

Working-Class Intruders: Female Domestics in *Kamouraska* and *Alias Grace*

In the end, she said, we had the better of them, because we washed their dirty linen and therefore we knew a good deal about them; but they did not wash ours, and knew nothing about us at all. (*Alias Grace* 189)

She “sits on a cushion and sews a fine seam,” cool as a cucumber and with her mouth primmed up like a governess’s, and I lean my elbows on the table across from her, cudgelling my brains, and trying in vain to open her up like an oyster. (*Alias Grace* 159)

Traditionally, domestic servants in literature have been fixed as icons and stock characters (for instance, drudges, loafers, fools, messengers, mammies, and accomplices), or under-represented as silenced subjects, background fixtures mute as furniture. As indicated by the title of Bruce Robbins’s study, *The Servant’s Hand: English Fiction from Below*, domestics appeared on the margins of the text as metonymic presences and necessary absences in Victorian fiction, their dismembered hands standing in for fuller representations of the people. In Canadian literature, however, female domestics have done a great deal of cultural work in fiction, appearing increasingly as protagonists after the turn of the century in English, French, and minority ethnic literature (for example, in Antonine Maillet’s *La Sagouine*, Ethel Wilson’s *Lilly’s Story*, Gabrielle Roy’s *La Rivière sans repos*, and Nellie McClung’s *Painted Fires*). Literary versions of domestics in Canada have ranged from the “servant’s hand” on the margins of the text to the well-known servant/protagonists who dominate the fictional landscape by voicing servitude and classed subjectivities. Servant/protagonists are, nonetheless, too often read as minority ethnics, universal symbols of womanhood, or the people in general, rather than as representations of domestics. Despite the fact that literary servants have been the focus of feminist recovery in critically acclaimed texts like *Kamouraska* and *Alias Grace*, female domestics have failed to appear as a meaningful category of analysis in Canadian women’s writing. Aurélie has been read as a minority ethnic

and a female double for the lady of Kamouraska, and Grace Marks has been read as a fluid, “unbounded” postmodern subject (March 80) and a haunted, split personality. Although it is difficult to bring materialist analysis and social history to bear in a direct way on these dreamlike historical novels, I would like to probe the ideology of their representations of domestics by considering the politics of domestic space in their narratives.

In order to suggest oppositional ways of reading female domestics in literature, I wish to explore how they are portrayed as intruders into the bourgeois spaces of home and nation. Often seen transgressing social boundaries, these working-class intruders overstep their place and thus threaten their middle-class employers, privileged women in particular, and social order in general. This analysis of working-class intruders deploys two meanings of intrusion that are opposed ideologically: first, intrusion as moral panic about domestics encroaching upon the private home or bodily space of the upper and middle classes; and second, intrusion as an oppositional reading style that makes female domestics visible as a category of analysis and thus intrudes upon our assumptions about universal womanhood. In the first, more usual, sense, intrusion expresses a moral panic that is reproduced in frequent images of domestics transgressing symbolic or physical borders, which are themselves the product of particular historical moments and attitudes toward domestic space, through actions such as stealing, talking back, spying, eavesdropping, dressing up as a lady, plotting murder, seducing, or simply knowing too much about the class other (as suggested by the dirty laundry in the epigraph). In the second sense, intrusion is possible through a radical reading practice, a disturbance arrived at through oppositional knowledge. Especially in Canadian culture where we so often read subjects as classless even though authors depict them otherwise, we need to make visible the politics of domestic space and how textual representations of those spatial relations reproduce or challenge lived power relations.

Claudette Lacelle describes, in her social history of domestics in nineteenth-century Upper and Lower Canada, the nature of contact between the classes in cities of the time. She notes that “les grandes villes ont été caractérisées par la coexistence de deux populations fort différentes, l’une stable et permanente, l’autre mobile et transitoire” (10). What was unique in domestic work was that it put these two populations into contact on a daily basis. Further, Lacasse notes that this contact took place within a larger context of urban poverty: “Autre constante: les maisons où vécurent ces gens [. . .] ne constituaient qu’une faible minorité des résidences urbaines et elles

comptaient parmi ce qu'il y avait de mieux et de plus confortable dans un siècle où on déplorait la grande pauvreté des villes, de même que leur insalubrité notoire" (10). The mobility of the poor has always been the subject of social hysteria (Kaplan, Rimstead), and that of domestics was no exception, especially since the high turnover rate in domestic staff meant that servants changed their place of employment four or five times a year in this period (Lacelle), resulting in the lack of trained servants and the so-called "servant problem."¹ Anxiety that contamination, crime, sexual deviance, and social deterioration would arrive in the person of the domestic resulted from the close(d) contact into which these two virtually segregated populations were brought by domestic work and the architectural authority of the bourgeois house. Privileged subjects depended for the maintenance of their habitat, their bodies, their cleanliness, and their very class difference on those from the "unwashed" masses, those from whom the rising middle classes sought to distance themselves. The spatial politics is fraught with the paradox of necessary proximity and desired distance. As feminist historians have pointed out, "servants working in the household lived amongst people of a different class, but did not live like them. For it was the work done by servants that allowed their masters to live a life different from their own . . ." (Clio Collective 157). Separate staircases and separate places at mealtime demarcated the "physical and human" barriers between servants and families in nineteenth-century houses and also ensured the invisibility of labour and servants themselves (Clio Collective 157, McClintock 160-76). Separate spaces were more evident in urban homes, for in rural homes, the help—often daughters of neighbouring families—tended to eat with the family, shun uniforms, share sleeping quarters with family members, and regard their work as temporary, not lifelong service (Cohen, Errington, Lacelle, Leslie).

The female domestic worker can be studied as a site of power relations and cultural contact at the nexus of capitalism and patriarchy. Not only does she represent the place where one class of women can afford to own the domestic labour of another class of women; she also represents a shared space among women, the devaluation of all women's domestic labour under patriarchy, including sexual service and reproduction. The authors of *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe* note that domestic work was the main source of waged labour for women until 1940, and that the migration of rural women to the city to secure domestic work had more impact on women's lives than industrialization itself (Anderson and Zinsser 248).

