

where he works, she clutches against her "son petit sac de faux cuir de forme arrondie et gonflée" (183), which foreshadows her pregnancy to come.

Simone de Beauvoir's views on the subject may have been influenced by Sartre's rejection of paternity. According to one critic, when Marcelle, in *L'Âge de raison*, discovers she is pregnant, "Sartre's descriptions of that pregnancy translate vividly the revulsion he shares with his character."¹⁵ Like Jean, Mathieu—and Sartre through Mathieu—rejects connection with women because freedom for the individual depends on his autonomy; links with women and children create responsibilities and negate man's freedom. From this point of view, of course, no woman could ever imagine being truly free unless she gave up heterosexual connections entirely. This might also explain some of the pervasive hate and dread for the female body we see in *Le Deuxième Sexe*.¹⁶

In her autobiography, Gabrielle Roy describes the pitiful sexual education she received from her mother: "Elle s'y était en tout cas si mal prise que je n'avais presque rien compris à ce qu'elle tentait de m'expliquer, sinon que d'être femme était humiliant à en mourir."¹⁷ The pervasive alienation both writers describe is one which modern women are just beginning to work through. This vision of the body as a servitude and a trap is largely a consequence of the absence of readily available and effective birth control. Otherwise, the body does indeed threaten to take control. Whatever the Pill's many shortcomings, there is no doubt that it has made it possible for large numbers of women to see motherhood as a choice rather than a trap. In that light, the female body loses its opaque and sinister qualities. As contemporaries writing in the 1940s, Gabrielle Roy and Simone de Beauvoir shared a view of the body and of motherhood which women have been able to call into question since. Women are learning, in Beauvoir's phrase, to "s'accepter sans complaisance et sans honte" (I, 369).

Women Among Themselves

When women turn to men as their source of self-worth, they automatically turn away from other women. Rose-Anna has no female friends; Florentine has never been close to other young girls of her age, "imaginant qu'elles étaient envieuses d'elle, prêtes à lui jouer un mauvais tour, ou simplement ennuyeuses" (264). It never occurs to her that a woman could help her in any way: "Les femmes! pensait-elle avec mépris. Et d'ailleurs, est-ce qu'une femme peut aider une autre femme?" (271). Simone de Beauvoir points out, too, that "Le souci de plaire est souvent néfaste aux amitiés féminines" (I, 429). She adds that

[il] est rare que la complicité féminine s'élève jusqu'à une véritable amitié; les femmes se sentent plus spontanément solidaires que les hommes, mais du sein de cette solidarité ce n'est pas chacune vers l'autre qu'elles se dépassent : ensemble, elles sont tournées vers le monde masculin dont elles souhaitent accaparer chacune pour soi les valeurs. (II, 229).

If other women are seen as rivals, obviously they cannot also be friends. The mother-daughter relationship also suffers from women's primary loyalty to men. Simone de Beauvoir describes this relationship in essentially negative terms: the mother is the woman who indoctrinates the daughter in her female role and out of unconscious jealousy prevents her child from enjoying more advantages and freedoms than she did (II, 190). Gabrielle Roy portrays the mother-daughter relationship in a much more favourable light; while the mother cannot help the daughter or even make real contact with her, the two women care deeply for each other and sometimes draw strength from their resemblance.¹⁸ What separates them is their equally negative experience of femaleness.