



'Surfacing' the Politics of Desire: Literature, Feminism, and Myth (University of Toronto Romance Series)

Rajeshwari S. Vallury

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A particular model of masculine desire has traditionally been evoked in an effort to understand the subordinate role of women in male-authored fiction. Because of this, the belief that male-authored texts are unfailingly built upon the denial of feminine difference has come to dominate many aspects of literary studies. *Surfacing, the Politics of Desire* re-examines the .myths. of masculine desire in order to challenge this premise, placing literature at the centre of recent feminist debates over the ontology and politics of sexual difference.

Citing examples of textual resistance to analytical feminist thought, Rajeshwari S. Vallury argues that literature is expressive of desires that are not always configured in terms of oppression or the denial of difference. In other words, a particular politics of reading obscures the multiplicity of desire that literature is capable of affirming and risks sacrificing the possibilities of both literature and desire. Through a re-evaluation of the sexual politics practiced by nineteenth-century male writers such as Balzac, Gautier, and Maupassant, Vallury moves towards a reconfiguration of the relationship between aesthetics and politics.

Surfacing, the Politics of Desire calls into question dominant feminist approaches to the literary representation of gender. Enlisting the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, Vallury calls for a different method of reading, one based on a deeper understanding of the politics of literature.



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