Also consistent with this archetypal character, Shane is very much the strong and silent type—he keeps to himself, cultivating this sense of mystery and others’ curiosity about his past, and he virtually exudes machismo with regard to his formidable fighting prowess when pushed too far.

Out of the vast wilderness, Shane rides onto the property of one of the homesteaders and stays on as an employee—to reform himself, the implication is—although, again, no one knows exactly from what. Shane’s run-ins with the collective enemy (about a dozen or so men)—usually in town, but sometimes on the property of Joe, the homesteader for whom Shane works and with whom he is boarding—are marked by restraint at first; he is consciously holding himself back from the violence that apparently checkers his past. Ultimately, however, he elects to draw on his reserves of violence on behalf of the homesteader community that he feels compelled to save—after all, a man’s got to do what a man’s got to do. Consistent also with the archetypal Western, Shane eradicates the collective enemy singlehandedly in the final scene.

The homesteader for whom Shane works is a foil for Shane; Joe is decent, honest folk, and very open, thus casting Shane’s exciting and mysterious, strong-and-silent character into even sharper relief. In all
respects, Joe just doesn’t match up to Shane. Just in case the audience
doesn’t “get” this, Joe’s wife, Marion, and son, Joey, provide frequent
prompts. Joey is downright smitten with Shane—Joey’s idolatry is effusive,
constant, and vocal, and he looks to Shane to teach him and show him
things, particularly related to conventional notions of what men and boys do:
shooting and fighting, for example. Joey frequently makes comparisons
between Joe and Shane in which Joe, inevitably, comes up short; in one
scene, Joey points out that Shane could beat up Joe.

Marion’s admiration of Shane is not so obvious; hers is conveyed via
long glances and brooding expressions, using her best dinnerware during
Shane’s stay, and worrying excessively over what to wear. Marion’s
attraction to Shane also is conveyed indirectly through interactions with
Joey—indeed, the distinction between mother and child in Shane is rarely
complete, a condition that has its roots in patriarchal conceptions about
women. When putting Joey to bed one evening, Marion suggests that Joey
mustn’t get too attached to Shane; this is conveyed in such a way that Marion
is reminding herself of this at least as much as she is advising Joey. This
attraction is not unrequited; there is a definite, albeit unspoken, sexual
tension between Shane and Marion, also conveyed via meaningful,
smouldering glances. The audience is quite aware that this is the life Shane
could have had.

The more obvious exigence of the film, however, is the threat posed by
the gang attempting to run out the homesteaders. Shane, the classic
Western hero, singlehandedly “takes care of them” and rescues the
peaceable homesteaders in the film’s epic finale. Before he does so, he
confirms Joey's observation and beats up Joe in order to prevent him (at Marion's request) from going into town and risking his life. This is the climax of the film, after which Shane rides off into the wilderness from whence he came, set off by a blazing sunrise. Joey—who followed Shane and witnessed his dazzling display of manhood—desperately pleads for him to stay, pleas that fade in the distance behind Shane.

Shame

Released in 1988, Shame—written by Beverly Blankenship and Michael Brindley—is directed by Steve Jodrell and produced by Damien Parer and Paul D. Barron. This film also features a detached outsider lighting upon a troubled community. Set in Australia, in this case, the outsider is a woman, Asta (played by Deborra-Lee Furness), who is travelling across the country on her motorcycle. In an effort to avoid animals on the road one night, she runs off the road and damages her motorbike; she finds her way to the nearest town and becomes stranded there as she awaits the shipment of a part necessary to repair her motorcycle. Asta is mysterious and has a questionable, unknown past (she is, as eventually is revealed, a barrister, which renders her suspect in the eyes of many villagers of this small, backwater town); she is not like the villagers in most respects.

This particular small town has a terrorist element composed of a gang of young men who are sexually terrorising the women of the community—that terrorism ranges from harassment to, more typically, rape. Their crimes are rarely even acknowledged, however, for the victimised women rather than the perpetrators are held liable by a misogynist community, and the young men engaged in the crimes are not so subtly praised for their sexual
“escapades”; those who recognise that misogyny for what it is--most of the women and a very few of the men--are thus silenced.

Asta stays on with the town’s mechanic, Tim Curtis, and his family while she waits for her bike part--Asta boards in a tiny room in the garage. Tim permits her to use his garage and tools, as needed, to mend her bike. Tim serves, in many ways, as a foil for Asta; she establishes herself early in the film as independent, assertive, and outspoken. In marked contrast, Tim is resigned and passive, beaten down by life. Indeed, this is very much in evidence when Tim’s teenaged daughter, Lizzie, is the latest rape victim; her rape occurs on Asta’s first night in town. Although Asta isn’t quite clear yet as to what has happened, Tim is, and his response is frustration—he is helplessly angry, but he is not sure where to direct his anger. The result is an increasing, painful distance between him and Lizzie.

Lizzie is slow to warm to Asta; she is very reserved as a result of the rape, which the community is encouraging her to see as humiliating and her fault. Her interactions with Asta are tentative, but she grows slowly to trust her; she seems to appreciate and flourish under Asta’s manner of engaging with her as if she were an adult. Asta, unlike the community, is non-judgmental and encourages Lizzie to trust her own perceptions; Asta believes Lizzie and tells her so. The other resident of the house is Tim’s mother, who cares for Tim and Lizzie and the house--Tim’s wife left him years ago. Tim’s mother comes across as brusque at first, even abrasive, but her character is multi-dimensional; in one scene with a small group of women, she is humourous and sentimental as she recalls her romantic youth. Tim appears to have a long-standing but ill-defined relationship with a woman
who lives nearby; she is characterised as independent, and she is very disturbed by Lizzie's rape (and the rapes in general). She and Tim argue vehemently about his reaction to the rape, which includes the belief that Lizzie is somehow responsible. Like most of the women in the community, however, she is afraid of rocking the boat. She is worried about risking censure, given the overarching misogynist environment of the community, and about provoking the same violence toward her.

Asta becomes increasingly aware of what is happening, even though most town folk avoid addressing, let alone discussing, it. The matter is brought home to her when she is targeted by the gang in a deserted railway station. She is able to resist, thanks to physical self-defense tactics, and escapes, even injuring one of her attackers in the process (for which she is chastised by the community and for which she is threatened with charges by the town's sheriff). Once fully cognisant of what is happening, Asta pursues various avenues—seeking redress through the police and the law—to stop the young men, but she finds no help in the community; the women are cowed into silence or downright misogynist in their defense of their male relatives who are implicated in the rapes. Even the few (three) men who recognise the atrocity of what is happening are ineffective. Each of them is defeated, literally, when he objects by being socially ridiculed, threatened, and/or beaten. Slowly, however, the women of the town begin to look to Asta for guidance, primarily because she is the first person to condemn this behaviour vocally and demand its end; as a result, a collective awareness on the part of the women begins to emerge.
The climax of the film depicts the angry young men, incensed at Asta's attempts to stop them, descending upon the Curtis home. Much violence and terror ensue. Tim is severely beaten, another rape (of Tim's mother) is attempted, but the young men are ultimately apprehended by the town's women and turned over to the authorities—but not before Lizzie is killed. The final scene is ambiguous with regard to resolution; the (male) sheriff blames Asta for Lizzie's death ("I hope you're bloody satisfied!"), and although the women at large respond ("No, not by a long way"), a question still hovers about whether things really will change. The film closes on this note—Asta is ensconced in this community of women, and nothing suggests that she has left them or, necessarily, will leave them.

Analysis of the Appropriation

Similarities between Texts

The most obvious similarity between Shane and Shame is that of setting. In both films, characters and actions occur in a small town that seems to be very isolated and removed from urban civilisation and thus from relatively sophisticated resources. In Shane, this lack of resources is manifest in that the homesteaders are limited and ill equipped (law enforcement is non-existent) to handle the town's bullies. In Shame, this means that the women have almost no recourse in terms of action or open support because of a very small law-enforcement agency; furthermore, that agency—composed primarily of one (male) law-enforcement agent—is suspect with regard to its allegiances; the sheriff condones the boys' behaviour, verbally and by virtue of his passivity in pursuing charges, and he even participates in the sexual harassment of women. The communities in
both towns also are very small--everyone knows everyone else and their business and has for a long time.

A number of similarities between the films also are evident with regard to characters; for the most part, *Shame* has a counterpart for each significant character in *Shane*. Asta, of course, is Shane's counterpart, and they share many characteristics. Those characteristics, in fact, are particularly relevant to the description that Janice Hocker Rushing (1983) offers in her description of the archetypal Western hero--the rugged individualist. Rushing describes the rugged individualist as someone markedly detached from the community, typically caught up in the dilemma of choosing between independence and the stability of community living. This tension--a necessary one, argues Rushing--is successfully heightened and preserved by the traditional plot, in which the individualist hero saves the community from some threat or disaster and then, inevitably, rides off into the sunrise.

*Shane* certainly conforms to these generic expectations, most clearly on two levels: first, Shane is clearly a "loner"; and, second, his status as hero is mythic in its proportions. Shane is the classic cowboy loner. Terminally detached from the community, mysterious and, we suspect, potent, Shane comes out of nowhere, accompanied by a questionable past--the film is replete with veiled references to his gun-slinging prowess and, more directly, how it was honed. Certainly, Shane is detached from the physical community; in addition, his potent, mysterious manhood also distinguishes him from the community, even though he attempts to squelch it early in the film in order to blend into the community. This effort is characterised by calculated restraint on Shane's part to become a member of the civilised
community. He exchanges his rugged suede gear for civilian "store-bought" clothes; drinks soda rather than whiskey; and refuses to rise to taunts, verbal and physical. The community thus is described as weak and, therefore, implicitly feminine, according to traditional standards, and Shane's attempt to integrate into that community results in his manhood being questioned. Shane quickly settles any doubt on that count, however, by demonstrating his conformity to conventional standards of manhood on his next visit to town--drinking, fighting, and so forth--suggesting that, ultimately, he is not community material.

The consummately rugged individualist, Shane is also the hero of mythic proportions to whom the community looks for salvation and who delivers exactly that. This adulation borders on reverence as expressed by Marion and Joey, and at no point is this discouraged. Marion's token warning to Joey--"Don't get to liking him too much"--which is really a warning to herself, in fact does more to reinforce that adulation than to defuse it, confirming as it does Shane's worthiness of such adulation. Irrefutable affirmation of the rugged individualist as saviour is, of course, saved for the climax, in which Shane (sporting his original suede ensemble) successfully takes on the entire renegade gang.

In Shame, the rugged individualist is present as well, in similar ways, in the character of Asta. Like Shane, she, too, is a loner--she is independent and fiercely self-reliant, very much in the archetypal, atomistic tradition. Furthermore, just as Shane is, Asta is clearly detached from the community and mysterious (clad in bike leather gear); also like Shane, she is strong,
confident, assertive, mechanically competent, and resorts to physical blows fairly readily when provoked.

Some of the mythic dimensions of the rugged individualist hero also are apparent in *Shame*. Asta, like Shane, is a mysterious stranger who blows into town and saves its (women) citizens. She represents a leader, someone somehow more capable than they, to whom most of the women in the town eventually turn for salvation. This dynamic is rendered most clearly in the character of Lizzie, who becomes dependent on Asta for protection. After all, Asta successfully escapes a seemingly inescapable attempted gang rape (which Lizzie could not), injuring an assailant in the process; she embarrasses some of those young men publicly; and she is tenacious in her condemnation of them and her pursuit to stop them.

The character of Joe in *Shane* and the character of Tim in *Shame* correspond on a number of levels as well. Both function primarily as foils for the lead characters; their presence is intended to throw into sharp relief those qualities that make the lead characters so distinctive. In *Shane*, Joe is benign and pleasant--an upstanding, community-oriented family man, just an all-around average “Joe,” so to speak. This is in marked contrast to Shane, whose character is spiced up with the hint of mystery and danger--he is silent, strong, rugged, and not dependent on or responsible to others. Given that Shane is clearly the hero in this drama, Joe is perceived, in contrast, to be less than admirable.

In *Shame*, Tim also acts as Asta’s foil. Whereas Asta is outspoken, assertive, and resourceful, Tim is helpless, resigned, and confused--he sees his life and his family as shabby and disintegrating and has no idea what to
do about it or where, even, to direct his frustration. Although he is pained
and angry over what has happened to Lizzie, for instance, he is unable to
trust that reaction; instead, he ends up distancing himself from her.

Lizzie, in fact, is the corroborating character for Joey in *Shane*. Joey,
Joe's young son (about eight years old), positively reveres Shane; he is
awed by and ecstatic about Shane's various displays of strength and general
physical prowess, which are displayed in a variety of conventionally
masculine ways--primarily through moving impossibly large and heavy
natural obstacles (trees) and fighting. Joey is particularly taken with the
notion that Shane can beat just about everybody up, especially Joe. In
*Shame*, Lizzie is similarly drawn to Asta, although not in such an overt
manner. Lizzie is older than Joey--perhaps fifteen--and she is more tentative
about entering into the relationship. Like Joey, however, she also looks up to
Asta as something of a role model. She is similarly intrigued by many of the
things that Asta can do--she can fix motorbikes, she is independent, she can
pick up and travel across country all by herself--without a man. She is finally
and completely impressed, like Joey, that Asta can stand up for herself in a
confrontational, combative scenario--Asta's escape from attack and her
knowledge of physical self-defense are lifelines for Lizzie, who feels helpless
precisely because she feels unable to defend herself. Because of Asta's
fighting prowess--primarily literal but also figurative, in terms of openly
condemning the young men and seeking legal recourse in an attempt to stop
their behaviour--Lizzie sees Asta as exactly the person whom she wants to
be, which is just how Joey perceives Shane.
The plots of *Shane* and *Shame*, respectively, are very similar as well. In both cases, the story revolves about a community that is terrorised by a group of individuals who feel entitled to something belonging to that community. Although many differences exist between the films’ respective portrayals of community, which will be described in the next section, several features of the plot nonetheless correspond. The first is regarding the role of violence. In both films, the terrorist gangs are distinguished by their unjustified violence against members of the community because of what the gang members perceive to be their rights. In *Shane*, the gang is given to harming or killing homesteaders arbitrarily or destroying that which they own --livestock and farmland, for instance--because they believe that the homesteaders unjustifiably have taken their land. The gang members believe that the land is rightfully theirs because they were there first, long before any of the homesteaders, and that ensures their privilege.

In *Shame*, the gang sexually terrorises--harasses and rapes--the women of the community for a very similar reason: they believe--and the community at large reinforces the notion--that this aggressive male sexual behaviour is natural and that to deny it or “misrepresent” it as rape is unjustified. A significant connexion, in fact, exists between the respective possessions in contention in *Shane* and *Shame*. In *Shane*, the land is prized because--especially in the context of New Frontier America--it renders supreme status and privilege to its owner, as well as future gain by virtue of cultivating and harvesting that land. Women are important in very similar ways to the collective enemy in *Shame*; possession of them guarantees the men their male status and privilege, particularly in the eyes of other men.
The physical nature of this sexual terrorism—rape and general sexual terrorism—are the means by which women are cultivated and harvested by the men. From the point of rape on, a woman is no longer an individual in her own right but a “slut,” “tart,” or “whore”—epithets hurled at them by the misogynist members of the community. Her identity is premised upon and characterised by a conscious distortion of the men’s actions upon her—she is owned, and her owners reap the social rewards.

Violence also is significantly similar between the two films in that in each case where it features the protagonist, it serves as an impetus for change. In *Shane*, each violent episode marks a significant, positive turning point in the film. In the first such episode, Shane’s manhood is explicitly confirmed, his civilian demeanor notwithstanding; prior to this point, his manhood is only implicitly asserted. The second such episode, when Shane and Joe—side by side—are at fisticuffs with the gang in the bar, becomes an elaborate bonding scene; Joe and Shane exchange long buddy glances and boyish grins as they fend off the bad guys. In one scene, this violence is implicit. When Marion objects to Shane’s lessons teaching Joey how to shoot, Shane gives her a brief patronising lecture suggesting that she stop coddling Joey. This incident is a turning point in Joey’s upbringing, for Marion is shown that Joey is in danger of becoming a mama’s boy. The final scene, of course, is the ultimate turning point; the bullies are eliminated completely—singlehandedly—by Shane, thus marking a thankful end to the terrorism against the homesteaders.

In *Shame*, too, violence in which Asta features results in relatively positive change. Asta’s ability to escape attack, admirably fighting off her
assailants and even injuring one in the process, marks a turning point in that many of the town's women are inspired by her—they see her physical, violent responses to misogyny as more compelling than her vocal condemnation, perhaps because they see them as more effective and practical as a resource. She is consequently sought out for her self-defense tactics. In another episode, Asta overhears a young man taunt Lizzie about her rape and slaps him; Lizzie thus is able to see that his behaviour was unacceptable and that she does have reliable support—of the brute force kind, even—in Asta and possibly others. In the final scene, as well, in which the young men descend upon the Curtis home, much violence ensues; eventually, the women of the community band together to find Lizzie and her grandmother, both of whom have been taken by the young men after they have beaten Tim severely. Although the ending is not as neat or pleasant here as in Shane, the fact remains that violence is what finally unites and galvanises these women into action and what may sustain them in the end.

Differences between Texts

A number of differences between Shane and Shame are apparent with regard to technical, formal aspects of film—in fact, there are no major similarities in that regard. With regard to soundtrack, a particularly notable difference between the film has to do with the role of music. In Shane, the music is virtually constant—always present, throughout the film—and always consistent with the action occurring. When the homesteaders are together, as individual families or as a community, a soothing, melodic, and rhythmic instrumental melody, characterised primarily by string instruments, accompanies the scene, and the tune is rather reminiscent of traditional,
idyllic cowhand tunes like those featured in Roy Rogers' films. By contrast, whenever the terrorist gang is spotted, the music becomes staccato, deep, and urgent, marked by a proliferation of drums and brass instruments that sound like alarms; also, this track is lacking in melody, relative to the “good guys” track. The only scenes in which music is absent in Shane are when Shane is engaged in very dramatic confrontations with other men--all of the barroom brawls and a community meeting in which his actions are challenged--and when he is providing Joey with a significant lesson. In Shane, then, the musical score complements and sometimes anticipates the actions on screen; furthermore, the “good guys” have the same sweet and happy music and the “bad guys” have the same dark and threatening music throughout the film, thus establishing a simple--dichotomous--and clear distinction between these two groups. The rare absence of music serves to suggest that what is occurring on screen ought not to be sullied by distractions; these are the very important moments in which the most profound messages should be gleaned.

In Shame, music is virtually absent. The quiet, light piano music that accompanies the opening credits crops up only occasionally in the film, usually in conjunction with a scene that involves one of the women's apparent introspection--when Asta realises that Lizzie has been raped, when Lizzie reflects on her rape, or when women are together in a positive environment--chatting and playing. Otherwise, music is entirely absent; only the sounds accompanying the actions of the characters are included in the soundtrack. This virtual absence of music cultivates concentration on what is occurring in the film and lends some ambiguity to those events. Whereas the
constant background music serves as a cue in *Shane* for anticipating or confirming action—and its nature as good or bad—the lack of music in *Shame* prompts more involvement in the film and also refuses to simplify the messages of the film. The unobtrusive music that does occur infrequently in *Shame* similarly signals a refusal to simplify; it is heard during moments of silence, when female characters' internal thoughts or emotions are featured—as such, these moments are the most complex in the film.

Where the scenes occur and how they are conveyed also are very different in *Shane* and *Shame*. In *Shane*, most of the action occurs outside; furthermore, the outside is characterised by vast, magnificent outdoor scenes. Set in a valley, the background is characterised by vastness and openness—it features majestic, snow-capped mountains; blue skies (even when thundering); and grassy meadows. The various sounds of nature, birds and beasts alike, fill the air. Although the terrorist gang appears occasionally outdoors, significant confrontations always occur in town, specifically in the town's bar. This is where one of the town's men is killed by a gang member, where the various brawls occur, and where Shane's blazing final showdown with the gang takes place. In addition, the outdoors is always sunny, bright, and cheery, a quality primarily responsible for the fact that *Shane* is a very light film, overall. By way of contrast, the indoor scenes that feature confrontations with the gang are dark and relatively crowded—with people, tables, chairs, and bar paraphernalia. The fact that the good people in *Shane*—of whom Shane is primarily representative, as their hero and saviour—tend to be associated with nature in this way suggests that nature is somehow in accord with them; what Shane, in particular, represents
is consistent with nature. Furthermore, the fact that lightness so thoroughly characterises *Shane*, primarily by virtue of its predominantly outdoor setting, lends to the simplicity of the film in terms of its messages--no ambiguity is conveyed via shadows and murkiness. As such, given that dark and light are really the only gradations in terms of the film's lighting, the clear, dichotomous messages of the film are reinforced--similarly, there is good and bad, man and woman, right and wrong, natural and unnatural.

In *Shame*, most of the scenes occur indoors; no inherent association between the women and the indoors is suggested by the film, however. Rather, the indoors is conveyed as restrictive and confining for women; they are forced to be there, as demonstrated by the fact that they seldom venture out and rarely do so alone. In addition, although they take great pleasure in the outdoors--Asta, after all, loves to experience the outdoors on her bike, and Lizzie seems to relax a bit on excursion to a local lake--women are almost always threatened, or worse, by men when they are outdoors. In this respect, *Shame* suggests that the natural world--although it does not inherently belong to men, for women derive great pleasure from it--is exploited and controlled by men. This is the impetus for Lizzie's grandmother revealing, reflectively, her fantasy of visiting the moon--a place not owned by men, where she might be free. The indoor setting of *Shame* results in the film's significantly darker visual tone than *Shane*; however, even the outdoor scenes primarily occur at night. Consequently, *Shame*'s lighting is conducive to its ambiguous and complex messages; the proliferation of shadows, which suggest difficulty in clearly identifying
anything, complement the indeterminate nature of the same concepts so readily defined and established in *Shane*.

In addition to lighting, other elements of visual tone--camera angles, camera proximity, and editing--vary significantly between *Shane* and *Shame*. In *Shane*, the film is dominated by static shots; characters are portrayed almost exclusively in long- or medium-range shots, populating a background that is undistracting in that it largely consists of light, open spaces. In addition, not much continuity exists between given scenes; for the most part, no element connects consecutive scenes, and no fadeouts convey the sense of time lapse or imminent change of context. Also, cuts to various characters within a scene appear choppy and sometimes inconsistent. For example, in one of the barroom brawls, Shane's confrontation with the bullies is depicted. At various junctures during this scene, however, the camera cuts away to an incongruous shot of Joey, who is watching happily and eating a candy cane; the homesteaders, who are in the store next door, shopping; and Joe and Marion, who are debating Joe's intervention in the brawl. As a result, *Shane* is the cinematic equivalent of a picturebook story, in which a reader is presented with a new picture on every page, consistent with the action described on that page. In this respect, the uncomplicated messages of *Shane* are reinforced--they are not burdened unduly by relationships that are more complex than dichotomy, which might be conveyed by several things going on in one scene at one time.

By way of contrast, *Shame* revolves about assuring a connection between various actions and concepts, connexions developed through its visual tone. There is significantly more continuity between scenes than in
Shane, provided by fadeouts and by the camera’s following of characters from one scene to the next. For instance, Lizzie’s character is traced continuously by the camera across a series of scenes that involves her establishing a relationship with Asta on a visit to the lake; demonstrating her optimism for the future as they ride back home; indicating the obstacles to that future as she is confronted by one of the young men soon after they return; and, consequently, her frustration at her father’s unsatisfactory response. Shame’s editing style thus cultivates a sense of connectedness and ambiguity that enhances similar themes in the film’s messages. Just as these incidents embody and entail each other cinematically, so do notions of gender, emancipation, and oppression consistently entail each other in complex and definite ways. Also, camera shots enhance the theme of ambiguity that is central to Shame; the camera is more dynamic than in Shane, following characters about and often from varying angles--for instance, Lizzie’s encounters with the young men are portrayed usually such that she is looking up at them; the image of them looming over her conveys an appropriate sense of the threat and fear that she is experiencing. Also, characters move toward and away from the camera in Shame; again, this tactic helps to convey the notion that things--concepts as well as characters--are not fixed and immutable.

