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"Not ANdrea":

**THE FICTIONALITY OF THE
CORPOREAL IN THE WRITINGS
OF ANDREA DWORKIN**

Submitted for the degree of Masters by Research in English Literature

By Isobel MacBrayne

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And, lastly, in the immortal words of Caitlin Moran:

“Damn the patriarchy”

Introduction

Andrea Rita Dworkin (1946-2005), radical feminist and tireless political campaigner, was integral in shaping the second-wave feminist movement of 1980s America. Infamous for her vitriolic feminist diatribes, Dworkin shocked many readers with her uncompromising views on sex and pornography and became a controversial and - this thesis argues - misrepresented figure in the media. The purpose of this study is to re-examine and re-evaluate common perspectives of Andrea Dworkin and her work, by critically analysing the fictionality with which she constructed all her writing. This will be achieved by exploring the intertextual blurring between her polemics and fiction, and how her stylistically radical polemics were often read as literal, turning her into a contentious representation of feminism. Dworkin actively sought to further this radical, controversial persona by selective revelations about her personal life to the media, such as a history of domestic violence and rape, which shaped her public perception. Moreover, these discussions of her use of stylistic literary radicalism will reveal how Dworkin constructed and cultivated an identity which served and validated her polemical works, making Andrea Dworkin a symbolic figurehead of radicalism. She used this public image to aggressively push forward the progressive political movement of second-wave feminism.

Though her entire body of work will be utilised, this thesis will focus primarily on her two full-length fictional novels and her autobiographical works, such as her memoirs. Through literary and stylistic analysis rather than literal interpretation, this thesis endeavours to achieve greater understanding of one of the most notorious feminists of the second-wave. This study is a timely re-reading of feminist polemics and radicalism, as this is a style that has been mostly lost in the feminist third-wave; many of the writers have been too focused on conciliatory, mollifying publications rather than texts akin to the dogmatic texts of the 1980s. Using Andrea Dworkin as a case study, this project will consider how a re-reading of her work, and a reclaiming of polemics and radicalism more generally, could be beneficial in light of contemporary feminism. Within the last few years there has been a significant renewal of interest surrounding feminism and women's rights, including national and international movements such as SlutWalk, the Everyday Sexism Project, and the Fawcett Society's march on budget cuts in 2012. Additionally, there has been a new surge in new feminist scholarship and polemics, for example Kat Banyard's *The Equality Illusion* (2010) and Caitlin Moran's bestseller, *How to be A Woman* (2011). Furthermore, there is also a growing and palpable shift back towards radicalism within the burgeoning array of internet

feminist groups and blogs, most prominently 'The Vagenda' and 'Jezebel', and the aforementioned 'Everyday Sexism Project' (Bates, 2014). However, this shift back towards radicalism on the internet is problematic, as the works tend to be unfocused and diverse, and the anonymity web means that there no icon for women to follow. Within the third-wave there is a scarcity of polemical writers who have the capacity to act as rallying figureheads in spearheading the progress of feminism at a mainstream or 'grassroots' level.

In trying to examine the potential value of polemics and radicalism for third-wave feminism, there has been little critical engagement with Andrea Dworkin's work that provides (or even considers) a sufficient and multi-layered literary analysis of her body of work, her public identity and how the two effectively worked in conjunction to create an embodied representation of radical feminism. The radicalism found in the second-wave texts has been dismissed too easily by third-wave writers, most of whom choose to write in a journalistic style that is free from the polemical style. A renewed interest in the area of women's rights gives cause to look back and reassess the previous works of radical second-wave writers, analysing them with fresh eyes and tools of literary analysis to explore where radical feminism could go in the contemporary context. This thesis seeks to argue that strident and vitriolic polemics could once again become part of the feminist movement without fear of being dismissed as 'too extreme', and that this would bring new energy and diversity to a movement that needs a new direction. This project hopes that a reinterpretation of radicalism as a stylistic and literary (rather than literal) construction could contribute to feminism rediscovering a defining voice.

The origins of Andrea Dworkin's political life began long before her entry into feminism and literature in 1974. By her college years Dworkin was already a radical and a campaigner, becoming a part of the left wing campaign against the Vietnam War while still at university, where she studied Literature. She spent several years abroad, but after escaping a marriage with an abusive husband and a dark period working in prostitution, Dworkin returned to the USA, already having begun her first book, *Woman Hating* (1974). A prolific writer, Dworkin wrote nine full length works on feminism between the years 1974 to 2002. Her career started with writing essays for journals in the mid-1970s, many of which have been anthologised in *Letters from a War Zone* (1988), and she was a strong voice in grassroots activism. Her first full length publication was *Woman Hating: A Radical Look at Sexuality* (1974), which was shortly followed by *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics* (1976). She

entered the mainstream of feminist discourse, however, with her seminal 1981 publication of *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. Dworkin categorically delineates the systematic oppression of women in pornography, beginning with the Greek etymology of the word, through the Marquis de Sade, to modern depictions in contemporary magazines such as *Playboy* and *Hustler*.

This analysis of the sexual submission of women was further developed in her 1987 work, *Intercourse*. In this book Dworkin discusses the social implications of how the relational dynamics of sexual intercourse influence and perpetuate existing power relations between genders in wider society. Much like in *Pornography* (1981), Dworkin argues that men have used sexual intercourse as a means of debasing women through laws, media images and language: “This reality of being owned and being fucked – as experience, a social, political, economic, and psychological unity – frames, limits, sets parameters for, what women feel and experience during sex” (1987: 77). *Pornography* and *Intercourse* are Dworkin’s most well-known polemics, but she also published *Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel, and Women’s Liberation* (2000) and two collections of essays, *Letters from a War Zone* (1988) and *Life and Death* (1997). Dworkin left the feminist scene for a few years after a brutal rape in a Paris hotel in 1999, but she re-entered feminist discussions with her 2002 political memoir, *Heartbreak*.

What remains less well known is that Andrea Dworkin also published fictional works, including a collection of short stories, *The New Woman’s Broken Heart* (1980), and two full length novels, *Ice and Fire* (1986) and *Mercy* (1990). However, this foray into fiction was not a departure from her polemics, but instead complemented them, employing a variety of literary techniques to intertextually weave her fiction and non-fiction together into a larger, cohesive body of political feminist work. In these novels, Dworkin utilises the fictional form to push forward the messages in her polemics. While her fictional work has often been dismissively labelled as semi-autobiographical due to the names, experiences and aspects of the protagonists being analogous with Andrea Dworkin’s life¹, such a labelling would be

¹ To give a couple of examples: In *Mercy* (1990), the protagonist is named ‘Andrea’ and is involved with anti-war activism, has an abusive husband, and spends a period working in prostitution. In *Ice and Fire* the unnamed protagonist writes a book on Pornography, similar to Dworkin’s seminal polemic *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*.

simplistic. In these novels Dworkin brings literary techniques to the forefront, utilising repetition of phrases and motifs, and metafiction, to constantly undermine the concept of authorship, and to throw into disarray any interpretation or assumption of her works as simply autobiographical. These novels display a myriad of literary devices, used with a heavy hand to drive the message home, displaying significant linguistic and stylistic similarities to the way in which she writes her polemics. She, also, makes references to her own novels and to other writers' work in order to situate her novels within a web of fiction. Creating a dialogue between her works, Dworkin quotes and contradicts herself constantly, in order to draw attention to the fictionality of her body of work.

By analysing the way in which Dworkin used literary techniques to create a dialogue between her fiction, polemics, and memoirs, this thesis will untangle the way in which her connected body of work fictionalised the idea of 'Andrea Dworkin', and seeks to display the relationship this had to her public perception. These fictional works have been, for the most part, overlooked by academics and critics alike, relegated to the side-lines in order to concentrate on her polemical works and public persona. This, however, is a vital mistake, as these novels directly relate to her polemical works, and are the direct counterpart to them. Her writings form an overarching feminist politic and to miss one genre of her work is to compromise her work. This thesis will examine all three aspects of her work: her polemics, her fiction, and her perceptions in the media.

In chapter one, the nature of polemics is discussed and why they were so crucial to the feminists of the second-wave. The chapter will look at Andrea Dworkin's polemics from several angles, analysing how her aggressively argumentative and belligerent style fit within the social and political context of the time, and also, how it was also used as a stylistic technique to target and mobilise a grassroots movement. This chapter focuses upon the ways in which Dworkin was successful in disseminating well-established theoretical arguments about gender relations to a mainstream audience through a militant polemical voice. Her writing was also informed by the testimonies of real women in order to provide a personalised and relatable counterpoint to the more nuanced and 'dry' necessities of feminism in the academy (Whelehan, 1995), and to shock her audience into action, give them a clear 'bottom line' (Viner, 2005). In doing so, Dworkin was manufacturing a feminism of the 'everyday', where the experiences of women were political *because* they were personal, bringing lived experience to the foreground of feminist politics. Dworkin's polemics also

worked in collaboration with her fictional works. This chapter will consider the historical precedents of this combination in feminism, drawing from the works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf and Kate Millet, and explore how these two genres, polemic and fiction – worked in harmony together within feminist works.

In the second chapter, the focus is on Dworkin's fictional works; building upon ideas from the previous chapter surrounding the fictionalisation of Dworkin's body of work, this chapter will explore how Dworkin weaves her fictional works together by making reference to and imitating one another, repeating phrases and recurring motifs. Her work, also, references any other writers, such as Tolstoy and Kafka, and some of these allusions will be examined in depth. Moreover, I will examine how Dworkin's protagonists reflect aspects of her real life, but are then undermined as autobiographical representations through their flawed nature and distinct characteristics. This confuses the supposedly autobiographical identity of the narrator and undermines and destabilises the concept of authorship. All of these techniques significantly distort the line between the fiction/non-fiction binary and amplify the fictionality of her works, demonstrating the stylistic choices she made to frame these works. This chapter will argue that all of Dworkin's publications – her fiction, polemics, and memoirs- constitute an intertextual and cohesive *body* of work which cannot be read in distinct isolation, but read together contribute to clouding the 'reality' of Andrea Dworkin. The premise of this chapter is that Dworkin's body of work, when read together without the anchoring force of 'the author' (Barthes, 1977), reads as an intertextual web of references to one another in which the conventions of genre are creatively played with to obscure definitive distinctions between her fiction and non-fiction.

The third and final chapter will examine Dworkin's reputation as a radical feminist and how she used the media to create a persona which merged with, and complemented, the voice in her works. This chapter will demonstrate how Dworkin was highly selective in her revelations about her personal life, only publicising aspects which served to display her political arguments, creating a role that validated and personified her work. These revealed personal experiences included her rape-like brutalisation in a women's detention centre, her experiences of mental, physical and sexual abuse from her former husband, and her rape in a Paris hotel room in 1999. The reason for using herself and her own personal experiences, throughout her non-fiction work, is that much of the writing of feminism is focused on the individual experiences of women in society, and this makes Dworkin's own experiences a

distinct part of her political arguments. Moreover, this chapter will argue that Dworkin uses personal experience to effectively target a grassroots audience by relating broader social, cultural, and economic process to concrete, individual incidences of the brutality, suffering, and discrimination against women; her own trauma acting as a rallying cry to those who are reading. In conjunction with her radical writing style and ‘voice’, these limited images of Andrea Dworkin, as an aggrieved victim of the crimes against women, turned her into a tangible anthropomorphised symbol of women’s oppression and radical feminism, having the effect of making Dworkin into an idea, a cliché and a character. Finally, I will go on to discuss feminism in the third-wave and how, in reaction to the media backlash against second-wave radicalism, the strident polemics and politics of the past have been replaced by the more journalistic, conciliatory texts that strive not to offend. I will argue that feminism is suffering as a consequence of this style and that there is a growing desire for a return of radicalism. This will lead onto a consideration of Dworkin’s place within modern-day feminism and an argument - the over-arching purpose of this thesis - that second-wave polemics need to be re-evaluated with fresh literary analysis and consideration of the stylistic conventions of genre, and brought back into contemporary feminism.

Chapter I – Re-assessing the Feminist Polemic and its Relation to Fiction

The question this chapter sets out to answer is, how should a polemic² be read, and why do feminists use them so pervasively? The etymology of the word ‘polemic’ comes from the Greek *Polemikos* meaning ‘warlike’ and ‘hostile’³; it is integral to the understanding of the second-wave feminists that this aggressive and combative nature is brought to the forefront of analysis the style, and recognised as the way in which Dworkin brought antagonistic, radical argumentation to the forefront of her analysis. The purposefully one-sided and hyperbolic nature of this style of writing makes it contentious and easy to undermine by opponents, and for a subject as divisive as feminism it often leads to misappropriation and misunderstandings, as was especially the case with Andrea Dworkin, who has been described as “the most maligned feminist on the planet” (Viner, 2005; no pagination). Dworkin’s polemics were written to inflame readers, and despite her university education, Dworkin purposefully shunned explicit academic references in the aim of building a grass-roots movement.

Dworkin’s polemical works are radical in the style of her writing, and she wrote with the intention of inspiring readers, and to make herself an unforgettable presence within feminism, as Judith Grant has claimed, “Over the years, I have found that I simply could not get Dworkin’s work out of my head” (Grant, 2006; 967). It is the unforgettable and haunting aspects that make polemics, including Dworkin’s, so useful for establishing new thought. Grant goes on to argue that, during the second-wave, polemics had a very distinct role to play:

They had the passionate rhetorical flourishes characteristic of words intended to incite. As theoretically and politically naive as they may now sound, they spoke with unmediated authenticity from a place of women’s pain and anger that is sometimes made invisible by the jargon and glitz of much theoretically richer and more sophisticated academic prose. (Grant, 2006; 967)

² Oxford English Literature: “1. A controversial argument; a strong verbal or written attack on a person, opinion, doctrine, etc.;(as a mass noun) writing of this kind”.
<http://www.oed.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/Entry/146793>

³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/polemic>

This description of polemical works reveals the climate in which Dworkin and her contemporaries⁴ were publishing, as the period between the 1960s and 80s was a time of huge social upheaval in which the rights of marginalised groups were being fought with tenacity and vigour, such as the civil rights movement and the gay rights protests⁵. The polemical writing that Grant discusses, such as Dworkin's, was not intended to be infallible critiques of gender relations, rather, to eschew caution in favour of expressiveness. Though gender studies and women's studies were becoming popular university disciplines during this time⁶, polemics were part of the grass-roots activism and their aggressive style was used partly to sustain morale of the movement, and also to speak to a wider audience beyond the university⁷. Academic feminism tends to have a limited mainstream appeal and though it is crucial to the development of new ideas, there is little motivating and rallying aspect to it; thus, in the second-wave the amount of feminist polemical writing boomed to coexist with their academic parallels. Polemical mainstream writings can be used to delineate the ideas found in new academic thought, and to disseminate them to a larger demographic.

Even though Dworkin's work is heavily reliant upon radicalism and polemic, and as such eschews traditional academic prudence, her work is actually grounded within academic

⁴ Key feminist polemicists publishing around the same time includes (but not limited to): Betty Friedan *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Valerie Solanas *The SCUM Manifesto* (1967), Germaine Greer *The Female Eunuch* (1970), Kate Millett *Sexual Politics* (1970), Shulamith Firestone *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Susan Brownmiller *Against Our Will* (1975), Catherine MacKinnon *Feminism Unmodified* (1987)

⁵ Key dates for Civil Rights Movement: Freedom Riders Protest (beginning in 1961); The Great March on Washington (1963); Civil Rights Act of 1964 (1964); Murder of Malcolm X (1965); Foundation of Black Panthers (1966); Civil Rights Act (1968). For further research on the Civil Rights Movement see Riches' (2010) *The Civil Rights Movement: Struggle and Resistance* (3rd edition).

Key dates for Gay Rights: Stonewall Riots (1969); Formation of the Gay Liberation Front (1969); the beginning of Gay Pride marches in 1970; For further research into Gay Rights Movement see Marc Stein's (2012) *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*; and Marcus' (2002) *Making Gay History*.

⁶ "The first accredited women's studies class was held at Cornell University in 1969...Women's studies courses took hold across the country." (Horner, 2010: 836). In 1972 the first interdisciplinary journal for Women's Studies, *Feminist Studies*, was published. (Horner, 2010)

⁷ In her article "Is Academic Feminism an Oxymoron?", Judith Stacey laments the decline of activism in the face of academic feminism's institutionalisation: "For what was once the subversive, intellectual arm of a thriving grass-roots movement has been institutionalised and professionalised, while the movement that launched our enterprise is far less activist, confident, or popular" (Stacey, 2000; 1190)

theoretical frameworks, such as gender constructionism⁸, and often within well researched areas, as indicated by her mammoth bibliographies that accompany her polemics. In *Pornography* (1981), for example, Dworkin claims that rape is about power, not sex; this is actually a well-established theory, with its base in psychology and criminology, yet Dworkin makes this assertion with little to no reference to the research behind this premise. She states it in such stark polemical language, in fact, that it suggests this idea is something particularly new and radical, rather than a firmly recognised theory⁹. As such, Dworkin's ideas can be fairly sophisticated in premise, and yet are depicted in a way that engages a wide audience, stirring strong emotions and reaction.

It is this that defines Dworkin as a radical feminist, as she avoids diluting the dynamic style of her writing in the professional requirements of academic discourse, but uses this knowledge as a backdrop. The real motive of the text – to anger and inspire the reader – is achieved by shying away from language and style that is too obviously academic. The use of academic research to substantiate polemical writing is fairly typical of second-wave writers, most of whom were university educated. It has the benefit of connecting their work with the more theoretical and academic feminist writing (such as the French psychoanalytic movement¹⁰), as well as making it harder to challenge, and though Dworkin is rarely explicit in her use of theory, it is the grounding behind everything she wrote. The hyperbolised and polarised language of polemics means that readers experience a strong reaction when reading

⁸ Gender constructionism is a theoretical perspective towards gender and gender relations which asserts that gender and discourses on gender are not inherent, objective, universal truths. Alsop, Fitzsimmons, and Lennon (2002) assert that gender is actively constructed through material social, political, and economic structures, in addition to the discursive construction of gender through language and culture. The meanings of gender emerge from these social processes and interactions. Gender constructionism within feminism arguably began with Simone de Beauvoir's seminal quote, "one is not born, but rather, one becomes a woman" (1949; 295). Similarly, West and Fenstermaker (1995) argue: "[the] conceptualization of gender as a routine, methodical, and ongoing accomplishment. We argued that doing gender involves a complex of perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of manly and womanly "natures." (1995: 9)

⁹ Nicholas Groth (1979); Lisak and Roth (1988); Diana Scully (1990); Teague (1993)

¹⁰ Key work of 'French Psychoanalytic Feminists' – Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement *The Newly Born Woman* (1986), Luce Irigaray *This Sex Which is Not One* (1985), Julia Kristeva *Desire in Language* (1980)

"The reception of 'French Feminism' here [UK] has been partial and selective...the influence of these writers remains centered in the academy" (Fraser, 1992; 1-2) For further research into specific 'French Feminists' see Fraser's (1992) *Revaluing French Feminism*; and Marks and de Courtivron's (1980) *New French Feminisms*.

them; whilst polemics can be divisive, Dworkin's aim was not to divide readers, but to militarise them.

Radical feminists are defined, at least by a mainstream audience, by the way they project themselves, and the way in which they frame their ideas. There are some aspects of Dworkin's ideas that many people would disagree with, and yet there is actually very little content in Dworkin's writing that is inherently extremist. In her analysis of pornography, for example, she claims that mainstream hegemonic pornography demeans women by showing acts that dehumanise, objectify, overpower, and often hurt, not only the woman 'acting' in it, but also all women by association (Dworkin, 1981). Given the nature of the pornography she discusses this is not a particularly inflammatory statement; however in *Letters from a War Zone* (1988) she phrases this as: "A woman, nearly naked, in a cell, chained, flesh ripped up from the whip, breasts mutilated by a knife: she is entertainment, the boy-next-door's favourite fantasy, every man's precious right, every woman's potential fate" (Dworkin, 1988; 199). Similarly, in her 1981 monograph dedicated exclusively to a radical feminist analysis of pornography, she writes that "pornography is the orchestrated destruction of women's bodies and souls; rape, battery, incest, and prostitution animate it; dehumanization and sadism characterize it; it is war on women, serial assaults on dignity, identity, and human worth; it is tyranny" (1981; xxvii). Dworkin is stylistically brutal, uncompromising, unmovable and shocking, and it is this that accounts for much of what makes Dworkin such a radical.

Dworkin thought of herself as a radical feminist, and was fairly critical of liberal feminists. Examples of these 'liberal feminists' are Naomi Wolf whom she named a 'coward' (Schillinger, 1996: no pagination); and of women who ingratiate themselves with men at the top in order to get into positions of power, such as the main organisers of NOW (Dworkin, 2002). She also believed, however, that these women were necessary: "I have a really strong belief that any movement needs both radicals and liberals, you always need women who can walk into the room in the right way, talk in the right tone of voice, who have access to power. But you also need a bottom line" (Viner, 2005; no pagination). This quote highlights the popular assumption of the main aspect that constitutes radical feminism: style. It illustrates how Dworkin herself saw the distinction between the two positions, and that she felt there to be a need for both. Thus, we can see that, for Dworkin, what defines a feminist as radical is not exclusively predicated upon the ideas they present but the way in which they do so as

well¹¹. By adopting a conciliatory position, Wolf *et al.* become liberal, and strident writers like Dworkin become defined as radicals.

Though, perhaps, not strictly academically correct¹², Dworkin's definition of radical/liberal feminism, in fact, accurately sums up the way many people view the distinction. Dworkin's public persona and narrative voice was arguably instrumental in shaping the terms of this distinction. Polemics are such an essential part of feminism as this is one of the ways in which they bring excitement and strength to the discourse whilst liberal feminists made feminism more palatable to a mainstream audience.

Dworkin would represent one of the most extreme voices in feminism for most readers, and yet her views and ideas generally fall under mainstream liberalism. This means that many readers who would have already have been sympathetic to Dworkin's ideas and those who already shared many of Dworkin's views, though perhaps not as vehemently, would be antagonised into action by this radical prose. Many readers were not sympathetic to

¹¹ For more in-depth analysis regarding how rhetorical techniques and style shape feminist identities and movements, see Lynne Pearce's (2004) *The Rhetorics of Feminism*. Drawing from her own experience of how her political inclinations and feminist position was shaped by the rhetoric of Kate Millet, Pearce attempts to "demonstrate the link between rhetoric and thought-production: that is to say the extent to which 'what we think' is determined by 'how' we think it" (Pearce, 2004: 2). Pearce argues that rhetorical techniques do not merely communicate ideas about the feminist movement, but actively shapes the movement itself. Dworkin's perspectives on the proper direction of the feminist movement were dictated by *how* she thought, wrote, and communicated her ideas.

¹² For further academic research into the origins of 'radical feminism', its emergence, and original conceptualisation, see Alice Echols' (1989) *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*. Here, Echols discusses how radical feminism emerged as theoretically, politically, and ideologically distinct from the socialist-feminist movement. For Echols' radical feminism was a divergence from the left-wing view that women's oppression was a result of capitalism; and radical feminists opposed the subordination of women's liberation to the left's battle with capitalism. According to Echols, radical feminism of the late 1960s and early 1970s was about framing the patriarchal social structure and system as a mode of oppression in and of itself; not just a mere 'epiphenomenon' of capitalism. As she argues "radical feminists argued that women constituted a sex-class, that relations between women and men needed to be recast in political terms, and that gender rather than class was the primary contradiction" (Echols, 1989: 3).

Echols (1989) argues that the distinction between 'radical feminism' and the 'cultural' or 'liberal' feminism was that radical feminism was a political movement dedicated to eliminating the sex-class system; whereas cultural feminism was a counter-cultural movement aimed at reversing the cultural valuation of the male and devaluation of the female and 'celebrating femaleness' (Echols, 1989: 6). This is embodied in the work of Kathie Sarachild's 'Consciousness Raising' papers (1973) and Firestone's (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex*.

Dworkin's work, however, and thus the use of her radical style made her into a hugely controversial figure. For those who disagreed with Dworkin, the polemic was a challenge; the presentation of her ideas was deliberately antagonistic to those who differed from her. For the polemicist it is more effective to employ this strident style in arguments well-established and supported by mainstream political perspectives, allowing the radical writing to be the main component which angers, enrages, and thus assembles passionate support behind these issues. Dworkin was very apt at navigating this minefield, as she wrote works which were largely original, yet she did not stray too far from mainstream liberal values, and presented them in a startlingly new, visceral way. The radical style of these works had the ability to engage readers, and to be memorable, as Judith Grant suggests, "The fact is, I have been reading and thinking about Dworkin's work ever since I discovered her" (2006; 968). The style of the work is a deliberate literary tool, as with any writing, to pursue a certain end, and convince a reader of a perspective; Dworkin chose to write in this way to bring pornography and violence towards women into an active mainstream debate.

Dworkin is explicit that the purpose of her books is to rally people, specifically women, to her cause. In the prologue to *Our Blood* (1976), Dworkin says she wanted her writing to be: "crafted prose that would inform, persuade, disturb, cause recognition, sanction rage" (1976; xi), and it is this desire that most characterises her work. She writes in carefully sculpted prose, brutal, repetitive, with the precise intention of militarising other women. As she says, she wanted to 'sanction rage'—a direct invitation to other women to join her in her anger. The final paragraph in *Pornography* serves as a good example of this 'rallying': "The boys are betting on our compliance... The boys are betting that their depictions of us as whores will beat us down... The boys are betting that their penises and fists and knives and fucks and rapes will turn us into what they say we are... The boys are betting. The boys are wrong." (Dworkin, 1981: 224). This defiant end to the book is a summation of her major arguments throughout the text as well as being a positive and revitalising note to end on. The repetition of 'the boys are betting' building to the final sentence is a blunt and unambiguous rebuttal to the misogynist culture she describes. It has the effect of distancing the woman reading the text from the men imposing their beliefs upon them. The finality of the statement coupled with Dworkin's persistent radicalism, attempts to spur the reader into the same sense of determination. The use of words such as 'us' and 'we' unite women together, showing the commonality of the female experience, and demonstrating that acts of extreme violence and women hating do not just happen to other, different women, but to all women alike.

Throughout her work, Dworkin is heavily critical of women who do not support other women, specifically middle-class 'feminists' who betray lower-class women for the sake of their status: "It became a bad feminist habit for the rich to rat out the poor, turn on the poor, keep themselves divided from the poor – no mixing with the dispossessed" (Dworkin, 2002; 135). The lack of unity within the female sex has enabled men to take control of women's lives, specifically in the sphere of sexuality, and use it not only to define their sexual desires but also to demean and control women. For Dworkin, only when women are united together in the struggle for liberation will there be any chance of progress.

