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“Eskimo,” or an Encounter with the Real of Feminine Desire

- 1 There is no small amount of irony in the fact that “Eskimo” was first published in 1987 in the upscale fashion monthly called *Gentlemen’s Quarterly*, since the short story certainly contains enough food for the thoughts of this select readership on the complex relationships between men and women. Moreover, the fact that it was later included in a collection enigmatically entitled *The Progress of Love*, invites us to consider the story as an interrogation on the notion of love itself, raising severe doubts as to the relevance of the notion of progress when love is concerned. The text follows the usual pattern of the genre: the routine of the protagonist’s life is suddenly interrupted by an unexpected event which changes her outlook on life radically. In this particular instance, Mary Jo, the nurse working for Dr Streeter and also playing the role of the faithful mistress, is flying to Tahiti for a vacation paid for by her lover-boss. On the plane, as she is confronted with several foreign, or more or less exotic passengers, she goes through a painful experience/revelation that challenges the quiet comfort of her cosy but empty middle-class life, and creates a feeling of frustration that leads her to reconsider the small scale success story of her private life as a fraud based on lies which the dominant discourse of patriarchy covers up as thoroughly as is convenient. In more abstract terms, the repetition, the routines of her life hitherto governed by the predominance of the principle of *automaton* is interrupted by the intrusion of the principle of *tuchè*, or encounter with the real of her desire. Portentously, the key signifier representing the crucial moment of *tuchè* turns out to be the very title of the story: Eskimo, a word that suggests both intimacy, as the girl claims that she is a “fellow Canadian”, and extimacy, as her strange appearance and behaviour, particularly in relation to males, somehow destabilise Mary Jo to the point of producing daydreams involving a fantasy of murder. Consequently, the following reading of the short story will first focus on the ironical portrait of the self-complacent Dr Streeter, then it will consider Mary Jo’s gradual awareness of her alienation and, finally, it will explore the truly subversive dimension of the text.

Patriarchal ventriloquism

- 2 The opening sequence of this wonderfully crafted short story affords us a blatant illustration of the way the discourse of patriarchy deceives Mary Jo into expressing its own pre-requisites in her own discourse. However, this double-voiced discourse appears to be the site of an ironical distance that exposes what we call the void of the phallic position, in other words it reveals the fact that the so-called male superiority inherent in the patriarchal vision of human relationships is predicated on a void, that can only be concealed if it is supported by the very discourse of women. Mary Jo does this very successfully at the beginning of the short story until the truth gradually dawns on her that she might well be a victim of her own gullibility. As a result the voice of masculinity is exposed as a perversely efficient means of control of femininity. In spite of its length it is worth quoting the opening passage to see the narrative strategy at work:

Mary Jo can hear what Dr Streeter would have to say.

"Regular little United Nations back here."

Mary Jo, knowing to handle him, would remark that there was always first class.

He would say that he didn't propose paying an arm and a leg for the privilege of swilling free champagne.

"Anyway, you know what's up in first class? Japs. Japanese businessmen on their way home from buying up some more of the country."

Mary Jo might say then that Japanese hardly seemed foreign to her anymore. She would say this thoughtfully, as if she was wondering about it, almost talking to herself.

"I mean, they hardly seem like a foreign race."

"Well, you seem foreign to them, and you better not forget it." (189)

- 3 It is first crucial to remember that the above dialogue is entirely imaginary, it never took place in reality, it is just a fantasy made up by Mary Jo, as she is sitting on board the plane: "But he isn't stretching his legs out beside her, grumbling and content. She is off to Tahiti by herself. His Christmas present to her, this holiday. She has an aisle seat, and the window seat is empty" (190). A present that is more like an absence is already an index of the ironical tone that will prevail in the short story, but what is striking is that her relation with Dr Streeter is introduced as a form of manipulation "knowing how to handle him" (189). For her human relationships seem to consist in a game of distribution of symbolic places whose outcome is the confirmation, the recognition of the place occupied by the locutor in the discourse of the interlocutor, and conversely. Here, however, irony is present since, if she seems to be able to control him (on the spur of the moment) it is in fact he who controls her life on a more general plane, as we shall see. The very incipit of the short story shows her in a passive position, that of the quiet listener lending an obliging ear to the speeches of her boss hacking over and over again the same old arguments, as the double value of the modal auxiliary "would," which suggests at the same time a hypothetical realisation and repetition, testifies. Moreover, it is significant that the only subject of her silent monologue is none other than Dr Streeter himself, who occupies the whole textual space in the first half of the text to disappear virtually from the second. He is endowed with a sort of natural authority that warrants his unquestioned right to hold opinions, whereas she is only allowed a word in edgewise, as the choice of modals implies. Within the opening paragraph we move from Streeter's "he would have to say" to Mary Jo's "she might say" (189). It is obvious that Mary Jo is supposed to receive the good word from Dr

Streeter's lips and that, if she can hear his voice when he is not present, she is unable to hear the voice of her own desire.

