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COMING OF AGE IN CHESAPEAKE BAY: FEMALE ARCHETYPES IN CYNTHIA VOIGT'S TILLERMAN CYCLE

BY

LOUISE T. SALDANHA, B.A. (Honors)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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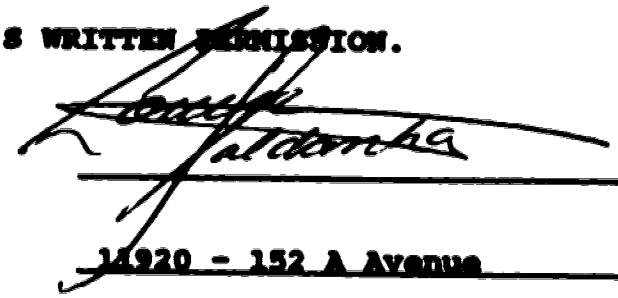

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED "COMING OF AGE IN CHESAPEAKE BAY: FEMALE ARCHETYPES IN CYNTHIA VOIGT'S TILLERMAN CYCLE" SUBMITTED BY Louise T. Saldanha, B.A. (Honors) IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers how archetypal structures provide depth to a modern coming of age story. Homecoming (1981), Dicey's Song (1982), and Seventeen Against The Dealer (1989) by Cynthia Voigt emphasize values such as nurturing and sensitivity, reflecting what some critics find representative of women's epistemology. Furthermore, a close reading reveals archetypal structures that also emphasize the continual personal renewal found in affiliation and care.

Chapter One deals with Homecoming and how the abandoned Tillerman children travel miles to their grandmother's farm. The heroine's ability to establish meaningful relationships with people she encounters enables her to complete her journey. The novel is structured partly on "Hansel and Gretel" and "Molly Whuppie" which emphasize female heroism. Dicey Tillerman's initial abandonment suggests the fragmentation of deeper archetypal relationships. Her journey towards her grandmother represents an attempt to restore these relationships.

Chapter Two follows Dicey's progressive understanding, in Dicey's Song, of her place in her world. Forced to become an adult, Dicey must learn to be a child and her understanding is still informed by the archetypal relationships of Demeter and Persephone and the tripartite goddess.

The third chapter is about Seventeen Against The Dealer and deals with Dicey's self-absorption. Dicey's withdrawal can be read as Sleeping Beauty's deep sleep or as Persephone's descent into the

underworld. Dicey's reemergence into a life of relationship, however, is effected by herself.

In both surface text and subtext, Dicey's story lies within the paradigm of development set out by critics who wish to assert a distinct female reality.

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Introduction

> I have never had the impulse to type
> the end at the conclusion of a story.[1]

Cynthia Voigt's comments in her 1983 Newbery Acceptance speech accurately describe her actual practice in the seven novels that together make up the Tillerman Saga: each of the endings of the first six books anticipates new beginnings. Individual narratives and family stories spill over from one novel to the next, linking the books together in a network that deals principally with the stages of Dicey Tillerman's maturation. The focus of this thesis is on the three novels in which Dicey figures as the central character: Homecoming (1981), Dicey's Song (1982), and Seventeen Against The Dealer (1989). Homecoming and Dicey's Song cover Dicey's development, whereas, Seventeen Against The Dealer records Dicey's struggle for fulfillment and her final understanding of the responsibility she has to both herself and to others. The reader who moves chronologically with Dicey Tillerman through each text is also involved in a process of discovery, one that is analogous to the heroine's herself.

Dicey's movement from childhood to adolescence and, finally, to adulthood is enriched and given greater emotional significance, through Voigt's skillful use of archetypes. All literature, argues Northrop Frye in his essay "Myth, Fiction, and Displacement," is based on mythic structure and archetypes. He describes fiction as displaced mythology, a "reconstructed mythology, with its structural principles derived from those of myth" (38). T. S. Eliot also emphasizes the structural importance of myth by claiming

that myth offers writers a way "of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance" (177) to their fiction.

Similarly, Joseph Campbell, in The Hero With a Thousand Faces (1949), emphasizes the fundamental relationship between myth and literature. Campbell argues that all story is based on mythic structures and archetypes that have "inspired, throughout the annals of human culture, the basic images of ritual, mythology, and vision" (18). Campbell organizes "the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero" into a formulaic pattern of "separation-initiation-return" (30). This "standard path" is a version of one of the most pervasive archetypal motifs in literature: the quest for self.

Yet Campbell's paradigm is concerned largely with male patterns of development. Such an archetypal heroic quest proves problematic for feminist writers who wish to represent a uniquely female development. Carol Christ, in Diving Deep and Surfacing (1980), argues that women need stories which address female development. In order to "actively shape their experience of self and world" (4). Christ calls for women to write their own mythological adventure of the heroine, one that is appropriate for female initiation stories, and she claims that paradigms of the female heroine must come from female myth and vision.

Feminist scholar Barbara Walker, literary critic Annis Pratt, and psychologist Carol Gilligan, all look back to ancient cultures in order to recover female archetypes which accurately portray woman's experience. They recover the figures of Isis, Demeter and

Persephone, and the ancient pre-Christian figure of the trinitarian Goddess, who was at once maid, mother, and crone as these are potent archetypes reflecting authentic female experience.

One important element of such archetypes is their affirmation of the emotional sustenance to be derived from a network of close family ties and in this way they give final emphasis to unique patterns of female development. In The Crone (1985) Barbara Walker describes the pre-Christian cyclical archetype of the goddess whose "three major aspects have been designated as Virgin, Mother, and Crone; or, alternatively, Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer" (21). This female trinity was "a closed loop" in which the Crone "often merged with the Virgin" (Walker 23). The function of this goddess, Walker claims, was to manifest true "cosmic balance" (26). Walker goes on to describe this goddess as one who "tirelessly created and destroyed, destroyed and created" (26). Love and regeneration perpetually renew life: " . . . the religions of the Goddess viewed existence as becoming, not being. They saw life as perpetual transition" (33).

One representation of the trinitarian goddess is found in the myth of Persephone and Demeter. Annis Pratt, in Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction (1981), develops the potential of the Persephone myth as a literal archetype of regeneration:

> A novel that is structured according to the Demeter/Kore archetype . . . comprises a story of the rejuvenation of the mother in the personality of the daughter and of the daughter in the personality of the mother. (172)

The reunion of Demeter and Persephone contains within it the alternating forms of the tripartite goddess who

> was virgin, maternal figure, and old woman at one and the same time. The third figure in the triad . . . represents the wise, older mother's knowledge of the best moment to fledge or let go of her children, a moment that, if precipitous or delayed, can lead the maternal element to become destructive. (172)

Similarly, Gilligan, in A Different Voice (1982), regards the Persephone myth as one that involves an overall commitment to human relationship in the life cycle (23). She writes:

> The elusive mystery of women's development lies in its recognition of the continuing importance of attachment in the human life cycle. Woman's place in man's life cycle is to protect this recognition while the developmental litany intones the celebration of separation, autonomy, individuation, and natural rights. The myth of Persephone speaks directly to the distortion in this view by reminding us that narcissm leads to death, that the fertility of the earth is in some mysterious way tied to the continuation of the mother-daughter relationship, and that the life-cycle itself arises from an alternation between the world of women and that of men. (23)

The Persephone myth also involves a withdrawal represented by Persephone's descent into the underworld. In folktale, this withdrawal is symbolized by Sleeping Beauty's deep sleep; in myth,

this withdrawal comes with the hero's journey underground; and in psychology, this withdrawal is what Pratt, citing Carl Jung, terms the "plunging into the unconscious" (Pratt 141). In The Uses of Enchantment (1975), Bruno Bettleheim defines the deep sleep of Sleeping Beauty as a period of recuperation. According to Bettleheim, the sleep is a necessary period of lethargy during which children gather "strength through solitude" (226). Although Bettleheim reads this sleep as "a time of quiet growth and preparation from which the person will awaken mature" (232), he does not explain what occurs during this sleep to mature the individual. Campbell, Pratt, and Jung venture a bit further. All three deal with this part of the heroic quest as, to use Jung's terms, a "rebirth journey" in which "one must come to terms...with one's 'shadow', the self-destructive potential manifest in their personal realm as social rebellion, which in the unconscious, accretes the power of the sexual opposite" (Pratt 14).

Whereas Pratt, Walker, and Gilligan have made explicit the archetypal feminine and its significance, Voigt's works can be seen as unique fictional embodiments of, not only these mythic structures but, also of folkloric patterns, figures, and elements which also assert a unique female heroism, one that is rooted in sensitivity and responsibility as found in "Hansel and Gretel" and "Molly Whuppie." It is through Dicey's physical and spiritual journeys that Voigt transforms the archetypal heroic quest for self to a specifically female rendering of Dicey's story. With her emphasis on the importance of community and kinship in the young

heroine's quest, Voigt recalls the triple-faced goddess, the Persephone myth, and the resourceful heroism of Isis, Gretel, and Molly Whuppie. All these figures demonstrate the "sensitivity to the needs of others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care" that Gilligan names as a primary source of "woman's moral strength" (16). Dicey does not achieve self-definition in isolation, but through her discovery of her place within a network of family, friends, and community. It is this self-determination through connection rather than through individuation that Gilligan advances as female. Woman "locates herself in relation to the world, describing herself through actions that bring her into connection with others" (35). And it is Voigt's unwavering insistence on the importance of human attachment that establishes Dicey's as a female quest for self. The journey that Dicey undergoes is shaped, in part, by the relationships between "virgin, maternal figure, and old woman" (Pratt 172). The archetypal image, replete with nurturing and personal relationships, promising rejuvenation and renewal, plays an important role in marking Dicey's growing awareness of the responsibility she owes to herself and to others.

The three aspects of the archetypal goddess are represented in Homecoming, the first novel in the Tillerman saga, by Dicey, her mother, Liza, and her grandmother, Abigail. The three Tillerman women embody Walker's description of the archetypal trinity as a "closed loop of alternating forms like the phases of the moon where the Virgin became the Mother became the Crone" (Walker 23) Voigt

achieves this effect by positioning each of the three Tillerman women in all three faces of the goddess at various times through the novel.

Liza fails as a nurturing, maternal influence and figures more strongly as a lost daughter. Conversely, it is Dicey, the literal maiden, who functions as a maternal figure in much of the novel. The final face of the tripartite goddess, the Crone, is represented by Abigail. As wise old woman, Abigail embodies what Walker indicates as a prepatriarchal conception of elder women, one which held crones as "founts of wisdom, law, healing skills, and moral leadership'" (31). At the end of the novel, Gram assumes responsibility for the Tillerman children, providing them with a home and with food. She offers a refuge that eventually heals children starving for love and nurturing. As mentor in both Dicey's Song and Seventeen Against The Dealer, she will initiate Dicey into womanhood, guiding the heroine's attempts to situate herself in a network of family and friends. As much as Gram offers new life for Dicey, so, too, does Dicey heal Gram.

The primary concern of Homecoming lies with the physical journey that Dicey and her siblings make in their search for home. The structure of their journey parallels elements of the folktale journeys found in both "Hansel and Gretel" and "Molly Whuppie." In Homecoming it is Dicey who manoeuvres her little family though an often threatening world, always keeping them together in a tight network that sustains them throughout their journey to Gram's house. As in "Hansel and Gretel" and "Molly Whuppie," the

successful completion of the quest in Homecoming depends on the resourcefulness and courage of the heroine as well as on the heroine's ability to define herself through repeated actions of love and care for others. In Homecoming the image of networking is introduced as central. Voigt uses these archetypal themes of nurturing and connection to write a modern tale of a young heroine's discovery of her place in her family and a young woman's initiation into a network that will both embrace and sustain her.

While Homecoming traces the physical journey undertaken by Dicey, Dicey's Song traces the subsequent inner, psychic journey of the heroine. Having found a literal home Dicey must now make it her home. She must come to terms with the other two elements of the archetypal female trinity: her mother and her grandmother. She struggles, first, with the meaning of her mother's disappearance, and, then, with her mother's death. She struggles with a way to communicate with her reticent grandmother. The three phases of womanhood--virgin, mother, crone--are reconciled in the burial scene at the end of the novel. Buried under the paper mulberry tree, Liza's ashes literally provide new life for the tree and symbolically provide new life for her daughter and her mother. The ordeal of Liza's death brings Dicey and Abigail closer together. In their mutual loss, the two share a common bond that provides them with the courage to face Liza's death and, their new life together, a life promising the fulfillment found in reaching out and accepting love. Liza's death establishes what Walker refers to as "the cyclic system of perpetual becoming, whereby

every temporary living form in the universe blends eventually into every other form, nothing is unrelated, and there can be no hierarchy of better or worse" (14). Although Dicey's Song concludes with Liza's burial, the end of the novel concentrates on restoration and healing. Even death does not disrupt the network of interrelationships but, as part of the natural cycle of life, becomes yet another opportunity to strengthen human attachment and affiliation.

In Dicey's Song, Voigt further develops the theme of connection through images of a heroine learning when to reach out, when to hold on, and when to let go. Dicey has to learn that, while self-reliance enabled her to bring her family safely to Gram, she cannot continue to live in isolation. Through Gram's example, Dicey is given a chance to see that a life of isolation only results in alienation and loneliness. As Dicey moves from isolation to connection, her network expands outwards from her siblings to encompass her grandmother and, finally, her friends at school.

In essence, Dicey withdraws from her family and friends after Dicey's Song as she enters into the next phase of her emotional development. She can only re-emerge near the end of Seventeen Against The Dealer when, like the folktale heroines, she "has attained inner harmony with [her]self...[and] in relations with others" (Bettelheim 235). She is briefly seen in Song from Afar (1987), where she is self-absorbed and remote, offering little moral support for her brothers as they struggle to find their

identity. The symbolic sleep of the folktale and the descent into the underworld of the myth is represented by Dicey's decision to leave home for college, which occurs sometime after Dicey's Song and before Song From Afar. In Homecoming and Dicey's Song, the heroine had learned the importance of interdependence. Now she must retreat, gather strength, and come forth ready to occupy a more active role in which she can place herself "in an expanding network of connection" (Gilligan 39).

Dicey leaves home in order to be able to return home in a way that corresponds to the folkloric circular journey, Bettleheim's sleep-journey, and Campbell's journey underground. A minimal presence in the four novels that follow Dicey's Song, in the seventh and last book of the Tillerman saga, Seventeen Against The Dealer, Dicey completes her female quest for fulfillment. For much of the book Dicey appears lethargic and withdrawn, and her insensitive behaviour almost causes her to lose the two people who are most important to her. Insensitivity alienates her from Jeff and Gram; only when in danger of losing both forever does she "wake up." The necessity of such active participation in one's maturity is underlined by Bettleheim, who writes: "The world becomes alive only to the person who herself awakens to it" (234). But this willingness to nurture meaningful connections with others often leads to rejection and pain as much as acceptance and vitality. Dicey learns this lesson in her friendship with Cisco, a drifter who eventually betrays Dicey's trust. What the book shows as important, however, is that Dicey has the courage to take risks.

By the end of the Tillerman saga, Dicey is finally able to assume a responsibility to herself that places her within a new feminine maturity.

