

**RETURN OF THE GODDESS:
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND CELTIC MYTHOLOGY IN
ALAN WARNER'S *MORVERN CALLAR***

John LeBlanc
Okanagan University College

ABSTRACT

Scot Alan Warner's first novel, *Morvern Callar*, brings together, in a postmodern fashion, ancient Celtic and contemporary 'New Age' worldviews. The novel focuses on the depressed reality of Scottish youth and culture as the title character, imprisoned by a moribund patriarchy, adopts her suicide boyfriend's identity as a means of reasserting both her own and Scotland's sovereignty. Crucial to this reassertion is Morvern's intuitive adoption of the character of the queens and druids of Celtic mythology, but also significant is her fondness for contemporary music's postmodern aesthetic of dismemberment that, paradoxically, engenders a womb-like watery space similar to that of the developing global communications network.

"Look all around. The male god is dysfunctional. The goddess is coming back."

(Tomson Highway)

Recently, Scottish literature has enjoyed a renaissance as a new generation of Scottish writers—including such figures as A.L. Kennedy and Irvine Welsh—is now being recognised internationally. This renaissance of Scottish writing has coincided with a renewed interest worldwide in things Celtic, suggesting that the Scottish/Celtic worldview may provide insight for a world that, in response to recent developments in communications technology, seems to be undergoing a paradigm shift. One of the emerging Scottish writers who has exploited this nexus of a Celtic revival and a shift in the way the world sees itself is Alan Warner, from the Scottish west coast port city of Oban. In his first novel, *Morvern Callar* (1995), Warner reflects this seemingly

paradoxical intertwining of the Celtic sensibility and the electronic age by combining contemporary rave culture and ancient Celtic mythology. Producing a postmodern pastiche of wildly contrasting cultural elements, Warner suggests that things Celtic need not be seen nostalgically or as a mere exoticism but as a significant force in the shaping of a “New World Order” that would give currently marginalised constituencies (such as Scotland) a more prominent role in world affairs.

The affinity between Celtic mythology and New Age rave culture lies in their shared matriarchal character. Matriarchal Celtic culture enjoyed a brief ascendancy around the 5th century BC, only to be “beaten back into obscurity by the combined pressure of Romans, Germans, and Christians” (Markale 14). The culture associated with these groups (who have remained in power ever since) was patriarchal in character, and they, in turn, defined the Celts as “primitive.” It is only recently that this patriarchal paradigm is being challenged, given that its obsessions with rationality and uniformity are now becoming outmoded due, in large part, to the computer revolution, whose new lines of communication are breaking down old cultural and political barriers. Native Canadian writer Tomson Highway has called this shift in attitude a “return of the goddess,” suggesting that patriarchal paradigms, which have dominated human relations for the past two thousand years, have become dysfunctional (Posner C1, C5).

The strongly matriarchal character of Celtic culture can be seen in the way that the “Celtic woman,” with her qualities of sovereignty, ambition, beauty, and prowess in battle, has informed present day notions of the “emancipated female” (Ellis 14-15). Furthermore, “the laws of ancient Ireland and Wales... gave more rights and protection to women than any other Western law code at that time or since” (O’Hara and Bulfin, qtd. in Ellis 15). This is not to suggest that the Celts considered women to be superior but they believed in “equality of the sexes,” even to the point that in Ireland men and women share a high number of common names (Ellis 17-18). Women’s importance did diminish as Celtic culture came in contact with first Roman and then Saxon, Frank, and Norman culture but, even to this day, Celtic “women’s moral influence remain[s] strong” (Ellis 18). As well, in Celtic mythology, creation is “ascribed [...] to a mother goddess” (Ellis 21). This mother goddess (Danu — ‘Waters from Heaven’) represents the “spiritual aspiration of mankind,” seen in contrast to the worldliness of her “evil counterpart [...] Donnu” and manifested in the “worship of rivers and ‘divine waters’ [...] in pagan Celtic religion” (Ellis 23).