- 4 Through the figure of Dr Streeter, Mary Jo idealises the masculine in a sort of process of rationalisation of her fascination for the man, even though she denies it occasionally: "Mary Jo did not defend Dr Streeter just because he was a man, and a father, not at all; it was not for those reasons she thought his wife should have instilled some respect for him from his children" (191). Here, the function of Free Indirect Discourse is quite clearly to underline the fact that the third person narrative voice does not endorse her position, even though the point of view is seemingly, that is to say grammatically, hers.
- 5 In this respect, the role of Rhea, Dr Streeter's daughter, is not ambiguous. She is the one who speaks the truth about the shortcomings of her father, which Mary Jo blinds herself to or even attempts to justify, and this Mary Jo finds difficult to face. For instance, she is right to claim:

Her father is not far from being the cause of all this [nuclear proliferation, acid rain, unemployment, as well as racial bigotry and the situation of women] In Rhea's mind. he is behind bombs and pollution and poverty and discrimination. And Mary Jo has to admit that there are things he says that would lead you to that conclusion. (190)

- 6 In spite of her exaggerations, Rhea does put her finger on the truth because, if he is not immediately and individually responsible for all the disasters that she mentions, the ideological positions he upholds in his discourse accuse him, and Mary Jo's defense of her so-called benefactor: "Men have to have their opinions" (190), sounds rather lame.
- 7 Dr Streeter's remarks on Japanese businessmen who buy up the country and indulge in a *jouissance* he disapproves of (swilling champagne), as well as his comments on the flashy and picturesque clothes of foreigners, are evidence enough of the range of his racial prejudices. What makes things more perverse is that he uses the phrase "regular United Nations" to refer to potentially conflicting race relations, when the initial purport of the phrase was to suggest peace and harmony between nations. The worst is that, in this particular context, he cannot be suspected of wanting to be tongue-in-cheek. This less than flattering portrait of an ordinary racist is further aggravated by the focus on his mysogyny. The details of his relationship with Mary Jo make it clear that for him she is merely a sexual object that he thinks he can use at his convenience. Their physical intercourse is cold and devoid of affection: "His is a fierce but solitary relish" (194) and his visits to Mary Jo's bed are "regular though not lengthy" (191).
- 8 Not only does he use her body, but he also rules her life with the invisible power of his money and of his social position. Buying her a trip to Tahiti is but one way of buying her (sexual) services and, moreover, Mary Jo has to admit that she had no wish for that type of destination:

Tahiti is, in fact, a place where Mary Jo never thought of going. Tahiti to her means palm trees, red flowers, curling turquoise waves, and the sort of tropical luxuriance and indolence that has never interested her. The gift has something unimaginative but touching about it, like the chocolates on St. Valentine's Day. (192)

- 9 She tries to improve her physical appearance (teeth, hair, clothes) to please him, she refrains from drinking liquor because he dislikes the smell of it, but he behaves as though he owned her, as if she were an object that could be stolen from him: "It's hard to tell how much difference any of this makes to Dr Streeter. He used to tell her not to be too glamorous or somebody would spot her and grab her away from him" (193).