Finally, with regard to cinematic form, the various elements of editing in the films serve to cultivate very different perspectives as to which character serves as the one through whom the audience apprehends the narrative. In Shane, from the outset, viewers are encouraged to understand events through Joey’s eyes. The opening shot is viewed from his
perspective—he is targeting a deer with his rifle when Shane rides into view—and this sets the precedent for the film. In all dramatic confrontations and almost all other scenes as well, the camera cuts back to Joey and chronicles his reactions—verbal and nonverbal—to the events, thus making Joey the channel for the audience’s understanding of the film and its messages and reminding viewers that they are seeing the events through Joey’s eyes. Consequently, viewers are primed to share in Joey’s unmitigated adulation of Shane and all that he represents.

In Shame, viewers are encouraged, by virtue of editing and camera angles, to identify primarily with Asta and secondarily with Lizzie. In the opening scene, for instance, viewers see from Asta’s viewpoint the animals in the road that she strenuously manages to avoid hitting. Through her eyes alone, viewers come to understand what is happening in the village—through Asta, the audience pieces together what has happened to Lizzie and the townswomen’s general fear. The camera cuts back to Asta frequently throughout the film, also, recording her reactions to various events and reminding the audience that it is viewing those events through her eyes. As a result, viewers of Shame are encouraged to understand the film from Asta’s perspective. This tactic also occurs with Lizzie, although less frequently; for example, the camera, in her place, looks up into the face of her tormentor, and the camera also frequently records her personal reactions to events so that the audience understands those events as she does. These episodes as viewed from Lizzie’s perspective serve to provide a concrete edge to Asta’s relatively intellectual and sophisticated understanding of gender oppression; because of her rape, Lizzie has raw and fresh experience with
misogyny. Significantly, *Shame* is understood, via technical cinematic elements, from the perspective of adult women, as opposed to the evaluation of *Shane*’s messages through the naive eyes of a young boy.

Perhaps obviously, given *Shame*’s overt feminist orientation, the most profound differences between the films in terms of content are those relevant to how gender is conceived—both films consciously address gender, but each conveys very different messages about it. In *Shane*, gender is depicted as innate: men are men and women are women. As manifest in the characters in *Shane*, any effort to change substantially that fact is futile, evidenced most clearly in Shane's concentrated and ultimately unsuccessful (unnatural) effort to eschew his inherent manhood. “A man has to be what he is; he can’t break the mold,” Shane tells Joey in the film. Shane epitomises manhood via his physical strength, gunslinging and fighting prowess, confidence, independence, and manly virtue and, as such, serves as the ideal manly role model for young Joey. Indeed, Joey’s education in the lessons of manhood is quite striking; he conspicuously witnesses and is enthralled by all the demonstrations of manhood—male bonding, fighting, and shooting. Shane teaches Joey to draw and shoot and makes consistent references to Joey as a man in progress, although Joey is constantly held back by his mother—much to his chagrin as well as Shane’s and Joe’s.

Indeed, only one thing can come between a man and his nature—women. Manhood, significantly, is constructed dialectically in *Shane*—it is opposed specifically to women, whose femininity is also innate. Marion is described by Joe as “my little woman who sure can cook”; constant references are made to her appearance—she is worth the wait to gussy
herself up, an endeavor with which she is preoccupied—and she is a "pretty wife." Indeed, Marion is rendered frequently in the film through a smudged lens, which gives her a soft, romantic, traditionally pretty appearance.

Women, in general, are depicted as weak in Shane—they faint or become hysterical when confronted with violence and are incapable of protecting themselves. Paradoxically, women are depicted also as emasculating of men; this is the reason why some men are prevented from being true to their manly natures. This clearly has happened to Joe because of his connexion to Marion; he has been rendered benign and passive, even though the real man in him yearns to be free of her perverting ways. This is evident particularly in the scene in which Joe—out of Marion's sight and clutches—participates enthusiastically in an all-out barroom brawl with Shane. They are truly men as they throw punches and break whiskey bottles over heads, grinning and gazing at each other in a clear moment of male bonding. Joe only can revert to his true, manly nature when away from Marion, however, for emasculation occurs whenever men are intimately connected with women. Although marriage is the most obvious threat, motherhood poses the same risks; Marion is chastised, more than once, for feminising Joey. In response to Marion's objection to his teaching Joey how to handle a gun, Shane patiently—patronisingly—explains to her, "a gun is a tool, Marion, like any other—like a shovel, like an ax"; he makes clear to her that she is holding Joey back from being what he is meant to be. Women thus are seen in Shane as consuming and neutering men whenever they are granted the opportunity.
Shame, however, articulates an entirely different message of gender; this film suggests that gender is socially constructed. As in Shane, this is most clearly evident in the lead character. Asta does not conform to gender type at all; indeed, she displays more conventionally masculine than feminine characteristics. She is independent, strong—physically and in character—self-sufficient, mechanically inclined, unconcerned with her appearance (more often than not, she is dirty and grease stained), and rugged. Asta’s deviation from the norm is not calculated, however, nor does she ever attempt to alter her nature (her leather ensemble appears intermittently), as Shane does. Similarly, none of the women depicted in the film is like anyone else, nor do any of them evoke traditional feminine stereotypes. The message here is not subtle: the mold is a construct and biology is not destiny, as Shane would have us believe it is.

Given this marked distinction between the two films with regard to the nature of gender, notable is that fact that manliness, as depicted in Shame, is, indeed, perfectly consistent with its depiction in Shane. Most of the men are physically strong, confident, independent, and distinguished by their sexual prowess (as they interpret it), qualities heightened by their allegiance to a misogynist community, particularly when any of their own are threatened with persecution. Those men who would defend the women are perceived by the community as not having these manly qualities and, therefore, as feminine, according to conventional standards—they are described as “piss weak.” Male bonding, demonstrated in Shane by shared brute force and strength, occurs in Shame similarly—via rape. By the same token, whereas weakness and passivity are appropriate for women in Shane, those qualities
similarly are cultivated by the misogynist community in *Shame* precisely because they are conducive to male privilege and violence. The encouragement of gender types in the community actually is reinforced by the fact that the few men in the community who see the travesty of what is happening don't know how to make sense of it—they only see it in the first place because their loved ones have been raped, and they cannot reconcile their misogynist training—which justifies rape—with their visceral reactions to the rapes as intolerable. As a result, they are helpless.

*Shame*'s messages regarding gender go beyond specific characters, however; indeed, its attention to how gender is manifest on a social scale is evident in its portrayal of community. A hallmark of the Western myth, according to Rushing (1983), is the hero's resistance to becoming a part of the community, which is typically associated with the presence of women and thus with weakness. Indeed, the Western community of *Shane* is depicted as thoroughly feminine—largely through the presence of women but also because it features all the trappings of domesticity, such as family-type hoedowns; nuclear families comprise the bulk of its members. His protestations notwithstanding, Shane actually resists community life—and is destined not to be part of it—because it would compromise his identity as a man, as a hero, and certainly that of a rugged individualist. In effect, to become part of the community would mean emasculation for Shane—he would be broken, tamed, and even feminised in some way. Not coincidentally, then, Shane is driven to reject the community. The final scene epitomises this ultimate rejection—Shane beats Joe up in order to prevent his going into town, a deed that permits Shane alone to rescue the townsfolk,
effectively restoring manly rugged individualism to its rightful, glorified status.

In *Shame*, however, Shane's contention that community is feminine is directly challenged; community, argues *Shame*, is thoroughly patriarchal and misogynist. Furthermore, Shane's construction of woman-as-emasculator is directly challenged; *Shame* effectively exposes this misogynist myth by illustrating that women are the ones who are unrelentingly victimised and violated by men. Whereas the community in Shane is essentially feminine and emasculating, the community of *Shame* is thoroughly male and patriarchal. The community is notorious for breaking the spirit of its women; one of the rape victims used to be "as hard as nails" until she was raped, tried to press charges, and was publicly humiliated as a "slut," as were all the rape victims. Consequently, Asta primarily resists Shame's community simply because it bodes significant harm for her and for all women. Whereas the little Western community of Shane radiates moral rectitude and wholesomeness, the little Australian town community is seedy and dangerous, specifically for women. This is particularly significant in that in Shane, the point is often made that those who do not conform to standards of manliness ought to "go back to the women and children, where it's safe" or are subject to the sarcastic taunt, "they've brought the women to protect them."

In *Shame*, however, "where the women and children are" is singularly unsafe and threatening and, in fact, women are consciously and actively ostracised (via terrorism) from a thoroughly male community. There is a deeper message here, however; rather than depicting a community that is the exact antithesis of the one depicted in Shane, Shame is engaged in
exposing the reality of *Shane*’s generic community—that is, *Shame* showcases the patriarchal and misogynist underpinnings of conventional community that are distorted, denied, or glossed over in *Shane*. *Shame* gives the obvious lie to *Shane*’s insistent point that community—a system constructed, after all, by and for men—is feminine.

The distinctive notions of community in the two films also have relevance for Asta’s role as a non-rugged individualist because of her lack of choice in the matter. In *Shane*—as in many Westerns—the rugged individualist champions the community, which is irrefutably legitimate. The enemy, conversely, is singularly illegitimate, seeking to undermine the community for “his” evil gain. (Incidentally, that this gang is a collectivity reinforces the rugged individualist myth; the gang members’ reliance upon each other indicates their essential lack of strength and character, not that markedly different from members of the legitimate community, who, after all, need Shane to rescue them.) In *Shame*, however, the enemy is a misogynist, abusive community that, nonetheless, has legitimacy; that is, although the enemy has a stronghold in *Shane* in large part due to the absence of law(men), in *Shame*, the presence of the law(man) actually fosters the abuse and persecution of women. Thus, the rugged individualist dynamic is virtually necessitated in *Shame* in a way that, again, is not evident in *Shane*. After all, Shane is not distinct in his motives except as an exaggerated version of the community; Asta, on the other hand, is voicing a distinctive challenge never before articulated.

Although *Shame* challenges the assumptions made in *Shane* regarding community, it does not reject the concept of collectivity.
categorically. Resistance to formal, organised community is very evident on Asta's part in *Shame*, but she is more than willing to cultivate a community absent of misogyny, and she accepts help to that end where she can find it. Asta is particularly willing to connect with the women of the town, and she actively seeks those connexions; for instance, whereas she assumes an aloofness around men, she is warm and friendly with women. Given what I see as the feminist message of the film, this is not surprising; after all, central to much feminist theory is this notion of collectivity, of community among women in particular, revolving about the tenet that this very sort of collective female energy fosters empowerment. To reinforce this point, Asta also welcomes the efforts of those few men who recognise and object to the women's violation. Ultimately, however, they are ineffective and impotent—the women are the ones who succeed in confronting and apprehending in villains. Indeed, there is considerable irony in this point in connexion with the taunt in *Shane* that "they've brought the women to protect them."

The marked differences between the films with regard to how gender is conceived and portrayed can be located in specific characters as well. Shane and Asta share a number of characteristics, most of them consistent with the consummate masculine Western archetype of the rugged individualist. Whereas Shane conforms exactly to that archetype, however, Asta deviates from it on a variety of levels, thus problematising its traditionally necessary masculine connotations. Although Asta does appear to reify and perpetuate that standard, patriarchal model, she does so superficially, for the most part. On many subtler, deeper levels, *Shame* succeeds in at least challenging, if not subverting, the patriarchal role of the rugged individualist.
One of the defining characteristics of the rugged individualist archetype is that “his” heroism is mythic in proportion. Significantly, however, *Shame* consciously rejects those mythic dimensions. These supernatural abilities are usually showcased as the hero’s ability to defeat the enemy singlehandedly in impossible situations, as when, for example, a dozen men are aligned against “him,” as demonstrated more than once in *Shane*. In *Shame*, only one scene conforms to this criterion: the attempted rape of Asta, where she fights her way out of the gang and injures a member in the process.

Asta generally is remarkably realistic as a “hero”; indeed, she consistently and adamantly resists conventional hero (super)status. In response to Lizzie’s adulation, for instance, Asta urges Lizzie to stand up for herself and not look to others for guidance (“You can’t count on anyone, Lizzie!”). She attempts to teach Lizzie--and the other women, by proxy--to be her own champion and not to wait for anyone else. Coaching Lizzie in self-defense, Asta accosts her, instructing her, “If he grabs you here, knee him in the balls, that’ll really hurt him; if he grabs your neck, use these hands, Lizzie, these little hands--go for throat, for the eyes.” Sobbing, Lizzie pulls free. “But Asta, what if there are six?” she asks. After a pause, Asta replies, quietly, “I don’t know, Lizzie.” In all actual confrontation scenes other than the noted attempted rape of Asta herself, Asta needs others to help her, and she isn’t really showcased. Also, the consequences of such episodes are realistic in a way that those depicted in *Shane* are not. The “good guys” are not truly victorious: the final climactic confrontation yields a severely beaten and nearly dead Tim Curtis, and Lizzie *is* killed, partly due to Asta’s oversight.
Another significant way in which *Shame*'s appropriation of the rugged individualist dynamic plays out is with regard to the circumstances surrounding and compelling its incarnation. This is also relevant with regard to the different way that violence is portrayed in each film. For Shane, rugged individualism means, in large part, active rather than reactive strategy. He has chosen to stay, however temporarily, in town; he decides to try to melt into the community; he decides when “enough is enough.” Although his actions often are premised upon those of the gang in town, he consistently has a definite choice with regard to his response. Indeed, he is the instigator of violence on several occasions; he starts a brawl that he could have avoided (he did avoid that same situation on an earlier occasion); he beats into unconsciousness his own friend—to protect him, of course; and he instigates the final scene in which he kills all members of the gang. Shane, then, refuses the argument that violence is inherently evil.

In marked contrast to the theme of choice central to the rugged individualist character in *Shane*, a central theme in *Shame* is that Asta is left with no alternative but to exercise rugged individualist behaviour and violent actions. The fact that Asta is stranded is symbolically significant; unlike Shane, she has not chosen to enter and remain in the community. This lack of choice is also featured in Asta’s general resistance patterns that mark her as a rugged individualist. Asta’s resistance tactic of choice is legitimate—legal action; she considers pressing charges, encourages Lizzie to do so, and even obtains a restraining order against the young men—all tactics that ultimately are ineffective. As such, the rugged individualist role is one that Asta assumes only because all other avenues are closed to her.
In principle, *Shame* appears to eschew violence, unlike *Shane*. The opening scenes in each film demonstrate this contrast, in fact. In *Shane*, Joey is depicted taking aim at a deer with his rifle; Asta, on the other hand, runs herself off the road rather than injure animals in the road. The violence that Asta practices and advocates in confrontation with the rapists is defensive and reactive, contingent upon their behaviours. She has no choice but to claw and fight her way out of her own attempted rape; when she overhears Lizzie being verbally abused and humiliated, she slaps the taunter; when she is desperate to learn Lizzie’s whereabouts, she attacks one of the rapists upon his refusal to reveal them. The point is that these behaviours are sanctioned only under extreme conditions, as a last resort, when Asta is driven to them. When Tim objects to Asta’s coaching his daughter in crude but effective physical defense—“I didn’t bring her up like that”—Asta snaps, “Do you think I like it? Having to constantly look over my shoulder, jump at every shadow?”

Finally, the final scene most successfully subverts the theme of rugged individualism. In *Shane*, Shane is swept back up into the myth of legendary cowboys accessorised by a spectacular sunrise and a feeling that all is right with the world. He fades into the spectacular horizon, his progressive absence and inaccessibility confirming his status as a mythic hero. There is no such romance or resolution in *Shame*. The final scene in the film is ambiguous and marked by a decidedly grim atmosphere. The authority (representative of all socially sanctioned authority) into whose hands the perpetrators are rendered is still suspect—he has defended them in the past, and he still exhibits the hallmarks of misogyny. Asta, her face
grimy, tearstained, and swollen, is an undeniable presence, as opposed to Shane's vagueness and absence at the conclusion of Shane. She faces the camera, with a group of villagers—almost all of them women—standing behind her; the presence of this primarily female collectivity does much in itself to subvert the purely individualist hero, even though Asta is still showcased. This ending is vastly different from the sublime, romantic vision in Shane, in which Shane seems to ascend the heavens.

The corresponding characters of Joe and Tim, although perhaps not as complex as those of Shane and Asta, also entail significant differences between the two films, particularly with regard to gender. Although both are defined, ultimately, by their relative helplessness, the reasons for that differ radically. In Shane, Joe is the harmless homesteader, building a life for himself and his family; he seems troubled only by the threat that the town bullies represent. He is helpless to do anything about it, however, other than to participate in community meetings that never accomplish anything. What essentially renders him helpless is his role as a family man; he is constrained by his wife, Marion, and child, Joey—by his perceived responsibilities to them. This dynamic serves to reinforce the notion that women are responsible for rendering men impotent and ineffective. Joe is destined to be a disappointment to everyone, as evidenced by the marked way in which he pales in comparison to Shane: “Now, there’s a man!” the contrast appears to scream. Marion and Joey are very aware of this fact, and Joey is highly vocal about it; he is particularly impressed that Shane could beat his daddy up. Indeed, the one time when Joe actively (manfully) can resist—in the barroom brawl—he is not in contact with his family in any way. Significantly, as the film
climaxes, Joe decides to go into town and settle things, violently. Marion pleads with him not to go, and when that fails, she pleads with Shane to stop him—again, she is bent on stifling his manhood. Shane does so, in effect, by fulfilling Joey's prophesy and beating Joe up. Consistently, the essential feature of Joe is that he just isn't man enough.

In Shame, Tim is also helpless but for different reasons. Tim's family is not so neatly organised as Joe's—his wife left him years before, his mother does most of the caretaking, including that of his daughter, Lizzie—and he feels that he has no control. He feels like a failure. These feelings come to a head when Lizzie is raped by a gang of young men; Tim has no idea what to do, where to direct his anger. As a result, he grows more introverted and distant, especially from Lizzie, whom he feels may be to blame. Asta, on the other hand, is clear headed, outspoken, and assertive; she is also resourceful and practical in a way that Tim seems unable to be. Lizzie, in fact, does turn to Asta but not in the dichotomous way that Joey does in Shane: her relationship with Asta is not competitive with her relationship with her father. Significantly, there is no character in Shame truly analogous to Marion. Tim clearly does not heed any of the admonitions of the women to whom he is close; this feature makes difficult the attribution of Tim's shortcomings to a woman—to anyone or anything other than a society that has betrayed him as surely as it has betrayed his daughter. The final scene, which depicts the young men convening at the Curtis home to exact retribution for Asta's and Lizzie's attempts to put an end to their terrorism, features Tim frantically trying to protect himself, his family, and Asta. He fails; the young men (not Asta) beat him severely and, ultimately, make off with his
mother and daughter. Where he has failed, the women of the town succeed; they--including the previously protective and therefore misogynist mothers of the perpetrators--corral most of the young men and prevent Tim's mother's rape; unfortunately, no one can save Lizzie, who dies trying to escape from her captors.

The respective characters of Joey and Lizzie, as well, are distinct in several important ways, and their implications with regard to the messages of gender in each film are paramount. In Shane, Joey is drawn as a very simple character; his primary functions are to adore Shane and to resist or complain about anything that would prevent him from being with or like Shane. He thus functions as a means of asserting and reinforcing Shane's heroic status--essentially, he constitutes the cheering section for manhood. Lizzie is a more complex character, however; she is older than Joey, and she has just been raped. Consequently, she is more reserved and tentative, at least initially, in her interactions with Asta than Joey is with Shane. She grows to admire Asta, and--like Joey with Shane--she perceives Asta as a role model; however, Lizzie and Asta have a more adult relationship, not marked by the paternalism that characterises Shane's relationship to Joey. Also, Shane ends with Joey calling in vain to Shane to "come back!" as he recedes into the blazing sunrise, a scene that conveys the sense that Joey has been visited by this magical, mythical hero who has guided him on the road to manhood but now must return to the Land of Testosterone. In Shame, however, Lizzie is on her own at the climactic conclusion of the film; as she valiantly fights off her attackers, she launches herself out of the moving car and is killed--none of Asta's advice could save her in the end.
The film's closing glimpse of Lizzie is of her bruised and battered lifeless body being borne away on the bed of a pickup truck. Certainly, there is no sense of myth or magic characterising her interlude with Asta.

The most significant difference between the characters of Joey and Lizzie, however, is that regarding their function as catalysts for the overarching messages of each film. Joey, in fact, is the underlying focus of *Shane* as the subject who is being constructed as a man. Lizzie is similarly the focus of instruction in *Shame* but as the subject who must be constructed precisely in response to and in defense of the very manhood that Joey is being taught. The men of Lizzie's hometown are enacting the same lessons Joey is being taught—that manhood, characterised by strength, power, competition, status, ownership, and not woman—is innate. As the townsfolk say, "My boy's a good boy" . . . . "They're just young lads having a bit of fun" . . . . "They're just doing what comes natural to boys." *Shame* rejects gender construction as anything but dangerous to women, which is why it conspicuously abstains from providing definitive female characteristics—indeed, every woman in this film is distinctive. The film also recognises, however, that women must be aware of and prepared for the reality of gender construction, which is inherently misogynist. In *Shame*, becoming a woman means nothing more (or less) than self-defense. Lizzie and the other women are encouraged and instructed by Asta to protect themselves not so much from men—for some men in the film are able recognise misogyny—but from manhood.
Messages of Emancipation

There are five messages in *Shame* relevant to women's emancipation. The first message suggests that being like men is the key to women's emancipation; that is, it reifies masculine gender norms as inherently worthy. Several traits associated with Asta reinforce rather than defuse certain patriarchal constructs—for instance, that of violence as a catalyst for change—an effective and defensible means of achieving desired ends—and that of the patriarchal hero who leads the persecuted to salvation. As a woman, I cannot deny that, at a visceral level, I am positively exhilarated—intoxicated, even—by watching a heroic Asta physically retaliate against these men who arouse such anger, fear, and hatred in me. Upon reflection, however, I also recognise that she is exhibiting the very behaviour that I fear; I also wonder if my reaction is the same as that of misogynistic men who witness the abuse of women—an uncomfortable thought, to be sure, and hardly emancipatory.

Other of *Shame*’s messages, however, are more promising with regard to their emancipatory implications. Although the qualities that Asta embodies may be problematic in that they appear to endorse male values, the very fact that she, as a woman, has them is liberating on one level. The message here is that conventional gender norms are not innate, which suggests, in turn, that women are not limited to feminine norms that traditionally have cultivated their oppression by limiting them and rendering them invalid or helpless. The character of Lizzie reinforces that message, in fact, in that she grows from being helpless and intimidated early in the film into someone who develops the potential, at least, to be confident and to
resist efforts to oppress her. Indeed, to see a strong, confident, assertive, resourceful, and immensely capable woman in any context is profoundly liberating for many, if not most, women; on that level, Shame conveys a message with significant emancipatory potential.

Another of Shame's emancipatory messages related to that of challenging traditional gender norms is relevant to women’s reliance upon men. Directly challenging the message articulated in Shame, Shame, through the character of Asta, suggests that women do not need to rely upon men to protect them; women are more than capable of taking care of themselves. This is repeatedly conveyed in the film by virtue of the fact that in every successful confrontation, women are responsible for that success, either individually or collectively: Asta’s escape from attack, her showing up of the young men’s swaggering machismo by thwarting their advances publicly, and the women’s dramatic rescue of Tim’s mother. Not only are the women extremely capable of their own protection, but the men are just as incapable of protecting them. Every man who attempts to defend or help the terrorised women fails dramatically—they are helpless to do anything. The film further suggests that this is because, in recognising the abuse of their loved ones, these men’s misogynist worldviews have been challenged drastically, and they have no idea how to respond or react. Shame thus implies that not only do women not need to depend upon men for protection, but they simply cannot do so.

Another message of emancipation in Shame is characterised by the fact that it raises consciousness regarding the danger of gender types; that is, Shame asserts that gender norms ultimately and inevitably constitute a
profound danger to and abuse of women. The message crystallised in the symbiosis between the characters of Joey in Shane and Lizzie in Shame clarifies that the manhood so glorified in Shane and so much in evidence in Shame necessarily is rooted in misogyny. This strong message, although certainly not optimistic, is emancipatory in terms of its capacity to cultivate a critical awareness of how gender norms often lie at the root of abuse of and violence to women.