Paradoxically, then, while few of the elite could afford servants, the majority of women working outside the home in the Western world were in service from the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth when factory jobs and others forms of employment opened to them. In terms of space and contact, the essential fact was that servants changed their positions often, most wanting to marry out of the situation altogether, and the elite had to deal with a constant stream of strangers within their doors, strangers with aspirations of mobility.²

Of the few existing literary studies on domestics in Western literature, most note that when paternalism was displaced by capitalism and the role of the servant shifted from loyalty to a contractual arrangement, the dramatization of intrusion increased, as manifested in crime writing that featured servants as threats within the household (Harris, Robbins, Trodd).³ The sexualization of master/servant relations and the icon of the domestic as temptress, the heightened need for privacy in the bourgeois home in the nineteenth century, the social hysteria around contamination by servants and the poor in general as morally and intellectually inferior, the rhetoric of racial purity in national policies to recruit domestics abroad, and the construction of good and bad femininity which helped separate the ladies from the maids—social attitudes like these buttressed the popular icon of the domestic as working-class intruder (Barber, Giles and Arat-Koç, Kaplan, Lacelle, Leslie, McClintock, Schechter).

Among Canadian and Québécois novels that have dramatized the female domestic's life in the nineteenth century, Anne Hébert's *Kamouraska* (1970) and Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996) stand out as compelling accounts of the female servant as criminal accomplice, with the former foregrounding the lady and consigning the servant to the margins, and the latter erasing the lady almost completely to feature the female servant/protagonist in interaction with her peers and with gentlemen. Both novels reactivate the residual form of domestics in crime fiction by revisiting the nineteenth century through the vehicle of the sensationalized murder in which domestics are criminal accomplices. As historical novels, however, both reach back from the late twentieth century into the mid-1800s to imagine the stories and subjectivities around actual crimes by Canadian women, whose very notoriety hints at the social panic around women and domestics striking back on rare occasions. The likenesses and differences between the two novels stem less from the fact that one was written in French and the other in English or that their social contexts were Lower Canada or Upper Canada,

than from the way they show symbolic and social space dominated by class and gender, and from the way these texts inscribe class divisions, but then attempt to transcend these divisions through images of universal womanhood.

At the heart of the crimes of passion in these two novels is desire. In *Kamouraska*, the French lady, Elisabeth, desires her English lover, the Doctor, and her freedom from a brutal husband, the Seigneur of Kamouraska. In the lady's shadow, her mixed-blood maid, Aurélie, desires fine clothes and romance with a gentleman. In *Alias Grace*, the Irish-Canadian servant/accomplice, Grace Marks, desires "things" (dresses, bonnets, gloves) and the rise in status and living standard they imply. Her fellow servants, Mary and Nancy, also desire mobility and romance as evidenced in their affairs with gentlemen. Despite different social stations, the ladies and maids in these novels regard their lot/space as women within patriarchy as unfair and inauthentic, resulting in a conscious form of theatrics, which requires the wearing of masks to hide female power, desire, and deceit. In *Kamouraska* the lady wears the mask, while in *Alias Grace* the servant does. We cannot know to what extent the lady and the maid are, as narrators, lying or misrepresenting their part in actual crimes, for in both novels, truth is questioned through plural narrators, the intervention of dreams into reality, and the "mad woman" motif, not to mention the mystical presence of evil.

It is not merely because the servant is marginal to the text as in *Kamouraska* that we can assume she has a hegemonic function in the novel. Nor can it be assumed that when she steps into the spotlight as the protagonist in *Alias Grace* she will have a resistant or militant function.⁴ The shadowy messenger/accomplice Aurélie in *Kamouraska* occupies the margins of the lady's text in many of the stock ways that Robbins identifies, but her doubling of the bourgeois protagonist gives her the potential of resistance as a feminist element in the text. Also, her talking back gives her a decidedly resistant class role to play as spokesperson of the people. To date, *Alias Grace* may be the most sustained and detailed portrait of a domestic's life and work in the English Canadian novel, but it is not the most resistant in terms of class politics because its postmodern insistence on indeterminacy and the fluid subject consistently dissolve material relations into abstract space, discourse, and fragments. To make sense of the class subtexts underlying each novel, it is useful to focus on their construction of the lady and the maid in relation to the politics of domestic space and the two meanings of intrusion proposed earlier.

On the Margins of the Mistress's Text: Domesticity in *Kamouraska*

Anne Hébert's *Kamouraska*, written in 1970 as a retrospective loosely based on an actual crime in the 1840s, invokes Aurélie as an accomplice in her mistress's plot to murder her husband. When read through feminist reading practices, *Kamouraska* expands and thematizes the marginal servant's role in order to comment skilfully on the parallels between the servant and the mistress, each constructed under patriarchy. When read oppositionally in terms of class and the politics of space, the contrasts between the servant and mistress are highlighted to reveal their respective class roles and habitus (to use Pierre Bourdieu's term for the complex system of tastes and everyday practices that reproduce class identity and lifestyle). Several chapters open with Elisabeth, the lady of the house, sleeping in a servant's bed, while her second husband lies dying in their own. In this role reversal and under the sign of disorder, she comments repeatedly on the smallness of the space allotted the servant girls: "La pièce est petite et ridicule. Une sorte de carton à chapeaux, carré, avec papier à fleurs" (40). In Elisabeth's role as lady, however, she is also concerned with the restrictions placed on her body by the symbolic space allowed a lady in nineteenth-century Sorel, and frequently refers to herself as a playing a role, striking a pose, wearing a mask (tropes of deception often reserved for the domestic servant) rather than occupying the space of her body and her home more authentically. Hébert's novel combines a disturbing psychodrama and historic romance to protest the gender role Elisabeth has been given to play in Lower Canada as a bourgeois lady, wife, and mother of eight children (resulting from eleven births over twenty-two years and two marriages). Although Elisabeth herself resents this role, she enjoys her privileges as lady of the manor and sees her class position as part of her essence, deep beneath the mask of woman's Christian resignation. The text shows that it is the servitude of the female body within the Father's house that binds Elisabeth to her female servants in the margins of this text, for they are all engaged in the domestic production of children for church, family, and state (Aurélie's part as midwife underscores this relationship to her mistress). They are also bound to the maintenance of the manor and the great house as ordered spaces (according to bourgeois taste [Bourdieu], the Father's house [Smart], and the cult of domesticity [McClintock]), even though they compete for men's attention within that space.

