

‘Love’ as a Disguise of Sexual Power Politics in Atwood’s *Bodily Harm*

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Abstract:

Feminist approach to violence sees the brutalization of an individual woman by an individual man, not as an individual or family problem, but as the manifestation of the system of male domination of women that has existed historically and cross-culturally. Margaret Atwood, a Canadian iconic novelist and an active member of the Amnesty International is interested in gender/sexual power politics. By power politics, she does not mean who votes for whom but how power operates and who has power over whom. Sexual power politics is often disguised as ‘love’, one of the forms of power politics. In her Book of poems Power Politics, Margaret Atwood asserts that love is dominated by imperialistic intentions. Lovers wield love as a weapon rather than bearing it as a gift. Atwood’s novel Bodily Harm (1981) explores the imperialistic harm done to the women’s physical body and the sufferings of women both physically and psychologically. The article attempts to analyse how far women are harassed psychologically in the name of ‘love’.

Key words: Violence – sexual politics – power politics – love – sexual harassment – victim – victimization – self affirmation – optimistic view towards life

Violence is conceptualized as an act that is embedded in the socio-cultural, economic, political and ideological context of

power relations. In the social context, it is the illegal employment of methods of physical coercion for personal or group ends. Atrocity is a conspicuous act of cruelty, associated with some political operation, for which a Government may be represented as directly, or indirectly responsible. It may be morbid or sadistic phenomena, or the outcome of a judicial process. Violence against women occurs with the intent of perpetuating and promoting hierarchal gender relations. It is deeply rooted in gender based power relations, sexuality, self-identity, and social institutions.

Gender violence embodies power imbalances inherent in patriarchal society. Structural inequality of power in relation between men and women provides the objective conditions for male abuse of power. The different processes of socialization strengthen the gendered identity and each adorns the stereotyped gender roles, males for domination and females for submission. Violence against women, stem from the concept of male superiority and power. The problem of violence against women cuts across race, religion, income, class, caste, creed and culture. It is manifested in physical aggression, sexual abuse, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmailing, economic or emotional threats and control over speech and action against female dignity. These expressions of violence against women take place in male female relationship within the family in particular and society in general.

Feminist approach to violence sees the brutalization of an individual woman by an individual man, not as an individual or family problem, but as the manifestation of the system of male domination of women that has existed historically and cross-culturally. Karnika Panwar is of the opinion that "societal tolerance of domestic abuse of women is a reflection of patriarchal norms which support male dominance in family and society" (Panwar 2011, 38).

Margaret Atwood, a Canadian iconic novelist and an active member of the Amnesty International is interested in

gender/sexual power politics. By power politics, she does not mean who votes for whom but how power operates and who has power over whom. Sexual power politics is often disguised as 'love', one of the forms of power politics. In her Book of poems *Power Politics*, Margaret Atwood asserts that love is dominated by imperialistic intentions. Lovers wield love as a weapon rather than bearing it as a gift. Atwood's novel *Bodily Harm* (1981) explores the imperialistic harm done to the women's physical body and the sufferings of women both physically and psychologically. As Howells says, "in *Bodily Harm* female bodies are all passive, distorted, dismembered or coerced witnesses to the sexual power politics of the Berger epigraph" (Howells 1996, 120).

In *Bodily Harm*, the protagonist Renata Wilford is a lifestyle journalist who just had a mastectomy. Besides her physical pain, Atwood traces her internal torment in her troubled childhood, her relationship with men and a violent society at large. Rennie tries to escape the traumatic experiences of her own past but unfortunately she escapes to an area that is politically abandoned by the British. During her visit, Rennie gets imprisoned by the corrupt politicians of Caribbean Island and she writes her travelogue in prison cell. In her travelogue Rennie includes all sorts of bodily harm perpetrated on woman such as the pornographic violation of women, as shown in the Toronto Policeman's Pornography museum; Her lover Jake's sadism and the situation of rape; the humiliations she suffers in the prison, the torture she witnesses of the people crusading for human rights and civil liberties in the Caribbean Island; Her mutilation by cancer; and her fellow prisoner, Lora's 'non-violent' rape by her vicious stepfather.

Atwood depicts the horrifying consequences of imperialistic power-structures that de-humanize, inferiorize the individuals and reduce them to being virtually dispensable commodities. Rennie is a double victim both of cancer and male chauvinism. From the 'victimized' status, she has undergone

the process of self-discovery and re-humanization against the backdrop of inhumanness, cruelty and violence.