A similar approach to the first novel has been taken by James T. Henke in this article "Dicey, Odysseus, and Hansel and Gretel: The Lost Children in Voigt's Homecoming." As the title suggests, Henke considers Voigt's work as displaced mythology and so anticipates the same approach of this thesis. But, if one returns to Frye's description of displaced mythology as providing a context for works of literature that "gives them an immense reverberating significance" (37), Henke's analysis is reductive rather than "reverberating." Henke forces correlations between the realistic episodes in Voigt's fiction and episodes in myth and folktale, takes details out of context, and then manipulates them to fit his framework. He leaves no room for "reverberating significance" in his struggle to allegorize Homecoming. According to Henke, the novel is really Homer's Odyssey with Dicey as Odysseus, the children her crew, and Abigail as Penelope. The alternative reading of Homecoming that Henke offers also traces the folktale subtext. Like Hansel and Gretel, who are deserted by impoverished parents, the Tillermans are abandoned by a mother who cannot provide for them. Henke draws parallels between Hansel's trail of flints and the coins the Tillermans find along the road, between the witch and Mr. Rudyard, a farmer who tries to trap the children, and between the witch and Gram, who at one point tells Dicey, " 'I sometimes think people might be good to eat . . . especially babies

. . . or children '" (Voigt 251).

Henke's approach obviously consists of arbitrary choices from Voigt's text and is thus an incomplete consideration of her fiction. He fails to address two central elements of the "Hansel and Gretel" folktale in his analysis. He ignores in fact that the folktale involves a circular journey in which the two main characters, having developed the necessary skills and inner resources, return to their original home and are accepted and are reintegrated. Homecoming contains a linear journey; Dicey's journey is a going forward rather than a returning.

Henke, also disregards the fact that it is the heroine, Gretel, who effects the rescue of her brother. Like Gretel, Dicey leads her family to eventual safety. As an essential substructure in Voigt's novel, "Hansel and Gretel," in presenting a story of the heroic female, presents Homecoming and, by extension, Dicey's emotional maturation as a particularly female experience.

This analysis will attempt to offer a more complete understanding of the mythic and folkloric displacement of a realistic fiction. The underlying archetypal narrative which draws on explicitly female figures of strength and wisdom provides depth to Voigt's contemporary story of a young girl's quest for identity. In their insistence on the importance of relationship and interconnectedness in self-realization, both subtext and surface text speak to a specifically female experience of the world; they give power to Dicey's story as a modern myth of the female self.

Notes

[1]Cynthia Voigt, "Newbery Medal Acceptance," American Library Association, Los Angeles, August 1983.

CHAPTER ONE

Homecoming marks the first step of Dicey Tillerman's journey to maturation. In this novel, she embarks on a journey in which she overcomes various obstacles, both inside and outside of herself, in order to reach a new, fulfilling home. In the background of Dicey's journey is the archetypal quest for identity that is found in mythology and folktale. As a heroine she journeys through a world of unfamiliar forces in which she meets helpers and faces tests. Dicey's journey is shaped through her struggle to locate herself within a network of relationships, as she comes to an understanding of her place in the world when she discovers the responsibility that she has both to herself and to others.

The structure of the novel organizes the emotional journey of the heroine. The division of the novel into two sections encourages the reader to compare the heroine at parallel stages of her journey in each part. At the end of the first half of their journey, for example, the children stay in Bridgeport, a name which itself suggests a bridging of the two halves of Dicey's journey. Just as the first part of the journey begins from a rented shack in Provincetown, so, too, the second part begins from an inadequate home in Bridgeport. The Tillermans, however, do not choose to leave the first home, whereas they assume an active role and choose to leave the second in the hope of finding a better home at their grandmother's house in Crisfield.

From it's title, Homecoming, onward, the novel insists on the importance of home and what it means, to children, to know that

they have come home. During the course of the novel, Dicey's understanding of home changes so that, by the time the children reach Crisfield and their grandmother, Dicey feels sure that she has finally arrived home. Her brother, James, defines the Tillerman quest thus: " 'We're runaways to, not just runaways '" (48).

During the course of the novel, Dicey Tillerman and her siblings indeed do run away to various types of homes. Even before they are abandoned by their mother, the Tillerman children have already left behind their home in Provincetown, a "small" and rented "shack" (24). Dicey herself recalls that this first home was not a place of stability and security. In Provincetown "she felt restless; so even Provincetown, even their own remembered kitchen wasn't home" (85). From the rented shack in Provincetown, the children travel to the campground of Rockland Park. But as a campground, the park can, at best, offer the Tillermans only a temporary shelter. When the children do attempt to over-extend their stay, they almost get caught in a life of cheating and fear. And so they run to New Haven, where they spend the night in a college dormitory, a more permanent home than a campground, but still a temporary one. The Tillermans leave New Haven for Aunt Cilla's house in Bridgeport and for what Dicey hopes will be the end of their journey. Despite the fact that Cilla's house looks like a home with its kitchen, living room, and bedrooms, it only threatens to entrap Dicey and her siblings and so reveals itself as more a prison. Dicey's experiences at Bridgeport show her that

freedom is necessary, if a place is to be a home. With their new-found knowledge of a grandmother in Crisfield, the children run away from Bridgeport. Along the way to Crisfield the Tillermans come to a farm at which the farmer tries to enslave them; here they find a place where they are wanted, but for the wrong reasons. The last major stop the children make on their journey, with the travelling circus, is the final version of home that the family experiences before arriving in Crisfield. At the circus, the children are given a chance to rest and renew themselves before completing their journey. But the circus is a moveable home and, therefore, cannot provide the stability the children require. Dicey's progression through all these homes allows her to recognize her grandmother's farm as the real home the Tillermans need. Her experiences throughout the journey prepare her to know that she and her family belong at her grandmother's farm. (293).

This basic plot outline resembles the plot of a folktale. Four children are abandoned by a parent who can no longer provide for them. Essentially orphans, they set out on a long, often dangerous, journey in which they face numerous tests. Along the way, the children meet both helper figures,who guide them on their quest, and people who threaten the successful completion of the journey. Relying on her wits, courage, and love, the heroine leads her siblings to safety, and the novel ends with a sense of a happy ending.

The three folktales that are mentioned in the novel--"Hansel and Gretel" (6), "The Snow Queen" (232), and "The Wolf and the

Seven Kids" (309)--are all tales of female protagonists who triumph over evil and who, in rescuing their "families," symbolically give them new life.

This emphasis forms a substructure of female heroism which exists in tension with the songs the children sing through out their journey. "Pretty Peggy-O," a song the Tillermans sing frequently, tells of a young woman who ran away with a captain and who (in another version that the children learn) is tricked by this false lover and murdered. "There Was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly" is also about the unnatural death of a female. "The Water is Wide, I Cannot Get Over", one of Momma's favourites, also concerns death. Thus Dicey's quest mediates between a background of folktales about female strength and courage and a foreground of song about female death and destruction so that the reader feels more deeply the perilous nature of Dicey's quest. This tension accurately reflects Dicey's emotional states as she seeks safety for her family. Many times Dicey is tempted to see death as the end of her quest. It is the survival of her family, however, that keeps her solidly rooted in life. Through her courage, Dicey is able to lead her family home thus ensuring them a new beginning.

Although Dicey's journey is specifically linear, several elements of this plot fit Joseph Campbell's pattern of the archetypal heroic quest, which involves "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return" (34), although Dicey's journey is specifically linear. For much of Homecoming Dicey is alienated from mainstream society;

her search is for a place where she belongs. With the constant help of a map, she negotiates her way, through a symbolic labrinyth from which she emerges in Crisfield. The power she gains comes, in part, from the network of relationships that she forms during her journey. This network teaches her the importance of love and care, and gives her the emotional strength to persist in her trials to win her grandmother's acceptance and a home for herself and her family.

The power that Dicey derives from meaningful relationships reflects a specifically female awareness that feminist critics who wish to reinterpret quests undertaken by female protagonists claim as specific to female patterns of development. These critics emphasize connection over individualism when speaking of the ways in which women define themselves. As a female, Dicey Tillerman is engaged in what Carol Christ terms "women's social quest," in which "a female begins in alienation from the human community and seeks new modes of relationship and action in society" (8). Whereas the hero reenters society to achieve meaningful relationships at the end of his quest, the heroine struggles to maintain or create meaningful social connections throughout her journey. Like Christ, Carol Gilligan also suggests that female moral development depends on "the inclusion of [self] in an expanding network of connection" (39). In walking away from her family, Liza Tillerman leaves behind the very relationships and responsibilities that Gilligan identifies as central to women's moral strength (19). Therefore, Dicey, as a female protagonist, must move from this initial

experience of rejection, and the isolation of self which such an experience involves towards forming meaningful human connections. Upon realizing that her mother has disappeared, Dicey reviews her alternatives. She chooses to walk to Bridgeport, where her great-aunt, a woman she has never met, lives because "Aunt Cilla was family, the only family Dicey knew about" (9). This choice introduces Dicey's quest as one that is centred upon human attachment and relationship. As Dicey journeys toward Crisfield and her grandmother, she encounters characters and places that reveal the "continuing importance of attachment in the human life-cycle" (Gilligan 23). Near the end of Homecoming, Voigt uses the image of the coiled rope to depict the network of relationships that is fundamental to Dicey's quest: "All of their goodbyes lay like coiled ropes on the ground, connected and unconnected, curling silently, finished things" (236). According to Gilligan's argument about the nature of female experience, these interpersonal relationships enable Dicey to "act responsively toward self and others and thus to sustain connection" (149) in a way that is essential to female identity (164). Homecoming adheres to these patterns of female development and can thus be regarded as a specifically female bildungsroman.

The novel opens as Lisa abandons her children in the parking lot of a shopping mall. Both surface text and subtext reverberate with the emotional rupture caused by this act. Whereas the archetypal mother-daughter relationship represented by Demeter and Persephone is, according to Pratt, Walker and Gilligan, the

prototype of interconnectedness and sustaining relationship that is the centre of women's experience, the relationship between Tillerman mother and daughter is fractured. In fact, the entire archetypal tripartite goddess of maiden, mother, and crone is fragmented. Dicey's mother, herself estranged from her own mother, abdicates her responsibility. It is her daughter, the maiden, who must, although only thirteen years old, fulfill the maternal role, if her siblings are to survive. Dicey feels this role as "a great weight . . . on her shoulders" (12).

The ultimate healing of the fragmented archetypal relationship will come with the maiden's reconciliation with the crone. Barbara Walker celebrates the crone as the "vital link" in the archetypal female trinity; the wise old woman is "everything necessary to life: warmth, nourishment, protection . . . training in the skills of survival" (10). Walker's premise implies that the inclusion of the crone in any sort of personal development is necessary for female survival. In Homecoming, it is the third aspect of the goddess that occupies most completely and most satisfyingly the space left by the inadequate mother who refuses a nurturing home for her family.

Ironically, it is the mother who figures more as a child. Dicey recalls how, when Liza had talked to her youngest child, Sammy, it had "sounded like two six-year-olds talking, not one six-year-old and his mother" (7). When Liza walks away from the car and her children, she looks like a vulnerable, pathetic child dragging her feet in a "stride made uneven by broken sandal thongs,

[her] thin elbows showing through holes in the oversized sweater, her jeans faded and baggy" (5). The pressures of being a single, unemployed parent with a young family to feed make the children's mother distant and withdrawn. The food she needs she forgets to buy, "she'd go to the store for bread and come back with a can of tuna and just put her hands over her face, sitting at the table" (7). Symbolically, as well as literally, Liza fails as a nurturer.

While the children are waiting for their mother in the parking lot of a shopping mall in Peewauket, Massachusetts, Sammy demands a story: "I want HanselnGretel. And the witch. And the candy house with peppermint sticks" (16) and James tells the story of "Hansel and Gretel," a story that presents Dicey's quest for home in terms of nurturing and freedom. It is during her journey, that Dicey learns how essential these two qualities are to the well-being of her family. Voigt emphasizes the enjoyment James takes in describing the witch's house, underlining the primacy of home in the Tillerman journey. The description of the house is the part "James liked best in Hansel and Gretel," and each time "he . . . did it a little differently from the time before" (10) so that, with each rendition, the walls of the house are built of different sweets. But both witch and house provide no sustenance and so represent the real threat to life that such an insufficiency entails. Many of the characters the children meet on their journey are measured by their ability to provide the Tillermans with food that is life-giving both literally and metaphorically. James' different versions of the witch's home foreshadow the different

versions of anti-home that the Tillermans will encounter on their journey.

In abandoning her daughter, Liza denies Dicey any connection with the past, with a personal history, leaving Dicey in a vacuum. Yet a large part of one's present self is formed through one's past. This is what gives life its sense of continuity. The importance of one's past in one's present is a theme that Voigt introduces in Homecoming and develops in the subsequent Tillerman novels. At the outset of her journey, all Dicey has is the address of her great Aunt Cilla's house and a few memories of Momma. Her alienation from her past reinforces the sense of isolation that pervades much of the first half of the novel. It is not until Dicey reaches Bridgeport that she discovers some of her family past. She meets Eunice Logan, a cousin she never knew she had, and discovers family photograph albums full of her great aunts and uncles. Her most important discovery is that she has a maternal grandmother in Crisfield. With a grandmother, Dicey now has a link to a history. Dicey's ability to connect with a past will enable her to reclaim a sense of continuity.

The first stage of Dicey's search for home takes place in a state park by the name of Rockland, where the heroine learns that the consequence of a complete renunciation of meaningful human relationship is an oppressive life of immorality and alienation. At the park, the Tillermans meet Louis and Edie, two runaways who, as it turns out, are running from connection and responsibility, and thus are unlike the children who (as noted earlier) are running

to a place to belong and grow in the context of relationship and care. As Louis is portrayed, he is a false mentor figure who teaches a philosophy based on the premise that humans are motivated by selfishness and competiveness: " ' . . . learn quick and learn good. Look out for yourself and let the rest go hang--because they're out to hang you, you can be sure of it '" (62). Louis' attitude attests to an impoverished vision of the world, which is incongruous with Gilligan's claim that intimacy is "the critical experience" (163) of female selfhood. Louis carries his attitude of self-interestedness into the relationship he has with Edie. He uses the love that she feels for him to manipulate her, slyly threatening to withdraw from the relationship if she should ever challenge his authority (55).

When Louis tells the Tillermans, who have been fishing in the marsh at the park for needed food, that they are breaking the law, Dicey herself begins to assume that "[t]he whole world was arranged against kids" (61). But Dicey's quest depends upon her ability to trust an adult. In order to achieve what Gilligan classifies as female maturity, she must develop within the context of interdependence.

The inability of the two runaways to offer or to teach the children anything that they will find help them successfully complete their quest is further emphasized by the fact that Louis and Edie mistake Dicey for a boy. In failing to recognize Dicey's true self, her true nature, they do not rightly see the nature of her quest.