Kate Millett's seminal text, *Sexual Politics* (1970) analysed in astounding new depth the works of Henry Miller and Norman Mailer, challenging the reader to re-evaluate these canonical texts in the light of feminist literary analysis, as Dworkin phrased it, "Millett described Henry Miller's depictions of sex acts in a voice I had never heard before. She said, simply it seems now, *look at this, this is what he does and then this is what he calls it*" (Dworkin, 1978; no pagination). It is this use of detailed, in depth, feminist analysis that Andrea Dworkin followed with extracts or images of pornography. In her seminal work, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981), Dworkin takes an image from *Hustler* (no date) entitled "Beaver Hunting", depicting a woman tied with ropes, in a contorted position, tied to the roof of a hunting van; Dworkin analyses this one photo for many pages, discussing in depth every technique the pornographer uses to dehumanise and humiliate this woman, every social, political and economic inferiority that hides behind the picture, and the hierarchical power implications that frame it. Her brutal, detailed analysis is unabated and all encompassing, leaving no room for compromise or half-measures. Her writing style is a 'take-no-prisoners' approach and her generalisations of "men" lack subtlety.

Within these polemics, there is no question of these perceived antagonists being a diverse group of people, and none are redeemed by some hedging words like 'some' or 'a few'. Men are viewed as a homogenous group; as such, her writing is in no way 'male-friendly'. The reductionism in Dworkin's writing arguably isolated many who would naturally have agreed with many of her sentiments. For Dworkin, however, the use of vitriolic and far-reaching statements was a necessary and integral part of her writing. Her conviction was that there was a need to describe female subjection as viscerally as it is felt by women—to 'sanction rage' (Dworkin, 1976)—and that in so doing the full meaning of the crimes against women can be

conveyed. Her assertions of this often led to what appeared as reductive theories that readers, especially men, found disconcerting and too hyperbolic to be seriously considered.

Dworkin openly discussed the ideas, meanings and political significance that frame her texts, calling her work “a purposeful series of provocations” (Dworkin, 2002; 142). When describing her writing in an article entitled “Autobiography” (1995), she claims that: “My only chance to be believed is to find a way of writing bolder and stronger than woman hating itself” (Dworkin, 1995; no pagination). These quotes illustrate that Dworkin wants the reader to understand, not only the inherently constructed and contrived way in which she is writing, but that it is for a purpose and the purpose is real. The aim of her works, both fictional and non-fictional, is to examine, display and eliminate male power and violence against women. The arguments she makes are for real atrocities committed against real women, the images she analyses are real images found in magazines, but if she is to elicit a response from her readers, the way in which she argues it has to go beyond just a pointed finger, and take the argument further into the realms of hyperbole and perhaps fictionality. Her stylistic choices in writing these belligerent, crushing polemical works is for her the only way to - not just depict - but to also reflect accurately the overwhelming political systems of power that are designed to keep women in a state of inferiority.

Dworkin claims that her non-fiction work is guided by her experiences and underlies everything she writes, saying:

“Autobiography is the unseen foundation of my nonfiction work, especially *Intercourse* and *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. These two nonfiction books are not “about” me. There is no first-person writing in them... The research materials had nothing to do with me personally. They were freestanding, objectively independent (for instance, not interviews conducted by me). Yet when I wrote *Intercourse* and *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, I used my life in every decision I made. It was my compass. Only by using it could I find north and stay on course. If a reader could lift up the words on the page, she would see-- far, far under the surface--my life. If the print on the page turned into blood, it would be my blood from many different places and times. But I did not want the reader to see my life or my blood. I wanted her to see intercourse or pornography.” (Dworkin, 1995; no pagination)

In this quote the book literally becomes a body, and the words turn into blood, a blurring of her body into her body of work. The language Dworkin uses here is steeped in the hidden, the personal and the political. This idea of the book as a body serves to demonstrate the connection between the political aspects of feminism and the real-life implications for women

as individuals. That the words on the page become transmuted into ‘blood’ highlights the violence and suffering of the real body that Dworkin wants to display. The focus on the individual finds an outlet in the portrayal of her own life, but not as a whole person, simply as an experiential list of the atrocities committed against her by men. This means, for example, that Dworkin does not create the idea of herself as a real person, but simply draws attention to very specific autobiographic moments. This depiction transcends her own body, however, and becomes in Dworkin’s text the universal experiences of women. In Dworkin’s eyes, the acts committed against her (rape and domestic violence) happen to many women, and the threat of it touches all women, and so her work uses her own personal experience as a case-study of the ingrained and systematic sexual injustices experienced by women. The blood on the page is not just a hyperbolised image, but an allusion to the very real blood that had been shed by male sexual domination in her life (women’s house of detention; violent husband). This idea of her ‘blood’, or the blood of women more generally, runs through all of her books, as each one takes either real or imagined (non-fictional or fictional) incidents of extreme violence against women, and calculatedly, in grotesque detail, describes them for the reader, in order to realise fully the effects of violence against women.

In her fictional works especially, this often makes the reading of the text quite uncomfortable. Whilst her fiction is inherently tied to her polemics, they serve a different purpose in their execution. In Dworkin’s fictional work, particularly *Mercy* (1990), the character is flawed, broken and homicidal, a living product of the hatred of women. Despite her fiction being steeped in autobiographical details, the narrators of these texts are undermined, and shown to be imperfect representations of Dworkin and her feminism. The flawed protagonist of *Mercy*, who is left destitute from her lack of status or education, and therefore reacts in a certain way to the actions in the texts, is a tool for Dworkin, who, in her polemical works discusses these issues on a less personal and wider scale. The fictional counterparts to polemics are designed to illustrate the points made in the non-fiction text, and to give them a humanistic perspective, adding to the political work as a counterpart, rather than a separate work.

In *Pornography* (1981), Dworkin claims that men have always held “the power of naming, a great and sublime power” (1981: 17), and thus, implicitly, language as well. As a writer and a feminist, Dworkin has to reconstruct male language, and reclaim writing and language for women; hence her claim to have to write ‘bolder and stronger than women hating’ (Dworkin, 1995: no pagination). The control of language gives men a command over not just how

women are perceived, but also, the construction of the terms that define their rebellion. The term Feminism, for example, has always carried with it some ‘traces’ of ideas of bitterness or misandry that few women can escape. Even within the movement of feminism itself, the terminology to relate to the discourse is often defined by men; as Germaine Greer recalls in *The Whole Woman* (1999): “In 1970 the movement was called ‘Women’s Liberation’, or, contemptuously, ‘Women’s Lib’. When the name ‘Libbers’ was dropped for ‘Feminists’ we were all relieved” (Greer, 1999: 2). Greer does not specify exactly who dropped the word ‘libbers’ and created ‘feminists’, but the use of passive and reactionary language suggests that it was not feminists themselves that enacted such changes.

Since the 1970s, however, the term Feminism has largely become a pejorative term in mainstream discourse, and as Imelda Whelehan writes, “It seems likely that a great number of the most common conceptions (and often misconceptions) about feminism derive from the 70s when feminist militancy was at its peak” (1995: 11). This is confirmed by Aune and Redfern’s (2010) discussion regarding how the ‘demise of the f-word’ coincides with the political right’s narrative that feminism has gone ‘too far’. After the early movements which focused upon macro structural issues such as equal pay acts or women’s suffrage, feminism’s militant in-roads into challenging issues of cultural sexism such as pornography or domestic abuse were simply overstating the issue. To borrow from some of Aune and Redfern’s data, the perspective is that ““all you feminists do is sit and slag off good entertainment and cry about how gingerbread men should be called gingerbread people”” (Aune and Redfern, 2010: x).

The third-wave has been full of proclaimers trying to ‘reclaim the F-word’¹³, from the grasp of the male ‘naming’. The simple idea of women having to ‘reclaim’ the word that is used to identify a group of people striving for ‘gender equality’ demonstrates clearly how phallogocentric language and culture can undermine, co-opt and bring lasting meaning to words and movements, as Andrea Dworkin suggests, “Feminism is hated because women are hated... It is the political defence of women hating” (Dworkin, 1983; 195). As patriarchal systems manage to impose their hegemonic meanings through the performance of language, the word ‘feminism’ becomes associated with traces of other words in mainstream media.

¹³ A few examples are Aune and Redfern’s (2010) *Reclaiming the F Word*; Caitlin Moran’s (2011) bestseller *How to be a Woman*, and Katherine Rake’s article in *The Guardian*, ‘Let’s reclaim the F word’ (2006).

Consequently, the movement arguably becomes splintered through a male-defined discourse, affecting its meaning and reactions towards it.

This possession of language and its perception goes further than just the definition of feminism. This ‘power of naming’ is used to define women and female behaviour, thus creating constructions of women and femininity that serve the masculinised vision of them: “Women who deviate from the male definition are monstrous... Since all women do deviate to some degree, all women are viewed to some extent as monstrous” (Dworkin, 1981; 65). Furthermore, this power is so universal it indicates that there can be no dissent from these constructions, as everything women do falls within the concepts of male-language. Within this system of language, any writing by women – including, but not limited to, feminist work – is subject to a language that has been already defined for them, and may be contradictory to their purpose; as Dworkin suggests: “As Prometheus stole fire from the gods, so feminists will have to steal the power of naming from men” (1981; 17).

Helene Cixous, another important second-wave feminist, and a Derridean scholar, wrote a seminal essay ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’ (1975), in which she exhorts women to “write themselves”, and to reclaim language back into the female domain. She demands that women create their own way of writing that is free from the phallogentric origins of language. This is an idea strikingly similar to one portrayed in *Mercy*, in which the protagonist suggests: “We can finally invent: a new alphabet first, big letters, proud, new letters from which will come new words for old things” (Dworkin, 1990: 235). This concept of the ‘new language’ as outlined by Cixous and Dworkin’s protagonist is designed to challenge the underpinning assumptions – or trace - within language. Dworkin believes that in order to do this, feminists must write in a way that is free from the reserved and polite style that is commonly associated with feminine writing, and thus to challenge and break through the assumptions that limit the scope of their work: “Even as a writer – I was supposed to be delicate, fragile, intuitive, personal, introspective” (Dworkin, 1976; 13). In her own writing, both her fiction and her polemics, Dworkin means to repossess words and styles that, she believed, are male-defined or stereotypically ‘masculine’ to her own ends.

The language Dworkin often uses to describe her own writing, especially in “Autobiography”, contains many allusions to war and violence. Dworkin describes her literary choices as: “I’d have to be militant; sober and austere. I would have to commit treason: against the men who rule” (Dworkin, 1995; no pagination). The use of ‘I’d have to’

illustrates that the vitriolic writing she uses is a deliberate choice, set out in advance to construct her argument. In the quote above, Dworkin highlights that the use of the word ‘militant’, in this context synonymous with polemical, is a stylistic choice for her. The use of this military language runs through all of her work, the most obvious examples being the titles of *Letters from a War Zone* (1988) and *Life and Death: Unapologetic Writings on the Continuing War Against Women* (1997). The war zone that Dworkin alludes to is not just literal attacks on women’s bodies, although that is certainly part of the meaning, but the sustained and unabated colonisation of women’s rights, bodies, consciousness and selves.

The use of military language, rather than terms such as colonisation that suggest a powerlessness or inevitability, serves to add hyperbole, but also to unite and encourage women to fight for their own rights. It was Dworkin’s war-like hostility that marked her out as a radical, and her admission of her own ‘militancy’ solidified that perception into the public consciousness. Her bellicose style, coupled with allusions to war and violence, construct her as an aggressor, a trait often associated with masculinity, and this has the effect of repossessing this masculine image, and setting herself up as an equal adversary. Being aggressive as a radical feminist meant that Dworkin did not become masculinised in her adoption of these war related images, and instead becomes a distinctly female aggressor. As with Dworkin’s own analysis of war, specifically the Cuban missile crisis, the act of military aggression is often – if not always – the domain of men. By using language that mimics this to describe her own work, Dworkin reclaims for women the sphere of aggression and anger.

To further this, the ‘war on women’ that Dworkin describes is not just one of physical violence, but a sustained hostility, much of which plays out in the minds and psyches of the victims, a technique which instils in the oppressed a belief in their inferiority. Dworkin claims that women have been told that their experiences and their lives are so insignificant that most women believe it, and the battle for liberation would be over before it began. Thus, the need for an opposition, fought out, using anger and hostility, in order to create enough momentum to enact significant changes to dominant ideologies and systems. It is for this reason that Dworkin writes with such an abridged hostility and drive, as a polemical argument is, for her, the only way to counter such insidious mental corrosion. The social order that men have formulated is so established that to defy its system may seem futile and insubstantial, and thus the challenges that feminism presents need to have substantial vigour and a sense of belief if they are to succeed.

As with the concept of naming, Dworkin argues that men have defined what is 'normal' in culture, and those systems of power that elevate men are not seen to be systems at all. In the first chapter of *Pornography*, Dworkin discusses how "biology has replaced God (and is used to buttress anachronistic theology whenever necessary)" (Dworkin, 1981: 16), allowing men to argue that inequalities between the genders are 'biological' and factual, a fault of nature but certainly not alterable. As ideologies which explicitly perpetrate misogyny become less popular, they get replaced by new systems which contain the same implicit messages in new ways; religion gets supplanted by popular science. The male systems of power are so historically homogeneous that the normalisation of them means that any dissent from their structures is perceived as 'radical', 'extremist' and anarchistic: "All feminist arguments, however radical in intent or consequence, are with or against assertions or premises implicit in the male system" (Dworkin, 1981: 17). Feminists must argue against systematic injustices that have become so ingrained into the common consciousness that to do so seems inherently mistaken, 'against God', 'against biology'; against facts.

In this climate, Dworkin's perceives that her writing must be radical if it is to challenge the systems in any meaningful way. In 'Autobiography', Dworkin claims: "I would have to betray the noble, apparently humanistic premises of civilization and civilized writing by conceptualizing each book as if it were a formidable weapon in a war. I would have to think strategically, with a militarist heart: as if my books were complex explosives, minefields set down in the culture to blow open the status quo" (1995; no pagination). This idea suggests the concept of a gender war, a battle of the sexes, fought out on the page. It was not, Dworkin knew, quite so simple. The war she discusses is not a war against men in a literal sense, but against the ideas that propagate male dominance, views which can be held by both men and women, and it is the challenging of these views that Dworkin refers to as a war.

The prevalence of male domination is so widespread and insidious that it takes more than just a purely factual and restrained account of male violence in order to really open up discussions to the perpetuation of the patriarchal systems of governance and control, or as Dworkin put it: "blow open the status quo". The use of the words "blow open" are violent and expressive, shunning the idea of rational discourse. It is notable that Dworkin refers to her books in such an interconnected way, as is suggested when she describes them as "weapons of war" (1995: no pagination). This suggests the idea of individual weapons making up a military strategy; this is similar to her use of her books as individual bodies, each one contributing its own story

or message separately but adding up to a complete point. This is significant as this is the same way in which Dworkin treats the individual testimonies of women within the body of her work; each story contributes to the whole message in its own way. Dworkin uses her polemics to bring these personal stories to the forefront to demonstrate how widespread and pervasive these abuses are; they are so common, in fact, that they are almost 'status quo'. One such example is the case of Linda Lovelace, who Dworkin refers to at the end of *Pornography*. Lovelace was a porn star and the star of the film *Deep Throat* which made an estimated \$50 million at the US Box Office. Lovelace, whose real name was Linda Susan Boreman, claimed at the Commission on Pornography (1986), in front of Attorney General Edwin Meese, "every time someone watches that movie, they're watching me being raped" (Bronstein, 2013: no pagination). This may have increased the film's notoriety, but did not affect its popularity. Andrea Dworkin was instrumental in bringing Boreman's abuse to the forefront and into the mainstream in *Pornography* (1981), and in this way she managed to 'blow open the status-quo' by showing the abuse prevalent in even major Box Office hits. Despite this *Deep Throat* has remained as one of the most famous pornographic films of all time.

The use of individual testimonies of victims within her non-fiction work allows Dworkin to bring the lives of real women to the forefront of her discussion, as it makes the arguments more relatable and more personal. This desire is what fuelled Dworkin to write her fictional novels. Non-fictional political writing is useful to display broad concepts and ideas, and yet the real woman, as an identifiable character, often gets lost within these texts. The need for broad language that overarches the issues at hand mean that terms such as 'women' or 'females' are used, but this does not sufficiently display the effects misogynist culture has on an individual. For Dworkin the fiction served to give an empathetic insight into the patriarchal culture. It is for this reason that Dworkin – many other feminists – have utilised fiction to give a more humanistic perspective to their polemical works and to express their ideas in a more relatable medium. These fictional counterparts to Dworkin's non-fiction are able to display the effects of misogyny in a personal and intimate way that broad polemical writing cannot.

Andrea Dworkin was by no means the first feminist activist to write both polemics and fiction. Long before the explosion in feminist writing of the 1970s, feminists had been utilising both genres concurrently in order to frame their political motivations. The use of

polemics as a driving force behind feminism has a long history, beginning in the era of proto-feminism. Early European women, such as Christine de Pizan (1405) [2013], who was writing in the early fifteenth century, began the tradition of using hyperbolised, one-sided arguments to push a pro-woman agenda. As the centuries wore on there were many more notable examples of European women writing distinctly pro-woman texts, from women such as Amelia Lanyer's *Eve's Apology* (1611) and Rachel Speght's *A Muzzle for Melastomus* (1617), though, these polemics were more akin to a tongue in cheek battle of the sexes, than anything that resembles the more dogmatic tracts of the 1970s. Similarly, there were a notable amount of fictional texts by female authors which questioned, mocked or undermined the female experience, such as Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666), or the seventeenth-century plays of Mary Pix, Susanna Centlivre and Aphra Behn.

These proto-feminist examples led on to the first-wave of feminism, in which writers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and later, Virginia Woolf, used both polemics and fiction to construct feminist arguments, and in particular, works that blurred into one another with the use of references or fictionality. The publication of *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Wollstonecraft, [1792] 1996), hailed the very beginnings of first-wave feminism, and its call to arms for education and greater freedom for women paved the way for the next century of women writers. Wollstonecraft is a key figure in feminism, as, at the time in which she was writing there were few voices championing women's rights. Wollstonecraft was very much a lone figure and was revolutionary in her ideas. Though her feminism and her support of the French Revolution earned her derision in many circles during her lifetime, the feminist ideas she put forward paved the way for future nineteenth-century feminists.

Though most famous for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft also wrote two novels; *Mary* and *The Wrongs of Woman* ([1788], 2009), which went unfinished. In the fragmented preface to *The Wrongs of Woman*, Wollstonecraft writes that her aim was to exhibit "the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society" (Wollstonecraft, 2009: 67) and that it ought to be read as a book more about "women, than of an individual." (*ibid.* [1788] 2009: 67). This novel discusses the institution of marriage as it was used as a means of social control of women, disenfranchising them from their freedom, wealth and autonomy, and it has been suggested by Gary Kelly that it is a fictional sequel to *A Vindication* (Wollstonecraft, [1792] 1996). As the title of *Mary* suggests, there is certainly semi-autobiographical, or at least implied, reference, and the novel does draw some parallels with Wollstonecraft's childhood.

Though the novel is fairly brief, and has drawn little critical reception, it is interesting to look at the central character, Mary, in connection with *A Vindication*. The narrator describes Mary as a child that is living the life Wollstonecraft prescribed for women. Mary rejects pursuits that are typically feminine, preferring the outdoors and the world of books. Where *A Vindication* preaches for greater education and literacy for women in order that they can become more developed, Mary, as her father claims “always exclaimed against female acquirements” (Wollstonecraft, [1788] 2009: 8), is able to read books that would have been unavailable to most young girls, and reads them eagerly: “she perused with avidity every book that came in her way” (*ibid.* [1788] 2009: 8). Equally, where Wollstonecraft argues that: “A girl whose spirits have not been dampened by inactivity... will always be a romp” (Wollstonecraft [1792], 1996: 87), Mary is set free to roam the countryside, unchained from the restrictions of her sex: “she would steal to this retirement, where human foot seldom trod – gaze on the sea” (12). It is here, in these texts, that we see the first blurring between polemics and fiction within feminist writing. The novels further develop the ideas presented Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication*. The empathetic nature of fictional writing allows Wollstonecraft to demonstrate her political motivations without the backlash that abstract and theoretical writing incurs. Where many readers may feel isolated or attacked by polemical ideas, the characterisation of the ideas brings a dimension of humanity to the concepts within fictional works. The polemic/fiction dichotomy allows writers to argue two sides of the same coin; where the polemical is often directly political in its aims, the fiction allows the author to imagine the reality of it, as it effects a character, rather than a disembodied idea of ‘women’.

Though all polemics employ the use of literary devices and fictionality in order to convey and strengthen their argument, none more so than Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929). Though much of Woolf’s fiction is implicitly feminist, such as *Orlando* (1928) or *To the Lighthouse* (1927), it is in *A Room* in which Woolf utilises both feminism and fiction to a political end. The book begins with Woolf describing a fictitious day at a college in Oxbridge, followed by a dinner party in the Great Hall, in which her narrator, Mary Beton, is relegated to the path for trespassing on the lawns only for men, then barred from the library without a male companion. Woolf is explicit that her examples of everyday sexism are contrived: “I need not say that what I am about to describe has no existence” (Woolf, [1929] 2000: 6). For Woolf, however, this does not detract from the truth of the argument; in fact, the opposite is true as she claims “Fiction here is likely to contain more truth than fact” ([1929] 2000: 6). Though the narrative may be fictional the story is not inherently untrue.

Women were barred from Oxbridge libraries, were economically disenfranchised, and were hindered from writing by cramped living conditions. The fact that Shakespeare did *not* have a sister, does not alter the historical realities faced by female writers. This is a perfect example of the blurring between polemics and fiction, and Woolf's illustration of the contrived nature of her polemic is crucial to understanding the work of later feminists. Though *A Room* does not have an explicit fictional equivalent to go with it, like Wollstonecraft or Dworkin, the work itself blurs the two modes together within the text, so that Woolf's 'stories' are backed up by the inherent truth behind them.

The first voice of the so-called second-wave of feminism is Simone de Beauvoir, whose 1949 publication *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir, [1949] 1997) began the movement that Dworkin and her contemporaries both emulated and built upon. Beauvoir's use of existentialist philosophy to articulate the theory of gender construction is one of the most important developments in feminist thought; it is markedly different from first-wave movements, and it changed the parameters of discussions of women's issues. Instead of demands for education and rights for women, *The Second Sex* challenged the sexist assumptions that underpinned these restraints; tackling the issue at its root. Beauvoir's now famous claim, "one is not born, but rather, one becomes a woman" (Beauvoir, [1949] 1997: 295), and her analysis of the construction of gender, was a pivotal moment of the second-wave movement, and during the 1970s were built upon and developed by feminists both in Europe and America, such as Dworkin, whose ideas of the sexual degradation of women being formed by representation, are directly Beauvoirian in origin.

Beauvoir was also the author of several fictional works, many of which grapple with the concept of womanhood, such as her collection of three novellas *The Woman Destroyed* (Beauvoir, 1969), in which she presents three flawed female protagonists. These three stories are written in different styles, about very different women, but the one thing they all have in common is the focus on the men in their lives. Despite each story having a very different plotline, they all revolve around personal relationships with men; from one woman worrying about her own ageing, to the woman with the adulterous husband. It is from this that the title derives, as for Beauvoir, it is this fixation upon the male that destroys the full personhood of the women. These characters spend so much time centred on the man that their personalities seem two-dimensional and incomplete, as their obsession becomes limiting to their own lives and constrains their development. This constant relation of themselves to men is what defines them as the 'Other', as they can only see themselves through the male gaze; as Beauvoir

asserted in *The Second Sex*: women cannot attain full humanity while they view themselves in relation to men, or the One. Thus, Beauvoir joins the list of women who use fiction in order to give a fuller, and more humanistic, extension to their polemical works.

Marilyn French wrote *The War Against Women* in 1992; a brutal and uncompromising look at the lives of women through the lens of consistent, global patriarchal oppression; but French is more famously remembered for her bestselling novel, *The Women's Room* ([1977]1997). The novel follows the life of Mira through her days as a housewife in the 1950s to a mature student at Harvard in the 1970s. This novel is hugely important as French took Betty Freidan's 'problem with no name', as outlined in *The Feminine Mystique* (Freidan, [1963] 2010), and turned it into fiction. This is a relevant example of how these feminist writers entwined polemics and fiction within feminist discourse. Where Freidan questioned, and tried to explain, why women seemed so unhappy with the life of the perfect housewife which they were supposed to aspire to, French takes the reader through hundreds of pages of shopping lists and polished floors to *show* exactly why women were so unfulfilled. Mira's disillusionment with this life comes slowly as she desperately tries to be happy living the dream she was promised. This novel, a substantial nine-hundred pages, stands alone in its unparalleled detailed construction of character; French's work is one of the most realistic attempts to depict the reality of a middle class woman's life as a housewife in the 1950s. The narrator, who turns out to be none other than Mira herself, explains that: "I have, over the years, read a lot of novels by male novelists, and there is no question in my mind that their female characters... are stick figures with padding in certain places" (French, 1997: 260) and obviously has set out to rectify this convention. Published one year after *The Laugh of the Medusa* was first translated into English, it is impossible to say whether French was aware of the theory of *écriture féminine*, but it is certain that French does not fall into the trap of "workmanship which is in no way different from male writing, and which either obscures women or reproduces the classic representations of women"(Cixous, 1976: 878). French seeks to portray her characters' struggles against all the small, everyday occurrences that reinforce female oppression that Freidan tried to depict. Insipid and repetitive at times, French drags the reader through the mundane and monotonous days of a housewife: "All her tomorrows were big days - tomorrow, for instance, she would tackle the living room" (French, 1997: 214). Where Freidan tried to explain it; French brings it to life.