The text shows the mistress dependent on, but in competition with, the women who do her domestic work. Elisabeth resolves to hire a plain wet-nurse—"une femme laide, pas trop jeune, qui soit propre et qui ait du lait"

(89)—to combat the wandering eye of her lustful first husband. Her second husband would rather be tended on his sickbed by Florida, the trusted housekeeper, than by Elisabeth, the treacherous lady. Florida holds the keys to the pantry and knows where all the provisions are kept, but Elisabeth panics when she cannot locate a cube of sugar for her sick husband. In the role of trusted, efficient servant, Florida is foil to both the lady and her accomplice/maid, two women who have broken the order of the Father's house by stepping beyond their servile female roles and desiring more. These moments of competition highlight not only the contrast in power between the mistress and the maids, but also their shared spaces within patriarchy. Florida displaces her mistress at the second husband's deathbed because of the power and strength of her hands which symbolize trusted service: "Mme Rolande abandonne son mari aux mains expertes qui l'a-paisent et le possèdent" (29).

Invisible hands were needed to manage the many rooms, children, and possessions of the lady in the nineteenth-century manor house. The order in the Father's house is thus maintained by servants as well as the lady herself; a long string of nursemaids, governesses, wetnurses, cooks, cleaners, messengers, and stable boys provide the silent hands that keep the household functioning. Hébert inscribes intricate images of silk, lace, and velvet, frequently sullied by blood and dirt, not only to connote the lady's guilt, but also to show the difficulty of maintaining order and cleanliness, given the elaborate dress and habits of the bourgeoisie. For example, Elisabeth comments on the elegant pantalets, frills, crinolines, and embroidered bibs of her children (14), and on her wedding night, the seduction and disarray of sexual activity go on beneath layers of lace and velvet that enrobe the lady in her public role as one who wears her wealth. (In a significant act of betrayal, her first husband will rummage through Elisabeth's wardrobe to give some of her finery to women far beneath her in status, his country mistresses, who symbolically usurp her role as lady.)

When Elisabeth appears unkempt and dishevelled before her children and the maid after sleepless nights mourning at the deathbed of her second husband (the narrative frame for her tortured memories of the murder of her first husband), the nursemaid flatters her by noting what a picture she makes with her children: "On dirait la reine avec ses petits princes autour d'elle." But the children protest that their mother is not herself at all: "Mais Maman est en robe de chambre! Ses cheveux sont en désordre. Et puis son visage a l'air tout rouge!" (34). The pressure for controlled appearances and

spaces comes from the children themselves as the text constructs the lady as one who must not show the signs of physical labour or duress. Elisabeth, besides being tormented by sleepless nights, guilt, and delusions, has just helped the nursemaid tidy the nursery and dress the children in the absence of Florida, who is tending the sick husband. This further role reversal signals the tenuousness of the division between maids and mistresses and their shared space in the Father's house. When the maid is otherwise occupied, the lady must step in and take up the devalued domestic work that maintains order in the Father's house. Anderson and Zinsser note that for a woman in nineteenth-century England and France, "the first step up in society was to move out of the kitchen and leave the grosser forms of housework to her servants, to switch from labouring herself to supervising others' labour" (131). (They also remind us that the servants' work liberated the lady to bear more children for the patriarchy.) The unkempt appearance of the mistress in *Kamouraska* jars the children's sense of order as indicated by the reference to the family picture: "En un clin d'œil le charme est rompu, la fausse représentation démasquée. Le désordre de la toilette de Mme Rolland jure comme une fausse note. Un si joli tableau d'enfants soignés et tirés à quatre épingles. Agathe semble honteuse de s'être laissée prendre par d'aussi pauvres apparences" (34). Such is the control of the bourgeois habitus on the construction of the lady's body and soul that even her own children police her appearance, while the young maid alone does not at first recognize the class imperatives for order and the difference between the dishevelled woman and the queen, and by extension that between the lady and herself.

Yet, true to the class snobbishness expected in her position, Elisabeth often refers with contempt to the servant women who help her maintain her lady-like cleanliness, control, and leisure. Referring to them as inherently contaminated and contaminating, she disdains their coarseness: "les caresses bourruées des paysannes en bonnets tuyautés" (20); "Une gourde qui sort de sa balourdise" (28); "Ma pauvre Agathe vous n'êtes qu'une bête" (33). As employer, she not only holds herself above this class of women, but orders them about, depends on them, competes with them, reprimands them, manipulates them, and at times even strikes and shakes them. Even her imaginative space is invaded by them. She imagines that three maids in uniform invade her waking dream state, riding in on rays of sunlight to order the room and turn out her drawers looking for evidence against her. With their knowledge and accusations and their power to bring

order to the Father's house, they are rivals. But as the images of maids turn into maiden aunts (symbols of matriarchal domestic order and piety), the class barriers dissolve, and the shared space of female servitude within patriarchy emerges as the ultimately shared place of women (42-50).

The main role of accomplice and accuser in this drama of guilt is played by Aurélie, who appears in a number of stock servant roles in the margins of her mistress's story: for example, messenger, double, voice of the people, maid who talks back, trollop, hands that serve, wisewoman, and minority ethnic (not to mention the stock female role of witch/midwife). Elisabeth envies Aurélie her freedom to run with the boys and then the men, to smoke a pipe, to bear the stigma of a bad reputation, to dabble in midwifery and witchcraft, and to know about boys and her own body. But she is relieved as well as guilty that Aurélie will serve two and a half years of prison time, while she, Elisabeth, the mastermind, will be released after only a few months. Aurélie's relative freedom to be herself, make sexual choices, be midwife rather than mother, and move freely in the forest outside domestic space without the need to protect her reputation is based not only on the class construction of femininity, but also on her marginal position as a mulatto, who is outside of the community anyway by virtue of racial impurity. This limited freedom is tempered, however, by Aurélie's lack of status. Few will believe her truthful testimony at the trial, while the good families and the elite will back Elisabeth's duplicity, protecting her from social sanction by closing ranks around her. However, as Carla Zecher has pointed out in a paper on Aurélie as Elisabeth's double, the maid will eventually be reunited with the community while Elisabeth, as lady, will be left to her private hell in her private space (17).