Furthermore, the nurturing Louis and Edie offer is both physically and morally inadequate. Although Edie does give the children a couple of oranges at one point, the two runaways, despite their wallet full of money, never offer to buy the family food. Instead, they encourage the Tillermans to steal food. As the days go by, Dicey feels increasingly uncomfortable around Louis and Edie until she eventually wants "to avoid contact with them" (66) altogether. Dicey realizes that the "danger" (53) at the park lies with more than the police who constantly patrol the park, and she forces her family to move on to a more secure and stable place of rest. It is not surprising that Dicey forgets her map at this park, where she and her family almost lose their moral way.

Dicey returns to the path that will lead her to the home that she and her family need. She manages to do this when the family crosses the Connecticut River and spends the night in a graveyard. It is here that Dicey, for the first time since her journey began, takes the time to scrutinize the meaning of her quest for home. A gravestone that reads, "Home is the hunter, home from the hill, and the sailor home from the sea," makes Dicey think about the object of her search. She wonders if to be home means inevitable death. Although she realizes that "living people had homes" (85), at this point she imagines that a place of rest and refuge will only be found in the grave. But her place is with the living and, to return to Gilligan's argument, as a heroine Dicey must attain selfhood from within, rather than from outside, a social framework

The Tillermans' experience in New Haven teaches Dicey about

the depths of ties that bind. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word "haven" as "harbour; refuge," something not far removed from a home, and this is exactly what the children find in this city. The adults whom the Tillermans meet here are very different from the threatening and selfish people Dicey had envisioned while in Rockland Park. In New Haven, she meets Windy, who, unlike Louis and Edie, recognizes her as a girl. On a symbolic level, the fact that Windy sees Dicey rightly allows him to offer her the kind of help she needs: " 'Why don't you come with me and get some food and camp out in my room tonight . . . I've got a roommate so you don't have to worry about being alone with me. '" (91). He offers her family a life-giving haven. Dicey accepts his help. By trusting Windy, Dicey includes him in her "network of connection" (Gilligan 39).

Windy and Stewart,his roommate, both college students, teach Dicey an important lesson about the strength of relationship and connection. At New Haven, it is the children and not the adults who betray the trust. James steals money from Stewart. Much to Dicey's surprise, however, when the theft is discovered, the college boys do not desert the family. Instead, Stewart emphasizes the importance of human interrelationship in defining oneself. His attitude implies a repudiation of Louis' philosophy of self-interest and isolation in favour of a more humanitarian morality that involves integrity to self and the implicit integrity to others that this entails: " 'I plan to be a man when I get through. Not only a man, I plan to be a good man '" (102). His ability to

advocate a philosophy helpful to the Tillerman's quest for home, a goal which is contingent upon relationship and connection, reveals Stewart, in contrast to Louis, as a true helper figure. Significantly, Stewart buys Dicey a new map (106) to guide her as she continues on her way. Unlike Louis and Edie, Stewart and Windy represent vital links in a network that will be one of Dicey's sources of strength as she searches for home. And it is Stewart who drives Dicey to Bridgeport and to what she believes to be the end of her journey.

The connection that children have to Stewart and Windy is the first truly nurturing relationship that they experience on their journey. But, for all it significance, the connection is a fragile one. Stewart simply leaves the children on Cilla's street and heads back to New Haven. The feeling of desertion that his departure causes is emphasized by the fact that he takes the map back with him. He leaves Dicey to guide herself. After he is gone, Dicey realizes that "[s]he didn't even know [Windy and Stewart's] last names. Or phone number. Or address. Stewart hadn't even stayed to find out if the Tillermans would be all right. The Tillermans had just drifted through his life, touch in, touch out, and gone without a thought" (117). Symbolically, Dicey's relationship with Windy and Stewart, as the first positive connection that Dicey has had outside the family, reflects the first stage of her progressive emotional maturation that occurs within the context of interrelationship. Their relationship with her is a necessarily tenuous one accurately reflecting Dicey's own

insecurity as she experiences, for the first time, the emotional support to be found as a result of having the courage to reach out and to form a meaningful connection with others.

At Bridgeport, Dicey discovers that Aunt Cilla's house is not the home for which she has been searching. Cilla is dead; her house is occupied by her daughter, Eunice Logan, who allows the children to stay, not out of any sense of familial love, but out of an overdeveloped sense of duty. She reluctantly relinquishes her dream of becoming a nun so that she can look after the children: " 'That is my duty. You will be my family now.' Her soft voice reverberated with the pleasure of resolution and sacrifice" (147). So suffocating is Eunice's sense of obligation and sacrifice that, while listening to her cousin drone on about her duty toward the Tillermans, Dicey stifles an urge to "get up and run"(147). Eunice's hospitality is not without its price, as Dicey later realizes: "The price was always remembering to be grateful" (168).

The claustrophobic nature of Eunice's hospitality is emphasized by her house, a place of entrapment and danger. Inside there is no room for growth. The house is "closed and empty" (110), "dark and stuffy" (112), "narrow" (112), and "cramped" (118). And even outside, the children have to be content with a "tiny yard" (126).

Eunice is unable to provide the proper nurturing for which the children are starving. When the children arrive on her doorstep, she cries in welcome, "I don't know what I have for children to drink. I don't keep much food in the house" (113 - 114). She

feeds them a steady supply of TV dinners. Eunice has little food in her fridge and little nourishment, whether real or symbolic, for the Tillermans. As a nurturer figure she proves ineffectual.

It is at Eunice's house that Dicey faces her biggest test, for the Tillermans will be allowed to stay in Bridgeport only if they are separated. Each member of the family begins to have increasingly "separate afternoon[s]," and Dicey wonders, "if she [is] losing touch with her family" (136). It is inevitable that the Tillermans leave, for to stay in Bridgeport would only mean the end of the family that Dicey has struggled to keep together. Using the money she has earned doing various odd jobs, she leads her family from the threatening danger.

On the bus, with a new destination in front of her, Dicey seriously questions her search for home. So affected is she by her experience in Bridgeport, in which the "home" she found threatened to destroy her family, that she now is tempted to relinquish her quest entirely:

> There could be no home for the Tillermans. Home-free--Dicey would settle for a place to stay. Stay free . . . Dicey had lowered her sights. She no longer hoped for a home. Now she wanted only a place where the Tillermans could be themselves and do what was good for them. (168)

Dicey has to learn that home and freedom are not mutually exclusive: a true home is a place of freedom to realise oneself with the support and encouragement of a network of family and friends.

In Annapolis, they meet two boys who offer to take them across the bay so that they can continue their journey. The boys, Jerry and Tom, recall the two young people the Tillermans had met in Rockland Park. Like Louis and Edie, these two have a relationship that is based on manipulation. When Jerry hesitates about taking the boat across the bay without his parents' permission, Tom taunts his friend: " 'I don"t have to be home by dark. I don't have the mother who has to know where I am every minute of the day" (191). Faced with the possibility of being called "sissy," Jerry quickly agrees to help the Tillermans. However, because the boys are still connected to social values, they, unlike the runaways, do provide some real assistance to the children by taking them across the bay. Watching the water, Dicey again wonders whether a real home can only be found in death (199). But she repudiates this view because she remembers her family and decides, "As long as I'm near the water, that'll be enough . . . There was James and Maybeth and Sammy, for one thing" (200). This rejection of death adheres to Gilligan's belief that female development involves the "recognition of the continuing importance of attachment in the human life-cycle" (23).

Another difference between Louis and Jerry is made clear by the fact that Jerry recognizes that Dicey is a girl; his realization of the heroine as a sexual being, signal that Dicey is approaching adulthood on both an emotional and physical level. Dicey blushes when she realizes that he regrets that she is not old enough "to be [his] girlfriend" (202). At the brink of

adolescence, Dicey's sexuality is just beginning to awaken. In this way, Jerry qualifies as a helper figure who imparts a special wisdom to the heroine, and thus becomes an important connection in Dicey's network.

The Tillermans' next stop, a farm where they decide to earn money by picking tomatoes for the owner, Mr. Rudyard, holds a similiar but greater danger as Eunice's house had for the family. But Dicey is no longer as naive as she was in the first part of her journey. Because of her experience at Bridgeport, she immediately perceives Rudyard's property as place of entrapment, a "three-sided cage" (216). As it turns out, the farmer does intend to ensnare the Tillermans in slave labour. However, conscious of the danger at the farm, Dicey is not caught off-guard as she was in Bridgeport. Rudyard also withholds food from the children, whom he is prepared to work until they collapse from hunger. He reluctantly brings them lunch only at his wife's insistence, food which ironically saves the children's lives. They throw their lunch at Rudyard's dog to distract him as they run away (Henke 47-48).

The children are rescued by Will and Claire, owners of a travelling circus, who offer them food and refuge. The days spent with the circus are a time of final [illegible] before meeting the grandmother. Here, "Dicey had nothing to worry about" (235), and she uses the time to reflect on what she has learned along the way. Having begun essentially alone and abandoned, she now prepares for the end of her journey with an identity that fits Gilligan's

description of female identity as one "defined in a context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care" (160).

Will and Claire, the last helper figures Dicey meets on her quest, teach Dicey about the value of interdependence. Furthermore, they recognize Dicey as a girl. This recognition, coming as it does after Windy's and Jerry's recognitions of the heroine and the subsequent meaningful roles they play in Dicey's quest, implies that, since Will and Claire are able to see the heroine rightly, they, too, can function as true helper figures. Will emphasizes relationships as a source of strength and nurturance. He makes his connection to the Tillermans concrete by calling the children " 'friends '" (238), and he binds himself to them with a promise that he will always be there to help them. He thus goes further than Stewart in sustaining his relationship to the children. He tells Dicey, " 'You're a little bit of my life now. You can't get away, and I can't get rid of you . . . '" (238). With Will, Dicey learns the important difference between the bondage that threatened her in Bridgeport and at Rudyard's farm and the ties of love and care that bind her to people like Windy, Stewart, Will, and Claire.

As a friend, Will drives Dicey to her destination but does not desert her as Stewart did. In fact, some weeks later, when they do not hear from the children, Will and Claire go to Abigail's house. They make it a point to ask Abigail about herself and do not leave until they are satisfied that the children will be safe. Will's goodbye hug, the first physical contact that Dicey has had outside

of her family since the novel's opening, confirms the depth and strength of the connection. The contrast between the regret that Dicey felt upon Stewart's departure and the sheer misery that she feels when Will and Claire leave testifies to the impact that the latter have had on her.

Dicey's arrival at their grandmother's farm completes the underlying archetypal plot introduced at the beginning of Homecoming. Abigail, whose farmhouse is surrounded by "broad fields burgeon[ing] with corn" (243) and whose bare feet are usually "caked with earthly dirt" (246), fits Walker's description of the crone as a figure associated with "fertility....and seasonal ceremonies" (53). Abigail is also reminiscent of the mythic figure of Demeter, goddess of the harvest and seasons, who lost a daughter to Hades, for Abigail, too, has lost Liza to the shady figure of Frank Verricker, a character whom the reader learns more about in The Runner and Song From Afar. The restorative potential of the grandmother's presence in Dicey's life is underlined at the level of the archetype, at which the crone, according to Walker, is responsible for the family. The crone is the "sole origin of the ironclad bonds of the family and clan that united human groups" (43).

As part of the archetypal female trinity, Abigail is able to identify the heroine in a way that is more precise than the previous recognitions of her as a girl, or as a potential girlfriend, or as a friend. She knows Dicey as part of her family. Yet this recognition becomes an accusation: " 'I know who you are.

You hear me? I know who you are, and you can't stay here '" (249).

The implications of the crone's refusal of the maiden are made vividly clear by Walker, who warns that "to be rejected by [the crone] is to die" (10). Voigt emphasizes the desperate need the children have to be accepted by their grandmother. James comments on the suitability of the house for the children. Unlike Eunice's house, Abigail's house is "big . . . big enough for all us" (256). The children's hunger for the love and care they are sure they can find with their grandmother is evident by the way James looks at "his grandmother, as if he was hungry . . . but for something not food, hungry in a way that food could never fill" (311). As the name Tillerman suggests, Abigail is tiller of the soil, cultivator of new life. One of the first things she does when she meets Dicey is to feed her lunch. Unlike Eunice, she feeds the children hearty meals got from her garden and the nearby bay. When Maybeth pulls a tendon, she notices the injury and wraps a bandage around Maybeth's arm and so fulfills the crone's role as "caretaker of the sick" (Walker 20).

Abigail fulfills a further need, teaching Dicey things about the past that are central to her sense of self. The idea of the network between the past and present that was introduced at Eunice's house is picked up again at Crisfield. Aided by her grandmother, Dicey discovers still more about her past. Abigail's house itself is full of "many secrets" (257) waiting to be disclosed. Dicey discovers that Sammy has been named after Momma's dead brother, and about her tyrannical grandfather, now dead, and

about her own father who might " 'cheat at cards if luck wasn't running his way '" (265).

What is more important, Dicey learns about her mother. She discovers that it is partly from Liza that she derives her strength and integrity. Liza does not marry Frank because she had promised that she would never marry, and as Abigail tells Dicey, "We keep our promises, we Tillermans. We keep them hard" (296). The reader might here remember the earlier promise of friendship that Dicey, who never makes promises she cannot keep (85), made to Will. Promises are important to Dicey Tillerman, too. Having established a connection with her past, she will now be better able to discover her place in society.

Abigail, however, fails to see that she needs Dicey as much as Dicey needs her. Yet reciprocity is central to the figure of the tripartite goddess who was "three individuals who were still somehow one, embodying the same spirit" (Walker 22). When Abigail first appears in the novel, she is far from complete. She lives in a "ghost house" (257), and, while the children sing together upstairs in the farmhouse, she sits "alone downstairs at the empty kitchen table" (266). So long has it been since she has experienced joy, that when the children finally make her laugh, the sound is "rusty" and "thin" (273). It is clear that she needs to be restored and healed, in the same way the children do.

Little by little, Dicey works her way into Abigail's life; as the heroine settles into the farmhouse, she brings light not only into the house but into the old woman's life as well. She opens

the windows in the "silent, vacant, neglected" (244) house and "[f]resh air filtered around the room and light came in . . ." (257). Thus, in keeping with the archetype of the tripartite goddess, the relationship is a mutually restorative one.

The link between Dicey and her grandmother corresponds, on the archetypal level, with the cyclic nature of Walker's tripartite goddess, in which the "Crone . . . often merged with the Virgin" (23). Maybeth notices the similarity in the way the two express anger (268), and Dicey herself realizes that she turns up her chin the same way that her grandmother does (308). The primary link between the two rests in the lesson that both have to learn about taking risks and reaching out. Abigail finally reveals to Dicey why she does not want the children in her life. She fears that she will fail a second family. This, she tries to explain to Dicey:. " 'All of my children. . . I failed them. I let go . . . I'm responsible. I won't have that responsibility again. Not to fail again" (297). The ties that have been established during the children's short sojourn at the farm, however, are ties that bind. Unable to break the connections, Abigail reluctantly allows the children to stay. Both granddaughter and grandmother reveal the "[s]ensitivity to the needs of others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care" (16) that Gilligan defines as women's moral strength. When Abigail names herself " 'Gram, '" (310) she is accepting not only the children, but also her role in their lives as well.