Not all the fictional works written around this time had a direct polemical counterpart. Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* (Jong, [1973], 1994), is a novel that fictionalised the attitudes of the

sexual revolution. Though Jong is often criticised for Isadora's exploits supposedly mimicking hegemonic 'masculine' sexuality, this view does not take into account the intricacies of the text. Isadora does not so much lust after impersonal and brief encounters with men, as much as she seeks to free herself from the limiting sexuality imposed upon women; their castration. This is obviously a theme that is prevalent in Germaine Greer's seminal work (1970), and it is this new school of thought that Isadora represents. She is portrayed, not as a radical and particularly forward thinking character, but one who reacts against old patriarchal sexual norms along with the tide of the woman's movement. Younger than Marilyn French's Mira, Isadora is able to join in with 'Women's Lib', quoting ideologies already in place: "Don't you see that men have *always* defined femininity as a means of keeping women in line? Why should I listen to *you* about what it means to be a woman? Are you a woman? Why shouldn't I listen to *myself* for once?" (Jong, [1973], 1994: 20). Whilst this quote knowingly aligns itself with contemporary feminist discourse, the text becomes directly metafictional when Isadora is explaining the white lies and fabrications she gave to Bennett when discussing her history. She directly addresses the reader: "Surely you don't suppose that I'm telling the literal truth here either?" (1973] 1994: 200). This sudden departure from the trajectory of the plot reminds us that, as with so many of these characters, Dworkin's included, Isadora Wing is a writer. This gives Jong an opportunity to discuss the nature of writing within the text whilst still writing fiction. Isadora discusses the inherent falsity of characters in fictional works, and the propensity to try and find a biographical element to the texts: "I flipped out. Started reading my own poems and trying to become one with the image presented in them...Started believing I was a fictional character invented by me" (Jong, [1973] 1994: 283).

The huge number of feminist activist/writers boomed within the second-wave, with Adrienne Rich - notably known for her poetry but also the author of several essays and books - bell hooks - known for activism and polemics, but also the author of collections of poetry; Robin Morgan, activist and writer, and a long standing friend of Dworkin; Julia Kristeva - feminist post-structuralist who had recently begun writing a series of detective novels, just to name a few. These writers largely wrote their fictional alongside their polemical works, although sometimes there is a large gap. The entire tradition of feminist polemics and fiction is too large to discuss here, but it is enough to say that Dworkin was working within a well-defined framework; feminist polemics and fiction have been used simultaneously, as a means of expressing women's disenfranchisement, for centuries. The reason for this blurring is not

entirely clear, nor why feminists specifically found such productive use in a combination of fiction and non-fiction. Dworkin was following the path forged by many feminists before her, but her reasons for using this technique may well be particular to herself.

Dworkin's texts are all interconnected with each other; by means of repetition, Dworkin forms a conversation between the books, each responding, citing or reacting to one another. Each book is distinct from the others in either its specific argument or plotline, and yet each one of Dworkin's books reiterates the same messages, but told in a slightly different way. This gives the impression that they all add together, as a body, to form an overarching point or politic. As Andrea Dworkin said to Liesel Schillinger in an interview for *The Independent* in 1996: "I see my books as a body of work" (Schillinger, 1996: no pagination). Her two major non-fiction publications, for example, *Pornography* (1981) and *Intercourse* (1987), discuss slightly different areas, as their titles suggest, but many of their arguments and points are similar. Naturally, there is a fundamental connection between these two subjects, but Dworkin approaches both these books in a very similar way; both these texts argue that male sexual domination is cemented through systems of knowledge that are created, perpetuated and enforced by men in both the discourse of sexual intercourse and the representation of it in pornography. These two strands of argument come together to form the whole, Dworkin's overarching point about male supremacy is reiterated time and time again. Dworkin argues that the way male sexual supremacy has endured is by the dehumanising and violent acts that are perpetrated against women, inscribing women with no sexuality of their own, but a simulation of male claims of what female sexuality is. Female desire is circumscribed by men who reduce women to compliant sexual objects and then propagate this view as 'knowledge, using the 'truths' of history, biology, and anthropology as proof. Similarly, in her fiction, her characters often go through analogous experiences, such as rape or battery, to demonstrate the prevalence of these acts, and yet each character responds slightly differently depending on the history Dworkin has written for her. These books become bodies that tell their own story or argue their own point, but are fundamentally connected, just like how the individual testimonies of women come together to form the overarching politics of feminism.

Feminism may be a political movement, but it is one whose ideologies are often formed upon the real life experiences of women within the oppressive system of male dominance.

Dworkin's works are full of testimonies from women speaking to her on the street, accounts from prostitutes, stories from female friends, the list is endless. Dworkin utilises personal

stories for a political end, but the politics she propagates arise directly from her own personal experiences and those of others. By using her work to examine personal stories of women, her body of work becomes a figurative body of its own, representing the lived experience of women who have contributed in suffering to the writing of the work. In Dworkin's view, the individual is what makes up the politics, the experiences of each woman is important to the discussion of rights and policies. In a radio interview with Larry Josephson in 1992, Dworkin said: "There's nothing I have written about that has happened to me that isn't a common experience of women, and that's why it's a political problem and not a personal problem" (No author, 1992: no pagination). Dworkin often argues that women have been silenced, forced into mannequin roles, in which they themselves believe that their own voices and experiences are not important. This, Dworkin suggests, is the driving force behind her work; in *Heartbreak* she claims that: "I walk with women whispering in my ears. Every time I cry there's a name attached to each tear" (Dworkin, 2002: 145).

Dworkin attempted to create a body of work in which each of her books informs and influences her others. Even texts that one would expect to be personal all enforce and repeat the same political message. Dworkin used her memoirs, *Heartbreak: A Political Memoir* (2002), a seemingly personal text, to make much wider political statements. The fictionality of the narrator in *Heartbreak* is important when looking at Dworkin's entire body of work, as she uses all of her texts in conjunction with each other, each serving their own political message (though often repeated), to push forward her overarching feminist point. Texts such as *Heartbreak* and "Autobiography" (1995), and the prologues to her non-fiction work, are not the personal voice of the writer, but are still inextricably linked with her overarching politics. The prologues are a direct part of the books, and the 'personal' texts are used to propagate her politics, not to give insight into her character. This is equally true of her fictional works, which utilise semi-autobiographical plot-lines, but she still creates completely fictional characters, who experience and react to these situations in different ways, both to each other and to the way Dworkin did in her life. In her essay "Autobiography", Dworkin poured scorn on the idea that her fictional characters were spokespersons for herself, saying: "My fiction is not autobiography. I am not an exhibitionist. I don't show myself" (Dworkin, 1995: no pagination); her non-fiction work, she claims, is a more realistic expression of her.

This chapter has sought to show how the use of polemics is an important and integral part of feminist discourse. Writers such as Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir have used polemics alongside their fictional work in order to bring a new dimension to their work, and sought to display their feminist arguments in a more humanistic way. Dworkin's polemics rely on her bellicose style to make an impact upon her readers and Dworkin was a writer who understood and valued this style, for all its values and limitations. She used her work to inflame her readers; with her brutal and uncompromising style she shocked many of those who came upon her work. She was able to inform her work with accounts of the lives of real women, and yet she succeeded in making broad arguments about the state of gender relations, specifically within the realms of sexual intercourse and pornography. Dworkin used her polemics to protest forcibly male systems of power, such as naming and language, and the radicalism of the language is an integral part of that protest. Like many writers before her, Dworkin intertwined this with her fictional works, which drew inspiration from her polemics, in order to frame themselves within a political context. The blurring of fiction and polemics was used to personify her feminist arguments with her fictional characters, and to compliment her polemical works. Though her fictional works give a more humanistic and relatable perspective than her polemical works they are by no means less stylistically brutal, and often more uncomfortable and disturbing to read.

The next chapter will provide a more detailed analysis of Dworkin's fiction, particularly her two novels, *Mercy* (1990) and *Ice and Fire* (1986), in order to examine how her fiction relates to her polemical works and to her feminist message more generally. It will, also, provide insight into how Dworkin subverts the ideas of autobiography and authorship to create texts that are distinctly literary in style. Given the importance of feminist fiction around this time, and the connection between it and political writing, it is necessary to give further insight into the ways Dworkin wrote and constructed her novels, and the impact they had on her feminist message.

Chapter Two: Intertextuality in Dworkin's fiction

Andrea Dworkin's work - both fictional and non-fictional - constitutes an intertextual web, in which her writing quotes, references and draws from one another, to make an entire body of work. Dworkin's different books, often across genres (polemic/fiction), blur into one another using the repetition of ideas, motifs or phrases. Her fictional works often use semi-autobiographical references to aspects of her life, but she undermines the validity of these allusions by her use of flawed protagonists, whose actions oppose Dworkin's feminism. Dworkin also situates her fictional work in a textual dialogue with other works of fiction, by repeatedly quoting or making mention to famous writers. Similarly, her own fictional works all link together through various repetitions of plots, to create a feminist argument which compliments her non-fictional work. Each book contains the ghosts of other books, and can never be read as an isolated work.

The significance of the intertextuality throughout all of Dworkin's fiction and non-fictional works operates around three connected points. Firstly, it demonstrates Dworkin's unwavering commitment to her political activism and feminist dictates. Even in her novels and short stories, Dworkin was uninterested in expanding the diversity of her work and characters to display a wide array of personal literary and creative abilities. Instead, she used literary techniques of allusion and recurring motifs to convey an unchanging and guiding feminist political message. Dworkin's work is a belligerent campaign, relentlessly repeating the same statements again and again. Dworkin rallied against pornography for twenty years and her message never altered or abated, much like the repetitive motifs in all of her publications. Secondly, as we will see, by blurring much of her fiction and non-fictional polemics together through repeated phrases or themes, she highlights the stylistically constructed nature of her polemics, emphasising that, unlike some works of non-fiction, their tone and radicalism are not necessarily to be read as literal but as a constructed text. Lastly, the blurring similarities between her fictional and non-fictional texts, and consequently the blurring of her fictional narrators with the 'real' Andrea Dworkin of her non-fiction, confuses the identity of the narrators and author and allows Andrea Dworkin herself to become fictionally constructed as a symbolic representation of radicalism.

One example of how all of her texts work together as a collective - both fictional and non-fictional – can be seen in the repetition of phrases and themes in her novel *Ice and Fire* (1986) and her anthology of essays *Letters from a Warzone* (1988). In a chapter from an unpublished novel, *First Love* (1978), Dworkin wrote, “I wanted instead to write books that were fire and ice, wind sweeping the earth” (1978: no pagination); nine years later her first full-length novel was published, entitled *Ice and Fire*. In *Ice and Fire* (1986), the unnamed protagonist is a writer who believes that being a writer transcends and is an escape from being a woman. In disbelief at the sexual advances of her publisher who sees her only in terms of her body and sexuality, the protagonist exclaims: “I am a writer not a woman” (Dworkin, 1986: 181). In contrast, two years later, in the introduction to *Letters from a Warzone* (1988), Dworkin claims: “As a writer and as a woman; for me, the two are one” (1988: 5). These examples seem minor in themselves, but Dworkin’s work is littered with such repeated phrases such as her works build up a textual conversation, quoting, referencing and imitating one another. Even though the quotes conflict in their messages, the repetition of these phrases and ideas in both a fictional and non-fictional work draws an inherent bond between the two texts, and their modes of writing. Through the repetition of such a similar phrase and topic, Dworkin destabilises the boundary between fiction and non-fiction, somewhat clouding the distinction between these modes of writing as we try to analyse the body of work, and attempt to locate the voice of the author.

Dworkin, however, further obscures the line between her fiction and non-fiction in the closing moments of *Ice and Fire* (1986). Here the protagonist comes to the realisation that writing and the body, being a woman, are inextricable; or as Dworkin says in *Letters from a Warzone*: “the two are one” (1988: 5). After her original book was failed by her publisher, the protagonist reflects on the importance of writing from one’s heart, from one’s body: “the walls are closing in, writing my poor little heart out: in a terrible hurry to tell what’s in my heart. You have to be in a terrible hurry or the heart gets eaten up. There is a carcass, sans heart, writing it’s little heart out” (Dworkin, 1986: 187). While initially, as shown by the earlier quotes, Dworkin is in opposition to her protagonist’s perspectives on writing—a protagonist who supposedly so closely resembles her—the character’s perspectives shift in accordance with Dworkin’s at the close of novel. Here, Dworkin cunningly detaches herself from her protagonist before drawing one last crucial similarity, simultaneously clarifying and confusing the distinction between her fiction and non-fiction.

A further example of this blurring between her fiction and non-fictional works can also be found *Ice and Fire* (1986), in which the character, after years of trying to write, finally sits down to write her second book. The book is about pornography and its effects, and is strikingly similar to Dworkin's seminal publication, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981). This blurring could be explained away by dismissing the novel as autobiographical; however, the novel resists attempts at such easy classification - as we shall see later in this chapter - by her undermining the reliability of her central protagonist. What, then, are the effects of reading *Pornography* within the context of *Ice and Fire*? Within the intertextual system of all her work, this book is written by a fictional character, an inherently constructed voice separate from the author, throwing into disarray the supposedly 'real' or 'non-fictional' nature of Dworkin's polemic. If we disregard, as Roland Barthes would say, the taming and grounding force of the author's name (Barthes, 1977) and instead read Dworkin's *Pornography* in the context of an intertextual body of work akin to Derrida's 'web of signs' (Derrida, 2004), *Pornography* becomes intimately connected to the fictional protagonist in *Ice and Fire*, becoming no more than a fictional book written by a fictional character.

Dworkin's fictional works also often quote or make reference to famous literary texts to centre her work within the domain of fiction and metafiction. In *Ice and Fire* (1986), there is a constant stream of literary allusions, most notably the famous quote from *Jane Eyre* (Bronte, [1847] 1992), which becomes distinctly darkened in Dworkin's hands: "Reader, I married him" (Dworkin, 1986: 101) is closely followed by: "Reader, he got hard" (1986: 102) and "Reader, I saved him: my husband. He can fuck now. He can pulverize bones" (1986: 102); a savage escalation from the implied happily-ever-after that the phrase connotes in *Jane Eyre*. This use of allusion places *Ice and Fire* firmly within a literary tradition of previous works. As Barthes suggests in *The Rustle of Language* (1986): "The writer can only imitate an anterior, never original gesture; his sole power is to mingle writings, to counter some by others, so as never to rely on just one" (Barthes, 1986: 53); thus, Dworkin's reliance on other texts to create her own text. It is not so simple, however, as simply using other texts to her own ends; this technique is so heavy-handed and recurring that there is a natural tendency to compare the works. With the example from *Jane Eyre*, by using a famous novel by a woman, especially one often hailed as 'proto-feminist', Dworkin compares the experiences of these two protagonists, Bronte's Jane and Dworkin's unnamed narrator, and this serves to bond the two women in literary pre and post-nuptial comparison. Dworkin uses

the phrase to begin her tale of married life where *Jane Eyre* finished, mocking the happy ending that marriage signified in the original text.

In *Ice and Fire* (1986), Dworkin takes quotes to begin each chapter, and uses them as the backdrop for the chapter. Chapter one, two, three and four, for example, begin with a quote from Spinoza: “Neither weep nor laugh but understand” (Dworkin, 1986: 3; 24; 28; 34). In these chapters we follow the child narrator through the streets of her childhood, the death of her mother, to the end of her time at boarding school, with her first love, first boyfriend, pregnancy and subsequent abortion. These chapters are sprinkled throughout with Spinoza’s quote in action: “Later, mother died. I didn’t laugh or weep or understand” (Dworkin, 1986: 23), “Oh, little girls, weep forever or understand too much but be a little scared to laugh too hard” (1986: 33), “Everything gets taken away and everyone eventually weeps and laughs and understands” (1986: 41). It is interesting to note that Dworkin does not use Spinoza’s phrase as an absolute which the character orbits around; rather, the phrase works around the character, constantly changing the word order of the original quote to have a multiplicity of different meanings for her protagonist. In this, the original quote loses all intrinsic meaning, destroying the authorial intention of Spinoza, by being assimilated into Dworkin’s work.

This becomes especially pertinent to her feminist theory once we get to the later stages of the novel; after the protagonist has been prostituted, raped and brutalized, she declares: “coitus is the punishment” (Dworkin, 1986: 107) , later: “Coitus is punishment. I am a feminist. Not the fun kind.” (1986: 110). This quote may seem like an extreme misandrist statement, stemming from this characters’ traumatic past with sexual violence, but in fact, it is just a reworking of a quote from Kafka, taken from his diaries, which begins the chapter: “Coitus is punishment for the happiness of being together” (Dworkin, 1986: 107). How can we then read this passage of *Ice and Fire* when the meaning becomes so blurred? If we dismiss this phrase as just a character describing coitus as punishment because of her abusive relationships with men, how must we reassess our view when the original quote comes from a man, and from his diaries no less? It is in this way that Dworkin plays with the conventions of fictionality and questions of authenticity. Dworkin situates her work within an intertextual web of different writers, which allows her to disengage her own voice from the text, and to highlight the fictionality of the book. This blurring of any connection with the author displaces the notion that the character acts as a mouthpiece for her. It also, crucially, shows the flaws and assumptions of the narrator, which in turn illustrates the differences between narrator and author. If we adopt a post-structuralist framework for analysing this device of accruing and

assimilation that Dworkin uses, we can see that Dworkin subverts the original meaning of the quotation in order to change the intrinsic ‘value’ of the words.

This framework can be expanded to understand the ‘play’ that Dworkin creates with her language to illustrate the female experience of language within her novels and other fictional works. Dialogism is a term, coined by the Russian Formalist Mikhail Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination* ([1975], 2004), which argues that language is always situational, each word being given meaning, not by any intrinsic value, but by the person, situation or tone in which it is used. As Dworkin takes phrases and quotations from other literary texts and changing the situational relationships within the scene, the meaning of the original is altered; as Bakhtin describes it: "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (Bakhtin, [1975] 2004: 324). This similarity to Bakhtin's theory is exacerbated by the style of Dworkin's writing, as according to Bakhtin, the structuralist mode of analysis is too focused on language as a text and not as speech, and Dworkin's use of a semi-stream of consciousness narrative, heavily laden with repetition, closely resembles an inner dialogue with herself: "I didn't mean to do anything wrong and there wasn't anyone else around and it was dark and he put his arm around me and he started talking to me and saying weird things in a weird voice" (Dworkin, 1990: 13). For a reader what is happening in this scene is obvious, but for the nine year old Andrea this recitation is remembrance and thoughts to herself about this assault.

The technique of using a heavily subjective first-person narrator is indicative of the more self-conscious style of writing that is present within much feminist fiction from the second-wave, such as Beauvoir's "The Monologue" found in *The Woman Destroyed* (Beauvoir, 1967), and Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* [1973] (1994). So much of this work was written in this style as it allowed greater insight into the intimate minds of the women in the text, thus giving these characters more depth and creating characters that do not bend to male-defined stereotypes of women. The characters are speaking directly to the reader creating a bond which allows the reader to identify with the narrator to a greater extent. This use of this narrative style, found in both Dworkin's major novels, allows for the reader to observe the character's prejudices and flawed perspectives, but without feeling detached from the empathetic nature of the story. This first person narrative, written in a semi-stream of consciousness style, gives the reader an insight into the character without the need for elongated descriptions by the author, or any mechanical summations by a third-person detached narrator.

This use of this first-person narrator allows Dworkin to show the failings of her characters in a larger social context. This is certainly the case with Andrea in *Mercy* (1990), in which the character will discuss her feelings in a situation, which is usually at odds with how the reader can see it, and this achieved by the inner narrative voice of the protagonist. For example, at the beginning of the text, the nine year old Andrea is sexually assaulted in a cinema though she is too young to fully understand what has happened. When Andrea tells her parents they ask, “did anything happen?” (Dworkin, 1990:6), and as the man in the cinema did not fully rape her they finally say, “Thank god nothing happened” (1990: 7). This inducts the nine year old into a culture in which her sexual assault counts as ‘nothing’, and thus later in the novel when she is raped at the age of eighteen, she doesn’t realise what has happened to her: “Well, I wasn’t really raped. Rape is just some awful word” (Dworkin, 1990: 46), she goes on,

I didn’t want the man to be fucking me but, I mean, that doesn’t really matter; it’s just that I really tried to stop him, I really tried not to have him near me, I really didn’t want him to and he really hurt me so much so I thought maybe it was rape because he hurt me so bad and I didn’t want to so much but I guess it wasn’t or it doesn’t matter. (Dworkin, 1990: 50)

This bleak picture from Andrea’s mind is a direct response to the treatment of her at the beginning of the book, and though the reader can see the situation very clearly, from just Andrea’s telling of it, she herself is blind. This strategy allows the reader an understanding of Andrea’s character – her flaws and her mental processes – without the need for an omniscient or descriptive narrator. It, also, allows Dworkin to demonstrate how the treatment of victims allows ‘rape culture’ to perpetuate. Dworkin can make vast political points with this character, just from insights such as these into her mind; Andrea serves as an archetypal victim for Dworkin, and is used to contrast the unfeeling narrator of the prologue and epilogue.

The body of the story of *Mercy* (1990) is surrounded by a prologue and an epilogue, both entitled “Not Andrea” and the narrator’s voice in these sections is cold and academic and the ambivalence of this narrator comes as a sharp turn-around from the direction of the body of the text, and is heavily ironic. Dworkin’s narrator is a perfect example of Bakhtin’s ‘hybrid utterance’ (Bakhtin, [1975] 2004) in which the tone of the writing mocks the character or narrator speaking. The language used in these segments allows the views of the narrator to be harshly mocked by the author, by showing the over- ‘academisation’ of the moralistic subject of rape, especially within the ‘sex-positive’ group to which Dworkin was particularly opposed. The narrator, for example, claims that it would be “anti-mythological to perceive

rape in moralistic terms” (Dworkin, 1990: 334) and that then, “We would then have to ignore or impugn the myth of Persephone, in which her abduction and rape led, in the view of the wise ancient Greeks, to the establishment of the seasons” (1990: 334). In this extract it is the language used by the narrator that adds the irony to the text. The superfluous use of the adjective ‘wise’, which has the effect absolutely undermining that sentiment, is a clever use of language; as Bakhtin argues: “Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*...the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author” (Bakhtin [1975] 2004: 324). The narrator continues: “It is disparaging and profoundly anti-intellectual to concentrate on the virtual slave status of women per se in ancient Greece as if that in and of itself rendered their mythological insights into rape suspect” (Dworkin, 1990: 335). The purpose of mocking this narrator is designed to justify the way Dworkin wrote her text. Many of Dworkin’s critics opposed her use of sweeping statements and vast generalisations, seeing it as ‘anti-intellectual’ and critically naïve. The use of this narrator, then, can be seen as a way of answering her critics before they had a chance to remark upon it. By assuming a hyperbolised voice of an academic, Dworkin uses the language of academia to justify her own lack of academic writing.

This narrator is mocked further by her direct criticism of Andrea Dworkin. This narrator disparages Dworkin’s work, calling her: “Grand Inquisitor Dworkin” (1990; 342) and dismissing her with: “She is a prime example, of course, of the simpleminded demagogue [*sic*] who promotes the proposition that *bad things are bad*.” (1990; 342). Calling Dworkin a grand inquisitor is a particularly negative reference, intimating references to the Spanish Inquisition, and is emotive of violence and torture¹⁴. The narrator continues to condemn, not only Dworkin, but her readership, dismissing them as: “the poor, the uneducated, the lunatic fringe that she both exploits and appeals to” (1990; 342). This sentiment presented by the narrator is obviously supposed to reflect the character, Andrea, who is both poor and uneducated. Dworkin is trying to show that the narrator has not understood the way in which Andrea came to be the character she is by the end of the text, which is directly due to poverty and lack of social structures that led to her exploitation. The narrator’s scorn for the lead character, of Andrea Dworkin, and of Dworkin’s readership at large, is a satirical end to the

¹⁴ It is also a reference to parable of the Grand Inquisitor found in Dostoyevsky’s novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), further embedding her story within the web of intertextuality.

novel. This also functions to unify her readers, as in her dismissal of the 'lunatic fringe' the narrator has allied them all together, creating cohesion against this pre-empted criticism.

The use of a narrator that openly criticises the author is one of the techniques Dworkin uses to display the contrived nature of her text. The use of this narrator in the prologue/epilogue, who is a fictional character themselves, serves to disengage the author from the text. Her work is so often linked to her life and her characters or narrators attributed to her own voice, that the linguistic techniques used by Dworkin to situate herself within the field of literature are often overlooked. This narrator, responding directly to Dworkin, allows her to mock the critics of her work. Her narrator for this epilogue is a reaction to her opponents, who dislike her heavily aggressive, polemical style, which lacks the subtlety of scholarly texts. She parodies the language of academia, partly to show her perception of its blindness, but also to prove that she actively chose to write the way she did.

The use of the two distinct narrators in *Mercy* (Dworkin, 1990), the unnamed writer of the prologue/epilogue and the character Andrea also leads to a parody of tone. These two characters have opposing voices; the narrator is a mockery of a supposedly traditional academic voice, whereas Andrea is largely uneducated and struggles with the application of language. The contrast between the two characters throws into sharp relief the flaws of the character, Andrea, in the text. As discussed, the academic voice is obviously written to be flawed; however, the differences between the two characters allows for the reader to see how Andrea's radicalism is formed. As Andrea does not have access to the same sources of information and social protection owing to her being 'poor' and 'uneducated', she is more vulnerable to the sexual exploitation she endures - and her actions at the end of the text directly reflect that vulnerability.

These two contrasting characters of Andrea and the narrator, both of which are hyperbolic caricatures of the types of people they represent, are both good examples of how the hybrid utterance, as coined by Bakhtin, can use first-person narrative voices to create character. As Bakhtin concluded in 'Discourse in the Novel' ([1975] 2004), by the use of conflicting narrators the authority of the text is questioned; the contrast between these voices questions the authorial voice. There is a tendency on the part of 'academic criticism', as defined by Barthes, to try and identify the authorial voice within the characters or narrator of the given text, and to attribute the authorial intentionality and viewpoint to one or all of the characters. The undermining of both of these narrators by the discrepancies between their voices makes

the voice of the author invisible within the text. By displaying how inherently constructed and flawed both of these voices are, Dworkin distances herself from these characters.

The act of being a writer is hugely prevalent within Dworkin's body of work. In both her novels, *Mercy* (1990) and *Ice and Fire* (1986), the central protagonists are writers, as is the voice of the prologue in *Mercy* who describes herself as a "woman of letters" (Dworkin, 1990: 1). Similarly, in her non-fiction works, such as *Heartbreak* (2002) and *Letters from a War Zone* (1988), Dworkin is unrelenting in repeating that she too is a writer. Throughout her work there is an emphasis placed on 'creating' and the use of characters that depict the struggles of writing and publishing, which is something that Dworkin experienced when trying to get her own work published. For Dworkin, there is obviously a huge significance in being a writer and her political intentions within her work, as by highlighting the contrivances in her literature and writing, and specifically how she was writing for a purpose, these characters take on a political significance that melds with the feminist arguments found in her polemics.