From the very beginning of the narrative, the mistress and the maid have embarked on a strange alliance based on envy and blame, class distance and desire. Both are caught up with the intrigue of romance when the English doctor enters the scene to form a love triangle. Actually two triangles are formed: one of patriarchal control and romance (Elisabeth, her first husband—the Seigneur of Kamouraska—and the English Doctor); and the other, a triangle of crime and romance into which the maid has intruded (Elisabeth, the Doctor, and Aurélie). The criminal triangle is tenuous as each stands ready to accuse the other. And Elisabeth's perception of Aurélie is one of fear that she has penetrated too deeply and too silently into the privileged space of mistress of the house:

On ne l'entend jamais venir. Tout à coup elle est là. Comme si elle traversait les

murs. Légère et transparente. La voici qui étend ma robe de bal neuve sur le lit. Tapote le beau velours cerise, avec une sorte de gourmandise, mêlée de crainte. – Mon Dou que cette robe est jolie! Mon âme pour en avoir une comme ça. (133)

Echoing Elisabeth's earlier vow that she would sell her soul for a string of pearls to wear to the governor's ball (64), this phrase once again underscores the shared, gendered space of mistress and maids within patriarchy, the common devalued space of women who need clothes and accessories to define themselves and to win men who will support them. But their difference in rank is clear from Elisabeth's contempt and her belief that Aurélie's desire for things and romance can be easily manipulated: "Il est si facile d'ailleurs d'animer le teint lunaire d'Aurélie. Il suffit de lui parler de velours et de gros de Naples, de passion dévorante et de folles amours" (183).

The mistress of Kamouraska wishes to elicit the ultimate service from the maid: the poisoning of her husband. Willing to call her "soeur," to flatter her, to stroke her hair, and to dress her up as a lady in Elisabeth's own clothes (another transgression of class), the lady opens the door to disorderly intimacy in order to secure Aurélie's hands as extensions of her own in crime. The psychodrama closes around the cross-class event with the image of closed, shared space, suffocating with mere proximity as well as guilt. This is not a utopian moment of union between the classes (Robbins), but a drastic collapsing of space in a nightmare of closure:

Aurélie a pris sur elle le meurtre d'Antoine. Un tel soulagement. Une paix singulière.

Il s'agit d'attendre la neige, patiemment. Apprendre à vivre en soi. Dans un espace restreint, mais parfaitement habitable. Éviter de regarder à plus de deux pas devant soi. George, Aurélie, et moi, nous nous exerçons à ramener les quatre coins cardinaux sur nous. Les réduisant à leur plus simple expression. Moins que les murs d'une chambre. Une sorte de coffret hermétique. Une bouteille fermée. Nous apprenons à respirer le moins profondément possible. (182)

Behind the suffocation resulting from the guilty closure of their conspiracy/triangle is that which results from an unnatural proximity between the classes. It is partly for this reason that Elisabeth cannot breathe within the spatial enclosure (coffin-like) which seals the transgressive nature of their tryst. It is as if, by not maintaining class or patriarchal walls, the lady must watch them close in upon her. She sees Aurélie growing pale and diminished as the day of her departure for Kamouraska and the crime approach (signifying the imposition of a role), but Elisabeth also remarks on the servant/accomplice's transgression of boundaries: "Réconfortée, imbue de son importance, avide et gourmande, au-delà de toute décence, Aurélie Caron

jure de bien remplir sa mission” (183).

Hébert's novel expands as well as contracts the cultural space of domestics by deploying them here and there as the voice of the people. Florida is the voice of the people in Elisabeth's imagination, for it is this trusted servant and rival who acts as accuser in the mistress's waking nightmare. In Elisabeth's mind's eye, she sees Florida descending into the street, crying, “Oyez! Braves gens, oyez! Monsieur se meurt. C'est Madame qui l'assassine. Venez. Venez tous. Nous passerons Madame en jugement” (32). Aurélie also voices the public conscience when she finally talks back to her mistress, refusing to accept Elisabeth's elaborate rationalizations that they are both innocent. The maid reminds her mistress that they are wicked as the plague, and denounces the lady and her doctor lover at the trial. This power to denounce and to testify momentarily overpowers the silence of the dismembered servant's hand and even of the unjustly persecuted accomplice, and Elisabeth is aware of this moral and discursive power: “Suppliciée, pendue, décapitée, la tête séparée de son corps, Aurélie ne se dédira pas. Elle hurlera dans l'éternité” (189). The mistress fears the servants as spies and informers because they know what has been going on behind the walls of her chambers; as working-class intruders, they have seen behind the façade of bourgeois, patriarchal order.

When the black figure of an unknown, once-buried woman is resurrected to haunt the text mystically in the final pages, this unearthing of suppressed female power and desire (Smart 4) speaks for the community of women who have inhabited the text as domestics, maiden aunts, and ladies—all contained and silenced by the father's house. The symbolic corpse speaks of blackness, pagan magic, and primitivism outside of white, Christian civility in the European settler community. The blackness of the corpse recalls Aurélie's understated racial difference as a mulatto. (She is not Métis as sometimes assumed; numerous small clues point to her racial identity as mulatto. For example, she appears white but is said to move with the ease of a black woman [171].) A community of women outside patriarchy and class and racial divides is suggested by the ancient body of a woman whom all fear, a woman capable of unspeakable crimes against the Father's house, witchcraft not excluded. In Elisabeth's dream the invasive servants who melt into the three aunts also suggest a bond among women, not to mention Elisabeth's repeated supplications, “Tu es mon amie, ma seule amie, plus que mon amie, ma soeur, Aurélie . . .” (186). However, Hébert's mystical rendering of a sisterhood, when read beside other images of domestics

and social histories as well, betrays its own idealism. As Elisabeth herself says, the story is ultimately hers alone, for the maid will not be believed and she will be imprisoned for the sins of the mistress. The spectre of female strength and bonding outside patriarchal and class society is presented mainly from the point of view of the bourgeois woman. The exhumed corpse of an ancient woman is there to haunt the mistress who dominates symbolic space and desire in the text. We cannot know if Aurélie and the other domestics would be haunted by such an image because they themselves are fixtures in the mistress's story, appearing as tools of her desires or haunting apparitions of her guilt and insecurity within patriarchy. We know too little of the domestics' inner lives to know what such a symbol would mean to them. The female resurrection in the novel as a whole is a symbol of universal woman that exceeds her oppressed place within patriarchy, but transcends class divisions among women by offering a mystical solution.