The closing lines of the novel speak not only of going home,

but also of teaching and learning. Gram asks Dicey

> "Do you know how to sail?"
>
> "No. But I could learn. Could you teach me?"
>
> "Yes", Gram said . . .
>
> "Ready to go home?" Gram asked Dicey...
>
> "Ready," she said. (312)

The final impression of "home" that the reader has in Homecoming is not a fixed, static concept, but a flexible one, with room for growth and development. Dicey has found a home in which freedom is possible. By the end of the novel, she knows that she is "ready" to go home with her grandmother.

Dicey's journey home is not made in isolation, but is dependent on her relationship with the people she encounters on her journey. Read in this light and with an awareness of the subtexts that give an added dimension to the story, the journey fits into the paradigm of female growth set out by critics like Gilligan, Walker, and Christ. The strengthening home that Dicey has found at the end of Homecoming is the focus of it sequel Dicey's Song and in this way the end of Homecoming is really a new beginning for her. The space she has found at the end of this first novel is the space she must work to claim as her own in Dicey's Song.

CHAPTER TWO

Homecoming deals with Dicey's physical arrival home; Dicey's Song, focuses on her emotional "homecoming." The outer journey used by Voigt to represent the first stage in Dicey's maturation in Homecoming is replaced by an inner journey that depicts Dicey's emotional growth through her relationships with other characters. Both novels follow Dicey's struggle to belong, although Voigt presents this struggle in each book in completely different ways. Homecoming ends with Dicey's struggle to belong, although Voigt presents this struggle in each book in completely different ways. Homecoming ends with Dicey's quest for home a success; she has found a place to belong, a home, at her grandmother's farm in Crisfield. But, in Dicey's Song, Dicey has to understand her unique space in the place she has found for herself and her family. She learns that a home is more than a physical structure and that it has to be made into a place of nurturing and love; only then can she gain a sense of emotional and physical belonging. Dicey's Song narrows its focus so that it is mostly concerned with what happens to Dicey in Crisfield, and it widens in scope near the end of the novel when with her grandmother she travels to Boston. Because of this tighter focus, the second book is more a delineation of character growth than an unfolding of plot.

The physical journey of the first novel is replaced in its sequel by a more subtle narrative, in which the journey is more a metaphor that structures Dicey's discovery of a sense of belonging

in the form of ever-widening circles of relationship. The first circle involves Dicey's relationship with her family. The second circle encompasses the people in the community of Crisfield with whom she must take the initiative to form new relationships. The third and widest circle is the relationship between Dicey and a larger reality as the heroine arrives at a new understanding of the human life cycle and her position within it. As all three circles are interdependent, her ability to accept her emotional and physical place in each circle allows her the strength and the wisdom to search for fulfillment in the next, wider circle. Dicey's journey of maturation in Dicey's Song can be traced through her movement from one to another of these circles.

Dicey's Song continues to emphasize love and care, responsibilities and relationships, all of which make Dicey's maturation specifically a "woman's experience of self and world" (Christ 11). While her journey in Dicey's Song still adheres to Christ's definition of "women's social quest" in which fulfillment lies in "relationship and action in society" (8), the heroine's journey in Dicey's Song is also very much a quest for the psychic integrity which Christ defines as "women's spiritual quest" and which "concerns a woman's awakening to the depths of her soul and her position in the universe" (9). The nature of Dicey's spiritual quest, however, echoes the nature of the social quest in Homecoming: the success of both inner and outer journeys is dependent on her ability to situate herself within a network of relationships. In both novels Dicey's emotional growth results in

a "self delineated through connection" (Gilligan 35) which not only Gilligan, but also such feminist critics as Pratt, Walker, and Christ have advanced as the primary source of female moral strength. Dicey's Song furthers Dicey's understanding of the strength to be gained by reaching out to others.

Dicey's inner struggle to find her place in the world is given an emotional depth by the same archetypal figures of maid, mother, and crone that formed an important subtext in Homecoming. In Dicey's Song the heroine must find her rightful position within this archetypal female trinity. The three aspects of the female archetype could be regarded as representative of the three phases of womanhood in which "the Virgin became the Mother became the Crone" (Walker 33). Having been forced to assume the role of mother at thirteen years of age in Homecoming, Dicey must, in Dicey's Song, become a maiden and therefore take up her rightful role as a young girl again.

In both foreground and background texts, the second novel sets right the chaos that began the first novel. When Dicey was made to fulfill the role of a mother before she was either sexually or emotionally mature, both the natural life cycle (child--adolescent--adult) and the archetypal female cycle (maid--mother--crone) were disrupted. Essentially, Dicey's Song is about the way in which Dicey must "grow into" a young girl in order to "grow up" into a woman and, thus, about the way in which the cycles are restored. In this way, Dicey's struggle to understand her place pervades both the surface and subtext.

Trapped in and isolated by a maternal role she did not choose, Dicey must move to redefine herself in terms of her new life and her new sense of self. In the context of a quest that closely follows the patterns set up by feminist archetypal critics, Dicey's fulfillment lies not in a life of isolation, but in "the rediscovery of connection, in the realization that self and other are interdependent and that life, however valuable in itself, can only be sustained by care in relationships" (Gilligan 127).

Gram gives Dicey the freedom to discover her own potential and, in keeping with the mythic nature of Dicey's quest, functions as the helper figure in the heroic adventure. Campbell describes the helper as a "protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass " (69). In Voigt's second novel, the "amulets" that the crone provides are her words of wisdom that help the heroine confront the "dragon" which, in Dicey's life, is the pain and confusion of growing up. In Walker's analysis, Campbell's "little old crone" remains an important helper figure, but is further empowered as "the wisest of all mortals" (49) and "the ultimate source of truth" (65) who enjoys a "superior intelligence, compounded of keener senses, more acute powers of observation, quicker analysis . . ." (65). Indeed, Gram's experience and her wisdom sustain Dicey on her spiritual journey toward selfhood.

The novel embodies Walker's conception of the archetypal cyclic trinity as "three individuals who were still somehow one" (22) in its continual affirmation of the bond that links Dicey and

Gram. The grandmother and the granddaughter, the crone and the maiden, seem to be in a sort of sympathetic communion that is almost intuitive. " 'Between us '" Dicey promises Gram, " 'we can do anything '" (20). Gram often knows what Dicey is thinking just as Dicey knows what Gram is thinking (16, 54, 69). Dicey is able to complete Gram's unfinished sentences (53), and the two worry about the same things (16).

With the insightful wisdom of the crone, Gram is able to perceive rightly Dicey's emotional turmoil and to help the heroine to understand her own place in the world. She offers to relieve the enormous burden of responsibility under which Dicey has staggered for so long. She symbolically places the heroine in her correct role as child rather than as mother when she writes the childrens' names in the family Bible after Liza's name (16) and tells Dicey: " 'You've been responsible for a long time and done a good job. Take a rest now '" (21).

Dicey must first take her proper place within the first circle, the family circle, in which she learns to balance the claims of self and other in relationships. Gilligan describes this new understanding as an assertion of the "power to choose, and the acceptance of responsibility for choice" (67). Throughout the journey to Crisfield, Dicey assumed complete responsibility for the well-being of her family. It was through this maternal role that she had been forced to define herself. The opening pages of Dicey's Song reaffirm the heroine's commitment to this maternal role and the control she has over her family. Relaxing under the

shade of a tree in the yard, Dicey is content in the knowledge that although "she was alone . . . she knew where everybody was" (3). It is significant that the novel opens with the young girl completely alone. Her literal isolation reflects her emotional isolation as she struggles against her changing sense of self. She still feels burdened by the weight of the maternal role and carries "the sadness of Momma lost to them, maybe forever . . . deep inside her all the time" (18). Yet all the enormous adult fears and worries for the survival of her family is the life to which Dicey has become accustomed over the past year. Symbolically, the fact that the heroine procures a job at a grocery store in Crisfield reinforces her determination to fulfill the role that her mother abdicated in the earliest novel. While Liza was unable to keep her job at a supermarket, her daughter manages to find one at a grocery store. Dicey thus continues to succeed as a nurturer figure where Liza did not.

However, it is at her grandmother's farm that Dicey's maternal role, and, by extension, her identity, are challenged. When Gram tucks the younger Tillermans in bed, Dicey "wished Sammy and Maybeth hadn't wanted to go to bed without saying good night to her" (18). Furthermore, Dicey is no longer the sole provider for the family: her job at the store is only part-time one meant to "help out" (12) the family. In Dicey's Song Dicey has to share the role of caretaker of the family with the Welfare Office, her grandmother, and even her brothers, who themselves manage to find part-time jobs. All this forces her to question her identity.

Later, when she is unable to make Maybeth understand her math homework, Dicey feels her own inadequacy as an adult figure deeply: "She had done it wrong and she didn't know how to do it right. She tried not to look as discouraged as she felt" (14). She also does not know how to answer Sammy's questions about Liza Tillerman's illness and turn to Abigail for assistance, looking "helplessly at her grandmother" (12). When Gram gives her granddaughter "a rest" (21) from her awesome adult responsibilities, Dicey experiences a new type of freedom, discovering "that it felt pretty good to be able to do things without worrying about the little kids" (37). Later, she is "relieved" (21) when Gram offers to meet with Maybeth's teacher. She begins to enjoy this "vacation" (66) from responsibility so much that she soon feels no compulsion to involve herself at all with the family and convinces herself that, whatever happened, "Gram would settle it" (54).

There is something not quite right, however, about this complete freedom from responsibility. Although Dicey suspects that her siblings are experiencing difficulties adjusting to their new life at Crisfield and begins to wonder whether "James was old enough for a job, or reliable enough . . . [or] why [Sammy] got weepy when he was losing at checkers or parcheesi" (37). She decides to ignore the doubts: "nobody was talking to Dicey so she guessed they were doing all right without her" (37). But Dicey's family does need her help. James asks her sister how she managed to " 'fit in '" (19) at school revealing his own self-doubts and insecurity. Instead of really listening to her brother and being

able to hear his anxiety, Dicey only "snap[s]" back at him telling him that it is not worth worrying about. She realizes that "[h]e didn't believe her, but", "[s]he didn't let that bother her" (19). She also ignores Sammy's problems, growing impatient with his clumsy attempts to help her fix the old Tillerman boat (29). Despite her sense of the "unused energy" (30) that is bottled up inside him, she fails to see either the reason this energy or Sammy's real need to help her work on the boat. Even Dicey's relationship with Maybeth suffers from the former's lack of concern. The problems that Maybeth has with fractions (13) and reading (45) somehow do not stop Dicey from assuming that "Maybeth seemed contented . . . Maybeth didn't seem to mind all the schoolwork" (37). The end of this separation of self from relationship and responsibility could result in what Gilligan terms as a "narcissm [that] leads to death" (23).

Dicey has to confront a changing sense of self on an emotional level in this first circle, but also on a physical level. That is, as a girl on the brink of adolescence, Dicey is faced with a body that is physically maturing. She again refuses to reconcile herself to being a thirteen-year-old girl: "There wasn't much she could do about getting a bosom, but she didn't have to like it" (7).

It is Gram who guides Dicey to a new relationship both with her self and with her family. She begins by helping her to accept her changing body. " 'You're too old to go around half-naked '" (6) she tells the heroine, recognising that her granddaughter is

approaching womanhood. The two go to a shopping mall in Salisbury where Dicey undergoes a rite of passage of sorts under Gram's hand. At the mall Gram buys Dicey not only a bra, but, also a beautiful velvet dress. The transformation from girl to young woman is made clear as a somewhat bewildered Dicey stands in her new dress and stares at herself in the dressing room mirrors.

> The heavy-soft fabric hung close to her body. Her bosom showed a little, and the belt at her waist made her look curved. She looked unfamiliar to herself . . . She stood, biting her lip, looking at the girl in the mirror. (73)

But when she wears the dress for her grandmother, "Gram just nodded, as if she had expected to see exactly what she saw" (73). In the dress Dicey feels "confused" and tells her Gram, " 'I don't know when I'll use it ," (73). Dicey does eventually wear it, at the end of the novel, when she is ready to accept her position as a responsible, mature, young woman. Dicey's present confusion attests to the fact that she still has much of growing up to do before she can feel at ease in the dress.

It is significant that Dicey experiences her physical initiation into womanhood at a shopping mall. It is not until this episode in Dicey's Song that the reader is able to see the way in which all the shops that Dicey has encountered from the outset of Homecoming form an important chain in which all shops are linked to the theme of nurturing. Lisa's failure as a nurturer was represented by her inability to keep her job at the supermarket in

Provincetown. When the children are abandoned, it is in the parking lot of a shopping mall which they must enter in order to get something to eat. Dicey often does odd jobs at various stores and malls along the way to Crisfield and thus is able to earn enough money to buy some food for her family. During lunch at a restaurant in Salisbury Mall, Gram provides Dicey with nourishment that is even more sustaining that the huge club sandwich that she buys for her granddaughter. Having helped Dicey to confront her physical maturation, Gram, the wise old woman, guides Dicey towards a specifically feminine ethos in which she includes herself in what Gilligan, in her study of female moral development, calls "an expanding network of connection" (39). Gilligan suggests that women's moral strength rests with women's ability to "define their identity through relationships of intimacy and care" (164), and her suggestion finds voice in Dicey's Song through Voigt's metaphor of the courage to reach out for, to hold on to, and to accept love. Gram sees in Dicey's growing neglect of her family the possibility that Dicey will end up with the same life of bitterness and loneliness that she had brought upon herself. To prevent this from happening, the old woman encourages her granddaughter, over lunch at the mall in Salisbury, to define herself through connection rather than through separation: " 'You've got to hold on. Hold on to people. They can get away from you. It's not always going to be fun, but it you don't -- hold on -- then you lose them '" (70).

Dicey's experience at the mall marks the beginning of her

journey from girlhood to womanhood. On the way home she tells Gram " 'I have the feeling that I know who I am, only I'm not any more '" (75) and so experiences what Campbell identifies as the first stage of the hero's journey, the call to adventure, when the mythic hero finds that "[t]he familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand" (51). As one who is on her way to a maturity that is characteristically female, Dicey must realize a life-vision that "centres moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships" (Gilligan 19) in both the circle of the family and in the wider circle of the community. Such an understanding does not demand however, that she again take up the overwhelming responsibilities which had previously entrapped her in a role that was not properly hers. Instead, it requires a new perspective in which responsibility does not presuppose self-sacrifice, but, rather the equation of self and other in a relationship of interdependence.

During the conversation, in the shopping mall, Abigail reminds her granddaughter of this "morality of responsibility" (Gilligan 132). In spite of Dicey's attempts to believe otherwise, the other Tillerman children are experiencing some serious difficulties settling into their new life at Crisfield. Gram tells Dicey that Maybeth is in danger of failing school, that Sammy is not his usual boisterous self in class, but " 'sits quiet as a mouse, all day '" (68), and that James handed in a report on the pilgrims at school that was different from the one he had shown his family because "

'he didn't want to be too different '" (67). In response to this information, "Dicey felt her shoulders sag" (69). Unlike before, however, Dicey does not have to bear the worry alone. She is able to ask Gram: " 'We can't tell James we know what he did, can we?" and Gram, in turn, tells her that " 'we should tell Sammy we know . . . '" (74). That the two speak of the family problems in terms of "we" reveals that henceforth the responsibility will be a shared one; Dicey can still maintain the personal freedom to establish her own sense of identity.