Alan Warner’s novel, *Morvern Callar* renews this Celtic emphasis on the feminine as watery source of wisdom, healing and life by having its female title character behave in ways that identify her with elements of Celtic mythology, especially Celtic goddesses (such as Morrighan and Morgen) and Celtic shamans (the druids). These associations transform Morvern, who is imprisoned by the patriarchal order as a lowly supermarket stock clerk. Like the Celtic goddess Morrighan, who “appear[s] at the imminent demise of a king or hero, clustering like [a] carrion crow [] over his still warm body” (Matthews 32), Morvern oversees the death of the dysfunctional patriarchal order and the rebirth of a matriarchal sensibility concomitant with her own emergence as an individual. In the novel’s vivid opening, she discovers the dead body of her much older boyfriend (referred to only as Him), who has committed suicide. Like her queenly mythological counterpart, Morvern proceeds to scavenge his bank account and steal his identity as a novelist. Abandoning her job at the supermarket,

where she is plagued by a patriarchal boss, she dismembers Him (the boyfriend), buries Him in the countryside and uses his money for trips to the resort island of Ibiza, a chemical generation playground off the eastern coast of Spain.

Morvern's behaviour, however, is not merely criminal or selfish but, unconsciously, an enactment of Celtic ritual, recalling not only the Celtic queens but also druidic practice as, like the druids, she wanders the world undergoing shamanic ordeals in search of wisdom. Identifying Morvern as a druid seems ironic, given her working-class status, her taciturn nature, and her obvious lack of schooling. However, Warner wants to emphasise that this new focus on things Celtic and this re-emerging matriarchal sensibility very much arises from the working class. Therefore, Warner has Morvern, like the druids but also like disaffected British youth, travel to other worlds, such as the resort island of Ibiza, to gain wisdom. As she participates in the rave culture of the island, she is not merely indulging in pleasure but undergoing purposeful druidic rites. Given her status as a foster child (forced to wander from place to place throughout her life), she seems to have been born to the druidic role, since it is also their fate to go from home to home in search of instruction in various arts. Can Morvern, neglected and suppressed, be said to be a master of any art? She does have an encyclopedic knowledge of contemporary music, as is witnessed in her obsession with the soundtrack that accompanies her throughout the novel. This interest in music is not merely a frivolous hobby but the key to understanding her significant (although unconscious) role as a Celtic goddess announcing the dawn of a new era with 'minority' cultures (such as Scotland's) at its forefront. Therefore, readers of *Morvern Callar* must pay close attention to the music that Morvern listens to.

As she tells her story, Morvern constantly refers to this music that accompanies her every action. This music is not merely a diversion from her mundane existence but a key element of her identity, an element that allows her to establish a self beyond the limited role of store clerk that the patriarchal establishment grants her. The music serves this purpose through its ability to transport her to another level of consciousness, as she has specifically designed it to recreate for her an alternative world that intuitively reflects a renewed Celtic matriarchy. Morvern's soundtrack covers a wide variety of genres from dissonant avant-garde to danceable funk but underneath the audible differences lies a common purpose of immersing the listener in a sonic environment that reflects a "different" global order, one which replaces a masculinist geography of clearly demarked nation states with a matriarchal space that is a constantly shifting sea of intertwined localities.

In his book *Ocean of Sound*, David Toop suggests that this emphasis on music as complete sonic environment is a response to a noisy twentieth-century reality of "swarms of aural garbage, babble of dead city transmissions" (270). With the growth of radio and TV signals and computer linkups and the imminent digitalisation of everything, "postmodern humans swim in a third transparent medium" (Kelly, qtd. in Toop 270) and Morvern, wired to her walkman, is surrounded by this environment while also shaping it in her own way as she carefully chooses her music to suit her mood and situation. Creating as well as experiencing this third medium, Morvern abandons what patriarchy calls reality—leaving behind her current world, which is ruled by older, ageing, dominating, and dysfunctional men—for the more nurturing realm of the matriarchal sea.