The final emancipatory message offered by Shame also turns on critical awareness as a means to liberation and also is not optimistic--it is that the struggle is a long and hard one with no neat resolutions on the horizon. This feature is most dramatic at the conclusion, for that is where resolution is achieved conclusively in Shane. In Shame, however, there is no such clean ending. Rather, the final scenes are fraught with ambiguity and anguish: Lizzie--the one person about whose welfare the audience is most concerned--is dead; the rapists are turned over to an authority who is not clearly trustworthy; and, after all, the fate of the male criminals is uncertain. In addition, the misogynist community has not been eradicated; if anything, the wedge between that community and the women (some of whom--the mothers--have emerged out of their collective mystified consciousness) has been driven even further. The final shot is that of Asta, facing the camera, with the women and some men of the town closing ranks behind her, as she confronts the audience, her face grimy and swollen; the last thing we know she has seen is Lizzie’s body being driven away. Instead of the closure implied by Shane’s riding off into the sunrise and slowly, but surely, fading
away, the overriding impression in *Shame* is that of something unfinished—the unease that the film has engendered cannot be alleviated by a tidy ending.

These contrasting themes of absence and presence in *Shane* and *Shame* are significant. Although the final scene is by no means combative or aggressive, Asta's frozen gaze, fixed upon the audience, appears to issue a silent challenge to take up the cause. In terms of emancipation, this is a complicated message because of the tragedy that permeates it; however, given that it features the coming together of women in the struggle does suggest a measure of hope, specifically for potential liberation. Whereas *Shane* is about eliminating a struggle, *Shame* is about inciting one.

**Conclusion**

As an instance of feminist rhetorical appropriation, *Shame* contains some interesting features. In many ways, the film reifies *Shane*'s patriarchal standards, specifically with regard to Asta's rugged individualist qualities and to the cathartic role of violence. *Shame* does modify these elements, however, in significant ways. The rugged individualist as portrayed by Asta, for example, is much more realistic and rather less paternalistic than Shane. In addition, the film takes pains to illustrate the very real and unhappy consequences of violence and suggests that it ought to be used only as a last resort. This is indicated most eloquently, I believe, by the fact that Lizzie dies fighting; even more ironic, she is the only character in the film who does die. *Shame* deconstructs the rugged individualist myth by having Asta refuse power by deflecting it back to those who would mythologise her. Do these efforts succeed? Perhaps they do by virtue of violating the generic
constraints of each of those elements, but they do not on their own terms. The pertinent question, of course, is whether—in any appropriation, in fact—calling attention to those generic constraints overshadows the attempted critique. In such an interpretation, *Shame* could be read as simply another example of the genre, what Anwell (1988) would call a "manipulation of a familiar plot" (p. 78).

*Shame*’s strength as a feminist rhetorical appropriation lies in the fact that it fulfills the narrative—it fills in the huge gaps in *Shane*’s lessons of manliness. This happens on two levels: first, via the actual pushing of the concept on its own terms; and, second, via the shift in perspective from male to female. *Shame* is relentless in its holding of *Shane* to its own terms; it completes the narrative laid out in *Shane* by pushing it to its own logical conclusion, critically exposing the profoundly disturbing implications of "manhood," which only receives a superficial and absolutely vindicating treatment in the Western. *Shame*’s extension of the narrative is contingent also upon the fact that the story of *Shame* unfolds from a woman's perspective; in this way, the patriarchal messages of *Shane* are challenged overtly from a point of view barely acknowledged and certainly not validated in the original film.

As a result of these features, I think that *Shame*, by rounding out the narrative of *Shane*, raises consciousness, cultivates critical awareness, and utilises—appropriates—*Shane* as the springboard by which to do so. *Shame* premises its retelling on a "harmless" archetypal cultural artifact whose essence is familiar to the audience; problematising that same story by completing prompts the audience to question critically assumptions of which
it previously was unaware. The appropriation evident in *Shame* also, however, is characterised by engagement with, alteration of, and participation in the themes of the original artifact. In terms of emancipation for women, this suggests that struggle with and subversion of the oppressor--patriarchy--is inevitable and necessary. Thus, the film suggests--in terms of content as well as in terms of this particular element of the appropriation--that the best way for this to occur is to adopt patriarchal values and practices. In fact, this feature is representative of the ideals of the sort of feminism supportive of the notion that liberation for women is assuring that women can be just like men. As such, *Shame* certainly holds up as a feminist text insofar as it reflects and embodies this particular feminist perspective on women's emancipation. Many other feminisms, however, find this perspective problematic because it does not truly validate women and their experiences but, instead, perpetuates the notion that masculine characteristics and experiences are ideal.

This specific type of appropriation--completion--does hold significant promise for emancipation in general, nonetheless, in that it provides the audience with far more information than that provided in the original. In the sense that liberation consistently is premised upon awareness, fulfillment of the narrative only can contribute to that end. This particular strategy also validates women's experiences by acknowledging and confirming their understanding of gender oppression. The obvious danger here, however, is that the story only can be fleshed out in a particular way in an appropriation--in that sense, it is only one version of how the narrative might be completed and, thus, this version, too, is limited necessarily. Even if a truly complete
narrative were possible, however, it would be undesirable. Emancipation is fundamentally at odds with the notion of presenting "the truth" or "the whole story" to those who would be free; that is the very thing that constitutes oppression. Rather, a shift in perspective—for instance, with regard to who tells the story or from what location in the story it unfolds—is inherently conducive to cultivating critical analysis to the end of emancipation. In this sense, then, *Shame* completes the narrative by virtue of extending it rather than finishing it.

Although the appropriative strategy of completion of the story is promising in terms of contributing to emancipation, the strategy depends greatly on how it is rendered within the appropriation. In *Shame*, the story is completed via engaging and altering—as opposed to referencing, for instance—the original story. As a result, almost as many messages of the original are reinforced as are completed. Although women's experiences are validated in *Shame* by completing the story, the fact that this is done by adopting and altering the original, patriarchal film suggests that, ultimately, women must enact male practices and values in order to be free. Completion of the story does not have to be rendered in this way, however. Filling in the gaps where women are absent in the original and extending the original, patriarchal messages does not necessarily entail, I believe, invading the original text, thus risking reification of patriarchal norms.
CHAPTER III

THE FIRST SUPPER: APPROPRIATING THE LAST SUPPER

The rhetorical act of appropriation with which I am concerned can assume a variety of forms. Its defining feature—the referencing of material popularly associated with an oppressive party in such a way that the original association is challenged or subverted—is broad enough to include, for instance, narrative appropriation (replacing the narrator of the story); an extension of the original (unfolding the consequences of the original story); embellishment of the original material; and inversion (replacing the dominant characters and features of the story with those that are marginalised). In this chapter, I shall explore the implications of the particular appropriative strategy of reverse irony, in which two apparently related and congruent elements—artifacts, in this case—actually are fundamentally incongruent. For that purpose, I have selected Susan Dorothea White’s The First Supper, which constitutes an appropriation of Leonardo da Vinci’s The Last Supper.

In this analysis, as directed by the method I am employing for this project, I shall provide, first, the context of each artifact, in which I also will offer a description of each artifact. Second, I will provide a two-part analysis of the appropriation: in the first part, I will explore consistencies and similarities across the two artifacts—what features of the original White has retained in her appropriation; and in the second part, I will identify the points
at which the two artifacts diverge—those aspects of da Vinci’s original that have been rejected or reconstituted in White’s piece. Third, I will identify and discuss the messages regarding emancipation that I find in White’s *The First Supper* based upon my analysis of the relationship between the artifacts. Finally, I shall indicate what this particular instance of appropriation implies for appropriation as a general emancipatory strategy.

**Description of the Artifacts**

**The Last Supper**

“Leonardo da Vinci: This name has become legendary, a synonym for greatness and for universal genius,” suggests Wasserman (1984, p. 7). To cite da Vinci as a celebrated artist constitutes an understatement of significant proportions; as Wasserman suggests, da Vinci’s work is recognisable universally, even to those unfamiliar with da Vinci himself—the *Mona Lisa* is one such example, as is *The Last Supper* (Appendix A, Plate I). An Italian Renaissance painter, da Vinci also is described as the quintessential Renaissance person; he was, apparently, brilliant, knowledgeable, and well educated on a variety of subjects, some of which he incorporated technically into his work. For instance, generally characteristic of da Vinci’s work and particularly remarkable in *The Last Supper* is the technical sophistication of his work with regard to mathematic and geometric principles and details.

*The Last Supper* is da Vinci’s best known work. It was commissioned, probably in 1495, by Ludovico il Moro for the refectory of the Convent of Dominican Friars at Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan and probably was completed in 1497. Measuring 13’10" x 29’7.5", *The Last Supper* occupies
a large part of one of the refectory walls. In a notable deviation from the
convention of fresco painting, which generally is characterised by a pigment-
water solution applied to wet plaster, da Vinci applied his preferred,
trademark oil-tempera mixture to dry plaster. This combination did not hold
up very well over time, however, a problem exacerbated by humid conditions
in the building that houses the fresco. Consequently, The Last Supper has
undergone numerous restorations--so many that, most art historians believe,
what now remains is "largely the work of restorers" (Clark, 1983, p. 17). Da
Vinci left behind, however, a number of scrupulously detailed sketches of the
work that allow contemporary scholars and reviewers considerable insight
into the original.

The Last Supper depicts Jesus Christ and his twelve male disciples
sharing the last meal on the eve of Christ's crucifixion; specifically, da Vinci's
work chronicles "the announcement of the betrayal: 'Verily, I say unto you that
one of you shall betray me'" (Brown, 1983, p. 10). The Last Supper captures
the drama and emotion of the apostles' various powerful and highly
individual reactions to Christ's statement, leading many art critics to laud the
work as a profound psychological study.

The action occurs around a table sparsely laden with empty
dinnerware, a few rolls of bread, and small containers of red wine--the bread
and wine, of course, are symbolic of the Eucharist, the body and blood of
Christ, the consumption of which implies salvation. The room that serves as
a setting is gloomy, paneled with dark wood, and the window directly behind
Christ frames a threatening landscape--dark, hovering clouds and the vague,
looming shape of mountains. There is an appropriate sense of impending
doom. The overriding impression of The Last Supper is sombre and grave; the moment is conveyed in dark colours and shadowed planes. Christ appears profoundly saddened and isolated, yet relatively serene, in the maelstrom of dark emotion and passion experienced by his apostles. This feature, combined with the viewer’s retrospective knowledge of the religious and historical significance of the occasion, serves to cultivate a strong sense of awe and abstraction. The event is beyond the merely mortal viewer yet responsible for powerfully altering human life—it is, truly, a “terrible moment” that da Vinci has captured (Clark, 1983, p. 19).

**The First Supper**

In her painting, *The First Supper* (Appendix A, Plate II), Australian artist Susan Dorothea White challenges da Vinci’s depiction of the legacy of Western Christianity on a number of apparent levels. Acrylic on wood and measuring 4’4” x 8’4”, this work was exhibited originally in Munich, Germany, in 1988. *The First Supper* is an explicit appropriation of *The Last Supper*; White explains that “although *The Last Supper* is a magnificent composition, I wanted to challenge the acceptance of the image of thirteen men on one side of a table as a celebrated symbol of a patriarchal religion” (White, 1988). In order to do so, White has replaced all of the figures in *The Last Supper* with women.

White also explains that the 1988 Australian Bicentennial influenced her painting. The Bicentennial generated a controversy regarding the appropriateness of celebrating the white invasion of Aboriginal life and land. In response, in *The First Supper*, the Christ figure has been replaced with an Aboriginal woman wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the Aboriginal Land
Rights flag. The table is adorned with a variety of luscious fruits, vegetables, and prepared foods characteristic of the Australian diet. The world beyond the room, framed by the window in the background, features the bright, arid Australian landscape that includes Uluru, a large rock and sacred site especially symbolic to Aboriginal peoples because of its recent (at the time of the painting) return of the site to them by the Australian government.

In her painting, White also acknowledges that Australian society is composed of more than just the white oppressor and the Aboriginal oppressed. The other figures "represent women from different regions of the world, who are part of Australian society today" (White, 1988). These women are dressed in traditional garb corresponding to their ethnicity and/or nationality. The only white person present is the woman who replaces the original Judas.

The physical proportions and elements of da Vinci's painting have been duplicated exactly by White in The First Supper. The physical setting is identical--paneled room, window, table, location, and configuration of subjects. Indeed, White describes in her artist's statement the pains she has taken to replicate scrupulously the physical dimensions of The Last Supper--she has drawn upon the very mathematical principles apparently employed by da Vinci in order to do so. White describes how, in order to convey consistently the missing feet--due to erosion--of The Last Supper in her piece, she, like da Vinci,

used the series of the mathematician Fibonacci . . . ( . . . 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21) in the following way: 1 table, 1 central figure, 2 side walls, 3 windows and figures grouped in threes, 5 groups of figures (including central figure, 8 panels on the walls and 8 table legs, 13
individual figures. Therefore 21 was the logical choice for the number of feet. (White, 1988)

The only instance in which she deviates, she points out, is with regard to the “impossible configuration of Peter's arm (the figure holding the knife) because the position of the hand cannot correlate with an outward-pointing elbow.” Instead, White strives for a more natural rendering of the movement by the woman who replaces Peter in The First Supper; she does so by “altering the elbow to an inward-pointing position” (White, 1988).

Analysis of the Appropriation

Similarities between Texts

The most obvious similarity evident between the two artifacts is that of form. The difference in actual size between the paintings notwithstanding, White has duplicated scrupulously in her work the physical dimensions of The Last Supper. White describes, in her artist's statement, how she researched and traced da Vinci's intricate mathematical procedures of composition in order to imitate the original exactly, with the noted exception of Peter's arm movement (White, 1988).

The physical setting has been reproduced exactly in White's appropriation. In both artifacts, a long table with eight legs is centred in a room of paneled walls and ceiling, with a tripartite window framing the background and allowing a glimpse of the external world. Empty plates, water, and unbroken bread on the table are common to both pieces as well.

The physical dimensions common to both paintings are remarkable especially because they are characterised by artifice and visual paradox (Kemp, 1981, p. 194). According to Kemp, the most immediate evidence of
visual paradox is that the table does not accommodate, realistically, all the subjects featured; it is not wide enough, does not allow adequate seating, and is too long to allow any seating at the ends, even though characters are placed there. A second difficulty with the setting is that the walls and ceiling are not portrayed realistically—a logical extension of their respective planes indicates that they could not be attached—although they do conform rigidly to mathematical and musical principles (p. 198). For instance, the tapestries in The Last Supper "appear to diminish in size according to [mathematical] ratios" that conform precisely to tonal intervals in musical terms (p. 198). Kemp suggests that da Vinci deviated from a purely naturalistic depiction partly out of physical necessity—the constraints of its position on the refectory wall—and partly out of a desire to experiment with incorporating an element of imagination—"fantasia" (p. 199)—into his work. Kemp claims that the fact that The Last Supper's "apparent reality veils a series of visual paradoxes... gave [da Vinci] a crucially greater range of expressive rhythms than is possible" with purely logical, realistic depictions (p. 196).

Given her acute attention to the mathematic configurations of the physical dimensions of The Last Supper, White probably was aware of these paradoxes; certainly, she reproduced them exactly. Given the nature of her project—appropriation—their reproduction, however, seems secondary if not incidental. The "greater range of expressive rhythms" evident in The Last Supper may be carried over in The First Supper by virtue of coincidence; however, the precision of White's reproduction ensures that a viewer's immediate response is to connect her work with da Vinci's original. This seems even more likely given that most casual viewers of both paintings are
unlikely to detect the noted inconsistencies—particularly in *The First Supper*, when viewers would be engaged with the more obvious disparities between the two pieces—those involving the subjects.

The subjects featured in *The First Supper* also reflect exactly the physical proportions of corresponding subjects in *The Last Supper*. In both artifacts, the subjects—with the exception of the central figure—are broken loosely into agitated clusters of three in their response to that central figure's dramatic revelation. Within these clusters, the women in *The First Supper* are poised identically to the corresponding subjects in *The Last Supper*. Like Christ in *The Last Supper*, the Aboriginal woman is isolated, physically offset from the other women; also, as with the original Christ, the notion of the trinity is reproduced by virtue of “the strict triangularity of [her] silhouette as framed against the rectangular window and the crowning segmental arch” (Wasserman, 1984, p. 94). Like da Vinci's Christ, the Aboriginal woman in *The First Supper* reaches toward a small loaf of bread, at which [she] glances with yearning” (Wasserman, 1984, p. 94); the woman in Judas' place “guiltily withdraws” (p. 96) from the Aboriginal woman as Judas does from Christ; and so on with each of the subjects.

Each subject in *The First Supper* retains the mannerisms and objects with which her counterpart in *The Last Supper* is portrayed. The woman in Peter's stead, for example, clutches the knife Peter holds in the original, “which prefigures his severing a soldier's ear” (Kemp, 1981, p. 192). Similarly, the woman in Judas' stead clutches a moneybag, just as Judas does in *The Last Supper*, symbolising greed and corruption. As in the original, her other hand hovers above a dish for which the Aboriginal woman
(and Christ, in *The Last Supper*) also reaches—symbolising, in the original, Christ’s prophecy that he would be betrayed by one who “dippeth his hand with me in the dish” (Brown, 1983, p. 9).

In addition to physical stances, White also replicates the physical expressions of each of da Vinci’s subjects in her work, expressions that contribute in significant ways to the sense of “an explosive and highly dramatic scene” (Wasserman, 1984, p. 94). The profound emotional reactions of Christ’s disciples in *The Last Supper* have been retained in White’s painting. The “impulsive surge of shock expressed by Peter’s angular motion, as he elbows his way towards Christ . . . carefully contrasted with the sleepy curves of young John, and set in counterpoint to the tense recoil of Judas, whose tendons contract like taut bow strings” (Kemp, p. 191), apparent in *The Last Supper*, are reproduced exactly in the corresponding subjects of *The First Supper*. The Aboriginal woman in Christ’s place, too, conveys a similar sense of melancholy serenity; like Christ in *The Last Supper*, her “dignity, aloofness, and perfect calm distinguish [her] psychologically and attitudinally from the apostles” (Wasserman, 1984, p. 94).

White’s replication of the physical dimensions of each subject intensifies the viewer’s identification of her work with *The Last Supper*; while the physical setting of *The First Supper* certainly evokes the original, White’s replication of the subjects’ stances confirms that identification. The lay viewer’s knowledge of *The Last Supper* is centred very much—if not predicated exclusively—upon the featured subjects of that work—Christ and his apostles. Because the setting of *The Last Supper* itself does not feature
prominently in most viewers' recollections of the work, had White not appropriated the physical configurations of the subjects as she does, she risked the possibility that the reference to da Vinci's painting would be oblique or possibly even lost on her audience.

White's appropriation of the expressions--the emotional and psychological reactions--of the subjects functions similarly for the viewer; it serves as reinforcement of the reference to *The Last Supper*. White's appropriation of the facial expressions, however, is not as compelling or immediate as the appropriation of the physical stances of the subjects. This is because an awareness of the expression of each original subject constitutes a more detailed and intimate familiarity with *The Last Supper* than most casual viewers have. But there is a more compelling function of White's replication of da Vinci's "intens[e] . . . psychological analysis of each participant in the drama" (Brown, 1983, p. 9), conveyed by very particular facial and physical expressions; the replication suggests to the viewer that similar dynamics are being enacted with regard to circumstance in *The First Supper*. That is, as with *The Last Supper*, *The First Supper* appears to chronicle the moment in which the central protagonist--the Aboriginal woman--acknowledges her impending betrayal by one of her own. For the reactions of the women featured in *The First Supper* to be identical in every way to the reactions of the men featured in *The Last Supper*, identical or at least highly similar circumstances also must have transpired.

The similarities between the two artifacts are contained in form; White has taken great pains to replicate precisely the physical setting, proportions, and expressions (physical and facial) of the subjects in *The Last Supper*. 
This scrupulous reproduction serves to guarantee the reference to da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, an artifact universally familiar and powerfully symbolic in its representation of Western Christianity. Furthermore, White's exact duplication of the form of *The Last Supper* prompts the viewer to make that reference immediately--before the obvious differences are noted. In other words, the similarities between artifacts ascertain that *The Last Supper* functions as the fundamental premise for an understanding of *The First Supper*.

Differences between Texts

On a grand scale, *The Last Supper* is perhaps the quintessential symbol of Western religion; the painting embodies a profoundly powerful episode in Western culture that, in turn, had a powerful effect on less privileged, non-Western cultures. Indeed, *The Last Supper* is rife with meanings, all relevant to those who historically have claimed power and privilege--it depicts thirteen powerful, divine, white, heterosexual men. Recently, however, the paradigm that privileges these individuals is being increasingly challenged; scholars and laypersons alike are issuing sophisticated criticisms regarding the proposed inherency of white male supremacy and its manifestations. *The First Supper*, in fact, occurs in the context of this debate; its challenges are manifest in the many differences between it and the object of its appropriation, *The Last Supper*.

The most immediately apparent differences between *The Last Supper* and *The First Supper* exist with regard to the physical placement and dimensions of the actual works. As noted, *The Last Supper* measures 13'10" x 29'7.5" and occupies most of a wall in a Catholic refectory. Its location
there is significant; the Catholic setting establishes a congruent (with the painting) background replete with elaborate rituals; extreme conceptions of divinity and evil; and rigid, institutionalised hierarchy. The wall fresco is situated so that the viewpoint—the ideal viewing position—is located “in an impossible position at more than twice the height of a [wo]man” (Kemp, 1981, p. 196). In simple terms, da Vinci’s original is huge and immovable—it can be viewed only from one perspective: from below. *The Last Supper* is literally beyond viewers’ immediate reach and is something at which they must look up. As a result, they become subjected to a very particular rendering of the event depicted, rather than free agents capable of assuming multiple viewing perspectives on that event.

Kemp (1981) points out that a lower placement of *The Last Supper* on the refectory wall “would have rendered it highly vulnerable to a change of viewpoint” (p. 196) or a change of perspective, something Leonardo strategically sought to avoid, according to Kemp. Given that perspective dramatically influences interpretation, a fixed, immutable viewing perspective restricts the range of possible interpretations. Viewers of *The Last Supper*, therefore, constitute something of a captive audience—captive, that is, to da Vinci’s preferred interpretation of the event. The painting’s location in the refectory, its considerable size, and its position all serve to cultivate a viewing atmosphere of holiness, awe, and worship.

In contrast, White’s *The First Supper*, measuring 4’4” x 8’4”, is depicted on a free-standing, “hand-produced woodblock” (Brief note about the artist, 1988), and it was exhibited originally in Volkshochschule (“the people’s high school”) in Munich. Relative to *The Last Supper*, White’s work
is significantly smaller, a feature that implies that it is less daunting and less intimidating than da Vinci's painting. In addition, the fact that The First Supper's canvas is a free-standing woodblock--regardless of how it was placed originally--renders it manipulable, in terms of placement, in a way that the wall containing The Last Supper is not. This means that The First Supper is inherently subject to a variety of viewing perspectives and, thus, to a greater variety of interpretations than The Last Supper. Also, the exhibition of White's painting in “the people's high school” suggests a viewing atmosphere characterised by openness, egalitarianism, and lack of pretension, in contrast to that of The Last Supper. These features combine to make The First Supper accessible in a way that The Last Supper is not; viewers of the former have significantly more agency in that their participation in understanding the work is relatively less restricted. Unlike the audience of The Last Supper, these viewers are not constrained by perspective or intimidated by size and religious context.