Dworkin was not the only writer of feminist fiction whose work featured a protagonist who was a writer or an aspiring writer; in fact, many of the second-wave feminist fictional writers utilised this plot device. Gayle Green claimed that this style is a huge part of feminist fiction: "versions of the feminist *Kunstlerroman* existed earlier in the century, but the genre reached its fullest expression during the second wave of feminism" (Green, 1992: 9). *Kunstlerroman* is a form in which an author or artist creates a work about the process of creating. In novels, this usually takes the form of the lead character aspiring to become a writer, documenting their influences and struggles against adversity, usually ending with a turning point in their career or direction of writing. An example of this would be Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* [1973] (1994), in which the narrator, Isadora, discusses her previous and current difficulties with writing, and the novel ends with her literary epiphany: "I sat very quietly looking at the pages I had written. I knew I did not want to be trapped in my own book" (Jong, [1973] 1994: 315). Though the future is uncertain, the character has reached a point of transition and change.

In this aspect both of Dworkin's protagonists experience much the same journey as Isadora Wing; both novels show the characters struggling with the task of writing; what to write, how to write. *Mercy* (1990), however, does not fit the form as completely, as the end of the novel is characterised by Andrea giving up writing for a more violent strategy - a more radical

change of direction than *Kunstelroman* usually implies. *Ice and Fire* (1986), however, ends with the moment of the character beginning to write a new novel after the publication and the failure of her previous book; a much more typical ending for a *Kunstelroman* novel, as it implies a new beginning or a change in direction. The character had been made to change her first book by a publisher who promises to make it sell: "and *everyone thinks you - want - censorship - so why don't you - just give - us - that - and then - we can sell - the fucking thing*" (Dworkin, 1986; 117) and finds that after she has changed it and given in to his sexual advances, he makes no effort to publicise her work: "He lets it die, no gift like jewellery for me anymore. He preordains its death and it dies" (1986; 180). The novel ends with the character beginning her second work, "writing my poor little heart out: in a terrible hurry to tell what is in my heart" (1986; 181), in a turning point that we hope will be the beginning of her career. The final line, "Did I remember to say that I always wanted to be a writer" (1986; 181), seems to suggest that the very book we are reading is the book she is just beginning to write, once again bringing us back round to questions of authorship, authenticity and intertextuality.

This use of contested authority in the text is most clearly stated in this very final line from *Ice and Fire*, "Did I remember to say that I always wanted to be a writer, since I was a little girl?" (Dworkin, 1986; 181). Despite the fact that the protagonist has been a writer for the latter part of the book, this line still strikes a tone of discord. By ending the novel in such ambiguous terms, the reader is forced to reconsider exactly what they have just read, and consider the authenticity or truth of the book. Following a more traditional narrative, *Ice and Fire* (1986) could be considered to be simply a metafictional book about writing, similar in many ways to Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* [1973] (2004) or Marilyn French's *The Woman's Room* ([1977] 1997), in which the characters discuss the difficulties of writing; yet, Dworkin's narrator undermines this by drawing attention to the fact that, as a writer, she is also writing the text we are reading. This immediately calls authenticity into question, and changes our perceptions of the authorship of the work. This technique allows Dworkin to subvert the opinions of the protagonist and to disengage herself from any of the feelings and experiences of the character. Undermining the ideas of her central protagonist appears to be an unusual technique, yet perhaps the answer may lie in a different text by Dworkin. In *Heartbreak*, Dworkin discusses her disillusionment with many of the male writers she idolised, such as D.H. Lawrence, and is told by her father: "Sometimes writers lie" (Dworkin, 2002: 22). Dworkin was vocal about the impact Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) had on

her reading of canonical male authored texts and how Millett's work had taught her to re-evaluate them: "I was one of the ones it was written for, because I had absorbed the writers she exposed, I had believed in them; in the euphoria of finding what I thought were truth-tellers, I had forgotten my father's warning that some writers lie" (2002: 34).

In *Mercy* (1990), there is also a continuation of this use of literary tradition to situate Dworkin's work within the conventions of fiction. Dworkin repeatedly calls on canonical writers to inform, contrast and situate her work. What is notable is that the vast majority of these writers are men. Dworkin quotes excessively from authors such as Rimbaud, Ginsberg and Baudelaire, and in *First Love* (1978), the narrator exclaims: "I loved Rimbaud. I loved Plato and through him Socrates. I loved Sappho. I loved Dostoevsky, and sweet Shelley, and Homer. I loved cold Valery, and warm D.H. Lawrence, and tortured Kafka, and raging tender Ginsberg" (Dworkin, 1978: no pagination). With the exception of Sappho these writers are all men ("her existence obscuring the gender specificity of my true devotion" (Dworkin, 1988; 67)), and the majority are stereotypically 'masculine' in their writing; indeed, these are writers who often elevate hegemonic masculinity.

This lack of any substantial references to literature by women is disappointing as it is not something that is true of Dworkin, who often cited the works of female writers in her non-fiction work. In an article entitled 'Loving Books: Male/Female/Feminist' in *Letters from a War Zone* (Dworkin, 1988), Dworkin claims she values writing that is less involved with stereotypical 'femininity', but does not condemn the writing of all women: "I love what is raw and eloquent in writing but not feminine. I have learned to appreciate the great subtlety and strength of women who write within the boundaries of a feminine writing ethic: but I do not accept it for myself" (1988; 68). In a subsequent essay in *War Zone* there is a blistering analysis of *Wuthering Heights* (Bronte, 1847), in which Dworkin claims: "there is nothing like it— no novel of such astonishing originality and power and passion written by anyone" (1988; 72). *Wuthering Heights* is not a typically 'feminine' text, and yet, though Dworkin raves about its importance, there is no mention of Emily Bronte throughout her own fictional works. This demonstrates that whilst Dworkin appreciated literature by women, she actively chose not to engage with it in her fiction. Whilst Dworkin does point out in her essay, 'Loving Books: Male/ Female/ Feminist' (1988), that there is a difference between 'feminine' writing and just writing by a woman, the lack of references to female writers in her fictional work is a glaring absence. She goes on to claim her writing has much more in common with male authors: "This ambition [writing] is deeply rooted in male identification: and many of

the characteristics that I value most in myself as a person and as a writer are” (Dworkin, 1988: 67) – an unexpected admission given Dworkin’s stringent feminist values.

Dworkin claims that her writing puts forward a rebuke to the masculine tradition of writing. She asserts that she mimicked a masculine style of writing in order to challenge their own conventions and their power: “I dare to confront it [male power] in my writing because of the audacity I learned from male writers” (Dworkin, 1988; 68). By situating herself within the a male literary tradition, by referencing, quoting, and citing as influences, male writers, Dworkin automatically draws comparisons between her writing and theirs, a device that Gayle Green suggests is typical of the writers of feminist fiction: “they use metafiction to challenge the cultural and literary tradition they inherit” (Green, 1992: 2). In *Mercy* (1990), as Andrea fights against the patriarchal and misogynist world she encounters, the only way she can express herself is by mimicking their style and values; as she has been shown nothing but disregard and violence throughout the text, she then mirrors this behaviour becoming the cold, homicidal character at the end of the text. In a move away from the theories of *Écriture féminine* and Cixous’s idea that women should ‘write themselves’ (Cixous, 1976), Dworkin claims to write in a stereotypically ‘masculine’ way - mimicking these male writers. Though this is a contentious claim, it is true that Andrea has no typically feminine pursuits and certainly by the end of the book, as she goes on her nightly killing sprees, she is not typically ‘feminine’. Andrea has so deeply internalised the male-perspective of the other characters in the book that she can only respond by ‘fighting fire with fire’ and mimicking un-feminine language and violence. By creating such an androgynous character, Dworkin demonstrates her belief in the discrepancy between masculine and feminine writing, and shows how canonical male writers have continuously isolated the real experiences of women from their work, creating female characters that do not fit with her ideas of womanhood: “I thought the world was as they said it was, to be a hero, one must be as their heroes were...I did not experience my body as my own” (Dworkin, 1978; 12).

In her non-fiction work she also uses this technique of quoting and referencing other writers, and often engages with them in detailed literary analysis. In the most recent prologue to *Intercourse*, written by Dworkin in 1995, she claims that she is attempting to undermine the authority of the authors she cites, such as Tolstoy, Kobo Abe and D H Lawrence: “I use them; I cut and slice into them in order to exhibit them; but the authority behind the book – behind each and every choice – is mine” (Dworkin [1987] 1995: xxxiii). Despite this claim to use these writers as examples for her own arguments, she often chooses books that undermine

hegemonic depictions of gender roles and sexuality, unlike the choices in her fictional works. With the exception of a few, such as D H Lawrence, the writers she chooses are arguably subversive in their portrayals of gender roles and have diverse perspectives on women and social equality, and her literary analysis seeks to bring this to the forefront rather than to critique them.

In the opening chapter of *Intercourse* (1987), Dworkin quotes extensively from Leo Tolstoy, and his novella *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889). *The Kreutzer Sonata* is the story of a man recounting how his repulsion for his own sexual objectification of his wife, turned into hatred and rage towards her. The protagonist then finds his wife in bed with another man, and in this fit of rage, he stabs his wife to death. He tells this story to a group of strangers on a train, seemingly in the hope of catharsis, and preaches the messages of abstinence and the need to end the sexual objectification of women: “they liberate woman, give her all sorts of rights equal to man, but continue to regard her as an instrument of enjoyment... And there she is, still the same humiliated and depraved slave, and the man still a depraved slave-owner” (Dworkin, 1987: 12).

The ideas portrayed in this novella resonate with second-wave feminist discourse, and strike a surprisingly modern chord. The protagonist, Pozdnyshev, finds himself lusting after women, yet after he has been with them, he feels repulsed and disgusted by them. Pozdnyshev acknowledges that this disgust is due to the way in which he perceives them and their sexuality, and – crucially – the loathing of his own sexual desires. Pozdnyshev asserts that women can never attain liberation while they are still objects of male desire. Dworkin was interested in this book as the protagonist explores many assumptions that second-wave feminists would come to challenge nearly a hundred years later. Where Dworkin *et al.* differed from Pozdnyshev is that where he preached for abstinence to avoid the objectification and revulsion towards women, feminists sought to change the beliefs and prejudices that underpinned the degrading sexualisation of women. Tolstoy himself had a very complicated relationship to sex and it is not within the remit of this thesis to explore whether Tolstoy himself was attempting to convey a progressive or a misogynist message. Rather, *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) is used by Dworkin to show that the character, Pozdnyshev, is too short-sighted in his solution to the liberation of women. This character cannot free himself from a patriarchal viewpoint to be able to see the inherent misogyny in his belief that all sexual desires towards women must be tainted by hatred.

Tolstoy is used in *Intercourse* (1987) as an example of a male perspective on female objectification, and one that was particularly bold and progressive among its contemporaries. Similarly with *The Woman in the Dunes* (1962) by Kobo Abe, which Dworkin also analyses at length in her text, the sexism of the protagonist is not drawn as a reflection upon the author; in fact, it is suggested that this demonstrates Abe's awareness and denunciation of this misogynist character. These books by respected male authors actively question the positions of women and the treatment they receive at the hands of men are both nuanced perspectives of the ways in which these objectifications have been perpetuated. Fictional works by feminist authors have long been over-simplified, and reduced to one-dimensional analyses. The inclusion of these male-authored texts, within her polemics, that deal with new or different perspectives of gender relations, whether good or bad, were not an arbitrary choice, as Dworkin suggests. For an author who also writes fictional works, and ones that specifically challenge normative society, Dworkin chose writers who can complement and give insight into her own fictional works.

The feminist analysis that Millett brought into the mainstream in the 1970s helped women writers to challenge conventions within literature. In *First Love* (1978), the character follows her list of adored male writers with the discovery of *Sexual Politics* (1970), and the way in which it changed her perception of the male literary tradition: "Millett described Henry Miller's depictions of sex acts in a voice I had never heard before... Then I saw it--the cruelty of it--as what it was, no matter what others, the whole world, called it" (Dworkin, 1978: no pagination). The literary criticism that arose out of the feminist movement had a profound effect on the literature it created. This challenge often took the form of literature that was heavily self-aware, using techniques such as allusion, *Kunsterroman*, parodies of convention, and interdiscursivity. Many female writers used this style of self-conscious fiction, including Margaret Atwood, Margaret Drabble, Doris Lessing and Erica Jong, and it became a fairly common trope in feminist fiction. Gayle Green discusses this idea of feminist metafiction in her book *Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the Tradition* (1992), in which she describes the style as "the most revolutionary movement in contemporary fiction – revolutionary both in that it is formally innovative and in that it helped make a social revolution, playing a major role in the resurgence of feminism in the sixties and seventies, the so-called second wave" (Green, 1992: 2). This style is closely linked with the feminist movement, and was so prolific during this time, that Green claims that the second-wave feminist movement "was a revolution in which reading and writing played unprecedented

roles. So close was this fiction to the pulse of the times that it is possible to use it as documentary of and commentary on the social and political scene" (Green, 1992: 34). Feminist fiction was so tied to metafictional and self-conscious narratives that the structure itself became a tool for the movement.

This lack of structure is furthered by the use of the semi-stream of consciousness narratives found in both *Mercy* (Dworkin, 1990) and *Ice and Fire* (Dworkin, 1986). This feminist metafictional style is constructed by turning traditional narratives slightly off balance, and changing the central focus of the novel. Feminist metafiction is a style so involved with changing perceptions of the fundamentals of society that for the majority of these texts, the foundation of the novel must undergo a change. Green concurs with this, suggesting that: "Women's efforts at liberation in relation to problems of narrative form, fiction that destabilizes the conventions of realism in a project of psychic and social transformation" (Green, 1992: 1) is a popular theme throughout the genre. That is not to suggest that feminists were the only writers to use these techniques - many of which stemmed from modernism and earlier - yet it is the predominance of them in this style of feminist fiction that is interesting. Green argues that the reason feminist fiction is so self-conscious is that "to draw attention to the structures of fiction is also to draw attention to the conventionality of the codes that govern human behaviour, to reveal how such codes have been constructed and how they can therefore be changed" (Green, 1992: 2).

One technique that Dworkin uses throughout her work is blurring the distinction between text and body. As discussed, 'metafictional feminist writers' have often used *Kunsterroman* as a means of using the text to discuss being a woman and a writer, but Dworkin goes further and in her works the text becomes a body in itself. In 'Laugh of the Medusa', Helene Cixous states: "Text: my body" (Cixous, 1976: 882), and this is an idea that is present in all of Dworkin's fiction, most notably in *Mercy* (1990). Through the use of literary techniques, such as the non-linear narrative and the semi-stream of consciousness style, the book does not describe the character; the text *is* the character. Andrea is so caught up in the very style of the book that she is inseparable from its narrative techniques. The semi-stream of consciousness, the repetitions, the discrepancies, the incongruities, and neuroses, is the only way we can discover the character of Andrea. The writing itself makes reference to this blurring of text and body: "What happens to a girl who is poetry on cement, your body is the paper and the poem, the press and the ink, the singer and the song; it's real, it's literal, this song of myself, you're what there is, the medium, the message, the sign, the signifier" (Dworkin, 1990: 103).

As the writing is so tied up with the actual person and life of Andrea Dworkin it makes this technique more complex. Dworkin uses autobiographical details from her life in her novels, but always subverts, alters or changes the significance of them. Details such as being jailed over protesting against the Vietnam War, or an abusive marriage, or simply calling her character Andrea are ways in which Dworkin blur the distinction between herself and her fiction.

In the second-wave, writers began to challenge the assumptions and ideas within literature. Just as in *Heartbreak*, when Dworkin laments that: “In the euphoria of finding what I thought were truth-tellers, I had forgotten my father’s warning that some writers lie” (2002: 46), there is a prevalence of writers in the second-wave who re-think the ‘truth’ of the assertions of canonical male writers. In *The Woman’s Room*, for example, Mira says: “I have been suspecting for a while now that everything I ever read was lies” (French, [1977] 1997: 210), or Isadora Wing in *Fear of Flying*: “I learned about women through... the eyes of male writers” (Jong, [1973] 1994: 12). The trope of self-conscious writing that is present within women’s fiction is a direct retaliation to hegemonically male writing that has dominated literature. The very tradition that is inherited by feminist novelists is largely male, and whether the canonical texts are pointedly misogynist or not, many of these canonical male writers will define women through their own male gaze. Isadora continues: “Of course, I didn’t think of them as *male* writers. I thought of them as writers, as authorities... Naturally I trusted everything they said, even when it implied my own inferiority... I learned from Shaw that women can never be artists; I learned from Dostoyevsky that they have no religious feeling; I learned from Swift and Pope...” (Jong, [1973] 1994: 12). What is universal with these feminist writers is the idea that male writers categorised women too easily, turning them into caricatures of people, and not acknowledging the full humanity of the female experience. In order to defy the traditional canon of literature these writers often write in a self-conscious style – that purposefully acknowledges its own place within literature by referencing these other authors – in an attempt to highlight the contrast with their own work.

The reductive depictions of women which dominate the canon of literature are found in both male and female novelists work, “feminist fiction is not the same as ‘women’s fiction’ or fiction by women: not all women writers are ‘women’s writers,’ and not all women’s writers are feminist writers, since to write about ‘women’s issues’ is not necessarily to address them from a feminist perspective” (Green, 1992: 2). Feminist novelists, then, seek to expand the parameters of language and form in order to bring the experiences of women into their work.

Écriture féminine is a term by Helene Cixous, made famous by her seminal essay 'The Laugh of the Medusa' (1976), in which Cixous argues that the phallogocentric construction of language has meant that women have been kept from writing, and more crucially, from writing about themselves. She claims that women must reclaim their space in literature and history: "woman must put herself into the text - as into the world and into history - by her own movement" (Cixous, 1976: 875). In *Ice and Fire* (1986) the protagonist's work is modified by the publisher then left to 'die', just as Cixous warns: "managing editors, and big bosses don't like the true texts of women - female-sexed texts. That kind scares them." (Cixous, 1976: 877).

For Cixous, the body is closely connected with women's writing, claiming: "I write woman" (1976: 877). As Dworkin's narrators struggle in the bounds of their male-defined chains, it actually highlights the female experience of writing. Dworkin differs from Cixous in that rather than 'writing woman', she writes about the *difficulties* of writing 'woman's' literature, and manages to encapsulate the female experience in this way. For these characters, writing in a male-dominated sphere, using 'masculine' language fails to describe their experiences, and as a result they feel 'voiceless'. The character must "write her heart out" (Dworkin, 1986: 181), and write a narrative, unconstrained by male influence, that will define her experience, until the writing becomes her: "Text: my body" (Cixous, 1976: 882). In this sense then, *Ice and Fire* is the textual body of the protagonist, and the character has written herself, thus defining the novel. It is perhaps for this reason that the character in *Ice and Fire* is a writer, as at the heart of the novel is the need to create identity, and according to Cixous, in order to do this, a woman must become a writer. There are similar incidents in both *Mercy* (1990) and *First Love* (1978), in which, the characters feel that the language they have been given does not describe their experiences: "those writers and their kind, had taken cruelty and rape and named it for me, "life," "sex," "lovemaking"" (Dworkin, 1978: no pagination), so as a woman, language must be changed to accommodate women's experiences: "We can finally invent: a new alphabet first, big letters from which will come new words for old things, real things, and the bait says what they are" (Dworkin, 1990: 235).

In *Mercy*, Dworkin takes this contrast with male canonical writing even further, by using references to Walt Whitman repeatedly throughout the text. Whitman appears to follow Andrea throughout the book and her experiences after often compared to his writings. Whitman is a formidable presence in American literature, having been described by M. Jimmie Killingsworth as "the boldest innovator and perhaps the greatest poet in the literary

history of the United States" (Killingsworth, 2007: 105). Writing just after the civil wars, Whitman wrote poetry that is largely patriotic yet liberal in tone and he came to represent freedom, liberation and American democracy. Whitman is famous for playing with the conventions of poetry, and when he first published he often came under severe criticism for his breach of tradition: "They dismissed his effort to create new forms of poetry as "carelessness," "impertinence," "nonchalance with regard to forms," and "indifference to the dignity of verse"" (Killingsworth, 2007: 106). Known as the 'poet of the body' Whitman's poetry is closely linked with his corporeality, and he famously wrote in the preface to *Leaves of Grass*: "And your body shall be a very great poem" (Whitman, 1855).

This use of comparing body and language are prevalent throughout his works and Dworkin's writing often mimics the idea closely. Andrea is constantly being defined by language or by a name, not usually of her own choice: "Andrea, it means manhood or courage but it was pink pussy anyway wrapped in a pink fuzzy blanket with big men's fingers going coochie coochie coo" (Dworkin, 1990: 102). In this quote we see that, not only is Andrea defined by the definition of her name, but is then undermined by the men who surround her. The brutal imagery of forced sexualisation, implied by the 'big men's fingers', is exacerbated by the infantilizing 'coochie coochie coo'. Andrea, here, is caught between definitions, either of her name as 'masculine' to the hyper-sexualised view of her as 'pussy'. Her identity is constantly created by this language - none of which she is the author of - as she is defined and redefined by the male gaze. Where Whitman said in "Song of Myself": "Whoever reads this reads a man", in *Mercy*, Andrea is not allowed to define herself, but is defined by the language used against her; a direct opposition to Whitman.

Andrea is clearly influenced by Whitman, and, at the beginning of the text, idolises him, glorifying in living "just down the street from Walt Whitman's house" (Dworkin, 1990: 5). The physical proximity of Whitman is obviously crucial for Andrea, a suggestion that they started from the same place, and she hopes to follow his path. By following Whitman's ideology of free, universal love, and sexual voraciousness, she loses her own path and becomes the damaged and distraught individual that we see by the end of the book. What this seeks to emphasize is the different social roles ascribed to men and women, especially in a sexual capacity. As Andrea discovers, within the sexual freedom is a luxury only to be enjoyed by men, whereas as a woman she experiences the full force of sex as a commodity, as power, as deference, but never as love or pleasure. Towards the end of the novel it is clear that Andrea feels like Whitman has betrayed her with his promises of liberation and sexual

freedom, “Walt; I don’t like poetry anymore” (Dworkin, 1990: 101) and even later in the text, “he had God-given talent for God-given propaganda; the poet says love; as command...I loved him, the words, the dreams; don’t believe them, don’t love them, don’t obey the program written into the poem” (Dworkin, 1990: 283). This shows, once again, the discrepancy between male writers and female experience within the literary tradition. By using a writer as canonical and influential as Whitman, Dworkin ensures that her audience, especially in America, will be familiar with his works and so her contrast to his ideology will not be lost. By drawing a comparison with Andrea’s experiences to Whitman’s ideologies, Dworkin brings the female experience into his text. Dworkin’s use of Whitman throughout *Mercy* allows her to show the discrepancies and prejudices between male and female experiences of sexual freedom.

As the character begins to reject these male-defined experiences and ideologies, she attempts to form her own self and belief system. A part of this is coming to terms with her name, which she reminds us constantly means “manhood or courage”. Andrea struggles within the confines of language and seeks to give her own meaning to words and experiences that she feels have been defined by men. This makes the role of names and naming is hugely significant within Dworkin’s work, especially as it connects to the perceptions of the body and of the author. The idea of being a writer, and of the nature of writing, links heavily with the use of names and naming within Dworkin’s fiction. In the two major novels, *Mercy* (1990) and *Ice and Fire* (1986), Dworkin uses the names to help create the identities, or rather, the non-identities, of her protagonists. In *Mercy*, the narrator is called Andrea, ostensibly a semi-autobiographical reference to herself, and yet the concept of a name as identity is questioned and undermined at every turn. Conversely, in *Ice and Fire*, the narrator is never named, a device that adds to the insubstantial sense of identity that pervades both the texts. These two protagonists, both of whom are writers themselves, constantly use names to displace the sense of identity of themselves and of the supporting characters.

The textual body of *Mercy* is defined by this naming process. The first line may be “My name is Andrea” (Dworkin, 1990: 5) but framing these words is the ambiguous “Not Andrea” (Dworkin, 1990: 1; 334) as the title of the prologue and epilogue. So the text is literally surrounded by this denunciation, calling into question the authenticity of the protagonist, and indeed, of our author. This narrator of the prologue/epilogue, has her own very distinct voice, a complete contrast to the heroine of the main narrative. This narrator presents herself as an ‘intellectual’, cold and unaffected; very different to the character Andrea, and yet, as

discussed, also not aligning herself with Dworkin, whom she openly criticises. So who is this unnamed “Not Andrea”? Is ‘Not Andrea’ the scathing, bitter, academic we find in the prologue/epilogue? Is it the character Andrea? Do both or neither reflect the notorious author? Or is it as simple as saying that this narrator is not neither Andrea, nor Andrea Dworkin, but a completely new voice surrounding the text? What we find is a matryoshka of narration, in which the book is written by Andrea Dworkin, the prologue/epilogue by an unnamed narrator, and the narrative by a character named Andrea. At every stage the concept of authorship is subverted, and the reader’s perception of ‘real’ is destabilised.

Unlike a traditional narrative format the story is not linear, it does not build upon any previous action; the character makes no reference to past events or characters. This makes Andrea, our protagonist, a fluid presence, impossible to pin down. Almost every chapter begins: “My name is Andrea.” (Dworkin, 1990). In this way, at the beginning of each chapter we are re-introduced to the character again and again. In each new chapter, the character seems to begin again, at a different age, or in a different place, and with a new story to tell us. This makes the “My name is Andrea” into a sort of mantra, a heartbeat reinstating her sense of self as surely as her own pulse and it is only through this repetition that we can be sure we are following the same character throughout the text.

When Andrea goes abroad to Europe in the middle of the novel, where her American name has lost all meaning, she becomes disembodied: "I have no fear, no ambivalence, no yesterday, no tomorrow; not even a name really" (Dworkin, 1990: 81). A lack of emotion and the inconsequence of time, do not seem as crucial to her release from reality as the loss of her name. Even the arrangement of this sentence highlights the importance of the name as the final proof of being. The character imagines herself free, living in the present, nameless, yet the syntax betrays her. She desperately lists her freedoms asyndetically, rolling off the tongue, yet in the final clause the “really” adds a melancholic note. In losing her name, she has lost herself. The freedom that she has won has left her alone in the world. It is interesting how much the use of her name serves to create her own identity: "Here, Andreus is a man's name. Andrea doesn't exist at all, my momma's name, not at all, not one bit. It is monstrous to betray your child, bitch" (Dworkin, 1990: 73). This unjustified anger towards her mother is a product of the instability the character feels at the loss of her only identity. Where her mother reflected homeliness and safety, the removal of the presence of her mother has left her detached, without a sense of self to define her.