Close(d) Contact: The Politics of Fragmentation in *Alias Grace*

The condition for orderly contact is that the servant keep her place, or at least seem to. This place shifts according to political systems (paternalism and capitalism), local cultures (rural, urban, and ethnic), national policies of recruitment, the racial identity of the servant and master,⁵ and notions of good and bad femininity applied to both maid and lady. As Trudier Harris notes, the double signification of "keeping one's place," meaning staying in the kitchen and acknowledging inferior status, has pressured domestics into wearing masks of self-repression, inferiority, or happiness to serve. Harris points out that mask-wearing is "as old as slavery" for blacks in the United States and is thus reflected in their fiction by being both celebrated (as trickery and control) or lamented (when loss of self results) (16-17). In Canadian literature, *Lilly's Story* by Ethel Wilson is an archetypal representation of the loss of self that can occur when a domestic, in this case a white woman, wears a mask of propriety and self-denial with such conviction that she loses her spontaneity of speech, laughter, and desire.⁶ Other literary domestics, like Rodolphe Girard's Marie Calumet, are not shown wearing the mask of the happy servant, but simply *being* happy to keep their place and serve within a paternalistic system.⁷ But Margaret Atwood's Grace Marks comments wryly, "You are paid to smile, and it does well to remember it" (307).

From its title on, *Alias Grace* celebrates mask-wearing as a subversive technique for both the domestic/murderess in the world of the novel and the postmodern subject as one who eludes any definitive identity. Closer

examination of the politics of space and intrusion in the novel, however, reveals that the presumably “unbounded” postmodern subject (March 80) recycles hegemonic representations of domestics, such as the working-class intruder, without contesting the class politics of these icons. Published in 1996, *Alias Grace* dramatizes the inner thoughts of a notorious serving maid/murderess who lived in Upper Canada in the mid 1800s. Marks was imprisoned for thirty years after being convicted of aiding a male-servant to murder their master and the housekeeper/mistress. Critically acclaimed for the way it problematizes historical recovery and comments ironically on its own fragmented reconstruction of the murderess (Lovelady, March, Rogerson, Van Herk), the novel paints an ambiguous portrait of the housemaid. A mammoth, prize-winning book, *Alias Grace* is pieced together like a patchwork, incorporating ballads, etchings, fictionalized dialogues, archival documents from the Kingston penitentiary, fictionalized letters, inner monologues, transcribed confessions, newspaper clippings, excerpts from Susanna Moodie’s nineteenth-century descriptions of Grace, epigraphs from romantic literature, and even chapters titled after quilt patterns. Such strategies of collage and intertextuality recycle past accounts, both popular and literary, and they call up social panic at the working-class intruder. It is in calling up in quick succession all these historical constructions of the heroine’s identity and in having Grace herself comment on them—“And I wonder how can I be all these different things at once?” (28)—that the postmodern text resists fixing her in yet another recycled version. Nonetheless, the voyeuristic and gothic impetus of the narrative reactivates icons of the working-class intruder with particular vigour.

While newspaper reporters and courtroom observers shudder at the accused appearing in the murder victim’s dress to face trial, the postmodern narrative points to multiple motives: pragmatism, vanity, amnesia. Yet no version is as strong as that of Grace as intruder and usurper with a fatal desire for her mistress’s fine clothes. The threatening image surfaces again when she testifies to donning Nancy’s finer dress for the first time and burning her own. She remembers smelling “scorching meat” and feeling as if she had shed a skin, “like my own dirtied and cast-off skin I was burning” (403). Here, cross-dressing is metaphorically aligned with the serpent, the impostor, and pure evil for gothic effect, an image to be suggested again in the brilliantly duplicitous final scene of the novel, which shows Grace sewing a macabre quilt pattern for her marriage bed.⁸ After her release from prison, Grace is married off to a middle-class landowner, the star witness

against her—a contrived ending of class mobility, not based on historical record. The comfortable setting of Grace’s new home and the evil looming in the final sewing scene enable Atwood to posit her anew as the working-class intruder, but this time within her own home. Earlier, she had likened quilts to flags of war, and now she sews a quilt for her marriage bed (192).

As she stitches *The Tree of Paradise*, she reflects on its meaning in terms of her guilt/quilt. She decides to add a border of snakes and red feather-stitching of her own invention around the biblical motif, thus having feminist discourse reframe and problematize biblical discourse on morality and gender. Like the newspapers reporting on her crime, Grace charges, the Bible gave a flawed account because it was written by men (557-58). In post-modern terms, this *mise-en-abîme* of biblical discourse demonstrates the power of parody in the novel itself to reframe polarities such as guilt and innocence (557-58). But the serpent in the garden also suggests intrusion and evil. Including pieces of the dead women’s dresses and her own prison uniform in the quilt, Grace utters the last line of the novel like a pact, a prayer, or an incantation among women, “And so we will all be together” (558). Ironically, however, this vow of unity in the context of the tale of split personality, promises more madness; in the context of gothic hauntings, more ghosts; in the context of aliases, more crime. Grace, the intruder, looms so much larger than Grace, the female friend, that the double-edged discourse ultimately reinforces the icon of intrusion.

In addition to deploying the residual icon of the working-class intruder, the novel as patchwork reveals, in its selection and arrangement of fragments, a significant blind spot around the role of bourgeois women in maintaining control over female domestics. Bourgeois women are all but missing from the novel as Grace plays out her duplicity and class tensions among fellow servants and gentlemen of a higher class. In this way, the universal feminism of the novel focuses on the sexual exploitation of female domestics by privileged men as the dark side of class power.

Nonetheless, *Alias Grace* sets up tension between ladies and maids from the opening pages, without actually casting its gaze on ladies as key characters. By skilfully juggling popular literary icons of silk dresses (metonymic for the lady) and rough, red hands (metonymic for the housemaid) it explores Grace’s desire to pass as a lady through cross-dressing.⁹ When she contemplates her notoriety as a “celebrated murderess,” she reflects how that label “rustles, like a taffeta skirt across the floor” (27)—appropriating the class icon to indicate her heightened status. The scene where Grace gazes

at her roughened hands in the court room and wishes they were covered in gloves that were “smooth and white, and would fit without a wrinkle” (25) emblemizes the maid’s inappropriate desire to rise above her station and thus intrude upon bourgeois space. To a great degree, Grace is gentrified within the world of the novel. She stifles spontaneous facial expressions, speaks in modulated, flat tones, watches her grammar, keeps her hands folded when not in use and her eyes lowered, and wears dresses buttoned high at the neck. This gives her a refined air, “a composure a duchess might envy” and the appearance of being “self-contained” in the eyes of visiting gentlemen (158). In terms of domestic space, this self-control is an act of complicity; the domestic watches herself from within and polices her own body to bring it under control as rigorously as prison officials survey prisoners. (Atwood exploits the social implications of voyeurism and panopticism without questioning the social implications of her own postmodern gaze at the domestic [Foucault]). Once under control, though, Grace is even more of a threat to bourgeois space because she can pass more easily as a lady, and her composure and improved speech are perceived as sexually attractive to gentlemen, a “trick she has learned no doubt through long service in the house of her social superiors” (158). In addition to demonstrating the instability of class boundaries, cross-dressing signals the postmodern subject’s agility as shape-shifter. Yet Grace’s desire for transformation is not mere play; it is of gothic proportions for the working-class intruder.