Another point on which the paintings differ is with regard to medium--the different painting materials employed by the two artists. The Last Supper is an oil-tempera mixture--a medium that was trademark da Vinci in that he flaunted tradition and practicality by using it for a fresco. According to Wasserman (1984), da Vinci “favored the use of an oil mixture because it permitted him to attain atmospheric effects and veiled sensuous surfaces” (p. 92); da Vinci appreciated the “transparent and luminous skin surfaces, lustrous jewelry, silken hair, and atmospheric space” (p. 9) that an artist could attain with oil. The subtle, generally dark shadings of hue and tone made possible with oil contribute to a sense of inevitable shadows and darkness;
also, the fluidity of those shadings suggest secrecy to the viewer--the danger and the betrayal could lurk anywhere. At the same time, da Vinci’s use of an oil medium is responsible for the very luminosity of the subjects’ skin; this luminosity, which da Vinci greatly appreciated (Wasserman, 1984), contributes to the sense of holiness (historically associated with light, especially the glowing kind) that *The Last Supper* inspires. Indeed, consistent with the narrative, Christ is endowed with more luminosity than his disciples in *The Last Supper*. Finally, in *The Last Supper*, da Vinci’s oil-tempera medium functions to convey an atmosphere of drama and tragedy; that medium complements an interpretation of the work as dramatic and passionate precisely because of oil’s sensuous and ambiguous qualities. The psychologically and emotionally complex individual reactions to Christ’s revelations demand a medium that can be equally complex.

The medium chosen by White for *The First Supper* is acrylic paint, a synthetic compound known for its durability. Given the notorious lack of durability of *The Last Supper*—it had begun deteriorating significantly already during da Vinci’s lifetime—this is especially notable. Although acrylic paint can mimic the density of oil paint, it cannot replicate oil’s subtlety and luminosity; indeed, brilliant colour particularly characterises acrylic paint. Consistent with that characterisation of brilliant colour, *The First Supper* is conveyed in bright, flat colours; there is none of the subtlety and ambiguity of *The Last Supper* with regard to hues. In fact, although possible with acrylic paint, but not as easily accomplished as with oil, shading and shadows are conspicuously absent from White’s work. This suggests to the viewer that secrets have no part in this narrative--the story is open; danger does not lurk
in corners and shadows. The relative lack of complexity and subtlety entailed by White’s use of acrylic paints complements the theme of accessibility identified earlier. Absent of shadows and ominous secrets, the narrative is opened up—the work encourages viewers to see that nothing is beyond their grasp. Although the dangers are real, they are manageable; they are not saturated with the abstract, unknown evils of supernatural proportions that da Vinci’s shadows just may obscure. Here, too, viewers of The First Supper are imbued with agency in that they have unrestricted access to the narrative.

Related to these diverse uses of medium is the two artists’ equally distinctive use of colour. The Last Supper is characterised unequivocally by darkness. The room is very dark—the panels of dark wood on the walls and ceiling are so darkly shadowed that they might well constitute deep recesses. The window provides a glimpse of the outside world, which might offer some respite from the darkness, but it also is overcome by a dark and threatening sky. Although streams and grassy hills can be identified, they are virtually lost in the shadow of dark, looming mountains and low clouds. The subjects of the work, Christ and the apostles, are clothed similarly—in dark colours, which are rendered even darker by dense shadows. Dark blues, browns, and reds prevail with regard to the men’s robes; they are so dark—with the exception of Christ’s garments, which are relatively luminous—as to constitute cool colours, which recede for the viewer (Parsons, 1987, p. 114). The colours of the subjects’ garb reinforce the powerful sense of abstraction characteristic of the painting on other levels. Even the relatively warm—red—colours of Christ’s clothing are not inviting, however; the viewer understands
that his distinction with regard to colour is a function of divinity rather than
invitation—the red is intended to set him apart, to distinguish his status from
that of the apostles, and to make him even less rather than more accessible.
Da Vinci’s monochromatic use of colour, too, is significant in this respect;
nothing about the individual subjects significantly threatens the epic
magnitude of the narrative, with the exception of Christ, around whom, after
all, the narrative revolves.

Relative to *The Last Supper,* *The First Supper* is a veritable explosion
of light and colour. Its lightness is evident in the room’s composition of blond
wood with no hint of hidden places, and the light, wooden floor is
distinguished by a geometric pattern in a variety of pale, muted colours. The
world beyond the window is open and inviting. The warm Australian desert,
leavened by hints of greenery, reclines beneath a bright, cloudless sky; in the
distant background, Uluru—the sacred site of Aboriginal people—can be
seen. The light in *The First Supper,* again, suggests invitation and
openness; no threat, real or otherwise, is shrouded in darkness and shadow
to convey threat and foreboding. Rather, clearly identifiable tragedy and
drama are framed by light, which suggests instead optimism and hope.

Colour itself is of primary significance in White’s work; the women
depicted are dressed in drastically diverse garments representing various
nationalities and ethnicities. Bright pinks, reds, oranges, yellows, blues,
greens, and browns prevail, and they are rendered in a variety of patterns.
No two women wear exactly the same colour—nor, indeed, do any two
women share the same skin colour. In addition, the table is adorned with
intensely colourful fruits, vegetables, grains, and seafood. With the exception
of the physical setting—the room and the desert beyond—White uses primary colours, reinforcing the notion of concreteness and accessibility; primary colours often are associated with children and thus with openness and guilelessness.

That each of the subjects is unique with regard to colour and dress functions to draw viewers away from the narrative as the unifying theme or even from the Aboriginal woman as the primarily significant subject. Instead, viewers are attracted to the individual women, each so distinctive from the others. As a result, although identification with the subjects is discouraged in The Last Supper, the viewer is invited in The First Supper to identify with and/or visually explore one, some, or all of the women. As a result of this invitation to identify with the subjects of The First Supper, the drama becomes diffuse and no longer epic or “bigger” than the viewer. The particular hierarchy described in The Last Supper is at least questioned by viewers of The First Supper.

A marked difference exists with regard to form between the two paintings, as well. The Last Supper is characterised by long, simple lines whose dramatic effect is enhanced by the darkness of the work. The panels of the walls and ceiling reflect this pattern of long lines, and the shadows into which they disappear suggest that they may be even longer. Similarly, the apostles’ robes are rendered with long, clean lines; folds are minimal. Long lines also render the subjects’ faces long and thin and thus gaunt, an appearance often associated with suffering.

The sparseness implied by these long, thin lines—especially as manifest in human subjects—contributes to an aura of asceticism and
austerity, themes generally characteristic of Christian religions and particularly of Catholicism. Within most Christian faiths, such asceticism—especially as the result of self-denial—is associated with divinity: those who are most frugal, chaste, and modest with regard to their needs and desires are closest to God. The notable exception in the painting is Judas, who clutches a money bag; he thus is portrayed as greedy and indulgent. The form of The Last Supper, then, contributes to the sacred abstraction of the work; the event depicted is “out of the league” of mere mortals. Indeed, given the all-too-human drives to which most submit, the only subject with whom viewers can identify is Judas, therefore rendering them firmly beneath—lower than—Christ and the other disciples. The theme of self-control also has implications for gender in that control over nature—in this case, over natural urges and drives—is associated frequently with masculinity. The Last Supper suggests, then, that divinity is inherently masculine and that masculinity is, likewise, divine.

The form of The First Supper, in contrast, is characterised by roundness and shorter lines. Although the physical setting of The Last Supper has been duplicated with regard to proportion, its sense of length and sparseness is alleviated considerably by White’s depiction of it as light and bright—this lightness conveys an impression of breadth and density. The subjects of White’s piece, however, differ dramatically from those of da Vinci’s in this regard. The women are round, and most are plump—while many are petite, none are thin. In marked contrast to the subjects of The Last Supper, the women of The First Supper are not characterised by self-denial; rather, they are indulgent and sensuous, seemingly practiced in pleasure. In other
words, they are profoundly human, in harmony with their natural human impulses. Their characteristics imply a radically different reading of spirituality, then. The divine is no longer characterised by self-control and -denial, nor is it, by extension, characterised exclusively—if at all—by the masculine. Rather, spirituality is characterised by pleasure, nature, and the feminine. The roundness featured in The First Supper conveys warmth and invitation; it creates, again, a sense of accessibility and identification with the women for the viewer. These women are human beings, comfortable in their bodies and given to pleasure—although they are now distressed, they could be joyful just as readily. Viewers are not likely to so interpret the subjects of The Last Supper, whose self-imposed suffering seems inherent in their characters.

The notions of asceticism and self-denial central to The Last Supper are evident also with regard to that meal's menu, laid out before the men on the table. That menu consists, simply, of bread rolls, red wine, water bowls, one scant platter of sliced fish, and some unidentifiable foodstuffs—tiny and undistinctive with regard to shape and colour—and most recede into the shadows cast upon the table by the subjects. The food in The Last Supper is secondary to the scene, at best. For instance, the fish, Wasserman (1984) believes, are significant primarily as indicators to the identities of those apostles depicted immediately behind them—Peter and Andrew, who were fishers by trade (p. 100).

The bread and wine of The Last Supper have particular significance with regard to Christianity; they represent the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, whose consumption by the faithful contribute to salvation. The
presence of these items could be construed as hopeful and optimistic in a setting that is characterised otherwise so thoroughly with tragedy. The ritual, however, has distinct overtones of cannibalism; they are eating the body of one who sits among them. The notion of sacrifice inherent to the symbolic consumption hinders a reading of the scene as optimistic; the allusion to the bloody sacrifice of Christ perpetuates the notion that divinity is connected directly and thoroughly with suffering. This notion is enhanced by the overriding impression of the table setting as sparse. What little food is in evidence is no threat to the men's self-control, for it is too nondescript to be tempting. The conventional themes of sacristy and divinity are reinforced, then; to be holy in spirit, one must suffer, sacrifice, and deny the flesh. Because such denial involves eschewing very human physical needs, most humans are excluded from this "club"--within the context of Christianity, those who succeed in this capacity are revered and set above the mortal masses.

The contents of the table in The First Supper differ radically from those featured in The Last Supper. Only the bread is retained; the wine has been replaced with water, symbolising purity and cleansing, and the sliced fish has been replaced with a sliced yam. (There is a whole fish present on the table in another spot.) Both of these particular replacements suggest a rejection of violence and suffering; the figurative blood of da Vinci's work is absent, as is the implied violence of a mutilated fish. The environment of The First Supper is far less threatening than that of The Last Supper in that it is not predicated on pain and suffering.

The most striking difference between the two table settings is the fact that the The First Supper depicts a table laden with a dazzling and colourful
array of lush fruits and vegetables, as well as a bright blue-green emu egg, a fresh crab, and a fresh fish. In her artist's statement (1988), White points out that each item on the table corresponds to the native origin of the woman appearing immediately behind it. The overall effect is one of voluptuous abundance that enhances the feminine qualities of White's piece and, again, gives lie to the notion that denying the physical (sensual) enriches the spirit. Instead, sensual indulgence is encouraged in this particular allusion to the spiritual—equated with it. For the women in *The First Supper*, the physical and the spiritual are indistinct from one another.

The foodstuff depicted in *The First Supper* is symbolic in kind as well as in presence. The character replacing Judas—the only Western European—has before her a Coke and a hamburger instead of the water and bread that all the other women have. These artifacts, which lie in stark contrast to the other natural, simple, and whole foods, symbolise commercialism/capitalism, artificiality, and exploitation; this female Judas is not connected with the earth and the sea—with nature—in the way that her sisters are. Ironically, she symbolises the very control over nature—characterised here by exploitation and commercialism—celebrated in *The Last Supper* as self-denial. In White's piece, that theme (of controlling—manipulating or denying—nature) has been condensed into one woman who, significantly, is the least admirable of all the subjects. This woman also has before her a lemon and grapes (sour ones?), which convey deception and (perhaps) coveting, respectively. Like Judas in *The Last Supper*, this woman is one of whom all should be wary—she embodies betrayal in its contemporary incarnation.
The subjects of the original have been replaced in *The First Supper* with women from various cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds. The homogeneous white men of da Vinci's work have been recast as women of drastically diverse heritages, clad in traditional garb identifying those respective heritages. In *The Last Supper*, Peter, John, and Judas are seated together immediately on Christ's right; to their right are clustered James the Less, Bartholomew, and Andrew; on Christ's immediate left are James the Greater, Thomas, and Philip; and on their left hover Matthew, Thaddeus, and Simon (Wasserman, 1984, pp. 96-102). In *The First Supper*, these clusters are reconstituted as follows: to the right of the Aboriginal woman (placed in Christ's stead) are what appear to be--by virtue of their dress--a Chinese woman, an Arabic woman, and a Western-European woman (in Judas' place); on their right appear to cluster a Black African woman, a South American Indian woman, and a Polynesian woman. On the Aboriginal woman's left are what seem to be a Korean woman, an Israeli woman, and a West Indian woman; and on their left cluster women who seem to be Indian, Japanese, and Eastern European.

The two subjects of *The First Supper* that invite particular scrutiny are the women who replace Christ and Judas. The central figure in White's painting--the Aboriginal woman--deviates in obvious ways from the Christ character in *The Last Supper*: first, she is clearly a woman. She is the only subject in *The First Supper* whose sex is physically showcased--clothed in a T-shirt bearing the motif of the Aboriginal Land Rights flag, her ample breasts and hips are very much in evidence. Her representation calls to mind representations of ancient female deities who were associated typically with
creation and sustenance, as opposed to the Christian tradition, which squarely asserts that divinity is inherently masculine.

In appearance, as well, Christ and the Aboriginal woman differ dramatically. Christ is nearly perfect physically; he appears as conventionally beautiful with waves of lustrous blond hair and shining white skin, with neat clothing draped gracefully over and totally obscuring his anatomy. In direct contrast, the woman is extremely dark and quite unkempt; her hair is scraggly and uncombed, her breasts are unbound, her legs are bare, she is shoeless, and she is unquestionably Aboriginal, as opposed to da Vinci's depiction of Christ as quintessentially European. This totally antithetical representation of the Christ indicates a clear inversion of the Western hierarchy that places "cultured" European men at the very top and women of "other"--especially darker--races at the very bottom. Christ's physical perfection in The Last Supper prevents identification with him on the part of the viewer; indeed, his perfection enhances his "aloofness from ordinary human feelings" (Clark, 1983, p. 20) that are so prominent in the other men in the painting. In The First Supper, however, that aloofness of expression in the Aboriginal woman is offset dramatically by her very human appearance; again, accessibility is featured as a central theme. Once more, the viewer is called upon to reconceptualise spirituality radically. In The First Supper, it is no longer affected--marked by pretension, ritual, suffering, and control of the natural. It also is no longer abstract and inaccessible, hierarchical, and masculine. Rather, like the Aboriginal woman, it is thoroughly natural, simple, and "easy"; it is very concrete and accessible; it is everywhere, not just "up there"; and it is feminine.
The white woman in *The First Supper* who replaces Judas is, like him, clutching a money purse; this feature, combined with the noted implications of her table setting—a burger and a Coke, in addition to a lemon and grapes—identify her as greedy and exploitative. Significantly, too, she is dressed in a plaid shirt, denim overalls, and running shoes. In stark contrast to the simple, unaffected clothing of the other women, she smacks of artifice. In addition, this clothing is the most conventionally masculine attire of all the women in the painting. Unlike the others, this woman participates in exploitation—in the rejection and control of the natural—a characteristic also identified commonly as masculine. The only nefarious character in the scene is very nearly a white male.

Whereas the similarities between the artifacts actually constitute replication, the differences between the two are distinctive because they are entirely antithetical. As carefully as the physical dimensions of every aspect of *The Last Supper* are reproduced in *The First Supper*, how they were rendered in the original is rejected—this is evidenced by virtue of title; size; location (material and contextual); medium; colour; line; table setting; and characters (with regard to sex, dress, and heritage). The antithetical nature of the differences ensures an interpretation that specific features, at least, of *The Last Supper* are being challenged. Furthermore, recognition of the antithetical nature of these differences occurs following recognition of the similarities. Just as the precision of similarity functions to call up *The Last Supper*, the precision of difference—precise because of exact antithesis—serves to challenge it. Whereas the similarities between the two artifacts establish *The Last Supper* as the premise for viewers’ understanding of *The
First Supper, the differences between them serve to subvert the grounds for that premise.

Finally, an obvious--although not visual--difference between The Last Supper and The First Supper is that of title. Da Vinci's work depicts the eve of Christ's crucifixion as described in the Bible--literally, this is Christ's last supper. According to Biblical interpretation and as rendered by da Vinci, the occasion is characterised by the explicit prophesy of Christ's impending betrayal by Judas and martyrdom and by the ensuing angst of Christ's apostles. The title of da Vinci's work, then, appropriately conveys a sense of impending horror and tragedy--a sense of finality that is as foreboding as it is inevitable. White's work, on the other hand, is entitled The First Supper; on a fundamental and obvious level, this suggests a beginning. Whether or not the beginning is a positive one, however, is unclear. On the one hand, the themes of betrayal and martyrdom are retained from the original; on the other hand, the meaning of the title, in the context of other dynamics, might be construed as suggestive of optimism and hope. Certainly, the title of White's work rejects the finality that The Last Supper suggests.

Messages of Emancipation

At first glance, The First Supper appears to be a straightforward sort of appropriation; in particular, it appears to constitute inversion, a specific form of appropriation, in which the original themes and ideas are replaced with their antitheses. Closer analysis, however, indicates that The First Supper is actually quite complex, as indicated especially by the variety of messages that can be located in the painting. As a result, The First Supper can be interpreted in a number of ways with regard to messages of emancipation;
three seem primary, and I have labelled them the engaging, confusing, and postmodern interpretations.

The First Supper is distinctive because of its clear invitation to engagement—it invites the viewer to participate in the painting in a particularly fun and playful way. This is especially true relative to The Last Supper, where such participation is actively discouraged on a number of levels. Rhetorically, The First Supper is provocative, interesting, and enjoyable. This alone can be construed as liberating, given that The Last Supper exists in such a legacy of sacredness, gravity, and solemnity. The sheer fun of The First Supper—suggested by bright, optimistic colours, interesting and radically diverse characters, and enticing food, for instance—is subversive simply because of its implied sacrilege; playfulness and a provoked imagination are inconsistent with the Western Christian tradition of worship.

On a most obvious level of engagement, White’s work features women of radically diverse ethnicities in place of what many consider to be divinely (so to speak) powerful and homogeneous men—an elite boys’ club. On this point alone, viewers are invited to participate by virtue of identification with one, some, or all of the character(s). In contrast, in The Last Supper, only white men are inclined to identify with any of the characters in the painting and, even then, that identification is constrained by conceptions of self as human, as opposed to divine. Although men are not specifically invited to identify with anyone in The First Supper, the absence of the condition of divinity there, in fact, may make it more accessible to them than The Last Supper.
Engagement also prompts the viewer to reconsider the assumed immutable truth of *The Last Supper*—the established patriarchal nature of spirituality as related to the inherent superiority of white men. A likely reaction is to consider that that legacy is not necessary, sacred, or true. Women—especially non-white women—could be powerful. In a racist, patriarchal system that encourages a self-perception on the part of women and people of colour as weak and inferior, this very simple act of replacement is significantly liberating.

Another significant aspect of an engagement reading of *The First Supper* is relevant to agency—White’s work invites participation and agency just as *The Last Supper* discourages them. Indeed, possibly the most profound message of emancipation in *The First Supper* is that circumstances are not beyond one’s control—they are manageable, and one is not at the mercy of awesome events and entities. This is liberating for women in the sense that they do not have to feel cowed and passive in the face of patriarchy. Its pomp and circumstance are contrived—all for show—and no awful, evil powers lurk in the shadows. The painting functions similarly for minorities, who are no longer “looked down upon” by white folk on high.

There is another way to interpret *The First Supper*, however, one that I will call confusing; in this reading, the work can be construed as having failed with regard to emancipatory messages. This reading is most likely in the context of the sheer number of messages available in the painting. Indeed, *The First Supper* appears to comment extensively on a number of significant issues: gender, patriarchy, spirituality, religion, colonialism, Aboriginal rights, and multiculturalism. Whether the message is spiritual or political is quite
unclear; for instance, do we interpret the work as a challenge to patriarchy in
general or to traditional conceptions of religion? Of course, messages
regarding all of these topics could be construed, but the painting seems to
contain as many elements that undermine a specific message as it has
elements to support it. For instance, the work may be read as a challenge to
patriarchy in that women are depicted as central, powerful, and multi-
dimensional agents. Some aspects of the work, however, suggest this may
not be the message it seeks to convey because certain female stereotypes
are reified, especially with regard to women's connexion with nature, their
more sensual (conventionally read as animalistic) characters, and their
"innate" gentleness, conveyed by the conspicuous absence of references to
violence that are present in The Last Supper—the butchered fish and body
and blood of Christ, specifically.

A reading of the work through the lens of religion and spirituality
suggests similar problems. Conventional Western notions of religion and
spirituality are challenged in that the theme of respect for the earth and
nature and one another is portrayed as vital in The First Supper. Several
standards of Western Christianity that are maintained and reinforced in the
painting, however, contradict this theme; there is still a character clearly more
divine or at least more important than the others—the Aboriginal woman is
featured as the crux of a geometric trinity in the same way that Christ is in The
Last Supper. In addition, if viewers perceive The First Supper as a reference
to ancient female religions and deities, then a supreme female deity betrayed
by a female apostle is showcased, thus replicating Western Christianity
exactly (or setting the model for it). Neither message seems particularly liberating; each appears to imitate rather than revise.

The First Supper, similarly, could be interpreted as a challenge to ethnocentrism by virtue of the multiple ethnicities featured in the piece. The marked centrality of the Aboriginal woman, however, suggests that ethnocentrism is not so much rejected as modified by cultural sensitivity. A hierarchy of race and culture is maintained, just reconstituted. Related to this theme is the clear reference to the Australian Bicentennial in The First Supper, assured by virtue of the joint presence of the Aboriginal flag and Uluru, the freehold land returned to Aboriginal peoples, and confirmed by White in her statement. If that frame is applied, yet another reading emerges. Instead of a challenge to patriarchy and/or Christianity, a revisionist interpretation of a historical event is portrayed—the first pilgrims on Australian soil. Even this alternative depiction is inconsistent, however. While the work portrays women as once powerful, it also assigns consequent exploitation to women.

Also confusing are the mixed messages conveyed with regard to essentialism and the social construction of gender. On the one hand, viewers could understand that patriarchal Christianity is being challenged as an elaborately constructed facade that has no substance; women are as capable of power as men and also are capable of the same evil, evidenced by the woman in Judas’ place. On the other hand, certain inferences to essentialism could be drawn—that women are gentle, connected with nature, and corrupt only if seduced by the white man and his ways. Similarly, the clear ethnic identities of the respective women could be construed as
celebration of difference or as rigid classification of them by virtue of their origins. Although the ethnically and nationally specific dress of each woman serve to identify the various folk who comprise Australian society today, most of those folk probably don't dress like these women and may not even identify with the countries of their parents' birth—or appreciate the "pigeonholing." Again, what seems, at first glance, to be a message challenging essentialism seems contradicted and thus undermined by various dimensions of the work.

Confusion is exacerbated, if not prompted, by the necessary—stipulated—referent of The Last Supper. In that work, there is a clear, singular message; The Last Supper depicts a focussed moment, untainted by any distraction. Every facet in the painting serves exclusively to enhance that crystallised, unambiguous moment of betrayal. Given this precedent in the original, viewers may expect a similar experience with regard to the message of The First Supper; even an openness to a variety of messages may not satisfy the desire for clarity and consistency that The Last Supper invokes. Furthermore, in an attempt to understand The First Supper, the viewer is compelled to return to The Last Supper as a means for understanding White's work. That response cultivates a powerful presence and presumption in favour of The Last Supper—already endowed with significant presence and presumption, given its historical legacy—to the extent that The First Supper recedes into its shadow. If measured by the narrative standards of The Last Supper—characterised by consistency, clarity, and focus—The First Supper fails.
There is yet another way to interpret *The First Supper*, and that is as a sophisticated and complex intellectual argument; I have chosen to label this interpretation *postmodern*. With regard to the number and inconsistent nature of the appeals in *The First Supper*—especially in light of the clarity and singularity of the message of *The Last Supper*—viewers could perceive White's work as liberating because it vigorously challenges virtually all traditional standards, particularly those of narrative and logic. For instance, *The First Supper* could be construed as replacing an acontextual, linear model of appeal with one that is characterised by ambiguity, holism, complexity, and diversity. This reading is enhanced by the fact that *The First Supper* contains the extremes of replication and antithesis in its reference to *The Last Supper*, yet so many possibilities exist between those two options; in essence, *The First Supper* challenges the traditional--Western--conception of absolutism and its consequent manifestation in dichotomy.