According to Toop, the sea-like music that characterises this realm features strange sounds that submerge us into “deep and mysterious pools” in order to satisfy our “intensely romantic desire for dispersion into nature, the unconscious, the womb, the chaotic stuff of which life is made” (270), fulfilling a “nostalgic [...] yearning to float free in a liquid world of non-linear time, heightened sense perceptions and infinitely subtle communications, [...] a pre-mobile infant state when the world is colour, sound, smell and touch” (273). This music also features bass, echo, noise, massive volume, and density so that it is “felt at its vibrational level, permeating every cell, shaking every bone, derailing the conscious analytical mind” (273). Such a music is decidedly utopian, echoing jazzman Miles Davis’s concern with evoking “spiritual center[s] of power, lands of advanced races [...] place[s] of contemplation and good, a land of adepts [...] drowning in celestial radiance all visible distinctions of race in a single chromatic of light and sound” (Toop 100). Miles Davis’s music (and that of many musicians whom he has influenced) is featured prominently in Morvern’s soundtrack. His piece “He Loved Him Madly” is the first music we hear in the novel, setting the tone for what is to follow. Davis’s prominent position in the soundtrack clues the reader to the kind of sonic space the novel will evoke and invites a consideration of the antecedents of this aspect of Davis’s career, such as the sonic experiments of pioneering electronic composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, a figure who has inspired much of the music in the novel and who was introduced to the rock music world by Davis through his ground-breaking 70s electric jazz albums, now seen as the forerunners of the recent electronic dance craze that Morvern embraces.

This music constructs a space similar to what Jacques Lacan has identified as the matriarchal realm of the Imaginary¹ (in contrast to the patriarchal world he terms the Symbolic), a space that exhibits what Ihab Hassan in his book *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* describes as a postmodern aesthetic. *Morvern Callar* echoes Hassan’s title when the novel associates the patriarchal Him (Morvern’s older, patronising boyfriend) with the figure of Orpheus by making Igor Stravinsky’s music based on this mythological character a prominent work in Him’s record collection. Not only does this piece contrast with Morvern’s music but it also reinforces Him’s association with patriarchy, identifying him as a master of educated, harmonious eloquence. Morvern’s postmodern music, the antithesis of such eloquence, features dismemberment, a quality that Warner’s novel evokes literally by having Morvern dismember Him’s body. Postmodern art, according to Hassan, views dismemberment as central to contemporary life in that, in the words of Lionel Trilling, “somewhere in the mind of every modern person” dwells the “idea of losing oneself up to the point of self-destruction, of surrendering oneself to experience without regard to self-interest or conventional morality, of escaping wholly from societal bonds” (qtd. in Hassan xv). Whereas Him emphasises permanence, to the absurd point of recreating exactly his surrounding environment by constructing a detailed model of his community (Oban) in his apartment, Morvern emphasises change by ritually destroying this model, sending Him’s body crashing down on it as part of her larger rite of dispersing Him, erasing her past identity, and creating a new life. In fact, Him can be seen as a “modernist” version of the contemporary individual, the version still colonised by patriarchal Victorian morality, while Morvern is the postmodernist version, harkening back to “primitive,”

matriarchal Celtic values, values that Victorianism, seeing itself as the modern fulfilment of the “civilizing” project of the Enlightenment, tried to obliterate.

