



From Girl to Woman: American Women's Coming-Of-Age Narratives (Sunny Series in Feminist Criticism and Theory & Sunny Series in Postmodern Culture)

Christy Rishoi

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From Girl to Woman examines the coming-of-age narratives of a diverse group of American women writers, including Annie Dillard, Zora Neale Hurston, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Mary McCarthy, and explores the crucial role of such narratives in the development of American feminism. Women have long known that identity is complex and contradictory, but in the twentieth century their coming-of-age narratives finally voice this knowledge. Addressing a variety of themes awakening sexuality, the body's metamorphosis in puberty, consciousness of difference from males, and the socialization into feminine gender roles these narratives reject the heroine's narrative ending in romance, allowing American women writers to create alternative subjectivities by rejecting the notion that identity is ever fixed. While activists have succeeded in winning legal battles that have changed the legal status of women, these narratives perform the cultural work of exposing the painful contradictions faced by women as they come of age."

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