The focus of the novel is on Rennie's struggle towards the goal of specialization through a life of tensions and conflicts. The novel gives us a peep as it were into the life of a tiny isle of St. Antoine with its politics, pathos, comedy and tragedy. But it centres round the interior landscape of Rennie's consciousness. Rennie is brought up in the sterile, hypocritical, sexless Southern Ontario small town called Griswold. Her childhood is suppressed by her grandmother's rules of do's and don'ts. Rennie is never allowed to think and feel independently.

She spent her childhood in the narrow and repressive Griswold. The puritanical town sees everything that happens as the will of God and believes that people get what they deserve. In Griswold, everyone deserves the worst. Rennie regards Griswold as a 'backdrop' rather than as her background. If the light bulb goes out the people in Griswold believe that it is will of God, and nobody is ready to change the bulb. Rennie grew up surrounded by old people: grandfather, grandmother, great-aunts, and great-uncles. Her grandmother told her many maxims:

Laugh and the world laughs with you.

Cry and you cry alone.

If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.

If you can't keep your word, don't give it.

As a child Rennie learned three things well: how to be quiet, what not to say, and how to look at things without touching them.

After her grandfather's death, her grandmother began to deteriorate. Sometimes she wouldn't remember who she was and who they were. In Griswold, women thought it was a sin to wear even lipstick. Rennie's mother is as conservative as other Griswoldians. Being around them all the time made her mother seem old. She never leaves Griswold even after the

death of Rennie's grandmother. People in Griswold have a great fear of being left alone.

Rennie realizes that women relished sacrificing their lives, serving others, being subordinates. They are used in a negative way against their own selves. Her grandfather was a doctor. Seeing her grandfather hero-worshipped by town, Rennie says that as a young child, she too wanted to be a doctor like him. However after a few years at school, she gave up the idea, for, by then she had become aware that "men were doctors, women were nurses; men were heroes and what were women? Women rolled the bandages"(Atwood 2007, 56). Rennie's grandfather is both the mixture of the heroic and kind doctor as well as the violent and brutal man. Her father was an irresponsible man who leaves his family for a mistress. Her mother has sacrificed everything – husband, home and family - to look after her aged parents. She is modest, and has the necessary courage and confidence to negate her own existence, and individuality. Rennie feels hurt as she is badly neglected by her mother. She hates the self-abnegation of her mother and chooses to break away from such an environment:

I didn't want to be trapped, like my mother. Although I admired her – everyone was always telling me how admirable she was, she was practically a saint – I didn't want to be like her in any way. (Atwood 2007, 178)

In order to live a free life she escapes to Toronto as a University student. Rennie leaves Griswold in order to lead a life of freedom where there would be no fetters to bind to such an extent as to kill her own individuality and identity. Rennie begins her adult life as a versatile writer. After college she starts her career as a freelance journalist specializing in 'Life Styles'. She writes articles for Pandora, a woman-oriented magazine and for Visor, a male-oriented magazine.

Rennie as a journalist prefers invisibility, and not being tied to anything. She couldn't stand the idea of anyone doing

her favour. She believes that the respect comes not from beauty but from decency, and the best way to keep the respect is to do nothing unusual. She wants neither to be considered crazy nor to be dead. Rennie was ambitious when she was in college in 1970. Honesty is her policy, and she decides to specialize in abuses. She writes a piece for *Varsity* on blockbusting as practiced by city developers and another on the lack of good day-care centres for single mothers. She receives threatening letters as a tribute to her effectiveness. She is commented by one of the editors, "a southern Ontario Baptist at heart" (Atwood 2007, 64). Instead of writing, she begins interviewing the people who are involved in them. The editors call her a Radical chic. As a typical Griswold woman, she keeps professional liability as her honesty, but under control. She neither bothers about the comments made by anyone nor makes her honesty public. She views her honesty less as a virtue than a perversion. She dislikes being lumped in with a fictitious group labeled 'people like you', and believes in personal privacy. For her it is nice to know "who you are" (Atwood 2007, 200).

Jocasta, a feminist activist, is Rennie's friend in Canada. She is a liberated woman. For Rennie, Jocasta represents a complete and complex socio-gender system. Jocasta believes that men are desperate to assert their superiority over women one way or another. Her theory is that, "they don't want love and understanding and meaningful relationships, they still want sex, but only if they can take it" (Atwood 2007, 156). Rennie's association with Jocasta raises her feminine consciousness. According to Jocasta women think that they are liberated but in reality it is like a distant dream. Nothing has really changed with women. Men still are interested in having full control over women. They consider women as rental objects for the pleasure of men.