According to Hassan, acts of self-dispersal —such as those performed by Morvern on Him and then herself— require an emptying of the self, resulting in a negative state characterised by a silence (Hassan 4) that restores one to nature and the “secret life of things” (Hassan 5). Morvern (whose last name Callar means silence) has readied herself for what Hassan has described as possession by the god who then uses her as a medium for the “music of universal harmony and eternal repose” that “unites all opposites” and creates a space “where being and nothingness seem to touch” (Hassan 5). This music features the extremes of “madness, outrage, ecstasy, mystic trance” (Hassan 13), metamorphosing reality so that identities become perpetually fused and words, paradoxically, are restored to “their full significance [...] by reduc[ing] them to nonsense” (Hassan 16-17). As in schizophrenia, words “pass beyond ordinary language (the language of the reality-principle) into a truer more symbolic language” (Norman O. Brown, qtd. in Hassan 16). This symbolic language (evoking Lacan’s realm of the feminine Imaginary and not to be confused with his contrasting category of the Symbolic) more accurately reflects contemporary reality with its “large areas of [...] non-verbal languages [such] as mathematics [and] symbolic logic” (George Steiner, qtd. in Hassan 17). Significantly, such a symbolic language is similar to not only the symbolic character of the coming digital age but also the poetry of the ancient Celts, with its emphasis on the truth of nonsense. By following the postmodern aesthetic Hassan describes, Warner has moved Celtic aesthetic practice and sensibility into the foreground of contemporary experience instead of treating it as a source of nostalgic retreat. At the same time, he has given the ethos of the chemical generation, with its challenge to patriarchal authority (through its rejection of Victorian “industry” and its embrace of childhood), new relevance as he depicts its seemingly marginal and regressive character as a potentially progressive force.

This connection between Celtic and postmodern practices suggested by Morvern’s music is reinforced by the shamanic (as in those of a druid, the Celtic shaman) experiences she undergoes as the novel progresses. Morvern’s chemical generation adventures, then, accompanied by her ritualistic music, can be seen as the wanderings of a Celtic shaman going beyond the everyday world to what Celtic mythology refers to as the Otherworld and the Underworld. Prominent among these wanderings are her trips to Ibiza, a chemical generation haunt. Like the Celtic Otherworld, Ibiza, with its youth clubs that feature the kind of music Morvern is tuned to, is a world of “intense image, colour, and symbol,” a blissful paradise whose prototype is the Avalon of Arthurian legend (Matthews 65). Both the Otherworld and Ibiza emphasise eating, drinking, making love, and merriment (Matthews 64) and, like Ibiza, the Otherworld also favours music that “cause[s] the company to forget the hardships of battle and to lose all sense of time” (Matthews 71). Significantly, the Otherworld is described as a watery world, the Land Under Wave (Matthews 65), an Atlantis that echoes not only the character of the music Morvern listens to but also its thematic concerns, as in Miles Davis’s fondness for naming his compositions after lost utopias such as Pangaea and Agartha.

It is in this echo of the Otherworld where the political dimensions of Warner’s novel emerge in that, for the Celts, the Otherworld is “their true home, [...] the source

of their wisdom, the dwelling place of their gods, the dimension in which poets and wanderers are most at home" (Matthews 63). There, "everything is possible," providing the impetus for the accomplishment of great deeds (Matthews 64). A visit to the Otherworld makes one more than mortal and gives one the potential to be a cultural hero. Morvern, through her shamanic experiences that go far beyond self-indulgent raving, recovers the ability to become a Scottish hero who could lead her country from under the patriarchal authority of England to a more elevated status within the new global order, renewing the greatness of the distant Celtic past. Significantly, the wonders of the Otherworld are accessible only to the strong (heroes) and the wise (druids and poets) for it is only they (the gifted ones) who can profit from and even survive the Otherworld's rigors. It is only they who can drink from the fountain of wisdom and its five streams (mirroring the five senses) without becoming overwhelmed and destroyed (Matthews 66). Most of the ravers at Ibiza will be overcome by its pleasures and will miss the significance of the experience. They will not understand the wisdom that, like the music itself, comes in the form of gibberish and noise, a child's language of the Lacanian Imaginary, like the language of the birds, but ultimately a "truthful language in which no falsehoods can be tolerated" (Matthews 71).