- 10 If Mary Jo's "life was changed without these stratagems" (193) it does not follow that it was the sign of a liberation, quite the contrary in fact. Given this particular context, it is surprising that Mary Jo should accept so eagerly the yoke of subjection. What makes all this possible is the fact that Mary Jo herself voices the stereotypes of patriarchy, which she has internalised through her culture and social environment. Not unsurprisingly, her love for Dr Streeter whom she, contrary to his wife, believes is "the Great Healer" (191) and whom she sees as "a noble-headed giant" (189), takes the very conventional form of her unconscious desire to occupy the place of the real wife. First, this leads her to disparage his wife whom she sees as a hard-drinking would-be intellectual who failed to perform adequately her role, so that she feels in duty bound to take her place as a surrogate mother for Rhea: "Mary Jo was supposed to do the work this girl's mother should have done – making her understand her father, and forgive and admire him" (191). It is therefore ironical that although he is a heart surgeon Dr Streeter knows so little about the workings of the hearts of women in the realm of affects, and thus finds himself in the position of the physician of the Bible (Luke 4.23). In the short story, however, irony is not reserved for Dr Streeter in a bid to denounce the evils of patriarchy, it is also leveled at Mary Jo, as it takes her a long time to see the light. And for this she will need the experience of the encounter with the Eskimo girl.

The rise to consciousness and the emergence of a feminine voice

- 11 Mary Jo's dissatisfaction with her situation is inscribed quite early in the narrative, and the frustration at the root of her restlessness surfaces at the beginning of the central episode of the short story: the plane scenario. Yet, the uneventful life of a provincial nurse already contained the seeds of her repressed fret, as the reader is quickly made aware, owing to the function of Rhea in this tale of unrest. Mary Jo does not fail to notice that Rhea's questions have the knack of unsettling her, of making her feel more uncertain about herself and her desire: "Why is it that Rhea always knows the tricky questions to ask, in spite of her predictable mockery, lectures, and propaganda" (192).
- 12 In point of fact as a true hysteric, Mary Jo, through the mediation of the man to whom she identifies – and there is no doubt that she identifies closely with Dr Streeter, be it only on account of their common professional competence, efficiency and dedication – tries to get the answer to the fundamental question of knowing what a woman is, or in other words, what it is that she actually wants. Thus the question of desire is at the heart of the story, and it is Rhea's function to remind Mary Jo of the urgency of finding an answer. The symptoms of this growing unrest are perceptible in Mary Jo's uneasy response to Rhea's questions, because they bring a suspicion in her mind that her life may be based on a lie, and the efforts that she has to make to maintain her belief in the fairness of her position become an overwhelming task. For instance, keeping up appearances not to acknowledge her relationsp with Dr Streeter requires a lot of control which she is more and more reluctant to keep up: "Now Rhea must know all about that, but does not make direct investigations. She often seems to be probing, skirting the subject. Mary Jo remains bland and unforthcoming, but sometimes the effort tires her" (191). Psychoanalysis has taught us to realise that the refusal to comment, the refusal to have a word to say, are usually a site of resistance. Mary Jo, though she cannot yet admit it, has had enough of her relation with the doctor, and

very soon she recognises that: "she did not feel as equal to this conversation as she sounded" (190).

- 13 Besides, Rhea is certain to know about the affair, as the use she makes of the double meaning of the word "devotion" to describe Mary Jo's love of her job, rewarded by her exotic holiday, clearly indicates. As a consequence, the suspicion dawns on her that she is perhaps not living the life she had dreamed of. Rhea's question, as well as the blatant lie about her trip that she tells to her acquaintances, show this quite well: "She had told patients, and her friends, and her sisters – whom she suspects of thinking that she does not have much of a life – how excited she is about it" (192). Consequently, Rhea's cheeky question: "What is your world, Mary Jo?" is bound to trigger off deeper existential reflexions, the outcome of which she is not yet ready to confront, as her attitude in two later episodes suggests. The first one is her sudden escape in a flight of fancy after seeing the Greek and the Indian family who are going to be her travelling companions. Remembering a particular television programme she indulges in a typically Freudian fantasy which consists in falling under the spell of a beautiful and powerful exotic ruler – the father of the Primitive Horde – eager to acquire her into his harem. The fact that the narrative voice uses the word "horde" where the word "hoard" would be commonly expected in the sentence: "He might have left his country, got out before the Russians came, with his rugs and women and perhaps a horde of gold, though not likely his goats and sheep and horses" (197), whether it is a misprint or not, is particularly relevant and enjoyable.
- 14 But this is hardly acceptable, and her final remark: "If he asks me to join his harem, I promise I won't agree to any such weird procedures!" (198) sounds like the unconvincing denial of an unacknowledged desire, of the promise of a *jouissance* that has, so far, been out of her reach. The use of the verb "agree" leads the reader to surmise that her desire is to be part of it, in spite of social norms and conventions, because it holds promises of a new kind of fulfilment, but such a thought obviously has to be repressed. Later on, a feeling of betrayal crops up when she thinks of her present lover, and she feels that she must rehabilitate him in her eyes, so she reminds herself of his dedication to his job, of his sadness that she attributes to his capacity for obedience, by which she means acceptance of the world as it is, not to say staunch conservatism, so that she concludes unsurprisingly by reasserting that: "She loves this man with a baffled, cautious, permanent love" (203). Yet, the narrative does not end with a reaffirmation of her love for Dr Streeter, but with the phrase: "This is the beginning of her holiday" (207) which is obviously a holiday from Dr Streeter.
- 15 The turning point in the uneasy process of discovery of her need to assert her femininity in a different way, is illustrated by two incidents that occur when she meets the two foreign families sitting next to her on the plane. To her own surprise and dismay, she experiences an uncalled for reaction of jealousy when she observes them feeding their children: "Mary Jo is surprised at how ill-disposed she feels toward this harmless family" (194). Contrary to Dr Streeter's mistrust of foreigners, Mary Jo is not repelled by their presence on board, it is rather the fact that they have children which she resents: "What a fuss, what accumulation and display and satisfaction, just because they have managed to reproduce" (194). Reproducing is precisely what she is not allowed to do because of her situation as a mistress, and thus her desire of maternity is frustrated by the social pressure she has to submit to on account of her partner. This realisation functions as a symptom that "there is something wrong with her" (195), as