Keith, the editor of *Visor* assigned Rennie to do a piece on pornography from women's angle. Rennie visits the Toronto Policeman's Pornography Museum along with Jocasta, and

interviews the policemen. There she encounters with the evidence of male brutality and violence against women. She is shocked to see the film clips of nude women, and different postures of naked women. The policeman shows her some film clips of women with animals. Film clips of women copulating with animals make her physically ill. There Rennie sees all ugly and horrible films displaying bodies of women as maps of violence. She realizes the abuse of woman in so-called civilized society. She feels that men destroy women's individuality in a subtle and invisible manner with the help of cultural codes.

There are a couple of sex-and-death pieces, women being strangled or bludgeoned or having their nipples cut off by men dressed up as Nazis. Rennie is shocked to see the final pictures shown by the policemen:

The picture showed a woman's pelvis and the tops of the thighs. The legs were slightly apart; the usual hair, the usual swollen pinkish purple showed between them; nothing was moving. Then something small and grey and wet appeared, poking out from between the legs. It was the head of a rat. (Atwood 2007, 210)

Rennie interviews Frank, an artist who made furniture in the structure of women's body. According to Frank, art is for contemplation. Rennie never turns on the artistic sense of Frank. As Howells says, it is very close to "the early 1980's feminist anti pornography position which asserted strong links between pornography as misogynist power fantasy and male violence against women" (Howells 1996, 12). Rennie feels that a large gap appears in what she has been used to thinking of as reality. She decides that it is better not to know any more about some things. In many cases, surfaces are preferable to depths. Rennie refuses to do on pornography and sticks herself to lifestyles.

While writing an article "The Young and the Solven" for *Visor*, she comes in contact with Jake. Jake works as a designer for a packaging company. He is smart and keeps up

with the latest trends in fashions. He lives according to the male images in the magazines he reads. Being a fine young man, and a good dancer he hardly ever bothers to dance. He is good at what he does. He is even good enough to start his own small company at the age of thirty. Before meeting Jake, Rennie used to think that being in love is like running barefoot along a street covered with broken bottles:

It let people think they know something about the lovers that they don't know about them; it gives them power over them; it makes them visible, soft, penetrable, and ludicrous. (Atwood 2007, 102)

At the same time, Rennie thinks also about sex: "It is a pleasant form of exercise, better than jogging, a pleasant form of communication, like gossip" (Atwood 2007, 102). What matters is the relationship – with whom the sex has been. Rennie and Jake are supposed to have a good relationship, and there is no doubt of having sex with Jake.

Jake is more interested in Rennie's body than her mind. They start living together. Rennie likes to have baby through Jake, but Jake advises her to postpone it. He tries all his tricks to use and pack her just as he does thing. It takes more time for Rennie to realize that she is one of the things Jake is packaging. Though Rennie considers her an intelligent and cautious she allows herself to be trapped in the evil doings of Jake. Jake is foxy, saturnine and a trickster. Underneath his self-assured, playboy mask, Jake is emotionally very insecure. He is an animal in the dark. For him love is a crude game intended to hurt women. As Rennie says:

Jake liked to pin her hands down, he liked to hold her so she couldn't move. He liked that; he liked thin king of sex as something he could win at. Sometimes he really hurt her, once he put his arm across her throat and she really did stop breathing. (Atwood 2007, 235)

Rennie soon learns that people get trapped in things that are beyond their control. Rennie is shaken as she is diagnosed of cancer requiring a partial mastectomy. Though her operation is successful she continues to be haunted by the fear of recurrence. Before her operation, Rennie and Jake seem to be perfectly suited to each other but after operation Rennie realizes that Jake was all along packaging her according to his taste and pleasure till he realizes that packing was rotting from inside. She blames herself for allowing him to use her as a commodity and decides to leave him. Vevaina is of the opinion that Jake, who is tragically alienated from his inner self, is a "classic Waste Lander figure and not at all the hero Rennie once thought him to be" (Vevaina 1996, 187). It would take a long time to scrape the true nature of Jake.