Morvern's journey to Ibiza takes place in two stages. During the second visit, Ibiza is less like the splendid Otherworld and more like its more sombre counterpart, the Underworld, which is not so much like the Christian hell but rather a productive land of the dead, "a primal, creative place where mortals and gods [...] enter into special relationships" and sometimes change places with each other (Matthews 72). The focus in this underworld is on rebirth rather than on damnation. In echoing the Celtic Underworld, Warner has replaced the negativism of patriarchal Victorian Christianity with an approach that more positively addresses individual and societal shortcomings. Through Morvern's ordeals in Ibiza, the pressing problem of the redemption of the Scottish state, languishing under English patriarchy, is brought to light. The sombre Underworld stage of the novel reinforces Morvern's emerging role as a Celtic hero, struggling to redeem her people. For example, during this stage she, in the tradition of the queenly Morgen of Celtic mythology, comforts a distraught young man who has lost his mother, or, on the level of political allegory, she ministers to the Scottish people themselves who have had their matriarchal culture suppressed. This comforting leads to sexual intercourse with the young man and Morvern becomes pregnant with (once again on the allegorical level) the future hope of the Scottish nation, the fruit of the ordeal she has undergone. After she returns from Ibiza, Morvern, as the novel ends, can be seen wandering (like a druid) westward, pregnant with a child of the future, redeemed Scottish nation, whom she terms "the child of the raves" (229), moving towards the home of her ancestors where she will further commune with the dead—the subject of Warner's next novel, *These Demented Lands* (1997), the *Tempest*-like sequel to *Morvern Callar*.

Initial responses to *Morvern Callar* treated the novel as an illustration of the sad state of British youth, focusing on Morvern's "emotional anaesthesia" and seeing her taciturn nature as "meant to convey hip disaffection" (Kornreich 21). Warner, in turn, was seen as "laying bare an anti-culture he apparently considers worthless" (Biswell 22). However, Douglas Gifford views Morvern's disaffection in more positive terms, reading her character and the novel as a "female version of [Alexander] Trocchi's

Young Adam.” Morvern thus can be seen as “a woman who withdraws from social obligation [...] like Trocchi’s Joe and Kelman’s characters, work[ing] on the edge” (Gifford 600). As Gifford explains, Morvern’s disassociative personality and the sombre atmosphere of the novel erase traditional “tourist and romantic associations” (600) about the region in order to rescue Scotland and its people from a narrative that imprisons them in a tragic past and to restore them to what really matters —“the here and now” (601). This erasing of the traditional also applies to gender categories (601), hence the novel’s emphasis on Morvern’s adoption of her boyfriend’s identity. Consequently, Morvern’s behaviour is not defeatist but defiant and heroic as she “take[s] initiatives which centuries have said she shouldn’t, refusing commitments, sure only of a few basic things— her right to decide where she’ll go, who she’ll have sex with, and her recognition that she’s alone” (601-602).

Another critic, Terri Sutton, dismisses Warner’s gender confusions as fashionable cross dressing that can’t hope to render women’s experience accurately. For Sutton, Warner’s *Morvern Callar* is merely one example of a new fad (including other writers such as Arthur Golden, Reynolds Price, Martin Amis, and Jim Lewis) that features, in the manner of the Spice Girls, “girl power as a marketing device” (Sutton par. 7). As a result, Morvern is seen ultimately as having no voice (reinforced by the association of her name with silence and emptiness) or only an “infantile” one (Sutton par. 12). Furthermore, Sutton suggests, she does not “comprehend[] herself until she has been clarified by masculinity (when Morvern buries her writer boyfriend in a mountain, it reads as if she has taken him into herself)” (Sutton par. 14) and her fulfilment at the end of the novel comes in the traditional form of pregnancy. Yet, Sutton fails to note that Morvern’s treatment of Him’s (the boyfriend’s) body is not an ingestion but a dispersal and an erasure, as Gifford suggests. Similarly, her silence is not the lack of a voice but the erasure of confining traditional notions of voice for a new moment by moment voice, realised in the completed novel itself, which becomes her personal record of her observations. The atmosphere of erasure and silence also prepares the way for her possession by supernatural power —not necessarily a male god but in Warner’s postgender landscape one that crosses gender barriers. Morvern’s pregnancy also need not be seen in a traditional and negative manner. She chooses the pregnancy and its conditions on her own terms as a single mother who does not have to submit to the nuclear family paradigm.