Dicey returns to the first circle, her family at the farm, with the same "sensitivity to the needs of others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care" (16) that Gilligan names as characteristic of women's developmental patterns. Dicey addresses both James' and Maybeth's problems at the same time. She asks her brother to devise a way to teach Maybeth to read because she realizes that since James kept from "working with his mind" (67) in school in order to fit in, he needed "something to think about at home" (68) to keep him from boredom. James agrees to do some research on learning difficulties, but his procrastination frustrates Dicey, who realizes that "[t]his holding on that Gram has talked about was more complicated than she'd thought. She had to hold on to James, for what he wanted, and hold on to Maybeth for what she needed" (88).

However, holding on also means having the maturity to give other people the space they need to discover their own potential. When James finally gets around to telling Maybeth that he will help

her read, Dicey, in her impatience "wanted to hiss at James, Get to the point," but sees that "part of holding on was letting him do things his own way" (90). She also reaches out to Sammy by allowing him to help her work on the boat and so gives her little brother an opportunity to release the energy that he has repressed during the school day. She notices how "Sammy worked like [she] did, without hurrying, without dawdling. They got into a kind of rhythm, working together. Dicey told herself, I should have remembered this about Sammy" (82). This awareness of her family extends to Gram. Dicey realizes that her own poor performance in Home Economics hurts not just herself but Gram, too. When Gram expresses surprise at the low grade, Dicey "was almost sorry she hadn't tried harder in the class, if it mattered to Gram" (64). Carol Gilligan describes this awareness of others as critical in female moral development, a part of which involves women arriving at a new "responsiveness in relationship" able to "assert a standard . . . of sharing and care, of protecting people from hurt" (50). Dicey enters into a new relationship with the other members of her family that is beneficial to both other and self because it allows room for mutual self-definition.

Having learned a little bit about the emotional complexity of relationships within the family circle, she is now ready to assume her place within the context of the second circle, the community circle, where she eventually proves that she can love with the freedom and responsibility of an adult by choosing the ties of belonging that constitute her network. In the novel the people

around her impinge on her sense of self in important and influential ways. At first, Dicey's commitment to the self-sufficiency that allowed her to survive the perils in the first novel, poses the very real threat of loneliness and alienation in the second novel. In school "nobody sat near Dicey who sat alone" (23), but, as she tells herself, "she liked working alone, she was used to it." When her classmate Nina Smiths asks, " 'wanna work together? '", Dicey is forced to admit that she "was pleased to have this girl for a partner" (34). Still, she initially resists Nina's gestures of friendship in the belief that "the more anybody knew about her . . . they had a kind of hold on her" (46) and makes little effort to respond to Nina's greetings in the school hallways.

Dicey also refuses to let Jeff Greene, a tenth grader at her school, have any sort of "hold on her." Although he is older, she finds herself drawn to him and the music he plays on his guitar. The second time she sees him, she even sings the melody of one of the songs he plays. But as soon as he moves to establish a friendship and asks Dicey about herself and her family, the heroine pulls away in fear:

> What did he expect her to do, invite him to her house or something? There was something he expected, or wanted, Dicey could see that.
>
> "I gotta go now, " she said.
>
> "Why?" he asked. "I've got another song you might like."
>
> "I gotta go, " Dicey insisted and turned to get her bike

out of the rack and ride away. (41-42)

Like Nina, Jeff makes Dicey unsure about her place in her world. Although they recognize her as a peer, she refuses to recognize herself as a potential social being.

Dicey's insistence on remaining an "outsider" (19) also extends to her attitude towards Millie Tydings, her employer. She quickly grows impatient with Millie, who she decides, "wasn't very smart at all" (9). Dicey can only feel pity for "'Millie, so big and slow-witted'" (44) and really does not bother to get to know the woman for whom she works.

As Dicey struggles to understand her place in this more social of circles, Gram again functions as a helper figure, pointing out the path that promises the most fulfillment for the heroine. Gram allows Maybeth's music teacher, Mr. Lingerle, into the family circle, trusting him enough to admit that she cannot afford the extra lessons Maybeth's talents require (51). He is invited to stay for family dinners; he takes part in family sing-songs; he takes care of the children in Gram's absence; and generally he becomes an integral part of the Tillerman family life. Gram, who discovers a friend with whom she can share her troubles and responsibilities, reveals to Dicey that she " 'took [Mr. Lingerle] in -- in the nature of an experiment '" because " 'You don't go reaching out with your hand closed up '" (120). By taking risks through reaching out Gram is rewared with emotional support. Her friendship with Mr. Lingerle allows her to continue to succeed in her role as parent in the family. In this way, the family circle

and the wider community circle become more fully integrated.

Dicey, too, must repudiate her self-imposed isolation in the community if she is to develop into a sensitive and complete individual. Voigt skillfully depicts the movement from self-protective isolation to self-enhancing attachment in the second of the three circles by setting up two parallel scenes that vividly manifest Dicey's alienation and isolation and simultaneously provide the opportunity for her to establish a meaningful relationship with the people around her. In school, both Miss Eversleigh, the Home Economics teacher, and Mr. Chapelle, the English teacher publicly humiliate the heroine. In both situations Dicey is distinguished as being somewhat different and apart from mainstream society, yet in each instance there is an attempt made to establish a connection with the heroine so as to include her in a vital social network.

Miss Eversleigh's response to Dicey's shoddy apron leads the heroine to "attend to voices other than [her] own and to include in [her] judgement other points of view" (16). Before arriving at her grandmother's farm, Dicey had to depend on her own judgement. She had to always be right; the survival of her family required that. In Crisfield there is little to threaten the safety of her family, and as Dicey now approaches adulthood, she must learn to open up and incorporate perspectives other than her own into her world-view. With Miss Eversleigh, she is forced to see the world from someone else's view. What she discovers is that there are many things she does not know, and that, despite her previous feats, she

is still a thirteen-year-old girl with much to learn.

The mistake Dicey makes in dismissing Home Economics as a "stupid thing" that is "boring--boring--boring" (20) is made clear when her resistance towards learning domestic skills in contrasted both archetypally and literally with the actions of Gram during the course of the entire novel. As the archetypal crone, whom Walker identifies as in control of "the thread of every life" (29) and who is typically associated with weaving tapestries, life cycles, Gram is often pictured knitting and sewing. Dicey's shoddy apron stands in sharp contrast to her grandmother's handiwork. Grams alters some old shirts for Dicey to wear (36) and makes a party dress for Maybeth out of an old blouse (44). She knits a sweater for each of the children, choosing the colour of the wool for each with special insight (63). Significantly, when Maybeth is having problems at school, Gram is knitting Maybeth's sweater. It is as if the steading clicking of her needles in the background pulls together a fabric that is strong and warm enough to sustain and comfort the girl. When Sammy begins fighting at school, Gram begins to knit his sweater. Again her work symbolically provides a fabric of support and solace that promises to see Sammy through his troubles.

Dicey also grows impatient with Miss Eversleigh's nutrition lessons, for, as she grumbles to herself, despite the fact that she had no money for most of the previous summer, she was always somehow able to scrape together a meal for her family. Again, she must step back into her position as maiden and learn to nurture her

family in ways that are as sustaining as Gram's culinary talents. Gram's lobster pot is reminiscent of the cauldron that Walker declares as an essential part of the crone's symbology and that was the "source of life, wisdom, inspiration, understanding and magic" (100).

As part of the same archetypal trinity, Dicey must come to value the skills that provide real and symbolic nurturing and care. Slowly, it dawns on Dicey that "if Gram didn't know [these skills], where would the Tillermans be? Maybe Dicey ought to try to learn them" (106). She begins to move out of herself towards a larger view of her world.

By accepting help from people like Miss Eversleigh Dicey will eventually be ready to assume a responsible role in her world. Miss Eversleigh tells Dicey's class, " 'You owe it to yourself . . . to acquire information you have need of. If you do not understand that, your understanding is faulty '" (106). That Dicey actually thinks long and hard about what Miss Eversleigh says to her and that she eventually apologizes to her teacher for her poor attitude marks her growing maturity. In accepting another's opinion, she once again changes her understanding of her own situation, this time within the context of the second wider circle of the community. Like Gram's relationship with Mr. Lingerle, Dicey's with Miss Eversleigh influences her relationship with her family. The domestic skills that she learns in her Home Economics class teach her how better to take care of her family. This link between the family circle and the community circle reinforces the

fact that Dicey's identity cannot be attained in isolation but, instead, is rooted in affiliation and attachment.

The incident in Mr. Chappelle's English class also provides Dicey with the opportunity to expand her "web of connection" (Gilligan 44). This time it is Nina Smiths who establishes a connection with Dicey and so draws her out of her isolation. In a movement of solidarity, Nina stands up in class to defend Dicey against Mr. Chappelle's accusations of plagiarism. Nina reveals the accusations as completely unfounded (115), and, for the first time in the novel, Dicey takes an active role in her quest for self. Out of her own volition, she telephones Nina to thank her. The telephone call represents a further progression in her emotional development in that she now accepts that she cannot face the world on her own all the time as she had once thought. Dicey relinquishes some of her independence in exchange for a relationship that proves to be an invaluable source of strength for the heroine. With the maturity of an adult, she acknowledges her limitations and accepts help. With Nina, Dicey finds a peer who can closely sympathize with the anxiety and uncertainty she has been experiencing since her mother's disappearance. By sharing her pain, Dicey risks rejection as much as friendship; she is willing however, to take the chance, for she realizes that "you didn't hold out your hand with it clenched up"
(123-124).

As with Nina, Jeff is admitted into Dicey's network when he is permitted to help the heroine. She agrees one day to let Jeff

carry her books. However it is more than books that he takes from Dicey's shoulders: "It felt strange for Dicey to walk without anything to carry, without anything to push, with just the walking to do" (151). Like Gram, Jeff helps relieve her of a burden that was not naturally hers, and allows her to be a "normal" thirteen-year-old girl about to, in this case, experience her first love. As Dicey's network grows wider, so too does her "sensitivity towards the needs of others" (Gilligan 16). Her movement from isolation to connection becomes clear in her response to Jeff's distress at her younger brother's unfriendliness as she finds that she wants to "make [Jeff] feel better" by "reaching out" to him (130).

As Dicey gradually becomes more involved in a social web of mutual respect and care, she gains an insight into the people in her life that she had not had before. Millie Tydings provides a good example. Dicey starts to appreciate the store keeper not only as a skillful butcher, but also as a warm and giving person, who has the wisdom and strength that Dicey has learned to value. " 'Millie's always reaching out, '" Gram tells Dicey. " 'She always had a hand out for me, not that I've taken it much. She's got one out for you, hasn't she girl. I'm not saying that Millie's thought this out, but she didn't need to. Because there's wisdom in her '" (120). Near the end of the novel, Dicey herself sees Millie's special qualities and tells Nina that she " 'started out disrespecting [Millie], because she's not so smart, not at all. But she's been a good friend to my grandmother--all her life

without changing-- and she never asks anything much from anybody . . . '" (154).

In this second circle Dicey asserts her freedom to choose to include certain people in her widening network of relationships. The integrity, sensitivity, and wisdom of people like Miss Eversleigh, Nina, Jeff, and Millie win her respect; each encourages her to take the risk and reach out to form ties with the community. On the other hand, Mr. Chappelle who, after the plagiarism incident, behaves as if Dicey " 'can't do anything wrong . . . makes [Dicey] sick '" (165) with his insincere behaviour. Because any connection that she has with him is not based on integrity, meaningful relationship becomes impossible.

The third and widest circle requires that Dicey establish a new relationship with her world through an understanding of the human cycle of life and death and of her own place within this circle. The network that embraces the first circle of family and the second circle of friends and that is made vital and powerful through Dicey's courage to reach out and accept love, prepares her for her experience in the third circle. In this latter part of her spiritual development, she learns adult lessons which introduces her to the ideological conflict inherent in life itself: holding on sometimes means letting go; there is no life without death, no death without new life. How Dicey is able to handle such fundamental contradictions becomes her ultimate moment of self-definition as a mature and a sensitive woman.

Part of this understanding about the human life cycle revolves

around the same sense of continuity that was introduced in Homecoming. Dicey continues to need a sense of the past, of her family history, in order to feel connected to her present life in Crisfield. Having just begun to learn about her personal history in Homecoming, she is determined to learn more about her past from her grandmother. But Gram refuses to talk about a past she finds painful, and for much of Dicey's Song, the young girl's attempts to recover her history are frustrated. Gram has shut away all the memories, the old clothes, the family albums, in the attic. The past, full of mistakes she has made, mean only anger and guilt for her. Yet despite her efforts, bits and pieces of the past do filter into her present life. A tight budget forces her to alter her sons' shirts for Dicey, an old blouse for Maybeth, and some old coats for James and Sammy. Memories of her first family continue to haunt Abigail; and memories of the pain she experienced when they left her sometimes make her frightened to take the risk of loving a second family. Although the Tillerman children do revive the past, they also provide the opportunity for healing and forgiveness. This is apparent in the fact that Gram, who had previously destroyed her telephone upon news of her son's death in Vietnam, hooks up another one in case the children find themselves in need of help. In a sense, Gram "re-connects" herself to a life of responsibility and relationship. In order to live completely in the present, however, she must release herself from the burden that her past has become. Ironically, what she is trying to forget, Dicey is trying to remember. This process of remembering and

forgetting, of giving and forgiving, of holding on and letting go, represents the contradictory process of life itself. Both Dicey and Gram have to make choices about when to let go and when to hold on in this third circle. Dicey's understanding of these values enables her to assume a new relationship with her world.

Her mother's death introduces Dicey to a larger human reality. At the news of Liza's impending death, granddaughter and grandmother rush to the mental hospital in Boston. Dicey, who has "carried around deep inside her all the time" the "sadness of Momma lost to [her]" (18) confronts her dying mother near the novel's end and is filled with anger and hurt (165). But she has to come to accept death in order to affirm life.

Waiting for her mother's inevitable death, Dicey browses with heavy heart through the shops in town looking for Christmas gifts for her family. In keeping with the significance of shops in her life, these in Boston mark yet another setting in Dicey's progress towards maturity. While choosing gifts for her family back home, she thinks more and more about the people in her life and soon she feels "a million miles away from the hospital. And that feels better" (171). Again, the first two circles of relationship are inextricably linked with the third, as Dicey finds comfort in thoughts about not just her siblings, but also about Gram and her friends in Crisfield, too. She is letting go of the pain she feels at her mother's imminent death by holding on to the life she has found with the people around her. In death she finds life; in holding on she finds the strength to let go. The shops serve to

take Dicey's mind off the dead and force her to attend to the living. They serve to make her reaffirm her commitment to life. At one of the shops she learns the central truth about life from a woodworker who tells her that in the final assessment life is " 'not easy . . . Sometimes, things just have to happen, it just has to be the way it turns out ' " (174).