Jake, an adept in the field of advertising, inhabits the plane of disembodied appearance alone, manipulating images, which bear no relation to the world of substance. He enjoys sex as a pretended rape: "Pretend I just came through the window. Pretend you're being raped" (Atwood 2007, 236). Rubenstein comments, "Jake, a man with canine teeth and predatory desires, prefers sex that includes bondage and sadism" (Rubenstein 1988, 261).

Jake is an exploiter of female sex and a woman is just an object of sex for him. In the woman's objectification, the female is nothing but the body and the female body is representative of sexuality. From this stems Jake's need to reshape Rennie into the image of what is taken to be the eroticized female. After killing her plants, remodeling her apartment and her look, he stages the ultimate erotic object – the perfect sexual poses as she parades in sensual lingerie. Everything seems to underline the power relation between male and female. He asks and she complies. He hangs posters in Rennie's bedroom showing, "brown-skinned woman wound up in a piece of material that held her arms to her sides but left her breasts and thighs and buttocks exposed" (Atwood 2007, 116). There is another poster

in which "a woman lying feet first on the sofa and her head up at the other end of the sofa was tiny, featureless and rounded like a doorknob. In the foreground there was bull" (Atwood 2007, 116). This shows Jake's rapist fantasies.

Rennie's passive behaviour to Jake's every whim eventually drives him away. After her mastectomy, things begin to go sour between them. Jake does not lose interest because of her mastectomy as she believes, but because of her remarkable acceptance of his oppressive and abusive nature. She reacts to her abandonment with predictable passivity and tries to embody the victimized woman, the innocent one in a perverse world of wrongdoers. She seems to manifest the victim psychology which Atwood announces as her subject in the epigraph to the novel taken from John Berger's *Way of Seeing*: "A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. By contrast, a woman's presence...defines what can not be done to her".

After her mastectomy Jake feels uncomfortable with Rennie and sees the scar on her breast as the kiss of death on her. Now Rennie is emotionally disturbed by her operation and feels that she has her malignancy uncured. The mental anguish Rennie experiences on account of the rapture of her sexual self-image caused by the mastectomy is conveyed with great sensitivity and without the trace of melodrama. The malignant cancer cells within her body function as a metaphor for the malignant manifestations of power in the external world. Rennie regards the operation very little in terms of a salvation but more as evil and violation by man, her body and self cut away from each other are marked by male probers, the labelers and cutters. It is significant that the surgery and removal is that of the breast, an eroticized body part thus enforcing the idea of man preying on the female as sexual object only. She has no more hopes of becoming a mother and breast-feeding her future child. As Rubenstein says:

Some of Rennie's anxieties about invasion and violation can be understood, through the cultural attitudes towards both the

female flesh and cancer; Rennie is a double victim, of both disease and male exploitation. Men worship the breast, and woman internalize the male overvaluation of this aspect their anatomy. Because it is also associated with the actual and symbolic qualities of nurturance, the loss of part or all of a breast affects a women's sense of her procreative capabilities. After her operation, Rennie wonders and worries whether she will be able to bear a child. (Rubenstein 1988, 262)

Rennie has done a piece on boredom for Pandora, and she observes that the powerful source of the boredom is male and the passive recipient is female. Being an expert on boredom, Rennie suggests women to alter their wardrobes, which will improve their appearances. Rennie closely observes the difference between men and women in the society. For instance, even Jake likes her refreshing body, not the interesting mind. The fault is not on the part of men alone, since "women prefer guys who treat them like shit" (Atwood 2007, 103).

Sexual demands of men and women differ from each other. Rennie firmly believes that as long as there is trust, a secure woman is not threatened by her partner's fantasies. She wants to be the one the man (Jake) opens up for; Jake wants her to be the one who opens up. He treats her package, and doesn't want to be stuck with the whole package: "She may be the icing on his cake" (Atwood 2007, 154). After some days, there is neither desire nor need between Jake and Rennie and they part from each other. Rennie thereafter thinks of atomic radiation in the war, which accounts for New Chastity. Too many deadly rays zap the pineal gland. As per the wish of Jocasta, if every man is turned into woman and every woman is turned into man, all the women will become rapists. Rennie comments that men don't want love, understanding, and meaningful relationship, but only sex if only they can take it.