Grace’s class identification has gone askew because as maidservant she is brought into contact with finer things and develops a taste for gloves, silk dresses, and bonnets.¹⁰ In the Kinnear household the space of the bourgeoisie has already been violated when Grace appears on the scene, for she notes that Nancy, a former servant and now housekeeper/mistress, is dressed improperly in fine clothes while gardening. The ballad at the beginning of the novel registers the disorder in terms of cross-dressing:

O Nancy’s no well-born lady,
 O Nancy she is no queen,
 And yet she goes in satin and silk,
 The finest ever seen.

O Nancy’s no well-born lady,
 Yet she treats me like a slave,
 She works me so hard from dawn to dark,
 She’ll work me into my grave. (16)

As a former servant, Nancy will prove overly demanding and yet unable to

summon the respect of servants. She will bully, misuse, and confuse Grace, even striking her, but the major reason for Grace's not keeping her place will be her own desire to ascend and her lack of respect for a mistress who is neither lady or maid, but concubine. When Grace finds that Nancy has been sleeping with the master, she concludes that she has "lost much of the respect [she'd] once felt for Nancy, as being older, and the mistress of the house" (307).

[. . .] I am sorry to say that after this I answered her back more than was wise, and there were arguments between us which came to raised voices, and on her side to a slap or two; for she had a quick temper and a flat hand. But I so far remembered my place as not to strike her back; and if I'd held my tongue, my ears would have rung less often. So I take some of the blame upon myself. (307)

The viewpoint expressed by Grace is largely conservative, reinscribing the ethos of keeping one's place in terms of good and bad femininity as well as class.¹¹ The fact that Mary and Nancy are both pregnant with gentlemen's babies when they die, and that Grace may be pregnant with her middle-class husband's baby at the end of the novel ("But then it might just as easily be a tumour. . ." [556]) underlines the degree to which sexual play across class borders infects social order. The female domestic intrudes upon the order of inheritance and class rights by bedding men of a higher class. The feminist novel testifies to the opposite: that gentlemen have historically infringed upon the space of female domestics and then abandoned them. But either way, the sexualization of class tensions is reductive if class tensions among women are obscured.

Grace's opinions on class distance and domestic space confirm rather than challenge class divisions within the bourgeois home. Separate staircases served the interests of the bourgeoisie by confining the traffic in food and chamber pots to the servants' space, leaving the main staircase free of the sight and odour of work and workers. (This erasure of workers is endemic to the social production of space in capitalist society because it naturalizes wealth and privilege, separating the fruits of labour from the process of work [Lefebvre, McClintock]). Grace bemoans the fact the Kinnear home, a country house, is too small to have service stairs. For her, masters and servants "lived too close together, and in one another's pockets, which was not a desirable thing; as you could scarcely cough or laugh in that house without it being heard [. . .]" (308). Her aversion to proximity may be partly due to Kinnear's leering at her while she washes floors, but the novel itself does little to challenge separate spaces for ladies and maids.¹²

Mary Whitney, Grace's friend and fellow servant in a city house, transforms her knowledge of the class Other (acquired through close contact) into shocking invective against them: "the front stairs were there so the family could keep out of our way. They could go traipsing up and down the front stairs in their fancy clothes and trinkets, while the real work of the place went on behind their backs, without them getting all snarled up in it, and interfering, and making a nuisance of themselves" (188). Ironically, however, Mary cannot keep her distance but is impregnated by her employer's son. Still she comments how "feeble" and "ignorant" the rich really are: "[. . .] it was a wonder they could blow their own noses or wipe their backside [. . .]" (188). Drawing on everyday knowledge to deflate the privilege of her employers through hyperbole, invective, and scatology (188-89, 39, 25-26), Mary as the older and more worldly-wise servant represents the voice of the people, an intruder through knowledge. Although she radically redefines segregated space, her discourse is mostly an inversion of class prejudice and a conservative call to maintain class distance, but Grace calls Mary's ideas "democratic" (189).¹³ In passages such as the one where Mary instructs Grace that ladies cannot sit on a chair where a gentleman has been because "you silly goose, it's still warm from his bum" (25), the resistant maid is deployed as comic relief and the voice of social disorder. Dying off early in the novel, however, Mary evaporates into a memory, a ghost, an inner voice, and an alias for the murderess/domestic.

When the protagonist splits in two to voice the demure, calculated innocence of Grace beside the brash, cocky wisdom of Mary, this splitting of the domestic's psyche pathologizes class anger and successfully contains it within the drama of spiritual possession, multiple personality, or mask-wearing by the working-class intruder. Nonetheless, through the double-voiced discourse, Atwood allows the servant/protagonist to express bourgeois points of view as well as those of the working class. Grace's voice, more grammatically correct and instinctively refined than Mary's, comes to stand in for the potential lady in the housemaid, while Mary's coarser voice becomes the mad (both insane and angry) inner self, which surfaces most definitively in the scene of neuro-hypnosis. Once more, class tensions are internalized.

The intruder at this point can be seen as class anger itself. Grace, the young impressionable maid, is invaded by Mary's subversive attitude and her ghost: "And then I heard her voice, as clear as anything, right in my ear, saying *Let me in*" (214). The mistress's and master's persons will in turn be

invaded by the Mary in Grace, the murderess in the domestic, just as Dr. Simon Jordan will be forever haunted by the memory of Grace, the seductress. And we as readers are left to wonder if the possession and splitting of Grace is a hoax enacted with the help of Jeremiah, the conjurer, or if she is really innocent of the Mary (class anger) in herself. In this collage of points of view, no single testimony, no history, and no ideology can claim precedence. It is just a story, as one doctor says, and not subject to the “harsh categories of Truth and Falsehood” (456). The whole terrain of class struggle has been shifted from the lived space of the houses, with their segregated staircases and bodies who labour and bodies who rest, to the internal and abstract space of psychological turmoil, discursive play, and elaborate, formal design (of the novel according to the quilt pattern or the gothic thriller).