Morvern, instead of passively submitting, intuitively executes a double movement of, on the one hand, going beyond traditional categories to the constantly recreated here and now and also returning to the values and sensibility of ancient matriarchal Celtic culture. It is in her return to a long repressed matriarchal sensibility (following other twentieth-century artists) that she discovers a way of being which will take her beyond current calcified notions of gender and nation and into the future. Similarly, in her close scrutiny of the here and now, she evokes both ancient practices of ritually attending to the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. This attention is most clearly illustrated when she goes camping to ritually disperse the parts of Him’s body. In fact, a sense of ritual attends her behaviour throughout the novel, revealed through the precise and detailed way she records her actions, such as her noting of whenever she lights a cigarette. This sense of ritual, ultimately, encompasses both the “ancient” and “contemporary” aspects of her double-edged strategy.

Morvern's precise record of discrete details, the record that constitutes *Morvern Callar*, follows the tendency in postmodern fiction to focus more on "awareness" than knowledge and understanding" and on the *conditions* or *states* of consciousness at any given point in time," casting the narrator in the "stance of an observer" and "allow[ing] for a more random arrangement which, in turn, shifts attention away from 'conclusion' toward the particulars of a given moment" (Butling 70). Such a postmodernist fiction "records as accurately and fully as possible the thoughts, feelings, sensations, actions, interactions, sights, and sounds. 'Story' becomes simply the narrative of the act of perceiving, thinking, feeling," revealing a "pluralistic, constantly changing, constantly moving world," and "reflect[ing] the view of reality developed in modern physics, of matter as a 'mass' of sub-atomic particles in a space-time continuum, not as something solid, fixed, and permanent" (Butling 71). Recalling David Toop's metaphor of music as an "ocean of sound," this kind of narrative creates a space where the "inherent linearity of narrative becomes submerged; the circular, fluid, and at times disjunct nature of consciousness is brought to life" (Butling 78), Morvern's narrative follows the circuitous route on many levels, including her return, at the end of the novel, to the west and the home of her ancestors. However, *Morvern Callar* can also be read as what Butling calls a traditional novel in that Morvern can be seen as moving "from a position of ignorance and inexperience, through an immersion in self and/or world, to a position of greater knowledge and understanding" (Butling 70). This aspect of *Morvern Callar* surfaces where Morvern's journey echoes those found in Celtic mythology. What Warner has done (in a postmodern manner) is mix an established mythic narrative with a more postmodern one. In fact, such a pastiche is characteristic of Warner's writing, as can be seen in the widely different styles of his three novels, which freely move among realist and fantasy modes.

Narratives that echo and valorise Lacan's feminine Imaginary are quite common these days. The *X-files* is the most obvious example of this narrative fad, with its gender-bending lead characters, its feminised male, its patriarchal conspiracy that favours a perverse, rationalist genetics, and its appropriation of alternative, "primitive" realities (like Warner's Celtic world) such as those of Native North American Indian cultures. Similarly, many Cordelia figures (like Warner's Morvern) populate these narratives, such as the *X-files*'s Scully and Jodie Foster's Ellie Arroway of the "New Age" movie *Contact*, based on Carl Sagan's book. Alan Warner's Morvern Callar is yet another of these patient, truthful daughters, as Lear's story (that of an ancient Celtic king) provides an apt model for a society that is interrogating its overly masculinist character. This model is especially apt because Shakespeare (not only in *King Lear* but in other plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) often meditated on how the England of his time was turning from its roots as a Celtic culture to a more "enlightened" view of itself as a great "civilization" inspired by the light of the Renaissance. *King Lear* speaks poignantly of the harm and the loss brought on by such a shift. Hence, it is no surprise that a return to the Celtic sensibility (as part of and a general interest in alternative realities such as the Native North American Indian and the African) should echo Shakespeare and it is no wonder that his popularity has undergone such a renaissance in recent times.