In this foreign country where her name has lost its inherent meaning, she feels disengaged from her past self: "My name is Andrea but here in nightclubs they say *ma chere*." (Dworkin, 1990: 74). This idea shows how much the other characters surrounding her have made her nameless, she has lost her identity under the fierce male gaze of the nightclubs. Though this phrase is occasionally used as a term of endearment, that men call her this in nightclubs, and not ones in France, suggests that the phrase is used in a sexual predatory way, The use of '*ma chere*' is a generic term used by males as a name for a woman, which serves to highlight her feelings of impersonality and anonymity. This episode in Europe serves as a detachment from her constructed identity, where the characters around her do not speak her language and do not refer to her by name: "I'm twenty; I can't remember the last time I heard my name" (1990: 104).

The final escalation of this is the loss of her name during marriage: "When I married him I got his real name planted on me by law" (Dworkin, 1990: 139). This signifies the break away from America and from the spectre of her mother and she becomes defined by name to a man. The language used to describe this re-naming is symptomatic of her feelings of the creation of a new identity: "The wedding was my baptism, my naming" (1990: 139). The repetition of the word 'my' shows how the wedding ceremony is focused on changing the name and identity of the woman, not the man. Her husband retains his name while she changes hers; her identity becomes embroiled in his.

The name Andrea itself takes on different meanings throughout the text: at the beginning, the name serves to recollect tenderness, and more specifically, her mother, whereas towards the end of the book it is often looked at with derision for its masculine roots. By the very end it has become a disembodied concept, detached from her body. Just as the narrator in the prologue claims her caricature-like personality as her means of "identity and identification" (1990: 1), so Andrea becomes her *nom de guerre* and the character becomes the definition of 'courage'. When she wrote her name, authored it herself and created an "army" of Andrea-s she transformed from a person into an idea. For the character, to author a text is automatically to become detached from the idea itself, the body becomes disparate from the text.

As an aspiring writer at the beginning of the text, it is interesting that Andrea has no ability to form language in the way that she perceives it has to be written: "When I feel something no right words come or no one would know what they mean. It would be like throwing a ball that could never be caught" (Dworkin, 1990: 56). She cannot form her ideas properly with the

language she has been given; as Cixious argues, the language that she has inherited is too phallogocentric for it to convey properly the female experience. Andrea goes on to claim: "I don't have words except for my name, Andrea" (1990: 57). The only word she has left is a name that is constantly undermined during the course of the novel as it takes on a multiplicity of varying meanings, making it confused and detached from her sense of self. By the end of the novel, after the narrator tries to live up to the "fiction" written by her mother her solution to this is to become an author herself, and write her own 'person'.

At the end of the text, Andrea has succeeded in becoming the fiction her mother wrote. "And I am real; Andrea one, two, three, there's more than one" (Dworkin, 1990: 318). This phrase is telling of the warning that pervades the text; whilst the character may be fictional the idea she creates is real. As she changes from a character to an idea, she changes her name into a concept as well: "My *nom de guerre* is Andrea One; I am reliably told there are many more; girls named courage who are ready to kill." (1990: 333). In this quote, the protagonist changes her real name to her 'war name', she has at last escaped beyond the bounds of its meaning, and become nameless; she has become an author, and more than that, she has become the author of her own name. It is interesting to note that the "manhood" has now been removed from the definition, and 'Andrea' now solely relates to "courage", an emasculation that fits in with her denunciation of men. Given the power of the 'AuthorGod' (Barthes, 1977), she has chosen to rid herself of any masculine elements just as her homicidal misandry promises to rid the world of men.

Andrea's husband is also never named in the text, but more than that, she tells us that owing to his illegal activities, he is never referred to by his real name: "His *nom de guerre* was his name" (Dworkin, 1990: 139). In this we see the juxtaposition between Andrea and her estranged husband. His name was always his 'war name', displaying the stereotypically masculine penchant for violence, whereas she was always Andrea. Just as Dworkin mimics the style of male writers to create her novel, so Andrea uses the power of fear and violence that her husband used against her to free herself. It is questionable, however, just how free Andrea is by the end of the novel. By simply reversing the roles inflicted upon her, she is still trapped within the same system, never managing to change the actual terms of the oppressor/oppressed.

That Andrea becomes the perpetrator rather than the victim does not serve as a useful or constructive solution to a misogynistic society; as Dworkin argues in her speech 'Renouncing

Sexual ‘Equality’”, “commitment to sexual equality with males... is a commitment to becoming the rich instead of the poor, the rapist instead of the raped, the murderer instead of the murdered. I want to ask you to make a different commitment—a commitment to the abolition of poverty, rape, and murder; that is, a commitment to ending the system of oppression called patriarchy” (Dworkin, 1976: 13). This is one of Dworkin’s most frequently misunderstood quotations, and yet what she seeks to argue is that in order to liberate women – sexually or otherwise – does not come from replicating male behaviour, but liberating women from systems of power and discrimination. Andrea is a demonstration of this political point, as she cannot free herself from these systems, but merely imitates and reproduces the masculine behaviour that has been shown towards her during the course of the novel. Andrea does not represent a feminist character, but a woman who is bound by the chains of patriarchal systems.

Within the feminist metafiction tradition, the character often has a mental breakthrough, and can see the oppressive system in which she has been living, such as in *Fear of Flying* ([1973] 1994) or *The Woman’s Room* ([1977] 1997). Though often in these *Kunsterroman* novels the character is left on a precipice of change, acknowledgement of injustices brings about a revelation for the character. Why then does Dworkin employ such barbarism to outline her points? The use of this character essentially ‘fighting fire with fire’ is the exact opposite of what Dworkin’s feminism sought to achieve. In much the same way as Millett exposed the misogynist aspects of literature that were considered the norm, even empowering, Dworkin hoped to highlight the abuse of women by presenting a female character who acts in the same way as men – thus destabilising notions of femininity, and drawing attention to these acts outside of their usual setting. Discrimination is often hard to see in its normative setting – such as the male to female violence found in the rest of the text – so when the gender roles are swapped at the end of the novel, and Andrea commits violence against males, the discrimination inherent in her act is much more apparent. Feminism as a political discourse seeks to show an alternative to fighting within the system of male oppression by changing the perspective of systems of power, rather than fighting inside them; Andrea, however, does not manage to achieve this and instead constantly fights within the confines of oppression. As Dworkin said:

“I don’t believe rape is inevitable or natural. If I did, I would have no reason to be here. If I did, my political practice would be different than it is. Have you ever wondered why we [women] are not just in armed combat against you? It’s not because

there's a shortage of kitchen knives in this country. It is because we believe in your humanity, against all the evidence" (Dworkin, 1988: 54).

The character Andrea does take up combat against men, armed with a knife, whereas Dworkin, as a feminist, believes in the 'humanity' of men and liberation for women from patriarchal governance.

Andrea's focus on the masculine origins of her name, and on turning this into a 'war name' is part of inherent falsity of the concept of naming -in which the meaning of the name determines the characteristics of the person – in the book. This idea of the construction of personality the narrator compares to the creation of a fictional character: "My mother who you can't make up either because there's nothing so real as one named me Andrea as if I was someone: distinct, in particular. She made a fiction. I'm her book, a made-up story written down on a birth certificate" (Dworkin, 1990: 224). This 'hyper-'metafictionalising' of a fictional character contemplating their own fictitiousness may seem a little heavy handed as a literary device, something the austere academic of the prologue/epilogue may have railed at as "anathema to the spirit of enquiry" (1990: 334); yet in a book that constantly undermines the nature of the 'real' and of authorship this device serves to add textual layers to the writing, partly to undermine any autobiographical connection.

The fact that the narrator believes that naming her made her "someone: distinct" may explain why her mother is never named in the book. Her mother's character floats ambiguously throughout the text like a spectral mirror reflecting the prejudices and predicaments of her daughter from chapter to chapter. She changes from the idolised and comely figure of motherhood, to a "bitch", to a "prophet", seemingly embodying all the most clichéd feminine stereotypes. This makes the character of her mother seem like the archetypal figure from masculine literature.

Yet, why is her mother someone you "can't make up"? The narrator thinks it is because her mother is her 'author'. Her mother created her as one writes a story and Andrea is both the reader and the physical embodiment of this work. Andrea uses the name her mother gave her as a script which she seeks to emulate, and in this way from reading her mother's 'text' she becomes it; the fiction becomes real. In this view, the author appears infallible and omniscient; she assumes an intentionality on the part of her mother, the author, in naming her such. The name becomes a loaded word, steeped in hidden meaning, a burden for critical

analysis. *Mercy* constantly undermines the authority of the author, so we must assume that this conception of her mother/author as infallible is a perception of Andrea's.

Andrea's perception that an author is infallible is perhaps the reason why by the end of the novel she seeks to become the author of herself: "So I have to be the writer she tried to be - Andrea; not cunt - only I have to do it so it ain't a lie" (Dworkin, 1990: 232). The idea of lying and fiction is prevalent throughout her works; in *Heartbreak* Dworkin claims that as a child she decided "I'd write and I wouldn't lie" (Dworkin, 2002: 21) Andrea considers her lack of 'manhood' as a lie: "Maybe I should change from Andrea because it's a lie" (Dworkin, 1990: 232), once again alluding to the lie/truth binary opposition that Dworkin repeats throughout her work.

The narrator in *Ice and Fire* (1986) is obsessed by limits and by boundaries, constantly trying to escape perceived confines, such as the walls of her house. Thus, it is little wonder that the character is unnamed throughout the whole novel, and that the supporting characters in *Ice and Fire* are often referred to by initial only. We have a series of characters called 'N' or 'A' or 'M' which makes their identities fluid. For the character, however, her knowing their names means she feels that she knows them: "I knew their names: something about them: there was nothing rough" (Dworkin, 1986: 107). As in *Mercy* the use of names serves to create a sense of identity and of self. This blurred perception of self and of 'real' is something that is present throughout both the texts and is highlighted by this device of 'not naming'. From a structuralist perspective, to name something is to give it a value, or a meaning; hence by not doing so, the characters are unknowable. The fact that we, as readers, cannot perceive these characters as anything other than vague, transient forms highlights the fictionality of these characters.

The use of men in Dworkin's work is a troublesome issue, as the feminist agenda which she is trying to convey clouds the way she portrays them. Within her polemical works, owing to the sweeping and hyperbolic nature of the genre, men make up a homogenous group, indistinguishable from one another. Dworkin makes coarse generalisations about men as a group in her polemics, claiming: "The male compulsion to dominate and destroy that is the source of sexual pleasure for men" (Dworkin, 1988: 22) or in *Pornography*: "Pornography reveals that male pleasure is inextricably tied to victimizing, hurting, exploiting" (Dworkin, 1981: 69). These vast statements do not make allowances for individuals within the group who do not ascribe to these values, or for other broader differences such as race or sexuality

or historical situation. In order for the polemics to be sufficiently radical and far reaching, such nuances are lost; a weakness of the genre. In feminist polemical works, however, the reader expects to read these depictions, whether it is to their taste or not, yet in fictional works we expect there to be more character development; thus, Dworkin's use of these two-dimensional and vague male characters encourages comparison with her polemical works.

In other feminist fictional works of the second-wave, male characters are usually written to demonstrate the sexist views of the time, acting as mirrors to reflect societal attitudes and prejudices, and for the female characters to learn from. In *The Woman's Room* (French, [1977] 1997), for example, Mira encounters a variety of males, but most notably the archetypal husband from the 1950s and the Harvard student. Both her husband Norm and lover Ben, espouse misogynist attitudes; Norm's marital demands are transparently sexist, and though Ben is far more subtle in his misogyny, often appearing as the clichéd liberal scholar of 1970s Harvard, he is discovered to be no different to Norm at the end of the novel, when he becomes a husband himself. These two males serve, not as characters in their own right, but as devices to illustrate sexist attitudes in society. It is for this reason that these characters are purposefully 'two-dimensional' in depiction: "All this while you are asking, 'What about Norm? Who is he, this shadow man, this figurehead husband?'" (French, [1977] 1997: 260). The narrator goes on: "You think I am making him up. You think, Aha! A symbolic figure in what turns out to be after all an invented story" ([1977] 1997: 260); for the narrator/French, the story may be fictional but the character is not. French seeks to argue that there are real men, just like Norm, who are so swayed by socially constructed notions of gender that their entire belief system is essentially fictional, and they themselves almost become fictions.

Similarly in *Fear of Flying* (1973), Isadora bounces between her husband, Bennett, and lover, Adrian Goodlove, who represent the safety of the marital nest and the terrifying freedom of detachment respectively. Yet, though Isadora paints an astute picture of both, there is still an essence of these characters as clichéd. As she tries to decide between them, it appears to the reader that she is not so much picking between two men as two ideological perspectives; in the wake of female sexual liberation should women try to amend current relationships or pursue, as Isadora phrases it: "those other longings...The restlessness, the hunger" (Jong, [1973] 1994: 9). In both these texts, and others of the genre, male characters are depicted solely for the purpose of demonstrating sexual stereotypes found in society, but, despite this, these characters are still given some distinct characteristics that define one from another; or,

as French's Mira claimed about female characters in male-authored novels, they "are stick figures with padding in certain places" (French, [1977] 1994: 260).

In Dworkin's fiction, however, the male characters are not given even a scrap of character to redeem them. Throughout all her fictional work, men are shadow figures, completely anonymous, casting an unknowable but omnipresent darkness over the texts. In *Mercy* (1990), the first male character we meet is the stranger who assaults the nine-year old Andrea in a cinema. To the young girl the man is an "alien" with more hands than she can count; a man who seems inhuman. As the darkness covers her, and his hands seem to be all over her at once and the whispering in her ear seems to surround her, the man becomes, not a person, but an almost liquid presence. The darkness of the cinema literally makes him a silhouette, completely unrecognisable and inscrutable, adding to the sense of encompassing fear he creates.

This sense of male fear continues throughout the novel, and the male characters remain indistinct figures of violence. By the time Andrea has grown up, this sense of men as sexually predatory figures has been developed through her time as a junkie and prostitute: "Men roll on top, fuck, roll off, shoot up, sleep, roll on top again" (Dworkin, 1990: 41). That Andrea refers to them as just 'men', not quantifying a number or a particular subgroup of men, demonstrates that for her, they have become an indistinguishable mass; without character or distinction. They are still, however, the only active participants in the sentence. Despite being mere figures, rather than characters, these men are still defining the action of the scene. This device hints at the universality of male domination in society. This homogenous mass of 'men' are obviously not representative of every male, yet the character perceives it as such because of the male-system of dominance that perpetuates patriarchal attitudes towards women.

For Andrea, every male in the text uses, betrays or abuses her. This constant stream of male oppression means that the male characters in the text become blurred into one another; distinguishable only by the particular atrocity they have committed. By the end of the text, the narrator's opinion of men has become generalised and unanimous: "Lover, husband, boychick, brother, friend, political radical, boy comrade; I can't fucking tell you all apart" (Dworkin, (1990: 318). The universality of these portrayals is in keeping with the polemical tradition which these fictional texts compliment. The use of generalisations is a hallmark of the genre of polemical works, as is Dworkin's use of hyperbole and extremist depictions. The

male characters of her fiction are not representative of all men, but they are used in the novel because they do represent *some* men – particularly the worst kind – which fits in with the genre of polemics which present these one-sided views. These male characters also serve to add hyperbole and extreme sexual violence to these novels which seeks to amplify the feminist politics in them.

Dworkin also uses this hyperbole in the form of comparisons between misogynists and examples of extreme anti-Semitism. Outspoken in her fascination with the holocaust, Dworkin often makes references to Nazis, concentration camps and genocide - throughout her fiction and non-fiction works - and in *Mercy* the narrator shares this fascination. In one, somewhat incongruous chapter, Andrea discusses the horrors of women and children in concentration camps, and claims: "I consider Birkenau my birthplace." (Dworkin, 1990: 166), and later in the novel imagines herself in Massada at the time of the invasion and mass suicide. Andrea describes this event as: "The rock was barren and empty and soon it would be a cemetery and the bloodletting would become a story; nearly fiction, nearly a lie; abridged, condensed, cleaned up" (Dworkin, 1990: 279). This quote is interesting as, not only does it hint at the sanitisation of literature on atrocities, but also how the act of writing itself distances one from reality. Even though the mass-suicide at Massanda is real, by writing it down as a text it somehow becomes less than real; distanced from the reader by the body of the text.

This process of sanitization of horrific events is one that the narrator directly discusses in *Mercy*: "It's almost funny reading Holocaust literature. The person's trying so hard to be calm and rational, controlled, clear, not to exaggerate, never to exaggerate, to remember ordinary details so that the story will have a narrative line that will make sense to you; you - whoever the fuck you are" (Dworkin, 1990: 158). As within 'academic criticism' of literature, once the 'meaning' of the text has been discovered the text can be dismissed, the character rails at the idea of these incidents trying to be understood and rationalized. As with the 'sculpting' of the language, the writer tries to make the events into something that can be read as text, but as the critic Anne Whitehead states: "The holocaust past... cannot be narrated in an objective mode without omitting all that is most significant to understanding its power" (Whitehead, 2004: 83).

Andrea suggests the writing historical non-fiction is typically designed to distance the reader from the subject; the nature of the sign inherently distances one from the object (Derrida,

2004), and so the use of such careful, cold, language rather than evocative, does not allow the reader to understand the reality: "The person [writing about atrocities] picks words carefully, sculpts them into paragraphs" (Derrida, 2004: 158). By demonstrating how literature is styled, for example by the use of the word 'sculpts' which suggests moulding something to fit a form, Dworkin shows how these writers attempt to normalize these horrific event in order to make them readable for a wider audience: "They are so polite, so quiet, so civil, to make it a story you can read" (Dworkin, 1990: 158).

This style of historical non-fiction that Dworkin dislikes is very cold and precise, rather than purposefully emotive, and Dworkin's writing is more in keeping with trauma fiction. Unlike non-fiction literature about traumatic events, trauma narratives focus on the feelings evoked by the event rather than the historical details. In Anne Whitehead's *Trauma Fiction* (2004), she discusses how writers have tried to encapsulate the experience of trauma and horrific events within fiction, and attempts to answer the question: "If trauma comprises an event or experience which overwhelms the individual and resists language or representation, how then can it be narrativised into fiction?" (Whitehead, 2004: 3). Whitehead argues that trauma narratives use techniques such as "intertextuality, repetition and a dispersed or fragmented narrative voice" (2004: 84) in order to portray the psychological damage incurred by the experience of devastating events. As Andrea in *Mercy* states: "Nightmares don't have a linear logic with narrative development, each detail expanding the expressive dimensions of the text. Terror ain't esthetic. It don't work itself out in perfect details picked by an elegant intelligence and organized so a voyeur can follow it." (1990: 168). This perspective situates *Mercy* very comfortably within the remit of trauma fiction; her language is purposefully evocative rather than descriptive, and Andrea only recounts the incidents she feels are important, rather than a linear movement.

The allusions to the holocaust within *Mercy* situate the character within the bounds of trauma fiction, as Dworkin consistently compares rape and sexual violence with the Nazi holocaust, and the traumas suffered by Andrea at the hands of the men in the story as war crimes. As she expresses her disgust at horrors being "condensed, cleaned up", Andrea's narrative is distinctly non-linear and anti-realist: "Novelists have frequently found that the impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterized by repetition and indirection" (Whitehead, 2004: 3). This sense of indirection can be seen clearly at the end of the text, in which the final few chapters seem like a sharp turn-around of plot, from our

heroine's supposed suicide, to her return, in the following chapter, as a homicidal vigilante. This plot device works within the bounds of trauma fiction, in which the plot is ambiguous and changeable.

In her essay "Autobiography" (1995), Dworkin claimed that there are two endings to the text, and, arguably, these endings present the two common ways of dealing with abuse, the first of which is to internalize it, as the character does when she commits suicide. Dworkin, however, clearly did not think this was an appropriate ending for our heroine, who comes back to deal with the trauma by becoming the abuser. In *Our Blood*, Dworkin claims: "There is no freedom or justice in exchanging the female role for the male role. There is, no doubt about it, equality" (Dworkin, 1976: 23), a distinction that Andrea does not understand. The use of trauma fiction in this style allows Dworkin to counter Andrea's claim that the "bloodletting would become a story; nearly fiction" (Dworkin, 1990: 279) by writing a fictional work that illustrates, rather than describes, the true devastation of rape and sexual violence against women.

Much like trauma narratives, Dworkin's writing is heavily repetitive: "One of the key literary strategies in trauma fiction is the device of repetition, which can act the levels of language, imagery or plot. Repetition mimics the effects of trauma" (Whitehead, 2004: 86). Andrea has a fragmented and erratic narrative voice due to the 'trauma' she has suffered by the hands of men during the course of the novel. The character returns again and again to the same ideas and phrases, like the constant repetition of her name or the allusions to Walt Whitman; in fact, *Mercy* (1990) displays every facet of Whitehead's trauma narratives.

It is not just within each individual book, however, where there is a heavy use of repetition. Over her three most prominent fictional works, *Ice and Fire* (1986), *Mercy* (1990) and *The New Woman's Broken Heart* (1980), as well as in a chapter from an unpublished novel, *First Love* (1978), there is a constant stream of repetition of the similar plotlines and motifs. Situations such as a violent rape in her home, traveling to Greece, and an abusive marriage, are repeated in *Mercy*, *Ice and Fire*, *First Love* and her short stories. The theme of abusive marriage for example: "I wasn't brought low in the inner sanctum of my belief; until after being married, when I was destroyed" (Dworkin, 1990; 170), "he beat me until I was a heap of collapsed bone, comatose, torn, bleeding, bruised so bad" (Dworkin, 1986; 102), and in her short story 'bertha schneiders existential edge': "he kept banging my head on the kitchen floor (hard wood)" (Dworkin, 1980; 6). These stories are repeated and repeated over the

entire body of her fiction, until it all becomes one mass; individual texts inseparable from each other.

The term ‘semi-autobiographical’ is used here because, even though the incidents did happen to Dworkin, she often changes the way they happened or the character’s reaction of it is different to hers. One particular story that is repeated is one that recounts experience of abuse in a woman’s detention centre after a Vietnam War protest. What is particularly interesting about this is that this is something Dworkin herself experienced, and later took them to trial for it, causing a scandal that made its way into the national press. In *Mercy* (1990), however, when this happens to the character, she is confused, vulnerable and feels like she deserves what happened to her. Furthermore, in *Ice and Fire*, the narrator discusses the writing she is working on: “I have written it. It strangely resembles my own story: jailed over Vietnam the woman is endlessly strip-searched and then mangled inside by jail doctors” (1986; 47). Not only is this story repeated throughout Dworkin’s own fictional and non-fiction works, but is also repeated in these fictional works, except the character in these texts cope with the situation in a different way to Dworkin; showing their similarities to the author, but also their differences.

The incident of the women’s house of detention is interesting to compare with the real experience of Dworkin and of her fictional characters. In *Mercy* (1990) the incident happens at the same time in her life as it does in Dworkin’s, and under almost exactly the same circumstances, but as Tanya Serisier notes: “the aftermath for the two women is sharply divergent” (Serisier, 2013; 10). In *Mercy* (1990), the character attempts to speak out, and is silenced by those around by their disdain for her injuries, where-as Dworkin wrote multiple letters to the press to publicise the abuse of women, which eventually began a grand jury investigation into the case. The circumstances surrounding Dworkin and Andrea were also completely at odds: “Like Dworkin, Andrea is doing volunteer administration work for the Draft Resisters’ League at the time of the incident. Unlike Dworkin, who was studying and living at Bennington College, Andrea is broke, homeless and uneducated, dependent on sex with men for her nightly shelter” (Serisier, 2013; 12). These divergences between the real life of Dworkin and of her character Andrea throw into disarray the idea of autobiographical links between the two. Dworkin uses Andrea as a mimetic reflection, one that purposefully highlights the discrepancies that allowed for Dworkin to succeed as a writer, and more generally, and for Andrea to become the suicidal/homicidal character we see at the end of the book. By presenting Andrea as her own imperfect mirror, Dworkin is able to actively

demonstrate two different outcomes; one is her own persona, the outspoken feminist writer, and the other is a woman destroyed by male oppression. Andrea shows the effects of abuse by her very comparison to Dworkin.

The image of a benevolent father is another trope which is in both *Mercy* (1990) and *Ice and Fire* (1986), and is a significant part of her fictional works. Dworkin was reportedly very close to her father but in both the novels there is a falling-out between the two, and the suggestion of his early death. In *Mercy* this is described as: “So when he didn’t mind the bomb, when he liked it because it saved his life, his, I was dumb with surprise and a kind of fascinated revulsion” (1990; 183), whereas in *Ice and Fire*: “He is sick, says nothing, does nothing, languishes, a sad old man with a son killed in Vietnam and a dirty daughter on dirty streets” (1986; 58). Dworkin was vocal about her positive relationship with her father in texts such as *Heartbreak* (2002), and it seems to be similar to the character of the father in both these texts. Dworkin’s father did not, however, die when Dworkin was young and there was no particular falling-out between the two, as these texts suggest, but in fact died in 1999 at 84 years of age on good terms with Dworkin.

The detail of the role of father may seem unimportant to the text, as the character plays a very minor role, but it is interesting to note how Dworkin plays upon truths from her life and then alters certain details for her fiction. As with the women’s detention centre, even though many of the events themselves were things that happened to Dworkin, in her fiction they become mutated into something different, to make a political point. In the case of the women’s detention centre the point seems more clear – namely, that an uneducated woman does not have the resources, either mentally, socially or economically, in order to fight institutionalised misogyny in the way Dworkin was able. In the instance of the paternal figure within the text, the reason is more blurred. It is possibly a device to elicit a reaction for the one sympathetic male character in both the texts, or may be an attempt to distance Dworkin’s own life from the text. Either way, the discrepancy once again allows Dworkin to use her own life as a back-drop but to consistently undermine it, and undercut any autobiographical readings.

All of her works, and her persona, were driven by the same motivations and thus they all link in with each other to form a dialogue. The numerous examples of metafiction, intertextuality and dialogism illustrate how Dworkin was able to exploit literary allusions, references and mimicking to construct novels that parody and undercut male systems of violence and

patriarchal norms. Setting herself within the bounds of fiction, through use of allusion and reference, Dworkin constantly draws attention to the fictional construction of her work, calling authenticity and authority into question. Her use of the male canon throws conventions into the limelight, highlighting the misogynist views that have been, not only accepted, but canonised in the literary world.