Indeed, whereas *The Last Supper* seems to be characterised by absolute standards of consistency and purity (in terms of singularity and clarity of appeal), *The First Supper* appears to reject any and all standards—it functions as a postmodern work of art. This reading is substantiated by inconsistencies apparent in the messages; women, for example, resist easy classification in the painting (born vs. made), just as spirituality resists pat understanding (some aspects of Western Christianity remain, coexisting with other implied religions--Jewish, Hindu, Muslim--and heavy references to ancient female spirituality).

The irony of this final reading of *The First Supper* as a sophisticated intellectual commentary inheres in the fact that this interpretation is abstract
and elite, inaccessible to many viewers. Specifically, this is ironic because so much of the painting seems to revolve about the theme of accessibility and invitation. Of course, this could be construed as entirely consistent with a postmodern approach to the painting—again, defying any definition whatsoever. Regardless of how viewers choose to interpret The First Supper with regard to messages of emancipation, ambiguity is a consistent theme. Perhaps, then, the overarching message to be inferred from the work is that ambiguity and complexity have significant emancipatory potential.

Conclusion

Although The First Supper appears to defy a clear reading on its own terms, it does contain definitive implications for the function of appropriation as a strategy of emancipation. Significantly, I chose this artifact as an example of feminist appropriation; however, because its various possible messages (in addition to feminist ones) are so central to the work, my conclusions necessarily are based on the interplay of these messages.

A feature particularly significant with regard to this instance of appropriation is the fact that The Last Supper—the appropriated original—is such a familiar artifact; it is, as many scholars have noted, a universally familiar work of art. By the same token, most people are as familiar—at least on a superficial level—with the narrative it portrays: Christ’s last supper, prior to his crucifixion, directly related to his betrayal by Judas, one of his apostles. Given the context of this familiarity, The First Supper is immediately recognisable to most people as referencing The Last Supper: the signification is virtually guaranteed. This raises a question with regard to appropriation: How familiar must viewers be with the original for
appropriation to work, and how does degree of familiarity affect appropriation?

Obviously, some knowledge of the original is entailed for appropriation to be understood as an appropriation; however, how does the fact that, in this case, the appropriated artifact is extremely familiar to most potential audiences affect the function of The First Supper? This feature seems to lie at the heart of the fact that so many possible readings of White's painting could be derived from and simultaneously perceived as inconsistent; The First Supper appears to be so much of a deviation from the straightforward, unambiguous, singular message of The Last Supper that the former seems to be lacking somehow in comparison. Undoubtedly, this is also due to a historical context that consistently has hailed The Last Supper as a prestigious masterpiece. In effect, then, extreme familiarity with the original very well could induce an audience to superimpose--consciously or not--onto the appropriation expectations or standards relevant to and perhaps even established by the original artifact. In this case, appropriation inadvertently may function to reify values and standards associated with the original and come up short according to those standards.

Another issue relevant to The First Supper's appropriation is that regarding inversion. On its face, The First Supper appears to be a clear inversion of The Last Supper, in which form is retained and substance is replaced with its antithesis. In this case, the fact that all male subjects are replaced with women and that which is dark is made light seem to point to inversion. Simple inversion is a very risky form of appropriation in terms of its potential for emancipation--with inversion, value systems and standards are
not challenged clearly; only the characters representing them are reconstituted. Inversion constitutes what Anwell (1988) calls a “simple manipulation of the familiar plot” (p. 78), in which the actual dynamics of the plot are not addressed specifically. Several features, however, suggest that more is going on in The First Supper than simple inversion. The various ethnicities of the women in The First Supper, for instance, are critical deviations from mere antithetical depictions, as are the nature, quantity, and configurations of the food. Because The First Supper is no simple inversion, it cannot be dismissed as lacking in critical challenge. The fact that many of its elements seem to suggest inversion superficially, however, especially when coupled with general familiarity with The Last Supper, could contribute to the possible reading that it is less than liberating.

Rather than inversion, I believe that the appropriation of The First Supper functions rhetorically as reverse irony. Foss and Littlejohn (1986), in their analysis of The Day After, describe the rhetorical construct of irony--characterised by incongruity between what is expected and what occurs--as comprised of three elements: detachment, which allows for a separation between the literal and the intended meanings; superiority, the recognition that readers or viewers have access to this sophisticated meaning; and cohesion between rhetor and audience, given this mutual understanding of that irony. Meaning is critical to irony; the fundamental meaning of the irony must be understood in order for it to work. Booth suggests, and Foss and Littlejohn corroborate, that irony, when successful, can be enormously so by virtue of its cultivation of audience agency and of bonding between rhetor and audience. As Booth (1974) points out, however, irony “risks disaster
more aggressively than any other device" (p. 74) because of the possibility that the audience won’t “get it.” Two other significant dangers can be identified with regard to irony. Given that irony turns on doubt by virtue of an unlikely juxtaposition, “at the extreme point of doubt, all statement becomes suspect” (Booth, p. 244). In addition, as Foss and Littlejohn point out, “the choices made [as a result of irony], and the intensity with which irony requires that we make them, may entail rejecting or accepting a whole way of life” (p. 32).

The qualities that characterise irony also are evident in reverse ironic appropriation, in specific and intriguing ways. Interestingly, although the first condition of detachment is highly relevant in ironic appropriation, it functions in a manner opposite to conventional irony. Traditionally, irony is distinguished by the imposed association of two apparently incongruent elements such that their deeper connexion to each other is uncovered by the audience. In reverse ironic appropriation, however, the opposite is true—the elements, superficially, appear related, and their incongruence becomes apparent upon closer examination. This apparent relationship, then, becomes the literal meaning, and the embedded differences constitute the intended meaning. In reverse ironic appropriation the necessary similarities between an appropriation and its original provide the literal meaning of reverse ironic appropriation--as the obvious reference that serves to establish a connexion between the respective artifacts. The differences between the artifacts and how those differences relate to one another serve to provide the intended meaning. Exactly the converse of traditional irony, the immediately apparent--literal--relationship between the artifacts suggests
a superficial congruence; closer analysis of the appropriated artifact, prompted by the differences that consequently become apparent, elicits an alternative, embedded meaning.

Reverse ironic appropriation is very similar to traditional rhetorical irony, however, with regard to its cultivation of audience agency. Indeed, audience participation in both cases is necessary for the strategy to be successful in discovering the intended meaning. Audience participation also often manifests in the tenet of superiority that characterises rhetorical irony in that the audience garners a sense of itself as distinguished by virtue of having derived the intended meaning of the appropriation veiled by the literal similarities.

Upon discovery of the intended message, reverse ironic appropriation also can be characterised by cohesion between rhetor and audience, as Foss and Littlejohn (1986) describe. This feature, however, is not guaranteed in reverse ironic appropriation; furthermore, when it does occur, it does so for specific reasons not directly related to the ironic aspects of the artifact. In appropriation, issues of power are often key to the event. Because appropriation occurs most often as a vertical phenomenon—a socially dominant group appropriates the meanings and experiences popularly associated with another or vice versa—cohesion between rhetor and audience is determined by factors other than participating in a discovery of intended meaning in the artifact.

Cohesion between rhetor and audience is enhanced rather than created by appropriation, given that an audience will apprehend the event
with an established conception of where it fits on social and political strata. An audience aware of and disturbed by gender oppression probably would respond to a feminist reverse ironic appropriation with a clear sense of cohesion with the rhetor; however, a person disinclined to accept that premise, while able to discern successfully the intended meaning of the reverse ironic appropriation, probably would experience a distinct sense of alienation from the rhetor. Although the possibility exists that rhetor-audience cohesion well may be created by reverse ironic appropriation, because issues of power feature so prominently as a context for understanding the appropriation, that dimension does not characterise reverse irony as an appropriative strategy.

In its appropriation of *The Last Supper*, *The First Supper*, as an example of reverse irony, confirms the traditional ironic principle of detachment. The extremely precise and obvious nature of the similarities between White's painting and da Vinci's original provide a literal meaning relevant to an awareness of the relatedness between the two artifacts. The significant and equally compelling differences between the two artifacts, however, suggest clearly that another meaning(s)—other than relatedness to each other—is present; as such, the distinction between literal and intended meanings that characterises the traditional rhetorical construct of irony is borne out in *The First Supper*.

The elements that confirm *The First Supper* as an example of reverse ironic appropriation, however, are related primarily to the difficulties specifically associated with traditional irony. On the one hand, the sheer variety of experiences suggested in White's painting, juxtaposed with the
singular experience of The Last Supper, culminates in an imbalance of incongruity. Discussion of irony as a rhetorical device tends to revolve about two experiences—the literal and the intended; perhaps The Last Supper cannot bear the weight of the many ironies of The First Supper, especially since the audience would be compelled by the irony to discern its singular meaning—again, irony is characterized by a fundamental meaning camouflaged in its literal guise. Second, related specifically to the fact that The Last Supper virtually embodies a specific culture and worldview (white, male, Christian) and that The First Supper addresses each of these, viewers of this piece may feel overwhelmed; they may feel that too much is being asked—namely, the rejection of a whole way of life rather than just a bit at a time.

Even apart from The First Supper as a specific instance of reverse ironic appropriation, I am apprehensive of the use of this strategy by feminists. Reverse ironic appropriation necessarily is premised upon establishing a clear relationship with the original, patriarchal artifact; furthermore, that relationship is established most effectively by reproducing many elements of the original artifact. As a result, I think that reverse irony, as an appropriative strategy, runs a significant risk of reifying oppressive, patriarchal standards and norms by virtue of duplicating them within the artifact itself. In addition, reverse ironic appropriation, as a general strategy, relies upon entering into and manipulating the original artifact, in some way, in order to ensure the reference and, thus, establish the grounds for that particular strategy. As a result, reverse ironic appropriation turns on invasion
and exploitation--features that tend to characterise oppression--of the original artifact and, in turn, may appear to condone those practices.
CHAPTER IV

"ORPHEUS (1)" AND "EURYDICE": APPROPRIATING THE CLASSICAL MYTH

In this chapter, I shall analyse an instance of appropriation that recounts the identical narrative of the original artifact. The only difference between the two is that, in the appropriation, the story is told from the perspective of a character present but undeveloped--perspectively absent--in the original. I choose to call this particular strategy of appropriation shifting voice, and in this chapter, I explore what the implications of the use of this strategy are for the emancipation of women.

The collective artifact that I have chosen for this particular analysis is Margaret Atwood's two poems, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," published in 1987. They constitute a feminist appropriation of the classical Greek and Roman myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. I have selected Edith Hamilton's (1969) discussion of that myth as representative of the original because Hamilton, a world-renowned classicist, is known particularly for her comprehensive and thorough compilation of classical Greek and Roman myths. In the original version, although he is not the narrator, Orpheus' perspective is featured exclusively in the unfolding of the tale; in Atwood's version, the story is Eurydice's to tell.
In this analysis, I shall provide, first, a description of each artifact. Second, I will provide a two-part analysis of the appropriation. In the first part, I will explore consistencies and similarities across the two artifacts—those features of the original Atwood has retained in her appropriation. In the second part, I will identify the points at which the two artifacts diverge—those aspects of the original classical tale that have been rejected or reconstituted in Atwood's piece. Third, I will identify and discuss the messages regarding emancipation that I find in Atwood's poems based upon my analysis of the relationship between the artifacts. Finally, I shall indicate what the particular strategy of appropriation featured in this instance suggests for appropriation as a general emancipatory strategy.

Description of the Artifacts

Hamilton's Version of Orpheus and Eurydice

Edith Hamilton's work, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (1969), still is considered by many scholars to be the definitive collection of classical mythology. In the text, Hamilton includes, in a chapter entitled "Eight Brief Tales of Lovers," the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice (Appendix B). Hamilton points out that the best recorded accounts of this myth and thus her primary sources are those of the Roman poets Virgil and Ovid. She also indicates that she has drawn some details absent in those sources—relevant to Orpheus' travels with the Argonauts—from the account of the third-century Greek poet, Apollonius of Rhodes. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as told by Hamilton is a straightforward, narrative summary of these various sources' collective epic poems; however, she does include excerpts from those original recordings. In general, the excerpts all feature
non-rhyming, continuous verse that adheres to a clear rhythm; lines contained in the verse tend to have very consistent verse feet--patterns and number of syllables that compose each line.

According to Hamilton's account, Orpheus' defining feature is his astonishing musical talent. His musical prowess is second only to that of the gods. Orpheus' mother was one of the Muses--nine "indistinguishable" daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) known for their carefree spirits and beautiful voices (Hamilton, p. 37)--who bestowed upon him the gift of music. His father was a Thracian Prince; Thracians were known as the most musical people of Greece. According to the myth, Orpheus has no rival . . . except the gods alone. There was no limit to his power when he played and sang. No one and nothing could resist him. . . . Everything animate and inanimate followed him. He moved the rocks on the hillside and turned the courses of the rivers. (Hamilton, p. 103)

Orpheus' talent is not only divine but good and put to good use. At one point in his life, he travels on the Argo with Jason (whose adventures relevant to the quest for the Golden Fleece are chronicled in Apollonius of Rhodes' epic poem; Jason is also featured in Euripides' tragic play, Medea). When the Argonauts grow weary of rowing, Orpheus' music inspired them to row vigorously and zealously in tempo. He also soothes and calms the Argonauts' frayed tempers when necessary. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment on this journey is that he saves the Argonauts from certain death; when they come within earshot of the Sirens--enchanting, seductive, island women who lure sailors to their deaths by singing so sweetly and
temptingly that the men are drawn to the shore and dashed upon the rocks--Orpheus "snatched up his lyre and played a tune so clear and ringing that it drowned the sound of those lovely fatal voices" (Hamilton, p. 104). The Argonauts thus are able to put the ship back on course and escape the Sirens' lure.

Hamilton points out that where Orpheus met or how he courted Eurydice is unclear in any of the existing accounts; however, "it is clear that no maiden he wanted could resist the power of his song" (Hamilton, p. 104). What is known is that upon their wedding day, immediately after their wedding, Eurydice--strolling in a meadow with her bridesmaids--is stung by a viper and dies. Orpheus is devastated; he cannot accept his loss. Daring "more than any other man had dared for his love" (Hamilton, p. 104), he resolves to go down into the underworld, the world of the dead, in order to charm its king, Hades (also known as Pluto), and queen, Persephone, with his enchanting music and ask for Eurydice's return.

The journey to the underworld is understood as a "fearsome" (Hamilton, p. 104) one because those who enter are not permitted to return. Orpheus, however, manages to charm all those who guard the entrance to Hades--Cerberus, the hound of hell, relaxes; the notorious sinners Ixion, Sisiphus, and Tantalus--each of whom has committed a crime against the gods and must pay an eternal price--stop in the throes of their punishment for the first time; the Furies--women of Hades whose function it is to punish evildoers--weep for the first time; and even Hades and Persephone pause to listen to Orpheus' enchanting melodies. Orpheus, in his song, describes how Eurydice was taken from the earth too soon--"the bud was plucked
before the flower bloomed” (Hamilton, p. 105). Furthermore, Orpheus sings, he cannot bear the loss: “Love was too strong a god” (Hamilton, p. 105). Finally, he pleads with Hades to “weave again for sweet Eurydice life’s pattern that was taken from the loom too quickly. See, I ask a little thing, only that you will lend, not give, her to me. She shall be yours when her years’ span is full” (Hamilton, p. 105).

Hades, like all those before him, cannot resist Orpheus’ musical spell. Eurydice is summoned and given to Orpheus, on one condition: that he not look back at her as she follows him out of the underworld until they reach the world beyond. Orpheus agrees, and he embarks on the path that will lead them out. Although he longs to look back to reassure himself that Eurydice follows, he does not. As he steps out of the black cave into the daylight of the upper world, he turns to her--too soon, however, for she is still in the cavern. Eurydice vanishes instantly, slipping back into the underworld, and he hears only a faint “Farewell” (Hamilton, p. 105).

Despondent, Orpheus attempts to follow Eurydice and get her back; however, he is not admitted entrance a second time to the underworld while still alive. He returns, desolate, to the earth, where he shuns human company--his only companions, as he wanders “the wild solitudes of Thrace, comfortless” (Hamilton, p. 105), are the rocks, trees, and rivers, for whom he plays his lyre ceaselessly. Orpheus meets a tragic end; he is eventually attacked by Maenads--women “frenzied with wine,” disciples of Bacchus, given to tearing apart, literally, hapless creatures that they encounter and “devour[ing] the bloody shreds of flesh” (Hamilton, p. 56). This is Orpheus’ fate; his severed head is flung into the river Hebrus and finds its way to the
shore of the island of Lesbos, where it is buried by the Muses. They also gather his limbs and place them in a tomb at the foot of Mount Olympus, where “to this day the nightingales sing more sweetly than anywhere else” (Hamilton, p. 105).

**Atwood’s “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice”**

Margaret Atwood is a well-known, contemporary feminist author of poetry and fiction. A pervasive theme—perhaps the pervasive theme—that characterises Atwood’s work is that regarding gender oppression. *Selected Poems II: Poems Selected and New 1976-1986* (1987) is a collection of Atwood’s poems, spanning ten years, that features her awareness of women’s oppression in the context of their corporeality or physical incarnations.

Included in this work are several poems that refer to various classical Greek and Roman myths; among them are “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” (Appendix C). These are two separate poems; “Eurydice” (Atwood, pp. 108-109) follows “Orpheus (1)” (Atwood, pp. 106-107) immediately in terms of sequence. Each poem is two pages in length and is characterised by free verse in the form of loose stanzas; they are loose in that they vary in terms of number of lines and verse feet—patterns that characterise rhythms within each line. “Orpheus (1)” is composed of seven stanzas and a single line as a conclusion, and “Eurydice” contains eight stanzas. Each stanza chronicles one specific idea, although sometimes an idea is carried through two stanzas.

Atwood’s version of the tale focusses exclusively on the actions that occur in the underworld that involve Eurydice; more specifically, “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” provide an account of Eurydice’s impressions of and
reflections on events. Atwood also includes in this collection a poem entitled “Orpheus (2)”; however, because that poem does not address issues of gender and thus does not constitute a feminist appropriation, I have chosen not to include it in my analysis.

In “Orpheus (1),” Eurydice is addressing Orpheus, revealing to him what she sees, what she feels, and what she believes. Orpheus is strange to her, if not exactly a stranger; she sees only the silhouette of Orpheus’ “head and shoulders black against the cave mouth . . . a dark oval” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107) as he walks in front of her. Furthermore, he is “pulling me back out . . . something stretched between us like a whisper, like a rope; my former name, drawn tight. You had your old leash with you, love you might call it, and your flesh voice” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 106). The light that she sees beyond him—that of the upper world—she describes as “green”; she remembers when that light “had once grown fangs and killed me” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 106). Eurydice describes her reactions at being led out of the underworld against her will: “I was obedient, but numb, like an arm gone to sleep; the return to time was not my choice. By then I was used to silence” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 106).

Eurydice describes in “Orpheus (1)” the nature of Orpheus’ obsession with her as she perceives it. She suggests that he does not truly want her; rather, he is driven by his need to be reflected in her: “Before your eyes you held steady the image of what you wanted me to become: living again. . . . I was your hallucination, listening and floral, and you were singing me . . . “ (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” pp. 106-107). Eurydice nonetheless is seduced by the strength of Orpheus’ narcissistic desire—she is drawn to it reluctantly, and
even physically responds to it: "It was this hope of yours that kept me following. . . . Already new skin was forming on me within the luminous misty shroud of my other body; already there was dirt on my hands and I was thirsty" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," pp. 106-107).

Eurydice's description of the conclusion of the journey--"when you turned and called to me because you had already lost me" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]." p. 107)--suggests an implicit measure of agency on her part not evident in the original: "Though I knew how this failure would hurt you, I had to fold like a gray moth and let go. You could not believe I was more than your echo" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]." p. 107).

In the poem, "Eurydice," Eurydice's reflections are recounted similarly, although she is not clearly the narrator in this case; she is referred to consistently in the second person--as "you." The narrator, however, has an extremely intimate knowledge of Eurydice--in particular, of her experiences of and reflections on the events that transpire. Given especially that, in the established environment of the underworld, solitude and silence prevail, "Eurydice" appears to be Eurydice's detached observations of her own experiences--she is talking to herself, in essence.

In this poem, also, Eurydice's perception of Orpheus is featured. He has returned, full of songs and promises, to call her back; he promises "that things will be different up there than they were last time" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108). As in "Orpheus (1)," Orpheus "wants you to be what he calls real. He wants you to stop light. He want to feel himself thickening like a treetrunk or a haunch and see blood on his eyelids when he closes them, and the sun beating" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109). An apprehension of her as a physical
object is integral to Orpheus' love, Eurydice realises. Furthermore, Eurydice understands that his love is nourished by her physical presence: "This love of his is not something he can do if you aren't there. . . . He cannot believe without seeing, and it's dark here. Go back, you whisper, but he wants to be fed again by you" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109).

Eurydice's state of mind is described elaborately in "Eurydice." She describes herself as "chilled and minimal: moving and still both, like a white curtain blowing in the draft from a half-opened window beside a chair on which nobody sits" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108), precisely the converse of that for which Orpheus yearns. This state is not altogether unpleasant for Eurydice, however:

You would rather have gone on feeling nothing, emptiness and silence; the stagnant peace of the deepest sea, which is easier than the noise and flesh of the surface. You are used to these blanched dim corridors, you are used to the king who passes you without speaking. (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108)

This world of utter stillness and her place in it is contrasted with Eurydice's rather sudden and disconcerting recollection that she loves Orpheus. At first, he is a distant memory--"you almost remember him. He says he is singing to you because he loves you" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108). Then she recalls that what you knew suddenly as you left your body cooling and whitening on the lawn was that you love him anywhere, even in this land of no memory, even in this domain of hunger. You hold love in your hand, a red seed you had forgotten you were holding. (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109)

This revelation, however, is not ultimately compelling to her. Although Eurydice realises at the poem's end that she is not truly free, not truly at
peace, in the underworld, she understands, too, that what Orpheus promises and represents is not a suitable alternative: “O handful of gauze, little bandage, handful of cold air, it is not through him you will get your freedom” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 109).

Analysis of the Appropriation

Similarities between Texts

Most of the key elements of the original tale of Orpheus and Eurydice are present, even identical, in Atwood’s appropriation, either implicitly or explicitly. The featured characters of the classical myth all are retained in “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice”--Orpheus and Eurydice, of course, and Hades are acknowledged explicitly. Although the secondary characters who populate the underworld noted in the original--Persephone, the various sinners, and those who guard or mete out punishment--are not referred to explicitly in Atwood’s version, they did not feature significantly in the original tale; rather, they served as embellishment, primarily in terms of confirming Orpheus’ prowess directly or indirectly. In “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice,” Orpheus is still the forlorn lover desperately seeking to regain his prematurely lost love. Similarly, Eurydice is the lover he seeks; as in the classic version of the myth, she is portrayed as passive, or insubstantial, although the nature of that passivity is described and understood in very different ways in the two versions. Hades’ status as the king of the underworld is confirmed in “Eurydice,” as is his power, although not as explicitly as in the original. In both instances, however, Eurydice clearly is subject to Hades’ rule and the environment that characterises his domain.
The setting of the classic myth is reproduced in Atwood’s appropriation; her version occurs exclusively in the underworld and the cavern that links it to the earth, and this is where the significant events that characterise the original tale take place, as well. In the original, the underworld is the world of the dead, in which the good are rewarded and the evil are punished. The original version mentions notorious sinners in the underworld—Ixion, Sisiphus, and Tantalus, for example; each offended or betrayed a god and must carry out a horrendous sentence. Ixion is tied to a wheel that revolves forever, Sisiphus rolls a stone uphill forever, and Tantalus is perpetually thirsty, forever denied water that recedes just beyond his reach as he bends for it. The overriding impression of the underworld portrayed in Hamilton’s tale of Orpheus and Eurydice is of a strange and ominous place. Atwood’s poem, “Eurydice,” reinforces the classical understanding of the underworld as such a place; it is cold, empty and silent, dim (sometimes white, absent of colour) and stagnant—Hades is a “land of no memory... [a] domain of hunger” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 109). Eurydice is fundamentally uncomfortable in this environment. Although she says she has become accustomed to the underworld and its “blanched dim corridors” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 108), the fact that she describes her reactions in this particular way suggests that Hades is not a place from which she derives sustenance.