The construction of Grace as a riveting character relies not on her oppositional knowledge as a domestic or her violent crime as a militant (Harris), but on her dexterity in moving between different identities. The liberty and agency of the subject rely on the novel’s transcending class relations and material space by privileging abstract and discursive space. When Grace wishes to escape confinement, she falls into delusions or spins stories for her psychiatrist. In several instances Grace’s inner imaginings collapse the confined space of her prison cell or her lonely life in service into wild, red peonies or colourful quilt patterns to suggest that she is somehow empowered through these imaginings (along with hauntings, fainting, lying, alternate identities, and so on). Since Grace as postmodern subject is given idealized discursive power to control and play with multiple versions of her own story, the novel affords her anachronistic powers for a nineteenth-century domestic (most of the novel’s 567 pages show Grace speaking to her psychiatrist or preparing what to say). The whole pretext for the novel, the extended narrative of a Scheherazade entertaining the prison psychiatrist with details of her crime as long as she possibly can (456-57), depends on Grace’s position as a prisoner, her ability to sit and talk for long hours while sewing, much like a lady, and her improved grammar which comes about, she says, during her imprisonment.

In the mind’s eye, the protagonists from Atwood’s novel and Hébert’s, Grace and Elisabeth, can be placed side by side very easily: the lady and the domestic—both accomplices to murder—sewing, posing, seducing, sinking into delusions, and unfolding their complex, self-conscious interior monologues (*Kamouraska* 125, *Alias Grace* 80-83, 159). Yet *Kamouraska* offers a

more relational account of domestic space, for it shows the direct relationship between the lady's leisure and her power to manage the labour of several servants. *Alias Grace*, with its fragmented micro-history of the servant, eclipses the lady in order to peer more closely at the maid and "open her up like an oyster" as the epigraph says, thus erasing many of the relational aspects of the politics of material space. In both novels, inappropriate dress or inappropriate sleeping arrangements are used to signal the social and domestic disorder that ensues when class segregation breaks down. Both deploy the icon of the female domestic as working-class intruder as a recycled dominant discourse (Williams) in order to draw attention to the drama of crossing class boundaries. As feminist projects of historical recovery, both novels embrace a universalizing feminism that transcends or conceals class rifts between ladies and maids in order to make a statement in the final scene about Woman in respect to patriarchy. Neither protests class boundaries.

Resistant reading practices based on materialist feminism should intrude upon portraits of domestics, first, to make the characters appear as domestics and, second, to interrogate the cultural politics of representational strategies. Merely placing the powerful icon of the working-class intruder beside other possible identities to fragment the subject does not disarm the icon of its power. Nor does making sisters/doubles of the lady and the maid dismantle class difference. Residual uses of hegemonic icons often find new ways of recycling old attitudes (Williams 116-17). We do not intrude to say the works should have been written otherwise, with greater authenticity or historical accuracy, but rather to see more clearly the cultural politics of

NOTES

Much appreciated in the writing of this article were the diligent research of my assistant Natasha Dagenais and the suggestions on literary domestics in Quebec by two colleagues, Christiane Lahaie and Pierre Rajotte. I am also grateful for funding from FCAR.

- 1 Historians disagree as to the magnitude of the servant shortage, with Marjorie Cohen arguing that only 11% of homes in nineteenth-century Canada employed domestics in the first place (Cohen, Barber). Others note that before the turn of the twentieth century, domestic work was the primary occupation for women outside the home in both Canada and Europe (Prentice et al., Errington, Leslie, Lacelle, Anderson and Zinsser).
- 2 On the level of the nation, this fear of strangers within our gates has been reflected in aggressive recruitment policies of white domestics to service bourgeois homes, accompanied by restrictive immigration policies when the domestics were increasingly drawn from non-white populations (Giles and Arat-Koç, Schecter).
- 3 Lacelle notes, however, that domestics seemed no more inclined to crime than the general population in nineteenth-century Upper and Lower Canada, although the harsh

- conditions and lack of security entailed in the work provided an ideal motive for crimes of a material nature. “Desertion” was the most frequently reported crime among domestics (65-67). It is interesting to note that domestics who ran away from their masters on arrival in Nouvelle France were branded with the fleur-de-lys for second offences (Guilbert 11)—a practice which imposes, rather strikingly, the nation’s claim on the labour power of the poor and the body space of domestics.
- 4 Many novels where the domestic worker is the protagonist may indeed be quite hegemonic in their depiction of work, gender, or class. This hegemonic trend in poverty narratives by Canadian women exaggerates the role of domestic work in transforming poor women into upwardly mobile subjects (Rimstead 114-17).
 - 5 The Clio Collective explains the situation in nineteenth-century Lower Canada:

The distance between servants and masters probably increased as more foreigners became domestics. At the beginning of the 19th century, servants were usually of the same nationality as their masters. In 1871, servants from Ireland and Scotland constituted nearly 70 per cent of the live-in servant population in the well-to-do sections of Montreal; in Quebec City, 59 percent were French-Canadian women and 33 percent were Irish. Immigrant women were looked down on. (157)
 - 6 Both the prototype of the upwardly mobile domestic worker and one of the loneliest spaces in Canadian literature, *Lilly’s Story* sets up its young female protagonist on a long, laborious quest to negotiate a place of respectability for herself and her child across social barriers in turn-of-the-century Vancouver. By working as a waitress, housewife, and then in a string of jobs as both live-in and live-out housekeeper and chambermaid, Lilly supports her child and fabricates a new, matronly identity for herself, but loses her sense of self in the process (Rimstead 114-15).
 - 7 Inspired by a popular folksong, Rodolphe Girard’s short novel *Marie Calumet* depicts an upstanding, matronly domestic employed in the village rectory, who loves to serve but who is humiliated in a scene which satirizes paternalism and the power of the church in the mid-1800’s Lower Canada. In a hilariously irreverent moment, Marie stumbles over her admiration for the bishop when it comes to emptying his chamber pot. She reflects on the sacrilege of disposing of his urine like everyone else’s—“Un moment, Marie Calumet eut l’idée de l’embouteiller” (62)—and carries the revered liquid to the priest to ask his wise counsel.
 - 8 For a theoretical discussion of cross-dressing and transgression, see Chapter 3 of McClintock’s *Imperial Leather*.
 - 9 These are popular icons in both British and Canadian representations of ladies and housemaids. Nellie McClung’s *Painted Fires* is about a Finnish domestic worker who begins her emigration and ascent in response to the rustle of a silk dress belonging to a visiting domestic who has emigrated and inspires her to follow suit. Laura Goodman Salverson recalls when she was a housemaid how bourgeois women pulled back the hem of their gowns so as to avoid touching the domestics.
 - 10 One of the paradoxes of service is that maids are trained to do all tasks relating to maintaining the bourgeois household, for example, through better knowledge of housekeeping, meal preparation, quality of care and shopping, etiquette and so on, but they are not meant to adopt these tastes themselves. The management of domestics became a large part of household manuals in the nineteenth century instructing the rising middle class on how to structure the hierarchy within the bourgeois home. Atwood’s primary source on domestics, Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management*, compared the mistress of a large household to the commander of an army.