Dworkin's novels operate in a circular way, all coming back round to each other in an endless repetition of words, phrases, themes and plots, spread across the range of her work, forming a continuous loop of meaning. The reader can never escape from Dworkin's message, which is hammered home with unprecedented force; even when finishing one text, the story will repeat itself in the next. The unrelenting assault of brutal imagery, constantly repeating is symptomatic of Dworkin's perceptions of the long and violent history of oppression against women. The transgressions she outlines in her polemics, in which acts of violence have been repeated continuously, in many different forms, from the capture of Joan of Arc, to the Marquis de Sade, to modern day pornography, will keep repeating, Dworkin argues, until women are liberated from these patriarchal and oppressive systems.

Chapter Three: The construction of Dworkin and Her Media Representation

Andrea Dworkin's work may have been a polemical *tour de force*, but it was often hugely divisive – much like the woman herself. This chapter will discuss how Dworkin used her image to compound her radicalism; how she used her own body and life to frame and exhibit her political motivations, for example her 'Political Memoir', *Heartbreak* (2005). Andrea Dworkin may have been in a happy, loving, relationship with John Stoltenberg thirty years, but she is still remembered as a lesbian (Stoltenberg, 1994); she may have been called warm-natured and witty by all journalists who met her (Viner, 2005), but that never changed her reputation as angry, bitter and hateful. The perceived image of Dworkin was so strong, in fact, that it is often blurred inextricably with her work, so that she more closely resembles a parody of a feminist or one of her own literary characters than anything close to human. This chapter seeks to explain how Dworkin managed this, and why she chose to blend carefully her public persona—driven by the sparse and selected revelations about her life—and her literary style in order to amplify her political voice.

Andrea Rita Dworkin was born in Camden, New Jersey in 1946, educated at Bennington College, arrested for protesting the Vietnam War, abused in her first marriage, forced into prostitution, and finally became a feminist writer. These details find themselves repeated again and again throughout her fictional works, *Mercy* (1990), *Ice and Fire* (1986), *First Love* (1978) and *The New Woman's Broken Heart* (1980). Though not all these plot details are in all of the books, there are at least some of these features in every work she writes; for example *First Love* features an abusive marriage but not prostitution, whereas *The New Woman* features prostitution but not the Vietnam War. In interviews Dworkin discusses these incidents again and again. In *Heartbreak: A Political Memoir* (2002), they arise again. Dworkin claimed that her own lived experiences were the backdrop to all of her feminist polemics (Dworkin, 1995; no pagination). Dworkin publicised, wrote about and discussed these incidents *ad nauseum* for more than twenty years.

Dworkin was explicit in admitting that this was very much a purposeful device. In the prologue to *Life and Death* (1997), she claims that throughout her work “some autobiographical facts and events are reiterated, like a leitmotif pointing to a pattern, a theme with variations. In each context the events are refracted from a slightly different angle, with more detail or deeper knowledge or another pitch of feeling” (1997; xiv). This repetition is

found over the body of her work, in all types of writing, be it her fiction, her polemics, speeches or memoirs. Though each of these repetitions argue slightly different points, they form a cohesive and intermingling argument surrounding Dworkin's ideas of power, dominance, construction and gender.

In *Heartbreak*, Dworkin discussed how Bach was able to create ideas with music, and says she wished to do the same with literature: "Repetition, variation, risk, originality and commitment created the piece and conveyed the ideas. I wanted to do that with writing" (2002; 1-2). Dworkin's body of work does read like a piece of music; strings of different ideas blended together to form one distinct argument, with deviations and alterations as the music goes on, but yet all part of the same piece. Dworkin's twenty-year campaign against pornography utilised many different strands of argument and many different styles of writing such as polemics, fiction, memoirs, interviews and articles; yet all these different ideas were all part of one motivation, which was to end the exploitation of women in pornography. *Pornography* (1981) and *Intercourse* (1987) were, in some ways, two distinct books, yet read together they formed one cohesive argument, and this is the case with all of her works, as we shall see in this chapter.

Much like Dworkin's twenty-year campaign against pornography, she repeats autobiographical details again and again. With each different work Dworkin changes the outlook and perception of these ideas, writing them in slightly different ways, from the varying perspectives of her characters or the expectations of the style of the work. Each detail that is repeated carries its own political point which contributes to Dworkin's overarching feminist politics. Take, for example, her imprisonment after the protest for the Vietnam War. Dworkin was arrested for protesting, taken to a woman's detention centre and subjected to brutal internal examinations which left her ripped and bleeding for weeks. This incident is a horrific part of Dworkin's life, yet it seems to be revived too often for this to be simply literary exorcism. In *Heartbreak* (2002), Dworkin describes the event: "I had been sexually brutalised and had turned the internal examinations of women in that place into a political issue" (2002; 62). This account is written to be a factual, detached version of the events, focusing, as it does, on the 'maelstrom' of news coverage, the grand jury, and the subsequent closure of the prison. Not so much is said of the incident itself, unlike in her essay 'Autobiography', in which Dworkin describes it as "a rapelike trauma in Manhattan's Women's House of Detention, where I was taken after an arrest for protesting the Vietnam War" (1995; no pagination). Rather, for the purposes of *Heartbreak* (2002), Dworkin utilises

her experience as an incident which captures, in a single moment, the institutionalised abuse of women and the accompanying structural, legal, and cultural responses. However, in her fiction, Dworkin opts to highlight more personal, physical and experiential aspects. In *Mercy*, for example, she writes: “they tore me apart inside so I couldn’t stop bleeding” (1990; 68), in *First Love*: “I felt alone, enraged, furious, violated, hurt, and so afraid” (1978; no pagination), in *Ice and Fire*: “strip searched and then mangled inside by jail doctors” (1986; 47). These are all examples of how Dworkin utilises autobiographical moments from her life in stylistically different ways to make different political points or evoke the brutality and emotional trauma of women’s abuse.

The political significance behind this event is clear; violence against women is often institutionalised and sanctioned by the state. When a governmental institution can ignore the violence against women perpetrated in one of their own buildings, then, for Dworkin, this is a direct expression of the socio-political position held by women. Similarly, abuse from her first husband, the Dutch activist Iwan Dirk de Bruin, in which he beat her, psychologically tortured her and repeatedly raped her, comprises a large part of her fictional and non-fictional work. Dworkin discusses these brutal physical events in her fiction, and in her non-fiction often focuses on the aftermath of fear and nightmares that lasted more than twenty years after her divorce. The focus on this issue is designed to illustrate how common and widespread the problem of domestic violence is, and makes her arguments surrounding violence towards women both personal and general. While official statistics might tell one ‘objective’ story about domestic abuse, rape, and violence against women, by discussing her own story of domestic violence she brought emotive individual experience to the foreground. Furthermore, this technique encouraged other women to come forward and discuss their own experiences of domestic abuse and rape, which Dworkin claims were incredibly common: “I’ve spent the larger part of my adult life listening to stories of rape” (Dworkin, 2002; 114). Dworkin often included other women’s personal accounts of abuse, discussing the act of rape and abuse and the responses to it, such as women’s experiences of having the ‘credibility’ of their rape accusations questioned. Dworkin uses personal testimonies to supplement official statistics with a tangible reality of lived experience, highlighting the brutality, emotional impact and trauma of rape and domestic abuse to emphasise its importance. This emotive strategy of discussing the personal experience of rape in contrast to more abstract, detached, and arid statistics feeds into and forms the political debate.

Some of the details Dworkin reiterates, however, do not at first appear to have such an explicit parallel with her feminist discourses. The Cuban missile crisis, for example, and Dworkin's fear of the nuclear bomb, is a theme that runs through almost all of her fictional, and many of her non-fictional, publications. In *Heartbreak*: "I could feel nuclear winter chilling my bones, even though the expression did not yet exist, and I had a vivid picture of people melting. I've never gotten over it" (2002; 44); in *Mercy*: "I tried to think of the bomb hitting and the brick turned into blood and dust, red dust covering the cement, wet with real blood" (1990; 40); in "Autobiography", "I'd see blinding light and heat and fire...my brain got tired of seeing burning humans, empty cities, burning cement" (1995; no pagination). Though the horrors of impending nuclear threat from Russia was certainly something that affected many people during the early 1960s, it is difficult to see why Dworkin was so outspoken about the event within her books, and how it played with her feminist intent.

In the extracts in which Dworkin discusses it, she often talks about the way in which 'adults' forced the 'children' to internalise the fear of the bomb. In her fiction she describes teachers in schools making the children hide under their desks in order to protect them from the explosion; a position that the young protagonists of her fiction quickly realise is wholly unhelpful in the face of nuclear explosions. It is this that Dworkin tries to show her readers by the repetition of this event; how the idea of a threat is perpetuated and internalised by systems of power. In her fiction she uses this idea of the children being fed fear and told by teachers to hide under desks, despite the teachers knowing that this would do little good. This example serves as a metaphor for the greater power structure; the teachers here represent the idea of a system in which the powerful demand adherence to strict rules to avoid perceived violence and injury. The idea behind these 'rules' is that they are for the 'children's' own well-being; yet, as Dworkin demonstrates, they do little more than instil fear and compliance.

The act of war, being both historically and in Dworkin's work (*Pornography* (1981), *Mercy* (1990)), a masculine preoccupation, there is little doubt that this example serves to mirror male over female domination in society. If, in this analogy, patriarchal systems are represented by the teachers, then women, and all who follow the strict hierarchical gender codes elicited by masculine structures, are the submissive children, hiding under their desks from something they do not truly understand. It is a powerful metaphor, and it is this unswerving acceptance of dominant power and beliefs that Dworkin protests in her writing. In *Pornography*, Dworkin suggests that "power is the capacity to terrorize" (1981; 15), and

that “the acts of terror run the gamut from rape to battery to sexual abuse of children to war to murder... backed up by the ability and sanction to deliver” (1981; 15). This power to terrorise by the act itself and the representations of it uses fear and suggested threat as forms of normative social control, and a corresponding need for compliance to rules and governance. Dworkin uses an argument that is related to Foucault’s claim (if not explicitly) that institutionalised fear and discipline create “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1975), which serve to self-govern and perpetuate current systems of power. The subtext to her story is that the need for compliance is marked out in youth and that fear is institutionalised in order to preserve systems of male power.

These governing discourses do not function purely from the suggested threat of violence and fear they create, however, but also through far more subtle means of normatively embedded patterns of informal social control. They are disseminated and implemented through non-forceful and eventually self-regulating means. Mainstream media, such as advertising, television and, as Dworkin argues, pornography, constructs very rigid ideas of femininity and appropriate gendered behaviour. Dissent from these presiding discourses is difficult owing to their insidious and non-forceful, yet hegemonic, implementation. In *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault argues that discourses or ‘epistemes’ have changed over time but always reflect the dominant groups’ notion of what is correct behaviour and thinking. While people may transgress these constructions, their violation will be constructed as ‘deviant’ or ‘abnormal’, rejecting the established, and, more importantly, the self-approved appropriate rules of society. Due to these rules appearing to be ‘self-implemented’ and self-regulated rather than explicitly *enforced*, the label of abnormality will still stand even for those who are subordinate within the existing power structure.

Much of Dworkin’s work - and arguably that of radical feminism in general - consciously or not, reflects some of Foucault’s ideas surrounding techniques in the exercise of power in neo-liberal society, such as those found in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Ironically, Dworkin originally wanted to write about prisons in the book that finally became *Pornography* (1981). She claimed that her proposal on prisons could not get published so she changed the scope to pornography because she “could make the same points – show the same inequities – as with prisons” (Dworkin, 2002; 127). Dworkin argued that, “each was a social construction that could be different but was not; each incorporated and exploited isolation, dominance and submission, humiliation, and dehumanization” (2002; 127), and though Dworkin specifically related this to pornography, the same is true for all forms of gender construction. Within the

American 'correctional' system, prisoners were taught to realign themselves with behaviours that are desirable to the existing social order, and so too, Dworkin argues, are women taught normative sexuality and gender power relations through media such as pornography. Through discourses and images the dominant group construct their subjects in ways that reflect and serve their ideological interests that are then disseminated through institutions—Foucault uses examples of schools and prisons, Dworkin uses pornography and gender construction. These discourses become normalised as objective 'truth' among subjects. Through the willing acceptance of, rather than forcefully imposed, normalised discourses as 'right' and 'truth', subjects become 'self-regulating' individuals who adhere to and agree with the discourses and behaviour which reflect and serve the dominant group's interests.

For Dworkin, pornography actively teaches women to see themselves and their sexuality through the male lens, both metaphorically and in a very real sense, and women are taught to exhibit behaviours that serve masculine expectations. Though the pornographic industry is dominated by men, in terms of directors, writers and viewers, the sexual scenes depicted – which often display sexual violence against women - are imagined as *universal* sexuality. This, has damaging effects for the lives of women; if masochism and submission are seen to be inherent traits of female sexuality, then women have no voice for the rape and violence used against them. For Dworkin, men use pornography as propaganda to display their own images of women and claim it as fact.

This perspective on power and discrimination is also found in Dworkin's references to the holocaust. As a Jewish woman herself, Dworkin was frank about her interest in the holocaust, which she claims she developed at a young age, and about Jewish history in general. In both of her full length novels there is a chapter dedicated to an imagined experience of living in times of extreme brutality towards Jews. In *Ice and Fire* (1986), it is the experience of a child in a concentration camp, and in *Mercy* (1990) it is as an old woman in the fortress of Masada at the time of the Roman Invasion and the mass suicide. These depictions, both using a great deal of poetic license, highlight the roles of women in times of extreme anti-Semitism. It is in her polemical works, however, that Dworkin draws the most parallels between misogyny and anti-Semitism. Throughout *Pornography* (1981), Dworkin alludes to the holocaust, and compares her points on the hatred of women to the hatred of the Jews at that time. Part of this is Dworkin's penchant for the use of hyperbole and shock tactics, but it also has a much more utilitarian purpose.

Dworkin said in 1996: “When anti-Semitism becomes normal, violence against Jews becomes easy; and when woman-hating becomes the norm, then killing and other forms of sexual abuse of women become easy” (Schillinger, 1996; no pagination); this statement demonstrates how ideologies of the dominant group - the former reflecting the Nazis, the latter the patriarchal systems of governance and control – become ingrained as normative. Dworkin connects patriarchal systems and the Nazi’s effective use of anti-Semitic propaganda as examples of how power is exerted through the widespread acceptance of dominant discourses as objective truth. In Nazi Germany, Goebbels’ propaganda machine ensured that the citizens believed in the racial inferiority of Jews. Similarly, according to Dworkin, mainstream mediums which perpetuate negative images of women, such as pornography, ensure the continued disenfranchisement of women. For her, pornography instills in the viewer hatred and disgust for the sexuality of women, which then gets transferred itself into very real physical atrocities against women: “pornography is the bible of sexual abuse; it is chapter and verse” (Dworkin, 2002; 143). Dworkin’s interest in the Nazi holocaust and her analyses of the techniques of male power, are two interwoven examples of her belief in the way in which control is created and perpetuated. The use of holocaust references reminds readers that discrimination is the consequence of a socially constructed prejudice. Just as Nazi Germany society’s beliefs about the Jews were constructed through images that depicted the Jews as evil, dirty, and a disease to their society, feminist theories of gender construction argue that our perceptions and opinions of women’s sexuality and the role of women in relation to men emerge from various images and media depictions of women and women’s sexuality. Dworkin uses these ideas to further her arguments surrounding the subordination of women in both pornography and in the wider sphere of society and culture.

All of these tropes (domestic violence, war, holocaust, *etc*) have their own distinct purpose, but are used as metaphors for, or examples of, feminist arguments. They are all re-iterated time and time again in order to add visceral, extreme, and material examples of her political arguments. They do, however, have another purpose within her work. The autobiographical moments of her life that she made public, and which have such strong political implications, make Dworkin’s life into a case-study of her own political points. The aspects of her life for which Dworkin is most remembered are the ones discussed so far. She was outspoken in her recollections of prostitution, battery, rape, and of her interest in the Cuban missile crisis and the Nazi holocaust. As shown, these are all things which directly served Dworkin’s political

agenda and, other than what Dworkin purposefully publicised, not much else is known about her life. These isolated incidents and selected revelations were, consequently, fundamental in shaping her public image and perception, which has infrequently distinguished between Andrea Dworkin as a person and as a radical and controversial feminist author. Interestingly, in contrast, though there were many aspects of her life that did not actively serve her feminist arguments, they were often kept very far away from her work and from media in general.

One such example is her relationship with fellow writer and activist, John Stoltenberg. Dworkin and Stoltenberg were very private about their life together, both describing themselves as gay publically, then marrying in secret. After meeting Stoltenberg, Dworkin is reported to have rung up her agent, Elaine Markson, and said: “I met someone. And it’s a *man*” (Levy, 2005: no pagination) and yet Dworkin always identified herself as a lesbian in her work¹⁵. These two facts, obviously, do not inherently contradict one another, and yet they do suggest the innate opposition that Dworkin had to navigate between her personal and her political life.

In an article entitled ‘Living with Andrea Dworkin’ written by Stoltenberg in 1994, he says: “We never make a big deal about our personal relationship--in fact we are always quite private, even among our closest friends” (Stoltenberg, 1994: no pagination), a statement which appears to contradict his declaration only a few sentences previously: “Who can explain how anyone recognizes that they have fallen in love and that life apart is simply unthinkable? All I know is that's what happened to me" (Stoltenberg, 1994: no pagination). This frank romantic assertion by Stoltenberg is hardly in keeping with the public perceptions of the private life of Dworkin. Critics of her, who railed at her ‘hating men’ or her polemical anger, would be taken aback at the sentimental picture of domestic bliss that Stoltenberg creates. The relationship with Stoltenberg is just one aspect of Dworkin’s life that does not fit in with the persona she was trying to create. As a woman who has publically come out as gay and then privately married a man, this displays the discrepancy between the statements she made, the persona she was constructing and the reality of her life.

In *Letters from a War Zone*, Dworkin wrote an article that was an interview with herself, called ‘Nervous Interview’,– which she described as a “half parody of myself” (Dworkin, 1988: 56). The format of this article allows Dworkin to develop further her public persona,

¹⁵ Levy, Ariel. ‘The Prisoner of Sex’. *New York Magazine*. 06/06/2005.

but she also uses it to highlight and mock how little people truly know about her; for instance, Dworkin asks herself: “Q: There are a lot of rumors about your lesbianism. No one quite seems to know what you do with whom. A: Good.” (59). She continues: “Q: Can I ask about your personal life? A: No.” (Dworkin, 1988: 60). Her opposition to revealing personal details made her notorious for the few details she did publicise: “One must learn to protect oneself. This means, inevitably, that one exaggerates some parts of one’s personality, some qualities” (1988: 58). Dworkin was selective in the details she chose to publicise, reducing her life to a handful of events, and using them to shape her entire character, which in turn meant that her private life was kept far out of public view.

This belief in her own privacy seems contradictory to Dworkin’s repeated use of her own life details in interviews and books and her use of semi-autobiography in her fiction. This is especially interesting given her insistence that even the private is public; as she outlined in her speech “Renouncing Sexual ‘Equality’”, “everything that happens to a woman in her life, everything that touches or molds her, is *political*” (Dworkin, 1976: 11). How then does Dworkin ratify this view with the parts of her she did not want the public to see, the parts of her life that contradict – or at least, do not serve – her media persona? The answer seems to lie in ‘Nervous Interview’, in which Dworkin asked herself just that question: “Q: If the personal is political, as feminists say, why aren’t you more willing to talk about your personal life?” (Dworkin, 1988: 60), she answers that in order for a private life to be private it must be kept out of the public eye or “it takes on the quality of a public drama... every single friendship takes on the quality of display” (1988: 60). This answer shows a deep awareness of how the public eye moulds people’s lives in magazines and newspapers, and everything they do becomes a news ‘story’. This idea of ‘display’ is the key point in this answer, as it implies that the points Dworkin did make public *were* for display. That is not to discount their nature or their truth, but the fact that Dworkin publicised, repeatedly, certain facts about her life, and withheld others, shows that she wanted those particular elements to be ‘consumed’ by the public.

In order to keep her personal life out of the public eye, Dworkin relied on the anti-feminists to perpetuate her stereotype. Despite countless journalists describing Dworkin as quiet and shy, many maintained the dominant view held of her as a ‘man-hater’, misquoting and misunderstanding the vast majority of her work; as Dworkin herself claimed in 1996, her work has been “deeply disrespected in a way that is savagely unfair” (Schillinger, 1996: no pagination). This public persona was, as discussed previously, shaped by a number of

different factors; her radically-written polemics, her scarce but effective use of personal details, and her use of semi-autobiography in her fiction.

This semi-autobiography within her fiction is a way in which Dworkin was able to subvert the ‘truth’ about her, and create a public image. As discussed in the previous chapter, the character, Andrea, is distinctly ‘fictional’, that is, she is not a representation of Dworkin the author, both from the way she is written and by Dworkin’s own admission. This knowledge, however, does not stop the reader from associating the one with the other, and the text must be read in the light of the bond between the two. The character Andrea may not represent Dworkin, but there is no coincidence that the character bears her name. The character is intended to be an imperfect mirror, intended to evoke Dworkin rather than to be her.

Thus, the name Andrea does not just reflect upon the analysis of the fictional character, but also draws attention towards the name of the author. The name of the author has been a contentious issue for theorists, such as Michel Foucault. In his 1969 essay ‘What is an Author?’, Foucault discusses the inherent difficulty of the name of the author, and his idea of ‘author construction’. Foucault argues that the name of the author is a signifier which has a multiplicity of meanings and “the author's name is not, therefore, just a proper name like the rest” (Foucault, 1969: 5). The name Andrea Dworkin takes on a series of connotations due to her work and her position in society; her name becomes less of a direct signifier of the real woman, but of the conceived notion of her based on her written works and image in the media. The name Andrea acts as a ‘spectre’ of the author herself, and not only will the character be perceived as autobiographical, but conversely, the perceptions of the author are shaped around this character.

The connotations associated with the name Andrea Dworkin automatically give the reader an idea of how to categorise the text, which assumes, of course, a previous knowledge of Dworkin. If the reader is aware of either Dworkin’s other works, or perhaps just knows the name in association with the feminist movement, the text is automatically limited by her signatory: “an author's name is not simply an element in a discourse...it performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others” (Foucault, 1969: 5). Dworkin’s text does not exist within a vacuum – it automatically exists within her other works, her reputation, and to the feminist movement of which she is part. Her very name and reputation frame the text before the reader

even opens the book. Thus, the technique of having a character on the inside of the text, that reflects the conceived impressions of Dworkin herself, serves to validate the reader in their sense of knowing ‘Andrea Dworkin’. The name on the front cover and the character inside the book match together in the reader’s mind - as the character is evocative of the media perceptions of Andrea Dworkin - and this serves to further Dworkin’s entrenchment in her own works.

Foucault continues to describe the function of the author in the various narrative voices within a text. Using the example of a book on mathematics, Foucault designates three voices within the text – the body of the work, the prologue, and the author themselves. In *Mercy* (1990) there is a protagonist named Andrea, a prologue with a distinct voice, and then the idea of the author ‘Andrea Dworkin’ on the front cover. Foucault argues:

Everyone knows that, in a novel offered as a narrator's account, neither the first-person pronoun nor the present indicative refers exactly to the writer or to the moment in which he writes but, rather, to an alter ego whose distance from the author varies, often changing in the course of the work. It would be just as wrong to equate the author with the real writer as to equate him with the fictitious speaker; the author function is carried out and operates in the scission itself, in this division and this distance. (Foucault, 1969: 9)

Foucault is discussing the idea of the author as different to the ‘real writer’. In this sense, the real writer is Andrea Dworkin, but the ‘author’ being the signified image that her name connotes. Foucault argues that it is difficult for a writer to be distanced from their name and the meanings associated with it, and that this directly reflects upon the text. The author, he argues, is no more real than the narrator of the prologue or the characters in the text, as all three are heavily constructed artifices. Foucault calls this the ‘author function’ and attests: “In these discourses the author function operates so as to effect the dispersion of these three simultaneous selves” (1969: 9). Thus, the level of narrative function is threefold – beginning with the name of the author, the unnamed speaker in the prologue, and finally the central protagonist, Andrea.

In both an article entitled “Autobiography”, written in 1995 for Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series, and one of the essays in *Letters from a War Zone* (1988), Dworkin discusses the creation of her lead character in *Mercy*, and explains that she is not representative of the author but of a fictional narrator: “I do not ever think she is me. She is not my mouthpiece” (Dworkin, 1995: no pagination). The fact, however, that Dworkin created a character that imitated many of the focal points of her life, moments that she had

publically and repeatedly discussed does beg the question of how she wanted the story to be perceived and how it would reflect on her. Creating a character that mimics parts of her life, and yet is entirely fictional, is a way of further embedding her own life in the discourse of fiction and caricature. The fact of publicising her numerous rapes, brutality by her husband and forced prostitution, was not a work of narcissism, but a purposeful strategy to broadcast the fates of women everywhere.

Her character in *Mercy*, however, would not be a representation many feminists would want to be associated with, especially at the end of the text when the character has been worn down by the hatred from men, and, as a result, has become a female-supremacist, man-hating killer. This particular image is one that many feminists would like to distance themselves from, especially as it is only a slight escalation from what many portrayals of feminism have been. Dworkin, however, remained unabashed by this, despite knowing that this character was all too likely to end up being compared with her.

The creation of a character that mimics Dworkin's life would draw immediate comparisons with her in the public sphere, yet she is adamant that her character is different; as she puts it: "My narrator, who is a character in my book, knows less than I do. She is inside the story. Deciding what she will see, what she can know, I am detached from her" (Dworkin, 1995: no pagination). By writing characters which mimic her life, the reader begins to associate the real writer with this fictional incarnation. While Andrea is, in essence, a fictional personification of Dworkin's public image, she is an incomplete representation of Dworkin's *entire* life. Andrea the narrator struggles is largely uneducated and struggles with the application of language among other things, something clearly not true of Dworkin herself. Nevertheless, the traumatic experiences of Andrea in *Mercy* (1990), such as domestic abuse, rape, and protesting the Vietnam War mirror much of what is known about Dworkin and is central to her public image. This intrinsically links this fictional character with Andrea Dworkin in the public perception and in doing this, Dworkin transformed herself into a real-life fictional character. By publicising her own life events in her non-fiction works such as essays and speeches, and then writing similar fictional characters, Dworkin partly became a work of fiction herself. Her public persona became the complete embodiment of her and she used her very corporeality to propagate her political points.