she puts it, and this something, she will soon discover, has to do with the acknowledgement of her desire and with her strange conduct during the Eskimo girl episode. She must have had a presentiment of the imminence of a revelation that might radically alter her outlook on life and the vision she has of herself, because she seems on the verge of refusing to take the problematic trip:

Mary Jo looked at the slushy streets, the dirty February snow, the gray walls of these houses, a tall office block, with its night lights on, that she could see beyond the park. She wanted nothing much as to stay. She wanted to cancel the taxi, change her new suede suit for her uniform, [...]. (193)

- 16 Leaving the comfort of her middle-class life, as unglamorous as it might be, for an uncertain future is certainly a hard decision to make, but as she says about the trip: "She can't go back on it" (192).

The subversive function of alterity

- 17 The climax of the short story is undoubtedly the long sequence describing Mary Jo's unexpected acquaintance with the nameless Eskimo girl in rather weird circumstances, as we do not know whether the latter's destabilising dimension is her own, or whether it is constructed by Mary Jo's fantasy. After she has already been unsettled by the Greek and Indian families showing the extent of their satisfaction and happiness, Mary Jo is further perturbed by the entrance on the scene of a most improbable couple: a corpulent, sullen and loudly dressed middle-aged man who does not look Caucasian with, in tow, a younger and drunken woman. Mary Jo seems fascinated by the couple and she begins to hypothesise about the true nature of their relationships, as their strange behaviour leads her to suspect something fishy, so that she eventually focuses her attention, principally on the girl whom she surmises to be a victim. Submitted to Mary Jo's questioning the girl claims that she is Eskimo, while he is a Métis, and this seems to puzzle her, as she does not give her name, but defines herself through her origin, insisting that it is different from that of her companion. However, it is the very word "Eskimo" which Mary Jo finds tantalising because it contravenes the tenets of the politically correct: "She nods, but the word 'Eskimo' bothers her more than the fact. That isn't the word to use anymore, is it? 'Inuit.' That's the word they use now" (199). To put it differently, the signifier "Eskimo" comes to embody for her the very notion of alterity as an irreducible difference. And sure enough, the textual presentation of the girl highlights her singularity which produces a jarring effect on the closed world of the plane.
- 18 Mary Jo's first reaction is one of surprise, the girl does not seem to belong to the conventional image of the traveller, she seems out of place. For instance, she is surprised that the intruder could speak English. Then the girl turns out to be different from the first perception Mary Jo had of her, she has been taken in by appearances: "When she came along the aisle with the shopping bags, she looked middle-age – thick-waisted and round-shouldered. But now, smiling at Mary Jo around the man's bulky shoulder, she looked quite young" (197).
- 19 When she finally learns that the girl is a fellow Canadian, her dimension of alterity is immediately transferred onto her attitude toward the man who travels with her. Right from the start the girl escapes Mary Jo's attempts to define her, and things will get worse as Mary Jo fathoms the contradictions of her desire. For all that, the textual

strategy makes it clear that the Eskimo girl must be seen as a figure of the double for Mary Jo, in so far as she embodies all the repressed, unwelcome, aspects of her desire.