- 11 See Kaplan for a discussion of “good” and “bad” femininity.
- 12 Atwood does not take on the role of advocacy for domestics. In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, she used the Marthas as stock backdrop, mouthpieces of conservative values, working hands, and eavesdroppers, rather than fully developed characters like the other two classes of women, the wives and the handmaids. In *Alias Grace*, the third-person narrator of sections of the novel reinscribes negative images of servants as dull-witted and blank, such as the descriptions of female domestics having “a face like a pine plank,” being “slab-faced” and “pudding-faced” (92-3, 69)—epithets that connote genetic inferiority as well as simple-mindedness. These caricatures are a foil to Grace, the shrewd story-teller and intruder.
- 13 In contrast to Mary, with her invective and folk knowledge, Antonine Maillet’s *La Sagouine* challenges at every turn of phrase the notion of domestics keeping their place. She details for us how institutions such as churches, schools, Radio-Canada, and even burial grounds enforce segregated space on the poor, Acadians, French Canadians, and women. The one-character play begins with her scrubbing her way onto the stage and from then on *La Sagouine* harnesses the symbolic power of cleaning to critique nation, class and gender politics (Rimstead 116-17).

WORKS CITED

- Atwood, Margaret. *Alias Grace*. Toronto: McClelland, 1996.
- _____. *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Toronto: McClelland, 1985.
- Anderson, Bonnie S. and Judith P. Zinsser. *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present*. Vol.2. New York: Harper, 1988.
- Bals, Myriam. *Les Domestiques étrangères au Canada: Esclaves de l’espoir*. Montreal: l’Harmattan, 1999.
- Barber, Marilyn. “The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestics for Ontario Homes, 1870-1930.” *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History*. Vol II. Eds. Allison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff. Toronto: McClelland, 1987. 102-21.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984. Trans. of *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement*. 1979.
- Brand, Dionne. *Sans Souci and Other Stories*. Stratford, ON: Williams-Wallace, 1988.
- Clio Collective. *Quebec Women: A History*. Trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill. Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1989.
- Cohen, Marjorie Griffin. *Women’s Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1988.
- Errington, Elizabeth Jane. *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses, and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada 1790-1840*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- Giles, Wenona and Sedef Arat-Koç, eds. *Maid in the Market: Women’s Paid Domestic Labour*. Halifax: Fernwood, 1994.
- Girard, Rodolphe. *Marie Calumet*. 1904. Montreal: Fides, 1979.
- Guilbert, Lucille et al. *Pauvre ou Vagabond: Le quêteux et la société québécoise*. Laval: Rapports et Mémoires de recherche du Célat 9 (1987).
- Harris, Trudier. *From Mammies to Militants: Domestics in Black American Literature*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1982.

- Hébert, Ann. *Kamouraska*. Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1970.
- Kaplan, Cora. "Like a Housemaid's Fancies': The Representation of Working-class Women in the Nineteenth Century." *Grafts: Feminist Cultural Criticism*. Ed. Susan Sheridan. London: Verso, 1988. 55-75.
- Lacelle, Claudette. *Les Domestiques en milieu urbain canadien au XIXe siècle*. Ottawa: Ministre de l'Environnement, 1987.
- Leslie, Genevieve. "Domestic Service in Canada, 1880-1920." *Women at Work, Ontario 1850-1930*. Ed. Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith, and Bonnie Shepherd. Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974. 71-126.
- Lovelady, Stephanie. "I Am Telling This to No One But You': Private Voice, Passing, and the Private Sphere in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 24.2 (1999): 35-63.
- Maillet, Antonine. *La Sagouine*. Ottawa: Leméac, 1971.
- March, Cristie. "Crimson Silks and New Potatoes: The Heteroglossic Power of the Object in Atwood's *Alias Grace*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 22.2 (1997): 66-82.
- McClintock, Ann. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McClung, Nellie. *Painted Fires*. Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1925.
- McNaughton, Janet. *To Dance at the Palais Royale*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Tuckamore, 1996.
- Rimstead, Roxanne. *Remnants of Nation: On Poverty Narratives by Women*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2001.
- Robbins, Bruce. *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below*. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- Rogerson, Margaret. "Reading the Patchworks in *Alias Grace*." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 33.1 (1998): 5-22.
- Roy, Gabrielle. *La Rivière sans repos*. Montreal: Beauchemin, 1970.
- Salverson, Laura Goodman. *Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter*. 1939. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1981.
- Schechter, Tanya. *Race, Class, Women and the State: The Case of Domestic Labour*. Montreal: Black Rose, 1998.
- Scheinberg, Ellen. "Bringing 'Domestics' to Canada: A Study of Immigration Propaganda." *Framing Our Past: Canadian Women's History in the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Sharon Anne Cook, Lorna R. McLean, and Kat O'Rourke. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2001. 336-42.
- Silvera, Makeda. *Silenced: Talks with Working-Class West Indian Women about Their Lives and Struggles as Domestic Workers in Canada*. Rev. ed. Toronto: Sister Vision, 1989.
- Smart, Patricia. *Writing in the Father's House: The Emergence of the Feminine in the Quebec Literary Tradition*. Trans. Patricia Smart. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991.
- Trodd, Anthea. "Household Spies: The Servant and the Plot in Victorian Fiction." *Literature and History* 13 (1987): 175-87.
- Tynes, Maxine. "In Service." *Fireweed* 26 (1988): 8-11.
- Van Herk, Aritha. Review of *Alias Grace* by Margaret Atwood. *Canadian Literature* 156 (1998): 110-13.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.
- Wilson, Ethel. *Lilly's Story*. In *The Equations of Love*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1952. 131-281.
- Zecher, Carla. "Elisabeth-Sainte and Aurélie-Sorcière: The Mistress of *Kamouraska* and Her Double." *Québec Studies* 20 (1995): 11-18.