An extreme example of this is Dworkin's publicising of her rape in 1999 in an article in the *New Statesman*, in which she revealed that she had been drugged and raped. This story

caused controversy after she refused to call the police or supply any evidence for her claim. In an article in *The Guardian* in 2000, the journalist Catherine Bennett questioned the truth of Dworkin's allegations of the rape in a Paris hotel room. Bennett speculated that Dworkin's accusations lacked evidence: Dworkin kept changing her descriptions ("gashes become scratches"), and Bennett accuses herself of being 'pedantic' when she points out that the date Dworkin supplied was not a Wednesday like she had claimed (Bennett, 2000). That Dworkin would make such an error with her dates, especially in such a public forum, is particularly interesting considering her awareness of the public scrutiny that accompanied all her works. Perhaps Bennett is too self-deprecating by calling herself pedantic in mentioning the dissimilarity of Dworkin's accounts. Arguably, she was more astute than she realised when she says: "it reads almost as if Dworkin wants to be doubted" (Bennett, 2000: no pagination). For the purposes of this argument it is not necessarily important whether Dworkin's allegations were true; but rather, could a case be made that the discrepancies in her accounts regarding the details of her rape were a ploy to highlight the almost knee-jerk response to discredit women's rape allegations?

Perhaps, Dworkin's last major publication, *Heartbreak* (2002) which was published two years after her infamous article in the *New Statesman*, could shed light on this question. In a chapter entitled "It Takes a Village", Dworkin addresses the issue of credibility, claiming: "Each time the women's movement achieves a success in providing a way for a woman to speak out, in court or in the media, the prorape [sic] constituency lobbies against her: against her credibility" (Dworkin, 2002: 119) - a stark resemblance to Dworkin's own story of rape, especially with the reference to speaking out in the media. Dworkin continues: "You can't earn credibility; you can't buy it; you can't fake it; and you're a fucking fool if you think you have any" (Dworkin, 2002: 120). Even Andrea Dworkin, despite "her seniority in both feminism and misery" (Bennett, 2000: no pagination), her status as an advocate for women's rights (especially in the domain of rape and sexual violence), and as a public figure, could still not possess credibility. This is something, I would argue, Dworkin *absolutely* knew.

In the *New Statesman* Dworkin muses on her own lack of evidence: "I know it was he and his little accomplice, but how do I know?", and on the fact that she would not "be able to make a legal case in any court of law" (Dworkin, 2000: no pagination). The fact that she was drugged when the rape occurred, that she waited too long to get an examination, and had only circumstantial evidence to suggest who her attackers were, meant that any chance or arrest, let alone prosecution, was impossible. The question is not whether it happened or not, but

why Dworkin chose to publicise the incident so long after the event. The fact that she publicised her story despite knowing that the attack would never be criminally validated demonstrates that there were other motivations in bringing this story into the public eye. Dworkin wanted to make a point about the way rape victims are discredited; in ‘rape culture’¹⁶ too many people’s first reaction will be, what the victim was wearing, was she drunk, or did she made it up altogether. That so many people doubted her story, especially owing to the lack of arrests, illustrated Dworkin’s argument that too many people would rather side with the rapist than the victim. In *Heartbreak* she claims, perhaps partly in relation to her own story, that "all the sympathy tilts towards him [the rapist], and he has an unchangeable kind of credibility with which he was born" (Dworkin, 2002: 160).

It is arguable that with this particular incident and her article in the *New Statesman* that Dworkin goes beyond her stylistic use of fictionality and construction of persona as she does in her fictional and non-fictional polemics. Dworkin, reflecting upon the aftermath of the Paris rape in the *New Statesman* article, writes that her partner, John Stoltenberg, did not believe her accusations: “John looked for any other explanation than rape. He abandoned me emotionally” (Dworkin, 2000; no pagination). By leaving discrepancies and gaps in the details of her rape she invites scepticism and makes a leap from constructing a persona to allowing her life to become a work of public consumption, where readers can create their own story, their own accounts, and their own interpretation of what happened. In doing so, it also demonstrates her arguments, and experience of, society’s attitudes and response towards female rape victims’ and their credibility. When Dworkin was asked how she felt about her allegations being doubted by the public, she answered: "If the Holocaust can be denied even today, how can a woman who has been raped be believed?" (Viner, 2005: no pagination). She uses her own story merely as a case study to highlight the scepticism shown towards the numerous victims of rape every day. That people were so quick to discredit her story, desperately finding flaws in the details, much like Catherine Bennett, shows that the burden of proof is put on victims of rape and sexual assault; unless they can prove it absolutely, the general public are unlikely to believe it. As Dworkin suggests in *Heartbreak*, “there is no empathy for her [the victim], not on the part of all the good, civic-minded citizens on the jury, not from the media reporting on the case (if they do), not from all the men and women socializing in bars” (2002: 160). If we are to imagine that the mixing up of the date and the

¹⁶ ‘Rape Culture’ – *Blackwell Reference Online*. <http://www.webcitation.org/6Dpy0NZWD>

day of the week was not just an honest mistake, but a purposeful demonstration, then Dworkin made her point clear. Bennett's highlighting of the error, with enough vigour for it to be an entire article, shows how keen to disprove the allegations she was. Though it cannot be known whether she purposefully made an error with the dates of the attack, she used her real life experience to highlight attitudes towards female victims that she made in previous works, notably *Intercourse* (1987), and would develop further in *Heartbreak: A Political Memoir* (2002).

Directly using something that happened to her to present a political idea, allowing for the public themselves unknowingly to demonstrate her point, is one of the ways in which Dworkin turns her own physical experiences into a political work. She uses her own life as a backdrop for all that she argues, and in so doing, she becomes a character in the public imagination. Her very being is so caught up in all she wrote that there is no longer a discrepancy between the idea of her and the actual person. She became defined by her campaign against rape and her vitriolic style, as well as by experiences, such as the rape in 1999 that she publicised. This technique is furthered in *Heartbreak: A Political Memoir* (2002), in which she fictionalises her real life experiences, calling into question the 'memoir', and using it as a rhetorical tool to reiterate her points.

Dworkin begins her 'political memoir', even before the contents page, with a quote from Arthur Rimbaud: "*Je est un autre*" (Dworkin, 2002). This translates, literally, to 'I am another', and in keeping with much of Rimbaud's work, is deliberately cryptic. Beginning a memoir with a phrase that undermines the idea of 'self', is an unconventional choice for a work that supposedly tells her 'real story'. However, the obscurity of the phrase allows Dworkin to utilise its ambiguous meaning flexibly for her own purpose. Within this context, then, the reader is forced to ask to whom this 'I' refers. One reading of this is that Dworkin has used this phrase to highlight her message that she has dedicated her life not just in time, but in the constructions of herself to fight for the rights of women who cannot defend themselves. This thrusts the idea that in *Heartbreak* (2002)—and her entire public life—she is not Andrea Dworkin, a person, but a symbolic representation of women's rights. At the end of the text, Dworkin continuously discusses how she has "devoted myself to the testimony of women who had no other voice" (2002; 143). Her private 'self' is one that is irrelevant in her texts, but rather the narrator adopts another personality which is somewhat detached from some of the realities of her everyday life.

If, however, we locate *Heartbreak* (2002) within her larger body of work where she consistently blurs her life with fiction, then the phrase “*Je est un autre*” suggests that this work will continue to present a limited side of herself rather than deviating into a more fulsome autobiographical, as opposed to political, project. In *Heartbreak* (2002), Dworkin only writes about the parts of her life that serve the persona she has created for herself within her books, as well as in more public forums such as interviews and articles. She quickly skims over her meeting with John Stoltenberg, and then elaborates no further than saying: “and I’ve lived with him for nearly twenty-seven years” (Dworkin, 2002; 123), which is a rather brief summation of a large part of her life. The work is, of course, a ‘political memoir’ not an autobiography; however, the missing details, the emphases, and the stylistic choices of language demonstrate that the emphasis of her entire being is on the political, where even the personal aspects of Andrea Dworkin’s ‘memoir’ are also political ones.

In this memoir, Dworkin does not delve into details and remembrances that do not serve a political goal. In *Heartbreak* (2002), as she does in interviews and articles, she continues her selective use of personal details that are focused solely on their utility for presenting political arguments. Dworkin was not interested in writing a work of narcissistic voyeurism to discuss who she truly was, but, rather, saw her work as “a purposeful series of provocations, especially *Pornography: Men Possessing Women, Ice and Fire, Intercourse, and Mercy*” (Dworkin, 2002; 142). *Heartbreak* (2002) is no different. By beginning the text with “I am another” she infers that the ‘I’ we find in the work is not Andrea Dworkin; her actual personhood is ‘another’ and not the narrator found in the text.

The use of literary techniques in the book also serves to display the ‘fictional’ nature of the text. In the chapter entitled “Immoral”, Dworkin uses a pseudo-list, each point beginning with the phrase ‘the worst immorality is...’, for example: “The worst immorality is to set one’s goals so low that one must crawl to meet them./ The worst immorality is to hurt children./ The worst immorality is to use one’s strength to dominate or control.” (2002; 157). This chapter is particularly interesting as it appears that Dworkin has summarised the main arguments in *Heartbreak* (2002) in this chapter, an asyndetic listing of the key ideas that she deems to be the focus of the text. By doing this she focuses her reader’s attention on the messages that she wants them to read, dictating what readers should take from the text. Unsurprisingly, the phrases reiterate motifs found in the rest of her body of work. She uses phrases that epitomise her unswerving commitment to her political repetitions, literary style, and media depictions such as: “The worst immorality is in conforming so that one fits in,

smart or fashionable, mock-heroic or the very best of the very same” (2002; 156). What is interesting is that it is a distinctly literary chapter - as in the style of the chapter is studied and elaborate, utilising literary techniques such as heavy repetition of both phrases and ideas as distinct from the factual clarity we expect in a memoir. Through bringing literary techniques into her writing, she begins to question the factual accuracy expected of a memoir, and fictionalises the reality of her life events. This chapter of *Heartbreak* (2002) undermines the idea of the ‘real’ in the text, and demonstrates that Dworkin was using the text as another way of arguing a political point; another text in her myriad of conjoined works.

Dworkin's undermining of the idea of a memoir is compounded in her final chapter, "Memory", in which she explains: "A memoir, which this is, says: this is what my memory insists on; this is what my memory will not let go" (Dworkin, 2002; 163). This quote demonstrates that Dworkin explicitly did not write this text as an accurate version of events in a diachronic and rational order, but as a series of defining moments that were important to her. This shows that the stories we read in *Heartbreak* (2002) are not just accounts of the progression of her life, but are carefully selected, for a purpose. It would be generous to suppose that Dworkin is telling the truth here, that these are the moments her memory insists upon as definitive, yet there are no personal details, no stories which do not relate back to her political motivations. This, of course, is what makes it a 'political memoir', which is the exact reason why the text cannot be read as a representation of her life. Dworkin uses her books as a political space in which to display her activism, thus blurring the two into one. Her body is directly linked to her work by the persona she creates and by her use of repetition, fictionality and metafiction. She used her polemics to outline her political motivations, her fiction to illustrate them, and her public image to demonstrate them. A full, uncensored autobiographical project which included elements of her life which did not contribute to her political arguments or position was arguably deemed irrelevant and would only detract from her political status as ‘another’. Therefore, virtually none of Dworkin’s writings, including her memoir, fall outside of the intertextual web of her work, which link to one another through a series of repetitions of key ideas and motifs.

It is interesting how Dworkin's entire persona became synonymous with the more general perceptions of radical feminism in the media. Her obituary in *The Guardian* read, “Since the mid-1970s, Dworkin symbolised women's war against sexual violence. Heroine or hate figure, her name became an adjective” (Bindel, 2005; no pagination). Andrea Dworkin became the figurehead for all that was extremist and dangerous with feminism, and Julia

Bindel claims that her name was, “misused to describe the type of feminist we are supposed to strive not to be” (Bindel, 2005; no pagination). Even those who would not recognise the name Andrea Dworkin would recognise the description of feminists as overweight, hairy and angry – an image that almost exclusively belongs to Dworkin. The rationalism behind what Dworkin, and other radical second-wave feminists, wrote often got lost if their style was too aggressive, and they became labelled as radical extremists. Dworkin was more feared and mocked than any of the women who, for example, took part in Roe vs Wade campaigns, or helped legalise contraception. The stylistic choices made by Dworkin, and by others such as Greer or Firestone, is what defined them as feminist radicals.

Dworkin was very much aware of this façade, and of her status within the media and feminism; as she suggests: “My ethics, my politics, and my style merged to make me an untouchable” (Dworkin, 1976; xii). Dworkin here does not use ‘untouchable’ as a positive attribute, but as one that is iconic, in the sense that she appeared no longer to be fully human, but the vehicle of her politics. Her self-inflicted dehumanisation into an idea or a figurehead is a powerful means through which she dispenses with her actual corporeality to become something almost non-human. An idea that Dworkin often posits within her non-fiction work is that men view the right to ‘touch’ as a right because they have deemed women to be purely sexual objects; thus to become untouchable is, for Dworkin, a salient political point.

That Andrea Dworkin is untouchable implies that she is defeminised and non-sexual, ‘untouchable’ in her lack of malleability to male-defined concepts of femininity in both her looks and in her writing. As Dworkin phrases it in the prologue to *Heartbreak*, “a published woman’s reputation, if she is alive, will depend on many small conformities - in her writing but especially in her life... It’s a declaration: I won’t hurt you; I am deferential; all those unpleasant things I said, I didn’t mean one of them” (2002; xii). Her heavily-aggressive persona coupled with her lack of stereotypical feminine traits is a threatening attack on the normative perceptions of women, and, “If this were not the common, current practice...there would be nothing remarkable in who I am” (2002; xiii).

Dworkin saw her refusal to bend to any male-defined concepts of femininity as an important part of her feminist ideals, as she was aware of being in opposition to everything that male-culture holds up as ideal in a woman. It is certainly a part of her radicalism to undermine the basic principles of ‘femininity’, and the making of herself into an image of feminism is in itself a part of her polemical project. This status as feminist icon was solidified on account of

the details of her life that she repeatedly publicised. She was very explicit about several details of her life, namely being a prostitute and a battered wife, which gave the media an insight into a specific part of her life history. That Dworkin reiterates these experiences again and again - in her books, speeches, interviews and fiction – meant that these aspects of her life became fetishized by the media. This, combined with Dworkin’s disregard for contemporary images of femininity, were what confined her as a caricature-like symbol of feminism.¹⁷

Andrea Dworkin was always an activist. Before becoming involved with feminism, Dworkin was a left-wing, anti-war activist; yet, feeling let down by the indifference towards women within this group (as discussed in *Heartbreak* (2002) and *Ice and Fire* (1986)), she became disillusioned with the anti-war movement and turned to feminism and literature. Despite her disenfranchisement with this particular group she continued to be an activist; transferring her activist spirit to feminist rallies, attendance at demonstrations, conferences and was a major organiser of the Take Back the Night marches, alongside her publications. The majority of the texts in *Letters from a War Zone* (1988) come from speeches she had given at various conferences or feminist conventions. In her alliance with Catherine MacKinnon, Dworkin helped write the Antipornography Civil Rights Ordinance (1983) (also known as the Dworkin-MacKinnon Ordinance), and got it passed in several cities in the U.S. before it was struck down again by the courts. Despite this particular project being somewhat unsuccessful, an understanding of the assimilation of activism and writing in Dworkin’s life is crucial when reading her body of work—both fictional and non-fictional. All of her writing is intimately connected to her feminist directives, including her fiction, her memoir, and her autobiographical essay. These texts were not written to add variety or another dimension to her existing publications, but instead to compliment her work as a cohesive *body* of political and explicitly feminist texts—including her polemics. The relationship between her literature and her activism is unmistakable. Dworkin’s narrative voice is a political voice which is

¹⁷ For an excellent analysis of how second-wave feminists have been caricatured and dehumanised see Hesford (2013). She argues that in the third-wave these radical second-wave feminists have been removed from their historical-political context and consequently the sexuality or physical features of the major radical voices of this period—she uses the example of Kate Millett coming out as bisexual creating the stereotype that all feminists are lesbians —have become “image-memories” which have provided the foundation for stereotypical images of feminists to persist.

anchored within her lifetime of experiences in activism directly fighting for women's rights at the grassroots level.

This infiltration of activism in all aspects of her work be it written or championing directly political social upheaval through demonstrations and the Dworkin-MacKinnon Ordinance (1983) is what makes Dworkin appear to be such a radical, and what made her become the stereotypical figurehead of radical feminism. Her entire media persona backed up all that her work sought to argue, and it was so all-encompassing that Dworkin became the media scapegoat for the voice of radical feminism. Unlike writers, such as Kate Millett or Shulamith Firestone, who wrote radical feminist works and then retreated out of the public eye, Dworkin was constantly in the limelight, outspoken and vehement. Everything about Dworkin was uncompromising from the style of her work, to her twenty-year campaign against pornography, to her looks.

Her appearance may not seem like an inherently political act, yet, her body is tied to her work because she did not compromise on her appearance for more public acknowledgement and acceptance but stayed true to her beliefs, unlike almost every other feminist before or since. It has been claimed that Dworkin would even "go to posh restaurants in Manhattan wearing those bloody dungarees" (Viner, 2005; no pagination), and it is this consistent and unabating defiance that came to represent her; one whose politics appear to define her completely. The fact that Dworkin would not alter her appearance, use hair dyes or wear make-up, even in the context of harsh criticism from the media, in a culture which rewards female attractiveness, and demands that women follow elaborate beauty regimes, was highly subversive. In a culture that is highly visual (advertising, film and television, magazines and newspapers) Dworkin's rejection of any physical enhancement demonstrates that, ostensibly, she was living out her feminist dictates - a challenging and threatening assault on patriarchal and phallogocentric culture.

Many journalists who met Dworkin, however, described her as shy and softly spoken; "Dworkin is, in real life, endearing and seemingly vulnerable" (Bennett, 2000; no pagination), "black wit is remarked upon by everyone who met Dworkin" (Viner, 2005; no pagination), "a peaceable hearth goddess, vast and gentle" (Schillinger, 1999; no pagination). Those who read her polemics as a literal reflection of her personality would barely recognise such depictions of her, as they appear directly to contradict the public image of her. Yet, despite such accounts by journalists, the perception of Dworkin remains as the archetypal

angry woman of anti-feminist backlash. In ‘Nervous Interview’ she questions this herself: “Q: People are surprised when they meet you. That you’re nice. A: I think that’s strange. Why shouldn’t I be nice? Q: It’s not a quality that one associates with radical feminists. A: Well, see, right there, that’s distortion” (Dworkin, 1988; 57). Though the form of this article is unconventional it does present an insight into her understanding of the perception of her in the media. The hostility towards the work of radical feminists found an outlet in portrayals of these women in the media, and reputations were built up using conjecture and a failure to distinguish between the narrative voice in their texts and their personality. In a sense, this makes the idea of Andrea Dworkin much more powerful than the reality. That Andrea Dworkin could be described as “a pussycat” by her friend Michael Moorcock (McFadyean, 1992; no pagination), and yet remain so notorious, demonstrates the power of the prejudice against her. The anti-feminist culture was so convinced of their perception of her that they could not be swayed from their beliefs. As Dworkin said in an interview with *The Independent* in 1996: “The characterisations of me in public are pretty much the opposite of the way I am” (Schillinger, 1996; no pagination). The voice in her polemics was often taken to be the ‘real’ woman, as people who met her remember: “I half expected the door to fly open in a fury” (Schillinger, 1996; no pagination), “here was Attila the Hun in most people’s imaginations” (McFadyean, 1992; no pagination).

On her death in April 2005 the publications surrounding Dworkin boomed; in articles and obituaries everywhere, writers and journalists discussed her life and her work, and their predictions for her legacy. Considering the normal tendency for obituaries to be wholly positive accounts, those on Dworkin were somewhat mixed. There were some articles that gave a brief perfunctory outline of her life and works, eschewing detail and descriptions, yet there were some obituaries, however, which were entirely negative. One such example is Havana Marking, who wrote in *The Guardian*: “Dworkin's true legacy has been that far too many young women today would rather be bitten by a rabid dog than be considered a feminist” (Marking, 2005; no pagination). In her rather poorly conceived article, Marking attested that Dworkin’s radicalism led to her being too easily demonised by the press and “male-led society”, thus stalling the progress of feminism. In an argument that is unhelpfully circular, Marking argues that Dworkin’s “melodrama” should have been curtailed, and replaced, presumably, with a more passive and gentle argument, that was more conciliatory towards sexual violence. Whilst admitting that society is ‘male-led’, Marking still attested that women should react in a very specific way, not allowing for polemics or radical rebellion, which can be misjudged and have the possibility of alienating some readers. Marking’s

mistake is not an uncommon one, however, and this article demonstrates how much the style of Dworkin's work, and polemical writing, is still misunderstood. Marking failed to recognise, however that she too was part of this demonisation. By reprimanding Dworkin, the figurehead of radical feminism, so publically in the press for her radicalism, she perpetuated the idea that radical feminism itself is a negative movement, and exacerbated the stereotypes associated with it.

Articles were not all negative, however, such as, that of another *Guardian* writer, Katharine Viner, who described Dworkin as feminism's "last truly challenging voice" (Viner, 2005; no pagination), and who claimed that her portrayal in the media had wrongly led to ridicule of her works. Viner claims that Andrea Dworkin's persona overtook the influence of her work, and that it became such a stigma that "Andrea Dworkin was always more famous for being Andrea Dworkin than anything else" (2005; no pagination). Viner presents Dworkin more as she wanted to be perceived than how she actually was, calling her 'a bedrock', 'a bottom line', and 'hard to forget'. Viner acknowledges that her style was not palatable to some, but shows an understanding of the direct choices Dworkin made to be this way: "Her radicalism was always bracing, sometimes terrifying; and, in a world where even having Botox is claimed as some kind of pseudo-feminist act, she was the real thing" (Viner, 2005; no pagination).

Despite being 'the real thing', Dworkin's legacy is fairly limited within feminist scholarship. Though there have been a few non-academic books published on Dworkin's work, it has largely been ignored by the academic community. Jeremy Mark Robinson wrote a book entitled *Andrea Dworkin*, in 1994, written in a style to mimic Dworkin's own semi-stream of consciousness narratives. The book, for example, opens with: "She's passionate, she's very passionate, she's coming on strong, that's what she does, she comes on strong and she's very passionate; nothing will stop her, it seems, from writing; she's a whirlwind of writing, a witch who whirls up worlds of words" (Robinson, 1994; 15). Apart from the alliteration, his engagement with Dworkin's texts is largely superficial. Robinson does reference other scholarship, yet his book does not involve any key argument or original developments in the critical analysis of her work. Nevertheless, Dworkin said of the book: "It's amazing for me to see my work treated with such passion and respect. There is nothing resembling it in the U.S. in relation to my work" (Dworkin quoted in Robinson, 1994: no pagination). Robinson's work, however, remained largely inconsequential, with few reviews written, and no critical engagement with his text.

The other, more famous, critical text associated with Dworkin's work was a compilation of writings by pro-sex feminist Susie Bright. Bright, one of Dworkin's biggest critics, wrote a collection of essays which she called *Inspired By Andrea Dworkin: Essays on Lust, Aggression, Porn, & The Female Gaze That I Might Not Have Written If Not for Her* (Bright, 2005), in which Bright uses the space largely to contest all of Dworkin's ideas, under the guise of praise: "Every time I put down one of her books, I was impressed by her passion, and by the risks she could take with her imagination – and yet I was also convinced that she was cracked... She could never see Pussy Power as long as she was so impressed by The Big Dick" (Bright, 2005: 5). Bright's collection of essays are, as the title would suggest, much more focused on her own work than anything Dworkin wrote, and give the impression that Bright was trying to get the final word in rather than engage seriously with Dworkin's ideas.

These two books have been detailed here in full, not because they constitute important works of scholarship, but to demonstrate exactly how under-appreciated and overlooked Dworkin's work has been. Both of these books engage with her work on an academic level, but use very rudimentary analyses. These are the only two full length texts published which focus solely on her work, and although she is afforded a perfunctory mention in some general texts about the second-wave and in a few journal articles, her work has been largely overlooked and scholars have generally failed to critically engage with Dworkin's work on a literary level.¹⁸ Equally, mention of Dworkin and her influence are largely absent from much third-wave feminism. This might be because the rhetoric in the last twenty years has become more liberal, and less focused than in the second-wave. Dworkin is barely mentioned by contemporary writers, and her influence over their style seems to have been more negative than positive.

The third-wave of feminism, usually claimed to have begun in the mid-90s, is a movement that has not drawn a huge amount of attention, as evidenced by the amount of texts that proclaim feminism to be dead¹⁹. Where previous 'waves' seem easy to define in terms of their core aims and beliefs, the third-wave has not successfully outlined its objectives, and many of the debates of previous decades have resurfaced without much amendment. Within

¹⁸ Squires, Judith and Sandra Kemp. *Feminisms*. Oxford; Oxford University Press. 1997.
Schneir, Miriam. *Feminism in our Time*. New York; Vintage. 1994.

¹⁹ Examples of the proliferating literature surrounding the 'death of feminism' include: Chesler's *The Death of Feminism* (2005); Roberts (2012); Time Magazine cover (June 1998).

the third-wave, a greater emphasis has been placed upon theories of intersectionality—how discrimination, oppression, and exclusion of women also interact with issues of race, religion, transgender, and sexualities that operate outside of the homo/heterosexual binary²⁰. Until perhaps 2011, with the publication of Caitlin Moran’s bestseller *How to Be a Woman* and the foundation of Laura Bates’ Everyday Sexism Project in 2012, the third-wave has had little political and social momentum in mainstream cultural outlets. Part of the reason for this is the absence of prominent writers within mainstream feminism, and the writing in existence is largely broad and unfocused, with many books exploring an array of concerns, stretching from pay inequality to ‘laddism’ and ‘raunch culture’²¹.