These corresponding images of the underworld are contrasted with similar depictions of the earth and the life that it represents. The world depicted in the original myth is characterised overwhelmingly by trees, meadows, rivers, rocks, flowers, birds, warmth, and sunlight. Hamilton refers
frequently to nature as the setting for Orpheus' beautiful music: "In the deep still woods upon the Thracian mountains, Orpheus with his singing lyre led the trees, led the wild beasts of the wilderness" (Hamilton, p. 103). The outside world consistently is described as light, particularly in contrast to the darkness of the underworld: "now he had stepped out joyfully into the daylight" (Hamilton, p. 105). The upper world is, essentially, an idyllic nature scene that beautifully complements and corresponds to Orpheus, the only human featured in the myth. The earth is truly Orpheus' world, a feature confirmed by nature's unmitigated adulation of him; all elements of nature are entranced by his music.

In Atwood's appropriation, the upper world is portrayed similarly—Eurydice describes it as "green light" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," p. 106), conveying her reactions to colour and brightness conspicuously absent in the underworld and thus strange and unusual to her. Eurydice also comments upon the "noise and flesh of the surface" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108), confirming Orpheus' connection to it—he is of mortal flesh, and his outstanding feature is talent for making noise in the form of music. Orpheus' intimate relation to the earth is reinforced in the description, "He wants to feel himself thickening like a treetrunk or a haunch and see blood on his eyelids when he closes them, and the sun beating" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109). The reference to the "red seed" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109) of love, too, suggests that the love upon which Eurydice reflects is of the earth—although Eurydice holds it in her hand, it is more Orpheus' than hers, representative of the natural upper world that embraces and reflects him. Its colour and symbolic representation of nature render it alien to Eurydice, who places herself firmly
out of nature’s realm. In both versions of the tale, the world belongs to Orpheus in much the same way that Orpheus belongs to the world.

The plot, or events, of the original myth also are retained in Atwood’s appropriation. As in the classic tale, Eurydice dies as a result of the sting of a viper lurking in the grass and, inevitably, she enters the land of the dead, the underworld. Also consistent with the original, Atwood’s Orpheus enters the underworld driven by his need to have Eurydice returned to him, utilising his musical talents as the means by which to accomplish this. In both instances, Eurydice follows Orpheus through the cavern until he turns to her and, consequently, she returns to the underworld—indeed, these are the events upon which Atwood focusses.

The similarities between the texts, in fact, are comprised of the most obvious elements of the respective narratives. The critical characters, setting, and plot are identical in each instance, features that assure identification of “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” as clear and concrete references to the classic myth of Greek and Roman eras.

**Differences between Texts**

Although the primary elements of the original narrative—setting, characters, and events—have been retained and reproduced in “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice,” differences between the versions of the myth proliferate and are profound, primarily due to the manner in which they have been rendered. Indeed, the similarities between the texts, although obvious, are superficial in comparison to their differences.

A significant difference between the two versions of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth concerns how the story is told—on what it focusses, what it
reveals, by whom it is told, and to whom it is told. In the original version, the story unfolds—like most mythology—as a fable. It is revealed by an omniscient narrator, one who has access to all that occurs in Orpheus’ life. Furthermore, the tale is addressed to the general audience of society in such a way that the story contains—even embodies—the universal truths and values that uphold and reinforce social and cultural traditions; Orpheus’ story, like most myths, contains valuable lessons for society—traditional truths that support cultural norms and beliefs. In this particular myth, these truths include that true love is powerful; love pushes a man to his fullest potential; a man will do whatever he can to rescue and protect his woman; and without love, people are lost. In the classical myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, the love depicted is celebrated as all important and all consuming.

The original version of the myth is told in a conventionally linear fashion. In the classical version, the story features Orpheus as the gifted protagonist from his birth to his death, recounting along the way his childhood, heroic travels, tragic loss of his lover and courageous (although failed) attempt to get her back, consequent grief, and, finally, gruesome death. This chronologically straightforward style enhances the universal and abstract elements of the myth in that it cultivates distance between the audience and the story; the style conveys that events already have happened in the way described, so that the audience’s ability to participate in the interpretation of those events is limited. Consequently, the audience is more likely to accept as true what it is told. The literary style of the original myth, as well—as apparent in the excerpts that Hamilton includes in her discussion—reinforces this interpretation; the rhythms are consistent and
predictable, lines usually are detached from preceding or succeeding ones, and they progress chronologically. As a result, the story unfolds according to a series of short, declarative sentences that describe events in a way that brooks no argument.

In "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," however, the story unfolds in a markedly different fashion. In the first place, the omniscient narrator is absent; in each poem, Eurydice is the narrator, albeit in varying guises. Furthermore, her audience is equally specific--she addresses not the mass, faceless audience of society but, respectively, Orpheus and herself. The story revealed in these two poems does not unfold in a conventional, linear fashion, either. Instead, it is concentrated about a particular event--Eurydice's encounter (of sorts) with Orpheus in Hades--and focusses more precisely on Eurydice's complicated impressions of and reflections on that encounter, variously referencing past and future events and experiences in a stream-of-consciousness rather than chronological and linear manner. The literary style of the poems, too, reinforces this aspect; the style is fluid, not confined by static rhythms and patterns, very much evocative of introspective reflection. This rendering also is more likely to establish a connexion with the audience than that of the omniscient narrator tracing chronological events; Eurydice's thoughts are open to the audience in such a way that it is invited into her experience, to some extent--the intimate and personal nature of her experience tends to evoke a similarly personal response.

All of these features combine to create a significantly different function from that of the classical myth, which served to inculcate and uphold cultural truths. Atwood's version of the myth, rendered in Eurydice's voice and
featuring her personal experiences and reflections, suggests alternative ways in which to consider knowledge and truth. Eurydice’s complicated understanding of herself and her world, as told in the particular narrative style that Atwood uses, is internal, experiential, and relative rather than external, absolute, and universal.

Atwood’s particular narrative strategies in “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” not only suggest an alternative perception of truth as a construct in itself, but they serve to challenge virtually every specific “truth” contained in the original version of the myth. This is most evident with regard to the featured characters and the qualities they embody. In the classical version of the myth, Orpheus is portrayed as supremely good, gentle, and kind; he is a musician who spreads pleasure and beauty. Orpheus is, indeed, virtuous but strictly in the original sense of the word—he is a good man, specifically. His love for Eurydice is strong—manly--and pure; it is unadulterated by distractions and cannot be shaken by the most monumental of obstacles—death. Furthermore, this love he has is characterised by the utmost courage. He is driven to “[dare] more than any other man dared for his love” (Hamilton, p. 104) and to challenge her death—specifically, the powerful man (Hades) who now possesses her soul—even if it means risking his own life. His is the truest, best love a man can have for a woman, the myth suggests, and he almost accomplishes the most manly—in terms of being able to dominate and control—act of all: bringing Eurydice back from the dead.

Orpheus’ musical talents, as described in the original myth, are symbolic of his manly goodness, as well. His musical prowess is established by the fact that all who encounter his singing and playing (animal, vegetable,
and mineral) are in his thrall, thus acknowledging him as worthy of the highest adulation. The masculine nature of Orpheus’ talent is confirmed, especially, in his adventures with the Argonauts; his music “aroused [the men] to fresh zeal and their oars would smite the sea together in time to the melody” (Hamilton, p. 104). He manages to inspire the sailors to manly bursts of strength and vigour. The masculine nature of Orpheus’ music is further demonstrated in the Argonauts’ near-fatal brush with the Sirens. Whereas the Sirens’ seductive feminine songs are deceptive—lovely and tempting but ultimately lethal, enticing sailors to their inevitable deaths—Orpheus’ music is pure and good; it drowns out the musical manipulations of the women and sets the sailors back on track, doing their men’s work as they should.

In “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice,” however, Orpheus’ character—although not altered in any way—is perceived very differently. He retains the same manly qualities evident in the original version; he is capable of amazing feats involving the manipulation of nature, including bringing Eurydice back from the dead: “you were singing me; already new skin was forming on me within the luminous misty shroud of my other body; already there was dirt on my hands and I was thirsty” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107). Orpheus’ feats and abilities are perceived by Eurydice as rooted in selfishness and arrogance, however. Instead of admiring his manly fortitude and commitment in coming for her, she sees that deed as selfish of him and threatening to her—it is indicative exclusively of his needs and desires and not hers: “Before your eyes you held steady the image of what you wanted me to become: living again. . . . I was your hallucination, listening and floral”
(Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," pp. 106-107). Eurydice does not attribute evil intentions to Orpheus so much as she points to self-centred, childlike expectations on his part: "This love of yours is not something he can do if you aren't there. . . . He cannot believe without seeing . . . he wants to be fed by you" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109). Much as a child demands attention and gratification, Orpheus wants Eurydice for his own purposes—to listen to, nourish, and confirm him in very material and immediate ways.

Orpheus' music, which is featured so prominently as a vehicle for his manliness in the original myth, also is deconstructed in Atwood's version. In the classic tale, Orpheus' talents were the means by which he asserted his virtuous—manly—prowess, in terms of rendering listeners awed or inspired. In Atwood's version, too, Orpheus' music is capable of great things; even though Eurydice is reluctant to return to the upper world, she is seduced by Orpheus' "song that calls you back, a song of joy and suffering equally: a promise: that things will be different up there than they were last time" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108). Eurydice, however, reveals a darker side of that very talent; she demonstrates how this same masculine music serves as the means by which she is erased and reconstructed to Orpheus' specifications—in this case, to be mortal and pliable, as no member of the natural world can resist him. Eurydice finds Orpheus' music more exploitative than charming; it is his "old leash, love you might call it, and your flesh voice" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," p. 106). Whereas in the original version, Orpheus' music is celebrated for its capacity to manipulate and control others, Atwood's version—through the character of Eurydice—provides a forum for the experience of being manipulated.
The character of Eurydice varies dramatically in the two versions, primarily because she is developed in the Atwood version where she lacks depth in the original--this, in fact, is the most obvious difference between the artifacts. In the classical myth, Eurydice is really mentioned only nominally--she barely exists and is a one-dimensional character. All that is known of her is that, apparently unable to resist Orpheus, she becomes his wife and is stung and killed by a viper that very day. Upon Orpheus' successful bartering with Hades, Eurydice is “summoned” (Hamilton, p. 105) and follows Orpheus through the cavern to the outside world. All of this is described from Orpheus’ point of view via the omniscient narrator, such that his longing to be reassured and anticipation of joy are featured. In the last instant, Orpheus sees her--too soon--and tries to clasp her, but she slips back into the darkness: “All he heard was one faint word, ‘Farewell’” (Hamilton, p. 105). At no point in the story are Eurydice’s own experiences even noted--she is consistently acted upon and consistently inactive. She is variously stung, summoned, behind Orpheus, and slipping back (Hamilton, pp. 104-105), but she is absolutely denied any agency or subjectivity--in stark contrast to Orpheus, who has these qualities in abundance. In the original version of the myth, Eurydice simply takes up space as a passive object who is occasionally manipulated at the whim of others.

The Eurydice of Atwood’s version, on the other hand, necessarily has depth in terms of agency and subjectivity given that both “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” chronicle her reflections and experiences--although, notably, not to the exclusion of others. Eurydice does describe what she thinks Orpheus is experiencing, as well. In these poems, then, Eurydice’s character comes
to life. Eurydice acknowledges Orpheus’ perception of her as a passive object to be manipulated; she sees this attitude of his epitomised in his seeking her out to get her back:

I was obedient, but numb, like an arm gone to sleep; the return to time was not my choice . . . something stretched between us like a whisper, like a rope: my former name, drawn tight. You had your old leash, love you might call it, and your flesh voice. (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 106)

Eurydice recognises that Orpheus values her passivity; it is why he has come for her, what he wants her to be--“listening and floral” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107). So convinced is he of her nature as an extension of him that, she realises, he arrogantly will perceive her return to Hades as a “failure” on his part: “You could not believe I was more than your echo” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107).

The Eurydice of Atwood’s version, however, is neither whole nor complete in terms of her identity. She describes herself, as she is in the underworld, as “chilled and minimal: moving and still both, like a white curtain blowing in the draft from a half-opened window beside a chair on which nobody sits. . . . [A] handful of gauze, little bandage, handful of cold air” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” pp. 108-109). She is insubstantial and ethereal--suspended, as it were--but left alone. Eurydice acknowledges that she has not discovered her identity in this most recent incarnation; however, she prefers it to be a consequence of solitude and silence rather than of direct imposition by another. In other words, she prefers to be nothing than to be something of someone else: “it is not through him you will get your freedom” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 109).
Eurydice seems to have some measure of agency in Atwood's version that is not apparent in the original, although her agency is not explicit. Conspicuously absent in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" is the bartering session between Orpheus and Hades, a particularly strange omission given that the underworld is the sole focus of Atwood's poems and that the bartering scene features so prominently in the original. The only mention of the king of the underworld is a figure "who passes you [Eurydice] without speaking" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108). In addition, Eurydice seems compelled to follow Orpheus herself, not as a result of the men's negotiation of her fate: "It is the song that calls you back, a song of joy and suffering equally: a promise: that things will be different up there than they were last time" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108). Because she has no substance, Eurydice is vulnerable to Orpheus' consuming love—it threatens to consume her as he imposes his desires and expectations upon her: "It was this hope of yours that kept me following" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," p. 106). Eurydice is also drawn by distant memories of a time in which she accepted that love; "you almost remember him. He says he is singing to you because he loves you, not as you are now. . . . You hold love in your hand, a red seed you had forgotten you were holding" (Atwood, "Eurydice," pp. 108-109). Even though Eurydice's actions are fraught with apprehension, given her understanding that she is being consumed by Orpheus, her actions appear to be her own—she is not being shuttled between two men.

Most significant in terms of Eurydice's apparent agency in Atwood's version of the myth is Eurydice's description of her return to the underworld. In the original version, Eurydice is forced to return by Hades based on the
condition stipulated by him regarding her exit from the underworld—it is entirely Hades’ doing. In “Orpheus (1),” however, Eurydice seems to have some choice in the matter: “Though I knew how this failure would hurt you, I had to fold like a gray moth and let go. You could not believe I was more than your echo” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107). In this scenario, she is responsible for her return, and she appears to be weighing the consequences of a decision that is her own.

A significant difference between the two versions of the myth also exists relevant to how the world—the upper world—is conveyed. In fact, superficially, it is described identically in terms of content. It contains trees, meadows, birds, and sunlight in the original, and in Atwood’s version, it is characterised by a “green light” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 106), reflecting Eurydice’s apprehension of it as alien and unusual, “noise and flesh” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 108), trees and sun. What the world above means, however, is radically different in each version. In the classical myth, as told in terms of Orpheus’ experiences, the world—described interchangeably as nature—is a positive place; it is beautiful and filled with greenery and sunlight. The world also is overwhelmingly receptive to Orpheus—so enamoured are the various inhabitants of the natural world of his music that he “led the trees, led the wild beasts of the wilderness.” Everything animate and inanimate followed him. He moved the rocks on the hillside and turned the courses of the rivers” (Hamilton, p. 103). As such, the world is not only the perfect setting for Orpheus, but it is conducive to him: “there was no limit to his power when he played and sang. No one and nothing could resist him” (Hamilton, p. 103).
Eurydice recognises and confirms Orpheus' intimate connexion with the outside world in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice"—unlike her, he can "stop light. He wants to feel himself thickening like a treetrunk or a haunch and see blood on his eyelids when he closes them, and the sun beating" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109). For Eurydice, however, this connexion to the outside world is threatening; it belongs to Orpheus. Just as he surely will erase her identity—mold, confine, restrict, and consume her—so will the world comply with and assist him in that deed. Eurydice, indeed, describes the upper world as malevolent, "the green light that had once grown fangs and killed me" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," p. 106). Orpheus' passionate love, too, is not truly a part of Eurydice, she realises; it is "a red seed" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109) that she holds forgotten in her hand in the colourless underworld. The seed (Orpheus' love) is of nature and therefore is dangerous to her. The love that Orpheus professes for Eurydice, in fact, has nothing to do with her; rather, it is of Orpheus and his world.

In "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," Eurydice clearly perceives Orpheus as attempting to make her like the world—nature—that he so easily can control. In the original version of the myth, in fact, he describes her to Hades as "the bud [that] was plucked before the flower bloomed" (Hamilton, p. 105), in such a way as to convey his praise of and admiration for her. In Atwood's version, however, Eurydice suggests that Orpheus' perception of and desire for her to be, ideally, "listening and floral" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," p. 107), is more indicative of his need to be admired than of his admiration for her.
Eurydice’s conscious comparison of herself to a “gray moth” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107)—although it does not correspond precisely with imagery of her in the original version of the myth—suggests further that she is aware that Orpheus’ vision of her necessarily denies her. As a moth, she has considerably more agency than a passive “bud” or “flower” (Hamilton, p. 105), as Orpheus describes her. Eurydice’s comparison of herself to a gray moth also acknowledges her emerging awareness of her surroundings and her options—like the moth, she is experiencing metamorphosis. The butterfly—the implicit alternative to a moth—is a possible but troublesome option for Eurydice, however. The colourful butterfly is distinguished by its delicate, ephemeral beauty, which in turn makes it the most coveted object of possession in nature collections—a process that necessitates its death. On the other hand, although far more similar to than different from the butterfly, the gray moth is a nocturnal creature whose lack of colour renders it undistinctive; therefore, it is left alone, ignored. Eurydice finally chooses this identity rather than that of the butterfly for those reasons. As such, she can evade Orpheus’ desire to possess her as part of “his” nature, “his” world.

Finally, the moth’s ability to remain relatively inconspicuous—by virtue of its dull colour and its night cover—also grants it a measure of safety and agency unavailable to the butterfly. As a gray moth, Eurydice is drawn initially to the “green light” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 106) and the tantalising promise it represents—“that things will be different up there than they were the last time” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 108). At the last moment, however—as she seems to remember fully its danger—Eurydice chooses to “fold . . . and let go” (Atwood, “Orpheus [1],” p. 107), returning to her chosen environs, unlike the butterfly
that belongs in the world of green light. Eurydice has undergone metamorphosis and has emerged from her cocoon of numbness, but she has directed the process.

Atwood’s Eurydice appears to have made a conscious choice between the upper world and the underworld; just as she has chosen, finally, her identity, she has chosen her environment. To “the noise and flesh of the surface” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 108)--Orpheus’ surface--she prefers “emptiness and silence; the stagnant peace of the deepest sea” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 108). Significantly, this brief episode with Orpheus has stirred in her a consideration of what it would mean to be free. She understands upon this reflection that her current limbo--“feeling nothing . . . moving and still both” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 108)--does not satisfy her any longer. Although she knows, finally, that “it is not through him [Orpheus] you will get your freedom” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 109), this revelation also clarifies for her that she never was free in the underworld, either--she recognises her heretofore haven of escape as a “domain of hunger” (Atwood, “Eurydice,” p. 109) in which she cannot be satisfied.

Each feature that constitutes difference between the texts is attributable to a shift in voice evident in the appropriation. Although the primary elements--characters, plot, and setting--are retained in Atwood’s version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, the subtle shift in her poems with regard to who tells the story results in a variety of profound differences. With Eurydice unfolding the tale, an entirely different set of impressions is conveyed; the story takes on an entirely different meaning, and original assumptions, consequently, are challenged. The story also becomes
personal and internal rather than universal—Eurydice, as narrator, remains true to her own experiences and reactions and cultivates intimacy by addressing Orpheus and herself. Atwood's version of the tale makes room for Eurydice and a heretofore-absent worldview.

Messages of Emancipation

Several messages of emancipation can be identified in Atwood's version of the Orpheus and Eurydice mythological tale, most of which are attributable to the narrative strategies utilised in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice." Perhaps most obvious of these messages is the fact that Atwood's poems give Eurydice voice, symbolically giving woman voice in a thoroughly patriarchal context. Mythology in general depicts an extremely patriarchal culture in which women are portrayed according to misogynist stereotypes when they are portrayed at all.

Because mythology serves as a means to convey moral lessons intended to reify and reinforce traditional social--patriarchal--norms, a narrative that specifically entails a woman's perspective is, by itself, emancipatory for women. In Atwood's version, Eurydice is no longer the wallpaper of the original version; rather, she is a thinking, feeling, complex agent utterly distinct from Orpheus. In a world that turns on women's silence, simply giving women voice is emancipatory.

Atwood's appropriation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth not only gives women voice but validates their experiences, a feature that also conveys an emancipatory message. "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" are personal and intimate descriptions of Eurydice's impressions of her experiences; they are recounted by her to Orpheus and to herself,
heightening this sense of intimacy. In addition, Eurydice clarifies that, while she recognises Orpheus' utter pleasure and contentment in his world and his love, she perceives these things very differently. Evidence exists that women come to know and understand through processes characterised by experience, context, and connectedness with others (see, especially, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), elements that are all present in Atwood's poems. These qualities contrast markedly with those of the original myth, which is premised upon and reinforces assumptions of universal truths: for instance, that the world is warm, welcoming, and kind; that love is good and equally kind; that Orpheus' so-called courage is indicative of his great love for Eurydice; and, implicitly, that Eurydice naturally will welcome Orpheus' travails on her behalf. The story is told by an omniscient narrator, too, a strategy that reinforces the immutability of these truths—an omniscient narrator, by definition, knows all and is timeless. By rejecting this traditional—patriarchal—mode of storytelling and conveying the tale from Eurydice's perspective in this intimate manner, Atwood's version validates and legitimises women's experiences and knowledge.

A third emancipatory message identifiable in Atwood's version of the myth is attributable primarily to content rather than to narrative form. "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" cultivate an awareness and questioning of identity through the character of Eurydice. Upon Orpheus' attempt to reclaim her, Eurydice is forced to consider her existence—previous and potential, as well as current—and, consequently, to achieve a greater understanding of who she is and what she wants. Prior to this incident, Eurydice has been in limbo—ensconced in a cold, dark world of silence, feeling nothing, "chilled
and minimal" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108); as such, she has not had to reflect--or was not able to--on her circumstances. Once confronted with the possibility of returning to Orpheus' world, however, she becomes very aware that this is not what she desires. She articulates her impressions through her conception of self--she perceives herself in Orpheus' world as erased but replaced instead with his "hallucination, listening and floral" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108). In this world, she ceases to exist and becomes instead a mere reflection of his narcissism--his "echo" (Atwood, "Orpheus [1]," p. 107). In the underworld, she still has no substance, no identity; she is still erased, but, upon comparison, she finds this far preferable to being Orpheus' mandated groupie--she describes her surroundings as peaceful and relatively easy (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 108).

Significantly, Eurydice's sudden, clear knowledge of what she does not want leads her to consider what she might want and who she might be; in essence, she begins to consider that these two men's worlds may not be her only two options--she begins to consider "freedom" (Atwood, "Eurydice," p. 109) and what it might mean for her. She begins to understand herself--who she is and what she wants. In this respect, Atwood's appropriation of the classic myth is emancipatory in that it conveys the message that women's identities cannot be forged on men's conditions; more to the point, they only can be forged exclusive of those conditions, and knowing what those conditions are is critical to the process. Atwood's poems suggest that this process of identity formation holds true even if men's conditions and terms are well intentioned; Orpheus and his world, adorned with protestations of
true love, are even more threatening to Eurydice's freedom than the discomfitting chambers of Hades.

Conclusion

In "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," the only aspect of the original Orpheus and Eurydice myth altered is that of perspective. In the original version, Orpheus' story is told to a general audience in a conventionally-chronologically-linear fashion, via an omniscient narrator. In Atwood's appropriation, Eurydice is the narrator who addresses Orpheus and herself, respectively, and her experience is conveyed in a stream-of-consciousness manner. Consequently, Eurydice's personal impressions of and reflections on her experiences are made apparent where they were entirely absent before. This strategy provides an entirely different perspective from which to interpret the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Whereas the original version of the myth refers to Eurydice only vaguely as the inherently passive object of various manipulations, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" provide an account of this experience from the other side--that of the subject of those manipulations.