- 20 To start with, both are concerned with drink, the girl is allegedly drunk and Mary Jo refrains from drinking alcohol because of Dr Streeter's dislike for it, although she indulges in a Martini and vodka that makes her a little tipsy. Both are connected with authoritarian males, and the girl's companion inevitably makes her think of Dr Streeter. Speaking of the Métis who has just made a "lordly gesture of thanks to her, she comments: "He is a corpulent man, probably older than Dr Streeter, but more buoyant. An incautious unpredictable man with rather long gray hair and new, expensive clothes" (196). Both women make a timid show of resistance to their men. Both are associated with the signifier "boss." The girl exclaims: "'You can't boss me' she says, and there are tears now in her voice and eyes. You're not my father'" (199). A clear gesture of defiance of the patriarchal order, as Mary Jo's man is none other than her own boss. But the word most closely associated with the two women is the word "devotion." Rhea speaks of Mary Jo's devotion (to her job and lover-boss), which deserves a reward. The Eskimo girl's devotion takes on a more physical and erotic form which repels and fascinates Mary Jo at the same time. As she comes back to her seat after waiting for the girl near the toilets in the vain hope that she could help her, she witnesses her total physical abandonment and total oblivion of the other passengers:

She closes her eyes but cannot keep them closed. She cannot stop herself from watching what is going on across the aisle.

What is going on is something she should have the sense and decency to turn away from. But she hasn't and she doesn't.

The whiskey glasses are empty. The girl has leaned forward and is kissing the man's face. His head is resting against the cushion and he doesn't stir. She leans over him, her eyes closed, or almost closed, her face broad and pale and impassive, a true moon face. She kisses his lips, his cheeks, his eyelids, his forehead. He offers himself to her; he permits her. She kisses and licks him. She licks his nose, the faint stubble of his cheeks and neck and chin. She licks him all over his face, then takes a breath and resumes her kissing.

This is unhurried, not greedy. It is not mechanical, either. There is no trace of compulsion. The girl is in earnest; she is in a trance of devotion. True devotion. (204)

- 21 This scene is probably the true turning point of the story, to the extent that what intrudes upon Mary Jo's gaze is an image of feminine *jouissance* that she has always refused to consider. She feels alien to such behaviour for reasons of social pressure and moral correctness but, in spite of her social self, she identifies with the girl who appears to have access to a specific knowledge of what constitutes feminine *jouissance* as something that reaches far beyond phallic enjoyment. The scene suggests to her that sexuality is the domain where the condition for a human being to become a subject is the ignorance of what constitutes him/her. In short she discovers that the sexual is like a core of darkness within the subject's conscious life. No wonder then if Mary Jo feels intimately concerned by this scene which is so far from her ordinary experience of love: "She seems to have caught something of the girl's persistent and peculiar agitation" (204). The alterity that Mary Jo is led to feel as her own is therefore fittingly encapsulated in the signifier "Eskimo." The very alterity inscribed in the letter of the word enigmatically represents for Mary Jo the Real of feminine *jouissance* which, by definition, is beyond the realm of the Symbolic, and therefore cannot be put into words. The opacity of the signifier "Eskimo" serves that purpose wonderfully, and

furthermore, according to Margaret Atwood, in Canadian mythical lore it has faint echoes of the potential threats which the unknown areas of the Malevolent North might contain.

- 22 That such a revelation is deeply disturbing to her is confirmed by the final murder fantasy in which she escapes at the end of the short story, which is a textual echo of the earlier scene in the movie that Mary Jo is watching desultorily. She imagines that she finds the dead body of the Eskimo girl in the washroom of the airport at Honolulu:

Mary Jo looks for the Eskimo girl and is bewildered to see her lying on the floor. She has shrunk, and has a rubbery look, a crude face like a doll's. But the real shock is that her head has come loose from her body, though it is still attached to her. (206)

- 23 The metamorphosis of the girl into a broken doll is strangely reminiscent of the image of a little girl breaking her toy to see what is in it, to discover some hidden secret about the feminine body. Bearing in mind the theme of the double, this could be interpreted as a symbolic gesture through which Mary Jo divests herself of her former childish or immature personality, and the advice she gives to the Eskimo girl: "You will have to say what you want" (202) in fact applies to her. The very ambiguity of the personal pronoun "she" in the second sentence of the quotation below, which may refer either to the girl or to Mary Jo, is very eloquent: "Mary Jo can feel the heat of her skin and the tremor that runs through the girl's fingers and her whole body. She is like an animal in an entirely incommunicable panic" (200).