Dr. Daniel Luoma, a male gynecologist, has performed a partial mastectomy on Rennie. Margaret Atwood presents

horrific reality of mastectomy and the possible death sentence of cancer through Rennie. The disease begins to restore in the most brutal way possible the severed contact between Rennie and her body in which she has up to then merely been a tenant. Rennie has been treating her body as a machine and for her, the damaged breast is like a diseased fruit. Daniel tells her that while the mind isn't separate from the body, body and its ailments cannot be regarded merely as a function of the mind. He adds that cancer isn't a symbol, it's a disease. Rennie finds it increasingly difficult to live at the same level as before.

Rennie doesn't want to turn into one of those people who use their physical disabilities for social blackmail. After her operation, as per the advice given by Daniel, Rennie constructs schedules and goals for her. She exercises; goes to movies to cheer herself up; begins to type; reworks her drain-chain jewellery piece; learns to brush her hair, and do up buttons again. Daniel applauds her and delivers an earnest lecture:

This is the second part of your life. It will be different from the first part, you will not longer be able to take things for granted, but perhaps this is a plus because you will see your life as a gift and appreciate it more. You must stop thinking of your life as over, because it is far from over. (Atwood 2007, 83)

Dr. Daniel is not even handsome. He is too tall for his shoulders, his hair is too short, and his arms are too long. Though it is inappropriate to have fallen in love with Daniel, who had no distinguishing features, Rennie is in love with him. He brought her a pamphlet called *Mastectomy: Answers to Down-To-Earth Questions*. The pamphlet suggests that she has to ask the doctor. She never asks him the questions, since she loves him. After the operation done by Dr. Daniel, Rennie wants to be sick again so that Daniel will have to take care of her. Rennie asks whether she can have a baby. Daniel replies that it is a risk to have baby immediately after her operation, and she can have it after some time. Daniel is a dutiful

husband, a dutiful parent, a dutiful son. Rennie is not jealous of his wife, but of his other patients. As for Rennie,

Daniel is the only man in the world who knows the truth. He's looked into each of his patients and seen death. He knows they have been resurrected, he knows they are not all that well glued together, any minute they will vaporize. The bodies are only provisional. (Atwood 2007, 142)

He is not an afterglow from the past, but the wave of the future. He is a fantasy - a fantasy about the lack of fantasy, a fantasy of the normal for Rennie. It is soothing to think of Daniel. So Rennie calls Daniel, giving the impression of someone on the verge of suicide. Daniel comes there, and more than a desire, both of them need each other.

Rennie sees Daniel as a substitute of Jake. He possesses the healing touch that Rennie comes to obsess about in his hand. She wants and needs him to touch her. He saved her from the cancer and Rennie thinks that he now reconciles herself with her body. Daniel takes his job very seriously and is earned in his effort to help his patients recover both physically and psychologically. Rennie allows him to touch her with his life giving hands. But, Daniel violates the professional ethics by taking advantage of her in her emotional state. In her relationship with Daniel, Rennie wants something definite, the real truth, one way or the other. Then only she will know what she should do next. It's this suspension, hanging in a void, this half-life she can't bear. As Wainwright says, Rennie can't bear not knowing, but Daniel is, "afraid of emotional commitment, and is unable to offer her anything but platitudes" (Wainwright 1981, 58). Ultimately, Rennie realizes that Dr. Daniel is a victimizer who exploits women in the guise of medicine and surgery. She says:

May I'm not the only one...there's a whole line up of them, dozens and dozens of women, each with a bite taken out of them, one breast or the other...he tells us all he loves us. Anyway he gets off on it, its like a harem...he's the only man

in the world who knows the truth, he's looked into each one of us and seen death. (Atwood 2007, 82)

Rennie compares Daniel with her grandfather, a physician of violent temperament. In the words of Rubenstein, the primitive life saving methods of Rennie's grandfather "uncannily resemble torturous mutilation of the body", and Daniel comprises, "the paradoxes of patriarchy: the opposing stances of healing and destruction as practiced in the characteristically male institutions of medicine and politics" (Atwood 2007, 264).