This particular strategy of appropriation, which I have chosen to label shifting voice, functions, essentially, as an unveiling. That which was absent originally is made present, very much in the sense that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1968) use the notion of presence--as a means of endowing something with significance. In Atwood's appropriation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, Eurydice is transformed from the passive object of Orpheus' need--she is not even described, much less developed--into a complex, thoughtful, and insightful subject. The myth originally functions
without her; Atwood's version suggests the enormous gap entailed by her silence.

Shifting voice, as it occurs in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," has significant potential for appropriation as an emancipatory strategy. This strategy does not "take on" the original in terms of replacing or altering key elements--characters, setting, actions--a practice that risks reification of ideas and values traditionally harmful to members of submerged groups. When appropriation occurs in a confrontational, combative way on the terms of the oppressor, a very real risk is that the appropriation is accepted as an interesting, amusing anomaly; the value system that supports the objectification and commodification of women is not challenged. In addition, features that tend to characterise oppression--violation and exploitation, especially--actually are utilised in these sorts of appropriative endeavors. Again, these cases may appear to suggest that oppressive systems themselves are less problematic than who wields power--as conceived within those paradigms--in the context of those systems.

 Appropriation that features the exclusive strategy of shifting voice, however, turns on retaining all of the elements of the original artifact; by virtue of the shift, however, they are understand in a radically different way that challenges virtually every notion advanced in the original. By shifting voice, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" do not confront the original myth in an aggressive, combative manner; the poems do not constitute a retelling so much as they constitute a different telling. Because Atwood's collective version of the myth does not engage, truly, with the original version, the risk of reifying subversive systems and values is virtually eliminated; rather,
Atwood's version, told by Eurydice, invites the audience to consider Eurydice's alternative understanding of the same story. In the sense that Gearhart (1979) describes womanised rhetoric, shifting voice creates the conditions for change by offering the audience--especially an audience of women--another possible way to understand the tale. In this capacity, shifting voice is more reminiscent of shedding light than of stealing it.

The appropriative form of shifting voice also suggests that women's emancipation is something located in women, to be defined by women. Because the frame of reference--rather than the story itself--is altered by shifting the voice in which the story is told, this sort of appropriation turns its attention to all that women have not said and cannot say as a result of their imposed silence--and validates them. Furthermore, these experiences usually challenge, fundamentally, male experiences that have been accepted historically as universally true; this is why, in fact, women are silenced in the first place--to ensure male privilege. As a result, giving women voice reveals that experiences and perspectives that differ radically from imposed patriarchal descriptions of the world are available. With regard to emancipation, then, the appropriative strategy of shifting voice prompts women to consider that their emancipation may be very different from the way in which patriarchy defines it.
CHAPTER V
AN EVALUATION OF
FEMINIST RHETORICAL APPROPRIATION

My purpose in undertaking this project has been to increase understanding of the nature and function of feminist rhetorical appropriation. Specifically, the research questions that have guided this endeavor are:

(1) What features characterise feminist rhetorical appropriation? How do they interact to constitute such appropriation?

(2) How does feminist rhetorical appropriation correspond with what we know about appropriation in general—is it oppressive, inappropriate, or empowering?

(3) What message(s) of emancipation is(are) implied by each instance of appropriation?

(4) Is appropriation a strategy that should be used by feminist rhetors to achieve emancipation? If so, how is appropriation best used by feminists as a tool for freeing women from oppression?

Each instance of appropriation that I have analysed for this project--Shame as an appropriation of Shane, The First Supper as an appropriation of The Last Supper, and “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” as a collective appropriation
of the classical Greek and Roman myth of Orpheus and Eurydice--has offered distinctive insights into the phenomenon of feminist rhetorical appropriation.

Summary of Analyses

In my analysis of *Shame*, I identified five messages relevant to women's emancipation as a result of that film's appropriation of the original artifact, *Shane*. Specifically, I found that, on many levels, patriarchal constructs are reified in *Shame*, primarily through the lead character of Asta, who embodies and enacts many of the same masculine qualities that Shane--Shane's lead character--does. I also found two liberating messages in *Shame*. First, the film suggests that gender is constructed rather than innate, a notion that frees women from confining and oppressive gender roles and allows them to understand that the entire range of characteristics typically dichotomised as strictly feminine or masculine is accessible to them. Second, *Shame* suggests that women do not require men to protect or help them in general or with regard to women's emancipation in particular; furthermore, the film suggests that men cannot help women even if they are so inclined--socialisation makes this virtually impossible. As a result, women are the ones who must free themselves; this message is liberating because it conveys to women that they are powerful to the extent that they can effect positive change.

Two final messages regarding emancipation are evident in *Shame*, as well, although they are hardly optimistic. First, *Shame* offers an intense critical analysis of the implications of traditional conceptions of gender; the film asserts that these norms are not simply bothersome or a hindrance--they
are profoundly dangerous, and they result in the grave abuse of women. This message suggests, in terms of women's emancipation, that profound change is necessary. Second, *Shame* asserts that the struggle to entail this change is a long and hard one; no neat resolution is in sight, and the process is painful.

Based on these messages, I found that *Shame*, as an instance of feminist rhetorical appropriation, appears to reify certain patriarchal constructs, primarily by virtue of celebrating masculine qualities demonstrated by women. *Shame* also demonstrates a type of appropriation that I call *completing the narrative* in that it extends the original story that *Shane* tells in two ways: by pushing *Shane*'s claims to their logical conclusions and by shifting the perspective from which the story gets told—from a male to a female point of view.

In *The First Supper*, I found three rather different possible messages of emancipation. First, *The First Supper* could be construed as engaging—the painting is fun, bright, and clearly challenging, and it conveys a sense of playfulness. In this context, the painting invites experimentation with traditional—even sacred—norms regarding gender, race, spirituality, and colonialism that allows viewers to question the necessity of those norms. This phenomenon is emancipatory in that it encourages viewers to understand that they need not be confined by those traditional norms. A second possible interpretation of *The First Supper* with regard to emancipation, however, is that it confuses rather than clarifies what constitutes emancipation. Several things appear to be going on in the painting—references to gender, race, colonialism, and spirituality, for
instance, proliferate. Furthermore, depending on which of these elements is primarily apprehended, conflicting messages can be identified—Western Christianity, for instance, is challenged on many levels in the painting but reinforced on many others. A final way in which The First Supper can be interpreted is as a sophisticated, intellectual, postmodern argument. So many issues are addressed in the painting in a variety of inconsistent ways that it could be construed as a radical rejection of conventional standards—standards that mandate focus, consistency, and linearity, for example. In this respect, The First Supper could be construed as suggesting that emancipation entails a radical reconceptualisation of how the world is ordered.

The various possible readings of The First Supper led me to argue that the painting functions, rhetorically, as a sort of reverse irony. By virtue of its clear reference to a universally familiar artifact—The Last Supper—The First Supper juxtaposes two apparently congruent elements that are fundamentally incongruent. The irony is complicated by the sheer number of potential messages contained in The First Supper, however, as well as by the various inconsistencies within each message.

In “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice,” I identified three messages relevant to women’s emancipation. First, the poems literally give voice to women; where Eurydice is present only nominally in the original version of the myth, she is the narrator of each poem—in the first, she addresses Orpheus, in the second, herself. Second, “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice” validate women’s experience; in the first place, a woman’s—Eurydice’s—experience is showcased exclusively, and it is free of interruption, distraction, or challenge,
within the poem, by others; these elements often characterise women's oppression. In addition, the poems depict the ways in which women come to understand themselves and the world around them. Eurydice draws on her various experiences, her intuitive responses, and her relationships with others, for instance, as the basis for her version of the story. In the original version of the myth, embedded patriarchal assumptions are conveyed as truths that are absolute, external, and universal. Finally, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" assert that women's emancipation entails more than simply a choice between men's worlds or nothing at all. Although the poems do not define liberation for women clearly, they do suggest that it must be achieved by women and not through men; women's emancipation is not available in the world that men have made.

"Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" constitute an appropriation in which all primary narrative elements of the original version have been retained--setting, characters, and plot all remain constant. The perspective, however, has been altered so that the story unfolds through the eyes of a character barely present in the original. This strategy, which I have chosen to label shifting voice, also engenders a profoundly different reading of the story from the original in such a way that patriarchal norms are not reified; rather, Eurydice's experiences are uniquely her own, and they chronicle her reflections, as a woman, on those patriarchal norms. In addition, shifting voice exemplifies a type of appropriation that is not confrontational. Significant elements are not claimed and changed in a manner that may be perceived as exploitative, and in this respect, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice"
appear to invite an additional reading of the text rather than manipulate the original.

Successful Feminist Rhetorical Appropriation

As a result of my analyses of *Shame, The First Supper,* and “Orpheus (1)” and “Eurydice,” I have come to a different understanding of appropriation as a feminist rhetorical phenomenon from the one with which I began this project. I defined feminist rhetorical appropriation at the start of my research as instances characterised by a process in which culturally popular patriarchal stories, songs, myths, rituals, legends, fables, and icons are referenced clearly in such a way that the messages apparent in the new text challenge the patriarchal conceptions of gender in the original. These so-defined feminist appropriations thus serve as a provocative forum in which feminist messages and appeals can be interpreted and evaluated.

I now propose a definition of what constitutes successful feminist rhetorical appropriation. I submit that, in order to function successfully as an emancipatory strategy for women, feminist rhetorical appropriation entails the referencing of an originally patriarchal artifact so that an experience of women’s emancipation is offered. In the appropriation, women’s experiences and perspectives are validated and privileged, and the means used to accomplish the appropriation are consistent with feminist principles and values. The various dimensions of this definition—patriarchal artifact, success, emancipation, women’s experiences, feminist principles, and means—will be examined in detail.

*Patriarchal artifacts* reflect patriarchy’s general hostility toward women as they celebrate patriarchal practices and values. These practices and
values are rooted in a system of domination and hierarchy, and they reflect qualities such as competition, violence, control, and mastery of nature. In addition, patriarchy is defined as masculine and not feminine, according to conventional conceptions of gender. In patriarchal cultures, traditionally women's things--meanings and contributions--are devalued, just as men's things are celebrated. Given that patriarchy permeates most cultures, artifacts reflecting its values proliferate; in fact, almost all cultural artifacts that are readily available and accessible reflect patriarchal values. Very few items exist that validate women or their experiences and reflect feminist practices and values.

In my proposed definition of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation, I regard success as offering audiences an experience of women's emancipation. I am contrasting this specifically with appropriation that places primacy, instead, on subversion. Although the two concepts are not mutually exclusive--in fact, I believe that women's emancipation entails subversion and that emancipation follows subversion--whereas the primary goal of subversion is concentrated on changing the patriarchal system, the focus of emancipation is on an understanding of what a system based on feminist values and principles actually would look and feel like.

The proposed definition also is heavily contingent upon how I define women's emancipation. Although I am hesitant to advance a comprehensive description of emancipation, in part because I believe emancipation is characterised by the freedom of individuals to do that for themselves, I see women's emancipation as constituted by values and practices very different from those that characterise a patriarchal system. I believe that emancipation
for women means creating a new world that reflects and validates women. Women’s emancipation does not mean getting a piece of the patriarchal world, which is premised upon the invalidation and silencing of the feminine; rather, women’s liberation is characterised, fundamentally, by a confirmation and celebration of women and those qualities associated with them—for instance, cooperation, care, an appreciation for diversity, and a cultivation of connexion with others.

Yet another criterion that I have advanced as central to successful feminist rhetorical appropriation is that women’s perspectives and experiences need to be privileged. I suggest this not because I believe that there is an inherent difference between women and men but because I believe that there is a significant difference between men’s and women’s experiences in a patriarchal culture: women’s experiences—and their consequent values and practices—are devalued, and men’s are privileged. As a result, in order to be successful, feminist rhetorical appropriation must feature and validate, instead, women’s particular experiences.

I also suggest that successful feminist rhetorical appropriation must be characterised by feminist practices and values. I characterise feminist principles as respect for diverse perspectives; a recognition of the immanent, inherent worth of others; an appreciation of lived experience; and an appreciation and cultivation of connexion with others and with nature. Furthermore, feminist principles include the valuing of women and their experiences and perspectives.

I stipulate that feminist principles must be featured in the act of rhetorical appropriation because I believe that the end of women’s
emancipation cannot be separated from the means practiced to achieve it. In this sense, I agree with Sonia Johnson (1989) that the means are the ends: 

"how we do something is what we get" (p. 35). If women's emancipation is to be characterised by feminist values and practices, then the means used to attain that end must reflect those very things. Consequently, for feminist appropriation to succeed as an emancipatory strategy for women, it must be characterised by feminist values and practices; if feminist appropriation features as means ones that embody patriarchal values and practices, it tends to reify and reinforce those very systems. In addition, appropriation that entails seizing the meaning and concepts of another seems to perpetuate structures that generally characterise patriarchal oppression--exploitation and violation. To practice invasion in this way is to condone it at some level.

This last feature of my definition--relevant to invasion of the original, patriarchal text--raises methodological questions with regard to how I define text; specifically, my discussion may be construed as suggesting that texts inherently belong to their creators. In fact, however, the way that I perceive of the text is consistent with the model of rhetorical analysis to which I adhere, described in the context of methodological grounds for this project. In this model, the critic fixes--claims and defines--the text, setting its boundaries and establishing the lens and criteria for its analysis. Given that rhetorical analysis of this sort turns on making claims regarding how the messages within a given artifact are interpreted and evaluated by an audience, and given further that claims are justified in terms of explaining the critic's movement from data to claim, invasion occurs whenever the data upon which
an analysis is based—the original artifact, in the context of appropriation—have been altered. In this sense, a text has been invaded and thus prompts its reinterpretation and reevaluation. The reanalysis, indeed, could reveal the new text to be engaging, provocative, and playful for its audience; however, to the extent that the original text has been altered in such a way that a reevaluation is necessary, the original text has been invaded. Relatedly, when reevaluation of a text is necessitated, an effort to achieve mastery or domination—of the interpretation and evaluation of the text’s messages—is evident; significantly, in terms of this particular project, that effort is fundamentally inconsistent with feminist principles and values as I have defined them.

Appropriation that turns on referencing rather than invading the original text, however, does not reflect an effort to dominate or control the interpretation of the event, primarily because referencing does not entail altering the text in any way. Instead, appropriation that features as referencing of the original artifact serves to shed light rather than steal it; that is, it suggests an additional—rather than “superior” or “true”—understanding of events or circumstances chronicled in the original. Moreover, appropriation that references rather than invades generally features terms and experiences not apparent in the original; this characteristic, too, dramatically lessens the likelihood that a rhetorical critic would perceive the appropriation as competing with the original text and thus she would not feel compelled to revise or abandon her evaluation of the appropriated text.
Assessment of Artifacts as Feminist Rhetorical Appropriation

Shane/Shame

The artifacts that I have analysed in the context of this project reflect the criteria I have advanced for successful feminist rhetorical appropriation in varying degrees. The film, Shame, represents an instance of the appropriative technique, completion of the story, in the sense that Shame finishes the narrative laid out in Shane, the appropriated artifact, and does so from a woman's point of view.

Shame certainly has appropriated a patriarchal artifact—Shane—and thus does meet the first criteria I proposed in my definition of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation. Shane embodies many of the principles, practices, and values associated with patriarchy and, consequently, associated with gender oppression. Specifically, Shane contains strong themes of domination, control, and competition.

According to my proposed definition, Shame is not successful in that it does not offer an experience of women's emancipation. The film appears to suggest, instead, that women's emancipation may not be possible; the strongest message of emancipation articulated in the film is that patriarchy is inevitable, and the best that women can do is cope with or resist it by adopting patriarchal norms. The audience is not provided with a glimpse of what freedom from gender oppression might mean for women. As a result, Shame also does not articulate what I have suggested might constitute women's emancipation—a world in which women are validated and feminist principles are reflected. Shame conveys instead that such a world is not possible.
Another of the criteria that I have suggested constitute successful feminist appropriation is partially fulfilled in *Shame*—the film features and validates women's experiences. *Shame* does so primarily by unfolding from a woman's perspective; the audience is encouraged to understand how events in the film affect women. The film does not, however, privilege women's experiences; the final message seems to be that the best way to cope with patriarchy is to adopt patriarchal practices, a message that also suggests that women's experiences are for naught.

As an instance of feminist rhetorical appropriation, *Shame* also does not embody or reflect feminist principles. In the first place, it is premised on invading *Shane*; it manipulates elements of the original story by altering characters and certain features of the plot. In addition, the film does not validate feminist practices and values; it suggests that women can be just like men, a point that does not address issues of gender oppression but reifies patriarchal principles instead. Asta, especially, is masculine, according to conventional gender types; she also is the hero who saves the women of the town. Although the women demonstrate their strength at the end of the film, it is the same sort of aggressive and violent strength that Asta embodies. This dynamic serves to reinforce patriarchal norms in that it suggests that the best way—indeed, the only way—to be effective, as a woman, is to be a man. This is the basis, in fact, for the film's message that women don't need men; however, this also implies that to be like a woman is undesirable. In this way, patriarchal norms are reinforced as valuable; women's emancipation is characterised by adopting and practicing them.
The First Supper/The Last Supper

In my analysis of *The First Supper*, I found that it represented an instance of reverse irony because of its unmistakable evocation of *The Last Supper*. Specifically, *The First Supper* appears, by virtue of its strong resemblance to *The Last Supper*, to be congruent with it; however, upon closer analysis, fundamental incongruence becomes evident.

*The First Supper* certainly has appropriated a patriarchal artifact. *The Last Supper* embodies many of the qualities associated with patriarchy—indeed, it is a revered artifact in Western patriarchal culture. The theme of hierarchy, especially, pervades *The Last Supper*, as do themes of competition and control—with and of nature, primarily.

I have strong reservations about reverse irony as a particular appropriative technique, reservations generated by the criteria contained within my definition of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation. I believe that success as I have articulated it—offering an experience of emancipation—is hampered by reverse irony because this tactic relies upon a near duplication of the original artifact. As a result, many of the experiences articulated in the original may be assumed by the audience to exist in the appropriation as a result of the sheer strength of the unmistakable reference. In the case of *The First Supper*, then, the audience's apprehension of it is premised upon its understanding of *The Last Supper*; in this sense, identifying an experience of emancipation in *The First Supper* that is distinct from that in *The Last Supper* becomes a difficult, if not impossible, task.

*The First Supper*'s messages of emancipation also do not correspond with the definition of emancipation that I have advanced. Each of the three
possible interpretations that I identified seem unhelpful with regard to cultivating women's emancipation. Two possible interpretations of The First Supper that I identified--confusing and postmodern--both turn on ambiguity, especially in relation to the painting's referent, The Last Supper. Namely, where The Last Supper is characterised by a clear, focussed message organised according to and reflective of conventional patriarchal standards, The First Supper is characterised, instead, by a proliferation of messages, each of which appears to be internally inconsistent. The thoroughly ambiguous nature of The First Supper suggests that emancipation, likewise, is characterised by a total absence of definition; with regard to gender, then, the painting appears to reject the notion that women can be described--and therefore constrained--in any consistent fashion. Although I agree with the spirit of this concept of emancipation, I believe that before it can be broached, women's perspectives and experiences--in accordance with feminist principles--need to be validated. Because this does not happen in a patriarchal setting, a suggestion of ambiguity as emancipatory works to the detriment of women; if gender constraints are lifted in a context in which masculinity is celebrated, then ambiguity will look very much like women's assimilation into a patriarchal culture. In other words, the dissolution of definition that ambiguity represents, if it precedes a valuation of women's experiences, is more reflective of an increased submersion of the feminine.

As a result, The First Supper also does not meet the criteria I have suggested with regard to validating women's experiences. In The First Supper, women's perspectives are absent--nothing in the painting appears to describe women's particular experiences, much less validate them.
Rather, women are portrayed assuming men's experiences. Consequently—intensified by the strength of the painting's referent, *The Last Supper*—the ambiguity that characterises the appropriation serves to perpetuate women's silence.

As an appropriative artifact, *The First Supper* does not reflect feminist principles. The first possible interpretation of emancipation I found—that it is engaging in a playful way because it tampers with a sacred patriarchal symbol—is problematic on this count in two ways: first, it is invasive. *The First Supper* has entered a text—*The Last Supper*—endowed with patriarchal meaning and manipulated the elements that constitute it; specifically, *The First Supper* has substituted the white male subjects of *The Last Supper* with women of various races and ethnicities. This practice serves to sanction exploitation and also reinforces patriarchy by demonstrating that women (of all races) can be just like (white) men. Second, this expressly playful engagement could result in a trivialisation of women's emancipation. *The First Supper* could be construed as cute and silly—women are pretending to be men—and may serve to contribute to the patriarchal legacy of not taking women and their concerns seriously.

The two remaining possible interpretations of emancipation that I found in *The First Supper*—confusing and postmodern—also do not reflect feminist values and principles. Both of these messages turn on ambiguity and suggest that women can be like men and/or can practice patriarchy. As a result, patriarchal principles are not challenged and, furthermore, they appear to be condoned as desirable or appropriate to the extent that women
are depicted as having access to them. Feminist values and principles, however, are not apparent in *The First Supper*.

"Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" demonstrate an instance of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation as I have defined it. I found evident in this appropriation the strategy of shifting voice, in which all elements of the original artifact are retained, but the story is told, in the appropriation, by a character all but absent in the original.

The original myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is a patriarchal one. In the tale, control and mastery over nature is a predominant theme, as is domination in terms of possession—Orpheus' of Eurydice, in particular. Hierarchy and competition are also evident; Orpheus and Hades barter over Eurydice, the object in contention, but Orpheus must pay his respects to this god of the underworld.

"Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" are successful in that they offer the audience an experience of emancipation. Through Eurydice, the audience has access to a world that is Eurydice’s alone, as opposed to Orpheus’ patriarchal world. Inside Eurydice, the audience understands, exists an alternative way of being and understanding. More specifically, the audience has access to Eurydice’s awareness and articulation of what emancipation might entail. In the appropriation, women’s emancipation is articulated clearly as unrelated to patriarchy; the poems assert that women’s emancipation is very different from men’s worlds. Although "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" do not clearly describe what women’s emancipation is, they clearly describe what it is not.
In the poems, women's experiences, through Eurydice, are presented in such a way that they are validated. In the first place, the story is told from her perspective alone; second, her tale is conveyed without contradiction, interruption, or distraction from patriarchy or patriarchal representatives. The poems suggest that women's emancipation is constituted by women's particular experiences and characterised by feminist principles. This is conveyed primarily through the rhetorical technique of shifting voice; given that this strategy allows women to articulate their perspectives unrestrained by patriarchal terms, the poems consequently suggest that alternative terms exist. In addition, this recognition is reflected concretely in Eurydice's final (in the poems) awareness that emancipation is something other than the world(s) that men have made. Shifting voice, in this respect, provides a glimpse of what emancipation might look like; the strategy simultaneously serves to validate and celebrate women's experience on their terms.

Feminist practices and values also are confirmed in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice." This instance of appropriation does not engage the original, patriarchal version of the myth beyond referencing it; the appropriation does not invade the original artifact in any way; it does not alter the elements that constitute it. As a result, the appropriation does not exploit the meanings and concepts indigent to the original artifact, thus avoiding engagement with or reification of oppressive strategies. Rather, the poems suggest an alternative interpretation of the very same story by virtue of shifting voice--from an omniscient narrator who, as a third person, views events primarily from Orpheus' point of view to Eurydice herself, who conveys her own personal reflections to Orpheus and herself. In addition, shifting the gender lens in this
manner allows for the audience's entire frame of reference to be shifted, as well, rather than merely adjusting elements of the story while maintaining a patriarchal frame of reference. Consequently, "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice" ensure that the appropriation will be understood on women's terms; the absence of established patriarchal terms in the poems truly privileges a woman's--Eurydice's--perspective.