The first two circles of relationship gave Dicey the freedom to be a thirteen-year-old girl; the third circle represents the move from childhood to adolescence, but unlike before, Dicey's assumption of a more adult role is the result of knowledge about life and living that she was without in Homecoming. As a young adult, Dicey now enters into a relationship with her world, one based on equality and reciprocity. Her experience with the process of death brings her to a new consciousness of self and her life. As in many children's novels, death marks the end of childhood and the beginning of maturity. On the brink of womanhood, Dicey finds herself firmly tied to the world of family and friends which has sustained her through interconnectedness and care. She returns to Gram at the hospital ready to assert her power in her world by giving to others what they gave to her. Her responsiveness to others allows her to recognise herself as a woman capable of adult compassion and care. She acts on this new idea when she tells her exhausted grandmother, " 'you should have something to eat ' " (175). In contrast to the earlier lunch in the Salisbury mall, where Gram insisted that her granddaughter eat a good solid meal, Dicey now takes the initiative as nurturer. By the time her mother

dies, Dicey has found her own place in the world and a space for her own unique voice. She now can make a difference in her world; Dicey confirms her living connection to her grandmother. As a free and caring being, she chooses to defy the Tillerman tradition of never "hugging and kissing" (11) and hugs Gram hard (176). The embrace is a moment of profound self-recognition for Dicey, who realizes how "strong and warm" (176) her own arms are. She is able to return home as one able to bind as much as be bound in relationship.

Significantly, Dicey wears the same brown velvet dress that had confused her near the beginning of the novel, as she stood in front of the dressing room mirror in the Salisbury mall. It symbolizes her readiness to accept herself as a responsible adolescent and to accept a life cycle of change for both herself and her world. On the train journey home, she reflects on the spiritual distance she has travelled since the previous summer. Then she had been determined to remain "unattached," but now, having learned of the power of relationship, she knows that "she'd never be afraid again" (186) to risk forming attachments. Although the train follows the same route that she and her family had walked, the Dicey that returns home at the end of Dicey's Song is a young woman firmly "anchor[ed]" (186) to things that connect her to a fulfilling life:

> Dicey . . . thought about her job and her school, about James, Maybeth, and Sammy, about Mina and Jeff. She thought about the little boat she was preparing for next

spring. She thought about Gran's house, their house . . . (187)

The subtext that underlies the train journey home and the burial scene that ends the novel form a powerful narrative that restores the female archetypal relationships which were fractured at the outset of Homecoming. Dicey carries Liza's ashes in a box. Although it is the daughter who brings her mother home, the promise of regeneration that is at the centre of the Demeter/Persephone myth still pervades. The female trinity of maid, mother, and crone is also restored as all three Tillerman women travel together back to Crisfield, a place which is,to each, home.

The cyclic nature of life is emphasized at the archetypal level, where Gran, Dicey and Liza represent the reunited female trinity and so affirm, in keeping with Walker's description of the ancient goddess, a life of "perpetual becoming" (Walker 14). Liza's death means a renewal of life for her mother, and her daughter. As one who is both home and gone (193), the restorative potential of her death is immediately apparent when, after the burial, Gran, who had previously refused to talk about her children, brings old family albums down from the attic. By sharing the photographs and their accompanying anecdotes, she gives Dicey her family, her history, and a final sense of connection with her present.

The frontyard tree under which the Tillermans bury Liza also becomes an accurate representation of the cycle of life and death. It is an image that, in opening and closing the novel, provides an

important framework for Dicey's quest for self. In Homecoming, the symbolic significance of the tree with its "four trunks that spread out from its common source" (249) and its branches held together by wires that prevent the "weight of the leaves and the growing branches" from "pull[ing] the tree apart" is made explicit by Gram, who tells Dicey that the tree is "'like families'" (261). In Dicey's Song, the tree as the family tree, the tree of life, the tree of knowledge, frames Dicey's struggle to understand her place in the world. The fact that the girl, on the first pages of the second novel, is leaning on the tree with its "thick roots [that] spread around her" (3) foreshadows the supportive and sustaining role that the family network will play in her life. It is under this tree that Liza is buried. The tree becomes an image of regeneration. Through the mother's death the rest of the family find new life with each other. Through death and Liza's being placed into the earth, the tree is reinvigorated, as is the Tillerman life cycle, the family network. The tree is like Campbell's mythic "tree of life" or "World Navel," which "is the symbol of the continuous creation" (41). In the third circle, Dicey moves toward an adult understanding of the forces of life and death that are at work in her world and towards a specifically female experience of being. Her spiritual awareness at the novel's end adheres to Christ's definition of women's power as grounded in "energies of life, death, and regeneration and being," a power that includes the awareness that "[e]very individual is finite and eventually must die, but life also re-creates itself from death"

(10).

Voigt externalizes this most ineffable of life's mysteries through visual and concrete images of hands that reach out, hold on, and let go. When Dicey first sees her catatonic mother lying on the hospital bed "still, absolutely still" (163), her initial impulse to pull Liza back into life is made concrete as she "reach[es] out to take [Liza's] hand"; daughter starts to tell mother all that has happened in her life feeling that "[t]alk was reaching out to the form in the bed" (166).

Liza shows no response and sensing Dicey's frustration, Gram sends her granddaughter out to buy some Christmas presents for her brothers and sister. The woodworker that Dicey meets has hands covered with "old cuts and new ones" (174). His hands are a visual representation of Dicey's own life experience, in which she has learned the importance of risking oneself and getting "cut". As symbols, they are witness to the life experience of reaching out and risking rejection as much as acceptance. Such visible proof of real life experience inspires her trust, and she reaches out to embrace the man into her network by opening up to him, a complete stranger, and telling him about her dying mother. As proof that she is moving towards maturity, Dicey buys a pair of gloves for Gram in one of the Boston shops, not only because in winter Gram's "fingers turned white with cold," but also because she "wanted to give something to Gram" (169). The gloves are tied to all the hand imagery so that, on a symbolic level, Dicey's gift can be read as her attempt to help Gram keep her commitment to the connections in

her life always alive and warm. When Liza dies, Dicey confirms her bond to her grandmother with a hug. In the face of death, she touches Gramm and shares warmth and life. At the undertaker's, "Gram reached out to take [Dicey's] hand and held onto it" and "Dicey held right on back" (179). On the train Gram "reached over to where Dicey's hand was . . . and wrapped her own hand around Dicey's" (188). The girl travels all the way home with her "hand clenched on top of the box" (188) of her mother's ashes, but when they arrive back at the farm "Gram took the wooden box out of Dicey's cold hands and knelt to place it in the hole" (192) that is to be Liza's grave. Symbolically, Gram shows Dicey the way to let go of the pain of her mother by burying the box and putting her own heart to rest. Voigt uses the hand imagery to symbolize the paradoxical truths that lie at the centre of Dicey's world: to affirm life is to accept death; to hold on involves the ability to know when to let go.

In Dicey's Song, Dicey must find her place in her family and community circles in order to join the larger circles that is life itself. In all three circles she achieves self-definition through relationships and the realization of the responsibilities she has both to herself and to others. Her experiences in Homecoming forced the heroine to assume enormous responsibilities and to grow up before she was emotionally ready to do so. Dicey's Song has as its focus the way in which Dicey relinquishes her self-reliance in order to "grow into" herself as a normal thirteen-year old girl. As she struggles to find her rightful position within both her

family and her community, she undergoes an emotional maturation that enables her to deal with her mother's death. At the end of Dicey's Song, Dicey is no longer a child but, physically and emotionally, an adolescent capable of love and care.

The four books that follow Dicey's Song, A Solitary Blue (1983), The Runner (1985), Come a Stranger (1986), and Sons From Afar (1987), break the chronological sequence of Dicey's development. Although Dicey Tillerman appears in only three of the four, and then only briefly, each of them provides a number of parallels and contrasts to her maturing process. Dicey withdraws after Dicey's Song, and, during the time that elapses between the end of Dicey's Song and the beginning of Seventeen Against The Dealer, she goes away to college only to drop out of her college programme and return to Crisfield. Symbolically, Dicey's withdrawal at the end of Dicey's Song is another integral stage of her development, and it is in the final book of the "Tillerman Cycle," Seventeen Against The Dealer, that Dicey rediscovers the importance of her network of relationships and enters adulthood as a sensitive and responsible woman.

CHAPTER THREE

In Seventeen Against The Dealer, the last novel in the Tillerman cycle, Dicey Tillerman completes her quest for self. Like all adolescents, Dicey is challenged and tested as she approaches adulthood. She must prove her worth and her identity, both of which are firmly rooted in relationships, in order to verify her identity and to enter adulthood as a loving and responsible woman. The overall sense of awakening to an adult life that underlies Voigt's characterization of Dicey's maturation in the novel is consistent with the conclusions of some developmental theorists and literary critics about women's transition from maidenhood to motherhood. In Seventeen Against The Dealer, Dicey awakens to a new self through a rebirth and transformation structured on the same underlying female folkloric and archetypal narrative patterns of interdependence and regeneration informing Homecoming and Dicey's Song.

In this last novel, Dicey, in order to prove her worth in a seemingly indifferent universe, must summon forth the power of interdependence and affiliation, modes of living that she has learned to value in the previous novels. From the detachment implied by the first lines of Seventeen Against The Dealer (" 'Dicey?"...she heard [Jeff] but didn't hear '" (1)) to the interconnection evident in the last (" 'I was just thinking," Dicey said [to Jeff], "Do you want to hear? '" (181)), the last novels enact Gilligan's assertion of a "psychology of adulthood which recognizes that development does not displace the value of ongoing

attachment and the continuing importance of care in relationships" (170) that is at the nucleus of female adulthood.

Seventeen Against The Dealer resumes the folkloric subtext that was begun in Homecoming. The resourceful orphan who found her way to a new home essentially withdraws after Dicey's Song into a symbolic deep sleep from which she awakens to marry Jeff Greene, her "prince." The physical quest for home of "Hansel and Gretel" that was in the background of Homecoming is supplanted by a more adult "Sleeping Beauty" type of subtext in Seventeen Against The Dealer, one that is an appropriate reflection of Dicey's growing maturity. Bettelheim describes the deep sleep of Sleeping Beauty, and all adolescent females, as preparation for marriage and so defines the "internal mental processes" (225) that occur during this time within the context of intimacy and attachment. Gilligan points out the tale's consistency with her paradigm of female moral strength so that "[s]ince adolescent heroines awake from their sleep, not to conquer the world, but to marry the prince, their identity is inwardly and interpersonally defined" (13). Carol Christ, while also underlining the centrality of relationships in women's self-discovery, removes the strong elements of passivity that surround Bettelheim's description of female development and describes the awakening of women as an important and powerful moment of their self-fulfillment. She writes: "Women often describe their awakening as a coming to self, rather than a giving up of self, as a grounding of selfhood in the powers of being, rather than a surrender . . ." (19).

Christ's description of the active role that women can assume in their own moral and spiritual development is an apt portrayal of the manner in which Dicey grows into a sensitive and self-aware woman. No prince's kiss awakens her to a new life; instead, it is her own recognition of the emotional paralysis she had suffered within the confines of the "thorny" barriers behind which she has secluded herself. Because Dicey's rescue from her deathlike sleep is effected from within rather than by any outside presence, she is better able to control her own destiny and to choose for herself the path to self-fulfillment. Dicey's final decision to marry Jeff is thus based on an adult affirmation of the emotional commitment she has to both herself and her prince. Despite the important differences between "Sleeping Beauty" and Voigt's novel, however, the overall design of death and resurrection, central in "Sleeping Beauty", is implicit in the narrative of Seventeen Against The Dealer.

Dicey's symbolic rebirth and transformation also completes the underlying female archetypal motifs of the Demeter/Persephone myth and the tripartite goddess that informed the subtext of the previous two novels. In this last novel the completion of the underlying mythic narrative enriches and enlarges the emotional satisfaction on the part of the reader, of Dicey Tillerman's final assertion of her identity as a loving and intelligent woman. The emotional chaos precipitated by the separation of mother (Abigail Tillerman) and daughter (Liza Tillerman), of Demeter and Persephone, and that manifested itself in the surface narrative of

the earlier novels in images of grief and sterility, threatens to repeat itself in Seventeen Against the Dealer, as Dicey's increasing self-absorption removes her from Abigail and propels her into a kind of underworld. But, once again, the fact that Dicey rescues herself and does not rely on outside forces to redeem her "fall", points once again to the active role that she takes in her own development. Dicey's courage in taking responsibility for herself and her actions allows her to return to Abigail and to bring the latter new life. The ability to nurture another in this way indicates her readiness to fulfill the responsible and more altruistic maternal role that she had been forced to embrace in Homecoming before she was emotionally prepared. By the end of the last novel, Dicey is ready to leave behind the innocence of maidenhood and to enter the emotional and spiritual space of the maternal phase of the archetypal tripartite goddess. In this way her story affirms a specifically female tale of maturation and a universal vision of the cyclic nature of human existence that is represented by female archetypes and myth.

Seventeen Against The Dealer is structured as a female journey to rebirth towards selfhood. In her Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction, Annis Pratt identifies the five phases of women's rebirth journeys as they appear in female-authored texts. According to Pratt, the quest involves a "splitting off from family, husbands, lovers," an encounter with "the green-world guide or totem," support and guidance from "the green-world lover," a "confrontation with parental figures," and, finally, a "plunge into the

unconscious," which constitutes "the turning point in [the] quest"(140-142).

In Seventeen Against The Dealer, Dicey's withdrawal into herself and her own concerns corresponds to Pratt's description of the first phase of the archetypal female journey of rebirth and transformation as the "splitting off from family, husbands, lovers" (139). Her single-minded pursuit of her goal to build her own boat gradually separates her from the concerns of her family and friends until she becomes so self-absorbed that she abdicates the moral responsibility she has toward others in order to achieve her goal without any interference. Her drive for success co-opts Dicey into an emotionally constricted existence that Gilligan, in her discussion of female psychology, posits as antithetical to female moral development in its subordination of "relationships . . . to the ongoing process of individuation and achievement" (154). Dicey's attention is riveted on the future realization of her dream; the present is reduced to a space that exists only to make enough money to build her boat. The twenty-one year old heroine is introduced "reviewing her plans because Dicey Tillerman always had things planned out so that she could get where she wanted. Where she wanted to get to was being a boatbuilder" (1). Furthermore, she "plan[s] to be the making of herself" (35) and, in her youthful arrogance, is certain that she will succeed. After all, she was clever enough to "get her family down to Crisfield when they were all just kids, [and] drop out of college when she'd been offered a scholarship to continue" (2).

Essentially, Dicey is guilty of hubris and is punished with a series of experiences consistently revealing her naivete and her inexperience. When her shop is vandalised and robbed, she realizes that she ought to have bought insurance. When a wealthy client cancels his order and takes back his money, Dicey sees the mistake she has made in not using signed contracts in her business. When she studies library books in an attempt to learn the boatbuilding to which she eventually wants to devote her life, she does not have the knowledge to understand the diagrams and designs. But she stubbornly refuses to be realistic and, instead of accepting the help and support of her family and friends, persists in her policy of self-reliance.