The partial mastectomy on her breast reinforces the idea of Rennie's incompleteness and her fractured identity. In Wilson's words, Rennie feels, "raw-material, violated and doctored by her surgeon Daniel" (Wilson 1981, 140). Now she understands the feelings of a woman who has undergone Daniel's surgery:

Holding the hand of a blonde woman whose breast he has recently cut off, who wants to cure, who wants to help, who wants everything to be fine. "you're alive", he says to her, with kindness and duplicity, compelling as a hypnotist. He says, "You're very lucky". Tears stream silently down her face. (Atwood 2007, 126)

Rennie searches for the ideal sexual relationship with Daniel. She wants to lie down beside him and touch him and be touched by him. She believes that the touch of the hand can transform, and change everything. There is a magic in the touch. She wants to be trusted; she wants to make love with him. She wants to open him up. But making love for an hour in a hotel room with Daniel will not work. There is a gap between what she expected and what she really is. Afterwards, she no longer expects Daniel to save her life. She never expects anything. She wants to write a piece on the sexual expectations of women, and comments that, "One man I'm not allowed to touch and another I won't allow to touch me" (Atwood 2007, 198). Her fantasy is unfulfilled. Shortly afterwards, in one afternoon she

returns to her apartment to discover that somebody has broken into her home in her absence.

The lust for power manifests itself in a myriad forms in the novel. The faceless stranger who breaks into Rennie's apartment in Toronto and leaves off-white, medium-thick rope neatly coiled on her quilt, indicates his capacity and desire to do harm. Since Rennie does not even know the man, there is no question of personal vendetta. Though he does not succeed in harming Rennie physically, he succeeds in terrorizing her psychologically. She feels silly and neurotic, and throughout the novel, thinks and dreams of this personification of brute power.

With his lack of identity, the man with the rope takes different forms from the sadistic island police to the various men with whom Rennie is romantically involved. But every attempt that Rennie makes at actually identifying the man with the rope fails her. She tries to identify him as Jake, as Daniel, as Paul until, terrifyingly, she begins to realize that this facelessness is the possibility of any male in society. He is an agent of male oppression. He represents the potential in all men to brutalize women. This is not the individual brutality of a certain person inflicted upon another but the patriarchal structure. It is the need for male dominance and female subordination. This sinister incident prompts Rennie's decision to leave Toronto.

After the arrival of stranger into her room, she persuades Keith, the editor of *Visor* magazine to let her do a travel piece and ends up with an assignment on 'Caribbean island'. In her journey to Caribbean Island, Rennie is frightened by the world of political intrigues. She visits Twin islands – St. Antoine and St. Agathe. Rennie meets Dr. Minnow, a sixty years oldman on the plane from Barbados. He is known for his rebellion against the tyranny of the Government and one of the three candidates for the first local election since independence. Dr. Minnow makes Rennie

conscious of her duty as a writer. He wants Rennie to publish the truth about the island. He says, "Looks with your eyes open and you will see the truth of the matter. Since you are a reporter, it is your duty to report" (Atwood 2007, 133).

After Jake's departure and the dead-end relationship with Daniel, Rennie comes in contact with Paul. Psychologically he is better balanced. Paul is a tourist guide in the Caribbean island. Paul is a good substitute of Jake or Daniel as he shows extreme tenderness and is not repelled by the scar on Rennie's breast. Dorothy Jones says, "Unlike Jake, who tries to make her over into something else, or Daniel who sees her as the answer to his emotional needs, Paul accepts Rennie for what she is" (Atwood 2007, 93). Her relationship with Paul gives Rennie a new meaning of life. But soon Rennie realizes that she is a sort of house guest. Paul is the one who's supposed to know what to do next. Paul, Marsdon, and Prince together used Rennie and Lora, an object of negotiation for their revolution. The vocation romances are only bare excuses. Rennie feels like a hostage, strangely uninvolved in her own fate.

Finally, Rennie realizes that all the men in her life are, in reality, one man, and that she herself has chosen him, created him in her own image his face, "...familiar, with silver eyes that twin and reflect her own" (Atwood 2007, 283). Rennie rejects her submissive role as a woman and is ready to speak out the truth about the exploited women. She emerges as a warning against disabling female fantasies of innocence and victimization, which displace women's recognition of the dangers of the real life. Rennie accomplishes herself a subversive journalist who is bold enough to narrate her experience in the form of travelogue called 'Bodily Harm'. She uses pen as a weapon and ends up as an activist. She realizes her duty to write, to report the truth. She feels as if she's returning after a space trip, a trip into the future. When she returns to Toronto, she says to herself, "You can fly" (Atwood

2007, 301). She will never be rescued. She has already been rescued. She is not exempt. Instead she is lucky. She is overflowing with luck, and luck holds her. As Helene Cixous says, "Rennie puts women into the text as into the world, and into history by her own movement of travelogue" (Cixous 1976, 875). A journalist has a power to influence and initiate the public against any harm. It is proved in Rennie's hope.

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