The influence of Dworkin and other second-wave feminists on contemporary third-wave voices seems to be somewhat mixed. Kat Banyard has been described as ‘Britain’s leading young feminist’ (Aitkenhead, 2012) and published *The Equality Illusion* in 2010. Banyard has often appeared on TV and radio shows, and has written numerous articles. In an interview with Kat Banyard, *The Guardian* journalist Decca Aitkenhead describes Banyard as “self-effacing, serious and so cautiously considered that I think she can see quotation marks waiting to pounce on every sentence out of her mouth” (Aitkenhead, 2012: no pagination), a far cry from the vivacious and irrepressible voices of the second-wave, who even in interviews and other media outlets, were able to display polemical and strident views. Aitkenhead goes on to assert: “Britain’s leading young feminist is no Andrea Dworkin sloganist, dramatising defiance via dungarees, nor a gladiatorial Germaine Greer show-off, nor another glossy Naomi Wolf”. These perceived denunciations of key second-wave feminists, despite the painful alliteration, are not as negative as they first appear. With the exception of the dismissal of Wolf as ‘glossy’, the descriptions of Greer and Dworkin, whilst not necessarily flattering, do paint them as challenging and inspiring; words such as ‘defiance’ and ‘gladiatorial’ giving the impression of strength and power. Aitkenhead uses

²⁰ For further discussions about how the inclusion of intersectionality has affected the response to the third-wave of feminism, see Clare Hemmings *Why Stories Matter : The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (2011)

²¹ For an in depth analysis of ‘90s laddism and raunch culture, see Whelehan (2000), in which she delineates a backlash against feminism in the wake of ‘ironic’ sexist humour that abounds in ‘lad culture’, and the rise of females that imitate sexist behaviour in order to gain credence and acceptance. She argues that women are victims of the patriarchal, consumerist culture that prioritises masculinity over femininity, and that the pop culture of the 1990s has taken a huge step backwards from the radicalism of the ‘70s.

these descriptions of Greer and Dworkin to throw into light the differences between these women's controversial intransigence and Kat Banyard's cautious and lifeless demeanour.

Banyard's prose is far more reserved than the notable second-wave voices:

“Just because it is officially illegal to pay women less than men for equal work, to sack them for being pregnant, or to sexually harass them, it doesn't mean these things don't go on. There is a huge gap between policy and practice, and much current legislation – particularly around equal pay – lacks real bite” (Banyard, 2010: 101)

Given this extract, it is not difficult to note the differences in style between Banyard and Dworkin. Her writing is carefully studied not to be accusatory or blaming, and whilst avoiding the nuances of academic feminism, it also lacks the aggression of second-wave polemics. The result is a text that is absolutely correct in its ideas and assumptions but has failed to become a seminal work of feminism because it lacks a driving focus and target audience. Banyard's work is situated in a liminal position between academic feminism and popular-journalistic that targets mainstream audiences to mobilise grassroots such as that of the second-wave. Banyard's work lacks the sophistication to add new thought to academic readers. Unlike some of the key feminist academic writers in the second-wave, Elaine Showalter and Susan Gilbert for example, Banyard's writing is simplistic and introductory, and her subject matter unoriginal, thus adding very little to current scholarship. Yet similarly, Banyard's bland prose cannot command the force of writers such as Dworkin *et al.* who brought new life into the grassroots movement.

Similarly, Natasha Walter, author of *The New Feminism* (1998) and *Living Dolls* (2009), is another major third-wave writer, whose work lacks the passion and vigour common to older feminist texts. As the journalist Kira Cochrane suggests, Walter writes about “subjects that can provoke real fury, and yet Walter's approach to them tends to be calm, sane, straightforward” (Cochrane, 2010: no pagination). Walter's work has often been described as ‘lipstick feminism’, and critics of her suggest that “there still seems to be an edge of fury amiss” (Cochrane, 2010: no pagination) or that it has “none of the impact, inspirational or irritating, of a seminal feminist work” (Cochrane, 2010: no pagination). These critiques are harsh but indicative of attitudes towards liberal feminism amongst journalists, and suggests that there are a scarce number of writers who effectively produce full-length texts and ideas that can rally the grassroots feminist movement and marshal support. These writers appear to be treading very carefully to avoid mockery or misrepresentation, but do not seem to be

gaining much reward for their efforts. There is an assumption on the part of these journalists that part of what makes a ‘seminal’ feminist work is anger and polemic, and though earlier writers who used these techniques were scorned and ridiculed, their rhetoric and stylistic radicalism were effective in making them memorable and identifying them with particular ideas and goals for the women’s movement. Third-wave writers Banyard and Walter have been chosen as examples in this thesis as they are the most famous writers of the early third-wave. Walter herself has stated that, “sometimes what you need in this debate are the people who will be enraged, and who will really shout. And maybe in this generation we don't quite have someone like that” (Cochrane, 2010: no pagination).

Kira Cochrane has discussed this lack of enagement and anger in contemporary feminism, and finds it to be a real lack:

“It's a hoary old cliché that feminists are intrinsically angry – a cliché that has been used to undermine feminists, to paint us as marauding harpies, steam belching from our ears – but like all clichés it holds a grain of truth. Most strong political arguments do, necessarily, arise from a wellspring of anger” (Cochrane, 2010; no pagination)

Cochrane is not wrong in her description of radicalism, however unappealing it makes feminism sound. Radical ideas are often written in an aggressive and one-sided style, as discussed in chapter one of this thesis, in order to push stridently for progress and change in society. Cochrane accuses Walter of not being angry enough in her writing, but this does not just stem from a lack of anger in the writers themselves. It is as much as a stylistic choice to write in this way as it is to write polemically – and these third-wave writers have chosen to write non-polemically as a direct reaction to the radicalism of the 1970s and 80s and how it was represented by the media. The ‘quieter’ approach of these writers is a direct reaction to the reviews and appropriations of past feminist writing. With so much hate and scorn levelled at the second-wave writers, and feminism being dismissed in many cultural outlets, it is understandable that these writers felt the trepidation of a media backlash if their writing became too radical. It seems, however, that they cannot win; their bland and appeasing writing has been sidelined and relegated to ‘pop-culture’ feminism.

In the last two years, however, there has been a distinct shift back towards radical feminism, and the need for it in the mainstream. There have been a multitude of news stories around women’s rights and international feminist movements such as SlutWalk; even the media

appear to crave more aggressive voices, such as the journalist Jonathan Freedland who reminisces about “the era when Andrea Dworkin was a disapproving presence on every female student's bookshelf and when a French guidebook directed tourists to Wadham to gaze at the "beautiful feminists" reclining on the lawns.” (Freedland, 2013; no pagination). It seems as though the loss of radical feminism is taking its toll on mainstream discourse, and there is a growing urge to bring it back.

During the late 90s and early 2000s, there were very few significant mainstream feminist texts published compared with the huge array of texts in the second-wave, but as Germaine Greer suggested in 1999: “Though parliament is unconcerned about women’s issues, universities appear obsessed by them. Every year brings forth thousands of academic publications on... women and power, women and war, women and peace, women and literature...” (Greer, 1999; 14). Though polemical works of the third-wave are few, there are many academic texts written and published during the early third-wave, and academic feminism continued to flourish, even when mainstream works appeared to have dried up. As Imelda Whelehan depicts:

“If one considers the achievements of feminism from the perspective of the 90s, feminism appears to be a success story, at least in academic terms. Women’s studies courses are still increasing, and the book shops appear to be bursting with new publications dealing with issues of gender. Yet underpinning this academic success story is the reality that feminism as a political movement with a mass following has waned in both Europe and the United States of America... Whilst feminist debates continue and become increasingly complex and diverse in the scholarly arena, feminism is constantly being lambasted in the mass-media and is gradually becoming one of the chief scapegoats for the ills of contemporary life” (Whelehan, 1995: 1).

This is useful to keep in mind, as feminism needs both academic and mainstream works in order successfully to challenge the social order. Though these academic texts rarely reach large audiences they are crucial in the development of new ideas.

Modern mainstream radical feminism has found a voice in the internet, and online publications such as blogs have flourished. The ‘Everyday Sexism Project’ which was founded in 2012, has generated over 5,000 followers on Twitter and collated over 10,000 women’s experiences of everyday sexism, as well as popular websites, such as ‘The Vagenda’ and ‘Jezebel’, are prominent sources of new feminist thought, many of which are more radically written than their printed counterparts. These websites, along with many others, are where the majority of radical feminist debate is being held, and they have both

positive and negative attributes. One of the most positive attributes of online feminism is that the flow of knowledge is much more up-to-date, and there can be quicker reaction to relevant contemporary events as well as foregrounding the experience of sexism, much like Dworkin *et al.* For example, if a news story appears that relates to feminism, there will be debates and critiques on these websites within hours of it being broadcast. This means that there can be much more active involvement with feminism in relation to every-day occurrences. Feminist critiques can intertwine with readers' daily lived experiences, giving more space to specific individualised incidents rather than abstracting feminism to the broader structural, cultural, and economic causes of inequality and prejudice which tend to be the subject full-length books.

With internet feminism, debates are open to a wide range of people and there is much more diversity in who is writing, as the restrictions of publishing are largely negated. A large critique of the second-wave was that it was dominated by white middle-class women, as this was the social group that had the most resources to be able both to study and publish, and the rise of internet feminism has been able to counteract this somewhat. This huge number of voices is, however, perhaps the biggest shortcoming of online feminism. The use of usernames or anonymity that accompany many of these articles means that there is no figurehead or icon for this radical writing. The other restriction of internet feminism is that it is in the form of short articles, and the research and depth found in full length publications is lacking. Nevertheless, the internet remains one of the biggest tools for feminism, and the importance of the radicalism found therein should not be undervalued, especially as it reaches a younger generation.

The most popular text on feminism has been *The Times* journalist Caitlin Moran's bestseller *How to be a Woman* (March 2011), which, by only July 2012 had sold 150,000 copies in the UK, and 400,000 copies worldwide (Doll, 2012; no pagination). Moran's 'part memoir, part rant' is funny and comical, critically analysing the modern perceptions of waxing, internet pornography and motherhood. In the Acknowledgements section, Moran claims she wanted to the book to be "a funny, but polemic, book about feminism! Like *The Female Eunuch* - but with jokes about my knickers!" (2011; 311). She concludes her chapter entitled 'I Am A Feminist!' with: "What is feminism? Simply the belief that women should be as free as men, however nuts, dim, deluded, badly dressed, fat, receding, lazy and smug they might be. Are you a feminist? Hahaha. Of course you are." (Moran, 2011; 88). Whilst this definition of a feminist may not be universally accepted, what Moran has actually presented here is a

polemical argument, which is what is definitive about *How to be a Woman* (2011), as opposed to many third-wave texts. Her writing may lack the anger and vitriol common to the second-wave, but her argument is distinctly one-sided, hyperbolic, and challenging, and it can be argued that it is this return to radicalism that has made *How to be a Woman* (2011) so popular. With this text, Moran successfully discusses larger structural and cultural issues surrounding women, but stylistically makes feminism tangible in her accounts of everyday and personal experiences.

Moran is another of the writers who claim that the ‘f-word’ needs to be brought back into common usage: “Because we need to reclaim the word ‘feminism’. We need the word ‘feminism’ back real bad. When statistics come in saying that only 29 per cent of American women would describe themselves as a feminist... What do you think feminism IS, ladies? What part of ‘liberation for women’ is not for you?” (2011; 80). In a climate where so much of modern feminism bemoans the loss of the ‘f-word’ and radicalism of the second-wave, it is refreshing for a voice to attempt to reclaim the word, bringing with it new meanings of fun and rebellion, that suit the new generation. Despite her exuberant style, Moran makes an astute point about contemporary perceptions of feminism: “If you weren’t actually aware of the core aims of feminism, and were trying to work it out simply from the surrounding conversation – you’d presume it was some spectacularly unappealing combination of misandry, misery and hypocrisy” (2011; 81). In this succinct quote she has successfully summed up many people’s views surrounding feminism, and the backlash towards the second-wave. Yet these attributes in no way describe feminist aims or feminists more generally. These clichés have been allowed to persist because of the negative impact so much of the second-wave had upon the modern media. Feminists, such as Dworkin, were denounced as man-haters or over-sensitive, and these clichés have been perpetuated, and have undermined some of the core objectives of feminism. Moran's venture to reclaim the word feminism has been hugely successful, and is a rare example of a polemical style and radicalism in a contemporary mainstream publication.

Germaine Greer, who, like Dworkin, was a second-wave feminist but who has continued publishing well into the third-wave, is still a relevant figure in contemporary feminism. Greer published her most recent text on feminism in 1999 (*The Whole Woman*) as a sequel to *The Female* (1970) but continues to write articles in mainstream publications, such as *The Guardian*. There were other voices from this time, such as Walter, which were not well received by the critics, yet reviews of Greer’s *The Whole Woman* (1999) describe the text as

‘a polemical bomb’ and a ‘reminder of what a feminist book was meant to be. It is funny, unforgiving, unapologetic, unappeasing’ (Decca Aitkenhead, *The Guardian*, cited in Greer, 2000: preliminary pages). These reviewers may not appreciate the implications of these descriptions, but it appears that they are unanimously harking back to feminism as argumentative, unappeasing, and challenging.

When Betty Friedan passed away in 2007, Camille Paglia wrote: “Betty Friedan wasn’t afraid to be called abrasive. She pursued her feminist principles with a flamboyant pugnacity that has become all too rare in these yuppified times” (Paglia, 2006: 94). The backlash against these ‘abrasive’ second-wave texts is one of the key reasons that third-wave writers such as Banyard and Walter chose to write in such an appeasing and cautious style. These writers, in a bid not to be misunderstood, undermined or mocked, began to write in a way that was more difficult to discredit; but in doing so, however, they lost the polemical fury that earlier feminist works championed. The ‘yuppified times’ to which Paglia refers is the neo-liberal and post-political structure which typifies the late 20th and early 21st century (Zizek, 1999). The social philosopher, Slavoj Zizek argues that we have entered a post-political phase, where postmodernism’s ironic and sceptical approach to ‘truth claims’ has resulted in a loss of faith in any extreme or radical guiding ideology that might govern our world and social issues (Zizek, 1999). In this post-political phase radical ideas have been deemed as irrelevant and unrealistic due to their extreme tone, and consequently watered down in an attempt to reach a larger audience.

The second-wave vitriol and polemical force of Dworkin, Greer, Firestone *et al.* has been replaced in its entirety by texts that are largely liberal, journalistic and conciliatory. That is not to suggest that these third-wave writers, such as Banyard and Walter, are not playing an important role, but the demise of radicalism in published literature has left a gap that is necessary to fill. As Dworkin said: “I’m not saying that everybody should be thinking about this in the same way. I have a really strong belief that any movement needs both radicals and liberals” (Viner, 2005: no pagination) – but this radicalism is missing from today’s mainstream feminism. Whilst times have changed in the last forty years since the heyday of the second-wave revolution, there has still not been anyone to replace the vigorous writers of this period; even the radicalism that is now found on feminist internet sites cannot offer the same sustained vitriol that motivated so many readers in the past. The guiding direction of feminism is lost in the absence of printed word and texts that are revered, such as *Pornography* (1981) and *The Female Eunuch* (1970), and the timid voices of liberal

feminism cannot bring new momentum to a movement that is fading from public discourse. Dworkin's stylistic embodiment of her feminist politics, in both her writing and construction of 'self', created a symbol for radical feminism, one which is arguably missing from the third-wave.

A question, therefore, needs to be asked: where can radicalism go in the contemporary context and how does a re-reading of polemics help? In the present social context, feminism has arrived at a paradoxical cross-road. This chapter has shown journalists reminisce about, and feminist internet followings yearn for, a return of radicalism. However, as Žižek (1999) has argued we also live in a post-political society in which there is mistrust of ideological or 'radical' ideas that might govern our social world which are dismissed as 'too extreme' and 'unrealistic', demonstrated by the increasing convergence toward the 'middle' in our political system. This thesis argues that a re-reading of the radicalism of second-wave feminists (such as Andrea Dworkin) as stylistically constructed can go some way to resolving this tension. Reading the fury and rage of feminism as a stylistic technique to mobilise feminism at a grassroots and mainstream level can perhaps assuage the concerns and rebuttals of a post-political society, while providing feminism with fearless, unwavering radical writers and leaders which the women's movement can drive behind in its pursuit of progression.

This thesis has brought Andrea Dworkin to the forefront of discussion for two reasons. Firstly, because she is a writer whose works have too often been misunderstood and need to be re-examined if we are better to understand her, and the nature of feminist polemical writing. Secondly, and most importantly, Dworkin has been used as a case-study to display the stylistically multi-faceted construction of radicalism in the second-wave, and how a re-reading of their works as *stylistic* rather than *literal* can bolster the third-wave movement. Polemical writing has increasingly disappeared from mainstream published works, replaced by rhetoric which shies away from anger and vitriol as a legitimate technique of argumentation. Choosing to stay within the boundaries of cautious and inoffensive language, these texts do not have the capacity to assemble popular mass support of feminism or provide iconic symbols to achieve the social upheaval that the radical feminism of the internet demands. Since the huge backlash to second-wave feminism that erupted in popular news sources and cultural outlets, feminism has become a more watered-down movement; one that, much like the work of Kat Banyard, is monumentally careful not to offend. The characterisations and denunciations that befell major voices from the 1970s and 80s led to a style that lacks the vigour and momentum needed to bring a meaningful movement into the

modern day. The space left by these radicals has yet to be filled, and, with the possible exception of Caitlin Moran, women have of yet no figurehead to follow. Too many contemporary feminist writers lack the vivacity to engage with readers in a way that excites passion and demands the urgency needed for drastic societal overhaul.

Conclusion

The period of second-wave of feminism is generally considered to be between 1960 and the late 1980s, though like Beauvoir, there are some writers who fell either side of this time-frame. It was a time of huge social upheaval; the civil rights movement of the 1960s, including the Black Power movement and Gay Liberation, had questioned and reformed many of society's long-standing prejudices, and feminists were both part of these changes and profiting from them. Feminists took advantage of this new-found energy and capitalised on it by writing works that were full of pain and anger, which sought to garner the same excitement and tap into society's fresh momentum. Though these polemical works today often seem too extreme and vitriolic they were an inherent part of this contemporary culture, which focused on truly standing for something, rather than a desire to be infallible political critiques. In Victoria Hesford's (2013) publication *Feeling Women's Liberation*, she argues that the stylistic, and often radical, rhetorics of 1970s feminism were used strategically in order to enact significant political changes. She argues that feminists used a specific rhetoric to push forward ideas that were radical at the time, though now that they have been immersed in contemporary culture, such as the destruction of the nuclear family, the idea no longer seems as radical, and the hyperbolised language used in these texts may now seem exaggerated and reductive.

This makes Andrea Dworkin an ideal case-study for re-reading the use of polemic and radicalism, as her works are some of the most brutally written and uncompromising of the second-wave. She is remembered as one of the most radical feminists of her time, but the depth of her work is often overlooked in contemporary academia or in larger media outlets, with the emphasis being placed on her image or on misunderstood sound bites. This thesis, then, has sought to examine the complexity of her work with the attention they deserve, and to present Dworkin in a new light that has been hitherto denied. The life and works of Andrea Dworkin have been used as an example for the larger aim of illuminating the constructed nature of radicalism within second-wave feminism. Moreover, this thesis has sought to situate misunderstandings of radicalism and stylistically radical writing within the contemporary context of third-wave feminism, and to consider how a re-reading of Dworkin's radicalism as stylistically constructed could contribute to feminism in the present-day, and future feminist works.

The constructed nature of second-wave radical feminists' style, their radical image, and the way in which these women used fiction, polemics, and media portrayals to create an image of themselves and feminism more broadly, were arguably so effective that they have become misconstrued and accepted as a *reality* rather than critically analysed as a construction. Consequently, a misreading of the aggressive attitude that Dworkin and other similar writers propagated has resulted in radical feminism being largely replaced by works that take a more conciliatory tone; modern feminists have felt the need to defend themselves against the huge media backlash that proceeded the end of the second-wave. By the end of the 1990s feminism had become a denounced term, mocked relentlessly by the media, who dismissed feminists as man-hating, too uncompromising, and a group too undiplomatic to develop any 'realistic' social change. This thesis aspires to present an argument for re-reading radicalism through a lens of constructionism in order to reintegrate the dynamic style of what Dworkin calls "the bottom line" (Viner, 2005: no pagination) into the mainstream for a more well-rounded feminism.

The other element of this thesis revolves around the dichotomy between feminism and fiction. In fact, for Andrea Dworkin this was a false dichotomy as she blurred the line between reality and the fictional in her autobiographically informed fiction, polemical style, and the careful creation and cultivation of her public image which worked in collaboration with her publications. Though feminism is an intrinsically 'real' subject in that it operates as a political system and gender issues permeate people's very real everyday lives, it does not operate independently from literary theory, language, and style. Social, political, and cultural perception and response to feminism is contingent upon not just the issues that it raises, but the way in which the vast literature that represents feminist perspectives are received. The responses to feminism have been too focused on reading the texts literally, and have not sufficiently delved into stylistic choices that inform these works.

This use of style and techniques are also found in Dworkin's feminist fictional writings, and compliment her polemical works by addressing many of the same issues from a fictional perspective. This was true of many of the feminists in the second-wave who used fictional works to parallel their own, or others, polemical works, such as the examples of Marilyn French or Erica Jong used in this thesis. These fictional works bring to life their corresponding feminist arguments, and are used to illustrate the effects of patriarchal, misogynist or phallogocentric culture and structures of power on an individual woman. This project was limited in scope by the restrictions of length, thus the subject of the feminist

fiction/polemic dichotomy remains far from closed. It is not the intention of this project to explore why this is such a popular medium across feminism; it is a question for further study and research and, therefore, remains largely unanswered by this thesis. This study merely wishes to explore Andrea Dworkin as a case-study for how both of these two styles of writing were used to construct, and to articulate, her feminist agenda.

In chapter one the nature of polemics was discussed and the way in which feminists use them to convey ideas. Andrea Dworkin's arguments were often liberal and humanistic, yet she conveyed them in a particularly vitriolic style. The reason the polemical style is so favoured by feminism is that it is able to convey broad ideas, unhindered by academic nuance, to rally readers to their cause. This chapter then looked at feminism's relation to fiction, and discussed some of the prominent feminist writers who also wrote fiction. In fact, the tradition of writing both feminist polemics and fiction together goes as far back as Mary Wollstonecraft and continued through seminal feminist writers such as Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millett. The relation of Dworkin's polemics to her fiction was briefly discussed, and other famous examples of feminist fiction were examined in some depth, as to how they relate to their contemporary polemical counterparts. It was argued here that fictional works combine with the use of first person testimonies found in non-fiction works to create a feminism that was personal as well as political. The use of characters that mimic Dworkin's life or the use of real women's stories personify her work, making it relatable and demonstrating that the ideas she discusses affect the lives of real women.

Chapter two focussed on the intertextual blurring of writing within Dworkin's works, specifically her fictional novels. It was shown how she used allusion, quotation and reference to other canonical writers to inform her work, and to situate her novels within the genre of fiction. This was necessary as her novels have often been referred to as semi-autobiographical and Dworkin uses this intertextuality to highlight their constructed nature, undermining this autobiographical comparison. Dworkin wrote her fictional works to mimic, yet undermine, details within her life. Her protagonists are shown to be flawed representations of her, merely imitations, which are used to demonstrate her political points; for example, Dworkin's being jailed over protesting the Vietnam War, and her incarceration in the women's house of detention. In her life, Dworkin took this to a trial and brought huge amount of media attention to the injustices happening inside, yet her character in *Ice and Fire* (1986), who has little education, is living in poverty, and has no strong support network of friends or family, simply internalises the event, accepting it as normality. Similarly, in *Mercy* (1990), Andrea becomes

a homicidal vigilante after her multiple rapes and abuse at the hands of men as society let her down though a lack of protection and social structures that could keep her out of poverty and prostitution. These examples show how Dworkin used these characters to illustrate her belief in the patriarchal systems of power which govern women's lives. This chapter also focuses on how Dworkin used stylistic techniques or styles, such as trauma fiction, to show fully how the dehumanisation of women is achieved through systematic injustices, and to give a brutal, and polemical, insight into how this is received by these characters. This makes her fictional work just as polemical and controversial as her non-fiction, and they often mirror each other in terms of this style and content.

The concluding chapter draws together these discussions about authenticity and intertextuality to connect with Dworkin's representation as a radical feminist in the mainstream media. Andrea Dworkin's legacy as an icon of radicalism was achieved through careful stylistic construction. Beginning with her construction of self in her polemics, her selected revelations about her personal life to the media, through to her undermining of autobiography within her fictional works, she created an image of herself that overshadowed the real woman herself. Dworkin's image and persona were intrinsic to the way her books were received, and Dworkin purposefully coveted this image as a radical and an absolute antithesis to male culture. Though Dworkin wrote about how the negative reception to herself was hurtful, she remained unmoved in her principles: "On one level, I suffer terribly from the disdain that much of my work has met. On another, deeper level, I don't give a fuck." (Dworkin, 1988: 4). Crucially, Dworkin was one of the only feminists to neither bend to become a more publically accepted face of feminism, such as Naomi Wolf or Erica Jong, nor to retreat out of public view (Millett, 1970; Firestone, 1970). Dworkin treated her public image as an integral part of, and perhaps inextricably intertwined with, her work. Where her polemical works were known to be both extremist and uncompromising, her image mirrored these facets, defying any remnants of traditional femininity within her appearance, and scorning beauty products. That is not to say that there is anything inherently anti-feminist about the use of feminine beauty products, but that for Dworkin, it was a crucial element of her rebellion of patriarchal culture.

This chapter then fed on to Dworkin's reception in the third-wave that, both she and her work, have received. It has been shown that third-wave writings fall short of the stylistic radicalism that is found in Dworkin's work, and too often use conciliatory or appeasing language in an attempt not to isolate readers. This, however, actually has the effect of making

their work too simplistic and lacking in the motivating and inspiring language that made second-wave feminism so popular a movement. Modern feminists, such as Kat Banyard, have used far more journalistic and liberal texts, that do not tread too far from mainstream values, in the hope of having their work recognised and taken seriously; unfortunately, this has only had the effect of them being largely ignored by a mainstream audience. The internet has provided a new voice for contemporary radicalism, but it has been argued here that the lack of figureheads and iconic works have led to a lack of cohesion, in which writings often short and disjointed, not allowing for the momentum of a full-length publication.

The work of second-wave feminist must not be discounted if feminism is to once again become a prominent aspect of society, and their works should be revisited with fresh eyes to understand the creativity and ingenuity with which these women wrote their works. Andrea Dworkin was a hugely complex writer and one that has been too often overlooked or misunderstood; her inspirational feminist writings challenged the violence and objectification towards women in contemporary society, and sought to give humanity and liberation back to those women. Her campaigns were always aimed at the most vulnerable women in society, those who were economically or socially disenfranchised, and she endured being mocked and ostracised for her views, and never detracted or swayed from her line of argument; her twenty-year campaign against violence towards women, including her work on pornography and her role in the Take Back the Night marches, shows her commitment to the ending of ending the secondary status of women. She was a controversial figure, but one that deserves to be re-evaluated if we are to fully realise the potency of the arguments she made. The death of Andrea Dworkin in 2005 left a glaring opening in today's feminist movement; she was one of the last truly radical voices who had the integrity to stay true to their beliefs. As Katharine Viner speculates: "We will miss Andrea Dworkin....Indeed, who is left to replace her?" (Viner, 2005: no pagination).

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