- 24 Retrospectively then, the textual strategy implemented by Alice Munro sprinkled a number of clues to warn the careful reader of the real stakes of the tale. The dialogue is like a code which Mary Jo has to decipher to reach the conclusion that the girl's story is symbolically her own story. Hence, the reiteration of the phrase "I am Eskimo" on six occurrences must be viewed as a signal: "What has that to do with it? She says as if it might be a code word, which Mary Jo would eventually understand" (200). And if the girl also repeats in no less than six instances, the entreaty: "Don't tell nobody" it is because the secret that she keeps is not her age but the truth about femininity as an irreducible form of alterity, which is bound to be perceived as a constant threat to the primacy of the patriarchal order.

- 25 If Mary Jo subsequently experiences a feeling of guilt, it is only natural since the advent of a new self may have to entail the casting off of her former attachments. This guilt manifests itself through misunderstanding:

"You'll get a chance to choose your own," says the white-haired woman, and Mary Jo thinks this means your own punishment. She knows she is in no danger of that – she is not responsible, she didn't hit the girl or push her on the floor. (206)

- 26 This misunderstanding is completed by a linguistic game on the words "court" or "count", which incidentally she associates with Dr Streeter for no apparent reason: "On the other hand the word "court" may refer to Dr Streeter" (207). We are later informed that the word was supposed to mean flowers, which suggests the feminine, and a happier *dénouement*. The meaning of the episode is, however, that femininity is an enigmatic and misleading word that escapes the narrow definition of any dictionary.

- 27 At one point in her daydreaming, Mary Jo mentions her desire to write a letter to Dr Streeter to tell him about her eventful journey, but supposedly, the letter will never be sent, at least not as a holiday report or card. Moreover, on account of the systematic use of Free Indirect Discourse, it is possible to maintain that instead, she writes this heavily autobiographical story as a record of her radical transformation into a woman

who is now ready to relinquish her dependence on men, and to assume the responsibility of her own desire. In other words, the short story is the letter that she indirectly sends to Dr Streeter in the form of a fiction that speaks the truth of femininity.

- 28 Ultimately, Alice Munro may not be conversant with the details of the psychoanalytical theory in its Lacanian version, but as Freud and Lacan have both acknowledged, it is the privilege of the artist to have access to the complexity of the deeper workings of the human mind. It is therefore a tribute to the greatness of Alice Munro's art that through the poetics of ambiguity which characterises her modalities of writing, she succeeds in creating a piece of fiction that illustrates the implications of the quest for an elusive femininity.
- 29 The ambivalent ending is a good case in point because, after all, there is no certainty that Mary Jo will sever her relationship with the patriarchal order of Dr Streeter for good. The last line: "This is the beginning of her holiday" (207) is particularly significant in this respect. It could no doubt be a new beginning for Mary Jo, but a holiday usually supposes a return home, unless her holiday is the prelude to a new start, or it could just as well be a mere interlude in her life. However, the ethical choice remains hers and hers only.
- 30 Whatever that may be, it succeeds in foregrounding the fact that femininity is not a fixed notion that could be enclosed in an identity, but remains for ever fluid, elusive, contradictory, and uncertain. In this perspective, the short story reminds us poetically that the inborn anarchistic impulse that is the very heart of femininity is the necessary condition to make a really great writer, whether he is male or female.

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ABSTRACTS

En s'appuyant sur le concept lacanien de jouissance et de réel, cet article propose une lecture d'"Eskimo" sous l'angle d'un processus de découverte de soi auquel l'héroïne se trouve soumise lors d'un voyage en avion, sans pouvoir ou vouloir y échapper. Par conséquent, elle se trouve confrontée à la double tâche de devoir se libérer de l'emprise patriarcale qui structurait sa vie et de reconnaître la nécessité d'un nouveau rapport à la jouissance féminine. La rencontre de Mary Jo avec le Réel de la jouissance permet à Munro de promouvoir une définition de la féminité qui révèle sa dimension profondément anarchique et profondément créatrice.