Although Dicey works in a shop painting boats for other people, she looks forward to the day when she will have enough money to establish her own boatbuilding business; with her eye always on the future, she forgets to live in the present and so separates herself from the everyday reality of family and friends and plunges instead into a narrow world of individual achievement. Tenaciously clinging to boatbuilding as her ultimate goal, Dicey begins to measure life in terms of the work she has to do painting other peoples' boats in order to make enough money to establish herself:

> She would lift her head sometimes and look down the length of weeks ahead and think of how long it would take her to build Mr. Hobart's boat. When she did that she could feel the end of March rushing at her, too fast. She

> could feel how short the week was, and how--thinking of the eight or nine weeks that were left to her--and those boats of Claude's she had to do so slowly, doing them alone--she didn't let herself think of it. (99)

Her fixation on the mathematical progression of time is reflected by her constant balancing of her chequebook in her mind, ensuring that things add up, marking her success by the amount of money in her account.

Dicey's narrow focus makes her unwilling to complicate her plans by involving herself in personal struggles and problems of her family around her. Too tired after her long day at work to bother joining in family discussions, she is content to observe her family through "a fog" happy in the knowledge that

> . . . she had the feeling that she knew what her life was for. She had the feeling that what she knew and wanted was important. She was going to build boats and she wasn't going to let anything stand in her way. (14)

She lets her family help James through the moral dilemma he is facing at college, losing herself in her plans for the next day: "She hoped the weather would be clear, because you didn't want to take good wood out on this kind of drizzly day . . . " (17). She seems blind to the depth of Sammy's desire to be accepted by a summer tennis camp and grows impatient with his chatter: "Sammy would have gone on forever . . . about some tennis camp he'd read about . . ." (11). She pays little attention to Maybeth's anguished attempts to pass all her courses so that she can graduate from high

school (190-191). Although she sees her family enough to convince herself that "everyone is all right," "work was what Dicey though about" (82). She fails to perceive her grandmother's failing health. Despite the fact that Gram's weakening state eventually forces her to take to her bed, Dicey, busy with her own business anxieties, delays contacting the doctor week after week.

Dicey's relationship with Jeff is also greatly damaged. Because Jeff "had got woven into her life so thoroughly" (5) Dicey begins to take his love for granted. Although she loves him, she is unwilling to commit herself fully to a meaningful relationship and offers to live with him during the few months that his father is away rather than to accept his marriage proposal. Her refusal to strengthen the bond that exists between them is emphasized by her firm rejection of his offer to lend her the money she so desperately needs. This repudiation of his help begins her growing emotional distance from Jeff. As time goes by, she forgets to return his telephone calls, "not remembering that she'd forgotten until the next evening, when she was too tired to remember not to forget again" (59). Months later, when she finally does telephone him, she discovers that he is dating somebody else. Partly due to this, Dicey accepts Jeff's previous proposal only to be rejected, in turn, by him. Jeff's rejection of Dicey registers as a muffled thud on her self-contained existence and Dicey decides that she is not going to waste time attempting to save the relationship: "When something was lost, it was lost and gone. You had to admit that to yourself. Dicey didn't even try to think she hadn't lost Jeff.

Hope was painful and it interfered with her moving on" (134). Instead, Dicey immerses herself further into her work.

Dicey's emotional solitude propels her into a symbolic underworld. In Seventeen Against The Dealer, this underworld is represented by the shop in which she works increasingly long hours to accommodate her enormous workload. The careful description of the shop as a "cave...with cinder block walls" with "a slab cement floor" and "high windows snapped up shut" (3) suggests the dark, unyielding, entrapping nature of the place. In her shop, Dicey toils away like the condemned Ixion:

> Sometimes work was all you could do, just put your shoulder to the wheel and push, and keep on pushing. You could barely see the wheel moving, but after a while you could see that you had gotton somewhere. So Dicey worked patient brushstroke after patient brushstroke. (99)

Unlike Ixion, Dicey does eventually effect her own escape from her underworld, but the metaphor suits the present reality she has created for herself. She leaves for work before sunrise and returns to the farm long after sunset; the darkness that constantly surrounds her echoes her bleak existence.

> Her arms ached from the circular motion of sanding and the stroking motion of painting. Her shoulders ached from the hefting around of plywood boats. Her back and the backs of her legs, too, ached--from bending over, to sand and paint, long hours after long hour . . . Dicey had a place to get to. Knowing the place . . . kept

Dicey going. (58)

Sammy complains that Dicey " 'live[s] . . . in the shop'". " 'All you don't do '", he scolds, " 'is sleep here '" (98).

At the centre of this underworld, Dicey meets Cisco Kidd, an appropriately shady and ambiguous character, who covertly aids Dicey as she journeys towards maturity. On one level, Cisco is an irresponsible drifter who insists on working with Dicey despite the latter's inability to pay him. It is at the mythic level, however, that Cisco plays a more significant role. Although Cisco does not abduct Dicey, the fact that he not only works by her side in the underworld cave of her shop, but also lives there makes him a Hades of sorts. The destructive "rape-trauma" archetype that Pratt identifies as predominant in women's fiction manifests itself in Seventeen Against The Dealer in Cisco's eventual betrayal of Dicey's trust and the deep pain that Dicey suffers at this betrayal implies an emotional ravishment.

Now a familiar pattern begins to emerge as once more a Tillerman woman is confronted with a dark figure who leads her further and further away from her family and friends. When Liza ran away with Frank Verricker, Gram, who in the previous two novels is set up as a Demeter figure, resorted to a life of emptiness and emotional sterility; when Dicey buries herself in her work with Cisco, Abigail becomes dangerously ill.

What is most important, however, is that Dicey's encounter with Cisco also fulfills another stage of Pratt's female archetypal journey: the confrontation with the parental figure. Cisco's

irresponsible nature and love of gambling recalls the character of Frank Verricker, Dicey's father, who deserted Liza and the children when Dicey was very young. Although in Sons from Afar, the Tillerman novel that traces the journey of maturation that Sammy and James undergo, Dicey calls her father " 'rotten '" and tells Sammy that she " 'never thought about [Frank] much . . . because--well it wouldn't do any good--And if I did . . . it made me very angry '" (41), she must, as she approaches adulthood come to terms with her father and the complexities of human nature. If one reads Cisco's friendship with Dicey as a substitute for Frank's relationship with his daughter, then Cisco becomes the agent through which Dicey is symbolically reconciled with her father.

Cisco betrays Dicey as harshly as Frank once did, but Dicey, nearing the end of her journey to adulthood, which has instilled in her the knowledge of the difficulties and rewards of interrelationships, is now better able to accept people realistically. As Dicey enters adulthood, she must confront and accept a complex human reality that cannot be divided into simply good and evil, or wholly kind or cruel. Cisco's complexity is related to the progressive phases of Dicey's relationship to him. At first, she is entirely suspicious of him, and then she is entirely trustful of him, but, by the time he betrays her, she has progressed to a more mature acceptance of the mixture of good and evil that defines human nature. When Cisco runs away with her money, Dicey knows that before long he will lose it all at gambling; but she also knows that "if he did win he'd give her back

hers" but "he wouldn't win . . . he never stop trying to get more, not until he lost it all" (169). Although the deep hurt and anger that Dicey experiences at Cisco's disappearance duplicates the grief that she has felt towards her missing father, the she that Dicey is able to see beyond Cisco's shortcomings and accept him (and by extension her father) as he is marks her changing view of the world as she grows into a wise and realistic woman.

Despite the fact that is ultimately a negative figure, he has a positive influence in Dicey's life (however unintentional on his part), and so also functions as a green-world helper figure in her journey of maturation. According to Pratt, the green-world guide serves as an "initiatory guide [who] often aids at difficult points in the quest" (140).

Although Cisco plays a rather ambiguous role in Dicey's self-discovery, one cannot ignore the force he exercises upon Dicey's journey of maturation. When Dicey meets Cisco, she has closed herself off from her family and from the world; as her friendship with him develops, she is constantly reminded of how detrimental her insulated existence is for her own well-being. Through Cisco, Voigt skillfully reiterates her emphasis on the necessity of risking oneself, opening oneself to fulfillment as much as to disappointment and hurt, in order to grow into a complete person. Dicey, who has dropped out of university, quickly becomes defensive when Cisco expresses shock at her ignorance of art, literature, and politics. But what is made clear by her inability to hold an intellectual conversation with him, despite the fact that in

previous novels her cleverness is always emphasized is that, Dicey's decision to stop learning in school reflects her decision to stop learning in life. Dicey's self-contained existence is challenged by a surprisingly well-read Cisco, who talks about books, scientific discoveries, philosophy, and, as he puts it,"'[j]ust the little things. Life. Time. Love. God. The nature of man. The nature of political structures. Power . . . '" (82).

Dicey soon sees the limitations of her seclusion and is embarrassed at how little she knows. Her withdrawal made her naive and unequal to the demands of reality. She takes for granted her relationships with the people she loves dearly. She depends on verbal agreements rather than on written and signed contracts in her business. Because of these mistakes, she destroys her business and almost loses her family. Education requires essentially the same risking of self that Dicey has learned relationships involve and that Cisco has learned gambling involves. All three demand admitting an incompleteness, a vulnerability that opens one up to the possibility of loss and disappointment. Cisco advocates a constant and total risk-taking. Being careful is boring: "'Insurance is for people who like to play it safe, people who can't take risks'" he suggests, and later he tells Dicey that the time to gamble is the time when she is most afraid that she will lose (85). Nevertheless this risking does not imply being stupid. There are times when it is better not to gamble: "'There's a song', Cisco said, 'Never hit seventeen, when you play against the dealer, for you know the odds won't ride with you'" (102), and even he is

sobered at the risk Dicey takes in conducting business without written contracts and in not telephoning Jeff for months while he is away at university. Dicey seems to vacillate between extremes: one moment she decides to withdraw completely from her family and Jeff and the next she trusts the word of complete strangers and so risks her business. Dicey must learn to temper trust with common sense and love with responsibility in order to become an adult.

The point of her entire relationship with Cisco becomes clear in Gram's response to Dicey's self-recriminations for trusting a man who had never pretended to be anything but irresponsible with a cheque that was to keep her business alive. " 'Don't fool yourself girl '", Gram tells her granddaughter, " 'It's not your failure. It's his. Yours would have been not to trust him '" (169). Gram, who has functioned as the voice of female wisdom and experience during Dicey's journey to selfhood, asserts once more the primacy of affiliation in self-fulfilment and the rightness of a life- vision that centres on the premise that integrity lies in a morality of care and interdependence. In caring about Cisco, Dicey asserts a belief in a predominantly good world and proves herself a sensitive and loving person. In this way, Dicey has both lost and gained in her relationship with Cisco; the fact that her gains outweigh her losses proves that she has gambled rightly and appropriately.

Dicey's relationship with Cisco begins her awakening from her paralysed existence, but it is the gravity of Gram's illness that finally shocks Dicey back to a life of responsibility and

relationships, and initiates her rebirth. Bettleheim writes of "Sleeping Beauty": "The world becomes alive only to those who awaken to it. Only relating positively to the other 'awakens' us from the danger of sleeping away our life" (234). This emphasis on the revitalizing power of interdependence in female quests for self supports Gilligan's conclusion that, for women, the "path that leads to maturity" lies with "ongoing attachment and the continuing importance of care in relationships" (170). Frightened by Gram's condition, Dicey realizes the danger of "not noticing things" (125). She telephones the doctor who chastises the children for not acting sooner; she diagnoses Gram as having a mild case of pneumonia caused by fatigue. Ashamed of herself, Dicey regrets "the way she had been living exclusively for her work" (139).

Her return to a life of nurturing and affiliation is confirmed by the active concern she shows for her family. She devises a way to help Maybeth memorize the dates for her history exam and discovers, along with her sister, that time cannot be measured but by dates by "boxes" in which events are coexistent and simultaneous. Because, as Maybeth explains, " 'things all happen together ' " (131), Dicey recognizes the importance of living in the present in order to have the time to see things that are happening around her. She also comes up with an idea of how to win Sammy the scholarship he needs in order to attend the camp. The threat of losing Gram makes Dicey re-evaluate her priorities. No longer obsessed with dreams of her boat, no longer absorbed by her work, she enters into a caring and responsible relationship with herself

and with others beginning to live once more in the present. Despite its price and the effect such a purchase will have on her bank balance, she buys Gram a cassette player to alleviate the boredom of the long hours of recuperation.

Furthermore, she realizes that she does not want to lose Jeff and actively goes out in search of him to apologize for her insensitivity. Dicey not only finds Jeff but discovers the depth of his love. The two agree to marriage, and the interdependence upon which their proposed relationship is founded is made clear when she tells Jeff, who will be busy writing his honours thesis, that she " 'owe[s] '" (181) it to herself to build a boat and thinks seriously about " 'going to school and learning boatbuildings or design, or signing up to be somebody's apprentice . . . '" (181). Dicey thus realizes the responsibility that she has to herself. By the end of the novel and the end of her journey, she completes what Gilligan defines as the "sequence of women's moral judgment" a journey which moves from an "initial concern with survival to a focus on goodness and finally to a reflective understanding of care as the most adequate guide to the resolution of conflicts in human relationships" (105). Dicey realizes that, in the end, when she thought of all the things she wanted to do, and

> do right--do right by, do as well as they could be done . . . It was all so risky, because there were no guarantees. You couldn't be sure that any of the risks would pay off. Even if you studied, and planned, and

> worked, even if you did the best you could, you could still lose out . . . That's what no guarantees meant . . . Then she understood--it wasn't guarantees she needed . . . but chances, chances to take. Just the chance to take a chance. (181)

Dicey learns that what is important in living is to keep learning, to keep taking risks, and to remain, always open to new experiences which, no matter how painful or joyful, will always keep her rooted firmly in life and affiliated with human community.

At the archetypal level, the tripartite goddess is again evoked as Dicey prepares to assume naturally the next phase in her life. According to Barbara Walter's study of the pre-Christian female trinity, the central attribute of the triple-faced goddess is its embodiment of a "naturalistic world vision" (21) which valued the life cycle as a "system of perpetual becoming" (14). The three phases of the goddess--maid, mother, and crone--represent the three stages of a woman's life (Walker 22). At the end of Seventeen Against The Dealer, Dicey's responsiveness both to herself and others, as well as her acts of nurturance, indicates an assimilation of the maternal role and a readiness to leave the phase of maidenhood behind. Whereas Dicey, at thirteen years of age, was forced to become a mother to her brothers and sister in order to ensure the survival of her family, now, at twenty-one, she moves both literally and symbolically, into a space that she is emotionally ready to occupy. Her progression from maid to mother is confirmed by her agreement to marry Jeff and thus enter into the

next part of her life as a mature and insightful woman. The generativeness and regeneration that occurred throughout Dicey's self-discovery is supported by a subtext of female archetypal rituals of birth, death, and rebirth, and of rape, and restoration.

Dicey realizes her identity through an ethic of care and a morality of responsibility in a journey that relates to specific female archetypal structures. The renewal through relationships of responsibility and care that lies at the centre of mythic archetypes such as the tripartite goddess and the story of Demeter and Persephone, and the folkloric archetypes such as Gretel, Molly Whuppie, and Sleeping Beauty, structures Dicey Tillerman's coming of age. Dicey's narrative is a modern rendering of a girl's growth from childhood (Homecoming) to adolescence (Dicey's Song) to adulthood (Seventeen Against The Dealer) based on the timeless stories of female experience of self and other.