All of these reworkings of *King Lear* may be viewed cynically as merely postmodern commodifications cashing in on Shakespeare's timeless appeal, and the

“New Age” character of these appropriations may be criticized as merely another fetish of grasping yuppies. Mark Dery suggests that this “New Age” paganism, this “return to Dionysian excess and abandon” (Dery 38) where “rationalism and intuition, materialism and mysticism, science and magic are [seen as] converging” (Dery 41) merely “diverts public discourse from the political and socioeconomic inequities of the here and now” (Dery 49). Yet, Warner’s *Morvern Callar* does have a political dimension, given its focus on the problems of lower class Britain, women, and Scottish sovereignty. The novel does not recommend weekend retreats in the shamanistic arts to his readers. The Celtic sensibility is inherent within Morvern not artificially adopted. Warner merely, in the spirit of postmodern playfulness, asks us to attend to and explore such so-called minority cultures since they, the guardians of lost paradigms, may lead us to solutions to real problems. Throughout the world, writers are resurrecting not only the Celtic culture but other repressed sensibilities that may offer practical insight on current problems. In Atlantic Canada, for example, writers are turning to not only the Celtic culture (which has always remained strong there) but to texts such as the Old Testament and to a working class ethos for neglected viewpoints. Similarly, Irvine Welsh, Warner’s contemporary in Scotland, mines texts such as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and *Beowulf* in an attempt to transform both a moribund literary canon and British society. There is nothing new or unusual in this strategy of echoing the past (and much of it is mere commodification) but these efforts can be seen, more positively, as instigating a social movement that goes beyond mere fadishness to motivate real political change.

Notes

Special thanks to Craig McLuckie my colleague at Okanagan University College for introducing me to Warner’s writings and for much valuable information and insight concerning Warner’s work and Scottish writing in general.

¹ A clear and succinct explanation of the Lacanian Imaginary can be found in Toril Moi’s *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. See especially pages 99-101, 117-118, 120-123.

Works Cited

- Biswell, Andrew. “Mortal Remains.” Rev. of *Morvern Callar*, by Alan Warner. *Times Literary Supplement* 31 March 1995: 22.
- Butling, Pauline. “Gladys Hindmarch: Pointillist Prose.” *Essays in Canadian Writing* 32 (Summer 1986): 70-91.
- Dery, Mark. *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996.
- Ellis, Peter Beresford. *Celtic Women: Women in Celtic Society and Literature*. London: Constable, 1995.
- Gifford, Douglas. “Contemporary Fiction I: Tradition and Continuity.” *A History of Scottish Women’s Writing*. Ed. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997.

- Hassan, Ihab. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature*. 2nd. ed. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1982.
- Kornreich, Jennifer. Rev. of *Morvern Callar*, by Alan Warner. *New York Times Book Review* 18 May 1997: 21.
- Markale, Jean. *The Celts: Uncovering the Mythic and Historic Origins of Western Culture*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1993.
- Matthews, Caitlin. *The Elements of the Celtic Tradition*. Rockport, Mass.: Element, 1991.
- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Posner, Michael. "Highway Is Back with a Vengeance." *The Globe and Mail* 17 Oct. 1998: C1, C5.
- Sutton, Terri. "Bosom Buddies." *Village Voice* 43.14 (7 April 1998): 17 pars. On-line. Academic Search FullTEXT Elite. Available: <http://www.gw3.epnet.com>. 11 Feb. 1999.
- Toop, David. *Ocean of Sound: Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1996.
- Warner, Alan. *Morvern Callar*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1995.