The appropriative technique of shifting voice could be perceived as, if not invasive of the technical elements of the original, at least violating the original in that the patriarchal meanings are denigrated. But privileging women's voices does not imply necessarily the denigration or exploitation of patriarchy; rather, this technique suggests that alternative experiences of the world exist and are worth considering. Consistent with this dynamic, in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," Eurydice consistently acknowledges that Orpheus perceives events very differently from how she does; thus, she recognises an alternative, patriarchal point of view. Eurydice juxtaposes her reflections with her awareness of his perspective; in fact, however, rather than denigrating Orpheus, this technique implies that he does not reciprocate--he cannot or will not hear her. Shifting voice allows women to break that imposed silence by privileging women's perspectives in a space reserved for them exclusively.

Of the three particular kinds of appropriation that I have identified in my analysis--completion of the narrative, reverse irony, and shifting voice--I find shifting voice to be the appropriative technique most representative of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation. As a type of feminist appropriation, completion of the narrative, as evidenced in Shame, is
promising to the extent that it turns on filling in gaps and extending patriarchal messages evident in the original. This strategy, however, usually necessitates entering the original text in order to fill in those gaps; consequently, completion of the story invades and violates the original text, thus not demonstrating the criterion of feminist principles that I have suggested is necessary for feminist rhetorical appropriation to be successful. Reverse irony, as an appropriative technique, also is problematic in this regard; this technique, as demonstrated in *The First Supper*, relies heavily--primarily--on a strong resemblance to the original artifact. Invading the original text, then, is characteristic of reverse irony; in addition, the prominence of the referent tends to overshadow the messages of the appropriation. The particular appropriative strategy of shifting voice, evident in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," is representative of the definition of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation that I have advanced. This technique meets all of the criteria that I stipulated in the definition; particularly important, it does not engage or violate the original text in any way, thus providing an experience of women's emancipation not premised on patriarchal terms.

My various findings as a result of my analyses also lead me to conclude that much feminist appropriation succeeds only for a feminist or feminist-inclined audience--cognisant of, at some level, gender oppression. Two of the three instances of appropriation that I have examined--*Shame* and *The First Supper*--entail engaging and violating the original, patriarchal artifact; as a result, patriarchal principles permeate the appropriation as well, both within the text and by virtue of the particular appropriative practice. An
audience that accepts and adheres to these patriarchal values probably will perceive this sort of appropriation as either threatening to or confirmation of those values. In essence, then, feminist appropriation that features invasion of the original artifact will result in hostility toward feminism or reification of patriarchal norms. A feminist or feminist-inclined audience, however, which does not subscribe to patriarchal principles, will not feel threatened by feminist rhetorical appropriation but will perceive it, instead, as reinforcement or validation of that audience's experiences. In addition, there is little risk of reification of patriarchal values for this audience because, by virtue of its feminist allegiances, it already has questioned or rejected those norms. This audience, as a result, is able to understand that patriarchy is being challenged--on its own terms--rather than confirmed in the appropriation.

Successful feminist rhetorical appropriation, however, as I have defined it, is promising for audiences other than exclusively feminist or feminist-inclined ones. The sort of appropriation that I suggest is successful does not engage or violate the original, patriarchal text; rather, as demonstrated in "Orpheus (1)" and "Eurydice," it references the original and proceeds to offer an experience of women's emancipation articulated according to feminist principles. As a result, patriarchal principles are absent in the appropriation, and an experience of women's emancipation--free of patriarchal definition--is articulated. This functions for a feminist or feminist-inclined audience as validation, as well as nourishment and resourcement; the appropriation offers this audience a reflection of itself. Successful feminist rhetorical appropriation is promising even for audiences who are not inclined toward feminism, however, because it does not violate or engage the
original artifact. In the first place, the fact that this appropriation draws its strength from and reflects feminist principles eliminates the risk of reification of patriarchal norms for this audience; patriarchy is not engaged and thus not perceived as confirmed by the appropriation. Perhaps even more significantly, audiences with allegiances other than feminist are not likely to feel threatened by this sort of appropriation. By not engaging or violating the original artifact and what it represents (patriarchy), the appropriation is not imposed on a patriarchal audience nor does it insist on a rejection or suspension of that audience's worldview; rather, the audience is invited to consider an alternative--feminist--worldview and to experience women's emancipation.

The definition of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation that I am proposing, then, is reflective of and consistent with Sally Miller Gearhart's (1979) writings on womanised rhetoric. In particular, Gearhart suggests that, historically, rhetorical theory is characterised by traditionally masculine qualities of violence, dominance, and control--persuasion typically has been conceived as changing another individual or group on the assumption that the other's perspective is wrong. Gearhart points out that rhetoric might be reconceptualised as creating the conditions for change; choice is cultivated by presenting one's ideas and perspectives to others rather than coercing them to accept those ideas. In this way, the others choose whether or not to subscribe to those ideas, and the integrity and dignity of all are assumed and preserved. Feminist rhetorical appropriations that validate women's experiences absent in the original artifact and that reflect feminist principles cultivate just such an environment. Without manipulating the original artifact
--thus practicing coercion and violation--an alternative, previously silenced interpretation is suggested that audiences are invited to consider. In this respect, oppression is not perpetuated.

The various media that these appropriations employ appear to have some bearing on the success of each instance, although these findings necessarily are restricted to the artifacts explored in this project and may not be generalisable. On the basis of the three artifacts that I examined, in terms of successful feminist rhetorical appropriation as I have defined it, those appropriations that engage film and art appear to be riskier than those that utilise a literary medium. A feature that characterises both cinematic and artistic media is spectatorship, a concept that describes the phenomenon of a text constructing the position that a spectator must occupy in order to apprehend and understand the text. Spectatorship entails a number of elements that might qualify the success of a feminist rhetorical appropriation. First, viewership has long been associated with distance to the extent that an objective stance is assumed—what is seen becomes mastered, controlled, and owned. Significantly, spectatorship is associated with the masculine (see, e.g., Berger, 1973; Mulvey, 1989; Parker, 1987; Pribram, 1988) in such a way that a female subject is positioned as object displayed for the male gaze, a gaze that women, too, are compelled to assume in their apprehension of such a text. Not only is distance cultivated by media that demand spectatorship so that positioning of subject and object are determined but the location of the spectator tends to be fixed as well—the boundaries from within which an audience perceives the artifact are
constructed, physically and narratively. As a result, audiences of visual media are obligated to assume a specified point of view.

A literary medium, however, is not inherently inclined to be characterised by a predetermined positioning in the way that visual media are (see, e.g., Showalter, 1985b) so that the audience is less distanced and less constrained as a necessary feature of the medium. Spectatorship can be constructed within a literary context in terms of the particular style adopted--Hamilton's (1969) version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, in fact, is one such example--but its is not a necessary feature of the medium. For feminist rhetorical appropriation to be successful in terms of reflecting feminist principles and values and not reifying patriarchal practices of domination and control, then, a literary medium appears to be less likely than visual media to impose a reading.

With regard to the particular context in which a given medium is usually understood, literature is less public, strictly, than film or art--even though interpretation of a given artifact is fundamentally an individual phenomenon, consumption of literature tends to be more intimate and personal than viewing a film or art. The respective media of art and film, however, generally are designed mass consumption at any one time; even when viewed by an isolated individual, one has a general awareness of that feature. Although literature is mass published, it is designed and understood to be geared primarily to one reader at a time; as such, the nature of literature seems to be more personal or intimate. In terms of feminist rhetorical appropriation, literature as a medium may be more consistent with feminist principles on this point as well, which include a cultivation of intimacy and
connectedness in terms of shared experience. This stands in contrast to the impositional quality that is inclined to characterise visual media by virtue of fixed spectatorship and its consequent dynamics of controlled knowledge; a literary medium is more inclined to embody and cultivate engagement and thus more likely to reflect invitational rhetoric.

Relative complexity of the medium by which appropriation is conveyed may contribute to its degree of success, as well. Of the three media featured in the context of this project, film is the most complex, rhetorically—a variety of dynamic visual (lighting and editing, for instance) and aural (sound effects, dialogue, music) cues, in addition to the actual narrative depicted in the film, all contribute to an understanding of the film. As a result, there are a number of elements that could interrupt or distract, for instance, an audience's experience of women's emancipation; consequently, the sheer number of elements to which the audience might attend may serve to hamper an understanding that is already confined by established positioning.

Although an artistic medium is not characterised by the sensory complexity of film, from a rhetorical perspective, art is a very ambiguous medium in general, and exclusively visual art is particularly so (see, e.g., Foss, 1986). This ambiguity could work in more than one way with regard to appropriation. On the one hand, this ambiguity serves to compensate, to some extent, for the fixed location of the viewer. On the other hand, however, the fact that art cannot posit the negative and is non-propositional (Postman, 1985) cultivates uncertainty and, possibly, confusion; this could qualify an experience of appropriation, given that the relationship between the original and appropriated texts is primary and given that challenge or negation
seems so heavily implied by that phenomenon. As a medium, art is very
invitational to the extent that it allows the audience to draw freely its own
conclusions; however, in terms of appropriation, this inherent ambiguity may
hinder a specific understanding of the text, which appropriation would seem
to prompt. As a result, the artistic arena may be less compatible than others
with the nature and function of appropriation.

Literature is the least rhetorically complex medium of the three
featured in this investigation of feminist rhetorical appropriation. With regard
to sensory engagement, a literary medium entails merely words on a page.
A reader, however, is required to exercise agency in that understanding is
achieved only by the act of reading the text. Although potential
interpretations are limited to the content of the text by virtue of its verbal,
necessarily propositional nature, the reader is more likely (relative to other
media) to be free to participate in that experience. Again, literature is not an
inherently superior medium for appropriation, for audience position certainly
can be defined and constrained by a literary text; however, literature does
appear to be more flexible than other media in that it can refrain from fixing
the audience while still, as a text, having some boundaries.

Art, as a medium, is characterised thoroughly by ambiguity, or no
definition whatsoever; film, conversely, is rife with definition, so that
understanding is imposed in the context of sensory bombardment. In many
respects, then, literature functions as a happy medium, so to speak, because
it sets generous limits for audience understanding within which the audience
might participate in and experience the text. For feminist rhetorical
appropriation to be successful as I have defined it, offering the audience an
opportunity to experience women's emancipation is critical; consequently, of the three media engaged in this project, literature appears to be the most conducive to that end.

Reevaluation of the Literature

Many of the features of feminist rhetorical appropriation that I have identified have been discussed in the existing literature that addresses appropriation in terms of its philosophical implications. In my review of that literature, I organised it into three general categories: appropriation as oppression; appropriation as inappropriate; and appropriation as emancipation. Proponents in the first group suggest that power is a necessary condition of appropriation—it only can be practiced by socially and politically dominant entities. For instance, Edward Said (1987; 1989) describes appropriation as a strategy of colonisation; appropriation, he argues, is a means by which submerged groups are exoticised by their oppressors so that oppression is reinforced and perpetuated. Mary Daly (e.g., 1984; 1990) also subscribes to this notion; she describes how women's meanings and experiences have been claimed and distorted by men throughout recorded history. Indeed, she advocates expropriation, in which women engage in reclaiming those things that originally belonged to them.

I do not believe that conventional power—practiced by dominant groups—is a necessary condition of appropriation, as these theorists assert. My analysis of three instances of feminist appropriation suggests that submerged groups are able to identify, address, and challenge in various ways artifacts typically associated with patriarchy.
Those theorists who suggest that appropriation is inappropriate generally do so because they are concerned that using the terms of the oppressor necessarily indicates the sanctioning of those terms. As a result, as Sonia Johnson (1989) argues, the structures undergirding oppression remain intact and, often, are reinforced by appropriation—"our participation in a corrupt system facilitates it and corrupts and therefore defeats us" (p. 1). Bell hooks (1990), too, sees appropriation as potentially dangerous because it may convey the impression that assimilation—of a submerged group into the dominant culture—is a desirable end because it demonstrates that submerged groups can be just like their oppressors. Furthermore, as Nina Baym (1984) suggests, appropriation as practiced by feminists, in particular, not only is futile and internally inconsistent, but it reifies oppressive structures to the alleged end of emancipation; it may result in the intensified oppression of women. This, she argues, is because appropriation is a patriarchal legacy in itself, and to practice patriarchy is to reinforce women's oppression, regardless of who is at the helm. Many theorists, in fact, voice concerns regarding the exploitative and violating nature of appropriation in general; Daly (1984; 1990) suggests that even if women could practice appropriation, they should not, for it is an inherently unethical practice.

I take seriously the concerns of theorists who suggest that appropriation is inappropriate. Given the pervasiveness of patriarchy and its characteristic misogyny, calling attention to it in the way that much feminist rhetorical appropriation does necessarily means acknowledging that patriarchy is powerful and that women, in contrast, are not. This
acknowledgment, in turn, can suggest that feminists concede a masculine conception of power.

Other theorists enthusiastically extol the virtues of appropriation; they advocate appropriation as an exhilarating, assertive, and unmistakable challenge to oppression. Alicia Ostriker (1985), for instance, hails feminist appropriation as “a vigorous and various invasion” (p. 315) of patriarchy. Other theorists see appropriation as vital to emancipation; Annette Kolodny (1985) suggests, for example, that feminists are “bound . . . to challenge the (accepted and generally male) authority who has traditionally wielded power” via the appropriation of traditionally male legacies and domains. Furthermore, many theorists suggest, appropriation endows members of submerged groups with a sense of their own power and suddenly unrestricted potential (e.g., Barr, 1989; Gentile, 1985; Nogle, 1981; Parker, 1987).

I aligned myself with this last group of theorists when I embarked on this project. I find something viscerally exhilarating about appropriation when I see it and, even more so, when I practice it--appropriation just feels subversive to me, and practicing it makes me feel assertive, confident, and, well, powerful. I am concerned, however, that the power portrayed and celebrated in feminist rhetorical appropriations--a power that can be interpreted as a commodity whose ownership determines emancipation--often is power as it is traditionally conceived: patriarchal and fundamentally characterised by domination and control. This notion of power and its consequent implications for liberation do not correspond to how I conceive of women’s emancipation.
My belief that much feminist rhetorical appropriation is successful only for a feminist or feminist-inclined audience distinguishes my position somewhat from those articulated in the existing appropriation literature. I suspect that much of the literature confronts appropriation as a conversion strategy, addressed to a neutral or hostile audience--one disinclined to accept the messages entailed by the appropriation. This may be why some theorists see appropriation as inevitably unsuccessful without power, why others see it as inevitably reifying oppressive structures, and still others see it as subversive: all of them seem to assume an audience that is the oppressor who might respond in these ways.

The way in which I have defined successful feminist rhetorical appropriation reflects all of my concerns relevant to what existing literature contends with regard to appropriation. I do recommend appropriation as an emancipatory rhetorical technique to be used by feminists under limited circumstances. In particular, I am suggesting that successful feminist rhetorical appropriation entails the referencing of an originally patriarchal artifact so that an experience of women's emancipation is offered. In the appropriation, women's experiences and perspectives are validated and privileged, and the means used to accomplish the appropriation must be consistent with feminist principles and values. With regard to the existing literature, I suggest, in my definition, that appropriation can be practiced successfully by a socially submerged group such as feminists under certain conditions. Primary among these is that it must not engage or violate the appropriated text but simply present women's perspectives as alternatives to mainstream--patriarchal--perspectives. Second, with my definition, I
concede that appropriation can be effective in the sense that it can advance and promote women's emancipation. Third, acknowledged in this definition is that feminist appropriation must be handled with care; given that appropriation entails referencing patriarchal terms, it runs a significant risk of reifying and perpetuating those terms.

My hope in undertaking this study was to provide an increased understanding of feminist rhetorical appropriation to the end of women's emancipation. Although my conclusion is based only on the artifacts contained in this investigation, I believe that appropriation can be used by feminists as a rhetorical technique to the end of women's emancipation under the conditions that I have advanced—characterised by feminist rather than patriarchal principles, both within the artifact and in terms of the appropriation itself, so that the feminine is valued. Successful feminist rhetorical appropriation, as I characterise it, offers various audiences access to an alternative to patriarchy by validating and reinforcing the feminist principles that characterise women's emancipation. Furthermore, appropriation that reflects these criteria shuns invasion, exploitation, and violation—qualities that characterise oppression. Successful feminist rhetorical appropriation, as I have defined it, constitutes a form of invitational rhetoric that articulates an experience of emancipation for audiences.
APPENDIX A

PLATES
PLATE I

The Last Supper
Leonardo da Vinci
PLATE II

The First Supper
Susan Dorothea White
APPENDIX B

HAMILTON’S “ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE”
"Orpheus and Eurydice"
Edith Hamilton

The account of Orpheus and Eurydice with the Argonauts is told only by Apollonius of Rhodes, a third-century Greek poet. The rest of the story is told best by two Roman poets, Virgil and Ovid, in very much the same style. The Latin names of the gods are therefore used here. Apollonius influenced Virgil a good deal. Indeed, any one of the three might have written the entire story as it stands.

The very earliest musicians were the gods. Athena was not distinguished in that line, but she invented the flute although she never played upon it. Hermes made the lyre and gave it to Apollo who drew from it sounds so melodious that when he played in Olympus the gods forgot all else. Hermes also made the shepherd-pipe for himself and drew enchanting music from it. Pan made the pipe of reeds which can sing as sweetly as the nightingale in spring. The Muses had no instrument peculiar to them, but their voices were lovely beyond compare.

Next in order came a few mortals so excellent in their art that they almost equaled the divine performers. Of these by far the greatest was Orpheus. On his mother's side he was more than mortal. He was the son of one of the Muses and Thracian prince. His mother gave him the gift of music and Thrace where he grew up fostered it. The Thracians were the most musical of the peoples of Greece. But Orpheus had no rival there or anywhere except the gods alone. There was no limit to his power when he played and sang. No one and nothing could resist him.

In the deep still woods upon the Thracian mountains
Orpheus with his singing lyre led the trees,
Led the wild beasts of the wilderness.

Everything animate and inanimate followed him. He moved the rocks on the hillside and turned the courses of the rivers.

Little is told about his life before his ill-fated marriage, for which he is even better known than his music, but he went on one famous expedition and proved himself a most useful member of it. He sailed with Jason on the Argo, and when the heroes were weary or the rowing was especially difficult he would strike his lyre and they would be aroused to fresh zeal and their oars would smite the sea together in time to the melody. Or if a quarrel threatened he would play so tenderly and soothingly that the fiercest spirits would grow calm and forget their anger. He saved the heroes, too, from the
Sirens. When they heard far over the sea singing so enchantingly sweet that it drove out all other thoughts except a desperate longing to hear more, and they turned the ship to the shore where the Sirens sat, Orpheus snatched up his lyre and played a tune so clear and ringing that it drowned the sound of those lovely fatal voices. The ship was put back on her course and the winds sped her away from the dangerous place. If Orpheus had not been there the Argonauts, too, would have left their bones on the Sirens’ island.

Where he first met and how he wooed the maiden he loved, Eurydice, we are not told, but it is clear that no maiden he wanted could have resisted the power of his song. They were married, but their joy was brief. Directly after the wedding, as the bride walked in a meadow with her bridesmaids, a viper stung her and she died. Orpheus’ grief was overwhelming. He could not endure it. He determined to go down to the world of death and try to bring Eurydice back. He said to himself,

With my song
I will charm Demeter’s daughter,
I will charm the Lord of the Dead,
Moving their hearts with my melody.
I will bear her away from Hades.

He dared more than any other man ever dared for his love. He took the fearsome journey to the underworld. There he struck his lyre, and at the sound all that vast multitude were charmed to stillness. The dog Cerberus relaxed his guard; the wheel of Ixion stood motionless; Sisiphus sat at rest upon his stone; Tantalus forgot his thirst; for the first time the faces of the dread goddesses, the Furies, were wet with tears. The ruler of Hades drew near to listen with his queen. Orpheus sang,

O Gods who rule the dark and silent world,
To you all born of a woman needs must come.
All lovely things at last go down to you.
You are the debtor who is always paid.
A little while we tarry up on earth.
Then we are yours forever and forever.
But I seek one who came to you too soon.
The bud was plucked before the flower bloomed.
I tried to bear my loss. I could not bear it.
Love was too strong a god. O King, you know
If that old tale men tell is true, how once
The flowers saw the rape of Proserpine.
The weave again for sweet Eurydice
Life's pattern that was taken from the loom
Too quickly. See, I ask a little thing,
Only that you will lend, not give, her to me.
She shall be yours when her years' span is full.

No one under the spell of his voice could refuse him anything. He

Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek.

They summoned Eurydice and gave her to him, but upon one condition: that he would not look back at her as she followed him, until they had reached the upper world. So the two passed through the great doors of Hades to the path which would take them out of the darkness, climbing up and up. He knew that she must be just behind him, but he longed unutterably to give one glance to make sure. But now they were almost there, the blackness was turning gray; now he had stepped out joyfully into the daylight. Then he turned to her. It was too soon; she was still in the cavern. He saw her in the dim light, and he held out his arms to clasp her; but on the instant she was gone. She had slipped back into the darkness. All he heard was one faint word, "Farewell."

Desperately he tried to rush after her and follow her down, but he was not allowed. The gods would not consent to his entering the world a second time, while he was still alive. He was forced to return to the earth alone, in utter desolation. Then he forsook the company of men. He wandered through the wild solitudes of Thrace, comfortless except for his lyre, playing, always playing, and the rocks and the rivers and the trees heard him play gladly, his only companions. But at last a band of Maenads came upon him. They were as frenzied as those who killed Pentheus so horribly. They slew the gentle musician, tearing him limb from limb, and flung the severed head into the swift river Hebrus. It was borne along past the river's mouth on to the Lesbian shore, nor had it suffered any change from the sea when the Muses found it and buried it in the sanctuary of the island. His limbs they gathered and placed in a tomb at the foot of Mount Olympus, and there to this day the nightingales sing more sweetly than anywhere else.
APPENDIX C

ATWOOD'S "ORPHEUS (1)" AND "EURYDICE"
You walked in front of me,
pulling me back out
to the green light that had once
grown fangs and killed me.

I was obedient, but
numb, like an arm
gone to sleep; the return
to time was not my choice.

By then I was used to silence.
Though something stretched between us
like a whisper, like a rope:
my former name,
drawn tight.
You had your old leash
with you, love you might call it,
and your flesh voice.

Before your eyes you held steady
the image of what you wanted
me to become: living again.
It was this hope of yours that kept me following.
I was your hallucination, listening
and floral, and you were singing me:
already new skin was forming on me
within the luminous misty shroud
of my other body; already
there was dirt on my hands and I was thirsty.

I could see only the outline
of your head and shoulders,
black against the cave mouth,
and so could not see your face
at all, when you turned

and called to me because you had
already lost me. The last
I saw of you was a dark oval.
Though I knew how this failure
would hurt you, I had to
fold like a gray moth and let go.

You could not believe I was more than your echo.
He is here, come down to look for you.
It is the song that calls you back,
a song of joy and suffering
equally: a promise:
that things will be different up there
than they were last time.

You would rather have gone on feeling nothing,
emptiness and silence; the stagnant peace
of the deepest sea, which is easier
than the noise and flesh of the surface.

You are used to these blanched dim corridors,
you are used to the king
who passes you without speaking.

The other one is different
and you almost remember him.
He says he is singing to you
because he loves you,

not as you are now,
so chilled and minimal: moving and still
both, like a white curtain blowing
in the draft from a half-opened window
beside a chair on which nobody sits.
He wants you to be what he calls real.
He wants you to stop light.
He wants you to feel himself thickening
like a treetrunk or a haunch
and see blood on his eyelids
when he closes them, and the sun beating.

This love of his is not something
he can do if you aren't there,
but what you knew suddenly as you left your body
cooling and whitening on the lawn

was that you love him anywhere,
even in this land of no memory,
even in this domain of hunger.
You hold love in your hand, a red seed
you had forgotten you were holding.

He has come almost too far.
He cannot believe without seeing,
and it's dark here.
Go back, you whisper,

but he wants to be fed again
by you. O handful of gauze, little
bandage, handful of cold
air, it is not through him
you will get your freedom.
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