CONCLUSION

Homecoming, Dicey's Song, and Seventeen Against The Dealer are realistic narratives that acquire greater depth through the incorporation of archetypal patterns of female emotional and moral development. By placing Dicey's self-discovery in the context of an immediate family circle and a larger community circle, Voigt keeps her heroine in a world where a sensitivity to the needs of both other and self are fundamental to Dicey's self-discovery. According to Carol Gilligan, Carol Christ, Barbara Walker, and Annis Pratt, these values are integral to women's emotional development, and, examined in the light of their beliefs, Dicey's journey of maturation is consistent with feminist hypotheses about women's developmental patterns.

The theories advanced by critics like Northrope Frye and Joseph Campbell concerning the universality and centrality of narrative archetypes is necessarily problematic for women, who quickly discover in traditional theories a definite bias towards citing male patterns of maturation as universal and normative. This universal, in turn, appears to lead to an assumption, by these critics, of a male reader who can identify with the archetypal hero and his quest, a man who has realized his potential through separation and individuation. When critics, like Bettleheim and Campbell, address a female experience, they envision figures who are so passive and submissive that many women readers find them disappointing, if not deeply disturbing. Women appear in

Campbell's paradigm of the heroic quest as mothers or as seducers, and, even when they are goddess figures, women's fulfillment occurs soley when they become wives to the hero. Campbell's description of role of women comes only as it is necessary to the fulfillment of the hero's quest: "the mystical marriage with the queen-goddess of the world represents the hero's total mastery of life; for the woman is life, the hero its knower and master" (120). Should the hero be "not a youth but a maid," even then her success is achieved when she is deemed "by her qualities, her beauty, or her yearning to become the consort of an immortal . . . And if she has shunned him, the scales fall from her eyes: is she has sought him, her desire finds its peace" (119).

Bettleheim, using Sleeping Beauty as his model, renders female maturation as contingent upon a male presence that is fundamental to a girl's initiation into womanhood. Bettleheim calls Sleeping Beauty's sleep "frigid" and "narcissistic." It is "[t]he kiss of the prince, " Bettleheim argues, "[that] breaks the spell of narcissism and awakens a womanhood which, up to then, has remained undeveloped" (234).

But if, as Northrope Frye believes, literature is the assimilation of mythic and folkloric story-patterns (33) that reflect timeless truths about humanity, why do many women writers and readers find archetypal roles like those of seductresses and sleeping princesses completely unrepresentative of their own humanity? Are woman doomed, as Carol Christ contends, to "live in the interstices between their own vaguely understood experience and

the shapings given to their experience by the stories of men" (5)? Without the validation of their distinctive experiences of self and other through story will women be tempted to regard their experiences as invalid and live a life of self-denial?

Recent work by feminist critics such as Annis Pratt, Carol Gilligan, Carol Christ, and Barbara Walker, shows that female-authored texts do offer a positive alternative for women who seek modes of self-representation other than those of temptresses and Sleeping Beauties. In her study of women's fiction, Annis Pratt discovers that their narratives reveal structural metaphors that present life in terms of its cyclic nature, so that motifs of death and rebirth, nothingness and awakening, rape and restoration, nurturing and interrelationships, and the continuing of the generations pervade their narratives. Such motifs embody specifically women-centred archetypal systems that reflect narratives like the Demeter/Persephone myth and that of the ancient tripartite female goddess. Although archetypes derived from folklore are not discussed in any great depth by these feminist critics, one can definitely postulate that tales like "Hansel and Gretel," "Molly Whuppie," and "The Snow Queen" that involve female heroines whose victories depend on their ability to love and to nurture would hold the same influence in structuring women's fiction as do the mythic female archetypes. Gilligan emphasises that women's emotional development arises from and is defined through their relationships with others (13). Christ, argues that women are responsible for their own emotional development and take

an active role in their decision to withdraw from their loved ones in order to discover their own potentials and thus awaken into more fulfilling lives of self-authenticity (13, 19).

An understanding of these archetypes encourages reading Cynthia Voigt's story of Dicey Tillerman as a realistic version of the mythic narrative of an initiation into womanhood. Together, the three novels contain a subtext that fuse folkloric and mythic structures affirming a female experience of self and other. Dicey's courage and resourcefulness parallel the life-saving strengths of folktale heroines like Gretel and Molly Whuppie, while her adolescent withdrawal draws upon the symbolic metaphor represented by Sleeping Beauty's deep sleep and eventual awakening into a new life. Furthermore, Dicey's growth from girl to woman embodies elements of the Demeter/Persephone myth and the figure of the ancient tripartite goddess, both of which figure as powerful archetypes of interrelationship and interdependence.

The three aspects of the tripartite goddess represent the three phases of a woman's life, beginning with maidenhood followed by motherhood, and finally, culminating in the figure of the wise old woman, or crone. The three aspects are in constant motion, in a continuous state of becoming, embodying woman's own life cycle, and this state of perpetual becoming is emphasized throughout Dicey Tillerman's story as she develops into a responsible and loving woman. The relationship between daughters and mothers, the story of daughters mothering, and mothers who themselves need to be nurtured, reveals the structural metaphor of the Demeter/Persephone

myth, which centres upon regeneration through human relationship and restoration through human love.

In Homecoming, the first novel, Dicey Tillerman, although still a child, is forced to become the caretaker of her family as a result of her mother's disappearance. During the course of the novel, Dicey undergoes a series of experiences which slowly bring her to an understanding of home and of what it means. Dicey encounters places like Rockland Park, where she finds complete freedom, but with it, an absence of any sort of meaningful and lasting contact with other people, places like Eunice's house, where she finds herself completely entrapped by guilt and obligation, and finally, Gram's farm, where she finds the freedom as well as the sense of belonging and security that she has discovered to be the ultimate object of her quest for home.

As in folktales like "Hansel and Gretel,", "Molly Whuppie," and "The Snow Queen," the survival of loved ones in Homecoming depends upon the heroine's courage and resourcefulness. However, the fact that Dicey is neither emotionally nor physically able to fullfill the maternal role in her family's life is emphasized in the recurring motif of hunger and food that runs throughout the Tillermans' journey. The food the children, including Dicey, crave is symbolic of their profound need for emotional nurturing and love. The worth of the various characters that she and her family encounter along their journey is measured by their ability to nurture properly the Tillerman children. Characters like, Louis and Edie, Eunice Logan, and Farmer Rudyard, either deny or fail to

give the children this nurturing, and thus are characterized negatively as drifters, hypocrites, or kidnappers. On the other hand, the college students, Windy and Stewart, and the circus folk, Will and Claire, who offer the children food and proper care assume meaningful roles in the children's life. When the children finally do find a home in Crisfield, they discover not only food and shelter, but a place of nurturing and growth. As Dicey and her family find a new life and a new home, they in turn bring new life to their grandmother, giving the old woman a second chance to care for a family and correct the mistakes she had made with her own children who left her many years ago. In this way, Dicey's relationship with her grandmother enacts what Pratt identifies as a predominant archetypal structure in women's fiction, one that involves "a story of the rejuvenation of the mother in the personality of the daughter and of the daughter in the personality of the mother" (172).

Dicey's Song, focuses on the way Dicey must learn to be a child again in order to experience the emotional maturation necessary to enter adulthood as a sensitive and caring woman. The process of her development into adolescence parallels the change in the goddess from maid towards mother; Dicey, at thirteen years of age, prepares to enter adolescence and to assume the more adult maternal role that the tripartite goddess portrays. In Dicey's Song, she undertakes an emotional quest of self-discovery, one that requires her to relinquish her fierce self-reliance and the alienation and isolation it has created. Her movement from

isolation to connection occurs in a series of ever-widening circles involving her understanding, first, of her place within her family circle, and, then, of her understanding of her place within the larger community circle, and, finally, of her place within the life-cycle, the circle of living and dying that defines life itself. The first two circles see Dicey move to include both friends and family in a rich interpersonal network that is mutually sustaining. Having discovered a new relationship with the people around her, Dicey is able to embark on a new relationship with her world and her place within the cycle of life and death.

Before writing Seventeen Against The Dealer, the final novel focusing on Dicey's development, Cynthia Voigt published four novels that deal with the other members of the Tillerman family and with Dicey's friends. Dicey appears briefly in only three of them, A Solitary Blue, Come a Stranger, and Sons From Afar, and not at all in The Runner, which is about her uncle Bullet, who had been killed in Vietnam several years earlier. Each of these novels, however, contains patterns of character development that provide parallels and contrasts to Dicey's.

In considering these novels sequentially, the reader becomes aware of the family and social circles surrounding Dicey. Just as Voigt's heroine grows in her understanding of the people in her life, so, too, does the reader's understanding of Dicey develop as he or she understands these people. In each novel Voigt emphasizes the necessity of the characters' moving from isolation towards connection. They must refute what Gilligan, in In A Different

Voice, defines as the competitive, aggressive male pattern of development. These four novels embrace the more balanced vision of life (open to both males and females) that allows fulfillment through connection and nurturing.

Like Dicey, Jeff, the central character in A Solitary Blue, is abandoned by his mother. He lives a lonely life, making sure that everything runs smoothly in the household, fearing that, if he does not, his father will also leave him. In his loneliness, he identifies with a "solitary blue" heron he sees while visiting his mother. Jeff discovers that his mother is selfish and superficial and realizes how much she has hurt his father. This understanding fosters a new relationship between the boy and his father, one which resembles Dicey's with Gram. Father and son also learn that, by sharing pain, taking risks, and reaching out, they are able to find the love and support they previously lacked.

The boys in The Runner and Sons from Afar also discover fulfillment in connection. At first, they locate sources of satisfaction and strength in aggressive, competitive behaviour. In The Runner, Bullet, the children's uncle, insists on winning every race in which he competes. In Sons From Afar, Dicey's brothers, Sammy and James, struggle to define themselves through competitive sport and physical violence. Yet all three boys remain dissatisfied, unfulfilled, and angry. Only when Bullet overcomes his racial prejudice and reaches out to embrace a Negro as a friend and when James Tillerman and Sammy Tillerman reach out and embrace each other as friends, do the boys discover what Dicey and Jeff

also learn: that fulfillment and strength must be found in relationships.

As a female character, Nina Smiths' growth parallels Dicey's even more closely. Come a Stranger tells the story of a Negro girl who is as independent and strong-willed as Dicey. Her growing relationship with the Tillermans, the minister, and her own family helps her to find her place in the world. Like Dicey, Nina must define herself through a closely knit community of family and friends, thereby achieving what is in Carol Christ's terms "a sense of authentic selfhood" (22).

Thus, the four novels that follow Dicey's Song provide perspective and depth to the nature of Dicey's quest for self. A Solitary Blue, The Runner, Come a Stranger, Song from Afar all centre upon the belief that life is sustained through interdependence. The pattern of self-fulfillment that informs each of the novels illuminates and reinforces details of the nature of Dicey's own quest. Although three of these four novels involve a male protagonist, the fact that Gilligan defines the movement from separation to connection that each undertakes as peculiar to female moral development problematizes the issue of Dicey's development as specifically feminine. The issue resolves itself quite easily when one categorizes patterns of development as female and male not specifically by a biological identity, but by one's experience of self and other. What is important about the four novels is the way that the protagonists, like Dicey, learn to move out of their self-protective emotional solitudes and into more responsible and

fulfilling relationships within both the family circle and the community. Voigt's emphasis on interdependence is a common thread that recurs throughout all seven of the novels that make up the Tillerman family saga and so reveals archetypal structures of nurturing and caring that fit Gilligan's conclusions about the unique nature of female development.

The last book in the Tillerman cycle, Seventeen Against The Dealer, records Dicey's growth into a mature and responsible woman who, at the archetypal level, is now ready to assume the role symbolized by the maternal aspect of the mythic goddess. The structure of the novel relies heavily upon the "Sleeping Beauty" tale. Yet, while Dicey's lethargy and remoteness bear strong resemblance to Sleeping Beauty's deep sleep, Seventeen Against The Dealer differs from the folktale in that the heroine is responsible for her own "awakening." Dicey's quest is thus a rendering of a woman's discovery of self, one which adheres to the patterns of female development as outlined by Pratt, Gilligan, Christ, and Walker. Dicey learns that a life of indifference to, or unawareness of, the needs of others is dangerous, if not destructive; she repudiates her childlike egocentricity in favour of an adult sensitivity and responsibility. Her relationship with Cisco leads her to the realization of the importance of remaining open to new experiences, of always learning, of always growing, of always having the courage to take risks. Dicey's relationship with Cisco teaches her the same philosophy of becoming that is at the centre of the archetypal tripartite goddess.

While this thesis, in its use of archetypes to consider Homecoming, Dicey's Song, and Seventeen Against The Dealer, the three novels that focus directly on Dicey Tillerman's experiences, shares a similar approach to Voigt's fiction as James Henke's critical article on Homecoming, it attempts to move beyond rigid absolutes and to consider, instead, the way in which the novels reverberate and resonate with suggestions of archetypal images that reflect a specifically female reality. In Henke's eyes, Homecoming can be read as a rewriting of Homer's Odyssey, or as a modern rendition of "Hansel and Gretel." Both his mythic and folkloric readings consist largely of contrived correlations, and his determination to allegorize results in his manipulating and omitting details in order to make his argument convincing. His reading of the "Hansel and Gretel" subtext, as it appears in Homecoming, is especially questionable, overlooking details of the folktale that are central to its meaning. In particular, Henke ignores the fact that, whereas "Hansel and Gretel" involves a circular journey in which the protagonists return to their original home and are reintegrated, Homecoming involves a linear journey. That Dicey ends in a new home at the end of Homecoming is essential to the nature of her quest, one which is defined by an ongoing development, a going forward rather than a movement back. Furthermore, Henke neglects to consider the significance of Gretel, and by extension, Dicey, as a heroine who is responsible for the successful completion of her quest. Homecoming shares with "Hansel and Gretel" a female protagonist who derives her strength and

courage from interdependence. While Henke reduces Homecoming to an unyielding retelling of The Odyssey or of "Hansel and Gretel," this thesis endeavours to discover mythic and folkloric archetypal structures in the three novels about Dicey Tillerman in order to enrich Voigt's fiction and to consider it, in particular, as a reflection of female experience.

Dicey Tillerman's self-discovery entails both the convictions and the emotions of women-centred folktales and myths thus enabling Voigt to create a modern story that offers a fresh and insightful perspective on a young woman's moral development. The success of Voigt's fiction lies, finally, in the way that it can be read on a number of levels from the contemporary surface narrative to the timeless archetypal subtext. As a writer of children's literature, Voigt imparts to her readers a reality that is emotionally complex, often difficult, but always kept alive through a human community of interdependence and care. And, for as long as we continue to find ourselves rooted in a human experience of self and other that is as complicated as it is sustaining, as painful as it is fulfilling, as intimidating as it is comforting, there will always be room on our bookshelves for the novels of Cynthia Voigt.

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